



Rotary  
CLUB CHANDIGARH



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 3080

# Open Hand

WEEKLY CLUB BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB CHANDIGARH | ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 3080 | INDIA

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HOME CLUB OF RAJENDRA K SABOO  
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1991-92

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2024-25

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RI DISTRICT 3080

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## Soil is source for sustainable health

**R**tn Lalita Grover introduce the guest speaker Ms. Komal Jaiswal, a farmer Permaculturist is deeply rooted in her passion for soil and its vital role in sustaining life on earth. She dedicates her efforts to regenerating soil health and promoting sustainable farming practices and believes in the power of nature's smallest element. Ms. Komal views soil not just as a resource but as a living, breathing ecosystem that holds the key to biodiversity, food security and environmental balance. Her work inspires others to reconnect with the earth, nurture its potential and create a future where both people and the planet thrive in harmony.

Ms. Komal started by informing everyone that the agricultural practices that were followed post green revolution are temporary and that today these practices are not only destroying the soil, the planet, the ecology, the ecosystem, but is harming the

people too.

She said, growing up in an urban environment and deciding to un-school her children put her on a completely different journey and understanding the alternative lifestyle. A chance drive through a farm area, made her question the bad smell in the area. on further investigation she was told it was emanating from the pesticide spray being used on the crops in that area. This led her to the very basic question on where food comes from? how it grows and effects our body. On further investigation and research, she informed that she kept getting told that farming in generally was not possible without the use of pesticides and urea. Her research made her real size that our understanding of the food that we eat is so limited that this lack of understanding is becoming dangerous for the whole human species.

She said that this prompted her to experiment on growing crops



without the use of chemicals, urea in her farms where many crops were already being harvested and led her to research and understand the very basic and perhaps the most important ingredient of farming i.e. soil.

She went to explain that for most of us, soil is a medium. It's a resource that we use like we use other resources. But in her journey spanning 20 years, 12 years have been solely dedicated to understanding soil, and she has found that soil is not just a resource but it's a brimming environment of 2 billion species, out of which we have only identified 124. These species are the ones that bring nourishment to our food. They are the ones that bring health to us. The idea of food is not to feed, it's not to fill the stomach, but to provide us sustainability and health.

She said that in her further experiments she came across the concept of hydroponic system for growing of saffron. She explained that hydroponic

system uses only three chemicals and water whereas soil alone gives us 124 nutrients. We can grow crops, fruits and vegetables hydroponically, but it will not have the qualities that we get because of soil.

To understand this concept in more detail, it led her to Pampore, Kashmir. Pampore, the area where saffron grows, there is a huge market of around 4-5 kilometres where they sell saffron. 300 samples were taken from this market and tested. She found that it was not saffron. It was grass. They were strands of plastic with artificial hair. Saffron is like the rain lily but the saffron plant has a flower which is purple in colour, beautiful flower

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



WE MEET EVERY MONDAY AT ROTARY HOUSE AT 6:00 PM

**NEXT** MEETING

Rtn Dr. Alka Mehta, Skin specialist talks to us on "The Holistic Skincare & Technology" on 2 December 2024 at Rotary House at 6 pm.

**Men's Day**



ROTARACT CLUB, HSJ Dental College and hospital, Chandigarh, celebrated INTERNATIONAL MENS DAY, at their college campus on 20th November 2024. All male faculty, were asked to share their opinions about having a special day celebrating them. Rotaractors thanked them for their endless contribution towards the education and professional development of all students of the institute. Special posters and cards of appreciation were made and distributed.

**RYLA at Bhavan Vidyalaya**

On 30th of November 2024, INTERACT CLUB of BHAVAN VIDYALAY, sector 27, Chandigarh, in collaboration with ROTARY CLUB CHANDIGARH, held a RYLA, 'AMPLIFYING THE LEADERSHIP OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.'



me aimed to promote inclusivity, empower people with disabilities, and foster a culture of empathy and

understanding. Rtn. Jatinder Kapoor, President Rotary Club Chandigarh, was the chief guest. Dr. Sanjay Kalra, Dist. Chair Ryla, was the guest of honor with principal, Rtn. Vinita Arora as the chief organizer. 60 children with special needs were supported by 60 interactors and psychology students for this RYLA. Parents of all special children fully participated.

