



ROTARY CLUB OF PUNE CENTRAL · DISTRICT 3131

CENTRAL TURF

SERVE BETTER · SHINE BRIGHTER



CREATE LASTING IMPACT

PRESIDENT: Rtn. Cmde. Parvin Malhotra | HON. SECRETARY: Rtn. Col. Julius Rocque (Retd.)
EDITOR: Rtn. Geeta Krishna | VOL. XLIII / 04 | 15 AUGUST 2026

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CLUB VOICE

From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Rotarians and R'Anns,



This has been a fruitful fortnight for RCPC with our landmark MOU with the Thalassemia Society Pune Chapter whereby we will be driving several initiatives to build awareness about Thalassemia. I would also like to thank every member who came forward so generously this fortnight, for our Assam Flood Relief Project, where our club raised a combined ₹4,70,000, and for PP Rtn. Narayandas Rathi's landmark ₹10 Lakh

contribution toward our Cancer Care and Junior Nursing Course Project.

As we mark India's 80th Independence Day this fortnight, it is worth reflecting that less than 1% of Indians alive today witnessed that first Independence Day in 1947. In 80 years, India has grown from a young nation still finding its feet into one of the world's largest economies, home to world-class institutions, a powerful space programme, and a digital ecosystem few could have imagined in 1947. But 80 years of progress is not 80 years of perfection, and our journey should be judged by whether the ordinary Indian today is healthier, better educated, safer and more dignified than before. That responsibility now rests with us, and even more with the generations that follow. On behalf of the entire RCPC family, I wish each of you a very Happy, Fruitful and Harmonious 80th Independence Day. Jai Hind!

Warm regards,

Rtn. Cmde. Parvin Malhotra

RY 2026-27 President, Rotary Club of Pune Central

FROM THE EDITOR

Editor's Desk

Dear Fellow Rotarians and R'Anns,



It has been less than three months since I was installed as a Rotarian, and I still feel, most days, like I have stepped into an entirely new world.

For over 30 years, I lived the life of a full-time corporate professional, alongside family, home, and the constant juggling that comes with all three. Last year, I left that behind to seek a more meaningful existence. It was Rtn. Raman Nanda who first urged me to join RCPC, and I am glad he did.

Ever since I joined RCPC, I have met exemplary people here running eye camps, funding cancer projects for children, conducting blood donation drives, funding schools and the youth, planting trees, cleaning our shores and doing other extraordinary work, not for the glory but because it needs to be done. It leaves me with a question I keep returning to: does one need to be a Rotarian to do good in the world?

I don't think so. Rotary's values, service, dignity, generosity, belong just as much in the ordinary corners of our own homes and neighbourhoods as they do in our projects. Something as simple as how we speak to the people around us, including who work in our homes is its own small act of Rotary, practised long before any of us wore the pin.

I know many of our members already live this way, without fanfare. Some fund a driver's child through school, some spend weekends with a city clean up group, some help underprivileged students with their homework. None of it makes it to Central Turf, and it does not need to. Nonetheless as we plan our next big project, the same spirit which brings us to RCPC on a Saturday can just as easily exist in an ordinary week.

My initial steps into the world of Rotary have been an eye-opener for which I'm forever grateful.

Rtn. Geeta Krishna

Editor, Central Turf, Rotary Club of Pune Central

INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

A Tricolour Tribute

A Salute to Our Veterans

This Independence Day, we salute all veterans of RCPC, who were serving the country long before they became Rotarians.

Some of our members once wore the uniform of the Indian armed forces and stood guard at the nation's borders. Others are doctors who have spent entire careers treating patients, easing pain and saving lives, procedure after procedure, night after night. We have journalists among us who once held the powerful accountable and told stories that mattered. We have those who have run eye camps for years, giving sight to people who could never otherwise afford it, and others who have built health awareness drives that will go on saving lives long after we have forgotten this issue of Central Turf.

