



## Bandhavya: Empowering Special Children Through Sport and Confidence

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ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಮಹೋತ್ಸವ-2026  
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**Baandhavya**  
2026  
Sports Event for Differently Abled...

Every year, the Rotary Club of Mysore Midtown brings to life one of its most inspiring and heart-touching community initiatives — Bandhavya, a flagship athletics and cultural event designed for specially-abled children. Conceptualised as a district-level Olympics-style meet, Bandhavya goes beyond sports to nurture confidence, resilience and camaraderie among children with diverse abilities. Origins and Purpose.

Bandhavya — the name itself means bonding — was first launched over a decade ago by Rotary Mysore Midtown as an annual celebration of inclusivity and empowerment for children with intellectual and physical challenges. What began as a modest athletic gathering has evolved into a much-anticipated multi-dimensional event that draws participants from across Mysuru and neighbouring regions.

The idea is simple yet profound: create a platform where children with special needs can compete in a supportive, structured, yet joyful environment,



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**Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju**

Chief Guest, Baandhavya 2026

Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju is a distinguished Indian philanthropist and entrepreneur with diverse interests spanning real estate, corporate and school transportation, and social enterprise initiatives. He is associated with Happiness in Transit, a transport solutions company, and is an investor in Fish Mongers LLP, an initiative aimed at uplifting marginalized fishing communities. A committed Rotarian, he served as President of the Rotary Club of Bangalore Orchards during 2018–19 and is currently a member of the Rotary Club of Bangalore under Rotary International District 3192 (formerly District 3190). In 2018, he made history by announcing a landmark contribution of INR 100 Crores (USD 14.7 Million) to The Rotary Foundation — the largest single contribution ever announced by an Indian national and the second largest globally after the contribution by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Professionally, he is the Co-Founder and Managing Director of Hara Housing & Land Development Company, a Bengaluru-based real estate development firm. Born in Bengaluru in 1953 to Kamesh Dakoju and Indira Kamesh, he is the sixth of seven siblings. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree along with a Diploma in Business Administration and Marketing Management. He is married to Paola Ravishankar, and they are blessed with two daughters, Ektaa and Samta.

### Philanthropic Contributions

Over the years, Rtn. Ravishankar has dedicated himself to community development, education, care for orphans and senior citizens, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and lake rejuvenation. His

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# Baandhavya 2026

## Sports Event for Differently Abled...

much like the Special Olympics. By organising Bandhavya, Rotary aims to encourage physical fitness, teamwork, self-confidence and social interaction among all participants

### A Festival of Sport and Joy

Bandhavya typically spans one or two days and features a series of athletic and recreational activities tailored for different ability groups. Running races, long jumps, shot-put throws, tennis ball throw and team events like bocce are common fixtures, giving every child a chance to shine, regardless of their skill level. Participants are often divided into Higher Ability and Lower Ability categories to ensure fair competition and to celebrate achievements at every level. Medals, trophies, certificates and awards for special categories such as Best Marching Team and Best Disciplined Team add to the excitement and sense of accomplishment for the children.

More than a sports meet, Bandhavya includes vibrant march-pasts, cultural programmes and prize ceremonies that involve parents, caregivers, educators and Rotary volunteers — turning the event into a festive celebration of diversity and inclusion.

### Impact Beyond the Track

One of the most powerful aspects of Bandhavya is its ripple effect on the greater community. For many families, this event is a season of anticipation and preparation — an opportunity to recognise and showcase the hidden potential of their children. Teachers and special educators work closely with participants in the weeks leading up to Bandhavya, fostering teamwork, discipline and self-belief.

Distinguished guests such as local leaders, para-athletes and advocates for persons with disabilities are often invited to inaugurate the event, share inspiring messages and interact with participants, further enriching the experience.

### Celebrating Ability, Creating Equal Opportunities

In every edition, Bandhavya reaffirms Rotary Mysore Midtown's commitment to Service Above Self — a core Rotary motto that translates into tangible support for under represented and underserved communities. Through Bandhavya, Rotary not only provides a stage for athletic excellence but also champions dignity, self-esteem and active participation for specially-abled children.

As communities continue to embrace inclusivity and equal opportunity, events like Bandhavya stand as powerful examples of what can be achieved when organisations, families and volunteers unite with purpose and compassion.



## Chief Guest of the Day

work extends across Karnataka and the North-Eastern states, particularly Manipur, with further initiatives planned in Assam.

