



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

RID 3291, Zone-16
Rotary
Garden Reach



2339th RWM

New Year 2026
A Rotary Vision of Hope & Joy

Eradicating Polio & Thalassemia

Building Peace & Unity

INSPIRING INTERACTORS

Happy New Year 2026!
Hope, Health & Harmony.

Dream Big!



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New Year 2026: Where Rotary Turns Resolutions into Reality (and Smiles into Strategy)

The New Year has arrived. Calendars are crisp, diaries are optimistic, and gym memberships—well—are full of hope. As **2026** steps in with fireworks, fresh planners, and ambitious resolutions, Rotarians quietly make a familiar promise: this year too, we will get things done.

Somewhere in a small town, a Rotarian begins the year the Rotary way—by checking blood donation schedules instead of party photos. A few time zones away, another Rotarian is counting vaccine vials more carefully than countdown seconds. And across the world, a group of children are dreaming big—because Rotary has decided that their dreams are non-negotiable.

For **Rotary International**, hope is not a New Year wish scribbled on a sticky note. It is a long-term project with milestones, monitoring, and—occasionally—strong tea. The mission to eradicate polio proves that persistence beats pessimism every time. Two drops may seem small, but then again, so did the first spark of every firework welcoming 2026.

The fight against thalassemia is equally determined. Through awareness, screening, and counselling, Rotary ensures that childhood is not interrupted by hospital queues and medical jargon. The goal is simple: fewer needles, more notebooks; fewer hospital visits, more playground visits.

And then come the Interactors—Rotary's secret weapon, battery fully charged.

If Rotarians bring experience, **Interactors** bring Wi-Fi speed enthusiasm. They spread awareness through reels faster than rumours, organise service projects with contagious energy, and ask the most dangerous question of all: "Why not try it this way?" In 2026, they are encouraged not just to participate, but to lead—turning service into something vibrant, visible, and undeniably cool (yes, service can be cool).

Peace and brotherhood also get a New Year upgrade. Not as lofty speeches, but as practical, innovative ideas:

Peace Labs, where children from different backgrounds work together and discover that teamwork beats stereotypes.

Service Hackathons, where youthful brains turn good intentions into workable solutions—sometimes before lunch.

Story Exchanges, where children across cultures realise that everyone wants the same things: safety, friendship, and permission to dream big.

And yes, there is humour in all this. Because Rotary knows that service delivered with a smile travels further. A volunteer joking with a nervous parent, an Interactor making health education fun, a Rotarian laughing while organising the hundredth meeting of the year—these moments matter. They remind us that kindness works better when it's human.

That child who once waited outside a community hall? He now helps organise camps. The mother who queued anxiously now waves cheerfully as her child runs to school. **These are not New Year miracles. They are Rotary habits.**

As 2026 unfolds, Rotary doesn't just welcome the year—it rolls up its sleeves and gets to work; one child, one idea, **one act of service at a time!!!**



PEACEBUILDING
AND CONFLICT
PREVENTION



DISEASE
PREVENTION
& TREATMENT



WATER,
SANITATION
& HYGIENE



MATERNAL &
CHILD HEALTH



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COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT

Lasting Transformation

Holger Knaack, TRF Trustee Chair

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 per cent. 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 organising joint medical outreach and home visitations. State ministries of health are increasingly adopting these approaches as part of their primary healthcare 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 per cent and neonatal deaths decreased by 28 per cent in supported facilities, while postnatal clinic attendance increased by 10 per cent.

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 programme's success prompted Nigerian philanthropist Sir Emeka Ofor 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.

A Leadership journey like no other

There was a stunned silence in the hall as Capt. Raghu Raman from the Indian Army walked the delegates of the Tejas zone institute through the tough terrain of the Siachen Glacier in the Himalayas and described the nitty-gritty of what it takes to exhibit leadership in one of the world's most difficult terrains. He was addressing a session titled Leadership at 26,000ft.

While on a flat terrain the attacker to defence ratio is roughly 1:3, in a place like Siachen it changes to 1:9; and if you have 100 people making the charge, "they know by the end of the attack, or the day, less than about 30–40 will be alive. The rest will be dead, or worse than dead, because they will be amputees for life."

