



AARATRIKA

M O S C O W

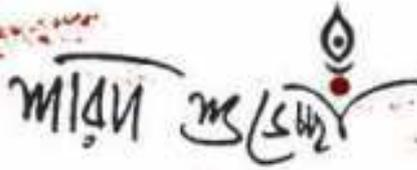
Durga Puja Since 1990





Debasmita Moulick Nair

From the Editor's Desk...



Numerous narratives revolve round the festival of Durga Puja. It is said that before the British rule in our country, the kings and zamindars were apprehensive of ostentatious puja celebrations that involved exhibiting their wealth as they feared tax imposition from the Emperor. It is believed that the first Durga Puja in Bengal was celebrated during the reign of Emperor Akbar and was organized by Raja Kangshannarayan in Rajshahi province. In 1728 Raja Krishnachandra who ruled in the regions of Nadia, celebrated Durga Puja on a grand scale and it is he who is credited with popularising Durga Puja as sarbojonin (for all). Other wealthy rulers soon followed his example and began to observe Durga Puja in its full grandeur.

There is also a mention of Barowari or (Baro is twelve in Bengali, Yar means friend) Durga Puja for all from the second half of the 18th century, when twelve men who were not allowed to join in the puja celebrations, formed a group and organized a puja of their own.

My Russian friends and colleagues are most intrigued when I share the commonly known parable according to which the four days of puja equates to Mother Goddess's annual visit to her paternal home on earth, along with her four children – Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartikeya and Ganesh. It is interesting to note that the Goddess is an inseparable member of our family and not merely an idol who is worshipped. Durga Puja is the occasion when married daughters come to their maternal home and there is a lot of rejoicing. People prepare specially for her arrival which is a year-long awaiting period. There is also a myth that it always drizzles on Vijaya Dashami, the last day of the festival when even nature weeps, reluctant to let the Goddess go as her time on earth comes to an end.

The legendary first man and Hindu lawgiver from the 1st century BC writes in his book Manu-smriti (Laws of Manu) that a 'high caste woman' should be under the protection of fathers, husbands and their sons. They should not be independent owing to their weak nature, should be focussed on domestic duties and be controlled by their husbands. In this context, it is fascinating to note the subversive aspects of the Mother Goddess Durga. She breaks the Brahminical representation of the woman as the dutiful wife. She even rejects the proposal of marriage from King Mahishasura, the demon who is attracted by her beauty. She replies "I will marry only he who defeats me in battle." She is warlike, not submissive and unassertive. She appears to be an ideal woman, beautiful and ardent while being fiercely independent. Her ten arms portray her multifaceted nature and the different roles inherent in women as they play different roles.

Today, Durga Puja, the largest festival in Bengal, is celebrated not only in many parts of India and the Indian sub-continent but in all Bengali pockets all over the world. Durga Puja is not merely a religious festival; it is essentially a socio-cultural celebration which also renews amity among people. In early autumn (sharat kaal) the melody in nature infuses people with euphoria, encouraging a splurge in creativity - we write, recite, sing, dance and act. Plays are staged during puja functions in neighbourhoods and music albums are released. Shopping knows no limits - clothes, jewellery, books, home décor even footwear! Creativity is evident in the pandals that are erected within weeks. It is time for the family to get together and share. Recent years have seen the commercialisation of Durga Puja and in spite of all the criticism it brings about traditions getting lost I feel this is also the time to accept the changes that come with time and see things through the eyes of the new generation. Aaratrika is an effort in that direction...merging new trends with the age old traditions.

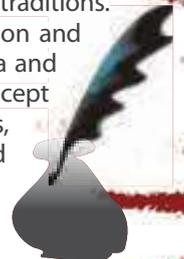
Hindu cosmology is based on the cyclic concept of creation and destruction, the sequence of the four ages - Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas. The return of the Goddess every year is symbolic of this concept where she emerges to redeem the mortals on earth from the darkness, untruth and pain. Cheering the spontaneous outburst of goodwill and gaiety, celebrating women's power as we celebrate Durga Puja - our annual festival dedicated to the Mother Goddess, the epitome of Shakti (power)!

