



RID 3291
Rotary
Garden Reach



Light

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

May 13th, 2025 - Vol. 47 No. 40

2311th Regular Weekly Meeting
Attendance: 12

Greetings on Birthday
May 13th : PP Chinmay Pal

Anniversary Greetings
May 13th : Spouse Dr. Payel & Rtn. Dr. Amitabh Ray
May 19th : Spouse Dr. Minu & PN Dr. BN Jha

Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's Thoughts for Youth Today

His Teaching on Self-Reliance & Efforts

One of the most important messages that Swami Vivekananda imparted was the power of self-reliance and the importance of individual effort. He believed that true success and happiness can only be achieved by developing one's own abilities and talents, rather than relying on external factors such as wealth or social status. He encouraged people to develop their own inner strength and to take responsibility for their own lives, rather than depending on others for guidance and support.

This message is particularly relevant for young people today, who are often under pressure to conform to societal expectations and to chase material success. In a world where the emphasis is often on instant gratification and external validation, Swami Vivekananda's message of self-reliance and inner strength can serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of developing one's own character and values.



Swami Vivekananda on Self-Improvement

Vivekananda's emphasis on self-improvement and self-realization also appeals to young people who are looking for ways to develop their own potential and make a positive impact on the world. His belief that each individual has within themselves the ability to achieve greatness if they work hard and have faith in themselves, is a message that resonates with many young people today.

Additionally, his belief in the importance of education and in providing opportunities for people to develop their own potential continues to be relevant in the current era as it helps with the holistic development of individuals. This can help individuals to overcome their own self-centeredness, and to live in a way that benefits others. By making a positive impact on the world and the people around them, individuals will find more meaning and purpose in their lives.

In addition to the above, Swami Vivekananda also stressed the importance of education and the need to develop a rational and scientific approach to understanding the world. He believed that education should be aimed at fostering critical thinking and independent thinking, and should not be limited to imparting mere knowledge. This emphasis on education as a means to achieving personal and societal development continues to be relevant today in light of many developing countries.

Swami Vivekananda's Significance in Today's World

Swami Vivekananda's message of unity, tolerance, and mutual understanding, regardless of the diversity of religions is of utmost importance in today's world, where religious conflicts and extremism are ongoing issues. His teachings can help promote a more peaceful and harmonious society, where different religions, cultures, and ideologies are respected and valued. Finally, Vivekananda's teachings can also inspire future generations to appreciate the rich spiritual heritage of India and to recognize the value of ancient spiritual traditions in today's world. He was one of the first individuals who highlighted the importance of Indian spiritual traditions to the west and his teachings and efforts can continue to inspire the youth to preserve and promote the same.

In conclusion, the thoughts and teachings of Swami Vivekananda continue to be highly relevant to the youth of today. His message of self-reliance, the unity of all religions, and the importance of education are all important lessons that can help young people navigate the challenges and opportunities of the modern world. With that being said, the teachings of Swami Vivekananda have the potential to inspire future generations to lead more fulfilling and meaningful lives by developing their own inner strength and potential, serving others, and promoting peace, unity, and harmony in the world. As we continue to face many societal and economic issues, we can look to the wisdom of this great spiritual leader for guidance and inspiration.

Letter to Members from RI President-nominee

Dear Rotary friends:

As the Rotary International President for 2026-27, I have been working closely with other Rotary members and staff to plan and prepare for the important work ahead after my confirmation last September. It has been a tremendous honor and pleasure to be given the opportunity to serve our organization.

However, I have been facing some personal health challenges. Recently, I was diagnosed with pancreatic adenocarcinoma or pancreatic cancer, which has put a temporary pause on my work. The good news is that I am receiving excellent care at one of Korea's top hospitals. My treatment is already progressing smoothly and my medical team is optimistic about the path forward. Based on their recommendation, I will need to take a step back from Rotary leadership responsibilities over the next six months.

I have been sharing updates with Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick and the Board of Directors. They have unanimously supported my decision, and I want to use this opportunity to thank President Stephanie and RI directors for their understanding and unwavering support. I am determined to return once the treatment is complete and continue to serve our organization, meeting the challenges ahead in Rotary.

