



# The Hong Kong Bengali Association



## Durga Puja 2019



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## Message from President

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> Durga Puja of HKBA, let us reminisce about the history of this glorious occasion.

The first recorded large scale Durga Puja celebrations in Bengal took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the houses of a few feudal lords, called zamindars. Since then Durga Puja is being celebrated every year with a lot of fervor and is become an epitome of every Bengali wherever he is.

Closer home in Hong Kong, the Puja was first started in 1999 at the Happy Valley temple by the courageous and enthusiastic founder members of HKBA. Later, after about 8 years, the Puja venue was shifted to the Henry G. Leong Community Centre in Yau Ma Tei in 2007, and in 2016, the Durga Puja moved to the grounds of Indian Recreation Club. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the puja celebration at the Indian Recreation Club.

Since its inception in 1999, the number of people participating in this mega event has increased manifold. Durga Puja is now an occasion which is awaited not only by the Bengalis but also by other communities in Hong Kong who eagerly look forward to participating in this event. More than being a religious festival concerning the rituals, the Puja now is a community affair for the Bengalis. All Bengalis converge in their new puja attire to seek the blessing of Goddess Durga and catch up with friends and their near and dear ones. The Puja is associated with a lot of nostalgic memories -the sound of Dhak, the smell of Dhuno and dhup, the dhunuchi dance, the pushpanjali, the uludhwanes – one can go on and on. All of us Bengalis have grown up with these sights and sounds, which are now an inseparable part of us.

There's never a dull moment. In addition all Bengalis of all ages showcase their talents in the various cultural programs like musical events, drama, abritis etc. The Purohit and Dhakis are specially flown in from Kolkata to make the event as traditional as possible. Even the cook is flown in from Kolkata so that the Bengali culinary pleasure is not compromised.

The build up to the event is also exciting with various teams like the cultural committee, the Puja organizing committee, the decoration committees, all working together to plan the events.

This year also like every year we have received very enthusiastic response from most of our members. This year we have extended Associate Membership to our non-Bengali friends with cultural ties to Bengal, and they have been participating in the preparation of various events enthusiastically.

For any organization, fund generation is an important part. Like before, there is an overreliance on sponsorships with membership fees covering only about 35% of the total expense of the Puja. Philanthropy is the need of the hour. While a few members have been donating generously every year, more people need to come forward to support the organization or collect sponsorships.

This year Ma Durga will arrive on the elephant signifying prosperity and good harvest season while her departure home will be on a Horse or Ashwa which indicates grave draught.

But I am sure, with our devotion and love, we can turn adversities into victories.

I once again thank you all for your participation and your support and please enjoy the 4 days of Durga Puja.

May Ma Durga Bless us all !!

Alok Roy

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## Message from Vice President

Dear All,

It is indeed a great honor for me to welcome you all for this special festival of ours that is so close to our hearts – the Durga Puja or simply The Pujas as is popularly referred to.

Traditionally speaking, Bengalis from all walks of life simply wait for the Pujas every year. Displaying tremendous enthusiasm and pride, Bengalis love to turn up in large numbers at “Pujo Pandals” to offer prayers to “Maa Durga” & participating in “Pushpanjoli” & “Aaroti”, to showcase their cultural talents by participating in the entertainment program in the evenings – and not to forget – to bask in the sheer enjoyment of wearing new dresses every single day of the pujas for all to see.

There is also the popular “bhog” or community lunch that everyone looks forward to – not just for the simplified excellence of what is served but for the sheer joy of meeting so many people and chatting with them. Standing in the line for the “bhog” or for the dinner can also be a lot of fun as we have seen here before (except when it’s raining of course) I would also like to add that – in many ways – Durga Puja is a festival which serves to unite all Indians – irrespective of language, caste or religion. We are very happy to see ample evidence of this fact during the “Maha-ashtami” “Pushpanjoli” every year out here. The turnout is ‘simply awesome’.

Any Indian from Kolkata – whether Bengali or not – is also specially connected to the Pujas from the heart. We have several of them as our Associate Members – whom I would also like to welcome for the Pujas this year.

The 4 days of devotion, fun & frolic begins on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October this time. The tempo is built up slowly till it culminates in the “Bijoya Dashami” day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. There is an air of passionate festivity for the 4 days and of course a sadness in the hearts of all when we bid “Maa Durga” goodbye towards the end of the Pujas.

We have got a vibrant Bengali community here in Hong Kong and I thank all those who have worked tirelessly, making different arrangements and joining meetings after office to ensure that we have been able to get this celebration on.

I would also like to thank all those who have volunteered to assist us greatly during the 4 days to ensure that all the functions are carried out smoothly. I would also like to thank all our sponsors – Personal & Corporate - who have contributed generously to make the Puja celebrations possible this year.

I pray for “Maa Durga’s” blessings for all of us.

Hoping all of you have a great time!

Wishing all a Blissful “Sharadiya Shubechha”!!

Warm regards

Dipankar Mukutmoni

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Mr. Rajdeep Mojumder



**Committee Member**  
Mr. Sanjay Bhattacharya



**Committee Member**  
Mr. Samrat Banerji

**Contact HKBA  
Web Site**

mailhkba@gmail.com  
www.hkbaonline.com



## 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:

Indian Recreation Club Committee and Staff members  
Indian Consulate in Hong Kong  
Hong Kong Immigration Department  
All Sponsors

Arun Kumar Paul (Pratima Shilpi)  
Sadananda Nayek (Chef)  
San Kumar Das (Dhaki)  
Sankar Das (Dhaki)

### VOTE OF THANKS!!



As you can guess, an event of this magnitude cannot be managed with a handful of people – the Executive Committee does its bit, but there are numerous people working silently, tirelessly in the background who deserve a big thanks from us all. So please put your hands together for...

**দশভূজা**  
(Volunteers for puja rituals)

Swapan Dutta  
Basabi Roy  
Atanu Ghosh  
Satarupa De  
Sumeet Chatterjee  
Anisha Bhaduri  
Moitrayee Ganguli  
Simita Talukdar  
Moushumi Sinha  
Suparna Panja  
Anindita Bhattacharya  
Sunita Roy  
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Anamika Dasgupta  
Archana Choudhury  
Sanchita Banerjee  
Kavita Biswas  
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Mayura Banerjee  
Emona Roy  
Shilpita Chatterjee  
Srijita Ghosh  
Rachaita Sinha  
Tanushree Saha  
Sushmita Ganguli  
Jolly Chakroborty  
Rituparna Ganguly  
Shilpi Dhar

**চালচিত্র**  
(Volunteers for pandal decoration)

Chiradip De  
Anjan Kundu

**প্রযুক্তিক**  
(Volunteer for IT related work)

Reetu Das

**সাংস্কৃতিক**  
(Volunteers supporting cultural programs)

Neelabh Kumar  
Sanjay Guha

**বৈঠকি**  
(HKBA magazine composers)

Anirban Ray Choudhury  
Sanjay Guha  
Lui Man Yin, Mandy





## Durga Puja 2019 Program Schedule

Venue:  
INDIAN RECREATION CLUB, 63 CAROLINE HILL ROAD,  
Sookunpoo Valley, Causeway Bay, HONG KONG  
Tel: (852) 2576 6583 (Office)

