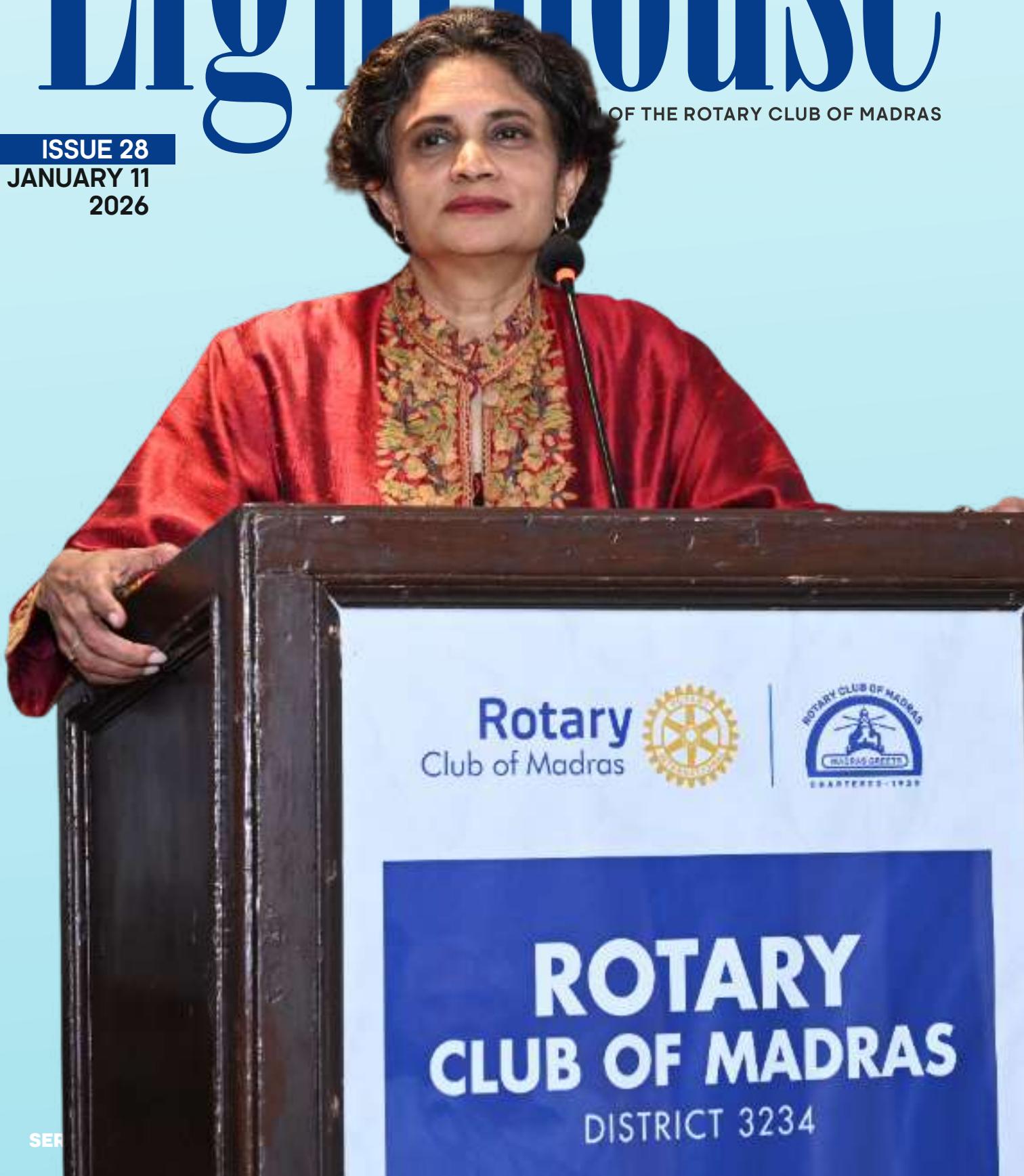


# The Lighthouse

OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

ISSUE 28  
JANUARY 11  
2026

Rotary  
Club of Madras



Rotary  
Club of Madras



**ROTARY  
CLUB OF MADRAS**

DISTRICT 3234

## BIRTHDAYS

PP Rtn Nandita Krishnan	6 <sup>th</sup> January
PP Rtn Satyan C Bhatt	9 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Vipin Sachdev	10 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Sanjay Tulsyan	12 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Arunachalam Palaniappan	12 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Sheetal Bhat	12 <sup>th</sup> January
Priya, Spouse of Rtn V. Sridhar	6 <sup>th</sup> January
Rajashree, Spouse of PP Rtn Dr Prof Gauthamadas Udiip	7 <sup>th</sup> January
Sashi, Spouse of Rtn Nataraj Ramaiah	7 <sup>th</sup> January
Pavithra, Spouse of Rtn Krishna Kishore	7 <sup>th</sup> January
Jaya, Spouse of Rtn Gowri R Shanker	8 <sup>th</sup> January
Girish Ramdas, Spouse of Rtn Shri Shakthi Girish	8 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>ANNIVERSARY</b>	⌚
Rtn Harish K. Murthi & Asha	5 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Sriya Chari & Vivek Chandrasekharan	5 <sup>th</sup> January



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SPEAKER:  
**AMITAV GHOSH**  
AUTHOR, GHOST-EYE

**TISHANI DOSHI**

Sunday, 11th January 2026 | 6.00 pm  
at Hyatt Regency, Chennai.

6 to 6.30 pm Tea/Coffee | 6.30 pm - Meeting | 7.30 pm Dinner

**Rtn. Nikhil Raj**  
President

**Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan**  
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Stay updated with our very own RCM magazine!

# Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)

## Minutes of 26th Weekly Meeting being held on 06-01-2026

### 1.30 pm @ Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

#### Call to Order

The President called the 26th Weekly Meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras to order at 1:30 pm. The meeting commenced with the Rotary Song.

