RAGAMS Connect

Bringing the world together to improve the quality of life of those affected by MS and to end MS forever

April, 2026

"Rotarians can make a difference" Together, Rotarians, families and friends, are stronger than MS. Our ultimate goal is to bring the world together to improve the quality of life of everybody affected by MS and to end MS forever.

From all of us at RAGAMS, Hope you all enjoyed Easter! Thank you for your support, however you have been able to contribute to maintain our group.

If you are attending the **2026 Rotary International Convention** taking place 13 – 17 June 2026 in Taipei, Taiwan **please visit the House of Friendship, RAGAMS Booth # 344** view our displays and discuss group membership and management opportunities with RAGAMS Vice Chairman Shankar and his wife Usha.

ONGOING:

- **RAGAMS India has started 2026 by holding an event "Navigating Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Together" Awareness & Advocacy Program | Bengaluru, India**

  The "Navigating Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Together" Awareness & Advocacy Program was held successfully with active participation from members of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (MSSI), persons with MS, caregivers, Rotarians from various Rotary clubs, neurologists, and senior stakeholders from the Government of Karnataka. The program served as a significant collective platform to raise awareness, share lived experiences, and advocate for systemic support for persons affected by Multiple Sclerosis.

- We share latest MS news and research developments via newsletters and links to specific information. RAGAMS joined The May 50K this May.
- RAGAMS signature project, in partnership with Australian Rotary Health and Melbourne University; The Jacob Taurins Memorial PhD Scholarship recipient Zhe (Darran) Qiang continues his work identifying Bionic Markers.