A heart touching rendition of a motivational song, 'Humein toh sath chalna hai tumhare saath chalna hai' moved all to give a standing ovation. Dr. Adarsh Kohli from PGI, explained the diagnostic testing and various levels of disabilities. Mr. Aditya from citizens for inclusive living, shared insights into the need for inclusivity of individuals with special needs and about group housing. A thought-provoking video presentation highlighted the importance of inclusivity and empowerment. The energy levels soared as the special children gave a robust performance of bhangra and gidda, assisted by, Chahat, Mishti and Amulya.

Arya and Ayna were complimented for excellent anchoring of the show. The event went on to hold competitive sports events musical chairs, tug of war etc. for special children and their parents. A fun art collage was made by children too, well supported by the regular school children from psychology class and the interact club, under the guidance of their teachers. Eminent Rotarians PDG Madhukar Malhotra with Ann Neeru, PDG Praveen Goyal, President Elect Abha Sharma, PP Neena Singh, PP Vijay Wadhavan with Rtn. Teena Virk, Director Youth Service, attended the RYLA to encourage all.

**First Earlyact Club BHAVAN VIDYALAYA JUNIOR SCHOOL formed**

Presentation of charter certificate of our ROTARY CLUB CHANDIGARH's, first EARLYACT CLUB, to Principal Kunika Sharma, BHAVAN VIDYALAYA JUNIOR SCHOOL, Sec. 33, Chandigarh.



**NEWS**

**BUNIYAAD**



The intercity of Rotary Foundation, a District, function under the leadership of District Governor Rtn. Rajpal Singh was successfully conducted at Panipat. Eminent speakers Rtn. Ashok Mahajan, Rtn. Parmod Vij and Rtn. M Subramaniam graced the occasion and shared their thoughts on the role of Rotary foundation and the contribution towards it. The morning session opened with Presentation by PDG Raman Aneja, Chairman Stewardship Committee. He briefed all about the Global and CSR Grants Projects by District 3080. The first 8 slides of the Presentation of the projects done by District were well executed by Rotary Club Chandigarh. A matter of Pride!!!!!! The event was attended by Rtn. Rajendra K Saboo, President Rtn. Jatinder Kapur, Asstt Governor Rtn. Jaspal Sidhu, Rtn. Arun Aggarwal, Rtn. Abha Joshi, Rtn. Alok Batra and Rtn. Anil Chadda

**RI Exchange Rate** From 1st December 2024 US\$ 1 = Rs 85.00

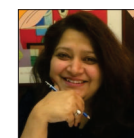
**Obituary**

-**Smt. Kanta Krishan**, a pioneer and an icon of voluntary blood donation movement in India left for abode on 30th November, 2024. A loving mother and grandmother, a devoted wife and a friend to so many, she ensured that blood is always available off



the shelf for patients. Countless beneficiaries owe their lives to Kanta ji as she motivated people to donate blood voluntarily. May her pious soul rest in peace. Mrs Kanta Krishan was a visionary who thought of the blood bank at the time when there was nobody in the organized sector in Chandigarh except the hospitals. Her selfless contributions to the community and the profound impact she had on the lives of those she served will leave a lasting legacy that will continue to inspire us.

-With a very heavy heart sharing the news of the passing away of Dearest **Shivani**



**Sharma**, Sister of our Rtn. Sangeet Sharma. She herself was our member for few years. Most above all My Close friend. Will miss her each Moment. Let's all Pray for the Beautiful soul to merge with Light. Prayers for her entire Family for this irreplaceable loss.



## Blood Donation Camp



A blood donation camp was organized by IPF Vikram India Private Limited, A company owned of Rtn. P J Singh and Rtn. Dr. Rajinder Kaur. This is the second year in succession when Rtn P J Singh supported this cause and contributed 109 units this occasion Rtn A P Singh, Rtn. Arun Aggarwal and President Rtn Jatinder Kapur participated in the event Grateful to Rtn PJ Singh ji, his family & wonderful team of IPF Vikram.

