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23RD AUGUST 1937  
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## NEXT MEETING

Wednesday  
26<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
at 07.00 PM  
at Rotary Balbhavan



BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF COCHIN

Volume 89, Issue 32, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025

# THE COCHIN ROTARIAN

## ROTARY TECH SKILLS INITIATIVE: A PROPOSAL FOR BRIDGING THE SKILL GAP

**A**t a recent meeting of the Rotary Club of Cochin, Rtn. John Chiramel presented a proposal for the Rotary Tech Skills Initiative (RTSI), a potential project aimed at equipping young students with technical skills relevant to the booming AI and software industry. The proposal is designed to address the challenges of unemployment among Kerala's youth, particularly those who, despite completing their education, struggle to secure meaningful employment. RTSI seeks to create a structured training program that would teach C++ and Python programming—critical languages for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and software development—to students who have passed the 12th standard with a minimum of 75% marks.

The concept behind RTSI is rooted in the idea of empowerment through skill-building, aligning with Rotary's philosophy of long-term, sustainable impact rather than short-term aid. Under the proposal, the program would be conducted in an outsourced training facility, delivered by certified industry professionals, and structured over four months per batch. The plan envisions two cohorts per year, with each batch consisting of 30 students, making a total of 60 students annually. The training would also include a soft skills component to enhance workplace readiness, covering communication, professional

etiquette, and confidence-building exercises.

While the placement of trained students is not guaranteed, discussions with leading tech companies such as IBM and Infosys indicate that there is an interest in hiring individuals with strong AI-related coding skills, even if they do not hold a formal degree. The proposal suggests an active engagement with potential employers throughout the training process, inviting them to observe sessions and assess students' readiness for recruitment.

A key consideration in the discussion was funding and sustainability. The proposed cost per student is ₹25,000, covering tuition, faculty, materials, and travel expenses. With a batch of 60 students annually, the estimated total cost would be ₹15–20 lakhs, inclusive of training, infrastructure rental, and the soft skills module. To ensure accessibility for deserving students, the proposal suggests corporate sponsorships and CSR contributions as primary funding sources. While there was initial debate over whether students should partially contribute to the cost, the general sentiment leaned toward full sponsorship, in keeping with Rotary's service philosophy.

One of the key challenges identified was securing a suitable training venue. While Bal Bhavan was initially consid-

ered, it was deemed unsuitable due to infrastructure constraints. The discussion included exploring government or private venues, particularly in Kalamassery or Panampilly Nagar, to ensure accessibility for students. The industries minister has expressed interest in supporting such an initiative, and further discussions on securing a location are expected after the Invest Kerala event later this month.

While the proposal is still in its discussion phase, there was enthu-

siasm among members about its potential impact. The Rotary Club of Cochin is evaluating the feasibility of RTSI, including venue finalization, sponsorship opportunities, and employer partnerships, before deciding on its implementation. If approved, the first batch could tentatively launch by April 2025, post-Vishu, giving the organizing team sufficient time to finalize logistics.

As discussions continue, Rotary members and corporate stakeholders are encouraged to share their inputs, explore funding opportunities, and engage in refining the proposal.

Should RTSI materialize, it could serve as a pilot project with the potential for scalability and replication in the years to come. The Club will continue to assess the project's feasibility before making any commitments, ensuring that it aligns with Rotary's goals of sustainable community impact.

For those interested in contributing ideas, sponsorships, or partnerships, please reach out to Rtn. John Chiramel. The coming months will be crucial in determining whether this proposal can be developed into a fully-fledged Rotary initiative.

## ROTARY'S RESPONSE TO THE U.S.'S PLAN TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WHO, USAID FUNDING FREEZE

Rotary notes the recent announcement that the United States intends to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO), a partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). We remain resolute in our mission to eradicate polio. As a founding partner of the GPEI, Rotary has for decades worked closely with all the GPEI partners, the U.S. government, and other governments to end polio worldwide. This effort has reduced the number of children paralyzed by polio by 99.9% since 1988. The global effort to eradicate polio has innovated many times over the years to come close to protecting every last child. Although this decision creates new challenges, Rotary remains dedicated to ensuring that every child is protected from this preventable disease. We are confident that the GPEI will continue to adapt, to innovate, and to implement

effective strategies to keep polio vaccines available for every child in the United States and around the world, especially those in the most challenging and remote regions. The most important decisions leading to a polio-free world are made every day by parents who present their children for vaccination.

