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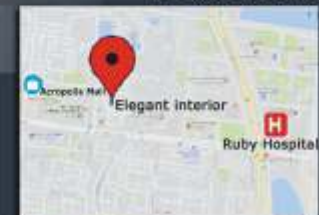
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১৯ সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৯

শারদ শুভেচ্ছা



‘তুমি নব নব রূপে এসো প্রাণে
এসো গন্ধে বরনে এসো গানে’

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আনন্দযজ্ঞে সামিল হতে।

“শিশির ভেজা শিউলি ভোরে
মা এসো গো সবার ঘরে”

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Managing Our World

thoughts of the managing editor of Utsav

- Arindam Sil

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Subrata Gangopadhyay is a master artist in portraiture and is widely known as one of India's leading painters in the modern realistic tradition.

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Greta Thunberg, a sixteen year old student from Sweden bunked school every Friday, last year, to sit in protest outside her Parliament. It was unique. She said - " Why should I study if the world is coming to an end". I was instantly reminded of Annie Hall, when I heard about Greta. But Greta went on to create a revolution which even Woody Allen could not. She pioneered the movement that led to a world wide climate strike.

The present crisis facing us as inhabitants of this world is our very own existence. We are ruining our world. The ice caps are melting so bad that sea levels are rising alarmingly. Thousands of square kilometres of forests are being destroyed to lay railway tracks or build dams and thus endangering our flora and fauna.

We end up pointing fingers at our administration and at our politicians. But the fact remains that we need to learn from such sixteen year old Gretas of the world that we are actually responsible. We discuss the smog at New Delhi, troll Priyanka Chopra but ourselves will burst crackers and enjoy fireworks. We debate on polluting our seas and end up living with plastics. Can we start with sacrificing our little enjoyments and habits for the sake of ourselves?

As individuals we need to step on to our brakes and turn. Singly it is difficult. If we start taking efforts as a community, it would be a lot easier.

Our community at Urbana comprises of a society to boast of. Very few gated communities in the city work on their social responsibilities the way we do at Urbana, round the year. Our children at Urbana are truly our pride. Let us inculcate them in the right direction so that they take charge of their very own world. And we as their seniors can take care of our own garbage and will not dump it onto them. That is the least we can do - be exemplary in what we do.

Conscious, responsible, aware and a fun-filled, vibrant community is our dream. Let us constantly walk and work towards it.

Urbana is for keeps.

Utsav is for keeps.

Every relationship is precious and is for keeps.

Our World is for keeps.

May we protect and value them all.

This yearly book commemorating our festivals and activities at Urbana has been named 'Utsav'. It's a unique word which indicates a transcended form of aware, joyful, inclusive and societal living.

The editorial board has made a commendable effort. Let us always encourage the young, new and willing of our society to take things forward.

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West Bengal's First Family Graces Urbana's Durgotsav

Visit of His Excellency Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, the honourable Governor of West Bengal, with his family to commemorate our Durgotsav 2019. (4th October)

Urbana had the privilege of welcoming into its Puja celebrations, the Governor of West Bengal and his family - the First Lady Mrs. Sudesh Dhankhar, their daughter Kamna and son-in-law Kartikye. They were present amongst us on Maha Shashti. They offered prayers to Maa Durga and spent time with the Urbanites in a warm and dignified ceremony. Urbanites offered gifts and a painting as a token of our respect and gratitude for gracing the occasion. Here are excerpts from his speech and the highlights of his visit.

His Excellency, Jagdeep Dhankhar is the recently appointed Governor of West Bengal (2019). He is an eminent politician and a Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India. He served as a Member of the Lok Sabha from 1989- 1991 as well.

He was introduced by Mr. Arindam Sil and in the beginning of his address he acknowledged Mr. Sutirtha Bhattacharya as his friend, family and guide. He also acknowledged the Senior members of UWA and UUC - Sanjeev Ganerwal, Gopa Bhabani, Udayshankar Mukhopadyay and Sushant Mallik making a special mention of finding a friend and cultural guide in Arindam Sil since his arrival in Kolkata. His speech was short but from the heart and gave insight into his humble and warm nature.





He repeatedly mentioned how he and his family would 'forever cherish their visit to Urbanid' and how happy they were to be in Kolkata, the cultural hub of the world.

He said, "I know each of you (Urbanites) is possessed of credentials that are absolutely remarkable. When I looked in the eyes of the young children, looked at the sparkle in their eyes, I had no occasion to render a speech. In other words, I'm speechless. Sometimes, silence is most eloquent. This is one moment. Silence is eloquent. I can assure you, for me and my family, it has been a blessing that I have come to Kolkata as it's Governor."

He ended his speech by thanking the Urbanites for including him in the celebrations like a large family and said, "Now I'm part of this large family and from each of you, I will draw sustenance; from each of you I will draw inspiration. I am privileged. I am honoured. I am blessed. I am humbled. Me and my family would ever cherish this moment and the relationships I have picked up here. I will pick up many more, but I have picked the one that will be the epicentre for me. Thank you so much. Wish you Puja greetings."

Truly a most unassuming, warm hearted and likeable Governor.



শারদ শুভেচ্ছা



ELECTROSTEEL

Q&A with Uday Shankar Mukhopadhyay

(popularly known as **Uday Da**)

President of Urbana Utsav Committee 2019

Q: Are you happy to be the President of UUC?

Udayda (US): Yes of course. It is a privilege and an honour to lead the UUC for 2019 -20. I am happy to have been entrusted with this vast responsibility and the opportunity to work with and for my fellow Urbanites towards a vibrant and festive community. I enjoyed it so far and look forward to the remaining festivities and events in the coming months.

Q: What is it that you feel is your best value-addition to this Committee?

US: First and foremost is the vast experience I have collected over the years from organising Club Pujo. Also, my experiences from managing Pujo abroad, in countries where idol worship is prohibited. There I have handled and performed Pujo for more than ten years without breaking a single law. With these years of organising Pujo events behind me, I feel I know the expectations that the community has from such events. I understand the behind-the-scenes work that goes into it and the organisational skills and team work that are required to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Q: Can you share some of the best achievements that the UUC has had this year so far?

US: Seven days of full enjoyment without any hassle and full utilisation of Urbana Talent.

Q: What about the areas for improvement, any that come to your mind?

US: Urbana is full of talented people. We must utilise that potential more often. In the coming months and for the years of Pujo's lying ahead of us I would like to see greater participation and coming forward of individuals who reside here, with their unique contribution to the successful organisation of Durgotsav and other festivities.

We should definitely gravitate towards a more eco-friendly Pujo. A celebration with least damage to our environment and usage of material that can be reused or recycled.



Q: What is the significance of festivals celebrated in a community? What makes it different for you?

US: Festivals are a perfect way to bring people together. They imbibe a sense of community in this fast paced world and give a moment of pure joy to all who take a moment to participate in the celebrations.

For me, I really enjoy celebrating them now, especially because I spent my prime years away from India. While I was away I really missed the festivities and celebrations back home.



Q: What is your favourite festival and can you share a memory from any celebration of that festival in the past?

US: My favourite festival is Durga Puja. I was living in Abu Dhabi where idol worship is not allowed. We were innovative and made idol painting on canvas /glass /metal sheets and used them in the Pujo. In place of a pandal, we celebrated in a Banquet hall of a Hotel. More than 300 families came together to participate in these Pujos. It was a challenging yet fulfilling experience for me. Even though I was far from home, I was part of the Durga Pujo festival and spread the joy to families who were far from their homes and loved ones.

Q: As a child did you participate in community puja's - how did you celebrate festivals when you were younger?

US: I am involved in Durga Pujo from my school days. I took part in Cultural events, Subscription Collection and helped my seniors to organise the Pujo every year. We looked forward to these exciting days filled with activity and the thrill of making each year better and bigger than the last one.

Q: What about Indian Culture and heritage - what are the lessons you have learnt from it?

US: For me, Indian Culture and Heritage is the grand total of all the traditions, rituals and celebrations of all the communities and religions in India. We are a unique, diverse country and our heritage is that we celebrate this diversity.

Q: How do you see Urbana 5 years from now?

US: 5 years from now Urbana will grow to 1000+ families. Managing Puja will be a big challenge! On the brighter side - we will have one the largest celebrations by a residential society in Kolkata and it will be a grand and awaited occasion.

Q: What's the best part about Urbana and what do you like the least?

US: The best part is the sense of belonging and the feeling that we are living like one big family. The part I don't care for are the unnecessary comments using Whatsapp!

Q. What is one message you would give to residents of Urbana

US: We are very lucky that we all live in this wonderful environment, that is Urbana. Please do join every event and celebration that is organised here. It will a great respite for you, a welcome break from our busy, busy lives.

Rapid Fire

Who is your inspiration?

Swami Vivekananda

Describe yourself in 3 words

Forever young at heart

What do you do in your spare time

Read. Travel. Watch good movies. Community Work.

Your personal motto

Be humble. 'Khao Pio Mouj Kara. Zindagee na milegee dobara'.

Favourite Food

All preparations of Fish.

Favourite Movie

Hate Bazare, Sholay, Mackenna's Gold.

Acknowledgement



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Our Patrons



R.S. Goenka, Joint Chairman, Emami Group of Companies is best known as one of the founder promoters of Emami Group of Companies, a diversified leading business conglomerate headquartered in Kolkata.

Today, Emami Group, under the aegis of the founding fathers enjoys leadership presence in diverse sectors like FMCC, paper manufacturing, hospitals, edible oil, bio-diesel, realty, writing instruments, contemporary art, cement and power generating employment for over 25000 people.

In 2003, R.S. Goenka was appointed as the Honorary Consul of Republic of Poland in Kolkata. He was awarded the Cavalier Cross of the Order of the Merit of the Republic of Poland on 17th December, 2007 that makes Mr Goenka the fifth Indian to receive this recognition from the government of Poland.



Rahul Todi, one of the most prominent young entrepreneurs of Bengal and son of a reputed Industrialist - Shri Shrawan Kumar Todi. He is one of the paramount forces behind the Shrachi Group, a highly regarded family owned business in Bengal

Under the leadership of Rahul Todi, Shrachi Group has grown exponentially.



Pradeep Sureka, is the Managing Director in charge of the Real Estate Division of the Sureka Group, which also has major interests in the manufacturing and distribution of bicycle tyres and tubes.

Under his leadership, the Sureka group has consolidated its position in Kolkata and expanded into Hyderabad and Odisha.



Mayank Jalan, Managing Director of Keventer Agro, is the son of visionary industrialist Mahendra Kumar Jalan, Chairman of the Keventer Group and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Ireland.

Mayank has an all encompassing interest in products, brands, markets and processes and this interest has led him to create several new businesses and transform Keventer into one of Eastern India's fastest growing conglomerates.

The Keventer Group has a presence in three distinct verticals - Foods & Beverages, Real Estate & Steels.

Meet Susanta Mallick

Secretary of Urbana Utsav Committee and read about his experience organising the various festivals under UUC at Urbana.



Q What is the motivation for you to work for the UUC as the Secretary?

Susanta Mallick (SM): In a complex with seven wonders touching the sky, rising from the lap of a green landscape there is a sense of unparalleled belonging.

It is amazing to work with hundreds of Urbanites who are working together selflessly. That is my unknown motivation to work as the Secretary of the Urbana Utsav Committee. It's an uplifting experience.

Q What do you believe is your contribution / value-addition to this Committee?

SM: I can't speak about my own contribution, but I will say that it is a rare situation to find over 150 committee members in 18 subcommittees working together for 4 months to produce 47 events with over 300 participants. It was the unwavering support and contribution of all committee members that put up such a vast array of festivals. As the Secretary of the UUC, sometimes even I find it hard to believe that we achieved such grand success.

Most of the events, out of the 47 that were organised, were in-house and the convenors /coordinators of all the events have worked extensively along with the participants for months on end. This effort has resulted in marvellous performances for a total of 12 days starting from Ganesh Chaturthi to Durgotsav to Kalipuja and then Deeputsav. I have reasonable doubt that there is any other complex in Kolkata who can organise such a mega celebration that too mostly with in-house performers. My contribution is my support to the great team that is UUC.

Q Can you share some of the best achievements that the committee has had this year far?

SM: I feel the involvement of so many Urbanites in these celebrations, be it as committee members, participants, sponsors and last but not least an encouraging and lovely audience, is the best achievement of UUC 2019.

The inauguration by His Excellency the Governor of our state in two events and presence of the legendary Soumitra Chatterjee were also major highlights.

Q What challenges did the committee face and how did you as a team overcome them?

SM: In any work of such magnitude, there will be challenges at every step.

I feel that the major challenges were motivating & involving as many Urbanities as possible and resolving the differences of opinions when they arose. The practical problem of estimation of food and its management was another challenge. Also, the task of collecting subscription from approximately 550 families and sponsors to meet our budget and managing such huge gatherings without any major shortcomings was quite a challenge. It was not easy organising so many events peacefully & successfully.

However, working round the clock, flexibility, adjustments, close monitoring, togetherness, being respectful to others opinions and finally getting to see the smiling face of all members helped us to overcome all challenges.

Q What is the significance of festivals celebrated in a community? What makes it different for you?

SM: It is difficult to believe that over 150 committee members are giving their selfless services for the community. They are sacrificing their commitments to their family, friends, relatives and job for such a long period, just for the sake of community. It makes our Urbana stand out from all the other complexes. This is significant for me - this sense of working together for building community through festivals, celebrating together as a large family and laying the foundations of a society that will flourish together.

Q What is your favourite festival and can you share a memory from any celebration of that festival in the past?

SM: My favourite festival has always been Durgotsav and I have a myriad of memories associated with it. I got to relive those memories again in this Durgotsav.

Q As a child did you participate in community puja's - how did you celebrate festivals when you were younger?

SM: In my childhood, in the village I grew up in, I was an integral part of the "para" puja organising committee. I have been fortunate to be a part of community pujas and finally ended up here in Urbana. I had felt a void after I shifted to this city, but in Urbana all that emptiness disappeared and I am enjoying myself more than ever.

Q What is unique about Urbana and how do you see this community growing in the future ?

SM: Urbana is a unique residential complex consisting of 2500 residents from almost all communities & religions, enjoying all festivals together. It is already a vibrant place, full of action and events. Urbana could be the most coveted society, where people can enjoy almost all festive colours, throughout the year. We need to protect this.

Q What is one message you would give to residents of Urbana?

SM: 'Urbanities' you all are geniuses, have huge talents in all respects, highly placed in the society, open-minded, friendly, respectful, lovable & helpful. I have only one prayer to all Urbanities - Never allow this unique togetherness to be broken. Let our Urbana remain at the top of all residential complexes.

RAPID FIRE

Your inspiration?
My Mother

Describe yourself in 3 words
Friends are my Lifeline

What do you do in your spare time
Work for NGOs and Associations

Your personal motto
To spread positivity everywhere

Favourite Food
Rice, Dal, Alu-Posto & Omelette

Favourite Music & movie
Music - R.D. Burman & Kishore Kumar
Movie - Dewar



An Open Chat with Sanjiv Ganeriwala

President of Urbana Welfare Association (UWA)



Q What is your message to the Urbanites for this festive season?

Sanjiv Ganeriwala (SG): Rich and vibrant festivals are testimony to our diverse tradition and customs and they bring forth occasions to celebrate humanity and the cultural heritage of our country. Urbanites of all ages have participated in the festivals with a lot of enthusiasm. These festivals bring all of us closer to each other, instil a feeling of togetherness and create strong and lasting bonds. Festivals when celebrated in a community like ours are also an intercultural learning experience which becomes an opportunity to bring people closer irrespective of their religion or region. I wish this trend continues in Urbana.

Q Midway into your journey as UWA President, what have been some significant achievements of UWA?

SG: We had committed to address a lot of issues faced by Urbanites before the election and have either resolved or tried with an honest effort to resolve all of them. The problems with stray dogs could not be resolved as it is a sub judicial matter. However, we have approached Animal Hospital And Research Institute (ASHARI) who are building a kennel shelter, wherein they may agree to relocate the stray dogs. In the meanwhile, all measures are being taken to restrict further entries into the complex by plugging possible entry points.

On the positive side, several of our initiatives have borne results - cameras are now installed in all lifts to monitor movements for security reasons. There is increased implementation of fire safety and road safety measures along with extensive campaigns to raise awareness levels amongst residents. Work is on towards installation of PNG Gas connections with new and safer piping and management of waste in our society. We have been continuously trying to improve facilities within the complex and the club - for example installation of the high quality basketball net and other improvements in the fitness facilities. Another achievement is the installation of Digital TVs in all the towers & Club which can be used for displaying notices and information as well as used for commercial promotions to generate revenue which will contribute to the society's funds. UWA has also initiated several social welfare activities for the underprivileged communities around Urbana as well as in service of those who work in our own complex for example RO machines were installed in all towers so that the staff can get clean drinking water easily.

While there is a lot to be done in Urbana I am happy to say that many of the things we set out to achieve have been successfully implemented or are in the process of being set up.

Q To what do you attribute the success of the UWA so far?

SG: UWA's success is due to our TEAM WORK - all Committee Members have contributed significantly and supported actively to implement our planned programs. Additionally, our Committee Members came up with the idea of involving all interested residents in various Sub-committees and in the Urbana Utsav Committee (UUC).

Moreover, it was not just involving them but further empowering them to take initiative and act as extensions of the UWA.

Empowering Tower Captains and appointing MICs (Member in-charge) in each tower to look after specific functions has also attributed to our success and we have been able to come closer to all residents through our Tower Core Teams.

Q What are the areas that still need work and what are some of the key things that UWA will be focusing on in the near future?

SG: No resident welfare committee's work can ever be fully accomplished as it's an ongoing process and we are just a short way into our journey at Urbana, to bring about change and add to the beauty, safety and unity of our society. A lot remains to be accomplished.

Some of the areas that we are continuously working on are tightening of the security of the complex using software and technology – Adda Gatekeeper and ClubHouse modules will soon be implemented to offer added security, improved first-aid kits in all towers and a major kit in the Medical Room for emergencies, increasing the number of cradles for more regular cleaning and repair of windows from the outside etc. We are in constant conversation with BNRI and Urbana Facility Management (UFM) team to make living here more efficient and safe for the residents.

We also want to add more activities and facilities that encourage interaction based on interests and grow the bond between neighbours. We plan on adding a Flying Club for the children, a group for Robotics and Photography enthusiasts and even want to get an international level Cricket pitch installed in the complex. I hope that some of these initiatives take flight and we make Urbana an even better place to live in.

Q Urbana has some wonderful activities and events. How can this culture be cultivated and what steps will UWA and UUC take to make celebrations more inclusive?

SG: We had an all inclusive Durga puja wherein all Urbanites participated with full enthusiasm and everyone enjoyed. We have seen the residents actively involved in various social service activities in large numbers. DEEP UTSAV saw more than 300 residents participating in the cultural presentation and the evening was celebrated over good music, food and drinks by all.

Urbana is lucky to have great sports facilities within its premises and we want to encourage fitness and healthy living amongst the residents. To further this cause the UWA Sports Committee is gearing up for some mega events like a 'Day and Night IPL' style Cricket match, a 'Cyclothon' - 5/10 Km cycling marathon in the wetlands area around us and other inter-tower sports and games. Like in the past, this year also we plan to participate together in the Tata Steel Marathon in December..

I personally encourage all residents to participate in large numbers at these events to keep the spirit of Urbana alive.

Rapid Fire

3 Qualities of a good leader?

Integrity , Accountability , Humility & positivity (and of course a clear vision)

What do you do in your spare time?

Spend time with family and friends

Who is your inspiration?

Our very own Mr. Kishore Nadhani and Mr. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh

Most memorable place you have visited?

Hongkong

Do you have a personal motto?

Keep a happy face whenever we meet each other.

Q Do you like living in Urbana? What is the best part for you?

SG: Yes, Of course. Before taking a purchase decision, we had visited various complexes and areas and finally decided on Urbana. Urbana's open areas, lower pollution levels and the good people living here, are it's best part.

Q Can you share some of your happiest moments from this year's festivities?

SG: I enjoyed the Inter-Tower Antakshari Program arranged by Mr. Aninda Palit in the Club Banquet, the most. It was fun to watch, the competition was exciting and the music and atmosphere was very enjoyable.

Aninda, Kishore and Nikhil are our assets whenever arranging a program is concerned.

My request to Aninda Palit is to arrange a mega event like 'Masterchef' in Urbana very soon. I would look forward to an event like that!

Q What do you believe could have made the festivities even brighter for Urbanites this year?

SG: If we can only stop commenting in Whatsapp groups – festivities can be even brighter. My suggestion is to use these Whatsapp groups only for information circulation and one-way communication. All other suggestions / complaints can be made either via email or in person on a weekly basis with Committee members. I think many Urbanites will agree with my thoughts on this.

Q How do you see Urbana evolving in the next 5 year period?

SG: In next 5 years, there will be not less than 1000 families residing here. . . We have to keep our inclusive spirit alive. We have to continue meeting and greeting each other and keep celebrating together to make Urbana an even more vibrant society.

Q What is your expectation from the residents of Urbana towards the community and how can we collectively improve things in our society?

SG: My request to the Urbanites is to keep their egos aside and meet and discuss problems and issues to sort out any differences. I request that people refrain from making sarcastic remarks in public groups. In a large society there will always be differences in the work style and opinions. We must respect these differences and try to understand each other. Once again, I request all to stop commenting or making false allegations on Whatsapp and especially in general groups.

With best
Compliments
from our
Well Wishers





Urbana Utsav Committee 2019



Core Committee

Uday Shankar Mukhopadhyay - *President* | Jayati Biswas - *Vice President I* | Sujoy Chatteraj - *Vice President II*
Susanta Mallick - *Secretary* | Mahua Sur Ray - *Jt. Secretary I* | Shilpi Chowdhury - *Jt. Secretary II*
Debabrata Ghosh - *Treasurer* | Debjani Mukherjee - *Jt. Treasurer*

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Prasad Bannerjee | Prasanta Kumar Sarkar | Shibani Basu | Sourav Roy | Subhas Agarwal | Suruchi Chowdhary

Ex Officio Members

Gopa Bhabani | Shyam Sundar Sonika

Advisors

Arindam Sil - *Chief Advisor* | Sutirtha Bhattacharya - *Technical Advisor* | Aninda Palit | Kisor Nadhani
Nikhil Kothari | Rajiv Ganeriwala | Sanjiv Ganeriwala



Bengal Institute of Technology & Management



Camellia Institute of Technology - Madhyapgram



Camellia Institute of Engineering & Technology - Badbud



Camellia School of Engineering & Technology - Barasat



Camellia Institute of Engineering - Madhyapgram



Camellia Institute of Polytechnic - Badbud



Bengal Law College - Santiniketan



Agora - The Club at Axis Mall | Garohat Mall



Camellia Institute of Technology & Management - Badbud



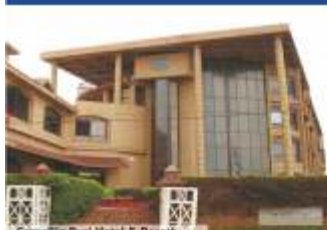
Bengal Institute of Hotel Management - Santiniketan



Camellia World School



Camellia Heritage - Santiniketan



Camellia Puri Hotel & Resort



Yee Tong - Chinese Fine Dining



Royal Oak - The Banquet at Axis Mall | Garohat Mall



Kokoro Rava - Multicuisine Restaurant



Camellia Institute of Aviation



Camellia Heritage - Santiniketan



Proposed Real Estate Development Camellia City - Barasat



Proposed Medical Hub - Bardwan



Industry - Cement Plant

In Conversation with Kolkata's New Police Commissioner



A sneak peek into the life of **Police Commissioner Anuj Sharma** as he shares his views on various topics about the city and himself with the Editors of Utsav.

Q How would you define your journey in the police? Lessons that you've learned in the time you have been a Police Officer.

Anuj Sharma (AS): It's been quite a long, but awesome journey. I joined the police force in 1991 and have worked in lot of places since then - a combination of rural areas and the metro cities. It's quite an exciting job because you're always trying to solve problems and solutions have to be found/created and executed immediately.

Q What do you think is the difference while working in metro cities versus rural areas?

AS: Metro policing is totally different from rural policing. Rural Policing is more laid back. The pressures are less. In urban policing, like metro city policing in a city like Kolkata, pressures are high. The pattern of crime is different.

Kolkata doesn't have major crimes but being a prominent metro, issues can scale up and reach a national level also. You have to be on your toes all the time.

Q You are one of the few Police Commissioners or public figures who are active on social media. So how do you think that helps you and defines you as a different Commissioner of Police.

AS: I use social media channels to have a direct interface with the community. I have my own Facebook page, the primary reason for the same is direct interaction. I get lots of input and messages via the messenger as well. People who face problems share them with me through this medium. They communicate and pass information directly to me. While it is not normal for a Commissioner of Police to use this form of communication - it is my personal choice that I do so. Kolkata Police already has a Facebook page and ongoing public interaction on that platform. So, I thought let me take it one step further and allow the citizens a direct connect to me.

Q So does this social media presence help you build a better connectivity with the youth?

AS: Yes. There is obviously a better connectivity and I am getting information first hand.

Q Since you have taken over the post of the Commissioner, what do you think have been the major changes brought about by you in the city?

AS: The Kolkata Police is a huge organisation established way back in 1857. It is the oldest police unit in the country. It's been functioning very well. Every person who comes in, will come with his own ideas and visions. Mine was basically core policing. 'Core Policing' means increasing the visibility of the police force, and focusing on night policing. Most people complain saying that they cannot see the police in the night.

So, what I did was, I put nakas around the city. I tried to improve the night visibility of police, which has had a very positive effect. We have got a very positive response on this initiative.

Other things include- focus on traffic, clamping down on helmet-less motorcycling, speeding etc.

Another focus area for me was to increase the respect and safety for women in the city. We're trying to focus on women's safety even though NCRB data has just released data indicating that Calcutta is the safest city in India, for women. I wanted to focus on raising the bar here.

We're trying to build further more awareness, and more connectivity. We are working on spreading awareness about what ladies who are going out in the night alone can do, if they are faced with some distress.

Q So the most current agenda, would be the pollution and noise levels caused by fire-crackers during the festive time. What is your view on this?

AS: I have just gone through the data we received, in comparison with previous years there is a definite improvement. Our action this year has been manifold and there is a vast improvement in the control measures and actions taken this year to keep in check the use of fire-crackers and keeping it to the designated time frame.

This does not mean that there were no complaints or all went well in the city, but my point is, it takes some time for the system to control this totally and the important thing is there is a will to control it and we are taking necessary action.



Q What is your personal take on eradicating pollution or arresting pollution miscreants?

AS: I have no personal opinion, it is a Supreme Court directive.

Q Any unique challenges you have faced since assuming this post?

AS: Everyday is a challenge. Basically what we're doing is fire-fighting. Things come up and we have to solve them, immediately. You can't say that this is a bigger challenge than that - all are important and need to be handled. The IPL was one such challenge. Durga Puja definitely is one of the biggest festivals in the world (the third biggest open air festival in the world) and therefore a challenge for the police force to organise and maintain law and order. And I would say we have managed it very well this time. Traffic was quite smooth. For that I would like to take credit on behalf of Kolkata Police. Durga Puja and Kali Puja both went off smoothly.

Q What would be your recommendation for the young generation to join the police force? What is the current trend amongst the youngsters joining the force?

AS: I would say it's great. It's a challenging job. And the best part is you can, if you want, help people. We are getting good people who want to join the police force. Engineers, BBA Graduates and Post-graduates are joining, as sub-inspectors. We are getting new recruits from good colleges like Xaviers. All-in-all it is a good trend.

Q Is it true that Kolkata Police has started recruiting handsome commissioners?

AS: Laughs

Q What about your schooling, your alma mater? What memories do you carry from your school days?

AS: Lovely, carefree days. We used to play cricket, study less, play more. I used to play cricket a lot but have given it up now. Life at that time was totally relaxed, not worrying about what's going to happen tomorrow morning. Once in a while I would get worried about the exams.

Q What do you feel about Kolkata City?

AS: I have spent in all 28 years here and my plans are to retire and settle down in this city. I've taken to the city, it has taken me in. I like it. It is slightly laid back but it has good quality of education, people are good and it is devoid of crime.

