

Beyond Borders

Monthly newsletter from Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport

EVERY
ROTARIAN
EVERY
YEAR

100% Member Participation
100% EREY (above \$25 AF)
90% members above \$50 AF
50% RFSM above \$100
Per capita AF above \$ 100

Rotary
District 3170
Synergy Passport

DOING GOOD IN THE WORLD

The
Rotary
Foundation



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Rotary
District 3170
Synergy Passport

Vrunda speaks...

Dear friends,

As we conclude the month of March, it is a moment of reflection, gratitude, and renewed purpose. The past month has been a meaningful chapter in our Rotary journey, reflecting our commitment to Service Above Self.

Throughout March, our club carried out activities that made a positive difference in the community—from a cleanliness drive and career guidance sessions to health initiatives such as dental awareness and a breast cancer screening program. The saree pre-pleating workshop added a practical, skill-based dimension to our efforts.

Each initiative reflects not only our commitment but also the strength of our fellowship. I sincerely appreciate every member for your dedication and support.

Looking ahead, we have planned initiatives such as an Aadhaar updation camp and workshops on mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, and vermicomposting to further promote awareness and sustainability.

Let us continue this journey with the same passion and commitment, creating meaningful and lasting impact together.

Warm regards,
With pride and gratitude,

Rtn. Vrunda Khanolker
President (2025–26)

Women and Rotary: by Norm Winterbottom



The predominantly dependent status of women in western societies changed irrevocably during World War II as women filled occupations previously the domain of men when the men were called upon to serve in the armed forces. This change accelerated with the growth of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout the course of nearly seven decades of Rotary's history has run the thread of the debate of women as members, yet the first constitution of the Chicago Club #1, adopted in January, 1906, makes no reference to gender, referring only to "persons." In 1911 an all-women club existed in Minneapolis and between 1911 and 1917 an all-women Rotary club existed in Duluth, Minnesota alongside the men's club. This club met on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, while the Duluth club #25 met on the 1st and last Thursday. In 1912, the board of directors of the Belfast, Northern Ireland club discussed the advisability of electing women to membership or allowing them to attend weekly luncheons.

The club records of that period indicate the board considered it undesirable to elect women to membership or have them at the weekly luncheons. In that year, also, Ida Buell of the Duluth women's club spoke to the 1912 Duluth Convention seeking support for women's clubs. The Convention discussed the admission of women and rejected the idea. The RI Boards of 1914-15 and 1915-16 disapproved of Women's Auxiliaries but the Board of 1916-17 held no objection to them being formed. In 1918 the Board refused recognition of them.

The 1921 Convention in Edinburgh, Scotland produced the Standard Club Constitution in which Article 2, Section III stated "A Rotary Club shall be comprised of men . . ."

In May 1921, Alwilda F Harvey the wife of the Chicago Club president convened a luncheon meeting of 59 women who formed "Women of Rotary." The Board of RI rejected that name so it was changed to "The Women of the Rotary Club of Chicago." In England, on 15 May 1923, the Manchester Club proposed "The Formation of a Ladies' Rotary Club in Manchester." The proposal was lost, but instead, the first Inner Wheel Club was formed with Mrs Margarett Golding as president.

PUNYASHLOKA RAJMATA AHILYA DEVI HOLKAR

(an Epitome of women empowerment)



IAn empowered woman creates an empowered family an empowered family creates an empowered society an empowered society creates an empowered nation And an empowered nation can do wonders to world humanity.

Today we talk about women empowerment and attempt a lot of work towards the same, every person talks on women empowerment, so were women not empowered in the early centuries, we're they restricted, deprived or not capable, absolutely not. If we look back women actually were always empowered there were women who have set and lead by examples despite a patriarchal overbearing society. Women many not possess the same physical strength as their male counterpart but emotional strength, tolerance, endurance are women's strong forte and using this women have worked towards being an equal in society.