1800 AD Pahari Drawing
Illustration Courtesy: Sri Sukhen Ganguly



Kumortoli August 2012
Photo Credit: Teerna Bhattacharya

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Greetings from the Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee

মমতা বানার্জী
মমতা বেনার্জী
ممتا بنرجی
Mamata Banerjee



মুখ্যমন্ত্রী, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ
मुख्यमंत्री, पश्चिम बंगाल
مفتیٰ ذکاء بنرجی
CHIEF MINISTER, WEST BENGAL

তারিখ : ২৪.০৯.২০১২

শারদ শুভেচ্ছা

নীল আকাশে সাদা মেঘের ডেলা, কাশফুলের সমারোহ, শিশিরে ভেজা শিউলি - মা দুর্গার আপন বার্তা হয়ে আসে। এবারে সব দুঃখ সৈন্য ভুলে আনন্দ মেতে ওঠার পালা, ধনী, গরিব, জাতি, কৰ্ম, সমস্ত ভেদভেদ ভুলে সবাই মিলে একসাথে উৎসবের আত্মনায় মিলিত হওয়ার সময়।

নিকষ কালো অন্ধকার রাত্রির অবসানের পর আলোকের কণাধারায় অভিসিঞ্চিত হয়ে যা কিছু সুন্দর, যা কিছু ভালো, যা কিছু শুভ তার অগ্রাহনের মতোই চিনারী দেবীর মূর্ত্তী রূপে আপনদের সামাজিক জাৎপর্ষ নিহিত।

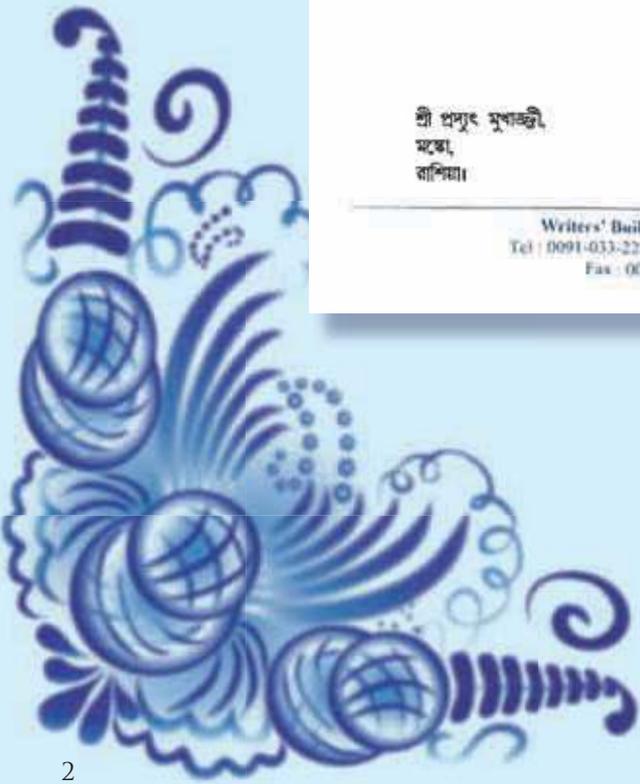
মা দুর্গার পদমূলধন্য স্বাংনার মাটি ধনধান্যে ভরে উঠুক, দশভুজার আশীর্ষমে প্রতিটি ঘরে আশার আলো সঞ্চারিত হোক, তুখন আনন্দধারায় সিক্ত হয়ে উঠুক - এই শুভকামনা রইল।

আপনদের শারদসংস্বের আয়োজন সফল হোক। পূজা ভালো কটুক, সকলে শরৎ-হেমন্তের কাশফুলের গৌরবে মেতে উঠুক। সবাইকে জানাই শারদীয়ার প্রীতি, ভালোবাসা ও শিউলি শুভেচ্ছা।

(মমতা বানার্জী)

শ্রী প্রদ্যুম্ন মুখার্জী,
মহো,
রাশিয়া।

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Editor's Note...



The history of festivals is as old as the history of the human society. Malinowski – the famous anthropologist, while studying Totem worship in different ethnic communities remarked that the worship of Totem was the worship of society, meaning thereby that collective worship and festivals served an essential purpose of keeping the society together and strengthening bonds between members of a society.

Festivals of course are of many kinds and meet specific needs of communities and societies, in addition to providing people a source of recreation and expression. Needless to say, festivals also have a strong economic dimension because more often than not, festivals are associated with a lot of economic activity, mainly buying and selling. Of course festivals are also associated with a lot feasting and are times of joy, of celebration, of meeting family and friends.

