



Francesco Arezzo  
Rotary International President  
2025-2026



Dr. Ramendu Homchauduri  
District Governor 3291  
2025-2026

# WHISTLE

E-Bulletin of  
Rotary Club of Calcutta South West

President: Rtn. Ruma Mitra

Secretary: Rtn. Samir Sur

Editor: PDG. Siddhartha S. Bose

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## PRESIDENT SPEAKS:

After touring Spain for 15 days, starting from Madrid (on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014) to Toledo to Seville to Faro (in Portugal) to Cordoba to Granada to Malaga to Valencia, we arrived at Barcelona on the 16<sup>th</sup> day. It is a vibrant city, buzzing with people and laughter, a cosmopolitan city—people here speak in English unlike the other parts of Spain. Barcelona offers a lot of places for tourists to visit. The FCB and the various architectural structures of Antony Gaudi are worth visiting. However, what I liked most and enjoyed the most is the walk down La Rambla. It's about a mile walk from Placa de Catalunya down La Rambla, Barcelona's most popular street to the waterfront. The centre of La Rambla is a pedestrian walkway, a cobbled pathway. I was awestruck with the bewildering array of colours, sounds and scents even though the threat of pickpockets is huge. The beggars, in their flamboyant costumes, left an indelible mark on my memory. The magnetic pull of La Rambla, with its inviting cafes and bustling eateries, had been irresistible—from the tantalizing aroma of spicy tapas to the comforting scent of churros bathed in molten chocolate to the famous Spanish drink, Sangria. The shops with their wares displayed in enticing arrays, the melodies of street musicians, the captivating Flamenco dancers and the intriguing living statues, still come alive in my recollections. The people with their infectious energy and warmth seem to be the very lifeblood of the boulevard. La Rambla is lined with a variety of shops selling everything from souvenirs to high end fashion to Lladro figurines. I couldn't resist myself and ended up carrying an extra suitcase back to India filled with La Ramblas shopping.....and good that the very next day was our flight back home. More than just a street, La Rambla is a living artery of Barcelona, a place where locals and tourists mingle. It is a place to experience the city's heartbeat, from the historic charm of its past to the energetic pulse of its present.

## HONY. SECRETARY SPEAKS:

### Wildlife

My love for wildlife stems from its sheer beauty and essential role in Nature's delicate balance. Witnessing creatures in their natural habitats, from majestic tigers to tiny insects, fills me with wonder and a deep sense of connection to the living world. Wildlife's importance extends beyond aesthetics; it is crucial for our planet's ecosystems, providing resources and maintaining ecological stability. This love inspires a commitment to protecting these precious species, ensuring they thrive for generations to come, and recognizing that their well-being is intertwined with our own. I understand that the survival and prosperity of wildlife are intrinsically linked to human well-being, as they provide us with essential resources and contribute to our overall quality of life. Wildlife plays a vital role in maintaining the health of our planet by supporting complex food chains and ensuring the smooth functioning of ecosystems. Observing wildlife in its natural environment evokes a profound sense of wonder, peace and a deep connection to the natural world. This love fuels a strong desire to contribute to wildlife conservation, recognizing the urgent need to protect endangered species and their habitats from human induced threats.

## PROJECTS DONE AFTER LAST RM

1. Saplings of mango, guava and betelnut trees were planted in the garden of Calcutta Deaf and Dumb School on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025

2. "Traffic Awareness and No Use of Plastic"—This Project was conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2025 on the main thoroughfare of Prince Anwarshah Road in front of Ram Mohan Mission School and the participants were the students of the school. [Detailed report later in this issue]
3. Teachers' Day celebrated at Mary Cooper's Home – Felicitated very elderly retired teachers of renowned schools of Kolkata living in the Home.

#### UPCOMING PROJECTS

1. Cervical Cancer Awareness Programme in association with Bengal Obstetrics and Gynecological Society will be conducted at a school for the underprivileged girls in Diamond Harbour on 13<sup>th</sup> September. Since most of our members will be away in Belpahari to conduct another Project, incoming members Somdutta Mitra and Biswarup Gupta will represent RCCSW and monitor the Project. Many thanks to them for happily offering to take charge of this Project.
2. Visit to Shakhbhanga Shobor Village in Belpahari on 13<sup>th</sup> September to distribute mosquito nets and new and old clothes and edible items to the villagers.
3. Cervical Vaccinations will be administered to the girls of a school for the underprivileged (same school where awareness programme will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> September). This is a joint venture with BOGS and we will be vaccinating about 80 girls.

#### A NOTE FROM DG RAMENDU HOMCOUDHURY:

**Any member who brings 25 members or more in his LIFETIME (as a Rotarian) will receive honour in the Hall of Fame.**

President Rtn Ruma Mitra and Hony. Secretary Rtn Samir Sur attended the Rotary Membership Seminar at Shibananda Hall, in Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark on 31<sup>st</sup> August.



