



BLISS



AN OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA NORTH EAST Rotary International District 3291

Vol. : 40 Club No. : 23802	Saturday, 28th March, 2026 1643rd Regular Meeting	No. 18 Charter on : 12.06.1986
We meet every alternate Thursday at THE ANTELOPE, 3, Ho Chi Minh Sarani, Kolkata - 700071 at 8.00 pm.		
Rtn Angana Paul President	Rtn Sabyasachi Roy Secretary	PP Rtn Chandra Kumar Paul Treasurer
		PP Rtn Subhashis Ghosh Editor

TOGETHER, WE

SUPPORT

Reminiscing The Past



Upgradation of accessible library at JU

ROTARY YEAR 2024-25
LED BY IPP RTN SUBASISH HALDER

SPONSORSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BLISS
IPP RTN SUBASISH HALDER

FELLOWSHIP & DINNER
RTN DR SUPRATIP KUNDU & RTN DR DEBARATI PAUL

Rotary Peace Fellow employs AI for a better world

By Amy Hoak

During her Rotary Peace Fellowship, Branka Panic worked as a short-term consultant at the World Bank, joining a team that was building a model to predict the probability of famine.

The benefits of such a tool were obvious: “If a certain area will be in need of food in six months, in 12 months, we can prepare humanitarian aid more efficiently,” Panic says.

But unintended consequences of making that information available also became clear. “Our intention was to make humanitarian agencies ready,” Panic says. “But what if, by providing this signal as an open source, we were actually informing the government or any warring party out there to intentionally attack this population because they see there is a vulnerability?”

The exercise illustrated both the power and the danger of using such technologies. It surfaced ethical questions to be mindful of and the sensitivities of parsing data and sharing it widely.

It also motivated Panic, 42, to found AI for Peace, a think tank dedicated to issues like these, as well as how artificial intelligence has the potential to benefit peace, security, and sustainable development. She co-authored a book of the same name.

The organization’s focus areas include humanitarian action (using AI to save lives by anticipating and targeting response efforts); human rights and democracy (using AI to identify human rights abuses and protect defenders of human rights); and human security (using AI to protect people, as well as researching potential security threats). Positive use of AI technology can strengthen societies and prevent conflict in the first place, Panic says.

AI is already being used in peace negotiations. Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders have used AI to facilitate large-scale dialogues aimed at ending the conflict in Gaza, she says. In some conflict areas, AI is breaking down language and dialect barriers. “We are using AI to say, ‘Wait a minute, we actually have quite an easy way to let people’s voices be heard in this peace process.’”

AI for Peace works with peacebuilders to build their knowledge and familiarity with artificial intelligence to become an active voice in designing, developing, and implementing new applications, she says. “We also work with data scientists, who quite often never thought about peacebuilding before, and we want them to become a little bit of peacebuilders themselves,” she adds.

In fact, Panic says everyone has agency to shape the future of AI and how it’s used — not only the experts and data scientists. While it can feel intimidating to participate for those who aren’t technology-minded, it’s important that individuals with varying perspectives have a say, Panic adds. “Everybody needs to be part of this conversation,” she says. “Rotarians as well.”

Born in Belgrade, Serbia, Panic lived through conflicts in the Balkans, an experience that shaped her worldview and motivated her to become a peacebuilder. She recalls the NATO bombing of her country, when school stopped and people had to live in basements and shelters. “These things tend to leave a mark,” she says. For her, it set her on a mission: to do all she could to prevent people from having to live through similar conflicts.

Panic became an activist while in high school, joining the Otpor (“Resistance”) movement against the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević, former president of Serbia and Yugoslavia. The group organized daily peaceful walks in resistance of Milošević, who eventually resigned and was charged with war crimes committed during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s.



Branka Panic founded AI for Peace to help stop conflicts before they start.

