



R. I. President: Gordon R. McNally

District Governor: Jeetender Gupta

# ROTARY CLUB OF DELHI SOUTH NEWSLETTER "ASHOKA" October, 2023

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO THE CLUB



Dear Members,

Before we blink, the year seems to go by. We are already into November and festival time and before we realize it will be time to say goodbye 2023. Not so fast as we had an exciting October with plenty of activities.

We had an interesting talk from Mr Ashish Shaker, CEO- Motilal Oswal on how to make money. Viceroy hall was packed to capacity for a change and everyone was intently listening to the state of economy and how each one of us may have to craft our portfolio for 2030. Highlight of the evening was honoring our PP Anil K Agarwal with Avenue of Services, awarded by Rotary International President and handed over by IPDG Ashok Kantoor and DGE Mahesh

Trikha. This is the first time in our club's history of 54+ years that our member was bestowed with this honor. Our PDG Hemant Ahuja aptly described the importance of this award. Congrats Anil ji. You are an inspiration and I know we can count on your help anytime, anywhere and be assured it will come. The event also saw pinning of Mr Anil K Agarwal, Mr Arjun Mehta and Mr Tridibes Basu as single major donors. Thanks to you for sharing your wealth to spread happiness in the communities we live in.

The Mental Health program organized at AIIMS and supported by District was a great start in an area fast becoming a concern. Gathering of young doctors from just about every discipline underlined the need for attention here. Our club is committed to help and support.

Our club took a major step in the area of promoting education by adopting MCD Primary School - Roshanpura-2 in Najafgarh. There are about 1400 primary students in a two shift operation. I see lots of opportunities from making the environment green to

getting the basics for primary kids like fixing the playground, the slides and the swings and making the place safe for children to play fearlessly. I am excited to see the happiness on children's faces when the slides are fixed and they get to enjoy the ride.

Nari Shakti and Atmanirbhar program are going great with the first batch almost placed with the exception of 2 young adults who will soon get placed. They have started the 2nd batch of 15 students composed of 10 girls and 5 boys. I met the students and they are super excited at the prospect of being financially independent in the near future.

Last but not the least, your club contributed INR 460,000/- (over US\$5500/-) towards the polio plus fund. This is a super important contribution as it will help Rotary International support the countries where polio virus is still raising an ugly head.

Wish you all a very happy, healthy and enjoyable Diwali. May this Diwali there be peace, love and harmony in the world.

**Pramod Agarwal**  
President, 2023-24

From the desk of the  
**E D I T O R**



**The cycle of events, festivals et al in the annual calendar comes a full circle in 365 days, with an extra day added in the leap year. The festivals provide some dramatic relief in one's pursuits of challenges and travails of life. These evolve with regularity, year upon year and as surely as the seasons in the years. Each year leaves its memories, some faint and insignificant and others everlasting and endearing. Look back over the years, and the memorable ones have left an indelible and enduring stamp of nostalgia. Monsoon has bid adieu, and will return in 2024 with bountiful showers of hope, and not of despair and destruction in its wake. It was relentless in its punishment this year with copious amounts of precipitation, with the hill states bearing the brunt of its wrath.**

The spell of autumn and its special fragrance is all pervasive, humidity too has retreated and a dry and cool breeze deftly flows through the early mornings and late evenings. If autumn is here, can the joy of winter and its accompaniment of colourful festivals be far behind? The change in season will soon begin engulfing the heat of the afternoons, with cool air announcing the advent of winter!! October to March the weather turns pleasant, but months of December till mid February are the months which are very cold, and some biting cold and freezing. A sense of joy has started to envelope in anticipation of festivals, which resonates with energy and affords much merriment. There's exuberance and an excitement in the air.