## CONGRATULATIONS -----

Rtn Ruma Mitra won the Outstanding Club Secretary Award 2024 – 2025 in the Rotary International District 3291 Individual Recognitions category.



## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**29<sup>th</sup> August was the Birthday of Hony. Secretary Rtn Samir Sur**

**08<sup>th</sup> September was the Birthday of Mrs. Rupa Mitra**

**21<sup>st</sup> September is the Birthday of Mrs. Misti Dutta**

## RCCSW IN ACTION

### PROJECT REPORT: TREE PLANTATION AT CALCUTTA DEAF & DUMB SCHOOL

**DATE: 27<sup>TH</sup> August 2025**

**MEMBERS IN ACTION: PP. Rtn. Dr. Sumit Kumar Mitra and Rtn. Mahua Das**

RC Calcutta South West celebrated "Tree Plantation" at Calcutta Deaf & Dumb School, Kolkata on 27th August 2025. On this occasion PP Rtn. Dr. SUMIT KR MITRA and Rtn. MAHUA DAS planted some sapling of Mango, Guava & Betel nut trees. The plantation was made inside the campus of CDDS, assisted by some teachers and staff members of the school. Since the students were engaged in classes, they could not participate

### PROJECT REPORT : TRAFFIC AWARENESS & NO USE OF PLASTIC

**DATE : 29th August 2025**

**TIME : 11:15 A.M to 12: 15 P.M**

**VENUE : Prince Anwar Shah Road, in front of Ram Mohan Mission School**

**PARTICIPANTS : Students of Classes 8 to 12 of Ram Mohan Mission School**

**BENEFICIARIES : General public commuting on the road during the time mentioned**

Two of our Community Service Directors (Non Medical), PP Rtn Dr.Sumit Kr.Mitra and Rtn Mohua Das visited Ram Mohan Mission School and B.D Memorial School on 26<sup>th</sup> August, to request the respective Principals to involve their students in taking part in our Project titled "Traffic Awareness and No Use of Plastic". While BD Memorial refused as the students are having their examinations, the Principal of Ram Mohan Mission School, Mr.Sujoy Biswas accepted our proposal and invited us to conduct the Project on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August.

Immediately, Mohua along with President Ruma Mitra chalked out some slogans. With just 2 days left to arrange for everything, Mohua with her usual enthusiasm and energy, wasted no time and placed orders for several banners and placards.

On 29<sup>th</sup> August, it started raining heavily from 10 A.M. Sumitda and Mohua reached Ram Mohan Mission School at 10:15 A.M and waited for the rains to stop. President and Secretary arrived at the venue just when the rains stopped. The School Principal and some teachers made the students stand on the road. We distributed the placards and the banners to them. All the passers-by glanced, some clicked pictures while some slowed down their vehicles to read the

slogans. We were there for almost an hour when the rains started again. Quickly we clicked some pictures before the students handed over the placards to us and went inside their school.

The Principal of the school, Mr.Sujoy Biswas invited all of us to his office where we chatted for a while over coffee and biscuits. We came to know that Rotary Club of South Calcutta conducts Projects in the school. When we came to know that Mr.Sujoy Biswas is about to become a member of RC South Calcutta, we requested him to plan joint Projects with our Club.



### PROJECT REPORT : TEACHERS' DAY

DATE : Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

TIME : 10:00 A.M to 11:30 A.M

VENUE : Mary Cooper's Home for the Aged in Khidderpore

MEMBERS ATTENDED : Club President Rtn Ruma Mitra, Hon. Club Secretary Rtn Samir Sur and Incoming Member Zeena Augustine

BENEFICIARIES : All the Inmates of the Home specially the elderly retired teachers.

President Ruma Mitra suggested a Project to celebrate Teachers' Day on 5<sup>th</sup> September at the Board Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. With the help and reference of incoming member Zeena Augustine, President spoke to the Superintendent, Mr. Barry Beals, of Mary Cooper Home for the aged in Khidderpore. She expressed her wish to felicitate the elderly retired teachers of the Home if there were any. She was told there were 22 inmates in the Home of which 7 were retired teachers. A unanimous decision was taken that the 7 teachers would be felicitated with coffee mugs (from Presto) with a Teachers' Day note printed on it and all the inmates would be presented with a gift hamper. Zeena and Rtn Ruma wasted no time and got the gift items ready before the D Day.

On Teachers' Day morning President Ruma Mitra, Hon. Secretary Samir Sur and Zeena Augustine reached the venue with the gifts at 10 A.M. All the inmates of the Home were waiting at the Living room of a beautiful 2 storey sprawling building built in 1930. There was an interactive session for about half an hour. The President addressed all the elderly people. There were ex Principals of schools, ex teachers besides the others. The oldest was Mrs. Chhaya Biswas (97 years), ex Principal of St. Thomas Girls School. The Teachers were felicitated with coffee mugs and a bag full of goodies. All the other elderly members were given goodie bags only. There was a photo session. The inmates requested the members of RCCSW to visit them often and plan health related Projects.

