

THE LIGHTHOUSE

BOND | BUILD | BRING CHEER

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS | ISSUE 31 | February 02, 2025



RYLA camp for Interactors



Dear RCMers,

RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) is important to Rotary because it helps build the next generation of leaders and demonstrates Rotary's respect for youth.

This issue's cover story features RCM's annual RYLA event.



Rtn.Shivkumar Eashwaran
Editor

Rtn.A.R.Raghuandan
Chairperson

Mr.Madhu Mathen
Co-Chairperson

Rotary Club of Madras
30th Weekly Meeting

TOPIC "Fundamentals of GenAI: 10x productivity. Use Case: A day in the life of RCM Directors"

SPEAKER **Rtn. Mehul Nanavati**
a certified Trainer of Trainers (VJAL Institute, Dubai).

Tuesday, 4th February 2025 | 1.30 pm
Lunch : 12:30 - 1:30 pm at Hyatt Regency, Chennai.
(Please note that spouses are cordially invited for this meeting)

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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Rotary Club of Madras
Minutes of 28th Weekly Meeting held on 25-1-2025
 at Madras Club, Chennai

Call to Order:

The meeting commenced at 05.30 PM. Sergeant at Arms, Rtn. Jayant Hemdev collared President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, who then called the 28th 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 27th weekly meeting minutes, which was passed and adopted by way of acclamation.

Welcome Address:

President G. Chella Krishna extended a warm welcome to all Rotarians, spouses and guests.

Special recognition was accorded to Mrs. Himani Datar and other distinguished guests.

Announcements and Updates

Golf Tournament Update:

Rtn. Jacob Kurian announced the Rotary Club of Madras Merchants and Bankers Golf Tournament to be held on Friday, the 31st of January.

The event includes a new senior category (70+ years) and a putting competition for non-golfers, which has seen enthusiastic participation.

MIOT Hospitals (The Madras Institute of Orthopaedics and Traumatology) contributed ₹30 lakhs as sponsorship, with other sponsors also making a significant contribution.

The tournament is expected to raise funds for community projects that will support clothing, shelter, education and skill development initiatives.

A fellowship dinner will be held on the same evening 31/01/2025

Recognition of 25-Year Members:

Rtn. G.S.K. Masud and Rtn. PP. S. Kapil Chitale were honoured for completing 25 years of service in Rotary.

Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath spoke about Rtn. Masud's pivotal role in tsunami relief efforts, particularly his contribution in raising ₹ 1 crore,.

Republic Day Activities:

Secretary Rtn. Rajesh Mani announced the club's Republic Day celebrations at Rotary Nagar (7:30 AM) and Selaiyur (10:30 AM).

Members were invited to participate in the flag hoisting and enjoy an "elai sappadu" lunch by Gnanambiga Caterers at Selaiyur.



Special Recognition:

A special birthday greeting was extended to Secretary Rtn. Rajesh Mani.

Guest Speaker Introduction:

The highlight of the evening was the keynote address by Senior Advocate Mr. Arvind P. Datar.

Mr. Arvind P. Datar's illustrious career, including landmark cases on privacy law, the Vodafone tax case and the Sahara-SEBI matter, was highlighted.

His integrity and relentless approach to securing justice, particularly recovering ₹23,000 crores for depositors in the Sahara case, were lauded.

The session was moderated by Rotarian Vikram P. Raman.

Conclusion:

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Rtn. Justice. Rtn. Dr. M. Jaichandren.

Adjournment:

President Chella Krishna G adjourned the meeting.

National Anthem:

The meeting ended with the National Anthem.



A P D on the dock



Arvind Datar in the ‘Dock’

The RCM had the honour of being addressed by senior advocate Arvind P. Datar - a legendary figure in the Indian legal fraternity. Having schooled in Mumbai, he completed his law degree from Madras Law College and was designated as a Senior Advocate by the Madras High Court in 2000. He has argued landmark cases, including the Vodafone matter, the Sabarimala case, and the SEBI-Sahara case.

A strong influence on his career has been his role model, the late Mr. Nani Palkhivala. As a tribute, Datar authored "Essays & Reminiscences on Nani Palkhivala" and "The Courtroom Genius." He has also written several books on taxation and constitutional law. Datar's contributions have earned him recognition as one of India's top seven lawyers, as featured in the prestigious book "Legal Eagles: Lawyers of India".

Excerpts from Arvind P. Datar in conversation with Rtn. V.P. Raman

How come you didn't want to follow your father's footsteps and enter the Indian Merchant Navy?

Growing up, I was inspired by my father's stories and wanted to join the Indian Merchant Navy. I dreamed of becoming a captain and starting my own shipping company, DISCO - Datar International Shipping Co. However, fate had other plans for me and in Grade 11, I was disqualified from applying for the exam on grounds of health.

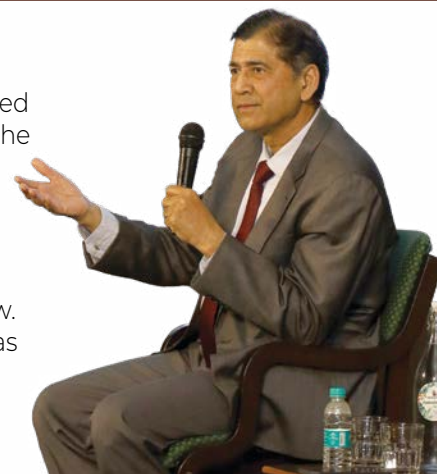
I then prepared for the IIT exam but faced another challenge when I developed a severe intestinal twist. After recovering, I decided to pursue a BSc Honors

degree in Physics and Mathematics in Bombay. It was there that I attended Nani Palkhivala's lectures and decided to pursue law.

