THE GATEWAY

UNITE FOR GOOD

Bulletin of the Rotary Club of Bombay

DISTRICT 3141
Celebrating 96 Years of Service

VOLUME 67 ISSUE NO. 10 SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

This Tuesday, Sept 2nd

A fireside chat between Milind Deora and Cyrus Broacha on India at the Crossroads of Culture & Power

UPCOMING Sept 9th, Tuesday Meeting



Mr. Bhushan Gagrani Municipal Commissioner will address the Club on Vision for Mumbai City.

September 11th

Opening reception of a unique body of new works by **Madhvi Parekh**.

September 18th

Decoding Dharma - unravelling how Indian epics are relevant even today, by author and myth-buster **Ms. Ami Ganatra**.

DEAR MEMBERS,

Tomorrow's meeting will proceed as scheduled. All roads are open except those around Azad Maidan & CSMT.

Please note: the entrance to the hotel will be from the back street / Mereweather Road. We have also arranged with Taj valet services to facilitate your entry and exit.

In the spirit of the true Mumbaikar who never sleeps, the show must go on. Our speakers have confirmed their commitment to be with us



Ashish Hemrajani, Founder and CEO, BookMyShow, on building a sustainable business

Thank you for having me. A lot of people ask me, how did BookMyShow happen? It happened because of smoking and drinking. I don't smoke; I like a cigar once in a while, but Hindustan Thompson Associates back in '97 was a smoking office. Everybody around me smoked. It was the culture in advertising – smoking and having tea. And the secondary smoke got to me, so I wanted to take a holiday. I used to make a really big salary of Rs. 6000 a month at that time, so I saved up some money over 2 years and decided to take a little break.

Al was Big Al not just in size, but even his position. So Al was the client servicing director, 10 years my senior in MBA. And I went there as a flunky. We were all, 'ohh, we made it in life'. And we got a paycheck of 6000 bucks, which at that time meant the world. So I collected 60,000 bucks over 2 years and took a trip to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. I said I'm going to go for a two-week holiday. It turned out to be 6 weeks. I texted my boss at that time, a dear friend of ours, and I said I'm not coming back.

And the reason was that I was backpacking

from Joburg to Cape Town, and under a big tree which is at Storms River Valley, I heard a radio commercial trying to sell rugby tickets online.

In India – and a lot of you seem to be my vintage and older than me - you'll remember the days of Sterling cinema, Regal, Eros, black marketeers, the paan ka dukan outside would be selling tickets, there was asymmetry and information. There was no democratisation of information. There was a structural hole. You went there, you'd see pigeon holes. And you would have advance counters and current counters and within that there was a segregation of dress circle, balcony and stall. And everybody thought it was normal and you'd have this paan chewing guy at the back in a dark room with this pigeon hole, and you'd be given a pink slip or a green slip or a vellow slip. And there was some weird ticket serial number. And there were three counterfoils. There was an audit counterfoil, a patron counterfoil and a doorkeeper counterfoil and you've got 2.



People say it must have been like Buddha getting enlightenment. I say building a business in India is the stupidest thing you can do. Either the bravest thing or the most stupid thing you can do.

And he tore one and he kept it with himself. By the way, the law hasn't been changed till today which, is the gauge of the paper, the gauge of the staple pin, the serial number, still stays. And the audit counterfoil still needs to be kept at the cinema in their strong room for 6 months and burnt because there were no shredders in 1956 in the purview of an entertainment tax collector.

There's a gentleman, a client of mine, Mr. Dhanji Sidhwa who used to own Regal Cinema in the 1990s, he was in his late 70's. The guy was so ***** *** because the border wall of his cinema was next to a petrol station and you cannot light a fire within 500 metres and the law in the cinema regulation tag told you to burn it in the purview of an officer. For the last 50 years, he had counterfoils which he couldn't burn, which he was keeping in his basement. I remember when Mr. Dhanji started going to the Mantralaya and dumping it outside, and that's when they changed the law. There are some archaic laws in India, and sometimes you have to treat these laws – I'm not telling you that you should do that in your business, but sometimes there is no reasoning all of this, and so I keep telling entrepreneurs that treat some of these laws, within reasonable limits, like how you would treat your marriage: "Always ask for forgiveness. Don't ask for permission. Keep going ahead and things will follow up." The 1956 Act hadn't been changed, the gauge of the paper, you could not do automated and digital tickets. You could not have a roll because the entertainment tax collector had to stamp each of those counterfoils.

