



RID 3291
Rotary
Garden Reach



Light

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

April 8th, 2025 - Vol. 47 No. 37

2308th Regular Weekly Meeting
Attendance: 08

Greetings on Birthday
Apr 8th : R'let Shreyanshi, Daughter of PP Abinash Singh

With a Saree & Solar Power, He's Bringing Safe Drinking Water To 400+ Children

Dr. Anil Rajvanshi's solar-powered water purification initiative in Phaltan, Maharashtra, transforms rural schools by providing clean drinking water and fostering interest in STEM. This innovation reduces disease and sparks hope, promoting healthier, brighter futures for children.

Imagine walking into a rural school, where young children sip from a community water tank, unaware of the microscopic dangers lurking within. For years, the water they consumed unknowingly became a conduit for diseases like diarrhoea and typhoid — ailments that not only ravaged their health but also hampered their cognitive development. It's a stark reminder of the gut-brain connection that influences lifelong mental health. Such was the plight of school-going children in Phaltan, Maharashtra, who grew up with the constant presence of waterborne diseases as their unwelcome companions.

These illnesses loomed over their childhoods, shaping their days with bouts of sickness and recovery that repeatedly interrupted their education and stunted their physical and mental growth.



“When you start thinking deeply about any issue, like poor water quality, you realise just how interconnected it is with health, education, and future possibilities,” says **Dr. Anil Rajvanshi, Director at the Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute (NARI)** — a Maharashtra-based non-profit research and development institute focused on rural development.

Disturbed by the deplorable conditions in rural schools, Dr. Rajvanshi was moved to act. His

heart stirred with a deep empathy for the children, and he yearned to quench not just their thirst for water but their thirst for a healthier future.

Driven by the belief that clean water is every child's right, he pioneered a solar-powered clean drinking water technology that purifies rainwater for human consumption.

Collecting drops of happiness using a saree

In the serene yet challenging landscape of Phaltan, Dr. Rajvanshi and his team envisioned a synergy between nature and science — a Clean Drinking Water Technology (CDWT) that would become a sanctuary for these children.

“This ground-breaking system captures rainwater, filters it through layers of fabric inspired by traditional saree cloth, and purifies it using solar thermal technology,” explains Dr. Rajvanshi.

Designed to function without electricity, the system effectively eliminates coliform bacteria (germs found in animal and human waste), even on cloudy days, maintaining water temperatures above 45°C. Tests have shown a microbial E. coli count of less than 20 MPN — well below the World Health Organization (WHO) standards. (E. coli is a harmful type of coliform that can cause diarrhoea and stomach pain).

“This system provides 100 to 200 litres of safe drinking water daily to more than 400 children in schools located in the villages of Nandal and Adarki,” Dr. Rajvanshi shares.

The installation of these systems in government-aided schools has done more than just quench thirst — it has ignited a spark of hope. As children gulp down safe, refreshing water, their smiles reflect the promise of a healthier future.

Arvind Nikam, the administrative officer of the Phaltan Education Society, which manages the operation of both schools, explains, “Previously, we relied on stored water from the gram panchayat, which wasn't always pure and was only available every two to three days, especially scarce during summer. Rainwater that once flowed unused is now harvested. This provides our children with ample, clean drinking water daily. The water is regularly sent to labs for testing. We now receive many visitors keen to see this unique setup in our schools.”

Dr. Anil mentions that the project was completed with the help of several team members, including engineer Manoj Kumar, technician Santosh Adsul, and microbiologist Aditi Nalawade. “They were all involved in testing the water, installing the system in the school, and general troubleshooting,” he adds.

When water healed more than thirst

For the first time, rural children watched with shining eyes as crystal-clear water filled their cups. Dr. Rajvanshi says the children learned not only learned to value clean water but also understood the science behind its purity. While addressing the urgent need for safe drinking water, the initiative also empowered the schools to harness solar energy — fostering a growing interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education among curious young minds.

Teachers, now equipped with instructional modules prepared in their native Marathi, guided students through the concepts of rainwater harvesting and solar energy.

Classrooms that once echoed with static lessons were transformed into vibrant hubs of exploration, sparking curiosity and nurturing a budding love for science and technology.

The journey, however, was not without its challenges. Installation of the system required funding and faith — both of which came through donations. A significant portion of the system's cost, nearly 60 percent, goes towards rainwater storage tanks. Dr. Rajvanshi notes that the Government of India's Jal Jeevan Mission could potentially subsidise this expense. “Over a 10-year lifespan, the cost per litre is about Rs 2.3, but with government support, we can bring it down to Rs 1.3,” he explains.

