

BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY

From the President's Desk



Even the rain gods couldn't dampen the spirit of Rotarians who gathered at the Darbar hall of the Asiatic Society last week. It was a

proud moment for our Rotarians at the inauguration of the conservation lab.

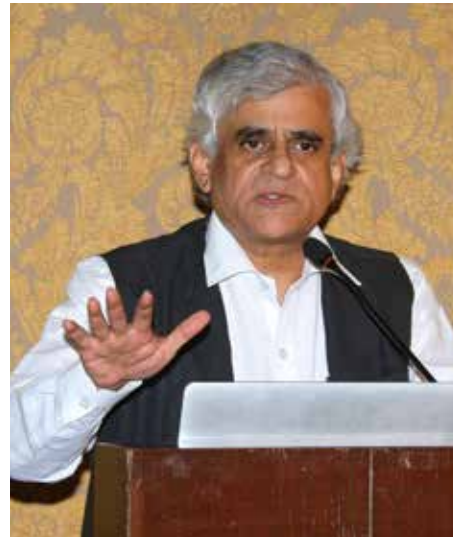
The Darbar hall in all its grandeur was an apt venue for the excellent talk by Magsaysay Awardee, Mr. P. Sainath. The diversity of rural India in terms of regions, languages, and skills was an eye opener. The amazing work that he has done by recording different languages and people of rural India is really commendable. As also hearing him reinforce our thought that as a society we ought to work towards keeping our cultural heritage alive.

Well done Ritu, Huzaifa, Anar, Mudit and all the generous hosts and members of the Fellowship committee for a fabulous Bohri Night!

Handwritten signature

Rural India - The Untold Truth

"I'm going to have to cover a continent in a very brief period of time because that is what rural India is about! It is a continent within a sub-continent, and without exception, the most complex aspect of planet earth" began Mr. P. Sainath, former rural affairs editor of The Hindu, and winner of the Raymon Magsaysay Award for his passionate commitment as a journalist to restore the rural poor to India's consciousness, moving the nation to action.



P. Sainath, World-Renowned Journalist and Magsaysay Award Winner

"When I talk about rural India, I'm talking about the 833 million human beings speaking 780 languages - six of which are spoken by over 50 million, three of which are spoken by over 80 million, and one of which is spoken by more than 500 million people! And

at the other end of the spectrum, are a large number of languages spoken by a million or less. The Jeru language of Andaman, for instance, is down to its last speaker, while the Saimarese of Tripura, is left to only seven people (although there are about 300 tribals), the younger generation has completely lost the language."

"Of these 780 languages, less than 4%, i.e., 32 languages, go beyond the 5th standard, and most of them end at the 8th standard. Thus, apart from the 780, you have 225 languages that died in the last 50 years. This is because, languages only live if they are spoken at home and are taught in schools. So we have an incredible amount of wealth, the most complex linguistic cultures on the planet, but it is dying very fast," he exclaimed.

Today's Meeting Dr. Ashish Contractor - The Increasing Incidence of Heart Disease
Guest of Honour - PRID Dr. Philip Silvers
Chair, Cadre of Technical Advisors 2014-17

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Forthcoming Events

- Oct 04, 2016 Mr. Shailesh Gandhi, Activist - Future of RTI
- Oct 11, 2016 Dussera - No Weekly Meeting
- Oct 18, 2016 Mr. Sudheendra Kulkarni, Politician, Columnist & Head of Observer Research Foundation - 'Good Governance Reforms - Need of the hour'
- Joint meeting with RC of Mumbai Central
- Oct 25, 2016 Diwali Night Party - M. V. M. Banquet: 6:00 p.m. onwards
- No afternoon meeting

"Every year, I take a 280km drive from Kalahandi to Koraput in Odisha, a place in Malkangiri called Balimela or Chitrakund. It takes us, my journalist friends and I, a week to do it because we stop every half hour at every village market and talk to people. So why does it take us so long to travel a 280km route? On that road are spoken 40 distinct languages! They are neither Indo-Tibetan, nor Indo-European. We don't know what they are, but there are 40 unique languages spoken by about 30-70 thousand people. And this astonishing picture of linguistic diversity has no parallel to it anywhere on this planet."

