



THE PANACHE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA AVYANNA | Vol. 3

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JANUARY TO MARCH 2026

ECHOES OF IMPACT

VOICES THAT INSPIRE

RECLAIMING WOMANIYA



From the Editor's Desk



Mita Walia
EDITOR

As I pen once again my editorial for Panache, let me take this opportunity to wish all our dear readers a very Happy New Year. As we slowly leave winter behind and make way for our tropical summer, let us be thankful for an extended cold spell and a longer wintry innings in the bargain!

Unfortunately, this is, in all probability, the treacherous effect of El Niño, and who do we have but ourselves to blame for this climate debacle?

As mankind made rapid progress in science and innovation, we forgot to caress and care for Nature and Mother Earth in our quest to establish ourselves as the lord and master of our planet. But then, "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her," and she still showers us with her love and bounty. It is for us to remember that every bit or byte of technology must be environment-worthy, and only then should it be allowed to work for us.

This quarter too, Panache is a melting pot of culture, religion, and creed. We have recipes from all over the country in every issue, and this time too there is no exception. There are articles on diverse subjects, and surely the readers will have as enjoyable a time reading them as we had in compiling the same!

Our mainstay and backbone, our projects, remain robust as ever, both the ones executed as well as those planned for. At Avyanna, women's empowerment remains a primary agenda and, accordingly, we are in the process of facilitating STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) labs in government-aided girls' schools. We have identified four schools on a need basis, and this remains our chief focus along with our sustained campaign of thalassemia awareness this year. With this, we have also begun beautician training courses for four underprivileged young women, and to see them rise and shine would definitely make our strides and striving worthwhile!

Looking forward to being United for Good, happy reading!



Sarmistha Das
CLUB PRESIDENT

As President of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna, I have always believed that true service does not seek attention—it creates impact that quietly resonates, leaving behind echoes that inspire many more to step forward. The period from January to March 2026, our third quarter, has been a beautiful reflection of this belief in action.

Over these months, our club has come together with a shared purpose—to serve with empathy, consistency, and sincerity. Each project we undertook was not merely an activity, but a step towards creating meaningful and lasting change in the lives we touched.

In the field of healthcare, our continued thalassemia awareness initiatives stood as a strong pillar of preventive care and education. By reaching out to schools, colleges, and communities, we empowered young individuals with knowledge that can shape healthier futures. These sessions may seem simple, but their long-term impact is profound—truly an echo that will carry forward for generations.

Our commitment to community and culture was beautifully reflected in our support for Baul artists. By extending financial assistance and recognition, we not only contributed to their well-being but also helped preserve a priceless cultural legacy. These voices of tradition and soul continue to inspire us, reminding us that service also lies in sustaining heritage.

Another meaningful initiative was our geriatric project, conducted in collaboration with the BijonSikha organization at Lake Club. This initiative focused on care, engagement, and dignity for the elderly, reminding us of the importance of compassion across all stages of life. It was a heartfelt effort that brought warmth and connection to those who often remain unheard, yet deeply deserve our attention and care.

A proud milestone for our club this quarter was the inauguration of our STEM Education Lab at Bidhannagar Municipal School. This initiative marks a significant step towards empowering young minds with access to scientific learning, innovation, and hands-on education. By nurturing curiosity and encouraging exploration, we aim to equip students with the tools to dream bigger and build a brighter future—truly creating an impact that will echo for years to come.

We also took a step towards empowerment through vocational training, where five young girls were trained and supported to develop skills for self-reliance. This initiative reflects our commitment to creating opportunities and enabling individuals to build a more secure and independent future—quietly transforming lives in the most meaningful way.

One of the most meaningful experiences this quarter was our engagement at Marble Palace, where we participated in the age-old tradition of serving food to people who have gathered there for generations. Being part of this legacy of giving—where khichdi and payesh have been served for decades—was deeply humbling. It reminded us that service, when rooted in continuity, becomes timeless.

What truly defines this quarter, however, is the spirit of our members. There has been a quiet strength in every initiative—a willingness to serve without expectation, to contribute without seeking recognition. These are the "voices that inspire"—not loud, but deeply impactful. Their actions create ripples that go far beyond what is seen, touching lives and building hope.

I feel immensely grateful to lead such a compassionate and dedicated group. Each member of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna has contributed to these echoes of impact, making our journey not just successful, but meaningful.

As we move forward, let us continue to believe in the power of quiet service. Let us remember that even the smallest act, when done with heart, can inspire change and create a legacy that lasts.

Together, let us keep creating echoes that inspire.



DG Dr. Ramendu Hom Chowdhury

In a world often drawn to the loud and the visible, there exists a quieter force—steady, graceful, and profoundly transformative. It is the voice that does not seek attention, yet leaves behind an enduring imprint. It is the strength that does not announce itself, yet shapes lives, families, and communities.

This journal is a tribute to those silent voices.

Within these pages lie stories of resilience, compassion, leadership, and purpose—women who may not always stand in the spotlight, yet whose actions echo far beyond their immediate circles. They nurture, they lead, they build, they heal—and in doing so, they create ripples of change that travel across generations.

An exclusive women's forum is not merely a gathering of individuals; it is a confluence of experiences, wisdom, and quiet determination. Here, every voice matters—even the ones unspoken. Every effort counts—even the ones unseen.

"Echoes of Impact" is not about grand gestures alone. It is about the subtle, consistent contributions that define true strength. It is about the courage to persist, the empathy to uplift, and the vision to inspire without seeking recognition.

As you turn these pages, may you discover not just stories, but reflections of your own journey. May you feel the power of collective purpose, and the beauty of influence that does not demand attention, yet commands respect.

For in the end, it is often the silent voices that create the most powerful echoes.

Echoes of Impact Voices that Inspire



Shromona Ghosh

Shromona is an alumna of Modern High School and Presidency College, Kolkata. She has been associated with the corporate sector for more than thirty years. An avid reader, Shromona is passionate about theatre and writing, and enjoys spirited debates. She subtitles Bengali movies in her spare time and edits an art magazine along with Jogen Chowdhury. She is also a committed Rotarian and is devoted to social work.

"If I were to remain silent, I would be guilty of complicity."

— Albert Einstein

These words of Einstein say it all. To raise a voice, whether to protest, guide, lead, or stand up for one's rights, is the basic tenet of a robust democracy. Silence is acquiescence, and in effect, to agree to or comply with injustice, unfairness, or wrongdoing. Therefore, silence may be construed to be a sign of cowardice under various circumstances and, in many critical situations, a sin.

However, here we are talking about voices of protest. It is important, definitely, but there is yet another voice that is also much required, and that is the voice that leads, influences, and inspires.

Today, let us delve into the depths of such quiet, firm, and steady voices.

Whenever we talk about quiet voices and lasting impact, we come upon a powerfully magnetic tool that is incredibly strong; it is the tool of "introverted leadership". Here, we can explore themes of such leadership that speak of a depth of character where actions speak far louder than words.

In a world where, often, rewards are meant for the loudest person in the room, the "lasting impact" of quiet voices usually stems from:

The Philosophy of "Quiet Influence"

What exactly is this philosophy?

Deep Listening: Creating space for others to feel heard, which builds trust.

Intentionality: Choosing words carefully so that when they are spoken, they carry the weight of conviction and belief.

Leading by Example: Allowing the quality of the work or the consistency of character to become the primary message.

Historical Icons

Many of the world's most powerful figures who brought about enduring changes led through quiet persistence rather than loud charisma. Some of them, who immediately spring to mind, are:

Rosa Parks: Often described as soft-spoken and timid, yet her single act of quiet defiance changed the course of American history.

Mahatma Gandhi: Proved that non-violence and "passive resistance" could destroy an entire empire's colonial backbone.

Albert Einstein: A classic introvert who once said, "The monotony and solitude of a quiet life stimulate the creative mind."

Modern Contexts: The Anatomy of a Quiet Influencer

Creative Solitude: Writers, programmers, and artists often use "quiet" spaces to produce quality work that "echoes" through the corridors of time.

The "Quiet Quitting" or "Quiet Ambition" movements redefine success away from the corporate ladder and towards a more personal and fulfilling goal achievement that brings forth a steady and meaningful contribution to society.

A matrix of the quiet movement – how quiet voices bring about lasting impact.

Trait

Impact on Others

Consistency: Builds deep trust and psychological safety within a community.

Humility: Shifts the focus from the "self" to the "cause," inviting more collaborators.

Thoughtfulness: Ensures that actions are intentional and minimize unintended harm.

Echoes of Impact: Voices that Inspire

True influence rarely requires a loudspeaker. Often, the most profound alterations are sparked by those who actually operate away from the spotlight—the "quiet voices" whose consistency, empathy, and localized action create a ripple effect that outlasts any viral trend.

