



# Spectrum



RI District 3291

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President □ Dr. Saktirupa Chakraborty

Secretary □ Ajit Kumar Majumder

Editors □ PP Siddartha Tantia & Priyanka Agarwal

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## Rotary District Conference

A Rotary District Conference (DISCON) is an annual gathering for Rotarians in a specific geographic district, featuring inspirational speakers, fellowship, service project planning, and celebration of achievements, acting as a key event for regional strategy, leadership training, and community impact discussions, with recent examples

Each year, districts are asked to hold a conference for club members so they can learn about what's happening in Rotary and their district and meet other Rotarians in the area. The conference usually lasts one to three days and includes:

- A visit from a president's representative, who gives an update on Rotary International and inspires and motivates participants
- A report on the district, including its successes and challenges
- An official business meeting to discuss and vote on important district matters
- Local and international speakers giving information on topics relevant to district members
- Time to network, reconnect with friends, and find inspiration for continuing service and community leadership

The recent conference of Rotary District 3291 was held for the 2025–26 Rotary year, titled "RAMDHANU," took place from January 9 to January 11, 2026 at the Eastside Pavilion, NICCO Park, in Kolkata, India.

The event was hosted under the leadership of District Governor Dr. Ramendu Homchaudhuri.

Key Attendees: Notable figures included past Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta and Lions International President A.P. Singh, highlighting a collaborative focus between the two service organizations.

Theme & Objectives: The conference emphasized the "Service Above Self" philosophy, focusing on community impact through initiatives like thalassemia awareness, ethical leadership, and global humanitarian values.

Featured Guest: The event featured Manasi Ghosh, a winner of Indian Idol, as a star attraction.

Organizing Club: Rotary Club of Calcutta Sun-city.

The Rotary District 3291 Conference 2026, featured speakers like acclaimed writer Shefali Vaidya, known for her insights on leadership, and other notable figures. Shefali Vaidya is a prominent Indian writer, newspaper columnist, and social media influencer based in Pune, Maharashtra. She is widely known for her commentary on Indian culture, Hindu traditions, and current political affairs.

*Rtn. Purnendu Roychowdhury, Rotary Calcutta delivered his official acceptance speech as the District Governor for 2027-28.*

*Rtn Brotindro Mullick got elected as District Governor designated for year 2028-29.*



### 2025-2026 Lions International President Arvinder Pal Singh shares:

*"Attended the District conference of Rotary District 3291 in Kolkata at the invitation of their past RI President Shekhar Mehta and DG Dr Roychowdhuri. This provided an excellent opportunity to discuss how Lions and Rotary could work together to serve their communities. Our challenges are similar, and our goals are aimed at making the world better than what it has been before. The two local districts shall hopefully be collaborating on programs related to thalassemia: the Lions district at Kolkata has been running a blood transfusion Centre for thalassemia patients, and Rotary district is engaging in awareness programs and testing for thalassemia. This could be a wonderful example of leveraging the core competencies of the two service organizations to multiply the impact of service."*

We meet calendar months' 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays at GPT Group, JC 25, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700098 at 6.00 PM

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**PP Dr. Aruna Tantia, RCSLMK shares:**

*“Two fun filled days with excellent sessions with prolific speakers, including doctors, an ambassador, a child prodigy, the list is endless. Mouthwatering food of one's own choice, evenings saturated by music, ramp show, conversation with friends from all over the district. Very efficiently Thalassaemia awareness message was served by Interactors through songs and poems.*

*To top everything our District Governor Dr Ramendu Homchoudhury and District's first Lady Dr Bandana Homchoudhury were continuously looking after every minute details and conducted the proceedings so efficiently. All Rotarians present were mesmerized by the efficiency of the group of dedicated core committee members and Sergeant at arms.*

*Our club exhibit, though visually and content-wise excellent, missed appropriate placement for larger viewership.*

*There were guest speakers, who were fantastic orator like Mr. Deepak Vohra, a retired Indian diplomat of the Indian Foreign Service who has served as an Indian Ambassador to Armenia, Poland and Sudan. He also served as the technology advisor to former Prime Minister of India PV Narasimha Rao.*

*Dr. S. Chatterjee pediatric surgeon was felicitated Session on Environment went well with Dr. Mina Venkatraman and Yashwant of clean the rivers initiative.*

*Then came prodigy child Rockstar Raul who is a master in AI at and of 16 years.*

*He took the audience through interactive session and taught AI in brief 20 minutes. His talk was something each of us should have listened. Dabbled in AI for 4 years and he has a company of his own, with large FB followers and popular Instagram page. He offers free coaching to everyone on weekends to learn AI.*

*At the end, flag of our District 3291 went flying high.”*



**Other speakers and performers as reported from miscellaneous sources:**

Tajinder Singh (Thalassaemia awareness) A keynote speaker for awareness on Thalassaemia

Gurjeet Singh Sekhon: D-3070, on being Elected as Rotary International Director for 2027-29 Mentioned as a Guest & Keynote Speaker.

