

THE LIGHTHOUSE

BOND | BUILD | BRING CHEER

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS | ISSUE 30 | January 26, 2025



**INAUGURATION OF RENOVATED TOILETS
AT RKM SARADA VIDYALAYA**



Dear RCMers,

According to reports, 30% of schools in India lack usable toilets and a significant percentage of girls drop out of school due to this reason.

Our cover story this week presents one of RCM's WASH initiatives.



Rtn.Shivkumar Eashwaran
Editor

Rtn.A.R.Raghuandan
Chairperson

Mr.Madhu Mathen
Co-Chairperson

ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS
invites you with your spouse
to the 29th weekly meeting
and
Republic Day
Celebrations at Selaiyur

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Rtn. PDG. Benjamin Chierian
Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari
Rtn. PP. Jayshree Shridhar
will walk us through the journey
and hear from
Rtn. Sanjay Chaganti
Director, Vocational Service
on the way forward
10:30 am - Flag Hoisting 10:45 am Meeting
followed by Lunch

Don't miss the elai sapat by Gnanambikai caterers

Rtn. G. Chella Krishna President
Rtn. Rajesh Mani Honorary Secretary
Rtn. Shanno Ravi Director - Club Service
Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan Chairperson - Programs Committee

THE LIGHTHOUSE

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- Mentors** : Rtn.PP.N.K.Gopinath
Rtn. PP.Indra Subramanyam

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Rotary Club of Madras Minutes of 27th Weekly Meeting held on 20-1-2025

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 27th 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 of the minutes of the 26th weekly meeting. The members approved and adopted the minutes by acclamation.

Welcome Address:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, extended a warm welcome to all Rotarians, spouses and guests. Special recognition was conveyed to visiting Rotarians, especially Rtn. PDG. Ganapathy, guests including Mr. Sriram, Mr. Arjun and Ms. Samitha.

HPVax Program Update:

- The club vaccinated 1,000 girl children, achieving the annual target within six months.
- Schools such as Shrine Vailankanni Senior Secondary School, Sarada Vidyalaya, and Sivaswami Group of Schools participated, thanks to efforts by members like Rtn. Manasa T. Pillai, President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna and Rtn. PP. P.V. Mohan Raman.
- The club has confirmation of an approved grant from the Infosys Foundation to fund an additional 1,000 vaccinations, with a March 31 deadline for completing the vaccinations.
- Members were encouraged to help identify deserving schools catering to lower socio-economic groups.

Special Recognition:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna and Rtn. R. Ravishankar honoured Rtn. Anand Rengaswamy, owner of Hotel Maris, for over 50 years of service to Chennai and his unwavering support of the club's activities. A memento was presented in recognition of his contributions.

Vocational Services Announcement:

Rtn. Deepak Chander announced the club's fourth industrial visit:

- Destination: Madras High Court
- Date: February 2, 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM
- Reporting Time: 6:45 AM

The visit is open to Rotarians and their spouses; registrations will close on January 26th for the visit. Special thanks was extended to Rtn. Justice Dr.M. Jaichandren for facilitating this visit.

Induction of New Member:

Rtn. PP. P.V. Mohan Raman introduced Mrs. Sharada Sriram for membership in our club. Sharada Sriram is a gold medallist in CA, CEO of the Abacus Learning Program and part of a family of Rotarians.



President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna emphasized the responsibilities of a Rotarian, including adherence to the Four-Way Test. Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath formally inducted her into the club.

Secretary's Announcements:

Rtn. Rajesh Mani announced the birthdays and anniversaries of Rotarians and their spouses.

The next meeting will feature Mr. Arvind P. Datar (Senior Advocate & Author) as the guest speaker on January 25th at the Madras Club (5:30 PM).

Introduction of the Guest Speaker:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai.

A tribute video highlighted his illustrious career in journalism, a career marked by awards such as the Padma Shri and his commitment to democracy and public accountability.

Rtn. V. Raja was acknowledged for organizing his visit as our Guest Speaker.

President G. Chella Krishna added the following announcements:

Republic Day - January 26th, 2025: The weekly meeting will be held at Selaiyur, which is just a 40-minute drive from Central Chennai.

Golf Tournament: A Golf Tournament is planned for January 31st, 2025. The day will conclude with a fellowship gathering.

Guest Speaker Session:

Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai engaged in a moderated session with Rtn. Sandhya Sridhar. The session featured insightful discussions on journalism, democracy and contemporary issues, marked by Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai's wit and candour.

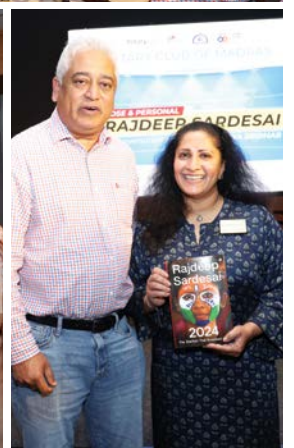
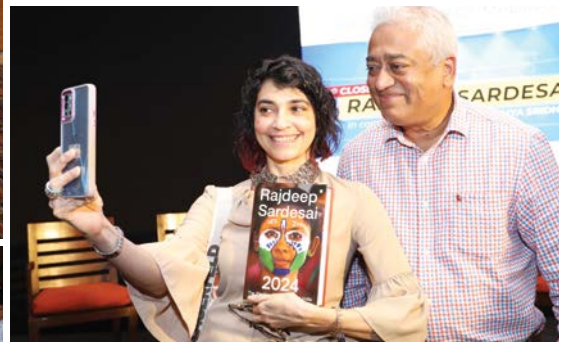
Vote of Thanks:

Rtn. PP. P.V. Mohan Raman, extended gratitude to all attendees, speakers and organizers for their contribution to the success of the meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting concluded with the National Anthem.





