

শারদীয়া পত্রিকা সপ্তদশ বার্ষিকী সংখ্যা - ১৪২২

DURGA PUJA 2015



HONG KONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION

Puja Greetings



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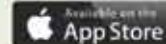
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Happy Durga Puja

**May the Goddess of fortune bless you
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Dear Patrons & Friends

Durga Puja Greetings!

As summer fades away the Fall colour creates a picturesque backdrop to the Hong Kong landscape, even without the fragrance of Shiuli Phool (Night-flowering Jasmine) we get to feel it is time for Durga Puja.

Hong Kong Bengali Association has grown many folds in the last seventeen years of its existence. With the advent of internet the world has become a global village hence the technology has enabled us to get a virtual feel of the DURGA PUJO celebrations in our homeland. The famous Pujo of Bagbazar/ Kumartuli is now seen through our handheld devices. However as Bengalis beyond BENGAL take pride in recreating the celebration where they live there is a Durga Puja now in every continent. In Hong Kong too we have taken all efforts to create the festive fervor similar to what is witnessed in BENGAL.

I take this opportunity to welcome our new members to the HKBA family. A number of Bengalis moving into Hong Kong has taken up membership of HKBA hence I am convinced our membership will continue to grow in the short term which is a very positive development. I encourage all, especially our new members to actively participate & to involve them in making HKBA a vibrant place.

We are celebrating the seventeenth edition of Durga Puja this year. We deeply appreciate the generous support of the members and friends of HKBA to make the celebration a successful and sustainable one. We thank all the volunteers for their enthusiastic participation in preparation and implementation of our program.

The spirit of festivity is in Hong Kong too as we are celebrating Durga Puja. Our souvenir is the voice of this "Festival of Joy" and we pay our tributes to Goddess MA DURGA for providing peace & happiness to all.

We have attempted to bring out a variety of features like articles, art work & poetry contributed by our Members. We hope you all will enjoy reading through the pages of this souvenir. Our sincere and deepest gratitude to The Consul General of India Sri Prashant Agrawal for his active involvement in rendering all possible assistance to HKBA, Councilors of Yau Tsim Mong District council, our Patrons and well-wishers without whose help this mega event would not have being possible to organize.

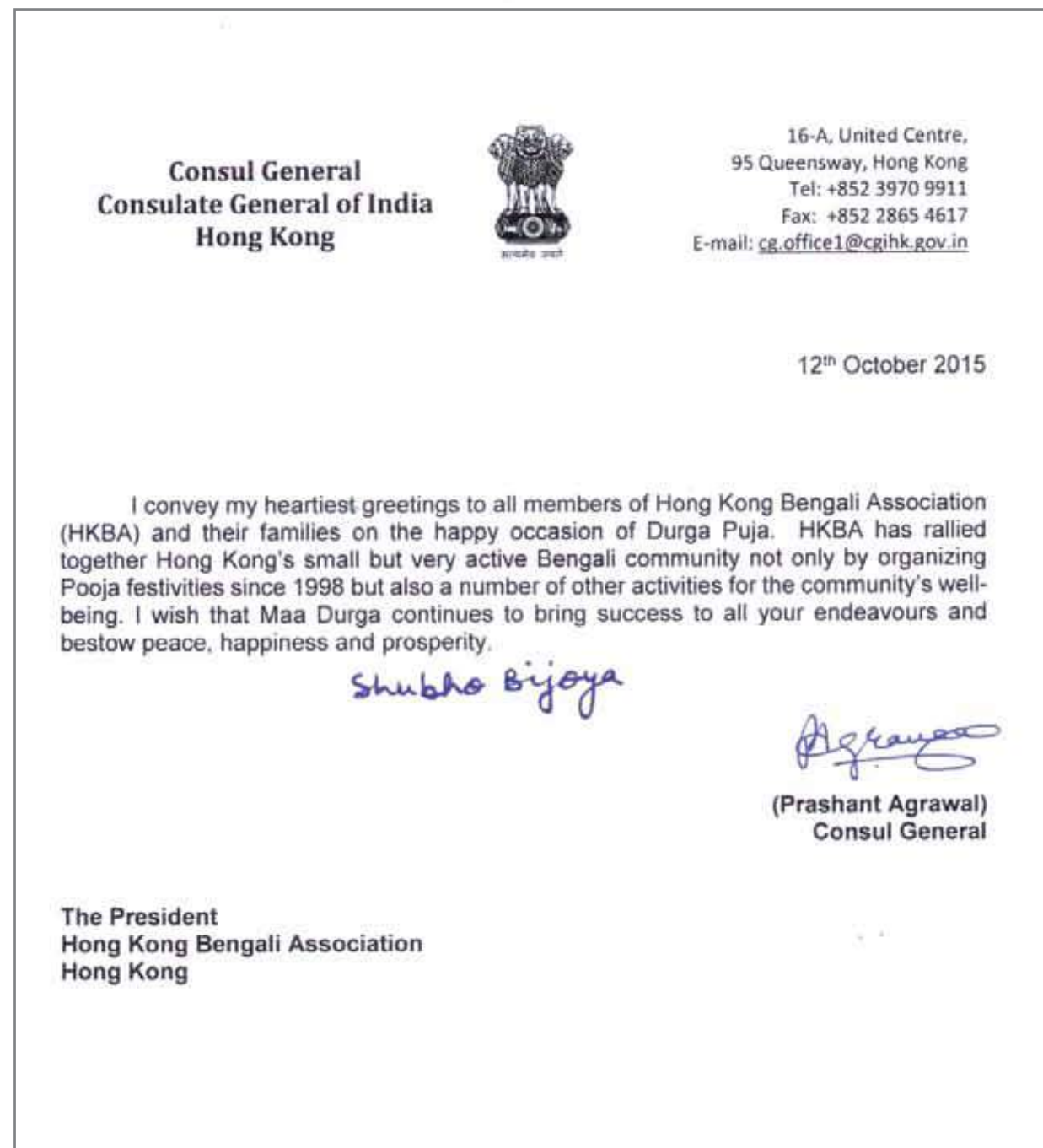
This year, through music and dance programs we will showcase our local talents preserving the rich cultural heritage of India.

We take this opportunity in extending our warm 'Sharodiya' greetings to you and your family.

Shubho Bijoya!

*With my best regards
Bhaskar Sengupta*

Message from Consul General of India Sri Prashant Agrawal



A Channel to Intercultural Friendship



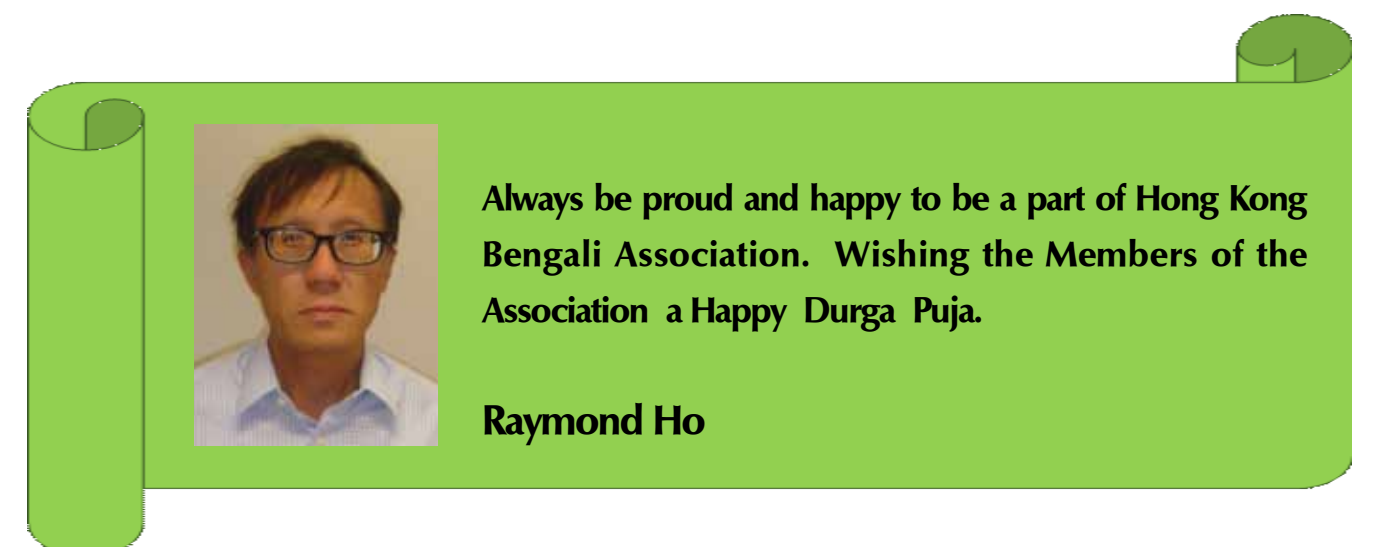
By Siumi Maria Tam
Associate Professor of Anthropology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Namaste! Greetings to friends in the Hong Kong Bengali Association.