Most of what they did never made the news. But they have protected and healed people, told the truth, and given people their eyesight back, again and again, well before any of them wore a Rotary pin.

To every RCPC member who has served this country in some way, big or small, whether in fatigues or in scrubs, at a newsroom desk or a village eye camp, this Independence Day is for you too. Thank you for everything you have selflessly given.

SERVICE

Service in Action

Satara Dam Repair Project: An Update



The dam wall repaired by RCPC at Velu village, Satara, is now holding steady, with zero leakage reported, a striking turnaround for a dam that had barely retained any water before. Wells within a five kilometre radius are also filling, and with good rains, farmers could grow three crops a year instead of relying on scarce water.

Led by Rtn. Giri Sakhrani, the project began with the *bhumi poojan* on 24th March and was completed in May. A well repaired dam brings benefits beyond farming too, reduced water borne disease, less migration to towns, and real relief for women, who bear the daily burden of fetching water.

The project's roots trace back to Rtn. Lt. Col. Julius Rocque (Retd.), whose work helped secure the Jal Yodha Samman 2025 for Rtn. Giri Sakhrani and partner Mr. Padmakar Bhide. It was made possible by anchor donors PP Rtn. Ebe Chaney, PP Rtn. Ajay Dubey and Rtn. Rakesh Makhija, along with several other contributing members.

A Visit to Asha School, NDA Khadakwasla

Rtn. Jeevan Mahaldar, Rtn. Minal Kering and Manisha Mahaldar visited Asha School at NDA, Khadakwasla, on 6th August, marking the second year of RCPC's association with the school, which trains children with intellectual disabilities in life skills, speech therapy and physiotherapy under psychologist Manasi Oak and her team.

The visit included discussions on future plans, and Rtn. Minal Kering, a certified therapist and counselling psychologist, will supervise RCPC's mental health initiatives at Asha going forward.

Salute to the Spirit of Giving

Since late April, monsoon flooding has affected communities across Assam, worsened by a cloudburst in Nagaland's Mon district on 19th July that sent a surge of water through

several of the state's worst hit districts, submerging villages, sweeping away homes and disrupting livelihoods. As of 10th August, the death toll had reached 100, with nearly 300,000 people forced into relief camps at the crisis's peak, and at least 49,000 still housed in relief camps even as floodwaters recede.

It was against this backdrop that RCPC members came forward, recognising that beyond rescue and shelter, families across Assam face a long road back to rebuilding homes, replanting fields and restoring daily life. We are grateful to all members who together contributed ₹4,70,000 toward our Assam Flood Relief Project.

Separately, PP Rtn. Narayandas Rathi also made a landmark contribution of ₹10 Lakhs toward the Cancer Care and Junior Nursing Course Project, the club's first donation received for Non-medical Services.

MOU with Thalassemia Society Pune Chapter: A Fortnight of Action

RCPC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Thalassemia Society Pune Chapter (TSPC) on 8th August, formalising the club's role as Lead Club in Rotary District 3131 for Thalassemia awareness.

President Rtn. Cmde. Parvin Malhotra and Dr. Nita Munshi, Founder President of TSPC, signed the MoU, committing RCPC to at least three to four awareness drives every month, with sample testing and blood donation central to each. A Global Grant application for USD 45,000 is also proposed in support. Following this, a series of initiatives have been launched to promote Thalassemia awareness and to encourage people to donate blood.

12th August — St. Mira's College for Girls

Dr. Nita Munshi addressed students on knowing one's carrier status and the value of screening before marriage, with Rtn. Lata Agarwal as Guest of Honour, who offered to bear the cost of testing for all attendees. The response was extremely encouraging, samples collected in support of a Thalassemia Mukta Pune, Maharashtra and Bharat.

