

“YOU ARE THE
LIGHT
OF THE WORLD...”

RID 3291, Zone-16

Rotary
Garden Reach



2357th RWM

BEYOND BLOOD



WORLD THALASSAEMIA DAY

MAY 8



AWARENESS.
COMPASSION.
ACTION.
LIVES.

— **TOGETHER,** —
— WE CAN MAKE —
THALASSAEMIA
— A STORY OF HOPE, —
NOT STRUGGLE.



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Birthday Greetings

May 13th : PP Chinmay Pal

Anniversary Greetings

May 13th Spouse Dr. Payel & Rtn. Dr. Amitabh Ray



PEACEBUILDING
AND CONFLICT
PREVENTION



DISEASE
PREVENTION
& TREATMENT



WATER,
SANITATION
& HYGIENE



MATERNAL &
CHILD HEALTH



BASIC EDUCATION
& LITERACY



COMMUNITY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT

Beyond Blood: A Conversation We Can No Longer Avoid

PP Tanu Roy

On the occasion of World Thalassemia Day, imagine a rather unusual roundtable. A dimly lit room, four legends; **one deeply serious subject.**

Amitabh Bachchan sits upright, thoughtful as ever. Beside him, the ever-grounded Jackie Shroff lounges casually with a plant in one hand and concern in the other. Across the table, tennis icon Pete Sampras spins a coffee mug silently, while football maestro Zinedine Zidane watches intently.

No media, no scripts; just an honest conversation on Thalassemia.

Amitabh breaks the silence first. *“People still whisper the word as though it is some mysterious curse. It is not. It is genetic. It can be detected. In many cases, it can even be prevented.”*

Jackie Shroff nods instantly. Bilkul! We check Wi-Fi passwords before entering cafés, but won't do a simple blood screening before marriage. Strange species, humans.

Everyone laughs. Briefly, but the point lands.

Thalassemia is inherited when both parents carry the faulty gene. Most carriers live completely normal lives and often do not even know they carry it. Yet when two carriers marry, the child may suffer from Thalassemia Major — a condition requiring lifelong blood transfusions.

Pete Sampras leans in. *You know what amazes me? Athletes obsess over iron levels for performance. But children with Thalassemia battle dangerous iron overload because of repeated transfusions. That irony is cruel. Indeed, repeated transfusions save lives but also increase iron in vital organs. Patients often undergo painful chelation therapy to remove excess iron.*

Zidane quietly adds: *In football, prevention is smarter than cure. Public health should work the same way. And there lies the solution nobody discusses loudly enough.*

☞ *Mass screening.*

☞ *Premarital testing.*

☞ *Genetic counselling.*

☞ *Voluntary blood donation.*

☞ *Not glamorous words. But life-saving ones.*

Jackie suddenly grins. *“Also, can we make blood donation camps less scary? Why does every camp look like an exam hall? Add music, chai, maybe biryani afterwards — people will queue up willingly!”* Even Amitabh laughs at that.

Yet Jackie may be onto something.

Countries that normalised blood donation through community events, youth drives, and celebrity participation have dramatically improved patient support systems. Awareness works best when fear is removed from the room.

Then comes a lesser-known fact from Amitabh. *“Do you know scientists believe the Thalassemia trait survived historically because it offered some protection against severe malaria? Nature writes complicated stories.”*

Pete raises an eyebrow. *“So humanity basically kept a dangerous gene because mosquitoes were worse?”*

“Precisely,” replies Zidane dryly. Another round of laughter.

But the seriousness soon returns, because somewhere tonight, a child will wait for compatible blood. Some parent will calculate hospital expenses instead of planning holidays. Some teenager will miss school for transfusions yet again.

Thalassemia does not need sympathy posters once a year. It needs collective responsibility all year round.

As the conversation ends, Jackie Shroff gently places the plant at the centre of the table. *“Disease spreads quietly,” he says softly. “But awareness can spread faster — if people decide it matters.”*

And perhaps that is the real takeaway from World Thalassemia Day.

The cure for ignorance is not medicine. It is Conversation.



"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD..."

Youth first, Rotary forever

M Muruganandam, RI Director, 2025–27

My dear Rotarians,

Rotary stands tall as a service organisation guided by our highest ideal — Service Above Self. Yet, at its core, Rotary is also a membership organisation. The strength of our service, reach and future depend on how well we nurture and sustain our members. Each one of us carries the responsibility not just to serve, but to strengthen the very fabric of Rotary by uplifting our fellow members and building continuity for the years ahead.



