

# The Stage is Set

The stage has been set for a historic year for Rotary in India. We are not only going to be led by RI President Kalyan Banerjee during 2011–12, but also record the best and lowest year of polio cases ever.

As you are aware, till date only one case of polio has been reported in India. The lone case was reported from West Bengal. This is unfortunate in spite of the dedicated efforts by Rotarians, but nonetheless a reminder for us to continue our work.

Each and every one of you contributed to achieving this and each one of you share the responsibility to see it through till the end. Past District Governors, Past Rotary Club Presidents, current DGs and Presidents, the incoming leaders — District Governors and RC Presidents — must take this mission further to its end. In our fight against polio in India, all the senior Rotary leaders have guided us in every step. A polio-free India must be achieved at any cost.

The year 2011 has been a marvelous year so far and a testimony to our unwavering efforts to end polio in India. For the rest of the year this positive momentum must be kept up. Any complacency or slack can bring us back and away from our goal. The monsoon season ahead of us is going to be very challenging. Time and again we have seen that the virus springs back, to its virulent and potent form during monsoon. Low lying areas especially in the endemic belt of U.P. and Bihar are flooded during rainy seasons giving enough room for the virus to breed and spread to unhygienic areas.

The entire high-risk belt of northern India has recorded the best year ever against the virus, but the same



belt can be the biggest challenge if we let our guards down. West Bengal, adjacent to Bihar, too is a low lying area and is prone to heavy rainfall and floods during monsoon. Hence, a busy and active season lies ahead of us and we must remain prepared. The next four months could decide the fate of polio in India. So please give your best efforts to contain the virus.

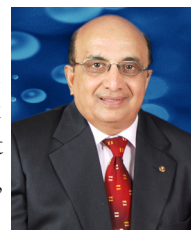
As you know, the campaign is facing huge challenge of funds. The global campaign is already deficit of US\$ 290 million for 2011 and US\$ 375 million during 2012. The funding gap that exists needs to be bridged for endemic countries like India. Every penny counts and each of your efforts to get that penny could mean the end of polio in India and the world. In this context, I must record our appreciation to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the support it has extended to The Rotary Foundation.

The Partners are intensifying their activities and efforts to brave the same and we too will. Rotary leaders in the District, Club, State and country must use their resources, expertise and

influences wherever required to brave the challenging months ahead. The time now is very crucial and key to our goal. We must make the most of it, let alone leave the monsoons to flood our hopes of a polio-free India!

It is said that it is not over, until it's all over! The developments towards eradicating polio in the country today has been tremendous and much needed but we still have ahead of us, months and years to record zero status. Please don't be complacent or give up. Remember we have come a long way and this is our chance to make it or break it.

I am certain each one of you will seize this moment and give your best to eliminate Polio, forever.



*Rtn. Ashok Mahajan  
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