13th August — Polybond India Pvt Ltd, Alandi

150 donors came forward on PP Rtn. Madhu Rathi's 86th birthday, continuing his tradition of marking the day with a factory-wide blood donation drive, the strongest turnout yet. PP Rathi, RCPC's President in 1998-99 and Outstanding Rotarian of the Year last year, was joined by President Malhotra and other Rotarians, and R'Ann Dr. Madhu Rocque, whose own birthday made it a double celebration, complete with an impromptu canvas painting made by RCPC members on the spot, presented to PP Rathi as a keepsake.

14th August — FIBE, Viman Nagar

A blood donation drive was held at FIBE, continuing RCPC's push for HbA2 testing among young people, the standard screening test for Thalassemia carrier status. President Rtn. Cmde. Parvin Malhotra, Rtn. Air Cmde. Pankaj Mehrotra, R'Ann Neelam Mehrotra, and PP Rtn. Sanjay Karwa attended, and the FIBE team welcomed Air Cmde. Mehrotra, VSM (Retd.), as their esteemed guest for an inspiring session, drawing on his 33 years of distinguished service in the Indian Air Force and the Vishisht Seva Medal he earned along the way.

RCPC Adopts Pune's Women Boxers



As reported by local news outlets Pudhari and Prabhat, RCPC has partnered with the Pune City Boxing Association on a Women Boxer Adoption Scheme, committing sports equipment worth up to ₹2 lakh to support women boxers from Pune competing at national and international level. A meeting held on 11th August brought together players, coaches and officials to understand the training needs, equipment and challenges faced by the selected boxers, with a positive discussion on meeting those needs going forward.

The meeting was attended by PP Rtn. Brig. PK Muralidharan Raja, President of the Indian Boxing Council, Mr. Avinash Bagwe, President of the Pune City Boxing Association, and Mr. Bhartkumar Vhawal, General Secretary of the Maharashtra Boxing Association, along with office bearers Mr. Sureshkumar Gaikwad, Mr. Ashok Memjade, Mr. Vijay Gujar and Mr. Abhimanyu Suryavanshi, coordinators and coaches, and the players' own parents.

FELLOWSHIP

Programs and Fellowship

Budget Presentation and Charcha Over Chai

RCPC's Club and Trust Budget for RY 2026-27 was presented on 1st August at Poona Club, before the evening moved smoothly from numbers to nostalgia with a warm episode of Charcha, the club's fireside conversation series, this time built around discovering our beloved past presidents and their spouses beyond their Rotary roles.

The chat brought together two of the club's most loved couples. PP Rtn. Narayandas Rathi, recipient of the Rotarian Lifetime Award, and PP Rtn. Aruna Rathi shared the stage with PP Rtn. Dr. Anand Bhatia, the well-known anaesthetist, and R'Ann Dr. Sita Bhatia. Rtn. Krishna Kumar moderated with his trademark wit, and the evening's highlight was a game in which the couples sat back-to-back and answered questions about each other. The husbands, it turned out, got most of their answers about their wives wrong, much to the room's delight.

A delectable spread of Chinese food, arranged by PP Rtn. Sukhminder Kalra, rounded off an evening that was as much about fellowship as it was about the club's finances. Our thanks also to PP Rtn. Nitin Rajore for his innovative contribution to the presentation.

Lage raho... हट के, my friends!

Samanvaya: An Evening of Harmony at Anjuman's Pune Campus

Rotary Club of Pune Central, in collaboration with Anjuman-I-Islam's Pune Campus, hosted Samanvaya, meaning harmony, a cultural and motivational programme on 28th July at Nura Bassam Hall, drawing a packed hall of dignitaries, Rotarians, Anjuman's Management Board, faculty, staff and students.

Guest of Honour PP Rtn. Sanjay Karwa and Chief Guest Dr. Sumit Paul graced the evening, presided over by PP Rtn. Dr. Nasir Kazi, senior member of both Anjuman's Management Board and RCPC. Dr. Paul spoke in chaste Urdu on the values young people ought to carry, PP Rtn. Karwa on Rotary's ethos of Service Before Self, and Rtn. Delshad Karanjia and Rtn. Air Cmde. Pankaj Mehrotra also shared their thoughts. Rtn. Dr. Nasir Kazi urged students to embrace performing arts as part of everyday learning.