I have had the good fortune of observing the Durga Puja festivities firsthand in the past few years and, with the generous help of Bengali friends, have learned about insiders' perspectives of the meanings of the activities. I find Durga Puja definitely one of the most colorful religious festivals in Hong Kong. With days of religious, cultural and social programs, it serves to bring everyone in the Bengali community in Hong Kong together, and pass important social and cultural capital to the younger generation. For the larger society, it provides a means for Hongkongers of different ethnic origins a channel to understanding Bengali customs, the Hindu religion, as well as changes within the Indian overseas population.

But while the festival is internationally famous and important to Bengalis, it is still relatively unfamiliar to Hongkongers of Chinese origin. As a Chinese myself, I have enjoyed the sights, sounds and smells, and of course the food in the festivities; but more so I have benefited from the knowledge and touched by the friendships given me so generously. I believe change in the intellectual and attitudinal aspects will lead to change in the relational and behavioral aspects of everyday life -- learning about Durga Puja will be a wonderful way for Hongkongers to appreciate their multicultural heritage together, and to genuinely enjoy intercultural friendships.

On the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja 2015, may I wish the Hong Kong Bengali Association a most successful event, and all the members of the Association good health and wealth in the coming year. And let's all work to create more intercultural friendships!





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Durga Puja 2015 Program Schedule

Venue:
Multipurpose Hall, Henry G Leong Community Center
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon.

19th OCTOBER, MONDAY – SASHTI

06.30 PM BODHON

07.30 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

07.30-08.30 PM FUNCTION

08.30-09.30 PM DINNER & CLEANING

10.00 PM CLOSING

20th OCTOBER, TUESDAY – SAPTAMI

10-11 AM PUJA

18.00-19.00 PM EVENING PUJA

11-12 AM PUSHPANJALI

19.00-19.30 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

1230 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

19.30-20.30 PM FUNCTION

12.30-02.00 PM LUNCH AT COVERED PLAY GROUND

20.30-21.30 PM DINNER AT COVERED PLAY GROUND

14.00-15.00 PM CLEANING

21.30-2200 PM CLEANING & CLOSING

21st OCTOBER, WEDNESDAY- ASHTAMI

10-11 AM PUJA

18.00-19.00 PM SANDHI PUJA

11-12 AM PUSHPANJALI

19.00-19.30 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

1230 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

19.30-20.30 PM VARIETY SHOW

12.30-02.00 PM LUNCH AT COVERED PLAY GROUND

20.30-21.30 PM DINNER AT COVERED PLAY GROUND

14.00-15.00 PM CLEANING

21.30-2200 PM CLEANING & CLOSING

22nd OCTOBER, THURSDAY- NABAMI DASHAMI

10-11 AM PUJA

18.00-19.00 PM EVENING PUJA & SHANTI JAL

11-12 AM PUSHPANJALI

19.00-19.30 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

1230 PM PRASAD DISTRIBUTION

19.30-20.30 PM SIDUR KHELA & BIJOYA

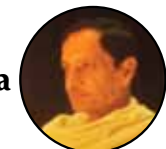
12.30-02.00 PM LUNCH AT COVERED PLAY GROUND

20.30-21.30 PM DINNER AT COVERED PLAY GROUND

14.00-15.00 PM CLEANING

21.30-2200 PM CLEANING & CLOSING

Priest: Shri Sakti Prasad Mukherjee of Kolkata



Traveling Direction to HLCC:

Take Exit C at Yau Ma Tei MTR, turn right, walk along the Nathan Road, turn right again at the Public Square Street, the HGLCC is ahead at the intersection of Public Square Street and Shanghai Street.

The Hazardous Adventure



By Aarshi Majumder

Once upon a time there was a little town called Persian City nestling at the tip of Mount Rushmore whose population was about 6,700 people. Now Mount Rushmore was usually a serene place and everyone was calm and peaceful, but on August 21st, 2001-word broke out that a disaster had hit the city and it was a 7.7 magnitude earthquake. The ground indeed started to shake staggeringly like 100 more times shakier than a tarantula climbing into your ear. Every family's house had been washed out and started to tremble and suddenly "BOOM!!!" a tall mountain of concrete sat before them. "Oh!!" such a sad and depressing story, but there was only one exciting news. A family had managed to escape. They quickly grabbed all their supplies and headed towards the North East Mountains. They scampered as fast as they could until they reached safety from the dangerous earthquake. During the transmigration of walking and walking they reached the Black Rock Desert on foot. All they had to survive was one tent, sleeping bags, a spade, fire matches and enough food for 2 days. They had extra pairs of clothes too. When they started trudging over the hot dry place, they met a giant scorpion. The mother whose name was Melindiana almost stepped on it. It crunched its claws, poisonously crawling towards its victims. And soon a hiss started. The scorpion had slayed Layla-the youngest daughter of the family. As the scorpion bit her, she tumbled to the desiccated sand. The father instantaneously picked up a blunt sledgexhammer and then stabbed the scorpion. It was exterminated! Now, there was just one problem, how could the family find an antidote to a scorpion bite in the middle of the desert. With excruciating pain and suffering, there was blue poison clauding around the wound which meant trouble. Auspiciously, there was a guide car coming by and there were many people on it. Melindiana dashed towards them for help. The director of the desert car took the necessities of helping the poor child and rushed over to aid her.

"There are often a lot of scorpion stings around this area, so I always have my first-aid kit with me. Your daughter can be fixed in no time," stated the director.

"Oh thank you so much!" replied the father. "There was huge earthquake in Persian City and we were the only family to escape from its danger.

"Hmmmm, I've heard about it," claimed the director. "Okay, there is no time to lose; I must start healing the bite." From the dark yellow pouch the director had, he clutched a shining silver container where a blue powdery liquid was held. He gently wiped the antidote on the badly hurt scar, and then stuck a plaster on top of it. He gave Layla a drop of brown medicine and then gradually she woke up.

"Mother what happened to me?" asked Layla

"Oh honey you don't want to know, a scorpion bit you, I'm so delighted to see your happy face back!" exclaimed Melindiana.

"Now hop onto our car, and you'll be safe and sound!" said the director.
"Thanks a bunch!" thanked Melindiana.

"Oh it's our pleasure!" exclaimed the director. "I have a feeling there are more dangerous consultants coming our way, I must take you to a safer place immediately." The family got on the car and rode to safety without anyone hurt.

My Primary School Life



By Atindrya Ghosh (Abhro)

Looking back at the years that I spent in my primary school, I realize that those were some of the best years of my life, till now. I would hence like to recount some of my experiences, joys and fears of those precious six years.

I started primary school at Sha Tin Junior in the year 2009. Though many ups and downs, joys and sorrows, good and bad experiences, I graduated on June 2015, to start yet another fruitful learning journey in Sha Tin College. So how were my junior years?

The first day is still very fresh in my memory. One of my worst fears was transformed into reality, when a dragonfly flew into our classroom and jolted every one of us out of our seats. My condition was the worst, perhaps and I started screaming my head off, till the teacher consoled me. There were many a challenge for me during the first year, as an example, I remember vividly, is my trip to the hospital and receiving a few painful stitches after my friend dropped me while trying to carry me in the playground. I was lucky that, I got away without much harm and a couple of warnings at home. But slowly and effectively I overcame them all to start another new year.

With the rhythm of the school year we had a very good time in primary two. As a student after primary one we learnt to manage the situations and started sharing our ideas and we tried to solve our problems in our classroom.

Primary three was very helpful to me as I learnt many things which were completely new to me, like the history of the opium war, multiplication and division. My learning growth was expanding and my journey was taking me to new exploration as new horizons slowly opened up.

I joined the school choir and had the opportunity to perform in many different places. I learnt to be a part of a large group and overcome stage fear. I became more confident on my extracurricular activities.

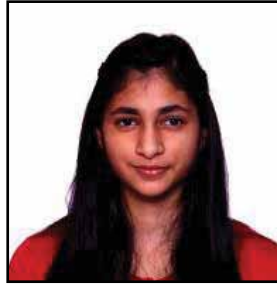
Thus, in year Primary four I tried my hand at Cricket, it was not easy since my training sessions were mostly after school and I used to be supper tired. But I still enjoyed them a lot. As I got to know the game better, I participated in my first extra curricular sports activity and gradually learn the intricacies of the game. I also tried my luck in Aquathlon (Swimming and Running combined), but was not selected. However I wasn't dejected since I had a feeling that I would later be a part of the team. My first experience of camping came this year. And it taught me quite a few lessons of life to be more organized, punctual, be a team player and above all be responsible for myself. It was indeed a life changing experience.