Q One last question, how do you like to unwind because you have a challenging 24X7 job.

AS: I love listening to music, reading books and spending time with my family and friends.



Puja Committees { **Agomoni & Immersion**
 Debopriyo Biswas -Convenor | Shankar Gupta -Co-Convenor
Members
 Jayati Biswas, Nikhil Kothari, Ranjit Ganguly



The Rituals and Traditions of Durga Puja



Rituals & Bhog

Madhumita Mukherjee -Convenor | Swetanjali Mehrotra -Co-Convenor

Members

Amrita Bose, Bhamhmoy Bose, Debjani Mukherjee, Jyoti Madan, Kamalika Ghosh, Mamta Agarwal, Mani Subudhi, Mithu Banerjee, Sarah Sharadkanya Das, Shilpi Roy, Soma Palit, Suchismita Mukherjee, Suruchi Chowdhury





মাতৃ আবাহন

সঙ্খ্যা ভট্টাচারিণী (T1- 503)

মা যে মোদের ডাক দিয়েছে
আয়রে ছুটে - আয়রে আয়,
নয়ন ভরে চারিটি দিন
দেখবি যদি দেবী মায়।

মা আসবে মোদের কাছে
এই আশাতেই থাকি,
কেনাকাটা, সাজ-গোজ,
রায় না কিচুই বাকি।

বছর ঘুরে এদিন কবে
আসবে নতুন সাজে,
মহোৎসবে মাতবে সবাই
অদম্য উল্লাসে।

হিসেবে কষি মনে মনে
প্রতি জনে জনে;
আবাল বৃদ্ধ সকলেই
দিন লগন গুনে।

দূর দেশে থাকে যারা
তাদের ও মায়ের টান,
দুর্গাপূজার সময় এলেই
প্রাণ করে আনচান।

মা আসছে পিত্রালয়ে
চারটি দিনের স্থিতি;
সঙ্গে আসছে গণেশ, কার্তিক,
লক্ষী-সরস্বতী।

কত যে তৃপ্তি ও আনন্দকর
কন্যার আগমন,-
পিত্রালয়ে চলে তাই
উৎসব আয়োজন।

শরতের হিমেল হাওয়া,
আর আকাশ, বাতাস,
পাতায় পাতায় শিশিরকনা-
সর্বত্রই পূজার সুবাস।

প্রভাতে শিউলির বরা ফুল,
জুঁই, মালতি, বেলী,
জবা, টগর, কামিনী, কাঞ্চন,
কমল, হেনা, চামেলী।

প্রকৃতি জানায় দেবী মায়ের
আগমনী আভাষ;
সকলের মনে জেগে ওঠে
আনন্দ - উচ্ছ্বাস।

চারিদিকে আলোকসজ্জা,
কাঁসর ঢাকির বাজনা,
নাচ, গান, কলরোল,
স্বজনের আনাগোনা।

মগুপে মগুপে আলোকসজ্জা-
মগুপ সাজানোর বিলাস;
মাইকে নানান গানের মহড়া-
মুখরিত চারিপাশ।

কতদিন ধরে মহা উল্লাসে
চলে কত প্রস্তুতি;
নতুন পোষাকে সজ্জিত সবে
যার যেমন সজ্জতি।

সর্বত্রই সাজো সাজো ভাব-
ঘর, পরিবেশ, প্রকৃতি;
মহালয়া হতে শুরু হয়ে যায়
দেবী মায়ের স্তুতি।

ষষ্ঠীর দিন বোধন আর
মগুপে আগমনী গান;
সপ্তমী, অষ্টমী ও নবমী
তিনদিন পূজা অনুষ্ঠান।

দশমীতে বিদায়ের দিন-
বিষাদের ক্ষণ;
ঢাক ও ধুনি নৃত্যের সাথে
প্রতিমা বিসর্জন।

মাতৃবন্দনায় আছে
মায়ের অনেক নাম,
ঔদ্বলিত হৃদয় তারই
করে গুণগান।

শরদোৎসব নয় শুধু
আনন্দমগুতা;
এবে সকলের প্রয়োজনে -
সকলের মিলনতা।

সকলেরই মঙ্গলে
এই মাতৃ-আরাধনা;
ধর্মীয় অনুষ্ঠান যদিও
তবু ঐক্যের পরিকল্পনা ॥

প্রণামি তোমায় মাগো
পাই যেন তোমার করুণা
তব শুভাশীষ বর্ষিত হোক
এইটুকু মোদের কামনা।

প্রতিমাতে নয়,
প্রতি-"মা"তেই
"মা দুর্গা" আছেন।।



শারদীয়ার প্রীতি ও শুভেচ্ছা



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Landscape of Bishnupur dotted with terracotta temples

Bishnupur

A centre of music, art and architecture

Somya Johri (T5/401)

As a conservation architect by profession, I have travelled to the most unique and culturally rich places in India that are not often on the tourist map. One such place that I visited is Bishnupur, a most serene, religious and cultural landscape. Approximately 3 hours away by train from the famous Howrah station, is the tranquil region of Bishnupur. The town is famous for its terracotta temples and is of high historic and religious significance.

Bishnupur was developed by traders and pilgrims in the 7th century and was the seat of Malla kings during the 17th- 18th century. They patronised the crafts of terracotta, conch shell and weaving. There was a shift in faith and philosophy behind the worship and its physical manifestation is visible in both built and unbuilt form, in the region.

The topography of the area was manipulated to create a habitable and self-sustainable settlement.

The most striking features of Bishnupur are the natural landscape and the brick

temples. The topography aided to the formation of a habitable settlement, with a well-designed defence system incorporating the natural slope, a citadel (traces visible), surrounded by earthen ramparts and moat, bastions, watch towers and gateways made of laterite stone called pathar darwazas.

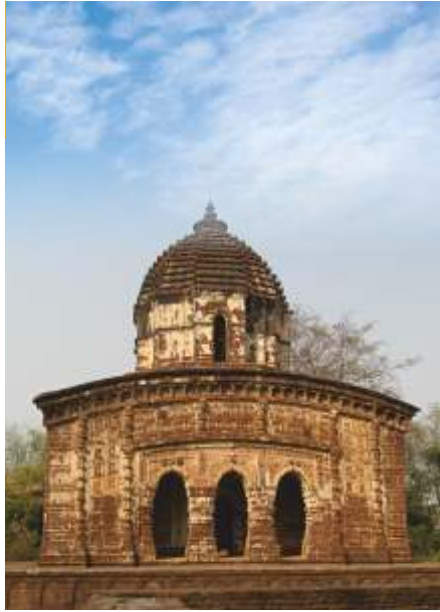
The Royal Palace within the citadel exists as nothing more than a pile of brick building. Lal Bandh area houses many royal temples and was designed to be a leisure garden. Pukurs, the local water tanks are everywhere in the town, used for all sorts of daily activities, rituals as well as industrial usage.

The deities and their temples were endowed with land by the kings and the people living in that part of the land paid rent, to aid the management of the temple. These temples are generally square in plan with a curved roof, with a tower rising from the centre.

There are three main architectural style of temples visible in the region:



Under the patronage of Malla kings, many exquisite temples were built in Bishnupur. The region has very good quality clay and it was easily available for making bricks and intricate terracotta tiles, used for the construction of temples with different architectural styles.



Shyam Rai Temple



Façade of Jorbangla Temple

1. Pinnacled style temples

The roof is less curved and is surmounted with one or more towers or pinnacles called ratnas. The simplest is eka-ratna or single central tower and other is the panch-ratna, with 4 more added to the corners. Kala Chand temple, built in 1656 CE, is an example of eka-ratna and Shyama Rai Temple, built in 1653 CE, is a panch-ratna style temple.

2. Bangla style temples

The style evolved from a simple hut form, with the pattern on walls derived from bamboo frames. Jorbangla Temple represents two huts joined together with a single tower, with decorated tiles showcasing various aspects of human life, figurines of Gods, animals, floral and geometric designs.



Terracotta panels on the walls of Jorbangla Temple showing a boat carrying people



3. Pyramidal roof temple

Rasamancha is the oldest brick temple in Bishnupur and is one of the unique representations of its architectural style in the region.

There are open galleries around the temple that were used to display the local deities during the Ras festival.

Built in 1600 CE, the temple is currently under ASI.



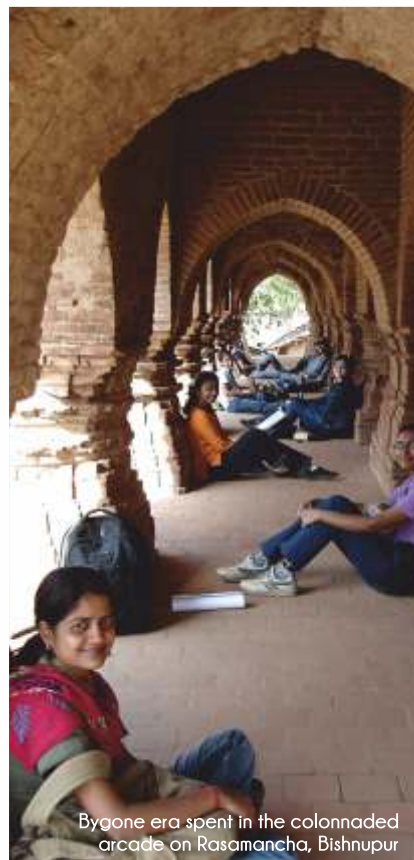
View of Rasamancha Temple



Earthen pots and Bankura horses ready for sale



Chakki used for making earthen pots



Bygone era spent in the colonnaded arcade on Rasamancha, Bishnupur



Weaving of silk thread in community spaces.

Bishnupur's terracotta work was undertaken by guilds and Kings and rich merchants had power over land and funds for the temple and the deity. The shapati was the leader of the guild, who designed the story to be depicted in the temple and distributed work. The sutradhars were the village craftsmen, who prepared the panels and tiles with raj (masons) and karigars (artisans).

The craftsmen were the bhaskars, mittikars, kashtakars, chitrikars and karmakars. For the raw material, pukurs were dug for rituals; then the mud taken out was used to prepare building material and the tank was used as a source of water during construction of the temple.

The clay used in the temples was flattened, with tiles 4" x 8" and panels 12" x 12" prepared. The design was then transferred onto the tile before baking it. The final fixing of the tiles was done by the master craftsmen onto the wall of the temple, with lime mortar as per the sequence of the story to be depicted.

Most of the temples in Bishnupur are under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and regular maintenance and restoration work is undertaken. But many of the unprotected historic structures are in a serious state of disrepair, due to lack of maintenance and vandalism. Temples lie abandoned, with no ownership and soon will be built upon with no evidence left of the rich architectural history and serene religious landscape that once mesmerized the visitors.

The town is also famous for its Bishnupur music gharana from the 18th century, with history dating back to 13th- 14th century. Malla kings were devotees of Lord Vishnu and patrons of music. It is also suggested that the name 'Bishnupur' is derived from the gharana. Many of the historic crafts continue to thrive in the town, though the lineage is struggling to breathe and flourish.

Other than terracotta, crafts associated with Bishnupur are silk and tussar weaving, conch shell craft, brass metal works, making of dasavatara cards, lantern making, pattachitra paintings etc. You may still find people in old paras or residential neighbourhoods of Bishnupur, trying to make ends meet and continue the family tradition of practicing these crafts.



ডেভিড ম্যাককাচন

এক মন্দির প্রেমী নাস্তিক গবেষকের গল্প

শুভেন্দু দাশমুঙ্গী

বাংলা সাহিত্যের অধ্যাপক, প্রাবন্ধিক ও বাংলা অলংকরণ শিল্পের বিশিষ্ট গবেষক। রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলীর সম্পাদনা করছেন।



তিনি সাহেব। এই দেশে জন্ম নয়। পড়াশোনাও বিলেতে। পড়া শেষ করে পড়াতে শুরু করেন বিদেশে। তবে বাংলায় তিনি আসেন তাঁর যৌবনের দিনে। সংযুক্ত আর সম্পৃক্ত হন এই বাংলার সঙ্গে। আর ফেরেননি দেশে সেই সাহেব। সাহেব--- কিন্তু তাঁর পরনের পোশাকটি অত্যন্ত সাধারণ এবং ততোধিক মলিন। দিন নেই, রাত্রি নেই, গ্রীষ্ম বর্ষা শীতের বোধ? সেও বুঝি নেই। পায়ে হেঁটে বা কোনো স্থানীয় উৎসাহী মানুষকে বন্ধু জুটিয়ে সাইকেলে চেপে তিনি মাইলের পর মাইল পথ ভেঙে চলেন। কোথাও কারো কাছে যে কোনো রকম দেউলের খবর একবার পেলে হল, তাঁকে আর আটকানো যাবে না, তিনি পাড়ি দেবেন সেই সাকিনের সন্ধানে। কতখানি নিবিড় ছিল তার দেখা। বিভিন্ন সময়ে যারা তাঁর সফরসঙ্গী ছিলেন, তাঁরা সকলেই তাঁদের লেখায় জানিয়েছিলেন সে কথা। তিনি মন্দিরের আকার দেখতেন, সেই আকার মাফিক বাংলার মাটিতে কত রকমের মন্দিরের শ্রেণিবিন্যাস করা যায়, তার ধরন খুঁজতেন। মন দিয়ে দেখতেন, মন্দিরের গায়ে আঁকা আর বানানো বিচিত্র সব মূর্তিগুলি। বুঝতে চাইতেন তাদের নন্দনতত্ত্ব।

তাঁর সম্পর্কে, তাঁর অকালমৃত্যুর পর, বঙ্গীয় লোকসংস্কৃতির এক বিশিষ্ট গবেষক, মানিকলাল সিংহ বলেছিলেন, তিনি তাঁর মধ্যে জর্জ গ্রিয়ার্সন, হ্যারি জনসন-এর মতো ভারত-অনুসন্ধানী মনকে লক্ষ করেছিলেন, সন্ধানের নেশায় যে মানুষ পাগল হতে পারেন, ইনি যেন সেই গোত্রের মানুষ। তাঁর সঙ্গে প্রথম পরিচয়ের কথা মনে করে শ্রী সিংহ বলেছিলেন: ‘ওঁকে প্রথম দেখেই স্তব্ধ হলাম। দেখলাম, লম্বা পাকানো শরীর, মুখ চোখ বসা বসা, সাহেব হলেও সাহেবের মতো সুডৌল দেহ নয়। সাহেবের মতো রংয়ের জৌলুস নেই। আমাদের দেশে দীর্ঘদিন থেকে আর প্রচণ্ড রোদে ঘুরে ঘুরে রংটা হয়ে গেছে পোড়া পোড়া তামাটে।’

সুদূর ইংলন্ডে জন্ম ১৯৩০ সালে, কিন্তু মাত্র ২৭ বছর বয়সে, সেই যে একবার এই বাংলার মাটিতে পা রাখলেন, আক্ষরিক অর্থেই ভালোবেসে ফেললেন এই বাংলার মন্দির স্থাপত্যকে। ভালোবেসে ফেললেন, এই বাংলার লোকশিল্পকে, বিশেষ করে, বাংলার পটচিত্রকে। ভালো তো কম-বেশি আমরাও বাসি। আরো অনেকেই বাসেন নিশ্চয়। কিন্তু ভালোবেসে কী করি আমরা? হয় তা দিয়ে ঘরের কোণ সাজাই, বড়োজোর তা নিয়ে একটু আধটু বই টাই পড়ি জোগাড় করে, ইদানীং তো আরো সোজা অপরিষ্কৃত ভাবে হাতমুঠোর সার্চ ইঞ্জিনে ফোক আর্ট অফ বেঙ্গল সার্চ দিই। তিনি শুধু পড়েননি, তিনি নিজে ছুটে গেছেন প্রত্যন্ত বাংলার এপার ওপার। এপার আর ওপার দুপারের মন্দিরশিল্প নিয়ে বিরাট গবেষণা শুরু করে দিয়েছিলেন। দীর্ঘ এগারো বছর পড়ে ছিলেন তা নিয়ে। যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ইংরাজি বিভাগে পড়াবার পাশাপাশি খুঁজে চলেছেন মন্দিরের মানচিত্রে বাংলার মনচিত্রকে।

বাংলার মন্দির নিয়ে সন্ধান তাঁর আগেও হয়েছিল। কিন্তু তাঁর সন্ধানে নতুনত্বটা কোথায় ছিল? তাঁর আগে আমাদের প্রণয় শিল্পতাত্ত্বিকরা প্রাচীন বাংলার মন্দিরের খোঁজ করছিলেন। তিনি আদি মধ্যযুগীয় থেকে অন্ত্য মধ্যযুগীয়, এমনকি ঔপনিবেশিক কালপর্বেও যে সব মন্দির তৈরি হচ্ছিল, তার খোঁজটাও নিচ্ছিলেন। বুঝতে চাইছিলেন, আগের ধারা কতটা অনুসৃত হচ্ছে আর কোথায়ই বা তা বিবর্তিত হচ্ছে এবং বিবর্তনের

পথটাই বা কী? মন্দিরের আকারের সঙ্গে মন্দিরের গায়ে বানানো মূর্তির ব্যাখ্যাও তাঁর সন্ধানের বিষয়। হাতে ক্যামেরা আর ক্যামেরায় তোলা অজস্র ছবি, তাঁর সংগ্রহে। যাঁরা তাঁকে কাছ থেকে দেখেছে, তাঁদের স্মৃতিচারণে জানা যায়, তাঁর ঘর ভরা থাকত ওইসব ছবির সুন্দর ক্যাটালগিং করা খামে। এতেই তাঁর বিপুল খরচ। এই বিষয়ে সারা পৃথিবী থেকে দরকারি বইটি আনাচ্ছেন খবর পাওয়ামাত্র। পুরোনো বইটি পেলে অতি সুন্দরভাবে বাঁধাই করছেন তিনি নিজের হাতে। শোনা যায়, জুশ বাঁধাইতে তাঁর দক্ষতা আচ্ছা আচ্ছা বাঁধাইদার জেলদপারকে লজ্জা দিত। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে যা পাচ্ছেন, তা এতেই খরচ হয়ে যাচ্ছে জলের মতো। সঙ্গে আছে, বাংলার এমাথা ও মাথা ঘোরার খরচ। আছে নিজেই উদ্যোগ করে সাধ্যমতো পটশিল্পীদের একটা সাহায্য করার ব্রত। ফলে, বই বাঁধাইয়ের হাতে ভালো রিফুর কাজটিও তো জানা তাঁর। সেই বিদ্যা দিয়ে নিজের গেঞ্জি আর জামা ছিঁড়ে গেলে, তার মেরামতি করে, সেটাই আরো কয়েক মাস পরবার মতো অনাড়ম্বর আয়োজন।

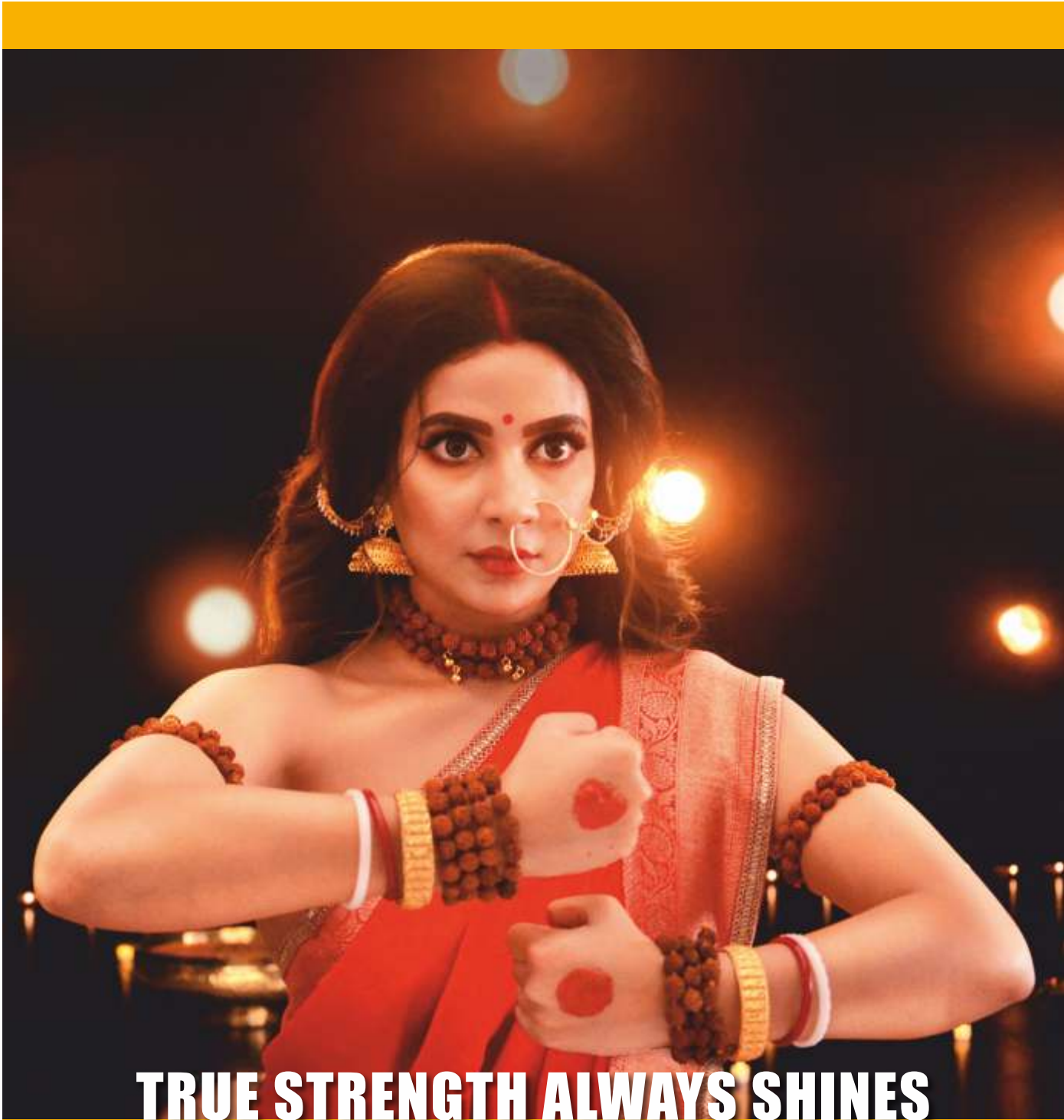
বাংলার বিষ্ণুপুরের মন্দির থেকেই তাঁর আগ্রহের সূচনা। ক্রমশ বিষ্ণুপুর পেরিয়ে তা পৌঁছেছে রাঢ় বাংলার অন্য প্রান্তে, রাঢ় পেরিয়ে বরেন্দ্রী আর বঙ্গালি ভূমিতেও চলেছে তাঁর অনুসন্ধান। সেই অনুসন্ধান সময় নষ্ট করা বলে কিছু ছিল না এই মানুষটির কাছে। খোঁজ পেলেই কেন তিনি ছুট দেন, তার কারণটি সম্পর্কে তিনি ঘনিষ্ঠ মহলে অদ্ভুত একটা কথা বলতেন তিনি। এক বাঙালি গবেষক তাঁকে তাঁর কাজের আশ্চর্য গতি আর বিপুল পরিমাণ দেখে বলেছিলেন, 'ডেভিড, তোমাকে আমি হিংসাকরতে শুরু করেছি।' এর উত্তরে তিনি যেটা বলেছিলেন, তার মধ্যে বিষাদের সুর অলক্ষণীয় নয়। বলেছিলেন, 'তোমার সামনে সমস্ত জীবন পড়ে রয়েছে। এখানকার সবকিছুই তুমি চাইলে দেখতে পাবে। কিন্তু আমার এখানে থাকা অনিশ্চিত। একানকার রাজনীতি কখন কোনদিকে মোড় নেবে বলা যায় না। যে কোনো সময়ে ভারতবর্ষ কমনওয়েলথ-এর সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক ছেদ করতে পারে। তখন আমাকে এ দেশ ছেড়ে চলে যেতে হবে। তাই অনিশ্চিত ভবিষ্যতের কথা ভেবে সামান্যতম সময়ও নষ্ট না করে মন্দির সংক্রান্ত তথ্য সংগ্রহের কাজ শেষ করতে হচ্ছে।' অনেকের স্মৃতিচারণেই শোনা যায়, সাহেবের ভাঙা ভাঙা গলায় কথা বলার একটা লজ্জাই ছিল, 'সোমোয় নষ্টে চোলবে না, কাজ কত্তে হবে।' আরেক বিশ্রুত বঙ্গীয় লোক-গবেষক অমিয়কুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় তাঁর প্রয়াণলেখতে বলেছিলেন, 'টোরাকোটা মন্দিরের প্রতি তার সুগভীর আগ্রহ, কখনো কখনো তাকে পাগলামি বলেও মনে হয়েছে, দেখে একদা তাকে বলেছিলাম--- তোমার কবরের ওপর আমরা একটা ছোট্ট টোরাকোটা মন্দির বানিয়ে দেবো। নট এ ব্যাড আইডিয়া--- বলেছিল ডেভিড।'

তিনি টোরাকোটা মন্দির পর্যবেক্ষণ করেছেন, মন্দিরের রক্ষণাবেক্ষণের জন্য উদ্যোগ নিয়েছেন, উদ্বিগ্ন হয়েছেন একের পর এক রং করে ফেলে সুন্দর করে তোলার অবৈজ্ঞানিক ও কুরুচিকর উদ্যোগ দেখে। সাধ্যমতো তার প্রতিবাদও করেছেন। তিনি ঘনিষ্ঠ বন্ধু মহলে আড়বাঁশি বাজাতেন, পাগলের মতো ভালোবাসতেন বাংলার লোকসংগীত আর ক্ষুদ্র হতেন লোকগানের কৃত্রিম নগরায়ণ লক্ষ করে। শোনা যায়,তাকে তিনি পরিহাস করে বলতেন, 'বালিগঞ্জিয়ান লোকসংগীত'!

আনখশির তিনি এমন এক মানুষ, যাঁকে বাদ দিয়ে উত্তরকালের বাংলার মন্দির-বিষয়ক, বাংলার পটচিত্র বিষয়ক কোনো গবেষণাই আর সম্ভব হবে না। বাংলার শিল্পের প্রতি ভালোবাসা থেকে তিনি বাংলার শিল্পীদের প্রতি দায়িত্বপালনেও অগ্রণী ভূমিকা নিয়েছেন। এমন এক ভারতবন্ধু মন্দিরপ্রেমী সাহেব, নাস্তিক ছিলেন। তাঁর নাস্তিকতা কোথাও বাধা হয়নি, তাঁর মন্দির গবেষণার কাজে।

আজ ভারত-ইতিহাসের এক সংক্রান্তি লগ্নে দাঁড়িয়ে বড়ো বেশি মনে পড়ে এই ধরনের ভারতপ্রেমী এক গবেষকের কথা--- ইনি আমাদের অনেকের চেয়ে অনেক বেশি ভালোবেসেছিলেন ভারতবর্ষকে। তিনি স্বল্পায়ু, মাত্র বিয়াল্লিশ বছর বয়সে তাঁর অকালপ্রয়াণ। বাংলার মন্দির নিয়ে পৃথিবীর যে প্রান্তে যে-ই কাজ করবেন, তাঁর হাত ধরে গবেষণার পথ আজও দেখাচ্ছেন তিনি তাঁর লেখাপত্রের মধ্যে। অন্যদিকে তাঁর এই অনাড়ম্বর জীবনচর্যায় তিনি উত্তরকালের সমস্ত গবেষকের কাছে এক আশ্চর্য জীবনশিল্পী, তিনি প্রেরণা দিতে পারেন, তিনি সঙ্গে থাকেন আমাদের সমস্ত কাজে অন্তর্লীন হয়ে। প্রণাম ডেভিড ম্যাককাজন।





TRUE STRENGTH ALWAYS SHINES

*With best
compliments from*





Therapeutic Art Himshika Palit T6- 4402

Trrriiiiiinnnggg! The alarm goes off and it's the start of another busy day. Before you know it, the morning turns into evening and it's time to retire for the night and another busy day is far behind. You may love the adrenaline rush of this life on the go but it is important to stop and take a break sometimes. Soothe the body, but more importantly, heal the mind and soul.

