

Issue No. 1526

Date: 1 Ashwin 2080 / 18 September 2023

Today's Programme: Regular Weekly Meeting

Forthcoming Programme: 25 Sept - Celebration of 'World Heart Day-29 Sept.' with the 'NCD' Alliance at Alice Conference, Lalitpur

Congratulatory Events

Birthdays: Nil

Wedding Anniversaries: Nil

Minutes of Meeting No. 1871

Date: 25 Bhadra 2080 / 11 September 2023

1. President Rtn. Mahendra S. Rawal called the RCP's Meeting No.1871 to order with 15 seconds of 'Silent Invocation' for world peace, health, and happiness.
2. The last meeting minutes were reviewed and adopted.
3. Guests welcomed by the President: Guest Speaker Mr. Hikmat S. Ayer; Rtn. Bishnu B. Karki, RC Baneshwor; Ms. Sushmita Rawat, Civil Aviation; & Rtn. Lila Upadhyaya, RC Kopundole.
4. 'Happy News' Contribution Pledges:
 - Rtn. Mukti N. & Praveena Shrestha – for 'Happy Wedding Anniversary' (NRs. 500).
 - Rtns. Chandralekha Kayastha (NRs. 500) and Matsyendra L. Kayastha (NRs. 1,000) – for the start of construction contract of Himalayan Bank, New Road, with their architectural design.
 - Rtn. Krishna Hachhethu – for the successful pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash/Mansarovar (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Som Paneru – for earlier ha.ba. of 'Happy Birthday' (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Khadak S. Bisht – for monitoring the last month's tree plantation with excellent findings (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Ganga R. Gautam – for the completion of menstruation hygiene training manual (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Prakash R. Regmi – for today's guests and good participation of members (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Bishnu P. Sigdel – for being happy (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Nirmal K. Pradhanang – for the completion and closure of the GG Grant Project for Mirge (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Siba B. Rajbhandary – for Rtn. Pushkar M. Shakya's son's move from ICU to cabin, and the participation of Rtn. Bishnu B. Karki today (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Ganesh R. Shrestha – for the participation of Rtn. Bishnu B. Karki today, and for the completion of the RCP's annual PEEF distribution/selection in schools. (NRs. 500).
 - Rtn. Mahendra S. Rawal – for the participation of today's guest speaker and other guests (NRs. 500).
5. Other Contributions:
 - Rtn. Bijaya Mallapaty presented 3 cheques as follows:
 - Contribution of NRs. 132,000 to the RCP's PEEF Trust Fund pledged earlier by his son Ajaya and daughter-in-law Dr. Anu Mallapaty.
 - Contribution of NRs. 130,000 to the RCP's PEEF Programme Fund from the receipt of refunds from a closed project where Rtn. Lochan Gyawali was the Primary Contact.
 - His annual contribution of NRs. 7,000 to KEEA as pledged earlier.
 - Rtn. Khadak S. Bisht informed of his additional contribution of NRs. 2,000 (he had earlier contributed NRs. 10,000) to the tree plantation programme held in collaboration with RC Himalaya and the local government in Bungamati.
6. Rotary Information:
 - Rtn. Ganesh R. Shrestha briefed on the completion of this year's PEEF scholarship support distribution and selection to 403 students with a total amount of NRs. 1,682,000. He also mentioned about additional merit rewards to students getting 90% or more marks that need to be presented to the PEEF committee.
 - Rtn. Prakash R. Regmi briefed on the RHD project training going very well for the 2nd week, and the plans for the celebration of 'World Heart Day 29 September' by the RCP on Monday, 25 September 2023.
 - Rtn. Lila R. Upadhyaya from RC Kopundole briefed on this year's plans for the Rota Quiz and requested the RCP to nominate participants to join starting from the zonal round for region 3 being hosted by RC Kopundole. Detailed guidelines for the Rota Quiz have been shared separately.
 - Rtn. Shiva K. Pradhan informed about his participation in the District's orientation seminar for new members.
 - Rtn. Ganga R. Gautam briefed on the completion of the menstrual hygiene training manual written and compiled

by Hannah Schwarz from Cornell University in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Patan. He presented a copy of the manual to the President of the RCP. The RCP has been working in the area of girl's empowerment in schools focussing on the preparation of the menstrual training manual, conducting training, establishing student quality circle (SQC) and leadership skills development of students in the RCP's adopted schools.