Year five saw a more mature me, who was capable of handling more responsibilities and accepting more challenges in new areas. Market day brought my skills of salesmanship and entrepreneurship into light. It was a mixture of business and pleasure as we sold different products as a part of a school project – learning at its best.

Primary six was probably the best year, not only in terms of learning but also in terms of achievement and self satisfaction. I was finally selected in the Aquathlon team, there were various Aquathlon competitions. I had very good results which help my school to secure the second place in ESF Aquathlon, a very proud achievement for my school, myself and my parents. Time flew quickly and we put up a Graduation play for our parents and school. I landed a triple role, again a very hard job, but lived up to everyone's expectations. I proved to myself that I was ready to accept greater responsibilities of life and overcome hurdles.

Soon it was time to say goodbye to Primary school forever. With a heavy heart we bade farewell to our old mate, teachers and many others who had made our junior years so memorable and rewarding in every way. The path ahead is difficult but I had every belief that no matter what, I will strive harder towards my goal of successfully completing my high school. No failure shall defeat my spirit, but rather further strengthen my conviction of achieving it. Wish me luck!

Kolkata



By Sreejony sengupta

Dawn broke upon the ebony canvas of the silent city. Strokes of vermillion diluted the horizon, whilst bullets of amber launched all around. As the hushed voices awoke, and the chirps of singing creatures amplified, night took shelter beneath day's shadow.

It had begun.

Thousands emerged from the scarlet-stained walls, and journeyed the rubble-filled streets, hurrying to their monotonous occupations that funded their hand to mouth existence. The silent city had now awoken. Bleats of bruised buses polluted the thick air whilst armies of fatigued bodies brimmed its yawning egress. A cloak of heady grey mist escaped from the steel tailpipes of golden taxis, diffusing into the dense atmosphere, choking its surroundings. The screams of vendors who were cluttered on the ends of the asphalt ribbon, rung in my ears, compelling me to divulge in their treasures; alabaster porcelain dolls, with heavy doe eyes painted fawn; chains of long polychromatic drapes; baskets engrossed with pellets of golden-brown crackers. Trails of ambrosial gems haunted my every step whilst the fiery garlands lay still upon the unpaved surface of the earth, awaiting Maa Durga's arrival.

Then there was a bleat. A step. A change.

Bleached pedestals stood tall as the amber bullets ricocheted and sank into the horizon. It was time. She had arrived.

Bang.

Echoes reflected off the curved alleys and lights flickered, she was near.

Bang.

The beatings of the drums got louder, and the vibrations more recurrent; they were the echoes that sounded in my ears; they were the melody that my blood pumped to; they were the welcome song of Maa Durga. In the distance, her jewel-enlaced body glimmered under the shimmering of the stars. Specs of gold entwined in her every curve. Caterpillar-like, her ten arms protruded out of her exterior, clenching weapons, ready to fend off the evil of this world.

Bang.

The echoes had now metamorphosed into chants; Durga Maa ki jai! The army sang in unison, triumphant; their hope, their savior, their queen had arrived. They carried her immaculate frame, like a child riding on its father's shoulders- their eyes glistening with hope as she lay.

Seconds. Minutes. Bangs.

Nearby, on the bleached pedestal they let her down. She now stood, her wandering eyes zoning out into the oblivion, scanning her devotees, her children. Her face flawless, sculpted with precision; her shimmering beige skin against her cat-like eyes outlined with charcoal eyeliner, her dainty lips rouged to perfection. Her jet-black hair, embedded with rich jewels cascaded down her hourglass mount. Around her, her children danced with joy as their eyes glistened with ebullience; I then looked up at the goddess. A warm simper had curved upon her meticulous profile whereas her eyes were now twinkling with endearment for her children.

Seconds. Crackles.

Boom.

An explosion of colours painted into the blank canvas of the night sky, mirroring the celebration, which took place down below. The sky now scorching with tints of glaring carmine howled alongside the crowd, their cheers now reverberating throughout the realm. The spectrum of colours diffused into every curve, every loop, and every hook of this glorified region. Bodies wrapped in lengthy psychedelic cloths capered around the deity, infusing the happiness that radiated from within them.

Seconds. Steps.

There was a new presence lingering about in the realm, catching glimpses of Maa Durga, beckoning her children to all now chant Om Durgahei Nama. It was a small man wrapped in a long opalescent burgundy cloth whose mere shadows had silenced the crowd. He now led, Om Durgahei Nama he recited. The voices followed, and the incantation flowed. As the goddess' children rejoiced cantillating hymns, the goddess rose, her aura bestowing blessings upon her humble devotees. A minute's silence, then followed by a day's celebration. More colours ignited the skyline, as exuberance and festivity drew upon Maa Durga's revered progenies.

Seconds. Minutes. Hours.

Men hammered at the drums whilst women whirled around them, whistling tunes of delight. Incense burned nearby, it's aromatic whiff tickling my nostrils, coercing out a sneeze or two. This balmy hint soon recast to a piquant fume, its searing singe scaling my eyes, prying out a stream of dampness.

Seconds.

The bleat sounded again. A change administered.

The beatings of the drums were no longer pulsating through my veins. No longer did I catch glimpses of red and white drapes surging through the realm. Colours and tinges of gaiety had been sucked up by the opaque mist which now tainted the sky. The chorus had come to a halt. Maa Durga was nowhere to be found. She had fled after her few hours with her children, her presence now nothing but a phantom, her blessings only to remain a memory.

As the children returned to their cages, dawn once again broke upon the tattered canvas of the silent city.

The other faces of Kolkata



By Debasis Roy Mahapatra

The famous novelist Dominique Lapierre called Calcutta the City of Joy. Others were not so kind. Journalists, travellers and writers have variously described the city as “Hell on Earth”, “The City that Never Sweeps” and so on. Rudyard Kipling called it “The City of Dreadful Night” in a story describing his trip to Calcutta in 1888. I do not blame them. Its filth, congested roads and mosquito infested neighbourhoods can evoke no other feelings.

When I decided to take early retirement at a ripe old age of fifty five, a friend enquired about my post retirement plan. He was totally aghast when I told him that I plan to relocate to Calcutta, now known by its original Bengali name, Kolkata. “Why on earth would you want to relocate to Kolkata?” he quipped. Where else can I find Ilish maachh and Rabindra Sangeet”, said I. For those unacquainted with these central elements of Bengali culture, Ilish maachh is known in English as Hilsa fish – a Bengali favorite – and Rabindra Sangeet are the songs written by the Bengali bard Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore was India’s first Noble laureate and we Bengalis are very proud of him!

Since then I have been frequently travelling to Kolkata. During these 8 or 9 years I have become somewhat disillusioned about both Ilish Maachh and Rabindra Sangeet. Overfishing has led to Ilish Maachh almost disappearing from Kolkata’s markets, while Rabindra Sangeet has been transformed beyond recognition after its copyright came to an end. And yet, my visits to Kolkata have given me glimpses of other faces of this much-maligned city – I have seen a kinder, gentler and more humane Kolkata. In this article I shall share with the reader three experiences which epitomize this other side of Kolkata.

Chaiwala on the Strand Road

A friend and I went to the Railway reservation office for foreign tourists in Strand Road, on the bank of the River Ganges. It was around nine o’clock in the morning. The office was closed and there was no notice posted about its working hours. A number of people were already waiting and they informed us that it opened at ten. Someone had taken the initiative to create a list of people as they arrived. I added my name to the list.

We began to ponder how to kill an hour. As we moved along the pavement, we found a chaiwala (street side tea-seller) was brewing the days’ first broth. The aroma of freshly brewed tea was tempting. We stopped and ordered two cups, which are like crucibles – earthen pots of approximately 50 ml in size. It costs ₹ 5/- (about HK\$0.6). The first sip of the hot tea was indeed refreshing. As we drank our tea, I began chatting with the chaiwala.

He was wearing a dirty gaamchha, or a cheap, dirty towel, often so thin that it is almost see through! He was from the neighbouring province of Bihar. I saw his assistant, wearing an equally dirty gaamchha, cooking something in a wok on a coal fired oven. A heap of cut pieces of potatoes were kept on a nearby dish. It was obvious that he was cooking potato curry which will be served with handmade breads (roti) later.

Nonetheless, in order to initiate a conversation I asked him what he was cooking.

CW: Potato curry

Me: What are the spices you are frying?

CW: Onion and ginger

Me: But that seemed too little for that much of potatoes. Will it taste good?

CW: Time has come to stop eating onions (in a reference to the high price of onions)

Me: I agree. See, we pay so high price but the poor farmers are committing suicide for not getting enough for their crops. Where is all the profit going?

CW: Who knows!