Let art do the work. Let art rejuvenate you.

As an expressive medium, art can be used to help you communicate, overcome stress, and explore different aspects of your own personality. So make some room for art in your life. Choose the medium you always wanted to explore. Or go back to the one you may have once tried. Express yourself on any canvas and watch life become more meaningful as you unleash the creative streak in you. Dig into your inner experience and express it on a canvas. When you create art you focus on your own perceptions, your imagination and feelings. It can help to connect better with others too. Make art your meditation, your mantra and see the change it brings in you.

”

Therapeutic art.
Because it is important
to put yourself
first sometimes.

Therapeutic art.
Because.
Simply because.



The intricacy of terracotta art captured in our pratima



Terracotta bells on the facade



UJC in terracotta



Fascination with creation



Puja Pandal 2019



Midnight alpona

The Durga Puja Pandal in Urbana always has a unique feature - most of the decor is done by the residents of Urbana themselves.

It is a collaborative effort, led by the Puja Pandal Committee. Residents get together a few weeks ahead of the Puja and put together the decorations for the upcoming pandal.

Be it the 'shora painting' 2 years ago or the paper folding and other crafts using recycled material last year - each time residents have infused a warmth into the decorations by creating them together as a community.

This year it was canvas paintings using a colour scheme and thematic representation of the art made popular by Jamini Roy. A tribute to the terracotta art of Bishnupur.

A sense of community woven together by the creative spirit - a celebration of art that is uplifting for all.

The result - a beautiful and unique home for Durga Maa when she visits Urbana.





The canvases adorn the pandal walls

Acknowledgements

Pratima, Pandal & Decoration

Himsikha Palit (*Advisor*) | Jayati Biswas (*Convenor*)
Amrita Maitra (*Co-Convenor*)

Members

Utpal Biswas | Sourav Biswas | Debdatta Nandwani | Sarah Sharadkanya Das
Sweta Pimparkar | Ashis Jhunjunwala | Tiash Sinha | Rajeshwari Chidambaram
Sourav Roy | Upali Biswas | Meghna Chandra | Sonia Kalra

Collateral Design

Aninda Palit (*Convenor*) | Debasish Banerjee (*Co-Convenor*)

Members

Arumita Nandy | Nivedita Agarwal | Sourav Biswas

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from



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The Pulwama Warrior

Anirban Rudra (T4-2504)

Somewhere in the valley there was a noise
Playing near the beach was a mother with her boys
She couldn't hear a sound from the lands so far
Her eyes sometimes glancing at the door ajar

She had a hope, a covet, a desire, an inkling
The warrior of her home would come in walking
There's wasn't a soul to whom she could bear hers
Her mate had left her alone to defend the borders

There was no one who came through the door
Another day had passed in a wait forlorn
She was his wife but felt like a mistress
He had chosen over her, his motherlands distress
The word went 'round and reached her ear
The devil had unleashed a strike severe
Her body froze, her limbs went shaking
In disbelief she stood, not shedding a tear

A group of fanatics had blasted a convoy
'twas so strong, it ripped through the alloy
She called so hard, all lines were jammed
She kept trying, the world be damned.

Sometime after there was a ring on the phone
She picked it up and her mind was blown
She couldn't believe a word she heard...
...her warrior it was and he was unhurt.

घड़ी बंद पड़ी है

Amita Sarkar (T3/3101)

वक्त को हाथ में बाँध कर दौड़ती दुनिया
हमारी घड़ी तो कब से बंद पड़ी है

वक्त थमता नहीं, और दौड़ती है ख्वाहिशें तेरी
रुक के एक अब्र-मज़ा पी ले, ये है तदबीर मेरी

दौड़ते दौड़ते थक कर रुके, और साँस बाँधी थी
मुडके देखा तो वही थे, जहाँ से शुरुआत की थी

दौड़ना भी मगर आसान नहीं, ये एक हुनर है दोस्त
ज़िंदगी की दौड़ जीतो, पर खो ना देना होश

दूसरों का हाथ थामो, बस बाँधों उनका हौसला
खुद ही कर लेंगे सभी, अपनी ज़िंदगी का फैसला

बस याद रखना, ज़िंदगी दौड़ का मैदान नहीं है
इन्सनियत का दरिया है, जंग का सामान नहीं है

वक्त को हाथ में बाँध कर दौड़ती दुनिया
हमारी घड़ी तो कब से बंद पड़ी है



A Haunted House

Aarav Birla (T7/505) 9 yrs

On a Sunday morning, we were playing cricket on the field. Rahul was batting and Shrey was bowling. The score was 56 for 2 in 4.2 overs. Rahul was a hard hitter. On the next ball, Rahul hit a ginormous six. However, it broke the glass window of an old and abandoned 100 year old bungalow. This house was surrounded by poky bushes and the walls were covered with creepers. Since no one lived there, we were relieved that we would not get into trouble. I also managed to convince my team to enter the house boldly and get the ball.

As we took our first step, the floors creaked noisily. We were getting sweaty with fear. After all, the rumours were that this was a haunted house. Soon we heard a sound. We jumped in fright! Can you guess what we saw? Let me give you a hint in the form of a riddle:
They are white twigs

Found inside you!

They can break easily,

If you slip and fall on god!

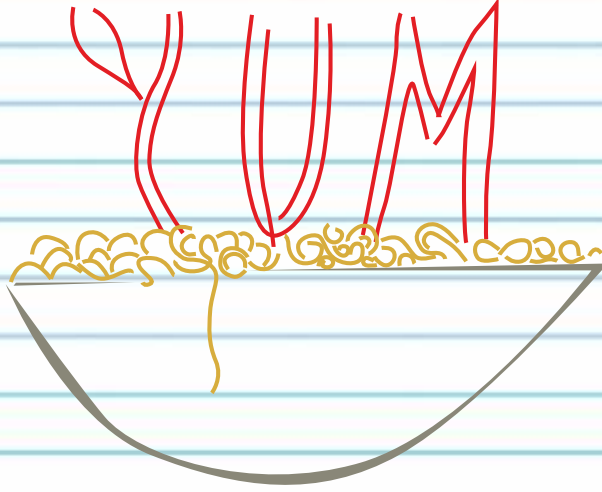
You guessed it right- it was a SKELETON!
The entire team ran out of the house with the loudest screams.
I don't know what happened to our ball but I was glad we all reached our homes safe and sound.



Noodles

Adira Singh (T1/2404)

9
yrs



Slip slop the noodles keep falling

The noodle was calling

Soon the bowl was getting empty

But still there was plenty

Umm...that was delicious

However, the noodles became suspicious

I told them to pack some

But they got a drum!

Ohhh! What a pity!

I just saw a kitty

Uh oh! All the noodles just fell

So I guess I could just ring the bell

I got a fresh batch

That was a good catch

My tummy was finally delighted

And so goes this poem recited!

Ishita Bhandari (T7-2106)

13
yrs

ज़िंदगी

हम सब ने सुना ज़िंदगी एक सुंदर कविता है

पर इस कविता का स्वनाकार कौन ?

हम सब ने सुना ज़िंदगी एक ही बार मिलती है, खुलकर
जियो पर कैसे ?

या तो ऑफिस का काम या परिवार की शान।

मुश्किल है ज़िंदगी मजे में काटना

पर कठिन परिस्थिति में कभी गतत इंसान को मत डाटना

जब ज़िंदगी धक्का मारे तो गिरना आवश्यक है,

पर गिरने के बाद उठना उससे भी ज्यादा अनिवार्य।

मरना होता तो पैदा होने के पहले ही मर जाते

मौत को अपने पर मत बुलाओ

ज़िंदगी है, थोड़ा तो ऊपर नीचे होगा ही,

इतना ज्यादा सोची मत,

क्वाब में मत आना, बस थोड़ा मुस्कराना।

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from
Mr G.N.A.Mahalingam
Greenchillis

13D Subodh Park, Roy Nagar
Bansdroni, Kolkata-700070

Burning Earth

Vipanshi Chhaochharia (T1/2004)

12
7/5

The one who is dying is Mother Earth
But we care more about dirt
People are just cutting trees
And wasting paper as if it is free

We have taken her for granted for years
By polluting her and not caring of what
happens if she disappears
We forgot she has given us life
Still we are burning her alive

The polar ice caps are in liquid state
Still no one will understand till it is very late
The temperature has considerably risen
We are making her feel as if she is in prison

Killing her is not right
To save her we all should fight
She is our mother after all
She taught us how to work and crawl

ভোরবেলায় শীতল হাওয়ায়
'সুপ্রভাত জানিয়ে বলল,
আমার জন্য কিছু লিখবে?

অবাক হয়ে তাকিয়ে রইলাম!
বুকে জড়িয়ে, ওর চোখের ভাবনাকে
মুচকি হেসে দিলাম জবাব-
কেন লিখব না?
তুমিই তো দিয়েছ আমার হৃদয় ভরিয়ে
চলো! তোমার সাথে কিছু গল্প করি ...
বলো তোমার স্মৃতিভরা যত ইতিহাস!!!

উত্তর পেলাম,

"তুমি তো সবই জানো ...
আমার অতীতের যত দুঃখের শ্বাস
দৈন্যতার মাঝে কাটিয়েছি অনেকটা সময়!
তাই চেয়েছি পেতে, কিছু ভালো সাফল্যের বিজয়া
তুমি এলে আমার কাছে সুগন্ধ নিয়ে -
নতুন পথের রেখা, শুরু হল আমার জীবনে!
এই নতুন জীবনের প্রাপ্তি, তুমিই তার চাবিকাঠি-
তুমিই আমার বন্ধু, তুমিই আমার ভ্রমণের সাথী!"

ছোট অনুরোধ

গৌরী ভাওয়াল (T1 - 2503)

বুক ভরে গেল!
এই মধুর আলাপনে জবাব দিলাম ---
আমিও পেয়েছি পৃথিবীর সুখা তোমারই সঙ্গেপনে!
এই শ্যামলা মেয়েকে
তুমিই দিয়েছো নতুন চলার ছন্দ ...
আবেগে ভরিয়ে দিয়েছ; যে যা বলুক ভালমন্দ
আমাদের জীবন পূর্ণ হয়েছে নতুন সুরে,
শুধু চলে যেও না ... আমায় রেখে দূরে!

সব ভুলতে চাই, কী পেলাম না পেলাম-
শুধু স্মৃতির মাঝে ভরা থাকুক, কে কী দিলাম
আমার এই রাঙামাটির পথে-
জড়িয়ে আছে কত কথা স্বপ্নের সাথে!
আমার এই গান, কবিতা, প্রেরণা তুমিই কবি-
তাই ধরে রাখতে চাই, হৃদয় মাঝারে তারই ছবি!
মেঘ-রোদ্দুর-ঝড়ের সাথে
উত্থান-পতনের কত গল্প লেখা আছে!
শুধু অনুভবের পৃষ্ঠায় যাকে রেখেছি ধরে
প্রণমি তোমায় আমার প্রাণ দেবতারে ...

এই ভালবাসা বন্দী মায়াজালে
সবকিছু হারিয়ে, যেতে হবে চলে!
শুধু থাকবে চিত্রপটে অনুভূতির ভাষা---
জানবে সবাই এরই নাম 'সৃষ্টির ভালবাসা' !!!



My Trip to New York

Anoushka Saha (T1/3504)

11

Like every year, we were planning the destination for this year's summer vacation. After a short discussion, we unanimously agreed on ... guess what, The Big Apple - New York!!!! There was plenty of excitement in the room: what will we do there, which are the places for sightseeing, what will be the weather like, how long is the flight etc. And then the packing began! Yes, we were going to be off as soon as the vacation began, and no one could wait!

Finally, the day arrived and we were taking off to the city of dreams, to the city that never sleeps, to the city of sky scrapers! It was a long 24-hour travel from Kolkata-Delhi-London-New York. What struck me first is that the JFK airport in New York was buzzing with people of several origins, people with different hair colour (purple too, if you may!), and all comfortable in their own skin. That taught me something about NY - it accepts all, the way they are, no judgement.

We soon arrived at our hotel - Holiday Inn Express in Manhattan. Small, yet warm and cosy rooms and we just crashed, with all the exhaustion and jet lag. The next day was fun, we roamed around Manhattan and enjoyed the hustle-bustle of Time Square. I was overwhelmed by the large number of people gathered at the same place, so many bright lights and fanfare made every moment spent there worthwhile. We also saw the magnificent Empire State Building - that lights up in different colours at night. We window-shopped at the Fifth Avenue and collected souvenirs along the way. The next day, I made waffles for myself for breakfast in a do-it-yourself equipment in the hotel coffee shop - and you would be surprised to know that a Chinese lady taught me how to - friendly people in

New York, I must say. Then we headed out to see the Statue of Liberty. We went in a ferry and saw the Lady with the Torch and heard the remarkable stories of the people involved in erecting this symbol of freedom. We also saw the Charging Bull, a bronze sculpture on the famous Wall Street, which represents stock market optimism! Well, after that, we settled down at Juniors, a splendid restaurant offering the best cheesecake ever! The following day was the visit to the Rockefeller Centre where we went to the Top of the Rock - the observatory. It was a breath-taking 360-degree panoramic view of New York. We also walked around Central Park - the largest park I would have ever gone to - we just walked and chatted - we saw the stunning Shakespeare Garden with the most beautiful and colourful tulips, and we saw the cute Turtle Pond, and we also went to the zoo and saw red pandas, snow leopards and the grizzly bear. My mother was keen, so I sat and had my pencil portrait made too! That took a while, but it turned out to be splendid and a treasure for keeps. One of the days, we also visited the the One World Trade Centre - New York's tallest skyscraper. The site of the erstwhile Twin Towers is now converted to a picturesque memorial. It was heart-warming to see the kind of homage paid to the victims of world terrorism, and I salute the New Yorkers for that. Soon after, we went for a Broadway Show, 'The Mean Girls', it was so lively and electrifying. We loved it! And well, so the days passed with lots of walking, chatting, laughter, good food, exotic experiences, and absorbing New York's eclectic vibe!

New York is incredibly extra-ordinary. It was fascinating. If I had to go to any place in the world, it would be New York. I look forward to visiting New York again soon!



A Fascinating Cruelty-Free Circus Show

Samarth Vir Singh (T1/2404)

11

I was fortunate to attend a cruelty-free circus where only holograms were used instead of actual animals. This means that all the various types of wild life shown, were just light projections in moving 3D images. Such unique solutions will ensure that living animals are not subjected to any type of torture.

They will now be able to live in their original homes - in NATURE WITH THEIR FAMILIES! YAYYY!

So was there any live element in the show?

Yes. Acrobats, mime actors and clowns were real.

The acrobat used a trapeze to fly from one side of the hall to another, this was a daring act! I admired their courage. Next came the clowns sitting on unicycles juggling apples. They were so funny instead of being scary! Thank God for that! Finally the mimes appeared out of nowhere moving like robots, I was amazed to watch so many hard working and talented performers.

I would recommend everyone to visit a cruelty-free circus. It is the safest most ethical and best way to watch such a production. I just loved it!!!





With best
Compliments
from
SURYA STEEL



Jordan

Tina Biswas (T5/701)

This is an ode to a land I knew -
A land from long ago,
Where olive trees in abundance grew,
And gentle zephyrs blow.

The silver leaves of the poplar trees -
Against skies of dazzling blue,
Their quiver and rustle in the summer breeze -
Was music to me and you.

Quaint old cafes, tucked away in corners-
Of forgotten unknown streets,
Beckoned to the busy passersby-
To slow down their hurried feet.

A passing whisper by the summer wind-
Turns the traveller's wistful gaze-
To the cascading splendour of wisterias-
In their cloudy purple haze.

Rambling roses over crumbling walls-
Yellowed with age and clime,
Speaks to me in their mysterious ways-
Forgotten by men and time.

The Roman arches stand proudly tall-
Sentinels from a glorious past,
Their known histories and untold mysteries-
Through ravages of time they will last.

The well worn cobbled pathways-
Meandering down gentle slopes,
Past old houses and it's people-
And their tales of sorrows and hopes.

When glittering stars dot the dusky sky-
And the long drawn day is spent,
The hookah's curling lazy smoke-
Fills the air with a heady scent.

The evening dizzy and redolent-
Makes the smoker lose control,
And in the hookah's heady scent-
He seeks a balm for his restless soul.

The daisy dotted grassy slopes-
Awaken after harsh winter's spell,
Swaying pines, shedding their snow-
Lives on yet, their story to tell.

The pinecones strewn on forest floors-
Waiting to be picked in summers' time,
And filled in bowls and hung from doors-
Was a favourite past time of mine.

And if you ever travel there-
Take the little road cresting the hill,
And gaze upon that ancient land-
And you will find that time stands still.



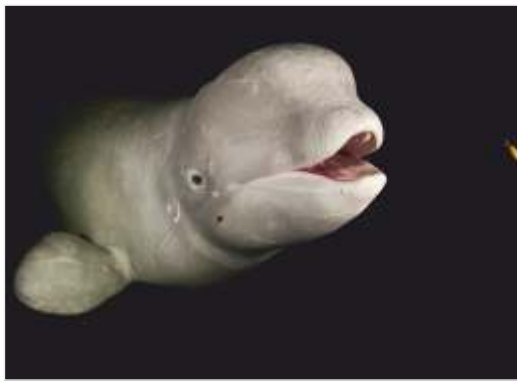
Arctic Russia

Dhritiman Mukherjee is a well known professional wildlife photographer known for his photography across India's National Parks and Bio-zones. He has been widely published and recognised both for his photography and the work he has done to promote the conservation of wild-life.

Shared here are photographs taken from an underwater exploration of the White Sea in Arctic Russia during winter when the sea is frozen and water temperature is minus 2 and outside the water it is minus 7 to minus 15.

Brrrr!





Beluga Whale Russia



Star fish in kelp under frozen white sea Arctic Russia during winter



White sea under ice



(Gorgonocephalus Arcticus). White Sea, White Karelia





Golfing Around The World

Asit Palit (T6-4402)

My love affair with golf started more than two decades ago. My passion for golf was ignited by Samir Mitra, my late brother-in-law and Somnath Ray, a very dear friend.

Both avid golfers, Samir and Somnath, coincidentally lived and worked with the National Health Service in Grimsby a picturesque town located on the Humber estuary in NE Lincolnshire. I used to accompany them whilst they played both on the undulating rolling fairways of the Grimsby Golf Club and sparkling greenery of the Tollygunge club. Watching them play, kindled my passion for golf. Once initiated into the game, there was no turning back.

I started playing golf seriously from the year 1998. It gave me the perfect break that I needed from my very stressful job of managing a company. However, the more I understood the game and its myriad intricacies the more I realized how it was so much a reflection of life itself, wherein every swing comprises of both infinite possibilities and unending prospects of failure. But, for me it offered a window into a fantastic world. . . and suddenly, it was as if I had found my purpose in life!

It has been from that time onwards my constant endeavour to try and experience golf not only on the stunning greens of the Royal Calcutta Golf Club but in many more beautiful courses around the world.

In 2002, I celebrated my retirement from an active work life with a golfing trip to Scotland. A group of four of us played for about five days on three different courses.

2002 Scotland Golf left to right self, Dr. Samir Mitra, Shourjo Sarkar & Dr. Somnath Roy



Pulling the Trolley with Golf Bag over hilly terrain was quite exhausting

The undulating Scottish terrain proved to be extremely difficult to play, especially since it entailed dragging my trolley along with my Golf-Set.

We experienced the vagaries of a typical English weather-rain, cold and high winds.

I was woefully unprepared for this and had no other alternative but to buy rain-overalls to protect myself from the biting cold showers. However, braving the bleak weather proved to be less difficult than being able to drive straight ensuring that we consistently avert the ball from slicing off towards the gorse. In Scotland, most fairways are clear and unobstructed, only intermittently dotted with a kind of thorny shrub called gorse. The problem was that if the ball veered into the rough then retrieving it was very difficult owing to those thorny bushes. Many balls therefore had to be left behind in the gorse that day!

In 2005, a group of four played near Newcastle in England for few days. We played in three courses. I remember playing at a links course near the sea. Most of us had never played in a links course before. Originally 'links' was any rough grassy area near the sea; the word being derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'hline' meaning a ridge. Links courses usually therefore have sandy soil, and mostly have long wispy grass, which makes playing difficult. Added to that, owing to its location near the sea, one must also be ready to encounter gusty and windy playing conditions. It was therefore very difficult for us to keep the ball in the fairways because of these circumstances.



Links Course near Newcastle, England in 2005



In Wales- Dr. Suven Sarkar, Self, Dr. Samir Mitra and Dr. Somnath Roy

In 2007, we visited the border counties of England & Wales for about five days as a group of four.



Tee-off in Wales and Putt in England

We played in three courses and most remarkable of them being a course which stretched across England and Wales; wherein you could literally drive from one hole in England and the ball landed in Wales.



2015 Grimsby Golf Club -
Dr. S. Mitra, Ms. S. Ghatak and Dr. S. Roy

However, my usual golfing experiences in England were mostly in Grimsby where I normally played at the Grimsby Golf Club.

My brother-in-law Samir, 92 years old, is on a golf scooter; this is and of course his indomitable spirit is what helped him play till 95 years of age. This kind of a vehicle is hardly seen here in India.

Between 1998 to 2012 I visited USA on many times and played at various courses in Virginia near Washington, D.C, Cary, North Carolina & Los Angeles. In USA I played with my nephew in Cary, North Carolina.

I saw the green being aired by three very large air circulator fans; while it was probably required but it irked me as it was difficult for me to understand how such an inordinate wastage of electricity could be justifiable.



2002 Cary, North Carolina- Dr. Shyamal Mitra, Self and Mr. Mihir, Mitra

Anyone who has played golf has experienced frustrations at oneself. Once playing with my brother-in-law Mr. Mihir Mitra in a Washington, D.C. course I was shown a golf club hanging from a tree, apparently thrown by one such frustrated golfer in utter disgust at his own abilities. It remained there hanging from the tree, as a testament to golfing foibles.

Between 2007 & 2012, I played with my friend Rathin, quite a few rounds of golf in Los Angeles. I remember a course where there was signpost showing various world renowned courses with direction & distance. I could not help taking a photo with our very own Royal Calcutta clearly marked.



2012 Los Angeles- the signpost showing RCGC

Prior to my retirement working period from 1998 to 2002 I played in many golf courses in Melbourne (Australia), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire/ Ivory Coast), Cairo (Egypt), Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket (Thailand) and Vientiane (Laos). Amongst all these courses I played in, the Thailand courses were the ones which in my opinion were unrivalled. I felt this because it was generally quite cheap to play in Thailand; except of course for the one I played in Phuket in 2016 which was quite expensive.

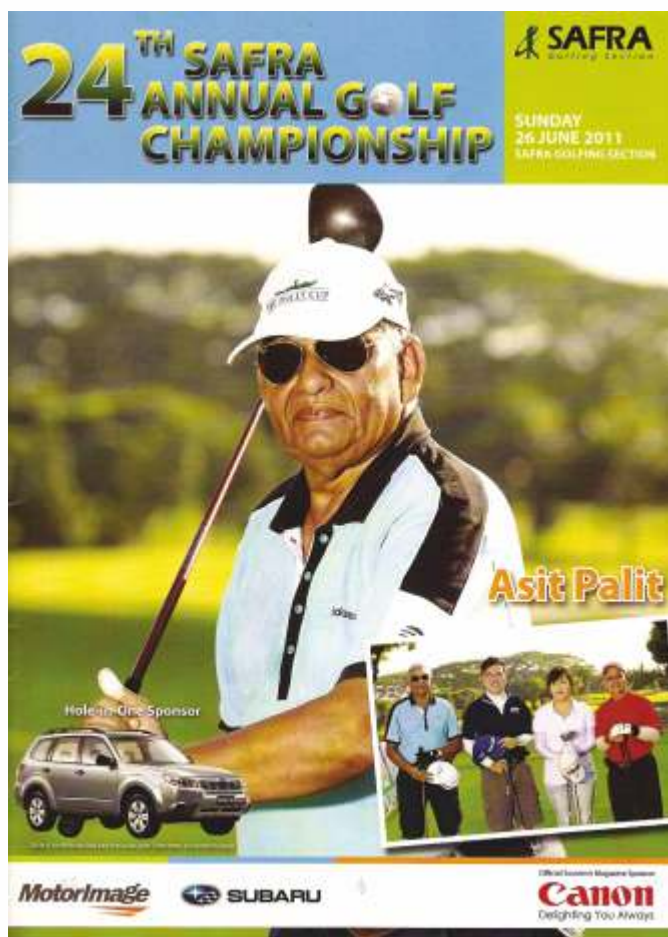
A unique experience was playing on a course in Melbourne with kangaroos freely roaming around it, exactly how we see jackals in RCGC and Tolly Clubs. I remember vividly the course in Cairo simply for its location. Mena House, Oberoi where I used to stay had a 9- hole golf course just opposite the Hotel. This course overlooks the Giza Pyramids. It was absolutely awe-inspiring playing golf while the pyramids loomed behind us.

Between 2009 and 2011 I used to be a regular visitor to Singapore, as my daughter used to stay there. In Singapore it was difficult to play often, as it was quite expensive. However, I played a few times at the Singapore Island Country Club which has reciprocity with RCGC, Marina Bay Golf Club as well as a course near Changi Airport.

In 2010 I had the wonderful experience of witnessing the HSBC Women's World Championship at Tanah Mera Golf Course in Singapore. It was a great experience to see in action world renowned women's golf champions from a close range.



Singapore-HSBC Women's Golf Championship



Singapore-2011- Safra Golf Championship

In 2011, while playing in Singapore I befriended Mr. Steven Chew a Singaporean with whom I played at SAFRA in 2011.



Bintan, Indonesia-2011- with Mr. Sandip Ghatak

In that same year, while at Singapore we visited Bintan, Indonesia where it was my son-in-law Sandip Ghatak who I played with.



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia-2011-with Mr. Basav Roy Chowdhury and his friend

In 2011, I also visited Kuala Lumpur where I played on a fine course with Mr. Basav Roy Chowdhury and his friend.



Kurmitola Golf Club, Dhaka- 2012-with late Pradip Bhattacharya, Dr. S. Sarkar, Mr. Madan Taneja, Dr. S. Roy, Mr. Arup Guin, and Mr. Shyamal Sen


In 2012 we formed group of eight golfers and visited Dhaka and Chittagong in Bangladesh. We played at Kurmitola Golf Club in Dhaka and Army Golf Club Course in Chittagong. It was a wonderful experience playing at both the golf courses.

I feel I have been incredibly lucky to have played in so many places around the world and I cherish those memories of time spent with friends and family. I feel golf has helped me to connect to places near and far and have helped me to understand how similar golfers are in spite of our cultural differences.

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আমি কে?