I returned to Madras, determined to complement my law degree with Cost Accounting to become a tax lawyer. In hindsight, my ill health turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

You have almost “delusional positivity” & your first client after you enrolled at the Bar was yourself. Tell us about it .

Well yes, it was after a Moot Court Competition which we won as students but for which I was not reimbursed



my travel expenses. So, I waited patiently until I cleared all my exams and received my Good Conduct Certificate without which I can't practice - and then sued the Madras Law College on my first day of entering the Bar for a travel expense reimbursement of Rs 674. I'm proud to say I won my first case.

A meticulous planner by nature, how did you chart your course onto becoming a good tax lawyer?

I started with a year's foundation in Civil Law before specializing over another 3 years. And then began my practice at just Rs 1,400, declining a lucrative offer as a Cost Accountant. My wife's support was invaluable during this time. At 18, I had decided to be financially independent from my father, earning money mostly through writing articles and teaching. With a passion for both law and cars, my goal was to own a Mercedes Benz, but I eventually bought my first car at 34, after having two children.

What made you choose Excise and diverge from the path of your role model Mr. Nani Palkhivala?

I was driven by the inspiration of management gurus Peter F. Drucker and Jim Slater, I applied the Zulu Principle and carved a niche in indirect tax, a relatively uncharted territory at the time, avoiding competition with established giants. I then went on to publishing my first book in Excise and Law. This marked a turning point in my career, my practice quadrupled and there was no looking back.

Why did you divert from Excise and write on the Constitution of India?

After my book on Excise, I went onto Company Law, where I edited the Ramaiya's Guide to the Companies Act -so I was constantly working on two branches - Excise and Company Law. The Constitution was always at the back of my mind.

Your obsession for time management - where did that come from?

I owe a lot to Peter F. Drucker, his first book "Managing for Results" Chapter - "Know thy time" set me thinking and I resolved that time is the most irreplaceable resource - time gone is time gone. I had no option but to marshal my time.

You have time for some hobbies now?

As a lawyer, I've had my share of adventures outside the courtroom. My wife and I travel annually, and recently drove from Delhi to Atal Tunnel, replicating Nazir Hoosein's 1981 rally route. The experience was surreal - emerging from the tunnel, China lay to our right and Pakistan to our left.

And, inspired by Arunima Sinha's Mount Everest feat, I trekked to Everest Base Camp at 66, completing it with 90 days of training. For my 70th birthday, I wanted to tackle Annapurna, but my family vetoed it due to safety concerns.

One last thing on your personal front - your obsession with seeing courthouses - tell us about it.

Yes, I love seeing Courthouses and how they function in different parts of the country on my travels and even on my honeymoon to the Bird Sanctuary in Bharatpur, I took my wife to see the District Court there! Have seen several courthouses over India during my vacations with family, in Goa, Ceylon, Boston & Washington except in Tokyo where my wife Himani put her foot down!





Work took you frequently to the Supreme Court but there was one big tax matter that gave you prominence. It diversified your practice.

It was on the issue of retrospective taxation for the Vodafone Case. I was in The Hague for 18 days for the International Treaty of Arbitration against the Republic of India . It was my misfortune to argue against India but we succeeded and got damages of \$1.1 billion USD.

Onto the famous Sahara case - all the senior senior advocates were blocked by Sahara by paying them a retainer. So how did the case come to you?

It was sheer luck and I got the Sahara case through a SEBI lawyer who saw me argue for Daiichi Sankyo. I represented SEBI independently, starting in 2010. Sahara had raised ₹25,000 crores from three crore people, disguising a public offering as a private placement. I successfully argued that it was a public offering, but refunds remain incomplete.

Apart from this crown jewel, can you talk about Decriminalisation of Homosexuality ?

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code stated that carnal intercourse against the order of nature is punishable with imprisonment, and the law contemplated sex between same sex partners being against the order of nature. But medical research in the UK proved that of any given population, 3% could have same sex orientation and that it was not unnatural. (The Wolfenden Report.) And along with representation from the LGBTQ community and research from across the world that same sex relationships are not of a “criminal” nature, the Supreme Court decriminalised it.

We are in the 75th year of the Indian Constitution. Can you tell us what is special about it?

The Preamble is a marvellous document and everyone should read it. Professor Tom Ginsburg

studied the constitution of 180 countries and concluded that the average lifespan of a constitution worldwide is approximately 16 years. The USA's is 200 and India's is 75 – and it is indeed a matter of pride that for a country with our size and great diversity, the Constitution has survived so long, and that describes the greatness of our Constitution.

Justice, Equality, Liberty & Fraternity – all these are the cornerstones of any democracy and I am certain that we will go on to celebrate 100 years of our Constitution.