Highlights included a talk by child prodigy and poetess Ms. Aishwarya Gupta, a Kuchipudi introduction by Ms. Arunima Kumar, and a piano recital by Ms. Ankita Kumar, warmly received by students, parents and dignitaries. Ms. Tarrannum hosted the programme with panache, and the evening strengthened the bond between RCPC and Anjuman's Pune Campus in true celebration of art, culture and harmony.

Book Launch: Ulta Pulta Thinking

Rtn. Aseem Srivastav, RCPC's Treasurer, in collaboration with RCPC, hosted the Book Launch and Dinner on 8th August for his new book, Ulta Pulta Thinking, with proceeds from copies sold going towards the Assam Flood Relief Project.

The evening welcomed several dignitaries such as Chief Guest PDG Rtn. Dr. Deepak Shikarpur, along with Rtn. Shikha Mitra, President of Rotary Club of Poona Downtown, Rtn. Aarti Thacker, President of Rotary Club of Poona, and Rtn. Naresh Paul, President of Rotary Club of Poona Airport, alongside other noteworthy guests, and Rtn. Aseem's family, sons Shivalik and Sanchit, and daughter-in-law Rashmi.

Aseem traced the book's origins to the crisis faced by young professionals today where they lose their passion to the corporate rat race. Drawing on root cause analysis from his years at Toyota, he built a philosophy around outdated beliefs and workplace stress, coining the line, "Fittest just survive, collaborators thrive," and inverting "seeing is believing" into his own ulta pulta logic, that belief shapes what you see.

PDG Shikarpur responded with dry wit, calling the evening itself thoroughly ulta pulta, and suggested the book be translated using AI, adapted for MBA students, and released as an audiobook. PN Rtn. Vaishali Karwa proposed the vote of thanks, and the evening closed with fellowship and dinner, hosted by Rtn. Aseem and Alka Srivastav.

AROUND TOWN

Other Events

Two Evenings of Music, in Service of Inclusion

Rtn. Air Cmde. Pankaj Mehrotra, VSM (Retd.), brought together two evenings in late July built around a common thread, using music and the arts to support and include the visually impaired community in Pune.

Musical Meadows, held on 25th July at NFBM's Jagriti School for Blind Girls, Alandi, was conceived with Wing Commander Dharam Pal Sabharwal, author, educationist and philanthropist, as Chief Guest.

Ankita Kumar, founder of Colours of Music, and Dr. Shireen Irani, herself a visually impaired professional pianist, performed for over 150 visually challenged children and adults, and a digital piano was separately gifted to the school to support its music education, with support from the Colours of Music Academy, New Delhi, RCPC and FIBE. Distinguished guests included Rtn. Reshma Sambhare, Ms. Reena Patil, Vice President of NFBM, and renowned singer and YouTuber Dr. Rajinder Kale.

Two days later, on 27th July, Triveni 2026 at MES Auditorium, Kothrud, was presented by CASS, the Company of Master Mariners of India, Pune Chapter, in association with the National Federation of the Blind, Maharashtra, drawing dignitaries, military veterans, Rotarians, naval cadets and students of Rani Laxmibai Sainik School. Chief Guest Smt. Shama Bhate, the eminent Kathak exponent, was joined by former Maharashtra DGP Mr. Ajit Parasnis and Air Marshal Gokhale among the guests. The evening featured a poetry launch by thirteen-year old author Aishwarya Gupta, whose own poem on how age or size need not limit one's capacity to make a difference set the tone, a Kuchipudi recital by Arunima Kumar, and a piano performance once again by Ankita Kumar.

Together, the two evenings raised funds, awareness and direct support for the visually impaired community, a reminder of what the arts can do when put to purpose.