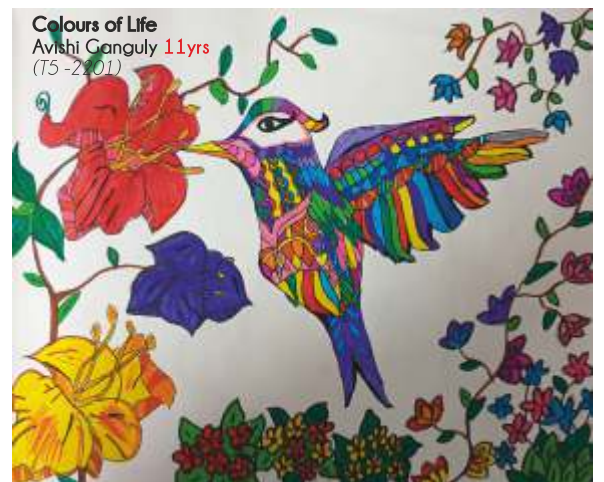
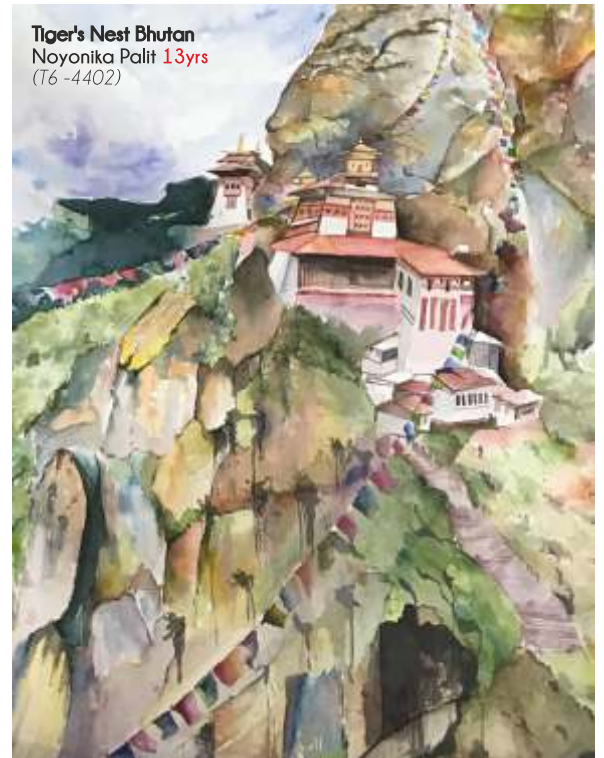
পূর্বী গুপ্ত (বরাট)

(T5-2001)

আপনারা কেউ কি আমায় চেনেন?
না না আপনারা কেউ আমায় চেনেন না।
আমার কি ভাল লাগে জানেন?
আমার ভাল লাগে বাড়, জল, জোয়ার।
ভালবাসি প্লাবন, ভালবাসি বন্যা, ভালবাসি বজ্রপাত, বিদ্যুৎ।
অবাক হচ্ছেন? সত্যি কথা, মনের কথা,
খাল বিল জলে টই টুমুর, অপূর্ব নেশা ধরায়।
জানেন, অদ্ভুত আমার প্রকৃতি,
বর্ষা শেষে গাঢ় নীল আকাশ, সাদা মেঘের ভেলা কেমন নেশা ধরায়।
আশ্চর্যের কথা কি জানেন?
লোকে আমায় হেসে বলে মা মহাশক্তি মহামায়ার মর্তে আবির্ভাবের সময় হল।
আমি আগমনীর বার্তা বয়ে নিয়ে আসি।
আমি কিন্তু আগমনীর সুর নই, তাল নই, ছন্দ নই, কথা নই,
তবু আমি মা মহামায়ার আগমনী বার্তা বয়ে আনি।
আমি মা দুর্গা কে খুব ভালবাসি।
আর এই যে মহালয়া, যেদিন মা নিজের মহা আলায় থেকে মর্তে আসেন
সে দিনের চণ্ডীপাঠ, “ যা দেবী সর্বভূতেষু শান্তিরূপেণ সংহস্তিতা”,
বিভোর হয়ে শুনি।
কিন্তু জানেন আমি ভালবাসি বিসর্জন, আমার প্রিয় দশমী তিথি,
পিতৃ তর্পণ উজ্জাপন হয় মহালয়ার ভোরে।
নবরাত্রির আরম্ভ পঞ্চমীর বোধন হয়।
ঢাকে কাঠি পড়ে।
আমি আনন্দে অস্থির হয়ে উঠি।
ষষ্টির দিন অধিবাস।
সপ্তমীর ভোরে আমারই সামনে দিয়ে নবদুর্গা স্নানে যাওয়া হয়।
নবদুর্গা, মা মহামায়ার নয়টি রূপ, নয় রকম গাছ।

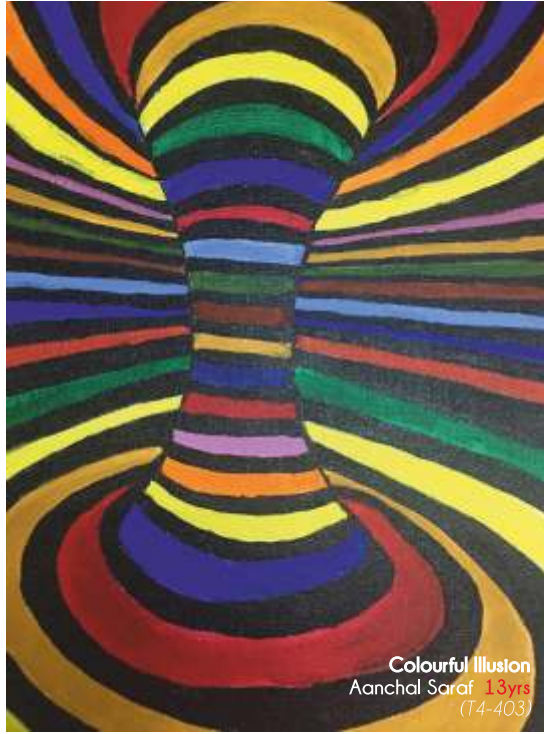
রঙা, ধান, হলুদ, কচু, বেল, বেদানা, বৈজ্ঞানিক, অশোক এবং অপরাজিতার ডাল
দিয়ে বাঁধা হয়।
ঢাকের বাজনা বাজে, কলা বউ স্নান করানো হয়।
সপ্তমীর অঞ্জলির মন্ত্র কানে আসে, “সর্বং কামাংশু দেহিমো”
মহাঅষ্টমীর ঢাক বাজে, সন্ধি পূজার আয়োজন।
১০৮ পক্ষ ১০৮ প্রদীপা মহাসমারোহ।
এর পর নবমী তিথি, আমি আনন্দে দিশেহারা হই। এই বার বিজয়া দশমী, মা
মহামায়ার বিসর্জন।
মা মেনকা যখন কাতর সুরে বলেন “নবমী নিশিগো পোহায় না”।
আমি বলে উঠি নবমী নিশিগো এবার বিদায় নাও।
দশমী তিথি, দর্পণ বিসর্জন, দধি কর্মা প্রসাদ বিতরণ।
এর পর মাকে বরণ, সিঁদুর খেলা।
বিসর্জনের ঢাক বেজে উঠল, “মা থাকবে কতক্ষণ, মা যাবে বিসর্জন”।
বিসর্জনের পথে মা এলেন আমার সামনে।
আমি চিতকার করে কেঁদে বলি “মা তুমি সকলের জননী, আমিও তোমার সন্তান।
তবে তোমার পূজায় আমার স্থান হয়না কেন?
পক্ষে ফোটা পদ্ম ফুল তোমার পূজায় লাগে।
পতিতার ঘরের মাটি না হলে তোমার মূর্তি গড়া যায়না।
শিউলি ফুল হলে দুলে নাচে, মা আসছেন, মার পূজার খালায় তার স্থান।
মা গো তোমার পূজায় আমার কোন স্থান নেই, কেন মা?
এবার বলি, আমি কে জানো না?
আমি হলাম অনাদৃতা, অবহেলিতা “কাশ ফুল”।
আমি মার আগমনের বার্তা বয়ে আনি।
আমি সুর নই, তাল নই, ছন্দ নই, কথা নই।
আমি শুধুমাত্র বার্তা নিয়ে আসি,
আমি সেই অনাদৃতা, অবহেলিতা “কাশ ফুল”।

Art Corner

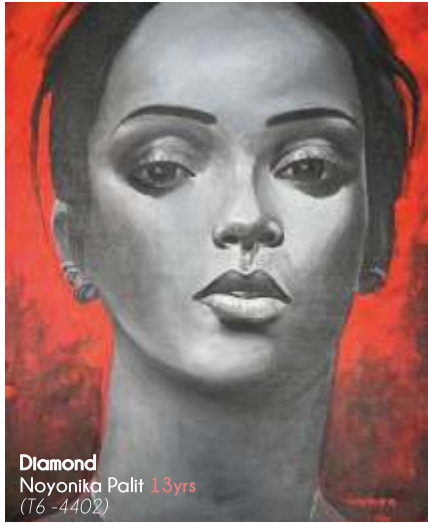




Writing Passion
Aanchal Saraf **13yrs**
(T4-403)



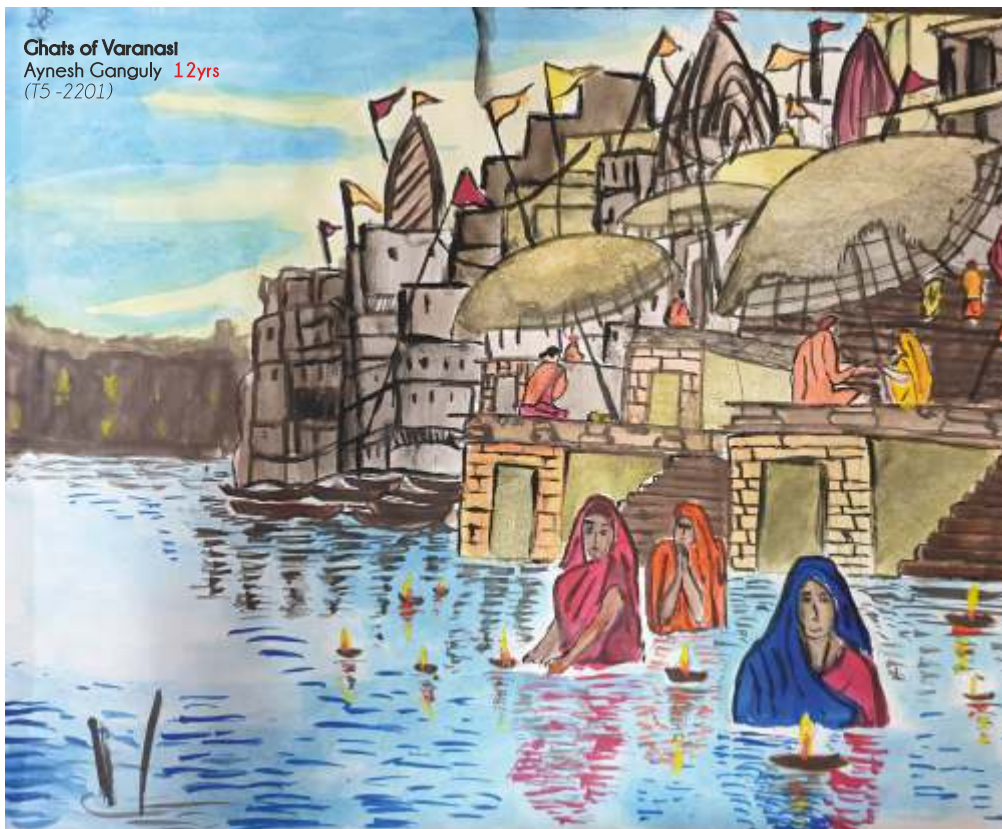
Colourful Illusion
Aanchal Saraf **13yrs**
(T4-403)



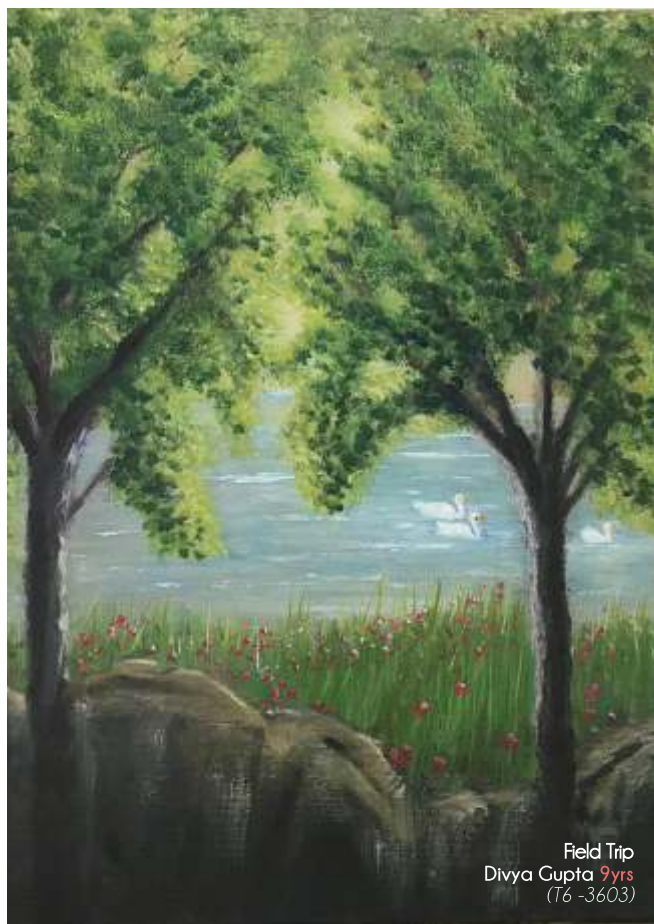
Diamond
Nayonika Palit **13yrs**
(T6-4402)



Messenger Owl
Ahan Maitra **7 yrs**
(T7-406)



Ghats of Varanasi
Aynesh Ganguly **12yrs**
(T5-2201)



Field Trip
Divya Gupta 9yrs
(T6 -3603)



Golden Beauty
Aanchal Saraf 13yrs
(T4 -403)



My Bride to be
Bua_ Divya Gupta 11yrs
(T6 -3603)



Mother's Love
Avishi Ganguly 11yrs
(T5 -2201)



My India
Shruti Agarwal 11yrs
(T1 -1604)

Art Corner



Mindscape
Aynesh Ganguly 12 yrs
(T5 -2201)



My Sweet Home
Arjun Saraf 6yrs
Arjun Saraf
TOWER-6
FLAT-107
1-F
T.H.S



Shruti Agarwal 12yrs
(T1 -1604)



Maa Durga
Yuvaan Agarwal 6yrs
(T3 -2102)



Streets of Kolkata
Aynesh Ganguly 12yrs
(T5 -2201)



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The Club Scene in Calcutta (1968 - 2019)

Pradip RoyChowdhury (T3-2201)



I restrict myself to the three Clubs in the city that I have had the privilege of being a proud member of for half a century:

Calcutta Cricket & Football Club - founded in 1792

Calcutta Rackets Club - founded in 1793

The Saturday Club - founded in 1875

A point to note is that the British formed similar Clubs across the country and in the colonies; hence, in our city, we have the Royal Calcutta Golf Club, The Calcutta Swimming Club, The Royal Calcutta Turf Club, The Tollygunge Club and The Bengal Club, amongst others.

This is my story:

After graduating in 1968, I was offered a position in a tea company which was then the largest tea company in the world. I was selected and told that there were a few do's and don'ts which I should note, as it pertained specifically to our department, i.e. - tea tasting, buying and blending. **No spicy food was permitted, there was a blanket ban on smoking, after-shave lotions and perfumed hair-oil.**

I am proud that, half a century later, I still maintain this ingrained discipline. Our Company encouraged sporting activities and I became a member of the three Clubs mentioned above.

Calcutta Rackets Club (Member since 1968)

Soon after I started my training programme, a letter was sent to the Club by my Chairman, requesting that my name be put down as part of our four-member squash team for the Merchants Cup.

After a strenuous training regimen for two weeks, I was accepted as a probationary member. The interview for Permanent Membership, however, took place on the court - one had to play with a Committee Member and if he approved of your newly acquired skills, you were accepted.

The monthly subscription was Rs.8/-, and the best fresh lime in the city would set me back Rs.1/-.

The Annual Merchants Cup tournament was an event no one wanted to miss - as a participant or a spectator.

The club had a few stalwarts and Vijai Singh, Amitabh Bachchan, Bunker Roy, Kips Atal, Adenwala, Jaideep Mukherjee, come to mind. The ladies too played the game with eagerness and often, it was difficult to secure a court booking.

At a Ladies Tournament one year, the semi-final line up as follows:

Mrs. Gray vs Mrs. White and Mrs. Brown vs Mrs. Green.

Another sport played at the Club was Sword-fencing and the metal body armour and weapons were safely cased during my time as the sport was slowly losing its popularity.

Calcutta Cricket & Football Club (member since 1969)

My Boss, a kindly Englishman, was very supportive in matters pertaining to sports and he was about to take over as Vice-President. He proposed my name for membership but was travelling when I was called for a formal interview in January, 1970. In those days, the interview involved the drinking of "a yard of Ale". The President would call for a towel, wrap it around your shoulders, look at the timer and give the nod to start. One only had to be sporting enough to make the effort to qualify and I did.



The Yard of Ale

My introduction to the General Committee was a very short affair and lasted five minutes. Soon after, in February, I received a letter requesting settlement of dues of Rs.91/-. This included the Entrance Fee, Monthly and Annual Subscription, and a Club tie.

During my first tenure as Honorary Secretary Pearson Surita, the cricket commentator and Member, MCC, was our President. He was a lovely man who was prone to taking a short nap if meetings were prolonged. The rest of us continued the meeting and sent the Minutes to him the following day for approval.

Rugby, Cricket, Tennis, Soccer, Cycle Polo, Badminton, Hockey and Darts – we played all games.

The Club has been our home away from home ever since, with me playing a small role in its affairs, as Honorary Secretary in 1973 and Committee Member on numerous occasions thereafter. I was proud to be associated with a book – 1792 – on the history of our club.

As one can well imagine, CC & FC being a sports club, we often visited upcountry Clubs in the Tea-growing districts of Assam and Dooars to play football and cricket. It was a meeting of kindred souls – all professionals and mercantile executives. On these tours, we often flew in Dakotas operated by JAMAIR. These sturdy aeroplanes hopped from one tea garden to another and often landed at the wrong garden too. The seats would be fitted after checking on the passenger load and on one of these trips, we found the pilot taking off without closing the door!

The cricket or football matches were keenly contested and villagers came from afar to support their "Burra Sahebs". Our hosts overwhelmed us with their hospitality on each occasion. I can remember a leopard running through the tea bushes in the Dooars as we were driving to the Manager's Bungalow for tea on one such trip.

A namesake of mine and a senior planter kept a pet leopard in his home. One night, he returned from the Club in a merry state and saw that his pet was outside the bungalow door, waiting for him. The pet was admonished and sent inside and the gentlemen dropped onto his bed and slept through the night. The next morning, he woke up to see that there were two leopards on his bed, both curled up and fast asleep.

The Saturday Club (Member since 1978)

The last membership I was offered, was from The Saturday Club in 1978. A Club that boasts of a Victoria Cross and a King's Cross adorning its walls and was home to meetings of the Calcutta Light Horse. This group of Britishers and their planned efforts to sink a German submarine off the coast of Goa became the subject of a film – The Sea Wolves – starring David Niven. The Calcutta Light Horse eventually donated their equipment to the Club where it proudly adorns the walls of the Main Bar to this date.

Here again, I did a stint on the Committee and still visit the gym and swimming pool every morning. The Club is very vibrant and the calendar is full of events throughout the year.

Conclusion

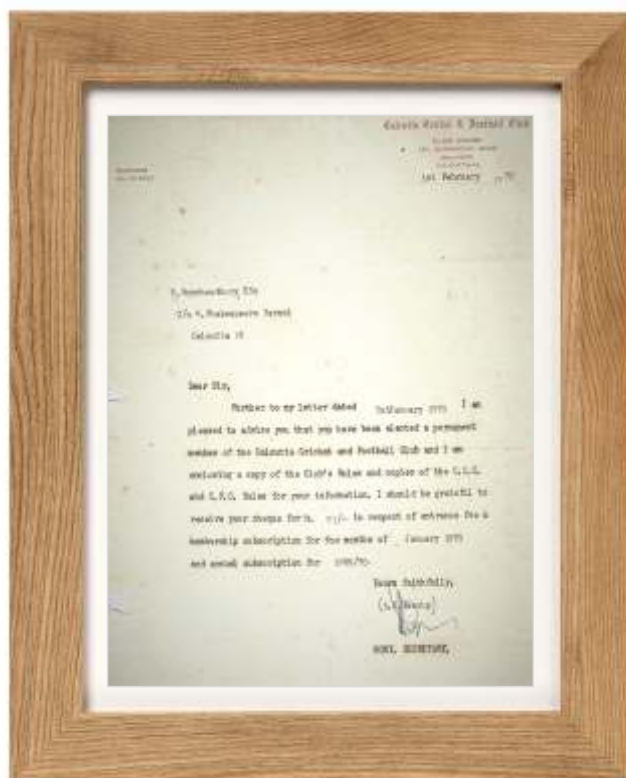
The world over, all Clubs have rules that help in maintaining discipline and decorum: dress code, adherence to timings, impeccable behaviour and respect for the Rules. Our Clubs, set up by the British, were no different.

We were honoured to be a part of this tradition – we hope to maintain it, going forward.

I cherish all these memberships because these were offered, not sought after, and the friendships made were permanent and lifelong.

We worked hard and played harder.

There are so many anecdotes which come to mind in each of these Clubs but that is for another day.



The Secret Life of all My Maashis

Stuti Paschisia (T7-1302)

We were sitting in a movie hall in Kolkata, waiting for a film to begin. Someone asked me a question and I answered in "... perfect Bengali, too perfect, really. No one would know you aren't Bengali." I smiled back at my friend and told him: "It's because of my Maashi."

Maa-shi. Mother-like. I remember every Maashi who raised me, by name, by face. I remember what their feet look like. As per the Hindu tradition of touching the feet of elders, I used to touch their feet every Diwali. I remember what their hands felt like. In slow, orange, Cartoon Network evenings, they would massage fragrant jasmine and coconut oil into my hair. Most of all, I remember their stories. In fifth grade, I gained some notoriety as the storyteller who could give R.L. Stine a run for his money. Lunches were spent with the packed roti-sabzi that Meenu Maashi being ignored. Instead, I waxed eloquent, mentally translating the Very Real Ghost Story That Happened in Meenu Maashi's Village to a group of awe-struck girls. Long after everyone had eaten, Meenu Maashi would eat her dinner and I would sit next to her, looking for the next terrifying story. It was always set in a distant village, which could speak darkness and the possibility of easy death and loss. As I spiritedly recited each story in class the next day, it never occurred to me that this haunted place was Meenu Maashi's home.

Ghost stories were a staple: whenever a new Maashi came, I would look her up and down, smile quickly and ask her the question that would determine my relationship with her: "Are there ghosts in your village?" Shyamali Maashi, who came after Meenu Maashi, merely smiled and responded in a Bengali that sounded like whistling to my eight-year-old ears. When the strange lilt of her s settled, I found that Shyamali Maashi had no ghost stories for me. "But," she whispered, she "did have stories of how her parents crossed the Bangladesh border". I understood none of it. For a life led exclusively in suburban Kolkata, where houses are still lemon yellow and magenta and peppered with coconut trees, borders made no sense to me. I imagined a line, an extension of the narrow pond by my house. Over our mutual incomprehension and the muri shared in a verandah, she had pointed to it one day and said, "It's haunted." That is how I see borders, even now.

When Kajal Maashi came, she brought her daughter along. Her daughter was like none of my previous Maashis. She wouldn't sit on the floor. Instead, she sat next to me on the table. She wouldn't listen if my mother asked her to do the dusting. She would swipe the remote from my hand and change the channel.

I hated her. I asked myself if I was discriminatory. At eleven, it was a new word, a long word, a bad word. She called me clever names I never had responses to. She sat next to me, eyeing the TV remote, as Kajal Maashi ran the kitchen.

My Mum used to say Kajal Maashi didn't walk, she floated. Her daughter had not inherited her grace. Instead, she had carefully nurtured a sharp tongue, often directed at me. I hated her. There was another word I learnt that summer. Domestic violence. A new word, a long word, a bad word. Kajal Maashi had bleeding cuts next to her eye. I saw the cut, and did not ask her anything. She nodded a silent thanks and floated into the kitchen, quiet as ever. It was not until years later that I recognised that her floating was not that of a practised dancer, but of someone who sought to minimise the impact of her presence. A ghost. If a ghost is inherently anachronistic, the right person at the wrong time, Kajal Maashi's daughter's sharp words were quiet ghosts, filled with haunted stories I would not understand.

And then there was Reena Maashi. I was fourteen when she came. Barely a year later, I left for boarding school. The six years since seem like a passing reality that others know, but which our arrested development—of hair-pulling, name-calling and quiet solidarity—does not. Every summer, back from college, I speak to her of what I have learned: how her daughter going to school is feminism. I do not speak to her of what I have learned: how her living away from home as a domestic help, my family's exploitation of hers, is not. I tell her I dream of a world where her daughter does not have to labour in someone else's house to make a living. I tell her to get me a glass of water, to give me lunch, to wash my clothes.

She tells me nothing. She tells me she hates the security guard checking her bags when she returns from the village. She tells me to write a note stopping him from it. She tells me she hates having to take the "service elevator", reserved exclusively for house helps and mechanics. She keeps her cups separate. Her hatred is not communicated through words, but through a cool, simmering anger of unfairness, the kind that is only contained in the eyes. She sometimes snaps at me, mother-like. This is how I know.

Seven years after I first knew her, I realize I do not know who



Seven years after I first knew her, I realize I do not know who Reena Maashi was outside my house. She perches on her haunches, wiping the floor. From the vantage point of my bed, I ask Reena Maashi for her full name. "Aami jaani na." She says. I pause, confused, and repeat, "You don't know?". She looks down and continues wiping the floor. "Reena... Shaikh." I repeat, "Shaikh?"

The memories of past Diwalis flood me. Reena Maashi in a sari, but beyond the threshold of the room. I clamber onto my bed to check the calendar when she goes home next, for "a puja". 22nd August. Eid.

I talk about social discrimination in class. I listen to my hijab-wearing friends in LSR, as they call my college an oppressive space. I nod to myself, sadly, pinning it down to Other Students—those who make jokes, those who look at the hijab with disdain. I am still sitting on my bed. Reena Maashi, if she were here, would still be on her haunches on the floor. The air around me grows colder. It hits me: I am the person who Reena Maashi loves, but I am also the person she is scared of.

By the time Reena Maashi came, I was too old for ghost stories. Almost ritualistically, I asked her if she knew one. She told me she did, but she couldn't tell me. Seven years hence, I had pieced together her story. Tehreena Bibi, a Muslim widow had to become a ghost, a person lost to the past, in order to serve a Marwari Hindu family.

I asked my mother if she knew, that evening of Eid. I waited with tense shoulders for her reply, knowing that I would fight for my Maashi, if I had to. Mummy told me she knew all along. She never cared. I smiled, my shoulders sagging. It was relieving, even though I knew that it was beyond any "open-mindedness". Religious identity can become conveniently superfluous to a working woman who needs a household help.

And so even if she did not care, Tehreena Bibi had to become Reena Maashi, a comfortably Hindu name. Tehreena Bibi had to forgo her mutton kababs for sabzi and milky tea served in separate cups. Tehreena Bibi had to keep her life her secret, because the cost of revealing her identity could have meant she lost her minimum-wage job. Worse, she could have been harassed by her employer for who she was. Tehreena Bibi knew only too well: her sister had gotten fired from her job, rendered unemployable to all the houses the area, after she was 'revealed' to be a Muslim.

When I was younger, in a fit of inspiration, I tried teaching Reena Maashi to write. I taught her how to sign her name first. After she had signed a few times, the pen getting firmer in her hands, she looked up to ask me how to write "T". I laughed and told her that her name has no T. I asked her to take her time, practice "Reena" instead. Six years later, as I stared at "Tehreena Bibi" on a medical prescription, I got off my bed and sat next to her on the floor. I pointed to the "T" and said, "This. This is how you write your name."



October 15th World Student's Day

Sunil Shah (T4-2306)



"When learning is purposeful creativity blossoms, when creativity blossoms, thinking emanates. When thinking emanates, knowledge is fully lit. When knowledge is lit, economy flourishes." These are famous lines by the Late Dr. Abdul Kalam. In order to honour India's former president and the missile man of India - Dr. Kalam, the UN in 2010 declared his birth day as World Student's Day. On this day, let us understand the Indian Education System.

Education in India is kept under common list indicating both Central and State governments can legislate for Education. That is how and why we have State as well as Central universities. Although jurisdictional differences exist between both.

There are various stakeholders in the education system, especially in higher education, namely: Governments, to legislate; Institutions, to impart; Teachers, to teach; Organisations, to utilise; Parents, to finance and guide; Students, to seek. On the face of it there appears to be a convergence of objectives among the various stakeholders but in reality each stakeholder has their own set of objectives which is not necessarily unidirectional. With the advent of private universities in the fray, the complexity has increased further.

One has read several reports of regulatory authorities being corrupt with the arrest of former AICTE and MCI chiefs. Hopefully this aspect will be taken care of at appropriate level in the future.