The speaker meeting of October on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup> was addressed by Mr Ashish Shankar the suave and articulate MD and CEO of Motilal Oswal. It was an excellent presentation, the contents of which are reported elsewhere in this newsletter. It was a record attendance, but mum's the word from those silent investors who quietly reap the harvest and nary a whisper, lest the evil eye checkmates the run of their luck. Apart from a comprehensive presentation of investment opportunities and the vast landscape it offers, Motilal Oswal very generously hosted the evening's cocktails and dinner. President had in advance given a sneak preview of the vast array of culinary delights that awaited the members palettes, and which alongside the very interesting talk, had whetted their

appetite on two fronts. Once again, Claridges had curated and served an outstanding meal, each dish complimenting the next, producing a symphony of tastes!! They remain consistently engaged in providing a satisfying experience each and every time!! Bravo, the master of it all - Rajiv Gujral!!

PP Anil Agarwal is rarely out of the news and all for good and praiseworthy reasons!! He's at the forefront of many a project, the latest being mental health, which was launched with much fanfare and laudable intent. However, he's also in the news for a very special reason, a reason and a celebration that has escaped RCDS for the length of its existence so far. PP Anil Agarwal was honoured with the Avenue of Services awarded by the Rotary International President for exceptional service. Mark my prediction- Anil is just warming up for a better and a greater role in Rotary in the foreseeable future!! Congratulations Anil for the special achievement.

We are a nation which substantially remains welded to traditions and societal values, where people have grown up imbibing practices of a traditional upbringing. For instance, two weeks of Shradhs praying for our ancestors who have ascended to the other world, precedes the Navratri which marks a period of fasting and abstinence for the cleansing of the souls, before the bugle's clarion call of all the fun filled and exciting festivals that await. The Western world has its equivalent too. For the 15/16 days of Shradhs they have the All



Saints Day on November 1, when they visit the ancestral and family graves with offerings of wreaths and candles. The equivalent of Navratri is the period of Lent, a period of 40 days before Easter, when the Christians refrain from some forms of indulgence living in denial and penitence. Christ is believed to have fasted for forty days in the desert and resisted all forms of temptations offered by Satan. Lent is a practice, much encouraged in Convent and Missionary schools, and many an old student still practices it for its extensive health benefits. Our Prime Minister is believed to practice a punishing schedule of fasting during the entire period of Navratri, ingesting only lemon juice and water and yet remains a reservoir of energy!! Much to be said about the benefits of fasting accompanied by prayers and charity.

October 2023 will be remembered as a macabre month of violence, of unheard of defilement of lives of innocent families, and of children and babies being decapitated by a frenzied group of terrorists called Hamas. Barbaric acts such as this, were supposed to have receded into the annals of medieval history. Of course, there were aberrations like the Nazis holocaust and the extermination of Jews during World War Two, and later the acts of violence perpetrated by the Islamic ISIS. Civilisation is supposed to have mellowed human nature but the Hamas actions have revived the fear that, violence and brutality remains intact as an intrinsic instinct, which can come to life and erupt like a dormant volcano!! Perhaps, it's a USP of terrorism to create fear and mayhem. It's abominable that an act of terrorism is perpetrated to the chants of Allah O' Akbar. They defile the image of the Prophet who is otherwise revered as Allah the merciful. The handful misguided charlatans are all products of Madrasahs and exposed to a psychotic brainwashing of eliminating the infidels!! Are we to once again witness disruptions in the civilised way of life by errant and misguided violent groups? Who knows and time will tell, but the signs of such

a virus of hatred are ominous.

Life goes on, but the signs of a calamitous restlessness are all too evident in some parts of the world which are enveloped in strife, are a fire either for reasons of ideological rabidity, or geographical hegemonism. It's a fire in its ignition stage which we hope will be doused before its conflagration consumes the world.

