



JANUARY IS VOCATIONAL SERVICE MONTH



HOLGER KNAACK
Trustee Chair 2025-26

Trustee Chair's Message January 2026

When we think of global projects at Rotary, we often think of the cooperation between two clubs or districts that goes into Rotary Foundation global grants. These efforts form the backbone of our international grant activities. Yet we have also seen how larger projects can have even greater impact by attracting significant partners and long-term funding. These initiatives are measurable and visible, attracting yet more partners and new Rotary members who see the work in action.

Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, one of the Foundation's Programs of Scale, embodies this vision. I asked **Dolapo Lufadeju**, a Rotarian from Nigeria and co-founder of the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health, to share why this model has been so successful:

Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, which began in 2022, aims to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths by 25 percent. We focus on training doctors, midwives, nurses, and community health extension workers in emergency obstetrics, neonatal care, respectful maternity practices, and long-acting reversible contraceptives.

The most vital aspect is community engagement. We conduct dialogues with traditional, religious, and youth leaders. We are organizing joint medical outreach and home visitations. State ministries of health are increasingly adopting these approaches as part of their primary health care interventions, using the template and methodologies Rotary developed.

Our electronic data-tracking system allows better monitoring of maternal and child deaths. Notably, our community-based system now tracks maternal deaths during home deliveries, something previously unmeasured.

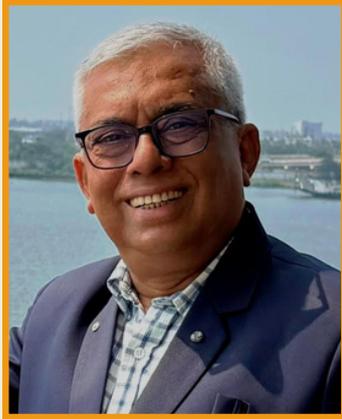
Most significantly, maternal deaths dropped by 20 percent and neonatal deaths decreased by 28 percent in supported facilities, while postnatal clinic attendance increased by 10 percent.

I am also a member of the action group and have followed this project for over 20 years, long before it was awarded a Programs of Scale grant. In November I observed the dedicated work there of the teams with midwives and health workers.

This evolution shows what's possible when Rotary dedication meets strategic partnerships. The program's success prompted Nigerian philanthropist Sir Emeka Offor to contribute \$5 million, allowing the initiative to expand. Other countries are interested in this model.

Every contribution you make to The Rotary Foundation strengthens its power as a global force for change that channels your generosity into lasting transformation.

Congratulations!



PDG Rtn. Prabir Chatterjee
for being elected from RID 3291 for
representing COL for the period 2026-29

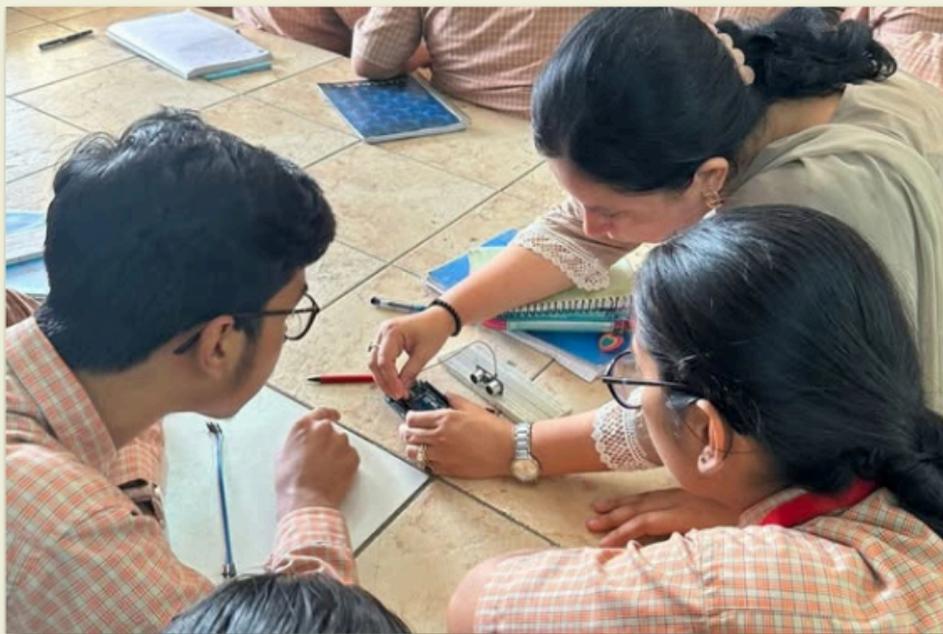


PP Rtn. Brotindra Mullick
for being elected as District Governor
2028-29; RID 3291

Engaging young minds with robotics and STEM

By: Kadam Bhambari

blog.rotary.org :: January 08, 2026



Students learn robotics and computer coding through hands-on experience.

