

THE LIGHTHOUSE

BOND | BUILD | BRING CHEER

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS | ISSUE 09 | September 01, 2024



Maxing HPVax
Awareness Program at PSBB Higher Secondary School



Dear RCMers,
Our cover image this week is striking, with the "Knowledge is Power" sign in the backdrop, beautifully complementing the intent of the HPVax Awareness Program.

Other projects covered in this issue include Kidz Payanam and Streetscape.



Rtn.Shivkumar Eashwaran
Editor

Rtn.A.R.Raghunandan
Chairperson

Mr.Madhu Mathen
Co-Chairperson

Rotary Club of Madras

10th Weekly Meeting

Tuesday, 3rd September 2024 | 1.30 pm
at Hyatt Regency, Chennai.

Speaker:
Deborah Thiagarajan
in conversation with
V. Sriram

Topic :
DAKSHINA CHITRA & MADRAS BAASHAI

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
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THE LIGHTHOUSE

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Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)
9th Weekly Meeting held on 27th August 2024
at Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

Call to Order and Invocation:

The meeting commenced at 1:30 pm Sergeant at Arms, Rtn. Jayant Hemdev, collared the President.

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna called the 9th weekly meeting of the year to order. A silent invocation was observed.

Confirmation of Minutes:

The minutes of the 8th Weekly Meeting were confirmed and adopted.

Welcome and Introductions:**Visiting Rotarians:**

- a. Rtn. Madhu Priya, President-Elect from Rotary Club of Meenambakkam.
- b. Rtn. Daksha from District Rotary Foundation Committee (DRFC)
- c. Probian M. Vivekanandan and Probian S. Umashankar.
- d. Visiting Rotarians from District 9111, Nigeria.

Announcements:

Rtn. M. Srinivasan, Rtn. Sumit Kumar Kalra, and Rtn. S. Abhay Mehta were thanked for organizing the trek at St. Thomas Mount and the subsequent fellowship at Urban Square.

Club Fellowship:

Acknowledgement and thanks were conveyed to Rtn. Suman Voora, Rtn. Linesh Sanatkumar, Rtn. Bharat M. Pujara and the fellowship team, for a successful club fellowship event at the Radio Room. Roundtablers were recognized for hosting the event.

Vocational Training Team from Nigeria:

The team, led by Rtn. Solu Abimbola Sotunde, is here for training on pediatric retinopathy, facilitated by Radhatri Netralaya. Special thanks was conveyed to Rtn. Daksha and Rtn. IPP. S. Ravi for organizing the visit.

Golf Tournament:

Rtn. Jacob Kurian announced preparations for the golf tournament in January 2025. Rtn. P. S. Jagdish donated \$10,000 to TRF for the golf tournament.

Cervical Cancer Vaccination Program:

Rtn. Ravi Bhatkal had previously announced a donation of Rs. 15 lakhs for the cervical cancer vaccination program. He subsequently donated an additional Rs. 20 lakhs for a lake project.

Youth Services Committee:

Rtn. E. Aswath Kumar Reddy invited participation in the streetscape project inauguration at Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar.

HPVax Awareness Event Update:

Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan reported on the recent awareness event at PSBB School and the upcoming event at Sarada Vidyalaya on August 31, 2024.

Cricket League:

Rtn. Shivkumar Eashwaran announced the second edition of the RCM Premier League. Volunteers for team ownership and committee roles were invited.

Sunflower Initiative:

Rtn. Shefali presented her urban gardening initiative and the sunflower growing project across Chennai. Seeds and resources were made available for those interested.

Birthday Announcements:

Birthdays and anniversaries for the week were announced by Rtn. Rajesh Mani.

Sunshine Contributions:

Rtn. P. B. Biswajit Babu contributed Rs. 38,000 for his wedding anniversary.