Image credit: Bénédicte Desrus

Protesting in 1999 and 2000, however, was done without much technology, she points out. In contrast, subsequent grassroots movements, such as the Arab Spring in the early 2010s, were able to benefit from social media tools to coordinate. □ “At the very beginning of my interest in technology, we started seeing how social media has been used to actually strengthen that type of activism,” she adds. “This was super empowering.”

During her Rotary Peace Fellowship, Branka Panic joined her host club from North Carolina in helping introduce electricity to schools in Nicaragua and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for the International Day of Peace.

With her Rotary Peace Fellowship, she was able to delve deeper into technology and AI to enrich her peacebuilding background. Rotary District 2483 in Serbia and Montenegro supported her fellowship, and the connection changed her life, she says.

Panic is now a Rotarian herself and is a charter member of the Rotary Club of Global Partners in Peace, an e-club for peace fellows and peace activists. The club hosts speakers who talk about their peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development work, and members live all around the world, from Mexico (where she lives, in San Miguel de Allende) to Chile, Nepal, and the Philippines.

With her husband, Panic opened a “peace house,” which she describes as “a place where artists, thinkers, neighbors, diplomats, technologists, travelers, and unexpected guests can meet around one table.” Gatherings spark conversations among people of different backgrounds, an effort to turn “everyday encounters into small acts of peace,” she says.

The house is part of Panic’s ethos of stopping conflicts before they start. AI for Peace intentionally focuses on prevention of conflict and building resilience; it doesn’t focus on the ethics of AI in weapons of war but rather how to address root causes of human suffering and vulnerability.

“This is the niche that we decided to cover,” Panic says. “There are a lot of things to do in building peace or sustaining peace or making sure that wars don’t happen at all.”

Branka Panic

Rotary Fellowship, Duke University/University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2017-19

Founding director, AI for Peace, 2019-present

Charter member, Rotary Club of Global Partners in Peace, 2022-present



During her Rotary Peace Fellowship, Branka Panic joined her host club from North Carolina in helping introduce electricity to schools in Nicaragua and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for the International Day of Peace.

Courtesy of Branka Panic

Family Corner

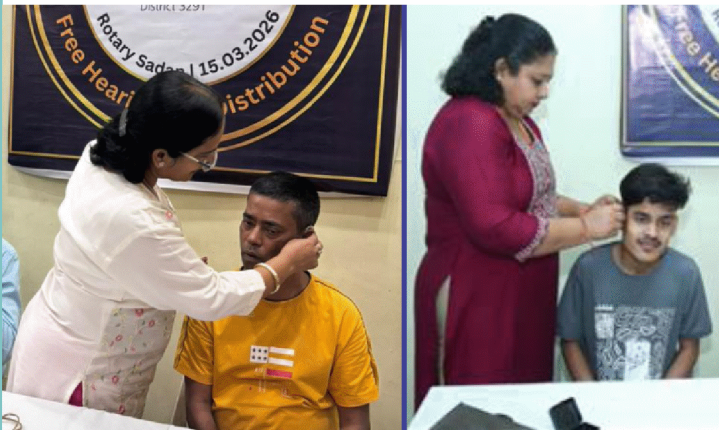
Congratulations!

Members of Rotary Club of Calcutta North East heartily congratulates Rtn Dr Debarati Paul on receiving her PhD certificate from Hon’ble Governor of West Bengal Shri R. N. Ravi in the presence of Vice Chancellor Prof Asutosh Ghosh. Dr. Paul has completed her PhD. in Bioinformatics from the University of Calcutta. She worked at Bose Institute, Kolkata. Her work focused on understanding how some proteins behave in normal vs. diseased human body, contributing better insights into various diseases and developing therapeutics against those diseases.



