

The Lighthouse

Rotary
Club of Madras



BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

ISSUE 33

February 15
2026



Rotary
Club of Madras



**ROTARY
CLUB OF MADRAS**
DISTRICT 3234

BIRTHDAYS 🎂	
Rtn Sanjay Gulvady	9 th February
Rtn Ranjit Pendurthi	11 th February
PP Rtn Vivek Harinarain	12 th February
Rtn Deepak Chander	15 th February
Rtn Sabina Narayan	15 th February
Pratiba Kadel, Spouse of Rtn Vijay Kumar Kadel	10 th February
Dr Aruna, Spouse of Rtn Dr Ramasubramanian V	15 th February
ANNIVERSARY 🎉	
Rtn Sai Srujan T V & Preethi	9 th February
Rtn Govind Parikh & Sandhya	9 th February
Rtn Balaji Chinni & Vijayalakshmi	9 th February
Rtn Arunachalam Palaniappan & Shruthi	9 th February
Rtn Vikram Jalan & Shailja	10 th February
Rtn Sanjay Gulvady & Priya	10 th February
Rtn Aswath Kumar Reddy & Y Shahaja	10 th February
Rtn Mohit Bajaj & Nikita Bajaj	10 th February
Rtn Vivek A Parachur & Sara B Cherian	11 th February
Rtn Sathiam Ram & Deepa	11 th February
PP Rtn Dr Arulmozhi Varman N V & Uma Varman	12 th February
Rtn Anand Vurgese & Dr Anila Mathan	13 th February
Rtn Udayanarayanan G M & Saraswathi	14 th February
Rtn Jhaver R K & Kiran Jhaver	15 th February
Rtn Dr Sharon Krishna Rau & G Lakshminarayanan	16 th February
Rtn Ramakanth Akula & Niharika Akula	16 th February
Rtn Siddharth Ganeriwala & Harsha Sajani Ganeriwala	16 th February



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YATRATECHS



Rotary Club of Madras

32nd Weekly Meeting



TOPIC:
The Beyond the Likes
"Age of The Influencer"



SPEAKERS

Ms. Shamshad Begum
@Begumschoice

Ms. Shitija
@Fitchefbyshitija

Social Media Influencers

Moderated by **Rtn.Mohit Bajaj**

Tuesday, 17th 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 31st Weekly Meeting held on 10-02-2026

at Hotel Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

CALL TO ORDER

The President called the 31st weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras to order at 1:30 pm and the Rotary Song was played.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the 30th weekly meeting was placed for confirmation and approved.

WELCOMING GUESTS

The President extended a warm welcome to the following guests and visiting Rotarians:

Mr. Ramesh and Mr. Sridhar Sankaran, Probus Club Members

Mr. Bharat, Rotary Club of Devils Lake

Mr. Venkat, guest of Rtn Sarada Sriram

Mr. Sushil Jethwani

A special welcome was also extended to the Guest Speaker, Mr. Sanjay Parthasarathy.

CLUB UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT:

Blood Donation Camp: A blood donation camp is underway at Loyola College, spearheaded by PP Rtn George B Cherian. The District Governor and the President were present at the camp in the morning. The target is to collect 1,000 units of blood.

Installation of a New Club: The President informed members about the installation of a new Rotary Club the previous day. PP Rtn George B Cherian, District Chairman – Membership, along with the District Governor, DGN Rtn Dr Vijaya Bharathi Rangarajan, DGND Rtn S Ravi, Secretary Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan and the President Rtn Nikhil Raj were present.

Inauguration of Water Recycling System and Treatment Plant at Vandalur Zoo: The President appreciated Rtn Samyukta Bhaskar and Rtn Sid Hande for spearheading this initiative and warmly acknowledged the

active involvement of Green Rotarians.

Fireside and RYLA: A fireside meeting and a RYLA program were held over the weekend. Further details would be shared by Rtn Sessa Sai and Rtn Suman in the following meeting.