India had a legacy of great institutions like Nalanda before foreign invasions. Few years back Archaeologists found remains of 2000 years old educational institution in Karnataka dedicated to food preparation the current day equivalent of 'Master Chef'. These institutions were world renowned but in the absence of any official ranking system prevalent in those days no one can assign a numerical rank. Most of the current day institutions like IITs and IIMs are a product of Independent India and yet do not feature in top 50 rankings worldwide. In due course of time one can hope to see them in the top 50 list.

Teachers or to be more appropriate facilitators, have become more commercial than passionate. One cannot say that the breed of passionate teachers is extinct but it is close to it. Technology especially Artificial Intelligence can fill the void to some extent. Organisations employing the products of educational institutions have mixed reactions. On various platforms they have opined that barring a few most of the students coming out of educational enterprises are unemployable. A large chunk of organisational focus is on finding the talent to do the job for them. Parents by and large make the mistake of guiding their wards to the 'Desired' path. While it may not be true for everyone but exceptions only prove the rule.

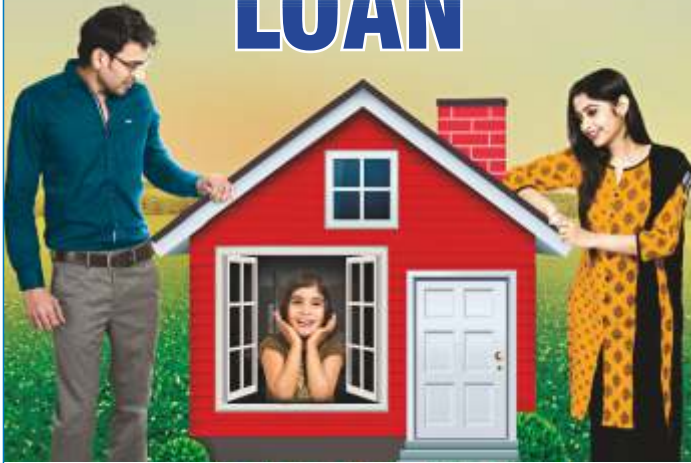
One needs to elaborate on the most important stakeholder 'student' as they are the pivot around which the entire system revolves. Moreover, being the World Student's Day let us understand the 'actionable' on the part of students.

Recalling the utterings of Dr. Kalam one needs to understand the purposeful learning. It is true that the seeds of purposeful learning should be sowed right from early schooling days but it is never too late to start. At whichever stage a student is, he/she should approach learning with a purpose. The purpose cannot be passing an exam but to derive actual conceptual understanding of a subject. At present most of the students focus on application based learning which inhibits conceptual understanding. In such an environment a student gets a degree but is ignorant about the grammar of a subject. In the dynamic scenario that one lives now the moment an application variable changes such students fail to realign the applications with new variables due to lack of conceptual base.

Even while choosing the career stream the choice is made on irrational factors ranging from peer pressure, elders desire, misguided personal success stories of role models etc. The choice should be based on personal calling searched with attitudinal and aptitude fitment. In absence of this one often ends up in a field not conducive to the self and starts rationalising the choice giving rise to stress and early decay. Creativity and thinking needs investment of time in self and an objective self-appraisal. The current lot of students are extremely intelligent and enormously talented but engaged in a rat race which leads nowhere.

Remember when one wants the credit of whatever one achieves one should be ready to take the responsibility for the outcome. As aptly said by the CEO of Apple, Tim Cook at the commencement address at Stanford University in 2019, 'your mentors will prepare you but you need to be ready!'

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Winter Skin Prep



Summer is over and winter is on its way. In preparing your skin for winter, it is important that you start prepping your skin early to help keep it healthy, hydrated & radiant this season.

Your summer skin routine will not suffice in the winter months. Your skin will need more moisture, more often. There are plenty of different ways to prep your skin for winter:

by
Bridgette Jones
(T7-2404)

TLC - This is the time to really boost outside - and inside, so sip on at least 8 large glasses of H₂O daily. Cleansing and moisturising remain the most important activities. Choose a cream based cleanser to work in harmony with dry, flaky skin. Follow up with a sweep of skin tonic / toner. Toner not only feels refreshing but can temporarily minimise enlarged pores. Choose an alcohol free formulation that won't dry out or irritate the skin. Get into the habit of using an eye cream as it will help to keep fine lines around your eyes smooth. Use daily for best results.



Lips
If you have dry, cracked lips - protect them with lip balm, preferably with an SPF 15. Reapply the balm as often as you can through the day, rather than waiting for your lips to dry out. Resist licking your lips, this only makes them drier. You can also opt for a weekly lip scrub to slough off dead skin cells.



Moisturise - As much as you can! Face, neck & cleavage (very important!) in the morning.

At bedtime, give your skin a double layer of goodness to feast on overnight. Massage in a few drops of facial oil first, then turbo-charge with night cream or an overnight sleeping mask.



Exfoliation - Exfoliating your skin once a week followed by a hydrating mask is time well spent. Done regularly, it can help skin creams to penetrate faster & more effectively, making skin instantly appear softer & smoother.



Avoid Hot Showers - Hot water feels great in the winter, but it robs skin of its natural oils. Opt for lukewarm baths or showers. Apply loads of body cream daily from chin to toe as soon as you have towel dried your body - it absorbs more easily into warm skin. Choose products with nourishing oils such as Cold Pressed Coconut Oil rather than mineral oils.

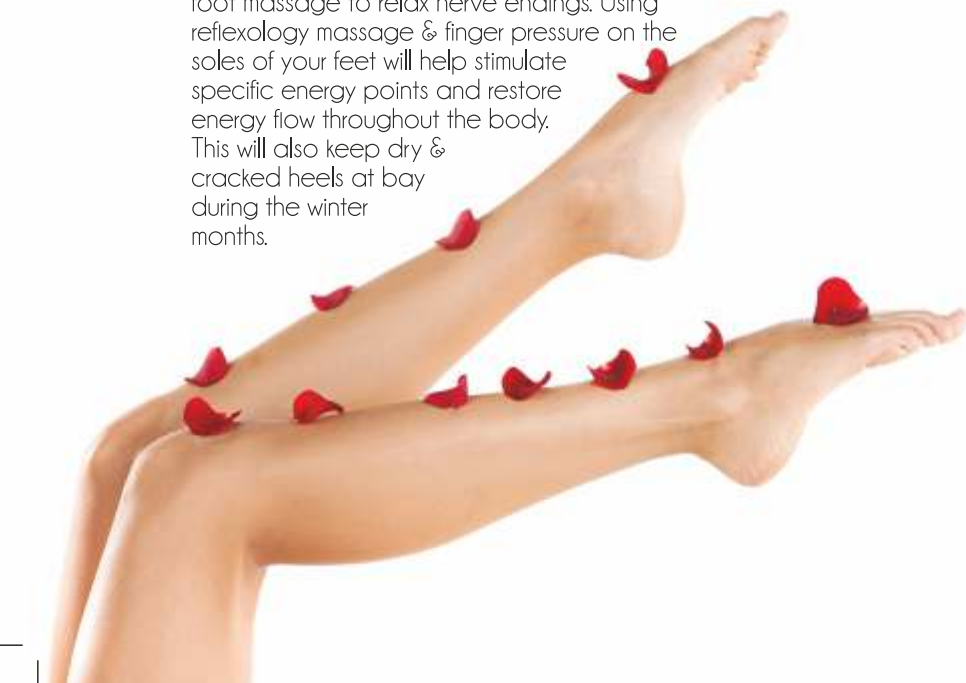


Body Brushing - Dry skin body brushing can help even out the bumpiest - looking skin, it also helps combat cellulite and helps rev up blood circulation. Before stepping into the shower, brush the soles of your feet to stimulate blood flow. Work upwards towards your heart. Working all over your body in the same upward direction. Don't brush any sensitive areas or broken skin.

Don't forget your hands - The more hand cream, the better. Whenever you apply a mask to your face, treat your hands too. If nails are flaking, apply oils directly on to your cuticles & nails. Treat yourself to manicures regularly.



Love your feet - If you look after them, they will look after you. Don't ignore them. Give your feet some attention too. Get into the habit of a little bit of daily TLC immediately after a bath or shower. Start off by applying body lotion / oil lavishly to your feet. For a few minutes give yourself a foot massage to relax nerve endings. Using reflexology massage & finger pressure on the soles of your feet will help stimulate specific energy points and restore energy flow throughout the body. This will also keep dry & cracked heels at bay during the winter months.



Eat your daily dose of antioxidant which help protect our bodies from free radicals. Put red, green & yellow fruits & vegetables, such as tomatoes, oranges, spinach, carrots & grapes in your diet or start your morning of right with an antioxidant rich smoothie.

Mix a handful of spinach, celery sticks, parsley sprigs, basil, green apple or half an avocado in a blender & enjoy.



Finally always wear SPF even during winter it can take just 20 minutes of unprotected exposure to damage the skin.



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I want a pet

Achintya Chaudhary 13 yrs
T7-2603



Mom and dad, I want a dog or a cat,
But, please, don't hand me a rat.
Or you can give me hamster,
But it should not look like a monster.

I have many more wishes,
One of them is to keep fishes.
I wanted to keep parrots,
Instead you asked me to eat carrots.

Mom and dad, this is so unfair,
You didn't allow me to keep a hare.
My pet might come from the moon,
But I want a pet soon!

I am a Water Baby

Eleena Khan (T7-903) 10 yrs

I love going to swimming classes. My training is under three professional trainers. Swimming is a sport which keeps us healthy and fit. It improves proper functioning of the lungs. Besides, exercising our joints, swimming also strengthens our muscles.

My trainers help me improve and build my stamina by practising different kinds of strokes. We perform freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke and butterfly. Moreover, what excites me most is relays and diving.

An important routine I follow is warming up before touching the water. I love practising squats, shoulder and ankle rotations. Such stretches reduce risk of any sport related injuries.

Last month, I led my team by winning two gold medals in diving with sprint. All my hard work paid off. I would like to encourage all children to learn swimming.

See you at the pool!



Lavender

Avantika Guha (T5-1701) 10 yrs

There was a little girl called Lavender who lived in the mountains on the edge of the cliff in Himachal Pradesh. She lived in a mud hut with her grandparents and was very poor. Monsoon was coming and that meant there would be lots of rain. She had seen rains on the mountains before and had enjoyed getting wet. But this time she had heard from other people in the mountains that there would be a storm and they could have landslides. Lavender was very worried because her grandmother was ill.

She had given all the care that she could give to her, but her grandmother did not become well. Grandfather had said that they would go to the plains for her treatment. Lavender was packing everything in a trunk when she heard a noise. She went out and saw a little child crying. She had fallen off the cliff and was clinging tightly to a cherry tree that had grown there. Lavender, as quick as a flash got a rope from the hut and threw it to the child. The child held it and she started to pull the rope with as much strength as she had. At last the child climbed up. The child's parents thanked Lavender for being so intelligent and prompt in saving their child's life. After a few days Lavender was given an award and lots of money from all the people who lived in the mountains. With that money she bought some medicines from the clinic to make her grandmother better. Her grandmother got much better and they all lived happily ever after.

You gotta learn how to live it up;
All you need to do is just let it out;
A little adventure can be just the ticket;
Not in distress should you shout!!



Time is with everyone

Gaurav Agarwal (T1- 1604) 15

Hello! My name is Time- a round, wooden and sturdy wall clock. The renowned GNS manufactures made me. Over there, I had so many friends who looked just like me. Everything was going perfect until I was gifted to one of the biggest businessmen Mr. Gaurav Agarwal.

I was very sad that I had to leave my friends. On the way to Mr. Agarwal's house, all I could think about was how they would treat me. When I finally reached the new house, the children took me out of the box and played with me excitedly. I was very nervous as the elders were staring at me curiously with big open eyes. They were deciding where to place me. Finally, they hung me on the drawing room wall, from where everyone could see. I was finally given the respect I deserved. I was happy.

A century passed and I witnessed innumerable weddings, birthday parties and even a great child being born. He is now grown up. He has just returned after completing his education overseas. He has bought a gift for the family. To my shock, it was a brand new digital clock which could also display the temperature and date. They took me off the wall and placed this new technological rival, where I was seated for almost 100 years. How could they do that?

I was placed on the wall of a small storage room. I became lonely as no one visited me. I prayed to God to give me a companion and soon a rat started visiting me. It would sit on

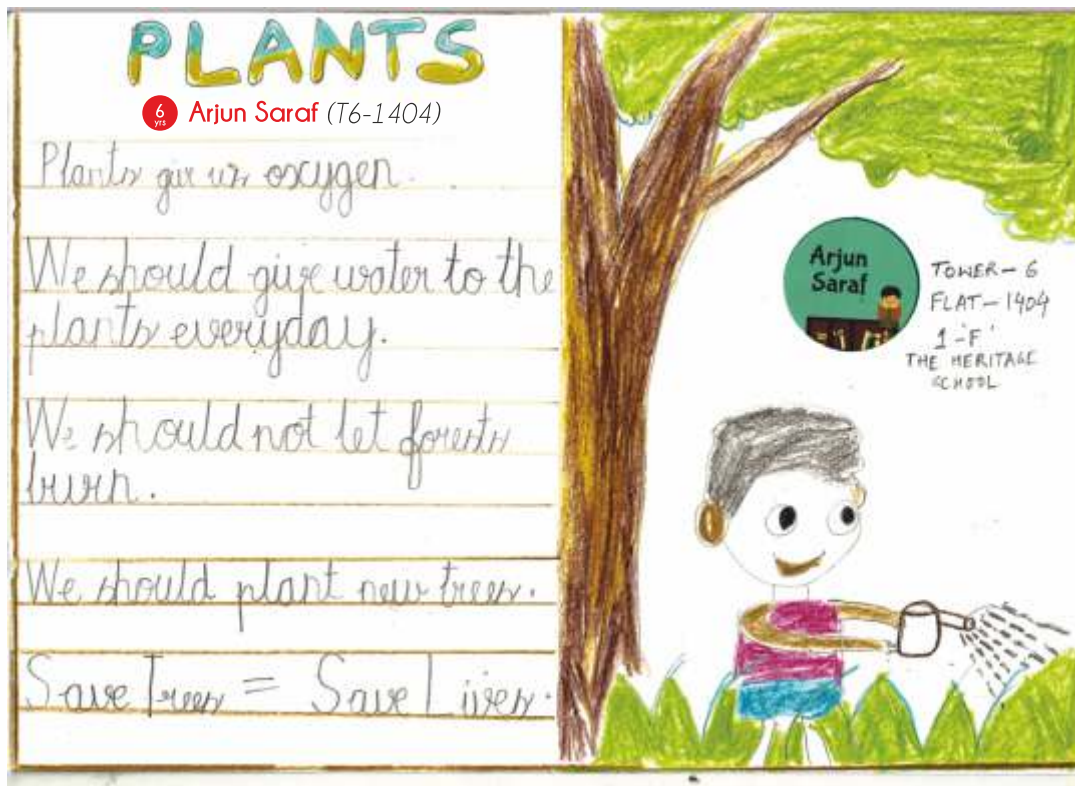


top of my head, thinking it's his home. Every time I stuck an hour and chimed loudly, it would run for its life. Then one day, a maid came to the storage room for cleaning. She looked at my dusty face and with a disgusting look, threw me in the trash. Just then, Joy, a 10-year old resident of the house, saw this and rescued me. She took me to her room and placed me on her study table.

From then on, all of Joy's friends who visited her admired and played with me. They named me "Modi". On Joy's birthday her parents placed a new designer glass-face on me which makes me look very modern.

I am at peace with Joy and happy that I could serve this family for more than a century. Time respects everyone as long as we value it as well.

How do you treat Time?



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HAPPY PATIENT

It's a new me! Things have never been so different, so wonderful for me. Thanks to Dr. Moon Chattaraj, who inspired and encouraged me to go for this incredible makeover and made my dream come true. Being into the field of performing arts, I knew how important it was to look good and presentable. Yet, my natural beauty was overshadowed by my set of buck teeth. I was quite apprehensive of any dental procedure. It was Dr. Chattaraj who boosted my confidence up and worked out together with her wonderful team of doctors, to counter any complication during the procedure and design a whole new look for me. Since 2018, people have changed their perception towards me and I am a way more confident and beautiful person now. Kudos to Dr. Moon Chattaraj and her team!

Shree Bandyopadhyay
KATHAK DANCER



BEFORE



AFTER

Helping Baby T-rex

Aaryav Deoskar (T1-1804)

6 yrs



Aryahi Sinha (T5/1402) 12 yrs

When the sun doesn't shine;
And the days are gloomy!
When you have no luck;
And you don't live it up!

When you make a mistake;
And then you doubt yourself!
That's the mistake you make;
Voice in your head is fake.

Life's like a game that you gotta play;
Make the right turns and success comes your way!
When you turn the wrong way;
Your head is full of regrets everyday.

When there is no scope;
And you have lost all your hope;
Just remind yourself that life's short
And you can't waste it like that!

You gotta learn how to live it up;
All you need to do is just let it out;
A little adventure can be just the ticket;
Not in distress should you shout!!

बुढ़ापा

मोक्षिता मानेक (T1-3001)

13 yrs

होना पड़ेगा बूढ़ा सबको एक दिन,
किस भ्रम में जी रहे हो!
बेशक आज तुम बूढ़े नहीं हो,
पर एक दिन तो हो ही जाओगे।
आपके द्वारा दिया गया,
अपने पिता को कंबल,
वापस एक दिन आपको मिलेगा।
अभी जो बड़े बूढ़े के सहारा बने हैं,
उनको भी कभी सहारों की ज़रूरत होगी।
यह तो सब संसार का नियम है,
जो बोएगा उसे ही तो फ़सल काटनी होगी।

Lady Bird

5 yrs Shreyansh Agrahari (T1-2001)



Colours

Avantika Guha (T5-1701) 10
YRS

Colours make the world look bright
 Full of happiness & dazzling light,
 You can see colours everywhere
 From the ground up the air,
 When you see the lovely green trees
 All your worries will cease,
 You can see the beautiful colourful flowers
 Even from the tallest towers,
 When we wake up from sleep every day
 The first thing we see is the sun's yellow rays,
 When you see the colours in the rainbow
 The whole city gets happy & seems to glow
 If there would have been nothing but
 black & white every where
 The world would look so sad
 & completely bare.

Mesmerizing Blue

Pranjan Bhojak (T7-1004) 12
YRS

Blue is the feeling inside me,
 Blue is the deep, dark seas
 Blue is the sky with many birds,
 Blue is the sound that may be heard
 Blue, the deep, crashing waves
 Blue is the love for whoever's brave
 Blue is happiness that may bestow,
 Blue is the wind that gently blows,
 For you Blue may be depressing for you,
 But for me, it is calm, a lovely hue.

Blue is everything something should be,
 Blue is something that drives me crazy
 Blue is everywhere around us,
 From the wide sky, till the huge bus-
 Blue is not a colour for me,
 but a feeling full of GLEE!

East or West,

BLUE is the

Best!!

Pranjan Bhojak
 T7/1004



Caught in the Rain

Vivaan (T6-1404) 8 yrs

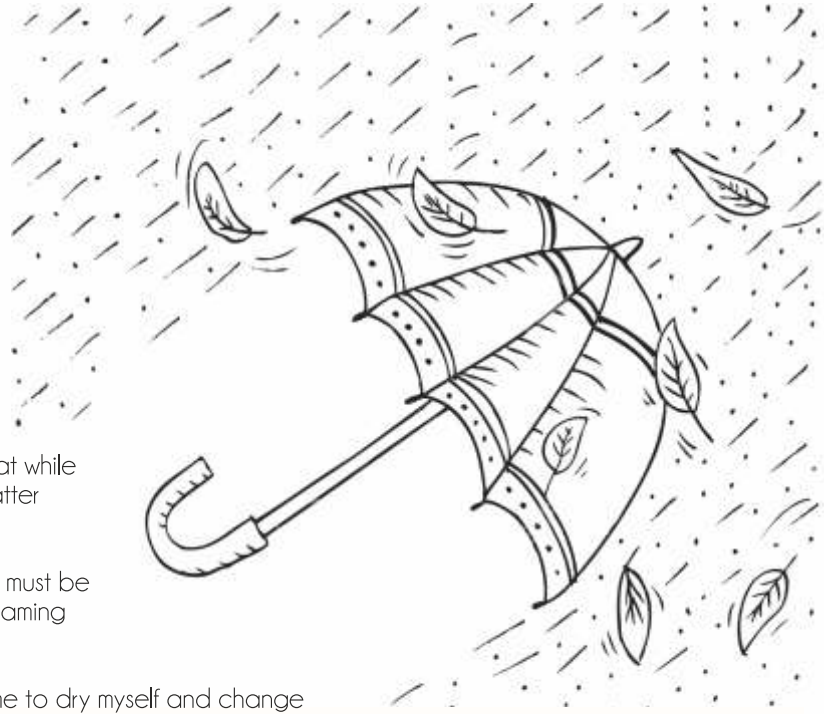
It was a bright, sunny evening and I was happily playing with my friends in the park. Suddenly, grey clouds started dancing in the sky. Then came the sound of lightning and thunder. Finally, a loud BOOM fell from the heavens. It made all of us run to the nearest shop. We were all scared.

Soon it started raining heavily. People on the streets were running here and there. Some of them were drenched wet because they had no umbrellas. Nobody knew the rain forecast it seemed. Everyone was in a hurry to go home.

I felt safe inside the store. The owner gave all of us biscuits to eat while we waited for the downpour to stop. The rain made a pitter-patter sound. There was too much water flooding the streets outside.

Finally, it stopped raining. There was an earthy smell in the rain. It must be the rain water mixing with the soil, I thought to myself. My day dreaming was broken by the loud honking of the cars on the street.

I ran home and my mom came running with a towel. She asked me to dry myself and change my clothes. Then she made hot pakoras and a delicious chocolate drink for me. I hugged and thanked her. I felt so safe and relieved to have reached home.



हिंदी है भारत की बोली

Neha Agarwal 14 yrs
(T1-1604)

दो वर्तमान का सत्य सरल,
सुंदर भविष्य के सपने दो
हिंदी है भारत की बोली
इसे अपने आप पनपने दो
यह दुखड़ों का जंजाल नहीं,
लाखों मुखड़ों की भाषा है
थी अमर शहीदों की आशा,
अब जिंदों की अभिलाषा है
मेवा है इसकी सेवा में,
नयनों को कभी न झंपने दो

हिंदी है भारत की बोली
इसे अपने आप पनपने दो
इसमें मस्ती पंजाबी की,
गुजराती की है कथा मधुर
रसधार देववाणी की है,
मंजुल बंगला की व्यथा मधुर
साहित्य फलेगा फूलेगा
पहले पीड़ा से कंपने दो

हिंदी है भारत की बोली
इसे आपने आप पनपने दो
बढ़ने दो इसे सदा आगे
हिंदी जनमत की गंगा है
यह माध्यम उस स्वाधीन देश का
जिसकी ध्वजा तिरंगा है
हों कान पवित इसी सुर में
इसमें ही हृदय तड़पने दो
हिंदी है भारत की बोली
इसे अपने आप पनपने दो ।



Rainy nights for a child

13 Achintya Chaudhary
(T7-2603)

I like the town on rainy nights
When everything around us is wet;
When all the town hosts magic lights
And people are enjoying with their pets.

When all the rain above the town
Is like a looking-glass;
And all the lights are upside-down
Below me as I pass.

In all the swimming pools are blue skies
And down the dazzling street;
A fairy city gleams and lies
In the beauty, at thy feet.

The Carnival Of Bengal

Deeksha Vijaypaul (T4-2201) 12



The heavens gleam
Do you know what this means?
A Goddess is on her way
Her name is Durga, she will protect us through night and day
Welcome her with flowers and sweets
Pray to her and touch her feet
This is the time for her veneration
It calls for a huge celebration
She fills our hearts with the purest of joy
She will bless every girl and boy
Oh! look there I can see her coming
Just look at all these people smiling
Today is indeed a very special day
Let the dhak music begin to play!
Durga puja is really my favourite festival
With emotions indescribable
Let us enjoy these splendid five days
With a smiling face!



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The Maharaj Next Door

Gautam Bhattacharya (T4-3002)

Gautam Bhattacharya is an eminent writer, author and sports journalist

Destination: Pune .Purpose : Promotion for his maiden book 'A Century Is Not Enough.'

We were about to board the flight and walk through the aero bridge. Suddenly, the small passage seemed swarmed with people; Dada a selfie please. Even some autograph hunters appeared from nowhere.

I was a little zapped. You expect them at the lounge. Outside the airport. At the coffee shop. At the check in. But of all places the aero bridge! I could not help mentioning it to my co passenger, 11 years Mr Ganguly yet nothing seems to have changed. Eleven years was a direct reference to the time he had quit playing for India. Sourav Chandidas Ganguly just grinned. Did not say anything. His Manager Partha, however turned around to say, "This happens daily."

Jump cut 1988. From a distance he looked like a bright youngster. Tall, fair complexioned and good looking. He was getting into a car parked well inside the CAB Club House. Now there was an unwritten rule those days that only two cars were permitted entry inside the compound while Bengal cricket team practiced. One would be Jagmohan Dalmiya's. The second one, invariably a red Maruti which belonged to an Arun Lal. The saviour of Bengal in that era. So I was very surprised to find a young boy all by himself taking a car outside the front gate and driving away to glory. He did not appear to be in the right age for driving a vehicle. I wondered how did he get a driver's license? How right the observation was I came to know years later. Sourav Ganguly was only 16 and yet he effortlessly drove all around Kolkata. If you thought Dadagiri began only at the time he started leading India you were far away from the truth.

His father, the late Chandi Ganguly was the Treasurer of the association. While we marvelled at his elder son Snehasish's stroke play, Chandibabu kept on mentioning to me, "Choto cheletake dekhbi. O kintu jhakabe." Loosely translated it means Look out for my younger son. He will stir things around. How prophetic were his words we understand today. I, of course did not believe him fully. By then I had spent five long years in the Maidan to understand how unreasonable parents can become while discussing their kids' career. But this proved to be an exception as senior Bengal cricketers one after another, started confiding in me about the special talent of this southpaw. From Arun Lal to Pranab Roy, from Palash Nandy to Gopal Bose all of them had advocated his case by saying it was just a matter of time before this lad turned out for India.

Then one day my then Editor, the legendary Aweek Sarkar called me to his cabin to ask a simple question, Will Sourav Ganguly become the greatest ever Bengal cricketer? I was completely taken aback. Did not know what to say as he was yet to play for Bengal and I had only seen him driving away with a car. Not witnessed a single drive of his with the cricket bat. But the bigger question was, how did the Boss come to know of his existence?

I quickly found out that his former coach at Aryans, Ashok Mustafi had discussed the youngster's batting prowess with someone Aweekbabu knew. Confirmation also came from my Bombay sources. They talked about an innings which this youngster had played for Tata Sports. During the knock, he apparently, had hit one delivery outside the Wankhede Stadium. Bombay praising Bengal cricket in those days was almost as surreal as ordering tiger's milk through Zomato.

For a cricket writer it was time to act. I quickly wrote a piece in Desh and after interviewing him went straight to the Sportsworld editorial department. The Tiger Pataudi edited magazine, in those days, was the most sought after in the cricketing circles. I used to write for them regularly but rarely covered local stories. Multiple Kolkata correspondents took care of that. The magazine had both colour as well as black and white sections. The best got covered in coloured pages. Whereas sportsmen from minor games found solace in black and white. Few days later the piece, the first ever English article on Sourav Ganguly came out with a headline the writer had given, 'Bengal's answer to Tendulkar' But strangely it appeared in the black and white section. I argued lustily, how could you relegate him to the black and white pages? He is a special talent and it is not done. It led to a debate which was concluded by one of their staffers who is now settled abroad. He said, If he indeed was Bengal's answer to Tendulkar, you should not worry. In future he will have enough colour pages on himself. Again how prophetic it turned out to be!