Is there Hope for Journalism?

(Up close and personal with Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai)

RCM was honoured to welcome one of India's most celebrated journalists, Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai. With a career spanning over three decades, he has been a trailblazer in the field of Indian journalism, combining integrity, insight and a commitment to storytelling.

Rajdeep began his journey in 1988 with *The Times of India*, where he gained recognition for his sharp political analysis. In 1994, he transitioned to television journalism,

joining NDTV as its Political Editor, eventually becoming Managing Editor in 1997. In 2005, he took a bold step by founding Global Broadcast News (now CNN-IBN), where he served as Editor-in-Chief, shaping it into one of India's most respected news channels.

Currently, he is a Consulting Editor with the India Today Group, where he continues to deliver impactful stories and in-depth analyses through his prime-time show.

His illustrious career has been marked by numerous awards, including:

- The **Padma Shri** (2008) for his contribution to journalism.
- The **International Broadcaster Award** for his exemplary coverage of the Gujarat riots.
- The **Ramnath Goenka Award** for Excellence in Journalism.
- The **Prem Bhatia Award** for Political Reporting.

Rajdeep Sardesai is also a bestselling author, whose books such as *2014: The Election that Changed India* and *Democracy's XI: The Great Indian Cricket Story* reflect his deep understanding of Indian politics and society.

He was introduced by Rtn. V. Raja as the guest speaker and interviewed by Rtn. Sandhya Sridhar in a lively and thought-provoking discussion, covering topics such as journalism, contemporary issues and his personal experiences.

What follows is a compilation of his insightful and candid responses.

Today's program is about getting to know you better, away from the spotlight. Your father was a cricketer, your mother an academician and activist. Can you share a bit about your family

“If covering Manipur's struggles makes me an activist, then I'm fine with that label.”



background and what led you to journalism? You once said, "All I wanted was to become a journalist."

That's a lie. My real ambition was to be a cricketer. The problem was, cricket requires talent and I didn't have it. Sports, like music, are truly meritocratic. Growing up, I was obsessed with cricket and often found myself constantly comparing my abilities to my father, who holds the distinction of being India's only cricketer from Goa. He had remarkable journey, learning from a village tailor and playing for India at 21, despite having no access to proper facilities until his late teens.

I tried desperately to follow in his footsteps. I captained Bombay Schools and even reached the India U-19 camp. But even when I scored 50, it wasn't enough; the comparison to my father's supposed 100s was always there. A humbling moment was being bowled by Abdul Qadir in a match against Pakistan. A Pakistani player even quipped about my inability to play spin.

Someone jokingly said, "When you're not good at anything else, there's always journalism." I had trained to be a lawyer and had a passion for news. I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time when television exploded in 1994. I didn't plan to be a TV journalist; it just happened. I wished I had the talent to be a cricketer, but it wasn't meant to be.

Journalism has treated you well, and you've excelled in it. How do you view your journey?

You're being very kind. I've been fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. I've been fortunate to witness India's transformation during my journalism career, starting in the late 80s, through the Mandal and Mandir movements and the economic liberalization post-1991. Moving to Delhi in 1994, I closely observed the country's changes, all of which benefited us.

I also recall my early days with Narendra Modi in 1989-90 and covering Ram Rath Yatra, one of my first significant political assignments.

My time at The Times of India, working alongside R.K. Laxman, shaped my perspective. It was a privilege to be a journalist at such a crucial time in Indian history.

After years of state-controlled media, NDTV was like a breath of fresh air—something novel and interesting. What happened to that story?

Revolutions often devour their own. In the early days, NDTV thrived with the novelty of 24/7 news, offering energy and innovation during that time, when news was sparse. We had the luxury of time, especially during the 1996 national elections, which lasted three days. Back then, there was no competition and we were the go-to channel for news.

However, as the market saturated with over 400, 24/7

A woman in Amravati whose husband committed suicide over a ₹1 lakh loan—something many would spend on a meal in five-star hotel. These stories rarely get the attention they deserve. Instead, sensationalism rules

news channels, the novelty faded and the focus shifted to sensationalism. The business model evolved, relying more on low-cost studio shows rather than in-depth reporting, as audiences became less willing to pay for quality news.

NDTV, like many others, was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. But today, platforms like YouTube and Netflix have reshaped traditional journalism, and the luxury of time is a thing of the past. The industry has changed, and while I miss the past.

After 36 years in journalism, you've witnessed the evolution of media. On one side, NDTV became legacy media, much like Doordarshan, and on the other side, we saw the rise of outlets like Times Now. Did this shift in news media change the game?