Quiet Voices, Lasting Impact

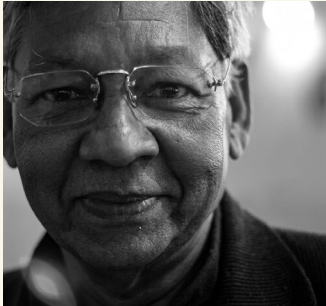
While our culture often rewards the loudest in the room, lasting impact is repeatedly built on a foundation of quiet virtues. Here is how these voices shape our world:

The Power of Presence: Many leaders inspire not through grand orations, but through their unwavering presence and reliability.

They lead by example, proving that integrity is a daily ritual, not a public performance.

Deep Listening: Quiet voices excel at listening. By truly hearing the needs of others, they create solutions that are rooted in reality and empathy, rather than ego.

Micro-Movements: Huge shifts often begin with "micro-movements"—small, localized acts of kindness or reform. These small echoes eventually coalesce into a powerful chorus of change.



Sujit Sanyal

Sujit Sanyal is a retired senior advertising and brand communication professional, who has worked across a wide range of categories in the product and service industry. He continues his association with advertising by teaching at various institutes, including the Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication at Lavale, Pune. He has authored a few books, including his memoirs, while also running a digital platform, Kahaani Koncerti. He is also the Chairman of Oly's Advertising Roundtable Charitable Trust, committed to deliberating and discussing matters of brand and marketing. A former Rotarian, he has served as the Past President of Rotary Club of Delhi Panchsheel Park and as a Zonal Secretary.

Currently, he serves as the Honorary Director of HARTS for the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development, which includes working as an Executive Aide to the Trust Chairman. He is also the Convenor for the International Conference on Preserving Buddhist Heritage in Rural Areas.

Over a hundred years ago, a casual "meeting up," better described in our parlance as an adda, sparked off one of the largest, perhaps the largest, movements in social service: Rotary.

An Indian sage, who travelled to the United States in the last decade of the 19th century, often spending nights in packing boxes at railway stations to fight the cold, put together his dreams and set up an international movement dedicated to the betterment of mankind: the Ramakrishna Mission.

We can recall many such examples. A chance presence of a Swiss businessman in a war zone sparked off the International Committee of the Red Cross, while a Swedish schoolgirl sparked off an international movement on the environment worldwide. Be it a political movement, a humanitarian cause, or environmental awareness, over centuries we have seen individual voices sparking off impacts in our social lives, making us think and triggering action, individually or collectively. We do not have to be a Mahatma Gandhi or a Rosa Parks, but we too, in our own way, can either take the initiative or be a part of an initiative.

While it takes a lot to espouse a cause and get people to gather around you to take it forward, people have excellent opportunities to give shape to their dreams through various bodies working in the field of humanitarianism. Rotary is one such example. Celebrated as the world's biggest NGO, spread across the world, it is the perfect platform to connect with people and play an active role in supporting various causes aimed at the betterment of the human race.

Rotary is the perfect example of what can be termed as Echoes of Impact. As for voices, it is not just individuals but also collective voices that inspire. And the best person to inspire is the person within you. If you are able to inspire yourself, you can surely inspire people around you, be it your family or community. You set examples. It took a single lady, who helped the wounded in the Crimean War, to turn the nursing profession into a profession of respectability.

The readers of this journal are very fortunate to be among people who are all striving to work together on various projects for the betterment of society. You are creating an impact, and you are the voice of inspiration.

Echoes of Impact Voices that Inspire



Anirudha Roy Chowdhury

Anirudha Roy Chowdhury is one of the most distinguished Rotary leaders from eastern India and a senior member of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Megacity.

He joined Rotary in 1994 as a charter member and went on to serve as District Governor of the then undivided District 3290 (India & Nepal) in 2007–08. Over the years, he has played significant leadership roles in membership development, public image, literacy, and The Rotary Foundation.

A major milestone in his Rotary journey was his elevation as a Rotary International Director for 2023–25, one of the highest offices in global Rotary leadership. In this role, he represented Rotary members across a large international zone and contributed to policy-making and strategic leadership at the worldwide level.

He is particularly respected for visionary leadership, strengthening Rotary's public image, promoting impactful service projects, and his contribution to literacy initiatives through Rotary India Literacy Mission.

Professionally, he is an entrepreneur associated with healthcare, diagnostics, digital imaging, and printing technologies.

Despite holding prestigious positions, he is known for his grounded approach and often says:

"At the end of the day, I am just a Rotarian."

In Rotary, impact is rarely a single moment—it is an echo. An act of service becomes a story. A quiet commitment becomes a voice that inspires others to act.

Every project we undertake, every hand we extend, and every life we touch creates ripples far beyond what we can immediately see. These echoes are heard in healthier communities, educated children, empowered women, and renewed hope. More importantly, they are heard in the voices of Rotarians who choose service over self, collaboration over comfort, and purpose over applause.

As we turn these pages, let us listen closely—to the stories of impact, the lessons learned, and the inspiration drawn from one another. May these voices remind us that leadership is not about how loudly we speak, but how deeply our actions resonate.

Together, let us continue to create echoes that inspire today—and shape a better tomorrow.



Member's Spotlight



Dola Mukherjee

Dola Mukherjee, a postgraduate in Literature from the University of Calcutta, started her career in Marketing and later shifted to HR. After a prolonged corporate tenure with multinational companies, managing top corporates as her clients, she started her own enterprise, where she works directly with weavers and artisans of India, visiting clusters to create her own designs.

It has been a 360-degree shift from her corporate career—moving more into designing and creativity—a journey at the grassroots level that brought her to Rotary, and one that she is loving and eager to take forward. An avid reader and a total film buff, deeply interested in history and heritage, and someone who loves travelling, Dola finds peace and draws her energy from the art and craft she engages with daily. A mother of a grown-up daughter who is a lawyer, Dola lives in Kolkata—the city where she has grown up and with which she finds a deep connection.

Joining Rotary, and importantly, the all-women Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna in 2022, has been a significant experience for me. It was a conscious choice and decision that I took to join Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna, where we stand for the common motto of Service Above Self.

I was privileged to be given the responsibility of Polio Chair for the year 2024–25, a duty that I consider sacred. The service projects that I am a part of as a member of the club have given new meaning to my life, where, beyond one's professional achievements, service to society can be deeply gratifying. This is where we, as Rotarians, stand strong and united.

Besides our projects, the regular meetings of the club are charged with energy, where discussions about our future initiatives and their execution take place. Each regular meeting is, therefore, a huge learning experience for me. My journey as a Rotarian has given me a purpose in life beyond my professional goals and achievements. This experience is enriching beyond expression.

Being part of this vibrant community has also allowed me to build meaningful relationships with like-minded individuals who share a passion for service. The exchange of ideas and collective enthusiasm constantly inspire me to contribute more effectively.

Rotary has taught me that even small efforts, when done consistently and with sincerity, can create a lasting impact. It has instilled in me a deeper sense of responsibility towards society and strengthened my belief in the power of collective goodwill.



Reshmi Mukherjee

Mrs. Reshmi Mukherjee is an educationist and was born into a family of erudite individuals and philanthropists in the field of education. After completing her Master's degree in Sociology from CU, she joined a market and social research organization, ORG-MARG, as a Research Executive. There, she had the opportunity to work in the coal mines of Bihar for a World Bank project and explored the poignant social structure there, which had previously been obscure to her. Her affinity towards social work developed from that experience. Later, she worked as the Founder Principal of a renowned ISC school in Kolkata, Pramila Memorial Advanced School, for 19 years. Currently, she is associated with schools, social groups, and organizations, and is also a Paul Harris Fellow of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna.

To be a part of Rotary has always been a matter of great pride for me. In the year 2017, the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna embarked on its journey, and I began my association with the club in July 2017 as a Charter Member. Being a second-generation Rotarian, it has always been my motto to serve society, and given the vast purview of Rotary International, no better platform could have been found. The word "Rotary" resonated within my family from my early childhood days, and it became intricately woven into our personal and social communications, emotions, fellowship, and commitment to service.

After I became a member, our club founded the school "Ankuran" at Central Jail, Dum Dum, for the lap children (children of inmates, usually below 7 years of age) in October 2017. This remains the most significant flagship project of our club. I would like to thank all the members and our Charter President, Mrs. Srabanees Chakraborty, for making me a part of this extraordinary initiative.

Over the years, the club has reached greater heights under the guidance of extremely capable and dynamic leadership. What I feel today is that Rotary International has emphasized the concepts of "Empathy" and "Inclusivity" since the very first day of its inception. This has helped in overcoming personal unconscious biases and prejudices through various self-empowering projects. Rotary has brought together millions of members from different races, religions, and countries under one umbrella, all sharing the same motto. It has addressed major challenges with empathy by embracing the underprivileged within its fold.

