

“Warm wishes for the Festive Season”



RID 3291
Rotary
Garden Reach



Light

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

October 4th, 2024 - Vol. 47 No. 13

2284th Regular Weekly Meeting
Attendance: 13

Birthday Greetings

Oct 1st Shreshth, Son of PP Sanjay Bhatt
Oct 4th Spouse Purba, Wife of Rtn. Jayanta Hati
Oct 6th PP Dr. Sumanta Dasgupta
Oct 7th Spouse Dr. Sharada, Wife of PP Dr. Arabinda Ray
Oct 8th Spouse Sheela, Wife of PP Amitav Ganguly
Chiranjeevi, Son of PE Mohan Bandaru
Oct 11th Spouse Jyotsna, Wife of PP Tapan Roy
Oct 12th Spouse Rita, Wife of PP Dr. Sumanta Dasgupta
Oct 14th Spouse Sagarika, Wife of PP Subir Singha Roy
Oct 15th 1st Lady Priyanka, Wife of Rtn. Biswajit Saha
Oct 20th Spouse Annu, Wife of PP Abinash Singh

“Nothing liberates our greatness like the desire to help, the desire to serve.” –

Marianne Williamson, is a quote to live by.

Apparently, the purpose of our existence is an unanswered thought that has been debated, pondered upon, and questioned over the centuries. Albeit the answer sporadically popped up time and again, we failed to address it.

Perhaps the answer lies in the act of Selfless Service. The practice of giving without expecting a return or favour is the ultimate driver of our lives. Finding your purpose in others will be your ultimate pursuit of happiness. There isn't a dearth of chances to help someone, be it in any form or manner. However, it does not mean being unrealistically devoted to keeping the needs of others before yours, as humans are self-



"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

centric beings driven by wants.

Selfless service is a leap taken to achieve overriding pleasure, and it extends beyond your family and friends. Embarking on this path, we imbue our actions with intentions. Lending your hand to someone in mental or physical pain can turn their life for the better. Thus, encouraging people who are fighting their own battles is one of the best ways you can help them. Loving people helps us connect to our inner peace. It is therapeutic and fabricates the core of our existence.

“How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world” – William Shakespeare.

The altruistic attitude one displays gleam warmth. Leading us to inner peace and satisfaction, helping others is not just a deed but a journey in itself. These random acts of kindness can have a lasting impact on someone, and will also improve your quality of life.

Selfless service lays the foundation of our spiritual journey. Humility, tolerance, empathy and compassion can all be achieved through it. Scientific facts now support the inevitability of the positive impact caregiving can produce on a human's mind.

Moreover, protecting the interest of humanity as one's own can help change our outlook towards the world. As the famous karma theory goes “everything you do comes back to you,” therefore, proverbially helping others means helping yourself.

Delving deep into the essence of our existence, you begin on a transformational journey of happiness and bliss. For people seeking it, selfless service can help you feel that unparalleled joy. The noble acts of selfless service always have and shall continue to restore our faith in humanity.

With gratitude, respect & hope,
-EDITOR



PEACE AND CONFLICT
PREVENTION / RESOLUTION



DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT



WATER AND
SANITATION



MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH



BASIC EDUCATION AND
LITERACY



ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



SUPPORTING THE
ENVIRONMENT

RI President Stephanie A Urchick – September's Message

With **World Polio Day** on 24 October, I'm proudly rooting for Rotary as we team up around the world to End Polio Now.



I had the honour of attending a Strike Out Polio event in July at PNC Park, home of the Pittsburgh Pirates MLB team. The Rotary Club of Delmont-Salem hosted the event, which raised \$1.3 million for PolioPlus.

Later in the summer, I joined members of our Rotary family in supporting the Más Millas Menos Polio (More Miles Less Polio) bike ride. Felipe Meza Chávez and his team rode all the way from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to One Rotary Center in Evanston, Illinois, to raise money and awareness. The ride took 12 days, and Felipe and his team collected more than \$100,000 to support the fight against polio. It was a joy to greet them as they arrived in Evanston. And I was thrilled to see Team End Polio raise global awareness around the 2024 Paris Olympics. This world-class roster of athletes,

global leaders, and polio eradication supporters came together to advocate for a world where no child has to live in fear of being paralyzed by polio. Some of the athletes on Team End Polio are polio survivors themselves, adding weight to their advocacy.

These are just a few examples of the many ways Rotary has teamed up recently to End Polio Now. It is vital that we continue to seek out and recruit teammates in polio eradication, especially after the challenges our eradication efforts have faced this year.

The Rotary world was heartbroken to learn about the tragic passing in August of Aidan O'Leary, director for polio eradication at the World Health Organization.

I knew Aidan and worked with him directly. He was a tireless advocate in the fight against polio and a kind, genuine man. We will remember him both for his advocacy and his warmth.

But where there is hardship, there is also hope. I feel hopeful whenever I consider the countless ways Rotary supports the fight every day to eradicate polio.

As people of action, we don't have the luxury of giving in to despair, even in the face of tragedy. The best way to honour Aidan's memory is by teaming up and reaching our goal to End Polio Now.