Yes, it did. Noise has overtaken meaningful discourse in media, especially after events like the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and UPA II corruption. Today, TV often showcases staged confrontations, such as mock fights between a Hindu Pandit and a Muslim Maulvi, for drama. Important issues like farm widows in Maharashtra, where thousands have died due to farmer suicides, rarely make it to primetime, while debates over religious disputes dominate.

I believe India's focus in the 21st century should be on schools, hospitals and improving lives, not on temple or mosque issues. I've seen firsthand the struggles of rural India, like a woman in Amravati whose husband committed suicide over a ₹1 lakh loan—something many would spend on a meal in five-star hotel. These stories rarely get the attention they deserve. Instead, sensationalism rules and while I don't agree with this style, it has its audience, and finding an alternative in today's media is a challenge.

In this high-octane, sensationalist media environment, doesn't real news become the first casualty?

Yes, absolutely. India is so vast and diverse, with countless stories to tell. Unfortunately, many of our TV



studios are in Noida, near Delhi, which means that a local issue in Delhi often takes precedence. For example, a drainpipe leaking in Noida could make breaking news, while a major flood in Chennai took a long time for national attention.

The problem lies in the business model. National channels focus heavily on Delhi, and stories from other parts of the country receive far less attention. Manipur, for instance, has been suffering for months, with people living in refugee camps, yet it only made headlines when a shocking video emerged. This is not just about real news—it's about reflecting the diversity of the country.

Why should news only focus on Delhi? India has over 730 districts, but how many of them are truly represented in the media. Take a woman being raped and murdered in Kolkata—it might lead to protests. But a similar tragedy in rural Chhattisgarh or Jharkhand won't spark the same response. It's troubling, but it's the way the media works today.

Why has ground reporting decreased, even with more media outlets, and why has news become more opinion-driven?

The decline in ground reporting is tied to the strained business model of legacy media. With an overwhelming number of news channels and limited advertising revenue, news organizations face

financial pressure. Sending reporters on the ground is expensive, whereas having studio debates is far cheaper. Ground reporting requires investment, but many Indian channels, even profitable ones don't prioritize it.

Moreover, government and corporate influence plays a significant role. The government is the largest advertiser, making it difficult for media to criticize it.

In India, media consolidation is happening quickly, with powerful business figures acquiring channels. This consolidation restricts independent journalism, as media becomes part of larger corporate empires. This business-driven model has led to a loss of critical journalism, with reporters silenced or threatened for speaking out. This erosion of media independence is a significant issue, as it threatens the foundations of democracy.

Is the pressure on journalists just a reality of their salaries and daily life, or is there a bigger issue at play?

The issue isn't just with journalists; The problem in media goes beyond journalists; it involves owners and government policies. In India, the lack of cross-media regulations allows monopolies to dominate entertainment and sports media, concentrating power in the hands of a few, which is unhealthy for democracy. Unlike other countries, where regulations prevent such

monopolies, India's business interests are often tied to government support, enabling media owners to acquire major outlets and further consolidate power.

With the rise of online media, younger generations are increasingly consuming news digitally, disrupting traditional media. Corporate pressure and the weakening business model of legacy media make it harder for journalists to provide quality, independent reporting. As a result, many young journalists are leaving the field for corporate communications or event management, leading to a tragic decline in opportunities for core journalism. This trend is worrying for the future of the profession.

How has social media changed journalism, and what are its impacts on news reporting?

Social media has had a profound impact on journalism, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, it brought people together, especially during crises like COVID-19, where real-time connections helped with urgent needs like blood donations or oxygen. In the past, reporting was slow, as during the Latur earthquake, where communication was delayed for days. Now, mobile phones and live streaming make instant reporting possible.

However, the dark side of social media is the spread of fake news and toxic content. It allows anyone to spread false stories anonymously, making it difficult to separate fact from fiction. Journalists have had to adapt to this change, often focusing on what trends on social media rather than important but less sensational issues, like farmer suicides. Instead, entertainment stories like celebrity updates dominate the headlines, turning news into a circus where the focus is on trivial matters. Social media, while a powerful enabler, has also become a disruptor of meaningful journalism.

How do you handle the trolling and abuse on Twitter, and does it affect you personally or professionally?

Initially, the trolling and abuse affected me, but I realized that the only opinions that truly matter are those of my friends and family. As long as I'm okay with them, I don't let the negativity from the wider world affect me. Over the last few months, I've spent time reconnecting with friends, especially those turning 60, and it brings comfort. On tough days, I find solace in Kishore Kumar's music or watching old Sachin Tendulkar videos.

Social media has made life more toxic at times, and while we can't completely disconnect from it, it's important to learn to live with it. It's part of our lives now, even though it has made the public more distrustful of traditional media.

Is there an element of distrust in the media today?

Yes, I think people still trust newspapers, as they carry weight and credibility. For example, seeing

my discussion featured in The Hindu made me feel proud. The bigger issue lies with digital and TV media, where the rush to be the first to report often leads to less accuracy.

I call it the "Usain Bolt-ization" of journalism—fast and superficial news. With digital media, unverified stories circulate easily, like one about Saif Ali Khan being stabbed, which lacked proper cross-verification.