- Rtn. Roshan Poncha

Birthdays		(3rd Feb to 9th Feb 2025)
Rtn. Vijay Dugar		3/2
Rtn. Jagdish A. Bhatia		6/2
Rtn. Sriya Chari		6/2
Rtn. Sanjay Gulvady		9/2
Spouses' Birthdays		
Ann. Madhu C. Mathen, Spouse of Rtn. Asha Mathen		4/2
Ann. Priya, Spouse of Rtn. Sanjay Gulvady		5/2
Ann. Poornima, Spouse of Rtn. A.M. Visvanathan		5/2
Ann. Bharti, Spouse of Rtn. Bharat M. Pujara		7/2
Ann. Vivek Chandrasekharan, Spouse of Rtn. Sriya Chari		7/2
Ann. Gautam Venkataramani, Spouse of Rtn. Dr. Supriya Dabir Gautam		7/2
Ann. Anisha, Spouse of Rtn. Mehul Uday Nanavati		8/2
Wedding Anniversary		
Rtn. Kapil Chitale and Kashmira		2/2
Rtn. Anu Jhaver and Parikshit		2/2
Rtn. Dr. Vani Vijay & Vijay Srinivas		3/2
Rtn. Hemu Ramaiah & Jai Subramaniam		5/2
Rtn. Alok Bhargava & Seema Bhargava		6/2
Rtn. Bharat M. Pujara & Bharti		7/2
Rtn. Harbinder Singh Rattha & Komal Singh		7/2
Rtn. P.B. Prasad & Saloni		7/2
Rtn. P. Suresh & Shanthi Suresh		8/2
Rtn. T.V. Sai Srujan & Preethi		9/2
Rtn. Govind Parikh & Sandhya		9/2
Rtn. Balaji Chinni & Vijayalakshmi		9/2
Rtn. Arunachalam Palaniappan & Shruthi Palaniappan		9/2



Rotary Club of Madras
Minutes of the 29th Weekly Meeting and Republic Day Celebration

held on 26-01-2025, at Selaiyur, Chennai

Call to Order

The meeting commenced at 10.30 AM.

Sergeant at Arms, Rtn. M. Srinivasan collared President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, who then called the 29th weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras to order and requested all members to rise for a silent invocation.

Welcome Address:

President G. Chella Krishna welcomed all Rotarians and emphasized the historical significance of Selaiyur for the Rotary Club of Madras. He highlighted that Selaiyur has been a key centre for boys' improvement and vocational training since the mid-1980s. He acknowledged the contributions of the Director of Vocational Services Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti, Chairperson Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota and other members, including Ann. Deepthi Prasanna, wife of Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan for their commitment to elevating the perception and impact of the centre.

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna referenced the book Zero to One by Peter Thiel, emphasizing the challenge of taking well-established projects to the next level. He commended Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti and Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota's efforts in bringing renewed focus to the Selaiyur centre, particularly through the organization of the Republic Day function. He expressed hope that increased member engagement would lead to greater contributions and benefits for the community.

Rtn Rajesh Mani made the following announcements:

He expressed gratitude to all members for attending in large numbers and encouraged everyone to stay for the lunch.

The next weekly meeting will be on the 4th of February at the Hyatt Regency, Teynampet. The speaker for the upcoming meeting will be announced shortly.

The club's golf tournament will take place on the 31st of January. Rotarians are encouraged to participate. A putting competition for non-golfers, Members are invited to take part.

The prize distribution for the golf tournament will be held at the Hyatt Regency on the 31st of January at 7 PM.

Special thanks were extended to Rtn. Shanno Ravi, Club Services Director, for handling logistics and to Rtn. Ravi Shankar for arranging the catered food.

Rtn. Rajesh Mani then handed over the proceedings to PDG Benjamin R. Cherian.

Rtn. PDG. Benjamin R. Cherian:

He provided historical insights into the establishment of Boys Town in Gummidipoondi in 1988.

Explained how the club acquired land and received funding from the International Children Trust and the European Economic Community.

Highlighted the contribution of Richard Gardener from the Rotary Club of Fareham Meon in funding the initial infrastructure.

Shared the challenges faced in acquiring the Selaiyur land and the legal battles resolved in 1997, securing 23.5 grounds of land for the club.

Address by Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari:

Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari opened his address with a warm greeting. He reminisced about his visits to Selaiyur over the years and mentioned the role of several key individuals in the establishment of various Rotary-supported projects, including the building in question.

He fondly recalled the dedication of club members like Rtn. PDG. Benjamin R. Cherian and others, whose efforts led to the creation of assets such as the building and Gummidipoondi centre.

He shared an inspiring story of a former student, who was trained as an air-conditioner mechanic through Rotary's programs and later started his own business.

His speech concluded with a tribute to the contributions made by the club, expressing honour at being asked to contribute to such meaningful initiatives. One block in Selaiyur was named after his grandfather, Captain B.S. Chalam and his father Admiral Katari from Indian Navy.

Remarks by President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna acknowledged Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari's contributions and highlighted the importance of the legacy created by Rotarians in the community, with a special mention of the building named after the Katari family.

Address by Rtn. PP. Jayshree Sridhar:

Rtn. PP. Jayshree Sridhar reflected on the long history of Rotary's work in the area, recalling the first digital literacy program in Sembakkam in 2012 under Rtn. PP. Rajendran Sabanayagam.

She narrated moving stories from the women of Selaiyur, many of whom had faced challenges like early marriages but were now empowered through Rotary's training programs.

She emphasized the impact of the Tailoring Center and Digital Literacy programs, particularly noting the success stories of women like Usha, who went on to become successful entrepreneurs and Sasikala, who overcame personal tragedies to secure a job through the skills she gained.

She commended the ongoing work, which continues to empower women and expressed gratitude for the support of all Rotarians involved, particularly in the face of challenges like COVID-19.

