

# THE LIGHTHOUSE

Rotary Club of Madras  
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WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS | ISSUE 43 | April 27, 2025

## One Home, Many Smiles RCM's Irumbedu Moment



Dear RCMers,

Our cover picture this week, capturing the beaming beneficiaries and Rotarians in one frame symbolizes the magic of Rotary!



**Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran**  
Editor

**Rtn. A.R. Raghunandan**  
Chairperson

**Mr. Madhu Mathen**  
Co-Chairperson

## Rotary Club of Madras

**43<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Weekly**  
**Meeting**

Speaker:

**Dhimant Parekh**

Founder & CEO

Topic : The **Power** of  
**Positive Storytelling**

**Tuesday, 29th April 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. Shanno Ravi**  
Director - Club Service

**Rtn. Rajesh Mani**  
Honorary Secretary

**Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan**  
Chairperson - Programs Committee

## THE LIGHTHOUSE

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- Honorary Secretary**  
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- Immediate Past President**  
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- Director - Rotary Foundation & International Service**  
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Rtn. PP. Indra Subramanyam

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- Rtn. Rakesh Jaiswal, Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan

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## Rotary Club of Madras (RCM) 42nd Weekly Meeting held on 22-04-2025 at Hotel Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

### Call to Order:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna called the meeting to order and requested all members to rise for a silent invocation.

### Confirmation of Minutes:

The President sought confirmation for the 41st weekly meeting minutes, which were passed and adopted by the members.

### Welcome Address:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna extended a warm welcome to the Chief Guest, Hon. Dr. Kalanidhi Veeraswamy, Member of Parliament for the North Madras constituency. Rtn. G. Chella Krishna acknowledged Rtn. Shanno Ravi for facilitating the Chief Guest's presence. He also welcomed the Rotarians, Probud Club members, spouses and other guests in attendance.

### Fellowship Update:

A brief recap was shared on the recently concluded Full Club Fellowship, organized by IIT Madras alumni of RCM. The evening was a grand success, with members enjoying the vibrant Mardi Gras theme. Rtn. PP. K.K. Raman, Rtn. PP Rajendran Sabanayagam, Rtn. Lala Mathai, Rtn. T. Shivaraman, Rtn. Gowri R. Shanker and Rtn. Bharat Shivkumar were appreciated for curating a memorable and engaging event that brought the club together in true fellowship spirit.

### Announcements:

Homes for the Homeless: President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna acknowledged the inauguration of 39 homes at Rotary Hope Village on Sunday morning. Rtn. N. Prakash provided an update on the event and shared details of the upcoming event. Bhoomi Puja was conducted for 24 additional homes along with plans for a community center, eco-initiatives and education/vocational training programs. ₹30 lakhs was raised through crowd funding.

Project Funding Overview: Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan shared the total spend on the project stands at ₹1.5 crores. Major contributions included:

- Rtn. Mahinder Jain – ₹1.25 crores
- Coromandel International – ₹20 lakhs
- Multivista – ₹5 lakhs

Upcoming Project: Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan announced that on April 27th, fishing nets will be distributed to support 54 boats in the Suleri Kattukuppam community, with a total project cost of ₹9.07 lakhs. This



initiative builds on previous support provided to the village, including 146 houses, a school, a community hall, cold storage facilities and 44 mechanized boats. As a continuation of this initiative, she encouraged members to attend the event on Sunday.

Balwadi Inaugurations: Two new Balwadi centers are scheduled for inauguration soon, with dates and further details to be announced shortly.

### New Member Induction:

Rtn. Jacob Kurian inducted Mr. Hari Venkatesan as a Member. Rtn. DGND. Dr. Vijaya Bharathi Rangarajan graciously facilitated the induction ceremony.

### Secretary's Announcements:

Rtn. Rajesh Mani announced birthday wishes and sunshine contributions for the week. Sunshine contribution of ₹2,000 received from PP. N.K. Gopinath and ₹8,100 received from Rtn. PP Ravi Katari. Upcoming Meeting: A special session with Mr. Dhimant Parekh from The Better India on the topic "The Power of Positive Storytelling," is scheduled for the next weekly meeting.

### Donations Announced:

Rtn. J. Kishor Dandekar contributed ₹1 lakh and Rtn. Rajesh Vummidi contributed ₹4.25 lakhs towards the Homes for the Homeless project, significantly supporting its ongoing development.

