



RID 3291  
**Rotary**  
Garden Reach



# Light

## WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

January 21st, 2025 - Vol. 47 No. 26

2297th Regular Weekly Meeting  
6th Board Meeting at AAEI Club, Kolkata  
Attendance: 17

Birthday Greetings  
Jan 21st Meghna, Daughter of PP Amitav Ganguly  
Jan 26th Spouse Gopa, Wife of PE Bandaru Mohan

Anniversary Greetings  
Jan 21st Spouse Mousumi & Rtn. Anupam Pal  
Jan 23rd Spouse Leema & Rtn. Chiranjib Sha  
Spouse Abhileena & PND Shubhayan Sengupta

### Netaji And Vivekananda – An Amalgam of Greatness

January is known for the birth anniversaries of two great luminaries of India. Vivekananda was born in 1863 and Netaji was born in 1897. By the time India's most renowned freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose was born, Swami Vivekananda the patriotic saint of India was almost planning to pack his bag for his return journey to eternity. Netaji was five years old when Vivekananda left his body in 1902. Within a short period of 39 years on the planet, Vivekananda, with his herculean spiritual austerity, could ignite the fire of spiritual revolution which would last for a millennium and had influenced everybody including Subhas Chandra Bose in the freedom movement. The sacred association of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna had a huge impact on Subhas Chandra Bose



For an individual, spiritual awakening is a personal affair and it needs tremendous hardships to discover the eternal bliss in him. Vivekananda had to spiritually conquer a country that was shattered intellectually, emotionally and spiritually by the gruesome impact of the invasion and his mission was more strenuous than an armed struggle against the British. For Bose, Vivekananda was his spiritual guru, in whom he discovered a blend of unadulterated patriotism and the purest form of spiritual decorum. Subhash Chandra Bose was not only awakened by the spiritual depth of Vivekananda but Vivekananda's unflinching patriotism got more and more engraved in his conscience as he flipped the pages of the saint's teachings. The patriot in Netaji became profound and unequivocally powerful by the insightful views of Vivekananda.

The influence that Vivekananda had on Netaji is reflective in his words. Netaji writes, *"How shall I express my indebtedness to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda?"* It is under their sacred influence that my life got the first awakening." Netaji was well aware of the fact that Vivekananda's mission was not only spiritual but also to awaken the country's patriotic sensibility and turn its social intelligence towards self-respect and enabling India to inch for its long-awaited freedom. Colonial dominance, therefore, according to Vivekananda, was a by-product of the genetic disconnect that India was made a victim of for centuries of invasion. Though sunk in the stupor of subjugation, the people of India found immense strength coming from the patriotic eloquence of Vivekananda. Netaji was one among millions who captured the splendour of spiritual values that Vivekananda disseminated.

The country sprang into an arm struggle with Netaji leading it from the front. When Netaji chose arm struggle as a means to political liberation, Vivekananda's teachings fuelled his spiritual personality, strengthening the deep patriotic behaviour in him to rise into its Himalayan stature. Extremely elated by the spiritual vision of Vivekananda, Netaji writes, *"If Swamiji had been alive today, he would have been my guru, that is to say, I would have accepted him as my Master. Needless to say, as long as I live, I shall be absolutely loyal and devoted to Ramakrishna – Vivekananda."*

In 1946, about 20000 sailors of the Royal Indian Navy serving on 78 ships are known to have mutinied against the British Empire. They went around Mumbai and Karachi with portraits of Netaji and forced the British to shout 'Jai Hind' and other INA slogans. This could be enough to illustrate the impact of Netaji on India's independence and every year January comes with memories of great patriotism that Vivekananda through his spiritual ideals and Netaji through his patriotic courage gifted to the Indian populace.

Swami Vivekananda's birthday is celebrated as **National Youth Day** on January 12th while Netaji's birthday is celebrated as **Parakram Divas** on January 23rd. Both terms beautifully connote a vision for the youth of the world's largest democracy. The English equivalent of 'Parakram' can be courageous and vigorous. India's Amrit Kaal is for the youth to jump into this transformation mission with Vivekananda's ideals being implemented with Netaji's courage.