As children sip clean water and find respite from illness, a quiet transformation is underway, rippling through the community. “Parents, seeing the changes in their children's health and vitality, began to believe in a future where education would no longer be interrupted by disease,” says Dr. Rajvanshi.

Though only two schools have been transformed in the past five months, the impact is undeniable.

The voices of the children — stronger, healthier, and more confident — echo Dr. Rajvanshi's dream like a clarion call for others to follow.

Reflecting on the impact, he says, “Our children are the future. They are the true wealth of our nation. By giving them clean water, we're not just improving their health; we're investing in a generation that will build a stronger, smarter India.”





PEACE AND CONFLICT
PREVENTION / RESOLUTION



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SUPPORTING THE
ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable Stewardship

Mark Daniel Maloney, TRF Trustee Chair

As my 26 years of Rotary leadership at the international level winds down, I've been reflecting on favourite memories and the extraordinary opportunities Rotary has given me. One stands out this month: the decision to establish the environment as one of Rotary's areas of focus.

We had seen how Rotary members were already preserving waterways, planting trees, and reducing pollution. Environmental stewardship was clearly an essential part of our work. As RI President in 2019–20, I was proud to have proposed the addition of the environment as an area of focus, after years of advocacy by Rotary members.

I am even prouder of what that addition — and all of you — made possible. Since July 1, 2021, clubs and districts, supported by global grants, have expanded their work to protect our planet's resources — restoring mangroves, saving forests, and cultivating coral reefs.

These grants hold endless possibilities, and I invite you to dream. Take inspiration from initiatives like Keep Mongolia Green, championed by Past RI President DK Lee, President-nominee Sangkoo Yun, and Rotary members in Korea. This major reforestation is combating Gobi Desert dust storms and creating Mongolia's largest green zone.

I am also proud of our new strategic partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme. This collaboration empowers Rotary members to implement projects such as river clean-ups and plastic waste reduction, leveraging global resources and expertise.

In November, I had the pleasure of leading a delegation of Rotary volunteers at the United Nations climate conference in Azerbaijan. You can read my account of it on 'Rotary 360' at blog.rotary.org.

So many opportunities are waiting for us. We know how much we can achieve together, so team up with your district and apply for a Foundation grant to support an environmental project.



Stewardship of the environment is deeply personal to my wife, Gay, and me. That is why we have established a named endowment fund through the Foundation, helping to ensure that future generations working on these projects will have the resources they need.

As we celebrate **Environmental Month this April**, I invite you to consider how you can make an impact. Every action matters. Explore environmental project ideas in Rotary's new Service Project Center, take part in an existing initiative, or support The Rotary Foundation through a gift. In this way, members

worldwide can protect our shared home.

I thank you, as always, for all that you do for Rotary and our Foundation.



Seaweed can absorb carbon 35 times faster than Rainforests: Here's why it Matters

India's coastlines hold immense potential for seaweed farming. Here's how cultivating this 'blue carbon' resource can help protect our coasts, create jobs, and combat climate change.

As the world confronts the ongoing climate crisis, solutions can often emerge from the most unexpected sources. One such powerhouse of hope is seaweed — a humble marine plant that is making waves as a sustainable ally in the fight against global warming.

For a country like India, with its vast shoreline and communities heavily reliant on marine ecosystems, seaweed offers a unique opportunity to mitigate climate challenges while driving socio-economic growth.



What is seaweed?

Seaweed refers to a group of marine algae found in oceans and seas, thriving in both warm and cold waters. With over 800 varieties found in India alone, including species like Gracilaria, Kappaphycus, and Ulva, these underwater plants are not just abundant but also incredibly versatile.

From culinary uses to biofuels and pharmaceuticals, seaweed's potential is vast, but its role as a climate solution is what makes it particularly significant today.

Seaweed and climate change: A dynamic duo

Seaweed is often referred to as a 'blue carbon' resource, a term used for ecosystems that store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Unlike terrestrial plants, seaweed absorbs carbon at a much faster rate — up to 35 times more efficiently than tropical rainforests.

This ability to sequester carbon makes it a valuable tool in reducing atmospheric CO₂ levels. Additionally, seaweed farms require no fresh water, fertilisers, or pesticides, making them a sustainable choice for scaling up production without depleting precious resources.