#### Confirmation of Previous Minutes

The President sought confirmation of the 25th Weekly Meeting minutes and the AGM minutes. Both were confirmed by the House

#### Welcome Address

The President welcomed members and extended New Year greetings for 2026, noting that this was the first meeting after a two-week break due to the AGM on 23 Dec 2025 and no meeting on 30 Dec 2025.

#### Guests and Visitors

The following guests were warmly welcomed : Dr. Bhavani and Mr. Ashok Kumar from Probus Club, Mr. Jnaneshwar Srinivas, spouse of the member to be inducted, Guest Speaker Ms. Uttara Bharath Kumar and her daughter Ms. Nina Bharath Kumar.

#### The Week That Was – Project Updates

The President provided a comprehensive update on recent activities:

Balakka School Renovation (Gopalapuram) sponsored by Rtn Govind Vasanadu and Rtn Vardhaman Jain : Bhoomi Puja and inauguration completed. Roof repairs underway; expected completion in two weeks. This School serves children of watchmen, auto drivers and migrant workers

RYLA Farm Guru Educational Trip: 170 Students participated under the mentorship of Rtn Sesha Sai. Flag-off conducted at Hyatt Regency. Rtn Suman Voora and Rtn Himanshu Budhia were present. Detailed presentation scheduled for next week.

HPV Program Launch (District 3000): Program launched during the District Conference with Rtn DGND Ravi Sundaresan, Rtn Ganesh and the President attending. Rtn Ganesh was acknowledged for the District connect.

Visit to Medavakkam Lake for a potential collaboration with AU Small Finance Bank : Facilitated by DG Vinod Saraogi and DGND Ravi Sundaresan. Positive response received; awaiting documentation.

Perambur School Toilets Renovation: Refurbishment of toilets under an existing CSR grant. Work in progress; expected completion by month-end.

French infrastructure company Technip visited Selaiyur: They were received and facilitated by Rtn Rajib Kumar Hota. Proposed sponsorship of Rs.5.5 lakhs in the offing for vocational training.

CSR & Grant Updates: Rs.26 lakhs approved for a Community Centre and an Anganwadi.

Rs.36 lakhs proposed for Madurapakkam School renovation (Boys Town students' school). Application to RI underway.

