

the gateway

Rotary Club
of Bombay



SERVE TO
CHANGE LIVES

BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY | FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY |

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TODAY
RTN. PUNEET
CHHATWAL, MD
& CEO, IHCL,
ON TRAVEL
& TOURISM:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE
AT TAJ MAHAL
HOTEL, 1 PM

NOTE FROM PRESIDENT SHERNAZ VAKIL



LEAP OF FAITH WITH THE VAIDU COMMUNITY

I am truly excited!

After months of delay and uncertainty we have finally zeroed in on our initiative of supporting the children of the Vaidu

community. The programme CHALANG will finally become reality!

Yesterday, we had a very fruitful meeting with the Vipla foundation. Thanks, DGE Sandip Agarwalla, for introducing them to us and for supporting us.

After a baseline study, it is quite clear that the children of this community need serious help. Rtn. Ptn. Ekta Shah and her family have been working with these children (through their family trust) and keeping them engaged with all the basic education they could give. Clearly, they needed more.

Finally, Vipla has made a very comprehensive proposal, starting with an initiative for parents of children 0-3 years in the form of workshops, creating a supportive home-learning environment and working to change attitudes in early childhood education.

For the age group 3-6 years, we will start Balwadi centres at each location, running in two shifts. There will be continuous classroom observation and assessment for the children.

For primary grades, there will be remedial education, with

diagnostic tests for children and regular mentoring.

Finally, the proposed intervention for adolescence will be in separate groups for girls and boys with weekly sessions on life skills, self-esteem, career awareness, spoken English etc. There will also be access to digital literacy. In other words, the children of this community will be supported from a very early stage right up to higher education, perhaps, even with scholarship support.

To kick this off, we are proposing a summer camp for two weeks in April, giving the community a glimpse of the exceptional intervention we propose over the next three years.

This is the transformation we are looking for!

A nomadic community lost and forgotten, will find a space for themselves, out of their alcoholic and tedious lives, into a hopeful and meaningful future.

~ **President Shernaz Vakil**





On International Women's Day, I am celebrating all the men. Yes, men, who have stood in solidarity with women and created a bold and united force for equality. So, **A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE TO ALL THE MEN WHO OUTNUMBER THE WOMEN AT THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY** today, on International Women's Day.

Recently, during the screening of 'Sonrise', I was asked, 'What makes a girl born and raised in south Mumbai, studied in Boston, lived in NY, and married to a Wall Street banker, want to go into the deepest hinterlands of Haryana and spend two years across 45 villages to find a story?'

The answer is simple: I have the conviction that each one of us, anywhere around the world, has the power to be the voice of change. Nobody would have imagined that **FROM THE UNLIKELIEST PLACE IN INDIA - RURAL HARYANA - INDIA'S SEAT OF PATRIARCHY, WE WILL FIND OUR GENDER-RIGHT HEROES.** Ordinary men who have done extra-ordinary things in standing by women and breaking the shackles of patriarchy.

I would never have imagined that these men would have achieved victories of humanity not only in India but globally as examples of how to knock over patriarchy in the world over.

Today, I am going to talk about my latest film 'Sonrise' and how it started. I do not have the opportunity to choose a story, the story chose me.

I was screening my previous documentary, 'Daughters of Mother India,' which put the spotlight on rape and gender-violence. **THE FILM WAS SHOT RIGHT AFTER THE BRUTAL RAPE AND MURDER OF NIRBHAYA AND I WAS THE ONLY TEAM ALLOWED TO ENTER WITH DELHI POLICE RIGHT AFTER THE RAPE AND MURDER.**

The film won the National Film Award but more importantly we were able to cover a lot of ground by screening the film for 150,000 police officers across India to gender-sensitise the force. Because **UNLESS THE POLICE ARE SENSITISED, JUSTICE WILL NOT ONLY BE DELAYED, BUT IT WILL ALSO BE DENIED.** It was during this screening that I reached Haryana. It was here, I believe she was an activist - who came to me and said, 'Ma'am, there is a farmer who, in an arranged marriage, has married a gang-rape survivor.'

To be honest, I was happily shocked. I went in search of this farmer; she did not have a name, she did not have a village, but I had the police. And so, with their help, I was able to track him. When I found him, I asked him, 'Why did you do this?' And he looked at me and said, 'The shame is not hers, it's ours.' And this is how 'Sonrise' was born.

