

# The Lighthouse

Rotary  
Club of Madras



WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

ISSUE 31

February 01  
2026



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

BIRTHDAYS 🎂	
PP Rtn Mohan P N	26 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Dr Kunal Patel	26 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Anil Saraogi	28 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn PDG Kamdar J B	28 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Dr Ramachandran B	28 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Rajit Mhetras	29 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Jhaver R K	30 <sup>th</sup> January
Dr Ravi Ramalingam, Spouse of Rtn Shanno Ravi	27 <sup>th</sup> January
Cyrus Poncha, Spouse of Rtn Roshan Cyrus Poncha	27 <sup>th</sup> January
Rajesh Devaraj, Spouse of Rtn Archana Parikh	29 <sup>th</sup> January
Vinolia Lobo, Spouse of Rtn Antony Lobo	31 <sup>th</sup> January
ANNIVERSARY 🎉	
Rtn P S Jagdish & Meera	26 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Himanshu Budhia & Stuti	26 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Shivakumar Vellur & Jayanthi	26 <sup>th</sup> January
PP Rtn Dr Shivkumar B & Sudha Shivkumar	27 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Rajesh Shankar & Lalitha	29 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Ravishankar R & Geetha	29 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Mahinder Jain & Sarita Jain	30 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Visvanathan A M & Poornima	30 <sup>th</sup> January
Rtn Hemant P Chordia & Pinky	31 <sup>st</sup> January
Rtn N Ramji & Soundarya	1 <sup>st</sup> February
PP Rtn Kapil Chitale S & Kashmira	2 <sup>nd</sup> February



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Rtn Akur Raman Raghunandan  
Rtn Dr Rama Narasimhan

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Bulletin Design:  
**YATRATECHS**

**Rotary Club of Madras**  
30<sup>th</sup> Weekly Meeting  
TOPIC:  
**INDIAN HOCKEY**  
Yesterday, Today  
and Tomorrow

**SPEAKER:**  
**MUNEER SAIT**  
Former India Goalkeeper, Olympian  
and a legendary figure in Hockey.

Moderated by **PP Satyan Bhatt**

Tuesday, 3rd February 2026 | 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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# Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)

## Minutes of the 29th Weekly Meeting held on 26-01-26

### at Selaiyur Vocational Service Centre at 11am

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#### Call to Order

The meeting was formally called to order by the President, who welcomed all Rotarians, spouses, beneficiaries, partners and guests. The Rotary Song was rendered.

#### Confirmation of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the 28th Weekly Meeting were confirmed.

#### Welcome Address & Republic Day Message

The minutes of the 27th Weekly Meeting was placed before the house and confirmed.

#### Welcoming Guests

The President welcomed the gathering and highlighted the significance of the 77th Republic Day, Constitutional values of equality, dignity, and opportunity and Rotary's role in women empowerment, skilling, and social upliftment. He lauded the Rotaract Clubs for spearheading the artistic painting of the walls of the Selaiyur campus and giving it a vibrant look. He placed on record his appreciation for the volunteers and organizers

at Selaiyur for managing the logistics despite the challenges of inclement weather. He appreciated the work of Vocational Services Director Rtn Dr Sharon Krishna Rau and the team at Selaiyur on forging and expanding partnerships like Swabodhini, the Tailoring and Aari Unit, MS Office & Tally programs with NIIT certification, and new partnerships with KMECT Foundations and Great Goals Football coaching.

#### Review of Previous Week's Activities

The President recalled the visit of Rtn John Armstrong, grandson of the first President of the Rotary Club of Madras Sir Geoffrey G. Armstrong, who was the Chairman of the Chennai Port Trust from 1929 to 1944. A visit to the Port Trust was facilitated by Rtn Vivek

Harinarain, where historical club connections were re-established.

He made announcements about the upcoming Golf Tournament on 30th Jan 26 and the pre-tournament Full Club Fellowship at the Pullman Hotel on 29th Jan 26.

#### Secretary's Announcements by Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan

Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan announced the Birthdays, Spouses' Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries for the week. The next weekly meeting is scheduled for 3 Feb 26 featuring a

Talk by former India Goalkeeper and Olympian Munir Sait moderated by Rtn PP Satyan Bhatt.

