

TOURISM: Conflicting Perspectives

Sun, Sea and Sex

European tourists are heading East in a tragically-perverted version of the tour-package formula of sun, sea and sand. Lucy Johnson of Inter Press Service reports from London

big rise in child prostitution," said David Ould of Anti-Slavery International, a London-based organisation that is one of the five groups in CCPT.

The child-sex trade has brought with it the danger of AIDS in Asia. While there are no figures on children with HIV, in one hostel in Bangkok that gives temporary shelter to children rescued from the city's brothels, half the girls aged 14 to 18 tested positive for the virus, according to CCPT.

To avoid AIDS, people are looking for younger and younger children. But, given children's susceptibility to the virus, it should really be the other way round," said Ould.

A recent study by the Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development at Thailand's Mahidol University showed a "tremendous increase" in the number of male child prostitutes, which it blamed on the country's drive to industrialise.

Britons head the list of foreigners flying into Thailand, still regarded as the number one destination for cheap sex tourism. Some 273,000 Britons went to Thailand last year, 62.5 per cent of whom were men. Of these, 9.3 per

cent were on business, and 89.3 per cent went for leisure, according to the CCPT.

Though the days when mainstream travel brochures advertised Thailand as a sex haven are over, campaigners say limited circulation magazines for businessmen run thinly-veiled advertisements for underage sex.

One magazine, published by a British financial publishing group, called *Scope International*, raves about the appeals of Sao Luis, an island in north Brazil where "most of the inhabitants are young and they live only for one thing...SEX", and "30 per cent of prostitutes are said to be between 12-16".

Despite evidence that British sex tourists are picking up cheap tickets and heading East in droves in a tragically perverted version of the traditional British tour-package formula of sun, sea and sand, the British government is unwilling to act.

Last week, it defeated an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill that would have allowed British courts to prosecute Britons for committing sex offences against children.

The government opposed the amendment on the grounds that existing extradi-

tion agreements are enough. But pro-amendment politicians and activists say that British courts have extra-territorial powers over murder, torture, treason and slavery — so why not child sex abuse?

They say British should follow the lead of countries like Australia, Germany, France and Sweden which have recently passed laws providing for jail sentences of 10 years or more for sex with minors even if the crime takes place in a foreign country.

"Is the government saying that adult slaves must be given greater protection than children involved in a modern form of slavery?" asked Anne Badger, campaigns coordinator for CCPT that is launching a one-year action plan to push child sex tourism higher up the government's agenda.

At a conference last month in Chiang Mai in Thailand, a Thai activist group End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) argued that the only way to defeat child sex tourism is for closer cooperation between Western nations and the countries where the crimes are committed.

Thai authorities admit there is corruption within local police forces. In the Chonburi region, seven policemen were recently sacked after accepting bribes. The Thai cabinet recently approved a draft bill proposed by the Interior Ministry to eliminate child prostitution and curbing the growing international sex trade.

But activists say merely clamping down in Thailand is not enough. "The problem is one of law enforcement; and that is not just a local duty, but also an international one," says Wilfred Wong of CCPT.

The scandal of child sex has tainted the British Embassy in Thailand as well. Last year, the British's honorary consul in Pattaya, was asked to resign after being accused by a Sunday newspaper of trading in pornographic photos of boys.

THIRTY years ago, the length and breadth of the bride or those of the groom were not important factors to determine the eligibility in marriage. Today these are important considerations — preference being always for the taller. One of my sisters-in-law, being shorter in height than her husband did not pray to the Creator either to increase her or reduce her husband in height. She sought a practical solution. What God did not give her, she sought an alternative from the cobbler. She raised heels of her shoes few inches more to get nearer the height of her husband. And none of the couples grumbled at the solution. Some claim that too tall persons tend to be foolish and too small ones are foul in conduct. Explaining this they say that in the taller man common sense is stretched out and therefore intelligence stands thinned. In case of small man just the reverse happens. Common sense and goodness remain concentrated and bogged up and therefore not applied. Yet many small men were gallant fighters including Sultan Mahmud who invaded India seventeen times and every time returned victorious. President Charles de Gaulle was never accused of wanting in intelligence.