Address by Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti:

Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti humorously acknowledged the attendance of various people, including those "forced" to attend by friends and family, while highlighting the importance of heart, head and hands in driving Rotary's mission forward.

Rtn. PP. Jayshree Sridhar introduced Mrs. Vimaleshwari, a key strength of the Selaiyur team, for her significant contributions to the success of the programs.



He further emphasized the impact of the community's involvement, expressing his appreciation for the collective efforts that have led to the growth of the initiative.

Acknowledgment of Contributions:

The event featured an acknowledgment of key figures in the Selaiyur projects, with special thanks to Mrs. Vimalleshwari and other staff for their dedication and hard work in managing the computer applications and other educational programs.

The Rotary Club's support for local projects in Selaiyur and Sembakkam, including community halls and child care centres, was highlighted as a major success of the ongoing efforts to uplift the underprivileged community.

Vote of Thanks by Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota

- Acknowledged the young and energetic board, led by President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, for their openness to sensible proposals.
- Thanked Rtn. PDG Benjamin Cherian, Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari, and Rtn. PP. Jayshree for organizing the historic club meeting.
- Recalled a conversation with Rtn. PP Jayshree regarding taking charge of Selaiyur-Sembakkam and how the center has grown in the past three to four years.
- Highlighted the energy and positivity of Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti, commending his leadership style that encourages growth without criticism.
- Acknowledged Ann. Deepthi Prasanna for her efforts in recalibrating the tailoring and Aari division, meeting Skill India's expectations.

- Noted that teacher training is set to begin in February, with guidance from Rtn. Rajesh Mani and Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan.
- Thanked Rtn. Asha Mathen, the board and Rtn. Shanno Ravi.
- Special mention of Rtn. R. Ravishankar for his assistance in organizing the lunch.
- Recognized the hard work of Vimalleshwari, Shanmugarekha (Computer DTS), mentor Anusha Madam and Bhagyalakshmi.
- Expressed appreciation for the presence and support of senior Rotarians, past presidents.

Closing Announcements:

- After the meeting, the beneficiaries performed a lively dance.
- Rotarians gathered for a group photograph to commemorate the occasion.
- Beneficiaries received a saree, each of the attending Rotarians was presented with a colorful pouch produced at the Selaiyur Project center.

Closing Remarks:

The event concluded with expressions of gratitude to all those involved in the success of the Selaiyur initiatives and reaffirmed Rotary's commitment to empowering communities through education and skill-building.

Adjournment:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna adjourned the meeting, which concluded with the National Anthem.



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 4th Feb.

Issue 31



Issue 30 : Best Captions

1. "Cheers to double trouble- where wine and laughter meet for a perfect blend!" - **Rtn. N.K. Bhatia**
2. Twosome Awesome! - **Ann. Vinolia Lobo**
3. Double Trouble? - **Rtn. Asha Mathen**
4. Girls just wanna have fun! - **Rtn. Shanno Ravi**



Bond Build and Bring Cheer

(At Selaiyur)

The 29th meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras was unique in multiple ways.

The program for the day began with a tour of the center after the guests were ceremonially received by the beneficiaries. The President, Past District Governor, Past President, Rotarians and their spouses, along with the beneficiaries and guests present in large numbers, hoisted the national flag and sang the National anthem.

The meeting held at Selaiyur's Vocational Service Centre was the first of its kind, a significant event where the club proudly empowers 350 women beneficiaries each year. This centre is where many dreams are realized for those in need. On the 26th of January, during the 76th Republic Day celebrations, nearly all members of the board were present and the atmosphere was filled with nostalgia, creating a sense of homecoming.

The celebrations were marked by unprecedented enthusiasm, with over 45 RCM members, 75 beneficiaries and instructors from Swabodhini, along with 15 child instructors and their parents, making up a large gathering of more than 150 guests. This included spouses, beneficiaries from the digital training and tailoring centres, as well as children from Swabodhini, an organization for children with special needs, who attended in colourful fancy dresses. During the event, four decades of history were recalled and brought to life by the founding members, Rtn. PDG. Benjamin R. Cherian, Rtn. PP Ravi Katari and Rtn. PP. Jayshree Sridhar.

Rtn. PDG. Benjamin R. Cherian, while applauding President Rtn. G.

Chella Krishna for organizing the meeting, reminisced about the early days of Boys' Town. He recalled that the initiative began in 1988 in a rented space in the Redhills area before moving to Gummidipoondi. The facility was established on 14 acres of land, generously gifted by Rtn. Markand Desai, located approximately 70 km from the city.

Rtn. Richard Garner who secured funding from the European Economic Community (EEC) for the purchase of 23.5 grounds of land in Selaiyur, initially contributing £50,000, followed by an additional £25,000. PDG also acknowledged the crucial support of Mohan Parasaran, then Attorney General and Raghavan IPS in facilitating the acquisition and securing of the site.

The construction of the technical training centre was supervised by Rotarian Ganesan, a builder by profession, with cement supplied by N . Srinivasan and India Cements around 1996. PDG expressed gratitude to all Rotarians involved in the project, including Rtn. PP. Shankar C. Mangadu, Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath, and Rtn. PP. S. Gunashekar, who played key roles in bringing the initiative to life. The centre was designed to provide vocational training in trades such as refrigeration, technical services, plumbing, and more. PDG fondly remembered the building's inauguration, which was led by District Governor Rtn. K.V. Srinivasan, the grandfather of Rtn. Raghu Kailas.

