



THE MIDTOWNER

BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA MIDTOWN

President: Rtn. Preeti Agarwal | Secretary: Rtn. Ruchira Bhuwalka | Editor: Rtn. Bhupesh Kapoor
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From Editor's Desk:

Born blind to poor and illiterate parents, Srikanth Bolla was rejected by the community. Many people even advised his parents to get rid of him. But his parents were supportive. Keen to study, six-year-old Srikanth would walk several kilometres to school, in rural India, following his classmates and guided by his brother.

When he turned eight, Srikanth's father broke an exciting news. Srikanth was offered a place at a boarding school for blind children at Hyderabad - 400km away. Srikanth was excited and quickly settled. He always dreamt of becoming an engineer.

In 2007, teenager, Srikanth was told, it was illegal for him to study maths and science at senior school, because he is blind. Srikanth was frustrated by this arbitrary law. One of his teachers encouraged him to fight for justice.

The duo went to the Board of Secondary Education in Andhra Pradesh to plead their case, but to no avail. Undeterred, they found a lawyer and with the support of the school management team, filed a case with the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, appealing for a change in education law to allow blind students to study maths and science.

Guest Speaker for next Rotary Meeting



Dr Prasun Kumar Mitra
PGDCC, Consultant

Critical Care and Non-Invasive Cardiology

Degrees /Training

Dr Mitra completed PGDCC from IGNOU. He has worked in the department of clinical cardiology in various tertiary care hospitals in Kolkata.

Clinical Expertise / Interests

Dr Mitra has over 15 years of rich experience in this field. He routinely performs Transthoracic Echocardiography, Vascular Doppler, Stress Test and Holter Monitoring. Dr Mitra also has experience of managing a large sized critical care unit in various hospital since 2003.

Academic Experience

Dr Mitra has been actively involved in public education programs and has delivered health talks.

While the case rumbled on, a mainstream school in Hyderabad - Chinmaya Vidyalaya - which operated under a different education body, offered science and maths to blind students. It offered a place for him. Srikanth happily enrolled.

After six months Srikanth won the case. The court ruled that blind students can study science and maths in their senior years at all state board schools in Andhra Pradesh.

Srikanth soon returned to a state board school and studied his beloved maths and science, averaging 98% in his exams. His plan was to join coaching classes to appear for IIT entrance exams, but none of the coaching schools would accept Srikanth.

Undeterred, in the year 2009, he applied to universities in America and received five offers. He settled for MIT in Cambridge, where he became the first international blind student. Though he struggled extreme cold and academic rigor, time at MIT was the loveliest period of his life.

After studying management science at MIT he was offered several jobs, but he chose not to stay in States. Srikanth's school experience had left a mark, and he felt like he had unfinished business in his native country.

"I had to struggle so much for everything in life whereas not everybody can fight like me or have mentors like me," he says, adding that once he looked at the bigger picture he realized there was no point fighting for a fair education if there were no job opportunities for disabled people to take afterwards.

He thought: "Why don't I start my own company and employ persons with disabilities?" Srikanth returned to Hyderabad in 2012 and founded Bollant Industries. The packaging company manufactures eco-friendly products, such as corrugated packaging, from fallen areca palm leaves. The company now has turnover of Rupees 150 crores and employs 500 strong staff.

Three years ago, aged 30, Srikanth made it onto the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders 2021 list.



Bollywood came calling. A biopic on celebrity Srikanth, starring well known actor Rajkumar Rao has been made and is showing on OTT platform.

For over four decades our club has been supporting students of Blind Boy's Academy by way of sponsoring scholarships. Who knows some day we find a new Srikanth.

Minutes for the 4th regular and 2150th continuous meeting of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Midtown which was held on Sunday 25th August 2024 at Ramkrishna Mission Blind Boys Academy at 10.30am.

- **Meeting called to order:** President Rtn. Preeti Agarwal called the 2150th continuous & 4th regular meeting for the year 2024-2025 to order.
- **National Anthem:** National anthem was rendered by all.
- **Confirmation of previous meeting minutes:** the last meeting minutes were floated on WhatsApp. They were proposed by Rtn. Biman Chakraborty and seconded by Rtn. Bhupesh Kapoor.
- President Rtn. Preeti Agarwal welcomed Swami Vasavanandaji, Principal Brahamachari Asima Chaitanyaji, Innerwheel President Rtn. Tandra Saha and all members and Anns.
- A short introduction was given about Swamiji & the principal of RKMBBA by the President Rtn. Preeti Agarwal.
- Scholarship cheques & Awards were given to the meritorious students Rotary club of Calcutta midtown donated a cheque for 87000/- against scholarship to RKMBBA.

