



# The Hong Kong Bengali Association

Regd. under the Societies Ordinance: Ref: (2) in CP/LIC/SO/19/21460 dated 31.12.1998  
Fax: +852 2739-9876 [Email:mailhkba@gmail.com](mailto:mailhkba@gmail.com)

## Minutes of the Meeting AGM For the Year 2023-2024

Venue – IRC

Date - June 16th, 2024

Time - 15:00

### Following were the activities:

- To confirm the minutes of the AGM held on 14th May 2023.
- To receive the Annual Report for 2023-2024
- To pass the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024.
- To appoint auditors for the year 2024-2025.
- Discursion on the events conducted during the period 2024-2025.
- Break for refreshments.

### Attendees

AGM FY 2023-2024 Attendance Sheet		
Sl. No.	Name	Signature
1	Dipali Putatunda	Dipali Putatunda
2	Mayura Banerjee	Mayura Banerjee
3	Debika Sarkar	Debika Sarkar
4	Debaraj Choudhury	Debaraj Choudhury
5	Shijita Ghosh	Shijita Ghosh
6	Amidita Bhattacharya	Amidita Bhattacharya
7	Anshujitika	Anshujitika
8	Rajti Das	Rajti Das
9	Rajdeep Majumder	Rajdeep Majumder
10	Subid Rajan Das	Subid Rajan Das
11	Pradip Putatunda	Pradip Putatunda
12	Sanjay Bhattacharya	Sanjay Bhattacharya
13	Bhaskar Senjyot	Bhaskar Senjyot
14	Debjani Senjyot	Debjani Senjyot
15	Samar Biswas	Samar Biswas
16	Ripab Majumder	Ripab Majumder
17	Abel Ray	Abel Ray
18	Mousik Talotdar	Mousik Talotdar

The meeting commenced at 15:50 HKT with the President Dr. Pradip Putatunda greeting everyone and apologising for the delayed start.



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## **Below are the details of the items discussed in AGM:**

The minutes from the last meeting of 2023 were reviewed and accepted by the attendees.

Copies of the annual report were distributed to all present. No changes or modifications to the annual report were proposed, and the report was accepted and approved by all members in attendance.

## **ACCOUNTS**

The President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda put forward a proposal to appoint the accounting firm N.C. Lo & Co., a certified audit firm based in Hong Kong, as the organization's new auditor. This proposal was accepted unanimously by all members present.

It was communicated that the minimum fee for the auditor's services would be 10,000 HKD. N.C. Lo & Co. was to be appointed as the authorized auditor for financial years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Donations:**

The President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda., emphasized HKBA's commitment to community engagement through donations that were made to local institutions and schools in Kolkata and Po Leung Kuk

### **Discussion on the events conducted during the period 2023-2024:**

The President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda asked all attendees to express their views on the events conducted in the past year. The discussion which proceeded is as follows

### **Bengali movie screening:**

Mrs. Rapti Das addressed the first agenda item, which pertained to the Bengali movie screening that occurred on September 22nd, 2023. She expressed the view that members should not have been charged for tickets to attend the screening.

Mr. Samrat Biswas responded, stating that the amount charged was nominal and this helped ensure good attendance at the event.

Dr. Subid Das then claimed that the ticket price used to be set at a more reasonable price in the past.



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Mr. Rajdeep Mojumder contested this point, highlighting that the number of members has increased over time, due to which the HK Film archive theatre (venue used for such screenings previously) is no longer appropriate as it has only 125 seats. Also hiring charges of this venue is much lesser compared to the private venues we hire now for movie screening.

## **Lokhi Pujo:**

The President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda mentioned that last year our Purohit Sakti da's was asked to stay back after the Durga Pujo to perform Lokhi Pujo the idea being to perform Lakhi Pujo as per Bengali rituals. The committee proposed not to ask Sakti da to stay till Lokhi Pujo to reduce the cost/expense.

It was generally consented that if the cost increase is not too much then we can continue the same as it gives a new flavour to Lakhi Pujo.

## **HKBA - 25th Year**

The committee distributed terracotta idols of the Goddess Durga to all members as gifts. The committee had initially considered providing copies of the Bhagavad Gita as the commemorative item but was unable to procure/publish enough of the same.

## **Annual Program:**

President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda announced the committee has also planned for Annual Function to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The committee has confirmed the Bengali rock band "Crosswindz" and reputed actor Mr. Kharaj Mukherjee to perform at the event. The visa processing is under way and members will receive update soon.

## **Durga Pujo:**

Our member Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh had previously sent an email expressing her views about last years events as she could not be personally present during the AGM and request the committee to discuss the matter. The committee did the same and the points were discussed among the members for their views. The discussion is as follows:

In her email, Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh raised several points for the committee to review:

1. Food shortage during Durga Pujo: Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh mentioned that there was a shortage of food during the Durga Pujo celebrations

The committee mentioned that the shortage may not be actual shortage in all cases. Sometimes the food item on the counter finishes and take some time to be refilled. Although in some cases it was genuine shortage, and the committee will look into this issue and reflect.