Festive events have a strong relationship with religion and religious beliefs and serve to bring together people of a particular religion and reinforce spiritual beliefs and values. While major religions of the world have their respective festivals, which are often celebrated world-wide, there are countless other minor (in terms of numerical strength of the followers) religions, with their own festivals which are celebrated at the local level.

However not all festivals are religious in nature. National festivals like Independence Day and Republic day festivals serve to bring people together on the basis of nationality and citizenship and create a sense of patriotism and nation building. Other modern festivals focus on art, aesthetics and culture and include film festival, sports festival (say the Olympics), youth festival, dance and music festival, theatre festival etc. You even have food festivals for example in India there is an annual Mango festival in which more than 200 varieties of mangoes are displayed!

Most interestingly, even religious festivals have begun to lose their insular nature and have begun to become more inclusive. For example in Indian and Bangladesh it is common for Hindus to join their Muslim neighbours during Iftaar feasts and Eid, just as it is common to see Muslims participate in festivals like Durga Puja or Diwali. Festivals like Christmas is now celebrated many non-Christians.

While religious festivals continue to have their spiritual and ritual significance, by bringing people together and closer these are increasingly becoming “social festivals” or the “worship of the society” as Malinowski had observed long time back.

The Durga Puja in Moscow is a very good example of the inclusiveness of festivals. It now includes all Indians and even many Russians and not just Bengalis living in Moscow. Many Indian and foreign expatriates who have been living in Russia for decades now, eagerly look forward to the Durga Puja every year.

With Aaratrika gradually attaining a global reach, in this issue, in celebration of the human spirit and society, we bring to you the voices from the five continents of the world on festivals that are celebrated in the respective continents. It reflects the diversity, beauty and vibrancy of festivals that are celebrated by people across the world.

In conversation with H.E. Ajai Malhotra, Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation



His Excellency Ajai Malhotra joined as an Ambassador Plenipotentiary of India to the Russian Federation in May 2011. A graduate from Delhi School of Economics, he joined Indian Foreign Ministry in 1977. During this tenure he was posted in countries like Kenya, Russia, Switzerland and USA. He was also Ambassador to Romania, Republic of Albania and Republic of Moldova. In New Delhi, India, His Excellency served in The Ministry of External Affairs as Deputy Secretary/Director in its UN Division as well as Director/Joint Secretary.

His Excellency is an avid ephemera collector which is evident in his enviable collection of rare postcards and photographs of the Indian Army in World War I, especially in Europe. He is a knowledgeable philatelist. During his leisure, he occasionally takes to his painting brushes. He is married and has a daughter and a son.

Ambassador with wife Srimati Ira Malhotra,
Gandhi Jayanti at Indian Embassy Moscow 2012





Ambassador felicitating World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand at a function at Indian Embassy Moscow on 31.05.12



Ambassador and Viswanathan Anand playing a chess move each



Independence Day 2012



Ambassador with the youngest guest, Gandhi Jayanti 2012

Aaratrika: Do you think that our festivals are becoming more secular day by day?

Ambassador: Festivals in India bring people together. Indians may follow different religions, but the celebration of our festivals embraces everyone. Beginning with the exchange of greetings to the actual festivity through song, dance, music and festive cuisine, it is a shared activity, irrespective of one's religious belief.

Indeed, the truly great religions of the world stress the equality and brotherhood of mankind and the virtue of tolerance. They seek to bring people together rather than divide them. In fact, festivity knows no religion; if anything it unites. While ceremonies and rituals of a religious community may be performed only by its members, the festivities are joined in by everyone. All our communities participate with joy and abandon in the celebration of the several India festivals that have religious significance. Some of our festivals even constitute an integral part of our distinctive identity as Indians. All this also serves to validate in practice the secular ideals enshrined in our constitution and enhances our common cultural heritage.

Many of our festivals have a pan-Indian character. The overwhelming sense of goodwill and camaraderie that pervades India during such festivals defies description and is worth experiencing. It reinforces the unity in diversity that is a hallmark of our way of life. Our festivals pull India together and invigorate the spirit of solidarity that binds all Indians.

Aaratrika: Would you like to comment on any particular festival in our country, the way it is celebrated and how festivals/cultural events significantly contribute in binding people of different nationalities, religion and from varied backdrop in India and more so in a foreign land?