Babumon K: Rotary International President's Representative (from District 3211).

Key speakers identified for specific professional and technical tracks include:

Artificial Intelligence: Biswajoy Chatterjee and Satyajit Chakrabarti presented as experts in AI.

Science & Technology: Sanjay Kumar Das, Additional Secretary of Science and Technology for Bengal.

Medicine & Public Health:

Dr. Partha Basu is Head of the Early Detection, Prevention and Infections Branch at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), World Health Organization (WHO), France.

Dr. Ramendu Homchaudhuri, District Governor and orthopedic surgeon, focused on thalassaemia prevention and emergency trauma care.

Jaiprakash Kabra, founder of Mind Movers, Management Consultants on Management & Professional Development.

Economic & Industry Insights: Siddhant Kaul, Managing Director of Nicco Engineering Services Ltd & Honorary Consul General, Republic of Korea, Kolkata.

Media & Communications: Jeena Mitra Banik, communications expert.

Spirituality & Social Service: Swami Kripakaranandaji Maharaj of Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Social Advocacy: Zainab J. Patel, transgender activist, on inclusivity and human rights.

Musical Tribute "Roshnai": A dedicated evening celebrating the centenaries of musical legends Salil Choudhury and Bhupen Hazarika.

Headline Performance: A powerful live set by the folk band Dohar, known for their preservation of North East Indian and Bengali folk traditions.

In-House Talent Showcase: Musical performances by Rotarian leaders, including contributions from Sanghamitra Shah and Ananda Basu.

Opening Ceremony: Traditional lamp-lighting followed by a choreographed dance recital reflecting the conference theme of "Unite for Good."  
District Fellowship Dinner: A concluding night of entertainment that included a DJ set and informal musical segments for networking among delegates

## ROTARY INTERNATIONAL NEWS I Olayinka H. Babalola urges members of Rotary to Create Lasting Impact

*Rotary International president-elect emphasizes effective action and 'embracing the world with open arms'*

By Etelka Lehoczky on January 12, 2026

Rotary International President-elect Olayinka H. Babalola called on members to Create Lasting Impact by making their clubs more welcoming, carrying out impactful projects, and allowing their Rotary experiences to transform them personally.



*2026-27 Rotary International President Olayinka Hakeem Babalola speaks at the opening general session of Rotary's International Assembly, 12 January 2026. He introduced the 2026-27 presidential message, Create Lasting Impact. "As members of Rotary, we share a vision of a better future," he said. "To make this vision a reality, we must acknowledge and unleash the change within ourselves."*

"Rotary has changed us. It has shaped who we are and made us better people," Babalola said at Rotary's International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, USA, on 12 January. "We often talk about changing the world. We talk about ending polio, about building peace. We do not think enough about how Rotary transforms us." Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, described how joining a Rotaract club as a teenager enlarged his perspective beyond the limited, privileged outlook he'd once had. That change in awareness came from observing the lasting impact his club had in the community, particularly from teaching people to read and write.

"As members of Rotary, we share a vision of a better future," he said. "To make this vision a reality, we must acknowledge and unleash the change within ourselves. We must focus not only on outcomes, but on impact."

Change and impact are not the same, he added: "Change is only the beginning. Impact is what endures."

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## Understanding impact

Rotary members have made an impact by expanding early childhood education in Knysna, South Africa, and increasing access to prenatal care in Nigeria, Babalola said. The Rotary Club of Knysna empowered local women to open and manage early childhood education centers.



2025-26 Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo speaks during the opening general session of Rotary's International Assembly, 12 January 2026.

"When you stand in this room, when you serve through Rotary, you share one calling: You are peace builders," he said. "Not peace as the absence of conflict, but peace as opportunity, as dignity, as connection."