Rtn. PP. Ravi Katari remembered the significant contributions of Rtn. Christopher Deva Prakasham, Rtn. V.K. Chandra Kumar, and Rtn. Kamal Chadha, who dedicated much of their time overseeing the setup of the project. He also mentioned his own contributions, particularly in financing the construction of the first floor, which was named in honour of his father and maternal grandfather.

Rtn. PP Jayshree Sridhar, who became a member of the club in



PDG recalled that Rtn. Richard Garner, from the Rotary Club of Fareham Meon, UK, had envisioned establishing a technical training centre in Selaiyur.

This vision became a reality with the support of well-wishers like C.R. Ramdas IAS and Paulraj IAS. It was



2010, recalled the inauguration of the Digital Centre, which was established on land provided by the Panchayat at Sembakkam on 02-10-2012 during the presidency of Rajendran Sabanayagam. She emphasized how her focus shifted towards empowering women in Sembakkam, where she had the opportunity to interact with and positively impact the lives of over 300 women from low-income groups through training programs. Jayshree also highlighted the history of the Tailoring Centre, which was started in 1986 by trainer Anusuya, who now serves as the centre's mentor. She proudly shared the success stories of three standout students: Usha, who ran a successful tailoring business; Sasikala, who worked in computer operations; and Mahalakshmi, who found stable employment with a commercial enterprise.



Director Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti in his inimitable style,

Green Rotarian Message

“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” – Sir Isaac Newton

Walking through the Vocational Training Centre at Selaiyur, you can feel the history alive in its walls. Decades of dedication, passion, and the resilience of the past PDGs, PPs, and Boards from RCM have shaped this space into what it is today. It is impossible not to be inspired and feel a sense of duty to build on this remarkable foundation.

The real magic of Selaiyur? It is in the stories. Hearing firsthand from Rotarians about the Centre's journey and how the torch has been passed from one generation to the next provided us with a front-row seat to its rich history. These did not just feel like anecdotes but as living proof of what happens when a shared vision meets unflinching effort.

Under the leadership of Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota and the vocational services team, Selaiyur have continued to leap forward. The Centre now proudly holds certifications from the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) as well as NIIT for its Digital Literacy Training Program. The Tailoring Unit has been upgraded led by Ann. Deepthi Prasanna, along with an exquisite embroidery centre. The Selaiyur centre promotes inclusiveness with a dedicated facility for children with special needs run by Swabodhini Trust. And the Computer Centre, equipped with state-of-the-art systems donated by Rtn. Ravi Ramachandran provides trainees with the tools to thrive in today's digital world.

Most importantly, Selaiyur stands as a proud asset owned outright by RCM—a vision made possible by the foresight and commitment of leaders decades ago.

But Selaiyur is not just about its impressive numbers and certifications - it is fundamentally about heart. The warmth at Selaiyur is impossible to miss. The smiles on the staff's faces, the way they comfortably break into a dance with the Rotarians, and the joy shared between trainees and members. It is a space built on connection, not formality. These bonds weren't built overnight; they've been carefully nurtured, year after year.

Perhaps the most inspiring aspect is the alumni who continue to stay involved, giving back to the place that helped shape their lives. It is a powerful reminder that Selaiyur is more than a training centre, it is helping a community grow stronger.

Selaiyur proves that when you combine purpose with heart, you don't just change lives—you create something timeless. It's the embodiment of Building, Bonding, and Bringing Cheer.

- Ann Vidya and Rtn. Bikram Sivakumar

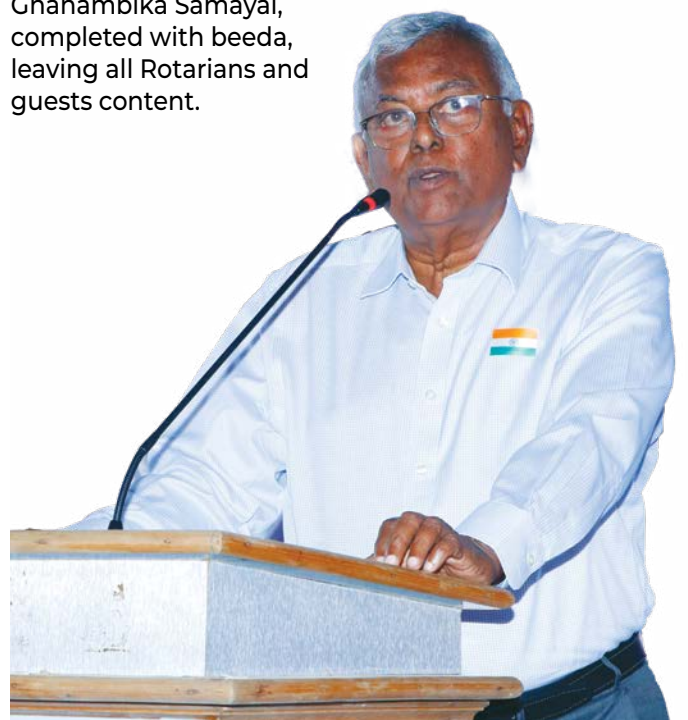
showed the way forward through his heart, head and hand analogies. He acknowledged great satisfaction in being able to succeed with the secret mission of drawing RCMers to this center and touching their hearts. He in particular lauded the stellar contributions of the site manager and senior instructor in Computer Applications, Vimalaswari and the catalytic roles played by Chairman Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota, Co-Chair Rtn. Dr. Sharon Krishna

Rau and Ann. Deepthi Prasanna.

