



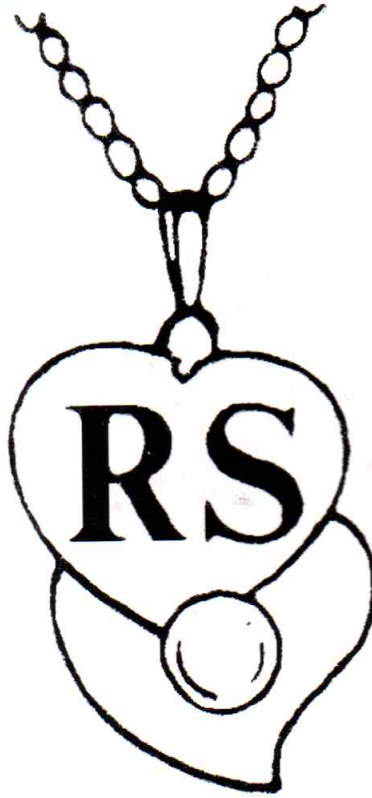
শারদীয়া পূর্নমিমা

Year 2002

HONGKONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION

Hong Kong

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হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

“শুভায়া উবতু ॥”

দুর্গা পূজা - ১৪০২ সাল

DURGA PUJA - 2002

প্রিয় সুধীবৃন্দ,

পূজার সত্য দিনে এল জয়। আর জয়ের নিল আকাঙ্ক্ষা,
সোনালি সৌন্দর্য দিনে আনন্দময়ীর আনন্দনা।

দেখতে দেখতে তিনটি- বসন্ত নারী করে চতুর্থ বসন্ত
নন্দন করল হিংসা বেঙ্গলী এ সৌন্দর্যনা। সকলের ঈশানত
প্রচেষ্টায় সমুদ্র হৃদয়ে এই নখ নীরুদনা। সারা বছর ধরে সব
অনুষ্ঠানে সারা প্রত্যক্ষ ও ন্যূনতম ভাবে সহযোগিতা করেছেন ও করে
চলেছেন, সেই সকল সত্যদের জ্ঞানই আধার আত্মিক ধন্যবাদ।

বাঙালীর এই সৌন্দর্য উদ্ভবের শুভ লগ্নে সকল শুভাশুভ
ও সত্যকে জ্ঞানই আধার আত্মিক শ্রীতি ও শুভেচ্ছা।

আমুন আধার সবার ঈশান থেকে প্রদান করে ঈশানিত
কর্তে বিন।

“ যা দেবী সর্বভূতেষু জগিত্বানেন সর্গীকৃত
নমস্তসৈ নমস্তসৈ নমস্তসৈ নমো নমঃ” ॥

- বিবিত

উদয়ন ঘোষা

On behalf of the Hong Kong Bengali Association I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of our community for their unfailing help and cooperation throughout the year, and also the members of the Executive Committee for their untiring efforts to bring out this Puja Brochure and make our great religious festival, "Durga Puja" such a tremendous success. May I wish you all every happiness, prosperity and good health.

With best regards.

Hong Kong, SAR
11th, October, 2002

Dr. Udayan Ghosh
President, HKBA.

হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

The Hong Kong Bengali Association
Receipts and Payments Account for the period ended 26.2.2002
(Period of the current Committee)

Receipts	HKD	Amount HKD	Payments	HKD	Amount HKD
Opening Balance of fund in hand:			Durga Puja Expenses:		
Cash in hand	8859		Purohit including travel & purchase	5500	
Cheque in hand	1000		Puja, Bhog, Community		
At Bank	69792	79651	Lunch-Dinner Expenses	31074	
Membership Fees Collection:			Decoration etc. expenses	3085	
2001-2002	2700		Printing of souvenir	6500	
2002-2003	3850	6550	Hindu Association contribution	7000	
Collection for Poila Baisakh function:		12080	Bijoya Sammelani function expense	11500	64659
Collection for Rabindra Najral Sandhya function		3800	Saraswati Puja Expenses:		
Durga Puja Collection:			Contribution to Hindu Temple	3000	
Members' Subscriptions	53402		Community Lunch / Dinner	6200	
Advertisements	30000		Expenses - Puja, Cultural and other	1451	10651
Pranami/Donations/Sponsorship	4175	87577	Poila Baisakh function expenses		13841
Saraswati Puja Collections:			Rabindra Najrul Sandhya function expenses		1833
Members' Subscriptions	8000		Donation towards charitable activities:		
Pranami	378	8378	Gujarat earthquake through Bharat		
Collection from Members towards:			Sevasram Sangha	16900	
Gujarat Earthquake Fund	16201		Calcutta Blind School	7200	24100
Less: Collected last year	11201		Bank charges		50
Collected this year	5000		Fund balance remaining in hand:		95102
Calcutta Blind School Fund	7200	12200	Total		210236
Total		210236	Total		210236