Small Hands, Big Impact: An Eco-Friendly Workshop for Vision School

On 8th August, a team from the Maharashtra State and Pune District Senior Guides Fellowship visited Vision School Rehabilitation Centre for Blind and Deaf Children at Jamia Abdullah Ibne Umme Maktoom, conducting an eco-friendly paper bag making workshop for the school's children. The session was led by Smt. Jyoti Belliappa and Smt. Sunita Ambep, together with fellow SGF members Mrs. Priya Kalaskar, Smt. Sunitee Joshi, Smt. Madhavi Joshi, Smt. Hemlata Bhangale, and Hon. Secretary Rtn. Col. Julius Rocque (Retd.).

The children took to the activity with real enthusiasm, small hands making a big impact toward a greener tomorrow. The SGF team, made up entirely of retired teachers, headmistresses and school heads, several now well into their eighties, the eldest a spirited 82, continues to serve schools like this one purely as volunteers. RCPC thanks the Vision School management for hosting the visit.

CLUB NEWS

Other RCPC News

A Seed Planted, Now in Bloom: Christ University, Lavasa

Christ University, Lavasa, has brought in a structured consultancy on workforce capability, with Dr. Amit Seth, Professor of Strategy, leading sessions on building capability and creating competitive advantage, integrating academic learning with real world industry and business expertise.

Rtn. Air Cmde. Pankaj Mehrotra, VSM (Retd.), opened a Rotaract Club at Christ University, Lavasa, under the aegis of RCPC two years ago, and last year PP Rtn. Sanjay Karwa led a two day seminar on campus bringing together industry leaders and prominent Rotarians.

Rtn. Air Cmde. Mehrotra congratulated Prof. Seth and the team at Christ University for this fruition of sustained effort, calling it proof of what targeted learning can achieve when paired with genuine industry engagement.

Welcome to India, Henri!

District 3131 welcomed its first inbound Rotary Youth Exchange student of RY 2026-27 this month, with Henri Hulin from Belgium landing safely in Pune with Rtn. CA Sareeka Rode, District Director for RYE, and his host family receiving him.

Henri will spend the coming year in Pune, hosted by Mr. Abhay Bora, brother of Rtn. Anil Bora, with Rtn. Dr. Sunil Deshmukh serving as his counsellor through the exchange, as per Rotary guidelines. He will study in 11th Arts at Symbiosis Arts and Commerce College, Pune.



Rtn. Dr. Sunil Deshmukh who recently met Henri over a brunch remarked that Henri has already made a fine early impression as a warm, promising young lad settling into his new surroundings. His year ahead promises friendship, culture, learning and no shortage of memories, and RCPC joins District 3131 in wishing him a wonderful exchange as he settles into what will soon, we hope, feel like a second home.

Rotary Youth Exchange is one of Rotary's longest running programmes, sending students abroad for a full academic year to live with multiple host families and attend local school, with a local Rotary club and designated counsellor supporting them throughout. The programme aims to build lasting understanding between young people and the communities that host them, besides facilitating the cultural immersion.

BEYOND THE PIN

Beyond the Pin

Every Rotarian carries a story that goes beyond the pin they wear, from milestones reached by the youngest in the family to a lifetime of dedication from our elders.

Semester at Sea: A Voyage of Discovery

Contributed by Rtn. Sneha Jain



Rtn. Sneha Jain has offered to share some of her travel experiences with us. This is the first in the series.

Seventeen years ago, I had the privilege of being selected by Rotary International's Global Students' Program to represent India as one of just two Inter Port Students, alongside Anusha from Rotary Club of Madras Central Adithya, for the Semester at Sea program.

Sponsored by Rotary Club of Madras Silver Beach, with my airfare generously supported by Rotary Club of North West, I embarked on an unforgettable journey aboard the MV Explorer, home to the Institute of Shipboard Education's Voyage of Discovery. Our voyage began in Port Louis, Mauritius, and sailed toward Chennai, India.