We made a promise to the children of the world and their families. It is incumbent upon us, together with our global partners, to end this threat once and for all.

There are so many ways we can team up to eradicate polio. You can donate to the End Polio Now campaign, join or initiate a PolioPlus Society in your club or district, or take inspiration from the fundraisers I mentioned above.

I encourage Rotary members around the world to continue to seek out new teammates, so that together, we end polio.



Reunion of Past Members renews Rotary bonds

Nitin Kapur, President (2024-25), Rotary Chandigarh Midtown

One of the most rewarding experiences I've had as Club President was our recent Alumni Meet. It was all about reconnecting with the past to build an even brighter future for our club.

As I took on the role of President, I thought a lot about the incredible legacy of our club. Over the years, we've had many amazing members contribute their time, energy, and passion to our shared mission. But as life goes on, some of our members have had to step away. I've long thought about finding a way to bring them back into the fold. I wanted to remind them of the Rotary spirit that first brought us all together.



I decided to reach out to every former member, personally calling them and inviting them to our Alumni Meet. I knew these were the people who had once been the heart and soul of our club. I believed that, deep down, the Rotary spirit still burned within them. Those phone conversations were some of the most fulfilling I've ever had. It was clear that many former members missed the camaraderie, fellowship, and sense of purpose that Rotary offers.

Former members recall Rotary's Magic

When our Alumni Meet finally came around, I was thrilled to see eight former members walk through the doors. The room was filled with familiar faces,

and it felt like no time had passed at all. This gathering gave the alumni a chance to connect again – not just with the club, but with each other. As they shared their stories, it was clear that the essence of Rotary had never left them.

One member talked about the fellowship they longed for and the friendships Rotary nurtured. Despite the demands of a busy life, they were eager to revive those relationships. Another member, who had taken a break due to work commitments abroad, expressed how much they missed being part of our projects. Their passion was palpable.

By the end of the evening, I was overjoyed to welcome six alumni back into our Rotary family. Seeing them re-join was a powerful affirmation of the enduring impact Rotary has on all of us. The excitement in the eyes of our returning members suggested that together, we would achieve even greater things.

But that's not all: Our Rotary family grew from 84 to 90 members in just one day! It was a milestone that filled me with pride and hope for the future. I could see the excitement in the eyes of our returning members. I know that we're going to achieve even greater things together.

District Governor-nominee, Dr. Rita Kalra shared inspiring updates on our current projects and initiatives. Her words resonated deeply with everyone in the room, reminding us that being a Rotarian is more than just a title – it's a lifelong commitment to service and community.

Returning members bring renewed energy

This Alumni Meet was about more than just reconnecting with the past; it was about building on our legacy and looking forward to the future. It reaffirmed the power of Rotary – its ability to bring people together, inspire us to make a difference, and always feel like home.

As we move forward, we carry with us the renewed energy and expanded perspectives our returning members bring. Their homecoming strengthens our club and enriches our collective ability to serve our community and fulfil the Rotary mission.

This reunion stands as a beautiful reminder of the lasting connections nurtured through Rotary and the timeless appeal of our organization's core values. It reinforces the idea that once you're a Rotarian, you're always a Rotarian – a sentiment transcending time and distance.





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Pujo Clothes Distribution on October 2nd, 2024 at our RCC Badartala Tarun Sangha. We much appreciate the presence of our respectable Rotarians and Past IWC President Dr. Sharda Ray at the do. In total we had 50 beneficiaries.



Remembering a Hero of Polio Eradication

Mark Daniel Maloney, TRF Trustee Chair

World Polio Day, on Oct 24, is a time to celebrate progress and rededicate ourselves to finishing the job of eradicating the disease. Let's also honour the countless Rotarians and Rotaractors who have championed the cause. One such hero was John Sever.

Sever, who died in April at age 92, was a member of the Rotary Potomac, Maryland. An infectious disease specialist at the US National Institutes of Health, Sever recommended in 1979 that Rotary make polio eradication a global goal, expanding what began as a national vaccine campaign in the Philippines.

It is hard to imagine where we would stand today without Sever's decades of leadership, expertise and advocacy. In August, I was honoured to present his family with the **International Service Award for a Polio-Free World** and a crystal recognition piece in Sever's name.

What he helped initiate, PolioPlus, became an example of implementing an action plan in Rotary. Thanks to him — and the volunteerism and generosity of countless others — polio cases have decreased by more than 99 per cent since 1988.

The path to our goal could not have been predicted and may take longer than expected. There are sometimes setbacks, as we experienced with increased cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan this year.

But we get back on our feet. This year, we ended an outbreak of wild poliovirus in Malawi and Mozambique that was caused by an importation from Pakistan in 2021, and we decreased variant poliovirus cases. Rotary and our partners stay flexible, developing new tactics while staying focused on the long-term goal with optimism.

Delivering a polio-free world with stronger health systems and communities is not only right for humanity but also a smart investment in future generations. It will be Rotary's greatest gift to the world.

Countless heroes have followed Sever's lead — from the club president who organised her first End Polio Now fundraiser to the advocates, donors and volunteers. We are all part of this story.