For the first six months when I entered Haryana, nobody spoke to me; as a woman filmmaker it was even harder. The first person I met was India's biggest khap leader, a patriarch who works outside the law but with tremendous social norm influence on

TO READ A COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF (HON) DR. VIBHA BAKSHI'S JOURNEY, CLICK [HERE](#)

the society. When he looked at me, he said, 'There is no place for woman here.'

It is the same khap leader today who is screening 'Sonrise' across 800 villages in Haryana and that is victory. **WE HAD MANY SLEEPLESS NIGHTS, SPECIALLY THE FAMILY, BECAUSE I WAS FOLLOWING THE STORY OF KUSUM, THE GANG-RAPE SURVIVOR.** The rapist had already seen me in court, and it would get very dark in Haryana and by 5 o'clock it was not only dark, but I would lose cell reception.

My husband called up the Police Commissioner and asked for protection for me; I did get the protection but there was a cop, a junior cop who looked at me and said, **'MADAM KYA PROTECTION? EK LORRY AAYEGI AUR AAPKA CAR KA ACCIDENT HO JAYEGA.'** And this is the reality on ground. But we came out untouched. When your intent and emotion are right, the universe conspires to make things happen. Not only did we come out intact but also stronger, braver and unstoppable.

The film won National Film Awards for Best Film, Best Direction, Best Editing, and we won not on the category of social issue but in Best Film category. The issue deserves the attention; I am very proud and honoured to share that, today, **'SONRISE' HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE UN TO BE PART OF THE GLOBAL HE FOR SHE MOVEMENT ACROSS 71 PRIORITY COUNTRIES.** And, when we say each one has this power, I remember sitting at a café in Dubai when a

Consul General of New Zealand in Mumbai, Ralph Hays and his wife Sonia, said, 'Why not bring Sonrise to the Dubai expo?' and I remember laughing. I said there are very glamorous events happening so let's not get a documentary to the expo. He said, 'Why not?'

SONRISE WAS SCREENED AT THE DUBAI EXPO AT THE LARGEST VENUE, THE JUBILEE STAGE, WHICH IS UNHEARD OF BECAUSE CONCERTS ARE HELD ON THAT STAGE. The film was attended by heads of 50 nations who signed a pledge. Covid has unleashed a shadow pandemic, which is an alarming upsurge in violence against women and girls globally.

So, while we flatten the curve of Covid pandemic, we also must use the same might to flatten the curve of the shadow pandemic. **THERE ARE NO FAIRY TALE ENDINGS WHEN YOU TAKE UP BURNING ISSUES; THERE ARE MORE TRIALS THAN TRIUMPHS.** But I have to say, as a filmmaker, I have choices to make. I can sensationalise the issue or sensitise my audience. I can focus on a burning country or ignite hope. I will go with hope because without hope, no movements can be won. And the movement for a safer and more equitable world is a movement that we cannot afford to lose.

So, thank you. We are in this together and remember each one of us has the power to be the voice of reason, caution, and conscience, unleash it.





TRF donors shine through

Generous donors to The Rotary Foundation were recognised at the Club meeting by President Shernaz Vakil, IPP Framroze Mehta, PP Vijay Jatia and PP Nirav Shah. The donors were Paul Harris Fellows (PHF), Multiple Paul Harris Fellows (MPHF) and Major donors (level 1-4). RCB thanks them for their generosity.

Committee News

MENSTRUAL AWARENESS FOR VAIDU TRIBALS

As a part of their community service project SURAKSHA, the Rotaract Club of GDC College and Hospital, Mumbai, and the Rotary Club of Bombay went to the Vaidu-inhabited areas of Jogeshwari and Marol. Volunteers Natasha Mehta, Mansi, Aishwarya, Saumya, Saimantika, Rashmi and Tarun worked to spread menstrual awareness amongst the Vaidu women.

Female members of the Vaidu community traditionally earned their livelihoods by collecting herbal plants to produce ayurvedic medicine. Now, they work as maids, clean sewage and sell stationery and hair accessories door-to-door.

They barely manage two hot meals for their children. Using sanitary pads is far from being a priority of any kind.

Young women of all ages were educated on:

- 1) normal menstruation
- 2) importance of maintaining menstrual hygiene
- 3) benefits of sanitary pads over cloth
- 4) how to use and discard sanitary pads

This was followed by an open conversation with the young girls to break the taboo around menstrual health. Questions were addressed and answered by the present Doctor Volunteers.

A pack of sanitary pads was given to each individual after the session. A total of 155 sanitary pad packs were distributed. 68 among the Vaidu women in Marol and 87 at the Jogeshwari camp.