This bombardment of conflicting, unverified information fuels public mistrust. Journalism should focus on fact-checking as a crucial model for the future.

Politics and journalism seem closely linked now, especially with your wife, Sagarika Ghosh, entering politics. How do you manage this dichotomy?

She has chosen politics and I respect that; it's her decision. I try to keep it out of our home life. As a journalist, I believe having a conscience is important. For example, during the Gujarat riots, I covered the deaths caused by religious violence. Some people might label that as activism, but to me, it was just doing my job as a citizen.

Journalists often face tough situations. I was deeply affected by covering the 1992-93 Mumbai riots, which were traumatizing but lacked visuals. Gujarat was the first communal riot during the TV era, and I was caught in it. I believe it's essential to tell the stories of ordinary people, like the Mody family who lost their son during the riots, but never got an apology.

Some journalists may act as activists when they tell uncomfortable stories, but it's important to shed light on societal issues. If covering Manipur's struggles makes me an activist, then I'm fine with that label.

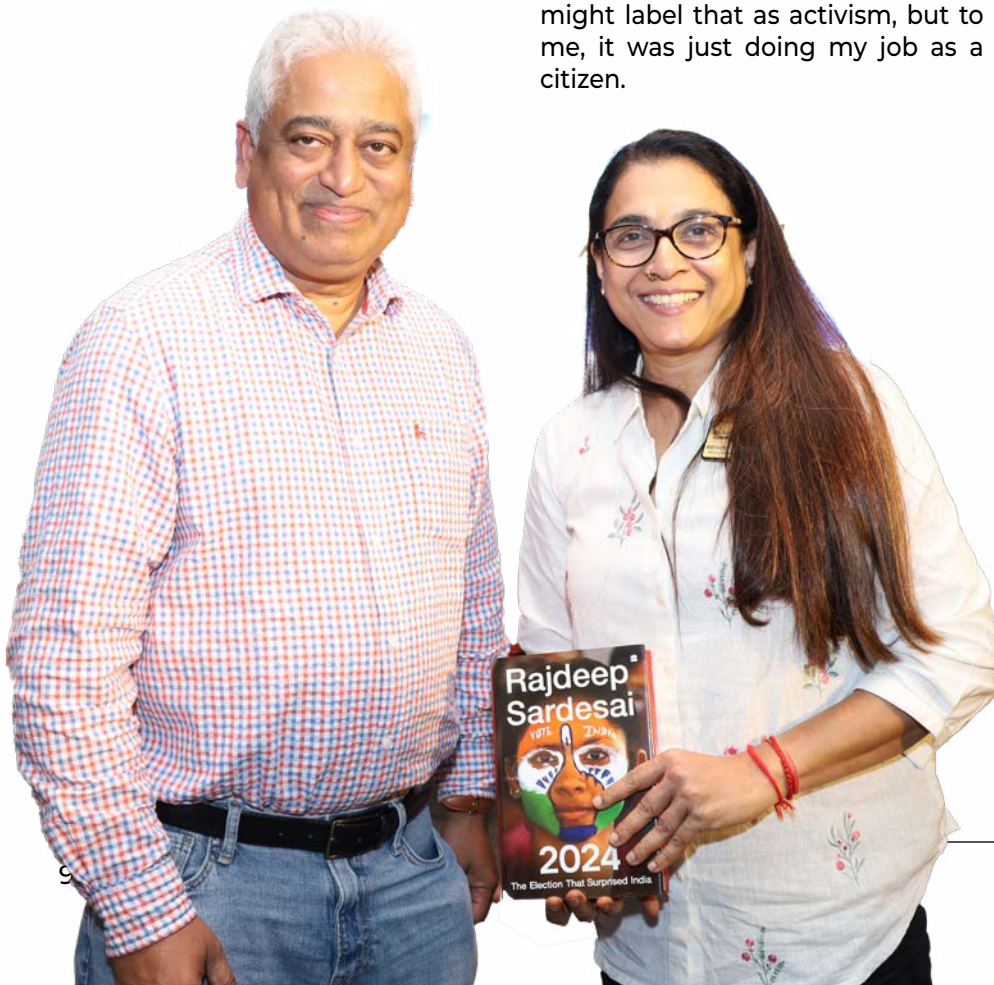
Can you share a little about your family?

My wife runs everything at home, and I'm lucky my children have chosen careers outside of journalism and politics. My son, an ENT surgeon, started a facial aesthetics clinic, while my daughter, a lawyer in Mumbai, feels it's the safest city for women. I'm proud they've carved their own paths, as the younger generation values merit over legacy. As a parent, I try to let them pursue their dreams. I regret not spending more time with them when I was younger.

To bring dignity and accuracy back to news reporting, a cultural shift is necessary, one that encourages businesses and citizens to invest in true journalism. It's not just about giving money but showing courage to back uncomfortable truths, which is essential for preserving democracy and ensuring accountability.

In conclusion, the future of journalism, whether through mainstream media or independent collectives, requires bold action, support for integrity and a collective effort to hold power to account, all while continuing to celebrate the stories of hope.