Ambassador: In cultural terms India is amongst the richest countries in the world. Our cultural legacy also teaches us to appreciate and celebrate the simple joys of life. We are a land where hardly a day goes by without a significant festive celebration. As a result of globalization and the spread of the Indian diaspora across the world, India is also being increasingly showcased through the observance of our festivals abroad. These festive celebrations also serve as a backdrop for the projection of Indian art, literature, cinema, music and dance forms. Outside India, all this harmoniously brings together people of various nationalities, reminiscent of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. This welcome trend is of relevance today in a world that often witnesses intolerance, xenophobia, and violence.

One of my favourite festivals is Holi, the popular and inclusive festival of colours that is celebrated across India with great gusto and enthusiasm by all segments of our rich and diverse society. It also marks the advent of spring and is an occasion for much joy and gaiety, with children and grown-ups alike playing Holi with colours and squirt guns, dancing to traditional Holi songs and music, enjoying festive vegetarian dishes traditionally prepared for Holi. What nicer way to enjoy a day together! I also find it very heartening that there is now quite a celebration of Holi that takes place in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and several other Russian cities.

Aaratrika: Your wishes to the readers of Aaratrika on the occasion of their 23rd celebration and "Durga Puja".

Ambassador: It is good that "Aaratrika", Moscow's annual Indian festive magazine, seeks to promote interest within Russia in various aspects of Indian culture, while keeping our community abreast of new activities, developments and trends. My felicitations to "Aaratrika" as it celebrates its 23rd anniversary and best wishes for good health, happiness and prosperity on Durga Puja to all its readers! May Durga Mata fulfill your dreams and bring happiness into your lives!



Photo Credit: Embassy of India in Moscow, Nitin Aurangbadakar

As told to Aaratrika on 4th October 2012

Pozdraveniye to Indians in Russia from Russian in India



H.E. Alexander Kadakin

H.E. Alexander M. Kadakin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of India joined the Russian Diplomatic Services in 1972. Since then, he has held many key positions, acting as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Nepal from 1993-1997, to India from 1999-2004, to Sweden from 2005-2009, and to India once again from 2009 till date. He accompanied Russian leaders like Leonid Brezhnev, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin on a number of official visits abroad including India, the USA, and Britain, as consultant. He participated in the work of Soviet delegations at five sessions of the UN General Assembly as an expert. He has also authored and translated several books from English and Hindi, and has published over 50 articles in scientific journals and press in Russia and India.



*Ambassador of the Russian Federation
to the Republic of India.*

New Delhi, October 2, 2012

Dear Readers of Aaratrika,

Dear Friends,

My cordial greetings to all the participants and conveners of the 23rd Durga Puja Festival in Moscow. Such initiatives aimed at maintaining traditional values truly deserve wholehearted support. It is a tribute to the ancient tradition and yet another manifestation of India's rich spirituality. It is heartening that national heritage is cherished by people staying away from home.

It is important that free India upholds its traditional spirituality, the doctrine of social unity in devotion that Durga Puja, one of the greatest religious festivals of India, so vividly epitomizes. While preserving the unique cultural identity of India, it is not less important to allow your neighbours and friends to be part of this celebrating of spiritual enlightenment. It is vital to spread the Vivekananda-preached principle of *Sarva Dharma Sambhava*, the all-embracing and all-welcoming essence of Indian philosophy which remains relevant today.

I sincerely thank the Moscow Durga Puja organizers and wish all of you best of health, prosperity and every success in upholding the eternal spiritual values. Have a nice celebration!

Yours sincerely,

A. M. Kadakin

Alexander M. Kadakin





H.E. Dr. Hoque

Aaratrika: What are the major festivals of your country?

Ambassador: Bangladesh is a multi religious country of over 1.5 billion people consisting of Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and Animists, majority being Muslims. Bangladesh has myriads of colorful festivals specific to every nook and corner of the country, especially Chittagong hill tracts, Maymensingh, Sylhet and Rajshahi divisions.

Like the popular Bengali saying which means that we people of Bengal have thirteen festivals in twelve months, Bangladesh is no exception. Many of these festivals are religious while at the same time being secular and rooted deeply in the Bengali culture, tradition and aesthetic sensibility.