My wife EunSun and I want to express our gratitude for all the care and encouragement. I have been deeply moved by the support of family and friends.

With warm regards,

SangKoo Yun

President, Rotary International, 2026-27

Building infodemic resilience: A public health imperative in the age of Vaccine Misinformation

By Jessica Malaty Rivera, infectious disease epidemiologist and award-winning science communicator.

In the last five years, the world has had a crash course in public health. A flurry of scientific jargon-filled headlines has caused a fair amount of confusion, panic, and fear. This dynamic is not new, and, in fact, it has a name in epidemiology: **infodemic**.

Epidemiology asks us where, when, why, and to whom a disease is spreading, and how it impacts population health. Infodemiology asks those same questions but about the information that is spreading, and how it impacts population decision-making.

Think of it this way: infodemics are to infodemiology as epidemics are to epidemiology.

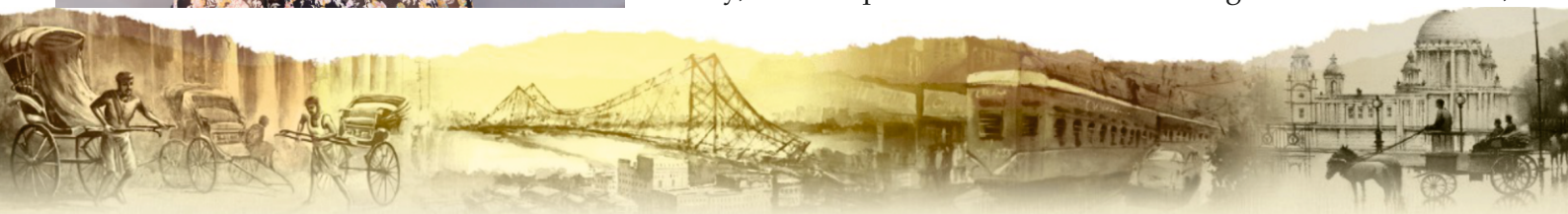
Infodemics don't necessarily mean an outbreak of all bad information. Sometimes, it's just too much information, making it difficult for people to navigate information landscapes for trustworthy information from trusted sources. This is acutely true in the world of vaccines.



Vaccine misinformation – which has shattered trust, stalled vaccination campaigns, resulted in the re-emergence of previously eliminated diseases and threatened global health security – is moving faster and farther because of our digital information ecosystems. As we look toward the future, building infodemic resilience must be a top priority for public health systems, policymakers, and communities alike.

What is Infodemic Resilience?

Infodemic resilience refers to a society's capacity to withstand, identify, and respond to false or misleading health information,



especially during public health emergencies. It's not just about fact-checking or debunking false claims – it's about building critical thinking, trust, and communication infrastructures that can filter out noise and amplify credible voices. In the context of vaccines, this means protecting people from dangerous misinformation that leads to vaccine hesitancy, refusal, and, ultimately, preventable illness and death.

The High Cost of Vaccine Misinformation

The consequences of unchecked vaccine misinformation are both immediate and long-term. We've seen measles and pertussis outbreaks in communities with low vaccine uptake, resistance to COVID-19 vaccines despite overwhelming scientific evidence, and a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases in areas where misinformation thrives.

These outcomes don't just affect individuals – they weaken herd immunity (vaccination rates to reduce transmission), overwhelm healthcare systems, and lead to avoidable loss of life. Moreover, they disproportionately affect marginalized communities and those who are immunocompromised or medically fragile. Misinformation, when left unchallenged, becomes a form of health inequity.

Why We Need to Act Now

The digital ecosystem is evolving quickly. Social media platforms have made it easy for misleading content to go viral within seconds. Algorithms often favour emotionally charged content – fear, outrage, or conspiracy – over nuanced, evidence-based information. While tech companies bear responsibility, we can't rely solely on content moderation. We need proactive, not just reactive, science communication. Resilience isn't built in a crisis – it's built before the next one hits. With future pandemics likely and ongoing public health campaigns for routine immunizations, our ability to respond effectively depends on how well we can communicate and foster trust. Here are some strategies to help build infodemic resilience:

➤ Invest in health and data literacy

Public health messaging needs to go beyond “what” and explain the “why.” People are more likely to trust information they understand and how it affects them.