Guest Speakers:

Rtn. Hemant P. Chordia introduced Mr. Karthik Ranganathan and Ms. Mrinalini Rao, co-founders of Thurro, a Chennai-based Alternative Data Analytics company. Their presentation focused on the rise of alternative data and how it can improve investment decisions.

Flag Exchange:

A flag exchange took place between the Rotary Club of Madras (RCM) and Rotary Club of Nigeria District 9111 delegates.

Vote of Thanks:

Rtn. Rajesh Mani delivered the vote of thanks.

Meeting Adjournment:

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna thanked the speakers and attendees. The next meeting will be held on September 3, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency featuring guest speakers V. Sriram and Debbie Thiagarajan.



Move over AI, AD is here !

The economic landscape is littered with the debris of unexpected meltdowns that have confounded financial pundits and investment wizards. In recent memory, Byjus and PayTM left gaping holes in the deep pockets of big time investors.

Rather than going by just management commentary and the rosy predictions of brokerage-cheerleaders, is there any other way to gaze into the future of the company and glean the first signs of trouble ahead ?

A similar daunting question faced Fund Managers in the early 2000s. Is the rise of Amazon and ecommerce affecting footfall in Walmart ? One intrepid Fund Manager hit upon the novel idea of analyzing satellite images of Walmart parking lots across the country on a daily basis over a period, to get a fix on the company's customer flow. Remote sensing metric analysts were then able to work up a mathematical regression to predict the company's quarterly revenue.

Welcome to the world of Alternative Data!

Karthik Ranganathan and Mrinalini Rao, the power couple and co-founders of the new age company Thurro, took RCMers on a fascinating journey into the world of Alternative Data, during the weekly meeting of 27th August.



What is Alternative Data ?

All publicly available information and facts across the web, spanning millions of unstructured data points, when cleaned and assembled in time series using technology, can reveal an incredibly rich image of underlying trends.

In a sense, this is a modern data-driven approach to legendary American investor Phil Fisher's (1907-2004) Scuttlebutt Investing method. Among Phil Fisher's best known followers is Warren Buffet. In simple terms, the Scuttlebutt Method refers to a process of gathering as much information as possible about a company by talking with employees, customers or anyone else associated with the company. Scuttlebutt is derived from the nautical term used for the

cask used to serve water in a ship in an earlier era. In the modern context, the scuttlebutt translates to the office water cooler, which often becomes the focus of congregation and casual discussion.

IIM Bangalore batchmates Karthik and Mrinalini, despite having worked in the industry for over two decades, were frustrated with the lack of simple solutions to access relevant business metrics on companies and sectors in one place. This inspired them to create Thurro – a one-stop repository for all up-to-date and credible market intelligence delivered in a breakthrough visual format, cutting the data discovery workflow time by 90%.

Now it's easy to answer questions such as: "Have luxury cars grown rapidly in the last 2 years?"; "Is more power being traded on power exchanges now than compared to 5 years ago?"; "Are D2C brands impacting market shares of traditional FMCG businesses?"; "What industries are impacted by the Ukraine war?"; and "Which industry is seeing the maximum credit growth?"

Wondering if AI is going to take away IT jobs and cast a pall of gloom over your TCS and Infosys stock holdings? Well, rather than looking for a crystal ball, start scanning the recruitment pages to gauge the hiring plans of these IT bellweathers. Or better still, take the help of Karthik and Mrinalini to dish up some Alternative Data, that can either whet or ruin your appetite for these stocks.

- Mr.Madhu Mathen
Co-Chairperson,
Lighthouse Committee

Streetscape by the Little Lords



On the 28th of August 2024, the Rotary Club of Madras launched its much-anticipated Streetscape by the Little Lords Project at Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School, Adyar.

The Streetscape project aims to promote environmental preservation and civic responsibility in the neighbourhood around schools through eco-friendly practices, cleanliness, painting and beautifying of street walls, proper garbage segregation, creation of No-Litter zones, road safety awareness programs and tree planting.