2019 June: I was watching Nasir Hussain speak at a cricket conclave at the Lord's cricket ground. World Cup Cricket was to begin two days later. Quite a few top stars were in attendance. Sourav wasn't there but the list resembled Who's who of world cricket. Sir Viv Richards, Wasim Akram, Sachin Tendulkar, Shane Warne, Ravichandran Ashwin, Michael Clarke. Nasir was asked to speak on New age Indian cricket. He, one of Sourav's arch rivals during the playing days began by saying

Indian cricket should be viewed in two different eras. One, pre Sourav where they were competitive but mentally fragile. The second, Post Sourav where they demanded an eye for an eye. A hand for a hand. Nasir felt Sourav taking off his shirt at the Lord's balcony was a priceless moment. As it signified complete independence from years and years of subjugation.

Sitting at the conclave one almost had goose bumps. I was reminded of his early years, driving away to glory without a proper driver's license, the four year imprisonment since making the international debut. the debut test hundred, elevation to captaincy, the sudden ouster, the period under Greg Chappell, the historic comeback, the roller coaster ride during IPL, the turbulent life with Shah Rukh. I always had a line for him which he got quite used to, Sourav, who writes your script?

Just as KBC gave a different context to Amitabh Bachchan's image across the country, Dadagiri may have done the same for Sourav. It has brought him closer to his captive audience which numbers in millions and millions. Once upon a time the Maharaj nick name had caused enough anguish for him within the four walls of the Indian dressing room. More than anything else it had allowed his detractors to relate to the name by saying he was princely in attitude, lazy, did not train enough and has difficulty to adhere to the team ethos. History has recorded that they fell by the wayside while the Ganguly brand marched all the way to immortality in Indian cricket.

But even the cricket bat and the thinking hat combined could not add this facet to his persona which life before the television camera has accomplished. From a Maharaj sitting on a distant throne he has reincarnated as the boy next door. Sorry, the Maharaj next door! Who knows fifty years later the prevailing generation might wonder, did he actually happen? Did a Bengali actually match Tendulkar in stroke making while they opened together? Did he actually lead India's cricket liberation? Or was it all imagined by scribes of that era?

This is what I had prepared to write for the Urbana Puja Souvenir. Little did one know that I would have to rework on it. As suddenly the Indian Cricket Board story came along.

The eventful night that had put Sourav Ganguly in charge of the World's most powerful cricket body, following a midnight drama, was personally very satisfying. Yet bit awkward. As in the previous months there were multiple occasions when I would profess the foolhardiness of continuing with the CAB job. I would sense that Sourav was getting bored with the somewhat mundane nature of the job and lacked in inspiration. I ought to have known that champions do not get bored and they only change gears. The CAB Presidentship, however thankless and boring it was, had actually prepared him for the job. That, it was the lull before the storm which I misread and he clearly didn't.

Today as I look back on the sum total of Ganguly's contribution to the cricketing world, I find it is not just the cricketing career. It is the career without the bat that is getting as impressive as the earlier. In nine cases out of ten, a man who has lead India in 49



test matches out of his 113 appearances and carries a cv of almost nineteen thousand international runs would sit on his fortune for the rest of his life. He will not see the need for a productive second innings as that would invite a fresh round of slogging, hard work, determination and the worst fear of getting rejected.

Why should a super successful man invite a round of rejection which can be avoided?

But SG, clearly has more appetite than the individuals we have seen and used as a sample for post retirement behaviour of the achievers. In his mind there are miles to travel before he decides to sleep. At times I wonder whether Sourav should remain grateful to all those people who had wronged him in the past! For they seemingly have provided him with a fiery motivation to carry on post retirement. Just to prove I deserved more test matches, more one days, more international runs, more wins under my belt as the captain. That to the outside world I may appear super successful but deep down I know I could have traveled even further.

There is an unmistakable Khudito Pashan in an otherwise happy Sourav whose mind travels like a Meher Ali in that iconic movie and silently shouts Tafat jao. Tafat jao. The essence in English would read like this :Do not mess with me. Do not come in my way while I am speeding.

It can be safely predicted that that the contribution of Sourav Ganguly will only grow manifold in the coming years.

That the Dada mystique will only grow with the passage of time!

Why blame the enthusiasts near the aero bridge!

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ज़िन्दगी

निलीमा डिडवानिया
(T1-1302)

ऐसा लगता है की
बरसों से पड़ी किताब को
खोल दिया किसी ने
पलट दिया किसी ने
कुछ दबे हुए एहसास
कुछ पुरानी हंसी
सब कुछ वापस पढ़ रहे हैं
सोचते थे सब कुछ छूट गया
हम भी बदल गए
पर एहसास हुआ है आज
बढ़ी है बस ज़िन्दगी
हम तो वहीं रह गए
हम तो वहीं रह गए

गजल कहूँ या गीत कहूँ

जयकांत प्रसाद चौधरी (T7-2603)

सुन-सुन के यूँ गजल मैं, गजल लिखने लगा हूँ ।
दुनिया के बाजार में, कीमत भी है कुछ अपनी
देखो, मुझे बचाना, क्यूँ बिकने लगा हूँ ?
डरती थी, तू कभी यूँ तेज हवाओं से
आ देख, तूफानों में, में टिकने लगा हूँ,
सुन-सुन के यूँ गजल मैं, गजल लिखने लगा हूँ ।

नजरिया न मैंने बदला, हालात खाये पलटे
जमाने में कैसे जीना, गुर सीखने लगा हूँ,
आ देख, तूफानों में, में टिकने लगा हूँ,

छोड़ी थी कला मैंने, छूटी न कल थी वह तो
बेतकल्लुफी के दौर से, अब उबरने लगा हूँ,
बस साथ हो तुम्हारा, जमाने का है क्या गम
हालात क्यूँ न बदले, मैं बदलने लगा हूँ,
गमगीन होके यादें, भटका रहीं थीं मुझको
फिर भी रुका था कबसे, अब चलने लगा हूँ ।
गावदियों का हुलिया, बनाये मैं यूँ फिरता था
इस हाल में भी अच्छा तुझे, दिखने लगा हूँ,
सुन-सुन के यूँ गजल मैं, गजल लिखने लगा हूँ ।

अच्छाइयां न देखो, कुछ भी तो मैं बुरा हूँ
चुप-चाप था अब तो लेकिन, चीखने लगा हूँ,
गुमनाम रहना चाहूँ, पर नाम दिया तूने
ड्रम गंभीरता का ढोये, चल पीटने लगा हूँ,
सुन-सुन के यूँ गजल मैं, गजल लिखने लगा हूँ ।

साथ-साथ

जयकांत प्रसाद चौधरी
(T7-2603)

नियति के हाथों छोड़ी
महत्वाकांक्षाओं को
सँभालने का दम भरते रहे
जाकर दूर काफी दूर...
और करते रहे दावा
कोई संधि नहीं कोई समर्पण नहीं पर
नियति ने ही लिखी थी
शायद
हमारी कार्यप्रणाली
हमारे उद्देश्य
शायद हमारी भावनाएं भी
दुविधा और संशय की
घड़ियों के बाद
बार-बार
गूँजती है आवाज़
तुम मूक-मौन युद्ध
और
देना पड़ेगा साथ मुझे
तेरे हर मुकाम तक ।



दर्द-ऐ-दिल

अजय चौधरी (T4-3303)

पैमाने खाली ना होंगे
जब साक्री उनका साथी है
गम ना कर की तेरे पास होली का रांग नहीं
अभी मेरा लहू बाक्री है
बहुत कुछ चाहा जिंदगी ने हमसे
कुछ नहीं चाह कर भी
बदकिस्मती कुछ ना दे सके हम उसे
अपना सब कुछ दे कर भी
राह में पड़ी धूल ही अब तो
मेरी हमसफ़र मेरी हमरहि मेरी साथी है
सभी कुचल चुके है मुझे
केबल तेरा पाँव पड़ना बाक्री है
एक दिवस हम डोनो
जिंदगी का सतरंज खेल रहे थे
हम तेरा साथ दे रहे थे
तुम हमें मात दे रहे थे

माँ मेरी माँ

मीनाक्षी भुवालका (T2-3401)

माँ तेरी गोद मुझे अनमोल बना देते हैं
सीप में छिपे मोती जैसे तेरे आँचल में छुपा लेते हैं
माँ तेरी हिम्मत मुझे सपनो को पूरा करने की ताकत दिलाते हैं
माँ तेरी ये ममता भरे हाथ रिश्तों का एहसास दिलाते हैं
तेरी ये डॉट और फटकार बात बात पर माँ
मुझे आदमी से इंसान बना देती हैं
माँ तेरे ये मीठे बोल सुखद संदेश दे जाते हैं
तेरी ये सूरत मेरी पहचान बता जाती हैं
तेरी ये मंदिर की घंटियों की आवाज़ और संस्कार
मुझे शीतल निर्मल और सुन्दर बना जाते हैं
माँ नींद नहीं आती है मुझे अक्सर
तेरी लोरी की आवाज़ हलके से सुला जाती है
लौटा के ले चल मुझे उस बचपन में माँ
जहाँ पापा के प्यारी दुलार हर डर को भगा देते हैं



युग- युग से

नीतू कौशल (T5-2802)

दिल की गहराइयों में
 यँही तन्हाइयों में
 डुबते - उतरते हम
 निरंतर बहते जा रहे

कहाँ, कौन जाने
 कभी लहरों का ज्वार
 कभी भंवर का आभास
 मृगतृष्णा - सी ज़िन्दगी
 की खोज में निरंतर

भागते- भागते
 थक कर चूर-चूर
 आँखें करुणा-प्लावित
 चित आकुल-व्याकुल

शांति की मरीचिका
 रेगिस्तान-सी ज़िन्दगी
 कहाँ जायें, कहाँ पाएं
 वह चयन, वह नाम
 वह शख्स , वह स्थान

जहाँ पुनर्मिलन की आस में
 एक शरीर मांस के टुकड़ों से
 चिपका हुआ खड़ा है
 युग-युग से



LASTING IMPRESSIONS

“It is a press, certainly, but a press from which shall flow in inexhaustible streams...Through it, God will spread His Word. A spring of truth shall flow from it: like a new star it shall scatter the darkness of ignorance, and cause a light heretofore unknown to shine amongst men.”

- Johannes Gutenberg

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Have a Heart

Interview with **Dr Mrinalendu Das** (T1-503)
Senior Cardiac Surgeon and
Head of Department at Narayana Health



Q Why did you specialise in Cardiology?

Dr. M Das (MD): I got inclined towards cardiology due to my personal tryst with it. While I was doing my MS General Surgery I lost my infant nephew to congenital heart disease due to lack of treatment options at that time. This was a big set-back for our family and it triggered my interest in treatment for heart conditions and I started considering Cardiology as a specialisation.

The other reason was that while in medical college, I observed several patients losing their life to heart disease without getting any treatment. I felt something could be done for them.

Q Can you share how you pursued your interest in Cardiac Surgery and how has your journey been?

MD: After I finished my General Surgery Training I joined the Indian Railways and took a transfer to Southern Railways Hospital Perambur to learn heart surgery. It was a 24*7, 365 day commitment. I worked very hard and within a year I got selected for my super-speciality training in Vellore - a great place to learn. In 1993 I was back in the Railways and doing multiple operations. In 1996 I moved to Sydney and while practicing there I realised congenital heart disease was quite prevalent so I went to study Paediatric Heart Surgery in New Zealand. I continued to practice both adult and paediatric heart surgery and then I returned to Kolkata in 2004 and for the last 15 years I have been associated with Narayana Health Hospitals.

Though, Cardiac surgery is tough and needs technical skill, it is a very rewarding field.

Q What advancement or recent development in your field makes you feel will have a great impact and why?

There have been a significant improvements in heart failure treatment. It has advanced from using a few medicines to treat the problem to surgical procedures like heart transplantation and use of ventricular assist devices and even artificial hearts. Previously, if somebody would go into heart failure, it was considered to be the end - end-stage heart disease. Today, there are better medicines that can cure the condition and of course advanced surgical procedures that assure a prolonged life for the patient. Naturally, there are several risks and the procedures are complicated and several factors are involved in the survival of the patient post the transplant of a heart or an implant of a mechanical device. Costs involved are also significant in the case of using mechanical devices and these continue to be areas of research for better results.

Heart transplants are now growing and recipient patients have lived for 15-20 years after a successful transplant. The donors heart has to match on various counts with the

recipient's blood group, body size, weight etc. The key factor in heart transplant is ischemic time. Once the heart is taken out, it does not have blood supply and the time until which it is implanted and blood supply is re-established is called ischemic time. This cannot exceed 4 hours, so often we have to refuse hearts owing to logistical reasons.

The last heart transplant we did was from a donor in Patna to a recipient here, in Kolkata. A team of surgeons harvested the heart, took it straight to the tarmac with a commercial plane pilot on standby who then flew it to Kolkata, in record time. It was brought through the green corridor and by the time I finished implanting it and the heart started beating, it was just 4 hours. So fortunately it turned out alright and the patient is doing well.

As you can understand this needs a lot of support from various quarters. The government and various organisation's are supporting this in India. There is a body called NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation), They organise, distribute and allot the heart. So, once you donate the heart, it becomes government property. The government decides as to which patient and which hospital it will be given to. It is a pure donation with no money involved. It is a gift. It's a gift of life.

Of course, there are a lot of advancement in the techniques used for cardiac surgery. Surgeries have become minimally invasive, leaving less marks and release time of patient is quicker. Percutaneous valve replacement using catheters is the future in valve replacement surgery. Continuous research and development is being done in the field of advanced cardiac surgery.

Q In your opinion are people more aware about their heart conditions than before or less or are they 'over-informed' due to the information overload?

MD: Well, in this era of Google, everybody knows everything. So, they're obviously well informed. But the only thing one should keep in mind is that you have to use information in a proper way. And if you are over informed and if you are not interpreting the information correctly, then that is dangerous. For example, let's take bypass surgery. People are well informed about bypass surgery today and have lots of details on its performance and procedure. There are two types of conduits we use for bypass surgery - veinous and arterial.

When there is a block, we bypass the block and put a graft beyond the block for ease in blood flow. Now, everywhere it's written that arterial grafts are better than the veinous grafts. So, everybody reads about it and comes to a doctor and states that we want all arterial grafts to be put in. But what they are not aware about is that the arterial graft only

works when the blocks are very tight. If the blocks are medium sized the arterial graft will fail. So, that is the drawback of being over-informed. Similarly there is a lot of information available about other medical procedures online but you have to read between the lines.

Those who have experience in the field, know what works and what doesn't and thus can take a better decision.

Q What is the routine check-up one should go through for their heart?

MD: Well, it depends on what kind of disease you're looking at. There are 4 types of defects we can talk about and how they can be identified. Prior to birth, the mother goes through an ultrasound test in the womb to make sure that the child is not born with congenital heart defects. So one can do a Foetal Echocardiography. This detects diseases and one can tell whether its curable or not and take decisions accordingly.

An echocardiography is done for young children to detect any abnormalities which manifest after birth. Then when you grow older, around 30, the next probable problematic disease one can get is Coronary Artery Disease. This is prevalent early on in the Indian sub-continent. So cholesterol checks are very important.

Beyond 45 or 50 everybody should have a heart check-up at least once every two years. Routine blood tests, diabetes, cholesterol levels, ECG and for people with history of heart disease a treadmill test should be done.

Q What is the main cause of the steep increase in heart problems observed in younger people?

MD: There are two reasons. 1. Diets with saturated fats 2. Excess stress and lack of exercise. Another important factor is also genetic abnormalities. Genetically, Indians have a high level of triglyceride and LDL level cholesterol rather than HDL. So, this predisposes us to early coronary diseases.

Q What's the best thing that we can do for our heart to make sure it stays healthy?

MD: Firstly, routine checkup is required. A check up to ensure the child doesn't have congenital abnormality because these have nothing to do with diet or exercise. Healthy habits are a must; avoid fast-food, exercise regularly, eat fruits and a healthy diet, good sleep, less stress. Have a very balanced life. Most important thing is avoiding tobacco in any form. Tobacco contains nicotinic acid which destroys the nitric oxide in the body and nitric oxide is needed to dilate our blood vessels and keep them open.

Q What's the worst thing we can do for our heart?

MD: Sedentary lifestyle is a very bad thing for the heart. Over exercise also can be a very bad thing because there are some diseases, which are rare, of course, which can manifest with over exercising. Make sure you don't have pulmonary arteries or other heart disease before doing rigorous activities and heavy exercises.

A Message for all

The other important thing which I want to emphasise on is increasing general awareness of Organ Donation. We are always asking people to pledge their organs. Not only that, all family members should be aware that if an unfortunate event happens, donation of the heart can save another life.

I know of a very touching case where there was an untimely death of a young man in fall. His mother was the recipient of a kidney donation and she donated her son's heart. She truly believes that her son now lives on and even though as a rule we don't disclose the recipients name, she did come looking for the recipient patient.

There is a voluntary organisation that is doing great work in spreading awareness about donation of the heart. Not only the heart but other organs also. If there is a cadaver donation, one donates a heart, 2 kidneys, a liver and eyes and you save and affect the life of many people. So this is very important; wherever and whenever you speak in a public forum and if you have the opportunity to raise this topic, please do that.

Donate organs!



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Preserving Kolkata's Heritage



Jawhar Sircar

Jawhar Sircar is a retired Civil Servant and a public intellectual based out of Kolkata. He is well known as a researcher, publisher of articles, author and public speaker.

When the Grecian pillars and the imposing pediment of the Senate Hall of Calcutta University were being demolished in 1960, little did Kolkata know that it was not tearing down a building: it was actually ripping out a bone from one of its very ribs, that protected its pulsating heart. Very few protested and ABP brought out a sepia-tint poster of this demolition which hangs in my house in Kolkata, with the legend focusing on the workmen, "Forgive them, for they knew not what they were doing; But some did, and did not care!"

It sums up the tragedy of the "second city of the Empire" that housed not only some of the finest edifices of the colonial period which would make any citizens of the world feel at home. It also boasted one of the largest numbers of palatial buildings for which it was once called "the City of Palaces". The wealth that flowed into the city from the early part of 19th century and continued unabated for the next 120 to 130 years assured that allocable surpluses to the ruling classes, as well as to their British overlords, and a sizeable part of this found itself in the magnificent mansions.

One by one, they were pulled down from the 1950s, either for public conveniences or sometimes for widening of roads, like Choudhury's palace of Sahib, Bibi or Gulam had to make way for Central Avenue. Others were handed over to promoters for building multistoried flats, often by squabbling siblings. But each time a building with neo-classical features or rococo or even ostentatious baroque was ripped apart, we lost an irreplaceable specimen of colonial Bengal's superb craftsmanship. Even after independence and CIT's expansion of the city, art decors sprawled and became common place. Thus few of us realized what these architectural specimen means to eyes that are tired of ungainly boxed buildings of all sizes in the same tinted glass and concrete.

I was trying to photograph some of the exquisite cast iron sculptures that adorned the facades of many such buildings, either as balconies or balustrades, and one is amazed to find the finest and the most delicate designs that man could ever weave with iron. Quite often large parts of such cast iron dreams are found to have been taken away and sold by



weight and replaced by unimaginative factory produced wrought iron. I think it is time to focus not only on stucco and on plaster and on architectural styles but also on railings, balustrades, windows and of course wonderful doorways and marble flooring. Unless we educate ourselves on what they mean and how valuable they are, how would we know what we destroy at periodic intervals?

But is it all right for connoisseurs to make whatever comment they want on somebody else's property or for heritage lovers to bemoan the passage of time and necessary modernization? Don't the owners need money to sustain uneconomically large buildings, so that the city's heritage can be preserved at the cost of someone else who has to bear the burden? OK: This logic is accepted. But how is it other self-respecting countries or cities manage to cling on to what they will never be able to replace? One of the methods to save heritage is to provide state or municipal funding, but I do not think we should even discuss this subject in India. After 40 years I hardly know any municipal body in India that has not taken an active part in the destruction of the history and heritage of the very cities that were entrusted to them.

One idea that comes to my mind is that of a 'Lottery Fund'. Let us not forget that large parts of early Kolkata were built through by lotteries conducted by the Company's government and one of the best examples of these is the Strand Road that was financed completely from such funds. The UK has its Heritage

Lottery Fund to which citizens can contribute with no sense of guilt and some hope of win. It earns millions, but its funds ultimately go to subsidized maintenance of heritage buildings and historical areas. Bank of China and HSBC take an active part in providing heritage funds for their cities in China. There are many such ideas which government just needs to clear and citizens can take over from that point, to maintain their own heritage. At the same time public bodies need to observe the highest level of transparency, while they absorb themselves in the task of saving every small part of priceless and irreplaceable history of their communities, cities, State and the nation.

Kolkata must remember that while Delhi has four World Heritage Sites declared by the UNESCO and Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Hyderabad all have such prestigious buildings of international fame, the grand old capital of British India, Kolkata, is yet to earn this award for even a single site. Since Kolkata does not have any notable architecture of the pre-colonial era, we could propose the Victoria Memorial or the Howrah Bridge or even Fort William to UNESCO, Paris, for World Heritage Status but that requires a lot of documentation of multiple dimensions and maintaining the purity of the original structure. These entail a heritage consciousness and pride to be existing or developed among the citizens of this city — which is missing where serious tasks of this nature are concerned.

But we can always make a start — so let us begin, now.

The Vanishing Tribe

The Anglo Indians of Kolkata

Brunel Arathoon (T4-4006)

After moving to Urbana in December 2018, I noticed that my family and I were the only Anglo Indians here. Although I am not a 'thoroughbred' AI, as my dad was of Armenian descent whereas my mum is AI, and my husband is pure Armenian, I still consider myself more Anglo Indian than anything else. Here's a brief run down of some of Calcutta's most famous Anglo Indians.



1. Frank Anthony: Known today for the chain of schools in his name (Frank Anthony Public School), Frank Anthony is one of the towering figures from the Anglo-Indian community. Born in Madhya Pradesh, he went on to become a Barrister at the 'Inner Temple' in London. He lobbied with Nehru to provide Anglo Indians with their own 'home', McCluskieganj (Jharkhand), founded the parent body of the ICSE Board, Chaired the ICSE Council, represented India at the United Nations and most notably, lobbied Gandhi, Nehru and Patel to make special provisions for Anglo Indians in the Constitution of India, which they agreed to.



2. Carlton Kitto: One of the most talented and famous jazz guitarists India has ever seen, Kitto was born in Bangalore in 1942. He taught at the Calcutta School of Music and performed at some of the city's most famous nightclubs including 'Someplace Else', 'Moulin Rouge', 'Mocambo', 'Trincas' and 'Blue Fox'.



3. Leslie Claudius: A Padma Shri, Banga Bhibhushan, East Bengal Club 'Bharat Gaurav', Four Olympic Golds and a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records, Claudius is a hockey legend. He was part of India's most successful hockey team, winning Gold in 1948, 1952, 1956 and Silver in 1960.

4. Henry Derozio: Having died of Cholera at the tragically young age of 22, he left his mark on education reform in Bengal. By 17 he was teaching at The Hindu College, and was highly respected as a scholar and thinker, joining Raja Ram Mohan Roy's reform movement. He formed a debating club where all free speech and ideas were openly discussed, a ground-breaking act at the time, called the 'Derozians' and is credited as one of the influencers behind the 19th century 'Bengal Renaissance'.





5. Ronnie Moore: A Calcutta Police Officer who was known for being fearless. He would often charge horseback into rioting crowds, who would flee knowing it was Moore coming toward them. Even before joining the Police, he twice qualified for the Olympics. One of his most famous acts was shooting a rampaging elephant that had broken out of Alipore Zoo. Moore calmly drove up to it, shot it in the head and killed it. The elephant, 'Phoolmala', is on permanent display at the Indian Museum.

6. Neil O'Brien:

The founding father of quizzing in India, he was a politician too. He served as the Anglo-Indian MLA in West Bengal from 1977 to 1991, and then as Anglo-Indian Lok Sabha MP in 1996. He chaired the ICSE Board, a post previously held by Frank Anthony. His son Derek is a TMC Rajya Sabha member.



7. Sir Henry Gidney: A Gold medallist from Calcutta Medical College who went on to study at Cambridge and then Oxford. He entered the Indian Medical Service, then the British Indian Army where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was 'Mentioned in Dispatches' for his bravery. He was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He fought for Anglo Indians Parliament too, where he once responded to Jinnah by saying, "The Honourable Member who has just spoken has not only got the bull by the horns, but also the cow by the udders"

8. Patience Cooper: A Bollywood actress credited with being one of the first to play a double role in a Bollywood movie, as twin sisters in 'Patni Pratap' and mother and daughter in 'Kashmiri Sundari'.



9. Maurice Barker: Not only the first Anglo India to join the Indian Air Force but also the first to rise to the rank of Air Marshall, posted as Air Officer in Charge Eastern Command and Air Officer in Charge Training. He was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM) for his exceptional management of the Central Air Command's resources and utilising them to the fullest extent. He was, for a while, based at Dum Dum before it became a civilian airport, from where his unit would drop sea mines in the Bay of Bengal.

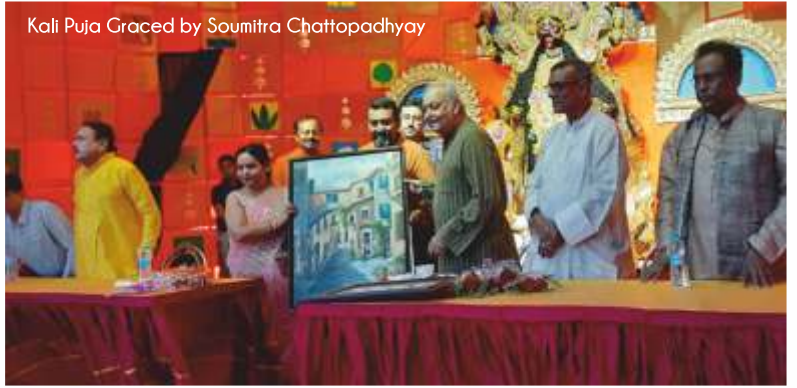


10. Sir Cliff Richard: Probably the most famous of all. Before he became famous, his name was Harry Webb. He studied at St. Thomas' Khidderpur and lived in Howrah, although he cannot recall where exactly his home was apart from somewhere near a post office. His father worked for a catering company which was supplying the Indian Railways at the time. The catering company is Keventer's!



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A journey of the memories collected in the festivals celebrated in Urbana



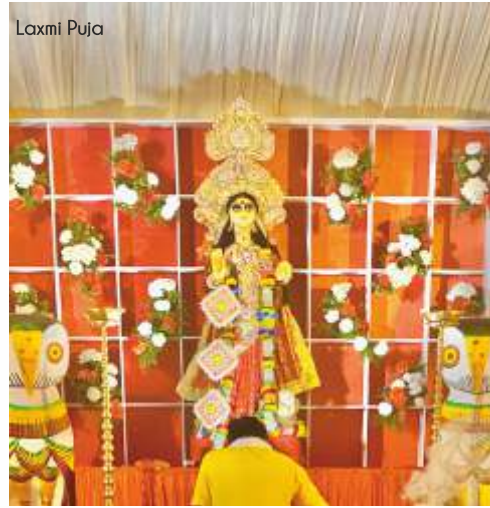
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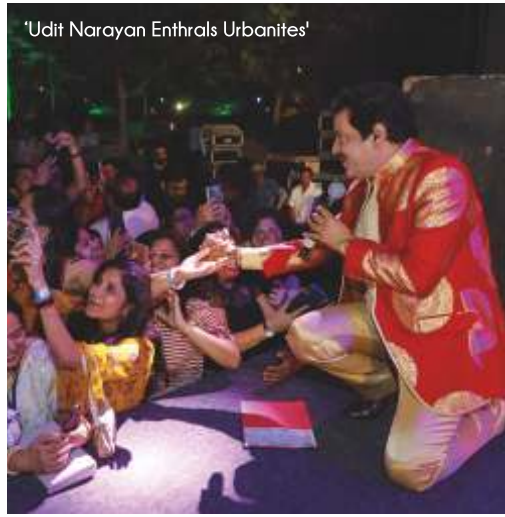
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Helping Hands

Amrita Maitra (T7-0406)

For the longest period I have believed that one needs to be rich to be able to help those in need. It was not until recently that I figured money is not enough, we also must have the heart, the will, an appropriate channel and the right contacts to enable us to make a real difference. I have also realized that those in need are not always the less-privileged, sometimes more than money people need a show of support, compassion or even simple awareness to improve their quality of life.