#### Special Donation Announcement

Special Donation Announcement: PP Rtn Jayshree Sridhar announced that she was inspired by the thoughtful appeal in Rtn R Ravishankar's daughter's wedding invitation requesting guests to refrain from offering gifts and bouquets and instead contribute to a

charity of their choice. PP Rtn Mohan Raman set the initiative in motion towards the purchase of a printer for the Selaiyur campus followed by PP Rtn Jayshree Sridhar. This was followed by many Rotarians with their donation pledges which was truly heartwarming.

#### Program Proceedings

The main program was anchored by Rtn Sanjay Rao Chaganti.

### Address by Rtn Dr Sharon Krishna Rau (Director, Vocational Services)

Rtn Dr Sharon Krishna Rau thanked all the Rotarians for taking the effort to travel to Selaiyur for the Republic Day Celebration. She mentioned that this was the third time that Republic Day was being celebrated by holding

an RCM weekly meeting at Selaiyur and hoped that the tradition would continue. She congratulated the graduating students for their efforts in earning their certification.

### Address by Rtn Rajib Kumar Hota (Chairperson, Vocational Services)

Rtn Rajib Kumar Hota stated that the Selaiyur team's overarching endeavour is to transform the Selaiyur campus into a centre of excellence. He recalled the vision of past Director Rtn Sanjay Rao Chaganti and highlighted subsequent initiatives undertaken in collaboration with NIIT Delhi and the Skill India Foundation, including certification programmes, infrastructure development, and the impact created for over 250 beneficiaries who have successfully earned certificates.

He made special mention of Rtn Rinku Mecheri's initiative in conducting a Spoken English Course. Another well-received initiative was the Women's Health Camp, organised in collaboration with VS Hospitals, Chetpet, which benefited 140 participants.

Rtn Rajib Kumar Hota lauded the efforts of Ms Deepthi Narayanan, spouse of Rtn Prasanna

**Chief Guest Address: Ms C J Sethulakshmi of YRG Care:** Ms Sethulakshmi delivered an inspiring motivational address to the graduating beneficiaries on overcoming challenges to reach one's goal.

**Motivational Address: PP Rtn Mohan Raman:** PP Rtn Mohan Raman traced the journey of Superstar Rajnikant to drive home the message of skill, perseverance, learning, faith, and self-belief.

**Cultural Program:** A cultural program was staged with performances by Selaiyur and Swabodhini students.

**Special Announcement by PP Rtn Rajendran Sabanayagam:** PP Rtn Rajendran Sabanayagam announced that his company would offer placement in Tally and other IT related work for the graduating women of Selaiyur.

Rajagopalan, for spearheading tailoring initiatives at Selaiyur. Ms Deepthi also coordinated a Holistic Living Stress Management Programme at the campus.

Rtn Archana Parikh was given a special mention for her valuable marketing inputs for the tailoring programme.

Rtn Rajib Kumar Hota further highlighted ongoing partnership with Swabodhini, an institution dedicated to empowering children and young adults with autism, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, and other neurodevelopmental conditions, as another significant initiative at Selaiyur.

Rtn Rajib Kumar Hota acknowledged the efforts of Rtn Sessa Sai and the Rotaract Clubs of Vepery, Jeppiaar Engineering College and WCC for the artistic wall painting of the Selaiyur campus.

**Beneficiary Address: Mrs Ishwari (Graduating Student):** On behalf of the graduating students, Mrs Ishwari expressed her gratitude to the Rotary Club of Madras, while also conveying the needs and challenges faced by the graduating students.

### Vote of Thanks

Ms Deepthi Narayanan proposed a Vote of Thanks acknowledging the President and Board, Organizing Committee, Selaiyur team, trainers, partners, donors, Rotarians, volunteers, guests, speakers and beneficiaries.

### Adjournment

The President formally adjourned the meeting. The program concluded with Certificate distribution, Group photographs and Lunch.