This project will be implemented through the 28 Interact schools and supported by the ten Rotaract clubs under the umbrella of the Rotary Club of Madras. RCM will provide kits, wall paint, signages, garbage segregation bins and tree saplings to these Interact Clubs.

The project hopes to inspire students to take an active role in preserving and enhancing their local environment.

The inauguration was led by Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, President of the Rotary Club of Madras, who, along with his team, initiated the event by planting saplings and painting a section of the school's



wall. This symbolic gesture underscored the club's commitment to enhancing the urban environment and fostering a sense of civic responsibility among students.

The event was attended by key members of the Rotary Club, including Honorary Secretary Rtn. Rajesh Mani, Youth Service Director Rtn. Balaji Chinni, Zone 1 Chairman Rtn. Vinay Mohan and Rtn. Jayshree Sridhar. Additionally, Rtn. Venkat Ramani, Youth Service Mentor, and Rtn. Aswath Kumar Reddy, who presented a video showcasing the success of last year's Streetscape Project, were also present.

A special highlight of the occasion was the presence of 15-year old Danish motorsport talent Alba Hurup Larsen, who joined as a special guest.

- **Rtr. Darmesh**, Rotaract Club of Jeppiar University



We had a great August and it was activity, community work and bringing cheer to the fullest.

We had a superb set of programs with topics ranging from the fall of the US dollar, to alternative data, to entrepreneurship and a panel discussion featuring four of our erudite member-speakers.

We had the independence day celebrations, which in a token way, set off the year in the Rotary Nagar, Boys Town and Selaiyur campuses. The Vaccination Awareness campaigns are in full swing, with the focus now shifting to picking schools with difficult socio-economic circumstances and giving them free vaccination.

Members' donations are also in full flow in supporting the Lake projects and the vaccination; I am finding out that our members generosity in RCM is simply endless, both in terms of time and resources.

The Holistic living committee requires special mention with two stellar programs in the St.Thomas Mount trek and the meeting with centenarian L.Swaminathan.

The full club fellowship was conducted with great aplomb towards the end of the month. The Save a little heart campaign and our equipment donation campaigns continued to make strides with the help of large donors.

The Lighthouse interview, captions and its layout continue to win admirers.

RCM is simply a giving and doing machine and I am slowly finding that out. The Magic of Rotary continues as we continue to Bond, Build and Bring cheer.

Rtn.G.Chella Krishna,
President

VOICES

*"Gopi,
What a beautiful story about Prakasam.
Also as a Foundation Chair for our club,
and trying to get our members to
become sustainers at \$100/year,
and how difficult that gets sometimes,
I'm truly impressed what RCM is raising
for TRF. Congratulations!"*

Message from **Rtn. Case Pieterman**
of the Rotary Club of Forest, in Virginia, USA
to **Rtn.PP.N.K.Gopinath**.

*"Hi Gopi,
.....thank you for sharing.... what a
happy and
powerful story of collaboration! Also,
congratulations on a beautiful magazine.
I will circulate it amongst my club
members."*

Message from **Grace Van Zyl**, Centennial
President of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg,
to **Rtn.PP.N.K.Gopinath**.

RCM Calendar of the Month September 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	WEEK 10 3 Debbie Thiagarajan & V Sriram DAKSHINA CHITRA & MADRAS BAASHAI	4	5	6	7
8	9	WEEK 11 10 Sharanya SPOT TALENT Interactive Session	11	12	FIRESIDE 13	14
15	16	No Meeting 17	18	19	FIRESIDE 20	WEEK 12 21 International Day of Peace with Kalyan Banerjee
22	23	WEEK 13 24 AZIM PREMJI PHILANTHROPY LAXMINARAYANA K R	PRESENTATION TRF 25 MARK MALONEY VISIT INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
TURKEY INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP						

The Circle of Life: The Student and the Teacher

It is indeed heartwarming when all the old students of a school, together with members of the Rotary Club of Madras, and a few more good fellows, carry the message of hope and prevention to young students for a brighter and better future.