Photos from the various social service initiatives by UWA





Social service after all is a group activity. A single person, no matter how wealthy, cannot make a difference without the support of helping hands and compassionate hearts. In the last few months I have come across some amazing people in Urbana. Some have devoted their entire lives to the cause of uplifting others, some despite many obstacles continue to raise awareness on issues that are considered social taboos but otherwise very relevant. Some quietly and continuously contribute to social causes with open hands but anonymously. For those who say the world has become cold and selfish, I have news - there is still an unimaginable amount of warmth and kindness, at least in this world we call Urbana.

When we started off this year, the very hard-working social services team brainstormed concepts for various programs but without setting a very high expectation from the residents. The way the residents showed support, got involved and contributed to give shape to these ideas has been truly inspiring and heartwarming. I have been often told that everyone wants to contribute towards helping the needy and often all they lack is the means to connect to those who need the help and I believe it now.

I believe it now that I have witnessed how the Urbanites can get together and raise a hefty amount in a matter of minutes for a children's shelter, how in a couple of days we can grant wishes of 38 less privileged children, how willingly the residents sponsored education for 16 children of Urbana support staff, how some truly kind hearts contributed generously so that we could distribute new clothes amongst people in almost an entire village nearby.

And my belief is reinforced every month when I see the way the Urbanites come forward to spread joy and smiles through our HappyShare and AnadaUtsav programs. It has been truly empowering and humbling. And the best bit is that these compassionate souls never even want their names published anywhere. To me that is the true spirit of social service - when we see it as a social responsibility rather than a service.

Funds are the driving force behind any program, and we need to raise it. However, the buck does not stop there. When we visit an orphanage or a shelter for the specially-abled or those who are ill or even old and lonely, what we leave with them is more than just the gifts we carry. It is the smile we leave on their faces, the hope we leave in their eyes, the strength we leave in their minds and the happiness we leave in their hearts. Sometimes these things can make a bigger impact than material things, to know that they are not alone in this big world. And isn't it the same for all of us really? They say it is all in the mind. When you truly inspire a child from a slum by sponsoring her education you are doing a lot more than paying for her education, you are giving her hope and instilling in her a confidence that lets her dream and makes her work hard towards achieving that dream. At that moment you are her savior. Your presence can make as much of a positive impact as your contribution.

To sum it up, I have been wrong for the most part of my life. To make a difference it is not compulsory to be rich. All we need is a few like minded people with their heart and mind in the right place, with the willingness to take out time from their busy schedule to make time for others, with the ability to place themselves in other's shoes and very importantly to have the drive to convince others around them to engage, contribute and do more so that the group keeps expanding. The rest simply follows. In the world of the haves and the have-nots as Isabel Allende said, "We only have what we give".

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Rakesh Gupta (T6-3603)

Not so much as even a noticeable grain of cosmic dust that I am.
 Living in a window of distinctly limited time, much unnoticeably small.
 Squished amidst generations before and after, perhaps even species
 before and after, I choose to become
 Alexander trying to feel so great to have conquered the world.
 Or perhaps the British empire where "sun never sets".
 But, after the gory and before the glory sets in I start to vanish.
 The glow which could have forever be lighted in thoughts starts to fade and
 yet I feel I have achieved and have won.
 Thus, lies my irony in my own fate that ONLY I chose to seal

Frometh energy I came, unto energy will disappear.
 There never was an "I" ever and yet the "I" feels the need to reign

Hold fast to Dreams

Bristi Chowdhury (T1-2201)

Hold fast your dreams,
 they shelter you through lonely nights.
 Gently they become the pillow,
 that put destination in your sights.

Hold tight the memories,
 the heart ache that burns,
 for the one who wins,
 is the one who remembers & learns.

Push away despair, nurture the hope.
 So Impossible it seems,
 but the only way out,
 is to hold fast to dreams.



A night in solitude

Pradeep Sarkar (T3-3101)

It rained last night.
 Colliding sounds of the days of yore
 Enlivened the smoky dawn.
 As it lifted veil
 Dim visuals of your departing shadow
 Rivetted in dreamy intoxication.
 Reflecting droplets on those lustrous cheeks
 Numbed me.
 Crystal chimes in the priory,
 Those familiar nimble steps
 Echoed through my soul.
 Its you, cried my choked voice.
 That mesmerising fragrance
 Stunned my senses.
 My hushed heart rejoiced,
 The silence of your poise
 Resonates our whispered embrace.
 Gone for ever
 You are all over my being.





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Motherhood – a paradox

Smita Saha (T1-3504)

A few years ago,
When I became a mother
I was so full of joy
There was nothing I could want further.

I was in for a surprise as days went by
Everytime she opened her eyes, the baby only seemed to cry
However hard I tried
The tears wouldn't dry.

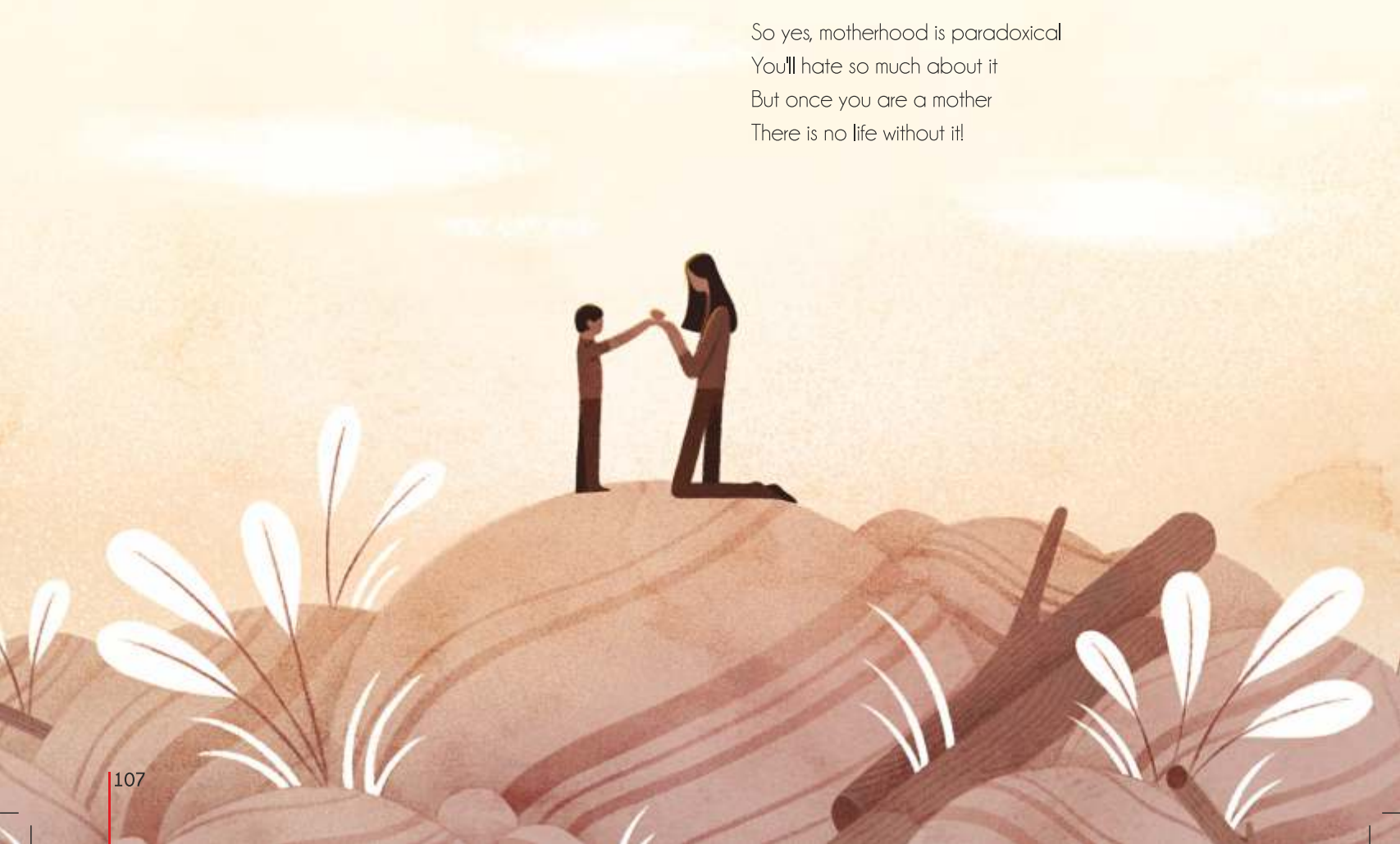
I told myself , just a few more years
And all will be well
But what was coming up
Was no lesser than hell

Mom, I don't want to go to school
Mom, I don't like the food
Mom, what happened to your fashion sense
Mom, I'm not in the mood

At work, I was the big boss
But at home, the kid didn't care
She would happily walk away
Not paying heed to my stare

Everything seemed out of hand
I was beginning to despair
Till the little doll walked up to me
And whispered, 'Mom, there's no fun if you're not there!'

So yes, motherhood is paradoxical
You'll hate so much about it
But once you are a mother
There is no life without it!



Shower Memoir

Sony Sinha
(T5 -1402)

Pitter patter Pitter patter
hear the rain fall
On the window panes
And down the concrete walls.

Little girl in me peeps out to see,
herself dancing in rain full of glee;
Paper boats and thin streams,
Now she can witness them only in dreams.

School uniform, ponytail and loaded satchel,
She walked in stride as if to win the battle;
Splashing the water, still fearing the thunder;
Enjoying the soft music of rain, I would wonder.

Pitter patter Pitter patter
Hear the rain fall
On the window panes
And down the concrete walls.

Young lady in me now questions to me,
airing her black tresses and raising kohled eyelashes;
"Why are you hiding your dreams behind those nerdy glasses?"

Drizzle still calls me and showers are still the same,
Says" Soak yourself in me as you did in your childhood game."

Don't bother yourself with the shackles of age,
You are more seasoned now to relish life's this page.

Don't bother yourself with the shackles of age,
You are more seasoned now to relish life's this page.



Mystery of Mistress

Ashishh Jhunhunwalla
(T4 - 2604)

Last night, I murdered her.
I put a bullet in her head.
A dull thud and then silence.

Surely, she was dead.
Work done mission achieved.
My new mistress wanted me
to get rid of her.

And so I did as I was told
And buried her beneath Nature.
The next day the cops arrived
And found her body .

Anxiety, uneasiness and fear.
After hours of investigation
They declared me, "not guilty."
Of course there were bribes .
And so many other favours .

And my otherwise good reputation
Helped me with my neighbours.

The following night
When everything had settled,

I called my new mistress
And made love to her
In the very same bed!

Until, late at night, she
Turned around and the dim light
Revealed a hole in her head.

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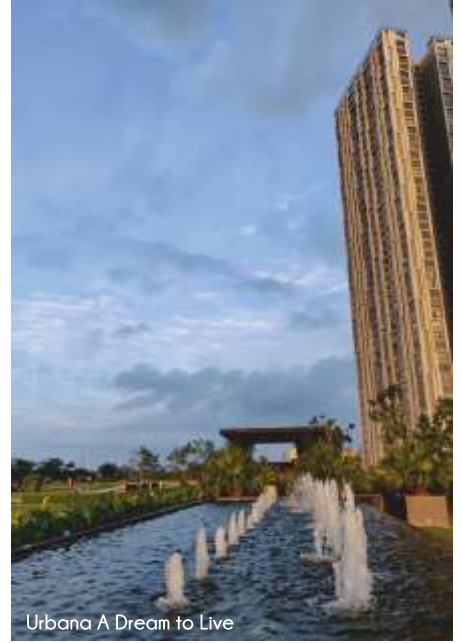
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প্রসঙ্গ: থিয়েটারের অর্থনীতি ও বেঁচেবর্তে থাকা



ব্রাত্য বসু এ রাজ্যের ও বাংলা নাট্য জগতের এক বলিষ্ঠ নাম, নাট্যকার, পরিচালক, লেখক / রাজনীতিবিদ এবং এক অত্যন্ত মননশীল মানুষ হিসেবে সর্বজনগ্রাহী।

থিয়েটারের অর্থনীতি আসলে দুরকম। প্রথমটি হল দলের অর্থনীতি। দ্বিতীয়টি হল একটি দলে অবস্থিত ব্যক্তির অর্থনীতি। দলের অর্থনীতি প্রধানত তিনটি বিষয়ের উপর নির্ভরশীল। প্রথমত, সরকারি গ্রান্ট তথা অনুদান। দ্বিতীয়টি, বেসরকারি বহুজাতিক বা স্থানীয় ব্যবসায়িক সংস্থার স্পনসরশিপ এবং তৃতীয়টি হল কলশো তথা আমন্ত্রণীয়মূলক অভিনয়ের ব্যয়বরাদ্দের থেকে অতিরিক্ত যে অংশ দলে থাকে। এছাড়াও দলের অন্তর্গত কোনো ব্যক্তি (তিনি নির্দেশক ছাড়াও অন্য কোনো ব্যক্তি হতে পারেন) এমনকি তিনি প্রাইভেট টিউশনি করেও তার একাংশ হয়তো দলকে মাসোহারা বা ‘লেভি’ দিতে পারেন) ভদ্রুকি দিয়ে দলের ‘শো’-এর খরচের একাংশ দিয়ে থাকেন। সারা বাংলার থিয়েটার মোটের ওপর এই তিনরকম ভাবে দল চালিয়ে থাকেন। এর মধ্যে সরকারি অনুদান দুরকম। কেন্দ্রীয় ও রাজ্য সরকার। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার একটি নাট্যদলের জন্য প্রধানত দুধরণের অনুদান দেন। দলের যে থিয়েটারটি হতে যাচ্ছে, তার জন্য আবেদনভিত্তিক একটি অনুদান-যার পোশাকি নাম ‘প্রোডাকশন গ্রান্ট’ এবং দ্বিতীয়টিও ওই আবেদনভিত্তিক-দলের ছেলেমেয়েদের এবং নির্দেশকের (সরকারি পরিভাষায় ‘গুরু’) জন্য মাসিক একটি অনুদান। এই গ্রান্টের পোশাকি নাম ‘স্যালারি গ্রান্ট’। একটি দল সর্বোচ্চ ২৫টি মাথাপিছু গ্রান্ট পেতে পারে। সঙ্গে পাবেন ওই ‘গুরু’। অর্থাৎ একটি দল সর্বোচ্চ ২৫+১=২৬টি মাথাপিছু অনুদান পেতে পারে। মাথাপিছু ওই অনুদান হল মাসিক ছ হাজার টাকা ও ‘গুরু’র ক্ষেত্রে দশ হাজার টাকা। এই অনুদান এই বাংলায় কোনো দল দুটি পায়। (অর্থাৎ ২+১), কেউ ১০টি পায় (অর্থাৎ ১০+১) আবার কেউ (সংখ্যায় সেই দল খুবই কম) পঁচিশটিও পায় (অর্থাৎ ২৫+১), কিন্তু বেশিরভাগ দলই কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারি এই অনুদানটি পায় না। তাছাড়া ওই ‘প্রোডাকশন গ্রান্ট’-এর সর্বোচ্চ মূল্য বছরে ১টি প্রোডাকশন পিছু পাঁচ লাখ টাকা। এই গ্রান্টটিও কেউ পঞ্চাশ হাজার থেকে পাঁচলাখ পর্যন্ত পেতে পারেন। তবে ওই পাঁচলাখিদের সংখ্যা কম। বেশিরভাগ দলই পঞ্চাশ হাজার থেকে দু লাখের মধ্যে প্রোডাকশন পিছু পান। অনেক দলের ক্ষেত্রেই এই টাকায় প্রোডাকশন করা সম্ভব হয় না। তখন অনেকে যারা দলে ওই স্যালারি গ্রান্ট পাচ্ছেন সেই ছেলেমেয়েদের একটা অংশ দলের প্রোডাকশনের খরচে ব্যয় করেন। মানে একটি ছেলে বা মেয়ে, যে ছ হাজার টাকা কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার থেকে আসে, সে তার নামে পুরো টাকাটা পায় না। হয়তো তার অর্ধেক পায়। মানে তিনহাজার টাকা। বাকিটা তাকে দলের প্রোডাকশন করা বা দল চালানোর কাজে দিয়ে দিতে হয়। তবে ইদানীং কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার নিয়ম করেছেন যে ছেলে বা মেয়েটি এই অনুদান পাবে, তার নিজস্ব ব্যাঙ্ক অ্যাকাউন্ট ও আধার কার্ড থাকতেই হবে। তবে তার অ্যাকাউন্টে সরকারি ‘চেক’ টি সরাসরি আসবে। আগে এই পুরো অনুদানটি দলের নামেই আসতো। বাংলার বেশির ভাগ দলই এই অনুদান দুটি পায় না। এছাড়াও কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার নাট্যউৎসব, নিজস্ব থিয়েটারের জমির জন্য অনুদান, স্টুডিও থিয়েটার, পত্রিকা চালানোর অনুদান দিয়ে থাকেন। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের সংস্কৃতি বিভাগের বিভিন্ন শাখা এই অনুদানগুলি দিয়ে থাকেন।

এছাড়া বিভিন্ন রাজ্য সরকার তাদের স্থানীয় নাট্যদলগুলির ক্ষেত্রে সাধ্যমতো কিছু আবেদনভিত্তিক অনুদান দেন। তবে তা প্রধানত ‘প্রোডাকশন কস্ট’। কন্নড়, মহারাষ্ট্র, কেরালা, আসাম সরকারের কথা এ ব্যাপারে উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে। এই পশ্চিমবাংলায় বিগত বাম সরকারের ক্ষেত্রে এই অনুদান ছিল পাঁচ থেকে দশ হাজার টাকা। মমতা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের সরকার আসার পর মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর অধীনস্থ সংস্কৃতি দপ্তর এই অনুদান বাড়িয়ে এ বছরে দলপিছু সর্বোচ্চ পাঁচাত্তর হাজার টাকা করেছে। সাধারণত জেলার বড়ো নাট্যদলগুলি কমবেশি সর্বোচ্চ একলাখ টাকা বছরে প্রোডাকশন পিছু খরচ করেন। ছোটদলগুলি তা পারেনা। তাদের বাজেট থাকে মোটের ওপর প্রোডাকশন পিছু দশ থেকে পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকা। কলকাতার নাট্যদলগুলির খরচ ও খাঁই দুই-ই বেশি। যে দলগুলি বছরে ও নামে বড়ো তাদের প্রোডাকশন বাজেট তিন থেকে দশ লাখ টাকা পর্যন্ত হয়। কেউ কেউ আরও বেশি খরচ করেন। সর্বোচ্চ পনের লাখ একটি প্রোডাকশনের পেছনে খরচ করেছেন এমন দলের কথা আমি অন্তত জানি। জেলার নাট্যদলগুলি নিজের জেলা শহরে অল্প শো-ই করতে পারেন। সেক্ষেত্রে তাদের কিছু টিকিট স্থানীয়স্তরে বিক্রি করতে হয়, কিছু দর্শক স্বতঃপ্রণোদিত হয়েও টিকিট কাটেন। কিন্তু খুব বেশি ‘শো’ তারা করতে পারেন না। কারণ তাঁদের দর্শকসংখ্যা কম। কেউ কেউ তারই মধ্যে চেষ্টা করেন নিজস্ব উদ্যোগে কলকাতা শহরে এসে বছরে দু-তিনটি ‘শো’ করার। কলকাতার সস্তর-আশি কিলোমিটার নিকটবর্তী অনেক দলই কলকাতায় এসে অভিনয় করেন। কেউ শিশিরমঞ্চে, কেউ গিরিশমঞ্চে আবার কেউ বা তপন থিয়েটারে। আকাদেমিতে খুব কম দলই করতে পারেন, কারণ আকাদেমি ‘প্রাইভেট হল’ বলে খরচ তুলনায় বেশি হয়। কলকাতার কোনো বন্ধুদলের সৌজন্যেও তারা অনেকসময় শহরে এসে অভিনয় করেন। তবে একশো বা দুশো কিলোমিটারের দূরের দলগুলি গোটা গ্রামবাংলা জুড়ে তাদের অভিনয় চালান। সেক্ষেত্রে প্রতিযোগিতা মঞ্চ বা স্থানীয় ছোটো কোনো উদ্যোগ তাদের সহায় হয়ে ওঠে। তবে এই উদ্যোগ থিয়েটারের অর্থনীতিকে লাভজনক করে না। বরং বছরের শেষে ভাঁড়ার শুন্যই থাকে।

কলকাতা শহরের দলগুলির ক্ষেত্রেও ব্যাপারটি অলাভজনক। কেননা ‘পুশ’ সেল বাদ দিলে শো পিছু তাদের আমদানি সাধারণত হলপিছু থাকে দশ থেকে পঁচিশ হাজার টাকা। কোনো থিয়েটার জনপ্রিয় হয়ে পড়লে সেই বিক্রি অনেকটাই বাড়ে। তবে সেই জনপ্রিয় থিয়েটারের সংখ্যা খুবই নগণ্য। কিন্তু শো-পিছু খরচ হয় খবরের কাগজের বিজ্ঞাপন ব্যতিরেকে তিরিশ থেকে চল্লিশ হাজার টাকা। কোনো দলের আরও বেশি। এই ভর্তুকি মেটানোর জন্য আগে যে ‘কল শো’ তথা আমন্ত্রণীয়মূলক অভিনয়ের বাড়ন্ত ছিল তা এখন অনেকটাই কমা। আগের অন্তত দুটি উৎস, যথা অফিস ক্লাব ও কলেজ তথা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আমন্ত্রণীয়মূলক অভিনয়ের সংখ্যা এখন অনেক কমে গেছে। তারা প্রধানত এখন সঙ্গীতানুষ্ঠান করে থাকে। তবে প্রধান জেলা শহরগুলিতে নাট্যউৎসবের সংখ্যা বেড়েছে। দলের সংখ্যাও। তবে সে উৎসবগুলিতে তো আর সব দলের সঙ্কলন হয় না। আর তা হওয়ার কথাও নয়। ফলে গত শতকের আট বা নয় দশকের তুলনায় এখন হওয়া একটি থিয়েটারের অভিনয়ের সংখ্যাও গেছে কমে। সাতের দশকে কলকাতা শহরে হওয়া একটি মোটের ওপর জনপ্রিয় হওয়া থিয়েটার হলেও তার অন্তত একশো অভিনয় হতই, এখন একটি থিয়েটারের একশো অভিনয় হওয়া মানে তা সুপারডুপার হিট। ফলে থিয়েটারের অর্থনীতি মোটের ওপর পঙ্গু, বেহাল এবং ধুকতে থাকা।

একটি হিসেব অনুযায়ী কলকাতায় বছরে যদি একশো নাট্যদল তিনলাখ টাকা করেও গড়ে একটি প্রোডাকশন তৈরি করতে খরচ করে, তাহলে বছরে এই শহরে থিয়েটারের পেছনে লগ্নি হয় অন্তত তিনকোটি টাকা আর থিয়েটারের আমদানি হয় যদি বছরে প্রতিদিন তিনটি হলে গড়ে অন্তত দশ হাজার টাকা আসে (অর্থাৎ $৩৬৫ \times ৩ \times ১০,০০০$) তাহলে থিয়েটারের ঘরে আসে বছরে প্রায় এগার লাখ টাকা। অর্থাৎ বছরে প্রায় দুকোটি নব্বুই লাখের উদ্ভূত থাকে। তাও মনে রাখতে হবে আমি এ হিসেবে দিয়েছি শুধু প্রোডাকশনটি তৈরি হওয়ার খরচ। তার ‘রেকারিং’ খরচ অর্থাৎ হলভাড়া, বিজ্ঞাপন, দৈনন্দিন প্রোডাকশন কস্ট, অভিনেতা-অভিনেত্রীদের অর্থ (খুব কম দলই যদিও তা দিতে পারে) এর সঙ্গে ধরা হয়নি। তাহলে পাঁচবছরে থিয়েটারের পেছনে ঠিক কতোটা আর্থিক ক্ষতি হয় এ হিসেব থেকে একটা আন্দাজ পেতে পারেন।

তার সঙ্গে এই শতাব্দীতে থিয়েটারের যুক্ত হওয়া ছেলেমেয়েদের ব্যক্তিগত অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থার কথা যদি ভাবি তা-ও অতীব করুণ। গত শতাব্দীতে এরকম একটি লবজ ছিল যে কোনো বাড়িতে দাদারা চাকরি করলেও বেকার ছোটো ভাইটি নিশ্চিন্তে তার পছন্দসই কিছু করতে পারতো। এখন তার অবকাশ নেই। দাদা আর ভাই যে বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই একসঙ্গে থাকে না। ফলে কলকাতায় থিয়েটারে, মফস্বলে ও গ্রামে হাজার হাজার নতুন থিয়েটারের ছেলেমেয়েরা আছেন, যারা সত্যিই কিভাবে জীবিকা উপার্জন করবেন তা ভাবতে গেলে শিউরে উঠতে হয়। পাশাপাশি এই কলকাতা শহরেও অনেক ছেলেমেয়ে এখন মফস্বল বা শহর থেকেই হয়তো বা থিয়েটারে যুক্ত হয়েছেন, যাদের পেশা শুধুমাত্র ওই থিয়েটারই। তাদের কেউ কেউ ফিল্ম বা টেলিভিশনের ধারাবাহিকে হয়তো অভিনয় করেন, তাতে কিছু মানুষের কিছু উপার্জন হয়তো হয়, কিন্তু বেশিরভাগের কপালে সে সুযোগ জোটে না। অনেকে আবার টেলিভিশনে অভিনয় করতেও চান না, থিয়েটার করাটাকেই একমাত্র অবলম্বন বলে মনে করেন। স্যালারি গ্রান্ট-এর একটা অংশ এরা কেউ কেউ পান কিন্তু তাতে তাদের পেটটুকুই হয়তো বা ভরে। কীভাবে জীবন চলবে এঁদের বেশির ভাগই জানেন না। এঁদের পাশে দাঁড়িয়ে বা এঁদের সঙ্গে একইমঞ্চ ভাগ করে কাজ করাটা সত্যিই দুর্লভ। যাঁরা সে কাজ করেন, তাঁরাই এর মর্ম বুঝতে পারবেন। আবার উল্টোচিত্রও আছে। গ্রান্ট পেয়েও বেশি ‘শো’ করতে চান না, এমন দলের সংখ্যাও নেহাত কম নয়। শোনা গেছে ভারত সরকারের কাছে এ বছর যা আবেদন জমা পড়েছে, তাতে এ রাজ্য থেকে আবেদনের সংখ্যা সর্বাধিক। সরকারি বড়ো মাথাবাদের অনেকেই এটিকে নাকি ‘বেকার সমস্যা’ হিসেবে দেখতে চেয়েছেন। তাঁদের কাছে আমার বিনীত প্রশ্ন তাঁরা যদি শুধুমাত্র বেকারই হবেন, তাহলে তো পাড়ায় নানান পুজো পার্বণ করে, বিভিন্ন ইমারতী কারবারে জড়িয়ে বা কোনো অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করে বাঁচার চেষ্টা করতে পারতেন, শুধু থিয়েটারই বা তাহলে তাঁরা করতে চাইবেন কেন? থিয়েটারই কি বেকারদের একমাত্র ভবিতব্য? নিশ্চয়ই নয়। থিয়েটার তাদের অবলম্বন, বেঁচে থাকার একমাত্র আধার, ডাস্টবিনসুলভ ভবিতব্য নয়। ফলে আমি চাইবো কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার যেন স্যালারি গ্রান্টের পরিমাণ আরও বাড়ান। প্রয়োজনে সব রাজ্যেই। বাংলায় বেশি হতেই পারে, কারণ বাংলার মতো বেশি থিয়েটার আর হয়ও না কোনো রাজ্যে। অর্থনীতিবিদরা প্রশ্ন তুলতে পারেন, তাহলে কি চাহিদা আর যোগানের মধ্যে ভারসাম্য থাকছে? অর্থাৎ একটি নাগরিক সমাজে থিয়েটারের যে চাহিদা থাকে, তার তুলনায় কি বেশি থিয়েটার হয় না? আমার উত্তর হ্যাঁ বেশিই হয়। কিন্তু সেতো গণমাধ্যম থেকে শুরু করে সিনেমা সবার ক্ষেত্রেই সত্যি, তাহলে আলাদা করে থিয়েটারকেই বা দাগিয়ে দেওয়া কেন? যাইহোক এ নিয়ে যদি এখনই ভাবনাচিন্তা না করা হয়, সামনে আবার গুরুতর বিপদ আসতে যাচ্ছে। সে সম্বন্ধে সতর্ক থাকা প্রয়োজন।