These examples are set before us by brave Rajputana queens, Jhansi ki Rani Lakshmbai, Razia Sulatana, Rani Durgavati, Rani Tarabai, Rani Channama, Rani Abakka, Velu Nachiyar, sethu lakshmi baye, captain Lakshmi Sehgal of Azad Hind Fauj, Savitri bai Phule to name a few from the vast ocean. These were all pioneer who have already broken the glass ceiling which we now talk of. They had already laid before us the seeds of women empowerment.

We follow Maa Saraswati, Maa Parvati and Maa Lakshmi as deities what are they teaching us educational, financial and strength of women.

Women were and are always empowered we just need to recognize and nurture our powers.

One woman who has been a very influential, Inspirational leader, educator, philanthropists, social worker, strategist, political analysts, warrior, and a compassionate mother to her subjects.

Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar (31 May 1725 - 13 August 1795) was the Holkar Queen of the Maratha Malwa kingdom, India. Rajmata Ahilyabai was born in a Dhangar Family in the village of Chondi in Jamkhed, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.

Her father, Mankoji Rao Shinde, was a Respectable Patil of the village. Women then did not go to school, but Ahilyabai's father taught her to read and write.

Malhar Rao Holkar, a commander in the service of the Maratha Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and lord of the Malwa territory, stopped in Chaundi on his way to Pune and saw the eight-year-old Ahilyabai at the temple service in the village. Recognising her piety and her character, he brought the girl to the Holkar territory as a bride for his son, Khanderao (1723-1754). She was married to Khanderao Holkar in 1733. In 1745, she gave birth to their son Malerao and in 1748, a daughter Muktabai.

Ahilyabai's husband Khanderao Holkar was killed in the battle of Kumbher in 1754. She became a widow at a very young age. Twelve years later, her father-in-law, Malhar Rao Holkar, died. He was a father figure, her mentor and guide. A year after that she was crowned as the queen of the Malwa kingdom. She tried to protect her kingdom from plundering invaders. She personally led armies into battle. She appointed Tukoji Rao Holkar as the Chief of Army.

Malharao her son was unwell and died of his illness in 1767. Ahilyabai broke another tradition when she married her daughter to Yashwantrao a brave but poor man after he succeeded in defeating the dacoits.

She moved the capital to Maheshwar south of Indore on the Narmada River. She taught people to weave sarees with unique border and called it Maheshwari Saree and promoted the saree by wearing it herself thus helped the people to earn by manufacturing and trading textile.

She taught ladies Military training and had a complete women's army.

She had very good political ideas and was an amazing strategist, She defended her state against Raghoba Peshve without even using weapons only by using strategy. Raghoba had come to attack Indore She sent him a letter saying our army is ready for you, you thought I am weak, but you will know me once you face me. But after the war you will forever be remembered in history as the coward ruler who waged a war against women even if you win or lose. You will be a big embarrassment to your future generations. He dared not wage a war after this letter reached him.

She was very good at letter writing, be it gaining confidence and good will of enemy or the British through her strategic letter writing process.

During her reign no one dared attack Malwa kingdom.

Rani Ahilyabai was a great pioneer and builder of Hindu temples. She built hundreds of temples in Badrinath in the north Mathura and Ayodhya, Rameshwar to the south, Dwarka, Somnath, Gokarn In the west Puri and Gaya towards the east Jagannath, Omkareshwar, Girneshwar and most important Kashi Vishwanath temple, Dharmashalas stops for travellers, water reservoir, planted many trees so that people could travel comfortably in shades, built ghats throughout India which were important for any trade or community even the Manikarnika ghat for the final journey of the soul.

She did all this social and philanthropic work from her own treasury. Thus she earned the title of Punyashloka.

Punya shloka Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar was an epitome of women empowerment and ideal women power, showcasing good governance, political analysis, warrior, strategists, social worker, philanthropists, Preserver of Religion, Traditions and culture. We need to promote this legacy and remind our further generations and make our future generations strong, compassionate and empowered.

