

THE LIGHTHOUSE

BOND | BUILD | BRING CHEER

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS | ISSUE 28 | January 12, 2025



Scholarships for Tribal Children



Dear RCMers,
 "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."
 RCM's scholarship for tribal students (see cover picture)
 is a step in the right direction .



Rtn.Shivkumar Eashwaran
 Editor

Rtn.A.R.Raghunandan
 Chairperson

Mr.Madhu Mathen
 Co-Chairperson

Fellow Rotarians,
Attention non-Golfers.
 Only RCM can do something like this !

Our Annual Golf Tournament

is happening on **31st January**,
 and this time, we're adding a
 special twist!

We have a Putting Competition for non-Golfers running alongside the main event, from 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM. at Cosmo TNGF next to Nandanam YMCA.

This is your chance to swing into action — no prior golfing experience required!

The tournament is open only to: RCM - Rotarians, Spouses & Children over 12 years and above who've never played golf before.

- Delicious Breakfast awaits you
- Gifts for all participants
- Prizes for the winners
- Dinner in the evening

No Registration Charges!

So, grab your spot on the greens and join the fun!
 Confirm your participation with;
Shanno Ravi - 9884041020
Nimish Tolia - 91 98410 11121

Let's make it a day to remember!
 And who knows!... you will catch the bug and be in the golf competition in a year.

Event curated and run by **Brandon Desouza**, the renowned golf event organizer.

Rtn. G. Chella Krishna
 President

Rtn. Jacob Kurian
 Chairperson-Golf

Rtn. Rajesh Mani
 Honorary Secretary

Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan
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Rotary Club of Madras
Minutes of 26th Weekly Meeting held on 07-1-2025

at Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

Call to Order

The meeting commenced at 01.30 PM.

Sergeant at Arms, Rtn. Jayant Hemdev, collared President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, who then called the 26th weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras to order and requested all members to rise for a silent invocation.

Confirmation of Minutes

The President sought confirmation for the 25th weekly meeting minutes, which was passed and adopted by the members through acclamation.

Vocational Services Updates –

Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti

Scholarships for Tribal Children:

Rtn. Mehul Uday Nanavati, through a CSR initiative, sponsored scholarships worth ₹2.5 lakhs for eight tribal children.

Graduation Events:

Home Nurse Aides Training: Twenty-five women completed training to become home nurse aides, fully sponsored by Rtn. Mehul Uday Nanavati.

Auto Rickshaw Drivers Training: Twenty women trained to become auto rickshaw drivers, four of whom were sponsored by Rtn. Himanshu Budhia. Sponsorships for the remaining candidates are open at ₹16,000 per candidate.

Training on Artificial Intelligence: A training session on AI essentials will occur on Saturday morning. Twenty spots have been filled, but waitlist opportunities are available. Interested members can contact Rtn. Ashwath Kumar Reddy or Rtn. Deepak Chander.

Drone Technology Exposure for Rotary Nagar Children: Sixty children from Rotary Nagar will visit the Indian Institute of Engineers on Saturday afternoon to learn about drone technology. Sponsorships for transportation costs of ₹10,000 are being sought.

Full Club Fellowship Update —Rtn Suman Voora: Past President Ranjit Pratap and Ann. Uma Ranjit will host the full club fellowship on Sunday, 12th Jan.

The environmental committee will conduct a special session from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM before the main event.



Members are encouraged to RSVP promptly to assist with better organization.

Acknowledgments and Gratitude: Special appreciation was extended to Rtn Mehul Uday Nanavati, Rtn Himanshu Budhia, and Rtn. PP. Ranjit Pratap for their continued generosity and contributions to Rotary's initiatives.

Rtn. R. Ravishankar: Recognized for outstanding work in Rotary Nagar, including contributions to digital learning, tailoring initiatives and recruiting a centre head. His mentorship and dedication have set a benchmark.

Rtn. Shivakumar Vellur and Rtn. Mehul Uday Nanavati: Commended for their efforts in the scholarships program for tribal children, ensuring that the Rotary Club of Madras reached and benefited the most deserving beneficiaries.

Rtn. IPP. S. Ravi was recognized for successfully overseeing the distribution of over 200 sewing machines to underprivileged women, highlighting it as one of RCM's flagship projects.