It was really a great experience being in the company of such senior citizens for a while. It was a Project of a very different nature. Some may, some may not stay for the next Teachers' Day but RCCSW achieved in bringing a smile to their lips. The 3 members of RCCSW silently prayed for their health and happiness and left the venue with a mixed feeling of emotion, satisfaction and joy.



## **Hakeem Babalola selected to be 2026-27 Rotary International president**

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2026-27.

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The Board, guided by the RI code of policies, conducted a special session to select the organization's leader after the resignation of RI President-elect SangKoo Yun, who decided to step back from his Rotary responsibilities and focus on his recovery from recent cancer treatment.

Babalola began his Rotary journey in 1984 as a Rotaractor. He joined the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi 10 years later. His leadership roles include serving as district governor (2011-12), RI vice president (2019-20), and member of the RI Board (2018-20). He was also an active leader and participant in RI committees such as the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee (2017-23) and the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (2013-present, adviser 2016-present).

Babalola received a university degree in engineering in 1988. He worked for 25 years in the oil and gas industry, holding senior positions in Shell PLC. He is the founder of two companies: Riviera Technical Services Ltd., an oil and gas infrastructure delivery company, and Lead and Change Consulting, an executive coaching and organizational performance advisory group.

Babalola's professional affiliations include the Nigerian Society of Engineers, the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria, and the Association of Change Management Professionals. He is a member of Jericho Businessmen Club, an organization in his birth city of Ibadan that provides input to governments on economic and social policy.

Babalola and his wife, Preba, live in the city of Port Harcourt. He supports The Rotary Foundation with a named endowment and as an Arch Klumph Society member. A trustee of ShelterBox UK, he is a recipient of the Africa Centennial Heroes Award, the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World, the RI Service Above Self Award, and The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service.

The president of Rotary International serves a one-year term, presiding over the Board of Directors and providing inspirational leadership for the organization. As the spokesperson for the global network, the president visits clubs around the world to promote Rotary's values and represent the organization at major events. Rotary chooses its president from members who have demonstrated extensive leadership experience within Rotary, including service as a club president, district governor, and member of the Board.

## MEMBERS CONTRIBUTION

### BLACK HOLE OF KOLKATA – PP. Rtn. Dr. Sumit Kumar Mitra

In general, we know that Black Hole means- a region of space time where gravity is so strong that nothing—no particles or even electromagnetic radiation such as light—can escape from it. The theory of general relativity predicts that a sufficiently compact mass can deform space time to form a black hole.

The Black Hole of Calcutta, refers to a tiny prison in Fort William , measuring  $4.30 \times 5.50$  metres (14 × 18 feet), in which troops of Siraj ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal, held British prisoners of war on the night of 20 June 1756.

John Zephaniah Holwell, one of the British prisoners and an employee of the East India Company, said that, after the fall of Fort William, the surviving British soldiers, Indian sepoy, and Indian civilians were imprisoned overnight in conditions so cramped that many people died from suffocation and heat exhaustion, and that 123 of 146 prisoners of war imprisoned there, died.

Modern historians believe that 64 prisoners were sent into the Hole, and that 43 died there. The Nawab attacked Calcutta because of the company's failure to stop fortifying the city as a defense against its rivals in anticipation of war (the Seven Years' War, 1756–63).

Following the surrender, Holwell and the other Europeans were placed for the night in the company's local lockup for petty offenders, popularly known as the Black Hole. According to Holwell, 146 people were locked up, and 23 survived.

The Black Hole Monument, the slender White Monolith, standing atop an octagonal base adorned with marble plaques, commemorates the British Officials who died in the BLACK HOLE incident.

The Monument was erected by LORD CURZON, in 1901 at the corner of Dalhousie Square (now B. B. D. Bagh), which is said to be the site of the 'Black Hole. Later, in 1940, the monument was moved to the graveyard of St John's Church, Calcutta, where it remains today.



## LAUGH A WHILE

For those familiar with William Shakespeare's JULIUS CEASER:

**Julius Caesar and Marcus Brutus are  
at the airport**

Brutus: "Which is our boarding gate Caesar?"

Caesar: "A-2 Brutus"

Brutus: "And what time is the flight Caesar?"

Caesar: "8:02 Brutus"

Brutus: "By the way, I have sandwiches. Do you  
want one Caesar?" Caesar: "Ate two Brutus"

Brutus: "This is an unusual paper size for a ticket.  
What size is it Caesar?" Caesar: "A2 Brutus"

Brutus (Thinking to himself): "This man is really  
getting on my nerves. One of these days I'm going  
to have to kill him"