- Divya Priya Rajalingam



NETS – The Perfect Pitch

The NETS, held on 17th and 18th January 2025 at Mylapore Club, was a thrilling spectacle that brought together over 100 Rotarians for an exciting display of their skillset. Owners and marquee players had the opportunity to evaluate players up close before the auction, as NETS offered a unique platform to showcase their raw skills, fitness and potential.

This year, the event introduced a fresh emphasis on fair play, allowing owners and marquee players to observe how the players perform under controlled conditions. Led by an energetic team of Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran, Rtn. S. Balakrishna and Rtn. Shailesh Vummidi Raj, the event was designed to bring out the best in the players.

Each player had a 10-minute window to impress with their batting and bowling skills, giving Rotarians a glimpse of their talents. With the high competition and enthusiasm, the NETS was a huge success.



The field is now set for the much-anticipated auction, scheduled for 24th January 2025 at Diamond Hall, Presidency Club.

Players will be classified into four categories based on their demonstrated skills:

- Platinum: ₹50,000 /-
- Diamond: ₹25,000 /-
- Gold: ₹15,000 /-
- Silver: ₹10,000 /-

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to see which players will be chosen for RCMPL 2—it promises to be a spectacular start!



RCM PREMIER LEAGUE

SEASON II | Feb - March 2025

Get ready for the cricketing action
you've been waiting for!!!!

MATCH DATES (FEB - MARCH 2025)

SATURDAYS	SUNDAYS
15th FEBRUARY	16th FEBRUARY
1st MARCH	2nd MARCH
8th MARCH	9th MARCH

Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran
Chairman - RCMPL

Rtn. G. Chella Krishna
President 2024-25

Rtn. S. Balakrishna
Co-Chairman - RCMPL

Rtn. Vummidi Shailesh Raj
Treasurer - RCMPL

Rtn. A R Raghunandan
Secretary - RCMPL

Rtn. Rajesh Mani
Hon. Secretary 2024-25

Celebrating Generational Legacy

Any organization that has stood the test of time, whether corporate or non-profit, embodies a rich history and a commitment to service. The Rotary Club of Madras, with its 96 years of dedicated service, exemplifies this legacy. Our club's success is deeply rooted in the contributions of thousands of Rotarians who have generously offered their time, skills and resources.



Among these remarkable individuals are unique families of Rotarians whose contributions span two or even three generations. These families have not only continued the tradition of service but have also seen multiple members, including fathers and sons, take on the prestigious role of President of our club at different times.

Here is a list of extraordinary Rotarian families who have left an indelible mark on our community.

- Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath

FATHER AND SON WHO WERE PRESIDENTS OF OUR CLUB

First Generation	Second Generation
Rtn. G.A. Phadke (1963-64)	Rtn. R.G. Phadke (1981-82)
Rtn. S.L. Krish Chitale (1982-83)	Rtn. S. Kapil Chitale (2020-21)
Rtn. PDG. Benjamin R. Cherian (1997-98)	Rtn. George B. Cherian (2009-10)

LIST OF 3RD GENERATION ROTARIANS CURRENTLY IN RC MADRAS

First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation
Rtn. N.C. Cunnan (late)	Rtn. M. Prabhat Kumar (late)	Rtn. M. Pratap Kumar
Rtn. PDG S. Sundararaman (late)	Rtn. Ashok Sundararaman (late)	Rtn. Dr. Anisha Ashok
Rtn. V.P. Raman (late)	Rtn. PP. P.V. Mohan Raman	Rtn. Vikram P. Raman

LIST OF 2ND GENERATION ROTARIANS CURRENTLY IN RC MADRAS:

First Generation	Second Generation
Rtn. Surendra Mehta (late)	Rtn. Abhay Mehta
Rtn. M.K. Bhargava (late)	Rtn. Alok Bhargava
Rtn. B. Shivkumar	Rtn. Bharat Shivkumar
Rtn. PDG. Benjamin R. Cherian	Rtn. George B. Cherian
Rtn. G. Ramaswamy (late)	Rtn. Gowri R. Shanker
Rtn. V. Balaraman (late)	Rtn. B. Kannan
Rtn. PP S.L. Chitale (late)	Rtn. PP. S. Kapil Chitale
Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari	Rtn. Maithili Shaan Katari Libby
Rtn. S. A. Kharche (late)	Rtn. Prashanth S. Kharche
Rtn. R. Baba Shankar	Rtn. Rajesh Shankar
Rtn. PP. PCM. Somasundaram (late)	Rtn. Rajesh Somasundaram
Rtn. Dr. Venkatasubramanian	Rtn. Dr. V. Ramasubramanian
Rtn. M.R. Pratap (late)	Rtn. Ranjit Pratap
Rtn. PP. V. Emberumanar Chetty (late)	Rtn. V. Sridhar
Rtn. Srinivasan (late)	Rtn. S. Srilatha
Rtn. PP. P.S. Govindachari (late)	Rtn. Sriya Chari
Rtn. Srinivasan (late)	Rtn. S. Subramaniam
Rtn. C.T. Philip (late)	Rtn. Thomas Philip
Rtn. G.M. Mahadevan (late)	Rtn. G.M. Udayanarayan
Rtn. PDG M. Balaji (late)	Rtn. Vijay Balaji
Rtn. Shankar Jalan (late)	Rtn. Vikram Jalan
Rtn. K. Rajkumar	Rtn. Anjali Ponni Rajkumar
Rtn. H.E. Abdul Azeez	Rtn. Ateeq Ur Rehman
Rtn. PP B. Shivkumar	Rtn. Bikram Shivkumar
Rtn. Ashok Bajaj (late)	Rtn. Mohit Bajaj
Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan	Rtn. Rachna Muralidharan
Rtn. PP. H.R. Pandurang (late)	Rtn. P. Ravishankar
Rtn. Gopal Madhavan	Rtn. Sanjay Madhavan
Rtn. Dr. H. Krishna Hande	Rtn. Siddharth Hande
Rtn. M.K. Jain	Rtn. Vardhaman Jain
Rtn. N.P. Jamal (late)	Rtn. N. Mahmud Jamal

