

# All is well in West Bengal

There is always something special in West Bengal. It may now be called as Poschim Bongo. It is the country's fourth most populous state. It has Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan as its neighbouring countries. The Indian States that share the border with West Bengal are Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Sikkim and Jharkhand. The city of Calcutta now renamed Kolkata, served as the capital of British India.

Bengal played a major role in the Indian independence movement and armed conflicts with the British were spearheaded by Subash Chandra Bose who led the Indian National Army. The Ganges River flows through West Bengal as the Hoogly and Bhagirathi rivers. The literacy rate is over 77 percent in this State. Over 72 percent of the population lives in rural areas. The State boasts of having stalwarts such as Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, the first Nobel Laureate from Asia and a host of other literary and political giants.

With such a good reputation, the State recently gave jitters to the polio eradication movement in India by throwing up one case in 2011. But again, as I said, the people here are known to take up challenges very seriously. The Rotary fraternity, INPPC, WHO, UNICEF and the State Government swung into action. It was as if a rapid action commando force was put in place to tackle one terrorist! But this was necessary and while taking stock in August 2011, I found that the enthusiasm and commitment of Rotarians had not diminished one bit. The district Orientation and Planning Meet on polio



*District Polio Orientation and Planning Meet, Kolkata.*

eradication held on August 21, 2011 reinforced the partner's determination to keep polio away from its porous borders. District Governor Angsuman Bandyopadhyay, RI Director Shekhar Mehta, health officials from Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Family Welfare Commissioner from the Ministry of Health, Government of West Bengal, NCM Siddhartha Bose, representatives from UNICEF, WHO, District PolioPlus Committee Chair PDG Rajkumar Rajgaria and a large gathering of Rotarians made the event memorable.

As our RI President Kalyan Banerjee also has his roots in West Bengal, it was the duty of every Rotarian to ensure that polio did not raise its head again in the State. They had to make their State and our nation proud. Rotarians of RI District 3291 did that.

It was heartening to listen to the comments from the Government officials about the support Rotary is giving them in their polio eradication efforts. Every official praised the impressive actions taken by Rotarians

in containing the virus and making sure that the entire neighbourhood was vaccinated without leaving out a single child. A seminar in which leading medical practitioners could speak and promote the value of routine immunisation is being considered by NCM Siddhartha Bose. I compliment the District Governor Angsuman Bandyopadhyay for declaring that any club that does not make polio eradication as a priority project will not be entitled for Governor's citation.

Kolkata has great cricketers and even greater football enthusiasts. I am sure that they will bowl out polio and kick out polio from West Bengal and India.



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