The Hong Kong Bengali Association
Balance Sheet as at 26.02.2002

Liabilities	HKD	Amount HKD	Assets	HKD	Amount HKD
Members' Fund:			Life Membership of Hindu Temple		6000
Opening Balance		25522	Hi Fi System (JVC)		2910
Add:			Cash At Bank		95102
Membership fees collected for:			Total		104012
2001-2002	2700				
2002-2003	3850	6550			
General Fund:					
Opening balance		51838			
Surplus from Durga Puja during year		22918			
Surplus from Rabindra Najrul Sandhya functi		1967			
Sub-total		76723			
Less:					
Transfer from General Fund for:					
Donation to Gujarat Earthquake Fund		699			
Deficit during Saraswati Puja		2273			
Deficit for Poila Baisakh function		1761			
Bank charges		50			
Sub-total		4783			
Total		104012	Total		104012

Deogun Suman (SIBANTA SAMA) Radhi (Neil chandhuri)

Audit Report

We have verified the Receipts & Payments A/c for the period from 5/2/2001 to 26/2/2002 and the related Balance Sheet as at 26/2/2002 together with detailed supporting documents / statements attached to and forming part of these accounts.

Based on our checking and information obtained, we certify the said Accounts to be true and fair in all respects.

Suratit Bose
 SURATIT BOSE

Pradip Putatunda
 (PRADIP PUTATUNDA)

হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

Hong Kong Bengali Association

Durga Puja 2002 Schedule (as per Bengali almanac; times quoted here are approximate only)
Venue: Hindu Temple, Happy Valley

- 11th October (Friday): Sashti Puja (7:00 to 7:30pm)
Sashti
- 12th October (Saturday): Saptami Puja (10:00 to 10:30am) followed by Anjali and Prasad Bitharan
Saptami
Carrom competition to start around noon
Sandhya Arati (7:00pm) followed by
Cultural Programme: Songs / Dance
- 13th October (Sunday): Maha Ashtami Puja (10:00 to 10:30am) followed by Anjali and Prasad Bitharan
Ashtami
Sandhya Arati (7:00 to 7:30pm) followed by
Dhunochi Dance
- 14th October (Monday): Sandhi Puja (5:30 to 6:30am)
Nabami
Maha Nabami Puja (10:00 to 10:30am) followed by Anjali and Prasad Bitharan
Sandhya Arati (7:00 to 7:30pm) followed by
Cultural Programme: Children's Dance Drama
- 15th October (Tuesday): Bijoya Dashami / Prothima Bisarjan (7:00 to 7:30pm)
Dashami
Sindhur Khela

HKBA shall provide lunch and dinner at the temple on the 12th, 13th and 14th of October
Lunch: 12:30 to 1:30pm Dinner: 9:30 to 10:30pm

20th October (Sunday): **Lakshmi Puja** (7:00 to 7:30pm)

26th October (Saturday): **Bijoya Sammelani** (7:00pm sharp)
Venue: Mariners' Club, Middle Road, TST
Cultural Programme: (Details to be announced during Puja) followed by dinner

Working Committee Year 2002 - 2003

President:	Dr. Udayan Ghosh
Vice President:	Dr. Subid Das
General Secretary:	Mr. Kingshuk Deb
Treasurer:	Mr. Sipanta Saha
Asst. General Secretary:	Mr. Pranjit Dey
Cultural Secretary:	Mr. Nilanjan Choudhuri
Working Committee Members:	Mrs. Litly Roy Mr. Balaram Paul Mr. Biplab Manna

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হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

The Legend of Ma Durga

According to Hindu mythology Ma Durga is proclaimed to be the Almighty Mother Goddess, the saviour, who delivered us all from the menace of the demon, Mahishashur, whose ruthlessness threatened to destroy the very existence of the universe.

Frustrated by the havoc being wrought by Mahishashur, all the Gods approached Lord Shiva for assistance, who then advised them to release their individual energy or 'shakti'. The fusion of all the different forms of energy, which emerged in female form, created a supernova. Thus Ma Durga was born, possessing the combined strengths of all the Gods in her strong arms. The Gods also adorned her with the best of jewellery and armed her with the deadliest of weapons, expressing an indescribable combination of beauty and power. Along with their blessings, Ma Durga set off gracefully astride the Lion, her 'vahan', for the battlefield.