Medical Camp: Members were informed about the monthly medical camp scheduled for the next day at His and Her Place, Pandy Bazaar. The camp typically benefits around 100 individuals and includes basic health checks.

Secretary's Announcements: Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan announced Birthdays, Spouse Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries for the week.

The next weekly meeting will be held on 17 February 2026, a regular afternoon meeting featuring influencers. Speaker details will be shared later.

FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE

Rtn Sandhya Sridhar, Director – Fundraising, addressed the members regarding “The Art of Quilting” fundraiser featuring hand-quilted toys and quilts donated by Ms Dolly Nanavati, mother of Rtn Roshan Poncha.

- Each toy is priced at Rs.5,000 apiece. Members are invited to contribute money to RCM for donating one or more of these toys to the children’s wards at VHS Hospitals. Proceeds will support the HPVAX Program.
- Two quilts priced at Rs.50,000 and Rs.30,000 respectively have also been donated by Ms Dolly Nanavati and available for purchase by members, with the proceeds earmarked for the HPVAX Program.
- One quilt for Rs.30,000/- was generously purchased by Rtn Suman Voora.

Rtn Sandhya Sridhar expressed appreciation to Ms Dolly Nanavati and Rtn Roshan Poncha for the initiative and members applauded the

GUEST SPEAKER SESSION

Introduction: Mr Sanjay Parthasarathy was introduced by Rtn Biswajit Babu P B who spoke about their long-standing family association and highlighted Mr Parthasarathy's academic excellence, professional achievements, leadership at Microsoft, entrepreneurial journey, contribution to startups, passion for cricket, and involvement in art and philanthropy.

Speaker Address: Mr Sanjay Parthasarathy addressed the members on artificial intelligence, emphasizing the importance of combining technology with empathy. His talk covered themes of instinct, creativity, and neuroscience, and was well received by the members.

Token of Appreciation: The Guest Speaker was presented with a copy of "Timeless Legacy – 97 Years of Our History."

Vote of Thanks: The Vote of Thanks was proposed by Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan.

He also announced that by 1:30 pm, 356 units of blood had already been collected at the blood donation camp.

Members were reminded about the upcoming Full Club Fellowship Quiz Program at the Nawab's Palace and requested to confirm their participation.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the President adjourned the meeting.

THE HUMAN SPARK IN THE AGE OF AI: WHY CREATIVITY IS OUR ULTIMATE SURVIVAL SKILL



The atmosphere at the Rotary Club was electric, a "full house" gathered on short notice for an event that wasn't even on the original calendar. The draw? A "homeboy" returned: Sanjay, a scion of the TVS family, a tech veteran who helped launch .NET at Microsoft, and a current co-owner of the Seattle Orcas cricket team.

But Sanjay wasn't there to talk about cricket

scores or corporate earnings. He was there to address the existential anxiety simmering in boardrooms and living rooms alike: In a world of rapidly advancing Artificial Intelligence, is there any hope left for humans?

His answer was a resounding "Yes." The savior of humanity, according to Sanjay, isn't more computing power—it is creativity.

THE SKEPTIC AND THE OPTIMIST

Introducing his upcoming book, tentatively titled Creative Engines, Sanjay positioned himself as a unique observer of the AI revolution. Having encountered the first generation of AI at MIT in 1986. He described himself as a "skeptic" of the tech industry's hype machine—noting that the industry that coined the term "vaporware" is prone to exaggeration but an

"optimist" regarding technology's ability to raise living standards.

He broke the tension early by dismissing the dystopian view that machines will outsmart us. "Will machines be more intelligent and creative than humans? The answer is no from where I stand today," he declared.



Redefining Intelligence: The "Pratibha" FACTOR

Sanjay took the audience on a philosophical journey, contrasting Western and Eastern approaches to the mind. While Western thought often equates knowledge with "justified true beliefs" and rational, slow structures, Eastern philosophy embraces instinct. He pointed to the Indian concept of Pratibha (creative inspiration) and Shakti (creative energy) to

argue that true creativity goes beyond simple IQ. "Creativity is the evolutionary operating system of humanity," Sanjay explained. It is the trait that has allowed the species to survive existential threats for millennia. Unlike raw intelligence, creativity requires emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and the ability to be open to new experiences.