"The project has reached thousands of children and families, and it will continue to provide education in those communities for generations," Babalola said. "We can recreate this kind of impact in other parts of the world, and in doing so we can earn the trust and recognition of our neighbors in the communities we serve. And when more communities trust Rotary, more people want to join."

Babalola also described the wide-ranging impact of Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria. The initiative to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates received a US\$2 million Rotary Programs of Scale grant in 2022.

"Before Rotary's intervention, many women avoided prenatal care, which is essential to ensuring a safe birth for both mother and child," he said. "After working with Rotary, systems were put in place to help expecting mothers receive prenatal care. The community was involved. Attendance went up. Mortality went down. That project [will] transform lives across Nigeria for decades."

## Extending a welcome

Babalola urged members to take a more open, welcoming attitude toward newcomers to their clubs. He described how, when he was a Rotaract club member eager to join a Rotary club, the president of the Rotary club treated him with scorn.

"He said, 'What audacity! You cannot just join. You need an invitation,'" Babalola recalled. "I could have walked away. Instead, I said, 'I didn't know a child needed an invitation to enter his parents' home.'"



A flag bearer takes the stage during the opening session flag ceremony at Rotary's International Assembly, 12 January 2026.

While things have changed since that time, Babalola said, they haven't changed enough. Some clubs close themselves off instead of "embracing the world with open arms," he said. Young people aren't necessarily treated with respect, he added, and people with different ideas and backgrounds aren't always made to feel welcome. He urged members to think about how they could better welcome others.



Rotary Foundation Chair-elect Jennifer Jones talks about how giving to the Foundation changes lives at the 2026 International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, USA, on 13 January.

"You never know whose Rotary story might begin — or end — based on the way you make them feel at a meeting or service project," he said.



Ravishankar and Paola Dakoju announce at the 2026 Rotary International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, USA, on 13 January, that they will donate approximately US\$50 million (4.5 billion Indian rupees) to The Rotary Foundation.

Another way members can focus on personal change, he said, is to aim to do better than their best. He urged district leaders to examine their past successes in raising funds, planning projects, and recruiting members. Then, he said, they should challenge themselves to surpass their past triumphs.



*2025-27 Rotary International Director Harriette Verwey, second from right, speaks with Rotary members Elizabeth Roach, Anita Patankar, and Haresh Ramchandani at the International Assembly, 14 January 2026. The panel discussed cultural competency, or the ability for global leaders to work effectively across different cultural backgrounds. Orlando, Florida, USA.*

“When we change ourselves, we change our clubs and districts,” he concluded. “When we change our districts, we change the communities we serve. And when we change our communities, we create lasting impact across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.”

*Photos by Monika Lozinska. © Rotary International*



*Tapas Bhattacharya, Governor Elect, RI District 3291 with Rotary International President 2026-27 Olayinka Hakeem Babalola and his gracious wife Preba at the Rotary's International Assembly 2026 held at Orlando, Florida, USA.*

Happy  
Birthday

Wishing you a day filled with happiness and a year filled with joy. Happy birthday!

### Birthdays of members in January & February

Dr. Ajit Kumar Majumder on Jan 2, 2026  
PP Uma Shankar Agarwal on Jan 9, 2026  
VP Indrakumar Bagri on Jan 10, 2026  
Ashok Kumar Surana on Jan 10, 2026  
PP Dr. Aruna Tantia on Jan 19, 2026  
Shruti Toshniwal on Jan 26, 2026  
Nitesh Toshniwal on Jan 31, 2026  
PE Dr. Bimalendu Sen on February 6, 2026

HAPPY  
Anniversary

Happy anniversary to a truly special couple. Your love is inspiring!

### Wedding Anniversaries of members in January & February

Dr. Deepayan Dey & Amrita Chatterjee on Jan 16  
Sushila & Ashok Kumar Surana on Jan 19, 2026  
Rahul & Meenal Chaudhary on January 29, 2026  
President Dr. Saktirupa & Spouse Dr. Suranjan Chakraborty on February 5, 2026  
PP Kusum Chamaria & Spouse Krishna on February 24, 2026  
Spouse Rani & PP BL Ajitsaria on February 28, 2026

January is Vocational Service Month

February is Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Month

23 February: Rotary's anniversary

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ROTARY STORY OF THE FORTNIGHT I

# Rotary projects around the globe

On January 8, 2026 by Brad Webber  
United States



For more than two decades, young anglers across Nevada have gotten hooked on fishing during a statewide free fishing day. In the city of Sparks, the event tips the scales: On a Saturday last June, more than 2,000 people lined the banks of a marina for the event sponsored by the Rotary Club of Sparks. Rotarians, joined by community volunteers, provided free use of 1,200 poles and offered fishing tips, hot dogs, ice cream, and beverages. The club has sponsored its city's Kids Free Fishing Day since 2002. One of the event's founders, club member Don Welsh, organized an extra day for anglers with disabilities, including his daughter, Rebecca, who had trouble navigating the burgeoning crowds at the main event. Club member Ed Lawson, now the mayor in Sparks, prodded the state Legislature to grant an extra day of license-free fishing for those outings, dubbed Fishing with Rebecca.

