

# THE GATEWAY

Rotary Club  
of Bombay



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<http://rotaryclubofbombay.org/>



## Somchand Parikh Award for Best Teacher, Ranjitsinh Disale

I am immensely honoured to receive Rotary Club of Bombay's Somchand Parikh Award for Best Teacher. I often call myself an accidental teacher. I would like to share some thoughts on education and what people with skills, knowledge, and/ or money can do to make a difference.

The famous words of Malala Yousafzai remind us that a teacher, a pen, and a book can change lives. Motivated by this, I shared 50% of my Global Teacher prize money, USD one million, with teachers. I believe teachers share their life, their knowledge, whatever they have. Since 2020, when I won the Global Teacher Prize, I want to see more Indian teachers getting recognition on international platforms.

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December 16<sup>th</sup>  
Christmas brunch.  
Further details to  
follow.



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**“21<sup>st</sup> century kids are being taught by 20<sup>th</sup> century adults like me, using a 19<sup>th</sup> century curriculum based on 18<sup>th</sup> century techniques. Your kids or grand kids are students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, born with a computer, laptop, mobile and other gadgets.”**



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Today’s presentation shows the number of students expected to go to schools; 5% have never gone to school, seen a classroom or teachers. This is government data. Others go to school till grade 4 and then drop out. Most of them are girls. Another portion completes their education till grade 10 and then drop out. We don’t have a mechanism to track these students or where they are now.

What can we do as teachers? There is a quote I like to use: 21<sup>st</sup> century kids are being taught by 20<sup>th</sup> century adults like me, using a 19<sup>th</sup> century curriculum based on 18<sup>th</sup> century techniques. Your kids or grand kids are students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, born with a computer, laptop, mobile and other gadgets.

I teach with techniques invented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There’s a huge gap between my style of teaching and their style of learning. The way I am talking now is the lecture method, an old-fashioned method. Sometimes the audience gets

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bored, that's why I made it interactive.

I began my career as a teacher reluctantly, on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. I had dreamed of being an IT engineer and gone to an engineering college for a year, but I dropped out. My father, a teacher, pushed me to join a teacher's training college. My initial plan was to go for six months and join another engineering college the next year. But I experienced life-changing moments in those six months. I saw the change teachers can bring for students. Teachers are real change-makers and I experienced it. I realised it was my duty to give back to society and be a change agent.

I began working as a government school teacher at a Zilla Parishad Primary School in Paritewadi (Solapur). My classroom looked like a cow shed with goats and food for cows and buffaloes. My headmaster told me the building belonged to the government, but a politician had occupied it because there was no teacher. I was just 20 years old, full of passion to bring change to society. It took me six months to get back that classroom.

I collected data of the village in terms of educational and economic backgrounds, and I realised the women in my villages are more educated than the males. I thought I should involve them in my teaching learning process. So, I set up three targets – to ensure 100% attendance of all the girls in the village, change the parents' indifference towards education and improve the academic performance of all the students in my school.

I initiated a couple of projects: a 'community engagement programme,' 'alarm on TV off,' 'QR coded textbooks,' 'virtual field trips' and 'let's cross the borders.' I'll be talking about these initiatives in detail.

The first was a community engagement programme. When you see problems in society, we try to force change. Child marriage was the problem, so stopping child marriage is the solution. I don't believe in forcing change on the recipient. I believe in the acceptance principle. The change should be accepted by the recipient. They should feel it's better. So, I would call educated girls from nearby villages who had got good jobs and good reputations to come to my classroom and share how education had changed their lives.

At the end of every session, I would ask parents a simple question: Would you like to see your daughter like this girl, or do you want to see them doing the same thing you are doing right now? The journey to achieve that status goes through this classroom. This is how you change their mindset instead of forcing them to send their kids to school.

Then, I set up an alarm on my school's building. It rings at 7 pm every night, an indication for parents to stop whatever they are doing and sit with their kids. Ask them questions about their day, their class, help them with their homework if you can.