Me: It is the politicians who pocket large part of the profits through their accomplices as the middlemen and we, the general public, vote for these very politicians. We should stop that. We should vote only for the honest people.

CW: Yes sir, you are right. Look at what is happening in Bihar ...

The conversation quickly became very animated. Accidentally, I hit my hand on something while gesticulating and my crucible fell on the pavement. With that went my morning cuppa.

My face must have clearly registered the loss, because the chaiwala immediately filled up another crucible and gave that to me. I took out my wallet to pay for it. But he refused. “Babuji (Sir), it could have happened to anyone. How can I take money from you for this!”

I was moved. He was destitute. He could not even afford anything more decent than a dirty gaamchha to wear in public - five Rupees was not something that he could easily afford to ignore. But honouring the new friendship was more important to him than five Rupees. I respected his sense of dignity and did not press further to pay.

For the remaining few minutes that took me to finish the tea, we continued our conversation about the state of affairs in the city. Then my friend and I said good bye to him thanking him for the free cup of tea.

Most likely I will not cross paths with him again, but he will remain in my memory for a long time – a poor chaiwala with a big heart, God bless him.

Mystery of an old bed cover

My apartment building in Kolkata has three apartments in each floor, all of which open into a common rectangular lift lobby. I keep a small bench fitted with a cushion in the lift lobby outside my front door, which acts as a shoe cabinet as well as a bench to sit on for wearing shoes. When I leave Kolkata, I remove its cushion for safe keeping and cover the bench with old news papers to prevent it from becoming dusty, although the measure is not very effective.

This time when I returned to Kolkata, I found that someone has neatly covered the bench with a folded old bedcover or curtain. I knew that I did not do it, so I thought it must have been done by my sister who lives nearby and visits the apartment from time to time to look after it. Anyway, I removed the cover and put its original cushion on it.

When I met my sister, I asked her about it. She said she had not put it. I was quite perplexed about who could have done it and why. Not being able to think of any person who could have done it, I came to the conclusion that I myself had put the cover in my last trip and completely forgot about it. I became very alarmed that I am starting to suffer from Alzheimer’s or some other age-related memory loss.

The day I was leaving Kolkata, a maid from a neighbour also got into the lift going down. The maid asked me if I was leaving again today. I said “yes” and asked her how she knew about it. She said, “Because you have again covered the bench with the old bed cover. Last time you had covered it with news papers. But it was still getting dirty. So Didi gave me that old bed cover and asked me to cover the bench with that”. (Didi means an elder sister, refers to the lady of the house where she is employed)

The mystery of the old bed cover was finally solved. I was indeed very happy that Alzheimer’s disease had not set in.

This particular neighbour moved in quite recently as they only bought their apartment from the previous owner about a year ago. I first met them earlier this year. They are a couple perhaps in their early forties with a school age daughter, perhaps 10 years old. The man, a chartered accountant with his own practice, seems to belong to an old aristocratic family of Kolkata, though he never said anything about it to me. He is the only child. The lady, I dare not guess a lady's age, used to be a school teacher, but gave up that job to look after their daughter. I later also learned that she is a very good cook. They are a very amicable couple. We got along very well with each other and quickly became rather friendly.

I had many interactions with them during this trip, especially with the lady. Never once did she mention that she took the trouble of covering my bench in the lobby.

The Bible teaches us – “you shall love your neighbour as yourself”, while Hinduism teaches us that a donor should bow down in humility while giving, accepting a gift is a privilege of the receiver. But we do not see these teachings being practiced today. In our apartment complex, so often we have lost sight of each others' humanity. We routinely hear complaints that people illegally park their cars in others' car parks, my neighbour upstairs routinely throws burning cigarette butts on my balcony and so on and so forth – forget about gestures of kindness. But here I find a loving housewife caring for the furniture of a neighbour whom she hardly meets and more importantly she never ever bragged about it or even mentioned it to anyone. In this age of fast living and stressful city life most of us hardly even know the names of our next door neighbours. I am indeed fortunate to have such a caring neighbour.

An iron trader with a soft heart

My sister and I were travelling from Kolkata to Mumbai on a train. Our berths were somewhere in the middle of the compartment. Our co-passengers in the coupe were a Bihari family of three living in Kolkata and a Bengali youth, probably an IT professional. On the side berth was seated another middle aged individual. He had a very intimidating appearance – stout build, a bush of dark black hair brushed back and a thick moustache. He wore a thick gold chain on his neck. Various gemstone studded rings adorned all his fingers. He looked like a mafia leader from a Hindi movie.

He did not talk to any of us nor did he create any trouble for us. He spoke in Hindi whenever he spoke on his mobile phone. His Hindi pronunciation did not have the accent that is normally heard when Bengalis speak Hindi. I formed an impression that he is a non Bengali, perhaps a member of some mafia group in Mumbai.

Our's was a non-stop train and its final stop was Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in south Mumbai, formerly known as the Victoria Terminus or VT. We were going to see our youngest sister who lives in Nerul, a distant part of the city in Navi Mumbai (literally New Mumbai, a whole new Township in Mumbai). As the train entered Mumbai suburb, my sister and I started discussing various alternative modes of transportation to go to Navi Mumbai. In the end we could not make a decision and decided to explore our options when we reached CST. It was around 11:00 AM.

When we finished talking, the scary looking person on the side berth addressed us in clear Bengali, telling us that he lived in the same area in Nerul as my sister. A car was coming to CST to pick him up. He offered to give us a lift. He mentioned that he had a factory in Nerul and would visit the factory on his way home, but it would take no more than five minutes.

I was suspicious. I have been cheated before in a railway station in Mumbai. I was hesitant to trust him on face value. But this person was so polite and his offer seemed so benign that refusing him would have been very embarrassing. I reasoned that he could not possibly do great harm in broad daylight in a city like Mumbai. I agreed.

The train soon arrived at CST. He got down ahead of us. When my sister and I disembarked from the train, he asked us to wait there and keep an eye on his luggage, while he went in search of his driver.

Once again I became suspicious. What if this person was carrying drugs or other contraband with him and trying to get past the station using us as unwitting mules? So while I agreed to look after his stuff, we maintained a safe distance from it – far enough to deny any involvement with it should such a need arise.

Soon thereafter the man reappeared with a short, bald individual, probably in his late forties and a young lad barely past his teens. They appeared to be his staff and he ordered them to carry his luggage and ours to the car. We followed them to the car park. There were three of them now and we were two older, retired individuals. Not a very comfortable situation.

Soon we reached their car. It was an SUV. The two staffs put the luggage on the back seat. He occupied a front seat and told us to take the seats in main passenger compartment in the middle. The short, bald individual was the driver and the young lad sat in the rear. He spoke fluent Bengali. Later we learned that he had recently come from Bangladesh to visit his uncle in Mumbai, who found him this job.

While we were on our way to Nerul, the man made a few phone calls about various business matters. When he was done with his phone calls, I started chatting with him.

He came to Mumbai many years ago as a worker in a motor garage. He soon realised that he cannot make much money from his salary. Soon he decided to start his own iron business. He now has a well-established business in Nerul where he employs about 50 people, quite a few of them Bengalis.

He is married with one daughter. He proudly announced that he has already set aside so much money for his daughter that she does not have to worry about a living.

He is from Barasat in West Bengal, which is a suburb of Kolkata. His villa in Barasat stands on one acre of land and is the best building in the town. His mother lives there. He goes back to Barasat every month. He used to make these trips by air. But he stopped travelling by air very recently. He was on a Spice Jet flight to Kolkata, which narrowly escaped a crash while landing in Kolkata Airport. (I had seen this news item). Since then he is too scared to take flights and travels only by train.

Our conversation became increasingly friendly and I began to feel at ease with him. When we came close to Nerul, I heard him calling his factory to send him another car to Nerul railway station. Then he instructed his driver to drop him near Nerul railway station and drive us to our sister's place. I objected to this and requested that he drop us at Nerul station where we could get a cab home. But he would not listen. He said we are much older than him and must be very tired after the long train journey. He felt obliged to drop us at home as early as he could. He also informed us that he often gives lifts to fellow passengers. I was moved by this gesture.

The SUV soon reached Nerul railway station. The man got down from the car. I also got off the car to bid him goodbye and sincerely thanked him for his unsolicited help. From the bottom of my heart I praised him profusely and wished him prosperity in his business and well being of his family. He gracefully accepted my complements, turned around and walked away. He never looked back!

He had no expectation from us – not even our gratitude. We did not even exchange our names. There was no give and take motive in this short relationship. It was simply one decent human being helping another fellow human being. It was just that - simple and noble.

As the SUV started rolling again, I told his staff that their boss was a very noble person. They readily agreed. I learnt from them that he makes iron grille and provides installation service of those grille in apartment buildings in that area. He is a well known businessman in that locality.

