

**“YOU ARE THE
LIGHT
OF THE WORLD...”**

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Rotary
Garden Reach



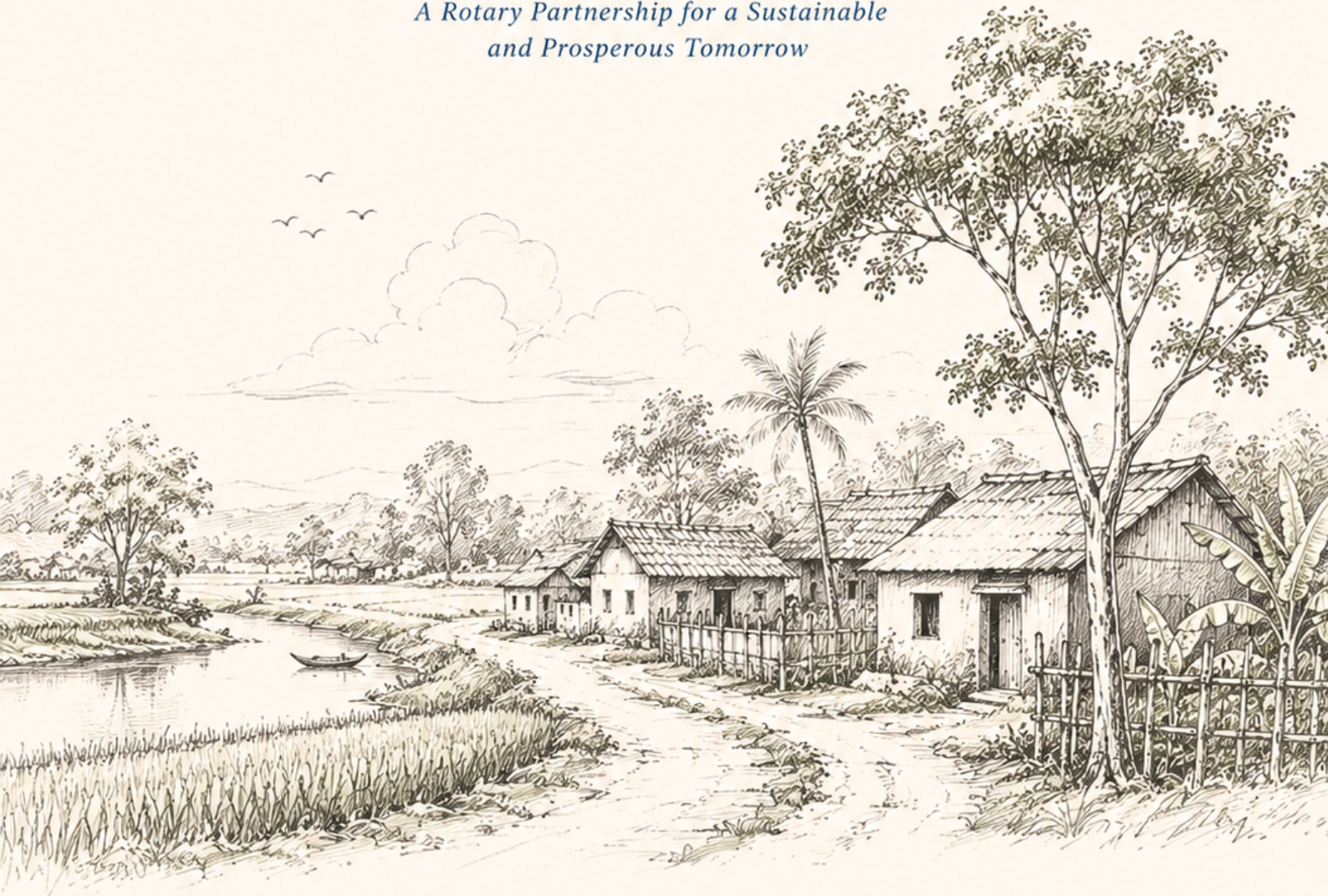
2358th RWM

Building a Resurgent Bengal



MEDICINE • VOCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT • ENVIRONMENT

*A Rotary Partnership for a Sustainable
and Prosperous Tomorrow*



MEDICINE
Better Health.
Stronger Communities.



**VOCATIONAL
EMPOWERMENT**
Skilled Youth.
Empowered Future.



ENVIRONMENT
Greener Today.
Sustainable Tomorrow.

TOGETHER, WE CREATE TOMORROW

May 19th, 2026 - Vol. 48 No. 42 • Attendance : 17



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Anniversary Greetings

May 19th : Spouse Dr. Minu & PE Dr. BN Jha

Bengal's Renaissance: The Defining Role Rotary Can Play

PP Tanu Roy

Bengal has always stood at the crossroads of intellect, culture, reform, and resilience. From the Bengal Renaissance of the 19th century to its contributions in science, literature, medicine, and nation-building, the region has repeatedly shown an ability to reinvent itself. Today, as Bengal looks toward a new era of growth, the question is no longer whether a resurgence is possible — but who will help shape it.