Mr. P Sainath then asked if any one had a count of the number of schools for weaving there were in the country? Or the number of schools for pottery? However, what we do know is that weavers are even worse off than farmers, due to the large number of suicides amongst them.

"Today, the great Kanjeevaram saree is given heavy competition by the Chinese-made ones. The Indian Kanjeevaram sarees, which are made by hand, costs you anywhere between 10-25 thousand rupees. But the Chinese ones are made on powerlooms and sold for as low as three thousand! This is made possible as they have taken a community of about 80 weavers and settled them in Guangzhou and actually treated them like human beings. And using those designs, they are giving the Indian Kanjeevaram sarees a run for their money."

Elaborating further, he talked about the most unbelievable occupational diversity that exists in the country. "There are some professions, which have ceased to exist in the rest of the

world, but have survived in South East Asia - with a bulk of them being in India. Take for example the Toddy-tapper. He is the guy who climbs date palm trees to tap toddy, which can either be converted to toddy or into palm jaggery (gud)."

"Do you know how much work a toddy tapper does? In season, an average toddy tapper in Tamil Nadu, services 50 trees, three times a day. Three times because in the morning, when the sap is running, he makes an incision, ties a pot there onto the tree at 30 feet from the ground and comes down - all this while using only his legs for support. He's got no ladder or no risk insurance, one drop and he could be dead. In three hours, the pot fills up, so he goes back with the second pot holding on the tree only with his legs, he removes one pot and puts the other. He does this three times a day, therefore on each tree he makes 6 trips up and down. If you were to calculate fifty trees into six trips, wherein let's say, the average height of the tree is 20 feet (though it is much higher), in a single day, the Indian toddy tapper climbs more feet almost twice the height of the Empire State Building!"

"Then you have the Khalasis of Malabar, an entirely Muslim community which has been into hydraulics long before the time of Christ. This was essentially the West Asian trade route on which St. Thomas is said to have come to Kodungalloor in Kerala. So what do the Khalasis do? In the ancient times, one of the biggest concerns was to launch ships, which were built on dry land, without damaging them, as they were made of wood. The Phoenicians did that in Europe, but now only the Khalasis do it. They are still launching Barges and Dhows

in Bahrain, Dubai and in Saudi Arabia with over 2000 years of technical expertise in hydraulics", he confirms.

"In 2000, Kerala was hit by a cyclone which blew the train off a bridge in the middle of the river. The army was called to retrieve the train but they couldn't, as the cranes couldn't get close enough, and building pontoon bridges would be impossible due to the cost, so it was decided that the train would rest at the bottom of the river. The Kerala Government then officially contracted the Khalasis, who brought the train to shore in 100 hours! With the river being in spate, they created underground canals, channels, fake embankments and used the water current to push the train to the shore from where the army cranes picked it up and took it out."

"However, apart from the brilliance and beauty of Rural India, there is also a substantial degree of Barbarism, atrocities of caste, or of oppression on women. The fact is that an incredible transition is taking place wherein the beautiful and the exotic are dying, and the barbaric and the negative are being strengthened like the Khaps of Haryana. Thirty years ago when I started, the Khaps of Haryana feared the law and order missionary. Today the policemen are Khap members; the police chief is a Khap member. What do you do?"