Though the Foundation is a bedrock of social service, it continues to foster positive fellowship. It has been working relentlessly to create a safe and promising environment across the world, where individuals have diverse needs.

Thus, we can confidently say that while diversity is a natural fact, in Rotary, "Empathy" and "Inclusivity" are our actions. Furthermore, I can proudly say that our club, with all-women members, stands tall among all the clubs in the district. Members are consistently working on new ideas every day and striving to bring them into reality.

Member's Spotlight



Anjali Patnaik

Educated at Loreto House School and College, Kolkata, she developed a strong foundation in discipline, teamwork, and service from an early age. A passionate sportsperson, she represented Bengal in junior hockey and basketball—experiences that shaped her resilience and competitive spirit.

Marriage to a sailor opened up a unique chapter in her life, taking her across the seas and allowing her to experience diverse cultures, cuisines, and landscapes around the world. These journeys broadened her perspective and enriched her understanding of people and traditions. Her children, too, were fortunate to grow up amidst this global exposure.

During her college years, she had the opportunity to engage with international platforms such as the United Nations, interacting with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and strengthening her appreciation for global perspectives.

Life truly feels like it has come full circle. After a long journey through college, family responsibilities, and the many phases in between, I now find myself in a space where I have the time and freedom to give back—and what better place than the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna.

When I was first invited to join Rotary, I was unsure—but discovering a vibrant group of inspiring women changed everything. I joined with enthusiasm, and the journey since has been truly rewarding.

Being part of this circle has introduced me to dynamic, compassionate individuals from diverse walks of life, all united by a shared purpose—to serve society and make a difference. Their guidance, encouragement, and example have helped me grow, teaching me how to contribute meaningfully and participate in impactful initiatives.

Today, I feel a deep sense of belonging and fulfillment. Together, we strive in our own small ways to bring about positive change, believing that even the smallest act of kindness can make someone's life a little better.

I feel deeply thankful to be able to extend my support to the amazing Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna and to be part of a community that believes in creating positive change. Every day is a learning experience—sometimes even the smallest efforts create the most meaningful ripples.

In my own humble way, I hope to make the world a little better by offering support, kindness, and service to society and the universe—that's what the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna is all about.

I feel truly blessed to contribute to the wonderful work of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna and to be among such lovely, immensely talented women who believe in creating meaningful change.



Project Stories

• Mandira Mukherjee



passion and commitment underscore our mission to empower young minds and create meaningful educational impact.

This pioneering project stands as a testament to Rotary's enduring commitment to innovation, education, and community development, paving the way for many more such transformative initiatives.



Inauguration of the Pioneering STEM Lab – A Landmark Project of Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna on 28.01.26

The first STEM Lab at Bidhannagar Municipal School was successfully inaugurated by our esteemed District Governor, Dr. Ramendu Hom Chowdhury, in the gracious presence of First Lady Dr. Bandana Hom Chowdhury and other distinguished guests.



The occasion was made special by the presence of Ms. Bhaswati Chakraborty, Principal of Bidhannagar Municipal School; Dr. Maitri Ghosh, Joint DPI & OSD, Higher Education Department; and Mr. Debesh Chakraborty, Regional Chief, HUDCO.

We were also privileged to have among us respected District Officials—Ms. Soma Kaji, Mr. N. Ramakrishnan, Mr. Avijit Kolay, Mr. Sandip Banerjee, and Ms. Shampa Chowdhury. This initiative marks a significant milestone for the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna, proudly standing as the first STEM Lab project in Rotary District 3291. It reflects our vision of transforming education by introducing innovative, hands-on learning experiences for students.



The STEM Lab is designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking, moving beyond conventional classroom teaching. It will provide students with opportunities to engage in practical, project-based learning, helping them build essential skills for the future.

The event was further enriched by the enthusiastic presence of Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna members and the dedicated STEM Education team of the college, whose collective efforts brought this vision to life. Their



Project Stories

• Dr. Sharmistha Majumdar



Through this project, Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna continues to uphold the true spirit of Service Above Self, making a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need it the most.



The Cataract Surgery CSR Project Initiative by Metroark Pvt. Ltd. at Sushrut Eye Hospital on 27.02.26

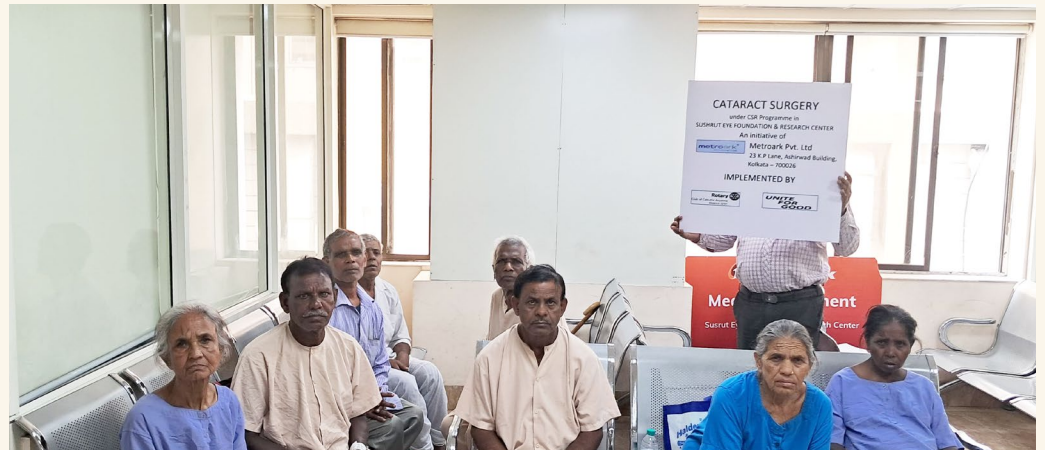
The Cataract Surgery Project for 50 patients at Sushrut Eye Hospital was carried out successfully, with the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna serving as the implementing agency. This noble initiative was dedicated to supporting underprivileged individuals who otherwise lack access to essential eye care and treatment.

This project was made possible through the generous support of Metroark Pvt. Ltd., with a total project cost of Rs. 4 lakhs. Their valuable contribution reflects a strong commitment towards community welfare and the restoration of vision for those in need.

On the very first day, 13 underprivileged patients successfully underwent cataract surgery, marking a promising and impactful beginning. For many of these individuals, impaired vision had significantly affected their daily lives, limiting their independence and quality of life.

The remaining surgeries will be conducted in planned instalments, ensuring that all 50 beneficiaries receive timely and proper care.

This initiative goes beyond medical intervention—it is about restoring dignity, confidence, and hope. For the underprivileged, access to such healthcare services can be life-changing, enabling them to return to their daily activities, support their families, and lead more fulfilling lives. Each successful surgery is not just a medical achievement but a step towards a brighter future. Restoring sight means opening doors to new opportunities, self-reliance, and renewed optimism.



Project Stories

• Uma Mitra



Inter-District Project with Rotary Club of Bolpur Rangamati (District 3240) 15.03.2026.

The Rotary Club of Calcutta Ayyanna, in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Bolpur Rangamati, successfully organised an impactful inter-district outreach initiative titled "Stories by Uma Mitra" on 15th March 2026 for the Baul community near Bolpur. The project reflected Rotary's commitment towards inclusive community service, healthcare, and human connection.

The programme was graced by the presence of distinguished Rotarians, including Ashim Kanti Adhikary and Sandip Banerjee, along with members from both participating clubs, whose support and participation added immense value to the initiative.

One of the major highlights of the project was a Mega Health Check-up Camp, through which comprehensive healthcare services were extended to the local community. The camp included general health consultations, dental check-ups, and eye examinations, ensuring that essential medical attention reached many who otherwise have limited access to such facilities. The initiative aimed not only at treatment but also at spreading awareness regarding preventive healthcare and overall well-being.

Adding warmth and care to the day, refreshments and lunch were distributed among all attendees. Water, fruit juice, candies, and wholesome meals were thoughtfully arranged, creating an atmosphere of hospitality and compassion for every participant.

The project stood as a beautiful example of collaboration between

districts, united by a shared vision of service above self. Through this initiative, both clubs reaffirmed their dedication towards reaching underserved communities and preserving the spirit and dignity of Bengal's rich Baul heritage while addressing essential humanitarian needs.



Project Stories

• Debjani Mukherjee



Thalassemia Awareness & Prevention Session Alongside a Stress Management Seminar at Baghbazar Women's College on 15.01.26

Some engagements feel purposeful from the very outset—and this was one of them.

The Rotary Club of Calcutta Ayyanna conducted a Thalassemia Awareness & Prevention Session alongside a Stress Management Seminar at Baghbazar Women's College—bringing together two equally important conversations on physical health and emotional well-being.

