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## NEXT MEETING

Friday

8<sup>th</sup> November 2024

at 7.30 PM

at Hotel Casino

**Diwali Dinner Meeting**



BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF COCHIN

# THE COCHIN ROTARIAN

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## KICKSTARTING A FOOTBALL REVOLUTION: THE BIRTH OF SUPER LEAGUE KERALA



On a vibrant evening at the Rotary Club of Cochin, Rtn. Navas Meeran captivated the audience with the compelling story behind the creation of Super League Kerala (SLK). He shared his vision, the motivations that sparked the league's formation, and the significant impact it promises to have on Kerala's football landscape. A fervent supporter of the sport, Mr. Meeran's passion for football and its positive influence on society shone throughout his presentation.

### Football in India: An Untapped Goldmine

Mr. Meeran opened by highlighting the disparity between India's film industry and its sports sector, particularly football. In the United States, sports contribute nearly 1% of GDP—about \$700 billion, surpassing even Hollywood's economic footprint. Meanwhile, Indian sports contribute a mere fraction of this potential, and football is yet to make a substantial economic impact, despite having a massive viewership. Mr. Meeran emphasized that while the Indian film industry com-

mands \$238 billion, football's contribution to the GDP hovers around just \$25-30 billion.

### Changing Perspectives: A Personal Journey

His personal journey in football began with a challenge—revitalizing youth sports in schools, often sidelined in favor of academic priorities. When he advocated for holistic growth among students, many parents, initially keen on high academic scores, withdrew their children. Yet, this did not deter him. His early efforts led him to the presidency of the Idukki Football Association, where he pioneered a focus on grassroots development.

Realizing that mere titles were insufficient, he introduced a network of football academies in Idukki. One success story is Satchu Sibi, who rose from modest beginnings to earn a professional contract worth 35 lakhs with Chennaiyin FC. Such milestones, according to Mr. Meeran, are not just business achievements but serve as impactful social entrepreneurship.

### Super League Kerala: Vision and Growth

The creation of SLK was driven by a long-term vision to provide a structured pathway for young talents. Mr. Meeran's leadership spearheaded the formation of youth-centric tournaments like the Chakolas Trophy, which increased youth match experience from

an average of 8 to nearly 24 matches annually. Collaborations with international academies, including Iniesta's academy from Spain, were established to scout and nurture talent. This scouting initiative has already reached over 5,000 young players.



The numbers speak volumes. In its inaugural season, SLK hosted over 800 matches, with an ambitious goal to expand to 2,100 matches per year. Mr. Meeran aims to see 25% of Indian Super League (ISL) players hail from Kerala, an aspiration well within reach given the state's footballing pedigree.

### **Building a Football Ecosystem: The Need for Infrastructure**

Mr. Meeran's presentation underscored the need for robust infrastructure to sustain Kerala's footballing ambitions. Traditional multi-purpose stadiums, which force spectators to sit far from the action, need to be replaced with

purpose-built facilities. Smaller, dedicated football stadiums with a capacity of 15,000 to 20,000, he believes, can provide a better spectator experience and cultivate a stronger fan base. Modern amenities—clean restrooms, food courts, and safe, family-friendly environments—are key to reviving stadium attendance. **Economic Impact: Beyond the Field**

Mr. Meeran is confident that Kerala's sports economy will flourish similarly to how tourism transformed the state's economic landscape. His vision extends beyond football to include sports like basketball, gymnastics, and table tennis, aiming to engage youth and divert them from substance use through athletic opportunities.

He acknowledged the challenges, from attracting investors willing to commit 6 crore per team to changing the cultural mindset toward sports. Yet, SLK's first season was a promising start, with players' salaries witnessing a significant increase—from 25,000-40,000 rupees to upwards of 1.5-2.5 lakh rupees per month.

### **Challenges and Opportunities Ahead**

The future of Kerala football relies not only on financial investment but also on a shift in societal attitudes. Mr. Meeran advocates for

early childhood exposure to sports, particularly gymnastics, which builds a strong foundation for any athletic career. He also supports year-round player contracts to foster loyalty and build a lasting fan base.

