

# THE LIGHTHOUSE

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS  
ISSUE 16 | OCTOBER 14, 2023

BUILDING RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITIES



Dear RCMers,

Greetings of the season that has started off gloriously with Festivals of India full club fellowship at RCM. Invoking the Almighty's blessings on all projects of RCM.

Yours in Rotary,

Yours in Rotary,  
**Rtn. Sunita Suresh**



**ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS**  
(RI District 3232)

**Invites you for the Inauguration of  
DIGITAL MAMMOGRAM MACHINE  
PROJECT FUNDED BY SBI MUTUAL FUND**



on 28th October 2023  
Saturday, at 11.30 am  
at  
**Vallal Mena Cancer  
Screening Center,  
Cancer Institute (WIA)  
Kodikottai, Devakottai**

**CHIEF GUEST**  
**Shri S. Ganesan**  
Chief Operating Officer SBIMF

**GUEST OF HONOUR**

**Dr. Kalpana Balakrishnan**  
Director, Cancer Institute (WIA)

**Dr. Malliga Subramaniam**  
Head, Preventive Oncology  
Cancer Institute (WIA)

**Rtn. S. Ravi**  
President, Rotary club of Madras

**Rtn. M. Sessa Sai**  
Honorary Secretary

**Rtn. Jayshree Sridhar**  
Imm. Past President

**Rtn. Bharat M Pujara**  
Director of Community Services II

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## Minutes of the 16th Weekly Meeting of Rotary Club of Madras

held at the Hyatt Regency on 14.10.23 at 7 PM

Sergeant at arms, PP Rtn. Mohan Raman P.V. collaring President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, who formally called the meeting to order followed by Silent Invocation.

President Ravi welcomed all the members and attendees, announcing the celebration of the sFestival of India, the centenary celebration of late M.R. Prathap, and the diamond jubilee celebration of the Rayala Corporation.

An invocation song with dance was performed by Nanda School of Dance, marking the special occasion.

The confirmation of the 15th weekly meeting was requested.

Guests and other club presidents were welcomed, including Rtn. Shanmugam, Rtn. Shivkumar, and Rtn. Kathirvel.

Rtn. Vikram Chesetty made announcements regarding the upcoming Mumbai trip, detailing the scheduled meetings and the plan to invite the Rotary Club of Bombay for the International Night.

Rtn. Sangeetha Viswanathan announced the success of the smart vision distribution function held a couple of days back, emphasising the impact of the smart vision goggles on visually impaired individuals.

Rtn. Nimish C. Tolia discussed the upcoming Art auction event, including the date and format, with the proceedings to go to the Rotary Club of Madras Charitable Trust.

Rtn. Shivkumar Eswaran announced a planned initiative for cancer awareness and support, including the dedication of a building and a mammogram machine in a tribal village in Mettupalayam.

Rtn. Chella Krishna announced a CSR contribution from Gulistan Investments and DSM Soft for the Rotary Club of Madras Charitable Trust.

Rtn. Sessa Sai made regular announcements, including members' birthdays and anniversaries. And also mentioned that there will be no meeting on the next week and the following week.

It's time to welcome our Star Speakers, I would like to specially welcome our star speakers for the evening Padmasri.Shrimathi.Meenakshi



Chitharanjan and also I have pleasure in welcoming Rtn.Sriram, renowned historian of Chennai.

The President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan welcomed the speakers for the evening Meenakshi Chittranjan and Historian Sriram.

Rtn. Vikram Chesetty introduced the star speaker Rtn. Sriram, who delivered a speech about the late M.R. Prathap and the history of the Rayala Corporation.

PP Rtn. Ranjit Prathap spoke about the Rayala Corporation's Diamond Jubilee celebration and the centenary celebration of his father, M.R. Prathap.

A video presentation of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations was played, followed by Green Rotarian Justice presenting a bouquet to Rtn. Sriram.

Rtn. Benjamin Cherian and Rtn. Gangadharan spoke about their personal associations with late M.R. Prathap.