He informed the gathering that, in an effort to elevate these centres to the centres of excellence, partnerships have been established with the NIIT Foundation for Digital Training and the Apparel Council & Skill India for the Tailoring and Aari centres. Significantly, beneficiaries graduating from the centre will now receive certifications from these professional organizations, in addition to the RCM certification, which will enhance their prospects in their chosen vocations. Discussing the future, he emphasized the need to create space and build connections that would unlock the full potential of the assets available. He also mentioned several initiatives being undertaken in this direction.

The Vote of thanks was delivered by the Chairman Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota, who effusively thanked the President, the Board and all Rotarians for their constant support and encouragement. He made special mention of the initiative taken by Ann. Deepthi Prasanna in aiding the changeover to professionalism of the Tailoring vertical in the center.

A special shout-out was given to Rtn. Rajesh Mani, Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan, and Rtn. Shanno Ravi for their efforts in ensuring the success of the event. Each attendee received a colourful pouch, specially stitched for the occasion by the centre. The spirit of camaraderie continued with Rtn. Nalini Radhakrishnan presenting sarees as returning gifts to all the beneficiaries. The atmosphere was electric, with songs, dance and music that even encouraged Past Presidents and many others to join in and shake a leg on stage. The event concluded with everyone enjoying the signature meal by Gnanambika Samayal, completed with beeda, leaving all Rotarians and guests content.





RCM Selaiyur Campus – An Undervalued Jewel

We have several long-term projects within our Club, some of those are running in our own centers. Leaders in our club had the foresight and vision to think ahead and establish places of our own to carry out projects of great social importance. The Selaiyur campus of RCM is one such center, located just an hour drive from the Chennai city. Housed on a 1.65-acre plot of land, which is unthinkable to procure these days, this center features some very well curated Vocational Service programs, with the potential to achieve much more in this wonderful place.

A visit on the 26th of January 2025 for the Republic Day function, combined with our own Rotary meeting, was nothing short of spectacular. The reminiscence of PDG Benjamin Cherian on how this place was acquired, his role in that process and how the facilities were established; the experiences shared by PP. Ravi Katari about how he funded one of the buildings; and the childlike enthusiasm displayed by PP. Jayshree Sridhar while narrating how some of the beneficiaries have prospered, all showcased the immense passion the three of them have for the Selaiyur campus.

The vocational services team, led by Director Sanjay Rao Chaganti and Chair Rajib Hota, has redefined the vocational service avenue. A computer training program that has been ongoing has now got the fillip provided by the certification offered by NIIT Foundation who have been roped in as a partner. Similarly, the tailoring program has obtained a shot in the arm with the entry of The Apparel Council (National Council on Skill Development), who train our teachers and certify the students enrolled in the program. The entry of such industry experts provides the much-needed recognition to this program and its beneficiaries. These were striking features of the programs run on the Selaiyur campus. Kudos to Director, Vocational Service, Sanjay Rao Chaganti and his team.

The occupational therapy program for mentally challenged children, run by Swabodhini, was another moving experience during the visit. The singing performance given by one of the children from this program during our meeting stood out. His confidence and enthusiasm, despite his challenges, marked the success of this project.

The scope at Selaiyur is tremendous and the passion of our Vocational services team and the staff at Selaiyur is amazing. The attendance of so many of our Rotarians for this meeting at one of our project centers augurs well. There is so much potential for many more things that can be implemented on this sprawling campus. With greater member engagement, the huge space available at the Selaiyur center can be transformed into a project place of great excellence. We have an undervalued stone sitting at Selaiyur, which is our own. It is time to convert it to a Jewel.

The satisfaction of this visit to Selaiyur was enhanced by the outstanding Ela Sappadu which was the icing on the cake.

Very well done, Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti, Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota, Rtn. Shanno Ravi, Rtn. Rajesh Mani, Rtn. Ravishankar and President Rtn. Chella Krishna on a wonderful Republic Day function and meeting on the 26th of January 2025.

- Rtn. Ganesh Ananthkrishnan



Team Selaiyur signed off by expressing their sincere gratitude for all the praise and recognition they received. However, they remained focused on the important message shared by their director, quoting the famous lines from Robert Frost: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but we have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep." This reflected their commitment to continue working hard and fulfilling their goals.

Jai Hind.

- Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota
Chairperson – Selaiyur



Paisa Vasool

The RCMPL is off to a roaring start. The auction, held on January 24, 2025, at the Diamond Hall, Presidency Club, saw heated bidding as team owners, co-owners and marquee players vied for their desired team members. Out of 344 hopefuls, only 128 players earned their spots on the teams after the intense tryouts (NETS). Team owners scrutinized talent, making tough decisions to secure their dream line-ups. The stakes were high and the atmosphere was charged with anticipation.

Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran, the driving force behind this initiative, is determined to make this year's RCMPL even better than last year. This year's primary goal is to create an atmosphere reminiscent of the IPL, filled with ferventness and excitement for everyone to enjoy. The participation of lady Rotarians is particularly encouraged. His passion for cricket is clear in the considerable effort he dedicates to organizing these events and this auction serves as a prime example of his commitment.

The Rotary Club of Madras Premier League is back and the excitement is bigger than ever!



