

## HKBA AGM 2022

Venue – IRC, 63 Caroline Hill Road, Sookunpoo Valley, Hong Kong

Attendees – HKBA Members

Date 29<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Time 3.30 pm

Total attendees: 29 members

### FOLLOWING Were the activities :

- Annual Report presented by the President on behalf of HKBA EC
- The Statement of Receipts & Payments, Balance sheet for the year which ended 31st March 2022, and a Comparative Statement of Payments and Receipts were presented, and acceptance was sought from members- Acceptance was proposed by Mr. Somdev Chatterjee and seconded by Dr. Subid Das
- The minutes of the previous AGM held on 25th June 2021 were confirmed. With acceptance proposed by Mr. Ashish Sengupta and seconded by Capt. Bhaskar Sengupta
- To appoint auditors for the next year, 2022- 2023 – The EC mentioned that it will fix an auditor after the meeting. Mr.Sunirmal Das's name was proposed informally during side discursssions, later Mr.Sunirmal Das's name was finalized after consultaion with him.
- To transact any other business of the Association
- Short Break for refreshments

### Members Present during the AGM :

ATTENDANCE RECORD - AGM 29/05/2022	
NAME	SIGNATURE
1 Basabi Roy	B. Roy
2 Subid Rayan Das	Subid Das
3 Dipali Putekude	Dipali Putekude
4 Mayma Banerjee	Mayma
5 Sagnik Ganguly	Sagnik
6 Pradeep Putekude	Pradeep
7 Randeep Misra	Randeep
8 Alak Roy	Alak
9 Srijita Ghosh	Srijita
10 Ashjit Ghosh	Ashjit
11 Debjyoti Sarkar	Debjyoti
12 Debdutta Basu	Debdutta
13 Tapas Roy	Tapas
14 Anirban Roy Choudhury	Anirban
15 Dipankar Mukutnanai	Dipankar
16 SANJOY GHOSAL	Sanjoy
17 SANJAY BHATTACHARJYA	Sanjay
18 SOMDEV CHATTERJEE	Somdev
19 Anshujit Sinha	Anshujit
20 Ashis Sengupta	Ashis

21. RAKESH SETHI	<del>Rakesh</del>
22 BHASKAR SENGUPTA	<del>Bhaskar</del>
23 DEBJANI SENGUPTA	Debian Sengupta
24 SAMRAT BISWAI	<del>Samrat</del>
25 SMITA DAS SEN	Smita
26 AMBAR MITRA	Ambar
27 BIPLAB SANGRAM NARWA	Biplab
28 Chanchal Kumar Chan	Tumpa Chan
29 Tumpa Chan	
30 Chanchal Kumar Chan	Chanchal Kumar Chan
31	

### **AGM proceeding :**

HKBA president Mr. Alok Roy gave the welcome address and went on to present a summary of events during 2021-2022

In the absence of the treasurer Mr. Rajib Panja, the Balance Sheet and statement of receipts and payments was presented by Mr. Angshujit Sinha.

### **Following questions were raised by members with answers:**

Member Query/Comments	EC's Response
Mr. Somdev Chatterjee asked about the Durga puja catering expenses; what was the % of expenses that go towards catering?	In the India Club, for the last Puja, catering/day amounted to about HK\$400/ person. 70-80% of the expenses were spent on catering. EC further mentioned that the catering in IRC is more economical since it is done by one cook arranged by HKBA, and provisions are bought for him by HKBA directly. Therefore IRC was more economical in comparison to India Club (IC).
Mr. Somdev Chatterjee asked for the breakdown of expenses of Purohit and Dhaki	Mr. Amit Chakravarty officiated as the purohit, did not accept Dakshina. The EC arranged for a token gift for him. Sakti da was paid his usual charges as he put in a lot of effort to train and stood by Amit during the Puja. The Association paid 10 K INR to the dhaki's to support them. They had also sent videos of their performance for all days during the Puja.
Mr. Somdev Chatterjee wanted to understand whether this level of expenditure for the Durga Pujo is sustainable?	Unless a good amount of sponsorship were obtained, this would not be sustainable, and therefore there was a need to raise the membership fees.
Mr. Somdev Chatterjee wanted to know the breakup of the expenses for Bijoya Sammelani.	Following breakup was given – 30K stage and lights; 10K hall booking; 50K catering by "Corner 90"

