



FrancESCO Arezzo
RI President 2025-26



Dr. Kameswar S. Elangbam
District Governor RID 3240



Chandana Das
President, Rotary Club of Shillong



DG Rtn (Dr.) K.S. Elangbam with RI president Francesco Arezzo in ORC Evanston institute.

Transforming lives in Manipur

Takhel, a small village just 9km from East Imphal, Manipur, now has a new public toilet complex, thanks to the initiative of the Rotary Club of Imphal, RID 3240. "The RCC in Takhel mooted the idea, as the village lacked a common facility. Every household has a toilet at home, but there was none in the public space," notes N Muhindro Singh, the club's president-elect.

The facility has been built in the bustling community market area and will benefit the 1,500 villagers who frequent it daily. With one unit each for men and women, an overhead tank for running water, and dedicated caretakers — a man and a woman employed by the RCC — maintenance has been taken care of. The ₹1.21 lakh project was supported through district grants.

This 53-year-old club, with 113 members, has been consistently making a difference through innovative

(Continued on page 2)

India's dramatic rise in space technology

A very informative and entertaining session at the Lead25 Conclave in Chennai was an exhaustive, and yet entertaining hour-long talk by ISRO chairman V Narayanan. He took the audience through a journey of what India and its capabilities were when we got Independence in 1947, and where we stand today. Particularly when it comes to space research and application, launching of satellites and sending missions to the moon.

At the outset, he thanked Rotary for its work for local communities and said he was highly impressed by the 100 social service projects launched during this conference, "particularly the '100-autos-for-women' project which would give economic empowerment to 100 families."

He came from a humble background, he said and recalled that when India attained Independence, 94.5 per cent of its population was below the poverty line. "I studied in a Tamil medium school in Kanyakumari district. In those days barely 50 per cent of the people had two meals a day, the remaining 50 per cent survived on just one meal. From that humble beginning, when we depended on food imports, we are now a foodgrains exporting country, and have become the 4th largest economy in the world."

"From an era when we had to transport a rocket by a bicycle, today we are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with developed countries in the space programme." ISRO Chairman

The average life expectancy then was 33 and deadly diseases such as polio were rampant; today that age had gone up to 72 years and India has become a polio-free country. "Take the education sector; at Independence, only 12 per cent Indians were literate; today that number has gone up to over 79.7 per cent. Primary schools have gone up from 2,825 to 8.5 lakh. There were no IITs, IIMs or AIIMS. We have to appreciate our education system, including the village schools, from where I come. In those days only 3,091 villages had access to electricity; I come from a developed state like Tamil Nadu and a developed district like

(Continued on page 2)



India's dramatic rise in space technology .. (Contd from page 1)

Kanyakumari. In my village we got electricity when I was in Class 9; till then I studied using kerosene lamps. Today almost all of our 60 lakh villages are electrified."

Narayanan said India had developed to a great extent and predicted that "before our 100th year of Independence, we will be a developed country. I have no doubt about it. We have grown in all sectors... infrastructure development, air transport, telecom, industries, education, health, agriculture, and science and technology."

"Sending people to the moon is very easy, but we have to send and bring them back... we are working on that!" ISRO Chairman.
(Source: Rotary News-Rasheeda Bhagat)



ISRO Chief V Narayanan and Deepavali Rockets

At the Lead25 Conclave in Chennai ISRO chairman V Narayanan emerged a darling of the audience with his simplicity, humility and a very earthy sense of humour. He had the participants in the packed hall in splits when he described an anecdote about how he learned, the very hard way, that unlike the rockets and satellites he and his team at ISRO make, Deepavali rockets have a mind of their own.

"I can tell you that there is a small difference between our satellite launch vehicles and our Deepavali rockets. Deepavali rockets... when you fire them, about 10 to 20 per cent don't work, and whenever such a rocket works, it goes wherever it wants to! But our rockets have to be very precise," he said.

Narayanan described his experience with a Deepavali rocket last year; five days before the festival of lights, he was driving down from Madurai to Kanyakumari with his wife Dr Kavitha, who was present in the audience. On the way, he saw many shops selling crackers. "The attractive display made me stop the car, get down and I bought 10 rockets of 700mm height. My wife thought it was something for the children," and held her peace.

"On the Deepavali day, I asked my son why don't you fire a rocket and he said 'No, no, there are so many houses around, I will not do it.' Meanwhile my wife was saying 'why did you buy so many of them? Around our home, there are several buildings, one a nine- storeyed one!'"

Putting things in perspective, the genial scientist told his wife: "I am a rocket scientist working in ISRO for 41 years, and know about rockets." He decided to fire them himself and headed to a vacant plot near his house. "Not trusting him much, she followed warning 'if it goes into anybody's house you will be in trouble, be careful.' With great difficulty and care, with her standing beside me, and going on repeating 'be careful, be careful' putting me in tension, I took out the first rocket, placed it very carefully pointing to the empty space and ignited it."

He was very happy that it "worked nicely and lit up, but then suddenly, it turned 90 degrees and went into the building nearby! My god, before the rocket could fire, my wife was firing me... shouting 'what have you done?'" Before the neighbours could come out and find them, they bolted and next day he handed over the entire packet to his driver, asking him to be careful, saying "the Deepavali rocket will go wherever it wants to."

India's dramatic rise in space technology .. (Contd from page 1)

community projects. Among its most impactful initiatives is the Rotary Egg Bank, launched in 2021. Every month, 1,680 eggs are supplied to three homes for girl children, ensuring that each child gets four eggs a week. "The eggs are sourced from local poultry farmers, so the project also supports their livelihood. It is our gift to our loving girl children, to help them stay healthy and strong," says club president Digel Singh.

The club regularly donates wheelchairs and hearing aids, and offers scholarships to deserving students from less privileged families. At the start of this Rotary year, members planted over 100 fruit-bearing saplings in the Sajiwa Central Jail complex as part of their greening mission. Blood donation camps are also organised in collaboration with the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal.

A unique signature project of the club is celebration of the World Plastic Surgery Day (July 15). Since 2013, the club has sponsored reconstructive surgeries for individuals with deformities, while also providing them with livelihood tools to start afresh. Source: Rotary News-Jaishree