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

## Elevate your Service Projects with the ‘Conducting Community Assessments’ and ‘Rotary Impact’ handbooks

**Claudia Urbano, Rotary Service and Engagement staff**

*Service is the heart of Rotary. It's one of the main reasons people are part of our organization. We use the Conducting Community Assessments and Rotary Impact handbooks to help us plan projects that prioritize long-term positive benefits to the communities we serve. These are essential resources that provide the framework, guidance, and best practices to plan and execute projects that create lasting, positive change.*

### Why Community Assessments matter

As we continue to focus on increasing our impact, partnering with communities is crucial. This collaborative approach empowers communities and enhances the success of our service projects. **Understanding a community's priorities** is the foundational step toward making a lasting difference. The recently updated Conducting Community Assessments handbook (formerly known as Community Assessment Tools) provides guidance on how to work with community members to identify their priorities and design projects together. By actively involving local individuals and institutions in this process, we ensure that our efforts align with their goals.

The handbook also covers data privacy and diversity, equity, and inclusion—ensuring our projects respect the people and environment where they take place. By conducting thorough community assessments, we can gather essential insights that will inform our project plan and focus on long-term success.

### Measuring our impact

Another element of increasing our impact is **our ability to measure our project outcomes**. The new Rotary Impact Handbook helps us incorporate measurement activities within our service project so we can demonstrate project progress and results. It provides guidance on various measurement methods that can be applied to every club or district project. Because we are committed to making positive change in communities, measuring our work and prioritizing quality outcomes is equally relevant to projects funded directly by clubs or districts as it is to projects being funded by The Rotary Foundation. The Impact Handbook also explains the “building blocks to impact” framework, which helps us outline and visualize our investments in a project (our project's inputs), project outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact.

Incorporating this framework into our project strategy ensures that we're not only setting clear goals but also establishing a roadmap to achieve them. Measurement isn't just an afterthought; it should be woven into every stage of your project. Measurement should be applied to every project we undertake – regardless of how small or large the initiative may be – so that we can ensure we are progressing towards the project goals. This approach enables us to make necessary adjustments along the way, ensuring that our efforts remain aligned with community priorities and objectives.

### Plan effectively

Combine these two resources to develop well-structured projects that align with community priorities and incorporate measurement to understand their outcomes. We can create lasting and positive changes through our club and district-led service work by **developing evidence-based projects with measurable and sustainable results**.

When planning a service project, start by identifying a specific goal – the change the community wants to make. From there, develop activities that are directly linked to that goal, and prioritize measurement. This allows to compare our project's outcomes with the baseline data gathered during the community assessment, providing a clear picture of what has been achieved.

By utilizing the Conducting Community Assessments and Rotary Impact handbooks as tools in our service project planning, we can increase our impact, build stronger relationships with communities, and inspire others to join us in making a positive difference. Let's work together to build a better future, one project at a time.







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

## The power of Rotary Vocational Service to enrich our lives and others

Mahiuddin Palash, Past President (Rotary Dhaka Midtown), District Vocational Service Committee Chair 2023-24, RID 3281

*Let's take a look at our Rotary journey. We weren't recruited just because of our smiles or friendly personalities. We were invited to join Rotary because our professional skills had the potential to make a real difference, and because we hold a shared commitment to serving others. It all started with Vocational Service. As the 2023-24 Vocational Service Committee Chair for District 3281 in Bangladesh and with 28 years of service to Rotary, I've seen first-hand the transformative power of this philosophy.*

*Today, I want to share my story of how Vocational Service enriched my professional journey and inspire you to use your skills to make a lasting difference in your community.*



### What is Vocational Service

*Unlike other service organizations, Rotary doesn't just focus on volunteering your time. It's about using your professional expertise – the very skills you excel at – to make a real difference. This is fundamental to every club. And simultaneously, Vocational Service is about applying ethical standards to all that we undertake – through Rotary, in our personal lives, and in*





*the workplace. Vocational Service encourages and fosters:*

- **high ethical standards in business and professions;**
- **the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and**
- **the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society.**

We can put these ideals into action by:

**Empowering through learning and skill development.** Joining the strategic marketing team of a telecommunications company was the start of my career. I had “zero” education in any marketing discipline, but I was a Rotaractor. How could I not make a difference? Numerous learning sessions with a late past district governor, a renowned marketing management consultant, gave me the tools I needed to break through in my career. I reaped the benefits of Rotaract's “professional development service” and Rotary's “vocational service” in my own life.