The Holy Slices of Happiness

Happiness is a feeling of contentment, joy, or fulfilment that can be complex. It is often associated with positive experiences but can also arise spontaneously. So, how does one achieve it? We were fortunate to explore this question with a life coach, Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti, who believes that a fulfilling life is possible for everyone.

On January 19, 2025, on a pleasant evening, Coach Sanjay dedicated his special birthday to a few of us who wanted to solve the mystery of how to attain and stay happy.

The gathering was held at the historic and graceful Hotel Maris, hosted by the owner, Rtn. Anand Ranganathan. The evening featured a delightful array of crisp and hot vadas, sweet and colourful Kesari, piping hot sambar and delicious chutney continuously plied on us, not to mention the delightful kaapi. The celebration also included a cake-cutting ceremony for the ever-youthful Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti, accompanied by his wife, Lata Murugan.

Rtn. Shanno Ravi and Rtn. Sumit Kumar Kalra had set the stage for a relaxed evening with all the tools



required to crack the code to happiness.

Tackling an abstract topic like happiness can sometimes get complicated, preachy or overly instructional to the point where one may lose the plot. But Sanjay masterfully avoided these pitfalls. His passion for learning, sharing and motivating others shone through as he drew from his travels and experiences in the United States, Africa and Asia, blending ancient

traditions with modern psychology and neuroscience.

He began with the power of unity in mind that leads to the unity of action, drawing from his experience in Zambia during his fieldwork. The word that changed his game was 'Tillitonse,' which means: I am with you or on the same page. It is a single word that emphasizes unity, oneness and synergy.

The road map to happiness: positivity, snapshot and plan

Positivity:

Sanjay introduced seven key elements or slices, that form the constitution of happiness. These are the slices of the pizza of happiness:

1. **Social:** Friends, family and community – what we define as inner and outer circles.
2. **Physical:** Taking care of our physical well-being.
3. **Inner:** Nurturing our spiritual, mental and emotional space.
4. **Career:** Where many of us spend more time than we realize.
5. **Economic:** Financial empowerment to support and explore other aspects of life.





6. **Adventure:** Activities outside of work and family that bring joy and excitement.
7. **Impact:** Actions we take that impact other individuals, communities and society.

This well-rounded “pie of happiness” highlights the importance of balance. Empty slices will impact and spill over into other areas, disrupting fulfillment in life. Sanjay encouraged us to reflect on each slice and assess how fulfilled we felt in each area of life. We even created pictorial representations of our personal happiness pizzas. This exercise turned out to be surprising and enlightening, leaving us with a deep sense of gratitude and positivity as we reflected on our accomplishments.

Snapshot:

Next, we paired up with members we knew the least and shared our reflections. This exchange was an eye-opener:

- A participant working on women’s empowerment shared their journey.
- Another reflected the need to address environmental issues like dead turtles washing up on shores.
- A new mother shared the joys and challenges of giving birth and raising a child.
- A mentor expressed gratitude and pride in seeing their protégés grow into mentors.



Gratitude was the common thread uniting us all, and we felt positive upon realizing our achievements and milestones. We also noted the areas we have to work on.

Plan:

Sanjay reminded us that the “urgent” often overshadows the “important,” leading to imbalances in our happiness pizza. To address this, he shared a weekly agenda that dedicates time and space to all seven slices of happiness. He emphasized:

- “Real decisions are marked by action. Without action, there is no real decision.”

The session concluded with a collective commitment to take actionable steps toward enjoying every slice of the happiness pizza. We left deeply grateful for the fun, interactive, introspective, and insightful session that Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti gifted us on his birthday.

- Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan

Inauguration of Renovated Toilets at RKM School

On January 20th, the Rotary Club of Madras inaugurated newly renovated toilet blocks and handwash stations at Sri RKM Sarada Vidyalaya Matriculation School, T. Nagar. Funded by the Usha-Vinod Saraogi Foundation and IPP Rtn. Sunderesan Ravi this initiative benefits 735 students, enhancing hygiene and sanitation facilities.