And when I was in South Africa, I heard this radio commercial telling me that you can buy tickets online. You don't need to stand in a queue. You come to the stadium and you can bypass the line because you had a QR code and if you use the coupon, you get a 10% off on food and beverage and merchandise. I'm like... we were living in a jungle, getting *lathi*-charged by the cops, standing outside Wankhede Stadium overnight, where they would put up bamboo scaffolding on the side and then in the morning, when

you reached the box office, you were told there were no tickets. it's almost like going to Starbucks and saying, listen, I want to pay for my coffee and the guy hits you on your knuckles and says I don't want the money. That is how it was when we were growing up. And we were OK with it. It was an eye-opener for me.

I continued on my holiday and I reached Cape Town a few weeks later. They have a region called the Stellenbosch, which is the wine growing region of South Africa. And in any wine growing region, they give you free tasting of wine. Now my surname is a big giveaway, I'm a Sindhi. I love free stuff, Anything given free in life is valued. And I'm going there and everybody is looking at this wine and putting it through their teeth talking about the viscosity, the oil, the notes. I only know musical notes, I don't know about people here, and then they were spitting it all out. I'm like this is free stuff, so I had 25 glasses of free tasting wine between 11:00 in the morning and 3:00 in the afternoon. I woke up the next day at a youth hostel on a bunk that wasn't mine and I had sent the most expensive text message of my life. The actual text message at that time was Rs. 130. It was also metaphorically the most expensive or the most stupid. In a drunken state, I told my boss that I'm taking another four weeks. She said, don't come back. And that's how bookmyshow happened.



ECO-FRIENDLY GANESH CHATURTHI CELEBRATED AT BY GK MARG

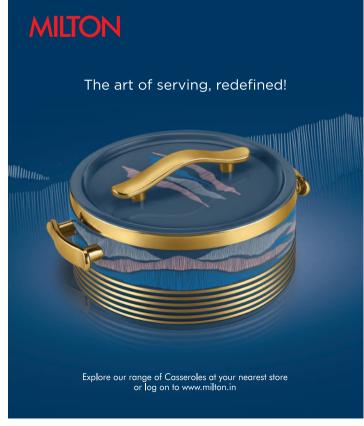
Ganesh Chaturthi at the GK Marg centre of Bhavishya Yaan was marked by creativity, devotion, and an important lesson in sustainability. The Primary School children came together to celebrate the festival in a way that honoured both tradition and the environment.

Through engaging storytelling, the young learners discovered the symbolic meaning behind Lord Ganesha's form — his large ears reminding us to listen, his small eyes to stay focused, and his trunk to remain flexible and adaptable. These timeless teachings were woven into the day's celebrations, giving the children a deeper understanding of the values embedded in the festival.

Equally emphasised was the importance of celebrating in an eco-friendly manner. The session explained how plaster-of-paris idols pollute rivers and harm aquatic life, while clay or natural idols protect the environment. The children were quick to grasp the need for change, pledging to carry this message into their homes and neighbourhoods.

To express their learning, the students created imaginative "leaf Ganeshas" — vibrant artworks that combined artistry with awareness. The celebration not only nurtured cultural pride but also sowed the seeds of responsibility, inspiring the children to become champions of sustainable traditions for the future.