Another tall man left examples of unsavoury intelligence. He was President Idi Amin who, called a monster by his enemies, harassed his British enemies in many ways. Once a British delegation wanted an audience with him. He granted it not in the capital, but at his village home. Here houses had no normal doors, but a round hole just above the floor. For entry or exit one had to crawl in or out. As the members of the British delegation were crawling in through the hole, a photograph was taken keeping Idi Amin within the frame. It appeared, as if the British delegates bowed down before the mighty Amin. Next day the photograph appeared in newspapers.

Again, during the annual conference of the Organization of African States (OAS) Idi Amin as the chairman decided to go to the conference not by a car, but by a palanquin carried by four white bearers. To the dismay of many, four white bearers were procured and they carried the palanquin with Amin aboard on their shoulders. The Daily Guardian of London published the photograph with a caption: 'White man's burden.'

Tall man is almost every woman's dream and vice versa. But this does not mean that the short man or, for that matter, the short woman goes out of circulation and not at all in demand in the matching market. There are couples, happily lived, who are ill-matched in physical heights, but mentally made a good compound of soothing virtues. Once Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, who was presiding over a meeting of School Broadcast Committee of Radio Pakistan was jokingly reminded by Begum Zoheda Khanam that Allah had given him bigger brain but small size. Precious things like diamonds were found in small bits not in bulk. Only coal could be found in big slices, quipped Dr. Shahidullah.

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Distant Drum

M N Mustafa

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Hazrat Adam, the first man, was said to be a very tall man. So was his consort, Eve, who almost matched her husband in height. These are claims not backed by proofs. Mythology claims in Sri Lanka, a spot named as Adam's feed measures about seventy feet. It certainly did not represent the size of Adams feet. In that case Adam dwarfs all men for all time.

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circus. The tallest living woman is Mulla (b.1956) of Borneo who is over 7 feet tall. All of them suffer from one or another kind of malfunctioning of their systems. Nature does not seem to go well with their size.

In Nature particularly in fauna, the same species has the bigger and smaller versions. The tiger has the cat the big crocodile has the minute lizard, the largest fleas (*Hystriophylla Schefferi*) has the minuscule flies. Mankind do not seem to have such contrasting diminutives and demons except in writers fancy.

In recent history, few inordinately tall men posed problems for their hosts besides attracting curious attention from their spectators. When Charles de Gaulle visited Canada his hosts had to place order to a furnisher for a longer and bigger bed for their unusually tall guest. The furnisher had to fly one of their men to Paris to get the correct measurement for the bed. Similar problems were also posed by former President Idi Amin to his hosts because of the larger volume of his physique. In India a similar problem was faced sometimes ago by the hospital authorities in Bhopal where a eight-footer Mangal Singh Shahu was admitted but could not be properly accommodated as no bed was larger than six foot. The problem however was temporarily solved by putting two beds together.

The advantages enjoyed and the disadvantages suffered by being taller than those of average run have been shown by Jonathan Swift in his book *Gulliver's Travels* and Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*. Gulliver, because of his unmanageable demonic size was unable to get lost in the crowd when it was necessary, and Alice, when she grew bigger

after eating the cake could not negotiate easily through the desired passage. Disproportionate size of both of them inspired awe in the minds of their viewers no doubt but frightening appearance, apart from arousing curiosity from a safer distance, never brought the viewed and viewer closer.

No creative author other than Jonathan Swift, mocked successfully at the relative size of men — the demoniac and the dwarfish man. He has also shown the relative advantages and disadvantages of the taller and shorter man. Many of Swift's critics did not love him for his so-called misanthropy, directly or indirectly poured out of his pen.

The tall people, besides dwarfing others, confront many practical problems. As they are exceptions, the people of average size often break unsavoury jokes on these people. Sir Winston Churchill, during the Second World War, could not make Charles de Gaulle agree on some of his war plans and he disdainfully called de Gaulle 'a heavy cross to bear'.

Sometimes taller people have been found to take full advantage of their height. Aesop, the famous Greek storyteller was a dwarf. On being asked to take a baggage to a certain place by his master, he preferred to take the heaviest fruit basket. His friends laughed at his folly of carrying the heavy bag. On reaching the station, his master found the fruit basket empty. The tall friends of Aesop ate up all fruits from the basket on way to the destination and Aesop, just carried the empty basket.

A tall man once went to buy orange. He looked at the oranges for a few moments and then was quietly passing away. On being asked by the pedlar as to why he was not buying any orange the tall man referred to the small size of the oranges. At this the pedlar quipped, "Sir orange never looks bigger if viewed from the Himalayas. Get down and you will find them bigger."