..by Rtn Sonali Nagvenkar

Service Without Borders: The Power of our Passport Club



As the Secretary of our unique Passport Club, I often reflect on what makes our fellowship so distinct. Unlike traditional clubs tied to a single neighborhood, our members are a mosaic of locations—stretching from the vibrant coastlines of Goa to the lush, quiet greenery of my own home in Sawantwadi. We are a club that doesn't just meet in a hall; we meet where the need is greatest. This geographic flexibility is our greatest strength, allowing us to act as a mobile force for good that transcends city limits and district lines.

Our mission is to reach the "unseen" corners of society. We recognize that true need doesn't always live on the main road; it is often found in remote interior villages and those quiet pockets of our community where resources are thin. As a Passport Club, we have the unique agility to identify these gaps. We don't just provide charity; we provide a presence. Whether we are traveling to a distant hamlet to support a rural school or coordinating a regional initiative, our goal is to ensure that no person feels forgotten by society.

A major pillar of our work this year is our commitment to the Earth. We believe that protecting our environment is the ultimate form of community service. Our tree-planting initiatives and eco-friendly projects are not just about greenery; they are about securing a sustainable future for the next generation. By restoring local ecosystems and promoting waste-consciousness, we are protecting the very soil and water that sustain the people we serve.

We are incredibly proud to lead this charge alongside our two Interact Clubs. These young leaders are the heart of our environmental awareness campaigns. When the wisdom of our senior Rotarians joins hands with the fearless energy of our Interactors, we create a team that is unstoppable. Together, we move beyond "one-day events" and toward long-term, high-quality projects that empower the youth to take ownership of their environment and their community's well-being.

The scale of this vision, however, is a journey we share with our well-wishers and partners. Every tree that takes root and every student who receives the tools to succeed is a testament to the collective strength of those who believe in our mission. We often find that our most impactful work happens when the community sees our transparency and dedication and chooses to walk alongside us. It is this shared spirit of "Service Above Self" that allows us to turn a simple plan into a life-changing reality for someone in need.

As we look toward our upcoming initiatives, we invite you to stay connected with our journey. Whether through expertise, time, or resources, every hand that joins ours helps ensure that help reaches the corners of society that others might overlook. Let us continue to bridge distances, protect our planet, and prove that when we work as one team, there is no limit to the harmony we can create.

Anagha

March highlights

By Secretary Anagha



Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport and Rotary Club of Vasco Port Town conducted an AI-Powered Eye Screening Camp in Vasco along with Mukta Optical on 8th March 2026.

Artelus conducted a community eye-screening camp in Vasco using advanced technologies like the Artelus NFC Fundus Camera, DRISTi AI, and the portable EZZential OCT. These hospital-grade tools allowed doctors to capture and analyze retinal images within seconds, helping detect conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and macular degeneration early.

By bringing high-end diagnostics directly to the community, the camp helped identify people at risk before symptoms appear. Such AI-powered screening initiatives could play a major role in improving early detection of eye diseases and preventing vision loss across Goa.

There were 50+ people screened and 4 patients were diagnosed with serious problem n referred to Retina eye specialist.



Breast Cancer Screening Camp a success! Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport and JCI Vasco joined hands to organize a breast cancer screening camp at New Vaddem-Vasco on 12th March 2026. Over 50 ladies from the community benefited from the awareness session on self-examination and got screened. A small step towards a bigger cause!



Spreading smiles and cleanliness! Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport and Shree Vishwanath Arlekar Memorial Higher Secondary School, New Vaddem-Vasco came together for a cleanliness drive at Kantheshvar temple, Gandhinagar - Vasco on 13th March 2026. 40 students, including members from interact club of SVAM SYNERGY and 30 staff members joined hands to make a difference. Big thanks to the temple authorities for their support!



Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport organized a saree prepleating workshop at Shree Vishwanath Arlekar Memorial Higher Secondary School, New Vaddem-Vasco on 16th March 2026!