The session on thalassemia, led by Dr. Narayan Dhar Chowdhury and Dr. Pradip Mitra, was both informative and deeply relevant. With clarity and sensitivity, they spoke about prevention—not as a distant medical concern, but as a responsibility that begins early, with awareness and informed choices. The emphasis on premarital screening was handled thoughtfully, encouraging students to approach the subject with maturity and foresight.

Complementing this was the stress management session by Sandip Banerjee, which addressed the growing pressures faced by young individuals today. Through simple, practical techniques, the session offered ways to navigate academic demands, emotional challenges, and everyday stress—promoting a more balanced and mindful approach to life.

What stood out was the openness of the interaction. Students engaged freely, asked questions, and participated with genuine interest, making the sessions both enriching and impactful.

We remain grateful to the Principal,

teachers, students, and guardians for their unwavering support and encouragement in making this initiative possible.

In bringing awareness and well-being into the same space, we take a step forward towards building a more informed, resilient, and healthier community. This is Debjani Mukherjee reporting from Baghbazar Women's College.



Project Stories

● Apala Datta



Chevening Alumni Engagement Session – A Proud Moment for Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna on 11.03.26

The Chevening Alumni Engagement Session on “UK–India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Growth Opportunities in East and Northeast India” was a truly enriching and insightful experience. Held at the British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata in celebration of International Women’s Day, the session brought together thought leaders, professionals, and changemakers for a meaningful exchange of ideas. We had the privilege of attending this engaging event, which featured an excellent panel discussion exploring the impact of the UK–India FTA and the emerging opportunities in the eastern and northeastern regions of the country. The discussions were both informative and thought-provoking, highlighting the role of collaboration, policy, and innovation in driving regional growth. We are immensely proud that our Club Secretary, Rotarian Shromona Ghosh, was one of the distinguished panellists and an esteemed speaker. She represented the Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna with great confidence, maturity, and professionalism, contributing valuable insights to the discussion. The session was also attended by our club’s board members, reflecting our collective commitment to learning and engagement in global and national developments. The concluding address was delivered by our Club President, and it was an honour to share a few words representing Avyanna’s dedication to women’s empowerment and economic participation.



Project Stories

• Sheela Janakiram



District Conference Ramdhanu 2026 — Where Minds Met, Hearts Connected & Memories Were Created

The District Conference Ramdhanu 2026, held on 10th and 11th January 2026 at the beautiful Nicco Park East Pavilion Lawns, was truly a magnificent confluence of learning, fellowship, entertainment, and celebration. From the very moment one entered the venue, there was a vibrant festive spirit in the air. The ambience was elegant, colourful, and extremely welcoming, and every detail reflected meticulous planning and seamless execution. The conference was exceptionally well organised and smoothly managed throughout. Cleanliness and discipline were maintained at every corner, despite the huge gathering, which deserves special appreciation. The hospitality was warm and gracious, making every delegate feel comfortable and valued. Right from the grand entrance to the beautifully designed conference hall and the magnificently decorated stage, every aspect of the setup reflected elegance, class, and scale. The entire venue had a truly majestic feel and carried an almost international-standard look and ambience. The lighting, décor, presentation, and overall aesthetics added a sense of grandeur that elevated the entire conference experience and left everyone deeply impressed. One of the biggest attractions was undoubtedly the delectable food spread. The venue was lined with lovely food stalls serving a variety of mouthwatering delicacies that added to the festive mood of the conference. The arrangements were systematic, timely, and extremely well coordinated.

What made Ramdhanu 2026 truly stand apart were the enriching and enlightening sessions by an extraordinary line-up of speakers. Every session brought fresh perspectives, inspiration, and immense learning. The audience remained thoroughly engaged throughout.

A particularly remarkable session was by young AI prodigy Raul John Aju, who amazed everyone with his deep understanding of Artificial Intelligence at such a young age. His session on AI and its human possibilities was intelligent, futuristic, and truly thought-provoking. It was inspiring to see someone so young speak with such confidence and clarity on a subject shaping the future of the world.

The session by Arjun Sen was deeply moving and motivational. Known for his extraordinary life journey, on which the film "I Want To Talk" was made, he spoke about resilience, leadership, life, and overcoming adversity with incredible honesty and warmth. His words touched hearts and left the audience inspired and emotionally charged.

Bharat Dabholkar, the renowned ad guru, actor, playwright, and director, brought a completely different flavour to the conference. His session on brands, ideas, and modern India was witty, engaging, and packed with insights. His effortless humour and storytelling style kept the

audience entertained while simultaneously delivering powerful thoughts and observations.

The session by Ambassador Deepak Vohra was another major highlight. His vast diplomatic experience, global insights, and dynamic style of speaking made the session immensely enriching. Equally unforgettable was the session by Jaiprakash Kabra, whose inspiring thoughts on leadership and mind transformation resonated deeply with the audience.

One of the most fascinating and talked-about sessions was by Deepak Rao, the Extra Sensory Perception expert and mentalist. His mind-reading abilities left the audience absolutely spellbound. The session was interactive, entertaining, mysterious, and deeply engaging, making it one of the biggest crowd-pullers of the conference.

The conference beautifully balanced knowledge with entertainment. The evenings were vibrant and full of energy. The members enthusiastically participated in Funtakshari and the glamorous Red Carpet Fashion Show, which added immense fun and excitement to the atmosphere. The entertainment programmes were truly the icing on the cake. The mesmerising performance by Indian Idol winner Manasi Ghosh created an unforgettable musical evening. The stunning Turkish dance performances added elegance and

grandeur, while the lively musical performance by the band led by Dr. Shibaprasad Bhowmick kept the audience enthralled and energised.

Special mention must also be made of the beautifully curated "Thalassemia Free India" selfie booth, which not only became a major attraction but also spread awareness about an extremely important social cause in a creative and impactful way.

All in all, Ramdhanu 2026 was not merely a district conference — it was an experience. Entertaining, enriching, enlightening, and inspiring in every possible way, it perfectly blended service, fellowship, learning, and celebration. The conference left every attendee with beautiful memories, meaningful takeaways, and immense pride in being part of such a thoughtfully curated and magnificently executed event.



Fellowship

• Sutapa Biswas



Simple Joys, Beautiful Bonds

“বহু দিন ধরে বহু ফ্রেশ দূরে
বহু ব্যয় করি বহু দেশ ঘুরে
দেখিতে গিয়াছি পর্বতমালা,
দেখিতে গিয়াছি সিন্ধু।
দেখা হয় নাই চক্ষু মেলিয়া
যর হতে শুধু দুই পা ফেলিয়া
একটি ধানের শিষের উপরে
একটি শিশিরবিন্দু।”
— “অশেষ আনন্দ”
by Rabindranath Tagore

For days and days,
across miles and miles,
I travelled far and wide to see
mountains and oceans,
Yet failed to notice,
Just two steps away from home.
A tiny drop of dew upon a paddy
stalk.

The essence of this timeless poem
came alive beautifully during the
fellowship picnic of the Rotary Club
of Calcutta Avyanna at Hide Away
Resort. Not very far from the city, yet
nestled amidst greenery, serenity,
and nature, the eco-friendly resort—
uniquely created using containers—
became a refreshing reminder that
sometimes the most beautiful
experiences are found close to
home, waiting quietly to be
discovered.

Surrounded by lush greenery and a
peaceful ambience, members spent
a wonderful day filled with laughter,
conversations, delicious food, fun
activities, and moments of
togetherness. Away from the rush of
daily life, the outing offered everyone
an opportunity to unwind and
reconnect with nature as well as
with one another.

The warmth and hospitality
extended by the owner of the resort
made the experience even more
memorable. Adding to the joy of the
day, our beloved Rtn. Sushupta Di
gifted beautiful cups to all the

members as tokens of love and
remembrance, while our President
delighted everyone with colourful
goodies that brought smiles all
around.

More than just a picnic, the outing
became a celebration of friendship,
warmth, and togetherness.
Fellowship is truly the heart of Rotary,
and this cherished gathering once

again reflected the beautiful
bonding and spirit that define the
Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna.



Fund Raising

• Susupta Chaudhuri



The U-Turn Hour — A Pause to Reconnect With Ourselves

In the middle of our fast-paced professional and personal lives, The U-Turn Hour Workshop turned out to be a truly refreshing and meaningful evening at the historic Calcutta International Club. It was not merely a workshop, but an experience of introspection, emotional awareness, and quiet rejuvenation.

Life coach Diya Jaiswal, founder of Empowerful, conducted a deeply engaging and thought-provoking session on the "Psychology of Happiness" and mental well-being. With warmth, honesty, and tremendous positivity, she shared her own inspiring journey — from a demanding career in foreign banking to becoming a certified life coach after courageously facing cancer head-on and transforming her life completely.

