



Francesco Arezzo
RI President 2025-26



Dr. Kameswar S. Elangbam
District Governor RID 3240



Chandana Das
President, Rotary Club of Shillong



Rtn. Gurmeet Singh at a Crisis Response meeting at District Commissioner's Office on 6th Feb 2026 .

Talent is equally distributed in India, but opportunities are not

By Jaishree

At the Lead25 Rotary Leadership Conclave, Rajya Sabha MP and movie icon Kamal Haasan was recognised with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his 'service to humanity through art'. Kamal Panpaattu Maiyam, the social and cultural foundation led by Haasan, signed an MoU with Rotary to empower youth with leadership and vocational skills, and encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and environmental stewardship.

Haasan thanked Rotary and the audience for their warmth. "My education has been extramural, so I am not used to much formality. But I admire the remarkable service that Rotary, this great international family, is doing." He drew a parallel between the Rotary Wheel and the Ashoka Chakra. "Rotary's wheel is not just symbolic; it is a virtuous cycle. Like the wheel of Dharma, it must always keep turning in the right direction, without breaking the axle between virtue and vice." Quoting Jawaharlal Nehru's famous "tryst with destiny" speech, Haasan said, "That midnight of 1947 is long past. Today, in 2025, it is dawn.

"Our nation is ready to fulfil its destiny." For him, true progress is not measured by money, but "by how wisely it is invested — in education, service and in building a virtuous cycle of growth." He believes that the next revolution for India must be in skill development. "Skilling India is extremely vital, and Rotary is already leading this change," he noted. He praised the country's industrial pioneers like G D Birla, J R D Tata, and Ratan Tata for giving back to society, alongside freedom fighters, observing that their legacies endure because of their sense of responsibility. Cinema had been his tool for social change, he noted. "In every script I write, society, not just one hero, is the protagonist. My fan clubs transform into volunteers for social service. I learnt this from Rotary," he said, recalling with pride his connection as a Paul Harris Fellow.

"Talent in India is equally distributed. But opportunities are not," he said. The pact being signed at the conclave was "an effort to balance that equation, to incubate innovation, nurture ethical leaders and create civic solutions. When service-minded people collaborate, the impact multiplies exponentially." Turning to the subject of awards, Haasan

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PDG (Dr.) Debashish Das with Anne (Dr.) Charis as RIPR to the District 3262 which PDG describes as an experience of learning and fellowship.

Talent is equally distributed in India

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wryly commented: "I get worried whenever people call something a Lifetime Achievement Award. Does that mean my life is already over? But I see it differently. Life is divided into quarters. This is just my quarterly report. I am in my second quarter, and I hope to come back for another report in the next phase too." He recalled a song in one of his films where he was referred as Ulaganayagan (hero of the world), and said that true heroes are not on the screen. "Each of the 40 million people who leave home in search of a livelihood is an ulaganayagan," he said. He also reflected on being called Vinveli Nayagan (hero of space) in another song, and pointed out to ISRO chairman V Narayanan who was also a speaker at the conclave; "He is the true hero of space, considering the monumental milestones in space explorations that are making our country proud." Referring to the logo of his party (Makkal Needhi Maiyam) which depicts six hands holding onto one another, he concluded, "Thank you for reaching out and shaking hands with me. I want more hands to join. No one man can do it alone. It must be together, with people like you."

[Kamal Haasan: Kamal Haasan is not just a celebrated actor, but a visionary who transformed Indian cinema through innovation, intellect, and artistic courage. Beginning his career as a child prodigy, Kamal evolved into one of the country's most daring performers, pushing cinematic boundaries in storytelling, technology, and social commentary. He introduced Indian audiences to experimental narratives, complex characters, and bold themes rarely seen in mainstream cinema. Whether it was breaking taboos, embracing prosthetic makeup, or championing realism, Kamal constantly challenged norms. He's the first Indian actor to win National Awards in three different decades, with four National Film Awards and 19 Filmfare Awards to his name later choosing to stop accepting them to give others a chance.



His contributions earned him the Padma Shri (1990) and Padma Bhushan (2014), among India's highest civilian honors. Internationally, he received the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France for his contribution to world cinema. Kamal is also a producer, director, choreographer, lyricist, and singer—one of the few artists to master every aspect of filmmaking. He pioneered India's first full-length silent film in the talkie era, experimented with digital filmmaking early, and addressed themes like politics, identity, and justice long before it was popular. Today, Kamal Haasan is not only a cultural icon but also a guiding force for future filmmakers proving that cinema can be both artistic and socially meaningful.] *(Source: Rotary News; Sourced by Rtn. Shankarlal Singhania)*

GREETINGS

Rtn. Ajay Gupta and Anne Renu celebrate their anniversary on 11th February.

Rtn. (Dr.) Jyotsna Puri celebrates her birthday on 11th February.

Members of the Rotary Club of Shillong wish you many happy returns of the day.