"And more importantly, all of this is completely missed by our media because they are revenue driven and will not cover anything that doesn't bring them money - and I say this as someone who was only in mainstream media for 36 years. Do you know that as per the Center for Media Studies in Delhi run by N. Bhaskara Rao, forget rural India, we don't even cover Urban



Inauguration of the Asiatic Society Conservation Lab



Left: The new Conservation Lab was inaugurated by members of the Urban Heritage Renewal Committee along with Mr. S. G. Kale, President of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai

The restoration of Asiatic Society's Conservation Lab was spearheaded by RCB's Urban Heritage Renewal Committee under the leadership of PP Dr. Sonya Mehta, with a view to restore, digitize and preserve the literary treasures that resided in the Town Hall of Mumbai.

Despite its competent team of conservationists, the Society was unable to meet its expected number of book restorations

in a year due to constraints in infrastructure. In order to overcome this, an MOU was signed last year whereby the capacity of the Conservation Lab was doubled with greater floor space, increase in the number of drying platforms and shelves, and equipment to control temperature and humidity.

That's not all! Rotarians have also pledged to restore the first 100 books setting a perfect example to the ideal of service.



India! The front page of an average Indian newspaper is 66% about New Delhi, Mumbai comes 2nd amongst other metros because of Bollywood and Stock Market. And by the time you come to Tier 2 metros and Tier 3 metros, it's gone", he retorted.

"So what is it that we do cover? During my mapping I realized that India breaks up into 95 regions, by which I mean natural physical regions, or a historically evolved region or both. The data show us that no newspaper or channels in this country covers more than 8 to 10 regions in any significant manner! That is why we have generation after generation emerging from schools and colleges, or without education that know

nothing about their country!"

"Rural India is in a period of great struggle, discontent, collapse and a huge battle. This has seen the largest movement of human beings (even greater than the partition) in the last 10 years. The level of migration in India, outstrips the movement captured in the 1961 census."

"Therefore, my friends and I, after having worked 35 years in mainstream journalism, started the Peoples Archive of Rural India (PARI). It is for me, an Archive of the past, a journal of the present and a textbook of the past, present and future. It is constantly updated. It is volunteer driven organization. We don't have a single full-time employee,

as we cannot afford it, but we have 1700 volunteers, including some of the finest journalists in the country."

Every piece for us is multi media production - we have videos embedded in the text articles with slideshows of the images shot. We have an online library entirely dedicated to rural India which can be referred by young researchers and college students as even libraries don't have this material.

"Remember, if we understand these various skills in a richer and a more civilized sense, we will have the most skilled society on earth. If not, we will end up demolishing those skills, letting them lapse, and ensuring they die!"

DG Recognizes RCB's Contribution

24 September 2016

Dear Pratham President Dr. Mukesh Batra,

Rotary Club of Bombay, the first club to be chartered in the city of Bombay, has over the years justifiably earned a premier status in the District with its dedicated community service, guided by Rotary's motto of 'Service Above Self'.

I am really impressed to see that in the first 3 months of this Rotary year itself, the Club under your enthusiastic and dynamic leadership, is soaring higher and higher, as is evident from, among others, the following major activities; and I am sure it will be flying smoothly at a much higher 'altitude'.

- 1) Active participation in all important District events.
- 2) Large scale participation in TAARE ZAMEEN PAR, the first TRF Centennial Event.
- 3) Commitment for 100 Pediatric Heart Surgeries - a District Thrust Area
- 4) Deft planing of Camps for Diabetes Awareness & Prevention - another District Thrust Area
- 4) Inauguration of New Conservation Laboratory at the historic icon 'The Asiatic Library', widely covered by the media.
- 5) Galaxy of renowned personalities as Speakers at the weekly meetings.
- 6) Confirming Mr. Ajay Piramal, as the first Arch Klumph Society Member this year.
- 7) Setting up challenging goals for TRF in the TRF Centennial Year.

I am very confident that with your dedication and sincerity; we all, working in close unison, will succeed in our efforts to make the Pratham crucial and historic year of newly constituted RID 3141 an Outstanding year - scaling great heights and laying a strong foundation for the future.

Please accept, and convey to all your Club members, our appreciation for the great exemplary work being done by you.