On August 23, 2024, the members of RCM visited yet another school, carrying forward the mission of the Government of India to eradicate cervical cancer. RCM has been a pioneer and a beacon of light for the Pulse Polio Program. It is no wonder, therefore, that we are automatically in sync with the HPV vaccination program.

About 210 girl students of the high school at PSBBHSS in Lake Area, Nungambakkam, were addressed by Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan. The students were informed about the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), how cancer, as an NCD, can be particularly devastating, and how cervical cancer, being largely caused by a virus, is amenable to prevention.

Statistics about cervical cancer, including incidence and prevalence worldwide and in India, the burden of the disease, challenges with diagnosis, and the resulting loss of lives in young women, were shared. The young audience not only understood, but was fully engaged with the scientific explanations.

Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan made an appeal to the young girls, the future citizens and hopefully the future mothers of India to take charge, become ambassadors of good health, and spread the word to their near and dear ones and to society at large, to make this campaign a grand success.



Connecting with the audience requires the speaker to resonate with them. Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan's daughter, Ms. Meera Shankar, a recent ex-student of PSBB, a young medic, an ardent public health literacy advocate and a TEDx speaker, graciously shared her thoughts and personal experiences as someone closer in age to the audience. This was also very well received.

Furthermore, our own President, Rtn. G. Chella Krishna, also an alumna of the very same school, addressed the audience about the role and goals of RCM and the importance of young adult participation in social campaigns.

Fliers with all the information were distributed at the end. Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan requested the children to have an open, educated, and honest discussion with their parents and to return to the school and RCM to liaise, navigate, and help with vaccinating the young girls with the consent of their parents.

-Team Cancer Prevention and Care (CPAC)

In his own words...

"It was an extremely exciting moment for me to be part of the awareness program on cervical cancer vaccination at Padma Seshadri School. Having been part of the school from kindergarten right up to the 12th grade, it was truly a homecoming of sorts. Dr. Rama, along with the CPAC team, conducted the awareness program with ease and aplomb. Her daughter, an ex-student, also addressed the group. The group of close to 200 girls absorbed the information and, after the briefing, were definitely more aware of the availability of the vaccine and its benefits. The vaccination awareness campaign is on a roll and has slowly but surely attained critical mass. Do follow this space for updates on the matter. For me personally, it was a fulfilling moment to go back to my school, speak to the students, and experience the joy of nostalgia and giving back, at the same time."

President Rtn. G. Chella Krishna



RID 9111 Nigeria's Vocational Training Team from Rotary Club of Ota arrives in Chennai for Paediatric Ophthalmology training at Radhatri Nethralaya. Led by Sotunde Soul, the team includes Dr.Olumodeji Ufuoma (Ophthalmologist), Miss Akpakpan Utibeima (Ophthalmic Nurse), Dr. Idoko Gregory, and Dr.Enemuoh Sharon (Optometrists). Training runs from August 25 to September 20, 2024, supported by RC Meenambakkam's global grant.



RCM recently donated an Arterial Blood Gas Machine to the Institute of Child Health in Egmore. ICH was in urgent need of the machine, which is critical to treat children in the intensive care unit. President Chella and the Board fast-tracked funding and ensured that this life-saving equipment was made available to critically ill children from poor families.

The ABG machine has been installed and is being used daily to monitor the well-being of these critically ill children and guide their management. Dr. Poovazhagi, head of PICU at ICH, sent us this photo and expressed gratitude to our club for this act of generosity.

- Rtn.Dr.Sangeetha Viswanathan

Kidz Payanam '24

A Day of Joy, Learning, and Memories



Kidz Payanam '24, now in its 11th year, is a cherished community service initiative by the Rotaract Club of Chennai that brings joy and education to children from orphanages. Co-hosted by Rotaract Clubs of DG Vaishnav, DCE, JPR, SDNB Vaishnav and SVCE, the event featured a fun-filled day of adventure and learning.