**4th Oct (Fri) - Sashthi:** Puja 18:00 to 19:00

**5th Oct (Sat) - Saptami:** Puja 10:00 to 12:00  
Pushpanjali 11:30  
Sandhya Saptami Puja 18:00 to 19:00  
Sandhya Arti 19:00

**6th Oct (Sun) - Ashtami:** Puja 09:30 to 12:00  
Pushpanjali 12:00  
Sandhi Puja 16:27 to 17:15  
Sandhyo Puja 19:00 to 20:30  
Sandhya Arti 20:30

**7th Oct (Mon) - Nabami:** Puja 10:00 to 12:00  
Pushpanjali 11:30  
Sandhya Nabami Puja 18:00 to 19:00  
Sandhya Arti 19:00

**8th Oct (Tue) - Dashami:** Puja 10:00 to 12:00  
Pushpanjali 11:30  
Sindur Khela & Bisarjan 17:00

Every day Dinner : 20:00  
Cultural program from 19:30 to 21:00 everyday

**Purohit: Shri Sakti Prasad Mukherjee of Kolkata**



**Pandal decoration theme - "Utsab er Amej"**

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 Conceptual Design  
 3D Modeling

## Probashi Pujo

For most of us who live and celebrate Durga Puja here in Hong Kong, our point of reference is usually our home in India. In Hong Kong we try to replicate the fervor and excitement of Pujas at home as much as possible. However, it is just not Hong Kong, Bengalis are spread across the globe, away from home for work or business. This year we reached out to a few other Bengali Associations in other countries and connected with them.

We present below some snapshots of how our fellow 'Bongs' celebrate Durga Puja in other countries.

### Bharati - Bengali Association of Thailand



In the year 1986, in an Indian restaurant in downtown Bangkok called 'Himali Chacha', a few enterprising Bengali expatriates congregated with a simple vision in mind - to meet up more frequently in the name of Bangali adda. 'Bharati', as they are called, is now a 26 years old organization, organizing multiple events throughout the year. The year starts with "Dandiya Night" for Indian diaspora just prior to Durga Puja and the puja itself spans across a week, from Panchami until Ekadashi (Bijoya Sammilani). Every day different cultural programs are organised, showcasing 'local' talents. The idol and the priest are from Kolkata, and this year Bharati are also arranging for five cooks to be flown in from the City of Joy, to prepare Kolkata food during each meal.

Bharati also organises multiple events throughout the year, such as Lakshmi Puja, Diwali, Picnic, Holi, Ravindra Jayanti, Saraswati Puja etc.

[www. http://bharatithailand.com/](http://www.bharatithailand.com/)



## BATJ - Bengali Association of Tokyo, Japan



BATJ started in the early 1980s as a small group of Bengalis from India, living in an around Tokyo. Only a few in numbers, they wanted to celebrate the heritage quietly - engaging in activities compatible to the Japanese way of doing things. Some Japanese who were their neighbors and had some exposure to India got gradually acquainted with Indian heritage within the confines of the Japanese social norms, and slowly the association embarked on organizing events and sharing the joy on such occasions with a much larger audience of Indians and Japanese. Currently, among the community members there are Bengali and non-Bengalis, also some Japanese. In Japanese, the group is referred to as "Indojin-No-Tsudoi" (インド人の集い). This year is the 30th year of our Durga Puja in Tokyo. On Puja day, over 350 people visit, of which 60% are Bengalis, 30% Non-Bengalis and another 10% are Japanese and other nationalities.

Durga Puja in Tokyo is celebrated in a single day, with 6<sup>th</sup> October scheduled for the Puja this year. BATJ also brings out a literary magazine "Anjali" during the Puja which has articles etc. in four languages ~ Bengali, English, Hindi and Japanese. Usually the Indian Ambassador attends the Durga Puja and releases the magazine.

On Puja morning, there is the traditional Puja bhog of khichuri, tarkari, chutney, papad and misti. In the evening, after pratima baran and sindur khela, guests will be treated to a sumptuous meal of pulao, mutton kasha, alur dom and mishti.

<http://www.batj.org/>

## BAS - Bengali Association of Singapore



The Bengali Association came into being with a membership of fifty families on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1956. The first program was, of course, to celebrate Bijoya Sammelani. Amongst the annual celebrations that gradually became integrated with the activities of the Association were Saraswati and Durga Puja, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti, Nababarsha, picnics and sports. Dramas, songs, and dance dramas formed part of the celebrations. In the early years food was prepared by the members. Now, BAS Durga Puja is by far Singapore's biggest celebration, hosted in a fully air-conditioned area of 21,600 square feet that draws a crowd of over 15,000 people over five long days of non-stop worship and revelry. There are fashion shows, plays, recitals, competitions, songs and dance. And of course, there are stalls selling everything from apartments and credit cards to Bengali street food - biryani, roll and phuchka.

The Association's first Magazine, Milon, was published in 1960. In its early years it used to be cyclostyled, stapled, trimmed and pressed by hand in a British Army office. The magazine is still published annually but with some gloss and shine. With a membership of about 850 a large number of whom are citizens, the roots of Bengali culture have been firmly planted in Singapore.

<http://www.bas.sg/>

Concept and compiled by: Anirban Roy Choudhary and Sanjay Guha



## MBA - Malaysian Bengalee Association

"Malaysian Bengalee Association" was established back in 1920's by a group of Bengalis who migrated from undivided India during the British rule, mainly from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and Calcutta, West Bengal to Kuala Lumpur, Seremban and other major cities in Malaysia. They were professionals mainly serving in the educational & medical fields. The Association was registered as "Malayan Bengalee Association" in 1952. Later on, the name changed as "Malaysian Bengalee Association (MBA)".

The Association has its own establishment (Pooja Bari) in Port Dickson (100km away from Kuala Lumpur) comprising Sea Facing Temple, Prayer Hall, recreation center, Kitchen with Dining Hall, Guest room for Priest and a vast Garden. This property carries a sense of the community's spirit and ethnic pride, as it was bought by a group of Bengali immigrants who donated their half month's salary to establish the property. All Bengalis in Malaysia, both local Malaysians & expatriates celebrate various festivals including cultural & social activities throughout the year - Paila Baishakh, Holi, Rabindra Jayanti, Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja & Deepavali - to name a few.

<http://www.mba.org.my>



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## HKBUFC – 1 yr old and growing fast

**Sudeep Sengupta**

As my fellow Bengalis who grew up in the 70s, 80s and 90s will fondly remember, football was the primary sport back home before the money infused game of ‘Cricket’ took over - quite unfortunately in my opinion - the imagination of young kids. For us though, it is hard to kill the love for something so deeply embedded. That love for the fantastic game led us to start regular football games under the banner of Hong Kong Bong United Football Club (HKBUFC) back in 2018, which we had written about in our 2018 edition of this magazine. The passion was carried well and truly in to 2019, and there are no signs of it stopping anytime soon!

Since 2018, around a dozen more players have become members and HKBUFC regulars. The games have continued, come rain, hail, or sunshine, and football loving Bengalis from the Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, Tsing Yi and Tung Chung have joined regularly to make them a grand success. And yes, we now have our own jerseys – Red, and Gold!