### Guest Speaker Session:

Director of CSR, Rtn. Ganesh Ananthakrishnan interviewed Dr. Kalanidhi Veeraswamy on the topic 'Scalpel to Sansad'

### Adjournment:

The President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna adjourned the meeting.

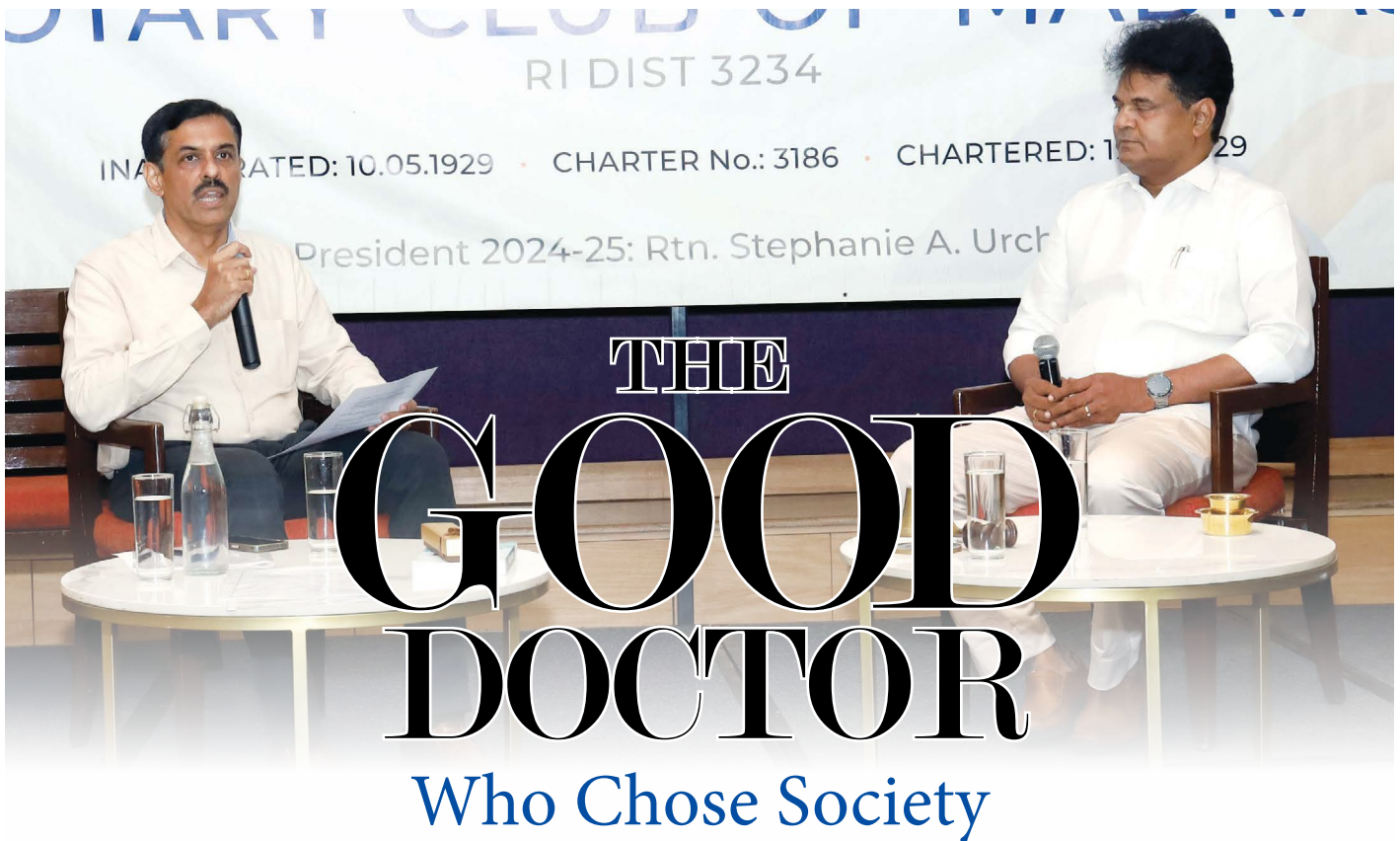












In Indian politics, few parties carry the weight of legacy and transformation like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). Rooted in self-respect, social justice and rationalism, the DMK has reinvented itself while staying anchored to its foundational Dravidian ethos. To understand DMK today, one must revisit the fervor of the 1960s when C.N. Annadurai broke away from Periyar's Dravidar Kazhagam to form a party focused on Tamil identity, linguistic pride and socio-economic upliftment. DMK came to power in 1967, becoming the first non-Congress party to rule a South Indian state.