## From Skills to Superstars: A Republic Day of Transformation at Selaiyur

The 77th Republic Day celebrations at the Selaiyur Vocational Service Center unfolded with a resilience that mirrored the spirit of the nation. Despite unexpected rains turning the grounds slushy, the atmosphere remained vibrant, underscored by the determination of the Rotary Club of Madras to empower the community. Against a backdrop of freshly painted murals by the Rotaractors, the event

marked the club's 29th weekly meeting, a gathering dedicated to the ideals of equality, dignity, and opportunity. The overarching theme, "The Future is Here," signaled a shift from previous years, celebrating the center's evolution into a hub of excellence through strategic partnerships with NIT and the Skill India Foundation.



The morning was defined by powerful narratives of transformation. Guest Speaker Sethu Lakshmi energized the audience by challenging the graduating women to embrace the speed of modern technology. She illustrated how the world has shifted to paperless offices and cloud kitchens, urging the women to run fast in the race of life and seize the opportunities scattered before them. Her message was one of boldness; she encouraged the women not just to hang their certificates on a wall, but to use their new skills to overcome challenges with confidence. Building on this energy, Guest of Honor, PP Rtn Mohan Raman delivered a stirring address, dubbing the graduates "Superstars".

He wove the legendary tale of Rajinikanth, tracing the actor's journey from a bus conductor to a cinema icon, to illustrate that ambition must be matched by preparation. Citing the concept that mastery requires ten thousand hours of practice, he emphasized that hard work is the hidden engine behind every success story, from Sachin Tendulkar to M.S. Subbulakshmi. Crucially, he reminded the gathering that every hero needs a mentor and for the students at Selaiyur, the Rotary Club serves as that guiding force, providing the support system necessary to turn dreams into reality.



The true heart of the event, however, beat in the testimonials of the beneficiaries. Eshwari, a fifty-eight-year-old grandmother and Xerox shop owner, stole the show with her defiance of age barriers. Having mastered MS Office and Tally to work "smarter" rather than harder, she eloquently stated that she sought the Goddess of Knowledge, knowing that prosperity would naturally follow. Her practical appeal for part-time employment opportunities for homemakers received an immediate, tangible response from the floor, with offers of employment arising instantly, proving the power of the Rotary network to effect real-world change.



From the graceful dance performances by the students to the inclusion of the special needs children from Subodhini, the event was a kaleidoscope of community spirit. As the National Anthem resonated and the flag was honored, the gathering at Selaiyur stood as a testament to a stronger, fairer, and more compassionate India, where skills are honed, confidence is built, and the future is not just awaited, but actively created.



# Child Care Institutions and Mental Health of Children: An Indian Perspective

In India, Child Care Institutions (CCIs)—also known as children’s homes—play a vital role in sheltering vulnerable children, including orphans, abandoned minors, and those rescued from abuse, trafficking, or extreme

neglect. While these institutions provide essential protection and basic needs, ensuring the mental well-being of children in care remains a deeply challenging and critically important responsibility.

## Psychological Impact of Institutional Care

Many children in CCIs have endured traumatic experiences before entering care: loss of parents, domestic violence, extreme poverty, or exploitation. These adverse experiences can manifest as anxiety, depression, attachment difficulties, and behavioural problems. In the absence of

stable and nurturing caregiving, institutional environments can further heighten emotional distress. Studies from both Indian and global contexts consistently show that children in institutional settings often exhibit higher levels of psychological difficulties compared to their peers in family-based care.

## Key Mental Health Challenges

### Attachment and Emotional Security:

Children in CCIs may struggle with forming secure emotional bonds. Frequent caregiver turnover, inadequate individual attention, and lack of consistent emotional support can hinder healthy attachment development, resulting in difficulties in relationships later in

life.

### Identity and Self-Esteem Issues:

Growing up in institutions may impact a child’s sense of self-worth. Feelings of abandonment, stigmatization, and social exclusion can contribute to low self-esteem and identity confusion, particularly during adolescence.

## Behavioural and Developmental Concerns

A structured but impersonal care environment might not always cater to individual developmental needs. Children may display aggression, withdrawal, or hyperactivity, which often stem from unaddressed emotional trauma rather than “misbehaviour.”