The first few days were far from easy. My windowless cabin, combined with the constant motion of the sea, left me severely seasick. Thankfully, the ship's medical team helped me recover within three days, and I was later moved to a cabin with a balcony overlooking the endless expanse of the ocean. Waking up each morning to nothing but blue skies and open water was an experience I'll never forget.

As an Inter Port Student, my role was to introduce fellow students to India's rich culture, traditions, cuisine, and history before we reached Chennai. Many of them continued their journeys to iconic destinations such as the Taj Mahal, Delhi, Mumbai, and Jaipur, where

local Rotarians warmly hosted them and gave them a glimpse of India's incredible diversity.

The exchange became even more personal when my own family welcomed two students, Whitney and Elle, into our home. We showed them around our city, dressed them in traditional South Indian attire, and took them shopping for silk sarees and souvenirs. Watching them experience India with such curiosity and joy remains one of my fondest memories.

Yet, beyond the ports we visited and the places we explored, it was the friendships that made the greatest impact. Living together at sea, disconnected from phones and the outside world, allowed us to form genuine connections that transcended borders and cultures. The handwritten testimonials my fellow students gave me at the end of the voyage remain among my most cherished keepsakes.

Looking back after all these years, I realise that the greatest destination was never a country or a city, it was the people I met, the perspectives I gained, and the lifelong memories we created together. It truly was, and always will be, my own Voyage of Discovery.

CREATIVE CORNER

Creative Corner

From My Heart

By R'Ann Dr. Madhu Rocque

This beautiful poem composed by R'Ann Dr. Madhu Rocque is dedicated to RCPC.

This simple poem springs straight from my heart,
To thank each RCPC member right from the start.
Our golden wheel, with every sprocket aligned,
Is far more than a symbol randomly designed.

We strive not just to bring dry rivers back,
We labor in thirsty and parched lands to restore what they lack.
For us, true joy isn't posing to say "cheese,"
It is planting hope and bringing life to native trees.

We lend a helping hand to children longing for love,
 A band of selfless souls, gentle as the white dove.
 In every quiet act, they offer their very best,
 Pouring out affection with endless zeal and boundless zest.

Restoring hope to the sorrow-stricken, the weak and the sick,
 'Service Above Self' is the motto to which we stick.
 Organizing blood donation drives that save hundreds of precious lives,
 There is many a noble deed into which RCPC dives.

With the deep sweet spirit of Rotary dwelling within us,
 We gather as one, without feathers, without any fuss.
 Neither seeking praise nor waiting for rewards to accrue,
 It is this selfless spirit that binds our fellowship like a strong glue.

CLUB LIFE



Celebrations



Birthday Wishes

This fortnight we send our warmest wishes to the Rotarians and R'Anns marking a birthday.

Date	Name	Date	Name
17 Aug	PP Rtn. Amitabha Mukhopadhyay	20 Aug	R'Ann Dr. Sadhana Lachyan
19 Aug	PP Rtn. Krishan Jhunhunwala	22 Aug	Rtn. Madhvi Kshetry
22 Aug	Rtn. Ashish Goyal	23 Aug	R'Ann Dr. Sheila Bhavé
29 Aug	Rtn. Ramesh Arora		



Wedding Anniversary Wishes

And our heartfelt congratulations to the couples celebrating an anniversary this fortnight.

Date	Name
17 Aug	Rtn. Kripashankar and Vidhya
19 Aug	Rtn. Oni and Nafisa Kakajiwalá
27 Aug	Rtn. Pravin and R'Ann Monica Nadkarni

ROTARY KNOWLEDGE

Krishna Speaks



A regular feature by Rtn. Krishna Kumar (KK), who continues to share his deep knowledge of Rotary with our members, one story at a time. In each issue, KK takes us behind the scenes of Rotary's history, traditions and inner workings, so that even our most seasoned Rotarians discover something new.

Know Your Rotary: Part 3

Rotary and the United Nations – An Unbeatable Partnership

Did you know that Rotary International and the United Nations have been joined at the hip since the very beginning?