Rtn. Sangeetha Viswanathan introduced the star speaker Padma Shri Meenakshi Chittaranjan, who addressed the attendees and performed a dance.

The secretary and PP Rtn. Ranjit Prathap was requested to honour the star speaker.

The club service director, Rtn. Vikram Chesetty, took over the proceedings and nounced the second segment of the full club fellowship, featuring a dance performance by Nanda and team showcasing festive dances of India.

The meeting adjourned after the vote of thanks. ■



From the 16th Meeting of Rotary Club of Madras Oct. 14, 2023









## AN ODE TO RTN.M.R. PRATAP

**PP Rtn. Ranjit Pratap** *shares his thoughts*



When Ravi called me about a week back and said that he wants have a celebration called Festivals of India and it coincided along with the diamond jubilee & my father's centenary and I said it's short notice and how will we manage? I suddenly realised that we are going have important match of the season going on and how are we going to get an audience and Ravi is an amazing gentleman... What he wants to, he will do it somehow and the results will always be there and how he selected this wonderful day. Today is a Mahalaya Amavasya, an auspicious day and also the starting of Navratri festival. It's a culmination of everything together and what better tribute can we pay to my illustrious father M.R.Prathap. Sriram is going to talk about the company, our family & also my dad and he had a lot of interaction with my father and what I am going to tell you is just little.... that my father was a Rotarian of this very same club for over 45 years and I must admit that though he attended every meeting in the club on Tuesday afternoons, he really didn't do much except very few occasions. I think Sriram sent me a cutting of way back in 1965 or 1970... I really don't remember and he said this is the picture of your father in Rotary Club of Madras in late 1960's that means he must have done something but not spectacular and lot of Rotarians don't know that my father was a long standing member and he never proposed me to this club where he was a member, and that it was Hari Raj who said.. Ranjith, come & join Rotary Club of Madras and my father never knew. So, the day he proposed and I had to be interviewed by the committee and they asked me whether my father knows and I said my father doesn't know and let's keep it as a surprise. The day I was being inducted he was there and then Hari Raj came and gave an extempore speech about my background and then my father said to Hari, you now know more about my son than myself. So with this few words I am going to say thank you to Ravi... its been very apt that you could select a date and also gave me this opportunity to celebrate this occasion because this 2023 is very important as Mohan Raman was saying its my 50 years in Business & my father's 100th year and our company's 75th year. So it's very important for us to propagate this great legacy and share with my Rotary family. I am grateful to you for giving us this opportunity to showcase little bit of our company. Thank you very much once again.

### **Mr. M.V. Sriram on the autobiography he has penned.....**

I am here to talk about late M.R. Prathap, a gentleman whose acquaintance I got to have thanks to Ranjith and he was very insistent that the history of the family should be written and I began meeting Mr.Pratap in the enormous house and yesterday as I was looking back at the records, I found that we had 15 meetings with the man, myself & my research assistant Susan Philip. He was a remarkable personality and he was already in the 90's when the book was written and if we fix meeting at 9

'o clock, he will be there at 8.59 waiting for us and every meeting he would have meticulous hand written notes on what he wants to talk on that day to us. If we had forgotten something that we had discussed earlier and if we ask him a question, he would ask to go back to that particular day and that he didn't intend to repeat. He kept room temperature at 10 degrees and we used to wear sweaters to go meet him. He used to be smartly dressed in shirt & trousers. Then one day Susan told me, I now know how he has lived till age of 90. Then I asked how he said he refrigerated himself and so he preserved himself completely inside and this was Susan's comments on Mr. Pratap. So Mr. Pratap was a remarkable personality. He was very tall, very impressive and I think it was a great lesson to all of us on the way he led his life. He was a champion horse rider & strong believer of ayurveda and oil massages at least once a week. He was a life long practitioner of Yoga & till late in his life he could stand on his head and he was also a practicing homeopath and had a passion for tennis which he played regularly .

He had a remarkable illness free life and that's how he lived and he was also a man who lived life on his own terms and he was born when his father was already climbing the corporate ladder.