TUESDAY MEETINGS AT ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY



IPP Satyan Israni, Rtn. Albert Almeida, Rtn. Rina Deora & Rtn. Ptn. Malti Jain with guest speaker Ashish Hemrajani



PE Manish Reshamwala



President Bimal Mehta with PP Vineet Bhatnagar



Rtn. Ptn. Vandana Kakar, Rtn. Rina Deora, Rtn. Farhat Jamal, and Rtn. Charu Agrawal & Rtn. Ptn. Malti Jain with guest speaker Ashish Hemrajani



PP Nirav Shah, Rtn. Ghanshyam Sheth & President Bimal Mehta





Rtn. Ghanshyam Sheth, Rtn. Dr. Aashish Contractor, Hon. Secy. Farhat Jamal, Trustee & PDG Sandip Agarwalla, President Bimal Mehta, Rtn. Albert Almeida & Rtn. Rina Deora with guest speaker Ashish Hemrajani



Rtn. Uday Sanghani & Rtn. Puneet Wadhwa with guest speaker Ashish Hemrajani



Rtn. D. Viraj Sanghi, Rtn. Gautam Doshi & President Bimal Mehta



Visiting Rotarians Suresh & Angelie Bharwaney from Rotary Club of Edgware & Stanmore, with President Bimal Mehta



Rtn. Hormusji Cama, President Bimal Mehta, First Lady Aradhana & PP Vineet Bhatnagar



President Bimal Mehta & Rtn. Paritosh Rungta

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Rotarians,

As we mark Ganesh Chaturthi this week, let us embrace new beginnings with clarity and wisdom, and continue our Rotary service with gratitude and purpose.

This month we kicked off our first fellowship and sports event.

The Parsi Nite celebration at the historic 150-year-old Allbless Baug was attended by 130 Rotarians, partners, family members, and friends, all dressed in traditional Daglis and Garas. The evening's highlight featured a sit-down patru of Parsi delicacies accompanied by excellent music, with Rotarians performing classic golden oldies. I extend our sincere appreciation to all the gracious hosts, particularly Fali, Khurshed, and Ritu, for organising such an enjoyable and memorable event.

We commenced our first sporting activity of the year — a table tennis tournament held at YMCA Colaba. Over 36 Rotarians, partners, and children participated across two groups, competing for the championship title. In the finals, Anand Dalal and Vivek Himatsingka faced Farhat Jamal and Chetan Daiya, with Anand and Vivek emerging victorious after an intense series of rallies. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Jamshyd, Chairman Moy, and the YMCA for their efforts in organising an enjoyable and well-coordinated Sunday morning event.

We have maintained strong engagement at our weekly meetings. The month began with a fireside chat featuring Dr. Tarang Gianchandani, CEO of HN Reliance, and Rtn. Ashish Contractor, who provided valuable insights into healthcare transformation from a physician's perspective. This was followed by an engaging discussion with Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman of Bajaj Finserve, and PP Vineet Bhatnagar. Mr. Bajaj captivated the audience as he shared how Bajaj Finserve evolved into one of India's leading non-banking financial companies.

Despite the torrential rains on August 19th, our recipient Elizabeth (Liz) Mehta, winner of the Somchand Parekh Award for Best Teacher, and Nazim Shaikh, recipient of the RCB Bravery Awards, persevered through inclement weather and Mumbai traffic to captivate our members with

their inspiring journeys. I would like to extend my gratitude to our members for attending the meeting and supporting our distinguished speakers, Liz and Nazim. Finally, our concluding speaker for the month was Ashish Hemrajani, founder and CEO of Book My Show. He engaged the audience with an insightful account of his entrepreneurial journey and shared practical lessons on business and life.

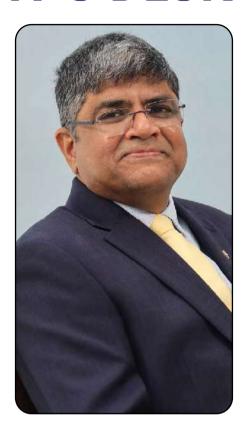
With regard to community service, a wide range of activities were conducted across our BY, Ananda Yaan & Lighthouse Centres, Mankhurd Centre for Neurodivergent Children, and at our Interact Schools. I would like to highlight two particularly significant events.