The enthusiastic Rtn. Sandhya Sridhar expertly hosted the bidding. Adding to the evening's excitement, team jerseys were presented to players, marking the beginning of their journey toward RCMPL 2. Each team engaged in healthy competition to secure the platinum players, given the limit of five platinum players per team. The sense of sportsmanship was obvious, with all teams focused on one goal, winning RCMPL Season 2.

With 11 rounds of bidding in each category, each team employed its own strategies to acquire players. Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran concluded the auction by thanking the Rotarians for their participation. He also acknowledged Neerav, Radhika and the technical team for their management efforts and for ensuring the timely display of budgets.

Finally, with all teams ready, the next step is action on the field. The eight teams will face each other with gears and bats in the action-packed matches on February 15th and 16th. Rotarians and their spouses are warmly invited to cheer on their teams and join the RCMPL 2.

Mark your calendars and get ready for an unforgettable cricketing showdown.



Bhoomi Pooja for Kadaperi Lake Restoration Project

On January 22, the Rotary Club of Madras, in collaboration with ExNoRa International Foundation and the presence of government officials, conducted the Bhoomi Pooja for the restoration of Kadaperi Lake in Tambaram.

The Bhoomi Pooja was conducted near the lake and attended by Rotarians, local residents, government officials and the media.

This initiative aims to clean and rejuvenate the water body, providing sustainable water resources to around 4,50,000 people in the region. ExNoRa President Mr. S. Senthur Pari welcomed the event with a warm welcome and praised RCM's impactful projects, such as Rotary Nagar, Old Perungalathur Lake and Homes project supporting the Irular & Narikuravar community. Rotarian attendees included President-Elect Rtn. Nikhil Raj, Rtn. Dr Anuradha Ganesan, Rtn. R. Ravishankar, Rtn. PP. P.N. Mohan, and Rtn. Deepak Chander.

The ceremonial lamp was lit by MLA. S.R. Raja, Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan, President Elect Rtn. Nikhil Raj, Zonal Chairman Mr. D. Kamaraj and Dr. Sathayavathan from Delphi TVS.

Rtn. Nikhil Raj highlighted the growing demand for water and the urgency to restore lakes to prevent



waterborne diseases and improve access to clean water. He stressed the importance of community involvement in maintaining the lake post-restoration, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

MLA S.R. Raja expressed his commitment to securing funds for the project, acknowledging the challenges posed by bureaucratic hurdles and encroachments. He praised the efforts of RCM and ExNoRa and directed the WRD (Water Resources Department) to offer full cooperation.

Raja said awareness needs to be raised on the impact of dumping waste into water bodies.

The restoration project, supported by Delphi TVS and H.K. Wentworth Company through CSR contributions, involves desilting the lake, removing plastic waste and enhancing its water storage capacity.

A representative of Donor Delphi TVS attended the event.

Rotaract Students and faculty from Vinayaka Missions AVIT College also participated.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Sitharaman from ExNoRa.





Annual RYLA Event

(Rotary Youth Leadership Awards)

The Rotary Club of Madras once again hosted its beloved annual RYLA event, this time in the historic town of Kumbakonam. This inspiring three-day journey brought together 128 enthusiastic Rylarians from Chennai and 72 from Kumbakonam, representing 12 schools and Boys Town Society.

It was a beautiful blend of fun, learning and personal growth, guided by the unwavering support of Rtn. Balaji Chinni, Youth Services Director and Rtn. Sesha Sai, RYLA Chairman, who were present throughout to mentor and encourage these young leaders.

A heartfelt thank you to PP. Rtn. Jayshree Sridhar for her warm hospitality in hosting a delightful breakfast and lunch on the final day, making the event even more special. The Rotary Club of Madras continues to ignite young minds with the spirit of leadership and service, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Here is a report from a student who attended the RYLA Camp in Kumbakonam.

Day 1: The Beginning of an Unforgettable Adventure

Our journey to Kumbakonam began early in the morning as we boarded the Cholan Express from Chennai, filled with excitement and anticipation, with friends by our side, the travel was nothing short of joyous—laughter, conversations and the simple delight of being together made it a memorable ride. We were provided with breakfast on the train.



We met a few of the organizers of RYLA, little did we know that they would soon become such an integral part of our whole experience.

Arriving at Kumbakonam – A Warm Welcome

Stepping onto the land of rich heritage, we were warmly received and taken to Dr. GSK School—a beautiful campus that was our home for the next few days. After settling in and placing our bags in the classroom, we were treated to a delicious lunch—much needed after our journey!

Our first gathering was in the auditorium, where we were introduced to some of the program's key organizers. Their warm words and presence made us instantly feel at home, setting the perfect tone for what lay ahead. One of the highlights of the evening was meeting a 74-year-old teenager Rtn.Cechu (Mr.

PS. Seshadri) —a man full of energy and zest for life, proving age is truly just a number.

RYLA 2025, Grand Inauguration

The inaugural session was nothing short of magical. It was a masterclass in inspiration, where remarkable speakers shared their wisdom and life experiences. The session began with a mindful relaxation exercise, calming our minds and preparing us for the enriching journey ahead.

Squadron Leader Unni Nair Sir – A Lesson in Resilience

Our keynote speaker, Squadron Leader Unni Nair, a retired Air Force pilot, took us on an emotional and thought-provoking journey through his talk, "Life is Beautiful." Through his words, we understood the immense power of resilience, hope and joy.