Two Global Grant applications submitted for Toilets in four schools & HPV Vaccination Program.

Dialysis Projects: Machines installed; inaugurations awaiting donor convenience and availability.

Major Donation Announcement: Rtn Nimish C. Tolia, through his Trust, has donated Rs.34.71 lakhs for pediatric dialysis machines at Child Trust Hospital and construction of four village homes.

#### Secretary's Announcements

Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan made the following announcements:

Full Club Fellowship (Pongal Celebration) will be hosted by Rtn AKS PP Ranjit Pratap at his residence on 18 Jan 2026. Announced Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries for the week. Next Meeting: Combined Meeting with FICCI FLO on Sunday evening, 11 Jan 2026 at Hyatt Regency featuring Guest Speaker Mr. Amitav Ghosh author of Ghost- Eye, in conversation with Ms. Tishani Doshi.

## Induction of New Member

Dr. Poornima Jnaneshwar, Orthodontist and Dental Surgeon was introduced by Rtn N. Sukumar. The President administered the Induction Charge and formally admitted Dr. Poornima Jnaneshwar as a member.

## Adjournment

The President adjourned the meeting.

## Guest Speaker Session

Rtn Niloufer introduced Ms. Uttara Bharath Kumar, behavioral Science expert and global public health leader.

**Speaker Address:** Ms. Uttara Bharath Kumar delivered an insightful talk on youth mental health, addressing impact of screens, stress, and social change, global insights with specific data from Tamil Nadu and behavioral science approaches to public health. This was followed by a Q&A session.

Rtn Sanjay Rao Chaganti proposed the vote of thanks. The Timeless Legacy book was presented to the speaker.

## YOUTH, TECH, AND MENTAL HEALTH: RECLAIMING HUMAN CONNECTION BY MS UTTARA BHARATH KUMAR



In that illustrious gathering, we found ourselves at a pivotal crossroads, grappling with a technological leviathan that threatens the very foundations of our youth's mental equilibrium. We are witnesses to a monumental struggle between traditional human connection and the siren call of the smartphone, an instrument of such addictive prowess that even the most stoic adults find themselves ensnared within its digital web. The profound insights shared reveal a digital model that requires not merely passive observation, but a valiant and concerted reclamation of our domestic and communal spheres.

The fear of social obsolescence haunts the

modern parent, creating a clandestine anxiety that withholding technology might cast our progeny into a shadow realm of peer isolation. This insidious pressure forces the hands of guardians to introduce complex gadgets far before the young mind possesses the fortitude to navigate them. Yet, we must confront the stark reality that constant, unsupervised access to the internet is akin to steering a high-powered vehicle without the requisite licensing, education, or road-testing. We are currently permitting a metaphorical bulldozer to rumble towards our children, and we stand as lone individuals attempting to halt its relentless momentum with our bare hands.



To combat this, we must adopt the mantle of mentorship, providing our youth with realistic role models rather than the ephemeral glitter of internet influencers. These paragons of virtue should be found within the sacred circle of the community, a cousin, a friend, or a neighbour whose journey is both attainable and transparent. Furthermore, we must embrace the philosophy of early failure, allowing the young to stumble and fall in minor ways so they may develop the resilience required to avoid a more catastrophic collapse in later life.

Our role as parents and educators is one of unwavering modeling; we must acknowledge the poignant truth that our children listen with their eyes. If we, the venerable architects of their world, remain perpetually tethered to our glowing rectangles during the sanctity of the dinner hour, our protestations against their screen usage will ring hollow and hypocritical. Consistency is our primary weapon; though the journey towards a digital detox may be paved with screaming and resistance, a steadfast adherence to these boundaries will eventually yield a more harmonious existence.



Strategies for reclamation abound for those with the fortitude to implement them. One might consider the heroic defiance of the "digital dinosaur" who rejects the ubiquity of WhatsApp in favour of the resplendent warmth of physical visitation and the rigour of formal communication. By reverse engineering the lives of the young, substituting screen-induced lethargy with the exhausting glory of the cricket ground and the nourishment of

wholesome sustenance, we can diminish the tyrannical grip of the device. We must also establish hallowed spaces for technology, treating the portable tablet with the same stationary reverence once afforded to the television. When the usage of tech is confined to a specific room and a prescribed duration, its ability to colonize every waking moment is severely curtailed.