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Education doesn't happen only in the classroom. This raised awareness and responsibility in parents that the future of our kids is not just the responsibility of the teacher but our collective responsibility as well.

I've been in the same school for the last 13 years and the same initiative is on. I send them text messages in the afternoon reminding them that they are expected to do this in the evening. Those messages with instructions on what they could do helped my parents build awareness of education.

Third, initially, my kids came to school because I showed them movies on a laptop. We would sing and dance and then they would go home. So, they came for the entertainment. When I saw the number of students coming for the movies increase, I changed that entertainment part slightly, into edu-tainment. The idea was that instead of watching Shah Rukh Khan, they would see me as their Shah Rukh Khan. I recorded videos and showed them on the laptop, saying, this is how Shah Rukh Khan will explain the internal parts of the body, Newton's law of motion, etc. So, entertainment played a crucial role in enjoying learning.

Then they wanted to see the videos at home. I tried but devices would not support file formats and so it was not working out. Once, in 2014, I saw a shopkeeper using a QR code. Nowadays we all use QR codes but in 2014, I didn't know what that was.

So, I asked Google; Google is a very good friend

of mine, maybe yours, too. He's very cool, calm, and patient. Soon, I realised that QR codes have a lot of potential and I can use them for my teaching and learning. I created 27 different QR codes in 2014 for my students, embedded my digital content on to them, printed the QR codes on to A4 sheets and pasted them into their books.

In just three days, my students had scanned all the QR codes. But, because they had scanned each code multiple times out of excitement, it did not work. I realised I would have to invest money to improve the system, but my salary was just Rs 3000.

I reached out to the local Rotary Club which donated Rs 7,000. I purchased a one-year premium pack of QR code software and created 300 QR codes for students in around 300 schools. We did a pilot for a year and students and parents really liked it. I proposed to the government of Maharashtra to use QR coded textbooks. They did so. Right now, every student in this country in a government school is using QR-coded textbooks. Fortunately, small-scale innovation has helped millions of students in India. This was recognised by Microsoft in 2016 as one of those 300 innovative ideas in education all over the world.

I got a chance to meet Mr. Satya Nadella, the sitting CEO of Microsoft, and he has featured three people in the world in his book, Hit Refresh. I was fortunate to be the only Indian mentioned in his book.

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In Toronto, I was invited to deliver a speech to my fellow teachers from all over the world. There, I learned about virtual field trips, a very unique learning and teaching style methodology. Virtual field trips mean travelling to many countries and seeing how the world looks without leaving the classroom. In the last seven years, my students have travelled to around 17 different countries. They used to send gifts to their friends in other countries and celebrate festivals together.

Our students have virtually seen the seven wonders of the world. For example, I would call my friend in Paris, and say, “Hey, can you go to the Eiffel Tower? My students want to see how it looks.” My friend goes there, and we will do a Skype call and the kids will see it and explore it.

We went to an undersea water lab in the UK where the government is researching how life looks under the water. Scientists from the underwater lab talk to my students and my students ask them the questions. This is how learning should be. Instead of just Ranjit, a teacher, being their source of knowledge, I want my students to find their source of knowledge from more than just one teacher. I don't teach them what to learn; I just teach them how to learn, right? Because information is everywhere nowadays. But you need to teach them how to learn. They will decide what to learn.

I use these techniques quite often without leaving a classroom. It's better because my students have their virtual passports. They make a note of what

we did, where we went, how much distance we have travelled.

In 2017, I was reading a Global Peace Index report and I found out that countries like India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, or Iraq, Iran, spend millions of dollars on military. If they had invested just 50% of those million, trillion dollars, on education, they would have found better solutions. Inspired from that, I initiated a project called Let's Cross the Borders, which invites teachers and students from conflict-zone countries to sit together virtually and discuss six topics.