Ma Durga, wielding her deadly power, slaughtered the army of demons on the battlefield. Mahishashur, the king of demons, was enraged at this sudden onslaught. In revenge, he transformed himself into a buffalo and ran fiercely, beating the divine soldiers of Ma Durga. This only provoked greater anger, and the enraged Lion attacked him. Ma Durga grasped Mahishashur tightly from the back and pierced him with her sharp spears. At last the buffalo was beheaded by Ma Durga's sword and Mahishashur fell dead. Thus he met his inevitable destiny at the hands of Ma Durga.

The Gods then returned to heaven, victorious and joyful, and in celebration sang praises of Ma Durga. Her devotion marks the identity of a woman who resolves all hardship. Durga Puja is celebrated to honour her victory over evil, and the familiar idol, depicting Mahishashur at her feet with her spear piercing his chest, is symbolic of this victory.

Diya Sen

Durga Puja: The Festival

The wisps of distant clouds in the bright blue sky, the cool morning breeze carrying the fresh fragrance of Shewli flowers, the light mist of dew on new grass sprouting after a long spell of rain and the happy chirping of birds, all vie with each other to announce the advent of Autumn. Mind and heart jump as autumn brings with it the most eagerly awaited of all Bengali festivals - Durga Puja.

Mahalaya, the first new moon in autumn, marks the beginning of Durga Puja, when families remember their ancestors and offer 'Tarpan', water, to the departed souls. On the morning of Mahalaya, homes and temples resound with the chants of shlokas read from the Bhagwat Gita. Starting from Mahalaya, the sixth day is Shashti, and thereafter, Saptami, Ashtami, Nabami and Dashami follow, with each day having its own unique set of rituals and ceremonies. Not only does the festival have its rituals and customs, there are a whole set of rules to be followed even when making the idol. The clay used for the purpose comes from the holy Ganga and when the idol is eventually immersed in the same river, it completes the cycle.

The main puja starts from Shashti. On Saptami, the image of the Goddess is infused with life through a process called 'Bodhon'. Maha-Ashtami is the day that Durga had triumphed over Mahishashur and killed him. The ritual of Sandhipuja marks Sandhikkhan, the period between Ashtami and Nabami. The main attraction of Nabami is the Maha-Arati performed in the evening. On Dashami evening as the idol is immersed in the holy Ganga, people bid a sorrowful farewell to Ma Durga, and thereafter starts a wait for yet another year for her return. Bijoya is a special time when peace and good relations are reaffirmed, families exchange sweets, and people embrace and wish each other happiness, prosperity and good health.

Rohini (Richa) Sengupta

Greetings for "Durga Puja"



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হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

শিউরী নারায়ণ

চাকুরী করতে এসে সাইকেলের দরকার হলো। তাই কলকাতা থেকে বাবা মর্কটপ্রদেশে সাইকেল কিনে পাঠিয়ে দিলেন। সেই সাইকেলটা আমার চুরি হয়ে গেল, এখন বড় মুক্তিলাভ, যদিও তদিক বখাওয়াগুলির পর এখন বপলাস না- এখন বাধ্য হয়ে পুনর্নির্মাণ লেখাতে হলো চুরির জাপারটা।

ইটাৎ পুনর্নির্মাণ মার্কেট ইন্ডাস্ট্রির অর এপেঁ দেখা। জিজ্ঞাসা করাতে উনি বললেন- এখনও অস্ট্রালিয়ার পাইনি, তবে উনিই বললেন- সামনেই শিউরী- নারায়ণে খেলা। অনেক সাইকেলের লোক এসে- শ্রুতঃ তোমার সাইকেলের অস্ট্রালিয়ার পোলেও পালো।

শিউরী নারায়ণের খেলা। নতুন রাজ্য ছদ্মিগড়ের জাঁজগীর জেলায় (আগে বিনাসপুর ছিল) মাসি পূর্নির্মাণ দিন খেলা বঙ্গ প্রায় ২৫ দিনের মত এই খেলা চলে। এইখানেই শ্রী বামচন্দ্র দত্তকারণ্য খাকার প্রথম সর্বস্বী নামের এক আদিবাসী মেয়ের সঙ্গে দেখা করতে এসেছিলেন। সর্বস্বী জী বামচন্দ্রকে পরম সাদা হলে ওরা করেছিল। শ্রী বামচন্দ্র ওদের এই মেয়ে গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। সেই থেকে এই জায়গার নাম হয় সর্বস্বী সর্বস্বী থেকে শিউরী নারায়ণ।