## WINS



- Menstrual Hygiene Management & Pads Distribution Drive for Girls and Gender Sensitization was conducted on 29/11/2024 (Friday) Time: 08:50 AM to 01:30 PM in the School Government Model High School, Raipur Kalan, New Makhan Majra, U.T. Chandigarh. The Students Covered: 528 and Number of Pads Distributed: 300 . Comprehensive session was conducted on the onset of the menstrual cycle, menstrual hygiene management, and gender sensitization. The anatomy of the female reproductive system was explained scientifically to ensure effective understanding of the menstrual cycle.
- WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Session was conducted

at Government Model High School Makhan Majra, U.T Chandigarh on 28th. November, 2024 where in the Number of Students Covered: 1077 students from Class: 1st to 10th. Six separate sessions were conducted to sensitize students about clean water consumption, personal hygiene, toilet habits, and sanitation practices, tailored to their level of understanding.

## Scholarship scheme to support Girl's Education



Since 2022 the Rotary Club of Vero Beach Florida, USA, in collaboration with Education: Access, anon-profit organization, has been providing scholarships to 18 girls from Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh. In 2024, 16 girls from the institution will continue to benefit from this scholarship program. These students receive a scholarship of Rs. 18,000 each per annum. This grant aims to provide free high school education to girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, empowering them to pursue their dreams and shape their futures.

Under the guidance of Mr. Madhukar Malhotra, Honorary Secretary and member of the Rotary Club of Chandigarh, Education: Access is making a tangible difference in the lives of these young girls, empowering them to pursue their dreams and create a brighter future for themselves and their families. The scholarship has alleviated financial burdens for parents, covering educational expenses and changing the lives of these girl students.

The scholarship has had a profound impact on students who have faced exceptional hardships. One student, who is supported solely by her grandmother, has benefited greatly from this scholarship. Additionally, three students who have left the institution continue to avail of the scholarship, demonstrating the program's commitment to supporting deserving students. The scholarship has not only covered the cost of education but has also reinforced self-belief, boosted confidence, and enhanced opportunities for the girls to break the cycle of poverty

## Haiku Horizons

We had a magical morning at Rotary Club of Chandigarh on 29th November 2024 at the "Haiku Horizons" program. The haikai & dance synthesis was an amazing and blissful experience. Kala Ramesh, a celebrated trailblazer haiku poet from Chennai introduced this Japanese short form poetry of haiku, superbly moderated the program and later shared her beautiful haikai poetry during the reading.



Haiku reading was done by 6 talented poets - Vandana Parashar, Muskaan Ahuja, Arvinder Kaur, Kashiana Singh, Rtn Neena Singh & Kala Ramesh. The short forms of poetry read aloud included haiku, senryu, tanka, haibun & tanka prose. Mughda Aserkar, a trained and awarded dancer from Pune added charm to the reading and entranced the viewers with her spellbinding Bharatnatyam abhinaya.



The program was a great success and created an awareness about this art form as many in the audience were not familiar with it. A hushed silence in the full hall created a surreal atmosphere which captivated the listeners. Thanks to President Jatinder Kapoor and his team for supporting this unique program. PE Rtn Teena Virk introduced Kala Ramesh in her inimitable style. Rtn Prem Mahindru delivered the vote of thanks. Grateful to all Rotarians, friends & family members who took their precious time to be with us.



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## Soil is source for sustainable health...

out of which only three strands come which is actually saffron. The cultivation of saffron is limited and a very slow process so it is expensive.

She further explains that a plant has a symbiotic relationship with the microorganisms in the soil. But people have no understanding of soil, they don't understand the biome. They're putting rice in Punjab. Punjab soil is not for rice. Rice doesn't grow here. But they grow it and to grow it they change the structure of the soil. The focus is yield but what's the point of yield if it doesn't nourish us? For example, we grow saffron in Pampore or Lethapora no other part of Kashmir. No other part of Kashmir can grow saffron the way that area grows because it has the microbiology.

To set up their saffron and honey farm, the whole ecosystem was engaged. The honey is being collected by way of beehives. They have trees and the flowers throughout the year so that those bees can survive, suck the nectar and we can get the extract of saffron in our honey.

