

শারদীয়া স্মরণিকা  
দ্বাদশ বার্ষিকী সংখ্যা



Hong Kong Bengali Association  
পূজা পূজা ২০১০



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*With Best Wishes To*

**HKBA**

*For the celebration of*  
***Durga Puja 2010***

*With the compliments of*



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Dear friends,

Most humbly and with a sense of deep respect I welcome you all on this auspicious occasion of Durga Puja 2010. The essence of Durga Puja is to destroy the demons within us and to embrace others with a true sense of love and selflessness. Let us pray to Maa Durga to give us the strength and courage to make this world a better place.

First, I want to highlight some notable accomplishments of our community that has come to my notice. Shreya Sen (ছোট্টা), daughter of Anuradha and Prasenjit Sen, did very well in her IB. She has been given an Artistic Honours Scholarship from SCAD, Atlanta. Later, she was also given an additional Academic Scholarship because her IB results exceeded their expectations. She makes us all very proud. Congratulations Shreya! All the best in your university career!

Recently two landmark operations were successfully performed at Queen Mary Hospital, both being the first of their kind in Hong Kong. One involved a combined heart and liver transplantation, the other an implantation of a ventricular assist device to help a patient with severe heart failure. Both patients got a new lease of life. I congratulate the medical teams. Our dear Dr. Subid Das was closely involved with both procedures.

Four families among us are blessed with new additions to their families. Sonali and Neil Chaudhuri have another son Ayush; Mahashweta and Sanjay Bhattacharya have their first child, a daughter, Sharanya; Moitreyi and Sagnik Ganguli have another son, Vivan; Mohana and Samar Das also have a second son, Aranyo. Sangeeta and Suman Senapati, who left Hong Kong earlier this year, are also blessed with their first child, a daughter. May God bless the newborns.

Now I want to briefly talk about one of the great pillars of our Bengali culture, Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore has such a strong influence on our cultural life that I am obliged to say a few words about an important event occurring this year. As many of you may know, next year is the 150th birthday anniversary of Rabindranath. Year-long celebrations of this event began this year in India, particularly in West Bengal and perhaps in Bangladesh too. Here in Hong Kong we are also planning a modest celebration of this event early next year. Since Rabindranath is Gurudev to all Indians, we want to stage a program that will appeal to all Indian communities as well as to the Bangladeshi nationals. We need your ideas about how to organize this event. I should add that the great treasure of Tagore's literary work in Bengali is inaccessible to many of our English-speaking children. Perhaps we should consider also presenting our children English translations of

his works during this event. That would be a humble tribute to our beloved poet.

A major portion of the funding for our events comes from the sponsorships in the Puja souvenir and donations from individual members. I thank the sponsors and the members for their support and generosity. I urge other members to please add their own donations.

Organizing the Durga Puja was made possible with the help and support of various fellow Indians and Chinese friends. I would particularly wish to thank the District Facilities Management Committee of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council, especially the Chairman, Mr. Chan Siu Tong, member, Mr. Yeung Tsz Hei (Benny), District Councillor, Mr. Hung Chiu-wah, Derek, Senior Executive Officer of Home Affairs Department, Ms. Liu Suk-Wa, Connie and other officials of HAD, for making the facilities of Henry G Leong Community Centre available to us for this purpose. We thank various Indian Communities, especially people from the Rajasthani Community, for helping us to raise funds for this event. I also thank my colleagues in the HKBA Executive Committee and their spouses for their dedication and hard work – especially the spouses, who support their other halves from behind-the-scenes but whose contributions go unnoticed. Finally, I thank the HKBA members who have volunteered to help and guide the Executive Committee in various stages of preparation.

HKBA has a healthy democratic tradition of changing the President at least every two years. This being my second year, a new President must be elected by the Executive Committee next year. There is no dearth of leadership talent among us. Indeed, many of our members hold substantial leadership positions in their professional lives. I am confident that HKBA will attain greater heights under the new leadership.

I have no doubt in my mind that in the months and years to come our community will contribute even more towards the prosperity and growth of Hong Kong. The best is yet to come.

I hope you will enjoy these few days of festivities of this annual event of the Bengali Community.

Season's Greetings and Best Wishes to you and your loved ones. Thank you.



Debasis Roy Mahapatra  
President, HKBA



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## Special Acknowledgements

The Hong Kong Bengali Association wishes to express its heart-felt thanks to all friends, supporters, sponsors and well-wishers for the help they have rendered to the cause of our Association. For this year's Durga Puja, we especially acknowledge the contributions of the following persons:

Mr. Mr R Seshadri  
Mr. Raymond Ho  
Ms. LIU Suk-Wa, Connie  
Mr. Kanwaljeet Singh Dhillon  
Mr. Sohan Goenka  
Mr. Vinod Dhariwal

Souvenir cover design      Rohini Sengupta (Richa)  
Mandap Decoration      Balaram Paul  
Souvenir Design      Lui Man Yin , Mandy



## HKBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2010 - 2011

President	Debasis Roy Mahapatra +852 6382 0991 debumahapatra@hotmail.com
Vice President	Sipanta Saha
General Secretary	Maumita Manna
Treasurer	Bhaskar Sengupta
Committee Members	Balaram Saha Chanchal Kumar Chan Debashis Bhattacharaya Mitali Chakraborty Sudipta Paul
Cultural Sub-Committee	Kaushik Neogy Mitali Chakraborty
Contact HKBA	mailhkba@gmail.com
Web Site	www.hkba.weebly.com



## Durga Puja 2010 Program Schedule

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

Sasthi	Wednesday, 13th October	- Puja starts from 7:00 PM - Prasad distribution
Saptami	Thursday, 14th October	- Morning Puja 09:30 – 12:00 - Pushpanjali 11:00-11:30 - Prasad distribution - Evening Puja 18:00 – 19:00 - Prasad distribution 19:00-19:30 - Cultural program 19:30-20:30
Asthami	Friday, 15th October	- Morning Puja 09:30 – 12:00 - Pushpanjali 11:00-11:30 - Prasad distribution - Sandhi Puja 18:00-19:00 - Prasad distribution 19:00-19:30 - Cultural program 19:30-20:00
Navami	Saturday, 16th October	- Morning Puja 09:30 – 12:00 - Pushpanjali 11:00-11:30 - Prasad distribution - Evening Puja 18:00 – 19:00 - Prasad distribution 19:00-19:30 - Cultural program 19:30-20:30
Dashami	Sunday, 17th October	- Morning Puja 09:30 – 12:00 - Pushpanjali 11:00-11:30 - Dadhi Karma - Prasad distribution - Sindur Khela 16:00-17:00 - Cleaning and packing 17:00-18:00
Lakshmi Puja	Friday, 22nd October	- Puja 18:30-20:30
Bijoya Sammelani	Saturday, 13th Nov	- Cultural Function 18:30 – 21:30

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 HONG KONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION**  
(Registered under the Societies Ordinance: Ref: (2) in CP/LIC/SO/19/21460 dated 31.12.1998)

**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2010**

Receipts	HKD	Amount HKD	Payments	HKD	Amount HKD
<b>Opening Balance of fund:</b>			<b>Durga Puja Expenses:</b>		
Cash at Bank as at March 1, 2009.		202,011	Purohit including travel & puja purchase	8,544	
<b>Membership Fees Collection:</b>			Decoration costs	2,374	
			Food catering expenses	53,285	
			Fruits, sweets, provisions, gifts, function and all miscellaneous expenses	23,074	
During the year		9,050	Printing of souvenir	11,234	
			Bijoya Sammelani dinner	20,233	
			Bijoya musical programme expenses	40,878	
			Lakshmi Puja expenses	573	160,195
<b>Durga Puja Collections:</b>			<b>Saraswati Puja Expenses</b>		2,779
Members' Subscriptions	91,000		<b>Poila Baisakh function expenses (net of collections from members)</b>		644
Pranami and donations from members and others	23,985				
Advertisements for year collected by year end	128,400	243,385	<b>AGM lunch expenses for prior year paid</b>		11,700
<b>Advertisement receivables for prior year collected</b>		3,400	<b>Bank charges paid</b>		145
			<b>Donation towards charitable activities:</b>		
			Sarada Seva Sangha	22,000	
			Po Leung Kuk	5,000	27,000
			<b>Cash at Bank as on 28 February, 2010.</b>		255,383
		<b>457,846</b>			<b>457,846</b>