আগিও খেলার প্রথমদিনে রুগ্না দিলোম, মজ্জা নাগাদ বাস থেকে লক্ষ দেখি জেনারেলের লাইট অর আলোতে জায়গাটা বেশ জল্পজল্প। বাস থেকে নেমে ডাকবালার দিকে যাওয়ার পথে দু'তিনটে মেয়ে আগিয়ে এসে স্থানীয় ভাষায় ক্যাগ পৌঁছে দেবার জন্যে জিজ্ঞাসা করলো। ওদের দিকে তাকিয়ে না বলতে গিয়ে একটা মেয়েকে দেখে অথাক হয়ে গেলো। ঐনিয়া দুই এখানে কি করে? আগি আস্তে আস্তে এগোলোম কলকাতার আন্দের পাড়ার ঐনিয়া এখানে এলো কি করে? পথ দিয়ে যাচ্ছি অর ভাবছি।

আলোনাশের লোকেরা দুই মেলা থেকে বড় বড় বাজন, রামায়ণ, মহাভারত, মেয়েদের মাথার ক্রিগা হুঁজাদি কেনে। সিনেমা অর নাগরদোনার আওয়াজে খেলা গম গম করছে। সিনেমাটা হচ্ছে টেরিং টেরিং দেখা সিনেমা।

ঐনিয়া কলকাতায় আমাদের বাড়ীর সামনেই থাকতো। ওর দাদা আমার সঙ্গে স্কুলে পড়তো। এখন জানতাম ওরা বিহারের লোক। কিন্তু এখন দেখছি ওরা এই ছদ্মিগড়ের লোক। পরের দিন ঐনিয়ার গ্রামের এক লোকের সঙ্গে দেখা। কথায় কথায় জানলাম লোকটা গরীব। তাই গ্রাম থেকে এখানে এসে দোকানের গল্পনা আছে। মানা বকম জিনিস বেছে দেখা লোকের মালপত্রের লৌছে দিয়ে যা পায় তাই দিয়েই অংশারটা কোনমতে চালান্য কিন্তু তার পরে যে ঘটনাটা হলো, তাতে আগি হুঁজাক হয়ে যায়। গ্রামের লোকটি বললো- কিছুদিন আগে মাম কয়েকদিনের জুড়ে ঐনিয়ার সুমি নারা যায়। ওদের দু'জনের বিবাহিত জীবন ৩০ই মুখের ছিল যে- ঐনিয়া তার স্বামীর সঙ্গে অহমরনে গিয়ে গভী হতে গিয়েছিল। কিন্তু গ্রামবাসীদের কারণে তা আর হয়নি। আগি গুপ্তিত হয়ে গেলোম মনে মনে ডাবলাম-কুটুই মেয়ে কি করে ডাবল পালনো অহমরনের কথা। নাকি মেও বুঝতে পেরেছিল। স্বামীর সঙ্গে চিত্তে যাওয়া অনেকখানি পুণ্যের। যদিও অহমরন আর নেই, এমাজ এখন পালনটে গোছো।

পরের দিন মজ্জাবলায় এখন সাইকেল খুঁজে বেড়াছিলাম অর জীড়ের মর্টে দেখি ঐনিয়া চলেছে হাগি ডঙ্কল মুখে একটা খুবকের হাত ধরে নাগরদোনার দিকে। বুঝতে আর বাকী রইল না এটিই তার স্বামী। তারমানে ঐনিয়ার আবার বিয়ে হয়েছে, সে ধরমামার করছে। ওদের দিকে তাকিয়ে মনে হলো এক নতুন সর্বস্বীর জন্ম হয়েছে। দুই শিউরী নারায়ণের মন্দিরের চুড়োতে পতাকা উড়ছে, মনে মনে ঠাকুরকে বন্দনাম- ঠাকুর ওদের হুঁসি মুখে রেখে। জীবনের বিবর্তন হলো- নতুন জীবন শুরু করে তোমার খেলাতেই এসেছে। যে খেলাতেই খুঁজে পেয়েছিলোম আমার হারিয়ে যাওয়া সাইকেল।

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হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

তোমার চিঠি

শরণে বাবু,

তোমার "পল্লী সমাজের" সমাজ গোল কোথায় আজ
ঘরে ঘরে চিঠি দেওয়ায় তোলে একল কাজ,
বান্ধনের মেয়ের ছোয়াছুয়ীর বিচার ছিল কত,
আজ অজবর্ন বিশ্বের ভেঁড়ে এসেছে বাসুন মত।
'পথের দাবীর' অকুসারী হয়েছিল কারারুদ্ধ,
'মিছিলে' মিটিং-এ ছয়লাফ পথ আজ অবরুদ্ধ।
পঙ্কিত-মশাহীর বৃন্দাবন, তোমার ছিল বোকা বড়,
আজ কোচিং ক্লাস খুলে সবাই হচ্ছে মধ্য দড়।
দেবদাসের হাতে হুঁলে দিয়েছিলে পল্লী-মদের গ্লাস
আজ চরম হেরোইনের ধোঁয়ায় হচ্ছে ভারী বাগাস।
তোমার 'মহেশ' পায়নি যেতে হাস আর পানি,
আজ মহেশ্বরা বোঝে চাখে মরছে তেনে ধানি।
আজকের 'অভয়া' রাজনস্বীদের করগো উদ্ধার,
পায়ে পড়ি শরণে বাবু, বসো আর বকচিবাবু ॥