The grandest festival in Bangladesh is Eid-ul-Fitr. It is a moment of joy and celebration for everyone! Followed by this is Durga Puja when the entire country comes together to welcome the Goddess with equal zeal. Her clay idols are worshipped across hundreds of pandals and temples during this time and the entire nation bathes in this ecstatic mood of



joyous celebration.

The birth of Lord Krishna is another festival which the Bangladeshis look forward to every year. To mark this, various kinds of devotional music sessions (traditionally called Keertans) are organized across the nation which tells the stories of Lord Krishna!

Towards the end of the year, 'Boro Din' (Christmas) is another festival which brings in a lot of colour and festivity amongst Bangladeshis. All the churches across the nation are lit up in bright lights and beautifully adorned Christmas Trees and the entire nation is heard crooning beautiful carols to welcome Lord Jesus to this World.

Bouddha Purnima, the festival that marks the birth of Lord Buddha is celebrated in many parts of the country with as much enthusiasm. Celebration includes prayer meetings where all of Lord Buddha's devotees gather in unison and seek his blessings.

In the Chittagong hill tracts, minority ethnic groups have numerous festivals associated with the cycle of nature. This is marked by joyous dancing, music, fairs and partaking in rice and fruit beer. Almost everyone, irrespective of their religion rejoice in the festivities. Hence these religious festivals are also gaining a strong social and cultural element to them.

Aaratrika: How does Bangladesh celebrate its secular festivals?

Ambassador: In addition to the religious festivals mentioned earlier, Bangladesh also celebrates key national and international festivals like Independence Day, International Women's Day and very importantly International Mother Language Day. 26th March, the Independence of Bangladesh is the biggest State Festival.

Festivals of Madagascar

The Festivals in Madagascar are fine examples of the rich tradition and diverse culture of the country. The country is known for its diverse culture and rich tradition which has led to the growth of various Festivals in Madagascar. A lot of fanfare along with a wide variety of musical and dance performances takes place during the Madagascar festivals. Hira Gasy is a unique festival of Madagascar. It is the traditional form of the Malagasy Festival and is celebrated with huge enjoyment. It is an ancient festival and dates back to the reign of the ancient dynasties. The festival is a type of thanksgiving to the king who had saved the inhabitants from the famine and other natural calamities. Apart from this, the celebrations and festivals that give travellers and tourists a taste of the local culture are Alahamady Be - the Malagasy New Year celebrated in March. The Donia is the traditional music festival held on Nosy Be in the months of May or June. Other festivals include the Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter and the ethnic festivals of Fisemana and Famadihana. The former is a ritual purification ceremony practised by the Antakarana people in June and the latter is the traditional 'turning of the bones' burial ceremony

Embassy of Madagascar in Moscow



takes place from June to September. The Gasytsara is a contemporary music festival held in the capital Antananarivo and is a popular tourist attraction. Apart from these, there are also more popular festivals that are held in the country like The Fitampoha and Tsagantsaina festivals. Local people as well as foreign tourists enjoy in these festivals.

Randriamihaja Joseph, Economic Counselor of the Embassy of Madagascar in Moscow

The Embassy of Madagascar wishes all Indians a very happy festival of Durga Puja.

Greetings from Dhaka H.E. Dr. S.M. Saiful Hoque, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Russian Federation

In addition to this, two other days are observed in Bangladesh in large scale. 21st February is observed throughout the country to pay respect and homage to the martyrs of the Language movement of 1952. On this day, a Book Fair is also organized which is getting bigger and grander by the year. However, by far the most spectacular of the secular and cultural festivals in Bangladesh is the Pohela Boishakh celebrations on the first day of the Bengali New Year falling on the 14th of April.

Apart from these, the celebration of the birthday of the mystic Lalon Shah, National Poet Nazrul Islam and Bengali Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore find equal prominence. Interestingly these celebrations often extend for three to four days at a stretch and are held in every city and town.

Bangladesh is truly the place where we celebrate thirteen, if not more, festivals in twelve months!

I would like to wish readers of Aaratrika season's greetings and a joyous and blessed Durga Puja.



H.E. Dr. Hoque with Swami Jyotirupananda in Puja 2011



In Conversation with Mr. Loi Martin Bakani, Governor, Bank of Papua New Guinea



Mr. Loi Martin Bakani, Governor, Bank of PNG

What are the main festivals in your country?

