

# Open Hand

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

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HOME CLUB OF **Rajendra K. Saboo**  
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT  
1991-92

**Francesco Arezzo**  
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT  
2025-26

**Ravi Prakash**  
DISTRICT GOVERNOR  
RI DISTRICT 3080

**Abha Joshi Sharma**  
CLUB PRESIDENT

**Arun Aggarwal**  
CLUB SECRETARY

## UNCOVERING THE FORGOTTEN VOICES OF INDIA'S FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

The Rotary meeting was enriched by an insightful address by Dr. J. S. Sehrawat, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Panjab University, Chandigarh. He shared his remarkable journey connected with the discovery of the Ajnala skeletal remains, a find that has shed new light on India's struggle for independence.

In 2014, skeletal remains were discovered in a well at Ajnala, near Amritsar, sparking historical curiosity and emotional reflection. Initially, the excavation was carried out by local amateurs, damaging valuable forensic evidence. Despite this, Dr. Sehrawat and his team undertook the challenging task of



scientifically examining the remains. Through advanced forensic techniques, they confirmed the remains belonged to Indian soldiers

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Monday 23rd March  
6 pm

**Nisha Luthra**  
Holistic Healer / Psychodramatic coach

**Before the Coffee Gets Cold**

Rotary House . 107a , sector 18a. Chandigarh

Monday 23rd March  
6 pm

Fellowship Host

**Rtn Krishan Kumar**

Rotary House . 107a , sector 18a. Chandigarh

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## Uncovering the Forgotten Voices...

of the 26th Native Bengal Infantry, executed by the British during the Revolt of 1857. The findings validated historical accounts of 282 Indian sepoys killed and disposed of in the well.

Analysis revealed the soldiers weren't locals, but came from regions across the Gangetic plains, aligning with historical recruitment patterns. Forensic evidence showed brutality, with gunshot wounds and physical assault, highlighting colonial repression.

Dr. Sehrawat's research bridges history and science, viewing the past through an objective lens. Ongoing efforts aim to further analyse the remains and preserve the site with dignity. The Ajnala skeletal remains stand as a testament to sacrifices made during India's First War of Independence, giving voice to forgotten heroes through scientific truth.

The session was enlightening and humbling, leaving the audience with renewed respect for science in uncovering heritage.

*contributed by Rtn. Nidhi Kapoor*



## CELEBRATIONS

### Birthday Greetings:

**26 March** Ashok Tandon  
**28 March** Dr. Rosy Katyal 9876000245

### Anniversary Greetings:

**26 March** Sartaj Lamba & Col. R.B.S. Lamba 87250 05444  
**29 March** B. M. Singh & Kiran 9876226688

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## Rotaract Day Celebration at DISHA – Goa (13th March 2026)

The celebration of Rotaract Day during the prestigious DISHA – Senior and Regional Leaders Conclave at Goa was a moment of pride, fellowship, and inspiration. The occasion witnessed the gracious presence of esteemed leaders, including RI Director Rtn. K. P. Nagesh, who marked the celebration by cutting the cake along with current and past District Rotaract Representatives (DRRs).



It was heartening to see the strong representation of Rotaract leadership, with all DRRs and PDRRs coming together, symbolizing unity and continuity in leadership. The gathering beautifully reflected the spirit of mentorship, service, and leadership that Rotaract stands for.

We are especially proud of the presence of our distinguished leaders, PDRR RI Director Rtn. M. Murganandam and PDRR Rtn. Abhinandan Shetty, whose contributions continue to inspire generations of Rotaractors.

The occasion was made even more special with the participation of PDRR & PDG Rtn. Praveen Goyal, adding further prestige and pride to the event.

A group photograph capturing all current and past DRRs made the moment memorable, preserving the legacy of leadership and camaraderie.

The celebration truly highlighted the strength of Rotaract as a vibrant arm of Rotary, committed to "Aim High" and serve humanity with dedication.



### **MEDIA COVERAGE**

## Youth must make right choices for peace in the world: Experts

PUNJAB EXPRESS BUREAU  
Mohali, March 22

Rotary District 3080 Peace Summit was hosted at Plaksha University, Mohali. Vice-Chancellor of the University inaugurating the event Dr Rudra Pratap lamented the sad state of affairs in the global conflict which would deeply impact the entire world. He said the youth needs to be sensitised today to resolve hu-



man conflicts by inculcating empathy, care and concern for other humans, and the peace summit, is one such effort to bring about this

realisation among the young generation.

Chief Guest on the Summit was District Governor of Rotary District 3080, Ravi Prakash, who informed that the Rotary has been engaged in promoting peace and goodwill amongst people through its humanitarian service projects.