On August 13th, I had the privilege of participating in the Satellite Club celebrations with the children at Tata Memorial Hospital. Observing their resilience and joy in the face of adversity was truly inspiring. The following day, we commemorated Independence Day at RCB Lighthouse, where our young participants impressed members with powerful speeches, as well as dance, yoga, and Taekwondo performances.

In September, we are initiating three new projects.

- Anaemia screening and treatment of 15,000 children in Dahanu.
- Transformation learnings through Life Skills Play Program at ST Kadam School, Palghar





Sports Development Programme at the Talwada and ST Kadam Schools

We are looking for both volunteers as well as financial support for these impact programmes.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that our senior member and former president, Rtn. Dr. Adi Dastur, has resigned from his position as trustee effective August 12th due to health reasons. Dr. Dastur has served as a founding trustee of the Rotary Club of Bombay Charities Trust No. 3 since 2003, and his exceptional contributions have greatly advanced the trust's goals and management. We extend our sincere gratitude for his dedicated service. Additionally, I am pleased to welcome Fali Mehta as a new trustee. We are confident that his expertise and insights will support the continued fulfilment of our mission and our commitment to the communities we serve.

Thank you for all your support, and I wish you and your families a happy Ganesh Chaturthi.

Warm regards,
PRESIDENT BIMAL MEHTA







Sparsh Workshops on Child Safety at Interact Bharda

The Rotary Club of Bombay, in partnership with the Inner Wheel Club of Bombay, organised four impactful sessions of Sparsh – Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at Bharda New High School, an Interact partner institution. The workshops, conducted on August 4th and 25th, 2025, were led by Ms. Zainab Lokhandwalla of the Inner Wheel Club.

The sessions were carefully tailored to suit different age groups. On the first day, workshops were held for students of Standards 1 & 2 and Standards 3 & 4, while the second day covered Standards 5 & 6 and Standards 7 & 8.

Younger children were introduced to the basic principles of personal safety, learning how

to distinguish between safe and unsafe situations and the correct ways to respond. With the older groups, additional focus was placed on internet safety, setting boundaries, and recognising the importance of resisting bullying and peer pressure.

Through interactive discussions and situational examples, students actively engaged

with the content, showing enthusiasm and curiosity. The sessions created a safe space for dialogue while empowering children with the confidence to protect themselves.

Overall, Sparsh at Bharda proved to be a fulfilling experience — one that equipped children with invaluable knowledge for their safety and well-being.

GREEN CAREERS SESSION INSPIRES INTERACTORS AT SIR J.J. GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

On August 25th, 2025, the Rotary Club of Bombay Interact Club at Sir J.J. Girls High School, Fort hosted an engaging session on Green Careers conducted by WeNaturalists. The workshop, led by Ms. Vindhya Menon of the WeNaturalists team, introduced students to the growing opportunities in sustainability-focused fields.

The speaker highlighted how everyprofession has the potential to become a "green career" if approached with a focus on sustainability. She also opened the students' eyes to emerging opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, and green technology.

A total of 115 students from

Standards VII and VIII participated with enthusiasm. The session encouraged them to reflect on how their individual skills and interests could contribute to addressing climate-related challenges, while also opening up meaningful career pathways.

Ms. Menon emphasised the importance of aligning personal aspirations with environmental responsibility, urging students to see sustainability not just as a duty but also as a rewarding and future-oriented professional choice.

The interactive session left the participants motivated, planting the seeds of awareness that sustainability can be both a calling and a career.



AI Tutor Comes to Bhavishya Yaan at NMJ

A novel initiative is taking shape at NMJ School under the Rotary Club of Bombay's flagship Bhavishya Yaan programme at N M Joshi Marg, thanks to the support of SP Jain School of Global Management, Dubai. In a first-of-its-kind partnership, SP Jain has introduced its AI Tutor – an innovative educational tool – alongside a series of soft-skills workshops specially curated for underprivileged students.