His father, Raja Gopal Naidu, founded Raja Gopal Motor works and then he went on to carry on to create a clutch of various industries and which went into the fold of Rani Madras later and then became the seeds for creation of Rane Group. Mr. Raja Gopal Naidu believed in the automotive world and then he got into

typewriters business post-independence and he also believed strongly in real estate. When he passed away suddenly and Mr. Pratap had to take over the entire set of businesses and the very interesting things that shows what clarity of thought Pratap had at the very young age and he divested himself of all the businesses he did not want and he believed that his vision was in the typewriter business and he settled all the businesses on the remaining family members and he also did not want a share of family real estate and completely struck out on his own. He made an institution out of Halda typewriters and if today Ashok Leyland is referred to as a Halda junction 25 years after company ceased to exist, it had something to do with the personality of Mr. Pratap. He was a fighter and running Halda Typewriters was not easy and he faced a lot of challenges along the way and he had compliments from greatest legal minds of India and he was a far better lawyer than what they were, in understanding the corporate laws and fighting his own cases. This was a man who also went to introduce on to introduce Fasit Asia to the country .

Then at one point when he felt that he had done enough, he had hung up his boots. When he wanted to acquire a property which would suit him, it became Villa Enchantress which is the one of the largest private land holdings even today and that's where he lived. Once when I asked about club membership, he said he created his own club. I have a swimming pool and my own tennis court and I go horse riding and beyond that I don't need anything else apart from this. He was truly remarkable personality and continuing the legacy of Rayala. Yesterday, when I was going through the notes, he said "Ranjith is also like me and also struck out on his own and none of us in the family believed in our ancestors worth and I came way and started my own company and Ranjith went and started his own business and he never believed in looking on me for support". And he is very proud of what you had done. The only throne in the entire garden of roses was when the book was published, he found that he had few pages less than what his father had. So he called me and told me that I thought you will write my biography and you ended up writing my father's biography but it didn't matter we still remain good acquaintances and whenever we met each other ,he also greeted me with lot of cheer and with lot of humour and that is one of the many acquaintances in this city I cherish and I look back to so many people who are not there today Mr. Mutthiah, Mr. N. Shankar, Mr.M.R Pratap and Mr. Sabanayagam who used to be my neighbours in Bishop Garden and would meet so often....all wonderful people who are no longer exist and people whose lives needs to be cherished and to be looked at as role models.

### **Padmashri Meenakshi Chittarajan's speech**

Namaskaram, President of Rotary Club of Madras and I can see many of my friends here and I am very happy to be here this evening. Dr Jaisree Sridhar called me and President came on a group call along with my brother Raj and requested me to join them for this occasion and I readily agreed and then they told me that they would like it to be approx 15 min and that was a tough task as you know that our rich art is like a deep ocean and there is so much to it and it is so complex and intricate and to explain in a very short time a tough job and what I thought was best in such circumstances is to talk less & do more because when we visually show what we are trying to say the impact is much more .So, I have with me two of my young students who will demonstrate few things which are the most important ingredients of our dance form so that I will be a bit clear to all of you.

But before I start that I would like to give a short introduction to Bharatanatyam and there are many interpretations to origin of word Bharatanatyam. The simple one is our land was called Bharat and the Natyam that follows Bharat is Bharatanatyam. The other ones as per our legends is that the sage who codified Bharatanatyam was sage Bharata hence we called it Bharatanatyam but what has always caught my fancy is the interpretation that Bharatanatyam has three major composites which is Bhava an emotion/expression, Raga which is melody ,Thala which is Rhythm.

The first syllables of all are used to have this dance form Bharatanatyam, and as we know that our country is diverse and it has a rich culture and so many languages cultures and so many traditions and legends stories mythologies, which makes it an exotic country.

And the origin, dance is something which has always moved man to express himself and as the story goes that the gods themselves at some point of time felt that they don't have a past time to spend their time and they went to Lord Bramha to create a past time in which they can spend good time. So, the creator went into mediative form and took the best from all the Vedas and created this Natyavedha because one request was this should be an art which should be a feast to the eyes ears and the mind and above all to the very soul.