We live in a time of great doom and gloom, from the economic uncertainty of the past few years to the rise of terrorism. And yet, these small isolated incidents give me reason to hold on to my optimism and reason to believe that all is not yet lost. The Bengali poet Jibanananda Das wrote in his poem “Suchetana”- “Kolkata ekdin kallolini tilottoma hobe”- which roughly translates as “A day will come when Kolkata will become a vibrant beauty”.

Being an optimist to the core, I look forward to that day.

প্রবাসে দৈবের বশে



By Anisha

আজীবন কলকাতাবাসী, কর্মসূত্রে যখন বিদেশে এসে পড়তে হল, তখন স্বভাবতঃই প্রশ্ন উঠল, আর কলকাতাবাসী রইলাম কিনা। বা, কলকাতা থেকে বাস যখন উঠেই গেল তখন কি কলকাতাইয়ত্ত্ব খণ্ডিত হল না বাঙালীয়া না হ্রাস গেল?

এ প্রশ্নের জবাব সহজ নয়। প্রবাসে বাঙালীয়া কতকটা আরশির মত। সহপ্রবাসীর বাঙালীত্বের আয়নায় ধরা পড়ে নিজের বাঙালীয়া না।

প্রশ্ন তখন আর এই থাকে না যে নিজস্ব বাঙালীয়া এখনও কায়েমী হয়ে আছে কিনা। উত্তরটা তখন খুঁজতে হয় আপেক্ষিকতার মাধ্যমে। অর্থাৎ, অমুকবাবু বা বিবি তমুকবাবু (বা বিবির) থেকে বেশি বা কম বাঙালী কিনা। কার বাঙালীত্ব সন্দেহাতীত, কারটা ভেজালমিশ্রিত, কার শ্যাম এবং কুল দুই-ই গেছে - ইত্যাদি। এরমধ্যে হংকং-এ আবার দুই বাংলার-ই বাসিন্দার সমাবেশ হওয়ায়, বিষয়টা পেয়েছে আরেক মাত্রা।

আমার বৃত্তিটি বহুকাল ছিল নিশাচরের - যে কোন দৈনিকের সম্পাদকীয় সম্পর্কিত কাজকর্ম রাতেই হয়ে থাকে - ফলে জীবনের দশটি বছর (যার মধ্যে প্রেম, বিবাহ এবং পুত্রের আগমন সবই হয়েছে) বাঙালী কেন, মনুষ্যপ্রজাতির অনেক প্রতিনিধির সাথেই আমার আদানপ্রদান ছিল একান্তই সীমিত। স্বাভাবিকভাবেই, আমার যখন দিন, সহকর্মী বাদ দিলে, অন্যান্য চেনাপরিচিতের তখন রাত। সেটা সামাজিকতার সময় নয়। এমনকি, বিবাহের কয়েকবছরের মধ্যেই টের পেলাম সেটি দাম্পত্যলাপেরও সময় নয়।

সে প্রসঙ্গ থাক।

মোদ্দা কথা হল মানুষজনের সাথে এহেন সীমিত আদানপ্রদানের কারণে আমার জীবনযাপন তাই, যাকে বলে ঠিক সামাজিক ছিল না। এবং সংগদোষে পরিবারের আর সবাই নিরুপায় হয়েই খানিক অসামাজিক হয়ে পড়েছিলেন। তাই কলকাতায় থেকেও বাঙালির বাঙালীত্ব নিয়ে কোনদিন বিশেষ চিন্তিত হয়ে পড়িনি। ধরেই নিয়েছিলাম, যা জন্মসূত্রে প্রাপ্ত, তার হ্রাস-বৃদ্ধি নিয়ে মাথা ঘামাবার প্রয়োজন নেই।

তবে স্থানের সাথে যখন কাল এবং পারিপার্শ্বিক পরিবেশও বদলায়, এবং বিদেশে এসে আমার বৃত্তিটি না বদলালেও, কাজের সময়টি রাত-দিন থেকে মনুষ্যপ্রজাতির বেশিরভাগ প্রতিনিধির মত দিন-রাত বদলায়, জীবনে সামাজিকতা প্রবেশ করল অনেকটাই। এবং তার হাত ধরেই আমাদের পরিবারটি গেল এগার-ওগার দুই বাংলার-ই অনেক বন্ধু।

যারা বন্ধু হলেন, আপন করে নিলেন আমাদের। উপলব্ধি করলাম বাঙালীজীবনের অন্যতম শ্রেষ্ঠ উপাদানটি - নির্ভেজাল আড্ডা - তার থেকে বঞ্চিত ছিলাম কতখানি।

আরও উপলব্ধি করলাম, বাঙালী সামাজিকতার সবচেয়ে হৃদয়গ্রাহী দিকটি। হংকং-এ হিন্দু বাঙালীদের কেউ দুর্গাপূজা করার মাথার দিবা দেননি। পূজার সুভেনির, বিজয়া সন্মিলনী, নববর্ষ বরণ - এসব আয়োজনের দায়িত্ব কর্মকর্তারা কাঁধে তুলে নিয়েছেন স্বেচ্ছায়।

জীবিকাই আমাদের প্রবাসী করেছে, হংকং-এ সময়ের দাম শুধু বেশি-ই নয়, বড়ই বেশি। তবে তার মাঝেই কিছু বাঙালী বার করে নেন সময়, পরিবারের প্রাপ্য সময় থেকে কাটছাঁট করে বেশ কিছু সময় - এবং কর্মজীবনের সাথে সামঞ্জস্য রেখে।

কলকাতার পাড়ার দাদাদের তৎপরতার মধ্যে যে পর-পর ভাব আছে, তা আমাদের সন্দ্বিহন করে। তাদের উদ্যোগে যতটা আত্মপ্রচার আছে, ততটা উষণতা নেই। ফলে, বারোয়ারী দুর্গাপূজা হয়ে উঠেছে এমন এক বাৎসরিক আয়োজন যা নিঃসন্দেহে আনন্দদান করে, মানুষকে একত্রিত করে, কিন্তু বোধহয় আর কাছাকাছি এনে দেয় না।

হংকং-র আয়োজনও বারোয়ারী, এবং প্রবাসে উৎসবে যোগদান করছেন যারা সবাই হয়ত একে অন্যের অভিন্নহৃদয় বন্ধু নন। কিন্তু তাদের সবাইকে উৎসবের কটি দিন একত্র করার যে নিঃস্বার্থ, বিবেচনাপূর্ণ প্রয়াস, তার মধ্যে ছড়িয়ে আছে যে সহজ সামাজিকতার প্রকাশ, হয়ত তাই বাঙালিয়ানার আসল প্রতীক।

It's a Dog's Life



By Simba Das
(ghostwritten by Shagnik Das)

Hello there! I am so glad that you are reading this, because I would like to discuss an issue very close to my heart - the adoption of pets. Now those of you who know me will know just how excited I get about my pets, and how much I would love it if everyone would adopt a pet of their own. However, in the interest of quality journalism, I shall attempt to put my personal feelings aside and write an informative piece from a neutral standpoint. Whether these words end up being of encouragement or of warning, I hope you will find them useful.

Before I begin, though, I suppose I ought to introduce myself to those of you who do not know me. My name is Simba, and I have been the proud owner of a human family for over three years now. Ah, did I forget to mention that I am a dog?

That being said, this article is about my pets, not me, and we ought to return to the topic at paw. While looking after them is a serious responsibility, there can be no doubt that it is incredibly rewarding as well, and I wanted to share some tips with those of you thinking about taking in some humans of your own.

Choosing your pets:

Great care must be taken in the choice of pets, because this is a decision for life. Choosing the right family can be a great boon, while a mismatch can end poorly for all involved. One thing to bear in mind is that humans can - surprisingly - shrink considerably during the early stages of adoption. When I first went home with my adopted family, I almost fit in their hands, but within a year I was able to lick their faces while standing on my hind legs. Fortunately this shrinking does seem to stop after some time, because if they got much smaller they would be hard to keep track of!

Food and hygiene:

Humans have an evolutionary history of being hunter-gatherers, and they will often express this genetic trait by providing food for you. It is important that you indulge this cute habit of theirs, for if you refuse their offerings they may get worried or upset. However, humans themselves are notoriously picky eaters, and will not chew on just anything. Thus you must carefully inspect whatever they eat during their mealtimes. Insist that they feed you a sample of their food, so that you can ensure it is suitable for their digestive systems. In that regard, note that humans are remarkably unhygienic animals, and will often do their 'business' in the water fountains inside the home itself. Though this repulsive habit is hard to get used to, you must remember that they are simply following their natural instincts, and that it is impossible to train them otherwise.