The collaboration began in February this year, when Rtn. Mudit Jain connected the Club with SP Jain Global's interest in extending their AI Tutor to underserved children. This was followed by a series of Zoom meetings with Prof. Nada Sayarwh, Director – Sustainability at SP Jain School of Global Management, Dubai, who played a pivotal role in shaping the engagement. Prof. Sayarh shared how the AI Tutor had already proved effective at SP Jain, and expressed a desire to adapt it for Bhavishya Yaan students.

With guidance from Professor Vikram and his team, the software was customised to align with the BY syllabus in English and Computers. As part of their CSR commitment, SP Jain has also equipped students with 38 new tablets and will launch the "Rise Up, Girls and Boys" workshops on AI, public speaking and emotional intelligence.

The initiative will be formally launched at BY NMJ School on September 5th, 2025.







BY NMJ STUDENTS AT AN AI WORKSHOP AT SOMAIYA UNIVERSITY





Our girls attended a two-day Al Certificate Programme: Shaping Future Innovators at Somaiya Vidyavihar University



Ganesh Chaturthi Craft Day Cheer at BY NMJ

On August 21st, 2025, the Bhavishya Yaan students of Standard II at NMJ School celebrated a lively craft session to welcome the spirit of Ganesh Chaturthi. With the festival just around the corner and the city already buzzing with anticipation, the little ones mirrored the excitement of the season in their classroom.

The moment it was announced that the day's activity would be Ganpatimaking, the children burst into cheers. Their enthusiasm filled the room as they eagerly prepared to create their own festive artworks. The session was divided into two parts: first, the students crafted simple Ganesh idols using

colourful paper; then, they expressed their creativity further by drawing and colouring Ganpati in their notebooks.

As sheets of paper were handed out, the children competed playfully to complete their craftwork quickly, eager to move on to the drawing segment. The atmosphere was charged with joy, laughter, and the unmistakable fervour of Ganpati Bappa's imminent arrival.

The session not only honed their creativity but also deepened their festive spirit. It was a heart-warming reminder of how traditions, when introduced with fun and imagination, bring both meaning and delight to young learners.

Life Skill Session with BY NMJ children

With the recent heavy rains bringing the city to a standstill, Rotary Club of Bombay conducted an awareness session with the students to guide them on how to stay safe if caught in such situations.

Key Safety Points Discussed:

- 1. Stay Calm Do not panic. Panic creates confusion and makes it difficult to think clearly.
- 2. Seek Help If you feel stuck, immediately ask for help from teachers, elders, or authorities.
- 3. Inform Home Always inform your family. Keep 2–3 emergency contact numbers written on your school ID badge, along with the person's name and relationship (e.g., Sunil Sharma Daddy).



- 4. Before Leaving School Visit the washroom so you are comfortable during any delay.
- 5. Stay Prepared Refill your water bottle and keep some dry snacks (like biscuits) handy.
- 6. Avoid Puddles & Wires Do not step into waterlogged areas or touch electric poles/wires. They may carry current.
- 7. Stay Together Remain with classmates or friends; avoid being alone.
- 8. Use Safe Shelter If you cannot reach home, stay inside a safe place (school, shop, community hall) until help arrives.
- 9. Keep Gadgets Safe If carrying a phone, protect it in a plastic pouch or zip-lock bag.
- 10. Follow Instructions Listen carefully to your teachers or elders and follow their guidance.
- 11. Walk Carefully Roads and stairs may be slippery—avoid running.
- 12. Be Alert Watch out for falling trees, waterlogging, or vehicles moving fast in water.