প্রসঙ্গ :- অল্পপ্রণর ও বাংলা থিয়েটার।

পেশাদারি মঞ্চ উঠে গেলেও কিছু মানুষ এখনও আছেন যাঁরা থিয়েটারেই লগ্নি করতে চান। তাঁদের সাধ্য সিনেমার তুলনায় কম, কিন্তু আকাঙ্ক্ষা আছে। এই অল্পপ্রণরদের নিয়ে কেউ কেউ বক্রোক্তি করেছেন, যদিও তাঁদের কারুর নিকটাত্মীয়কে দেখেছি সেই দল থেকে অন্য দলে গিয়ে অল্পপ্রণরপোষিত নাট্যদলে অভিনয় করতে। অর্থও নিতে। অর্থাৎ ‘নিজের বেলায় আঁটিসুটি। পরের বেলায় দাঁতকপাটি’। যাই হোক মনে রাখতে হবে এই অল্পপ্রণররা তাঁদের পকেট থেকে যে টাকা থিয়েটারে লগ্নি করেন তার বেশিরভাগই ফেরৎ পান না।

অর্থাৎ কেউ হয়তো দশটাকা থিয়েটারে ভর্তুকি দিচ্ছেন, কেউ বা একশো টাকা, দুজনেই সেটা আর থিয়েটার থেকে ফেরৎ পাচ্ছেন না। আমি অন্তত তিনজন এমন অল্পপ্রণরের কথা জানি যাঁরা থিয়েটারে নিয়মিত অর্থ দিয়েছেন বা দিচ্ছেন এবং তার অধিকাংশই ফেরৎ পাচ্ছেন না। তাঁদের পরিবারের ভাষায় নিশ্চয়ই তা ‘জলে দেওয়া’ বা ‘বুনো মোষ তাড়ানো’। তাহলে প্রশ্ন ওঠে এঁরা তা করেন কেন? আমার উত্তর হল, “যার সাথে মজে মন/কিবা হাড়ি, কিবা ডোম”। এত কিছুর পরেও মানতে হবে থিয়েটারই একমাত্র সামাজিক সিস্টেমের একটি বিকল্প স্বর বজায় রাখে, যার জন্য থিয়েটারওয়ালারা সবসময়ই বিপজ্জনক। কোনো জাতির শারীরিক স্বাস্থ্যর মান বুঝতে গেলে সে ফুটবলে কতোটা পারঙ্গম তা যেমন একটা সূচক, তেমনই কোনো জাতির মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য কেমন তা বোঝার অব্যর্থ টোটকা হল তার থিয়েটার কেমন হচ্ছে তাকে দেখা। থিয়েটার সেই জাতির বুদ্ধি, মেধা ও আবেগের একটা মোট যোগফলকে সামনে নিয়ে আসে। এ একান্তভাবে সাধনা ও চর্চার বিষয়। যাঁরা মনে করেন, শুধুমাত্র মঞ্চে উঠে পাট গাওয়াই থিয়েটার, তাঁরা মুখের স্বর্গে, খুড়ি নরকে বাস করেন। হালের থিয়েটারের অনেক ছেলেমেয়েদেরও এমন ভাবে দেখেছি। কিছুটা সিনিয়র হওয়ার সুবাদে তাদের প্রতি আমার দাদাগোছের উপদেশ-এ মনোভাব না কাটালে তুমি সম্মান পাবে না। মনে রেখো থিয়েটারের মর্যাদা আসলে রয়ে গেছে তোমার হাতেই। প্রশ্ন যদি করো, কি চর্চা তথা সাধনা করবো? আমার উত্তর তোমার পরিচালকের কাছে যাও, তিনি একটা সুরাহা তোমাকে দেবেনই দেবেন।

যদি থিয়েটারের হালহকিকৎ নিয়ে কথা বলতে হয় তা এখন মোটের ওপর এই। তার মধ্যেই কি কলকাতায়, কি জেলায় ভালো থিয়েটার হচ্ছে, অশীতিপর পরিচালক থেকে শুরু করে নবীন পরিচালকেরা তার মধ্যেই ভালো ভালো কাজ করে যাচ্ছেন। খারাপ কাজও হচ্ছে। তবে থিয়েটারের সাম্প্রতিক চালু প্রবনতা এই যে যতোটা খারাপ, তার থেকেও বেশি বাড়িয়ে বলা হচ্ছে, তুলনায় ভালো কাজ হলে ততোটা ভালো বলা হচ্ছে না। এ মানসগঠন কিছুদিন আগেও থিয়েটারে ছিল না।

প্রসঙ্গ: নতুন কণ্ঠ

তার মধ্যেই এই কলকাতা শহরে নতুন যাঁরা ভালো কাজ করছেন তাঁদের একটা অসম্পূর্ণ তালিকা দিই। এই কারণে এ তালিকা কলকাতার অসম্পূর্ণ মফস্বল ও গ্রামবাংলাতেও অনেক ভালো ভালো কাজ হচ্ছে। সেগুলি আমি সাধ্যমতো দেখার চেষ্টাও করি কিন্তু সময়ভাবে ও ভৌগোলিক কারণেই অনেকসময়ই হয়ে ওঠে না। কিন্তু খবর রাখি। ইচ্ছে আছে মফস্বল ও গ্রামবাংলার থিয়েটার ও নতুনদের প্রনোদনা নিয়ে অচিরেই একটি বড়ো লেখা লিখবো। তবে মনে রাখতে হবে মফস্বল শহর থেকে এসেই অনির্বাণ ভট্টাচার্য কলকাতায় থিয়েটার করে সিনেমায় প্রায় ‘স্টার’ হয়ে গেছেন,

যা থিয়েটারকেই একটা বাড়তি অঞ্জলি দিচ্ছে। ওঁর দিকে তো বটেই আরও অনেকের দিকে আপনাদের তাকাতে হবে, যাঁরা সত্যিই থিয়েটারে হইচই ফেলে দিচ্ছে। যেমন কৃষ্ণেন্দু দেওয়ানজি, কৌশিক কর, অর্ণ মুখোপাধ্যায়, শুভদীপ গুহ, সত্রাজিৎ সরকার, সুমিত কুমার রায়, অনির্বাণ চক্রবর্তী, অনির্বাণ ঘোষ, লোকনাথ দে, তরঙ্গ সরকার, রাজর্ষি দে, রাজর্ষি চট্টোপাধ্যায়, কেশব ভট্টাচার্য, জয়রাজ ভট্টাচার্য, অধিকারী কৌশিক, বিশ্বজিৎ দাশ, সুমিত দত্ত, প্রসেনজিৎ বর্ধন, রাজীব বর্ধন, কিঞ্জল নন্দ, সৌরভ পালোধি, প্রান্তিক চৌধুরী, প্রেমাংশু রায়, কৌশভ দত্তগুপ্ত, অনুভব দাশ, শুভাশিস দাশগুপ্ত, অভিষেক দাশ, কৃষ্ণেন্দু অধিকারী, শ্রমণ চট্টোপাধ্যায়, নীলাদ্রি ভট্টাচার্য, সুপ্রতিম রায়, সুপ্রিয় চক্রবর্তী, রাজা ভট্টাচার্য গম্ভীরা ভট্টাচার্য, দেবাশিস ঘোষ দস্তিদার, জয়দীপ ভৌমিক, শুভঙ্কর দাশশর্মা, রাজু বেরা, তাপস চট্টোপাধ্যায়, শুভ্রসৌরভ দাশ, পৃথ্বীশ রাণা, অভি চক্রবর্তী, দেবাশিস দত্ত, দেবাশিস রায় এবং আরও অনেকে। মেয়েদের মধ্যে রয়েছেন দু্যতি ভট্টাচার্য, অঙ্কিতা মাঝি, বিন্দিয়া ঘোষ, অন্তরা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, তূর্ণা দাশ, রায়তী বসু, ইন্দুদীপা সিনহা, তমিষ্ঠা বিশ্বাস, শাঁওলী চট্টোপাধ্যায়, আশ্রপালী ঘোষ, কথাকলি দেব, বহি চক্রবর্তী, সঙ্গীতা পাল, সুমনা ভট্টাচার্য, রুস্পি পাল, উপাবেলা পাল, সঙ্গীতা চক্রবর্তী, ন্যানসি রায়, মন্দিরা ভট্টাচার্য, অর্পিতা বর্মন, রিমি মজুমদার, সমাদৃতা পাল, পৌলোমী বসু এবং আরও অনেকে। হয়তো অনেকের নাম বাদ পড়লো, কিন্তু তাতে তাদের গৌরব কমে না। এঁদের অনেককেই কলকাতার থিয়েটারের দর্শকেরা চেনেন। আরও অনেকে উঠে আসছেন। এঁদের কেউ নাটক লেখেন, কেউ বা লেখা বা পরিচালনার কাজ আবার কেউ বা লেখা, পরিচালনা বা অভিনয়ের কাজ, কেউ বা শুধুই অভিনয়। এঁদের সমবেত কলতানে মুখরিত হয়ে উঠেছে বঙ্গরঙ্গমঞ্চ।

প্রসঙ্গ :- থিয়েটারের সমাজ।

যেহেতু থিয়েটারের অর্থনীতি বিষয়টিই দেখলাম আদতে অনিশ্চিত, ফলে থিয়েটারের সমাজও থাকে খানিকটা অনিশ্চিত, বেপথু এবং ক্রুদ্ধ। এ যেন সেই জন অসবোর্নের ‘লুক ব্যাক ইন অ্যাংগার’। সেই ক্রোধ ও অসহায়তায় স্বরূপ ঠিক কীরকম তা বোঝানোর জন্য কিছুদিন আগে ‘সামাজিক সংযোগ দর্শন’-এ একটি লেখা লিখেছিলাম। তারই কিয়দংশ নীচে তুলে দিলাম। আর এর সূত্রেই হয়তো খানিকটা বোঝা যাবে বাংলা থিয়েটারের সামাজিক মনের অতীত, বর্তমান ও ভবিষ্যতকেও :

“১. স্বাধীনতার পর বিভক্ত বঙ্গদেশের এই বাংলায় যে বিকল্প থিয়েটার জন্মেছিলো, তা প্রায় মৃতপ্রায় এখন। মুষ্টিমেয় ইতস্তত বিক্ষিপ্ত কোরামিন দিয়ে কোনরকমে বাঁচিয়ে রাখা হয়েছে। রাষ্ট্রিক কোনো সমাদর নেই, গণমাধ্যমের সার্বিক অবহেলা সুপ্রাচীন আলোচনাচক্র অবসন্নতায় ধুঁকে এখন সমারূঢ়প্রায়, অধিকাংশ মূর্খ জনপিণ্ড -বামচারী তন্ত্রসাংস্কৃতিক শ্মশানসাধনায় কালাতিপাত করছে, নতুন শতাব্দীতে প্রবেশ করেও তাই সত্যিই কোন থিয়েটারটি ভালো এবং কোনটি মন্দ তার কোনো নির্দিষ্ট সূচক তথা নির্ধারক বা বলা ভালো এ নিয়ে আমরা আজ পর্যন্ত হাতেগরম কোনো নিদান দিতে পারিনি, ফলত সামাজিক সংযোগ সাইটে এসে অবশেষে থিতু হয়েছি। আমরাও তাই নিজেদের মধ্যে মারামারি করেছি। হিংস হয়েছি, ভীতু হয়েছি, উত্তেজিত হয়েছি, বাঘনখ দেখেছি, দেখিয়েছি, অবসন্ন হয়েছি, কেঁদে ফেলেছি, ভালোবেসেছি, আর তারপর...থাকে শুধু অন্ধকার???

২. এদিকে থিয়েটার যখন ক্রমশ আস্তে আস্তে মরে আসছে তারই মধ্যে, আমার অনেক অগ্রজের মতো, আমার অনেক সমসাময়িক বন্ধুর মতো এবং আমার অনেক অনুজের মতো আমিও মনে করেছি আমি যে কাজগুলি করেছি সেগুলিই শ্রেষ্ঠ, সর্বোত্তম এবং ইতিহাসের স্বর্ণালী পাতায় রৌপ্য অক্ষরে সেগুলি বাঁধিয়ে রাখা হবে। আমার এ মনে হওয়ার দোষ কিছু নেই। ওই যে বললাম আরো অনেকেই যুগে যুগে এমনটাই মনে করেন, করেছেন। বুঝিনি কবে যেন ধীরে ধীরে আমার কাজটা আসলে স্যালাইন লাগানো ঠিকে নার্সের মতো হয়ে গেছে। মনে পড়ে বাবা মারা যাওয়ার কদিন আগের কথা। কথা বলতে বলতে সহসা তার হৃদযন্ত্র বন্ধ হয়ে যায় এবং সামনে বসা বাবার এক মেডিকেল জানা ছাত্র তাঁর বুকে নাগাড়ে ঘূষি মেরে হৃদস্পন্দন চালু করেন। আমরাও হয়তো অনেকেই আজ থিয়েটারের সংগে ঠিক সেই কাজটাই করে চলেছি।

৩. না, তবু তারই মধ্যে ইতিহাস বাঁচে। হয়তো নিঃশব্দে, হয়তো নিলিপি নিয়ে, তবু তা বাঁচে। শতজলঝর্ণার ধ্বনিও উপলব্ধির মধ্য দিয়ে বয়ে চলে। না খুঁড়লেও সে ধ্বনি টের পাওয়া যায়। যতোই নাটককার লিখুন না কেন, “আমাদের ইতিহাসই একদিন থাকবে না, তো তার ঠিক ভুল ব্যাখ্যা” আসলে তা শেষাবধি ব্যাজস্তুতি হিশেবেই প্রতিভাত হয়ে ওঠে। “নিঘঘাত ঘুমের মধ্যে একদিন এসবের মূল্যায়ন হবে”।

এতোবড়ো উপক্রমণিকা কেন করলাম নিশ্চয় বুঝেছেন অনেকে। থিয়েটারি যে পোষ্ট নিয়েই হইচই হোক না কেন, মনে রাখতে হবে যাঁরা এই পরিবেশে বড় হয়ে ওঠেন তাঁরা কখনই ওই অসাড় সমাজ থেকে জীবদ্দশায় যোগ্যতার প্রকৃত যথাযথ সমাদর পাননা। ফলে দৈনন্দিন অনাদর, অবহেলা, সন্দেহাতুর চোখ, কৌলীন্যপ্রথা, বর্ণভেদী সমাজের শুচিবাই, অযোগ্য চোখরাঙানো, নানান ধরণের ইনসিকিওরিটি ও তজ্জনিত কারণে নানান মনোভংগী বাইরে বেরিয়ে আসে। প্রায় সবার আসে। যুগে যুগে এসেছে। অন্তত একশো উদাহরণ দিতে পারি। তাই মতকে আক্রমণ করা হোক, স্থানবিশেষে ব্যক্তিকেও কিন্তু গুণকে অস্বীকার করে নয়। ফলে গুণ অস্বীকৃতির নিম্নরাজ যেন আমাকে গ্রস্ত না করে। দূরে থাকবো তাও ভালো তবু বলবো, “যদ্যপি মোর গুরু শূঁড়িবাড়ি যায়/ তদ্যপি মোর গুরু নিত্যানন্দ রায়”।



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Spiti Valley 4x4 Snow Chain Drive..

Rudra Prasad Biswas (T1-3604)

What do Bongs connect over? Festivals, food & travel. I am no different. The Spiti Valley Winter trip was a cherished dream, about to come true. Yes, I am a self-confessed adrenaline junkie and yes, I absolutely love it.

The trip started in my mind one and half years ago when I scrolled through Facebook and Google on the lookout for fellow thrill-seekers. Solo travelling is not advisable during winter in this region as most roads are covered with thick snow. It is better to form a group. Then I came across "Planet Way Round" owned by Dr. Rahul Chauhan which brought together groups of people interested in extreme adventures by road. It was just what I needed. The plan was made. Ten of us agreed to go on this road less travelled and we named the trip "Spiti 4x4 Snow Chain Drive".



I started from my home city of Kolkata on 23rd of January and drove to Varanasi (683 km) which took me a total of around 14 hours. I made my way from there to Delhi which was 800+ km but the journey was made possible due to the amazing expressways, the Lucknow-Agra Expressway and the Agra-Delhi Yamuna Expressway which allowed me to complete the trip in 12 hours.

The third day (25th of January) I arrived in Chandigarh (257 km) and met the most easy going and amiable people I have ever met and was excited to share this adventure with this group of amazing people.

So the next day, 26th January, we drove from Chandigarh to Narkanda (235 Km, 9 hrs) which is where the temperatures started dropping and we witnessed snowfall for the first time on the trip. We celebrated by taking shots of the World's Highest Rated Rum that Cheema Bhai, who was on the trip with us had brought. When we woke up to make our way further and walked over to our cars we saw that our cars were covered in snow and the swimming pool was frozen. We thought that this was freezing; only if we had known of what's to come.

Just before we started our drive from Narkanda (27th, January) on our way to Kalpa we were informed that no water would be available in washrooms on the way and were given one bucket of water a day for when nature calls. On the way we faced many patches of black ice covering the roads which slowed us down. The view of the mountain and valley was amazing. Before Kalpa we got news of road blockages because of the heavy snowfall and had to make a quick change of plans and decided to stay at Reckong Peo (175km, 8Hrs). It was in Reckong Peo that our definitions of 'freezing' started to change. 0 degrees didn't seem cold anymore and we were faced with the temperature of -15 degrees. This is also when we began to form bonds and get to know more about the people who started off on this journey as strangers. We discovered that Cheema Bhai, an army man with us had a flair for cooking, which served us well because no non-veg food was available. He bought fresh chicken from the market and cooked it and savoured it on a bonfire that was set up to fight the cold.

The next day (28th, January), we made our way from Reckong Peo to Tabo (165 km). The road after we crossed Nako was hilly and prone to landslides. We made a stop at the Nako helipad for lunch which was covered on snow. We took that opportunity to fulfil our 'fast and furious' dreams and tested our drifting skills on the snow. Beyond this point there were no hotels. The only accommodation beyond this point were home stays. At Tabo we stayed at a very cosy homestay with a fireplace where we sat for 'Adda'. This place however had no heaters and temperatures were -18 degrees so I thanked by lucky stars that I carried my sleeping bag which had seemed like over packing before.

Next morning (29th, January) before we could leave, we were faced with a challenge. The diesel of one of the cars froze. We applied whatever remedy we could think of - we put a gas oven under the diesel tank and tried pouring hot water on the engines, but we had no luck and the car had to be towed to the helipad in Tabo. We spent this free time to visit the Tabo Monastery. At around 1pm with the car fixed we left for Kaza. This was also when we had to put snow chains on our tyres. We reached Kaza at 5pm (54km, 4hrs) where we refuelled our cars at the Highest Petrol pump in the world 3740m (12270ft).

After parking in our Home stay most cars had to be wrapped to protect them from the ridiculously low temperature -20 degree Celsius, luckily I did not face this problem with my car. Food was also a problem in this area but we were prepared so we carried frozen food from Chandigarh which we enjoyed. There was no electricity here so 10 of us stayed in 3 rooms for warmth.

Our plan for the day (30th January) was to do local sightseeing including Key Monastery, Kibber Village, Chicham Bridge, Asia's Heights Bridge 13596 Ft (4145 meters), Hikkim the World's Highest Post Office is located here. But we had to take a detour and skip Hikkim because of a snow storm and lack of proper roads. With no places to eat nearby we stopped on the road at a safe place and cooked our own food with the help of a mini gas cylinder and oven we were carrying. On this day we have spotted a herd of Ibex (Mountain goats).

It was dark, and while taking a steep downhill turn in a few feet of snow my front left tyre was busted by a sharp stone edge lying hidden under the snow. I was worried but together we replaced the tyre while it was snowing. Our hands froze and everyone insisted on helping out and hardly let me do any of the work, I couldn't have been more grateful. Finally we returned to our home stay at around 8pm.

At Kaza we stayed at a home stay with no electricity or mobile network. All electronics showed 1 or 2 percent charge the moment it was exposed to the weather, although actually they were more than 60 percent charged, which was quite an adjustment in this day and age. This was also the coldest temperature we had faced which went as low as -28 Degrees Celsius.





The next day (31st January) we planned to visit Pin Valley from Kaza and then back to Kalpa or Reckong Peo. But the road was blocked towards Pin valley after Mud village with 2 to 3 feet of snow. On the way back we came across a group of fellow travellers whose car had broken down in Mud Village. We did our best to help thus losing a lot of time. So, we decided to stay at Changu (127km). But the only hotel in Changu was closed. We got acquainted with the man who took care of the hotel and performed all the duties, he was manager, waiter and cook. At first, he told us that the hotel is closed and he couldn't help. But as we got acquainted I found out he is Bengali and we bonded over our mother tongue and home city. Soon, he couldn't deny a request from someone from his native land and kindly let us stay. I also found out that the owner of the hotel Mr. Litan Paul is also a Bengali and we connected on Facebook later. Turns out the world really is a small place. At night I decided to pitch my own tent under an apple tree inside the hotel compound just to enjoy the snow and to test survival skills in such conditions. Cheema joined me in the tent.

The next day (1st February) on our journey back we planned to drive till Narkanda (260km) but just when we were around Pooh (87km) a huge avalanche occurred blocking the road leaving us no choice but to stay. We went to check for accommodation in a PWD Bungalow. Luckily it was the PWD that was given the task of clearing the road so we got constant updates of the situation. Never having faced such an avalanche, we expected the road to be cleared by sun down.

And that's when we were given the bad news. The road wouldn't be clear for at least next two days because one snow plower broke down and to repair it they would require materials from the other side of the city which was connected by that road only, the one blocked because of the avalanche. We were all frustrated, but the good thing was we were carrying enough food and water in case of such a situation. Still it was pretty unexpected.

The following day (2nd, Feb) at around 7pm we were told that the road had been cleared and we left as soon as the Army Major signalled that it was safe to pass. After 5 hours of driving we decided to stop in Rampur because it was already dark out and crossing Narkanda and Reckong-Peo with black ice on the road is not safe. But some of us had to catch a flight in Chandigarh the next day at 3pm so we decided to continue driving through the night with two 30 minutes power naps in-between. Successfully, we reached Chandigarh at 9am in the morning with just enough time for some to catch their flights.

Back to civilization, a hot bath and running water was all I could think of. None from our group had bathed even once in the last week. We had snowflakes for face wash and believe me it's not as romantic as it sounds. I checked into my hotel with images of a tub full of hot water, fresh warm food and a soft bed was like a gift from heaven, I realised I took perks of civilization for granted.

Finally on 6th of February it was time to make my way back home. I collected memories like souvenirs in this trip, intriguing stories, a touch of a way of life long forgotten the sound of pure silence and most of all bonds of friendship that can only be made while facing adversity. Yes testing myself out of my comfort zone is what I live for.

Total driving distance from Kolkata-Kaza-Kolkata was 4830km.

To see a small video of this trip please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/y666za43>

<https://tinyurl.com/y5rshvx9>

You can visit <http://www.planetwayround.com/> to know more about this group.

The Educated Salesman

Sunil Shah
(T4 - 2306)



Mr. Adhir is a young, energetic and as per his name, restless person. After completing his graduation he tried to get some job but failed. He hailed from a very small town hence he wanted to try his luck by moving to a big city as he thought there would be multiple opportunities in a metro city. Six months after moving to Kolkata he was still, jobless. Adhir was eager to make a mark and so in his own words he became an 'enterpreneur' by becoming an insurance agent. Simultaneously he joined a distance education program for a 'certificate in management' course. As per Adhir he enrolled in a 'correspondence course'.

Adhir's performance as an agent was up to the mark in fact his senior was very happy with his achievements but was very annoyed with his reports. The senior could never understand from Adhir's report as to what he is actually trying to communicate. The company where Adhir was working on commission basis was handling all types of insurance products of various companies ranging from life insurance to general insurance and health insurance. Adhir also approached the intending customers with complete portfolio of insurance products.

In the meantime Adhir could obtain the 'certificate in management' after several attempts and started proclaiming himself as 'post graduate educated' but his boss continued to struggle with his reports although happy with his achievement of targets. Adhir was often reprimanded by the boss for his lack of situational awareness and eagerness to sell. For example, once Adhir was asked to handover a cash less health insurance card to a family for a client who was admitted to the hospital with a severe heart attack previous night. After handing over the card Adhir said to the family members, 'take a life insurance immediately since his heart is attacked, life ka kya bhavasa'. Adhir did not find anything wrong in his pitching though. Adhir was finally asked to leave when on one occasion he went to deliver the cheque for sum assured to a young widow who lost her husband seven days ago in a fatal accident two years after her marriage. Adhir said, 'Congratulations, you are getting the money within seven days. Please take another policy immediately on your marriage. We promise even faster service next time!'

Chucked from the insurance job, confused but energetic Mr. Adhir joined a real estate agent next. Here too, his legacy did not leave him as he could do reasonably well in terms of sales but lacked in his reporting. Adhir was again sacked when once he was asked to approach a customer and the customer was not interested. Since the deal was important Adhir approached the customer several times without any success. Adhir's friends suggested that he should visit the customer's home with some unique and delicious sweet fruits to build rapport. That night Adhir thought hard and finally went to the customer's home next morning carrying a load of fully grown whole sugarcane sticks to build rapport!

Somewhat frustrated Adhir set out to make a proper CV for himself and apply to 'big companies'. He was called for an interview by a distributor of a MNC. The interview was taken by the GM Sales Mr. Gambhir and HR manager Mr. Sudhir. In the CV Adhir had written against achievements 'I should more that required'. Gambhir could understand during the interview that Adhir had exceeded the targets in his previous employments. Towards the end of the interview Adhir said, 'Sir, you fire me and I run like bullet'. All he wanted to say was he will be effective in giving results. Sudhir had negative opinion about Adhir but Gambhir wanted to try him out. Accordingly Adhir was asked to work for a month on trial basis.

After receiving product training for few days he went for field visits. There he was asked to convince a particular customer who only kept rival MNC's product. After several visits and using his own unique way Adhir succeeded in getting that customer and the deal was closed. As asked he directly reported to Gambhir, 'Shop attacked and closed'. When Gambhir got the report he thought about it for long and replied 'you are fired, keep shelling, forget everything else'. On receiving the reply Adhir was ecstatic as he felt for the first time in his life his report and achievement both have been appreciated.

With signed offer letter in hand and yet not convinced Sudhir asked Gambhir 'in two years time he will be due for promotion, would you promote him to be a sales manager?' Gambhir stared at Sudhir blankly!

আমার হবি

অরিন্দম শীল (T4-4004)

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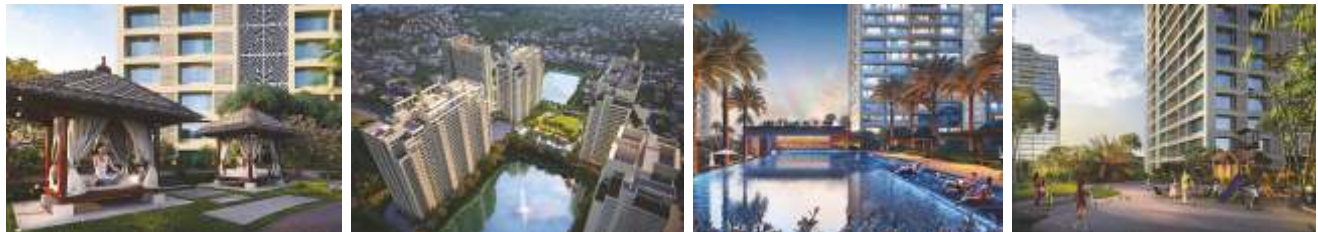
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