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2010**

Liabilities	HKD	Amount HKD	Assets	HKD	Amount HKD
<b>Members' Fund:</b>			<b>Cash and Bank balances:</b>		
Opening Balance as on March 1, 2009	70,272		Bank balance as on February 28, 2010		255,383
Add:					
Membership fees collected during 2008-09	9,050	79,322	<b>Advertisement receivables at year end</b>		4,000
<b>General Fund:</b>					
Opening Balance as on March 16, 2008	123,439				
Add:					
Surplus from Durga Puja during year including receivables from advertisements at year end	87,190				
<b>Sub-total</b>	210,629				
<b>Less from General Fund for:</b>					
Net Deficit on Poila Baisakh function	644				
Expenses for Saraswati Puja	2,779				
AGM 2010 estimated expenses accrued	15,000				
Bank charges	145				
Donations during the year	27,000				
<b>Sub-total</b>	45,568				
Closing balance as on February 28, 2010.		165,061			
<b>Provision for estimated AGM 2010 expenses</b>		15,000			
		<b>259,383</b>			<b>259,383</b>

**Audit Report for 2009-10**

We have checked and verified the Statement of Receipts and Payments for the period March 1, 2009 to February 28, 2010 and the related Balance Sheet as at February 28, 2010 together with the detailed supporting documents / statements attached to and forming part of these accounts. Based on our checking and on the information and explanations obtained, we certify that the said accounts are true and fair in all respects.

SD/-  
Ambar Mitra

Dated: 20 March 2010

SD/-  
Dipankar Chatterjee

Dated: 20 March 2010.

## পুঁটি কাহিনী

### কৌশিক নিয়োগী

পুঁটির সাথে সেদিন হঠাৎ দেখা হয়ে গেল ফটকেদার বিয়েতে বরযাত্রি গিয়ে। অনভ্যস্ত হাতে কোনো রকমে ধুতি সামলাতে সামলাতে সবে বাস থেকে নেমেছি – সামনে দেখি পুঁটির বাবা হাত জোড় করে বরযাত্রীদের আপ্যায়নের জন্য দাঁড়িয়ে। পুঁটির বাবাকে এই অস্বাভাবিক অবস্থায় দেখেই এক রাশ রক্ত গিয়ে পুঁটির বাবার চড়ে বিদ্ধ কবের দাঁতের সেই ব্যথাটা আবার বাড়িয়ে তুলল। আমরা দেখে এক গাল হেসে সবিনয় উক্তি – এসো ভায়া, রাস্তায় কোন অসুবিধে হয়নি তো? বুঝলাম বুড়ো স্মৃতিবিজ্ঞানে ভুগছে – ঈশ্বর সহায় আমার, ভাগ্যিস চিনতে পারিনি – এই এক বিয়েবাড়ি লোকের সামনে পুঁটির বাবা আমার টুটি চেপে ধরতো ভাবতেই আমার ধুতির খুঁটটা কেমন আলগা হয়ে এল। একে পেট রোগা মানুষ তার ওপর এ রকম অনাহত উপদ্রবে পেটের ভেতরটা কেমন গুড়গুড় করতে লাগল। ফটকেদার চক্রে কেন যে ধুতি পরে এলাম তাই ভাবতে লাগলাম। আমি যখনই ধুতি পরি দেখেছি কোন না কোন গন্ডগোল হবেই। ধুতি পরতে জানতাম না। প্রথমবার বিয়েবাড়িতে ক্যায়দা মারব বলে বাবার কাছে ধুতি পরে, তারপর বন্ধুদের সাথে বাজি ধরে গান্ধিপিন্ডে খেয়ে প্রকৃতির ডাকে আর সাড়া দিয়ে উঠতে পারিনি ধুতি খুললে আর পরতে পারব না তাই। সে কি অপরিণীত যন্ত্রণা নিয়ে বাড়ি ফেরা বোঝান দুস্কর। ইলেকট্রিক শক খেয়ে যেন সারা শরীরের লোম সব দাঁড়িয়ে আছে। বসলে দাঁড়াতে হচ্ছে হয় আর দাঁড়ালে বসতে হচ্ছে হয়। এক একটা বাম্পার যখন বাসটা পার হচ্ছে ঝাঁকানিতে মনে হচ্ছে “যাহ সব প্রচেষ্টা শেষ”। পরের দিন সকালে বাবার জিজ্ঞাসা ‘কাল কি খাওয়াটা একটু বেশি হয়েছিল রাত্তিরে?’ আমার ক্র কোঁচকান জীন্তাসু মুখের দিকে তাকিয়ে বাবার নির্লিপ্ত উত্তর ‘ধুতির এক যায়গায় অনেকগুলো মাছি ভিড় করে আছে তাই জিজ্ঞাস্য করছিলাম- যাইহোক বাড়িতে কাচতে হবে না লজ্জিতে দিয়ে দিও।

পরেরবার আরেক ঝামেলা সেই ধুতি পরে কেতা মারতে গিয়ে। একটু রাত হয়েছে বিয়েবাড়ি থেকে ফিরতে, পাড়ায় লোডশেডিং। নেড়ীকুকুরগুলো আন্ধকারে চিনতে না পেরে তাড়া করল। কুকুরের তাড়ার চোটে দৌড়তে গিয়ে ধুতি খুলে একাকার। অর্ধশয় অবস্থায় কোনোরকমে বাড়ি পৌঁছনো দেখে বাবা গম্ভীরভাবে বললেন ‘তোমার এই চেহারায় ধুতি পরা দেখে কুকুরেও যখন তাড়া করে তখন আসলে তোমাকে কেমন দেখতে লাগে বুঝতে পারছ তো ধুতি পরলে? ধুতি পরলেই উত্তমকুমার হওয়া যায় না’।

পুঁটির বাবাকে দেখে এখন মনে হচ্ছে প্যান্টুল পরে এলে অন্তত বস্ত্র হরণের ভয় তো থাকতো না। শক্তিত পদক্ষেপে ময়ূরপঙ্খি ধুতির কাছা সামলে ‘চাচা আপন প্রাণ বাঁচা ভাবতে ভাবতে বাকি বরযাত্রীদের সঙ্গে কোনোরকমে স্থিত হয়ে বসে সবে ঠান্ডা ‘মাজা’র বোতালে টান দিয়েছি কানের পাশে মহিলা কণ্ঠ “আপনাকে কৃষ্ণকলিদি এক বার ওপরে ডাকছে। পাশে বসা বিচকেদার মিচকে উক্তি “কী গুরু এসেই ফিল্ডিং শুরু করে দিয়েছে?” অপ্রস্তুত হয়ে বললাম ‘ধুং কি যে বল’। তবুও একা যাওয়া সমিটীন মনে হল না। সাথে কেউ থাকলে অন্তত মিথ্যে বদনাম দিতে পারবে না। তাই অগত্যা বিচকেদাকে নিয়ে সেই মহিলা কণ্ঠের পেছনে পেছনে চিলেকোঠায় গিয়ে পৌঁছলাম। আবছা আলোয় পুঁটিকে দেখে মনে হল বেশ খানিকটা আধুনিকতার ছোঁয়া লেগেছে। গাঢ় কমলা রঙের শাড়িতে আর গালের হনুর ওপর চড়া রুজ এর ছোঁয়ায় কালো আর গোলাপির অদ্ভুত রামধনু মিশ্রণ তৈরি করেছে। সেই বিনুনি আর সেই তার যায়গায় মাথার একরাশ চুল curl করে কানের কাছে মাদুরের মতন পাকানো। অনেকটা গ্রীষ্মের বিকেল বেলায় জানালার খসখসটা যে ভাবে অর্ধেকটা গুটিয়ে রাখা হয়। পাশ থেকে বিচকেদার দাঁত চেপা টিপ্পনি “এ তো নাওমি ক্যাম্পবেল রে – দুর্গা রংচঙে, পাড়ার কালি পুজোয় প্রতিমার খরচ বেঁচে যায় – জিব বার করে দাঁড়িয়ে পড়লে একেবারে রঞ্জনালির বাচ্চা। বুঝলাম বিচকেদাকে নিয়ে