THE "SEATTLE ORCAS" AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

To illustrate the limitations of machines, Sanjay shared a personal anecdote about naming his Major League Cricket team. Faced with a six-week deadline, his initial conscious thought was "Seattle Sixers." However, logic kicked in—there was already a Sydney Sixers. He and his team agonizingly debated options like "Seattle Captains" and "Seattle Sea Kings" without success. They went to bed frustrated, but the next morning, the answer was obvious: **The**

Seattle Orcas.

This, Sanjay noted, is the process of "incubation." The brain works on problems while we sleep, utilizing a fast, subconscious processing speed that machines cannot replicate. "Machines are really good at the slow, but they do it fast," he said. They can simulate reasoning, but they lack the "fast subconscious" leaps that drive human epiphany.

WHY MACHINES DON'T "FEEL"

Perhaps the most compelling argument of the afternoon was the distinction between emotion and feeling. Machines, through effective computing can detect emotions. They know if your heart rate spikes or your blood rushes. But they cannot feel. "Emotions last for moments. Feelings last for hours and days. Emotion is reaction. Feeling allows you to plan things,"

Sanjay said.

Because machines lack this biological embodiment, the physical sensation of gravity, the "gut feeling," or the tacit knowledge gained from actually performing surgery rather than reading about it—they cannot possess the metacognition required to frame problems the way humans do.

During the Q&A, the conversation turned to the inevitable economic impact. Sanjay offered a pragmatic forecast. Jobs that rely on "fluid intelligence" repetitive tasks with clear "yes or no" answers, such as basic coding or chess are vulnerable. "Code is one of those things where there is a yes or no answer... those are the kinds of things that I think are going to go away," he admitted.

However, roles requiring "crystallized intelligence," judgment, and physical presence are safe. He cited radiologists:

predictions claimed AI would replace them, yet the number of radiologists has increased because AI combined with human judgment yields better results than either alone.

His advice for the next generation? Move towards "full stack" roles that combine empathy, design, and architecture. "Helping people... define the problem, that's the role of product management or designer," he advised. The future belongs to those who can frame the questions, not just those who can compute the answers.

YOGA FOR THE MIND

Sanjay concluded with a call to action that felt less like a tech strategy and more like a wellness prescription. If creativity is our edge, we must train it.

"It is like yoga. It's yoga for your mind," he said.

He urged the audience to engage in "divergent thinking" exercises, to take walks (which research shows boosts creativity), and to nurture intrinsic curiosity. By understanding how

our brains work, valuing the subconscious, the emotional, and the embodied experience, we can ensure that while machines may process the world, humans will continue to create it.

As the meeting adjourned and the Rotarians moved to the fellowship lunch, the mood had shifted from apprehension to empowerment. The machines are coming, certainly, but as Sanjay reminded them, the "creative engine" remains strictly human.



A New Benchmark in Service: 633 Units in a Single Day



ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS
Proud to announce that
We have set a new benchmark in mobilizing
633 Units of Blood
in a
Single Day
10.02.2026

We would like to acknowledge Loyola College, Jesuit Management, Loyola Alumni Club, Rotaract Club of Loyola College, Youth Red Cross Society, Professors and Students.
Special thanks to
VHS Hospital, Tharamani, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. General Hospital, Central, Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children, Egmore & Indian Red Cross Society, Egmore

Thank you to all the 633 donors, participated in this life-saving initiative



AKS. Rtn. Vinod Sarangi District Governor - 2025-2026 RI Dist 3234	Rtn. Suryanarayana Rao Dist. Chairman, Comm. Service Health, RI Dist 3234	Rtn. George B Cherian Dist. Chairman, Membership Committee, RI Dist 3234
Rtn. Nikhil Raj President, Rotary Club of Madras	Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan Secretary, Rotary Club of Madras	Rtn. Arjun Ananth Director, Community Health, Rotary Club of Madras
		Rtn. Rinku Mecheri Chairperson, RCM Blood Donation Committee

With immense pride, we salute PP Rtn George B Cherian for spearheading one of the largest single-day blood donation camps—setting a powerful new benchmark by mobilizing 633 units of blood in a single day (10.02.2026).