With Seema and my best wishes,

Gopal Mandhania
District Governor 2016-17
RI Dist 3141

Spreading Cheer Amongst Young Cancer Patients



Rotaryanne Sushmita Mitra with the cancer-affected children



The Cancer Aid committee in association with Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA), recently organized a fun-filled party on September 17, at the Radio Club for the 20 underprivileged children battling with cancer. Clown Show, Stage performance by Acrobats, Peppy music played by the DJ were few of the many activities planned and executed by Rotaryanne Susmita Mitra (Director - Special Projects, Cancer Patients Aid Association) to amuse and entertain the children. Around, 60 people including children attended this party and spread unending cheers.

Over 5000 Members in D3141!

As on 20th September 2016, the total membership in our District 3141 crossed the astounding 5000 members mark W(5002 to be precise). In a matter of almost 80 days, starting from 1st July, a record 261 new members were inducted along with the addition of two new Clubs to our District.

On this momentous occasion, Membership Avenue Chair of D3141, Rtn Mayank D. Desai thanked all Pratham Presidents, Membership Directors, and all the proposers for adding new members. Also, in order celebrate and welcome the 261 new members, a grand infotainment has been organized on Sunday, 23rd October 2016.

Pediatric Heart Surgery Update

The Pediatric Heart Surgery Project has been forging ahead in full steam. So far, we have been able to successfully save the lives of these innocent children (and a few others as we went into print).

If you'd like to know more or donate, log on to www.rotaryclubofbombay.org, contact the Rotary Office.



Patient:
Vedika Manole
Age: 2 years
Donor:
Rtn Jayesh
Jhaveri



Patient:
Janvi Jadhav
Age: 3 years
Donor: Rtn
Madhusudan
Daga



Patient:
Arbaz Qureshi
Age: 13 years
Donor:
Rtn Nirav Shah



Patient:
Yuvraj Gadekar
Age: 5 years
Donor:
Rtn Dr. Akshay
Batra



Patient:
Tanvi Lokhande
Age: 1 year
Donor:
Rtn Mahesh
Khubchandani



Patient:
Tamana Mujawar
Age: 4 months
Donor: Rtn
Vikram Daiya



Patient:
Aradhya Kumbhar
Age: 8 months
Donor:
Rtn Gaurav
Nevatia



Patient:
Samart Chintamani
Age: 3 years
Donor:
Rtn Nanu
Daruvalla

Guest of Honor



PRID Philip J. Silvers
RI Director 2008-2010
Chair, Cadre of Technical Advisors 2014-17

Having acquired a Doctorate in Higher Education/Public Administration and an M.A. in History, Philip J. Silvers brings with him a rich experience of survey research, program evaluation, and project direction. During his tenure as an Adjunct Professor of Research Methods in Social Work at Arizona State University, he designed and implemented a comprehensive evaluation program for Health-Related Professions Training, and thereafter, played an important role as Project Evaluator for U.S. Veterans Administration Medical Center, Project Director for US Indian Health Service, and as Strategic Planning Facilitator for various institutes and colleges.

In 2008, he was deputed as a Board Liaison and member of Rotary Reach Out to Africa Committee. With extensive research, in 2011, he wrote the Environmental Scan for Rotary's Strategic Plan for Africa. Philip has also been a VTT Leader and Co-Leader for great work in Health and Human Services, Uganda, as well as on monitoring and evaluation of large projects for RI. We are honored to have him survey our Diabetes project and guide us with the way forward in monitoring it.

Asiatic Society Inauguration Coverage

HINDUSTAN TIMES - Mumbai Edition (21st September)

CONSERVATION LAB
History is remade again at Asiatic library

Chemical processes like de-acidification to conserve books were introduced 25 years ago, when the first conservation lab was set up here.

ANURAG GEORGE
anurag@thehindu.co.in

MUMBAI: It's like a super-specialty clinic of the art world — for books.