In the first week, we assign peace buddies. Indian students have peace buddies from Pakistan etc. They get to know each other, exchange contact details, and become friends. We need to teach our students how to tackle violence or conflict non-violently. This is what Mahatma Gandhi has taught us. Without a bullet or gun, he showed the world a principle of non-violence. We need to relearn it and teach our kids to find a more peaceful way.

In the second week, students discuss why we are fighting. So, Indian students talking to Pakistani students; it's magic. Indians say we are fighting for Kashmir. They say, we are also fighting for Kashmir. Then I ask them to just measure the area of Kashmir. They will say, for example, a thousand square kilometres. Okay, just imagine Kashmir is not a part of India or Pakistan. Is it

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really contributing to our development? They said, “No.” Then, why are we fighting for just a small piece of land? Then, they realise it’s not a real cause of fighting and we don’t need to fight. In the third week, Indians and Pakistani hardly find differences.

The purpose is to give them an opportunity to learn, at the very beginning of their lives, that they need to build a better world for tomorrow. In the fourth week, they read two chapters from Hit Refresh where Mr. Satya Nadella has talked about how we can build empathy and compassion for others. In the fourth or fifth week, we invite teachers from peaceful countries like Austria, New Zealand, Finland to share their experiences. What does peace mean to them and how it helps them grow, leading to good cities and good human beings.

In the last week, students become a part of our peace army. One of them is elected a colonel of the army. The colonel will lead the peace army and share their learning in schools. They do peace-making or peace-building activities. They celebrate the International Day of Peace. They also want to continue their friendship because ultimately, for a six week-long project, they have a good relationship with each other. This is how I teach my students.

Last year I was awarded a Fulbright scholarship by the US government. Rotary tends to spend more money on education in classrooms but if you get a chance to create such a classroom in Mumbai or

anywhere in your territory, just look at how the classroom should look because US people put a lot of money into education. This picture is of a government school. I taught third and fourth grade students there for six months and is a great example of how the classroom should look.

You may have seen these classrooms in private schools, but if students from rural or underprivileged families get access to these infrastructures, the result will be better.

### **ROTARIANS ASK**

#### **Do you think teaching parents will also help?**

Yes, a parent’s education is not given importance but, in every phase of education, we need to educate parents because they need to realise that they teach their kids the way they learned. For example, in my home, my kid is three and a half years old, and my wife tends to teach him a lot of things. I used to tell her not teach him so many things. He will learn gradually. Just teach him how to sit, eat, behave, and talk to people. These are the things we need to teach them.

Instead, parents believe that we need to teach them Newton’s law of motion because we give marks for that. We don’t give marks for how you drink water or sit in the classroom. Instead of focusing on knowledge-based parenting, if we educate parents on how to understand their own kids, it’s very important. Everyone in this

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world is unique. Every kid, every student in my classroom is unique. He has a different style of learning, talking, and thinking. Indian parents try to compare their kids with others and that's where we fail.

My elder brother ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the state board when he was in 10<sup>th</sup> standard. In the 12<sup>th</sup>, he was ranked 12<sup>th</sup>. I was an average level guy, but my parents never compared me with him. Because they knew that this guy is different from his elder brother. And this is what a teacher's mindset looks like. It's very difficult to teach parents these skills nowadays that you don't need to compare your kids. Just understand his interest areas and where he would like to explore better opportunities.

So, your question was right, we need to educate parents more than kids in the school.

**Do you also give time to inspire other teachers?**

I am fortunate that the government has allowed me to do these things. About 20% of my time every week goes to my classroom and students and around 40% is spent mentoring teachers. We initiated a project called Super 30 Teachers, where we have selected 30 teachers from every district. We do mentoring and inspire them to do things better, the way I did. That project is still going on. That's why I said, Ranjitsinh Disale is not enough to change the world or India. We need more and we are in the process of creating them.