Zapatistas Call Shots in Tourism Wars

The failed uprising of the Zapatistas in southern Mexico struck a blow to the tourist industry — the main breadwinner for the Chiapas' impoverished population. But now thousands of "social tourists" from US and Canada visit the site of the New Year Day rebellion.

John Ross writes from San Cristobal, Mexico



THE Mexican army officer shouted to the busload of North American visitors: "This is not a tourist zone."

The tour of the concerned United States and Canadian citizens had been abruptly halted at the military checkpoint leading into the Chiapas jungle where the rebel Zapatista Army of National Liberation is based.

The visitors, mostly elderly and church-affiliated, had come to Chiapas as representatives of Ecumenical Project on Central America and the Caribbean to interview victims of the Mexican army onslaught against civilian populations in the wake of the Zapatista uprising. Alleged atrocities had occurred on the local people but the "social tourists" were barred from visiting the rural communities.

The uprising has had a perverse impact on the tourist industry in Chiapas — the state's second biggest breadwinner. The nosedive in business has been felt most profoundly in San Cristobal, the focal point of the New Year's Day uprising.

The handsome, colonial city, which was packed with holiday tourists on that day, has never recovered from the images of the uprising and the subsequent military occupation. In San Cristobal, a third of the residents live on the tourist trade. In the past six months, according to the Chiapas state tourism chamber of commerce, cancelled reservations and empty restaurants, had taken \$8 million out of the town's economy.

The only bright spots for local hotels, taxi drivers, artisans, and newsboys had come at moments of high drama in the Zapatista saga such as February's peace talks with hundreds of reports, with open expense accounts, flocked to the city.

Indeed, the Zapatistas have called the shots in the Chiapas tourism wars. Many socially-conscious groups visit the highlands to review human rights abuses and spend their money. Global Exchange, a San Francisco-based organisation that takes tourists on "reality tours" of Third World poverty for \$1,000 a head, has conducted three "Insurrection in

Chiapas' eight-day excursions, filling a few hotel beds.

Oscar Barrera, a Mexico City student, asks \$3 donations from the few European and North American tourists who venture through, conducting walking tours of uprising sites in and around San Cristobal.

The Zapatistas again showed their draw dictates the tourism tone in August when they summoned 6,000 social activists to San Cristobal for the "National Democratic Convention."

The convention, so-named for a 1914 meeting of the forces of Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa in rebel-held territory during the Mexican revolution, was called just two weeks before the presidential elections and featured a much-heralded speech by the Zapatistas' star attraction, Subcomandante Marcos, urging a peaceful, fraud-free election.

The convention-goers initiated work at various San Cristobal sites, filling the city's hotels for the first time all year. Queues formed outside restaurants and taxi drivers could not keep pace with the demand.

Local artisans sold more souvenirs than they had for months. Their mainstay has been ski-masked "Marcos" dolls that came armed and wearing balacavas, and "Comandante Ramona" creations, honouring the women of the Zapatista high command. The Ramona doll is often a carbon copy of Marcos, but with a skirt.

The highlight of the convention was the trip to the jungle to see the Zapatistas. The largest motorised caravan in Chiapas memory — 240 buses and vehicles — was organised to transport 6,000 people, over 600 reporters, and hundreds of security and medical personnel down into the Lacandon jungle, over muddy, often dangerous backroads.

The logistics of this *locura* (craziness) as Marcos dubbed it, were often devilish: the caravan took 24 hours to traverse less than 80 kilometres to the convention site.

Constant searches by security forces made the trip even more unpleasant for delegates,

observers, and journalists — many of them North Americans and Europeans.

Marcos was the star of the show, snapping photos with admirers from near and far, jousting for hours with the press, commanding snappy military displays by his troops, and, most of all, delivering an electrifying speech in which he concluded by giving the flag of the nation to Mexico's leading non-government defender of human rights and then dramatically vanishing into the night.

Soon after his disappearing act, a tropical storm crashed over the jungle, knocking out the electricity system and lifting the 3,000 meter tent — Marcos described it as "the sail" of his "ship" — from its moorings and bringing it down around the thousands of convention-goers in soft billows.

Hours of rain and knee-deep mud created a sense of solidarity between dampened conventioners. The morning after the "great shipwreck" — as the press styled it — the convention resumed under the jungle rays.