**19% Share of Americans who went fishing in 2024 Mexico**



A Mexico City Metro train station pays homage to St. Martha with signs depicting the patron saint of cooks with a water pitcher. Yet for many families in Santa Martha Acatitla, a namesake settlement on the capital's outskirts, potable water is in short supply, a problem exacerbated by an aging water system and prolonged drought. In October, members of the Rotary Club of Ciudad de México distributed water filters to 110 families in the community. Funded at a cost of \$50 each by the Rotary Club of Lenexa in Kansas and a private benefactor, the filter distribution was coordinated by Woodland Public Charity, based near the U.S. club. Mexican Rotarians laud the partnership, which blossomed during relief work from the 2017 earthquake that devastated their country's center. "By providing clean water to families in need, we are not only improving health but also building lasting relationships between our clubs and the communities we serve," says Oscar Rivera Rodríguez, a past president of the Mexico City club and governor-elect of District 4170. "This project reflects the heart of Rotary: partnership, sustainability, and service with tangible impact."

**74 million People in Mexico who lack household access to safe water**

## China



The Rotary Club of Beijing is focusing attention on a condition at birth called hypospadias, in which the opening for urination is lower in boys. In rural China, the need for specialized medical training, financial hardship, and social stigma pose challenges to identifying and treating the condition, which can cause serious health problems if left unaddressed. The club has funded more than 160 corrective surgeries since 2016 at a cost of about \$1,400 each using proceeds from its annual ball, a Rotary Foundation global grant, and other sources. In April the club sent a vocational training team of two Rotarians and two urology surgeons from the Children's Hospital of Hebei Province to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in the U.S. for three weeks of specialized

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instruction. Another 50 surgeries are expected in the near term, says club member Gilbert Van Kerckhove.

### **1 in 1,000 Boys born with hypospadias in China Philippines**



An auto repair program that trains electric vehicle technicians at a Philippine university is getting a boost from the Rotary Club of Iloilo. With the support of a \$32,000 Rotary Foundation global grant, the club provided equipment that is benefiting more than 300 students and faculty members, says Herman Lagon, a club member and college spokesperson. The university also plans to offer community-based training for youths and adults, with a goal of reaching 120 trainees annually through 2028, he says. The club partnered with the Rotary Club of Namweon Central in Korea. "The grant is of great help for the studies of the poor but deserving students, as well as a genuine service to the community," Lagon says.

### **20,000+ Philippine EV sales in 2025 Australia**



Melbourne Rotarians made use of a long-standing partnership with Somali expatriates in the community to improve health care in the African country. With no

in-country club to work with, the participation of the Somali diaspora in Melbourne was integral to the project's success. Abdiwahid Hassan, a member of the Rotary Club of Flemington Kensington, collaborated with fellow Rotarians, Somalia's Health Ministry, and a university in Somalia to fulfill a list of the most-needed items, some of which were donated by hospitals. Funds from the club and District 9800 helped cover the \$18,000 cost of shipping. Nearly \$100,000 worth of medical equipment arrived in Jariban in central Somalia in March, expected to help 40,000 people.

*This story originally appeared in the January 2026 issue of Rotary magazine.*

## **ROTARY STORY OF THE FORTNIGHT II Building a global family through Rotaract**

*Posted on 15 January 2026 by Shoki Wafula,  
a member of Rotaract living in South Africa*



When I arrived in South Africa from Uganda in October of 2023, far from the familiar rhythms of my homeland, I discovered something I didn't expect: a Rotary community ready to welcome me as family. Circumstances had forced me to leave the country of my birth. But the warmth offered by Rotarians and Rotaractors across South Africa, along with many global friends, became the spark for a mission I hold close to my heart.