15 ladies participated in the workshop, learning the art of saree prepleating from renowned expert Gandhali Nandkishor Dessai.

A big thank you to Gandhali ji and all the participants for making this event a success!



Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport organized a session on Manners & Etiquettes for 80+ students of Shree Vishwanath Arlekar Memorial Higher Secondary School, Vasco! JC Anjali Loran brought GRACE to life through fun activities. Students had a blast learning



Capturing Moments, Creating Stories!

Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport successfully organized an engaging session on Photography at Shree Vishwanath Arlekar Memorial Higher Secondary School of Arts, Commerce and Science, New Vaddem–Vasco on 27th March 2026.

The session was conducted by Mr. Parag Mehta, who shared valuable insights into the art and techniques of photography, inspiring students to explore their creative potential.

Around 60 students and 25 staff members actively participated and benefited from this interactive learning experience.

Empowering young minds with creative skills and new perspectives!



Thu, 12 March we had an online Guest Speaker meeting on the topic “Women Empowerment - How we can help” by Smt. Deepali Dilip Naik who is currently serving as Project Director - District Rural Development Agency (Goa) She is actively involved in empowering women through Self Help Groups (SHGs) She spoke of the schemes of Govt of Goa and how our Rotary Club can collaborate to improve the economic development of Women in Goa.

Mental well-being is essential for a balanced and fulfilling life.

As part of the Harmony Within – Season 3 series by Rotary International District 3170 Mental Health Initiatives, an insightful online session was conducted on 4th March 2026 on the topic “Understanding our Behaviour – An Introduction to Choice Theory.”

The session by Meenakshi Mhambre helped participants reflect on how our choices influence our behaviour, emotions, and relationships, guiding us towards greater self-awareness and emotional wellness.

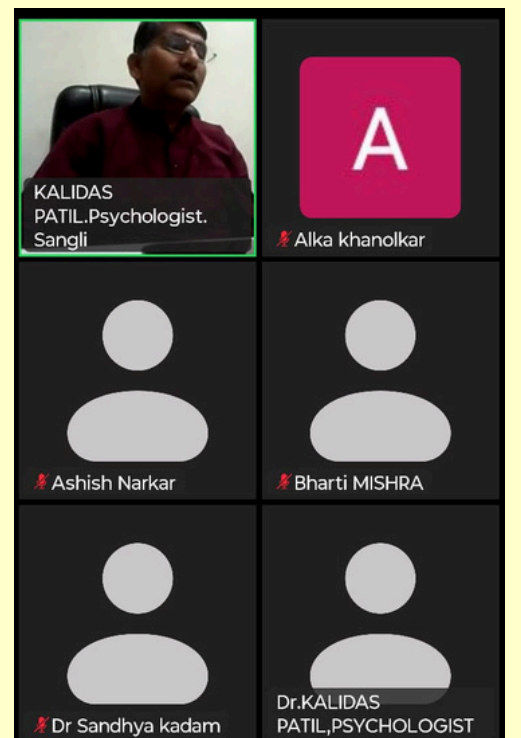
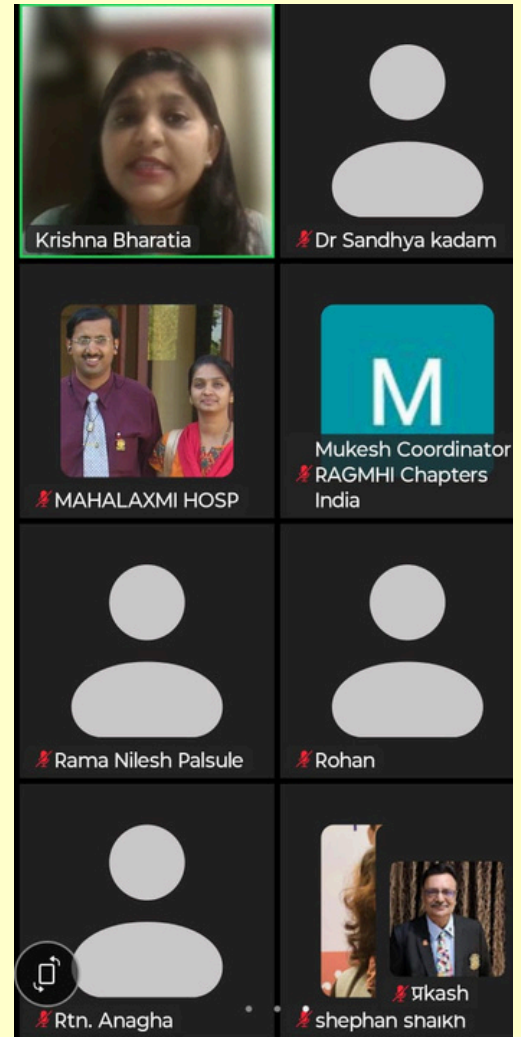
Rotary District 3170 Mental Health Initiatives continued its meaningful journey with another enriching session of Harmony Within on 11th March 2026. The session focused on the important topic “Role of Parents in Career Guidance.”