— জ্যোৎস্নাময়ী মান্না

অনামিকা

লিটেলী-বায়

ঐ যে সূর্যপানে একেলা দাঁড়িয়ে
কি ভেবেছো অনামিকা —
আমি ক্লান্ত হয়ে শ্রান্ত হয়েছি তোমার দ্বারে,
দুঃস্থো অন্নমাগি তোমারই চরণতলে বাবে বাবে।
ঐ যে দূর আকাশ মেঘাঙ্কন তিমির বিদিশা,
মেঘেণনি নিপায়া, খুঁজে পাইনি পথের দিশা।
জীবন আমার অজস্র বর্ষনে হয়ে প্লাবিত,
মেয়েছি কুল বসেছি নখেয় হয়েছি জীবনমৃত।
রক্তমাখা ঐ পথে ছিল শুধুই কাঁটার দহন,
তাকা ছিল পথ তিমির নিশায় কবেনি কেউ বহন।
একেলা জেগেছি জাগাও চেয়েছি দাঁড়া প্রতিদিন,
যা আছে আর কি তারই কর্ণাধুঁড়ে দিয়ে ভবে দিয়েছি প্রাণ।
থেকে নেই, হুও অসুখান জ্বালো প্রদীপ সমরে,
পূন করো নেবেদখানি তোমার শুভ্যদীপ্ত লিখরে ॥

হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

The Bengal Tiger

For a tiger Bengal is renowned
And for its prince who was never crowned
Indeed, it is of Ganguly I speak
Who shall take Indian cricket to its peak

He's the captain of India's cricket team
And to me it really does seem
He's the best we've seen for years
With him at the helm, have no fears

Amongst those who follow the game
Our Bengali has worldwide acclaim
And he proved to us just why
In the NatWest series final, on the 13th of July

In the last nine such series, India did cruise
But once in the finals, they always would lose
Another loss, they couldn't afford
They had to change their abysmal record

For England's batsmen, the runs kept flowing
The run rate showed no signs of slowing
Dismayed were the Indians watching it live
As England posted a mammoth 325

As out of the pavilion our openers did amble
To bet on India was a suicidal gamble
We had to score very quickly
To obtain 326 from our overs fifty

But on winning our openers were intent
They scored off whatever was sent
The English could just watch and wonder
Why our batsmen did not blunder

Ganguly smashed a four off the hand of Hussain
His counterpart left the field in excruciating pain
A few balls later, everyone was flabbergasted
When a massive six Ganguly blasted

He played with abandon in this wonderful display
The English bowling he did thoroughly flay
With his ninth four, he brought up his fifty
In just 35 balls, with boundaries aplenty

But suddenly came an end to the rout
Ganguly, bowled by Tudor, was finally out
Eventually, his wicket did fall
After he scored 60 of 43 balls

India's win was secured by Yuvraj and Kaif
Giving the Indians joy and the English strife
Ganguly took off his shirt and kissed the ground
In the pavilion there were smiles all around

It was Ganguly's memorable innings
That eventually ensured India's winning
I salute the Bengali who did begin
What became a record-setting Indian win

-Wribhu (Shagnik Das)

Home

A blessed place for me and my family
A blessed place for all

A blessed place with happiness and joy
A blessed place for memories to be recalled

Home to me is a place to be
A place where I can be free

Home to me is where I have a buddy
Whether it's friend or family

Home is what we carry with us
Along with caring ness and love

Home should also be very peaceful
As peaceful as a dove

Home is an imaginary object
That should be well guarded, but jolly

Home is like a precious gem
Well respected and full of glee

Shreyasee Putatunda

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হং কং বাঙালী এসোসিয়েশন

would be sorely missed. Very appropriately, Prabir Bannerjee, serenaded them with S.D Burman's famous song from the film, 'Guide', "Wahan Kaun Hai Tera, Musafir Tu Jayega Kahan". Our local body of singers, Prabir, Neil, Abanty and Rajashi were in terrific form and in full flow enabling the professional singer and instrumentalist at the restaurant to have a day off. However, the find of the evening was Biswaroop Bhattacharya, a newcomer to Hong Kong who enthralled the audience with a superb exposition of North Indian classical vocal. We can take pleasure in the fact that our community here, despite its small size, is quite replete with musical and cultural talent. By the way, were you aware that Dr. Udayan Ghosh, on his off-days from work actually runs a Bengali Cultural Recruitment Centre at Hong Kong's Airport to ensure that he snares each and every talented Bengali the moment he or she sets foot on Hong Kong's soil !

