

These engineers program lifelines too

Sankalp India Foundation Organizes Blood Donation Drives, Set Up Thalassemia Centre in 2011

Yamini Nair | TNN

Bangalore: Many years ago, a person's death due to unavailability of blood stirred the conscience of four engineering students. The quartet resolved to ensure that no one died due to shortage of blood. Thus was born the Sankalp India Foundation (SIF) on May 23, 2003.

Ten years on, the foundation has now expanded the frontiers of its service. "When we started as a small group, we used to go and tell blood banks to inform us when there was shortage of blood. Initially they didn't take us seriously. Later when they got to know how serious we were, we

started getting several requests," says Rakesh Dhanya, secretary, SIF.

The organization now has around 25 volunteer-members, who are basically engineers with software companies. The SIF maintains a list of regular donors who can be contacted anytime. In 2006, they managed to launch a helpline for people from within Bangalore which was commissioned as a state-level helpline by 2008.

"We have tied up with 60 blood banks across the state. Every morning, we take stock of the blood position in banks," says Rakesh. When they get a call, SIF volunteers guide the



SHOWING THE WAY: The organization, which began with four members in Bangalore, now boasts of around 25 volunteer-members, who are basically engineers with software companies

person to the nearest blood bank. The helpline now receives 30 to 40 requests daily.

SIF also organizes blood donation drives. "Over the past

five years, we have organized more than 300 drives across Karnataka, leading to a collection of about 35,000 units of blood. I talk to companies and

colleges and organize drives on campuses," says Lalith Parmar, a volunteer. "We have regular donors for even the rare Bombay Blood Group," says Rakesh,

adding they have sent blood to places such as Istanbul.

The life-saving mission is now growing into a life-building one as well. From carrying out relief work in disaster-hit areas to inculcating love for the nation in young minds through initiatives like Project Tiranga, the group is involved in nation-building at many levels. "The change that SIF brought in me was simple — from a constant nag to a busy individual," says Rajat Agarwal, a volunteer.

To ensure proper blood transfusion, medical tests and medicines to children suffering from thalassemia, SIF set up a Thalassemia Day Care Centre at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health in November 2011. "Children who suffer from

Rare breed

SIF volunteers are a rare breed of people doing great service to society. They have a good list of committed donors and we can rely on them during emergency. Most importantly, they have got regular donors, even for the rarest of rare groups like Bombay blood group.

Dr V Nanda Kishore | CHIEF OF BLOOD BANK, MS RAMAIAH HOSPITAL

Major ventures

- Blood helpline: 9480044444
- Thalassemia Day Care centre caters to around 170 children
- Quick response during disasters like 2004 tsunami, 2011 Sikkim earthquake and 2012 Assam floods
- A special website called www.bombaybloodgroup.org for Bombay group blood requests and emergencies
- A monthly journal Sankalp Patrika that carries information on blood transfusion, donation drives, thalassemia and others

thalassemia have to undergo blood transfusion every 20 days. They come from various places, even outside the state. Many parents are daily wage workers and at times don't have money to even travel till here. We provide them with help for that too," says Kumari Ankita, in charge of the centre.

Using technology to connect with global donors and keep record of donors and beneficiaries, the centre that started with 60 kids now has around 170 children. "Working with SIF shows it is not the number of people but their passion and commitment that makes the big difference," Lalith signs off rightly.

VROOMING FOR A CAUSE

K Sunil Prasad



SAYING NO TO TOBACCO: People from various walks of life rode Harley Davidsons and other superbikes on a 17-km stretch from Queen's Circle, Cubbon Park, to Uttarahalli Road, as part of a bikeathon, 'Embracing life, staying alive'. The participants displayed placards and colourful balloons to create awareness about the ill-effects of tobacco consumption. The event was organised by BGS Global Hospitals on Sunday

Get your water connection easily

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Residents can now apply for new water and sanitary connections at the sub-divisional offices of the BWSSB or through licensed plumbers.