India's coastline presents an immense opportunity to harness this potential. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), large-scale seaweed cultivation in Indian waters could not only offset carbon emissions but also restore marine biodiversity by creating habitats for marine life.

Furthermore, seaweed farms act as natural shields, protecting coastlines from erosion and mitigating the impacts of rising sea levels — a pressing issue for India's coastal communities.

A win-win for people and the planet

Beyond its environmental benefits, seaweed farming has socio-economic potential. It provides alternative livelihoods to coastal populations, particularly women while contributing to food security through its nutrient-rich profile. Indian start-ups and government initiatives are already recognising this potential, with efforts to promote seaweed farming across Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

Seaweed's simplicity belies its power as a natural climate warrior. By investing in its cultivation, India can take a giant stride towards a sustainable future, proving that, sometimes, the smallest solutions can lead to the biggest transformations.





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The President and the members of Rotary Garden Reach proudly congratulates PP Timir Roy for winning the 2025 Mercedes Trophy, Regional round at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club on March 25th, 2025.

PP Timir now joins 54 other finalists for the National Finals from April 24th-26th, 2025 at Oxford Golf Resort, Pune.

We wish PP Timir Roy the best for the Finals.





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Our priorities: Growing membership, strengthening our Foundation

Raju Subramanian, RI Director, 2023-25

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

Nature thrives on balance — every creature, from the smallest insect to the tallest tree, follows an unspoken code, existing in harmony with the ecosystem. Seasons change with precision, rivers carve their paths with purpose, and animals take only what they need to survive. Yet, amidst this intricate order, humankind stands apart — driven not just by necessity but often by desire. Unlike nature, which sustains, we consume; unlike forests, which replenish, we deplete. Our choices, shaped as much by need as by excess, have upset this delicate balance, making it imperative that we rethink our role as stewards of the planet. This month, as we focus on the environment, let us reflect not only on what we can do but what we must do to restore this equilibrium.

As the Rotary year wanes, we shift from counting months to counting days. The Magic Year will soon yield to Unite for Good, and while new leadership is prepared, the present teams press forward to fulfil their commitments. The seamless transition of leadership within Rotary is a testament to the strength of our organisation. As the proverb reminds us, “A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.” True leadership is not about authority but legacy — the ability to sustain momentum, inspire those who follow, and ensure that every Rotarian and their family find meaning in fellowship and service.



For over 120 years, Rotary has worked magic in communities worldwide. Now, it is time to create magic for Rotary — to strengthen the very organisation that has given us so much. Two priorities demand our focus: growing our membership and securing our Foundation’s future. We stand at the threshold of achieving our \$2.025 billion endowment goal, but until the final dollar is raised, our mission remains unfinished. This is our moment to seek, inspire and lead by example. True generosity is not just about giving — it is about igniting the spirit of giving in others. As I once read, “Spend your money on the things money can buy and spend your time on the things money can’t buy.” Let us invest in a future where our contributions create a lasting impact — one that money alone cannot measure, but humanity will always cherish.

The measure of our time in Rotary will not be in the projects we complete or the funds we raise, but in the lives, we touch and the futures we help shape. As we stand at this juncture, with one-year drawing to a close and another on the horizon, let us act with the quiet determination of those who build not for today, but for generations to come. Whether through service, generosity or the simple act of bringing others into our fold, our legacy will be written in the opportunities we create and the goodwill we foster.

The moment to act is always now, and the true measure of our effort will not be found in recognition, but in the better world we leave behind.





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Minutes of the 2307th RWM held on April 1st, 2025 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

- 1. President Biswajit welcomed the members and requested them to rise for the National Anthem.**
- 2. The President requested PN Dr. BN Jha to provide an update on the drinking water installation work near the Kali Temple in BNR Colony. PN Dr. Jha reported that the cooling machine, water tank, and plaque had been received from the Rotary Calcutta. Civil works have already started, and he assured the committee that the work will be completed by April 15th, 2025.**
- 3. The President informed that the visit to Bharatgarh School, which was overdue, is now scheduled for April 6th, 2025. He requested maximum member participation to assess the current status of the benches and tables provided by the club, as well as to review other educational updates.**
- 4. The President informed that the staff screening at Bata Factory, originally scheduled for April 9th, 2025, has been postponed due to the unavailability of the required number of doctors and support staff from NSC Bose Cancer Hospital. The screening is now tentatively rescheduled for April 17th, 2025.**
- 5. The Club Secretary conducted the Club Business.**
- 6. Minutes of the last RWM was confirmed. President Biswajit terminated the meeting.**