Lakshmi Puja was a small affair in the evening at the temple with young Swagata Bhattacharya officiating as the priest. He took his priestly duties most seriously and abstained from all vices for almost a whole day.

December 2001 had our entire community participating in a very auspicious ceremony, the wedding of Payal, elder daughter of Sima and Udayan Ghosh. This was, perhaps, the first such wedding to be held and celebrated in Hong Kong. Yet it had all the attractions and splendour associated with a Bengali wedding back home. Payal and her husband are now very happily settled in the USA.



members were engrossed in a game of limited-overs cricket under the watchful eyes of a couple of highly motivated and biased umpires. Naturally, therefore, no result was possible. Nevertheless it was an exceedingly enjoyable experience with Pradip Putatunda proving to be the most defiant batsman as his flowing jacket, more than his bat, stopped the ball from going on to the stumps.



We hope you all enjoyed the various events as much as we did bringing them to you.



This year we went out for our annual picnic to Sai Kung. Dipankar Roy once again donned the robes of the Chef and the lunch, as expected, bore the touch of a master. Barely a few paces away from the cooking area, a very fit band of HKBA



Saraswati Puja was very well attended, both in the morning and evening as it was on a Sunday.

The Naba Barsha celebrations of 2002 drew the largest gathering yet. Thanks to generous sponsorships by several of our members, we were able to import an entire troupe of professional musicians; Mrs. Chandrani Mukherjee and her group from Kolkata, and Mr. Kabi Shekhar and his band from Jamshedpur. Between the two of them, they put up a very lively bilingual musical show that was anchored and coordinated by Neil Choudhury, who himself gave one of the best renditions of the evening.

কৈলাসে হইছে

নানি Sengupta.

কৈলাসে কাড়ির সবাই বড়ই বেশী Busy,
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লক্ষী মেয়ে গা লক্ষীর সব হয়ে গেছে Packing,
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হংকং থেকে নেবেন তিনি Calligraphy Art.
ছোট ছেলে কাঠিক ঠাকুর খুব Handsome Guy,
"Armani"- তে বানিয়ে নেবেন Suit তার Tie.
নাদুগ নাদুগ গানেকাবকা গোলবামেন Food,
সব হোটেলেই থাকেন তিনি রান্না Very Good.
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তার সাথে যুবেরও তার Chinese Silk Sash.
আগ্রিজোনা গিবঠাকুর খুব অলগেই Happy,
কম্পিউটার গেন্ডার থেকে নেবেন কটা Floppy.
অস্তুরবাবু তিনি আমার ভিন্ন Angry Young Man,
জ্যাকি চ্যানের পাই নেবেন তার Secret Plan.
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হাতে সবসময় গাঙ্গ পাঁচটা দিন in Mid-October,
তারই গিতের যারতে হবে এ- সবকল Matter.
গাইতে এবার কৈলাসে হইছে Too-much,
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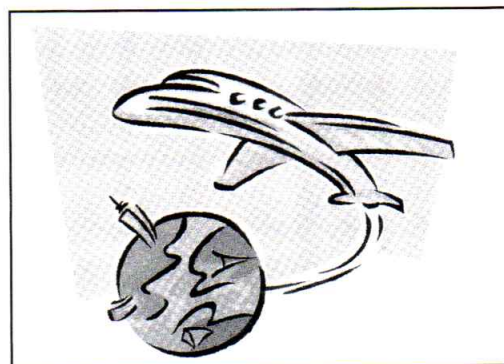
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“Life’s Like That” In Hong Kong

One fine Sunday, a decade ago, Bianca, Dyutish and I along with my friend Kalpana and her two children, Devika and Madhav, set out to explore Peng Chau. We knew it was an underdeveloped island with a very small population, but it had a school and more importantly, for us, a non-commercial beach. We wanted to get away from Mc Donald food and canned drinks. We wanted to become ‘rustic’.

We hopped onto a dilapidated boat. It was quaint. The one hour long ride was smelly but comfortable, and no sudden upheavals that would make our stomachs turn. On arrival we were amazed that just an hour away from Hong Kong there existed this little island that could be compared to some village in West Bengal!

All six of us made the most of the beach and the clean seawater. The children waded and so did we mothers.

Soon it was lunchtime and we went in search of food. There were only three or four shops that sold food, which didn’t look too appetizing. Beef and Pork were available in plenty but Kalpana being a strict Hindu, could not compromise and we had to have only chicken and vegetable. Unfortunately no one spoke any English, so after some gesticulation, we decided on making some kind of sound which would be comprehensible to them. So I went up to an old lady with a smiling face and said ‘Kukroo koo, Kukroo koo’ and pointed to my mouth to make her understand I wanted to eat it. This lady was not without humour herself. She, with a very sympathetic face, gestured to a carcass and said, only ‘moo moo’ meaning she had only beef!