- Rtn. Mahendra B. Thapa handed over to the President the 'Token of Appreciation' presented to the RCP by Saraswati Madhyamik Vidyalaya for its PEEF scholarship support.
 - Rtn. Siba B. Rajbhandary informed about the new high quality 'GML' publication published by the District, which should be collected. He informed about the TEACH/RNLM seminar held by the District on 8 September, and regretted non-participation of the RCP's TEACH/RNLM members.
7. Salutation: By Rtn. Mukti N. Shrestha - RC Penaflo, Santiago, Chile; Chartered: 1942; & Members: 28. District: 4350, Clubs: 60, & Members: 1324. He also gave a brief on the country's specificities.
8. Before the adjournment of the meeting by the President, Secretary Rtn. Shiv P. Khemka announced: happy news contribution pledges of NRs. 7,000 (50% or NRs. 3,500 each for the Sunshine Fund and the Operational Fund), NRs. 7,600 for attendance to the Operational Fund of the RCP, and the meeting attendance of 4 guests, 28 members, and 9 make-ups.

Summary of the talk programme by Mr. Hikmat Singh Ayer, Senior Director of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) on 'Present situation and prospects of Nepal's Tourism Sector'

President Rtn. Mahendra S. Rawal welcomed the guest speaker Mr. Hikmat S. Ayer and Rtn. Khadak S. Bisht introduced him succinctly. Mr. Ayer did his MBA from Kathmandu University and another Masters in Tourism Management from IGNOU, India. He has been working with Nepal Tourism Board since November 2000 and is currently a Senior Director there. He has participated in several tourism management courses abroad and represented NTB/Nepal in several international meetings. Mr. Ayer is also an author of several articles and a book related to tourism, economy and social development.

Mr. Ayer was very pleased for this opportunity to give a talk programme at the RCP with many friends. He started with explaining the role of NTB, a Public Private Partnership Organisation, established in 1998 to develop and market Nepal as an attractive tourist destination with a slogan 'Nepal is for everyone, every age and in all seasons'.

With the use of 112 pages of power-point slides, Mr. Ayer made a comprehensive presentation of Nepal's tourism – its present status and its prospects. The presentation included the situation in all the three geographical regions of Nepal, i.e., mountains (15%) hills (68%) and lowlands (17%). He gave data and trends on several aspects of tourism from 2015-2016 onwards with various breakdowns such as – by purpose, by annual tourist arrivals, destinations, and the country of origin of tourists of key countries.

Mr. Ayer explained the attractions in each of the three regions with photos of the majestic mountains, lakes, river beaches, thriving jungles, cultural heritage and religious pilgrimage sites, protected parks and reserves, and traditional cuisines. The possibilities for tourist activities in land, water, and air are in abundance in Nepal with huge potential to expand with regional and seasonal diversity so that we move from seasonal tourism to all season tourism.

Mr. Ayer talked about current target of tourists in the age group of 25-60, with possibilities to expand it to age group 60+ by making easy and affordable retirement location, and 0-25 years by adding more educational and research/exposure visits. He emphasised the need to work on making 'one stop destination' in collaboration with airlines, making travel cheaper, and improving the infrastructure. He also suggested several areas of improvements and regulatory policies required from the government that would reap economic benefits for the entire population.

In the Questions/Answers session, while acknowledging the huge potential to develop tourism in Nepal, several RCP members raised issues and problems, which hinder its development ranging from infrastructure, cost, government inaction to simple things such as lack of parking and toilets. A recent incident involving a RCP colleague's family illustrated that there is no regulatory policy to ensure safety while opening heated swimming pools by hotels in Nepal.

Mr. Ayer thanked all for the valuable comments/suggestions. Admitting that his presentation's focus has been on the potentials to demonstrate possible growth areas and mechanism in tourism development of Nepal, he hoped for the government and private sector collaboration for a success in this key sector for Nepal's development.

Following a 'Vote of Thanks' on behalf of all the participants by Rtn. Maheswari Bisht Rawal for the excellent presentation to Mr. Hikmat S. Ayer, President Rtn. Rawal concluded the session adding his own words of thanks.