So Indian classical dance is not a just release of physical energy, it is also a very cultivated part and to demonstrate the major ingredients of this art form is when I am going to have two of students, Aditi Shridhar and Pravallika Varanasi to perform on stage. ■



# RCM'S PROJECT SMART VISION



The sense of vision is the greatest gift of all. Every image we see is a ray of hope, a vision of beauty enriching the tapestry of our lives. Unfortunately, not every human is blessed with this gift. According to statistics, there are 15 million people who are completely visually impaired in India. And if we include individuals with low vision, the numbers increase to 40 million out of which 1.6 million are children. Vision impairment is a serious setback in one's life and has dire emotional, physical and socio-economic consequences.

Recent advances in medicine and technology, including machine learning and artificial intelligence, have improved the lives of these individuals through aids such as Smart Vision Goggles. These glasses assist in reading, face recognition, easy navigation etc. using smartphone-enabled technology. RCM is happy to announce the launch of Phase 1 of Project Smart Vision which was inaugurated on the 12th of October in collaboration with the Inner Wheel Club of Madras through the VisionAid Programme of our medical partner Voluntary Health Services, Adyar.

This project aims to provide technology-aided support to visually impaired individuals by providing Smart







Vision Goggles. 27 beneficiaries chosen by RCM (15) and Inner Wheel Club (12) were given Smart Vision Goggles through VisionAid at a lovely event held at VHS.

The ceremony was presided over by District Governor (Elect) Rtn Saravanan, RCM President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan and Inner Wheel club of Madras President, Ms Renu Chandra. Director of Community Services, Rtn Bharat Pujara, Chairman of Medical Camps, Rtn Dr.Sangeetha Viswanathan, Rtn Dr Supriya Dabir Gautam and other members of the 2 clubs were also in attendance. Senior members of VHS including HOD Ophthalmology Dr Parthasarthy and Chief Financial Officer Mr. Chari were also part of the program. The event was filled with heartwarming moments when the recipients spoke about how positively the glasses would impact their lives and it was such a joy to see the smiles on the faces of the beneficiaries as they tried on their new glasses. Many of our inspirational beneficiaries are working professionals or in higher education and we hope that these glasses will enable them to reach greater heights and pave the path for future generations of visually challenged individuals.

**- Rtn. Dr Supriya Dabir Gautam  
& Rtn.Dr Sangeetha Viswanathan ■**

## BIRTHDAYS

Oct. 23rd - Rtn. Sapru Mathew  
Oct. 24rd - Rtn.Giridhar Hemdev  
Oct. 25th - Rtn.Sridhar V  
Oct. 26th - Rtn. Nagarajan S  
Oct. 27th - Rtn.Ravi Bhatkal  
Oct. 27th - Rtn.Geetha Nagappan  
Oct. 28th - Rtn. Fazal Mohamed

Oct. 16th - Ann. Priya,  
Spouse of Ravi Bhatkal  
Oct. 23rd - Ann. Shailja Jalan,  
Spouse of Vikram Jalan  
Oct. 29th - Ann. Vidya,  
Spouse of Vasudevan R  
Oct. 29th - Ann. Manisha Singhee,  
Spouse of Ravi Prakash Singhee

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Oct. 25th - Rtn. Lata Mathai & Thangam  
Oct. 26th - Rtn. Ganesh Ananthakrishnan & Madura  
Oct. 29th - Rtn. Srikanth S.N. PP & Subha



## A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON TRANSFORMING TOMORROW UNVEILING THE WASH PROJECT'S JOURNEY AT SCHOOLS ON 12.10.23