As we reflect on this, a powerful opportunity stands before us — the vibrant world of Interact and Rotaract. These platforms are not just extensions of Rotary; they are the very foundation of its future.

As we step into May, the Youth Service month, our focus naturally turns to the young minds who will shape tomorrow. Their energy, ideas and aspirations are not just promising — they are transformative. Having begun my own journey as a Rotaractor, I say this with conviction: young people are not looking for perfection; they are looking for inspiration and encouragement.

Today's Interactors are tomorrow's Rotaractors. Today's Rotaractors are tomorrow's Rotarians. In every sense, they are our prospective members. The question we must ask ourselves is: are we giving them the kind of inspiration they seek?

Let us go beyond engaging them as volunteers. Let us trust them with responsibility. Let us invite them into leadership roles where they can experience the true spirit of Rotary. When we do this, something remarkable

happens — they don't just participate; they lead, they innovate, and they inspire.

Our role, therefore, is simple, yet profound: to make Rotary irresistible to them.

In this journey, the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) programme stands as a powerful catalyst. I strongly encourage every club and district leader to prioritise RYLA for the Interact and Rotaract clubs. It is not just a programme, it is an experience that shapes confidence, character and leadership at an early stage. RYLA has the power to ignite potential; often, one spark is all it takes to illuminate a lifetime.

As we move forward, let us carry this vision with clarity and conviction. Let us build momentum, strengthen our legacy, and ensure that what we pass on is not just continuity — but a stronger, more vibrant Rotary.

Together, let us continue to **Say Yes to Youth Service** — for Rotary's future begins there.



Rotary Garden Reach organised a Tree Plantation drive at Bharatgarh Rotary School on May 9th, 2026. As part of this initiative, 75 Betelnut (supari) saplings were planted in the school premises. Saplings were covered with nets and donated by PE Dr. BN Jha. Nets & others were donated by President Bandar. Total cost Rs. 4500. Sumptuous lunch was served to all the students & faculties of Bharatgarh Rotary School on the eve of Rabindra Jayanti celebrations. Total cost of the project was Rs. 8150. We are thankful to our esteemed members for their generous contribution.

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A Foundation for Peace and Impact

Bharat Pandya, TRF Trustee

In the midst of global conflict and uncertainty The Rotary Foundation stands as a beacon of hope. With a focus on peace, our work through TRF creates conditions conducive to peace. In fact, Rotary thought about and implemented its peace-building programme over 25 years ago, long before it became ‘de rigueur’ for organisations and world agencies to incorporate peace building in their activities.



Rotary’s work is aimed at positive peace through its service activities — in the seven areas of focus — that impact and change lives in our communities, and around the world. A peace mind-set requires a shift in behaviour from reactive, conflict- driven attitude to a proactive, peace-oriented mind-set rooted in empathy and a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, compromise and credibility. That is what Rotary’s Peace Centers and Peace Scholars programme are

all about — changing behaviour and mindsets.

Increasingly TRF is looking at projects and activities that create a lasting impact in the community. Whether it is through working with farmers for water access and better harvests (through the Programs of Scale) or providing homes for the homeless, paediatric cardiac surgeries, or equipping and running medical vans across India, TRF is truly creating a great impact.

That impact becomes possible due to the generosity of Rotarians. As we enter the final part of this Rotary year it is now more important to support and invest in The Rotary Foundation. All funds are important — Annual Fund, Polio and Endowment Funds.

It has been an honour and privilege to serve on the Board of Trustees over the last four years. I am convinced that Rotarians look at TRF as their charity of choice and that is why they give to the Foundation year after year because giving to TRF is effective, efficient and transparent and does good where it is most needed.

Your generosity and dedication to helping others is truly inspiring. Thank you for your commitment to *Doing Good in the World*.

Therapy rooms for special children

It was a dream come true for past president Sargam Falari from Rotary Bicholim, RID 3170, as two objectives of his pet mission were fulfilled one by one, but after much planning and deliberations. This included setting up therapy rooms for differently- abled students at the Narayan Zantye School for Special Children, Vathadev, in North Goa, and providing a teachers’ training programme for around 40 special instructors.