এসে ভুল করেছি সেই টিপিক্যাল বুর্জোয়া বাঙ্গালি মানসিকতা থেকে বের হতে পারিনি। অনেকক্ষণ সহ্য করেছি বিচকেদাকে – আর যাতে কিছু উল্টোপাল্টা না বলে তাই বললাম “দেখ বিচকেদা তুমি লোকের গায়ের রঙ নিয়ে উল্টোপাল্টা বলবে না, তুমি যে পাড়ার চাঁদুর দোকান থেকে রেগুলার ফেয়ার আন্ড লাভলী কিনে মাথা পাড়ার সবাই কে বলে দেব। বিচকেদা একটু দমে গেল। ছাপোষা বাঙ্গালি তো তাই। ফেসিয়াল করাবে, রিচিং করাবে, ফেয়ার আন্ড লাভলী মাথবে মেয়েদের মতন কিন্তু সব লুকিয়ে চুরিয়ে। জেনে গেলে আঁতেল বাঙ্গালির ম্যানলি ইমেজ যে নষ্ট হয়ে যাবে।

চিলেকোঠায় সেই আবছা আলোয় বিয়েবাড়ির জেনারেটরের ঘ্যাট ঘ্যাট শব্দের অনুরণনের মধ্যেই আবার সেই সপ্তমীর বিকেল ফিরে এল। সেই মোমবাতির শিখার মাঝে পুঁটির দীঘল হাঙ্কা টারা চোখের আকুতি দৃষ্টি ফিরিয়ে দিল আমার প্রথম প্রেমের সেই হারিয়ে যাওয়া আবেশ। ইচ্ছে ডানা আবার পাখা মেলে দিল আকাশে। জানতে পারলাম পুঁটির কোনো এক পিসতুতো দিদির সাথেই ফটকেদার বিয়ে হচ্ছে। ফটকেদার বিয়ের ছাদনাতলায় পুরুতের মস্ত উচ্চারণের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দুটা ভগ্ন হৃদয় আবার জুড়তে শুরু করল স্মৃতির ফাঁকে ফাঁকে হারিয়ে যাওয়া সময়ের হাত ধরে। ফটকেদার বিয়েতে জীবনের একটা অধ্যায় টপকে আবার এরকম আলটপকা আটকে যাব ভাবিনি।

ফুরফুরে মন নিয়ে খেতে বসে আবার বিপত্তি। পুঁটির বাবা নিজে বরযাত্রীদের নৈশভোজনের দেখভাল করছেন। মাথা নিচু করে খাবার গিলছি, ক্যাটারিংয়ের একটা ছেলেকে ডেকে পুঁটির বাবা বললেন আরে এখানে একটু মাংস দাও তো ভাই – ইনি তো কিছুই খাচ্ছেন না। বলির পাঁঠাকে যেমন কচি পাতা খাইয়ে নখর করা হয় যাতে বলির পর বেশি মাংস পাওয়া যায় নিজেও অনেকটা সেই রকম লাগল। পুঁটির বাবা আমাকে কচি পাঁঠার মাংস খাইয়ে সে রকম নখর করার প্রচেষ্টায় নেই তার যে কোনো গ্যারান্টি নেই। ভদ্রতার খাতিরে ‘না’ ‘না’ করেও উঠতে পারলাম না, গলা শুনে যদি চিনতে পেরে যায়। একটা দাঁতকেলানে বাস্তারাম মার্কা হাসি দিয়ে মাথা নিচু করে গলাধঃকরন করতে লাগলাম কচি পাঁঠার মাংস। কিন্তু মন পড়ে রইলো অতীতের সেই রোমাঞ্চকর দিনগুলিতে।

আবার পুঁটির সাথে সেই সখ্যতা শুরু হয়ে গেল। কিন্তু এবার আমি অনেক সতর্ক। আর যাই হোক পুঁটির বাবার হাতের সেই পিলে চমকানো চড় খেতে আর রাজি নই। তাই কলেজের সামনের গঙ্গার ধার নয় এবার দেখা করতাম আউটরাম ঘাটের কাছে স্কুপস এ। কোণের একটা টেবিল প্রেমালপের জায়গা হয়ে উঠল। শুধু পুঁটির সাজপোশাক নয় পুঁটির ভাষাতেও একটু আধুনিকতার ছোঁয়া লেগেছে বোঝা যেত। ‘হ্যাঁ’ এর বদলে মাঝে মাঝে ‘ইয়া ইয়া’ বলে। ‘হায় ভগবান’ না বলে ‘মাই গড’ বলে। বেশ ভালই লাগত শুনতে। হঠাৎ একদিন পুঁটি বলল “সিনেমা দেখতে যাবে?” সিনেমা ভাবতেই সেই আগের বারের টাটকা স্মৃতি ফিরে এল – সেই তারা সিনেমা – সিনেমা দেখতে দেখতে স্ক্রীনে হঠাৎ বড় ক্যাপশান “বাণ আসিতেছে পা তুলিয়া বসুন” সিনেমা হলে জোয়ারের জলে আমার নতুন খাদিমের চটি ভেসে যাওয়া আর তারপর খালি পায়ে বাড়ি ফেরা। চৌক গিলে বললাম “কি সিনেমা? আবার সেই পোসেনজিভের সিনেমা?” পুঁটি তাড়াতাড়ি বলে উঠল না না আমি পোসেনজিভের সিনেমা এখন আর দেখি না – “আমি এখন শুধু শোয়ার জন্য eager.” একটু হকচকিয়ে গেলাম। কি বলতে চায় পুঁটি? আমার নিরবতা দেখে পুঁটির লাজুক জিজ্ঞাসা “তোমার ভালো লাগে না?” পুঁটি হরলিঙ্গ এর বিজ্ঞাপনের মত আধো আধো ভাবে বলে চলেছে “আমার কিন্তু দারুন লাগে”। ‘জানো ও নাকি এখন পলিটিক্স করছে – এবার ইলেকশনে দাঁড়াবে। এবার আমি

বিত্রান্ত –“ পুঁটি পোসেনজিতের ছবি দেখে না ও এখন শোয়ার জন্য eager তা হলে পলিটিক্স কে করছে ?” “ কেন ? টার্মিনেটরের হিরো” পুঁটির লাজুক উত্তর। ওফ! অবশেষে ধোঁয়াশা কাটল। অর্পন্ড শোয়ারজেনগার পুঁটির উচ্চারণের ঠেলায় পড়ে ‘শোয়ার জন্য eager’। বাংলা মায়ের এই আংলো মেয়েদের এই দশা হবে ভেবেই কি রবি ঠাকুর আগেভাগেই লিখে রেখে গিয়েছিলেন “ ..... হে বঙ্গজননী রেখেছ বাঙ্গালি করে মানুষ করনি”।

পুঁটির সাথে শোয়ারজেনগারের সিনেমা দেখা হয়ে ওঠেনি কিন্তু বিড়লা প্লানেটোরিয়ামের শীততাপ নিয়ন্ত্রিত কক্ষের নিভুতে গ্রীষ্মের অনেক অলস দুপুর কেটে গেছে। এ রকম অদ্ভুত চিন্তা পুঁটির উর্বর মস্তিষ্ক থেকেই আসত। সপ্তাহের দিনগুলোতে দেহাতি বিহারী গুলো ‘চোদ্দোগুটিকে কলকাতা দেখাবার অছিলায় বিড়লা প্লানেটোরিয়ামের ভিড় করে আর সামনের দরজা দিয়ে ঢুকেই সামনের সিট গুলোতে বসে পড়ে। নিভুতের খোঁজে আমরা ঠিক উলটো দিকে চলে যেতাম। প্লানেটোরিয়ামের চেয়ারে ভর দুপুরবেলা অন্ধকার আকাশের দিকে চেয়ে আধশোয়া হয়ে নিশ্চিন্তে আর নির্ভয়ে চলত আমাদের অনেক দুঃসাহসিক প্রত্যাশার পদক্ষেপ।