➤ Partner with trusted messengers

Local leaders, healthcare workers, faith leaders, and even influencers can be powerful storytellers and allies in promoting accurate vaccine information. People trust people far more than institutions. Training and equipping these voices can dramatically expand the reach of public health messaging.

➤ Prioritize transparent and compassionate communication

Shaming or ridiculing those who believe misinformation rarely changes minds. We need empathetic communication that validates concerns, addresses fears, and provides clear, consistent facts without judgment.

➤ Policy support and global collaboration

Rotary, Shot at Life, UNICEF, WHO, and other global bodies have laid the groundwork to address current challenges and protect against the threat of future infodemics through public engagement, raising awareness, and encouraging governments to adopt policies that promote transparency and encourage collaboration between public health institutions and tech platforms.

Infodemic resilience isn't just the responsibility of public health professionals – it's a societal challenge. Parents, educators, journalists, scientists, tech workers, and community leaders all play a role in shaping the information environment. In the fight against infectious diseases, vaccines save lives, but only if people trust them. That trust depends on the stories people hear, the information they access, and the communities they live in. By building infodemic resilience, we create a stronger, healthier, and more informed society – one that can face the next health crisis not with confusion, but with confidence.





PEACE AND CONFLICT
PREVENTION / RESOLUTION



DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT



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LITERACY



ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



SUPPORTING THE
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Meet the moment

Mark Daniel Maloney, TRF Trustee Chair

There are moments in our journey to end polio when doubt and uncertainty may take hold, yet we must remain steadfast and, above all, hopeful as we keep our eyes on the goal. As Winston Churchill once said in a moment of crisis: “We cannot afford — we have no right — to look back. We must look forward.”

In Rotary, we always rise to meet the moment. No challenge is too great. In 1988, when we partnered with the World Health Organisation to form the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, an estimated 350,000 polio cases occurred annually across 125 countries. Since then, the GPEI — which also includes UNICEF, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Gates Foundation, and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance — has worked tirelessly with governments worldwide. Together, we have reduced wild poliovirus cases by 99.9 per cent.

The journey has not been without challenges. Today in Afghanistan, vaccinators are prohibited from conducting house-to-house immunisation campaigns, while in Pakistan, conflict, terrorism and migration hinder access to children in certain regions.

Earlier this year, the United States announced its intention to withdraw from the WHO, froze USAID funding, and restricted interactions with the CDC. These developments present obstacles for our polio eradication efforts and other Rotary global partnerships and programmes.

Yet we rise to meet the moment, just as we have done before. We did so in India when we faced spikes in cases before the country was declared free of wild poliovirus in 2014. In Nigeria, we also encountered obstacles, but in 2020, the WHO certified the country — and by extension, all 47 countries in the WHO Africa region — wild polio-free.

We are meeting the moment once again in 2025. Know that Rotary is working behind the scenes, collaborating with governments, international agencies and



partners to address challenges, manage disruptions and explore alternative funding. As a non-political organisation, we remain focused on operational solutions while serving communities and protecting public health.

My wife, Gay, and I have witnessed first-hand the urgent need of the moment in India, Nigeria and Pakistan, where we administered vaccines to children. Looking into their eyes, I saw the future we are fighting for — and the responsibility we carry to finish the job.

The winds of change may shift, but with your help, Rotary’s commitment to eradicating polio will stand strong until our mission is complete.



Interactor from Brazil combats a deadly online game

White Whale designed to promote Peace and Self-esteem

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Horrified by stories about an online suicide game called **Blue Whale**, Gabriel Kenji of Brazil decided to create a game to counter the dangerous online trend, and hopefully, save lives.