Papua New Guinea has a very diverse culture. There are over 1000 cultural groups and they all have their own festivals, traditions, customs which are practiced up to now. There are two festivals that I would like to mention, the Kundo & Canoe Festival celebrated in Alotau, in November and the Tumbuan Mask Festival held in Rabaul in July.

Canoes and the Kundo drums are of great traditional significance for the people of Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea. They are made from special wood, following strict customs. The National Canoe and Kundo Festival were first held in Milne Bay in 2003. The canoes that are used in the festival are ones designed by their ancestors many years back. The designs and colours reflect the tribe the canoe represents. In the recent years, the celebration has not been limited to Milne Bay. It attracts people from all over Papua New Guinea. There is a variety of performances and prizes to be won by the best performers.

The Tumbuan Mask Festival was introduced in 1995. Mask cultures are found in the New Guinea Islands, the Momase Region and Gulf Province and the masks for every region are very different. Apart from these, Papua New Guinea also celebrates the Hiri Moale festival and cultural shows in Mt. Hagen, Goroka, Morobe, Enga.

How does Papua New Guinea celebrate its secular festivals like Independence day/ Republic day/ New year?

The secular festivals like Independence

Mr. Loi Martin Bakani received his Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Wollongong, Australia in 1994 and commenced employment with the Bank of Papua New Guinea in 1985. In December 2009, the National Executive Council appointed Mr. Bakani as the Governor and Chairman of the Bank of PNG Board.

Mr. Bakani has been in the forefront of restructuring of the Bank's management and operational departments. He designed a new strategic plan for 2012-2015. He has also been instrumental in the development and implementation of "Financial Inclusion" agenda which includes the reform to the National Payments systems, expansion of microfinance services, rollout of mobile phone banking services, implementation of financial literacy and education.

Mr. Loi M. Bakani comes from Kulungi village in West New Britain Province. He is married with 3 children and 1 grandchild. He is a keen Australian Rules football player and is the current President of Dockers Aussie Rules Club in Port Moresby. He also enjoys watching rugby, sightseeing, traveling and meeting new people.

Day are celebrated across the country in a big way. For some provinces this is the major festival and can often stretch to week long celebrations. Celebrations include gospel reading, traditional song and dance, selling of local artefacts.

Each province also celebrates its provincial day. People gather together to celebrate as a community. There are traditional dances, sing sing and display of local culture. There are dance competitions and people would compete for prizes under different categories.

The songs and dances have historical value. The performers sing of their roots, where they belong to, the lives of their ancestors, how they hunt, how they do agriculture. The song relates to the traditions of those tribes.

Are your festivals becoming more secular day by day?

Earlier, the provincial festivals were limited to the respective provinces only, but now people travel from across the country to attend the festivals. People come to participate in competitions that are held during these events.

As in many other countries, the festivals have become more commercial over time. In our childhood, we have seen people coming from different villages carrying their own food, artefacts etc. The organisers of the event would provide some refreshments, but the things people brought along with them were shared with people from other villages. But now, every thing is on sale, there is hardly any sharing for free or exchange. The dance forms, the costumes, the musical instruments used are no longer fully traditional. Western influence can be seen in them. It is indeed a challenge for us to retain our traditions.

Papua New Guineans and friends of

PNG, who live outside PNG, also celebrate the same festivals. In the Solomon Islands, the people invite traditional groups and bands from Papua New Guinea to perform. There is praise and worship and programmes organised by the church.

In Australia people get together in different cities like Canberra and Brisbane and the Papua New Guineans representatives themselves perform different cultural activities.

What are your wishes to the readers of Aaratrika on the occasion of their 23rd celebration?

I would say, come to PNG and see for yourself. Plan your visit with any of the major festivals. This country is a mystery land to many. But many expatriate come and have lived on for years in Papua New Guinea. They participate in the festivals just as locals. A very common example is their participation in the Hiri Moale festival celebrated on the Ela Beach in Port Moresby.

Come and discover the wealth we have ... the exotic tourist destinations, age old traditions. We also offer immense business opportunities as we are a resourceful country with huge reserves of gold, copper, oil, gas. In addition we have one of the world's best coffee, a wide variety in agriculture, oil palm etc. Presently, the USD 15 billion PNG Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project is being implemented by a consortium of international and domestic investors led by Exxon Mobil. It is expected to nearly double PNG's current annual GDP.