"Now we know what it is to be without a roof or clothes, food, or even a mirror — now we know what it is to be without a face (*sin rostro* — the Zapatista description of themselves)," intoned ex-Mexican Autonomous University rector Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, one of hundreds of notables selected to direct the convention.

Back in San Cristobal, after the abbreviated visit to the jungle, 6,000 convention-goers seemed more exhilarated than discomforted by the adventure, piling into the hotels and restaurants in force to shower and chow down before heading back to their homes.

"Marcos should call one of these conventions every week" gabbled a San Cristobal cab-driver, ironically named Marcos. The driver doubled his fares during the event, in an effort to make back what he said he had lost to the tourist downturn since the January 1st uprising. — GEMINI NEWS

JOHN ROSS is an American poet, activist, reporter who has covered Mexico for more than two decades.

ROTARY: Serving the Humanity

FOUNDED on 23 February 1905 by Paul Percival Harris and three of his friends, Rotary is a world fellowship of business and professional persons who accept the 'Ideal of Service' as the basis for success and happiness in business and community life. In Rotary, thoughtfulness of others is regarded as the basis of service and helpfulness to others as its expression. Together, they constitute the Rotary 'Ideal of Service'. To attain this ideal, Rotary encourages men and women to develop their abilities to render service through their respective vocations in their communities. Rotary is an ideal in action.

The motto of Rotary is "Service Above Self".

Rotary is what the Rotarians do. Being a Rotarian means strong commitment of time, wisdom, energy and resources. Rotarians render service to humanity through four avenues of Rotary Service, namely, club service, vocational service, community service and international service.

Through Club Service, Rotarians associate themselves with their club's projects and programmes in addition to other organisational obligations.

Vocational Service concerns with an individual Rotarian's exemplification of service through his/her profession or

by Prof Jalal U Ahmad

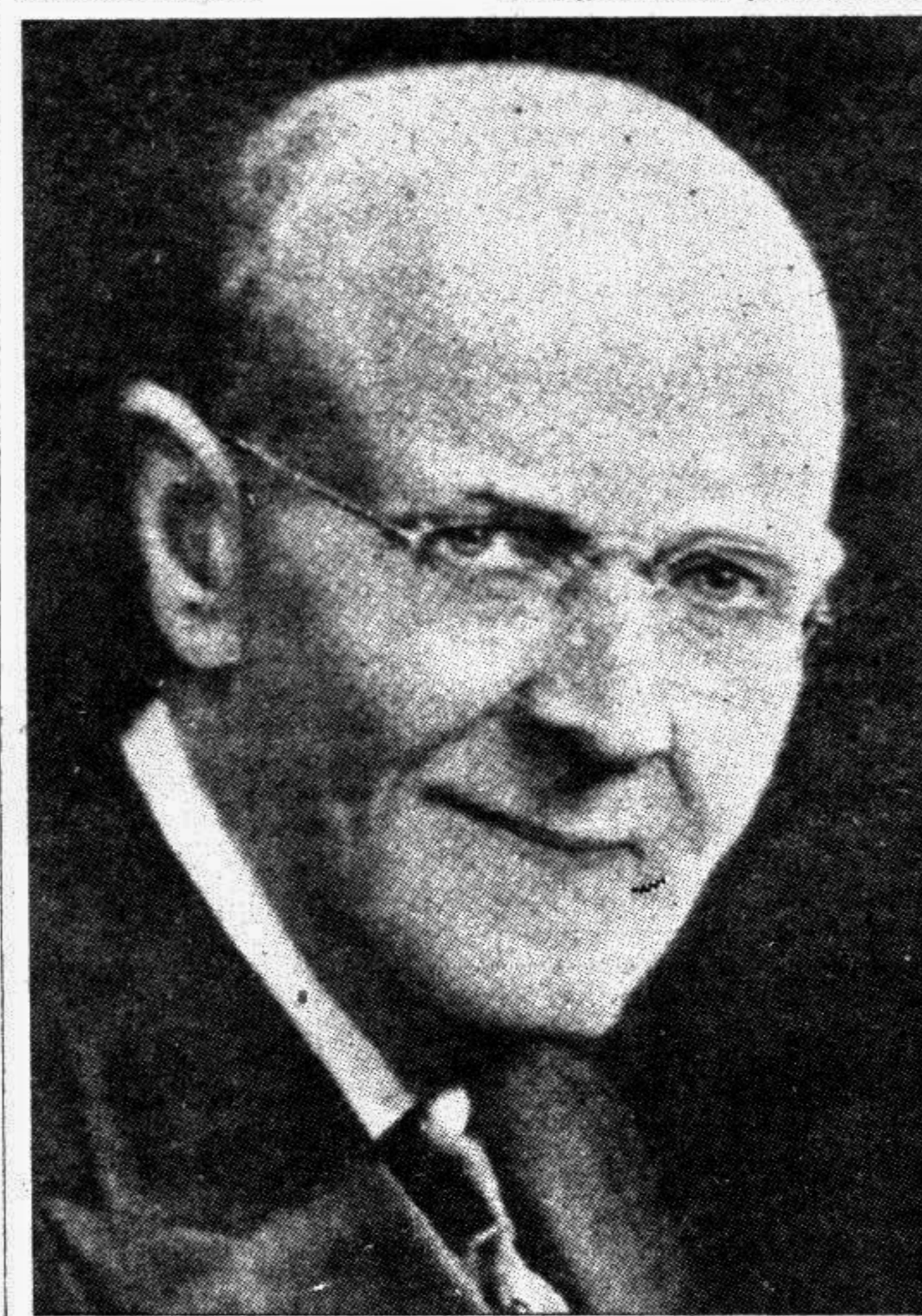
Rotarians for reasons beyond their control. Through these organised groups of future leaders, Rotary clubs also undertake many humanitarian projects.