The Blue Whale Challenge is a chilling suicide game allegedly run by a social media group. The game preys on vulnerable adolescents and teenagers, who are instructed to complete a set of challenges over a 50-day period. The tasks begin harmlessly but become increasingly more dangerous, including self-punishing, and end with the teenager being urged to take their own life.

“When I first heard about the horrific game, I thought it was a problem far away from Brazil,” says Kenji, a member of the Interact Club of Pinhais, Parana, Brazil. “Once it reached my country, I realized this type of evil can be anywhere. I had to do something to alert others about the seriousness of the problem.”



The game may have originated in Russia where more than 130 suicides have been allegedly linked to the game. The online trend has caused significant concern in Western Europe and South America, particularly in Brazil, where alleged suicide attempts from the game have cropped up in at least eight states. At least two suicide cases in the U.S. have been linked to the online fad. The title is said to refer to blue whales that beach themselves purposefully to die.

While no one can prove the existence of the game or identify who is behind these suicidal challenges, what is clear is that young people are ending their lives and documenting it on social media.

So, Kenji decided to do something about it. He devised a social media game that he named White Whale to help boost self-esteem, self-worth, and peaceful interactions among young people.

Challenges include forgiving yourself for mistakes, exercising daily, discovering new facts about people in your life, participating in volunteer activities, and posting positive messages on social

media.

White Whale is a way for teenagers, who may be vulnerable to the suicide game, to engage in positive activities and feel valued, says Kenji. He chose the name White Whale because he says the colour white signifies peace, purity, and clarity.

“We want to show young people that they can make small changes to change the direction of their lives,” says Kenji, who will enter college this year to study dentistry. “There is another path for teenagers to take that is far removed from an action like taking their own lives.”

Fellow Interactors and local Rotaract club members are helping to spread the word about White Whale by passing out brochures and information at bus and train stops, busy intersections, and to friends and family. They also helped Kenji create some of the game’s challenges. “I’m so grateful that my club and others people in the Rotary family are taking a small idea and making it big,” he says.

According to Kenji, about 4,000 people have shared the White Whale’s Facebook page with a reach of nearly 30,000.

Kenji says he’s already seen tangible results from the game among his own friends. “I’ve had friends tell me that the game is giving them the courage to reconcile broken friendships. It’s great to see. I hope this is just a start.”





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A person-to-person Global Grant resource

Need help with a grant? Your District Rotary Foundation Chair has the answer.

Peace Geoffrey Taremwa has more than 20 years' experience implementing grants through his work for an overseas development agency. So, during some of his visits to Rotary club projects, he noticed a problem.

"Clubs would receive their money but would end up doing something else that they thought was good," says Taremwa, a Past Governor of District 9214 in Tanzania and parts of Uganda. "At the end of the day, this becomes a stewardship issue because it was not what was discussed in the grant application.

"The biggest problem we had was a lack of knowledge," he adds. "Many Rotarians do not have sufficient knowledge of how to complete a global grant application."

Consult your District Foundation Chair

District Rotary Foundation chairs can bridge that gap. These advisers help clubs by explaining grant eligibility and procedures, building relationships with districts around the world as potential project partners, securing funding, and creating connections with mentors who can help with grant applications and reports. By working with their district Rotary Foundation chair, clubs can have a smoother global grant experience and ultimately support more communities in a more effective, sustainable way.

Taremwa, now the district Foundation chair, is working to streamline the grant process in his district, implementing changes he launched as governor in 2022-23. The new process clusters clubs together for grant applications, activities, and training events. The district's outgoing Foundation chair and grants team conduct the training rather than incoming leaders. And grant support officers (a new role) mentor the club clusters on all grant applications, making sure money is spent according to plan and reports are filed on time.

The new process is working. "We have many more global grant applications," Taremwa says. "And many clubs have been inviting our teams to go to them and do a training at the club level. Our stewardship teams are busier than before.

"Fundraising is also becoming easier," he says. "We have told members; this is your money. Please contribute, and your money is available. If you don't contribute, your money is not there."

Consider a review committee

District 3292 in Nepal and Bhutan modified its grant process to address a different problem: Within clubs involved in global grant projects, many members lacked critical information about the grant.