**Serving using our unique skills to address community needs.** Another extraordinary story is of a Rotarian doctor who, alongside other passionate Rotarians, founded the then only tertiary-level cancer hospital in the northern part of Bangladesh in 2002. The country ranks fourth in the world in cervical cancer deaths.

**Inspiring to act with integrity by following Rotary's guiding principles.** Many clubs in Bangladesh, like Dhanmondi Dhaka, Metropolitan Dhaka, and Uttara, are presenting a “Vocational Excellence Award”, a highly regarded recognition that celebrates exceptional individuals who use their professional talents to support communities.

**Attracting and retaining young leaders.** While “**Service**” and “**Fellowship**” are often cited as the top reasons for joining and staying in Rotary, “professional and personal development” is a powerful but often overlooked tool for attracting and retaining young leaders. It worked with me when I was a young professional. Telecommunications is a highly competitive business, and a career in this industry requires a strong network of people within sales and public relations, understanding market dynamics, identifying unmet needs, business intelligence, and many other areas. Rotary's network gave me the competitive edge in all of these areas to move my company and my career forward. My fellow club members can share similar stories. One of them joined Rotary about eight years ago at a young age when he was struggling with his new business as a buying agent in the garment industry. His efforts and Rotary connections allowed him to take a leap. He left Rotary to focus on his business, but he came back as his schedule allowed and will be a club president next year.

**A district in South Africa** used District Grant Funds to send a vocational training team to a community in another part of the country to provide teacher training in mathematics, science, and classroom skills. With the help of teachers, parents, and the community, this training will help two high schools increase the number of students who pass university entrance exams.

My story, alongside these inspiring examples, showcases the remarkable impact we can achieve when we unite our professional expertise with the Rotary spirit of service. **Now, the question is:** How will you write your own chapter in the book of Vocational Service?





## West Bengal ITI trainees shine nationally

ITI trainees from West Bengal have once again excelled in the All India Trade Test (AITT) 2024, a prestigious national-level examination. Among the 28 top-ranked candidates across various course categories nationwide, 11 of the top categories were secured by ITI trainees from Bengal, of whom 6 are young women.



All India Trade Tests (AITTs), a competitive exam for trade apprentices, are conducted by the National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT) twice a year. National Apprenticeship Certificates (NACs) are awarded to candidates who clear the exam by NCVT.




This achievement reflects the standards and dedication of both the trainees and the institution of West Bengal. Last year, ITI trainees from West Bengal also dominated the AITT rankings, securing 8 top positions in the state.

The continued excellence of ITI trainees in AITT 2024 emphasises their hard work and skill development in a competitive environment. Such consistent and remarkable success is a matter of pride and inspiration, not only for the institution but also for the entire state. These young achievers deserve heartfelt congratulations for their exceptional achievements in this national-level competition.

## What India's First Republic Day Celebrations Looked Like

Three years after India won her hard-fought freedom from British rule in 1947, another milestone was added in the journey of this new nation – India became a Republic. It's why we celebrate Republic Day, on 26th January 1950. It was the day the Constitution of India took effect, making the country a Democratic Republic.

Here's what this really means:

-  **On 26th January, the Indian Constitution replaced the Government of India Act of 1935, a colonial piece of legislation that continued to govern India in the first three years after Independence.**
-  **26th January was chosen as Republic Day as it was on this day that the Indian National Congress declared Purna Swaraj (Complete Self-Rule) at its session in 1930. This historic declaration is considered the first step towards independence from colonial rule.**
-  **Becoming a Republic meant that India was now a "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic" that "secures all its citizens justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity". This is enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution.**





## What was India's first Republic Day like?

On that fateful day in 1950, the Durbar Hall at the Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan) in New Delhi witnessed a solemn ceremony. At precisely 10:18 am, the first and last Indian Governor-General of India, C Rajagopalachari, declared the country a Republic. Precisely six minutes later, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was sworn in as India's first President. And with that, India's first Republic Day celebrations were declared open.

### What, No Rajpath?

No daredevil motorcyclists performing death-defying stunts, no fancy tableaux gliding down Rajpath, and no pomp and grandeur. India's very first Republic Day parade was a modest event. The solemn ceremony was held at the Irwin Amphitheatre, now called Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, in the capital.

It began with a flag-hoisting ceremony presided over by India's first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad. This was followed by a march past of the armed forces, including a fly-past by the Indian Air Force. Rajpath became the permanent venue of the parade five years later.