Year after year, the months of October and November not only herald the beginnings of pleasant weather, but also the festive season, which continues unabated till well past the New Year, notwithstanding the bane of polluted air made more foul by the raging fires from the agricultural fields of Haryana, Punjab and UP. It's rather uncanny or maybe just a personal feeling, but as the massed bands retreat and fade into the sunset at the Beating of the Retreat ceremony, the feeling of an impending change of weather and of the onset of blistering summer months, resets the mood from one of joie de vivre and exultation to resignation and despair, a cycle that continues year after year.

Dussehra was celebrated with much fanfare and thousands of effigies of the demon King Ravana across the country, from the smallest hamlet, towns and large cities, went up in flames to the symbolic arrow fired from the quiver of Lord Rama. The coming month of November will be host to several festivals and celebrations. Diwali melas sprout up across the city, culminating in the colourful festival of lights, hopefully sans the customary lighting of crackers, which have become the bane of civilised life in a polluted metropolis. It's hoped that the populace shuns the crackers in the interest of a healthy environment, though the experience of the past years belies that faith!!

Wishing you all a wonderful festive season with much to cheer, and hopefully a customary visit by Goddess Laxmi!! Stay safe, happy and smiling. Cheers.

**Inderjeet Singh**  
Editor

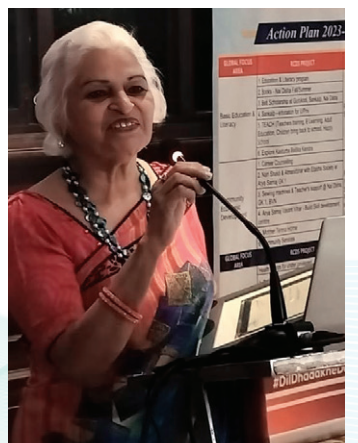
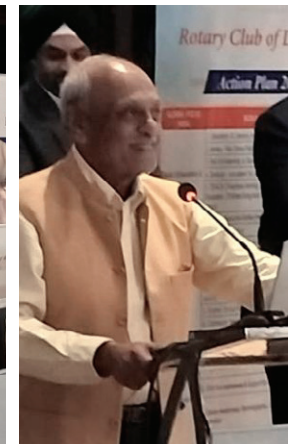


# SPEAKER MEETING

12th October, 2023

The speaker event on Oct 12 was on the topic "India at 2030" which was delivered by Mr Ashish Shanker, Managing Director and CEO of Motilal Oswal Private Wealth. He is also a fellow Rotarian from District 3141, Mumbai West End, a Paul Harris fellow and a major donor. Ashish talked about the power of compounding and its effect on India's economic growth. Growing at 9% per annum, India's nominal GDP has grown 8x from USD 0.4Tn in 1996 to USD 3.2Tn in 2021, while the world economy has grown only at 5% p.a. in this period, i.e. 3x. He predicted that from now on, India will add the next trillion dollar in successively fewer years than the past, and become a USD 8Tn economy by FY32. Growth in per capita GDP will lead to an exponential opportunity in discretionary categories which is good news for investors. He was positive about the recent actions of the government and optimistic about India's demographic dividend with 40% of our population being below 20 years of age. With a caveat that future predictions are difficult to make, he was optimistic of Nifty reaching 600,000 in the next 33 years. His advice to investors was to have the vision to see, courage to buy and the patience to hold. The session was followed by a lively Q&A where members got some more insights into the opportunities and the investment philosophy which was shared by Ashish in his presentation.

Manoj Kumar













# ...and they lived happily thereafter!!

by popular request we are creating a theatre of the newlyweds then, and happily ensconced now with each other



In October seven of our members swore the solemn vows for better or for worse and to be together for the next seven rebirths, and one couple of them as you can see, is unable to trace the evidence of their nuptials -the wedding day photos!! Apparently, Ashok has tucked them away safely in his London home!! Two new members have joined the list of the October weds - Vandana and Neeraj Bhalla and Anuradha and Sanjay Kumar but till going to press they have not responded to our request to send their photos for printing the pictorial story of the wedding night and another of recent origin. The Ashoka wishes all the couples a long and happy life, and a large progeny of grand and great grandchildren!! God bless them.