On the 12th of October, a momentous and auspicious occasion unfurled as the Rotary Club of Madras, in collaboration with the Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology (AVIT), a constituent college of Vinayaka Missions Research Foundations, initiated the ground-breaking ceremony for the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) project. This significant event took place at three schools nestled within the Chengalpattu District: Government Aadhi Dravidar Welfare Middle School in Alathur, Panchayath Union Primary School in Arunkundram, and Government High School in Siruthavur.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of distinguished individuals, including Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, the President of the Rotary Club of Madras (RCM); Rtn. Dr. Anuradha Ganesan, Director of Community Services at RCM and Vice President of VMRF-DU; and Rtn. Aravind Kumar Shankar, the Project Chairman. Joining them were dedicated members of the Rotary Club of Madras, with Rtn. Vishwanathan and Rtn. Gopi representing the club. In addition, Mrs. Z. Juliet, the Block Development Officer, and Dr. S.P. Sangeetha, the Vice Principal of Academics at AVIT, along with members of the ISR cell of AVIT, were also in attendance, adding to the grandeur of the event.

The Bhoomi Pooja, a traditional and sacred ritual, commenced at 10:30 AM with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, symbolizing the dawn of a transformative journey. The Village Panchayat Presidents and the Head Mistresses of the respective schools took this opportunity to expound on the significance of their institutions and the communities they serve. Their heartfelt expressions of gratitude resonated deeply with the Rotary Club of Madras and AVIT for their generous commitment to enhancing the facilities and resources of these schools.



Dr. Anuradha Ganesan, Director of Community Services at RCM and Vice President of VMRF-DU, addressed the gathering. She provided valuable insights into the WASH project's objectives, emphasizing the pivotal role of water, sanitation, and hygiene. Her words underscored the critical importance of these elements in ensuring the well-being of the students and their communities, shining a spotlight on the noble cause at hand.

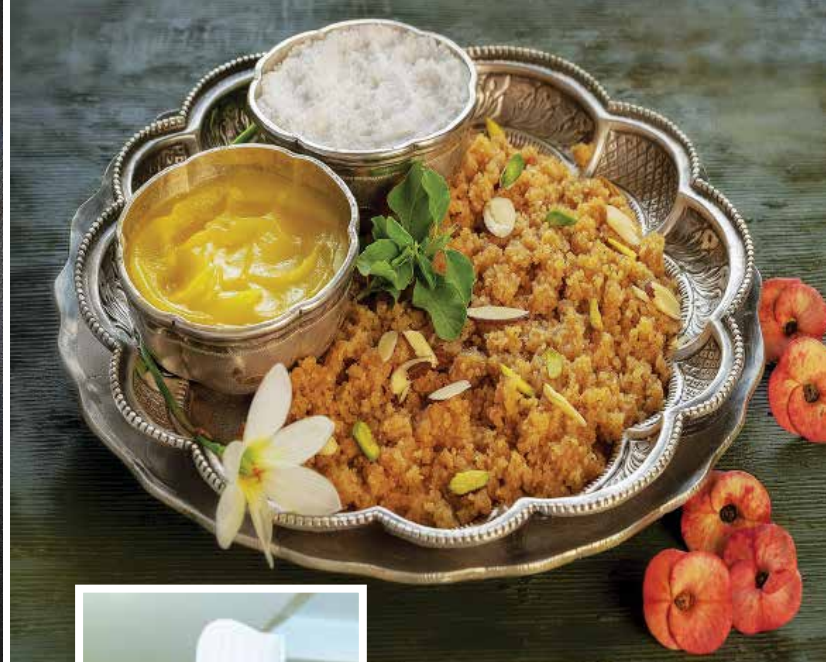
The total budget allocated for the WASH project is approximately around 19 Lakhs. This budget encompasses a wide spectrum of development activities, including the construction of toilets, installation of Sintex tanks, RO plants, classroom renovations, painting, compound

wall construction, hand wash stations, provision of ceiling fans, benches, and the introduction of smart boards. This holistic approach reflects the commitment to comprehensive development and upliftment.