With a comprehensive sports governance bill on the horizon, Mr. Meeran is optimistic about the reforms in sports administration, potentially minimizing legal disputes and fostering a more structured development pipeline.

### **A Community-Centric Approach**

Mr. Meeran ended his address with a call for collective effort, urging support from local businesses, schools, and families to back SLK's mission. He sees this initiative as a way not only to nurture local talent but also to inspire the next generation, ensuring Kerala's future football stars are not just visible on the national stage but also internationally.

As SLK continues to grow, Mr. Meeran's bold vision for a football revolution in Kerala offers a glimpse into a brighter future, where sports are a powerful catalyst for social change and economic development.

The Rotary Club of Cochin applauds his dedication and looks forward to the continued success of SLK, anticipating how it will shape the sporting culture in Kerala for years to come.

## **COLOURING THE CANVAS OF YOUNG MINDS: ROTARY CLUB OF COCHIN AND KERALA FINE ARTS SOCIETY HOST ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PAINTING COMPETITION**

Colour breathes life into human expression, vividly depicting the kaleidoscope of human emotions and illuminating the myriad meanings of life. Art, in particular, serves as a powerful medium for individuals of all ages to delve into

their inner thoughts and articulate them through colour, line, and texture. For children, the benefits of drawing and painting go beyond visual expression; they engage fine motor skills, boost hand-eye coordination, and foster both creativity

and critical thinking. Through these activities, children learn to translate what they observe into unique creations, nurturing emotional intelligence and self-esteem along the way.

In keeping with this spirit, the





Rotary Club of Cochin, in collaboration with the Kerala Fine Arts Society, has been conducting an annual painting competition for school children for several years. This year's competition, held at the Kerala Fine Arts Hall on Sunday, October 27, saw an overwhelming response, with 320 children from various age groups participating in the event. The young artists were categorized into three groups: up to Class 3, Classes 4 to 7, and Classes 8 to 10, allowing them to compete with peers at similar developmental stages.

The event commenced with an inspiring inaugural function chaired by Mr. G. Gopinath, President of the Kerala Fine Arts Society, alongside Ms. Michaelle Niaz, Vice President of the Rotary Club of Cochin, and other dignitaries, as well as the children's parents and guardians. Celebrated artist Mr. O.C. Martin inaugurated the event in a unique and enchanting way, playing soulful tunes on the flute and inviting the



children to sing along, setting a joyous tone for the competition.

Over the next two hours, the children channeled their creativity, producing remarkable paintings that vividly captured a wide array of themes. From vibrant colours to thoughtful compositions, the young participants displayed a range of skills, experimenting with hues, shapes, and textures to bring their visions to life. Their enthusiasm and dedication were truly inspiring, with each brushstroke reflecting the immense potential within these young minds.

The Rotary Club of Cochin and the Kerala Fine Arts Society rec-

ognized the tremendous effort each child put into their work. Apart from cash awards for the winners, runners-up, and third-place holders in each category, all participants will receive Certificates of Participation, acknowledging their creativity and hard work. The awards ceremony is set to take place on November 23 at the Kerala Fine Arts Hall, where the winning artworks will be show-

cased, celebrating the talent of these budding artists.

This annual event serves not only as a platform for artistic expression but also as an opportunity for children to think beyond conventional boundaries, explore their creative potential, and communicate their inner worlds through art. Rotary Club of Cochin and Kerala Fine Arts Society remain committed to nurturing young talent, reinforcing their belief in the transformative power of art in shaping young minds and fostering a brighter, more colourful future for the next generation.