প্লেটোনিক ভালবাসার সীমানা ছাড়িয়ে আমরা যে অনেক এগিয়ে এসেছিলাম তা আমরা বুঝতে পারতাম। একদিন পুঁটির হঠাৎ আবদার “আজ রাত্তিরে আমাদের বাড়িতে আসবে ?” হকচকিয়ে গিয়ে বললাম এটা একটু বাড়াবাড়ি হয়ে যাচ্ছে না ? রাত্রিবেলায় তোমার বাবা থাকবেন বাড়িতে আর সেখানে আমি নিশিকুটুস্থর মতো উপস্থিত হব – জানাজানি হলে কি হবে বুঝতে পারছ ? কিন্তু পুঁটি নাছোড়বান্দা – ওর বাবা নাকি ঘুমিয়ে পড়লে আর কোনো সাড় থাকে না। রান্না ঘরের দিকের ব্যালকনির দরজাটা হাফ্ট করে ভেঙিয়ে রেখে দেবে পুঁটি, যাতে সেখান দিয়ে অনায়াসেই ঢোকা যায়। আর রান্নাঘরের ঠিক পাশেই পুঁটির ঘর, ব্যাস টুক করে ঢুকে পড়া । অপরিশ্রুত বয়সের অভিসারের অপ্রত্যাশিত এই আমন্ত্রণ কে আদৌ অগ্রাসঙ্গিক মনে হল না বরঞ্চ একটু রোমাঞ্চকরই লাগল।

যথারীতি সেদিন রাতে পূর্ব নির্দেশ মতো পুঁটিদের রান্নাঘরের দিকের ব্যালকনির দরজাটার কাছে এসে পৌঁছলাম। নিশুতি রাতে গম ভাঙা মেশিনের মত পুঁটির বাবার নাসিকা গর্জনে নিশ্চিন্ত হয়ে অন্ধকারে দরজা খুলে ভেতরে ঢুকে পা রাখতেই ঝনঝন শব্দ – রাতের তাগাড় করা এঁটো বাসনের ওপর পা রেখেছি । নিজের মাথায় চাঁটি মারতে ইচ্ছে হল। অন্ধকারে চোখ একটু সইয়ে তবেই না এগোনো উচিত – তর সইছে না আর যেন। কিন্তু তার থেকেও বড় ব্যাপার গম ভাঙা

মেশিন হঠাৎ নিস্তব্ধ। কিছুক্ষণ চুপচাপ দাঁড়িয়ে থাকার পর আবার গম ভাঙা মেশিন আন্তে আন্তে আওয়াজ শুরু করল শুনে নিঃশব্দে এগোনো শুরু করলাম। একটু এগিয়েই আসল বিপত্তি। ‘খটাস’ করে একটা শব্দ আর তার পরেই ডান পায়ের বুড়ো আঙ্গুলে প্রচন্ড যন্ত্রণা। অন্ধকারে প্রথমে ঠাওর করে উঠতে পারলাম না কিসে লেগেছে। তার পরেই বুঝলাম যে রান্নাঘরে ইঁদুর মারার জন্য দাঁতওলা ইঁদুর মারা কল রাখা ছিল আর ডান পায়ের বুড়ো আঙ্গুলটা সেখানে পড়তেই যন্ত্র তার যান্ত্রিক কাজ সমাধা করেছে আর সেই সাথে সমাধিত করেছে আমার প্রথম মিলনের প্রত্যাশাকে।

‘খটাস’ আওয়াজের শব্দের সাথে সাথেই পুঁটি বাবার গলা ‘কে ?’ পাশের ঘর থেকে পুঁটির তীক্ষ্ণ মস্তিষ্কপ্রসূত উত্তর “ ও বেড়াল টেড়াল হবে , তুমি ঘুমোও” । পুঁটির গলা শুনে আল্মবিসর্জনের আগে শেষ প্রচেষ্টায় ততোধিক তীক্ষ্ণতায় দুবার ‘মিঁয়াও’ ‘মিঁয়াও’ করে উঠলাম। ইঁদুর মারা কলে জাঁতাবিদ্ধ হয়ে পড়ে বেড়ালের ডাক দেবার অনন্য দৃষ্টান্ত বোধহয় আমিই সৃষ্টি করলাম। কিন্তু সারা জীবন পুলিশের চাকরি করে আর অপরাধী ঘেঁটে ঘেঁটে এই গভীর ঘূমের মধ্যেও পুঁটি বাবা ঠিক সন্দেহ করেছিল। মুহূর্তের মধ্যে বাড়ির আলো গুলো জ্বলে উঠল আর পুঁটি বাবা ভুঁড়ির ওপর লুঙ্গি বাঁধতে বাঁধতে একবারে রান্নাঘরের দরজায়, পিছনে আনত মুখে পুঁটি। বুড়োর স্মৃতিবিদ্রাট হট করে কেটে গেল। এইবারও সেই আগের বারের ঘটনার ক্ল্যাশব্যাক। আবার সেই বিরাশি সিক্কার চড় – আবার একটা নোনতা স্বাদ মুখের ভেতর – আবার সেই আল্মবিসর্জন – তারপর রক্তাক্ত পা নিয়ে কলিমুগের একলব্যের নতমস্তিস্কে প্রত্যাবর্তন।

আর কখনো দেখা হয়নি পুঁটির সাথে। সময়ের ফাঁকে নতুন চাকরি হয়েছে, সদ্য বিয়েও হয়েছে। প্রথমবার স্বশুরবাড়িতে শ্বাশুড়ি ঠাকরুনের সহজ সরল প্রশ্ন ‘ডান পায়ের কাটা বুড়ো আঙ্গুলের’ ইতিহাস বর্ণনা করতে গিয়ে ‘ই’ তে গিয়ে কোনো রকমে নিজেকে সামলে নিয়েছি। তারপর নির্ভেজাল মিথ্যে ‘ইয়র্কার’- ক্রিকেট খেলতে গিয়ে ইয়র্কারে লেগেছে। মুখ দেখে বুঝতে পারি যে ইঁদুর মারা কলের নির্খুত কাটার সঙ্গে ইয়র্কারের চোট এক করা বোধহয় সৌরভ-শচিন জমানার আমার আধুনিকা শ্বাশুড়ি ঠাকরুনের সম্ভব হয়নি কিন্তু সম্ভ্রমের খাতিরে বাবাজীবনকে হয়ত কিছুই বলতে পারেননি। ‘আফটার অল’ জামাই তো। যাইহোক স্বশুরবাড়িতে আমি কখনো রান্নাঘরের দিকে পা বাড়াই না – Rat-trap phobia টা কেন জানি না রয়েই গেছে।

## The Practical Philosopher

Arunavo Roy

Philosophy, as it was written by many of the greats, is often inaccessible to the masses and is indeed completely impractical for daily life. Not so with the late, great Bertrand Russell.

Some of you may be familiar with this titan of philosophy, others may not have heard of him. Regardless, his book ‘The Conquest of Happiness’ is a book that must be read by anyone with even the most basic interest in practical applications for philosophy. Indeed, despite winning the Nobel prize for his many profound and complex literary works, Russell also found the time to produce some highly accessible works, chief among them ‘The Conquest of Happiness’.

In this book, he puts forth “a cure for the ordinary day-to-day unhappiness from which most people in civilized countries suffer”. From this great thinker’s mind came this manual of happiness. Indeed it contains simple, formulaic, and immediately applicable methods for improving anyone’s general day to day happiness.

Initially, Russell explores the causes of unhappiness, including everything from envy to the sense of sin. He then goes on to ponder if, in the face of all these forces for unhappiness, whether happiness is still possible. Finally, as he explores the causes of happiness, such as zest and affection, he highlights practical measures to increase each of these levers.

One line has always stayed with me and it is this: “The secret of happiness is this: let your interests be as wide as possible, and let your reactions to the things and persons that interest you be as far as possible friendly rather than hostile.” This advice is so simple, yet still so relevant, 80 years after the book was first published.

The book is available in several public libraries in Hong Kong, waiting for you to be taken home ( catalogue number 171.4 RUS ). Even better is to get on to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and order your personal copy of this timeless work today.

## Amazing Bali

Debasmita Bhattacharaya

Have you ever dreamed of living in paradise? Of seeing amazing new attractions every day? If yes, then Bali is the place for you! With its beautiful beaches and unique dances and puppet shows, Bali is the closest place to heaven on Earth!

As the plane flew over Bali, the first thing that caught my attention was the gorgeous paddy fields. The contrast of sunflower yellow and lush green was breathtaking. After I left the spacious airport, I took a taxi to my hotel, the Conrad. The Conrad Hotel is located on the southern coast of Bali, and is conveniently situated, being only 10 kilometers from the International Airport. It has exotic tropical gardens and lagoons, with cascading waterfalls and a beautiful 350 meter private beach. I checked in immediately and left for the Seminyak Beach.

The Seminyak Beach is home to Bali’s best bars, clubs and restaurants. As the sunset transformed the blue sky into shades of magenta and orange, I noticed the elaborate patterns on the sand. After further investigation, I discovered that the patterns were made by tiny beach crabs crawling along the sand!