Project Report – Dhvani

The Rotary Club of Calcutta North East successfully hosted the third edition of Project Dhvani on 15th March at Rotary Sadan. This impactful initiative provided free high-quality hearing aids to 50 beneficiaries, restoring their connection to the world of sound. Supported by The Karna and Signia. The event underscored Rotary's commitment to disease prevention and community welfare. The occasion was graced by esteemed Guests of Honour, including DGN Rtn Purnendu Roychowdhury, IPDG AKS Rtn Dr. Krishnendu Gupta, PDG Rtn Rajani Mukherjee, Rtn Aniruddha Guha, and Dr. Md Sahidul Arefin (Bongo Shresto Awardee, 2024). Their presence highlighted the project's significance in bridging healthcare gaps for the underprivileged.



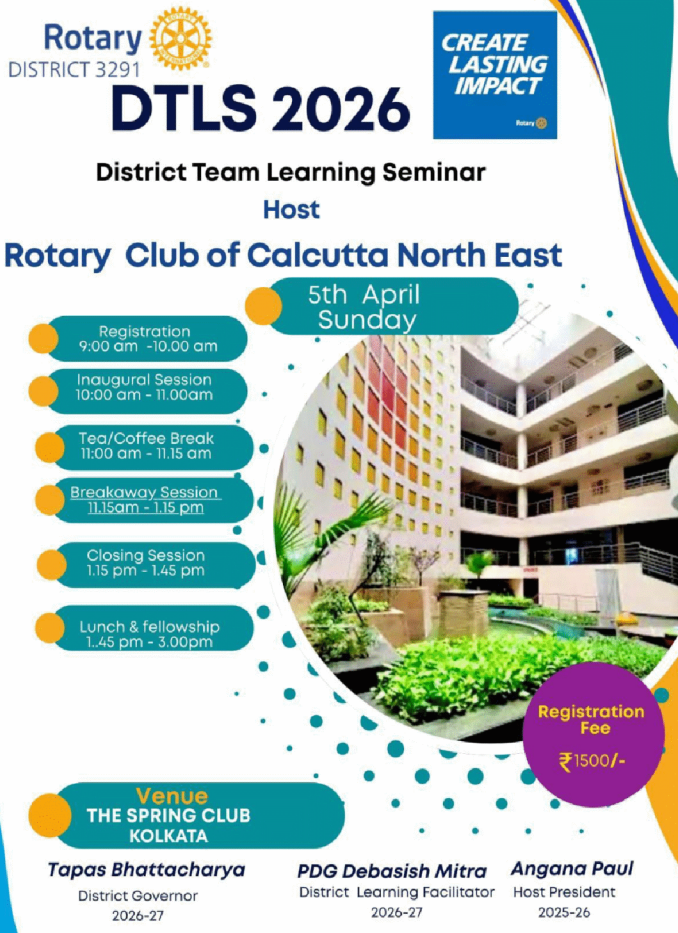
Project Report – Paving the Path

In honour of International Women's Month, RCCNE has pledged to sponsor the education of a young girl Ms Deboshmita Manna currently in the 9th grade. RCCNE will remain committed to supporting her journey until she achieves her dream of becoming a doctor. As part of our mission to empower women, we have provided her with the funds necessary for her books, school uniform, and supplies.



Upcoming Projects and Events

RCCNE will be hosting the DTLS (District Team Learning Seminar) for District 3291 Leaders for the Rotary Year 2026–2027 on 5th April 2026



The flyer features the Rotary logo and 'DISTRICT 3291' on the left. At the top right is a blue box with 'CREATE LASTING IMPACT' and the Rotary logo. The main title 'DTLS 2026' is in large blue letters. Below it, 'District Team Learning Seminar' and 'Host Rotary Club of Calcutta North East' are written. The date '5th April Sunday' is in a teal circle. A central image shows a modern building with a courtyard. To the left of the image is a vertical list of activities in teal circles: Registration (9:00 am - 10:00 am), Inaugural Session (10:00 am - 11:00 am), Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 am - 11:15 am), Breakaway Session (11:15 am - 11:30 am), Closing Session (1:15 pm - 1:45 pm), and Lunch & fellowship (1:45 pm - 3:00 pm). A purple circle at the bottom right indicates a 'Registration Fee ₹1500/-'. At the bottom, three names are listed: Tapas Bhattacharya (District Governor 2026-27), PDG Debasish Mitra (District Learning Facilitator 2026-27), and Angana Paul (Host President 2025-26). The venue 'THE SPRING CLUB KOLKATA' is highlighted in a teal box.