For decades, these two powerhouses have seen eye to eye on a single, soaring goal: bringing harmony to a fractured world. What started as a handshake between dreamers has blossomed into a legendary team, proving that when good people join forces, they can truly move mountains.

It all started with a tiny seed—a modest 1917 donation that became the Rotary Foundation. That pocket change didn't just grow; it blossomed into a global powerhouse for good. In the early days, the Foundation was content with planting small seeds, like funding a single charity school. But soon, they decided to shoot for the stars. They expanded their horizons, transforming from a local helping hand into a global shield fighting hunger, ignorance, and disease.

The real turning point arrived when Rotary crossed paths with the blueprints for the United Nations. In 1942, long before the UN was even official, Rotary conferences were already sowing the seeds of international peace. When the historic San Francisco Conference finally opened its doors in 1945, Rotary didn't just sit on the sidelines. In fact, forty-nine dedicated Rotarians were right there in the heart of the action, working hand in glove as delegates and advisors to help draft the monumental UN Charter.



This historic alliance laid the groundwork for a partnership that would stand the test of time. Since that faithful summer, Rotary and the UN have worked shoulder to shoulder on the world's biggest stages. They have brought life-giving water to parched lands, giving millions a fresh glass of hope. They have paved the way for children to learn, proving that education is the ultimate equalizer.

Most importantly, they pooled their resources to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

Thanks to this relentless campaign, we are now on the very brink of wiping polio off the face of the earth. Today, this beautiful friendship is still going strong, writing new chapters of hope and proving that peace isn't just a dream—it's a journey we walk together.

THE WIDER ROTARY WORLD

From RI and District 3131

80 Years of Freedom, Decades of Service: Rotary in India Since Independence

As India marks its 80th Independence Day this 15th August, it's interesting to see how closely Rotary's own story in India has grown alongside the nation's.

Rotary arrived in India in 1920 with the chartering of the Rotary Club of Calcutta, but its real expansion began only after independence, when India's 71 clubs and 3,121 members of 1946-47 began spreading well beyond the metros. Nitish Laharry of Calcutta, who had served as club secretary during Rotary's earliest days in India, became the first Indian, and first Asian, to lead Rotary International, in 1962-63. Thereafter, India counted 899 clubs by 1980-81, and the pace quickened further through the late 1980s.

Today, India is home to over 4,600 Rotary clubs and close to 172,000 members, contributing an estimated \$32 million annually to community service, and the country has

now given Rotary International four Presidents, with a fifth recently selected, a story you can read elsewhere in this issue.

On this Independence Day, we celebrate Rotary as a legacy built not in a single generation but across eight decades of Rotarians choosing, again and again, to serve.

Sources: Rotary District 3011, Rotary District 3020, Rotary Club of Central Calcutta, Rotary Haripad, Rotary International.

REIGN: Rotaract District 3131 Steps into a New Year

Rotaract District 3131 has entered RIY 2026-27 under the theme **REIGN, Rotaract Empowering Individuals for Growth and Networking**, led by District Rotaract Representative Dr. Karishma Awari. The district now counts over 100 Rotaract clubs and more than 2,700 Rotaractors across Pune and Raigad.

In her message for the year, DRR Awari called on every club to carry REIGN into their meetings, projects and fellowships, framing the theme around unlocking the potential within every Rotaractor: nurturing leadership, strengthening professional skills, and building networks that endure beyond the Rotary year. "When individuals grow, clubs grow," she wrote. "When clubs grow, our district creates impact that is measurable, inclusive, and lasting."

Rotary and Government of India Deepen Collaboration

Rotary International and the Government of India have opened discussions to deepen collaboration on national development priorities, following a meeting in New Delhi between Rtn. AKS Er. Muruganandam M., Vice President of Rotary International, and Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan, Vice President of India. The conversation centred on strengthening partnerships across education, healthcare, youth leadership, water and sanitation, and nation building.