This extraordinary life-saving feat was made possible through seamless collaboration with the Rotaract Club of Loyola College and the tireless on-ground force of Rtn Rinku Mecheri's Chennai Volunteers, under the banner of the Rotary Club of Madras.

Service in action. Leadership in motion. Lives saved—one donor at a time.



A Midday of Meaningful Connections: Rotary's Gala Get-Together at the Madras Club

Rotary thrives on service, sustained by deep fellowship. That spirit was on full display at a Gala Get-Together hosted by Indra Subramanyam, held on Saturday, 7 Feb 26 at the Shamiana, Madras Club, from 12 noon to 3:00 pm.

Designed as an unhurried social afternoon, the gathering brought together Rotarians and their families in a setting that balanced heritage with warmth. With no formal proceedings, the focus stayed where it mattered: catching up with familiar faces, welcoming newer members into the fold, and strengthening the friendships that make Rotary more than a calendar of meetings.



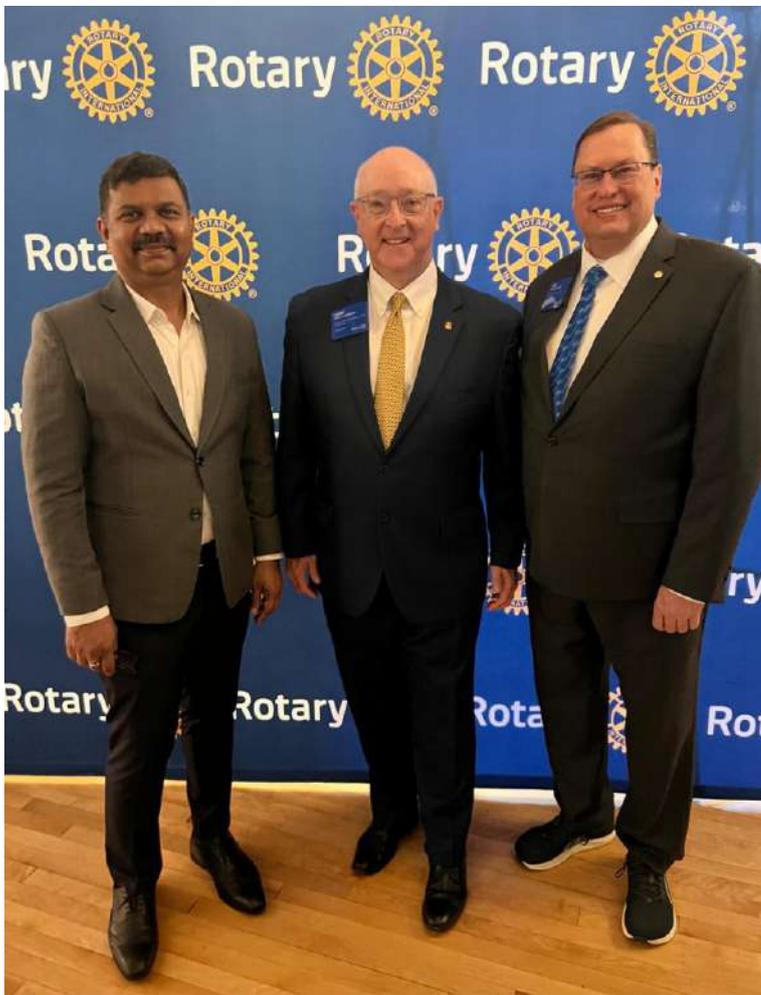
A highlight of the afternoon was the food—thoughtfully chosen, beautifully served, and genuinely enjoyed. Members lingered over conversations as plates made their rounds, with many remarking on the variety and how delicious everything was. The shared meal did what it always does best: it brought people together, sparked easy laughter, and turned brief hellos into longer, memorable catch-ups.