For us football has been a centrifugal force to unite like-minded Bengalis in our adopted home – both on and off the field. Improvement in fitness and stamina has been a rather pleasing by-product. Social bonding has increased many folds too. We now organize season end parties for our members where we host award ceremonies for some exciting on and off the field categories. ‘Golden Boot’ and ‘Golden Gloves’ awards are given out on the basis of goal records maintained during the year, and there are other awards for which voting mechanisms are put in place to decide on the winners of ‘Golden Ball’, ‘Fair play’ and the ‘Best Defender’. And what is the quintessential Bangali without some humour – so we also have categories like tu tu mein mein, taking a dig at all things football, from missed scoring opportunities to best play acting. We also capture all our daily game commentary in the form of a summary, in our own Facebook page (details at the bottom).

Organizing our weekly games in 2019, in the last 4-5 months had been particularly challenging. Our regular football ground in Tung Chung was closed down for renovation for six months, which meant that we had to search for other grounds in Kowloon or HK Island for our games. Undeterred we continued, playing in some of the most beautiful football pitches all around HK. Most of the members had to travel 2-2.5 hours to play these games but that did not stop us as we carried on with the same zeal as before.

The second blow to us was the recent demonstrations and rallies all over Hong Kong which started about three months back. Our weekend games were badly affected as the unpredictable nature of these protest meant that we could not plan our games in advance.

Good thing though, our regular Tung Chung ground should reopen soon (target by Oct 2019) and hence we anticipate the challenges around these weekly games will subside gradually.

Finally, we again encourage all Bengalis who love football, to come and join us. Young guns, in their teens are particularly encouraged to come and play with us, as we want to see young men taking up this sport actively.

Our Facebook page can be found here. This also holds lot of interesting Indian football related news and articles! If interested, please subscribe to the page and leave comments there.

<https://www.facebook.com/HKBUFC/>







*May maa bless you  
with happiness all the year through!*

*Wishing you a Happy Durga Puja*

*From*

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## রূপং দেহি, বর্ণং দেহি

মাগো, তোমার চোখে জল....  
শপথ আজি তোমার তরে, লড়ব আমার মতন করে  
মুছবো তোমার অশ্রুধারা, দুঃখ অস্তাচল  
তোমার কষ্টে বাঁধনহারা, তোমার চোখে জল।

বধূ, তোমার নয়নধারা....  
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তোর সুখেতে গানটি ধরা, তোর দুখেতে স্বপ্নহারা  
তোর চোখের জলে বহিঁশিখা লড়ব দিবারাতি  
মেয়ে, তুই যে আমার পরশপাথর, চলার পথের সাথী।

বোন, ভাইফোঁটার ওই ফোঁটার বাঁধন....  
শপথ করি তোর জীবনে, সুখের তরী তোর আসনে  
জীবন পথের সঙ্গী হয়ে রইবো আজীবন  
তোর তরে মোর পরাণ সঁপি, তোর লাগি মরণ।

আর আছে মোর ধর্মভীরু, ভক্তিভরা নারী  
রণচন্দী, দশভূজা, বীণাপাণি বা লক্ষ্মীপূজা  
নারী শক্তির শক্তিপূজায় প্রার্থণার চাতুরী  
রূপং দেহি, বর্ণং দেহি, ভক্তিভরা নারী।

শপথ, শ্রদ্ধা, ভক্তিভরা ভালোবাসা অপার,  
তবু ক্রণহত্যার মহামারী, আর নির্যাতিতা বহু নারী,  
বৈষম্যে ভুবন ভরা নির্লজ্জ সংসার  
শাসন লোভী, শোষণমুখী, ঘৃণ্য পুরুষাকার।

— বলরাম চন্দ্র পাল



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## Best Wishes for Durga Puja from A well wisher





## ভালবাসা

ভালবাসা হলকে পড়ে ইনস্টাগ্রামে ফেসবুকে,  
ছবি দেখে ভাবে সবাই আছেন সবাই কত সুখে!  
ভালবাসতে সবাই জানে, কেউ দেখায়, কেউ দেখায় না,  
ভালবাসা কি শুধুমাত্র সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ায় ছলনা?

এই যে ক দিন বিষ্টু খুড়ো, অফিসের লানচ স্কিপ করেন,  
সবাই ভাবে কিপটে বুড়ো, আসল কথা কি কেউ জানেন?  
বৌয়ের ইচ্ছে ৫-স্টারে খাবে, বিবাহ বাষিকির রাত্তিরে,  
তাই টাকা বাঁচাতে বিষ্টু খুড়ো, এক বেলা খান রোজকেরে!  
ইনস্টাগ্রামে ফেসবুকেতে কোথাও যে নেই খুড়োর পোস্ট,  
ফিলিং হাংরি, স্কিপিং লানচ ফর এ্যানিভার্সারি চিকেন রোস্ট !!!

কিংবা ধরুন মহিম চাচা, অফিস করে সকাল থেকে,  
বাড়ি ফেরেন ক্লান্ত হয়ে বাসে বুলে মধ্য রাত্তি!  
সরকারি তো চাকরি করে, তাও কেন হয় দেরি রোজ,  
ইনফিডেল না এ্যালকোহলিক, না কোথাও খেতে যান মহাভোজ?  
আসলে প্রচুর লাগছে টাকা, বৌয়ের শাড়ি, ছেলের কলেজে,  
তাই যে চাচা কাজের পরে, লোকের গাড়ি সারান গ্যারেজে!  
ভুলটা তো মহিম চাচার, ফেসবুকে পোস্ট করেননি,  
ফিলিং টায়ার্ড, ওয়ার্কিং টু জব, লাভ ইউ মাই ফ্যামিলি !!!

এরা সবাই বিবাহিত এদের কথা ছেড়েই দি,  
ধরা যাক রীতার কথা, বিনুর নিজের ছোড়দি!  
জোসেফিন কে ভালবাসে করেছিল কি এতই ভুল,  
শুনেই বাবা ভীষণ মেরে, বন্ধ করেছিল রীতার স্কুল!  
দুঃখ কষ্ট হলেও রীতা আপডেট করেনি ফেসবুক,  
আর জোসেফিনের ভালবাসাও কমেনি তো এতটুক!  
বাড়ি থেকে পালিয়ে দুজন, দেখেছিল সুখের দিন,  
ফিলিং ব্যাড, এ্যাংরি ড্যাড, বাট ইন লাভ উইথ জোসেফিন !!!

এমন কতই গল্প প্রেমের, ছড়িয়ে আছে বিশ্বজুড়ে,  
নাই বা থাকুক ফেসবুক বা ইনস্টাগ্রামের পাতা ভরে!  
ভালবাসার মহিমা এমন জরিয়ে ধরে জাকে তাকে  
আসুন সবাই ভালবাসায় ভরে দি এই জগত টাকে !!!

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বৃষ্টি যে বাড়লো আরো , রাস্তায় ও খুব কাদা !

বলতে বলতেই ভূপতি এসে চুকলো বসার ঘরে  
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জল চুপচুপে ফতুয়া আর ঝড়ে ভেঙে গেছে ছাতা  
কেমন যেন অন্য রকম, ভয় ভাব চোখে মাখা |

নৃপেন্দা বললো "ওইখানে ওই গামছাটা দিয়ে মাথা মুছে নাও এবার"  
"সময় নেই বেশি" ভূপতি বললো, "এখুনি যেতে হবে আবার"  
পরিতোষ আর কণাদ তখন একসাথেই বলে উঠলো  
"ব্রিজ খেলাটা হবে না আজ ? তবে সন্কেটাই মাটি হল ?"