The Spanish Shooting Star



Ignacio Burgos

Ignacio Burgos: Painter and photographer from Spain, 'Retrospective 1993-2011' was his first exhibition in Russia held in December 2011 at Moscow Museum of Modern Art. Aaratrika was invited for a tete-a-tete.

Is this your first exhibition in Moscow? Please tell us about your Russia experience.

In Moscow, people liked and understood my work. I am inspired by the works of Russian painters at Tretyakov Art Gallery and at museums in St. Petersburg. My next works will be influenced by my Russia experience. During my trips to Russia I have been taking many photographs from which I will create my Russia series. Those will be mostly oil paintings which I will be working on next year in my studio in Asturias, northern Spain.

You mentioned that you have lived in Jaipur, please tell us what aspects of India attract you.

I travelled to India twice, visiting Delhi, Udaipur, and some more places in Rajasthan. I was the guest of Maharaja of Udaipur. I took many photos and did many sketches. India changed my life, it was overwhelming particularly Holi. I have realized that India is a nation with a history and culture so complex, so varied, that I cannot possibly describe it at all, either in words or on the canvas, on the basis of a brief stay. This is one country that demands to be explored and embraced completely before you can begin to depict it artistically.



Greetings from the United States of America



Senator Rains at inaugural ceremony of IBC2012

Omer L. Rains is one of the leading environmentalists in the California Legislature, who has been elected thrice to serve in the California Senate. He has helped in facilitating legislation encouraging the development and use of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, biomass conversion, cogeneration, and developing ocean technologies. He has also played a crucial role in preventing the illegal exports of California's native plants, and in preventing Strip Mining in the National and State Forests. He is a part of the civil rights movements as well, and has served as the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Committee on Legal Equality, one of the earliest organizations in America to fight inequality on the basis of gender. He was a part of many of the key projects of President Jimmy Carter, has acted as an advisor to the South African Constitutional Revision Commission at the request of Nelson Mandela, and has provided humanitarian services in many lesser developed nations like India and Nepal, for which he has received the Summit Society's Annapurna Award.



IBC2012 at Ullon

Recently Aaratrika met Senator Rains at the International Brotherhood Conference (IBC-2012) organized by VSSU*. Excerpts from his interview.

Aaratrika: What is the significance of IBC 2012?

Senator Rains: We want to hold up before the world the significance of the Sundarbans as one of the unique biological reserves of the world. It is home to such magnificent species as the Royal Bengal Tiger and the salt water crocodile, among others. It also has the distinction of being the largest Mangrove forest in the world. We would like more people to know about it and to ensure that eco-tourism in the Sundarbans increases, which shall ensure employment for the locals, thereby bettering the infrastructure. But of course, all of this has to be done in harmony with nature. That is our aim: to make the Sundarbans a tourist attraction while helping it to achieve complete ecological balance. It has been declared a heritage preserve by none other than the UNESCO, so it should be maintained properly.

VSSU is an excellent example of the huge difference that one man can make. We want everybody to derive inspiration from this institution, and to play a part, regardless of religion or caste or class or any such thing, to contribute, in whatever manner possible, in making the world a better place.

Aaratrika: Are festivals becoming more secular these days?

Senator Rains: I would have to say that yes, they are, indeed. For instance, Christmas in America is no longer an exclusively Christian festival; Jews, Hindus, Muslims and the followers of other religions also take part in the celebrations. The more secular a festival becomes, the richer is the experience of celebrating it.

Aaratrika: Would you like to speak about any particular festival you enjoy?

Senator Rains: Thanksgiving is a very unique festival in my opinion. No matter how far away friends and relatives are from each other, on this day, they travel long distances to be together. And as I said, it is not just Christians who celebrate it. People from the other communities are also a part of it all. This is how festivals should be held: not by excluding but by including others. "The power of one" is the message I would like to convey to the readers of Aaratrika this year. If you have a good idea, a noble plan, go ahead with it, regardless of whether you receive any support at first.

