

# The Lighthouse

Rotary  
Club of Madras



THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

ISSUE 24

December 14  
2025



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

## BIRTHDAYS



Rtn Haresh Kishore	11 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Jacob Kurian	13 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Ramakanth Akula	14 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Gautam B V	15 <sup>th</sup> December
Shvetha Jaishankar, Spouse of Rtn Raghu Kailas	11 <sup>th</sup> December
Shenba A, Spouse of Rtn Arvind Kumar Sankar	15 <sup>th</sup> December
Moloy Chaudhuri, Spouse of Rtn Rita Chaudhuri	15 <sup>th</sup> December

## ANNIVERSARY



Rtn Dr Ramasubramanian V & Dr Aruna	10 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Prashanth S. Kharche & Mansi Kharche	11 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Rajiv Khanna & Dolly Khanna	11 <sup>th</sup> December
PP Rtn N K Gopinath & PP Rtn Jayanthi	12 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Gowri R Shanker & Jaya	12 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Gautam B V & K Shamantha	12 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Krishnamurthy Vijayan & Usha	12 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Suresh Kumar S & Nanda	13 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Dr Nitesh Jain & Dr Gunjan Jain	13 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Navneet Agarwal & Radhika Agarwal	13 <sup>th</sup> December
Rtn Samyuktha Bhaskar & T K Bhaskar	13 <sup>th</sup> December



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### PRESIDENT - NOMINEE

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**YATRTECHS**

# Rotary Club of Madras

24<sup>th</sup> Weekly Meeting

**TOPIC:**  
"FRIEND OR PHONE?  
HOW SMART DEVICES  
HOOK US"

**Speaker: Stephen Monteiro**  
Media and Culture Scholar. Teacher at  
Department of Communication Studies,  
Concordia University, Montreal.

Moderated by **Rtn. Dr. Rama Narasimhan**

**Tuesday, 16th December 2025 | 1.30 pm**  
**Lunch : 12:30 - 1:30 pm at Hyatt Regency, Chennai.**

Spouses are invited for this meeting

**Rtn. Nikhil Raj**  
President

**Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan**  
Honorary Secretary

**Rtn. Rajesh Mani**  
Director - Club Service

**Rtn. Mohit Bajaj**  
Chairperson - Programs Committee

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Stay updated with our very own RCM magazine!



# **Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)**

## **Minutes of the 23rd Weekly Meeting held**

**on 09.12.25 @ Hyatt Regency at 1:30 pm**

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### **Call to Order**

President Rtn Nikhil Raj called the 23rd weekly meeting to order.

### **Opening:**

The President welcomed all members and requested the Rotary Song to be played. He informed the members of the sad demise of Rtn Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan. He also informed members of the sorrowful passing of

Rt. Mr. Saravanan, brother of our member Rtn AVM Balu and Rtn P S Santhanam, past member of RCM. Members were requested to rise for a moment of silence to honour the departed souls.

### **Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

The Minutes of the 22nd Weekly Meeting was confirmed.

### **Welcome**

The President extended a warm welcome to Probus Club Members Mr V Dayalan and Mr N S Saravanan, visiting Rotarian Dr. Pavithra and guest Ms. Rhea (President's daughter visiting from the UK).

### **Tributes to Rtn Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan:**

Rtn DGND S. Ravi delivered a heartfelt tribute recalling her leadership in health initiatives such as the Medical Programs, Smart Vision Program and Touching Tiny Hearts – Uganda Project. He highlighted her dedication, simplicity, sincerity and deep commitment to community impact, her outstanding work on the Cervical Cancer Prevention & HPV Vaccination Program which has reached over 5000 girls and the national-level recognition her initiatives achieved across district, state, zone, and all-India levels. He recalled the quote “Those who live in the hearts of others never truly pass away.” He concluded with condolences to her family and the invocation Om Shanti.