International Service is the avenue through which Rotary clubs all over the world endeavour to enhance international understanding, goodwill and peace by their Rotarians as well as by involving other people who believe in the ideal of service.

In addition to the normal humanitarian projects of helping the needy like organising eye/dental/limb camps, providing safe drinking water, giving sanitary latrines, donating blood, helping and giving relief to the distressed people affected by natural calamities, adopting villages for gradual development, arranging vocational training for unemployed youths, organising literacy centres for underprivileged children and adults etc, Rotary undertakes some major projects through The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. This Foundation is the largest privately managed trust in the world having a fund of approximately US Dollar 700 million for doing good to humanity. The formation process of this great trust began in 1917 and today, The Rotary Foundation spends huge amount of money through its programmes globally. The Rotary Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Illinois, USA, where the world headquarters of Rotary International is also situated.

The programmes of The Rotary Foundation covers in the fields of: (1) Ambassadorial Scholarships, (2) Group Study Exchange, (3) Grants for University Teachers to serve in developing countries, (4) Matching Grants, (5) Health, Hunger and Humanity Grants, (6) Rotary Volunteers to serve in countries other than their own (7) PolioPlus, and (8) Peace Forum.

The Rotary Scholarship programme which began in 1947, has so far awarded scholarships to about 20,000 men and women; and since then, over 25 million US Dollars are spent annually for



Paul Percival Harris, founder of Rotary

Each Rotary club is a group of business and professional persons representing different vocations who meet together once a week in fellowship and are united in the practice of the 'Ideal of Service'. A Rotary club selects its membership on the basis of one active member from each recognised business and profession to the community. In this way, each Rotary club has in its membership a representative of cross-section of the business and professional activities in the community; and thus, Rotary is unity in diversity.

Rotary International is the association of all Rotary Clubs of the world in 185 countries and geographical regions with a membership of over 26,500 clubs. These Rotary clubs have approximately 1,200,000 members who are known as Rotarians.

vocation, and personal enrichment through service.

The Community Service, often called the heart-beat of Rotary, is its greatest public relations. Through this avenue of service, Rotary reaches the common people and in particular, comparatively less fortunate people in the community. The type of project a Rotary club undertakes depends on the specific needs of the community and the club's financial resources. Through this avenue, a Rotary club sponsors a Rotaract club or an Interact club; clubs for young adults and younger persons respectively. A Rotary club, through this avenue can also sponsor a Rotary Village Corps/Rotary Neighbourhood Corps/Rotary Community Corps consisting of persons having inherent qualities of Rotarians, but cannot become



Rotary cancer detection centre in Dhaka

The Group Study Exchange (GSE) programme arranges for teams of outstanding business and professional people to spend four to six weeks in another country actively studying its people and institutions. Since the introduction of this programme in 1964, more than 11,000 young people have taken advantage of becoming members of the GSE Teams.

Rotary Grants for University Teachers to serve in developing countries enable college or university faculty members to teach for six to ten months in developing nations, thus bringing their special knowledge and expertise where it is most needed.