The event was flagged off by Rtn. Balaji Chinni, Youth Service Director of the Rotary Club of Madras, and Rtr. PP.PHF.Sathish Kumar, District Rotaract Representative Elect (24-25). The children enjoyed a visit to the Snake Park, Guindy National Park, and Chetpet EcoPark, where they engaged in activities like a 3D show and boating. The day was filled with laughter, learning, and heartfelt moments.

The event's success was made possible by generous sponsors,



including Nithya Amirtham (breakfast), Mangifera Cuisines (lunch), Akshayakalpa (buttermilk), Bhumi NGO (school bags), Ethirajulu Naidu (tiffin boxes), Indhome Construction (stationery

kits), and Mr. Meat Magician (biscuits and juice). Distinguished guests like Rtr. PP. PHF. Essaki Sekar, IPDRR from RID3232, and Rtr. PP. Rishab P. District Rotaract Secretary 24-25, added warmth to the day.



BIRTHDAYS

Rtn. J. Kishor Dandeker	5/9
Rtn. N.K. Bhatia	7/9
Rtn. Dr. M. Parkavi	7/9
Rtn. Shanno Ravi	7/9
Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan	7/9
Rtn. M. Pratap Kumar	8/9
Rtn. Dr. V. Ramasubramanian	8/9

SPOUSES' BIRTHDAYS

Ann. Sudha, Spouse of Rtn. S. B. Goenka	2/9
Ann. Indraprabha, Spouse of Rtn. Mahul H. Shah	4/9
Ann. Thangam, Spouse of Rtn. Thomas Philip	4/9
Ann. Mohana, Spouse of Rtn. P. C. Shyam Sunder	5/9
Ann. Renuka, Spouse of Rtn. PP. Rajendran Sabanayagam	7/9

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan & Chetan Anand Koka	1/9
Rtn. PP. S. Gunashekar & Padmavathy	4/9
Rtn. V. Raja & Revathy	5/9
Rtn. PP. V. K.Chandrakumar & Usha	6/9
Rtn. Sanjay Madhavan & Anna Madhavan	6/9
Rtn. PP. A. S.Venkhat Ramani & Mallika	7/9
Rtn. Siddharth Hande & Tanuja Ramani	8/9

Rotary THE MAGIC BOND BUILD BRING CHEER

COMING SOON
STAY TUNED

RCM PREMIER LEAGUE

OWN A CRICKET TEAM!

Be a part of the action and make your mark in the upcoming cricket league!
Don't Miss the Battle!

Art for Peace—the eco perspective

On 14th August, the eco warriors of the International Service and Holistic Living team came together with paintbrushes to host the Art for Peace event—RCM's creative prelude to International Peace Day on Sept 21st. Of course, we needed a lot of disposable

palettes, cups, mugs, cloth, and all kinds of artsy stuff for this event.

A quick call to Anne, of Wasted 360 and we were off on an adventure, diving into their well-sorted waste bins. Talk about turning trash into treasure!

We scrubbed and cleaned those discarded items until they sparkled

and—voilà!—our event went off without a hitch and most importantly, without adding another ounce to the landfill.

All it took is a little thought, some washing up, and a stack of discarded, but not forgotten, treasure of disposables.