- RAGAMS Aust. Joined **THE MAY 50K MS** fundraiser https://www.themay50k.org/

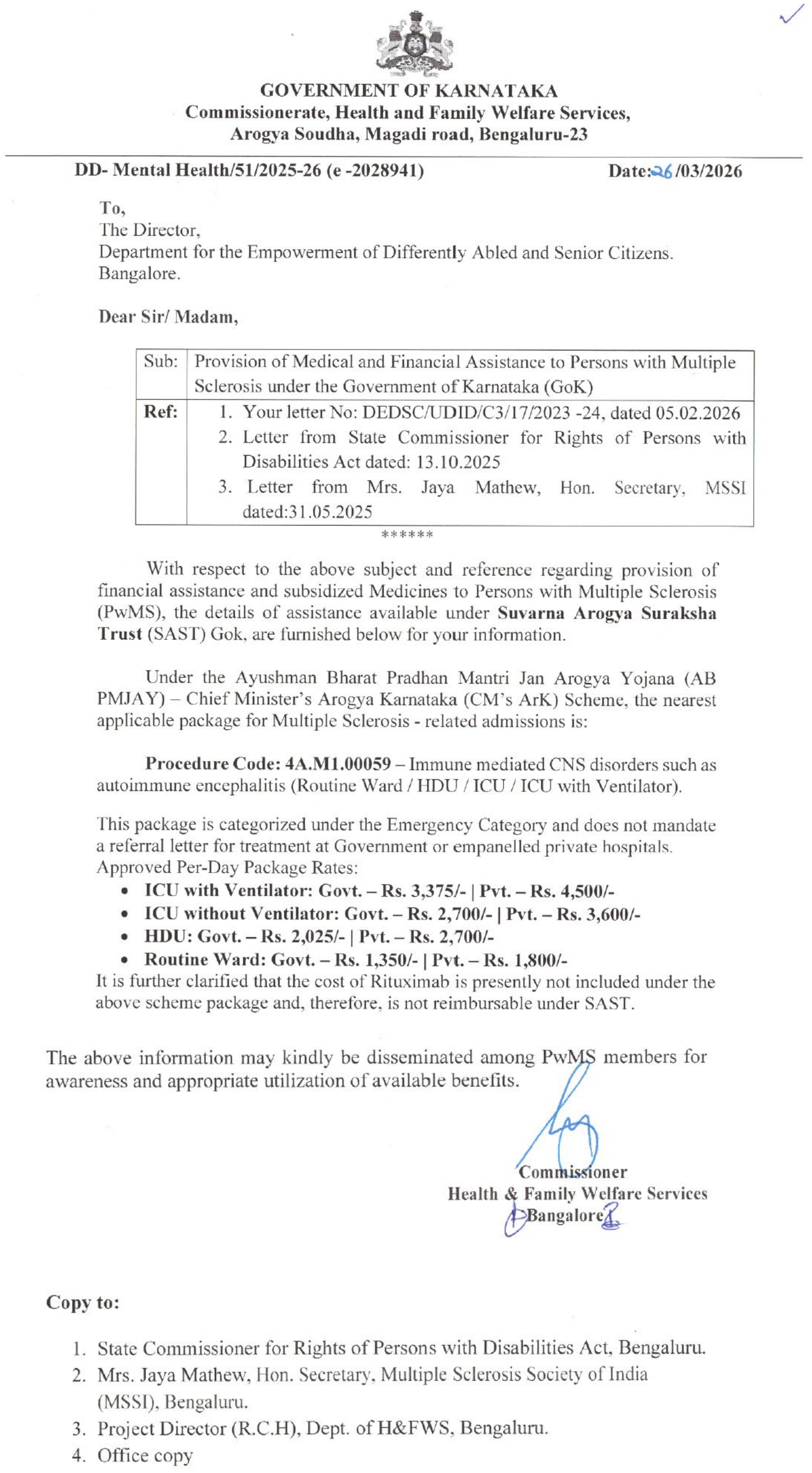
MS AUSTRALIA THE MAY 50K 2026

- For general group information, achievements, etc. Please refer website : http://ragams.org

- Please acknowledge receipt of RAGAMS emails and write a sentence re your thoughts or ideas to inspire RAGAMS improvement.

IN BANGALORE, INDIA

The advocacy efforts of MSSI supported by RAGAMs have resulted in the Government acknowledging the need for including persons with MS to be included in the various Government Schemes of the government which relate to admission in private and government hospitals. Below (next page) is the acknowledgement:



GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Commissionerate, Health and Family Welfare Services,
Arogya Soudha, Magadi road, Bengaluru-23

DD- Mental Health/51/2025-26 (e -2028941) **Date:26/03/2026**

To,
The Director,
Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens.
Bangalore.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Sub:	Provision of Medical and Financial Assistance to Persons with Multiple Sclerosis under the Government of Karnataka (GoK)
Ref:	1. Your letter No: DEDSC/UDID/C3/17/2023 -24, dated 05.02.2026 2. Letter from State Commissioner for Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act dated: 13.10.2025 3. Letter from Mrs. Jaya Mathew, Hon. Secretary, MSSI dated:31.05.2025

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With respect to the above subject and reference regarding provision of financial assistance and subsidized Medicines to Persons with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS), the details of assistance available under **Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust** (SAST) Gok, are furnished below for your information.

Under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY) – Chief Minister's Arogya Karnataka (CM's ArK) Scheme, the nearest applicable package for Multiple Sclerosis - related admissions is:

Procedure Code: 4A.M1.00059 – Immune mediated CNS disorders such as autoimmune encephalitis (Routine Ward / HDU / ICU / ICU with Ventilator).

This package is categorized under the Emergency Category and does not mandate a referral letter for treatment at Government or empanelled private hospitals.
Approved Per-Day Package Rates:

- **ICU with Ventilator: Govt. – Rs. 3,375/- | Pvt. – Rs. 4,500/-**
- **ICU without Ventilator: Govt. – Rs. 2,700/- | Pvt. – Rs. 3,600/-**
- **HDU: Govt. – Rs. 2,025/- | Pvt. – Rs. 2,700/-**
- **Routine Ward: Govt. – Rs. 1,350/- | Pvt. – Rs. 1,800/-**

It is further clarified that the cost of Rituximab is presently not included under the above scheme package and, therefore, is not reimbursable under SAST.

The above information may kindly be disseminated among PwMS members for awareness and appropriate utilization of available benefits.

Commissioner
Health & Family Welfare Services
Bangalore

Copy to:

1. State Commissioner for Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, Bengaluru.
2. Mrs. Jaya Mathew, Hon. Secretary, Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (MSSI), Bengaluru.
3. Project Director (R.C.H), Dept. of H&FWS, Bengaluru.
4. Office copy

INTERVIEW

Redefining Ability: The First Person with MS in India to be a Rotary Club President

"I got some of the best things in my life only after I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis," **says Rtn. Arun Mohan.**

Refusing to be defined by a condition that affected his speech, mobility, and even the simplest daily functions, Arun chose a path of awareness, advocacy, and purposeful action. Today, he is a wellness coach who works closely with persons with disabilities, helping them discover how to live fully despite limitations. He also holds the distinction of being the first person with Multiple Sclerosis to serve as President of a Rotary Club in India.