What made the session particularly impactful was the relatability of her thoughts. In today's world, where stress, pressure, and constant expectations often become part of daily life, she reminded us about the importance of pausing, reconnecting with ourselves, and understanding what truly brings inner happiness and peace.

Diya introduced her signature concept, "The U-Turn Hour," a mindfulness framework specially designed for busy professionals and individuals constantly juggling responsibilities. Through this concept, she encouraged all of us to take a step back from the chaos of life, identify our inner dissatisfaction, and consciously work towards emotional well-being and self-awareness.

The session was highly interactive and experiential rather than merely theoretical. Through engaging activities and globally tested modules, participants were encouraged to identify their emotional "blind spots,"

reflect on their thought patterns, and prioritise mental wellness in a more meaningful manner.

The entire evening had a calm, comforting, and positive energy. It created a safe and welcoming space where conversations about

happiness, emotional balance, and mental wellness could happen openly and honestly.

Overall, The U-Turn Hour was a beautiful reminder that sometimes, the most important journey we undertake is the one within ourselves.

Thought-provoking, enriching, and deeply inspiring, the session left everyone with valuable takeaways and a renewed sense of self-awareness and positivity.



A Snapshot of Projects Executed

JANUARY

Date	Title
Jan 1	Distribution of shawls and food packets at Mukherjee Farm House, Aminpur, Sondalia
Jan 3–4	Co-hosted multilingual drama competition at Muktangan
Jan 5	Vector-borne disease awareness and Thalassemia campaign at Christopher Road Govt. Sponsored High School along with tree plantation drive
Jan 12	Sustainable mushroom cultivation training project for village women at Barasat RCC
Jan 17	Sports event for specially abled children at Freemason Society Grounds
Jan 23	Contribution to Prothom Podokkhep during Saraswati Puja
Jan 28	Inauguration of the first STEM Education Lab at Bidhannagar Municipal School

A Snapshot of Projects Executed

FEBRUARY

Date	Title
Feb 12	Goodwill visit to Dumdum Correctional Home with fruits and cakes
Feb 13	Grooming and beautician training session for underprivileged girls with Treasures of Innocence and Salon Canvas
Feb 15	Contribution visit to NGO Aview at Jibontala Ghatakpur
Feb 21	"Snehobondhon" — A bond of love for elders at Lake Club on International Mother Language Day
Feb 27	Cataract Eye Surgery Initiative at Sushrut Eye Hospital with Metroark
Feb 28	Handmade organic colours created by Prothom Podokkhep children

A Snapshot of Projects Executed

MARCH

Date	Title
Mar 2	Awareness Today Better Tomorrow campaign at DPS Barasat
Mar 5	Mindwell Programme at DPS Barasat on healthy food habits, career analytics, and Thalassemia awareness
Mar 10	Chevening Alumni Engagement Session at the UK High Commission
Mar 13–15	Co-hosted Rainbow-RYLA project with RC of Budge Budge at DHYAN ASHRAM
Mar 14–15	Mega Health Check-up Camp and Inter District Project with RC of Bolpur Rangamati
Mar 24	STEM Lab Inauguration at Nalikul Govt. School, Hooghly
Mar 25	Women Empowerment Workshop by Diya Jaiswal with Calcutta Foundation
Mar 28	Joint RM with Calcutta Endeavour and Heritage Zoo; Marble Palace community development project
Mar 29	Interactive session with Swami Mahesh for Kailash Manasarovar Yatra at Sun City Community Hall

Potpourri



Shukti Singh Roy

All In A Line

Prescriptions in hand, they wait
With bags at the retail store,
Buying fruits and vegetables.
They are all seen standing in a line.

"One meter of distance," they say,
Should keep you safe and sound.
Make sure you maintain that
While standing in the line.

Closed windows and empty roads,
A stillness encompassed all.
Taxis and hand-rickshaws await,
All standing in a line.

Hordes of people walk together,
With families or alone.
Miles to go before they reach home—
With hope, they're running in a line.

Comrades have come forward
With rations and some relief.
Tired and fatigued, they await their turn,
Standing apart in a line.

Just those few—I can't say why—
Decided it was a ploy
To break their paths and fellowship,
Even while standing in a line.

We did what we had to do,
We cared, we distanced, stayed home.
Only time can tell if we could
Delay the ultimate crossover line.



Suniti Khastgir

River Festival

My relationship with the Ganga, as we Bengalis call the Hooghly River, dates back to childhood—whether it was crossing the grand Howrah Bridge while trying to catch a train, or travelling over Bally Bridge on the way to Belur Math, Adyapeeth Temple, and Dakshineswar Temple.

As children, the moment we got onto Bally Bridge, we would look across the river while chanting the Adya Strotam. At the end of the bridge was a plaque bearing my great-granduncle's name—he was the only Indian Chief Engineer at the time to have built it—and we would insist on seeing it. And of course, there was the Gay Ice Cream parlour near the river—our Sunday treat. We would drive to the riverbank and enjoy ice cream there.

As I grew older, my relationship with the Ganges continued through pilgrimages, when we would take the holy dip. Even in my saddest moments—when I immersed my parents' ashes—I took that dip. The Ganga, or the Hooghly River, thus holds a deeply personal place in my heart.

When I began painting, I would often go to Prinsep Ghat after work, watch the sunset, and simply sit in quiet reflection. The riverbank became my thinking space—my "me time." As life moved into the rhythm of corporate routines, these simple yet profound pleasures slowly faded into the background.

Serendipitously, I met Shoma Basu, and through her, Laily Thompson—a junior from school and a fellow Rotarian from my club, RC Avyanna. Laily's story inspired me deeply. Having left Kolkata over three decades ago to settle in the UK, she continued to return and spend time at the ghats. She fell in love with the history, culture, and beauty of North Kolkata's riverfront. What began as morning walks along the ghats evolved into a vision—to bring life back to these historic spaces.



The story of Kolkata is inseparable from the Hooghly River. From its early days as a trading port to its rise as a cultural capital, the city grew along these waters. The ghats—stone steps leading into the river—were once vibrant centres of commerce, ritual, and daily life. Over time, however, industrial decline and urban neglect created a distance between the city and its river. Many historic ghats fell into disrepair, even as they continued to host rituals, ferry crossings, idol immersions, and community gatherings. Their revival, therefore, is not merely about conservation, but about cultural renewal.

At the heart of this revival is KultX—Laily Thompson's initiative over the past five years. With passion and determination, she single-handedly created a platform that acts as a catalyst for community and creativity. One of its most impactful initiatives is the River Festival—a series of cultural events held along Kolkata's historic ghats to create awareness and reconnect people with the river through art, music, and performance.

First launched between November 2019 and February 2020, the festival activated spaces such as Prinsep Ghat and other riverside locations with music, dance, art installations, and performances. The idea was simple yet powerful—to take art out of enclosed spaces and bring it back to the river that once defined the city's collective life.

Subsequent editions adapted to changing times, with smaller pop-up performances at ghats like Ahiritola and Champatala. By 2023 and beyond, the festival returned with renewed scale, featuring multidisciplinary performances, student participation, and strong community engagement.

KultX's River Festival demonstrates how culture can drive urban transformation. It not only celebrates the river but restores its place in the city's imagination, inviting Kolkata to reconnect with its roots in a contemporary and meaningful way.

Alongside the festival, KultX has also worked towards cleaning and restoring the ghats. Laily reached out to stakeholders, including the Port Trust, river ambassadors, and the Army, building collaborations that support this mission. Through art, music, wall paintings, and community participation, she and her growing team are bringing people back to the river. They have also initiated efforts such as training local vendors and ghat workers as lifeguards, installing waste bins, and encouraging storytelling around the history of these spaces.

Such initiatives are complemented by broader efforts from corporates through CSR, NGOs, and civic authorities, who are working towards restoring and upgrading ghats—improving infrastructure, accessibility, and environmental sustainability. Areas such as Kumortuli, Nimtala, and Champatala are already seeing renewed attention as part of this larger riverfront revitalisation.

The revival of Kolkata's ghats is still a work in progress, but the change is visible. Where there was neglect, there is now engagement; where there was distance, there is rediscovery.

Operating largely from the UK, Laily has self-funded many of these efforts and created something truly meaningful. I am deeply grateful to her for allowing me to be part of this journey for the city I love. Our connection was instant, and being part of this movement has been both an honour and a joy.



Aparna Banerjee

Renewal

The mysterious hills, cuddling the night,
A blanket of mist, kissing it goodbye.
The whispering trees in dark silhouettes,
The cadence of the flowing rivulets.

Song of the magpie at break of dawn,
Marking the territory to harness social bond!
The first rays caressing the sky,
Awakening dreams that dare to fly.

Promising a new beginning,
Of renewal and growth,
A gentle vow, a living oath!