- Rtn.Sabina Narayan



Fireside hosted by Rtn.Dr.Krishna Hande and Dr.Indira



Issue 9

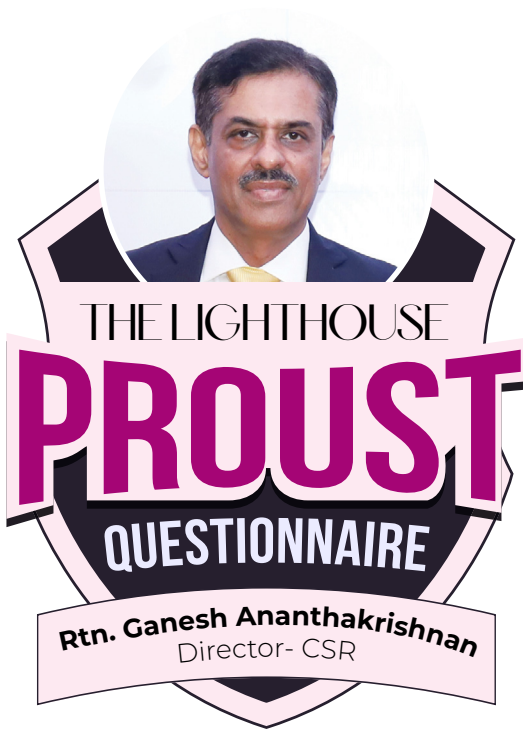
Suggest the most quirky, whacky or creative caption/ blurb for this photo (Maximum 15 words). The best entries will be reproduced in the next week's edition of Lighthouse.

Mail your captions to editor@rcmlighthouse.com on or before 3rd September .



Issue 8 : Best Captions

1. "Exchanging the most important contract of the day: How the bar bill will be settled" – *Rtn. Naveen Kumar Bhatia.*
2. Let me give it the golden touch! – *Rtn. Asha Mathen.*
3. 'Jayant owns the BAR now' ... says Bharat as he receives the payment. – *Rtn. Vijay Dugar*
4. I don't do autographs on cheques. – *Rtn. E. M. C. Palaniappan*
5. "Be happy with this piece of paper Bharath Bhai, don't aim for RCM Sergeant-at-Arms band; it's mine forever;" – *Rtn. Balaji Chinni*
6. Take this and buzz off – *Rtn. V. S. Narasimhan*



1. What is your current state of mind?
Full of various thoughts and introspection.
2. What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To be able to enjoy the present without even thinking of tomorrow.
3. What is your greatest fear?
The fear of the unknown.
4. What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
Aiming for perfection and the painful attention to detail sometimes.
5. What is the trait you most deplore in others?
Hypocrisy and being agenda-driven always.
6. Which living person do you admire most?
MS Dhoni.
7. What is your greatest extravagance?
Traveling Business Class.
8. What do you consider the most overrated virtue?
Humility.
9. On what occasion do you lie?
When I do not know how to say "No" and when I do not want to express my real feelings.
10. Which living person do you most despise?
None.
11. What is the quality you most like in a man?
Leadership with calm confidence.
12. What is the quality you most like in a woman?
A smile that displays kindness.
13. Which words or phrases do you most overuse?
"Oh, I see."
14. What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My two daughters.
15. When and where were you happiest?
When my first daughter got her first job, and when my second daughter secured her college admission.
16. Where would you most like to live?
Germany.
17. What is your most treasured possession?
Our family home in my native Karur.
18. What is your favourite occupation?
Watching political debates and legal arguments.
19. What is your most marked characteristic?
The ability to make friends quickly, with a sense of humour sometimes bordering on sarcasm.
20. Who is your hero of fiction?
None.
21. Which historical figure do you most identify with?
Shirdi Sai Baba.
22. Who are your heroes in real life?
My parents, who gave me a lot of independence and never micromanaged.
23. What is your greatest regret?
Not spending enough time with my father. I took it for granted, and before I knew it, he was snatched away.
24. How would you like to die?
Without my knowledge, and hopefully with at least some people missing my presence.
25. Your motto in life?
To lead a balanced life and show empathy.



Full Club Fellowship

Last Sunday afternoon, the members of the Rotary Club of Madras enjoyed a vibrant and engaging full club fellowship event with a delightful Hawaiian theme at the Radio Room in Chennai.