As a professional educator, I have always felt at home in classrooms. I've spent years designing lessons, nurturing curiosity, and witnessing that spark in a child's eye when a concept finally clicks.

But in 2022, I felt a deeper calling — to take my experience beyond textbooks, beyond schools, and into the community. I initiated something I called “Hour of Code with Rotary,” carrying laptops, lesson plans, and a heart full of enthusiasm into multiple government and private schools. We reached 10–12 schools, introducing students to computing in the most joyful way — by letting them create.

There’s one memory from working with the students that sticks out. A student wrote his first little block of code, hit run, and the computer obeyed. His face lit up, and he said with pure wonder, “Ma’am, the computer is listening to me now!”

That sentence affected me deeply. It was proof that when children experience learning, not just hear about it, something shifts. They feel empowered.

Learning through laughter

Gradually, the initiative grew. I introduced coding, AI, and robotics workshops, using my experience as an educator to keep sessions simple, engaging, and friendly even for first timers. Not every workshop was perfect — and that’s the beauty of growth. We had days when computers wouldn’t boot, robots lost wheels, and students had to share devices. Yet rather than give up, the students collaborated, problem-solved, and celebrated every tiny win. Chaos often turned into creativity, and laughter became part of learning.

To scale up our efforts, I started seeking support from different companies, organizations, and technology partners. Over time, several companies believed in the cause and extended resources, tools, expertise, and kits. Their support helped us deliver Robotics bootcamps, AI starter sessions, 3D printing demonstrations, and hands-on STEM activities at a much larger scale. With partnerships, our workshops didn’t just grow — they became more interactive, more accessible, and more memorable for students.

This year was special. Rotary Club Chandigarh Midtown received the District Monthly Award (August 2025) for the Most Innovative Project for our Robotics Workshop. When I heard the news, I had to smile; not so much because the award defines success, but because it honours all the behind-the-scenes efforts including preparing kits late at night, transporting robots across the city, training volunteers, and the many joyful “Ma’am, it ran!” moments.

Multiplying impact

Recognition like this reminds me why I began this effort and encourages me to continue. It pushes me to think bigger — to take STEM learning to more schools, more children, more communities. I am actively working to develop new associations and collaborations, because when industries and educators come together, the impact multiplies.

As we move forward, I’m excited to introduce Digital Literacy, Creative Computing, Internet Safety, and Future Skills programs, ensuring learning is not just an activity — but a lifelong empowerment.

Rotary has taught me that when we contribute even a piece of our professional skill, we create meaningful changes. My skill is education. Yours might be music, business, finance, healthcare, or art. Whatever it is, someone out there can benefit from it. The small steps we take today help build a future shaped by innovation, empathy, and curiosity.

Have you used your professional skills to give back to the community? Leave a comment in the section below.

Kadam Bhambari is a STEM Educator and the spouse of Jeeten Bhambari, Past President of the Rotary Club of Chandigarh Midtown, Chandigarh, India.

KNOW YOUR NEW MEMBER

Ms. Sayoni Ganguly

Address: 6/3/26 Seals Garden Lane. Cossipore, Kolkata: 700002

Mobile: 9923335698

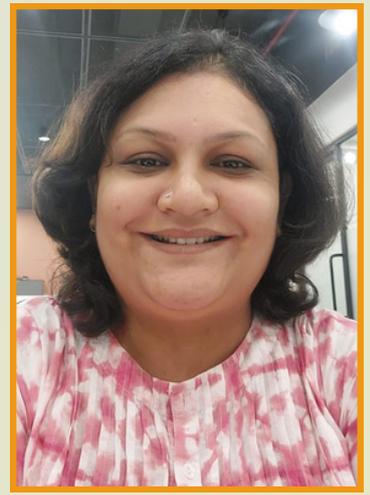
E-mail: sayoniganguly3@gmail.com

Date Of Birth: 3rd February

Marital Status: Not Married

Educational Qualification:

MBA from Symbiosis International University;
Second Graduation (B.Sc.) in Furniture & Interior Design.



