



ISSUE No: 14 / 2025-2026

REGULAR MEETING No. 2966

30 January 2026

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

28th May, 2016 early morning, we started for Auschwitz from Krakow in Poland, not knowing that the visit would haunt me all my life. It is a profound, solemn, and, for many, life-altering experience. Located in southern Poland, the site of the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp serves as a, perhaps the, defining symbol of the Holocaust. Walking through the gates of Auschwitz I and the vast ruins of Birkenau forces a confrontation with the absolute darkest depths of human history, leaving visitors with a haunting, yet necessary, understanding of the consequences of hatred, dehumanization, and silence.

The visit typically begins at Auschwitz I, which was originally a Polish army barracks later transformed into a concentration camp. The infamous, cynical sign "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" ("Work Sets You Free") looms over the entrance, a stark contrast to the despair that lay beyond. The brick barrack blocks, now a museum, house the agonizing evidence of the genocide.

Walking through these corridors, one is confronted with the personal belongings of those murdered: piles of human hair, suitcases marked with names, eyeglasses, shoes, and children's toys. These items, often stolen from victims upon arrival, are not just artifacts; they are deeply personal remnants of individual lives. Perhaps the most chilling part of this section is the gas chamber and crematorium at Auschwitz I, which remained intact despite the Nazis' attempt to destroy evidence. Standing in the silence of that concrete room is an overwhelming experience that renders the statistics of the 1.1 million murdered into a tangible, unbearable reality.

A short distance away is Auschwitz II-Birkenau, a site that operated primarily as an extermination camp. The sheer, staggering scale of Birkenau is difficult to comprehend, with miles of barbed wire, wooden barracks, and the destroyed ruins of gas chambers stretching toward the horizon.

Walking along the railway tracks to the "ramp"—where thousands of men, women, and children were separated in the infamous "selection" process—brings the immediacy of the horror to the forefront. The ruins of the crematoria, destroyed by the Nazis in an effort to hide their crimes before liberation, stand as silent witnesses to the systematic destruction of life. The atmosphere at Birkenau is often described as eerily quiet, yet filled with a profound sense of loss and profound sadness.

A visit to Auschwitz forces a deep, uncomfortable reflection on the capacity for evil and the fragility of dignity. It highlights how quickly hateful, dehumanizing language can translate into action. It is not merely a look into the past but a warning for the present, emphasizing the dangers of unchecked power

and racism.

Many leave with a feeling of being emotionally drained, often experiencing a mixture of sadness, anger, and numbness. Yet, this experience is vital. As survivor stories often emphasize, the purpose of visiting is to keep the memory alive, to bear witness to the victims, and to ensure that such an atrocity is never repeated.

Visiting Auschwitz is a difficult, painful, and necessary journey. It is a place where one must walk slowly, reflect deeply, and pay respect to the millions of souls whose lives were extinguished there. By confronting the horrors of the past, visitors are challenged to uphold human rights and dignity in the present, carrying the heavy burden of remembrance forward.

THE CLUB SECRETARY SPEAKS

The secret to happiness isn't a single formula but a blend of internal attitudes and external actions, focusing on gratitude for simple pleasures, meaningful connections, living in the present (mindfulness), and contributing to others, rather than chasing wealth or fame. True contentment arises from appreciating what you have, fostering strong relationships, finding purpose in work, and maintaining a positive, resilient mindset, acknowledging that life includes both joy and challenges. Cultivate thankfulness for simple blessings (food, shelter, health) to recognize your abundance. Mindfulness helps you focus on the present moment, reducing worry about the past or future.

Deep relationships with loved ones are crucial; people remember shared time and love, not possessions. Engaging in meaningful work or activities keeps the mind and body occupied, preventing excessive self-reflection and fostering a sense of accomplishment. Helping others, practicing kindness, and serving humanity brings profound contentment and inner wealth.

Finding joy in a simple life, free from materialistic obsession, leads to greater inner peace and happiness. Happiness isn't about constant joy, but about experiencing more positive emotions than negative ones, accepting life's ups and downs, and building resilience.

Money buys comfort, but true happiness isn't found in luxury; historical figures with immense wealth often remained unhappy. Happiness is a state of mind, not dependent on external circumstances or possessions. Constantly comparing yourself to others breeds frustration; focus on your own journey and blessings. Ultimately, the secret lies in recognizing happiness as a practice of gratitude, connection, purpose, and inner peace, a journey of appreciating the present and contributing positively to the world.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- 30th January is the Wedding Anniversary of PP Rtn Gautam and Sharmila Banerjee
- 31st January is the Wedding Anniversary of PP Dr.Sumit Kr and Sipra Mitra
- 7th February is the Birthday of Rtn Ruma Mitra
- 10th February is the Birthday of Rtn Ratnamala Ray

PROJECTS COMPLETED THIS MONTH

1. On 10th January 2026 PP Satya Sundar Sarangi conducted a Mega Thalassemia Project at Islampur Village in the interiors of East Midnapur. There was an awareness programme followed by blood group testing and blood tests to detect thalassemia.
2. On 16th and 17th January 2026 RCCSW organised Fun Fiesta Carnival at Golf Garden Park.
3. 22nd January 2026 Fruit Tree Planting Project was conducted at Galgale Village in the interiors of Dhanekhali Village.
4. 26th January 2026 'Khera Dhula', a sports meet was organised at Golf Garden Park for the children of Madartala Slums.
5. 28th January 2026 HPV Cervical Cancer Vaccines were given to the underprivileged girls free of cost. This Project was done jointly with the Trust formed by Rtn Dr,Sushmita Banerjee and her brother Dr.Partha Banerjee in memory of their late parents.
6. 30th January 2026 2nd dose of HPV Cervical Cancer Vaccination given to 29 girls.