Interestingly, the colourful and creative tableaux that represent the vibrant heritage and culture of India's many states made an appearance in the parade only in its second year.

### The Curious Case of the President's Buggy

A gold-plated, horse-drawn carriage can mean only one thing – royalty. And the Viceroy of India was the Sovereign's representative in British-India. A royal leftover from the days of the Raj, this elegant buggy became the 'Presidential Buggy' or the official vehicle of the President of India, post-Independence. It's what the President has been using traditionally when he or she shows up for official events.



So, it was in this buggy that Dr. Rajendra Prasad pulled up in at the Irwin Amphitheatre for India's very first Republic Day celebration. He almost didn't and here's why.

When the Partition of India took place in 1947, the soldiers in the Army were divided between India and Pakistan in a 2:1 ratio. The soldiers of the Governor-General's Bodyguard followed suit and those on the Indian side were renamed the '**President's Bodyguard**' in 1950. But when the matter of the Presidential Buggy's ownership was raised, both countries wanted to claim this 'treasure'. So, they tossed a coin!

A coin was flipped between the Commandant of the Indian side, Lt. Col. Thakur Govind Singh, and his Pakistani counterpart, Major Sahabzada Yaqoob Khan. No prizes for guessing who the winner was.

### The First Guest

The Chief Guest at India's Republic Day parade is traditionally a foreign leader and the first-ever head of state to preside over this august event was Indonesian President Sukarno.

Interestingly, when Indian independence was approaching in 1947, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru decided to assist Indonesia in its own freedom struggle against Dutch rule. India thus secretly flew out some of Indonesia's top leaders, so that they could attend the Pan-Asian Conference, so that their voice could be heard globally. Indonesia finally won its freedom in 1949.

### The Bravery Chakras

It was on this day, India's very first Republic Day, that the country's top gallantry awards were introduced by Dr. Rajendra Prasad – the **Param Vir Chakra**, **Maha Vir Chakra** and **Vir Chakra**.

The highest of these awards, the Param Vir Chakra, was given to five army personnel for their bravery during the Kashmir War (1947-48). The recipients were Major Somnath Sharma (Posthumous), Lt. Ram Raghoba Rane, Lance Naik Karam Singh, Naik Jadunath Singh (Posthumous) and Company Havaldar Major Piru Singh Shekhawat (Posthumous).

But the honour was not conferred during the first Republic Day celebrations. While the award for the first four recipients was given during the second Republic Day parade (1952), Piru Singh was honoured during the 1975 celebrations.







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

## ***Minutes of the 2296th RWM held on January 14th, 2025 at BNROC, Garden Reach***

1. President Biswajit Saha called the RWM to order and requested the members to rise for the National Anthem.
2. President highlighted the forthcoming official visit of District Governor on March 4th, 2025. A booking request has been submitted to BNROC management; the response is awaited. Further discussions will follow upon receipt of the reply.
3. January being Vocational Service Month, President requested PP Tanu Roy to assist in finalising nominations for vocational awards. Nominations from PN Dr. BN Jha, Rtn. Abbas Ali Halder, and other Rotarians will be reviewed.
4. The Secretary & Treasurer discussed the need to streamline the club's accounts for filing Income Tax Returns (ITRs) and after establishing a Rotary Garden Reach Charitable Trust. M/s. Calcutta Corporate, currently assisting with trust formation and incorporating the data of receipts and expenses entries in the Tally accounts for FY 2023-24, has quoted: ₹15,000 (one-time) for applying for 80G and 12A certification. This is needed for Charitable trust functioning. ₹10,000 annually for auditing and filing accounts regular club accounts and Trust accounts. Members approved the annual audit fee of ₹10,000.
5. PP Shweta proposed attending the Bharatgarh Rotary School for the inauguration of benches and tables on February 9th, 2025. The proposal was accepted. Discussion on outstanding payments to Mr. Harshit Mahato was deferred to the next meeting, with a request for a school representative to attend.
6. PP Naresh Jain shared a request from the Life Beyond Cancer forum to co-host their annual program on February 15th, 2025.
7. An appeal was received from Ramakrishna Sevashram to support a girl student pursuing a nursing course, with a requested amount of 20,000. Due to PP Dr. JK Singh's absence, the matter was postponed to the next meeting, with members favoring utilizing trust funds.
8. Club Secretary conducted the club business.
9. On confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting, President Biswajit terminated the meeting.