The Vice President also expressed support for Rotary India's aspiration to host a future Rotary International Convention, and acknowledged Rotary's more than 120 years legacy of service, particularly its leadership in the fight against polio through the End Polio Now initiative.

Dr. Bharat Pandya Selected as 2028-29 Rotary International President

Rotary's Nominating Committee has selected PDG Dr. Bharat Pandya of the Rotary Club of Borivli, Mumbai, as its choice for Rotary International President for 2028-29. He is

expected to be officially confirmed as President-nominee on 15th September, and will become the fifth Indian to lead Rotary International, following Nitish Laharry (1962-63), Rajendra K. Saboo (1991-92), Kalyan Banerjee (2011-12) and Shekhar Mehta (2021-22).



A general and laparoscopic surgeon for 38 years, Dr. Pandya holds fellowships from the Association of Surgeons of India and the International College of Surgeons. He has held several senior roles at Rotary, and currently serves as a Trustee of The Rotary Foundation. As Governor of District 3140, he led his district to become the top contributor to The Rotary Foundation worldwide in

2006-07. Dr. Pandya and his wife Madhavi, herself a past district chair of Inner Wheel District 314, are Major Donors and Benefactors to Rotary. RCPC joins Rotarians across District 3131 in congratulating PDG Dr. Bharat Pandya on this proud moment for Rotary in India.

WHAT'S AHEAD

Upcoming Activities

15th August — Vocational Excellence Award Ceremony, 5:00–7:00 PM. RCPC co-hosts this District 3131 ceremony honouring four decorated military veterans: Lt. Gen. RR Nimbhorkar, Air Marshal PS Pingale, Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha and Brig. Ajit Apte (Retd.), at Savitribai Phule Pune Vidyapeeth.

15th August — Independence Day Holiday, No Meeting.

19th August — Installation of Jagriti Interact and Disha Rotaract Clubs, 10:15 AM–12:00 PM, at NFBM Jagriti School for Blind Girls.

22nd August — Committee Meeting.

27th August — Talk on Emotional Intelligence by Rtn. Dr. Sunil Deshmukh, 6:30 PM, at Rotary Club of Poona Downtown, Poona Club Ltd.

29th August — Rotaract Club Installation, Christ University, Lavasa, 12:30–3:00 PM.

29th August — Interact Club Installation, Dasve Public School, Lavasa, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM.

Contributing to Central Turf

Central Turf belongs to all of us, and these pages are richer for every contribution that comes in. A few notes to help us serve your stories well:

What we cover. Central Turf's first focus and priority is RCPC's own service projects, programmes and fellowship, along with news from Rotary International and District 3131. Members' wider achievements, creative work and community involvement beyond the club are warmly welcomed too, and will be featured as space permits.

Beyond the Pin. Personal stories, family milestones and reflections, up to 400 words.

Creative Corner. Poetry, artwork, photography and short prose. Written pieces up to 300 words; artwork as a clear photograph or scan.

Shared material. Central Turf carries original work by our members. If your piece includes a quote, poem or article by someone else, please tell us who wrote it and where you found it, as we verify attributions before printing. If a piece has moved you, we would love to hear it in your own words instead.

Our Format. In keeping with RCPC's commitment to sustainability, Central Turf will continue in electronic format rather than move to print, and we're keeping photos to a minimum to make each issue easier to read on screen. Our video companion RCPC Snapshots will cover our moments of service, fun, and fellowship as photographs.

On quotes and forwards. We often receive lovely quotes and motivational messages for Central Turf. While these may not always find a place in the bulletin, our RCPC Fun & Frolic WhatsApp group is the perfect home for sharing them with the whole Club.

Sending your contribution. Please write to geetakrishna.rcpc@gmail.com at least three days before the issue date, with names spelled as you would like them to appear.

Decisions on length, placement and timing rest with the Editor in consultation with the Board, so that each issue stays balanced across the club's work. Where a piece cannot be carried in full, we will always try to find room for it in a later issue.