While delivering such lectures, when he quizzed the audience why soldiers fight, he got answers such as 'patriotism, love for the country, discipline, uniform,' etc. The simple answer is that troops don't fight for a huge cause but for the leader who is leading them, he said.

Dissecting the group of soldiers who end up in Siachen, Capt. Raman said, "More than geography, this is a lesson about reality. A boy who comes from Kerala does not know what the snow looks like. A boy from Kashmir doesn't have an idea what deserts look like. Our troops come from tiny villages, and have no vision of the strategy of the nation. Their visibility is limited to the comrades who are with them in the trench and that young leader... lieutenant or captain who is leading them. It is limited to the izzat of the Paltan, the honour of the battalion. There are no





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material tools with which military leaders can take their men into battle... no ESOPs, pay hikes, employee of the month award or bonus!”

Through a short and grainy video, he showed the audience what the Siachen Glacier was like. Where helicopters had to carry each and every piece of material under the most challenging conditions... such as the helipad being “roughly the size of these two tables put together. For the soldiers posted there, there is no bathing, shaving, personal hygiene. You put a piece of cloth in cold water and wipe yourself with it. This is life at 18,000ft and higher.”

Capt. Raman painted a vivid scenario to the stunned audience on what life is beyond 21,000ft, where temperatures can go down to minus 20 or 25 degree C, with the wind chill factor taking it even further down. Another video clip showed patrolling soldiers carrying packs weighing 15–20kg, and a rifle to boot! Whereas a patrol in normal conditions from Delhi to Dwarka takes 3–4 hours, in a glacier it can take 4 days, because when you put your foot in the snow, “it doesn’t go down to your ankle or knee, but all the way down to your thigh!”

He said leadership had to be provided in such an impossible terrain where to get a cup of morning tea, a soldier used a pick axe to break “pieces of concrete-like rock solid ice, heat it in a patila for an hour and half.” The soldier’s clothes were black, thanks to the abundant use of liquid gold of the glacier — kerosene. “You can survive without food or water for weeks, but without kerosene, you will not survive a single night, because if the bukhari in your enclosure goes off in the night, in the morning, you’ll wake up like an ice tray. Within days spent on the glacier, your eyes, nose and sputum that you cough out will have black soot, because you’re constantly inhaling kerosene fumes.”

The size of the bunker was about the size of the stage he stood on, and 14–16 men lived in it! The entry is through a tunnel, which has been chiselled in, so God help you if you have claustrophobia. Inside, the walls are lined with steel to prevent them from caving in. “So, if a novice by mistake takes off his glove and puts his hand on that steel girder at minus 40, you can imagine what’ll happen.”

Wryly, the army man said: “Now, through a five-minute clipping, I’m trying to show you what life is like for 12 months in Siachen. There is no way a video can show you what it really is like to live inside a bunker that stinks of unwashed human bodies mixed with the smell of kerosene, gunpowder, vomit and rotting food. You’ll have to extrapolate and imagine what it feels to live in that environment.”

Giving an example of combat leadership, Capt. Raman next showed a picture of a winter cut-out post, where once troops were inducted for six months, they couldn’t be de-inducted. The reason was the steep gradient of the mountain face where tonnes of snow fell every hour, and the slightest of vibration could start an avalanche. He related the tale of a 20-year-old lieutenant, who had taken 20 men into that post. Within two days they had a casualty, with a soldier dying of cerebral oedema. “They wrapped the body of the soldier in parachute cloth, kept it next to the post. You couldn’t throw away the body, it was one of your own soldiers, and nothing would happen to the body at minus 40 deg. Just visualise the grit required by that 20-year-old lad who had to then lead 18 men through the next 5 1/2 months. Compare that to the long face we get, or our morale breaks down when something goes wrong at work, or somebody steals our car parking, or when someone says ‘no’ to us.”

The Captain said that these men were not Special Forces or members of high-performance teams in various sectors. “They are very ordinary; what they do together becomes extraordinary because they are led in extraordinary ways, they are organised in extraordinary ways. The second rule of combat leadership doesn’t matter if you are a lieutenant who was minted just two weeks ago; now that you have command, you are accountable, period. There is no excuse.”