Professional Experience:

- 1) Led global Learning & Development initiatives as Asst. Vice President with an IT company, partnering with international clients for over a decade to deliver high-impact training strategies that enhanced employee capability.
- 2) Fueled by a passion for Design and Architecture, shifted her careers to deliver high-visibility projects for major startups and to execute large-scale projects across India.
- 3) Currently developing and nurturing a brand, specializing in Eco-friendly and sustainable residential and commercial design.

Extra-Curricular Activities:

She is an avid reader with a passion for music and all things creative. She is a traveler, who loves to explore the world to accumulate stories and experiences. She is also passionate about uplifting communities through impact full action and is driven to foster a positive and measurable change.

Happy Birthday

Rtn. Rajarshi Ranjan Maity falling on
January 27

Rtn. Sayoni Ganguly falling on
February 03

Rtn. Jayatee Biswas falling on
February 06

Happy Anniversary

Rtn. Koyeli & Mr. Anshuman Dutt
falling on January 26

Ms. Anwesha Roy & Rtn. Soumya Chattopadhyay
falling on January 24

Dr. Sampurna & PP Rtn. (Dr.) Mainak Sengupta
falling on January 29

Rtn. (Dr.) Soma & Mr. Ranjan Banerjee
falling on January 30

Ms. Sephali & PP Rtn. Swapan Chakraborty
falling on January 30

India's first IIT began in a former jail. The rest is history

Today, IIT Kharagpur remains a top institution. But its deeper significance lies in being the first IIT, the place where India's effort to build world-class technical education truly began.

India Today Education Desk :: December 12, 2025



IIT Kharagpur holds a very special position in the history of education in India. It is the first Indian Institute of Technology and the starting point of a system that would later shape the country's scientific and industrial growth.

Established in 1951, the institute began its journey in a place that carried deep national memory, the Hijli Detention Camp.

A site once linked to the freedom struggle became the foundation of India's technological future. This shift gave IIT Kharagpur an identity that no other IIT carries.

The need for IITs emerged when India was getting ready to rebuild after independence. Institutions were needed by the government that could meet the demands of engineering, research, and industrial development.

The Sarkar Committee recommended a chain of institutes on global standards, especially those followed by MIT. IIT Kharagpur was the first step to turn that plan into action.

HOW THE INSTITUTE TOOK SHAPE

The West Bengal government offered the new institute the unused Hijli Detention Camp.

Turning it into a technical institute showed how independent India planned to use spaces of struggle for building opportunities.

This choice of location was important because the camp had been used by the British to detain freedom fighters, and after 1947, its empty halls remained as monuments to the past.

IIT Kharagpur started functioning in 1951 Dr J C Ghosh took over as the first Director of the institute.

The infrastructure was limited then, but one thing was amply clear: an environment needed to be created where students would learn the fundamentals through classroom teaching and practical training.

The first programmes included civil, mechanical, electrical and metallurgical engineering. Workshops and labs formed the heart of the early academic setup.

With growth came an ever-expanding national role.

This culminated in the passing of the IIT Act in 1956 by the Parliament, which conferred on IIT Kharagpur the status of an Institute of National Importance.

The act laid the structure on which all subsequent IITs were modelled.

It formalised how the institutes were governed, how they maintained academic autonomy, and how they built long-term research goals.

A CAMPUS WHICH GREW ALONG WITH THE INSTITUTE

The permanent campus developed in phases around the old Hijli building.

Over the next two decades, hostels, classrooms, laboratories and research centres were added. The campus also created spots for sports and cultural activities and shaped student life beyond academics.

Also, departments in areas such as architecture, mining and aerospace engineering came up with changing national needs.

The partnerships with industry and government strengthened the research environment of this institute. Soon, IIT Kharagpur became a centre where new ideas and technologies were tested.