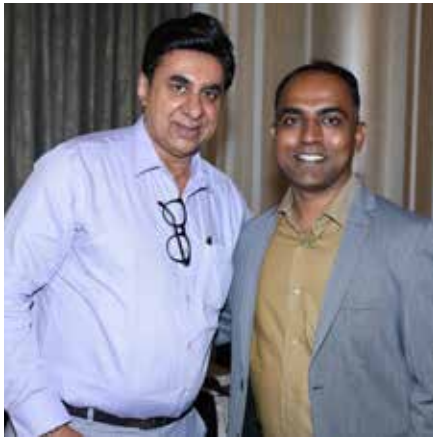
**What can be our role as the youth to promote**

**your cause and make a difference in kids' lives, et cetera?**

I'm happy to see young minds or young people here from Rotaract. The thing that you all bring to table is that you have a diverse mindset from different backgrounds. The experience that you have, try to share that with students from underprivileged families: how to build businesses, how to be entrepreneurs.

I am now designing a programme curriculum for entrepreneurs at the school level because I see the potential. The government is not going to give jobs. And you have to be a job giver, not a job seeker. So, the youth's role is to become problem solvers, not just disseminate information.

Try to apply your learnings for the betterment of society. Climate action, climate change is a rising problem in society. You are different from our generation, right? So, you will not just run your family business. You will create new businesses to solve the problems faced by society. My expectation from youth is to be a problem solver. Maybe a small problem. I solved a very small problem: my students were not coming to school. I engaged them, introduced the technology and they are now coming to school. Very small problem. But the impact on the lives of every student is phenomenal. So, if you try to solve any problem in the society in which you are living, that will be a great contribution to the development of the country as well.



**TUESDAYS WITH THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY**





# RCB's daily mental health programme for children

Rotary Club of Bombay's Committee for the Care of Neurodivergent Children has an ongoing programme on mental health daily (full year) for children with a mental handicap, at Mankhurd in association with AWMH Maharashtra, with qualified 'special educators,' physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

It is an EIRP (early intervention centre). About

20-25 children (with a mental handicap) attend daily. The aim is to enable the children to attend regular schools by the time they are 6 years old. There are periodic counselling / training sessions for parents. This is an yeoman service free of charge to the poorest of poor from the slums around. We are happy that we are able to wipe away some of their tears. PP Shernaz Vakil is the Chairperson of this Committee.



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## BY alumna inspires St. Xavier's students with life lessons at upskilling event

Our alumna Pooja Kamble was honoured with an invitation to be a guest speaker at a St. Xavier's upskilling event held at Vinayalaya in Andheri. During this event, she generously shared insights from her life's journey, a journey shaped and enriched by her active involvement in the Bhavishya Yaan programme, as well as the unwavering support of the Rotary Club of Bombay and its members.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ms Mala for providing Pooja with this valuable opportunity to connect and engage with the students.

Addressing the IT hardware batch, Pooja delved into various facets of personal and professional development that she has garnered through her participation in the Bhavishya Yaan programme. Her speech encompassed a range of topics, including:

- 1) Personal grooming and presentation skills
- 2) Taking responsibility for oneself and one's family
- 3) Effective daily planning and time management
- 4) Journaling as a tool for reflection on one's past, present, and future aspirations
- 5) Preparing for job interviews and honing communication skills
- 6) Financial literacy, including saving money, contributing to family expenses, and managing course fees
- 7) Overcoming the fear of public speaking and building confidence

Pooja's invaluable contributions and the knowledge she shared have undoubtedly left a lasting impact on the students, inspiring them to strive for excellence in their personal and professional lives.



# Golf tournament in Jan



As part of Rotary Club of Bombay's literacy initiatives, we have partnered with Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) and its T-E-A-C-H program. RILM, a National-level not-for-profit organization is working relentlessly towards total literacy and quality education in India. This comprehensive initiative has helped millions of children through its T-E-A-C-H programme. To fund its initiatives in literacy, we are organising the ROTARY SAFGR ASIA GOLF CLASSIC, 2024.