In all the above three programmes, those persons closely related to Rotarians are not eligible to participate. These programmes are meant to give preference only to persons other than those of a

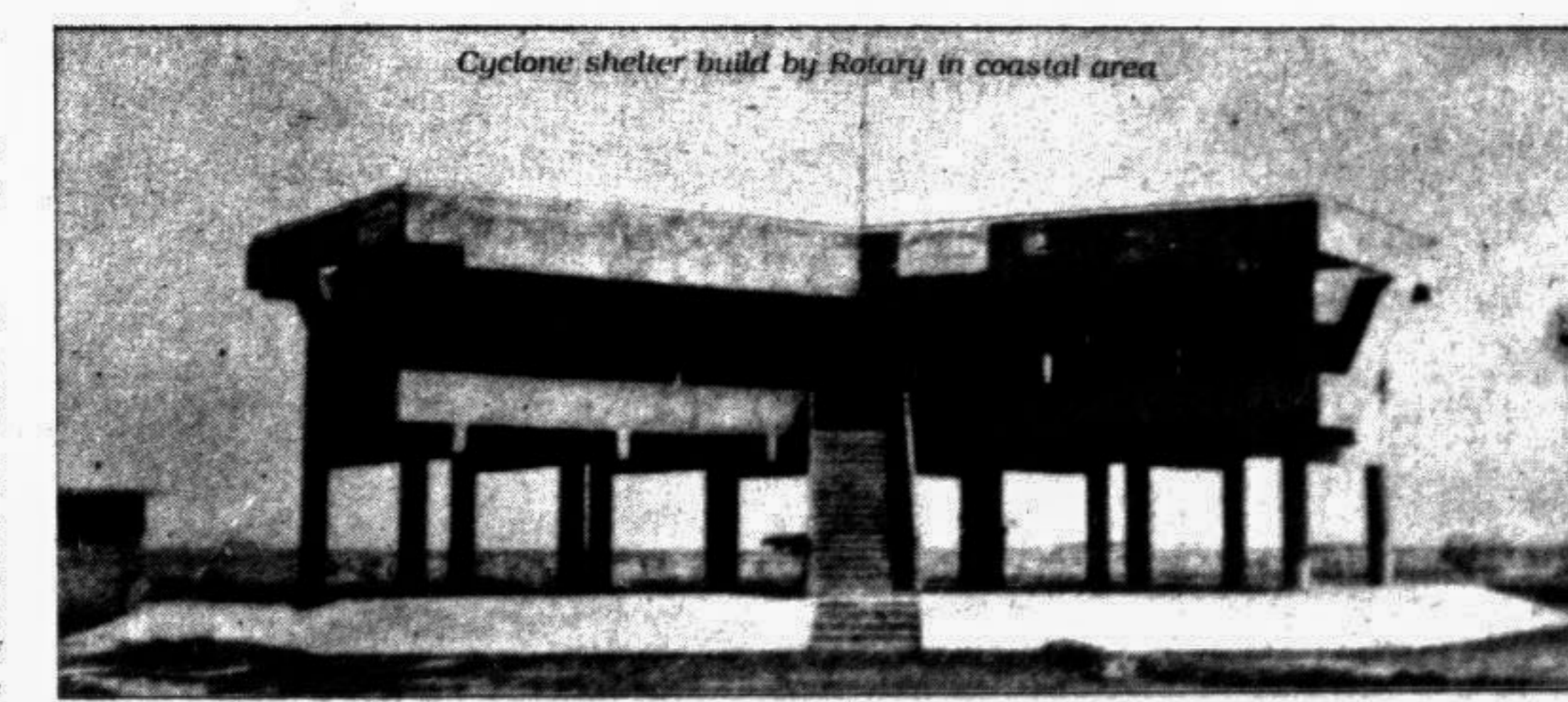
Rotarian's family. In the educational programme only, The Rotary Foundation spends huge fund every year more than that being spent by many internationally famous organisations including Nobel Prize Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation.

Through the programme of Matching Grants, projects of an educational or charitable nature can be undertaken by Rotary clubs in more than one country jointly for furthering international understanding.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of Rotary in 1979, The Rotary Foundation introduced a multimillion US Dollar worldwide programme under Health, Hunger and Humanity popularly known as 3-H programme to improve health, alleviate hunger and enhance human development.

Through the Rotary

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Cyclone shelter built by Rotary in coastal area