1st Prize -Md. Taufique for Rs.10000

2nd Prize-Biswarup Kisku for Rs.5000

3rd Prize-Koushik Mahata for Rs.3000

Best Sportsman - Krittibas Mahato for Rs 1000

- **Speech by Swamiji:** Swamiji gave a speech in which he spoke about the sevabhav, the Arjun's teachings in Mahabharata and the association of our club with RKMBBA.

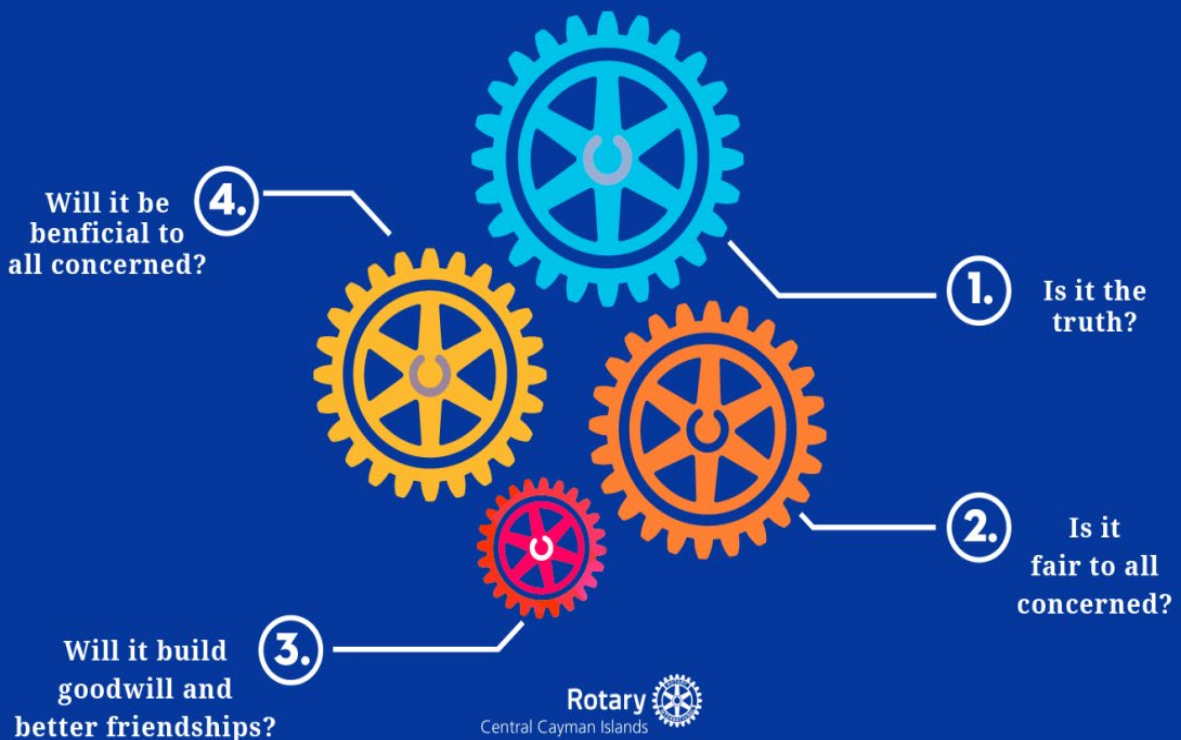
- **Any other matter:** We were informed about the Cleftlip surgery on Wednesday, 28th August 2024 at 1.30 PM at Narayana Hospital Howrah.
- **Secretary's report:** Secretary Rtn. Ruchira Bhuwalka announced the birthdays and the anniversary's for the month. The attendance was 14 members present making it 30%.
- **Meeting closed:** President Rtn. Preeti Agarwal closed the meeting.

Minuted by:

Rtn. Ruchira Bhuwalka

Secretary 2024-25 RCCM

THE ROTARY 4-WAY TEST



Annual visit to Blind Boy's Academy on 25th August Weekly meeting followed by Presentation of cheque, music and speech by Swami ji



Cervical Cancer Vaccine- second dose administered to 44 girls of the first batch at The Refuge on 3rd September



Birthday's

"Cheers to another wonderful year"



Rtn. Neeraj Agarwal (1st September)



Rtn. Biman Chakraborty (1st September)



Rtn. O.P Agarwal (4th September)



Rtn. Debojit Halder (7th September)



Rtn. Anirudh Tikmany (9th September)



Rtn. Nupur Prasad (11th September)



Rtn. Chetan Narula (14th September)

Love is Blind