In a fast-paced world, fellowship moments like these are essential. They create trust, renew energy, and make collaboration easier when service calls. Fellowship is not separate from Rotary's mission—it fuels it.

As the afternoon wound down, what lingered was a stronger sense of community: connected, cohesive, and future-ready.



-Rtn Samyuktha Baskar

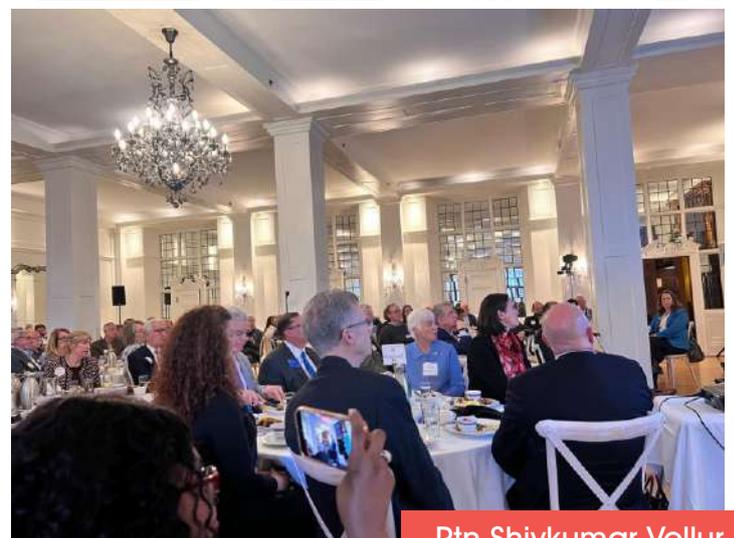


Today, 12 Feb 26 was truly a memorable and proud moment as I had the privilege of participating in the Minneapolis "City of Lakes" Rotary Club during the visit of RIP Nominee Rtn. Larry A. Lunsford!

My heartfelt thanks to our very own PP Rtn N K Gopinath for making the connection with Rtn. Tom Gump, RI Director Nominee. I am especially grateful to Rtn. Tom and Rtn. Catherine for their warm hospitality, for arranging this special visit, and for graciously introducing me to Rtn. Larry.

The energy in the room was incredible — a fully packed venue with Rotarians joining from multiple states across the U.S. and even Australia. The spirit of fellowship, leadership, and global Rotary unity was truly inspiring.

An unforgettable Rotary experience that beautifully reflects the power of service and connection across borders!



-Rtn Shivkumar Vellur

Water Recycling System Inaugurated at Arignar Anna Zoological Park

On Monday, 9 Feb 2026, the Rotary Club of Madras (RI District 3234) inaugurated a Water Recycling and Recirculation System at the Langur Enclosure in Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur.

The project was implemented by the Environmental Action Committee of the Rotary Club of Madras, with the Institute for Climate and Environment (ICE) serving as the Knowledge Partner and Circen Technologies as the technology provider. The system has a treatment and recirculation capacity of 400,000 litres per day and is designed to significantly reduce the enclosure's dependence on fresh water.



With the commissioning of this system, the Langur enclosure is expected to reduce its external water requirement by approximately 80% with immediate effect. Water used within the enclosure will now be treated and recirculated instead of being discharged after single use. This intervention focuses on improving operational efficiency while reducing freshwater draw.

The system was formally inaugurated by Thiru. Srinivas R. Reddy, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Government of Tamil Nadu.