And in each one, the renewal sings,
We rise, we shine, and grace doth bring.
A garden is alive with the flora of hope,
Amidst the vastness and vivid kaleidoscope.



Potpourri



Srabane Chakraborty

Quiet Battles, Enduring Strength

*"Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man;
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the one who thinks he can."*

— Henry Ford

This has never been merely a quotation to me. It has been a lived truth.

When people see strength, they often assume it was always there. It wasn't.

There are moments in life that quietly divide your story into "before" and "after."

For me, that moment came at 24.

At twenty-four, life quietly divided itself into a "before" and an "after."

I had just completed my Master's in English. I had been married for four years. My daughter was barely a year old. Life was meant to be expanding — filled with plans, responsibilities, and the gentle chaos of young motherhood. Instead, it paused.

Guillain-Barré Syndrome entered my life without warning. What began as discomfort gradually became weakness. Walking grew uncertain. Standing required effort. Medical consultations brought confusion; treatments did not always align. And eventually, I heard words no young woman wishes to hear — that a crutch or even a wheelchair might become my companion.

At 24, that is frightening.

At 24, with a one-year-old child looking at you for everything, it is overwhelming.

The diagnosis did not merely challenge my body; it challenged my identity. I was a young mother. I had responsibilities. I had dreams. The thought of physical dependency was overwhelming. Yet somewhere between fear and frustration, I realised that surrender was not an option.

Recovery was not dramatic. It was disciplined. Physiotherapy was demanding. Progress was slow and often invisible. There were days when improvement seemed negligible and exhaustion felt heavier than hope. But I gradually understood that healing required partnership. My doctors and therapists could guide me, but my mind had to lead. I had to participate actively in my own recovery.

It was a real battle — physical, emotional, and deeply internal. I had fallen, certainly. But I made a conscious decision that I would rise, and I would walk again. By sheer mental resolve, by trusting the process, and by refusing to see myself as limited, I rebuilt not just mobility, but belief.

When strength began to return, I knew I had to restore confidence in movement. I was not ready to accept a job. To take remuneration is to take responsibility for delivery, and at that stage I was not entirely certain of my stamina or consistency. I did not want to commit to something I might not be able to fulfil.

So I enrolled in B.Ed. — not because teaching was ever my focus, but because I needed structured movement and disciplined routine. I needed to step out daily, attend classes, travel, and function independently again. In many ways, it became rehabilitation in disguise. Though teaching was not my intended career, the learning enriched me profoundly. The exposure to psychology and communication later strengthened my professional journey in ways I could not have anticipated. No education ever goes to waste.

I later completed my MBA and consciously chose a profession that demanded physical stamina, mental agility, creativity, and relentless effort. After once being told I might not walk freely again, I refused to design my life around fear. I chose challenge over caution.

Years later, life tested me once more through COVID. I was among the first in my circle to contract it. While the physical illness subsided, the psychological aftermath was intense. Anxiety and emotional vulnerability followed. I was advised psychiatric medication and extended support.

I listened carefully. I reflected deeply. But I also trusted the resilience I had built years ago. With discipline, introspection, faith, and conscious mental conditioning, I worked through the darkness gradually. I regained balance without prolonged medication. It was another quiet victory — less visible than the first, but equally significant.

There is a memory that remains vivid. Standing atop the sand dunes in Doha, climbing through shifting sands under an endless sky, I paused at the summit. The climb had been physically demanding. In that moment, I remembered a time when standing steadily itself had seemed uncertain. The contrast was profound. What once felt like restriction had transformed into freedom. What once felt like struggle had become strength.

These experiences reshaped my perspective on life. I no longer see people or situations in black and white. Everyone carries strengths and shortcomings together. When we learn to value strengths while understanding limitations, we begin to truly understand one another. That realisation deepened my empathy and softened my judgments.

Potpourri



Mandira Mukherjee

A Day in Los Angeles in Under \$15!!!!

I took a day trip in LA from Arcadia to the Getty Museum via Santa Monica.

The best part of the journey was the bus ride, which went through the city via Venice Avenue. I did get to see the underbelly of LA—something one does not see when driving on the freeway. Freeways are like a carpet; the dirt is swept under them.

The ghettos of LA, of course, are better looking than their counterparts in Calcutta. They appear clean and hygienic! But one can feel and see the rowdies when they get on the bus.

I thought that we do not get to see this class in Calcutta, as we do not ride public buses there. But in LA, I got to see them. I think their plight is the same all over the world.

This is a view of the Getty Villa.

The 64-acre (26 ha) museum complex sits on a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean, which is about 100 feet (30 m) from the entrance to the property.

An outdoor 2,500-square-foot (230 m²) entry pavilion is also built into the hill near the South Parking Garage at the southern end of the Outer Peristyle.

The Outer Peristyle is a formal garden with roses and English ivy that includes a number of Roman sculptures.

To the west of the Outer Peristyle is an herb garden. To the west of the museum is a 450-seat outdoor Greek theatre where evening performances are staged. The theatre faces the west side of the villa and uses its entrance as a stage.

North of the villa is a 10,000 sq. ft. (930 m²) indoor, 250-seat auditorium. On the hill above the museum are Getty's original private ranch house and the museum wing that Getty added to his home in 1954. They are now used for curatorial offices, meeting rooms, and as a library.

On the way back, I got down at Santa Monica Beach and took a long walk along Broadway.

This was a most picturesque walk. The weather was good—everything was picture-perfect.

But there was a disturbing part as well: the beautiful garden was full of homeless people. Why would this happen in the land of milk and honey?

As I walked along Broadway, I was thankful to God that I had a home somewhere in the world and was lucky enough to walk in Santa Monica. I have a home in India; I have friends and family.

Thank God for everything.

Expense Statement

\$5 day pass

\$10 lunch at Starbucks with coffee

This was enough, but I cheated and had a tiramisu!



Potpourri



Rita Chatterjee

Escape From Insomnia

There are few things in life more frustrating than an inability to sleep. Sleep is essential for energy, health, productivity, and emotional balance—yet many people simply don't get enough of it.

However, insomnia, or lack of sleep, is not an illness; it is a symptom.

Certain factors—such as age, a disturbed biological clock, frequent trips to the bathroom at night, a new or uncomfortable sleeping environment, certain prescription drugs, stimulants like caffeine and nicotine, and screen exposure before bedtime—can aggravate insomnia.

The circadian rhythm, or biological clock, controls all biological patterns in life, including the sleep-wake cycle. If you try to sleep at a time when your body expects you to be awake, you disrupt this rhythm. As a result, you may lie awake, or if you sleep at irregular times during the day, you may find it difficult to fall asleep at your usual hour.

If you experience insomnia due to a temporary situation—such as an upcoming interview or examination—it will usually pass once the event is over. Similarly, insomnia caused by jet lag or a change in environment is temporary. This type of insomnia is known as acute insomnia.

However, when insomnia persists and is accompanied by unhealthy behavioural or perceptual changes, it may develop into chronic insomnia. In such cases, if the underlying cause is not addressed, the condition may continue to disrupt sleep. It is therefore advisable to either adapt to the situation or resolve the underlying issue. Many people unintentionally prolong their insomnia by repeatedly worrying about it.

Chronic insomnia can be deeply frustrating. Feelings of distress, hopelessness, inadequacy, and failure can sometimes overwhelm individuals. It is important to note that people who sleep well do not usually assess their sleep upon waking—whereas those with insomnia often do. Sleep becomes an obsessive focus.

Late-night socializing, working late, and prolonged screen time before bed may create a temporary sense of alertness or adaptation to modern life, but eventually, the nervous system resists. When the brain remains active and alert, the sympathetic nervous system—the body's "accelerator"—is stimulated. Stress hormone levels rise, leading to restlessness, and sleep becomes elusive.

If the brain habitually worries at bedtime, it can form an unintentional mental pattern. However, like the silver lining behind a grey cloud, the good news is that habits can be changed with the right strategies.

During sleep, the brain helps clear out toxins that accumulate during waking hours. Small lifestyle adjustments can significantly improve sleep quality.

Train Your Brain

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule.
- Limit food and fluid intake before bedtime.
- Develop a calming bedtime routine, such as taking a warm bath or giving yourself a foot massage.
- Put your thoughts on paper. Write down today's concerns and how you plan to address them tomorrow. Also list the next day's tasks in order of priority—it really works.
- Use sleeping pills only when absolutely necessary.
- Practice short sessions of meditation or pranayama before bedtime.
- Most importantly, limit exposure to artificial light from laptops, mobile phones, televisions, and other devices.

Finally, I would like to share a personal experience. Some years ago, I went through a phase of depression, anxiety, and insomnia. I felt angry and bitter, but I was able to overcome it without medication or professional counselling—through self-reflection, yoga, meditation, and pranayama.