The event featured a warm welcome by the school principal, Mrs. Geetha, and advisor, Mrs. Shardha. Distinguished guests included DG Rtn. AKS Vinod Saraogi, PDC Usha Saraogi, President Rtn. Chella Krishna, IPP Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, Rtn. Ravishankar R., and Rtn. Nikhil Raj. DG Rtn. Vinod Saraogi unveiled the plaque, dedicating the facilities to the students.

IPP Ravi Sundaresan who initiated and guided this project highlighted the importance of proper maintenance, while President Rtn. Chella Krishna inspired students to stay focused and disciplined. An engaging interaction with Rotarians added liveliness to the event.

The students expressed their gratitude with a devotional song and heartfelt prayers, while teachers presented bouquets to the Rotarians.

For underprivileged students, access to clean and hygienic toilets is transformative —reducing absenteeism, ensuring dignity, and fostering a safe learning environment. Projects like this align with Rotary’s global WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) initiative, providing sustainable hygiene solutions to improve lives, promote education and empowers children to focus on their studies and break barriers to success.





Congratulations to our **Rtn.N.Ramji** for having received the Vocational Excellence Award from the Rotary Club of Adyar.



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 28th Jan.

Issue 30



Issue 29 : Best Captions

1. Our Gambhir in discussion with our Rohit. – **Rtn. PP. A.S. Venkhat Ramani**
2. “Listen carefully, I have mastered this move in chess and in life. Your next move is already checkmated.” – **Rtn. N.K. Bhatia**
3. “I have a brilliant idea – a Doodle Blue team for RCMPPL 2!” – **Rtn. Asha Mathen**
4. RCM premier league Chairman stating, “With this one finger I can fix the entire batting lineup of all the other teams.”

Sustainability Fair 2025 A Platform for Awareness and Action

The Sustainability Fair, held on January 12, 2025, was an initiative by the Environment Committee of the Rotary Club of Madras. It was organized with the support of Environment Chair Rotarian Gautham Reddy's Institute for Climate and Environment (ICE). The event was part of the full club fellowship hosted by Rtn. PP. Ranjit Pratap to celebrate Pongal.

The fair aimed to create awareness about sustainable living, with showcasing entrepreneurs being one part of the larger mission.

The event provided a unique platform for seven eco-conscious entrepreneurs to present their innovative solutions to over 100 Rotarians and guests, fostering meaningful conversations and inspiring action for a greener future.

The Featured Entrepreneurs:

- **Plastic Free Madras:** Promoting alternatives to single-use plastics.
- **NILE Life:** Innovating eco-friendly products to encourage sustainable living.
- **Nilayaan:** Focusing on waste segregation for cleaner communities.
- **TVAM:** Specializing in fabric recycling and reuse.
- **Heritage House:** Offering organic perfumes crafted from natural ingredients.
- **Paper Dolphin:** Producing eco-friendly books and stationery.
- **MARG Constructions:** Building carbon-conscious and sustainable communities.

To make the event more engaging and interactive, color-coded wristbands featuring sustainability messages—such as carpooling, electric vehicle use, water conservation and energy saving—were distributed. These wristbands encouraged dialogue and promoted awareness of green practices.

Sustainability was also embedded in the event's operations, with Uncle Sam's Kitchen ensuring eco-friendly catering through the use of reusable cutlery, avoiding single-use plastics, and composting food waste post-event.

We thank Rtn. PP. Ranjit Pratap and the Fellowship Committee of RCM, along with the entrepreneurs and the ICE team, for their efforts in fostering awareness and action toward a sustainable future.



Empowering Students with Diabetes Knowledge

The Rotary Club of Madras, in collaboration with the Indian Council for Child Welfare, Tamil Nadu (ICCW-TN), and Motilal Fomra Sanatana Dharma Higher Secondary School, organized a diabetes awareness program for students. This initiative was the fourth in a series of awareness activities to educate students about the causes, symptoms, and precautions of diabetes.



The program, attended by over 132 students from grades 7 to 9, commenced with a welcome address by the Principal of Motilal Fomra Sanatana Dharma Higher Secondary School. Mr. Vasudevan, the resource person, delivered an informative session on diabetes, empowering students with the knowledge to promote diabetes prevention and management among the younger generation.

The program concluded on a successful note. A poster on diabetes awareness was presented to the principal as a token of appreciation to reinforce the importance of diabetes awareness among students.

-Joseph. P
RCM Reporting & Compliance Specialist

Birthdays

(27th Jan to 2nd Feb 2025)

Rtn. Anil Saraogi	28/1
Rtn. PDG. J.B. Kamdar	28/1
Rtn. Dr. B. Ramachandran	28/1
Rtn. Rajit Mhetras	29/1
Rtn. R.K. Jhaver	30/1

Spouses' Birthdays

Ann. Dr. Ravi Ramalingam PHF, Spouse of Rtn. Shanno Ravi	27/1
Ann. Cyrus Poncha, Spouse of Rtn. Roshan Poncha	27/1
Ann. Rajesh Devaraj, Spouse of Rtn. Archana Parikh	29/1
Ann. Vinolia Lobo, Spouse of Rtn. Antony Lobo	31/1