The legacy passed from Anna to Karunanidhi and now to M.K. Stalin. Each transition brought internal debates, external pressures and the need to stay relevant to an evolving electorate. In this political arena, Dr. Kalanidhi Veeraswamy, the DMK Member of Parliament from Chennai North, offers a sharp contrast to the usual rhetoric.

In a conversation moderated by Rtn. Ganesh Ananthakrishnan, Dr. Kalanidhi came across as someone who values authenticity over optics. "Ask me anything," he said when asked if there were any off-limit topics. This sincerity was evident throughout the interview.

A surgeon by training, Dr. Kalanidhi didn't enter politics impulsively. His father, Arcot N. Veeraswami, was a prominent DMK leader and Minister for Electricity. Yet, Dr. Kalanidhi chose politics not as an inheritance but as a way to address societal issues at a systemic level. "I didn't choose politics to escape medicine," he explains. "I chose it because I wanted to treat society on a systemic level."

North Chennai, his constituency, has deep infrastructure issues and a neglected population. Rather than making headline-grabbing promises, Dr. Kalanidhi has focused on localized, sustainable development, improving primary

healthcare centers, sanitation and raising relevant issues in Parliament. His office played a key role in mobilizing oxygen supplies and telemedicine during the COVID-19 crisis, taking action with little fanfare. "If people see you as accessible and honest, that's the real win," he says.

Dr. Kalanidhi's approach to modernizing Dravidian politics is marked by his focus on implementation rather than ideology. He represents a growing class of DMK leaders who aim to translate Periyar, Anna and Kalaignar's ideals into concrete action. "Periyar, Anna and Kalaignar emphasized rationalism and inclusion. My work is to translate those ideals into action—not just slogans."

Navigating the internal dynamics of the DMK has not always been easy. The legacy of his family name brings expectations and pressure, but Dr. Kalanidhi strives to prove

Voters, especially the younger generation, are becoming more discerning. "They're not just looking at ideology anymore; they're looking at implementation, governance and accountability."

himself as a leader in his own right. He believes voters, especially the younger generation, are becoming more discerning. "They're not just looking at ideology anymore; they're looking at implementation, governance and accountability."

His affinity for community-driven organizations like Rotary International reflects his commitment to public service. He actively collaborates with local clubs in North Chennai to support civic initiatives such as blood donation camps and school infrastructure upgrades. For Dr. Kalanidhi, Rotary is the principle of service without seeking the limelight. "Real service happens far from the spotlight," he adds.

Dr. Kalanidhi isn't afraid to critique national trends. He speaks against the centralization of power under the BJP, warning that it weakens cooperative federalism and stifles innovation at the state level. He also opposes the growing polarisation, to India's "The soul of been in its asserts. c o m m u n a l calling it antithetical pluralistic identity. India has always plurality," he

Despite privilege and speaks with someone being born into power, Dr. Kalanidhi the humility of who has seen both suffering and success.



## MP's Straight Answers

**When asked about the National Education Policy and the imposition of Hindi,** he clarified that the NEP does not mandate Hindi and now follows a three-language formula, offering flexibility. He emphasized that students can choose based on their interests and future needs.

**When asked about the budget disparity between Sanskrit and Tamil,** he acknowledged the disproportion and noted that while Sanskrit receives ₹1,600 crores, Tamil gets only ₹40 crores. He agreed that this is an area needing urgent redressal.

**When the importance of language versus STEM education was raised,** the MP remarked that while cultural and linguistic pride is important, we must also focus on employability. He stressed that future opportunities lie in science, technology and innovation and education policy must reflect that.

**When asked about the progress of the Smart City project in Chennai,** he explained that although the vision exists, budgetary limitations are a major hurdle. Out of Tamil Nadu's ₹4 lakh crore budget, only ₹50,000 crores are allocated for capital works. He emphasized the need to increase municipal revenue for more ambitious urban projects.

**When the idea of Rotary installing Air Quality Index (AQI) meters across the city was proposed,** the MP welcomed the initiative and said he would facilitate the necessary permissions and connect Rotary with relevant departments to move the project forward.