Till today when Kalpana, who has since moved to the U.S.A, and I meet, we fondly remember the old lady with such lovely sympathetic eyes urging us to eat beef.

We have never gone back to Peng Chau, but I am sure as everything else, it must be quite a modern island now.

My job as an English Oral Examiner for Hong Kong schools has been very interesting.

You could only be a good examiner if you had the ability to make the candidate speak at least one sentence in correct English. One always had a mixed group of students. Some were good and some were really trying hard to say something right and you were there to help. There was this particular candidate, who came in smiling, but gave only monosyllabic answers, which wouldn’t have done at all.

Bianca and Dyutish were both in school and I am sure Dyutish must have struggled with his French orals and the teacher tried to help. So, of course, my heart went out to this girl. Finally, I asked her, “Have you ever travelled overseas?”

She happily replied, “yes”

Then I again asked, “Where and with whom did you travel?”

She had to give at least two words. She said, “Tsim Sha Tsui with my mother”.

Needless to say, I passed her.

Sharmistha Chaudhuri

Where Love Is Abundant : India

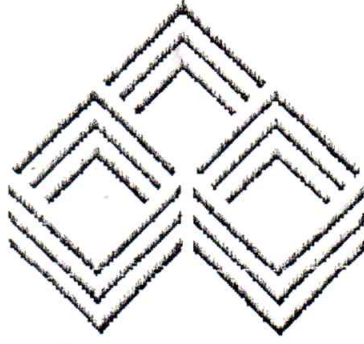
Dear diary,

On 16th August 2002 we were coming back to Hong Kong after holidaying in India for one month. The plane took off at 4:30 pm instead of 9:00 a.m. from IGI airport because of some technical fault. Thank god it was detected in time. The airhostess aunties were very beautiful and kind-hearted. They served us breakfast and then lunch on the plane. At 12:30 the captain announced that it would take more time to rectify the fault so we could wait in the lounge. We passed the time by window shopping and chatting with fellow passengers. We were happy when the captain announced that the flight was ready, at 4:30p.m. It finally took off. I was very happy watching a movie and munching roasted almonds and sipping some orange juice. My mother had gone to the back seat to talk to my father but she came back immediately and told me something. I took off my earphone to listen to her.. She told me that a little girl sitting behind my father’s seat was traveling alone to Manila via Hong Kong. My mother saw her crying; she was tired of the long waiting and feeling lonely, so my mother wanted to console her but she did not talk to her, so my mother wanted me to give her company. I tried to befriend her. I gave her some sweets. Nisha was seven years old .She was going to her parents in Manila. She was staying with her old granny in Delhi. After a while, an Airhostess came to her with dinner, she smiled at us and then helped Nisha eat her dinner. I remembered that when we were sitting in the lounge the airhostesses were looking after her as her own mother. She was never alone. Our people are very kind. I feel proud of being an Indian.

Bye

Indrani Roy

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SMUGGLERS IN BILBAO

Samya Sengupta

We were once quietly sitting on our armchairs and reading Tintin comics, when, suddenly, the doorbell rang, startling both of us. I, Dr. Kluivert, was about to go and answer it when Dr. Rivaldo said, "sit down my dear Kluivert. I'll go see who it is."

The fact that I saw Mr. De Boer, chief of police, did not surprise me. ----- we were close friends. As he sat down, Dr. Rivaldo offered him a glass of iced coffee. "No, thank you," said Mr. De Boer hastily, "I only came to tell you that the police headquarters of Bilbao wanted us to send our best detective to Bilbao. Quite simply, you were our natural choice."

Dr. Rivaldo replied, pretending to be embarrassed, "You make me blush. However, I should like to go to Bilbao, considering the fact that I have not gone there yet."

"Good," said Mr. De Boer. "tomorrow, I'll inform the Bilbaoic chief of police."

I broke in. "Sorry to interrupt, but when exactly do we have to start?"

Mr. De Boer replied childishly, "Kluivert, ol' buddy, you'll have to go there the day after tomorrow."

"Wait a second! In Bilbao, where are we supposed to meet the Bilbaoic police?" asked Dr. Rivaldo.

"The Grand Sazette stadium in east Bilbao," replied Mr. De Boer.

"Isn't that a football stadium?" inquired Dr. Rivaldo.

"Yes," replied Mr. De Boer, "but you should be sure of yourself having once been a football fanatic yourself." Saying thus he left.

Two days later while sitting in the Espana Air flight to Bilbao I asked Dr. Rivaldo what he thought the case was. "Drug smugglers," he said confidently.