"After my diagnosis, I knew a full-time corporate job was no longer possible," he recalls. "So I became a certified life and wellness coach." In this role, he began interacting with many individuals living with disabilities, including those with MS. He has also supported people who had contemplated suicide. *"Most people offer advice," he says, "but what they really need is someone who will listen."* Especially those diagnosed with conditions later in life, the transition can be incredibly difficult, he says.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease typically diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40. Affecting nearly 2.8 million people worldwide, it affects the central nervous system, and cause a wide range of symptoms such as blurred vision, numbness, tremors, slurred speech, extreme fatigue, and even paralysis. While there is no cure, its progression can be managed through medication, physiotherapy, and counselling.

Arun's own journey to diagnosis was long and fraught with confusion. In 2013, he was initially misdiagnosed with Parkinson's disease and underwent treatment for eight months. "I used to slur my speech, couldn't walk straight, and my hands would tremble," he says. "People assumed I was drunk. I was even reprimanded at work."

Photo Credits: Shankar Subramanian

At the time, he was working as a sales executive for a pharmaceutical company in Madurai. One scorching summer day, after walking nearly 10 kilometres, his body simply gave way. "I was about 500 metres from home when I couldn't walk anymore. My knees locked, and I just sat down by the roadside. I couldn't get up." He eventually had to crawl on all fours to reach home. Shaken by that experience, he decided to move back to Chennai, where his family lived.

In 2015, he visited a neurologist in Chennai who recommended an MRI scan, and based on that advised immediate hospitalization. After five days of treatment, his gait improved and the tremors subsided, but the slurring remained. It was then that he was finally diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. The treatment that followed was both physically and financially taxing. He had to undergo weekly injections for a month, each costing ₹40,000 that drained his savings. But the treatment was ineffective as the disease had already progressed significantly.

Photo Credits: Shankar Subramanian

Daily life presented its own challenges. On one occasion, when he went for an early morning passport appointment for his son, a security guard refused to let him in, assuming he was intoxicated. “My mother-in-law was with me. It was humiliating,” he recalls.

Some symptoms had, in fact, been present much earlier. Arun later realised he had been experiencing nystagmus—rapid, involuntary eye movements—since as far back as 1993, when he struggled to fill out bank forms due to poor depth perception. At the time, he had attributed it to severe myopia.

A significant shift came when he joined the Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (MSSI), first in Chennai and later in Bengaluru. Through the organisation, he found not just support but a platform for expression and advocacy. Invited by Rtn. Shankar Subramaniam, then Chair of the MSSI Bengaluru chapter, Arun modelled for an art exhibition aimed at raising awareness about MS. He also broke stereotypes in his own way—walking the ramp with a walking stick as part of a unique fashion show organised by the Rotary Action Group Against Multiple Sclerosis (RAGAMS) on World MS Day in Bengaluru.

After moving to Bengaluru, Arun became an active member of the MSSI chapter and served on its governing council. In 2023, he was elected Vice President of MSSI. His efforts in raising awareness were recognised with an award on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2019, he joined the Rotary Club of Bengaluru Abilities—the only Rotary club in India run by and for persons with disabilities, while also including others. Within two years, he became Secretary, and in 2024–25, he took on the role of President, earning the Best President Award for his leadership.

Advocacy for accessibility has since become central to his mission. He has written about the lack of accessible infrastructure in Bengaluru for national publications, sparking responses from many, particularly senior citizens who face similar challenges. Through MSSI, he has engaged with policymakers and even had the opportunity to meet the Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud. Their conversation on accessibility underscored a shared understanding of the barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

“I've been able to do so much because of MSSI and Rotary,” Arun reflects.

“Accessibility is my priority. I question it, write about it, and push for change wherever I can, even in Rotary. Because inclusion isn’t a favour—it’s a right.”

Interview conducted by Deepa Padmanaban.

Deepa is a freelance journalist and author based in Bangalore. She's also an active member of Rotary Bangalore Rajmahal Vilas, currently serving as secretary.

- **Prepared by, Diana, Martin and Shankar**