IPP Rtn Chella Krishna G. shared an emotional remembrance, noting the extraordinary outpouring of affection for Rtn Dr. Sangeetha across all Rotary WhatsApp groups, her key role in Save a Little Heart including raising 40 lakhs via WhatsApp crowdfunding, her initiative in enabling 400+ pediatric heart surgeries, her role in bringing 50 Ugandan

children to India for surgeries and her unparalleled and tireless voluntary work at VHS and ICH Egmore and her dream of administering HPV vaccine to a million children.

He commented on her transformation into a powerful awareness speaker for HPV vaccination and remarked that she served tirelessly even when unnoticed and truly embodied the spirit of giving. He described Rtn Dr. Sangeetha as a person who left a lasting impression on whomsoever she met. He expressed his condolences to her family.

President Nikhil Raj expressed personal grief and commented on Rtn Dr Sangeetha's unwavering commitment to the HPV vaccination initiative, her travel to Theni and Villupuram for awareness camps and their daily interactions regarding ongoing projects including surgeries at Kokilaben Hospital (Mumbai) and Apollo Hospital (Chennai). He emphasized that her spirit must continue to guide the club's service. He expressed his condolences to her family.

### **Secretary's Announcements – Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan:**

A support group has been formed to assist Chetan (Rtn Dr Sangeetha's husband) with travel arrangements from Hong Kong. Indian Embassy and Rotary Club of Hong Kong are supporting the process.

The December 10th meeting scheduled earlier stands cancelled.

The next weekly meeting will be on 16th December, an afternoon meeting featuring Guest Speaker Mr. Stephen Monteiro, on Friend/Foe – How Smart Devices Hook Us. The details of an event on 15 Dec 25 to felicitate DGND S. Ravi will be announced shortly.

### Dr. Jayashree Gopal in conversation with Rtn Rani Muralidharan:

Rtn Rani Muralidharan introduced Dr Jayashree, highlighting her 30+ years of experience in endocrinology, her global training in the USA and UK, her roles at Apollo Hospital and DiabEndoIndia, her passion for South Indian history and her work as an author.

A Q&A session followed, with Dr Jayashree addressing several myths and facts on endocrinology, metabolism and weight loss. A copy of "Timeless Legacy" was presented to Dr Jayashree by the President.

### Vote of Thanks:

Secretary Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan proposed the vote of thanks.

The meeting was adjourned.

### Closing :

The President thanked Dr Jayashree Gopal and Rtn. Rani Muralidharan and all Rotarians and guests for attending.



Dogs, cats, rabbits, and other pets took center stage during a Blessing of the Animals event co-organized by the Rotary Club of Tehuacán Granadas in Puebla state in January. "Around 1,000 pets and approximately 3,000 people attended the event this year," reports Paola Ortiz Gómez, president of the club, which partnered with TAC Una Protección al Entorno A.C., a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of animals. Since 2022, the club has organized and promoted the special Mass. "We all believe that by fostering a culture of respect for nonhuman life, it teaches us to respect human life as well," she says. "It fills us with satisfaction to see that entire families attend and not only receive a blessing for their pet but at the same time receive veterinary care," learn about animal adoptions, and donate to the care of homeless animals.

With profound sorrow, the Inner Wheel fraternity joins Rotary Madras in mourning the untimely passing of our beloved HPV Vaccination Champion, Rtn Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan.

Though a very busy medical professional, she was always readily available to guide, clarify, and support our cervical cancer vaccination initiatives. Her patience, warmth, and commitment touched every one of our presidents, who all held her in deep admiration. Her passion for protecting young girls from cervical cancer was contagious — one conversation with her was enough to inspire action.

On a personal note, this sudden news has deeply shaken me, as I was in constant touch with her for our vaccination drives, and her encouragement, clarity, and instant responsiveness were a great source of strength to me.

Her sudden departure is an irreparable loss not only to Rotary but also to the larger community of women and children whose lives she worked tirelessly to safeguard.

We extend our deepest condolences to her husband, Rtn Chetan, and her family. May they find strength in these moments of immense grief, and may her noble soul rest in eternal peace.