MK Jha, a Past District Foundation Chair from Nepal, recalls an example from when two Rotary club presidents, from Nepal and India, met at a conference and decided to pursue a global grant together. But after it had been approved, the Nepalese Rotarian moved on, and no one else in his club knew anything about the grant.

To prevent issues like this, the district created a review committee, which includes the district Foundation chair, to screen all grant applications. To be considered, clubs complete a community assessment and fill out an authorization form and District Designated Fund request form. Projects must have been selected by the club's service project committee and approved by both its Rotary Foundation committee (which identifies funding) and board. The club is then required to hold an assembly to discuss the project with all its members.

The district review committee pores over minutes of the club's meetings and verifies the data in the community assessment. If it all looks good, the team then helps the club through the rest of the application and reporting process.

"By doing this, each and every member comes to know what is going on," says Jha, now an assistant regional Rotary Foundation coordinator. "If members know what is being done in the community, it helps with reporting and avoids many issues."

Additional resources

Between administering grant applications, overseeing fundraising efforts, and managing district grant funds, district Rotary Foundation chairs have a lot on their plate. Rotary International has created many resources, including online learning courses and downloadable guides, to help district Rotary Foundation chairs understand and relay information about the grant application process. These resources help the leaders serving in this role to work with clubs to produce projects that have an even greater impact.

Ri's regional grants officers are also available to help districts with their grant processes. These Rotary staff members can provide guidance on project eligibility, address common problems, and offer tips for success. Clubs are strongly encouraged to contact their regional grants officers in the early stages of project planning.





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Minutes of the 2310th RWM held on May 6th, 2025 at Rotary Sadan, Chowrenghee

1. President Biswajit welcomed the members and requested them to rise for the National Anthem.
2. President invited Rtn. Tamal to provide an update on the medical camp held at Sunday Club, Shyamnagar on April 27th, 2025. Rtn. Tamal briefed about the projects and the number of beneficiaries was mentioned. The organizers felicitated Past Presidents and dignitaries including Sri Sisir Ghosh. Rtn. Shubojit Roy raised Thalassemia awareness. Members were served breakfast and lunch. 10 saplings were handed over for plantation. The efforts were applauded by Rotary Garden Reach.
3. President shared details of the Charter Presentation of Interact Club of Julien Day School, Howrah on April 29th, 2025. The Charter Certificate was formally handed over to the Interact Club office bearers with around 30 Interactors participating. As another service initiative, Interactors distributed snacks and rehydration drinks to traffic police. Tree plantation was also conducted. The support from school staff was appreciated.
4. Members were encouraged to register and attend the District Training Assembly at Dhono Dhanya Auditorium, Alipore on May 25th, 2025. President reminded members of the special invitation extended by the DGE.
5. Discussion was held on the letter to BNR Officers' Club regarding revised usage charges. While the Secretary proposed Rs. 3,500; the President suggested Rs. 2,500 after discussions with PP Dr. Sumanta Dasgupta. Members were asked to share their views via email for finalization of the letter.
6. Rtn. Amar Saha proposed organizing a medical camp in the 2nd week of June. Members requested details regarding location, logistics, and expected beneficiaries. The proposal will be reviewed in the next meeting.
7. The Club Secretary conducted the Club Business.
8. Minutes of the last RWM was confirmed. President Biswajit terminated the meeting.






Mário César Martins de Camargo
RI President Elect



Dr. Ramendu Hom Chaudhuri
Dist. Governor Elect



HOST CLUB

ROTARY CLUB OF KABITIRTHA CALCUTTA

RID 3291



DATE :
25TH MAY 2025, SUNDAY
9.00 AM TO 5.00 PM

VENUE :
DHONO DHANYO AUDITORIUM

REGISTRATION OPEN

WE MEET EVERY TUESDAY AT 7.30 P.M. AT B. N. R. OFFICERS' CLUB. GARDEN REACH, KOLKATA - 700 043
CONTACT : PP TANU ROY • Mobile : + 91 9831 72 88 80 / roytanu@hotmail.com

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