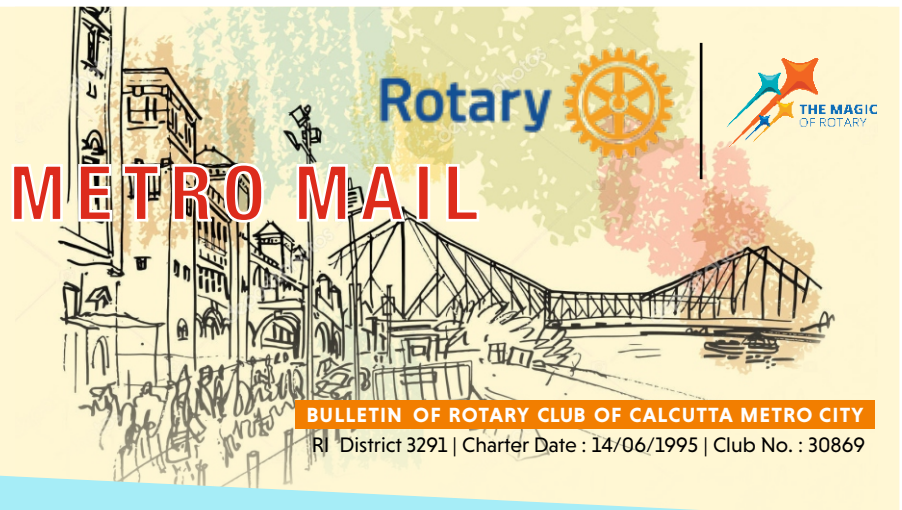


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**Wishing all the readers a Happy Durga Puja & Navratri
Let the power of Maa Durga be invoked to bring Justice and Equality**



Social media has undeniably reshaped modern communication and interaction, but its increasing influence has also sparked a range of mental health issues across all age groups. One prominent effect is a growing lack of concentration and focus. With the constant stream of notifications and content, users often find it difficult to maintain attention on tasks. This is especially evident among students and working professionals, who may struggle to stay productive as their focus is fractured by the temptation to check their social media accounts repeatedly throughout the day.

Moreover, social media fosters unrealistic comparisons, where people feel pressured to portray idealized versions of their lives. This obsession with "being seen" leads to anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of inadequacy. Users become consumed by the need for validation through likes, comments, and followers, which can result in heightened stress and depression, especially when their online presence doesn't garner the expected attention.

Beyond mental health impacts, social media engagement is also leading to decreased interaction within personal relationships. Instead of meaningful face-to-face communication, people are increasingly opting for virtual connections, often replacing real-life interactions with superficial online exchanges. This shift can weaken relationships, eroding the depth of personal connections and creating a sense of isolation, even when individuals are surrounded by digital connections.

Silent stalking, another dark aspect of social media, involves users passively monitoring others without engaging. This behavior promotes an unhealthy cycle of comparison and envy, as individuals often form judgments based on curated social media profiles. Silent stalking can foster feelings of paranoia, jealousy, and obsession, negatively affecting mental well-being while disrupting genuine relationships.

In conclusion, the rise of social media has significantly impacted mental health, reducing focus, and diminishing real-life interactions. Without mindful usage and boundaries, it can lead to an obsession with appearances and damaging habits like silent stalking, further straining mental and emotional well-being.

One effective way to regain control over social media use is by setting specific time limits, incorporating mindfulness practices like meditation can help users become more aware of their social media habits, Regularly taking breaks from social media—whether for a few hours, a day, or even a week—can significantly improve mental health and focus, actively making time for in-person interactions with family and friends fosters emotional bonds. By being conscious of social media usage and adopting healthier habits, we can protect our mental health, improve concentration, and strengthen personal connections.

Subhojit Roy

Rotary International

Rotary International launches celebrity ambassador program

Champions include Kat Graham, Sibongile Mlambo, Gaby Moreno, and Archie Panjabi



Rotary International today launched its celebrity ambassador program, welcoming **Kat Graham**, for many years Rotary's first ambassador and **Archie Panjabi**, Rotary's first ambassador for a polio-free world. **Sibongile Mlambo** and **Gaby Moreno** are Rotary's inaugural members for 2024-2025.

Rotary brings together people of action from all continents and cultures who deliver real, long-term solutions to the world's most persistent issues. Together with its celebrity ambassadors, Rotary aims to engage new leaders and change-makers from around the globe who can share in the membership service organization's efforts to create a healthier and more peaceful world.

"We are pleased to announce this initiative, especially with the help of these remarkable individuals who are devoted to using their platforms to make the world a better place," Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick said. "As Rotary's work has touched each of the ambassadors, we're honored for them to amplify our organization's impact and vision."

Rotary members throughout the world develop and implement sustainable, community-driven projects that fight **disease**, promote **peace**, provide **clean water**, support education, help **mothers and children**, grow local **economies** and protect the **environment**. Over the last 100 years, US \$5.5 billion has been awarded through The Rotary Foundation – Rotary's charitable arm that helps clubs work together to perform meaningful, impactful service.