The following morning, after a breakfast of tropical fruits, yogurt and freshly squeezed juice, I headed to Kuta Beach to get my hair braided with beads. After my make over and a brief foot massage, I paid a visit to the Tanah Lot Temple.

The Tanah Lot Temple is a Balinese Hindu temple. When the tide is high, it is cut off from the rest of the mainland as it is built on a large rock in the sea. The temple is surrounded by a coral reef inhabited by sea snakes which are believed to be holy. The temple was built to worship Dewa Baruna or Bhatara Segara, the sea god. When I had finished feasting my eyes on the magnificent view, I asked my driver to take me to the Monkey Forest in Ubud.

The monkeys within the Sacred Monkey Forest Ubud Sanctuary are commonly known as long tailed macaques. Their scientific name is *Macaca fascicularis* and they are found throughout Southeast Asia. The survival of the species is dependent on the conservation of Bali’s forested areas. I bought some bananas from one of the local vendors to feed to the monkeys. After watching the monkeys play with each other and groom themselves, I went to a small café to eat lunch.

Next on my itinerary was watching the Barong Dance. Dance is the main form of art in Balinese culture and is performed at temples and ceremonies. The Barong Dance is one of the most well known Balinese dances. It is a dance telling a story, narrating the fight between good and evil. This dance is the classic Balinese way of acting out mythology. As I watched, I noticed that some of the dance moves were similar to Indian classical dance. This is because the dance originated in India. Music, of course, was an essential part of the performance. Instruments such as xylophones, drums, gongs and bamboo flutes were played during the dance to create the moods and atmosphere. When the show was over I went straight back to the hotel. Hungry and exhausted, I ate dinner and retired to my room.

On the third day of my exquisite vacation, I started the day with a long swim in the hotel’s clear blue swimming pool. After a healthy breakfast, feeling thoroughly energized, I began the two hour long journey to the most famous tourist spot in Bali, the Agung Volcano.

The peak of the Agung Volcano is the highest point on the island of Bali. Agung last erupted in 1963 and is still active. It occasionally belches smoke and ash. After admiring the sights and taking photos, my driver showed me the way to a restaurant which overlooked the huge volcano. When I was done overindulging on the delicious buffet, I headed back to the hotel for an afternoon siesta.

Next on the agenda was the Wayang Kulit puppet show. The Wayang Kulit puppet show is a shadow puppet show. The stories the puppets perform are usually drawn from the two great Indian epics; the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. The puppet shows are also narrating the fight between good and evil, like the Barong Dance. When the captivating show was over, I felt completely and totally blown away by the skill of the puppeteers. Then, I went back to the hotel for a relaxing massage at the spa before dinner.

The following day was my last day in Bali. I sunbathed on the beach and lazed around until it was time for me to check out of the hotel.

I thoroughly enjoyed my luxurious stay in Bali and I can’t wait to go there again!

## Nights

Riddhi Roy

I rarely spent the night out in the countryside, but when I did, it was one that was a relaxing break from the bustling city life. I loved to lie on my back on the soft grass and stare at the mysterious moonlit sky. The moon was a creamy white colour and it had a luminous silvery glow around it. Little puffs of grey clouds filled the dark sky. The stars twinkled like thousands of jewel sparkling in the sky. I could smell the clean soft breeze that blew through the trees, causing them to sway and make a gentle swishing sound. The wind had a certain calming and relaxing effect on me as it blew over my still body. A beautiful scent of lush green grass and trees lingered everywhere. From the nearby tents, bright camping fires were aglow and I could smell succulent sausages cooking that made my mouth water. Little children were crowded around bright fires, giggling excitedly as they watched marshmallows melt on their hot poker. I remember when I was a child, eating marshmallows was one of my favourite pastimes. I loved the taste of the sweet sticky inside of the marshmallow as it dribbled onto my tongue. It went well with a steaming cup of hot chocolate. The rich taste of chocolate filled my mouth and slowly went down to my stomach, spreading a feeling of warmth throughout my body. The heat of the fire that we huddled around while eating created a feeling of cosiness and comfort. The dancing crackling flames of the fire lit up all the smiling faces. These were all things that made a night out in the countryside so memorable.

But an evening out in the city was just as enjoyable, yet very different. In the heart of Hong Kong, there

were crowds of people. Shop holders were loudly beckoning tourists who were looking for attractive but cheap souvenirs. The stalls were full of fancy jewellery with ingrained designs, colourful hair accessories, tie-dyed bandanas and many other bits and bobs. Booming Canto pop music came blasting from the music store nearby. Roadside hawkers were selling greasy spicy satays which smelled like burning coal. The cars from the main road produced smelly exhaust fumes and the buses produced a loud hiss each time they stopped. I could also hear the loud metallic clangs from the old trams. The beaming headlights and flickering traffic lights lit up the roads. All the lights and sounds made me feel very much alive, even if it was late at night. Beside me, many different types of people pushed by. There were rich businessmen in posh black suits who chattered away animatedly on their mobile phones. Alongside them walked construction workers with unshaven rough faces and many couples out on dates. A few stern-faced policemen dressed in blue smoothly pressed uniforms roamed the streets. As I crossed the bustling zebra crossing, I looked up at the tall buildings which made me feel ever so tiny. On the top of the skyscrapers were flashing billboards, advertising some big companies. Crowds of people swarmed into shopping centres from the uneven concrete pavement, occasionally stepping painfully on my toes. The city was always lively and loud, even at night.

Although both nights were ever so different, somehow I've never been able to figure out which one I like more, because both were special in some way or another.

## An Acrostic poem

S - Shadow during night time,  
H - Hinders my sleep  
R - Roaming on the open floor,  
E - Eating away things.  
Y - "Yuck", sound escapes from my throat  
A - At last I see, it's a brown mouse!!

- Shreya Palit

## Thoughts of Bengali

Sunandan Dhar

There's a saying: "You never know what you have until you lose it". I have spent my entire childhood in Kolkata, all thirteen years of innocence in the City of Joy. I had grown accustomed to the places, people and events of the city; I passed by it all without a second glance. My childhood is so intertwined with the city that no one apart from a fellow Bangali can relate to it. It is alarming how people are keen to criticize, without considering the value of what they have. The only way to appreciate what you have is to have it taken away from you, and that is exactly what happened to me. Taken away from my motherland, I was brought to a foreign land of executive class cars and incomprehensible real estate values, and only then did the realization dawn upon me.

Moving to Hong Kong was quite the experience. The thrill of a new lifestyle was enough to make me forget about what I was leaving behind. I was engulfed by a sense of excitement and suspense. My imaginations soared about a new home in an alien land. Of course, I had not yet realized that I was leaving my one-and-only true home behind. I can recall my last day at school, walking out just beyond the front gate, and turning back to say the final goodbye. That was the moment it all came crashing down upon me. The realization of what I was leaving behind, numerous people I had the pleasure of calling my friends... the memories of a fun childhood... the comfort of my second home. I started to realize that I was leaving my childhood incomplete by going away. By the time I had said my goodbyes to my friends, cousins, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and even my brother, to say that I was having second thoughts would be a gross understatement. Since that fateful moment, every time I saw something or someone, there was always that dreadful feeling that this was an ending.

Once in Hong Kong, the initial excitement of a new land fizzled out quite soon to expose a country barren of emotion or any homely feeling. It was only a matter of time before I started missing Kolkata and all things Bangali. Each passing day, it was the little things that reminded me of home. These are the little things that we take for granted, but are indeed invaluable. Things like being able to comfortably eat with our hands (which is when food tastes the best I might add), rather than having to use two tiny sticks which take the equivalent of martial arts training to master! Things like being able to go out in the evening with a group of friends and have a thrilling session of Para football

or Para cricket; without worrying about being handed a \$1000 fine. Things like knowing that all we had to do when we broke a window with a cricket ball was to grab the bat and run as fast as possible; instead of worrying about getting sued. Being able to go out to the field and play football while the chemistry teacher talks to an empty room, without the worry of surveillance cameras. Being able to have a pleasant conversation with the panwallah and our neighbours; rather than carrying a strict business attitude wherever we go. Being able to look up at night during a power cut and watch numerous sparkling stars; rather than being blinded by artificial lights from skyscrapers. Being able to hop onto an open auto-rickshaw whenever our feet got tired; rather than searching for the nearest MTR station. Things like waking up in the morning to the sound of Bhoomi or Cactus playing on the loudspeaker in your para and enjoying it; instead of reporting it as "unbearable noise pollution". Being able to go out and have the time of your life in the rain; instead of rushing to put up a million "Caution: Wet Floor" signs and opening as many umbrellas as possible at the first sight of clouds. Being actively involved in a para function or enjoying an overly-dramatic annual Natok; rather than sitting passively in the audience and watching a meticulously organized yet barely entertaining show on stage. Being able to perform a soulful Aroti, without the fire alarm going off. Being able to walk two steps and find a shop selling mouth-watering phuchka, bhelpuri, aloo chaat, muri, biryani, idli, dhosa, dahi bara, and mishti; rather than street shops selling food that makes you nauseous even thinking about! Perhaps it is these little things, and so many more, that truly make us Bangali. Perhaps it is only these little things that separate our homely motherland from the industrial jungle that is Hong Kong.