Showing a picture of soldiers wearing what is called an ‘anklet,’ a piece of equipment to cover their shoes to prevent the snow from getting inside, he said if a soldier got snow inside his shoes, “this squad cannot stop, no matter how exhausted they are, because if they stop, the ice will turn into water due to body heat, and will instantly refreeze.”

Those who had gone to Leh would know that the travellers are warned to take breaks between long walks, or else the risk of getting pulmonary or cerebral oedema goes up by 800 per cent! “Here, one man’s negligence, one man’s bad karma, and the entire patrol’s life is in danger. The third rules of combat leadership, good teams are literally tied at the hips. Either the whole team wins or the whole team loses. There is no room for an individual gladiator.”

It is in “that state of mind that leadership is being called for. Anybody can lead when the economy is doing great, business is good, environment is good and funding is coming in. Real leadership is actually called for in tough times.”

Next, displaying a bunch of letters, he said, “This is the only thing that brings a smile to the face of a soldier.... letters from home. But these are censored because you don’t want the soldiers getting any bad news. So, if a soldier’s daughter has died of dengue, he won’t be informed, but you, as his commanding officer, will know that. You will have to bear and carry that burden of knowing that your subordinate’s daughter is dead, but won’t be able to tell him.”

Saying that there were no good or bad soldiers, only good or bad leaders, Capt. Raman related an anecdote about the time he was posted at the Siachen battle school as an instructor. By a coincidence, there were two battalions there from the same regiment who were manning two different sectors of the Siachen glacier. While in one the soldiers appeared to be 7ft





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tall... “The way they carried themselves, the snappiness of their salute, the vibrance in their eyes, I almost felt if I touch a soldier, I will get a static, that’s the kind of vibration, vibrance they had.”

“But in the other unit, the men were slouched, their cheeks hollow and eyes vacant. It was the same army, same training, same equipment, same codes, everything was exactly the same, but their leaders were different and that made all the difference! One was kicking ass and the other was crumbling like a pack of cards.”

Through another visual, Capt. Raman showed a man, who was visiting the region when the temperature was around minus 23 degree C, wearing no special clothing. “This is not just excruciatingly painful, it’s downright suicidal. So, why is he doing this? VIPs, who come into the glacier, are covered

from top to bottom as if they are going to meet some Eskimos! Of course, they need to wear those clothes, but they come mostly for photo ops... and they don’t listen to my briefing, they are only awaiting the sound of the chopper which will take them back! But when this man comes to my post, he is sending me a message... ‘Son, I am a brigade commander; I can’t be there with you for the whole 12 months. But for the 10 minutes I stay here, I’ll expose myself to the pain that you feel for twelve months so that you know that I know what your pain is. That is leadership, ladies and gentlemen! This is walking the talk.”

With this anecdote, he reminded the audience that “troops don’t expect you to solve their problems; they expect you to understand their problems.”

Keep glowing, keep growing

M Muruganandam, RI Director, 2025–27

As 2026 dawns, let’s start with thankful hearts and renewed passion to serve through Rotary. Rotary, to me, is a movement of light — and every Rotarian, a torchbearer. When we let this light shine, Rotary glows. And when we share that glow widely, Rotary grows.

After becoming an AKS member, I once thought to myself — maybe now I can slow down, maybe I can focus on other Rotary work. But then came a moment that changed everything.

My home club, Rotary Club of BHEL City Tiruchirapalli, invited me for the inauguration of a global grant project at the Government Hospital in Manapparai, a small town about 50km from Trichy. The hospital serves nearly 80 villages and welcomes hundreds of mothers every month. But for years, it had no Neonatal ICU facility. When a new-born fell critically ill, families had to travel all the way to Trichy — and heartbreakingly, many infants never survived that journey.

Through Rotary’s global grant, the neonatal ward was equipped with life-saving equipment — turning an empty ward into a lifeline. In the last five years, that single project has saved thousands of new-born lives.

Standing there, watching these fragile yet determined lives breathing and thriving, I realised something profound: this is the magic of Rotary. That experience also reminded me of the true power of public image. Because when people see what Rotary actually does, their belief in Rotary grows deeper. Visibility builds trust. Trust creates participation. And participation expands impact.

Public image is one of the significant pillars of Rotary, alongside membership, Foundation and service. It is equally vital to Rotary’s growth. For the world to support us, the world must first see us and understand us.