We remain committed to working with all GPEI partners to fulfill the promise of a polio-free world. Together, we have ended smallpox, and together, we can ensure that polio becomes the second human disease to be eradicated from the planet.

### Rotary, USAID projects

Rotary has collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) since 2009 on different types of programs. Our current programmatic efforts and communications with USAID

personnel and leadership are on hold due to the stop-work order issued by USAID. Rotary International has already notified members whose projects are directly impacted by this order and is working to continue to support them in their impactful work.

We are navigating the implications of the recent stop-work order issued for Hearts of Europe projects that are part of a partnership with USAID. All projects that are currently in an implementation phase have been notified and given information about what actions need to be taken while the stop-work order is in effect. We are working directly with those projects that are not yet being implemented to determine alternative funding for their important work.

Source: <https://www.rotary.org/en/rotary-response-us-withdraw-who>

## RI PRESIDENT-ELECT

**M**ário César Martins de Camargo is a business consultant to the printing industry and former director of Gráfica Bandeirantes, a printing company founded by his father. Under de Camargo's leadership, the company expanded to be a supplier of printed material for clients in Brazil and elsewhere in South America.

De Camargo attended military school and graduated from a secondary school in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, during a Rotary Youth Exchange program. He had a year-long internship at MAN Roland, a printing press manufacturer in Offenbach, Germany, before he earned his undergraduate degree at the Fundação Getúlio Vargas' São Paulo School of Business Administration. He also received his law degree from the Faculty of Law of São Bernardo do Campo.

He has led numerous professional associations, including as president of the Brazilian Association of Graphic Technology and ABIGRAF, the Brazilian Printing Industry Association. He was also delegate director of the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP) in the National Confederation of Industry, vice president of FIESP, and vice president of the

Latin American Confederation of the Printing Industry. He received the Printing Leader of the Americas award from the Printing Association of Florida and the Global Presidential Print Award from NPES, the Association for Suppliers of Printing, Publishing, and Converting Technologies.

De Camargo joined Rotary in 1980 at age 23. A past director and trustee, he will be the fourth RI president from Brazil. He has volunteered for numerous roles including RI learning facilitator, zone coordinator for the Avoidable Blindness Task Force, Latin American coordinator for the Health Concerns Task Force, RI president's representative, and Council on Legislation representative. He has also served on committees including the RI Membership Growth Committee, The Rotary Foundation Programs Finance Committee, and the International PolioPlus Committee.

De Camargo says he is continually impressed by Rotary's global reach. "With Service Above Self, Rotary has created a unique global identity that is unlike any other I know," he says. "I think we all need to remember that we belong to an organization that opens up the world to us."



During the start of the COVID pandemic in 2020, de Camargo took on two projects: studying for (and passing) the bar exam — 38 years after attending law school — and learning Italian. He also enjoys reading history and biography books and appreciating good wine.

De Camargo has received The Rotary Foundation's Distinguished Service Award. He and his wife, Denise, are Major Donors and Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation.

Source: <https://my.rotary.org/en/news-media/office-president/ri-president-elect>

**Mário César Martins de Camargo**

*President-elect 2024-25  
Rotary Club de Santo André  
São Paulo, Brazil*

**A**t the Rotary Athletic Meet, Annettes of Rtn. Thomas Varghese participated in various events and won the following medals.

Samaara - gold in 100m, 200m and long jump.

Miriyam - gold in 50m and

Satvika - gold in 50m n standing broad jump, bronze in ball throw.





At the recently held Rotary District 3201 conference in Coimbatore, Imm Past President Prakash Aswani and the club was recognised for RY 2023-24 with a certificate of appreciation for 100% club members contribution to the TRF Annual Fund as well as a Silver Club award for TRF Annual Program Fund (APF) challenge for that year. Rtn PP Shweta S Vasudevan accepted the award and certificate on behalf of the club.