When I first left Kolkata for Hong Kong, I was too naive to understand its culture and heritage. The music, dance, cinema, religion, rituals and food are much more valuable than they are given credit for. The culture, along with the historic buildings and people, are part of what makes us proud to be Bangali. All the cleanliness, efficiency, wealth and fast food in Hong Kong cannot even compare to our homeland of Kolkata. The abundance of culture and pride of heritage gives us our identity, and separates us from the rest of the world. Amra Kolkata theke joto durei palai, amader "বারো মাসে তেরো পার্বণ" chhere thakte parbo naa. No matter how far we travel from Kolkata, we cannot live without our "বারো মাসে তেরো পার্বণ".

## Fuzzy Logic

Subid Das

"Do you have anything planned for this evening, Subid?" my wife asked me.

"No, not really. Do you have anything in mind?"

"If you are not busy then we could watch a movie at home. We have loads of DVDs lying which we haven't had a chance to watch yet," Rapti suggested.

"I have heaps of work to do, but right now I am all for procrastination. So, yeah, why not watch a nice movie, provided it's a good print. Even a black and white print will do, but not a black and black one that you occasionally get from your favourite store in Chungking Mansion."

"Please don't keep repeating the same old line. It has ceased to be funny. Just go through the pile of DVDs in the cabinet and select one you like. But if you don't mind, nothing too heavy or arty please."

"Absolutely," I agreed enthusiastically. I was already so overjoyed that this was not going to be another evening of endless Star serials. "I am certainly not in the mood to tax my intellect either. Let's choose an action thriller or something where the hero kills everybody single-handed."

It was one of those typical evenings during the middle of the week, when we had both just come back home from a rather long day at work and did not feel particularly keen to tackle any of the innumerable tasks that keep on accumulating on the domestic front. Being the middle of the week, it seemed a bit too awkward to ask Sanjib or Indrani, or any of our friends for that matter, whether it would be alright if we could just drop by for a chat, and then hope for the suggestion that we stay back for dinner. Under the circumstances, therefore, the idea of sitting back and relaxing in the sitting room while watching a movie seemed to be the most appealing alternative. I proceeded to lazily sift through the pile of DVDs.

"Hey, we bought this one quite some time ago and it is still lying unpacked. We completely forgot about it," I said, as I started to rip off the cellophane wrapping off the DVD cover, a task I sometimes find more stressful than performing some of the most high-tech procedures on my patients in the ICU at my hospital.

"Which one is that?" Rapti enquired.

"It's one we have seen in the theatres before and we both liked it so much that we bought the DVD so we could watch it again. It is "Ransom" starring Mel Gibson and Rene Russo," I replied, absolutely certain of Rapti's approval. After all, Mel Gibson had always been one of her all-time favourites and I had not known her to miss any of his movies. So what came next took me rather by surprise.

"No, no, no. Certainly not Mel Gibson. Choose something else, please."

"Not Mel Gibson? Did I hear you right?" I asked, quite incredulous at Rapti's response. "I thought you were his biggest fan. How many times have I heard you mention his looks, his blue eyes, etc, etc? Why, may I ask, do you not wish to see this movie?"

"It is not just this movie. I wouldn't want to watch any of Mel Gibson's movies ever again."

"But why," I asked, still quite stunned at this sudden volte face.

"Did you not know that he has recently divorced his wife of more than 28 years, one who has borne him 7 children?" replied a clearly agitated Rapti. "Absolutely no question of seeing any more of his movies."

"But, but, what has that got to do with seeing his movies?" I stuttered, quite obviously unable to spot the logic. "Would you have agreed to watch the movie if his wife had borne him fewer children, say just three?"

"Please stop being so frivolous. And do you know, it was all for the sake of a young singer he met and had an affair with while making his latest movie?"

"Sure, he shouldn't have done all that, but why can't we see his movies? He is still a good actor and he makes pretty good movies. In any case, this particular movie was made while he was still loyal to his wife." I pleaded.

"How can you ever condone this?" charged Rapti, clearly becoming more distressed.

"No, I am not. I only wanted to see the movie. I can't quite grasp the rationale here – I mean, why shouldn't we ever see a Mel Gibson movie again just because he has divorced his wife?"

"Don't you see, he was a huge public figure, a vastly popular icon, a role model, and then he goes and behaves like this? You can't just do this. If you are reaping all the benefits of being a public icon, you have got to behave like one. You can't have your cake and eat it too, you know," replied my wife in an almost venomous tone.

"But it is the fans who give movie actors such an iconic image, the public that makes them into stars and puts them on a pedestal. It is not as if the actors demand to be thought of as examples of righteousness," I argued.

"But once they become such mega public figures, they have to live up to their image. Otherwise they shouldn't be 'stars,'" Rapti countered, completely wrapped in her own logic.

"I still cannot fathom what watching a movie has to do with all this? I suppose, by this same logic, provided one could remotely call it that, we have to give up on Harrison Ford and Kevin Costner as well?" I retorted, trying to inject a dose of sarcasm in my voice.

"Obviously! I have long thrown away all the DVDs of those two," replied my wife.

"No!" I groaned, unable to believe that I had been so cruelly deprived of Indiana Jones, The Fugitive, No Way Out, The Untouchables, and so many others, some of the best movies in my opinion. "How could you ever do that?" I demanded, now my turn to get angry. "Why on earth should it matter to you or me which actor or actress is having an affair with whom, and whether or not they are being loyal to their respective spouses? I mean it's none of our business, is it? In their profession, it is all too common for such things to happen. Why should it affect us, I just don't understand?"

"You men never have and never will. It is just one of those things that so clearly separate the two sexes," replied my wife, getting yet more agitated.

"Precisely," I said, seizing the opportunity, "we men are inherently more logical; we do not confuse or complicate issues as you people seem to do so easily all the time."

"No, not at all. On the other hand, you men are all so extremely superficial, your views on everything so very myopic. Ask any woman, and you will find that they will agree with me. And besides, let me tell you, I don't quite like the idea of your taking up cudgels on their behalf," added Rapti, now clearly beginning to lay the responsibility of Mel Gibson's sins at my doorstep.

"Should we try asking Paris Hilton?" I challenged one last time, but already resigned to the utter futility of trying to change Rapti's decision. "Forget it, should we see a movie starring Graham Taylor?" I asked.

"Graham Taylor? Never heard of him."

"Nor have many others; but he is at least married to the same wife for the last sixty years!"

"Ha! Very funny. You have wasted so much time arguing, I don't think there's enough time left to finish a movie. We might as well forget about it," Rapti replied in utter disdain, walking off towards the kitchen in a huff.

"Okay then, I might as well switch to the sports channel," I replied, happy to be left alone to my own choice at last.

"What - the Premier League again?" enquired Rapti, a couple of minutes later, popping her head through the kitchen entrance.

"Not quite. NowTV has lost the rights to transmit the Premier League. They are instead showing an old Ryder Cup tournament from the year 2000, probably Tiger Wood's best year ever," I answered, as I admired some of the most amazing shots in the history of golf.

"What? Tiger Woods...OVER MY DEAD BODY! Switch it off at once," thundered the missus.