With your support, this year's World Polio Day will be the greatest ever. Donate to End Polio Now at rotary.org/donate. Your gift will be tripled, thanks to the 2-to-1 match by the Gates Foundation. Join or initiate a PolioPlus Society in your club or district. Raise awareness in your community about how we will eradicate a human disease for only the second time in history.

Whatever you do, do it for future generations who will live without this debilitating disease. Let us deliver on our promise to the world's children and end polio forever.



When the Durga(s) took up Dhak

In this world of blatant masculinity, it's fascinating to see the biggest festival in Bengal celebrates a woman – Durga. What's more encouraging is that the women of rural Bengal have chosen the most iconic instrument that represents the festival to empower them – Dhak.



There are precisely three things that signals Durga puja is around the corner – Kansa grass, the iconic voice of Birendra Krishna Bhadra and the sound of Dhak. It is an integral part of most of the religious festivals in and around Bengal.

Dhak is a percussion instrument made best out of matured mango wood, and the surface which takes the beating is covered with either goat or cow skin. The sheer weight of the instrument has traditionally contributed to its masculinity.

The poor farmers play the Dhak only during the festive season, to earn some extra income. Dhak being one of the oldest percussion instruments in Bengal, never earned the same respect as Tabla or Mridangam.

So, it will sound too far-fetched to think that one can make a career being a Dhaki, that too a woman. But then the Hindu deity Durga did the unthinkable and so did the women of Machlandapur village of North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal.

It all started in 2010, when the 'Dhak Samrat' Gokul Chandra Das was on a tour in Los Angeles to play with Tabla legend Tanmoy Bose's band 'Taal Tantra'. After the concert, Das went to a music store to buy a saxophone for his son.

There he met the store attendant, a woman who was playing guitar, drums, flute, saxophone, and other instruments to demonstrate to the customers.

"I thought to myself, if this woman can play so many instruments, then why couldn't the women of my village play the Dhak?" – Das recollected in an interview given to Kaahon.

According to Hindu mythology, it took several deities to arm Durga with all the required weapons to combat the evil. For the women of Machlandapur, it was Das alone. It took a while to fight the resistance of social stigma, but the Durga(s) were invincible.

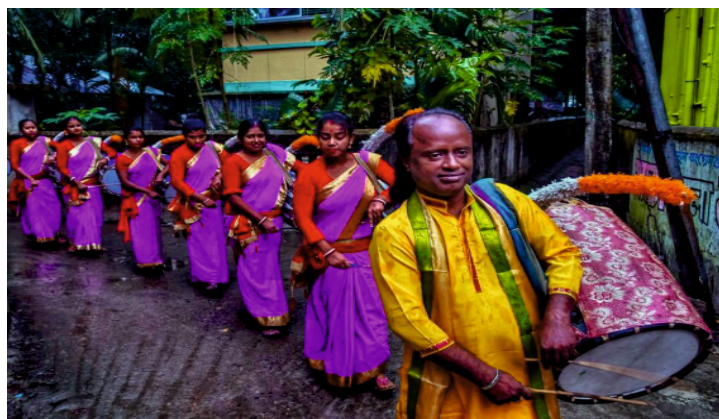
Das initially started off with his niece, daughter-in-law and three other neighbors and formed the first all women dhaki band named after his father – Motilal Dhaki. Their overwhelming success later attracted the entire village and soon the number went up to double figures.

Jyotsna Das, one of the early members of the band recalled, she was allowed to get trained by Das only after she had finished all her household chores at her in-law's house.

The women of Machlandapur are now financially independent. They're not only the 'talk of the village' but also touring nationally and internationally, playing Dhak in the most unique fashion, courtesy Das's training and their indomitable urge.

While Das remains the only dhaki to play alongside late Pt. Ravi Shankar and Ustad Zakir Hussain, his idiosyncratic effort to take Dhak beyond the religious festival appearance remains in its nascent state even after more than a decade.

We as much as Gokul Chandra Das can only hope for a day when a Dhak will be used as a metaphoric weapon in the hands of Durga that will combat the evil of the stereotypical gender bias of our society, and everyone will rise to the rolls of Dhak played by the Durga(s) of rural Bengal.



Minutes of the 2283rd RWM held on September 24th, 2024 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

1. President Biswajit Saha called the RWM to order and requested the Rotarians to rise for the National Anthem.
2. Pujo Clothes Distribution at RCC Badartala Tarun Sangha on October 2nd, 2024. 50 sarees, 25 lungis and children's outfits.
3. At Sanhati Old Age Home - 13 mosquito nets were donated by IPP Shweta. The club decided to have a medical camp for the inmates after Durga Puja.
4. President Biswajit will visit Sanhati Old Age Home on October 2nd, 2024 to distribute 11 sarees, 5 nighties and rations.
5. President requested all members to attend the District event on October 1st, 2024 from 6 pm at GD Birla Sabhaghar. Hence no RWM on October 1st, 2024 at BNROC.
6. Acting Secretary PP Mousumi conducted the club business.
7. On confirmation of the minutes, President Biswajit terminated the meeting.