**When asked about the continued pollution of the Cooum River,** he said the problem was due to untreated sewage and stagnant flow. He mentioned that two new sewage treatment plants had been set up and assured that better monitoring and enforcement would follow.

When you open someone's chest and touch a beating heart, you understand how fragile life is, and how important service is.

While some might see it as a political liability in a time where amplification is often mistaken for achievements, others see it as exactly what Tamil Nadu needs.

He doesn't believe in cult politics or blind hero worship. At a time when political figures are often judged by their ability to dominate the spotlight, Dr. Kalanidhi's rational conviction stands out, he doesn't promise the impossible, nor does he try to fit into the mold of a typical politician. In a state where Periyar once thundered against blind faith and demanded dignity for the common man, there is hope that Dr. Kalanidhi Veeraswamy, too, will value the movement once preached.

# Deals & Diplomacy



**O**n April 16, Rtn. A.K. Tareen delivered a compelling address as a guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Melbourne, sharing insights from his remarkable nearly four-decade career in international trade. His experience includes close collaboration with governments and businesses across Australia, India, South Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

**Rtn. James Wheeler Davidson, the founder of the Melbourne club, also played a role in establishing the Rotary Club of Madras, which is set to celebrate its centenary in four years.**

In his speech, Tareen celebrated the Rotary Club of Melbourne's illustrious 104-year history, highlighting its outstanding contributions that serve as a benchmark for service-oriented organizations globally. He also mentioned the impressive achievements of his club, the Rotary Club of Madras, noting the significant ties between the two clubs. Tareen pointed out that Rtn. James Wheeler Davidson, the founder of the Melbourne club, also played a role in establishing the Rotary Club of Madras, which is set to celebrate its centenary in four years.

He drew insightful parallels between the objectives of Rotary and the principles of global free trade, emphasizing their shared goals of fostering global understanding, community development, peace and prosperity.

Exploring the intricacies of international trade, Tareen discussed the challenges posed by rising tariff wars and stressed the necessity for a global perspective. He paid particular attention to the thriving relationship between Australia and India, highlighting how both nations have worked together to overcome historical obstacles through cultural understanding and personal connections. Drawing from his experiences as Australia's longest-serving trade commissioner in India, Tareen stressed the importance of building relationships and respecting cultural differences to enable successful business interactions.

His address concluded with a fervent call for Rotarians to unite in advocating for fair and open trade practices that encourage peace and prosperity. He encouraged members to harness their shared values and dedication to service in shaping a future where trade and cultural appreciation act as vital instruments for stability in an increasingly interconnected world. His insights resonated deeply with the members and guests who gathered to hear him.



<b>Birthdays</b> 28th April to 04th May 2025	
Rtn. Abhay Mehta S.	28/4
Rtn. Rachna Muralidharan	28/4
Rtn. Biswajit Babu P.B.	29/4
Rtn. Sudha Raghunathan	30/4
Rtn. Anand Rengaswamy	01/5
Rtn. Palaniappan E.M.C.	01/5
Rtn. Ramaswamy G. Capt.	02/5
Rtn. Rita Chaudhuri	02/5
<b>Spouses' Birthdays</b>	
Ann. Jayamangalam, Spouse of Rtn. Subbiah Viswanathan	30/4
Ann. Ajay Menon, Spouse of Rtn. Divya Poduval	1/5
Ann. Kathirganapathiappan, Spouse of Rtn. Dr. Parkavi M.	3/5
Ann. Satish Sridharan, Spouse of Rtn. Prabha Srinivasan	4/5
Ann. Babitha, Spouse of Rtn. Sunil Ravindranath	4/5
<b>Wedding Anniversary</b>	
Rtn. Kannan B & Harikripa	28/4
Rtn. Govind Vasanadu & Naga Prasanna	29/4
Rtn. Sabina Narayan & Vijay Narayan	1/5
Rtn. PP Nandita Krishnan & K.K. Arun Krishnan	2/5
Rtn. Sumit Kumar Kalra & Prerna	4/5

## Rotary Nostalgia

### Did You Know?

**Service above self**

Every year on July 1st, Rotary International gets a new president and that person chooses a new theme for Rotary to focus on that year. Since Rotary started in 1910, there have been 94 presidents in the first 100 years. The first president was Paul Harris, the Rotary founder. He is the only one who served for two years, everyone else served just one year.