## Who are the Bengalis 誰是孟加拉人

Debasis Roy Mahapatra

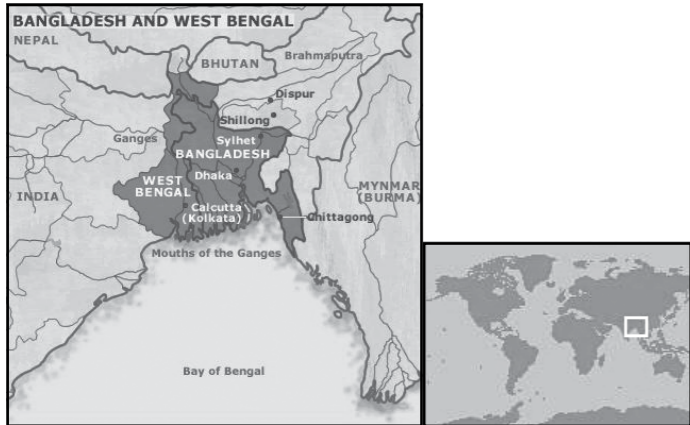
The original English version of this article can be found in our web site at <http://www.hkba.weebly.com>. I am immensely grateful to a friend of HKBA for the Chinese translation at a very short notice. I respect his desire to remain anonymous.

這篇文章主要目的向香港的華人社區介紹孟加拉人民和他們的文化。本文不是從政治和經濟方面，而是從文化角度剖析孟加拉人。

香港孟加拉協會的成員主要來自居港的印度裔孟加拉人、西印度孟加拉省的孟加拉人與孟加拉的國民，其中以西孟加拉邦的孟加拉人為主，香港孟加拉協會的成立目的主要是迎合居港的印度裔孟加拉人的文化需要。

### Geography of Bengal 孟加拉地理

孟加拉語是一種於孟加拉，即印度次大陸東部使用的語言。於這個地區居住的人亦被稱為孟加拉人。孟加拉語是孟加拉國家的官方語言，亦是印度其中一種公認的官方語言。



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簡單而言，在大英帝國統治時期，孟加拉國包括今天的孟加拉，西印度的孟加拉邦、特里普拉邦，印度阿薩姆邦、比哈爾邦和奧里薩邦的部分省份。當印度獨立時，英國基於宗教理由，將孟加拉分為兩部分。其時，大多數信奉伊斯蘭教的東部地區人民遷移到巴基斯坦。這部分後來普遍被稱為東孟加拉和東巴基斯坦。其餘的地區，當中大部分的人口是印度教徒，成為印度的一部分，即今日的西孟加拉邦。位於印度國境，即接壤東孟加拉的地方成為印度的阿薩姆邦和特里普拉邦。以此劃分後，併入以印度教為主的東孟加拉地區令印度人口大增。下表展示了該地區的一些基本數字。位於孟加拉國和西印度孟加拉邦的地區大部份以農村為主，依賴農業為經濟基礎。

### Introduction to Bengali language 簡介孟加拉語

孟加拉語是世界上第六大語言，謹亞於漢語，西班牙語，英語，印地文和阿拉伯文。像其他印度語言一樣，它主要是源於在古老的印度教經典和哲學著作裡普遍使用的梵文。

泰戈爾詩歌和孟加拉語是貫穿以印度教為主的西孟加拉邦和以穆斯林佔主導地位的孟加拉國。印度和孟加拉國的國歌均是源自泰戈爾詩歌。

2010年是泰戈爾150誕辰的週年紀念，在孟加拉國和印度，尤其是印度的西孟加拉邦，早於今年年初已開始了為期長達一年的慶祝活動。印度和孟加拉國政府亦同意合作舉辦跨國界的聯合慶祝活動。

泰戈爾不只是一個多方面的天才，更是一個全才。他不僅是一位偉大的詩人和編寫許多不同種類歌曲的作曲家，他同時亦是一位小說家、劇作家、音樂家、哲學家和教育家。他的才華主要見於他的歌曲和詩歌裡。他編寫泰戈爾歌的歌曲，俗稱 Rabindra sangeet (sangeet孟加拉語解作歌曲) 極富浪漫色彩，他的作品至今仍是孟加拉最流行的音樂歌曲。他在西孟加拉邦的汀尼克坦成立了一所名為Visva Bharati的大學，印度總理是該校的副校長，Visva Bharati一詞意指“讓印度與世界接軌”。這所大學可能是第一所在印度教授普通話的教育學院。

### Religion and cultural festivals 宗教與文化節

孟加拉人信奉的兩種主要宗教是印度教和伊斯蘭教。大部分人在孟加拉國的人信奉伊斯蘭教，而大部分在西孟加拉邦的人是印度教徒。由於宗教的差異，雖然兩個地域在文化方面有許多相似的地方，但亦存在著一些分歧。

慶祝孟加拉的新年 (Poula / Pahela Baishakh - Baishakh解作孟加拉曆法裡的第一個月)，是印度教徒和穆斯林教徒的共同文化節日，亦是兩教慶祝兩位偉大孟加拉語詩人 - Rabindranath Tagore和Kazi Nazrul Islam的誕辰。

在香港，孟加拉協會慶祝印度教的兩個宗教節日，Durga Puja和Saraswati Puja。雖然這些主要是印度教的宗教節慶日子，但並沒有限制了其他宗教信仰的人參加這些慶祝活動。孟加拉協會歡迎大眾參與。

每年孟加拉曆法裡的九月或十月便是一連五天的Durga Puja節舉行的時間。這個節日除了標誌著宗教戰勝邪惡之外，更巧妙的，是它同時標示著一個人戰勝自己內心的邪惡。這個節日是孟加拉印度教的最重要宗教節日。

### Food 食品

孟加拉人的飲食習慣與中國人非常相似，均以蔬菜，魚和白米為主要糧食。與中國人不同的是，孟加拉人也以糖果為主糧，它們大多是由奶酪製品。其他主要糧食是大米，而小麥為主的印度麵包也相當普遍。孟加拉人並非素食主義者，雖然大多數寡婦採取素食，但崇尚完全素食的家庭並不普遍。魚類的消耗比肉類多。基於宗教信仰關係，印度教徒不吃牛肉而穆斯林不吃豬肉，故此，孟加拉人的主要肉食是山羊和雞肉。

最常見的香料是薑黃，紅辣椒，小茴香種子，芫荽籽，芥菜籽，葫蘆巴，荳蔻，肉桂，丁香。魚類主要佐以芥末醬烹調。最常見的香料是蔥，姜，綠辣椒，大蒜，香菜葉。孟加拉人普遍使用芥末油烹調食物。

### Music and drama 音樂和戲劇

孟加拉人很喜歡音樂和其他形式的舞台表演藝術，包括戲劇，舞蹈，戲劇和電影。Satyajit Ray是一個傳奇電影導演，其低成本的孟加拉語電影榮獲不少國際電影獎項。已故演員 Uttam Kumar也許仍然是最多材多藝和最流行的孟加拉語電影演員。他與Suchitra Sen合演的電影仍然令人津津樂道。即使在今天，他們的電影仍然很受孟加拉人歡迎。

孟加拉的孩子均接受基本的音樂訓練。這種文化更廣泛地體現在印度國民的文化裡。許多著名的好萊塢歌手均是孟加拉人。數位著名的印度古典音樂家不是孟加拉人便是在孟加拉

接受訓練。其中最著名的孟加拉古典印度音樂的傳承人物首推錫塔琴演奏家Ravi Shankar。他的導師，Ustad Allauddin Khan，本身便是一個殿堂級的印度古典音樂家，他亦是孟加拉人。他的兄長，Uday Shankar，是一位著名的古典舞蹈家。

### Pujo Barshiki and Kolkata Book fair 普霍Barshiki和加爾各答書展

孟加拉人以喜歡閱讀自傲。雖然這種喜歡閱讀的風氣在現今的電視和互聯網年代裡受到衝擊，但閱讀的風氣仍在。孟加拉人喜歡以書籍作為生日和結婚的禮品。

當每兩年舉辦一次的Durga Puja及在加爾各答舉辦的冬季書展期間便是文化事業的頂峰。在Durga Puja舉行期間，在加爾各答的各所孟加拉語圖書的出版商都會出版特別版的旗艦雜誌，稱為Pujo barshikis。它們均收錄作家和詩人的最佳的作品。孟加拉人醉心閱讀，Durga Puja亦是一個文學界盛會。人們會利用為期一周的長假閱讀這些著作，甚或在其後的幾個星期和幾個月內繼續閱讀。作家及詩人們一整年的寫作成敗，亦取決於廣大市民對作品的評價。