With prayers and solidarity  
Leena Jayakumar  
District Chairman  
Inner Wheel District 321

## Remembering Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan



In the Rotary Club of Madras, every so often, we meet someone whose presence quietly transforms the lives around them. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan was one such soul — gentle in demeanour, firm in purpose, and unwavering in her belief that service must never be confined to words but lived through action.

Among her many contributions to RCM, nothing shone brighter than her passionate work in creating awareness about cervical cancer and championing the cause of HPV vaccination. At a time when hesitation, misinformation, and fear often overshadowed conversation, she chose courage, clarity, and compassion. With her characteristic calm

Her sessions were more than just medical briefings. They were moments of reassurance. Parents saw in her a doctor they could trust and a guide they could depend on. Her ability to make complex medical information feel personal, relevant, and accessible is a legacy that will continue to echo through every family she touched.

Beyond the numbers and achievements lies her true gift — the warmth she brought to service. She approached every project with grace, humility, and a quiet joy that uplifted her team. Even in the busiest moments, she carried a smile that said, “We’re doing something

confidence, she spoke to hundreds of parents, answering every question with patience, dismantling myths one by one, and replacing anxiety with understanding.

Dr. Sangeetha believed that prevention is empowerment, especially for young girls. It was this conviction that fueled her mission. Through meticulous planning, constant follow-ups, and unshakeable resolve, she helped facilitate the vaccination of hundreds of girls, ensuring they stepped into adulthood protected, informed, and stronger. Each vaccinated child was, to her, not just a medical success but a symbol of a brighter, safer future — a future she worked tirelessly to secure.

meaningful.” And indeed, she was.

As we mourn her sudden loss, we also choose to celebrate the immeasurable impact she leaves behind. Hundreds of girls will grow up healthier because she cared. Hundreds of families will remember her voice of clarity in a moment of doubt. And RCM will remember her as a Rotarian who exemplified our motto with her every breath — Service Above Self.

Her journey with us may have ended abruptly, but her legacy continues in the awareness she created and in the protection she brought to so many children.

**A light like hers does not go out. It simply shines on in the lives it touched.**

### **The Light She Left Behind**

Some lights burn softly yet steady enough  
to guide a hundred journeys.

Dr. Sangeetha’s was one such light —gentle in presence, unwavering in purpose.  
RCM remains brighter because she passed our way.

**-Rtn. Manasa T Pillai**





## *Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan*

Gone too soon, but forever a light in our hearts

With profound grief and immeasurable sorrow, we mourn the untimely passing of Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan, a healer, humanitarian, and beacon of compassion whose life's mission was to alleviate suffering and uplift the health of the most vulnerable. At just 50 years of age, an age far too early to leave this world — Dr. Sangeetha departed, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire generations.

Dr. Sangeetha was a cherished force in the Rotary Club of Madras, where she championed one of the most vital public health efforts of our time: cervical cancer vaccination among young girls. With unwavering commitment, she went from school to school, classroom to classroom, speaking to parents with empathy and clarity. She patiently addressed their fears, offered knowledge, and gently earned their trust because consent was not just a statutory requirement to her, but a sacred responsibility.

Through her efforts, thousands of young lives were shielded from preventable diseases, and countless families were given the gift of reassurance and hope. But her kindness did not stop there. Dr. Sangeetha embodied the true spirit of service. She believed that every child deserved a chance at life, no matter what their circumstances were. Through tireless

crowd-sourcing efforts, she helped facilitate life-saving cardiac surgeries for children, each one a testament to her determination to heal beyond the walls of any hospital. She rallied people, resources, and compassion with quiet strength and a smile that reassured every anxious parent.

Her community health initiatives were many and varied, each one rooted in her unwavering belief that good health is a fundamental human right. Whether it was preventive care, screenings, awareness campaigns, or support for families in distress, she gave her time, her energy, and her heart without hesitation.

To lose someone like Dr. Sangeetha is not just a personal tragedy for those who knew and loved her; it is a loss to society, to the countless lives she touched, and to the many more she would undoubtedly have continued to touch. She leaves behind a void that cannot be filled, but also a legacy rich with compassion, courage, and purpose.