In the first 100 years, these presidents came from 22 different countries. The first non-American president was Leslie Pidgeon from Canada in 1917-18. Later, in 1931, Sydney Pascall from England became the first president who was not from North America. He also helped create the original four ideas that guide Rotary's service work—today we call them the Five Avenues of Service.

**- Rtn. PP. N.K. Gopinath**

### Induction of New Members



#### Rtn. Hari Venkatesan

I am Hari Venkatesan. I was born in Bangalore and spent my early childhood in the small town called Dindigul. Later, I moved to Chennai, where I completed my schooling at Vidya Mandir, Mylapore.

I completed my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Commerce at Loyola College, Chennai. After that, I pursued my MBA at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. After returning to India, I joined my family's business, which focuses on manufacturing and exporting footwear. In 2017, we decided to diversify into packaging and we have three factories making corrugated boxes.

My wife's name is Kavya and she is a fitness trainer. She's one of my biggest inspirations when it comes to fitness and we both share a love for travel. I'm also an active oarsman at the Madras Boat Club and regularly participate in marathons. My daughter, Riya is currently pursuing her undergraduate degree in Economics at UCL, London. I'm excited to be joining RCM and look forward to meeting all of you, building meaningful relationships and working together to serve society.





# Building Hope and Homes in Irumbedu

On April 20th, the Rotary Club of Madras proudly inaugurated 31 newly constructed homes for the Irular community in Irumbedu, laying the foundation for a model village. Phase 1 of the project has been completed at a cost of ₹1.40 Crores. Once fully completed, the project will positively transform the lives of 76 families impacting over 300 men, women, children and their future generations.

Last year, the Rotary Club of Madras (RCM) embarked on a new avenue of service: building homes for the homeless. As part of this initiative, the Government of Tamil Nadu allocated a plot measuring over 4 acres to 75 Irular community families. In collaboration with its partner, Aid India, RCM—under the leadership of President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna and his team wholeheartedly adopted this project.

The location and the layout opened up the possibility of an

integrated approach to community development. This meant not only home designs could be improved, but other avenues of Club Service could participate in bringing about a remarkable change in the community over the next 5 years leading up to our Centennial year. Each home now measures 340 sq. ft. and includes two rooms, an attached kitchen, bathroom and toilet, a sit-out area, a kitchen garden, electricity connection, fans, lights and built-in cupboards. The floors and bathrooms are fully tiled, significantly improving hygiene.

Phase 2 of the project, which has already commenced, includes the construction of the remaining 36 homes, along with the implementation of a comprehensive plan for water supply, tree planting and other eco-friendly activities. On the same day, a learning center for children was also inaugurated, followed by a Bhoomi Puja for a 2,000 sq. ft. community center on a separately allocated plot.

The inauguration event began with traditional prayers early in the morning, followed by the unveiling of the 'RCM Hope Village' and commemorative plaques by District Governor N.S. Saravanan, President G. Chella Krishna and Guest of Honor Rtn. Mahinder Jain; nearly 50 RCM members participated joyfully in the celebration.

Rotarians symbolically activated the street lights, planted trees and made the first boni (first sale) at a convenience store set up for the community and also broke into a dance step or two to the beat of the percussion, nadaswaram and folk music, the joy in the air was infectious!

Distinguished guests at the event included District Governor N.S. Saravanan, President G. Chella Krishna, DGND Rtn. Dr. Vijaya Bharathi Rangarajan, PDG J.B. Kamdar and PDG Ganapathy. Many of our Past Presidents and all the Future Presidents leading up to our





Centennial year joined in, along with 40 RCMers and many spouses. Their enthusiasm, participation and commitment were inspiring. All had traveled nearly 140 kilometers and spent 3 hours on a hot summer day with a smile on their faces as they shared the joy of the community. Representatives from our Corporate Donors, Coromandel Cements and Multi Vista Group graced the occasions too.

Speaking at the ceremony, Home for homeless Chairperson Rtn. Prakash Nataraj, who led the project, shared that the initiative aimed to create a 'Model Village' of 75 homes by RCM's Centennial Year. He noted, 'among the three basic needs for human dignity—food, clothing and shelter—it is a home of one's own that provides lifelong security, confidence and hope to the owner and future generations.' The generosity of Rtn. Mahinder Jain and the support of Rtn. Ranjeet D. Rathod were also gratefully acknowledged. Prakash also remarked that many planned community interventions spearheaded by RCM would take place at the site over the next 3-4 years, contributing to the overall welfare of the residents.





## HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS

20-04-2025

Irular Community, Eureka Nagar, Irumbedu Village, Chengalpattu Dist

CSR Grant Number CS2500473

Guest

aravanda  
2024-25

ishna  
(25)

Guest of Honor

Mahinder Jain

Special Invitee

napa  
Govern

as  
for the



A Panchayat representative thanked RCM for building houses, an idea he never thought was possible. He said it would transform so many lives. President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna praised IPP Ravi Sundaresan for initiating the home for the homeless project with 30 units last year. The project is scaled up to 75 homes by Director of Community Services 1, Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan, along with Rtn. Prakash and it is now nearly complete.

The generosity of Rtn. Mahinder Jain and Rtn. Vardhaman Jain in sanctioning Rs. 1 crore in one phone call, contribution of PDG Rtn. Ganapathy in securing government permissions and Rtn. Ganesh Ananthakrishnan and Rtn. Nikhil Raj's efforts in securing the Global Grant made this project a reality. The entire HoH Committee was applauded for their outstanding efforts. The President remarked that minimal involvement from the Board was required, as the committee had efficiently managed every aspect of the project.

PDG J.B Kamdar expressed gratitude to all the Rotarians for raising funds for this project and providing livelihoods to the Irulars, who were previously living near landfills. PDG Ganapathy praised











After the inauguration of her new home, Chinnaponnu shared how this home would transform her life. Before moving to Irumbedu, she had no proper place to stay and was constantly worried about the poor condition of her old hut. However, after relocating here, she felt a deep sense of relief—she finally has a proper address to her name. The new home has brought new hope and the courage to dream bigger. She now wishes to buy a TV and looks forward to relaxing under the cool air of the fan while watching her favorite shows. She also finds the kitchen garden extremely useful, saying, “I don’t have to worry about going hungry anymore. Even if I can’t go to the market, I’ll still have vegetables to eat.” As our conversation ended, she smiled and said once again, “I have a place to stay comfortably now—and that is the biggest relief!”



RCM for its efforts in housing people, a key area of focus by our Honourable PM, Narendra Modi. DG N.S. Saravanan praised RCM for its passion and for showcasing Rotary’s ability to create lasting change. He said, ‘Rotary creates a tremendous impact—often beyond what we can even imagine. These homes give future generations the freedom to dream and become whatever they aspire to be.’

Major Donor Rtn. Mahinder Jain described the occasion as a moment born from compassion and fueled by service,’ adding, ‘Today, we are celebrating home, warmth and love.’ An MoU was then exchanged with Balaji Sampath from Aid India, our project partner, for initiating and managing the various Community Initiatives of RCM for this village. Speaking on the occasion Balaji Sampath said despite 75 years of Independence, most marginalized communities still do not have a decent roof over their heads. Collaborative initiatives like these by RCM are the call of the hour.

Following this, the children present a special memento to all the RCMers and the dignitaries who were presented; it will always remind us of this Special Day. Director of Community Services 1, Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan then delivered a vote of thanks. After getting a dream house, the residents wanted to be skilled in



Chandru just got married a month back. Yesterday, with his new bride Jaya, they stepped into their new home. Jaya, who is from a village in Villupuram, says that in her village, she has not seen a home with an attached toilet. Only families who could afford to build a toilet for themselves had one. She thought that she would have to go out somewhere to use the toilet once she moved to Irumbedu. But once she got to know their new home had an attached toilet, she was very relieved. Chandru got a patta for Irumbedu while he was living in a different village. There, it was very difficult because his entire family stayed in one small place with no separate space for sleeping or cooking. Now he proudly says that his new house has a separate hall, bedroom and kitchen! Chandru and Jaya are excited to start their life together in their new home and look forward to fulfilling many more of their dreams soon!





various vocations to enable them to prosper economically. Dr. Ganesan stated that RCM would assist them in this.

Rotarians then went over to inaugurate the Learning Centre for the children before heading to the Bhoomi Pooja for the community center and the next phase of 24 homes. This initiative stands as a testament to what service, partnership and compassion can achieve: the creation of a unique RCM Hope Village to herald our 100th year.



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](mailto:editor@rcmlighthouse.com) on or before 29nd April.