The great outdoors:

Whatever your humans may do, you should continue to visit Nature to answer her call personally. While doing so, be sure to make use of this opportunity to exercise your pets. Humans are terribly sedentary animals, and

will happily sit around all day unless you make them move. For safety's sake, it is important to establish who is in control early on, which you can do by running ahead, or by digging in your heels whenever they go the wrong way. It is also a good idea to keep your humans on a leash, so that you can guide them in the right direction and prevent them from returning home too quickly. In addition to giving your pets the exercise they need, a daily walk can also provide some pleasant bonding time without any of their usual electronic distractions. Take the time to smell the roses together preferably before you spray them!

Behavioural training:

A common concern among dogs is how hard it can be to train your pets, especially when they can outnumber you greatly at home. While humans cannot speak, and lack tails with which to express themselves, they do still have some level of intelligence – they seem to communicate with each other through a series of low-pitched grunts - and so you can still hope to train them. For example, every day when my pets return home I bring a toy to greet them with, in an attempt to teach them to bring me a gift when they come back. They are yet to learn this simple lesson, but do sometimes give me a biscuit, which I consider progress. When training your human, there are two things to keep in mind. The first is positive reinforcement - they like the feel of our fur, so let them pet you if they have been good. Personally, I roll over and let my humans rub my belly when they behave particularly well. The second lesson is that you must, above all, remain patient. Under no circumstances should you bite them, even if they hit you - remember, they know no better.

If after reading this you wish to adopt pets of your own - and, despite my earlier promise of neutrality, I do hope this is the case - then the best way to rescue some humans is by visiting the Hong Kong Dog Rescue. All the best for you and your new two-legged companions!

A final word of advice: Do all your typing at night - humans get jealous, and will be upset if they see you using their computers!



Loveonomics



By Kaushik Neogy

Sharadotsav every year takes me back to early years of my life & that Maha-Saptami evening where I saw my first love Puti (পুটি) in a Puja-pandal where a candle lighting contest was shaping up on a dusky Maha Saptami evening. She lit all the candles, looked up with her adorable, hazel eyes in the crowd. So cute that doe-eyed look, eyebrows that are naturally higher-set in an innocent question, wide eyes yet with low sleepy eyelids she looked straight at me and smiled as if I waited for her accomplishment with an athirst eye. A sense of delectation shivered down my spine. Both my legs locked with titillating sensation under the rib cage. We fell in love soon but our affair was not destined to last for long. How we fell apart that's a story some other day at leisure at some other place. I did not know the basic theories of loveonomics then. As life would teach me in course of its journey that economics works very succintly in all aspects of life including love. For love to swell, economics too must work well. Thus let's set out on the journey of Love and economics = loveonomics and see how I derived three basic laws of 'loveonomics'.

On a Friday evening after a long day in office I was waiting for the lift when a very pretty young Chinese intern of our office came out of the office door and pressed the lift button hurriedly. She had an apparent urgency. While waiting for the lift we set out on a cursory chat & came to know that she was heading for dinner in Mandarin Oriental Hotel with her boyfriend. Guessing her socio-economic status I asked her what her boyfriend does. In a sneaky manner she whispered "I don't know. I recently started dating this boyfriend & not sure what he does but he treats me with excessive indulgence, showers me with nice gifts and takes me out for delicious dinner". She was clear in her mind of her need and understood economics very well. In an expensive city like Hong Kong getting access to a rich guy is a ticket to an apparently happy life. Loveonomics works. That is predictably rational.

Anup-da was few years senior to me in school. He came from a usual middle class family and was an average in every aspect. In contrast Sushmita-di came from a politically connected well to do family. Anup-da expressed his emotion in many ways to her & at times used me as a courier. In fact my first letter to puti was exact carbon copy of anup-da's letter to Sushmita-di with the exception of the names. That was the beginning of my ethical offense of plagiarism. After they passed out of 12th board exam they decided to elope. But somehow Sushmita-di's father got the wind of it. He used his political clout to put Anup-da few days in a police lock-up. Generous use of the police baton in lock-up at some sensitive place impelled Anup-da to defecate the concept of love altogether. Anup-da relented but he could not forget Sushmita-di for the rest part of his life. By and by he would explain me in his typical Bankura accent “শুন, উয়ার সাথে আমার ভালোবাসা টো হল গালের ব্রণর মত। ব্যাদনাটা নাই কিন্তু দাগটা আছেক” His affair with Sushmita-di was like a dried up acne on the face where the pain has long gone but the black spot remains. Anup-da got his economics wrong. Loveonomics works. That was predictably irrational.

When I moved to college, I started going around with a girl called 'Indrani'. No, No, not the same Indrani you are thinking about. I profess no allegiance to that 'Indrani' that you are thinking about. This Indrani Dutta in our college was known as 'portable'. One who could be easily or conveniently carried. Anyone with a deep pocket could have had an affair with Indrani. My affair with Indrani did not last for long and I impart the entire blame to my thrifty father for the break up. The old man has a habit of noting every single expense in a diary every evening. Every single penny I would get as a pocket money had to be accounted and presented with a plausible explanation prior exacting my next pocket money. Intimacy with Indrani continued on a very tight budget. My general unwillingness to part with money made Indrani to realize very soon that my affordability is confined to only 'cheap roadside food stalls'. The affair had its natural death very soon. But this led me to understand loveonmics concept very easily and derived my first law of loveonomics.

“Increment in Stinginess in male partner \propto Depletion of Oxytocin in female partner”.
(\propto : directly proportional)

Oxytocin is widely dubbed as the love hormone, numerous other names have been given to oxytocin recently - hug hormone, cuddle chemical - since researchers have begun to uncover its role in love. One can try out the first law at home by presenting a precious jewelry or promise of an expensive holiday and see how your wife's face brightens up with a sudden surge of love for you. That is when oxytocin is released in large amount from the brain. Loveonomics works. That was predictably rational.

Sumit-da was a quiet person & senior to me in college. He lived with a vague notion that if he had a motor bike he could 'Patao' any girl. He was ahead of times I must say. Remember this was much earlier times of Dhoom 1, 2, 3 era. Somehow he managed to buy a bike. I have no idea how he convinced his father to pay for it. But the fishiest thing is that his conviction proved right and he fell in love very soon. He would go around pillion riding with his girlfriend. To add spices to their affair, his girlfriend even started to learn biking from him. Begrudgingly we would see from our hostel balcony how Sumit-da would clinch to her from behind with no airgap between their torsos, imparting bike driving lessons with extreme care and great effort. Good there was no moral police. Let's leave the remaining part of the bike lessons to everyone's creative imagination. Very soon the driving position interchanged & whole college would see Sumit-da pillion riding with his girlfriend in driving seat. Not sure if he realized then that he will losing his driving acumen for the rest part of his life and need to contend with the back seat henceforth. Nevertheless the driving lesson paid off. Years later now when we meet in social gathering where all men folks would be restricted to a single alcoholic drink to avoid drink driving in Hong Kong, Sumit-da will enjoy his drink to the golden drops of the bottle and somehow roll down to rear seat of the car. His so called girlfriend & now his wife would drive her drunken husband back home. In Hong Kong when a chauffeur driven car is a pricey proposition and probably impossibility for most of us, he has the luxury of it. As Einstein said "Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He, who understands it, earns it ... he who doesn't ... pays it." Investment in bike had a compounding effect. I told you that he was ahead of his time. Loveonomics works. That was unpredictably rational. We affectionately called him DDT. Dipto Dutta Choudhury was a very handsome guy in our group and hails from a very well to do background in one of the posh South Kolkata locality. He was our ticket to visit the favorite hangouts of the Nouveau riche of Kolkata. We just started earning then. DDT would be very comfortable in company of a group of girls. Men are often thought of as visual creatures. As it happened DDT fell in love with an extremely beautiful, upstart and bubbly girl. He would take all of us to Oberoi's pink elephanta to introduce his new girlfriend and celebrate. We would drink and dance there till the wee hours of the night. Few months later we heard that they did not get along and decided to part ways. Later while in a flamboyant mood on a 'bong adda', he said " বহুত মাল খায়, শালা ফতুর হয়ে যাচ্ছিলাম পাবে ঢুকলে " Liquid addiction of the girl had resulted into liquidation of DDT's personal wealth. For the preservation of wealth, split was a better solution. Loveonomics works. That was predictably irrational.