Rtn. Bharat M. Pujara and Rtn. Nimish C. Tolia: Praised for their efforts in ordering seven dialysis machines this week. Their hard work, negotiations and teamwork were instrumental in reaching this milestone.

Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan: Thanked for her thoughtful gesture of organizing an outing to VGP Golden Beach for the boys from Boys Town, following the Boys Town Committee's advice.



RI Convention 2025 – Rtn Ashish Gupta encouraged members to register and attend the Rotary International Convention in Calgary, scheduled from June 21 to 25, 2025.

Highlighted Calgary as the hometown of James William Davidson, the founder of the Rotary Club of Madras.

Advised members to book refundable travel plans due to potential visa delays. Further details and registration links will be shared through official communication channels.

Special Recognition – First Lady Swetha: Acknowledged a team of women from RCM, including Padma Raman, Anita Srinath, Usha Krish Vijayan, Ambika Ravi, Deepti Prasanna, Poornima Vish and Rtn. Usha Umapathi, for securing second place in a fashion walk organized as part of NRAP, celebrating World Sari Day on December 21st.

Special thanks to:

Rtn. Nalini Radhakrishnan:

Coordinated the team's participation.

Rtn. PP. Mohan Raman:

Provided the team with a script.

Ann. Radhakrishna S. Iyer (spouse of Nalini):

Contributed with voiceover work.

The team's efforts were lauded, and trophies were distributed during the meeting.

Induction of New Members

Rtn. M. CT. P. Chidambaram introduced Rtn. Balraj Vasudevan, and Rtn. PP. S.N. Srikanth introduced Rtn. Dr. R. Narasimhan; both were inducted into the club.

Secretary's Announcements: Birthdays and anniversaries of Rotarians and spouses were announced.

Special Announcement: On 22nd January, Past President S.N Srikanth will address Rotarians of District 9212 (comprising Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan) on behaviour change for WASH. The link for the session will be circulated.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

Due to Pongal, no meeting next week.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 20th January, instead of the usual Tuesday. Renowned journalist Rajdeep Sardesai will be the guest speaker.

The lunch meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency at the usual venue and time.

Chief Guest Introduction and Address:

Introduction by President Rtn. Chella Krishna G. Mr. Manoj Kumar, Founding CEO of the Naandi Foundation, was introduced with a video highlighting his impactful work in poverty reduction and tribal empowerment through initiatives like Araku Coffee and Naandi Water.

Notable partnerships include Anand Mahindra, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

Address by Chief Guest Manoj Kumar:

Highlighted the transformative journey of Araku Valley tribes through regenerative agriculture and sustainable business.

Shared success stories of over 2,000 villages empowered and 300,000 lives improved.

Closing Acknowledgment:

Special thanks to the tech team led by Rtn. Shanno Ravi and the Hyatt Regency for their support.

Closing Remarks

President G. Chella Krishna thanked all members and guests for their participation and contributions.

The meeting concluded with fellowship and camaraderie.

Birthdays (13th Jan to 19th Jan 2025)	
Rtn. PP. Ranjit Pratap	13/1
Rtn. S. Suresh Kumar	13/1
Rtn. Vummidi Shailesh Raj	14/1
Rtn. Rajendra Mudaliar	18/1
Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti	19/1
Spouses' Birthdays	
Ann. Dr. Sushama Kekre, Spouse of Rtn. Dr. Prashant Kekre	18/1
Ann. Brinda, Spouse of Rtn. Suniel U. Lulla	18/1
Ann. Kashmira, Spouse of Rtn. PP. S. Kapil Chitale	19/1
Wedding Anniversary	
Rtn. Bharat B. Mohindra & Rashmi	16/1
Rtn. S. Abhay Mehta & Niyati Abhay Mehta	18/1







Suggest the most quirky, whacky or creative caption/blurb for this photo (Maximum 15 words). The best entries will be reproduced in the next week's edition of Lighthouse.

Mail your captions to editor@rcmlighthouse.com on or before 14th Jan.