The iconic Asiatic library now has a swanky, air-conditioned wing dedicated to conserving antique tomes, records and manuscripts — which is good thing, given that the beautiful Green-Roman structure is home to about 10,000 precious books, none of them over 100 years old.

The new conservation lab will be library's second. "A pre-existing facility was able to restore about 1,000 books a year. With the additional wing, we have doubled that capacity," says John Datta, a member of the Rotary Club of Bombay's Urban Heritage Renewal Committee, which sponsored the Rs 25-lakh project and inaugurated the new lab on Tuesday.

The infrastructure has been upgraded too, with air-conditioned, temperature-controlled and humidity-controlled chambers to fix so that the books can be worked on in complete safety.

The lab has been four months in the making, says Janshad Bhatgi, the chief architect for the project, and is part of an ongoing process to modernise the library.

"Chemical processes like de-acidification to conserve books were introduced 25 years ago, when the first conservation lab was set up here," adds chief conservator Sachin Bhatgi. The 1999 basement was renovated to create a special cool basement room which is essential to the repair of rare books — including our most famous artefact: an original manuscript, in Italian, of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, dating back to 1508-AD.

INDIAN EXPRESS - Mumbai Edition (21st September)

Book restoration lab of Asiatic Society expanded

NATASHA TRIVEDI
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TWO NEW laboratories for the restoration, conservation and repair of antique manuscripts and books, one of them a state-of-the-art conservation lab, were inaugurated at the Asiatic Society library on Tuesday.

The library holds a fair number of original manuscripts and books, some of them as old as 100 years.

At least all the books of the library have been restored by the previous owners of the library, but the process has been slow, limited by the lack of adequate facilities. Now that these labs have been added, last year's Chief Conservation Officer, it will undertake restoration of the backlog work.

"The library is a treasure trove at all times to the health of the books, because of the level of humidity in the air," said Bhatgi.

The new laboratories were inaugurated by the Asiatic Society's Special Custodian and are placed in a special basement that is constantly air-conditioned and dark.

The new laboratories were built with the aim of a better conservation of the library's collection.

Water Resources Committee Visits Nagpur

On September 18th and 19, four Rotarians - Ravi Fotedar, PP Sandip Agarwalla, Mahesh Khubchandani and Rohan Dalal - of our Club's Water Resources Committee accompanied by Dr. Ajit Gokhale (an expert in agriculture, water management and environment), toured villages in the Yavatmal and Chandrapur districts to survey projects undertaken by the Rotary Club of Nagpur.

Rotary Club of Bombay has partnered with RC of Nagpur for two of their global grant projects on Watershed Management in Ralegaon and providing clean drinking water to a cluster of eight villages situated in the buffer zone of the Tadoba Tiger Reserve.

Our visit, facilitated by Rtn. Alok Goenka, President, Rotary Club of Nagpur and his able, dedicated team, was very informative and provided a first-hand perspective of the challenges faced by villagers and farmers in these

drought-affected areas. Some of these areas also hold the dubious distinction of having recorded the highest incidence of farmer suicides in India.

Upon surveying these projects, the Committee proposes to undertake two projects:

1. Expansion of Watershed Management in Yavatmal district
2. Creating a model village in the Tadoba region of Chandrapur district

Discussions have been initiated with Rotary Club of Nagpur, their network of NGOs on the ground, corporate partnerships and experts like Dr. Gokhale, to determine the feasibility and scope of these projects. By leveraging these local partners and the Rotary International infrastructure through The Rotary Foundation, Rotary Club of Bombay hopes to make a sustainable difference to the rural communities that are deprived of basic necessities and need our service the most.