We grieve because she is gone too soon. But we celebrate because she lived so meaningfully. May her soul rest in eternal peace, and may her memory continue to guide us toward kindness, service, and a world where no one is left without care.

Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan  
You healed. You served. You inspired.  
Your light lives on.

-PP Rtn KK Raman

## The Healer and the Historian: A Profile of Dr. Jayashree Gopal





In a recent session presided over by the Rotary Club, members were treated to an illuminating conversation between PP Rtn Rani Muralidharan and one of Chennai's most respected voices in metabolic health, Dr. Jayashree Gopal. The meeting, which began on a somber note with tributes to the late Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan, transitioned into a vital discussion on health. Dr. Gopal, a Senior Consultant Endocrinologist and Diabetologist with over three decades of experience, was introduced not merely as a physician, but as a "powerhouse" combination of rigorous science and creative passion.

**A Global Medical Pedigree, Dr. Gopal's credentials** are formidable. After completing her MBBS at Madras Medical College, she pursued extensive training abroad, including a residency in Internal Medicine and a fellowship in Endocrinology at the prestigious Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. She further honed her expertise in the UK at the University of Cambridge's Addenbrooke's Hospital, focusing on complex and rare endocrine conditions. Today, she serves as a Senior Consultant at Apollo Hospital and Director at DiabEndo India Institute for Diabetes, Endocrine, Metabolic and Lifestyle Health.

### The Renaissance Woman

What makes Dr. Gopal truly engaging is her life beyond the clinic. Introduced by Rani Muralidharan as a "fantastic combination of science and history," Dr. Gopal is a published author of historical fiction. Her love for South Indian history has birthed novels such as *The Chola*, *Parched Earth* and *To Laugh Again*. A childhood friend, Sanjay, recalled her as a student of immense warmth and balance, noting that while others struggled to pass, she was the type of student who effortlessly scored full marks in Biology.



### The Biology of Weight

Dr. Gopal began by dismantling the guilt often associated with weight gain. She explained that obesity is not a personal failure but a "mismatch between the environment in which our genes evolved and the environment we are living in." She highlighted the biological unfairness of the human body: while there are dozens of hormones to signal satiety, there is only one—ghrelin—that signals hunger, making the drive to eat primal and overpowering. Citing the famous "Biggest Loser" study, she noted that when people lose weight, their metabolic rate drops and unfortunately stays low, making maintenance a physiological battle.





## Demystifying the "Wonder Drugs"

The conversation inevitably turned to the global buzz surrounding GLP-1 analogues like Ozempic (Semaglutide) and Mounjaro (Tirzepatide). Dr. Gopal explained that these drugs work by mimicking the body's natural hormones to reduce appetite and slow digestion. She described the body's reaction to food as a "tsunami" of energy that needs processing, which these drugs help manage.

However, she offered a balanced, cautious perspective. While acknowledging their benefits for diabetes, heart health, and even arthritis, she warned that they are not magic bullets. She emphasized that patients must

engage in strength training to counteract the muscle loss that accompanies rapid weight loss. She also addressed safety concerns, from gastrointestinal side effects to the risk of worsening retinopathy in diabetics if blood sugar drops too quickly.

Ultimately, Dr. Gopal stood out as a figure of empathy. She confessed her dislike for the stigmatizing term "obesity," preferring clinical descriptors like "high BMI," and expressed hope that society would eventually treat weight issues with the same neutrality as hypertension or arthritis.

## In loving memory of Rtn Dr Sangeetha Viswanathan









# Rewilding Chennai, One Native Sapling at a Time

Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Madras,  
kickstarted a **native-species rewilding** initiative  
at Loyola Campus, Chennai.



**Funded by:**  Rtn Geeta Nagu

**Executed by:**  Environmental Foundation of India (EFI)

Together, we're building a greener, healthier Chennai.





MEHTA  
JEWELLERY

BETA,  
THE NEXT TIME  
YOU LOOK AT IN  
THE MIRROR, REMIND  
YOURSELF TO

WEAR  
YOUR  
SAVINGS

WITH

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