## Policy Landscape in India

India’s legal framework, including the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, emphasizes the child’s right to a safe, supportive environment and encourages deinstitutionalization wherever possible. The National Child Rights Policy and guidelines from the Ministry of Women and Child Development advocate for family-based alternatives such as foster care, sponsorship, and adoption. However, implementation gaps often limit the timely transition of children from institutional care to nurturing family settings.

## Pathways to Better Mental Health Support

**Trauma-Informed Care:** CCIs must adopt trauma-sensitive practices that recognize and address emotional wounds rather than focusing solely on physical care.

**Professional Mental Health Services:** Regular access to psychologists, counsellors, and social workers should be mandatory. Early screening and intervention can prevent long-term psychological issues.

### Strengthening Family Links:

Whenever safe and feasible, efforts should be made to reunite children with families or provide family-based care. Support for families at risk can prevent unnecessary institutionalization.

### Capacity Building:

Training caregivers in emotional support, child psychology, and positive communication is essential for healthy psychosocial development.

## Conclusion

Childcare Institutions in India serve as lifelines for vulnerable children. Yet, shelter alone is not enough. Prioritizing mental health through compassionate caregiving, professional support, and community integration can transform institutional care into a foundation for resilience, hope, and holistic well-being.

Dr. Rajesh T Kalam  
Rehabilitation Psychologist  
Senior Manager-BTS  
Rotary Club of Madras

## A Fireside Feast of Fellowship & Flute-Filled Nostalgia

A delightful evening unfolded at Alok and Seema Bhargava's Rotary fireside dinner party, one that felt less like a gathering and more like a warm, laughing embrace. The

aroma of UP-style cuisine set the tone instantly, tempting every palate and turning each bite into a happy little celebration.



The conversations were an absolute standout—lively, effortless, and the kind guests keep talking about long after they've left. Adding a magical touch, flute music drifted through the evening, transporting everyone into a nostalgic reverie and wrapping the ambience in quiet charm.

With cocktails flowing, smiles widening, and camaraderie at its finest, the fellowship was as always infectious. Heartfelt thanks to the gracious hosts, Alok and Seema, who personally looked after every guest and made everyone feel truly at home. Because really... RCM isn't just a club—it's one big family.





Radhakrishnan S (Spouse of Rtn Nalini)

## Paediatric ICU ambulance donated to children's hospital

SI Investments and Broking Ltd, Mumbai, and Rotary Club of Madras donated a paediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU) ambulance to Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital (KKCTH) on Tuesday, 27 Jan 26. This was to safely transport critically ill newborn babies and children across long distances.

Siddharth Iyer, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, SI Investments and Broking Private Limited, and Nikhil Raj, President of Rotary Club of Madras, were present along with Janani Sankar, Medical Director of KKCTH on the occasion. The vehicle costs Rs.31 lakhs.



Bala Ramachandran, Head, Department of Paediatric Intensive Care Unit, KKCTH, said, the ambulance would be utilized to go and retrieve seriously ill children, stabilize them before transfer, start intensive care and continue in the ambulance while travelling to KKCTH. He noted that they received children from places including Chengalpattu, Tirupati, Madurai, and Bengaluru and Vijayawada. The ambulance would be equipped with

medical equipment including a patient monitor, infusion pumps, a ventilator, and an ultrasound machine. It has two large oxygen cylinders. A team of doctors and nurses who are specially trained in the long-distance transport of seriously ill children would be available, a press release said.

Govind Parikh of Rotary Club of Madras and S. Rengarajan, chief executive officer, KKCTH also spoke.

# Karangal to Dhrusti: Service That Sees Beyond Sight

The Rotaract Club of SDNB Vaishnav College successfully hosted Karangal, a vibrant leadership programme that brought together an inspiring 1,600 Rotaractors.



In a beautiful full-circle moment of service, the proceeds from the programme were generously donated to the Rotaract Club of Dhrusti, a remarkable club led by visually challenged Rotaractors. Adding heart and impact to this initiative, math frames and sticks were sponsored by Anitha, spouse of our Rtn Dr Yeswanth Srinath. With only half the stock available at the Indian Association for the Blind, the remaining requirement has been ordered from Gurgaon, also being sponsored by our ever-generous Anitha.





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