Project Smita (Smiles), the first global grant project (\$47,000) of the club, has set up three therapy rooms for audiology-speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy with diagnostic equipment, tools and learning aids for special children, inaugurated in September 2025. “During my tenure as club president (2023–24), I visited the special school and heard from



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the teachers that the growth of their special children is not keeping with the metrics of national standards for those with learning disabilities. First, they lacked the right equipment and special therapy rooms that help in rehabilitation. Second, teachers needed special training for handling differently-abled children,” recalls Falari, the primary contact of the project.

Following the inputs from the special school, his team looked into the pros and cons of setting up therapy rooms “with needs assessment done before applying for the GG.” Once the GG funding

was sanctioned, “therapy rooms were created in 18 months, fully-equipped for teachers to impart life skills to their special children.”

Expressing his happiness, club president Damodar Shrinivas Prabhu says, “all our 64 members are elated to see this project through for special children. The 20-year-old school has around 180 students in various age groups suffering from varying disabilities and needing diverse approach by a set of special instructors. Right now, the school has 30 special teachers.”

Now these special rooms will facilitate the identification and grooming of children in craft skills such as pottery, making of paper bags, cloth bags, agarbathis, diyas (for festivals), embroidery etc., says Jyoti Sawant, Club Secretary. “Three therapists — one each for physiotherapy, audio-speech and occupational skills — will help the special teachers in mentoring the students,” she explains.

But getting the facilities ready is only half the work done. “We had a domain expert Ketaki Parob, psychologist, who took an exhaustive four-month course (Dec-Mar) for 40 special teachers, including 10 trainees from another school, spread over eight sessions on the ways to handle different types of special children whose needs and difficulties vary,” says Falari. All the trainee teachers were given completion certificates at an event held in April. Thanking Rotary, Manjiri Jog, a teacher, says, “We are grateful to the Bicholim club for upgrading our teaching skills to such high standards. This new perspective will guide us to look after the special children better.”

Speech and audio therapist Deepaswi Sawant points out the “new therapy rooms will ensure faster development of children... making them to adapt to the practical world. We have heard so much about the global work done by Rotary, but this special project gave us the real feel of Rotary’s magic.” It was an emotional moment for the project team led by Falari as “I could sense a mission accomplished well in time.”

RC Lake Arrowhead, RID 5330, US, is their global partner. PDGs Gaurish Dhond and Vinaykumar Pai Raikar inaugurated the therapy rooms at the special school, a part of the Keshav Seva Sadhana group of educational institutions in Goa.



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Minutes of the 2356th RWM held on May 5th, 2026 at BNROC, Garden Reach

1. The President Bandaru called the meeting to order & requested all members to rise for the National Anthem.
2. The President then requested all members to stand and observe a minute's silence on the demise of our ex-member, PP Rangan Dhar.
3. The President informed the members about the Thalassemia Summit scheduled to be held on May 8th, 2026 at ICCR on the occasion of World Thalassemia Day and requested members to attend the same.
4. The President apprised the members about the Tree Plantation drive to be held at Bharatgarh Rotary School on May 9th, 2026. Rabindra Jayanti celebrations will also be observed on the same day, followed by lunch for the students & faculties of the school. Members were requested to attend in large numbers and make the programme a success.
5. Proposal for Vocational Training & Adult Literacy classes at Bharatgarh Rotary School.
6. PP Biswajit Saha raised the issue of constructing a proper pathway/road at the Bharatgarh Rotary School premises, as presently there is no proper pathway and students face difficulty reaching the school during the rainy season due to muddy conditions. It was discussed that approximately 80% of the required funds may be raised through donations and the balance borne by the Club. During the proposed visit to the school on 9th May 2026, discussions will be held with the contractor regarding the estimated cost, following which the matter will be taken up further.
7. The President informed the members that the grant for procurement of the Blood Storage Refrigerator for The Thalassaemia Society of India (TSI) has been approved and payment has been made by EIRWT. The equipment is expected to be received at the Society within 10 days.
8. Family corner & Club business was done by PN Shubhayan.
9. President Bandaru confirmed the minutes of the last meeting and terminated the meeting.



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WE MEET EVERY TUESDAY AT 7.30 P.M. AT B.N.R. OFFICERS' CLUB, GARDEN REACH, KOLKATA - 700 043

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