Proceeds from the event will help make thousands of adults literate.

So far, 1,46,266 adults have already been enrolled in the Adult Literacy Programme. Our goal is to transform 50 lakh non-literate adults into literate individuals by 2024.

The ROTARY SAFGR ASIA GOLF CLASSIC, 2024 will be held from January 13th – 15th, 2024 at the Oxford Golf and Country Club, Pune. We request you to enrol in large numbers - you do not need to be a golfer to attend the event and enjoy the fellowship.

Registration details are below (for 2 persons):

1. Platinum Gold – Rs 150,000
2. Gold Patron – Rs 125,000
3. Golfer with Residence – Rs 80,000
4. Non-golfer with Residence – Rs 70,000
5. Golfer – non-resident – Rs 25,000 (individual)
6. Non-golfer non-resident – Rs 20,000 (individual)



## Congratulations to Rtn. Dushyant Dave

The Rotary Club of Bombay extends its warmest congratulations to Rtn. Dushyant Dave on his outstanding achievement of being honoured with the Mid-size Turnaround Transaction Award from the Turnaround Management Association USA for the year 2023. This accolade is a testament to his exceptional work in the Turnaround & Restructuring Industry, particularly in resolving an Indian Company under the IBC Code. His role as a Resolution Professional has been pivotal, completing the assignment in record time and thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code of India.

We are proud that Dushyant and his team at Decode Resolvency have been recognised on this global stage, bringing honour not only to themselves but also to our nation. It is truly a proud moment for India to see our talent acknowledged internationally.

Once again, we commend Dushyant for this well-deserved recognition and for being a stellar example of professional excellence.

# Health camp for Lighthouse parents



The RCB Child Welfare Committee extends its gratitude to Sadhu Vaswani Mission for conducting a health camp for the Lighthouse community.

117 adults were checked for osteoporosis and diabetes, with immediate diagnoses and actions taken. Our thanks go to Dr. Ruchika, an allopathic doctor, and Dr. Sunita Sabharwal, a homeopath, who prescribed calcium medications and offered guidance to diabetic patients. Special thanks to Ms. Poonam Malani and Ma Neelam Dusija from Sadhu Vaswani for their invaluable support in facilitating this camp.



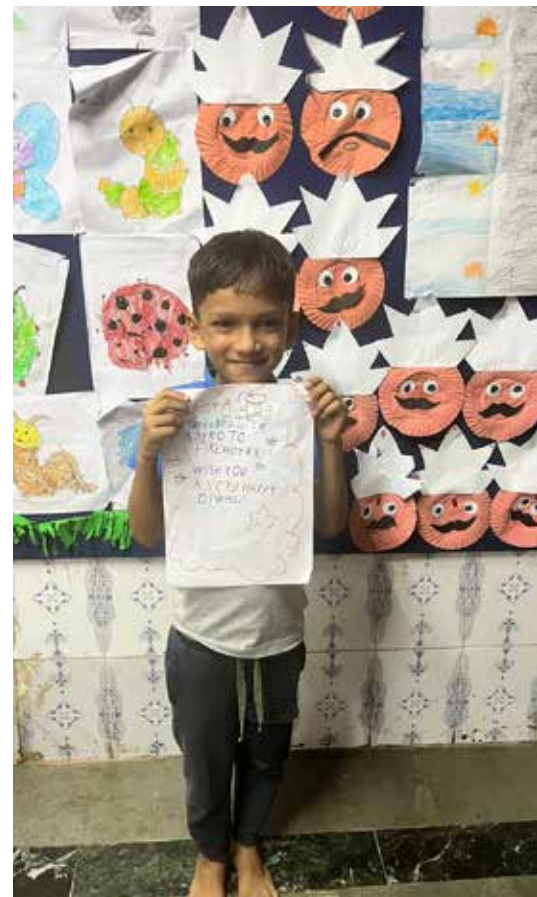


# Lighthouse advocates a cracker-free Diwali

This Diwali, Lighthouse is taking a stand against the use of crackers, recognising that one night of festivities can equate to a year's worth of pollution in a city. With Mumbai's Air Quality Index deteriorating day by day, it's crucial to address the environmental damage and health risks associated with cracker smoke, loud noises, and smog.