Rotary is the driving force behind efforts to eradicate polio worldwide. Alongside its partners in the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative**, Rotary has achieved a 99.9 percent reduction in polio cases, with 12 cases of wild polio reported in 2023 compared with 350,000 a year in the late 1980s. Rotary members have contributed more than \$2.7 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect more than 3 billion children in 122 countries from this paralyzing disease.

Through traditional and social media, events, advocacy and more, ambassadors will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Rotary's work and engage with supporters to amplify the organization's mission and impact.

The Rotary Ambassadors include:

Kat Graham - "I have been fortunate enough to have a long history with Rotary, from promoting women's health and safety around the world to gathering with Rotary members in California to promote peace. Rotary empowers regular people to become extraordinary changemakers by launching their unique initiatives using their unique skills and passions. By doing so, they improve the lives of others far beyond their communities. I've seen the profound difference Rotary members make, and I'm honored to serve as a Rotary Ambassador."

Sibongile Mlambo - "I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Uganda with Rotary and see their work firsthand. Witnessing their dedication to helping refugees and their unwavering commitment to peace left a lasting impact on me. Rotary members show respect for those displaced, empowering them through education, job training, and more, helping to create the conditions for stable, sustainable, and peaceful communities. As a Rotary Ambassador, I will enthusiastically help to amplify their message of hope and resilience."

Gaby Moreno - "Returning to my home country of Guatemala with Rotary exposed me to the life-changing impact its members have had on early education and literacy in the country. I met children who now are inspired to dream big, and who have been given the tools necessary to make their dreams a reality. As a Rotary Ambassador with deep personal connections to its members, I want to help spread the word about this remarkable organization that's giving hope to so many children around the globe."

Archie Panjabi - "My first visit to India at the age of 10 opened my eyes to the heartbreaking reality of children suffering from polio. Years later, I returned to administer the polio vaccine and witnessed the dedication of health workers, inspiring my commitment to this cause. For over a decade, I've proudly served as a Rotary Polio Ambassador and continued the fight to eradicate polio while shining a light on the full scope of the vital work Rotary members undertake to create a brighter future for all, from safeguarding our environment and improving maternal health, to providing clean water and promoting peace."

Media literacy is crucial for healthy societies. Rotary members are teaching people to think critically about what they see and read

By Etelka Lehoczky



The first day at a new school can be disorienting for any teenager. But your first day at Virginia Hall High School is even stranger than most. Your grandfather claims he used to be a spy, your sister accuses some students of locking her in a closet, and everyone says a monster is stalking the hallways. What is happening? Is any of this true? Instead of rushing off to fight the monster, you read about the weird recent events in the school newspaper. You ask yourself: Do these sources provide multiple pieces of evidence for their claims? Could they possibly be earning money because of what they're saying? Do their stories cast a negative light on people who disagree with them?

You ask all these questions because you're actually playing a video game designed to increase your media literacy. Co-created by Anahita Dalmia, a member of the Rotary Club of Newport Beach, California, USA, the game **Agents of Influence** is being developed to help 11- to 13-year-olds think critically about what they see on social media and in the news.

"We're teaching kids to understand media bias, logical fallacies, and confirmation bias. We teach things like reading closely — tools you can use to determine what to trust online," says Dalmia, the founder and CEO of game developer Alterea Inc.

Dalmia, a third-generation Rotarian, says the game's approach was inspired partly by **Rotary's Four-Way Test**.

"The first question is, 'Is it the truth?' And there's a reason that's the first question," Dalmia says. "If it's not the truth, you cannot make a strong judgment call based on any of the other questions, because you're starting on an unstable foundation."

"An unstable foundation" is one way to describe the current state of the media landscape. Experts say we're exposed to far more media than ever before. That includes both misinformation (unintentional untruths) and disinformation (deliberate falsehoods meant to mislead people). Although many outlets are responsible and credible, figuring out what to believe can take time and effort.

"Before the internet, if I went to get a newspaper, it was run by journalists for whom truth was an important standard. Of course newspapers were biased. But today, people who want to believe things just post stuff," says Alan Dennis, a professor of internet systems at Indiana University.

"There are active disinformation campaigns by foreign governments designed to influence voters in democratic countries. The actors have become much more sophisticated, and they have learned quite a bit about what messaging works."

People are aware of this problem, and they say they want to become savvier about the media they consume. A study released this year found that about seven in 10 Americans were interested in learning how to better distinguish between true and false information online. But media literacy is more than just separating fact from fiction.

"We need to be able to judge things like, 'What's the bias behind it? Who created it? Who's benefiting from it?' So there's not a simple fix here," says Jeff Share, a lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a co-author of "The Critical Media Literacy Guide." "We need to slow down and investigate. It might mean it's going to take me a couple more minutes, but I can go to some different sources. I can also recognize that some are more legitimate than others."