The strongest prospects lie in three interconnected sectors: Medicine, Vocational development, and the Environment.

In healthcare, Bengal possesses one of India's richest ecosystems of doctors, hospitals, medical colleges, and diagnostic expertise. Kolkata already serves as a healthcare gateway for Eastern and North-Eastern India, as well as neighbouring countries. With focused investment in affordable healthcare, telemedicine, nursing education, and preventive care, Bengal can emerge as a global hub for accessible medical excellence.

Equally important is vocational empowerment. The future economy will reward skills more than degrees alone. Bengal's youth must be prepared not just for employment, but for adaptability — in healthcare services, renewable energy, hospitality, logistics, digital technologies, and entrepreneurship. Skill development at the grassroots can transform entire communities and reduce economic migration.

Environmental sustainability will define Bengal's long-term survival and prosperity. Cyclones, river erosion, pollution, and climate vulnerability, especially in the Sundarbans, demand urgent and collective action. Green innovation, waste management, water conservation, and renewable energy must become people's movements rather than isolated projects.

This is where Rotary International can become a transformative force in Bengal's renaissance.

Rotary possesses something few organisations do: a rare combination of professional expertise, grassroots trust, international partnerships, and service-driven leadership. Its members are doctors, educators, entrepreneurs, industrialists, environmentalists, and community leaders — precisely the kind of network needed to bridge ideas with implementation.

Rotary can establish district skill centres, rural telemedicine networks, climate-awareness campaigns, women entrepreneurship platforms, and sustainable community projects. More importantly, it can inspire ethical and service-oriented leadership among Bengal's youth.

Bengal's resurgence cannot depend solely on policy or politics. It requires civic institutions that combine compassion with execution. Rotary's partnership can provide that moral and developmental backbone.

If Bengal seeks another renaissance, Rotary can help ensure it is not merely remembered in history — but witnessed in our lifetime.



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**BELIEVE
THERE IS
GOOD IN
THE WORLD**

Rotary



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How community youth and a Rotary club sparked a national movement for energy awareness

PP S. Balakrishnan, Rotary Coimbatore Gaalaxy

When schools and colleges in my community of Coimbatore began raising concerns about rising electricity costs and the lack of energy education, our Rotary club listened. Parents, teachers, and students voiced the same need: young people wanted to help solve energy challenges but lacked the knowledge and tools to do so.

This insight became the foundation for **Project Parivarthan (“Change”)**, a youth-led energy awareness initiative created in partnership with TANGEDCO, our state electricity utility.

What we learned from the community

Through conversations with school leaders, college faculty, and student councils, our team learned that energy waste on campuses was common—not out of neglect, but because many students simply didn’t understand how electricity consumption worked or how small behavioural changes could reduce both costs and environmental impact. Teachers told us they lacked appropriate, practical materials to guide students. Parents shared that household electricity bills continued to rise without clear strategies for reducing consumption.

Those voices guided us. We code-signed a program focused on clear explanations, practical demonstrations, and activities that students could lead themselves.



Our purpose

Our goal was to cultivate a generation of youth energy leaders in Coimbatore who could help their families, schools, and communities make informed decisions about electricity use, renewable energy, and conservation.

What we did together

With TANGEDCO’s expert guidance, we launched student-driven energy-awareness workshops across schools and colleges in and around Coimbatore. What began with 1,300 school students in 2016 soon expanded to engineering colleges, eventually reaching around 5,000 students over the following years.

TANGEDCO engineers, Rotary volunteers, and the Indian Association of Energy Management Professionals co-led training sessions. Schools and colleges welcomed us with open arms. The program included live demonstrations of energy meters, poster campaigns, hands-on app-building ideas, and pledges to reduce energy consumption at home and at school.

What happened next

The students took their roles seriously. They switched off unused fans, organized energy awareness rallies, and became change makers in their homes and campuses. Within months, schools reported noticeable behavioural changes in electricity and energy use among both students and staff.

The most unexpected effect

TANGEDCO compiled and shared our entire initiative with the Tamil Nadu Government and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power, Government of India.

Recognizing its grassroots impact and youth-led approach, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency adopted the Energy Ambassadors program as a template for nationwide school-based, energy-awareness programs, to be implemented through all State Electricity Boards across India with government funding.

Why this matters

Rotary gave us the platform to partner with government agencies and think boldly. Our collaboration with TANGEDCO proved that when civic groups, utilities, and youth come together, we can truly shift mindsets and create lasting habits.

What I learned and felt

This journey changed me. I learned that Rotary’s true power lies in building bridges—between citizens, institutions, and policymakers. What started as a local club initiative in Coimbatore has now become a national energy education model, backed by the Indian government.