"How can you be so sure?" I asked, rather puzzled.

"Well, Kluivert if you would be so kind as to leave the comic world for a few minutes and have a look at the headlines of this newspaper. I'm sure you could find out for yourself," he said, handing me a version of Catalonia Times.

The headlines said, in bold letters: DRUG SMUGGLERS ON THE LOOSE IN BILBAO!

"Wow. Have you ever had to handle smugglers before?" I asked Dr. Rivaldo.

"No. Not yet," he replied.

We reached the Bilbao domestic airport at 7:07 A.M and hailed a cab. We told the cab to go directly to the Grand Sazette stadium. After about half an hour of driving we neared the countryside. The funny thing was that a certain car had been driving exactly in front of us ever since we left the airport! Suddenly, two men jumped out of the bushes and made the driver stop the car. They pushed the driver out of the car and held us up. They told us that they knew why we were in Bilbao. They even knew our full names! Well, at least my suspicions about the car in front of us were cleared because it had sped off.

One of our hijackers told his partner to tie us up and threatened us with a rifle, while we were seated back. They drove off with us as prisoners.

After an hour of driving, we reached a small road that was full of stones. It was a very noisy and bumpy ride. We were lucky that it was daytime because I most certainly would have freaked out if it were night; it was otherwise such a quiet and eerie atmosphere. As I was thinking what it would be like at night, we entered a relatively dark tunnel. As we were coming out of this long tunnel, a sudden WHAP! SOCK! BOOM! TCHWAK! Next I found the hijacker's gun with Dr. Rivaldo. He had eased himself off the tight knots while the car was passing through the tunnel. Our mission was successful. The two men were completely knocked out. We put the two men at the back seat of the car and Dr. Rivaldo guarded them. I turned the car around and drove off to the highway.

After a three-hour drive, we reached the police station at the basement of the Grand Sazette stadium. We started chatting with the chief of police while the two smugglers we caught were being checked for clues before being put into jail. Finally, an inspector came back with some excellent news: they had found a diary on the driver stating the addresses and phone numbers of his fellow drug smugglers. The chief of police yelled, "What're you waiting for? Go and arrest them!"

Six hours later, the police came back with 22 drug smugglers who were immediately popped into jail. There was some bad news, though. The drug kingpin was yet to be found. Dr. Rivaldo suddenly said, "Did any of the smugglers you caught have mobiles on them?"

Chief of police, Mr. Martyn said, "All of them did."

Dr. Rivaldo was pleased. He said, "Bring one of them to me with his mobile phone."

A short plump man came into the room. Dr. Rivaldo told him, "If you don't do what we tell you to, I'll shoot you. If you do it properly, your term in jail will be reduced."

The plump man replied, "Okay. What do I have to do?"

Dr. Rivaldo replied, "You'll have to phone your boss and tell him that you've made a lot of money today and that you'll meet him at the St. Solskjaer's cricket pitch today at 8:30 P.M to split it. But remember to do it in your normal voice. Am I clear?"

The plump man replied, "Yes."

The plump man made the call as if it was his daily business. He started the phone call by asking the 'boss' if he was in need of money. "Why, yes. Did you sell a lot today?" asked the 'boss'.

"Yes. We sold a hundred batches," the plump man said, rather nervously, eyeing the gun in Dr. Rivaldo's hand.

"Great!! So where do you propose we meet?" asked the 'boss'.

"In front of St. Solskjaer's cricket pitch," said the plump man.

"Okay," said the boss and he hung up.

Dr. Rivaldo asked the man what his boss's name was because the boss's name was not in the diary. "His name's Mr. Morientes," said the plump man as he left the room.

Dr. Rivaldo told Mr. Martyn, "Well you must know what to do now! You may pay off my fees quickly; we'll just be in time to catch the 10:37 P.M flight to Barcelona. After a check of 50,000 pesetas was handed over, we quickly hailed a taxi and went to the airport. While we were boarding the flight, I thought, 'another mystery solved, thanks to Dr. Rivaldo.'

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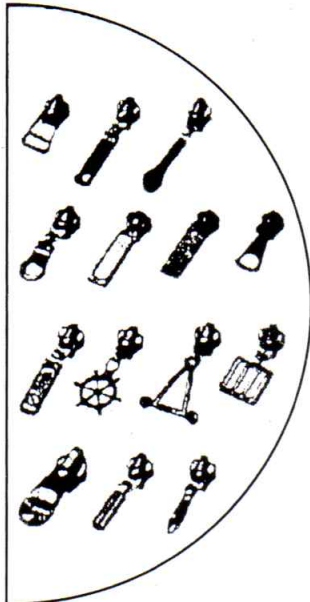
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