Sanjay Kumar hailed from Darbhanga in Bihar and was an officer on board my ship which I was in command. He was an interesting character. Being away from families for months it is usual to discuss about hometown or families on board. While approaching Hong Kong harbor, as the silhouette of Hong Kong skyline was getting closer, I asked him how is his home town Darbhanga ? Nonchalantly he responded "Hang Kang ka jaisai hai khali building ki height thora chota chota hai" (Darbhanga is like Hong Kong only except that the building heights are slightly smaller). Drawing an inspiration from the neighboring state for making Kolkata another London, fortunately Bihar chief minister did not vouch to make Darbhanga another Hong Kong during election campaign. It was futile to get into further discussion on this comparison. On a moonlit night while on a trans-pacific voyage, as a part of daily ritual prior going to bed, I went up to see if the ship is proceeding for its destination as planned. I went out in the wing & noticed that strong wind bellowing the long hairs of rueful Sanjay, the officer on duty. Sensing the mood swings of my mate, I accosted him. Is everything fine Sanjay? He said 'Sir Geetu ki bohut yaad aa raha hai" Since we never discussed on this topic, got curious and asked who is Geetu? Your girlfriend? He nodded. I prompted "You are getting off in next port. So go home & get married to Geetu. You have a decent job & a good earning." He disputed immediately "Sir I am not that crazy. Income tax commissioner is pestering my father for some time & offered 12 lakhs and a Tata sumo along with his daughter. Getting married to Geetu seemed impossible now." Carefully avoiding these marital dowry topics I sneaked out. Years later when I met Sanjay in a party, he introduced his wife Geetu to me. Probably Sanjay noticed the crease in between the bridge of my eyes while introducing, he acceded quietly that Geetu's father somehow agreed to match the Income tax commissioner's highest offer & they all lived happily ever after. Loveonomics works. That was predictably rational.

Buddhdeb Chatterjee has befriended me after we met in a social gathering. While sipping whiskey one evening probably out of intoxication he gave a thwarting account of not having any affair in teens or in twenties. At the end, his parents did not have much option but to advertise on the matrimonial column of a Bengali newspaper. Things moved fast after that. Girl was shortlisted, they all had gone to see the girl, parents met, both visited each other's house, lots of sweets eaten up in very short span of time, compatibility of north & south kolkataan was established between both the families. All happened very quickly. Now the elders decided that bride & groom must meet outside the house to know each other better. It was unanimously decided that Buddhdeb Chatterjee would go to Golpark and wait near 'Mouchak' the famous sweet shop

& the girl would join him there. Bengalese somehow prefers to keep all their action intertwined with sweets. Mouchak is very close to the bride's residence and a prominent landmark. Buddhdeb, not dated earlier had no idea how to greet his would be bride when they meet. Nonetheless the typicality of Bengalese in greeting each other with box of sweets nailed in his psyche, he decided to buy a box of Sandesh from Mouchak. Envisaging Buddhdeb Chatterjee on his first date with his would be wife & greeting her with a ' সন্দেশ বাস্কেট ', for me effect of single malt was waning now. Restraining my laughter asked 'Budhdhu why Sandesh? Why not a rose?' In a convincing humble manner he responded 'there were roses too, twenty five pieces. মৌচাকের কড়াপাকের গোলাপ ছাপ সন্দেশ পঁচিশটা " (25 pieces of rose stamped Sandesh). It was getting to my nerve then. I clinched my teeth and why পঁচিশটা ? With similar modesty he responded ১০ টা টাকা করে পিস, পঁচিশটায় পুরো দুশো টাকা। সিম্পল হিসেব।(Rs.8 per piece and 25 pieces makes Rs.200 It was easy to calculate & pay). It was time to enjoy the single malt rather than listening to his fanciful tale. He had put all the essential ingredients in right perspective - Sweetness, Rose, and Economics and it worked. Good thing is that sweets of Mouchak still adding up the sweetness in their life. Loveonomics works. That was predictably rational.

In conclusion, must narrate the story of a very beautiful lady in our neighborhood. She was contemplating a divorce and leaving separately from her husband. It so happened that on the pretext of business trip she had gone to meet her ex-flame and spend some considerable time with him which later laid bare to her husband who did not & could not take it lightly. When I met her, she tried to reason out her behavior of snuggling with her ex-flame by demonizing her husband by spoofing stories. I patiently listened and then reasoned "All this is fine but you should have discussed this earlier with your husband & not put up now after you cheated him?" She said " No he has cheated me first and that is the reason I did this". Now the story was getting colorful. The assumption for thousands of years has been that men are more prone towards adultery due to their genes and their need to spread their seed for continued survival. She blurted out " we had been married for so long and he has few hefty life insurances in his name. Do you know who the nominee in those life insurances is? His mother". I asked her how this could be tantamount to cheating ? she came up with a very plausible response " If he has died during this period his mother would be laughing all the way to the bank and I will be sobbing rest of my life with the memories only. This is utter disregard to the conjugal relation." I nodded. How could one explain to this dumb lady that mother's love for her children can not be quantified by assigning the property rights. Loveonomics works That was unpredictably irrational.

But this gave me my 2nd law of loveonomics.

"Assigning the rights of succession of all material possession including future earnings to another lady apart from your wife ≥ Adultery.

(≥ Greater than or equal to)

Now you must be waiting for my 3rd law of loveonomics. Third law of loveonomics is exactly equal to Newton's 4th law of motion. Sadly if you yet do not know Newton's 4th law of motion, it is time to google it.

Get used to loveonomics, but keep loving too as Martin Luther King said "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear".

Disclaimer: All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.

Our Mother Earth



By Shweta Banerjee

Our Mother Earth

As I walk across the earth,
thousands of things I get to see.
Birds fly high, soaring higher,
and on the flowers I hear the buzz of
bees.

The sun at the dawn, rises within
the hills.
Mountains covered with snow,
shining like the crown of silver.
And the waves touching the cliffs.
The waterfall flowing down
the green-blue mountains.
Rivers forming a dream delta
before entering the sea.