Training storytellers

Many people believe that ideological biases and financial interests guide major news outlets' coverage, says global grant scholar Alex Freeman, who is pursuing a master's degree in global media and communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

"It's one of the big reasons that people have turned against media, but I think it's an overcorrection," Freeman says. "A lot of people have turned to independent journalists who are more willing to incorporate their own personal experience into their reporting. But without a traditional media apparatus — without standard practices for ensuring accuracy — it's hard to know who's trustworthy."

Still, independent voices can be crucial in places where media organizations lack funding or are restricted by repressive governments. When Rotary Peace Fellow Thomas Sithole realized his hometown in Zimbabwe was ignored by major media outlets, he launched a community radio station. Then he founded the Zimbabwe Centre for Media and Information Literacy to teach people to think more critically and tell their own stories effectively. He believes the two skills are intertwined.

"We tell citizens how to arm themselves against disinformation and misinformation," he says. The Centre also trains citizen journalists and other content creators, teaching skills like fact-checking and ensuring balance in a story.

"We're trying to build a movement across the region, because we see that there is no appetite from our governments to push for policies that support media and information literacy among citizens," Sithole says.

The threat of artificial intelligence

Even as he trains an army of storytellers, Sithole worries that the arrival of artificial intelligence will make it easier to create and spread disinformation.

"For unsuspecting citizens, it's creating a lot of challenges," he says. "It becomes very difficult now to tell whether a piece of content is true or false, especially if it's in the form of videos or images. It's something that is really a challenge even to the professional journalist."

Some believe the key is educating younger media consumers. Erin McNeill meets many students through her job as CEO of the U.S.-based nonprofit Media Literacy Now, and she's heartened by what she finds. "AI is definitely making it harder to identify good and credible sources," McNeill says. But she says people can use the same skills to analyze human-generated and AI-generated content.

"Young people are so creative and smart. We're educating them so they can rise to the challenge," she says. "They're going to find solutions as long as they're given the skills and the education they need."

The same belief animates Dalmia as she continues to develop and promote *Agents of Influence*. She has presented the game to numerous Rotary clubs and hopes Rotarians will encourage their local schools to use it. "This started as a passion project, but there was a huge demand from parents who were concerned about how social media was shaping their kids' perspectives and interactions with the outside world," Dalmia says.

"The resounding feedback we've gotten is, 'Can I have this for my kid who thinks TikTok is a reliable source of information?'"

District News

Bem-vindo
Presidente
Welcome President
Mário & Denise
Register Today!

Rotary Zone 6

Mário César Martins de Camargo & Denise
President, Rotary International (2025-26)

Register at
Rs. 100/- only

Anirudha Roy Chowdhury
Director, Rotary International
Convener

Rajiv Sharma
Past District Governor
Event Chair

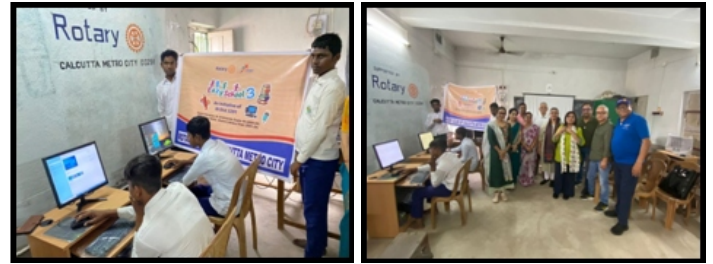
Prabir Chatterjee
Past District Governor
Event Co-Chair

Hosted by DGs & DGEs of Zone 6

6:00 pm • 1st October, 2024
GD Birla Sabhaghar, Kolkata

Meet & Greet program with Rotary International President (2025-26) Mário César Martins de Camargo on 1st October '24 at the GD Birla Sabhaghar from 6 pm onward.

CLUB NEWS



The club conducted the District Eazy School 3.0 Literacy project at Garalgacha Surabala Vidyamandir, Hooghly on 25th September'24. 2 PCs, were installed and operated by the school students as part of their e-literacy programme. The school and the students highly appreciated the PCs donated as the students will now be able to learn and work on Windows, which was not available earlier to the students. More than 200 students, both boys & girls, of the school from Class V to Class X are expected to benefit from our donation.

This project was attended by our club's PDG Shyamashree Sen, PP Bandana Das, PP Sunetra Dasgupta, PP Subhojit Roy, Rtn Shankar Das, Rtn Tilak Dasgupta, Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee and President Sunando Sen.

The club thanks its member Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee for taking such great initiative in organizing today's project and treating us all to a wonderful lunch at her home.

Forthcoming Programs :

1st October '24 - Visit to Nayagram to donate football kit for the all girl's school football team of Nayagram Balika Vidyapith, Jhargram. The program is being supported by Vidyapith, United Kingdom.

7th October '24 - Distribution of new clothes and sponsorship the Puja Parikrama of young boys and girls of Sundarbans to be held in association SHER.

19th October '24 - Club Fellowship Meet.

Greetings

Happy Birthday Bandana Mullick for 8th October
Happy Anniversary to Subarna & Nirjhar Bhadury for 8th October