Rotary
DISTRICT 3291

DTLS 2026

District Team Learning Seminar
Host
Rotary Club of Calcutta North East

5th April Sunday

- Registration 9:00 am - 10:00 am
- Inaugural Session 10:00 am - 11:00 am
- Tea/Coffee Break 11:00 am - 11:15 am
- Breakaway Session 11:15 am - 11:30 am
- Closing Session 1:15 pm - 1:45 pm
- Lunch & fellowship 1:45 pm - 3:00 pm

Venue
THE SPRING CLUB KOLKATA

Tapas Bhattacharya
District Governor
2026-27

PDG Debasish Mitra
District Learning Facilitator
2026-27

Angana Paul
Host President
2025-26

Registration Fee
₹1500/-

RCCNE will be supporting weavers of Begumpur in an effort to revive 'TANT SHILPA' and provide them with a sustainable livelihood on 29th March, 2026.

ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA NORTHEAST

Minutes of Regular Meeting No. 1642

Date : 12th March, 2026, Time : 8.00 pm.

Venue : The Antelope, 3 Ho Chi Minh Sarani, Kolkata - 700071.

The Regular Meeting No. 1642 of the Rotary Club of Calcutta North East (RCCNE) was called to order by President Rtn Angana Paul at 8:00 p.m. The National Anthem was led by IPP Rtn Subasish Halder, with all members standing in respect. The President extended Holi greetings to all members.

The President informed that a Pre-Holi Utsav was celebrated with the orphan boys of Bikas Boys Home, where the boys were given Holi gifts and goodies, and lunch was sponsored by the family of Late PP Rtn Tapan Kumar Bakshi.

On the day of the meeting, the Club extended support

to Debosmita Manna, a 14-year-old meritorious student preparing for medical entrance examinations, whose father is ailing and financially weak. The Club provided Rs 4,000 for her immediate academic requirements. PP Rtn Shubadip Roy pledged Rs 1,500 per month towards her education, and Club Secretary Rtn Sabyasachi Roy assured continued support for her future study needs. The Club has also assured arranging her spectacles.

An appeal was received through PP Rtn Shubadip Roy for a three-month-old baby, Aditya Thandar, who requires urgent paediatric heart surgery. Financial support of Rs 5,000 each was pledged by PP Rtn Shubadip Roy, PP Rtn Biswajit Choudhuri, and the Club.

Another appeal from Shri Buddha Bakshi, a close associate of RCCNE, for an urgent cataract operation was considered, and the Club assured support for the same.

The President further informed that the Club's major upcoming project "Dhwani" will be held on 15th March 2026 at Rotary Sadan, where approximately 60 hearing aids will be distributed to patients with hearing impairments in association with The Karna and Signia. The Guest of Honour, DGE Rtn Purnendu Roychowdhury, will attend the event, and members were requested to extend their full support.

It was also announced that the Home Science and Nutrition Laboratory at Pareshnath Balika Vidyalaya, sponsored by RCCNE, is ready for unveiling, and the date will be announced shortly. Additionally, RCCNE will host the District Team Learning Seminar (DTLS) for District 3291 for the Rotary Year 2026–2027 on 5th April 2026 at Spring Club, Kolkata, with around 200 participants expected to attend.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Club Treasurer PP Rtn Chandra Kumar Paul. The Club Secretary confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting, extended birthday and anniversary wishes to members and their families, and informed that the next Regular Meeting of the Club will be held on 28th March 2026, with further details to be shared in the club group.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned, and all members and guests were invited to join the fellowship and refreshments.

Minutes Prepared by

Rtn Sabyasachi Roy, Club Secretary