## ARMY TITBITS

### **Wg Cdr Raju Srinivasan, VM(G)**

It was sometime in the winters of 1982-83. There was a severe Western Disturbance (WD) over Ladakh - heavy snowfall with fog and poor visibility - we called it 'dhakkan' over Leh / Ladakh. No flying, no mail couriers, no nothing. The only entertainment was 'Mind Your Language' on a video in the Offr Mess (there was no TV broadcast in Leh then)!

The WD bad weather lasted almost 13 days.

On the 14th day was bright sunshine. We were tasked to take the GOC 3 Inf Div to Darbuk, which housed the Bde HQ.

We landed in Darbuk with the GOC and his SO. They proceeded to the Bde HQ for their briefing. The GOC asked us if we could return after lunch. There was not a speck of cloud in the sky - we told him that there was no problem going back after lunch.

The helipad party looked after us - there was a young Maj with us.

After the GOC party cavalcade faded away towards Tangste, a young jawan approached us. He hovered around us but did not utter a word - probably mustering the courage to speak to us. After we finished our tea and the oily pakodas, he finally spoke to us. The conversation was (translated from Hindi):

**Jawan:** Saab, I want a lift to Leh.

**Major** (before we could react): Arre, how can you ask for a lift? Don't you know the GOC is travelling back to Leh?

The Jawan was disappointed. I consoled him saying the road would be cleared of snow in two or three days. He can go then.

After a pause, Jawan (almost pleading): Saab, I have to go today.

**Me:** Why? (we expected a standard answer - illness at home, wife pregnant etc etc)

**Jawan:** \_Saab, it is my marriage. Parsu\_.

I was taken aback. A unique request!

The Jawan further said, "Saab, you got the bunch of my invitation cards when you delivered the mail, two weeks back. The next day, Mausam kharab ho gaya Saab".

We could only sympathise with him! His marriage was somewhere near Jaipur (Tonk, I think).

At 1430h the GOC and the SO arrived. There was chai for them in the helipad. The GOC enquired about our lunch. He was in a good mood.

His main blurted me to say "Sir, that Jawan (pointing out to him in the corner of the helipad) wants a lift to Leh".

The GOC was surprised at my request. He said, "As long as you take me and my SO back to Leh, you can take anyone else". I then told him about this unique request from him!

I summoned the Jawan and told him no baggage - he had a bulky holdall. (I remember telling him that either he OR his holdall).

The GOC boarded in the Cheetah, the SO in the centre (with their coat-parka, there was very little space for a third). Anyway, it was a tight fit and we took off.

It was around 1530 h when we could establish RT contact with Leh. We heard an An-12 starting up.

I asked the An-12 if they would wait 15 min to take a 'VIP'. The Capt (Wg Cdr Ambady) answered "Make it fast, Boy".

There was a small hitch - we landed in the helicopter det dispersal - the An-12 was started up on the other end of the 10,000 ft runway!!

During the switch-off, I told the GOC about the last An-12 ready to depart. He asked his SO to give his Stand-by Jonga for the Jawan.

Ten minutes later, the An-12 flew off and the ATCO confirmed to us that the Capt said the VIP was on board!

I presume the Jawan must have landed in Chandigarh by 6 pm, took an overnight bus to Jaipur and reached home 24 hrs, before his wedding!!

Marriages are made in Heaven - but, it needs a General to make one on earth!!