This was the first Full Club Fellowship of this Rotary year. The event organized by President Chella's team and Full Club Fellowship Chairperson Rtn. Suman Voora, was flawless. It provided an excellent opportunity for members to connect, relax, and celebrate the spirit of Rotary in a festive and relaxed setting.

The Radio Room was transformed into a tropical paradise, with vibrant Hawaiian decor, including leis, tiki torches, and palm leaves. Members embraced the theme wholeheartedly, sporting colorful Hawaiian shirts and grass skirts. The atmosphere was lively and immersive, transporting everyone to the sunny shores of Hawaii.

Members were greeted with traditional Hawaiian leis and refreshing tropical drinks. The warm and welcoming environment set the tone for a fantastic afternoon. The dance floor was lit up by the ladies of RCM. The drinks, food and service was exemplary. The event was a great success in fostering camaraderie and strengthening the bonds within the club. Members had the chance to engage in meaningful conversations, share experiences, and make new connections in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

We look forward to future events that continue to celebrate our Rotary spirit and bring us all together.

A big shout out to the 36 Tablers from RCM, for hosting this event and special thanks to Rtn. Karthik Srinivasan for sponsoring the photography for the event. .

- Rtn. Dr. Venkatesh Munikrishnan

A Walk to St. Thomas Mount

Twenty-three of us met on August 23rd, to see parts of Chennai that we have often passed by, but never truly looked at. The Alandur Metro station, which we merely glance at, as we speed to the airport; "Uptown Urban Square," a sign that signals a pause in traffic as we race on our way; St. Thomas Mount, just a terminus for some PTC buses; the Officers Training Academy – a vintage tank, two soldiers, and a gate we hurry past on our way home. Thanks to Rtn. M. Srinivasan, we 'saw' them this time.

At around 16:30, we assembled at the Alandur Metro Station. Most of us used the CMRL, while a few came by car. From there, we walked (or drove) to St. Thomas Mount.

The walk began with a "Wow!" We could cross over the roaring traffic of GST Road using the foot overbridge accessible by an escalator at the Alandur Metro station. For me, it was the first time making such a crossing in India.



We reached Chennai's second-largest footpath (also probably the second-cleanest after T-Nagar) and walked past the lush green Polo Ground – a defence golf course with an imaginary water hazard. We continued walking for another 15 minutes through winding gullies until we began to wonder if we were climbing an imaginary mount.

But soon, we reached the steps, and it was a decent exercise on a hot, humid afternoon, relieved by bursts of breeze and, after a time, a breathtaking view of the city.

At the top, we visited the Calvary of St. Thomas (I looked it up – it means "a depiction of the suffering of



Christ or, more generically, a depiction of extreme suffering") and climbed again to the viewing platform, where we savored a panoramic view of the city as planes came in to land. Exiting from there, we walked to another corner to see the runways and the planes touching down. It was quite exciting to see it from the outside instead of the inside. "AVM" Balu had brought along a life-saving cooler with water bottles, which gave us renewed energy, as did President Chella, who dropped by and walked a short distance with us, before leaving for other presidential duties.

The stroll back was along a path that took us by the roads alongside the Officers Training Academy, where we marveled at the difference between military and civilian upkeep of civic infrastructure; the comparison was like my golf compared to Sriniv's.

Srini then guided us without crossing paths with the speeding home-goers on bikes and cars, almost to Uptown @ Kathipara Urban Square, where the buzzing 24-hour food court offers a wide range of nourishment – from Rajasthani dabeli to murukku-sandwich, ice creams, kebabs, ID Café delights, and one of the only three 24/7 Starbucks in India.

Usha and I only had the energy for a fresh lime soda, but the visit has certainly added immense possibilities for enlivening a midnight drive back from the airport.

A big thank you to the Wellness Committee and M. Sriniv, who must have reconnoitered and mapped this route with military precision so that we could walk alongside some of Chennai's most trafficked routes and yet enjoy a tension-free walk and a safe return.

-Rtn.Krishnamurthy Vijayan



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