Issue 28



Issue 27 : Best Captions

1. When Dev Saab and Zeenat united to watch a rerun of 'Hare Krishna Hare Ram.'
– **Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti**
2. Crazy... We are that funny. Are we?
– **Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota**
3. "Proof that a selfie, cocktail and great friends can turn any moment into a party masterpiece!" – **Rtn. N.K. Bhatia**
4. Holistic trip to Space ! - **Rtn. Asha Mathen**

The Tribal Tale Behind Araku Coffee

This week's speaker has brewed up something extraordinary: not just an exceptional coffee brand but a well-faring community. Mr. Manoj Kumar, the founder of Naandi Foundation, has rewrought the concept of service by empowering communities through skill development and sustainable livelihoods rather than merely offering financial aid.

His philosophy aligns closely with Rotary's vocational service ideals, which involve equipping individuals with skills and opportunities to become self-reliant, generation after generation.

From humble bean to global brand, Manoj Kumar's journey showcases how he transformed a small tribal community in the Araku Valley from struggling subsistence people into farmers who eventually helped to form a global brand of premium coffee production.

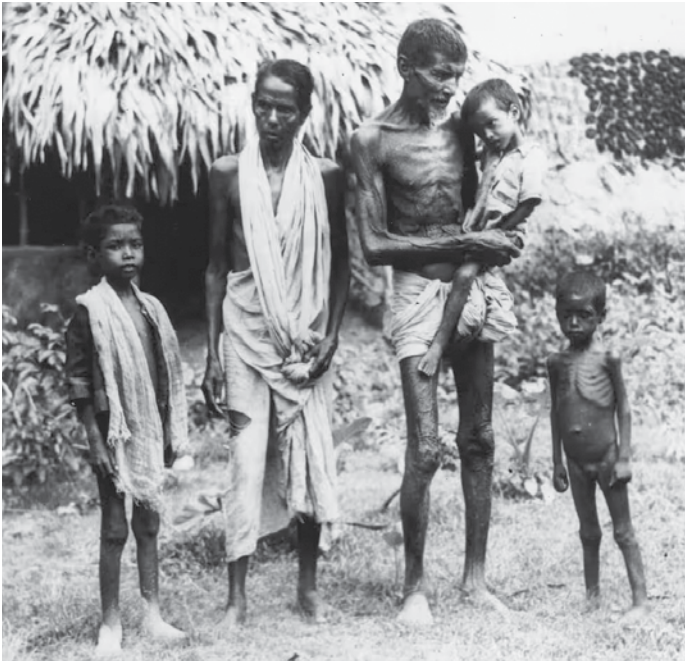
His out of box thinking and strategic approaches have been



pivotal in this change. During his presentation, Manoj shared two impactful images. The first image depicted the Bengal famine, while the second showcased how the Rotary Club of Calcutta established free kitchens during the 1943 famine to provide relief, to the starving population. Manoj expressed his honour at sharing a forum with Rotary, emphasizing that his service mindset mirrored that of a Rotarian.

Over the last 25 years, the Naandi Foundation has impacted over 8 million lives across India through its initiatives to reduce poverty, empower women and improve farmer livelihoods.

He often highlights how traditional non-profit strategies can fall short when addressing complex



challenges. By sharing personal stories, he has shown how unconventional approaches can drive positive change, especially in rural communities.

One of his most significant achievements has been the transformation of over 2,000 villages in the tribal Araku Valley, located in the Eastern Ghats. This region is home exclusively to tribal people. Private land ownership is prohibited. To live there, one must either be a member of a tribal community or marry into one. The region faces challenges like poverty, Naxalite insurgency and environmental degradation. Despite these difficulties, Manoj led a two-decade-long initiative that resulted in the creation of Araku Coffee, a globally recognized brand.

This initiative has not only brought prosperity to 300,000 tribal individuals but also positioned India on the global map of premium coffee production. What began as a retail brand launched in Paris in 2017 has expanded into full-fledged cafe formats in Bengaluru and Mumbai.

Initially, the project faced significant hurdles, including high production costs and market obscurity. However, through global collaborations with coffee experts and relentless efforts, a cooperative of 60,000 farmers was established. Today, Araku Coffee is recognized worldwide for its quality and eco-conscious practices, with nearly 50 million trees planted as part of the initiative's sustainability efforts.

Convincing tribal communities to adopt structured farming was no easy task. Many families, accustomed to living harmoniously with nature, were unfamiliar with working for profit. He shared a memorable exchange where a tribal woman skeptically questioned his origins, saying, "Are you from India? People from India are bad."

When Manoj responded, "I'm from Kerala," she replied, "If you're from Kerala, then it's okay." This humorous yet profound interaction highlighted the deep-rooted perceptions and the need for trust-building.