My journey showed me how transformative genuine community can be. I want every young person, regardless of country, background, or circumstance, to feel that same sense of belonging. Inspired by this support, I set out to build something that would be more than an e-club: a home for those seeking purpose, connection, and opportunity.

I spoke with dozens of emerging leaders, many who had left their previous clubs not because they didn't love Rotary, but because they longed for an environment that felt more like family, valued their identities, and supported their growth. Several of these young leaders brought along friends who felt the same way, expanding our circle and deepening the conversations that shaped our vision.

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## Formed from youth voices

We began to shape a Rotaract club that is international in its membership and is dedicated to belonging, leadership, and peace. Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Auckland, New Zealand, our provisional club is District 9920's first cause-based Rotaract e-club, with a vision centered on international service, peacebuilding, and young leadership development. Our uniqueness lies in how we were formed: shaped by the voices, expectations, and needs of young people who wanted something different from their Rotaract experience.

In addition to our core group, we recruited members who had never been Rotaractors before, but whose fresh insights and expectations are playing an equally important role in shaping the culture and structure of our club. Their perspectives are helping us build a space where both former Rotaractors and first-time members can thrive.

With 19 provisional members, we have a lively, supportive global community that stays connected well beyond meeting hours. We meet three times a month through Google Meet, Zoom, TikTok Live, and X Spaces. We have young leaders across Africa, Asia, North America, and Europe, including China, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Nigeria, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United States. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is not merely a principle for us it is the foundation of our culture.

## Leadership and professional development

While many clubs focus primarily on the third goal of Rotaract – community service – we chose to realign ourselves with Rotaract's original purpose: developing leadership and professional skills in young people. We seek to empower young leaders to grow, lead, and serve more effectively.

By creating a member-centered environment where personal and professional development comes first, we have significantly strengthened member participation, as individuals feel supported, valued, and equipped with the skills they need to thrive. We believe that meaningful service begins with empowered members, and that by investing in ourselves, we become better prepared to extend sustainable, high-impact service to our communities.

In partnership with Mentoring Peace Champions Uganda and several Rotary and Rotaract clubs across Uganda, we supported 5,000 youth leaders during the 2nd Annual Peace Festival from 18–20 September 2025. Our Ugandan members attended physically, representing our entire international family.

## Driving global impact

In Sierra Leone, we continue to nurture emerging leaders through school-based leadership and arts programs led by our member-base there.

We also partnered with Rotary Global Action in the 8th Annual Global Cleanup Initiative, encouraging members to act locally on 1 January and share their stories to inspire environmental action across continents.

Perhaps our most ambitious endeavor is the creation of an investment club, a youth-led financial model where members save US\$10 per share with the long-term vision

of establishing a Youth Empowerment Fund. This fund aims to support young innovators and underserved communities worldwide, demonstrating our belief that Rotaract is a platform where bold ideas can grow into sustainable change.

To strengthen our community and attract new members, we are planning a Rotaract Festival, a celebration of service, global friendship, and youth leadership. This event will honor those who continually create space for others and reinforce the spirit of unity that defines our club.



The project aims to restore the 2 villages coastal areas biodiversity by replanting native 1 lakh mangroves and engaging the community through Skill training workshops on their vital role in climate change mitigation & livelihood generation.

G - 3661

GG 2454166

Website: [Shoring The Shores Application with Community Assessment & Training Plan](#) | [Donorcenter: Shoring the Shores \(Share with Allotment\)](#)



Lead Host Club : Rotary Club of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata, INDIA (D-3291)  
Partner Club : RC Central Calcutta (D-3291) | RC Hooghly (D3291)  
Project Contact (HC) : Dr. Aruna Tantia  
International Host Club : RC Washington DC (D-7620)  
Project Contact (IC) : Dr. Sam Hancock - Washington DC  
International Club Partner : RC Aarau (D-1988)



[arunantantia@gmail.com](mailto:arunantantia@gmail.com)

## We Seek International Partners

✓ RC Washington DC (D7620)	DDF	\$5,000
International District 2	DDF	\$3,000
Host Club District 3291	DDF	\$7,000
✓ RC Washington DC (D7620)	Cash	\$5,100
International Club (IC) 2	Cash	\$10,000
✓ IC RC Aarau (D1988)	Cash	\$1000
Host Club Lead (RC SLM)	Cash	\$13,808
✓ HC Partner (RC Central Calcutta)	Cash	\$5,000
✓ RC Hooghly	Cash	\$1,500
✓ E Club of District 7210	Cash	\$1,000



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