<p>Mr. Tapas Dey wanted to know the actual price of the Pratima.</p>	<p>The price of the Pratima was paid in installments, and the payment of 19,140.45 was for the year 2020-21. The total cost was HK\$29,372, and the cost of local clearance was HK\$4,853. The cost of transportation from Kolkata to HK was USD 672, which was written off by the transporter, who agreed to sponsor the same. The above-detailed explanation could not be provided during the AGM, though. The current year's 2021-22 expense of HK\$ 2,000 is only for the disposal of the old Pratima and not as the payment for the new Pratima.</p>
<p>Mr. Debdatta Barman wanted a comparison of Durga Puja's expenses between IC and IRC</p>	<p>EC further replied that an even comparison of the costs of IRC and IC could not be made because, ordinarily, IC cannot accommodate all HKBA members at one time, and a limit had to be imposed on the no of people that could be accommodated. Also, IC is more expensive because the hall needs to be booked, and the cost per plate works out to be more, whereas, in IRC, the catering was managed at actuals.</p>
<p>Mr. Debojyoti Sarkar wanted clarification on the donation amount for Amphan to RK Mission.</p>	<p>The total donation was HK\$ 22K, whereas 7.5K was given by members and the rest of HK\$ 22K was by HKBA.</p>
<p>During the discussion, it was mentioned that in the excel shared for membership list, Mr. Adrish Basu was shown as a Single-member, which is incorrect.</p>	<p>EC acknowledges with regret the mistake and confirms that the member in question is a "Family member" and there was a mistake in the Excel. Mr. Adrish Basu, who was not present At the AGM, was later contacted, and clarification was provided.</p>
<p>Mr. Biplab Manna wanted to know whether payment is made to artists performing on Rabindra Jayanti ?</p>	<p>INR 65K was made to Ms. Jayati Chakravarty for her performance, including all expenses like supporting musicians, telecast, etc.</p>
<p>Dr. Subid Das wanted to know about the proposed venue for Durga Pujo this year (2022)</p>	<p>The first preference would be IRC as IRC could accommodate the whole crowd and has an open ground. IC has a limitation of 200 people and cannot exceed this capacity. And we are keen to celebrate this year with all members attending the puja everyday(subject to the rules and regulations at that time and govt permissions)</p>
<p>Mr. Somdev Chatterjee asked how much funds needed to be increased to do the Puja, or was some scaling down required?</p>	<p>There is a need to cover the deficit of HK\$ 45K, which showed in the current year, and the EC feels that this year too, the sponsorship amount is expected to be less than usual, and therefore there would be a deficit next year as well.</p>
<p>Mr. Chanchal Chan suggested considering the inflation figure while calculating the increase. He said considering 4% X the number of years the membership has not increased, i.e., seven years, the membership should be increased by 28% or a figure around it.</p>	<p>Here the compounded rate should have to be considered. It must also be remembered that once increased, the membership will remain the same for the next couple of years. So the factor of 7 years is also not appropriate.</p>

<p>Dr. Subid Das mentioned that the increase in subscriptions is an important point and objected to the fact that this decision will be taken at AGM only. He suggested that all members be informed and provided with a chance to comment.</p>	<p>EC mentioned that the item was a pending item from the last AGM (2021), and the current discussion is a continuation of that only. As far as commenting is concerned, the presence in AGM is needed for that purpose. It is not mandatory to circulate such information prior to AGM. The decision taken at the AGM will be final and binding.</p>
<p>Capt. Bhaskar Sengupta mentioned that the membership subscription needs to be increased. He stated that members pay not only for the Durga Puja meal but for other Puja-related expenses and all events around the year.</p> <p>Mr. Ashish Sengupta agreed that membership must be increased. He suggested increasing the membership by 1,000 HK\$ and not 500 HK\$ as proposed earlier. This will reduce the dependency on sponsorship to a reasonable extent. Else piece meal increase is not the Way to go.</p>	<p>EC took a vote by raising hands, and most members agreed to the proposal of increasing the membership by HK\$ 1000 for families and HK\$ 500 for singles.</p> <p>By a show of hands, the increase was adopted, and from 2022 onwards, the revised membership will be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family – HK\$ 3,000</li> <li>• Single – HK\$ 1,500</li> </ul> <p>EC mentioned that it would provide an elaboration about the increase in membership for all members. This will help explain the increase to all members, including those not present at the AGM, to understand the background. Please see annexure 1.</p> <p>EC will keep the option open for members who have financial difficulty paying the whole of the increased amount to approach the EC for consideration.</p>
<p>Mr. Abhijit Ghosh – mentioned if we could come up with certain ways to increase membership. To find out how many Bengalis are there who are non-members but could be reached out to them. There were people last year who did come up and wanted to become members during the Durga Pujo.</p> <p>Dr. (Ms) Basabi Roy mentioned that this is usually done by word of mouth and is very effective.</p> <p>Mr. Biplab Manna suggested to have a scheme to attract members for the first year by giving them a discount. But eventually through further discussion among attendees in the meeting, it was concluded to be not very effective approach.</p> <p>Mr. Somdev Chatterjee mentioned that EC is empowered to take a call on returning members on whether to charge or not to charge arrears.</p>	<p>EC requested all members to reach out to other Bengali friends and acquaintances and try to convince them to become members. EC in the past has allowed past discontinued members to join back without paying the past arrears.</p>