Following an amendment to BWSSB regulation 12 on Saturday, a resident can now directly submit his/her application along with a copy of the sanctioned plan of the building, tax receipt or extract of the khata certificate at the jurisdictional sub-divisional office of the BWSSB. After inspection of the property by the water inspector or engineer concerned, the assistant executive engineer will

issue a demand note to the applicant.

After payment of the prescribed charges, the connection will be sanctioned and a meter will be issued to the respective water inspector. The water Board said applicants should approach licensed plumbers only; the list is available on the board's website.

However, installation of water meters and bore-well systems can be carried out under the supervision of a water inspector only, said an official statement from the water utility.

Earlier, applicants were forced to rely on plumbers to get new water and sanitary connections.

PRECIOUS DROPS



CM wants to link rice scheme to Aadhaar

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Chief minister Siddaramaiah has expressed his intention to link his ambitious Re 1 per kg rice scheme to Aadhaar. On Sunday, he directed state government officials to carry out enrolment of people for Aadhaar card in full swing.

The chief minister's statement came after Nandan Nilekani, chairman of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), called on him at the CM's home-office Krishna on Sunday.

"All districts and taluks should get Aadhaar cards. The focus should be on enrolling the weaker and marginalized sections as most of the state and central beneficiary schemes are linked to Aadhaar," Siddaramaiah said.

Giving the details, Nilekani said the authority has distributed over 34 crore cards as against the 40-crore enrolment. "In Karnataka, 3 crore people have registered and already 2.2 crore cards have been distributed. Aad-



haar can be used as proof for obtaining ration cards," he pointed out.

WORKING SUNDAY

While ministers prefer to visit their home-turfs on Sunday, three ministers — M H Ambareesh, Satish Jarkiholi and Santhosh Lad — held review meetings of their respective departments.

Holding the housing portfolio, Ambareesh convened officials from Mandya to get more information. All the

ministers had completed a round of meetings with the officials, but Ambareesh and Jarkiholi were entrusted the job of election canvassing in Periyapatna assembly segment, which is going to poll on Tuesday.

MEETING WITH DCs

To discuss and find a solution to the drinking water crisis in the state, Siddaramaiah has convened meetings of DCs and CEOs on Monday. The chief minister is also expected to hold a video conference with other district officials to know the situation. Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah said he has asked advocate general (AG) Ravivarma Kumar's opinion on the alleged cash-for-post scam in Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC).

PATIL GETS PORTFOLIO

SR Patil, who was inducted into the Siddaramaiah ministry on Saturday, has been given IT/BT/science and technology planning and statistics portfolios.

He pedals for green mission

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Cycling 2,800 km all the way from Punjab to Bangalore — all for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As an air-conditioner mechanic back in Ludhiana, Sanjay Verma knew very well how much the environment was being polluted. The 27-year-old, along with a group of friends, launched, 'Satya Malhotra', a local NGO in Ludhiana. "We promote organic farming, plantation and cycling to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions," he said after a 21-day cycling expedition which reached Bangalore on May 5.

Sanjay started his solo journey from Ludhiana on April 14, to convey the 'go green' message. He travelled 2,800 km spanning Punjab, Haryana, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and finally reached Karnataka on May 5. It took Sanjay 21 days to cover the distance. On the way he held a rally in Ambala, spreading messages like "Save water, save life" and "Clean Ambala, green Ambala". The



ON THE GO: Sanjay Verma has cycled 2,800 km all the way from Punjab to Bangalore

rally drew over 150 like-minded people who gathered to support the cause.

"Although I faced obstacles like extreme weather conditions, my journey was great. I learned survival techniques and met a lot of people on the way, those who shared my concern about degradation of the environment," Sanjay said.

Once back home, Sanjay hopes to start a cycling club to spread awareness and garner the support of the youth.

— Adiba Taj and Jentanita Robert

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