Rtn Nikhil Raj, President, Rotary Club of Madras, attended as Guest of Honour. Also present were Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan, Honorary Secretary; Rtn Suresh Amirapu, Director – Community Service Development; and Rtn B.V. Gautam, Chairperson – Environment Action Committee, along with fellow Rotarians who supported the initiative.



The Langur enclosure water recycling system was made possible through the generous support of R B Agarwala & Co., along with co-sponsors Rtn Shri Shakthi Girish and Rtn Suresh Amirapu.

In addition to the inauguration of the Langur system, the Club also laid the foundation stone for the Water Treatment Plant for the Otter Pond, sponsored by Aspire Systems

(India) Pvt. Ltd. Further, the upcoming water recycling system for the Chimpanzee Enclosure will be supported by DRA Homes.

What began with the Langur enclosure is now extending further. With the foundation stone laid for the Otter pond and plans in place for the Chimpanzee enclosure, the Club is steadily building momentum in supporting improved water use across the Zoo.

This initiative reflects the Club's continued focus on practical, infrastructure-led environmental work — projects designed to deliver measurable results and remain functional well beyond inauguration day.

-Rtn Sid Hande



THEME: BOLD BEGINNINGS AND QUIET TRIUMPHS



Q1: Looking back to your very first day as a Rotarian, what was your initial impression and what unexpected lesson did you learn in your first year that still guides you?

A1: The pinning of the Rotary emblem on my lapel in the mandatory formal suit and tie, along with the words said, clearly told me that I was joining an institution steeped in rich tradition. That warm welcome into a diverse, committed, friendly and caring group, barely a month after my wedding, made my spouse and me feel very comfortable, and that wanting to belong.

Before that day, my first impression of Rotary wasn't exactly flattering.

When I was proposed for membership, a very senior Rotarian (not in RCM) called me to his office for what he termed "Rotary Information." It felt less like an introduction and more like an assessment. He said that I was being selected primarily because I could contribute money and that I should become a Paul Harris Fellow on the day I joined.

Usually, that kind of pressure would have made me walk out. For some reason, I didn't. I joined anyway.

One great aspect of Rotary is that all positions and offices held are only temporary and pass on. Each Rotarian is treated always as an equal. Everyone gets an equal opportunity to contribute or participate if he or she desires and at the time of his or her choosing.

Q2. Sometimes, triumph doesn't look like success. Was there a Rotary project that didn't go as planned but in hindsight, turned out to be a quiet triumph in disguise? What changed because of it?

A2: The projects that are a club's legacy should be carefully cultivated and not allowed to fail. If the need is reduced, they should be repurposed in a manner that is useful again. I have seen many projects in my earlier club shut down due to lack of interest or inability to find resources. And they were such great

projects, still very relevant.

Great projects will create wonderful effects for the beneficiaries and transform their lives. But for the club, the success of a project depends first and foremost upon the wide and active participation of its members.

Many times (not always), members are unaware of the projects done by the club and could lead to their low participation.

I have also understood that every Rotarian has his/her strengths in abundance, some seen, unseen or untapped. A green Rotarian will not always be uninhibited to mingle or contribute. The duty and success of a club's elderly people depends on how they bring forth and channelize the youngsters' energy and positivity. Sometimes it takes fresh blood to get things going again. A mixture of the old and the new is the recipe.

Q3: Imagine RCM could relive one moment from its past through your eyes. What moment would you choose, and why do you think it still holds a lesson or magic for today's generation?

A3: How does one choose a single moment from a legacy as rich as this. Would love to have been at the first charter night, the first Governor installation, the first extension of a club on India and a club overseas, and so many more such events. But the ultimate pleasure would have been to sit in that little committee meeting when Polio Plus was adopted as a mission and again when it was announced that the dreaded disease was eradicated.

With the 100th year coming up, there is so much more to do, and so much more RCM can do in every area of service, and the magic will always remain as long as people care for each other and our world. With humane spirit so alive, friendship and unity can and will make RCM and Rotary shine brighter than ever before.

-Rtn Palaniappan E M C



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