ভূপতি এবার উঠে পড়ল, বললো "আসছি আমি তবে" !  
"ভাল থেকো সবাই, পরে আবার দেখা হবে" -  
কেউ কিছু বলার আগেই ভূপতি বেরিয়ে গেল,  
নৃপেন্দা বললো "ব্রিজ খেলা যখন হলই না, তবে যে যার বাড়ি চলো" !

সেদিনের পর ঘোষেদের বাড়ি আড্ডা আর বসেনি  
তিন বন্ধু সেই সন্ধ্যার কথা আজ ও ভুলতে পারেনি !  
ভূপতি নাকি সেই বিকেলেই বাজ পড়ে মারা গেছিলো  
জীবিত বা মৃত, কিন্তু কথার দাম তার ছিল !



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# HKBA IN MEDIA

A snapshot of the coverage of HKBA through the year, in the various media both at home (India) and here in Hong Kong.

Compiled by: Rajdeep, Anirban and Sanjay

## হংকংয়ের বুকে আড়ম্বরে পালিত হচ্ছে শারদোৎসব



পূজার দিনে হংকংয়ের বুকে আড়ম্বরে পালিত হচ্ছে শারদোৎসব। ছবি: দিনকারি।

<https://www.anandabazar.com/international/durga-puja-celebration-in-hong-kong-dgtl-1.676364?ref=international-new-stry>



Radio Broadcast covering HKBA Durga Puja  
Date for broadcast - 5th Oct 2018  
Show : Direct Dil Se, Time : 1 pm HKT  
participant from HKBA : Rajdeep Mojumder

## মিলবে না রেশুরায়, তাই ভোগের জন্য লম্বা লাইন

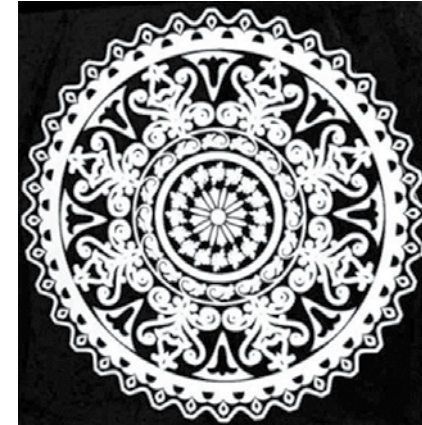


<https://anandautsav.anandabazar.com/beyond-bengal/durga-puja-2019-bengali-citizen-of-hong-kong-shares-his-emotion-about-upcoming-festival-1.1048748?ref=anandautsav-beyond-bengal-new-stry>



<https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/travel-leisure/article/3029969/indian-street-festival-durga-puja-guide-celebrations>

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## A Turkish Delight

Chiradeep De

A quick confession, I have never been to the Moon. Yet after landing in Cappadocia it felt like, this must be the same as walking on Moon's surface. Cappadocia is a historical region in Central Anatolia province of Turkey, and is one of the top three tourist attractions of that country. The region is served by two Airports, Nevsehir and Kayseri. We landed at the smaller but more recent of the two, Nevsehir Airport. The vastness of the area stuck us once our Mercedes tourist minibus left behind the small terminal building for a 40 minutes journey to Goreme, the popular town of Cappadocia region. The road was straight as an arrow, and our bus zoomed like a bullet. On either side of the road there were, well nothing, just bizarre rock formations and table-mountains devoid of greenery. Coming from HK/India it takes some time to get used to such emptiness of landscape. From the flight we also saw a vast salt-lake (little water), which remained in our view for good 2 minutes. I read later in the guide books that this lake is called "Tuz Gölü" in Turkish and is one of the largest hypersaline lakes in the world.

The incredible landscape at Cappadocia were formed due to ancient volcanic eruptions, thanks to the 3 volcanic peaks which flank the region. Their eruptions covered the region with meters of ash, which later turned into rock. Mother nature then chiselled its way through the softer rocks using wind and water erosion over millions of years, leaving the harder rocks to tell the tale. The end result is a fairyland of rocky cones, pinnacles, mushrooms, chimneys, caves etc, which rise from few meters to 40 meters into the sky. The humans then did the finishing touches by carving out dwellings into these rocks. The human history of Cappadocia is no less fascinating. It has been constantly inhabited by the Hitties, Romans, Byzantines, Christians, Turkish and other people since at-least 6th century BC.

Our destination Goreme is famous for fairy chimney rock formations and rock-cut cave hotels. The attached photos show how bizarre the chimneys look in a cluster. Goreme turned out to be a small but touristy town full of great eateries. We booked a cave hotel atop a small hill, just below the Goreme sunset point. Our cave room had stone walls, ceiling and floors, and no windows but yet felt quite cool. Every dawn and dusk we walked few steps up to the sunset point to watch the spectacular 360 degree views from there.



Goreme Open Air Museum



Goreme at Night from Sunset Point

Our guide Zeki was an interesting person to say the least. At the first look, he looked like a younger Salman Khan. Zeki explained that Turkey is inhabited by people who came down from Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries and Europe in the past, so Turkish people have a mixed look between Asians and Europeans. Zeki had a fine sense of humor which was the case with most tour guides and shopkeepers in Turkey. Some shopkeepers would welcome us by saying "we have everything in our shop except customers, so please visit us"! Zeki talked a lot (বক বক), but imparted a great deal of knowledge about Turkish religion and culture to us. He appeared to know at-least 10 different languages including few broken words of Hindi. We visited some amazing places in Cappadocia under Zeki's stewardship the full description of which will fill up a diary, but let me provide a glimpse:

**Goreme Open Air Museum-** This 1000 year old UNESCO World Heritage site near Goreme, is a monastic complex composed of scores of refectory monasteries placed side-by-side, each with its own fantastic church. All the structures including churches are rock-cut, with beautiful frescoes (wall paintings). The churches have unique names like Snake church, St. Basil church, Dark church etc. The area looked like Ajanta caves, many times over in size.

**Avanos-** Avanos is the famed pottery town of Cappadocia with a history of nearly 2000 years. It is situated next to Red River, which provides the red silt used to make pottery. The techniques are not much different from that of our own "Kumartuli" back home, however the workmanship, raw materials, designs and colours used are of highest quality, which renders the finished product a fascinating look. We went to Sultan's pottery, one of the largest shops there. The shop looked more like a pottery museum. We also quickly realized that the prices were as spectacular as the designs!

Here I must mention about the delicious Cappadocian cuisine which we sampled at Avanos, Goreme, Ihlara and Mustafapasa. Each meal was preceded by a starter set of Turkish tea, hummus, yogurt and other Turkish dips with pita bread and salad. The main courses usually were grilled or curried meat or fish with vegetables and rice or bread. The kids soon became a fan of Testi Kebab (tasty too), which was meat cooked in a sealed earthen pot over very slow fire. The pot was broken right at the table and its contents poured directly on the plate. The local yogurt drink was a fine accompaniment with the main course. At the end they served sinfully sweet Turkish desserts including the famous baklava.