ROTARIAN BIRTHDAYS



MARCH 15
Rtn. Ram
Gandhi



MARCH 15
Hon. Rtn. Uday
Kotak



MARCH 16
Rtn. Siddharth
Mehta



MARCH 17
Rtn. Satyan
Israni



MARCH 18
Rtn. Pradeep
Mafatlal



MARCH 19
Rtn. Anil
Harish

ROTARIAN PARTNER BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 15
Rtn. Ptn. Munira Jehangir

MARCH 16
Rtn. Ptn. Meenal Patodia

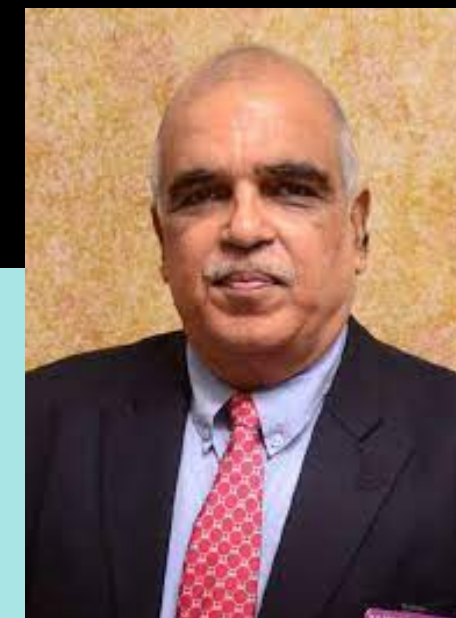
MARCH 19
Rtn. Ptn. Navaz Guzder

ANNIVERSARIES

MARCH 17
Rtn. Ptn. Hemlata & Rtn. Dr. Devendra Saksena

MARCH 19
Rtn. Ptn. Dr. Nilofer & Rtn. Murad Currawalla

MARCH 21
Rtn. Ptn. Zarine & Rtn. Darabshaw Davar



OFFICIAL
CLUB VISIT

DG
RAJENDRA
AGARWAL

MARCH
22ND, 2022
AT TAJ MAHAL
HOTEL, 1 PM

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER



DG Rajendra Agarwal will be visiting our Club along with Assistant Governor Rtn. Abbas Arsiwala and Group Co-ordinator Rtn. Yogesh Jesrani on their official visit.

A programme of their visit:

10 am to 10.45 am: They will interact with our Office Bearers and thereafter with the Directors and Chairpersons of our Club followed by interaction with the Presidents and Secretaries of Interact, Rotaract, Inner Wheel Club of Bombay and RCB Satellite Club.

At the regular meeting which starts at 1.45 pm, DG Rajendra Agarwal will address the Club on his observations after his visit to our Club.



Please join President
Shernaz Vakil
And the Board of Directors of RCB
for a special weekend.

March 26th.

The RCB Village at Pingeman, less than 3 hours from Mumbai.
See the transformation that you have been able to bring about.
26th. evening: fellowship and overnight stay.

March 27th.

Visit our flagship project at Talwada and commemorate
the late Dr. Rahim Muljani's lifetime of work.

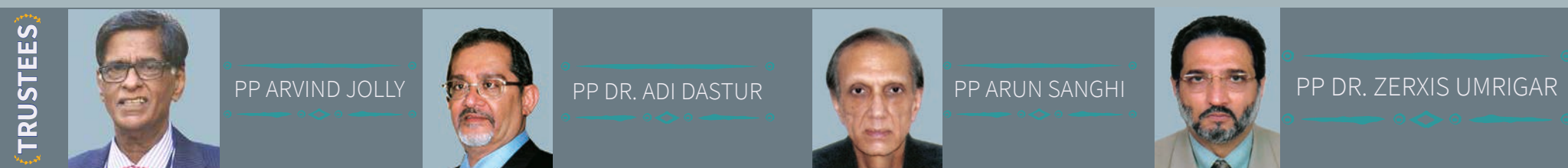
Confirm your presence with Rashmi at the Rotary office.

Mihir Mody
Chairperson
Rural Development Committee



Just be kind

ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY 2021-2022



PRESIDENT SHERNAZ VAKIL, IPP FRAMROZE MEHTA, PE VINEET BHATNAGAR, PN MANOJ PATODIA, HON. SECY. DR. AKSHAY BATRA, JT. HON. SECY. NATASHA TREASURYWALA, HON. TREASURER KIRIT KAMDAR

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