I am confident that you, too, can overcome it. So roll over, relax, and reclaim your lost sleep.

Musings by our Interactors

REPORTER

● **Susmit Mondal**
JOINT TREASURER
INTERACT CLUB OF
BIRLA BHARATI



Cyber Security Awareness Workshop

Organised by: Interact Club of Birla Bharati School

Partners: Friends FM 91.9 & Federal Bank

Date: 02.02.2026

Venue: Birla Bharati Auditorium

Beneficiaries: Around 150–200 students of Classes XI and IX



In keeping with the Interact Club's commitment to community awareness and youth empowerment, a Cyber Security Awareness Workshop was organised to educate students on safe and responsible digital practices.

The programme commenced with an inspiring address by Ms. Apala Datta, Principal, Birla Bharati School, setting a strong foundation for the initiative. This was followed by an engaging session by Mr. Jimmy Tangree (Friend Jimmy), RJ, Friends FM, after which the event was seamlessly anchored by RJ Kuheli, ensuring active participation throughout.

Mr. Rajorshi Chakraborty, Assistant Vice President, Federal Bank, enriched the session by sharing real-life cyber fraud cases, enhancing students' alertness and understanding. Learning outcomes were reinforced through an interactive quiz conducted by RJ Kuheli and RJ Arijit, with winners receiving bottles and keychains.

The workshop concluded with a collective pledge, "Checking twice is wise," marking a purposeful culmination of awareness, engagement, and commitment to cyber safety.

Musings by our Interactors

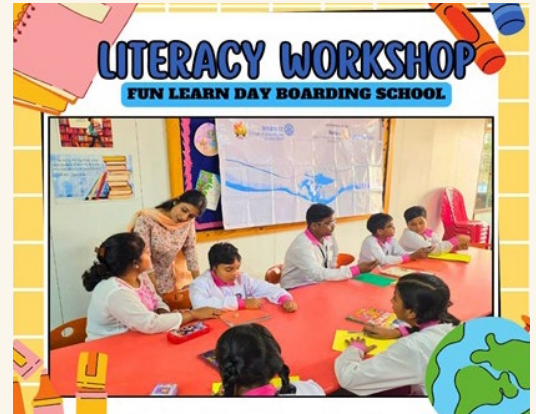
REPORTER

● Sifa Khatun

LITERACY
AMBASSADOR
INTERACT CLUB OF
BIRLA BHARATI



Fun Learn Boarding Day School Workshop



One of the most effective strategies for both individual and societal development is literacy. It makes it possible for people to communicate, learn, and fully engage in their communities by opening doors to information, confidence, and opportunities. However, the consequences of denying impoverished children access to a high-quality education can last a lifetime. It is crucial to give every child the opportunity to learn to read and write for both their future and the advancement of society at large. Founded in 2014, Fun Learn Day Boarding School serves underprivileged learners in Metiabruz, Kolkata, providing inclusive English-medium, high-quality education to economically weaker sections where access to quality education, especially for girls, is limited.

On 28 November 2025, Friday, the Interact Club of Birla Bharati organised a literacy workshop for students of Classes 3 to 7 from Fun Learn Boarding Day School. The workshop was held in the school library and attended by 10 interactors and multiple teachers. After the students were escorted to the venue and made comfortable, a brief round of introductions was conducted.

The workshop included a few simple literacy-based activities such as an icebreaker, a letter to their future selves, and a short vocabulary session. The members of the club took the lead accordingly and conducted the interactive activities. The first activity included introducing oneself with a word that was written on the respective chit, which were randomly chosen by the students and based on the word each one came up with and introduced themselves. Even the Interact Club members took one chit each and introduced themselves, which helped to build a rapport. The students were beaming with confidence and joy.

The second activity was a way to know about the aspirations and dreams those bright minds wanted to achieve and things they were eager to learn. A template was provided to them with the help of which they filled in the areas of required inputs such as their dreams and what they want to be when they grow up. The answers were diverse and they filled in the required areas with great enthusiasm and interest, but what caught everyone's attention was an answer from a student to the question of what they wanted to be when they grew up, and he had written "a good human being". Everyone applauded and appreciated his awareness of being a good human being before anything else.

The last activity was more of a learning segment since the members introduced words to the students which were known to many, but the meanings have evolved with time and helped them to understand those.

The workshop was a happy and successful experience as the students were very responsive and open to learning new things. Every student attended the workshop joyfully and participated with great enthusiasm. The atmosphere was lively and students eagerly engaged in each activity. Their interactive involvement made the session both enjoyable and meaningful for everyone.

We wish to hold more sessions with these students—dance, music, and yoga—for overall holistic refinement towards learning using our school resources.

REPORTER

● Archisman Ghosal
PUBLIC RELATIONS
OFFICER
INTERACT CLUB OF
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER



Awareness and Screening Programme on Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis (AIS)



On 21st January 2026, the Interact Club of St. Francis Xavier School, in association with the Spine Research Foundation, organised an awareness and screening programme on AIS (Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis) for the students of Class XI in the school hall.

Dr. Saumyajit Basu (Spine Surgeon) and his team conducted the session. It was the first of its kind organised by the Interact Club. Students were introduced to an important aspect of spinal health, which was a very new concept for them.

A total of 58 students underwent the screening. Some of the teachers also participated in the screening process. Early detection is critical for effective intervention and improved long-term outcomes. It was a very enriching experience for everyone.

The Interact Club of St. Francis Xavier School shall strive to undertake more such projects in the future for the welfare of its students and society as a whole.

Empowering Young Lifesavers: CPR Training Initiative by Interact Club



On 12th February 2026, the Interact Club of St. Francis Xavier – Sahayog organised a Children's CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) training session in association with ISCCM (Indian Society of Critical Care Medicine).

The session provided hands-on training, enabling students to learn essential life-saving skills and respond effectively in emergency situations. It was highly appreciated by both students and teachers.

The initiative reflects the club's commitment to fostering awareness, responsibility, and preparedness among young individuals.

Stirring Stories and Recipes

• Puja Tandon



Besan Khasta Uttar Pradesh Style

Besan Khasta is a popular recipe from Uttar Pradesh. It is a deep-fried snack featuring a crispy, flaky pastry made with whole wheat flour and refined flour, filled with a spiced roasted gram flour (besan) mixture. It is enjoyed plain with chutney or aloo sabzi and can be stored for 15–20 days.

Makes about 10–12 pieces

INGREDIENTS

For the Dough

- 1 cup whole wheat flour (atta)
- 1 cup refined flour (maida)
- ¼ cup ghee
- ¼ tsp ajwain
- Salt to taste

For the Besan Filling

- ¼ cup besan (dry roasted separately)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds (jeera)
- 2 tsp coriander seeds (sabut dhania)
- 1 tsp fennel seeds (saunf)
- ½ tsp ajwain
- 1 tsp black pepper (kali mirch)
- 2–3 cloves (laung)
- 2 bay leaves (tej patta)
- 2 green cardamoms
- 2 dried red chillies
- 1 tsp garam masala
- ½ tsp turmeric powder (haldi)
- A pinch of asafoetida (hing)
- Black salt and regular salt to taste
- 1 tsp chaat masala
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2–3 tsp water

METHOD

- Mix together the whole wheat flour, refined flour, ghee, ajwain, and salt in a bowl. Add water gradually and knead into a firm dough. Cover with a damp cloth and let it rest.
- For the filling, dry roast the besan separately and keep aside. In a pan, dry roast cumin seeds, coriander seeds, fennel seeds, ajwain, black pepper, cloves, bay leaves, green cardamoms, and red chillies on low flame until aromatic.
- Allow the roasted spices to cool, then grind them into a coarse powder. Add the roasted besan, garam masala, turmeric powder, hing, black salt, regular salt, and chaat masala. Mix well.
- Add lemon juice and 2–3 teaspoons of water to the mixture so that the filling binds together evenly.
- Divide the dough into 10–12 equal portions. Flatten each portion into a small disc and shape it into a bowl.
- Place 1–2 teaspoons of filling in the center, gather the edges, and seal well so that the filling is completely enclosed.
- Gently flatten each stuffed ball slightly using a rolling pin.
- Heat oil in a pan until hot. Reduce the flame to medium-low and fry the kachoris until golden brown and crisp.
- Serve warm or at room temperature with chutney or aloo sabzi.

Oil should be hot initially and then kept on medium to low flame while frying the kachoris to ensure they become crisp and cook evenly.



Coconut Mithai

An authentic homemade recipe combining the taste of Uttar Pradesh's delicious ingredients in an indulgent manner. Perfect for any festive occasion.