The evidence from international jurisdictions and summer camps suggests that when the collective decides to sever the digital umbilical cord, the mental health quotient ascends to magnificent heights. When an entire cohort is liberated from the fetters of the phone, the agony of social comparison vanishes, replaced by vibrant tapestry of genuine socialization and a heightened capacity for academic focus. While every generation faces its own tempests, be the spectre of drug culture or the allure of alcohol, the current digital addiction is unique in its pervasiveness and content-driven seduction.

In conclusion, the burden of shift rests upon the shoulders of our educational systems and parental vanguard. We must move beyond shallow waters of convenience and dive into

the depths of intentional engagement. By fostering an environment where physical presence is prized above digital shadows, we ensure that our youth do not merely survive the age of artificial intelligence, but thrive as robust, connected, and mentally resilient human beings.

To understand our predicament, imagine a vast and turbulent ocean where our children are cast adrift in small vessels. Giving them a smartphone without guidance is like handing them a powerful motor without a rudder or a map; they may travel fast, but they are at the mercy of the currents. Our task is to be the Lighthouse and the seasoned captain, teaching them to navigate the waves before they are lost to the deep.

### MOONLIT MAGIC AT JAYSHREE SRIDHAR'S FIRESIDE



The moment we stepped into Jayshree Sridhar's Fireside, the evening announced itself loudly, lovingly, and with the heady fragrance of marigold and jasmine floating through the air like a warm welcome. Floral streamers

framed the space beautifully, and with brass lamps placed thoughtfully in the corners, every angle felt like a ready-made photo moment that was elegant, festive, and unmistakably "Fireside season."



As the night gathered its sparkle, spirit flowed freely from the bar, and the mood rose effortlessly. Two singers kept the energy alive with catchy numbers that had members (and spouses!) swaying, singing along, and happily jiving while conversations bubbled everywhere, with people comfortably settling into groups, laughter rolling from one circle to the next.

And then came the final, cinematic touch: a full moon shining overhead, bathing the entire terrace in a soft glow and creating an ambience that felt almost unreal especially on the huge Alwarpet terrace of Jayshree Sridhar and Dr. Sridhar's home, where the city felt far away and the fellowship felt close.



Jayshree is known for hosting a Fireside that's flawless every year, and this one was no exception. It was thoughtfully planned, beautifully paced, and effortlessly warm. The evening ended exactly as it should: with a well-crafted menu and a memorable dinner, sealing the night with the kind of hospitality that stays with you long after the last goodbye.



- Rtn Kamala Ramakrishnan



That is The Four-Way Test in action. Those four simple questions help us not judge others but guide us toward genuine, effective service.

Consider our commitment to ending polio. For nearly 40 years, we have promised the world's children we will eliminate this disease. Despite obstacles, we persist, and today we are closer to defeating the virus. Keeping this promise is the very definition of integrity.

The same integrity must drive our vocational service. With 1.2 billion young people in emerging economies reaching working age in the next decade and only 420 million jobs projected, we face a critical gap. Communities long excluded from economic opportunities need our support.

But support doesn't mean imposing our will. It means listening to local needs, building partnerships, and designing projects that communities can sustain themselves.

In a garage outside Salinas, California, young people who are learning to restore classic cars are doing more than developing a skill — they are reclaiming their futures. This training programme provides mentorship and, for some, a path away from gang involvement toward meaningful employment. Graduates leave with certifications, practical experience and hope.

This is what Rotary's Vocational Service Month celebrates each January — the power of bringing together people with unique skills to do good in the world. It reminds us that integrity isn't just about our actions matching our words. Integrity is in everything we do.

The California automotive programme has been such a success because it was built on integrity. Members of the Rotary Club of Carmel-by-the-Sea didn't assume they knew what the community needed. They listened. They learned there was a shortage of skilled mechanics as well as a large number of young people lacking job training. They recognized that technical skills alone wouldn't be enough, so they partnered with Rancho Cielo, a nonprofit offering counselling and support services alongside vocational training.