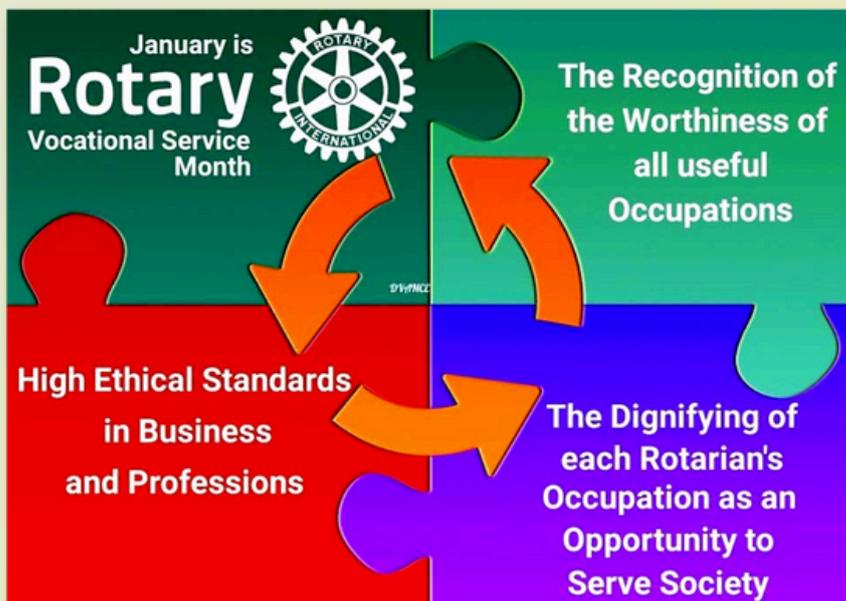
Students came to study here from across the country, and thus it turned into a national hub for engineering talent.

The early graduates of IIT Kharagpur played key roles in India's industrial and scientific programmes.

Many joined public sector enterprises, research bodies, and universities. Others moved to private firms or started their own ventures. The model instituted at Kharagpur guided the creation of IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IIT Kanpur, and others that followed.

Today, IIT Kharagpur is still a premier institution.

But the deeper meaning of IIT Kharagpur lies in its being the first IIT-the place where India's effort to build world-class technical education really began. Its journey, starting from a former detention camp, shows how the country turned a symbol of struggle into a centre of learning and innovation.



Minutes of the Virtual 2164 TH RCM of RC Calcutta Jadavpur held on January 07, 2026, at 6.30 PM on Google Meet.

President Rtn. Sudipta Kundu called the meeting to order and welcomed the members present.

- National Anthem was led by Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh and joined by all.
- Next, President Rtn. Sudipta briefed the attendees about the projects that have been carried out, in between.
 - The next batches for beautician training & tailoring training courses at Sarenga, is progressing satisfactorily.
 - The club has already started a graphic designing course at Santospur Rishi Arobindo Balika Vidyapith and few sessions have already been conducted and led by Rtn. Subrata Kundu on December 22, 2025 and January 07, 2026.
 - That on December 18, 2025 the club headed by Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh, participated in a school students' science exhibition organised by the Sonarpur Book Fair Organising Committee, held at the Ardhendu Sekhar Bose Science Park, Sonarpur Club Samannay Samiti, Sonarpur Railway Colony. Around 25–30 students from different schools presented their scientific models and explained them to the best of their abilities. RC Calcutta Jadavpur will award the students, showcasing the two best exhibits. The club also, distributed food packets to the participating students. IPP Rtn. (Dr.) Mainak Sengupta and Rtn (Dr.) Sitaram Pal, were present and served as judges for the exhibition. This was followed by prize distribution ceremony on December 21, 2026, where PP Rtn. Jaydeb Banerjee, PP Rtn (Dr.) Partha Pratim Roy, Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh were present. Mementos & Certificates were handed over to the deserving candidates.
 - On Dec 22, 2025 the club conducted an awareness session on Cervical Cancer at the Sri Ramkrishno Ananda Ashram Girls High School in Naktala led by own club member Rtn (Dr.) Sharmila Sengupta. This was followed by distribution of consent forms amongst the kids & parents, who were present for the purpose of cervical cancer vaccination, drive in near future. Apart from Rtn. (Dr.) Sharmila Sengupta, Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh, Rtn Subrata Kundu & himself participated in the project.
 - On December 24, 2025 the club actively supported Christmas celebration for the Thalassaemia affected kids at Kolkata Police Hospital. The program was organized under the banner of Life Beyond Cancer (LBC). The program included fruits & cake distribution, Santa Claus caps & blanket distribution. Further, the club sponsored musical performance & magic show and more with fun & frolick. The event was attended by Dr. Partha De - Principal of the Kolkata Police Hospital, DG Rtn. (Dr.) Ramendu Homchaudhuri and District LBC Chair PP Rtn. Partha Sarathi Sarkar.
 - On December 27, 2025 PP Rtn. Sanjay Ray, PP Rtn. Swapan Chakraborty and himself visited RCC Chowbaga and enquired about their needs. The objective of this visit was to assess their current situation and needs, for future planning of similar kind of service projects.
 - On January 02, 2026 RC Calcutta Jadavpur delivered two service projects, both at the Santoshpur Rishi Aurobindo Balika Vidyapith. A comprehensive Eye Check-up Camp was conducted on 35 students to ensure the visual health of students of Class VIII. The camp was spearheaded by our club member PP Rtn. (Dr.) Partha Pratim Roy, supported by a skilled optometrist from his team. Seven students need glasses which will be provided by the club. This was followed by an insightful Session on Emotional Wellbeing for the students of Class VIII and Class IX, highlighting the importance of mental resilience in young girls. PP Rtn. Sourish Choudhury from RC Calcutta Newbies, a renowned mental wellness councilor, conducted the session. The programme was attended by PP Rtn. Jaydeb Banerjee, PP Rtn. Rtn. Gautam Chakravarty, PP Rtn. Partha Sarathi Sarkar, PP Rtn. Sanjay Ray, PP Rtn. (Dr.) Kunal Ray, Rtn. (Dr.) Jharna Ray, Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh, & himself.