Mushroom Rock Cluster – Pasabag Valley



300 Steps to Ihlara Canyon

**Pasabag Valley-** Pasabag valley is like Goreme Open Air Museum, a place where ancient monks lived in rock-cut dwellings. The difference being, monks here lived in isolation for meditation purpose, high up in their rock cut caves. They came down only to collect food and water from disciples below. Zeki believed that some of the monks here may have been related to Hindu monks from India. The rocks here also stood out but like giant mushrooms, unlike the pointed chimneys of Goreme. The rocks also bore a strange yellow-orangish hue.

**Ihlara Canyon-** Ihlara was meant for adventure and it did not disappoint us. We did a 2hour long trek in the canyon, after climbing down 300 steps into it from our carpark. The canyon was formed by the Melendiz river thousands of years ago. On either side of the river were stiff mountain walls littered with many rock-cut caves at impossible heights. I told Zeki that the ancient people could give our modern engineers a run for their money any day.

**Derinkuyu-** Derinkuyu is to be seen to be believed. It is the world's largest underground city, built manually by cutting into volcanic rocks. It was used as a shelter against marauding invaders. Zeki said that a bigger underground ancient city has been excavated at Nevsehir recently but yet to be opened to public. Derinkuyu, in its heydays could accommodate up to 20000 people. It had provisions for storage of food, wine, rooms for domesticated animals, and had bedrooms, living rooms, study halls, toilets, graves and even churches, all below the ground. We climbed to the lowest level which was eight stories below the ground along with many others and yet never felt suffocated. In fact, deep below the ground suddenly the airflow



increased due to a cleverly hidden wind channel which rose up to the very top. It is said that the residents at Derinkuyu could live there for weeks without coming out in the open. The word “kuyu” means a hole in the ground or a well in Turkish. I told Zeki that in my language “kuyo” means a well too.....surprise, surprise!

We identified many common words between Turkish and Indian languages. The famous Egyptian Spice Market in Istanbul is called “misir carcisi”. The word “misir” is similar to “mishor” and “misr” as Egypt is called in Bengali and Hindi. The word “namaz” or Islamic prayer, had originated in India, claimed Zeki, and is used in Turkish language but not in Arabic countries.



Rock cut castle at Uchisar



Turkish Evil Eyes (protective charm) on a tree

**Horse Ride-** This easily was the highlight of our visit. Horse rides are common activities anywhere, but this one was different. Each of us had to ride a full-bodied Turkish horse up and down the rocky paths of the Rose valley, on our own. Incidentally, wild Turkish dogs are huge beasts too and you would not like to meet one at the dead of night. I did while taking photos of the night sky once, but how I survived is another story! Rose valley was the best sunset view point I have ever been to. The rocky columns here were of pinkish-brown shade and the diffused light of a setting sun made them look even more dramatic. We rode along the base of a tabletop mountain, and our guides from the ranch walked alongside. We held the harness and the guides intervened only when the horses went astray. I had a heavy camera on one hand and had to hold the harness singlehandedly! My horse was a particularly naughty one which would frequently leave the path to eat wild berries from nearby trees. The entire experience felt surreal as the setting sun triggered an amazing change of colours in the horizon, and miles after miles of colourful rocky landscape providing perfect backdrop to the scene.

The hot air balloon rides at Goreme attract millions of visitors across the globe to this place every year. But as luck would have it, the local weather department cancelled the flights three days in a row due to adverse weather conditions. We were consoled that the balloons appear equally spectacular from the viewpoint near our hotel. That finally happened on the day we left. We rushed to the viewpoint at 5.00 AM to see hundreds of balloons taking flight from the valley below. The rising sun, the chimney like rocks and the landscape stretching till horizon again created an amazing backdrop to the colourful balloons which looked like huge inverted waterdrops. We weren't prepared for what happened next. Some balloons came to float right atop our viewpoint. Some flew so low that we could actually jump to touch their bases. We clicked photos to our heart's content.

We left for Istanbul on that day. Istanbul offered different visual and gastronomic experiences, but those experiences warrant another article – this article is for the fairyland named Cappadocia.

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## Home Away from Home!!

Neela Goswami

A Bangali usually starts the countdown to Durga pujo from 1st January of every year. From there on every other occasion is one step closer to Durga pujo. Be it Saraswati pujo, which was most important all my student life or Poila Baisakh which embarks the start of Bangali new year with new hope and dreams.

Year 2017 was my first official year in Hongkong. The people, the city, the places, the architecture, the natural beauty, everything has its own charm. But still something was missing. Nevertheless the year just went by in this super busy city. Beginning of 2018 something awesome happened and a friend introduced us to **HONG KONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION**. Yes you read that right!! Bengali Association in Hong Kong. And oh boy how lucky we were to get to know this. I started my countdown to Durga pujo and I realized this is what was missing. Through the year making plans on what to wear, what to eat, where to go, who to meet on each of the day of pujo is what I have done all my life and how kind life is to me to give me that back!!

The spirit of Durga pujo lies in end of all wrong things like ego, hatred, jealousy, conflict and beginning of new friendships, good times, positive vibes, kindness and just peace all over. **HONG KONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION** offers all of that and a great deal more. Beautiful Pujo ceremony, amazing atmosphere, excellent cultural performances, awesome people and just happiness all around. I found my Home away from home.

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## নানা রঙ নানা অনুভূতি... গানের সুরে নিয়ে এসেছে HKBA Music Lounge

চায়ের পেয়ালাতে চুমুক দিতে দিতে, এক মনে গান শুনছিলাম বসে, হঠাৎ কি মনে হল ভাবলাম এটা যদি করা যায় এবার পূজোতে তা হলে তো মন্দ নয়। মনে মনে ভেবে নিলাম কাদের নিয়ে করা যেতে পারে। একের পর এক ফোন করে কথা বললাম তাদের সবার সাথে, সকলেই শুনে বলল - খুব ভালো ভেবেছো আমরা আছি তোমার সাথে, এগিয়ে পর, ব্যাস আর কী আমি ও কাজে নেমে পরলাম।

আমার সেই পরিকল্পনা যেটা এত সুন্দর রূপ নিল, সেটা হয় তো লিখে বোঝানো যাবে না। স্বপ্ন যেন পাখা মেলে নতুন ভাবে দাড়ল ( HKBA Music Lounge ) রূপে। পূজোর পর, লোকের মুখে মুখে Music Lounge যেন সুগন্ধের মত ছড়িয়ে পড়লো বাতাসে। সবাই খুব খুশি আমিও খুশি কিন্তু কোথাও যেন মনে হল এটা কী এখানেই ইতি?