Rtn. Krishna Bharatia shared valuable insights on how parents can support and guide their children in making informed career choices while nurturing their mental well-being. Her practical suggestions and thoughtful perspectives were truly appreciated by all participants. This weekly initiative continues to create awareness and encourage conversations around mental wellness, helping individuals find balance and harmony within.

A meaningful and insightful session on “Mind and Diet” was successfully conducted on 18th March 2026 under the Harmony Within initiative by Rotary International District 3170 Mental Health Initiatives.

The session, led by Vd. Suvinay Damle, beautifully highlighted the deep connection between our mind and the food we consume. Participants gained valuable insights into how mindful eating and balanced nutrition can positively impact mental well-being.

The session was interactive, informative, and truly enriching, helping attendees reflect on their daily habits and emotional health.



Know your members:



Tejendra

In the business of civil construction since 1995, **Tejendra Lawande @ Nikhil** is the managing partner at M/s R S Lawande, a construction firm primarily executing projects for government or semi government organisations.

Former Rotaractor, joined Rotary Club of Vasco da Gama in 2004. Later joined Rotary Club of Mapusa City and presently member of Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport.

Has held positions in different organisation like Chiarmen of CII - Yi, Goa and is associated with Forum for Integrated National Security, Arogya Bharathi- Goa, Goa Lacrosse Association, etc in different capacities.

Loves to be of help to the underprivileged. He advocates for flatter organizational structures, increased member empowerment, and more participatory leadership styles.

His spouse Radha is a Past President of Rotary Club of Vasco Port Town.

Vrunda Khanolker, a distinguished academic and educator, holds an M.Sc. in Organic Chemistry and was a Gold Medalist in the year 2008. She began her professional journey as a Research Associate at Ratiopharm R&D, where she contributed significantly to research over a span of two years.

Her passion for teaching led her to take up the role of Assistant Professor in Organic Chemistry at Chowgule College during 2010-11. To further enhance her teaching abilities, she completed her B.Ed. from Nirmala Institute in 2013-14.

Over the years, she has imparted knowledge across various reputed institutions including Deepvihar HSS, St. Andrews HSS, and GVM's HSS, before securing a permanent position at Shree Vishwanath Arlekar Memorial Higher Secondary School, where she has been serving with dedication for the past seven years.

She has also worked with the Goa Board on several occasions for confidential assignments and has passionately trained numerous NEET and JEE aspirants while being associated with LSc 100 coaching classes.

Beyond academics, she is a Charter Member of Rotary District 3170 Synergy Passport Club. She served as the Secretary for the year 2023-24 and was honored with the Best Secretary Award by the district for her outstanding contributions.

Mrs. Khanolker is happily married to Mr. Krishnaraj Khanolker, and they are proud parents of a son, Aarav Khanolker.



Vrunda