## **Annexure 1**

### **Basis of increase in the membership fee by HK\$1,000 (per family)/ HK\$ 500 (single member)**

#### **Background**

For 2020-2021 a shortfall of HK\$ 43K was incurred from the previous year's balance. This shortfall is mainly due to the two major events, Durga Puja and Bijoya Sammelani. The total expense incurred was HK\$ 365K and the membership collected was HK\$ 277K. This was an excellent collection as it could cover 75% of the major costs.

The Durga Puja was a scaled-down version, unlike that of the pre-covid era. An additional expense was incurred this year for venue hire for Bijoya Sammelani to accommodate the usual member's turnout along with extra arrangements for the cultural program, which could not be held during Durga puja.

Referring to previous years, the total expense for Durga Puja is around 550K-600K, whereas membership subscription is about 260K. Therefore, this is only about 45%-50% of the expense for Puja alone. Then there are other expenses like the Annual function, where cultural artists from Kolkata are invited (expense of about HK\$70K), which was not conducted in 2020-2021. Although this event helps us connect to our cultural roots, this could not be organized due to COVID restrictions.

Internal and external sponsors cover a significant part of this deficit. Internal members sponsor meals/bhog and other things like puja flowers, sweets, etc. This has been steady over the years. A significant fluctuation in the amount was observed for external sponsors. Last year's collection was 112K compared to the 350K-400K range of other years. This considerable drop is because of COVID and its effect on the market, which is understandable.

The Association has managed with the same subscription of HK\$ 2K for the last seven years despite increased prices due to inflation because of the collection from external sponsors.

Given that the economy will be better but will need some time to recover, we can assume the collection from external sponsors will increase slowly. Despite that, we reckon it would take some time to return to the original figure.

#### **Proposed Way ahead**

We need to plan for all the events in advance, especially Durga Puja, and we cannot wait until the last moment to decide the scale of the event. Our main event, Durga Puja alone, will require abt HK\$ 600K,

and if we can do all other calendar events, we will need approx. 750K. Whereas our collection will remain at about 277K(without increment of membership fees) and expecting the collection from external sponsors to improve, we may be able to collect about 200K at best. With internal sponsorship of 40K (same as 2020-2021), the figures will look like

<b>Receipts</b>	
Membership	HK\$ 277K
External Sponsors	HK\$ 200K
Internal Sponsors	HK\$ 40K
<b>Total</b>	<b>HK\$ 517K</b>

So, the deficit will be 233K (Payments 750K – Receipts 517K)

With the increase in the membership fee, we can collect an additional C 135K(considering current membership strength remains more or less similar). The remaining HK\$ 98K can come from the reserve, which will be a reasonable ask. Allocation of the whole of 233K to the reserve fund will not be prudent, especially when we don't expect the external sponsorship to improve significantly in the next 1-2 years.

It is always nice to add a surplus to reserve, whatever the amount. On the other hand, allocating a big deficit to the reserve fund may not be prudent.

If the COVID restriction is back, and we have to perform the events, including the Durga Puja, in a restricted manner, the excess funds will remain in reserve.