You have knowledge that can transform lives. Whatever your profession, your expertise combined with Rotary's values creates lasting change. The question isn't whether you have something to offer, it's how you'll use your skills to serve.

This January, I encourage you to ask how your club can address vocational needs in your community. What skills do your members have that could change someone's life? How can your networks open doors for young people? What partnerships can create sustainable jobs?

Let integrity guide you. Let The Four-Way Test light your path. And let the young people in California and the multitudes worldwide who need job skills remind you why vocational service matters.

Let us celebrate putting our professional skills to work for humanity with integrity at the heart of everything we do.

- Francesco Arezzo  
President 2025-26

## 164 Hearts, One Earth: The Day RYLA Went Root-Deep



Then came the powerful, grounding inauguration by RI District 3234 RYLA Chairman Rtn Murali Rao, whose inaugural address anchored the day with clarity, conviction, and heart.

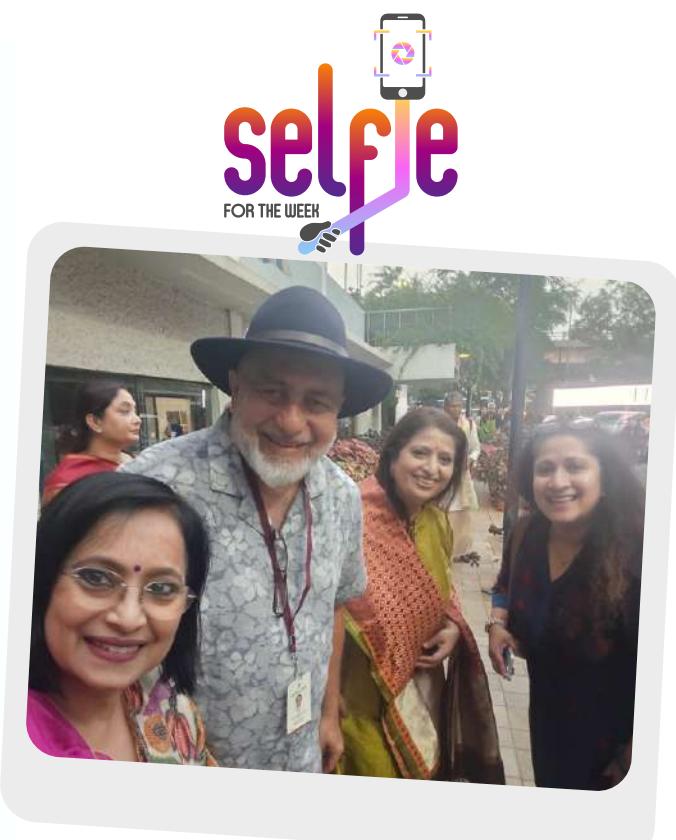
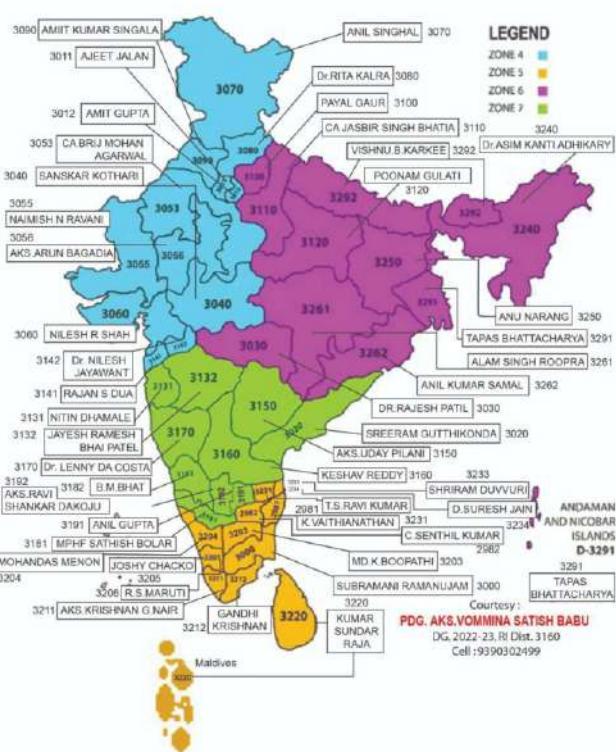
Every moment of this RYLA was thoughtfully curated—a careful, conscious journey spotlighting food security and the fragile, sacred balance between human survival and environmental harmony. It wasn't just a programme; it was a reminder, a responsibility, and a quiet promise that we all carried back with us.