Watching students take action, seeing our program grow beyond our expectations and knowing we made a positive change in the country’s energy future filled me with pride, joy, and deep gratitude.

My invitation to other clubs

I hope this story inspires other clubs to collaborate with local partners such as utility providers, businesses, institutions, or governments. When community groups and institutions partner with youth, powerful things happen. If our local project can go national, imagine what yours could do! Feel free to reach out if you’d like help replicating this model.



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No needle, no fear, no pain

Omid Farooq, Communications Officer for the World Health Organization

With jet injectors, polio vaccinators in Afghanistan build trust

On a cloudy morning in Afghanistan’s Laghman province, Dr. Arsala set out for Alingar, a rugged, mountain-wrapped district he had visited many times before. After 12 years as a provincial polio officer, he knew the rhythm of polio campaigns: the early starts, the long drives, the predictable challenges. But this time felt different. He carried a new tool being introduced for the first time in Afghanistan’s polio program: needle-free injections.

From August to October last year, Afghanistan’s polio eradication program launched a three-phase campaign using the inactivated polio vaccine, normally administered through a traditional syringe with a needle. Used alongside the oral vaccine drops, it can boost immunity. The campaign across the eastern region aimed to protect more than 1.2 million children under the age of 5 from polio. Fifty districts, four provinces, and more than 10,000 dedicated polio workers joined forces — and uniting it all was a groundbreaking innovation never before used in the country’s polio eradication efforts.

Instead of shots, the vaccinators introduced jet injectors, spring-powered devices that deliver a tiny stream of vaccine through the outer layer of skin in a split second. There was no needle, no fear, and no pain. Just a quick press, a soft click, and protection delivered with a smile.



It was modern technology meeting some of Afghanistan’s most remote communities.

“This campaign is unlike any I have ever seen before,” Dr. Arsala said as he held the jet injector in his hand. For him, this was not only about new technology; it was about building trust. “This is the first time such a device is being used in polio campaigns in Afghanistan. Delivering high-quality training is crucial. Vaccinators must feel confident before they go to the field.”

Teaching the technique

In a mosque in Alingar, vaccinators gathered, leaning forward with curiosity as trainers like Dr. Arsala and Dr. Jawaid, the district polio officer, demonstrated each step — loading the vaccine, positioning the injector, and administering the dose.

The device, made by a company in Colorado, delivers an intradermal injection into the thick layer of skin called the dermis. It’s simple to operate and requires minimal training. Administering an intradermal injection with a traditional needle, on the other hand, requires a high degree of training and skill.

This particular model of injector is designed specifically for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative to deliver what’s known as a fractional dose of inactivated polio vaccine, shown to afford virtually the same protection as a full dose when given over multiple rounds, while significantly reducing costs.

For many frontline polio workers, the campaign in Afghanistan was their first time using such technology. “This is the first time they are seeing this device,” Dr. Jawaid said proudly. “We make sure they understand every part of it and feel ready to use it.”

For Mohammad Ibrahim, a vaccinator with five years of experience, the device felt like a doorway to the future. “It is much easier than needle injections,” he said. “I’m excited. I’m confident to go into the field and vaccinate children.”



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And in the field, something remarkable happened.

Easing caregivers' concerns

In previous years, some caregivers hesitated as soon as they saw a needle. But now, the reaction was entirely different. Parents gathered around the vaccination sites, curious, relieved, and eager to learn more. “When they learned the device is needle-free and painless, they were eager to see,” said vaccinator Zahir Islam. “Some parents who had avoided injectable vaccines before now brought their children with confidence.”

Mothers smiled as their children barely flinched. Fathers watched with relief and admiration as the process took just seconds. Community and religious leaders even publicly encouraged families to embrace the new method, praising it as safer, faster, and more comfortable.

The campaign didn't just bring a vaccine — it brought renewed trust.

To deliver the best protection, campaigns can use both the oral polio vaccine, delivered with drops on the tongue, and the inactivated polio vaccine in a syringe. The oral vaccine interrupts person-to-person transmission, while the inactivated vaccine offers strong protection against paralysis.

With the jet injector, the experience became cleaner, quicker, and more acceptable — especially important among groups where fear of needles has created real barriers.

“We've done surveys among both parents and the vaccinators,” says Dr. Ondrej Mach, leader of the research and product development team at the [World Health Organization's](#) polio eradication program. “The vaccinators prefer it because it's easy to use and there are no needles, and the parents prefer that as well because the children don't cry. So, I think it probably is good for acceptance. There's no blood. I've tried it on myself. It's almost painless.”

A global tool

The speed of training, which takes about an hour, is another advantage, he adds, and the devices can be a good investment in places that mount regular vaccination campaigns like Afghanistan and Pakistan, the only two countries where wild polio remains endemic.