於加爾各答舉辦的書展已不再是一個新的事物，2011年將是它的35週年紀念。來自印度，孟加拉國和其他海外國家的出版商都會參加這個為期兩星期的書展。除了書攤，主辦單位還邀請許多來自國內外的講者講述各種文學話題。每年均有超過一百萬人參觀書展。加爾各答的書展為孟加拉人的文化層面增添了新的面貌。

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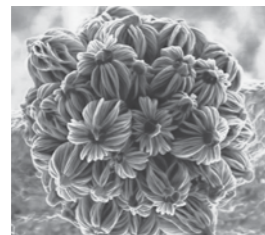
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Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October  
Inaugural Evening

বোধন 1900 – 2000 Hrs  
Inauguration  
প্রসাদ 2000 – 2100 Hrs  
Prasad



**মহাসপ্তমী - সৃজনী সন্ধ্যা Saptami**  
Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> October  
Evening of Creativity

সন্ধ্যারতি ও পূজা 1800 – 1900 Hrs  
Puja  
প্রসাদ 1900 – 1930 Hrs  
Prasad  
সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান 1930 – 2030 Hrs  
Cultural Evening

**মহাঅষ্টমী - আনন্দ সন্ধ্যা Ashtami**  
Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> October  
Evening of Joy

সন্ধিপূজা 1800 – 1900 Hrs  
Evening Puja  
প্রসাদ 1900 – 1930 Hrs  
Prasad  
নৃত্যানুষ্ঠান- 1930 – 2000 Hrs  
শুভলক্ষ  
Dance Programme  
Auspicious Moments



**মহানবমী - নৈত্রী সন্ধ্যা Navami**  
Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> October  
Evening of Unity

সন্ধ্যারতি ও পূজা 1800 – 1900 Hrs  
Evening Puja  
প্রসাদ 1900 – 1930 Hrs  
Prasad  
নৃত্যানুষ্ঠান - 1930 – 2030 Hrs  
মহামানবের সাগরতীরে  
Dance Programme  
At the backwaters of humanity



**বিজয়া দশমী Dashami**  
Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> October

পূজা ও দধিকর্মা 1100 – 1230 Hrs  
Puja  
অবসর বিনোদন 1400 – 1600 Hrs  
Entertainment  
সিঁদুর খেলা ও বিসর্জন 1600 – 1800 Hrs  
Vermilion Ceremony



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প Durga Puja 2009 প





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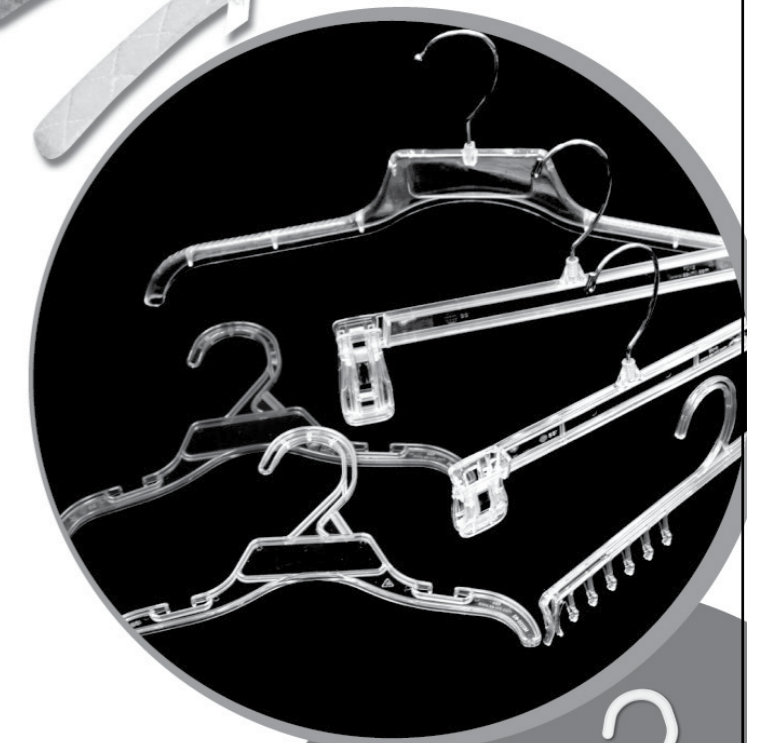
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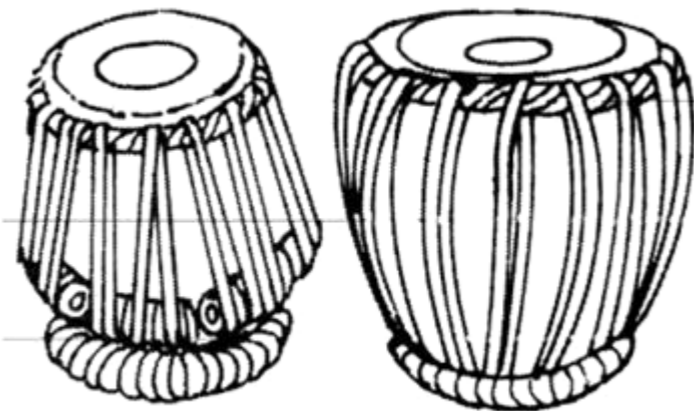
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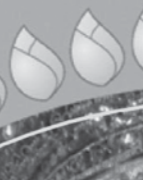
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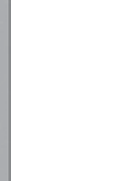













































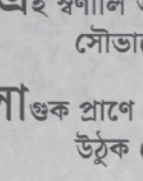


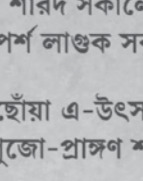








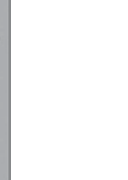







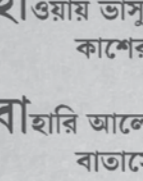




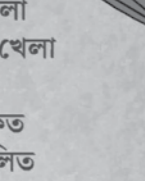




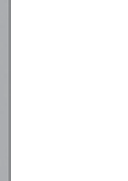




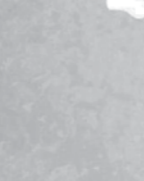


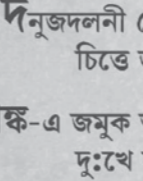


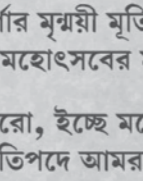


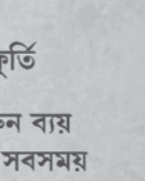





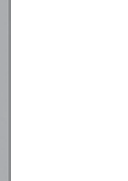





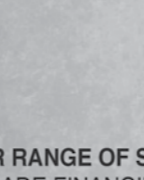


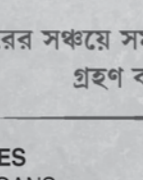


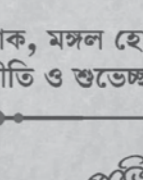


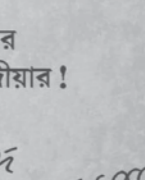










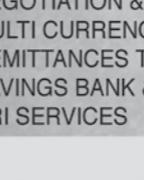


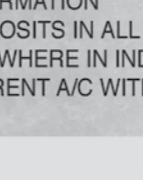


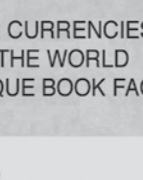


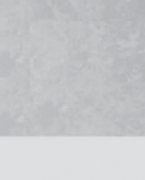










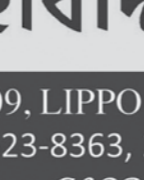





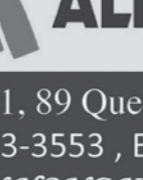


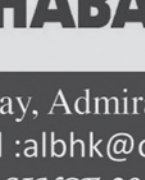


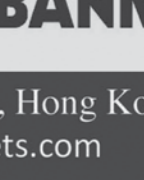





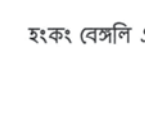







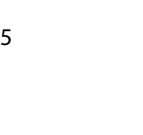





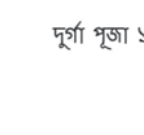





























































































































































































































































































































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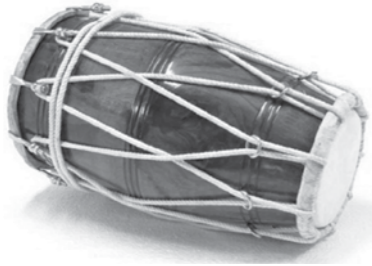
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