And a special salute to the brilliant force behind it all, the Rotaract Club of New College who planned and conducted the programme with infectious positivity, unstoppable enthusiasm, and a commitment that lifted the entire experience into something truly unforgettable.

5 January 2026 unfolded like a warm, life-affirming hymn to the planet—164 brimming, wide-eyed participants gathering for RYLA – Soil and Me, a programme that didn't just teach us something... it softly shook us awake: our first and truest mother has always been Mother Earth. With grace and purpose, RCM's President Nikhil Raj, alongside Youth Service Director, Rtn Suman Voora and RYLA Chairman, Rtn Himanshu Bhudia, flagged off the RYLA from Hyatt, setting the morning in motion like the opening beat of something deeply meaningful.



### Governors 2026 - 2027



# The FUTURE IS HERE @ RCM Selaiyur Vocational Services Training Centre



THEN

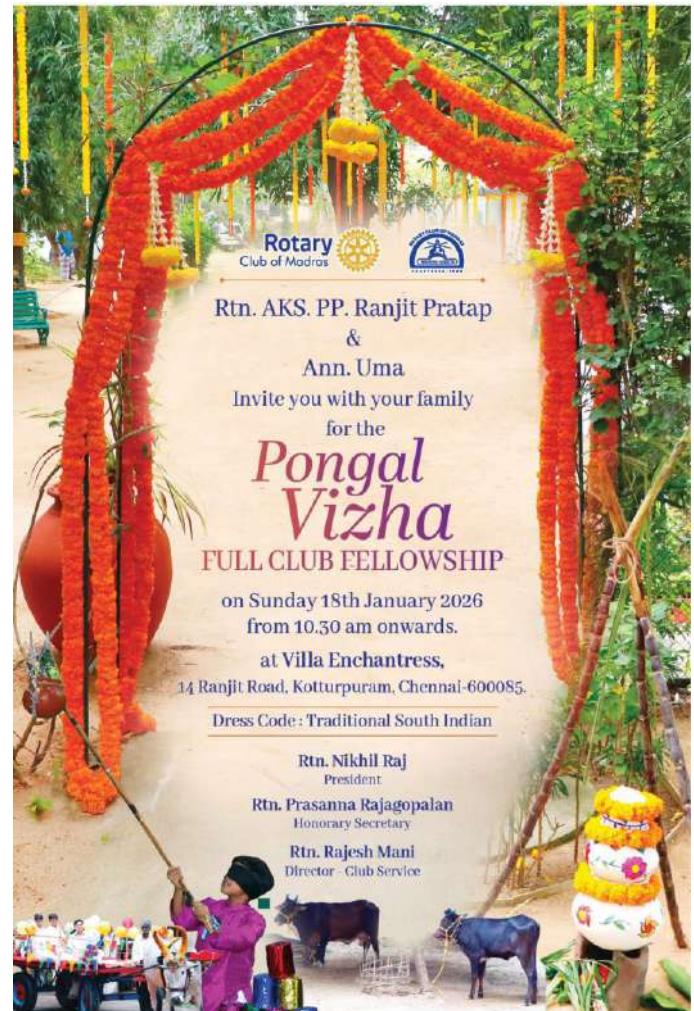


NOW



Guru Shree Shantivijai Jain College for Women proudly installed its Rotaract Club on 8 Jan 2026 at Vardhaman Hall. It was an afternoon of purpose, leadership, and service with inspiration from Guests of Honour Suman Voora (Youth Services Director, Rotary Club of Madras) and RTR.PPPHF. Bavitra Shanmugam (District Treasurer).







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