**by Rtn. PP V Adm M.P.  
Muralidharan**

## SEATBELT SAFETY: WHY BACK SEAT PASSENGERS MUST BUCKLE UP

In recent years, road safety has become a crucial topic of discussion, given the rise in vehicle-related accidents and injuries. A significant part of this conversation focuses on the importance of seatbelt usage. While most of us are accustomed to

fastening our seatbelts in the front seat, the necessity for back seat passengers to buckle up often goes unnoticed or is neglected. However, seatbelt safety for back seat passengers is equally vital. Here's why it's imperative for everyone, no matter

where they sit in the car, to use a seatbelt.

**The Misconception: Back Seat = Safer**

One of the most common misconceptions is that the back seat is

## Seatbelt Safety...

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automatically safer than the front. While modern cars have safety features like airbags and crumple zones, they are not foolproof. In a collision, back seat passengers who are not wearing seatbelts are at a higher risk of severe injury or death.



Studies show that unbelted back seat passengers are often thrown forward during a crash, colliding with the front seats or dashboard, putting both themselves and the front seat occupants at risk. A study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) revealed that unbelted rear passengers are **8 times more likely to be seriously injured or killed in a crash** compared to those who are securely belted.

### The Domino Effect: Impact on Other Passengers

An unrestrained back seat passenger can become a deadly projectile during a collision. The force of an impact can turn them into a human missile, causing severe injuries to themselves and others in the car. This phenomenon is known as the “domino effect” in car crashes.

### Legal Requirements: More Countries Are Making Seatbelt Use Mandatory

Many countries have realized the risks associated with unbelted back seat passengers, leading to stricter regulations. In India, for example, seatbelt use for back seat passengers is legally mandatory, but enforcement remains a challenge. Similar rules exist in Europe and the United States, where back seat seatbelt usage can lead to fines for non-compliance.

Laws are in place for a reason. Wearing a seatbelt isn't just a matter of personal safety; it's a legal requirement that saves lives. Data from the **World Health Organization (WHO)** indicates that seatbelts reduce the risk of death among drivers and front-seat occupants by **45-50%**, and for back seat passengers by **25-75%**.

### Technology Is Not a Substitute for Seatbelts

Modern cars come with advanced safety features like airbags, lane assist, and collision warning systems. While these technologies enhance safety, they are designed to work in conjunction with seatbelts, not as

a replacement. In fact, many airbag systems are optimized for belted passengers, meaning airbags might not deploy correctly for an unbelted occupant, increasing the risk of injury.

### Simple Steps to Enhance Back Seat Safety

Promoting seatbelt use among back seat passengers is a simple yet effective way to reduce injuries in accidents. Here are a few steps to ensure safety:

- **Lead by Example:** Always buckle up, whether you are driving or seated in the back. Children and young passengers often imitate adult behaviour.
- **Education:** Raise awareness among family and friends about the importance of wearing seatbelts in all seats.
- **Check Compliance:** Before starting your journey, make it a habit to ensure everyone in the vehicle is buckled up.
- **Install Reminders:** Modern cars often have seatbelt reminder systems. Utilize them to ensure back seat passengers are strapped in.

### The Human Cost: Real-Life Stories of Unbuckled Back Seat Passengers

Stories of accidents involving unbelted back seat passengers often serve as stark reminders of the risks. For instance, in many severe car accidents, back seat passengers who weren't wearing seatbelts were found to have suffered severe trauma, head injuries, or even fatal consequences—injuries that could have been avoided with a simple click of the seatbelt. These tragic incidents underscore the importance of spreading awareness about seatbelt safety beyond the front seat.

### A Simple Action Saves Lives

In the end, buckling up is one of the easiest and most effective ways to ensure safety while driving or riding in a car. Back seat passengers must recognize that they are not invincible and are just as vulnerable as those in the front. Wearing a seatbelt can be the difference between life and death during a crash. It's not just a good habit, it's a necessity. The next time you get into a car—regardless of where you sit—remember that fastening your seatbelt is not just a precaution for yourself but also a duty to protect everyone else in the vehicle.

by Rtn. Prathik Nayar



Rtn. K.J. Jose

03 Nov

Rtn. Dr. George Cherady

05 Nov