In India, 83% of the population is aware of Rotary, placing us second in the world. But awareness alone is not enough. Understanding is what truly matters — people knowing why Rotary exists, how it works, and what difference it makes. In that, India leads the world with 73% understanding.

Let me share a thought from one of the greatest treasures of Tamil literature — the Thirukkural. It says Naraa malar— flowers without fragrance. The meaning is simple yet profound: even the most beautiful flower loses its essence without its scent. Similarly, no matter how much we achieve in Rotary — if our work is not known, if our light does not reach others — it is like a flower without fragrance.

Through Interact and Rotaract, we are already taking Rotary’s story to newer





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generations. Our Polio Eradication Initiative, too, has made Rotary a name recognised and respected in every corner of India. Rotary is seen very well in our country — now let us ensure in 2026 that it is celebrated in a larger way. Every photograph shared, every project inaugurated, every human story told — adds to that fragrance. When Rotary's public image glows, Rotary itself grows — in membership, in Foundation giving, and most importantly, in the faith people place in us.

So my dear friends, as we step into this New Year, let our projects speak loudly, and let our stories spread widely. *Let us keep glowing, and keep growing.*

Gift vouchers for 700 children

Kolkata Mayor-in-Council member, Debasish Kumar was the chief guest at the inauguration of **Project Smile Street** initiated by Rotary Calcutta Mahanagar, RID 3291, at the Lion Safari Park, for the benefit of children from disadvantaged families. Shopping coupons, each worth ₹1,000, were given to 700 children so that they can enjoy the experience of choosing their own gifts at different stalls. Also, the club in partnership with seven other Rotary clubs and the Inner Wheel District 3291, distributed clothes (**Project Awarun**), chocolates, school bags, goodie bags and food packets to all the 700 children.



DG Ramendu Homchaudhuri, Lions District 322B1, Governor Manju Chamaria & PRIP Shekhar Mehta were also present on the occasion.

Here's to another year of Rotary, as we step into 2026:

Turning good intentions into action,

Challenges into service,

And ordinary evenings into extraordinary fellowship.

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Minutes of the 2338th RWM held on December 23rd, 2025 at Port View Restaurant, Hide Road

1. The President Bandaru called the meeting to order & requested all members to rise for the National Anthem.
2. The President briefed the members on the forthcoming Sports Day at Bharatgarh Rotary School. PP Prosenjit Barua informed that a sponsor has been arranged for gifts and refreshments for the students. Members were requested to confirm their attendance at the venue to facilitate arrangements for snacks and, if required, lunch.
3. The President read out the credentials of the candidates contesting for the post of DGND for the Rotary year 2028-29. The four candidates are:
Rtn. Amitav Chakraborty
Rtn. Shayak Gupta
Rtn. Brotindro Mullick
Rtn. Subhojit Roy
After discussion, the house unanimously authorised the President to cast the vote after due analysis of each candidate's profile.
4. Similarly, the credentials of the candidates for representing CoL were discussed. The President was unanimously nominated to cast the vote on behalf of the Club.
5. The President updated the members on the status of the EIRWT Grant for procurement of a Blood Units Storage Refrigerator.
It was informed that the final accounts for the year 2024–25 were signed on December 23rd, 2025 and have been forwarded to the Auditor for certification and generation of the UDIN number. Upon receipt, the same will be uploaded on the EIRWT portal for further necessary action. The President requested members to donate generously towards this project. A proposal for a donation of 2,000 per member was discussed and unanimously approved.
6. The Screening Committee was constituted for the election of:
President-Nominee (2028–29)
Club Secretary (2026–27)
The committee members are:
PP Dr. JK Singh – Chair
PP Dr. Arabinda Ray – Co-Chair
PP Tapan K Roy – Co-Chair
7. Club Secretary, Rtn. Shubhayan conducted the club business.
8. President Bandaru confirmed the minutes of the last meeting and terminated the meeting.



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Rotary
District 3291

UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Ramadhan

**LEAD THE PACK
REPRESENT WITH PRIDE!**

The club that brings the highest number of Rotarians to the conference will be specially recognised during the conference.

9th, 10th & 11th January,
2026

Eastside Pavillion,
Nitto Park, Kolkata