Globally, these devices have already been used to vaccinate millions of children in places such as Somalia, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Now, Afghan children would benefit too. And in the hands of dedicated workers like Dr. Arsala, Dr. Jawaid, and thousands of vaccinators across the country's eastern region, this small device carried something much larger: the promise of a future free from polio.

By the end of the third phase, vaccinators across the eastern region had fully mastered the new technology. With each campaign day, they moved from child to child with growing confidence, proud to be part of a campaign that could bring Afghanistan one step closer to ending polio for good.

The country's eastern region, once a key area of poliovirus transmission in 2022-23, has since made remarkable progress. Conducting the vaccination campaign further strengthens children's immunity and reduces the risk of poliovirus transmission in this region.

For Dr. Arsala, watching vaccinators use the jet injectors with ease, seeing communities welcome the technology, and witnessing children protected without fear became one of the most fulfilling moments of his long career.

As the campaign closed, Dr. Danish Ahmed, medical officer for the WHO East region, reflected on what it meant for the country's future. “This campaign is not only about vaccination,” he said. “It is about giving children a safer, healthier future and bringing us closer to the dream of a polio-free Afghanistan.”



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Through Rotary, a police officer expands her worldview

JP Swenson

In her early days of policing, Joanne Serkeyn had to confront a barrage of distressing events. The 9/11 attacks had just happened. And after returning to work from maternity leave, she endured multiple months with a lot of calls for homicides and other tragedies. “I felt like I was the Grim Reaper.”



She was starting to become cynical when her commander suggested she join Rotary. She eventually became president-elect of the Rotary Club of Ancaster A.M. in Ontario and was sent to the Rotary International Convention in England. “I walked into the House of Friendship and was gobsmacked,” she says. “I could not believe the good that was going on in the world.”

Serkeyn, now a member of the Rotary Club of Lincoln, Ontario, has served for 28 years at the Hamilton Police Service. She works as the DNA coordinator in the forensics unit. Over the years, she’s noted a connection between missing people’s cases and human trafficking. At a Rotary institute event, she learned about Rotary Action Groups and got involved with one devoted to a cause close to her heart: ending slavery and human trafficking. “Rotary Action Groups rejuvenate people,” she says. “They make people passionate about Rotary.”

In July, Serkeyn will become the governor of District 7090, which encompasses 75 Rotary and Rotaract clubs throughout southern Ontario and western New York. She’s focusing on a district wide initiative against human trafficking. “People think they can’t make a difference with

human trafficking,” she says. “But together, we can move the needle. We have a social responsibility to protect our young. We have an opportunity to be proactive.”



An Interactive Smart TV was donated by Rotary Garden Reach Charitable Trust for the students of Sanghamitra Vidyalaya, BNR South Colony. It was inaugurated on May 19th, 2026 at 11:00 hrs.

The inauguration ceremony will be graced by Hon’ble District Governor Rtn. Tapas Bhattacharya (2026–27) as the Chief Guest. PP Dr. Sharda Ray (Inner Wheel Garden Reach) was the Guest of Honour.

Members from the Charitable Trust were present in numbers and encouraged the students on this important occasion of promoting modern digital learning.





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Minutes of the 2357th RWM held on May 5th, 2026 at PVR, Hide Road

- 1. The President Bandaru called the meeting to order & requested all members to rise for the National Anthem.**
- 2. President Bandaru requested PP Sanjay to officiate as the Club Secretary.**
- 3. President informed the members that the tree plantation programme held on May 9th, 2026 at Bharatgarh Rotary School was successfully conducted. Out of 70 Supari saplings, 42 saplings were planted and duly protected with netting. Rest will be planted soon.**
- 4. The vendor submitted an estimate amounting to approximately Rs. 2.28 lakhs towards repair of the tube well, including replacement of the motor, pipes, and labour-charges. It was informed that the tube well had been functioning for nearly 4 years. PE Dr. BN Jha enquired regarding the availability of tube well documents, AMC records, and details of maintenance carried out over the years. It was reported that the motor and pipes had been burnt and the exact depth of the tube well could not be ascertained.**
- 5. The Smart TV installation programme at Sanghamitra Vidyalaya has been postponed to May 19th, 2026 at 11.00 am. at the request of the school authorities. Members emphasised that maintenance requirements and AMC provisions, if any, should be closely monitored and proper records maintained.**
- 6. A Joint Meeting with the Rotary Budge Budge has been proposed on May 19th, 2026. In case the Joint Meeting does not materialise, a Club Assembly will be held on the same date.**
- 7. Members were informed that the RCC Assembly will be held on May 24th, 2026 at Ramakrishna Mission, Golpark. Discussions were held regarding whether the Club should participate as a co-host.**
- 8. Family corner & Club business was done by PP Sanjay.**
- 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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