BYCULLA BY KIDS CELEBRATE I-DAY











Join us at The Mezz



For an In-camera session with Author and myth-buster Ms Ami Ganatra

who will talk to us about

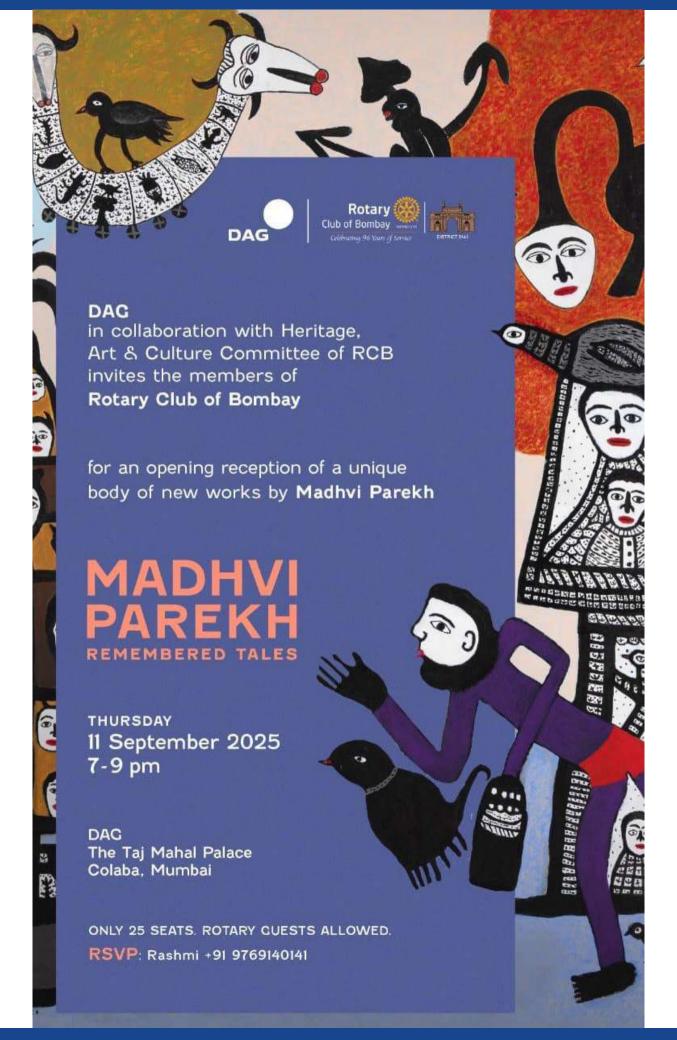
Decoding Dharma - Unraveling how our Indian epics are so relevant even today

18th September 2025

from 6.00pm to 9.30pm

RSVP: Rashmi Kotian +91 97691 40141

The House of Rose, Darabshaw House, Ballard Estate, Mumbai



ROTARIAN BIRTHDAYS



SEPT 3 Rtn. Mudit Jain



SEPT 5 Rtn. Dr. Cyres Mehta



SEPT 8 Rtn. Devinder Thukral



SEPT 4 Rtn. Anand Shah



SEPT 7 Rtn. Mudit Jatia



SEPT 8 Rtn. Jamshed Vakharia

ROTARIAN PARTNER BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER 2 Rtn. Ptn. Amisha Himatsingka

SEPTEMBER 3 Rtn. Ptn. Devi Narayan

SEPTEMBER 5 Rtn. Ptn. Falguni Padode **SEPTEMBER 6** Rtn. Ptn. Roma

Rtn. Ptn. Roma Singhania

SEPTEMBER 7

Rtn. Ptn. Percy Master

SEPTEMBER 8

Rtn. Ptn. Priti Shah

ANNIVERSARIES

SEPTEMBER 2

Rtn. Ptn. Aruna & Rtn. Suresh Jagtiani

NEXT TUESDAY: Mr. Bhushan Gagrani Municipal Commissioner will address the Club on Vision for Mumbai City.



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Bhushan Ashok Gagrani, a 1990 batch IAS officer, is a highly regarded administrator known for his clarity in city planning and development. He holds the distinction of being the first candidate to clear the IAS exam in Marathi, securing an all-India rank of 3. Over his career, he has held key roles in MTDC, the Medical and Public Health Department, MIDC, and CIDCO, where he

spearheaded the NMIA project. He also contributed to Maharashtra's "Make in India" campaign. With expertise in strategy, team building, and decision-making, he now serves as Municipal Commissioner of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.



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