Wedding Anniversary

Rtn. PP. Dr. B. Shivkumar & Rtn. Sudha Shivkumar	27/1
Rtn. Rajesh Shankar & Lalitha	29/1
Rtn. R. Ravishankar & Geetha Ravishankar	29/1
Rtn. Mahinder Jain & Sarita Jain	30/1
Rtn. A.M. Visvanathan & Poornima	30/1
Rtn. Hemant P. Chordia & Pinky	31/1

Newly Inducted Members



Rtn. Dr. R. Narasimhan

I am Dr. R. Narasimhan, a Pulmonologist from Apollo Hospitals. We are a family of doctors, except my wife, who was a banker with an Indian Overseas Bank and who is on the board of my foundation, the Respiratory Research Foundation of India, of which I am the chairman. My whole family works in Apollo Hospital. I am a Pulmonologist of 40 years, standing in Apollo Hospitals. I had my pulmonology training at the University of Pittsburgh, where I was trained in lung transplantation and interventional Pulmonology. My son is a Robotic Thoracic Surgeon, my daughter is an interventional Pulmonologist, my daughter-in-law is an EEG surgeon, and my son-in-law is an emergency consultant. My area of interest is respiratory. I am passionate about the surgery activity that you can do for tuberculosis patients.

I look forward to joining the Rotary Club of Madras and doing my best for the service. There are some unfinished tasks that I wanted to do as a Rotarian in my previous change, and I think that I will probably be able to carry them forward in my next mission.



Rtn. Balraj Vasudevan

I am Balraj Vasudevan. I am the chairman of Devendra Autocom Private Limited. We are in the business of manufacturing parts for the defence of trucks and tractor industry as original equipment suppliers. I am also the managing trustee of the Banyan. The Banyan is involved in looking after mentally ill and destitute women. I have been associated with the Banyan for almost 30 years, and it is an incredible organization. I am so happy to be a part of it.

I have fond memories of being part of the Rotary, especially since my father was a Rotarian and a member of the Rotary Club of Madras Fest. As a youngster, I attended many events because of his involvement, which was an incredible experience during my formative years. Many years later, I became a member of the Rotary Club of Madras and remained part of it for almost 10 years.

I had to step away from Rotary earlier due to personal commitments, but I am thrilled to share that I have now reapplied for membership and have been accepted back into the club. I am confident that I can contribute meaningfully, just as I have in the past as a member. Thank you all for welcoming me back into the Rotary family.



Rtn. Sharada Sriram

I am Sharada Sriram. I am excited to join the Rotary Club of Madras. I completed my schooling at Rosary Matriculation and earned my B. Com Degree from Stella Maris. Although I pursued ICWA and CA, I chose not to pursue a career in auditing.

I established a business franchising children's program, which has been incredibly rewarding. What I find most fulfilling is working closely with women entrepreneurs and making a positive impact on children. My hobbies are music and dance. I love to travel. I also used to play a lot of tennis and swim, but now I can't find time to pursue all this. However, I enjoy listening to music and traveling these days. I'm married to Sriram, and we have two sons, Avinash, who's in London working for A.T. Kearney and Abhinav, who is doing his MBA in Berkeley. My husband runs a family business that is into Industrial Hydraulics. He also does a lot of work on the history of Madras.

A Polished Diamond

Revitalizing Our Selaiyur Operations

As we welcome RCMers to celebrate Republic Day at Selaiyur, we take a moment to highlight our recent journey.

This year, we set two clear objectives for the Selaiyur campus:

1. Infuse new energy on campus.
2. Professionalize our offerings

Transformation of the Space:

We took on a significant clean-up and transformation of the warehouse and overall campus area. The campus now looks much more welcoming and professional.

The RCM members came together for this significant transformation, marking the first-ever regular RCM meeting hosted at the Selaiyur campus, a milestone worth celebrating.

Professionalizing Our Offerings:

1. Introduced Paid Classes:

After years of offering free courses, we started to charge for classes this year, with no drop in student registrations. Kudos to Vimalleshwari, our site manager and her team.

2. Spoken English Classes:

Launched based on community needs, with fees covering 75% of trainer expenses.

3. NIIT Foundation Partnership:

Trainers are now certified by NIIT and students follow

a revised curriculum, that includes textbooks. Upon completion, they will receive NIIT Foundation certificates.

4. Relocation & Upgradation of Tailoring Centre:

Moved from Sembakkam to Selaiyur, is now in the process of tying up with Skill India. A new batch with Skill India certification will start next month. Special thanks to Ann. Deepti Prasanna, for her remarkable work in upgrading the facilities.

While partnerships with Murugappa and TVS Training Services didn't materialize, but we did try.

Looking ahead, we plan to introduce professional programs that add value to our beneficiaries and collaborate with more professional organizations at Selaiyur. Our goal is to maximize the potential of this hidden gem and make the most of its untapped opportunities.

Special thanks to Chairperson Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota. His inclusive style, sense of humour, unflappable temperament and ability to get along with everybody has been useful. With mentoring from Rtn. IPP. Jayshree Sridhar and site manager Vimalleshwari, the trio, who have been together for a few years are the great example of a well-functioning team.

Let us continue building on this momentum together and make Selaiyur a hub of opportunity and empowerment!

- Team Vocational Services



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