TRACT Volunteers, Hon. Secretary Rtn Manish Bhati of RC Nagpur, PP Rtn Sandip Agarwalla, Water Resources Committee Chair Rtn Rohan Dalal, Director Rtn Ravindra Fotedar, Rtn Mahesh Khubchandani. From RC Nagpur: Rotaryanne Poonam Dhanwatey, Rtn Harsh Dhanwatey and President Rtn Alok Goenka



President Rtn Alok Goenka - RC Nagpur; Rtn Mahesh Khubchandani, Rtn Parag Paranjpe - RC Nagpur and PP Rtn Sandip Agarwalla at the Yavatmal Watershed Project site



A Volunteer of NGO Dilaasa talking to a farmer from Shrirampur Village in Yavatmal



Rotarians of RCB and RC of Nagpur enjoying a typical Pitla Bhakri meal en-route Yavatmal

Bohri Thaal Night - Fellowship Dinner



Held at the quaint Woodhouse Gymkhana, on the 23rd September, the Bohri Thaal Night provided a unique opportunity to celebrate the diversity of tradition and cuisine through an authentic dining experience.

With ten generous sponsors (Aliakbar Merchant, Huzaifah Bagasrawala, Ishraq Contractor, Sabira Merchant, Shariq Contractor, Sherebanu Baldiwala, Sohel Shikari, Suhail Nathani, Farhat Jamal and Aziz Javeri), the unusual aspect was that the food was served in thaals and guests sat around a thaal and shared some delicious Bohri specialties. Although predominantly meat-based, but Vegetarians were not left behind. They too sat at separate thaals and

were served some exclusive vegetarian delicacies.

The evening started with the Fellowship over wine and beer, and then proceeded to dinner and desserts thereafter. From the voice decibels, it was evident that everybody was having a gala time. All foodie Rotarians (a total of 84) were in attendance. And even though it was a night of very heavy rains in Mumbai, there was nothing that could deter the spirits of this wonderful Fellowship.

The Fellowship Committee took great care and worked hard to make sure the evening went off as planned and turned into a perfect night of revelry.

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NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

Mr. Shailesh Gandhi, RTI Activist

An alumnus of IIT Bombay, Mr. Shailesh Gandhi set up and ran a successful plastics packaging business for over 20 years, winding it up in 2003 to dive headlong into 'something socially relevant'. His first Right To Information (RTI) application revealed the extent to which cops were transferred on 'request' in violation of a Maharashtra Act expressly prohibiting this, and shook the state government and police force. Inspired by the potential of Maharashtra's RTI Act, he joined the campaign for a national law.



relating to new legislation must be made public within seven days of the Bill being tabled in Parliament.

One of his biggest concerns as the Commissioner - CIC, were the high rates of pendency that dog the central and state information commissions.

"If this pendency keeps rising, we're going to reach a point where it takes three to five years to hear a case, and citizens' attitude to the RTI will become similar to what it is to the judiciary: hopeless," says Gandhi. This is one of the issues he is currently working on.

In September 2008, Shailesh was appointed to the Central Information Commission. Since the appointment, he has heard over 20,000 cases and passed important orders including on the release of the Gadgil committee's report on environmental damage to the Western Ghats. In his last week at the office, he ruled that cabinet notes

He also feels lucky to have met thousands of determined RTI users, notable among them Harish Kumar, a small-scale plastics dealer and RTI activist who was injured in the Delhi High Court blast last year. His case was the first one he heard as information commissioner and feels disappointed about it not being his last!



Birthday Greetings



Rajashree Birla
29th September



Rohit Dhoot
29th September



Venugopal Dhoot
30th September



Preeti Mehta
1st October



Suresh Kotak
2nd October



Ramesh Mehta
2nd October



Purnima Sheth
2nd October



Alok Saxena
3rd October

Rotaryanne

27th September - Anita Parikh
30th September - Madhu Ruia
3rd October - Vatsala Jatia
3rd October - Rekha Ruia

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Statistics for last week's meeting

Members	52
Rotaryannes	08
Guest	03
Rotaractors	00
Total Attendance	63
Service Box Collection	₹ 0