Issue 43



Issue 42 : Best Captions



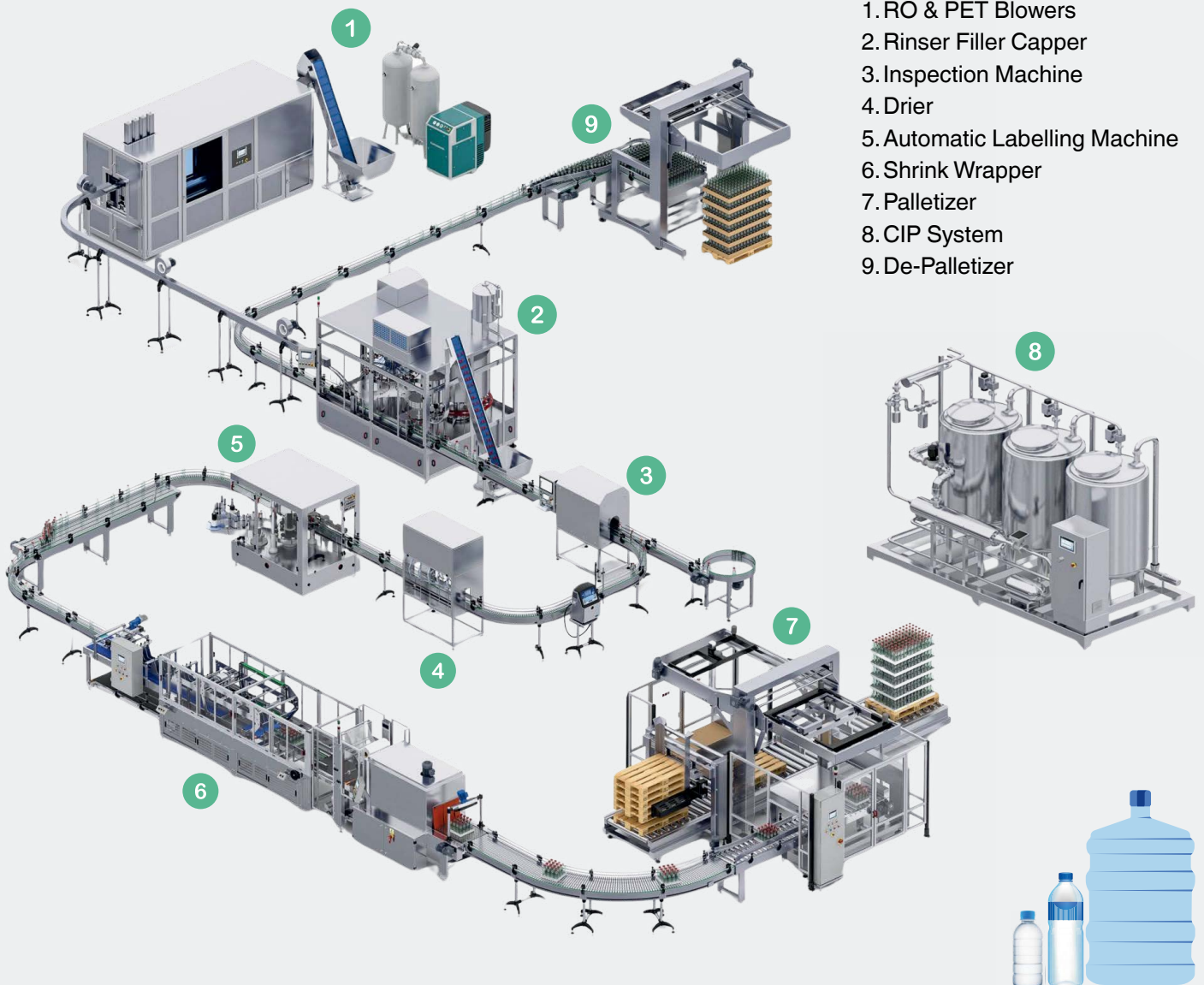
1. George – This is going to be a bloody caption while I flex my muscles– Rtn. Archana Shri Sanjay
2. Blood donation is easy, peasy...  
- Rtn. Asha Mathen
3. "Real heroes feel the pinch.....and smile through it!" – Rtn. N.K. Bhatia
4. The smile with which you donate makes the other person smile – Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota
5. Wonder who the lucky recipient of King George's blue blood will be? – Rtn. Sanjay Rao Chaganti

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