না - এত সুন্দর জিনিস টা বন্দ করা যায়না, তাই আবার কাজে নেমে পরলাম এটা নিয়ে তৈরি হল Music Lounge এর video যেটা বাড়ি বাড়ি প্রচার হল Youtube এর মাধ্যমে। আরো নতুন নতুন গায়ক গায়িকারা এসে যোগ দান দিল সাথে। আজ HKBA Music Lounge একটা চেনা পরিচিত নাম। রোজ নতুন নতুন নাম জুড়ে যায় এতে, সব যেন একটা সুন্দর স্বপনের মত। আমার এই সুন্দর স্বপ্ন পূরন করাতে যার সব থেকে বড় যোগদান তিনি হলেন সঞ্জয় গুহ, কারন Video Recording থেকে নিয়ে Editing করা সেটাকে আবার সুন্দর ভাবে সাজিয়ে পরিবেশন করা পুরোটাই ওনার, এক কথায় বলতে পারেন আমার স্বপ্ন কে যেন জীবিত করে তুলে ধরলেন উনি। সাথে সুদিপের সেই “নানা রং নানা অনুভূতি গানের সুরে নিয়ে এসেছে HKBA MUSIC LOUNGE” বলাটা যেন music lounge এর এক প্রধান অঙ্গ হয়ে দাড়ল, আর যাদের সাহায্য আর অবদান সব সময় আছে তারা হল Sangeeta, Piyali, Ashish da, Atanu da, Mahesweta আর Sudip। ভবিষ্যতে Music Lounge আরো নতুন নতুন পরিকল্পনা নিয়ে আপনাদের সামনে তুলে ধরবে।



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ইতি  
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(Check for the HKBA Music Lounge videos on YouTube in Manjari Guha channel)





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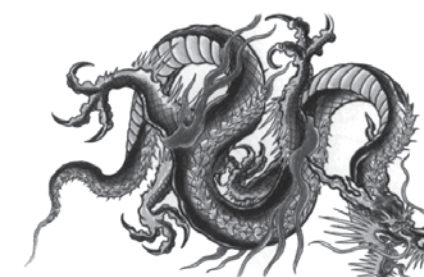
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## Quiz Time

The festive season is here, and it is time for a quick check on how much we really know about our beloved goddess Durga. A fun filled trivia, this quiz has no prize for getting answers right, but every time you get one wrong, there is that wee bit of knowledge that you gain!

It's question time!!

1. According to popular legend, which Indian city gets its name from Devi Durga's victory over the Buffalo demon Mahishasur after a nine day battle?
2. In Ramayan, it is said that Lord Ram sought the blessings of Devi Durga before going to war with Ravan. Who is said to be his priest?
3. Staying on with Ramayan, Lord Ram invoked the goddess in the middle of *Dakshinayan*, a period when all Gods and Goddesses are asleep. What do we call this invocation of the Goddess in the traditional Bengali style of Durga worship?
4. The Goddess was outfitted for battle by the various gods who gifted her weapons, and gems. Who gifted her the Trident (Trishul) that she used to slay Mahishasur?
5. Name Mahishasur's father?
6. The Art Institute of Chicago hosts a sandstone statue of Devi Durga where she is shown with eight hands. Said to be a creation of the 10th Century, which country did the statue originate from (hint: NOT India)?
7. The Goddess is also known by many other names. One of these names is similar to a pivotal character in Mahabharat. Name this character?
8. Mahishasur was an Asur (demon). In which two states of India do we find an ethnic tribe called Asur?
9. Any quiz on the Goddess remains incomplete for Bengalis without a mention of *Birendrakrishna Bhadra*, the broadcaster from All India Radio who is famous for his recitation of *Mahishasur Mardini*. His rendition of *Mahishasur Mardini* has been broadcast on All India Radio since early 1930s. In 1976, however, he was replaced for a brief period by another famous Bengali personality. Name him?
10. Hong Kong Bengali Association (HKBA) hosts the annual Durga Puja in Hong Kong. Which year did HKBA come into being?

Answers:

1. Mysore
2. Ravan
3. Akal Bodhon
4. Lord Shiva
5. Rambha
6. Cambodia
7. Amba (who was reincarnated as Shikhandi to slay Bhisma)
8. Jharkhand and West Bengal
9. Uttam Kumar
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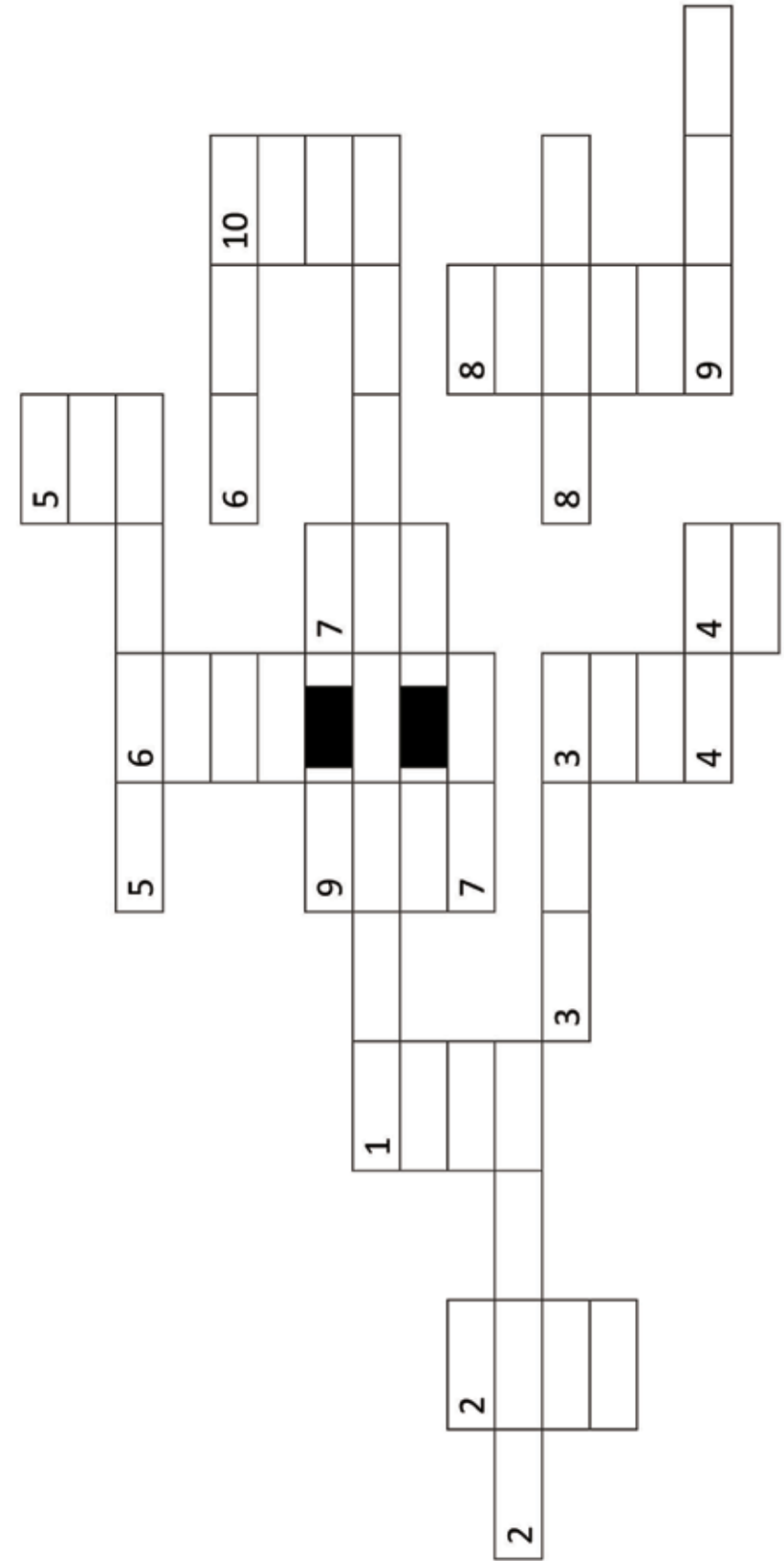