To raise awareness in the local community, our students from classes 3, 4, and 5 crafted creative posters, delivering a clear message about the importance of small actions in preserving the environment.

In addition, our Sr. Kg class contributed by crafting eco-friendly lanterns, adding a sustainable touch to our Diwali camp decorations.



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and 3.30pm to 6pm  
Last paper will be issued at 5.30pm

**Xray:** Every day: 10am to 6pm

**Paediatric:** Monday: 11am to 1pm

**Homeopathy:** Thursday:  
2.30pm to 4.30pm

**Skin:** Tuesday & Friday:  
10.30am to 11.30am

**Gynaecology:** Tuesday:  
12pm to 2pm

**Senior Medical Consultant:**  
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**Pathology:** Tuesday & Friday:  
10am to 1pm



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SPEAKER SESSIONS



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ON NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

## The Consul-General of South Africa, MS. ANDREA KÜHN

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Andrea Kühn assumed her position as the Consul-General of South Africa in Mumbai with the consular districts of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

Prior to her deployment to India, she was the Director for South and Central Asia. Previous assignments abroad include the South African Consulate General in New York, USA, and the South African Embassy in Berlin, Germany. Ms. Kuhn graduated in 1989 from University of Pretoria in South Africa with a law degree (BLC-LLB).

She joined the South African diplomatic service in February 1991. Ms. Kuhn served in various capacities in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation including the Private Secretary to the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation from 1998-2008.



# Rotarian Member Birthdays



NOVEMBER 7

PP Kastur Sheth



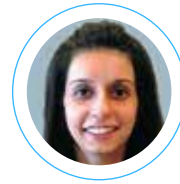
NOVEMBER 9

Rtn. Ratna Kapoor Sharma



NOVEMBER 9

Rtn. Jagdish Vora



NOVEMBER 10

Rtn. Natasha Treasurywala



NOVEMBER 11

Rtn. Mohit Jain



NOVEMBER 14

Rtn. Dr. Saumil Kothari



NOVEMBER 15

Rtn. Vivek Kothari



NOVEMBER 17

Rtn. Akil Hirani



NOVEMBER 18

Rtn. Freyaz Shroff



NOVEMBER 20

Rtn. Jagdish Malkani

## Chronicles of the birthday piñata



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## Rotarian Partner Birthdays