The breakthrough came when the communities noticed the gradual depletion of their forests, prompting a shift towards sustainable agriculture. The introduction of the 'food forest' model, where multiple crops are grown on a single plot, has since ensured a stable and sustainable livelihood for the tribal families.

To engage younger generations, Manoj introduced volleyball clubs, creating a strong sense of community and indirectly inspiring interest in coffee farming. Today, over 960 volleyball teams have been formed, fostering both community bonds and agricultural involvement. Additionally, to promote gender equality, the Naandi Foundation launched soccer teams for girls, beginning with 100 teams and aiming for 1,000, providing both sports opportunities and a platform for education and professional growth.

The Naandi Foundation's impact has been nothing short of extraordinary. Notably, the unique 'Red Truck' concept rewarding entire villages for producing high-quality coffee, has further fostered collective effort and community pride.

Manoj has invited Rotarians to visit Araku and plant trees as part of the ongoing mission, with nearly 49.9 million trees already planted. His leadership continues to inspire, showcasing how sustainable farming and community empowerment can create lasting positive change. Once struggling with poverty, tribal families now invest in gold, purchase vehicles, smartphones and save for future milestones like weddings.

Finally, It also reveals the remarkable capacity of forests, not only to sustain ecosystems but also to serve, nourish and ascend the entire tribal communities proving that lasting change is achievable when empowerment takes root at the grassroots level.

- Divya Priya Rajalingam



Cervical Cancer Vaccination Drive

A Shot of Prevention, A Lifetime of Protection



(This event is part of a series of ongoing initiatives to promote HPV vaccination.)

The Rotary Club of Madras, in partnership with Adyar Cancer Institute, launched an initiative to provide cervical cancer vaccinations to girl children in July 2024. As part of this endeavor, the 8th vaccination drive was held on December 26, 2024, for the children of Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Mylapore, Chennai.

70 students received their 1st dosage of the HPV vaccine at the Adyar Cancer Institute W.I.A. We are delighted to see the enthusiasm and cooperation from schools in getting their students vaccinated.

The vaccination drive has made a significant impact in protecting school children from cervical cancer. We look forward to continuing this initiative, reaching more children, and creating a healthier future.

The Rotary Club of Madras wrapped up its 9th cervical cancer vaccination camp.

The camp, held in partnership with Adyar Cancer Institute W.I.A on January 4, 2025, aimed to safeguard young girls against cervical cancer.

One hundred sixty-two students from Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya and Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls Higher Secondary School in Mylapore, Chennai, received their first HPV vaccine dose.

With continuous efforts in awareness for the school teachers and parents and with the tremendous support by Adyar Cancer Institute for the vaccinations; Together, we are making strides towards eliminating cervical cancer!

We look forward to continuing this initiative to reach more children in this crucial step towards protecting the health and well-being of our future generations.

- Swetha K C

RCM Reporting & Compliance Specialist





RCM Donates Therapy Kit to Institute of Child Health

On December 26, 2024, the Rotary Club of Madras (RCM) made a generous donation of a therapy kit to the Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children (ICH), Egmore. This thoughtful gesture aims to support the rehabilitation and development of autistic children. The therapy kit, comprising seven essential items, was formally handed over to the Autism Department by Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, President of RCM.

The donated items include:

- Auditory stimulation board
- Balance beam
- Bolster swing
- Bubble tube portable with mirror
- Bubble tube
- Infinity mirror
- Therapy mat

Several notable Rotarians participated in the event, including Rtn. A.M. Visvanathan, Director of Community Health; Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan, Chairperson of Community Service 2; Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath and Rtn. S. Balakrishna.

The children warmly welcomed the Rotary Club of Madras (RCM) with heartfelt gestures, presenting flowers to the visiting Rotarians. To further commemorate the occasion, Dr. Durairasan, Chief of ICH, presented a letter of acknowledgment to Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, the President of RCM.

The celebration gained momentum with a joyous cake-cutting ceremony. The children and Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan shared a delightful moment. An interactive session followed with Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath engaging with children and their parents.

The event concluded on a high note with a group photo capturing



the smiles of therapists, children and Rotarians, commemorating a memorable day of connection and community service.

- Joseph. P

RCM Reporting & Compliance Specialist

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