As the ceremony drew to a close, the students of the schools showcased their rich cultural heritage through captivating performances, offering a fitting conclusion to this memorable event. The ceremony ended with a group photograph, capturing the collective spirit and commitment of all those involved in this noble endeavor, creating lasting memories of this remarkable occasion. ■







## Grand Chennai by GRT presents Navaratri Gujarati Festival in association with HOME CHEF PARUL BHATT

**G**rand by GRT Chennai presents a 10-day Gujarati Food Festival that will take you on a gastronomic tour particularly to the Ahmedabad region of Gujarat.

This Gujarati Food festival is on from Sunday 15th to Tuesday 24th October 2023 and the curator is award-winning home Chef Parul Bhatt.

Entrepreneur and Author of a cookbook, Parul Bhatt, will take you on a Gastronomical journey to Gujarat through a wide range of authentic Gujarati dishes and make you cherish the memories for a long time.

Specialising in authentic Gujarati Cuisine, she has taken inspiration from the dishes she savoured during childhood. Over 35 unique dishes ranging from Komal – Yogurt and coconut milk-based spicy drink. Panki – a delicate & unique, rice flour-based crepe pan seared in Banana leaf. Bajara Dhebra, Dakor na Gota, Undhiyu, to Surat Ghari. Sutarfeni and more.

Gujaratis love snacking and we are fond of dry snacks. So, there will be an array of Farsan. In short, the spread has a wide range of dishes showing the rich flavours and aromas of Gujarat. Varieties of accompaniment like chutneys and pickles will be served to go along with the main course.

This food extravaganza will be held at the Bazaar, the vibrant dining restaurant at Grand Chennai by GRT. Chef Parul will be present every day and interact with guests and explain to them the nuances of the dishes.



Corporate Chef Sheetharaman says that this festival has been very meticulously planned to give the guests a real taste of Gujarat. We are proud to be associated with Chef Parul Bhatt, who has created a niche for herself in promoting Gujarati cuisine in Chennai. We want to show that there is much more to explore in Gujarati cuisine than Dhokla, Khaman, Khandvi and Theplas. The buffet is priced at Rs. 2000 plus taxes.

He further added that we also have Navaratri Golu with storytelling during all 9 days by Ms Aarthi.

For details, please visit [https:// grthotels.com/](https://grthotels.com/) Chennai or call 75500 36789 for reservations.

**- Rtn. Satyan Bhatt**



# THE LADAKH ROAD TRIP

Lexus Adventure  
Ladakh Experience  
Roof top of India



When I signed up for the Lexus road adventure in Ladakh, I had no idea how unforgettable it would be. Alongside my good friend Murali, I embarked on this journey after a brief acclimatization in Kodai.

Our adventure began with an early morning flight from Chennai to Leh, where temperatures hovered between 1 and 14 degrees. We were warmly welcomed by the Lexus team and transferred to Nimmo House, a charming guesthouse in Nimmo village. Surrounded by apple and apricot orchards, the place was a haven of tranquility.

Our days were filled with breathtaking landscapes, cultural experiences, and delicious local cuisine. We learned about the Pashmina trail, witnessed the intricate process of dyeing and weaving, and even saw the famed Pashmina goats in Changthang valley.

Each day, we drove around 180 kilometers in Lexus hybrid cars, equipped with everything from sunblock to oxygen canisters. The support team, led by Bert, Gulab, and Rahul, ensured our safety and comfort throughout the journey. Highlights included visits to Lamayaru monastery, the Moonland, and Pangong Lake, where we marveled at the stunning scenery.

passing through Chushul, a historic battleground. We drove through Changla and Kasangla passes, which were almost 18000 feet. Nights were filled with stargazing and cultural presentations, creating unforgettable memories. Our journey concluded at Ladakh Eco Retreat, where we showered after two days on the road.

This road adventure was made even more special by the camaraderie we shared with fellow travelers, some of whom became lifelong friends. The entire experience was organized with the utmost precision by Lexus, with the company's president, Naveen Soni, joining us for a memorable evening.

As we departed, we left Ladakh with our hearts full of gratitude for the remarkable adventure Lexus had provided in this breathtaking part of India.

- Rtn. Hemant Chordia ■