Former chief secretary of Punjab, Sarvesh Kaushal, IAS (retd), delivering the keynote address said that

youth today must stay informed and make the right choices to create the kind of world they want for themselves in future. Cacophony and conflict is the default human setting and if we don't change this setting it will continue to turn into hatred, jealousy, cut throat competition to grab power. District Governor Elect Dr Rita Kalra said that the population worldwide is facing the pandemic of mental and identity crisis, which requires active practice and self-discipline to achieve mental wellness and inner peace.

### **INTERNATIONAL ROTARY NEWS**

## With dams, rainwater collection, and purification systems, Rotary and Rotaract clubs help people access clean water

By Etelka Lehoczyk

Access to clean water and sanitation can determine whether a child gets an education. That's what Rotaract club members in the Ashanti region of Ghana learned when they explored ways to improve schools in their area.

The schools the club members visited faced water shortages and relied on contaminated water, resulting in high levels of diarrhea, dysentery, and other illnesses. There were no modern toilets, and girls didn't have modern toilets, and girls didn't have private spaces for menstrual hygiene. The lack of water affected every aspect of the students' lives. The wide-ranging impact of water access is highlighted on the United Nations' World Water Day, observed on 22 March.

"Water bankruptcy is becoming a driver of fragility, displacement, and conflict," Tshilidzi Marwala, undersecretary-general of the UN, said in January. "Managing [water] fairly ensuring that vulnerable communities are protected and that unavoidable losses are shared equitably is now central to maintaining peace, stability, and social cohesion," Marwala said.

More than 2 billion people around the globe lack clean, safe drinking water. Helping people gain access to clean water and sanitation is a top priority for Rotary, which includes the issue among its seven main causes.

# Rotary Peace Summit held at Plaksha University

Rotary District 3080 Peace Summit was hosted at Plaksha University, Mohali on 21st March, 2026.

In his opening remarks, District Peace Chair Rtn. AP Singh Dhiman emphasised on the complexity in understanding peace, be it positive and negative peace, inner and outer peace, practising peace building through language, sharing, kindness, understanding and service.

Vice Chancellor of the University and Guest of Honour Dr Rudra Pratap lamented the sad state of affairs in the global conflict which would deeply impact the entire world. He said the youth needs to be sensitised today to resolve human conflicts by inculcating empathy, care and concern for other humans, and peace summit, is one such effort to bring about this realisation among young generation.

Former chief secretary of Punjab, Sarvesh Kaushal, IAS (retd), delivering the keynote address said that youth today must stay informed and make the right choices to create the kind of world they want for themselves in future. Cacophony and conflict is the default human setting and if we don't change this setting it will continue to turn into hatred, jealousy, cut throat competition to grab power.

District Governor Elect Dr Rita Kalra said that the population worldwide is facing the pandemic of mental and identity crisis, which requires active practice and self-discipline to achieve mental wellness and inner peace.

Chief Guest DG Ravi Prakash informed that Rotary has been engaged in promoting peace and goodwill amongst people through its humanitarian service projects. He urged everyone to practice peace everyday and be the agents of change.

Chair Professor of Economics at Plaksha University, Dr Prakarsh Singh, highlighted the impact of current global conflicts in Iran and its economic consequences.

Prof Olga Shemyakina, who joined online through video conference, from Georgia Institute of Technology, USA, informed that females are the most affected in any crisis that impacts the social fabric of society,



because of violence, displacement, lack of education, etc.

Prof Rajesh Sharma from Plaksha spoke about AI/ML in Conflict Research.

Several young Rotaractors from different Rotaract clubs expressed their opinion on how peace can be achieved in the world, touching upon diverse areas of inner peace, conflict resolution through dialogue, the social media imperatives, etc.

All the esteemed speakers had one common message: Youth must make right choices for peace in the world.

The event was ably anchored by Rtn. Nidhi Kapoor. President Abha Sharma supported the event along with other club presidents. Co Chair Charanjit Singh was instrumental in execution of the program. Over 50 Rotarians and 25 Rotaractors from different clubs, Assistant Governors, past governors Madhukar Malhotra and Praveen Goyal and District Secretary Rtn. Pankaj Pandey attended the summit along with students and faculty from Plaksha University. We are grateful to Dr. Prakarsh, son of Rtn. Neena Singh for his support in organising the

Peace Summit at the University.

The Summit was jointly organised by Peacebuilder Rotary Clubs of Chandigarh, Chandigarh Midtown, Chandigarh Shivalik, Chandigarh Uptown, Chandigarh Central, Classic Chandigarh, and Chandigarh Tricity.

**Rtn. AP Singh Dhiman**  
District Peace Chair