- Further, President Rtn. Sudipta announced a few upcoming projects and requested the members to make it convenient to participate.
- On January 08, 2026, students and teachers of Santoshpur Rishi Aurobindo Balika Vidyapith will visit the LBC help desk at SSKM Hospital and would interact and spend time with the kids being treated over there.
- Next, on January 17, 2026, the club plans to deliver couple of projects at Kumirmari Island, Sundarbans and will donate some required equipments to the students of Kumirmari School, where IPP Rtn. (Dr.) Mainak Sengupta is already working. The club also plans to distribute blankets for the underprivileged residents at the precincts, for the winter season.
- Again on January 17, 2026, the club will conduct a service project in the form of Science Club at Udbhas, led by Rtn (Dr.) Dipankar Chakraborti.
- RC Calcutta Jadavpur will conduct cervical cancer vaccination at the Sri Ramkrishno Ananda Ashram Girls High School in Naktala, very soon for which guardian consent forms have already been distributed and filled in forms are being collected by the school authorities. Exact number of beneficiaries and program schedule will be finalised soon and members will be accordingly informed.
- **Regarding Picnic:** President Rtn. Sudipta requested PP Rtn. Jaydeb Banerjee to talk about the club's upcoming annual picnic whereby, he informed that this year the picnic is going to be held on February 01, 2026 at his farm house located at Panchla, Howrah.
- **Regarding District Conference:** President Rtn. Sudipta reminded members once again about the upcoming District Conference and urged the members to join the event. He also informed that nine club members have already registered for the same viz. PP Rtn. Jaydeb Banerjee, PP Rtn. Gautam Chakravarty, Honorary Member Rtn. Samirendu Dutt, PP Rtn. Partha Sarkar, PP Rtn. Paromita Das Dutta, PP Rtn. (Dr.) Kunal Ray, Rtn. (Dr.) Jharna Ray, Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh and himself.
- Upon request of President Rtn. Sudipta, PP Rtn. Partha Sarathi Sarkar reminded about the upcoming annual LBC Fund Raiser event to be held on February 15, 2026 at Rabindra Sadan and appealed to the members to be present for the event and also donate generously for the cause.
- Secretary Rtn. (Dr.) Saiful Anam Mir conducted the club business and extended birthday greetings to PP Rtn. Pausali Paul falling on January 11, which also happens to be his date of birth, Ms. Debi Chakravarty spouse of PP Rtn. Gautam Chakravarty falling on January 15, PP Rtn. Swapan Chakraborty falling on January 17. Further, he extended anniversary greetings to Rtn. (Dr.) Dipankar Chakraborty and Dr. Rituparna Kundu falling on January 19.
- Minutes of the 2163rd meeting, was confirmed by the members present and the meeting was concluded, with thanks to everyone.