And while walking on the beach at
night,
I feel the cool and sweet smelling
breeze.
The slashing sound still feels like
the sound of love and peace.
The moon over the sea,
shining like a ball of gold.
And in every step my eyes hold
wonder.
I bend on my knee
to thank the mother earth,
And that is the truth.
It's a great pleasure for me,
to live in this wonderland.

~~~~~

## War Country



By Samriddhi Nandi.

There stood in the middle of the dusty field,  
An old little cottage in eerie solitude.  
Where lay the remains of artillery  
Long forgotten like the reason for the war.

Rusty, undisturbed, it rested on the mud  
Taking with it the memories  
Nearby, the revving of an engine was heard  
Shattering the silence of a thousand moons.

Her eyes strayed to the horizon  
And thought of her people's woe  
Inside, the scrap of metal wore away slowly  
Taking with it the memories of the men.

MH370



By Balaram Chandra Paul

বাবা! তুমি বিদেশ কেন যাবে?  
চাকরি করে সেথায় তুমি অনেক টাকা পাবে?  
তাই বিদেশ তুমি যাবে!

মা আর আমি এই দেশেতেই থাকব তোমায় ছেড়ে,  
তোমার ফেরার সময় গোনার স্বপ্ন মধুর সুরে।  
তুমি কি আসবে অনেক পরে?

সকালবেলায় তোমার মুখের ঘুম ভাঙ্গানো ছড়া।  
রবিবারের খেলার ছলে তোমার সাথে লড়া।।  
আমি থাকব তোমায় ছাড়া?

এইযে দেখো দিনগুলো যায় ভীষণ ঝড়ের বেগে,  
কালই তুমি আকাশখানে হারিয়ে যাবে মেঘে।  
রাতটা, থাকবো আমি জেগে।

বাবা; আমার সোনা বাবা; লক্ষী বাবা; ভালো থেকে তুমি,  
এয়ারপোর্টে বিদায়বেলায় তোমায় অনেক চুমি।  
আবার আসবে কবে তুমি?

একি, হঠাৎ মামা, কাকা, মাসির হট্টমেনা,  
চোখের জলে সবাই কেন কাটায় সারাবেলা?  
এটা কেমন খেলা?

সবাই বলে বাবা নাকি ভ্যানিস হয়ে গেলো,  
বাবার সাথে যারা ছিলো সবার কিযে হলো?  
বাবা, বছর কেটে গেলো!

বাবা, তোমায় আমার চাই,  
সকাল বিকেল চোখের জলে তোমার স্বপ্ন তাই।  
কখন তোমার দেখা পাই?

আমি আশার আশা, অভিলাষা, তোমায় ভালবাসি,  
তোমার আশায়, তোমার তরে থাকব বারোমাসি।  
বাবা, তোমায় ভালবাসি।।

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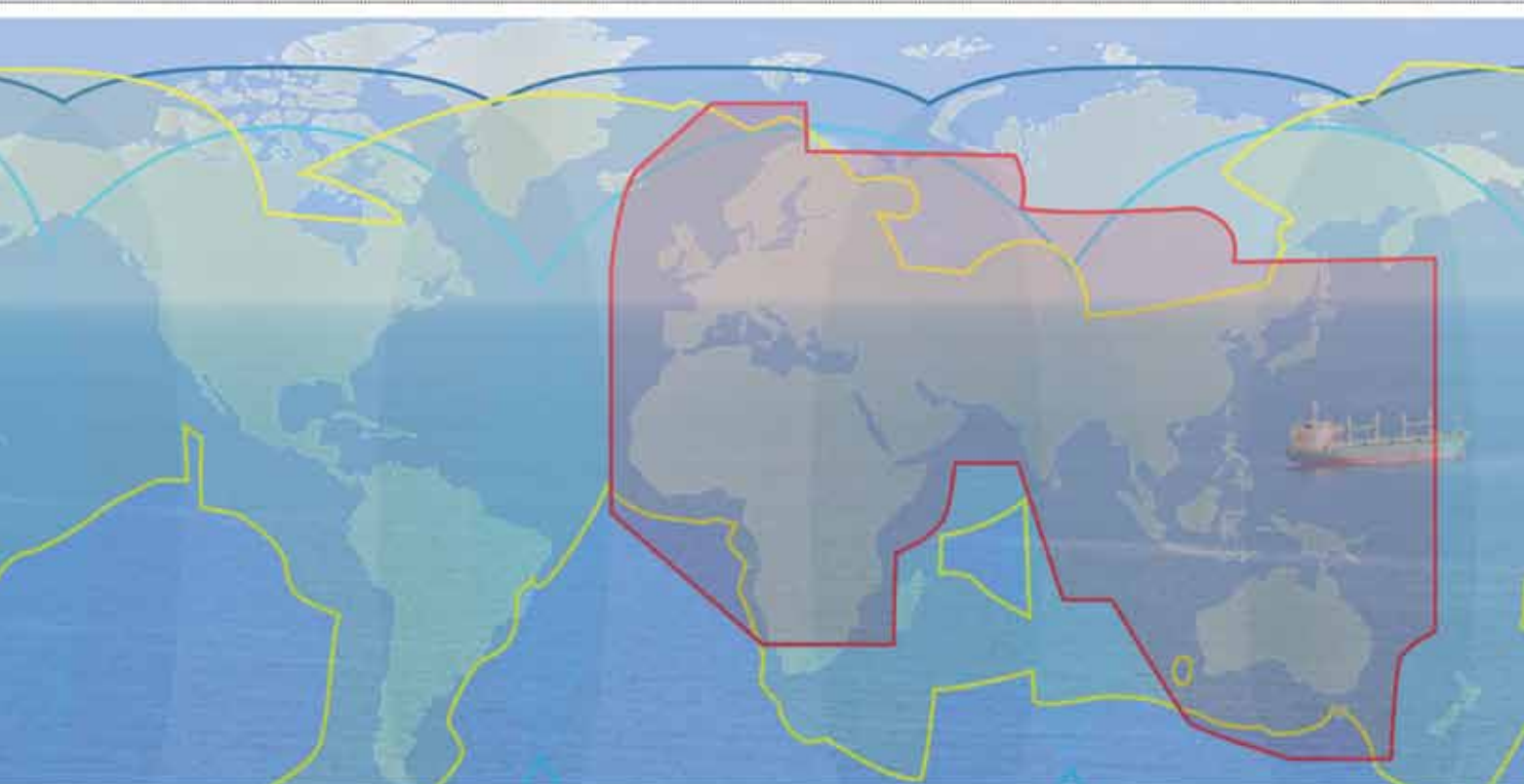


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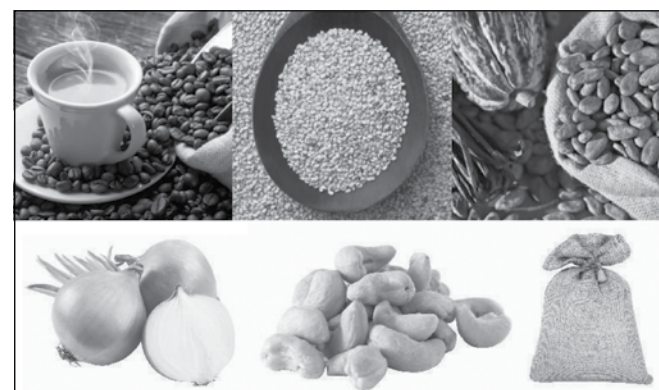
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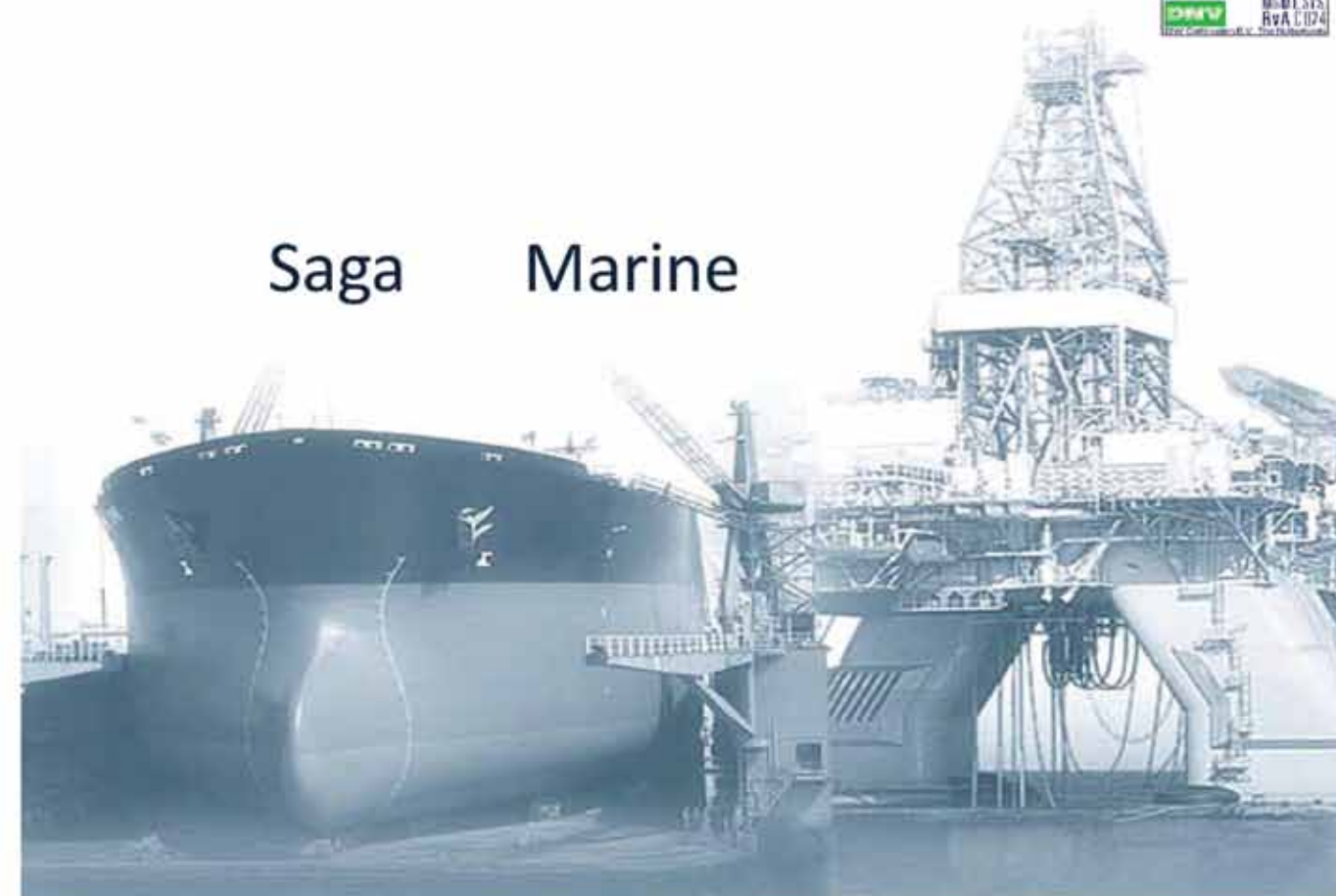
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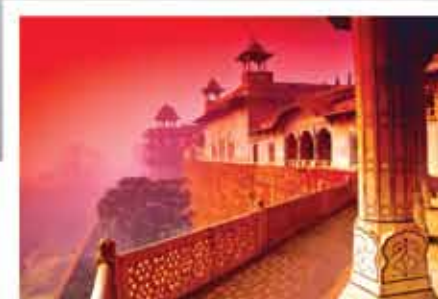
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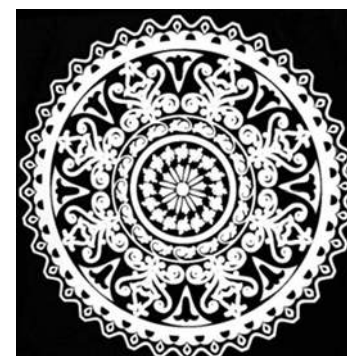
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