(The GOC was Maj Gen SF Rodrigues, later the Army Chief and Governor of Punjab)

The Titbit is courtesy **Brig Biren ChibberW**



# SNIPPETS HISTORICAL AND INTERESTING...

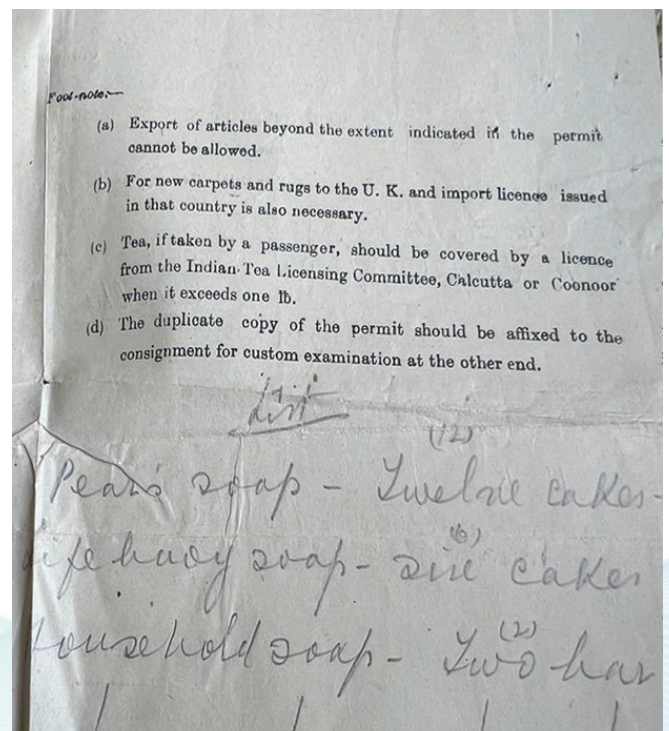
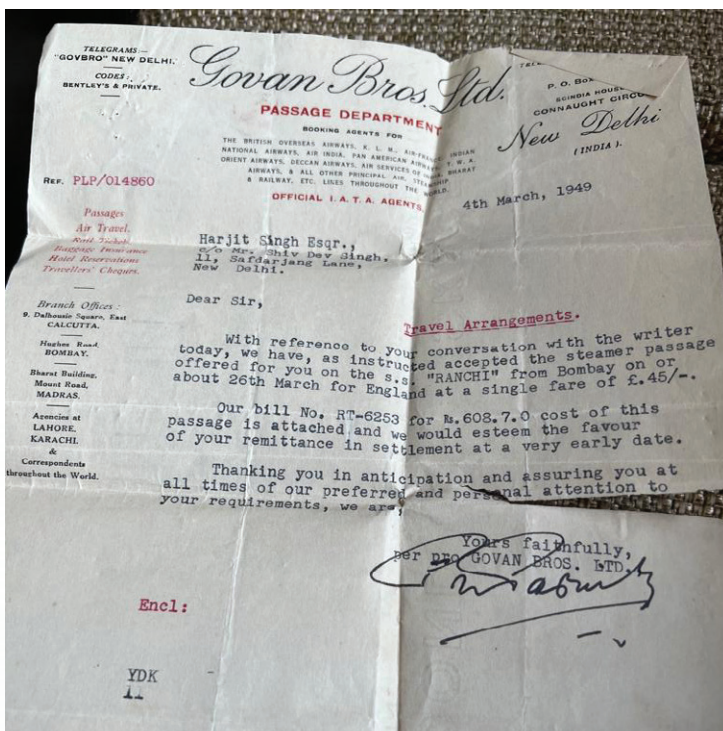
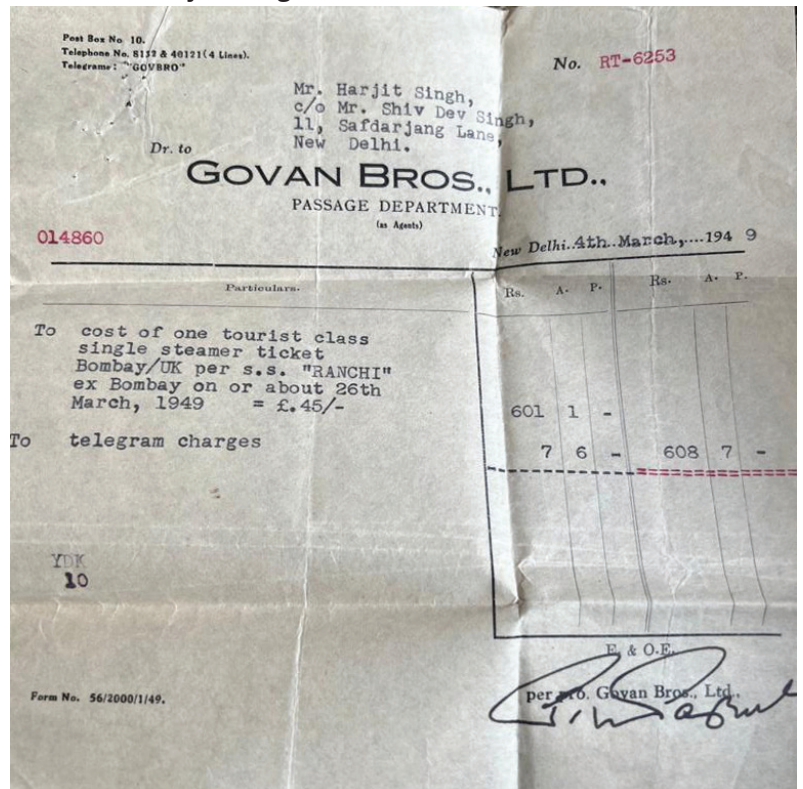
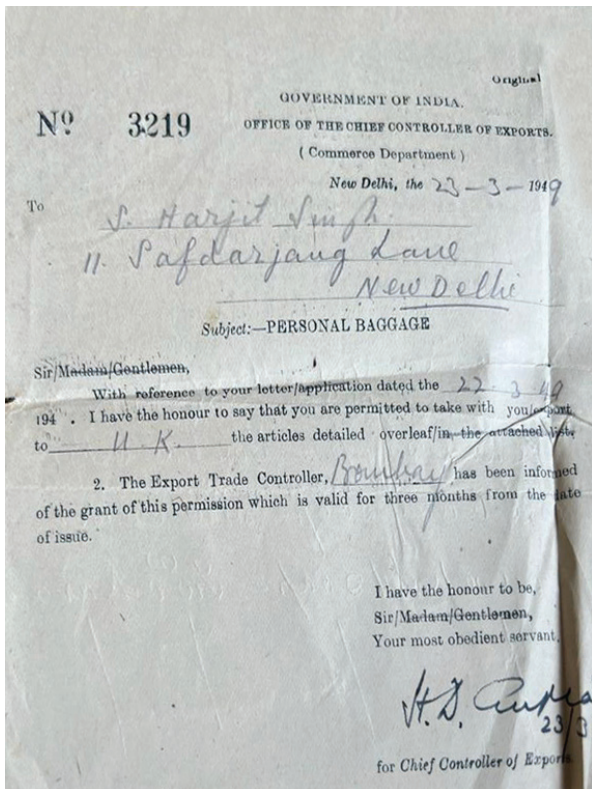
Shuffling through old family personal papers, I discovered some interesting memorabilia. My older brother by all of 14 years, was travelling to the UK in 1949 for studies. Invoice of Govan Brothers Ltd for travel by Tourist Class, Bombay/UK is priced at ₹601/- (£45/). It's a 17/18 days journey with 4 stops and catering to 4 meals a day!! Unbelievable!!