Somebody pointed out to her that cancer is a major problem and especially in Punjab. There are many reasons for cancer and pesticide is one is one of them. We are using a lot of chemicals in our farming; chemicals base is salt, and salt needs a lot of water. But the water table is depleting and to extract water we are digging deeper, as far below as 1000 feet, 2000 feet in the area around Batinda, Fazalgarh. Now water, filtration happens through microbes. They are the ones that filter water and bring it to the top layer and then the other filtration happens. But because we are digging so deep those microbes are missing, and we are getting unfiltered water from 2000 feet down. That water has lot of the issues because of which you have the whole cancer train running from Punjab.

She asked the members that you all must have gardens at home and requested that please grow your own vegetables. At least leafy greens that you eat in winters. Please don't buy it from the market. It's heavily chemicalized, heavy pesticides. She informed that Amlatoxin is a chemical of which only 0.3% is allowed to be exported. But in India it is found in the range of 32 to 33%. She said the if she was to go in detail about the pesticides in our food, all of us will get really scared. "I don't want to scare you. But that's the truth. Whatever food you're getting in the market, it's really bad. It's not food. It's chemicals because they don't understand soil microbiology".

She said, I didn't want to feed chemicals to my children. I didn't want to expose them to

pesticides so, I started growing. It started from home, then it's went on to farms. Now we are also working with Punjab government, and we are educating people how to grow food. It's simple, if you understand microbiology, we can grow food. Hydroponic is not how food should come to you. It should come from the soil. Because soil has the system which is going to give immunity to you.

One of the members asked Ms. Komal, on how they could get seeds that are non-toxic and from plants which have not been exposed to these toxic chemicals. She went on to explain that today the seeds are coated with neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids are chemicals which do not start showing their impact or effect on your body till after 10 years. After 10 years, it shows its symptoms, and those symptoms are of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Nature's way of choosing seeds is different. the seeds which are not capable of giving you immunity, even if they germinate, they will not go to a stage where they bear fruit. So, to overcome this, a lot of hybrid seeds or what we call them genetically modified seeds were created. She said when they came to Punjab, it was very difficult for them to get organic seeds. In Punjab there are no organic seeds left; they have not come across even one single village in Punjab so far where they could get these organic seeds.

A very basic way to know whether the seed is genuine or not is when you sow it. There could be seeds that are available which are not coated with chemicals and but are actually hybrid. But when it germinates and starts giving you the harvest, then it looks different. Organic looks, tastes very different. You don't need organic certification for a seed, its colour, texture, look, taste is different. For example,

coriander, if you sow coriander, the hybrid coriander's, colour, texture, density is very different from the organic variety. And organic will smell very differently. It has a very rich aroma.

She said if we wanted to eat wheat, we should choose the indigenous varieties like Khapli, Bansi, Sonamoti not the research varieties like 307, 518, 655. The research varieties give more yield and that's why they are preferred but we have to let nature play its part, abundance should come from the ecosystem. Modifying the farming methods like straightening of the fields has changed the fungal-bacterial ratio. There are so many fungal species who live in contours. There are so many microbial species who live in swales and bunds. We've removed all of that.

There's no place for the bird to come and eat the pest, the insect which is ruining your plant. And so, we need to spray. We don't have to do it. With that she concluded her session. Fellowship dinner was hosted by President Jatinder Kapur.

Rtn. Abhishek Verma deliver the vote of thanks and praised Mrs. Komal Jaiswal's understanding and knowledge of the subject and addressing a great session, interesting and full of knowledge. With that the meeting was adjourned.

**Rtn. Aman Aggarwal**

### CELEBRATIONS

#### Birthday Greetings:

<b>6 Dec</b>	Rtn Shivya Sehgal	9876165793
<b>8 Dec</b>	PP Rtn Surinder Paul Kaur	7837021002

#### Anniversary Greetings:

<b>2 Dec</b>	Rtn Ashok Tandon & Aradhna	9815164247
<b>2 Dec</b>	Rtn Rajnish Malhotra & Sunita	8146623411
<b>4 Dec</b>	Rtn SPS Matharoo & Harsarwar Kaur	9815011228
<b>4 Dec</b>	Rtn Sandeep Goyal & Aanchal	9872667466
<b>5 Dec</b>	Rtn Dr Aman Bhatia & Dr Priyanka	9041026212
<b>6 Dec</b>	PP Rtn Amrit Pal Singh & Maninder	9814009815
<b>8 Dec</b>	Rtn Abhinav Chaudhary & Kiranpreet Kaur	9855300009