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Rtn. Ptn. Nayna Chinai

**NOVEMBER 9**

Rtn. Ptn. Sudha Javeri

**NOVEMBER 10**

Rtn. Ptn. Dr. Sonia Kothari

**NOVEMBER 12**

Rtn. Ptn. Yasmin Divecha

**NOVEMBER 13**

Rtn. Ptn. Bharti Gandhi

**NOVEMBER 9**

Rtn. Ptn. Sudha Javeri

**NOVEMBER 10**

Rtn. Ptn. Dr. Sonia Kothari

**NOVEMBER 12**

Rtn. Ptn. Yasmin Divecha

**NOVEMBER 13**

Rtn. Ptn. Bharti Gandhi

**NOVEMBER 16**

Rtn. Ptn. Nidhi Aggarwal

**NOVEMBER 18**

Rtn. Ptn. Jita Kapadia

**NOVEMBER 19**

Rtn. Ptn. Mona Nevatia

**NOVEMBER 20**

Rtn. Ptn. Suman Bang

**NOVEMBER 20**

Rtn. Ptn. Silvia Salins

## Anniversaries

**NOVEMBER 11**

Rtn. Ptn. Sushmita & Rtn. Christopher  
Bluemel

**NOVEMBER 11**

Rtn. Ptn. Ayesha & Rtn. Dr. Darius  
Soonawalla

**NOVEMBER 12**

Rtn. Ptn. Aradhana & Rtn. Dr. Rajiv  
Agarwal

**NOVEMBER 12**

Rtn. Ptn. Soonnu & Rtn. Farokh Balsara

**NOVEMBER 12**

Rtn. Ptn. Shailaja & Rtn. Samir Mogul

**NOVEMBER 12**

Rtn. Ptn. Silvia & Rtn. Leonard Salins

**NOVEMBER 18**

Radhika & Rtn. Sameer Kaji

**NOVEMBER 19**

Dolon & Rtn. Parth Ghosh

**NOVEMBER 19**

Ketayun & Rtn. Darios Irani

**NOVEMBER 19**

Falguni & Rtn. Pratap Padode

**NOVEMBER 19**

Soha & Rtn. Nilesh Parekh

**NOVEMBER 19**

Poonam & Rtn. Manish Sampat

**NOVEMBER 20**

Nayna & Rtn. Ashok Chinai

**NOVEMBER 20**

Thirty & Rtn. Dr. Sorab Javeri

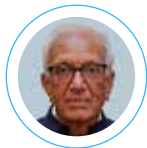
**NOVEMBER 20**

Rtn. Poonam & Rtn. Ajit Lalvani

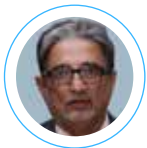
# TRUSTEES OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOMBAY



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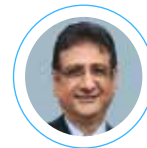
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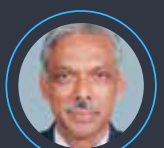
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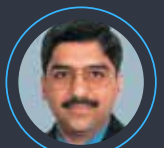
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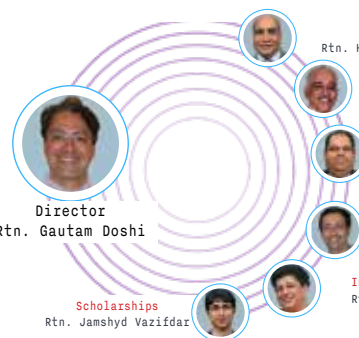
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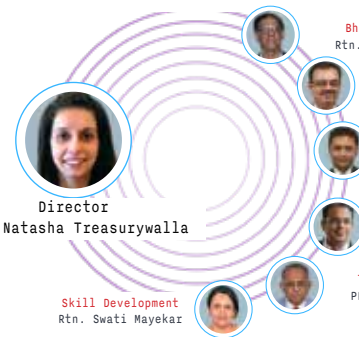
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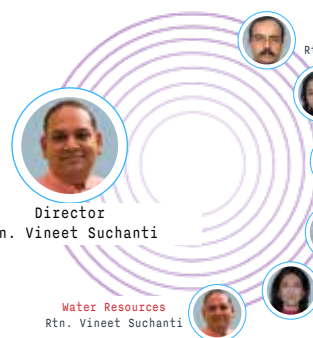
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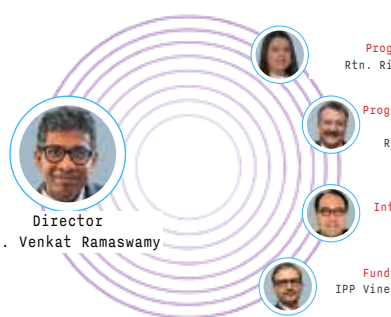
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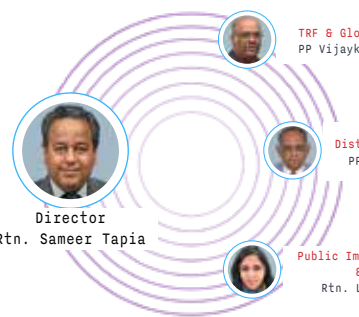
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