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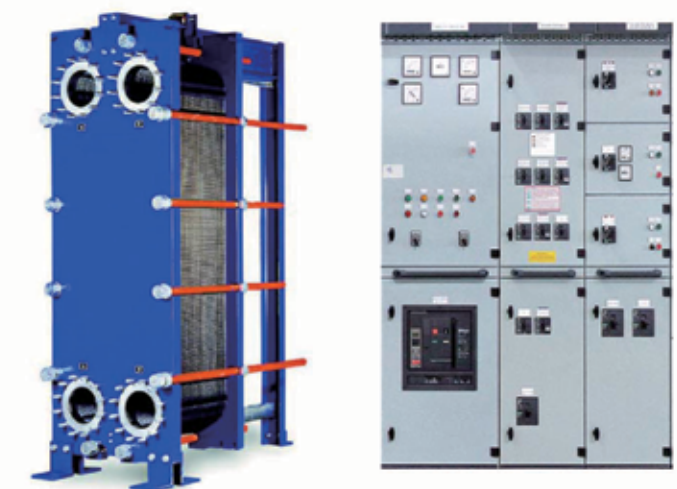
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Repair and technology support

Ship broker, ship design.

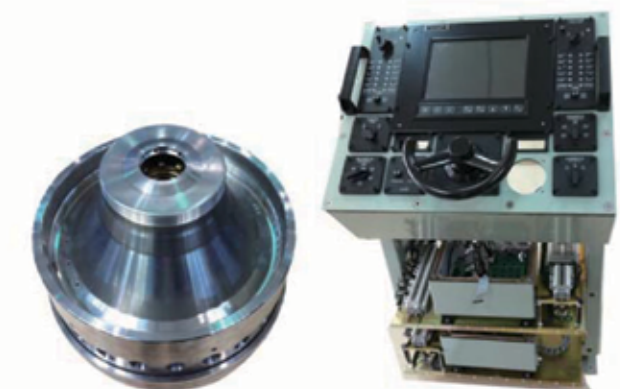


Spare parts for engine and turbocharger, purifier, compressor, air conditioner, boiler, deck machine and so on... ship store for engine room and deck, electrical, carbin and safety, mooring rope, lashing unlashing parts.

New building equipment: heat exchanger, purifier, fuel oil supply unit, air conditioner... according agent certification from maker.

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# HKBA MOMENTS

## *Durga Puja 2018*













# *Rabindra Jayanti*





## HKBA Picnic

Date : 24th Feb 2019  
Venue : Tai Mei Tuk public BBQ area, Tai po



## HKBA Bijoya Shammilani 2018





## HKBA Movie Show



## HKBA GALLERY

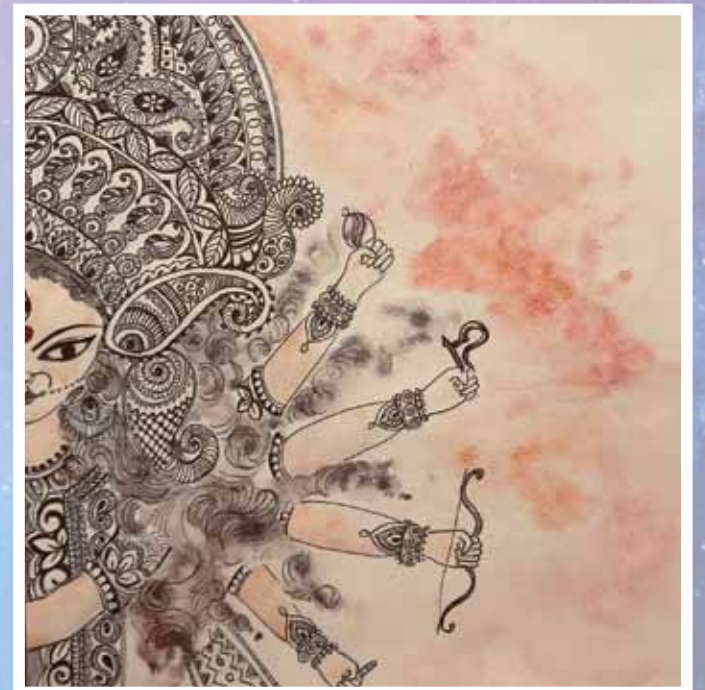
### Art & Painting



Anjan Kundu



Arpita Basak



Poonam Saha





Arinjoy De



Riddhima Majumder



Anusha Das



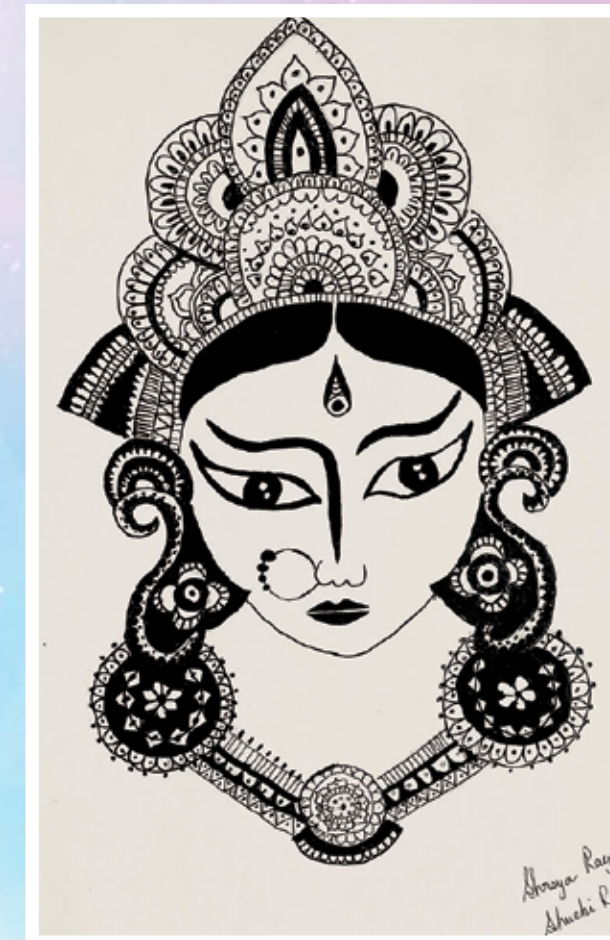
Arihaan Kumar



Vivan Ganguly



Aaheli Kumar



Shreya & Shuchi Ray



Enakshi Mandal



## Photos - Theme Hong Kong



*"#mobilephotography - On Tsing Ma Bridge returning from airport one evening" by Sudip Sarkar*