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2. Sandhi Pujo overcrowding: Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh has mentioned that there were too many non-members attending the Sandhi Pujo, which prevented members from being able to light the candles. Mrs. Anindita Bhattacharya concurred with this observation.
  - Feedback on candle lighting: Mrs. Srijita Ghosh acknowledged that this feedback is acknowledged and stated that last year, the committee members had made efforts to ensure that there was no chaos and that everyone (organized by one family member being represented), had a chance to light the candles.
  - Fire hazards and accommodating elderly non-members: Mr. Angshujit Sinha pointed out that the elderly non-members could not be refused, which created challenges. Also there is a chance of fire hazards involved. The committee agreed to look into the matter and will discuss with the pujo volunteer to streamline the process.
  - Prioritizing members: President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda agreed that although the number of members is increasing every year, priority should be given to members for all Pujo-related matters.
  
3. Regarding the Dashami celebrations: Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh mentioned that the Sindoor Khela ritual takes a long time, as the women take their time doing the "boron".
  - President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda assured that the committee will continue exploring measures to ensure members are prioritized during this ritual and ways to reduce the "boron" time. President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda also emphasized that as this is a ritual performed by ladies their co-operation is requested.
  
4. Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh mentioned that it was felt by many that Rabindra Jayanti program and the Ananda Mela (held on Poila Baisakh) were not up to the mark. She shared concerns over the venue for Ananda Mela and the stage decoration for Rabindra Jayanti.
  - Rajdeep Mojumder pointed out that all cultural programs include performances from interested members which are delivered on the stage to their best abilities. So, while there is always room for improvement, it would be better to receive specific constructive feedbacks from concerned members in future, which can help in making the performances more acceptable.
  - Regarding stage decoration, committee accepted that it could have been better and highlighted that due to storage restrictions at IRC, the décor materials couldn't be accessed. Also, there is a restriction on sticking any artwork on IRC walls as it peels of the wall colour coating. HKBA had been rebuked for similar activity in past. Hence not much was possible.
  - For Ananda Mela venue – The committee mentioned that Banyan Tree Garden clubhouse was the best choice amongst the several venues which Committee reviewed. The criteria considered were.
    - Centrally location



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- Indoors
- Within budget and
- Availability

5. Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh also mentioned that a proper prosad packet was organized for non-members visiting the Pujo premises in past, but it was discontinued this time.

The committee although was not clear about the what prosad packet Mrs. Sanhita(Polly) Ghosh was referring to but assumed it's the dry fruits packet which was given as prosad. The committee agreed that last year no dry fruit packets where distributed. The committee mentioned that all visitors were distributed fruits as prosad. The visitors had choice to select form multiple variety of available fruits. This the committee believed is more in line with Bengali tradition than distributing dry fruits packets.

## **Other points that were raised and discussed:**

Mrs. Rapti Das said that all communications from the committee to members should maintain a polite and respectful tone. Mr. Alok Roy also expressed the importance of this gesture. While the committee acknowledged this feedback, at the same time it was reminded that members also need to be mindful to speak with respect to the workers and staff at the club.

The committee shared details about the significant expenses involved in setting up the pandal for the Durga Pujo celebrations. Currently, the pandal costs are close to 300,000 HKD annually. However, the committee mentioned that the it might be able reduce these costs in the future. Because IRC is planning to expand its facilities by constructing an all-purpose, covered ground for cricket activities. If the construction of this new space is completed by the end of September, the pandal expenses can potentially be reduced by approximately 100,000 HKD. IRC is currently awaiting the necessary permissions from the buildings department to proceed with this project. If the covered facility construction is not completed September this year then at-least the savings can be done next year onwards.

The Durga Pujo celebrations will continue to be held in the club's existing hall, while the newly constructed covered ground can be utilized for cultural programs and food arrangements. This strategic use of the expanded facilities is expected to help optimize the overall event expenses.

Dr Subid Das mentioned that editor of the HKBA magazine who puts in a lot of effort which be recognized and a special mention and thank's during the Durga Pujo similar to the pujo volunteers and cultural program participants might be a good gesture. Dr Subid Das also suggested to do the same to all the members who contributes to the HKBA magazine.



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President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda thanked Mr Anirban Roy Choudhury for his excellent work on the magazine and mentioned that the editor's name is mentioned in the magazine and same is kept for ever. Mr Samrat Biswas added that during the Durga Pujo people participating only during the Durga Pujo are named, not for other events or activities.

Dr Subid Das mentioned that the committee needs to find a way to improve the attendance in AGM. He proposed to have a lunch along with the AGM which might attract more members to attend the AGM. In the past this was done with successful outcome.

President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda appreciated the idea but mentioned attending AGM should be members initiative as it gives members a chance to interact, express and share their views and ideas to improve the services they receive during the year. That should be the actual motivation to attend. Also, President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda added that lunch would increase the cost of holding the AGM significantly.

Lastly, the committee reported that the HKBA fund currently has a balance of around 1 million HKD, which should provide a solid financial foundation for the upcoming Pujo and other initiatives.

President, Dr. Pradip Putatunda mentioned even though the current financial condition is stable enough all members should take initiative to bring in more sponsors and also consider donation in their personal capacity to keep the fund position stable.