Through the Paola Dakoju Ravishankar Foundation, several impactful projects have been undertaken:

- Construction of a 77,500-litre water storage tank at Ijorong, Manipur.
- Establishment of the Lyzon Friendship School in Khomunnom Village, Churachandpur District, Manipur, serving 350 students.
- Development of the Sunbird Ravishankar Farming Knowledge Centre in partnership with Sunbird Trust at Ijorong, Manipur.
- Reconstruction of a Government School at Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru — transforming a dilapidated structure into a modern 20,000 sq. ft. campus accommodating 750–800 students, with the support of Rotary Bangalore Orchards.
- Establishment of the “Dakoju Senior Citizen Home” in 2016 with a contribution of INR 4 Crores, and support for another senior citizen facility, “Chaitanya,” through Rotary Bangalore Orchards.
- Leadership of the RBO Happy Schools Project, which adopted and transformed 128 rural schools in Kolar District and other remote areas of Karnataka — exceeding the original target of 125 schools. The initiative benefits approximately 8,000–10,000 students annually through infrastructure upgrades, sanitation facilities, RO water systems, libraries, playground equipment, and tree plantation drives.
- Initiation of “Rotary Koti-Nati,” an ambitious environmental movement aimed at restoring India's green cover by planting 10 million trees. Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju's life exemplifies the Rotary ideal of “Service Above Self,” combining entrepreneurial success with sustained and transformative philanthropy.

## Rotary Sainik Desharathna Award



On 25th February, the **Rotary Sainik Desh Rathna Award** ceremony was held amidst great enthusiasm and dignity. The hall was filled to capacity, and what stood out even more than the attendance was the rapt attention and deep respect shown by the audience throughout the programme.

The award was conferred upon **Major Bharath Yogendra**, a distinguished officer of the Indian Army. His address was truly awe-inspiring, delivered straight from the heart, and received with a well-deserved standing ovation. Reflecting on his remarkable journey in uniform, he shared powerful life lessons that resonated with everyone present.

“Look back to learn, but always march forward,” he said, emphasizing that setbacks should never be attributed to fate. Instead, one must accept responsibility and move ahead with renewed determination. For him, service to the Nation and to the men in his troop always takes precedence over personal interest. He underlined that resilience is the defining quality of an Army officer — the ability to regain strength and composure even in the most challenging circumstances.

Major Bharath also reminded the audience that hard work inevitably bears fruit. Though he once

missed securing the top rank, his perseverance and courage eventually earned him recognition and honour. He firmly believes that success is never individual, but always the triumph of the entire team.

The Chief Guest for the occasion, Air Commodore R. N. Jayasimha of the Indian Air Force, delivered a motivating address. He highlighted the often-unseen sacrifices of the parents of defence personnel, who endure long separations from their children with quiet strength and dignity. He also expressed his appreciation for the impeccable salute accorded to welcome the dignitaries, stating that it reflected exceptional discipline and respect.

He also mentioned that religion has no place in the armed forces and no one asks which religion one belongs to. It is only at the time of unforeseen circumstances like death of a person they ask if the body needs to be buried or cremated. He drew a meaningful parallel between the motto of Rotary and that of the Defence Services — **Service Above Self**. Both institutions are rooted in the spirit of selfless service to the nation and humanity. He reminded Rotarians that each of us has a responsibility not only towards our families, but also towards the Nation.

It was refreshing to hear MC of the day Rtn Bhanu who in his inimitable style briefed the gathering on the different forms of Bharat comparing them to our awardee Major Bharat.

Rtn Abhilash introduced the chief guest & the recipient of the Desh Ratna Rotary award Major Bharat Yogendra, Dr Prahlad proposed the vote of thanks.

Overall, the **Rotary Sainik Desh Rathna Award** ceremony was a deeply meaningful and inspiring event, leaving the audience motivated and proud of the brave men and women who serve our country.

*-Rtn Sunanda*



## Next Week in Midtown - Business Meet

11th March 6.30 pm - RCL Hall



**Rtn. Francesco Arezzo**  
President - Rotary International



**Rtn. Ramkrishna P K**  
District Governor RI-3181



**Rtn. Rakesh Babu K L**  
President 2025-26



**Rtn. Bhaskar Sainik**  
Hon. Secretary 2025-26



**Rtn. Sulaiman Sait**  
Editor 2025-26