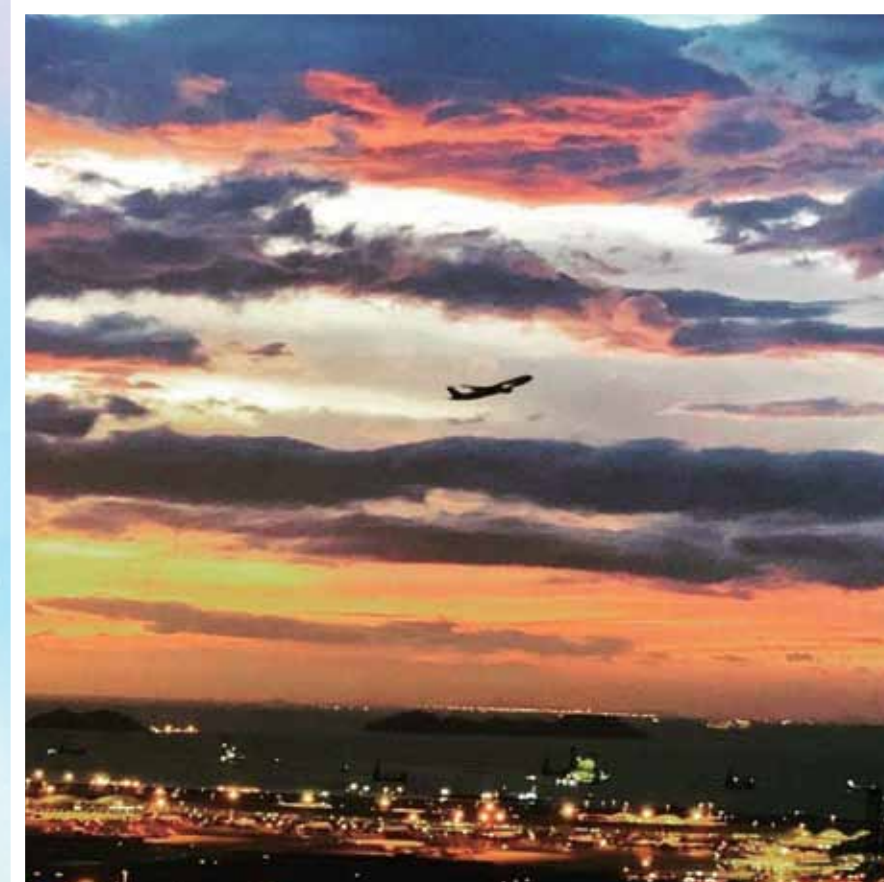
*"Despite all the negative news about HK, we still Love Hong Kong" by Sabyasachi Dutta*



*"Ding Ding - oldest mode of transport still thrives in glitzy Hong Kong, will take you around in just 2 HKD" by Sabyasachi Dutta*



*"European Carnival in Hong Kong at Central" by Sudip Sarkar*



*"#mobilephotography - captured this perfect moment at the right time, standing at the balcony" by Manjari*





*"Sunset at Pui O. 'Every sunset brings the promise of a new dawn'  
- Ralph W Emerson" by Souvik Banerjee*



*"This former police quarters located at the end of Hollywood Road  
in Central, has been redeveloped into a cultural and Heritage center  
called Tai Kwun" by Sanjay Guha*



*"Nan Lian Garden at Diamond Hill - An eye soothing oasis amidst the  
myriad of high rises and skyscrapers" by Souvik Banerjee*



*"A sunny afternoon in Tai O Fishing Village in the western coast of  
Lantau. A quaint and picturesque village" by Sanjay Guha*





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Octamar™  
HF-10 Plus

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### Octamar™ Ultra HF

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- Cleaner running from powerful additive technology.
- Improved fuel economy and reduced fouling of exhaust gas systems.
- Increased fuel stability and compatibility of marine fuel blends.

### Octamar™ HF-10 Plus

This multi-functional additive is designed specifically to reduce fuel compatibility issues. By stabilising fuel blends and reducing sludge it ensures VLSFO can be used safely.

- Improved compatibility when using new fuels, mitigating risk of unknown fuel.
- Safer fuel change-overs for ECAs.
- Stable and homogenous fuel ensures improved combustion.
- Reduced sludge, providing more fuel to burn.
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Examples of stability issues

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An aerial photograph of a large shipyard with several large ships being repaired or built. The water is blue, and the sky is clear.

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With ship repair as its main business HRDD has been devoting to high value-added products such as cruise vessel upgrading and docking, including "Costa Atlantic" in 2015, followed by "Glory of the Sea" & "Costa Serena"; bulbous bow renewal, turnkey solution for BWTS retrofit, turnkey solution for EGCS retrofit, LPG/LNG maintenance, FSRU re-gasification unit modules for LNG "Heegh Gallant", etc.

Since 2006, HRDD has achieved many successful conversions, such as three container vessels' jumbonization by way of lengthening and widening for German owner NSB Niederelbe Schifffahrtsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG. Conversion of "FPSO-YINSON GENESIS" from VLCC to FPSO for Singapore operator.

For the later business of LNG business, after years efforts and preparations, HRDD has been audited by the leading LNG membrane Technology service and supplier Gaztransport & Technigaz (GTT) in France. Furthermore, for offering more professional services, HRDD has established the cooperative agreements with the LNG specialized companies such as GABADI from Spain. Under the co-operations with all the LNG specialized companies, HRDD is capable to carry out docking /repairs and conversion for LNG carriers from now on.



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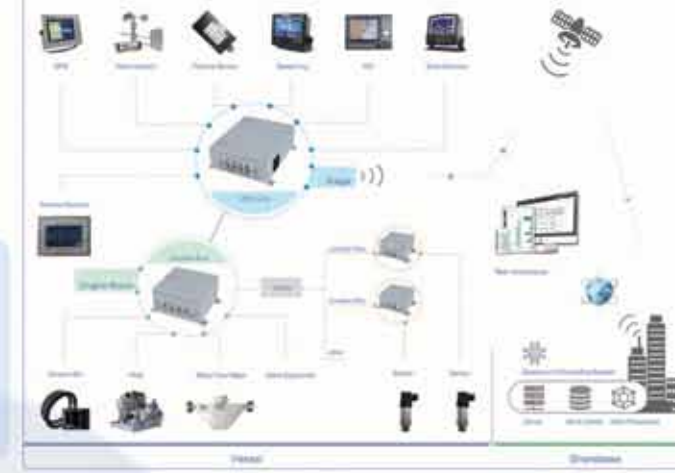
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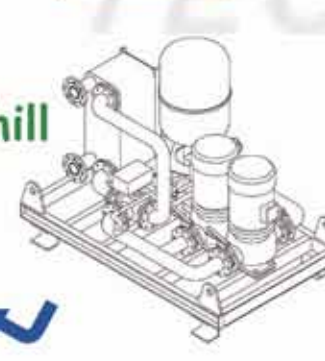


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Phone: +971-92231053, Mobile: +971-562969392

**SINCE 2014**

Absolute Marine Group are known nationwide to be one of the fast leading, reliable, shipping and marine services located in strategic location in Fujairah, UAE. We take Pride in delivering the best of services.

We provide services to other parts of the world's ports including Asia, Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

**Head Office:**

707, Nama Building,  
Mina Road, Near Fujairah Port, Fujairah, UAE

Ship Agency

Ship Supply

Marine Survey

Ship Repair

Logistic & Warehousing



## **Omega Marine Group Services**

Email: [info@omegamarg.com](mailto:info@omegamarg.com) Phone: +302104284868

**SINCE 2012**

Omega Marine group has served shipping for 7 years. Our company was established in 2012 and since then it has become one of the largest consultancy offices in Greece, European and Africa, Gulf countries and Americas market since the establishment Of Omega Marine Group, our relationship with all shipping Companies has been harmonious and the results are evident through our handling from our professional peers

**Head Office**

Omega Marine Group, Suit no. 2,  
Irodotou 31, Piraeus, Greece 18835.

Pre charter Inspections

Inspection and Marine Audits

Marine Safety Management

Marine Accident Investigations

Marine & offshore engineering

Marine insurance