Red tape presided over the lives of the citizenry even then, as you can see from the requirements of official permission to carry 12 cakes of Pear Soap, 6 of Lifebuoy and 2 bars of household soap. Only one pound of tea was permitted and for more than that it needed to be covered by licensing from the Indian Tea Licensing Committee, Calcutta or Coonoor. The polite tenor of the letter, from the office of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports however, leaves

one in disbelief. It ends with, "I have the honour to be, Sir/ Madam/ Gentlemen, Your most Obedient Servant," for Chief Controller. It was a short lived pleasure. The tenor of the official missives had started to turn toxic, crude and arrogant within a few years of independence, as the Babus had started to assume unto themselves a power and attitude, which was never intended as such.

I can't help sharing a business letter from the travel agents as an example of courtesy almost bordering on servility, which defined the relationships between business and the customer. Alas, it's history and if ever there's a tombstone in its memory, it would probably read: "They lived by a credo of politeness and refinement". It was a genteel world.

Inderjeet Singh





## SNIPPETS HISTORICAL AND INTERESTING...

### Wimbledon's beginning



1883. THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MATCH AT WIMBLEDON  
*W. & E. Renshaw (England) v. C. M. & J. S. Clark (U.S.A.)*

The first international match at Wimbledon in 1883. It's gotten a little bigger since then.



This 360 BC Greek vase of Aphrodite threatening her son Eros with her sandal shows us that the use of slippers as a pedagogical and coercive instrument turned out to be the same throughout different civilizations and historical eras



# RCDS - SANKALP LITERACY CENTRES

OCTOBER 2023



The aim of RCDS Sankalp Centres is to develop in children age and grade appropriate competencies by giving them a wide exposure to diverse activities, both curricular and co curricular. Some of the key features of the literacy centres are learning support program, comprehensive assessment, computer literacy, English speaking program, training and capacity building, regular monitoring and strengthening community linkages. Sankalp believes in equality in education to ensure that no child is left behind. Slums are visited on a regular basis and interaction is done with community people to make them aware of their child's rights, etc.

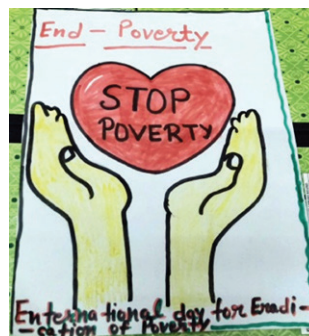
RCDS Sankalp plans to open doors of learning to more underprivileged children by taking up more child centric initiatives. RCDS Sankalp Centres are innovative in learning aiming to improve the quality of education.

The Centres provide education to children in the slums of South Delhi, RCDS- Sankalp has grown in both scope and scale, with programs today reaching children and youth across 4 locations. More than 430 children are currently enrolled across all RCDS Sankalp Centres.

Every month in the Centres special days are celebrated to expose children to specific themes. Children take part in regular major events and festival which bring changes not only in the level of knowledge they gain but also in the abilities to think and acquire habits, skills and attitude. Students are encouraged to embrace other traditions culture just like the way they do their own.

The following special events were undertaken the Centres in October 2023:

- Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd
- World Mental Health Day on 10th
- International Day of Girl Child on 11th
- Global handwashing Day on 15th
- Poverty Eradication Day on 17th



## NOVEMBER

Chopra, Dr HK	02-Nov
Agarwal, Naman	09-Nov
Anand, Ravindra S.	10-Nov
Gour, Vivek Narayan	10-Nov
Agarwala, Bimala	12-Nov
Gujral, Rajiv	13-Nov
Shashinath, Bhuvana	13-Nov
Agarwal, Mini	15-Nov
Singh, Gurinder	24-Nov
Dhawan, Sheetal	25-Nov
Sadana, Rohit	27-Nov
Wadhwa, Deepa	28-Nov



HAPPY Anniversary

Shashinath, TS	Bhuvana	01-Nov
Gulati, Dr Parveen	Anita	03-Nov
Singh, Inderjeet	Davinder	08-Nov
Taneja, Devendra	Dr. Punita	17-Nov
Poddar, Vinod	Rekha	21-Nov
Agarwal, Pravin K	Ashima	22-Nov
Basu, Tridibes	Sanghamitra	22-Nov
Bajaj, Rajeev	Sonia	23-Nov