Storage: 15 days

Servings: 6–8

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup maida (refined flour)
- 1 cup atta (whole wheat flour)
- ½ cup ghee
- ½ cup suji (semolina)
- 1 cup desiccated coconut
- 1¼ cup sugar

METHOD

- Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well to form a stiff dough.
- Divide the dough into small portions and shape them into oval pieces, roughly the size of your little finger.
- Heat ghee or oil in a deep pan until hot.
- Deep fry the shaped mithai on medium heat until they turn golden brown.
- Remove and place on absorbent paper to drain excess oil.
- Allow them to cool completely before storing or serving.



• Laily Thompson



Apple Crumble

Apple Crumble is a classic dessert featuring a soft cake base, a layer of tender apples, and a crisp, buttery crumble topping. It is best enjoyed warm and pairs beautifully with ice cream.

Servings: 6–8

INGREDIENTS

For the Crumble Topping

- 50 g flour
- 50 g ground almonds
- 70 g cold butter
- 70 g sugar

For the Apple Layer

- 4 medium apples, cored, peeled, and cut into long slices

For the Base

- 150 g flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 100 g sugar
- 100 g soft butter
- 2 eggs

For the Topping

- 30 g flaked almonds



METHOD

- Mix the flour, ground almonds, cold butter, and sugar gently with your fingertips to create a breadcrumb-like texture. Be careful not to overmix, as the mixture should not become smooth.
- Once prepared, keep the crumble mixture in the refrigerator until required.
- Preheat a fan-assisted oven to 180°C or a conventional oven to 190°C.
- Prepare a 26 cm round cake tin by greasing the base and sides with butter.
- Mix the flour, baking powder, sugar, soft butter, and eggs using an electric hand mixer for 2 minutes until smooth.
- Pour the base batter into the tin and spread evenly.
- Arrange the apple slices evenly over the base.
- Cover the apples with the crumble mixture.

- Scatter the flaked almonds on top.
- Bake for 35–45 minutes or until golden brown.
- Check with a skewer; if it comes out clean, the crumble is ready.
- Serve warm with a scoop of ice cream of your choice.

Pea Soup

Pea Soup is a simple yet delicious dish that is easy and quick to prepare. Made with frozen peas, onions, and garlic, this comforting soup is smooth, flavourful, and perfect for any time of the year. It also freezes well, so you can make a larger batch if desired.

Servings: 1–2

INGREDIENTS

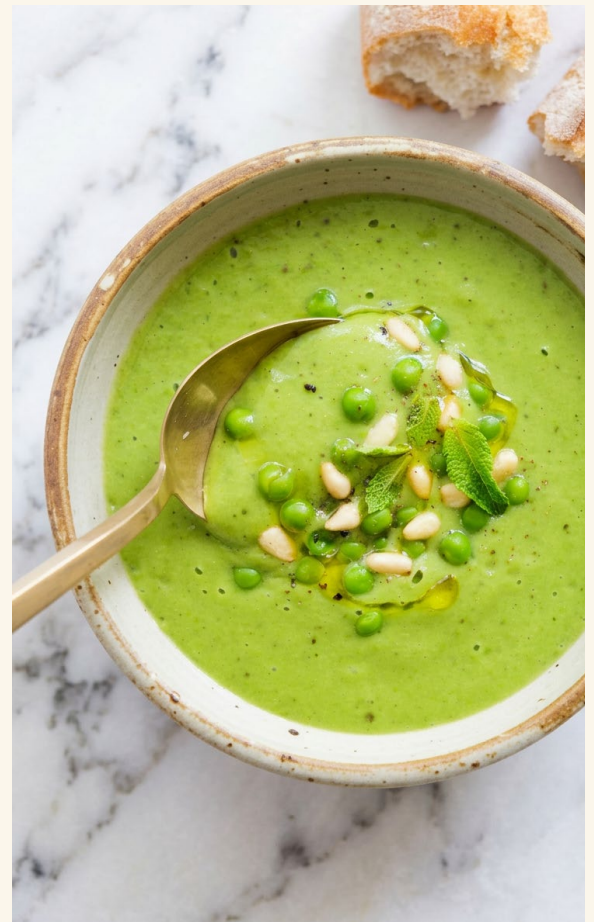
For the Crumble Topping

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 700 ml vegetable stock
- 200 g frozen peas
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 50 ml double cream or crème fraîche (optional)

METHOD

- Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and garlic, and sauté until softened and translucent.
- Add the peas and vegetable stock, bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. If using cream, add it at this stage.
- Remove the soup from the heat and blend using a hand blender or food processor. You may blend it until completely smooth or leave it slightly coarse, as preferred.
- Return the soup to low heat if needed, and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
- Serve warm with a slice of toasted bread and butter.

This soup can be stored in the refrigerator for a couple of days or frozen for later use. Reheat gently before serving.



Chicken and Broccoli Pasta

Chicken and Broccoli Pasta is a wholesome and comforting dish combining tender chicken, fresh vegetables, and pasta in a light, creamy sauce. It is quick to prepare and perfect for a balanced meal.

Servings: 2-3

INGREDIENTS

- 200 g cooked chicken pieces
- 200 g broccoli florets
- 100 g peas (frozen or fresh)
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 1 chicken stock cube
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 160 g small pasta shapes
- 150 g crème fraîche
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 30 g grated Parmesan cheese
- Fresh mint leaves

METHOD

- Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the chicken pieces and garlic, and sauté for about 5 minutes.
- Add 900 ml water along with the chicken stock cube and pasta. Bring to a boil, then cover and let it simmer for 8 minutes.
- Next, add the peas and broccoli, stir well, and cook for another 4 minutes. Increase the heat slightly, cover, and allow it to simmer.
- After 4 minutes, remove the lid and reduce the heat to low. If the pasta appears dry, add a splash of water.
- Stir in the crème fraîche and mix well. Add salt and pepper if required.
- Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the lemon juice, grated Parmesan cheese, and fresh mint leaves.
- Serve immediately.



Members' Nuggets



Congratulations to Ananya on her son's graduation in Company Secretaryship.



Congratulations to Apala Datta on receiving the Eastern K-12 Excellence Award by Student Outreach for her distinguished contribution to school education, with over 20 years of experience.



Wishing Manoshi Roy Chowdhury's son and daughter-in-law, Meghdut Roy Chowdhury and Pauline Larravoire, a wonderful journey into parenthood and eagerly waiting to welcome the little bundle of joy with love and blessings.



Congratulations to Suniti Khashtgir on completing the Post Graduate Course in Executive Coaching by the Coaching Federation of India. She is now a certified Leadership/Executive Coach.



Rotary Club of Calcutta Avyanna extends its heartfelt compliments, felicitations, and best wishes to the Pugalía family on this joyous and auspicious occasion.

May the newlyweds, Aryam and Shreyaangi, be blessed with a lifetime of happiness, love, prosperity, and togetherness. Wishing Vayjayanti and the entire family many more moments of pride, celebration, and happiness ahead.



Happy Birthday!



FEBRUARY

- Reshmi Mukherjee (4th February)
- Sabina Nathani (8th February)
- Dia Bose Sengupta (11th February)
- Apala Datta (14th February)
- Sumi Choudhury (14th February)
- Sheela Janakiram (21st February)
- Sarmistha Das (24th February)
- Manima Chaudhury (26th February)

JANUARY

- Bhumika Sarkhel (2nd January)
- Mita Walia (7th January)
- Shruti Singhania (13th January)
- Dola Mukherjee (23rd January)
- Dipanwita Das (25th January)

MARCH

- Mandira Mukherjee (2nd March)
- Diksha Rathi (19th March)



Just for Fun!



You cannot miss her matching glass bangles... they truly set her apart!!



So much creative talent... it is enough to sometimes make the rest of us want to crawl into holes!



First her height, then her attractive persona, and finally her pretty saris... one could continue ogling!

DID YOU KNOW?



Satanic Accusation: In 1928, a Spanish bishop accused Rotary of being a "Satanic" organization, leading to a 1929 Vatican decree advising priests not to participate — a decision that was later reversed.

The "Keyway" Secret: The official gear wheel emblem was adopted in 1923. It includes a "keyway" (a slot in the center), added at the request of engineers to make it a functional mechanical wheel rather than just a decoration.

Humorous Nicknames: In many Asian Rotary clubs, new members are assigned humorous nicknames based on their profession or characteristics, such as "Oxygen" for a chemical manufacturer or "Trees" for a lumber merchant.

Polio Vaccine Role: In addition to funding vaccines, Rotary's National Immunization Days have provided vitamin A supplements, helping to avert an estimated 1.5 million childhood deaths.

First Female Members: Women were formally admitted to Rotary International in 1987. Today, there are over 196,000 women members.

Impact Stories: Voices of Change



Impact Stories: Voices of Change



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Chit Chat With A Rotary Hat

• Soma Bhan



Rotary
Club of Calcutta Ayyanna
District 3291



UNITE FOR GOOD