A defining moment of his session was when he screened a video of a person who had triumphed over extreme adversity to find happiness. This was a powerful reminder that no matter what challenges life throws at us; our attitude and perspective will shape our destiny.

P.S. Seshadri Sir (Cechu) – The Youngest at Heart

What followed was pure Joy a session with P.S. Seshadri Sir, lovingly called "Cechu." His passion for



philately (stamp collection) was infectious and he showed us that it is never too late to pursue what we love. Singing, dancing and laughing together, we created bonds that will last a lifetime.

Culture & Celebration

As the sun set, the auditorium came alive with a vibrant cultural program organized by the Rotary Club of Madras. Watching performances and even getting a chance to showcase our own talents was an exhilarating experience. With hearts full of joy, we ended the first day, cherishing every moment spent together.

Day 2: A Day of Learning, Exploration & Discovery

The second day began with an energizing note, with a 2km jog followed by a refreshing yoga session. The crisp morning air, the movement of our bodies and the tranquility of yoga set a perfect start for the day. Over a hearty breakfast, we engaged in lively discussions, fueling our minds for the incredible sessions ahead.

Dive into History & Heritage

Our morning lectures were a deep dive into history, culture and art:

Mr. Seetharaman sir took us back in time, narrating fascinating stories of the Chola Dynasty, making history come alive before our eyes.

Mr. Radha Krishnan sir mesmerized us with his talk on sculptural heritage, unveiling the artistry and craftsmanship that define our cultural roots.

A Cultural Odyssey – Exploring Kumbakonam

The afternoon was a journey through the past and present:

We visited the home of Srinivasa Ramanujan; the legendary mathematician whose genius continues to inspire the world.

A tour of SASTRA University broadened our perspectives on education and innovation. At the Vaitheeswaran Temple, we witnessed the spiritual and architectural grandeur of Tamil Nadu.

The highlight of the day was a visit to a sculpture factory, where we



marveled at the precision and dedication of artisans who breathe life into stone.

Our final visit to INDeco Resorts gave us a glimpse of historical artifacts, one part of everyday life.

Evening of Fun & Togetherness

As night fell, we gathered around a crackling campfire, sharing stories, jokes and memories. The DJ session was a celebration of music and dance, a perfect way to conclude a day filled with knowledge, culture and bonding.

Reflecting on the day's adventures, we realized how invaluable it is to embrace new experiences and seek knowledge beyond textbooks. This journey was shaping us in ways we never imagined.

Day 3: The Final Chapter – A Heartfelt Goodbye

Waking up on the last day was an emotional experience. We shared our final breakfast, savoring every bite, every conversation and every laugh, knowing that these moments were precious.

Republic Day Ceremony – A Tribute to Our Nation

Our final morning was spent immersed in patriotic pride as we participated in the Republic Day ceremony. The event reminded us of the sacrifices of our national heroes and instilled a deep sense of gratitude for the freedom we enjoy.

Farewell Full of Gratitude

As we gathered for our closing session, emotions ran high. We expressed our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who made this journey so special.

A Journey That Left a Mark on Our Heart

As we reflect on these three incredible days, we feel overwhelmed with gratitude and love. This experience has left an indelible mark on our hearts, shaping us in ways we never expected.

We owe our deepest thanks to:

The principal, teachers and staffs of Dr. G. Kalyanasundaram Memorial School for their warmth, care and hospitality.

The Rotary Club of Madras for organizing this extraordinary RYLA experience.

The incredible speakers who took time from their busy schedules to share their wisdom.

The Rotaract club of AVIT College for tirelessly helping us in everything

Our beloved Murugesh Sir, who accompanied us throughout the journey, guiding and encouraging us.

Rtn. PP. Jayshree Sridhar madam for the awesome breakfast and packed lunch.

Our school gave us this golden opportunity to participate in such a transformative camp.

My fellow RYLA participants, who turned into friends and family in just three days.

This journey has been a celebration of friendship, learning and self-discovery. The memories we have created will stay with us forever, reminding us that life is truly beautiful when shared with wonderful people.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Itr. Shaun Deepak, Class IX
Chandrodaya Interact Club,
Heartfulness International School

A Sunday Morning That Touched My Soul

This morning, I had the privilege of visiting the Rotary Nagar Community Centre in Mylapore, a remarkable space with a legacy spanning over 70 years. What unfolded there was nothing short of extraordinary—a glimpse into the transformative power of hope, education and community service.

Watching the children supported by the Rotary Club of Madras, showcasing their talent was uplifting and emotional. Their performance wasn't just an act—it was a celebration of potential, confidence and the support they've received



through our tuition and academic programs. The sparkle in their eyes and the joy on their faces were truly priceless. Hearing our President's words resonate with them was deeply moving.

The centre's work goes beyond children—it's a beacon of empowerment for the entire

Not only did Fharzana grace us with her presence, but her immediate and generous financial contribution to support the children stands as a testament to how deeply she was moved by the work being done.

Special kudos to Rtn. R. Ravishankar for pulling together this intimate event.



community. From teaching women computer skills to launching vocational training programs, the impact is tangible, meaningful and life-changing.

Walking through the new building and witnessing this incredible work left me with an emotional surge—a mix of pride, gratitude and inspiration. It was, without a doubt, my ultimate wellness booster shot for the week.

I am so proud to be a part of the Rotary family and to witness the ripple effect of our collective efforts. Together, we are not just supporting lives; we are shaping brighter futures.

Let's continue to grow, support and expand this impactful work!

- Team Vocational Services





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