UPCOMING PROJECTS AND CLUB ACTIVITIES

1. Health Check up to be conducted for the inmates of Mary Cooper Home
2. To make a visit to Cheshire Home to spend some time with the women there.
3. Conduct and supervise Baking classes at the Light House for the Blind
4. To conduct and supervise the candle making classes at the Behala Blind School
5. Conduct Mega Health Camp at the Madartala Bazaar Club House.
6. Fellowship Picnic on 22nd February

DISTRICT UPDATES

- 10 members visited and enjoyed at the District Conference. President Rtn Ruma Mitra and Club Secretary Rtn Samir Sur took part in the Red Carpet Ramp Walk
- WALKATHON 2026 – On Sunday, 1st February 2026 from Ruby Hospital to Highland Park from 7 A.M onwards. This is a walk for Thalassemia and Cervical Cancer Awareness.

A new Rotary Club joins the Rotary International District 3291 family:

Rotary CALCUTTA CHANGEMAKERS

Club No. 227528

Charter date: 14 January 2026

No. of active members: 16

President: Prof. Shabina N. Omar

With this addition, the Rotary International District 3291 statistics show:

TRADITIONAL ROTARY CLUBS: 141

SATELITE ROTARY CLUBS: 04

TOTAL MEMBERS: 3824

ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS TO DIRECTORS 2026-2027:

Rtn. Ruma Mitra – President

PP. Rtn. Debashis Sarkar – President Elect

Rtn. Samir Sur – Vice President

Rtn. Dr. Sushmita Mitra Banerjee – Hony. Club Secretary

PP. Rtn. Subrata Chakraborty – Hony. Club Treasurer

Rtn. Prosenjit Sircar – Director, Club Service

PP. Rtn. Dr. Sumit Kumar Mitra – Director, Community Service [Non-Medical] I

Rtn. Mohua Das – Director, Community Service [Non Medical] II

Rtn. Zeena Augustine – Director, Community Service [Medical]

Rtn. Biswarup Gupta – Director International Service

OFFICERS APPOINTED for RCCSW – ROTARY YEAR 2026-2027

CLUB LEARNING FACILITATOR: PDG. Rtn. Siddhartha S. Bose

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS I – PP. Rtn. Gautam Banerjee

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS II – Rtn. Debashis Lahiri

BULLETIN EDITOR – PDG. Siddhartha S. Bose

BULLETIN [JOINT] EDITOR – Rtn. Somdutta Mitra

CLUB EXECUTIVE SECRETARY – Rtn. Somdutta Mitra

CONGRATULATIONS & BEST WISHES TO TEAM SOUTH WEST!

RCCSW IN ACTION:

Project-

- 1.Awareness drive on Thalassemia and the perils of the deadly disease.
- 2.Blood group testing
- 3.Blood test to detect Thalassemia

Date- 10 January 2026

Venue- Islampur Village, in the interiors of East Midnapur, 165 Kms from Kolkata.

Tests conducted by Ashok Diagnostics

Beneficiaries- 23 young boys and girls of the village



Project-Fun Fiesta Carnival

Dates- 16th & 17th January 2026

Venue- Golf Garden Park

Objectives of the Project-

- 1.To help underprivileged women involved in Cottage & Small scale industries & other business to showcase & sell their products
- 2.Help the girls of Calcutta Deaf & Dumb School to sell the embroidered kerchiefs & napkins made by them(our on going project).
- 3.Raise funds for future projects.

(10 stalls were given absolutely free of charges to the underprivileged ladies, 1 free stall to CDDS as well & 8 stalls were sold to cover the fair expenses)

- 4.To encourage musical talents among the residents & children of the nearby Madartala Slums.





Project- Yearly Sports
Date-26th January 2026

Venue- Golf Green Park Beneficiaries-Underprivileged children of the Madartala slums & the street children of the adjoining area.

In all 75 children participated. The races were divided into 5 age groups with 2 races for each group--2 to 5 yrs, 6 to 8 yrs, 9 to 12 yrs, 13 to 15 yrs & 16 to 18 yrs. There was a race each for the mothers & fathers of the participants.

Trophies, medals, & stationery were given to the prize winners & tiffin to all the 75 participants.





Project-- HPV Cervical Cancer Vaccine (2nd dose)
 Date--28th January 2026
 Venue-- Jadavpur University
 Beneficiaries--16 underprivileged girls of the University.



WELCOME TO THE ROTARY FAMILY

A warm welcome to the Rotary Club of Calcutta South West FAMILY:

- ✚ SRAGDHARA GHOSH – a 2nd Generation Rotarian [Proposer: PDG. Siddhartha S. Bose]
- ✚ Dilip Dey [Proposer: Rtn. Capt. Ranjan Dutta]
- ✚ Indrani Chatterjee [Propose: PDG. Siddhartha S. Bose]
- ✚ Subhashish Chatterjee [Proposer: PP. Rtn. Debasis De]

With these 4 new additions, our membership strength will be:

1 Honorary Member
 38 Active Members

We started with 24 Members on 1 July 2025
 Added 15 New Members + 1 Honorary Member since 1 July 2025
 Resignations – 1 Member.