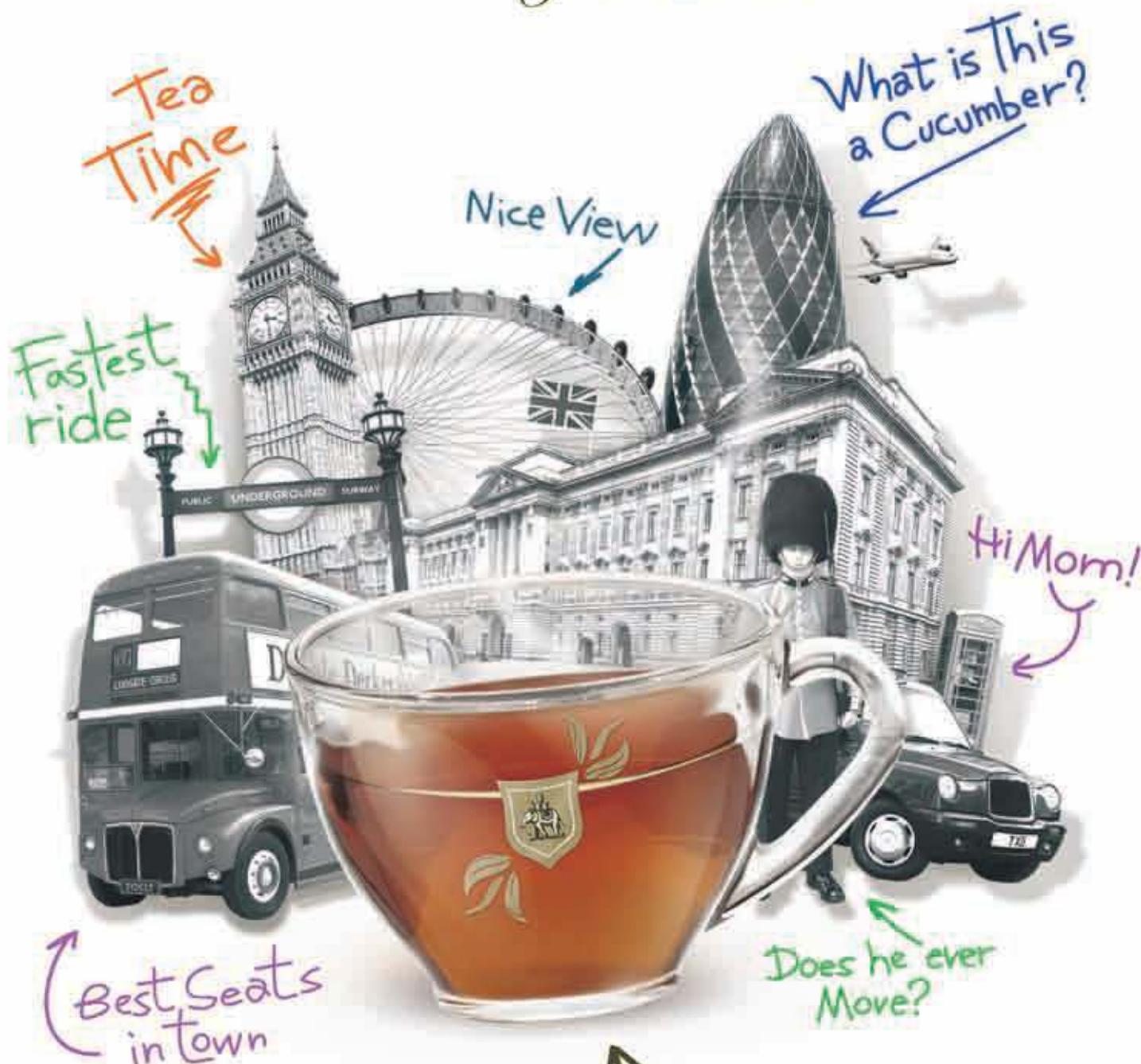


From left: Debasmita Moulick, Kapilananda Mondal CEO VSSU, Senator Rains

*Vivekananda Sevakendra-O- Sishu Uddyan (VSSU) operating in South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal near the Sundarban area supports development of local community in a self sustainable manner through Microfinance project & various community development programmes. To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, VSSU organized IBC-2012 from 27th September to 2nd October 2012. The objective was to enhance humanity awakening, solidarity, brotherhood, peace, communal harmony and youth leadership through the teaching of Swami Vivekananda.

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Tribute to Living Legend Sri Sunil Gangopadhyay



Editor's Note Aaratrika is delighted to share with its readers, an overview of the major works of this Bengali author. We hope Sunil Da, as many of us fondly address him will continue to present his readers with more works in the future, which shall hopefully be translated into English and other languages, so that they get the wider readership they deserve.

Wishing the readers of Aaratrika a successful celebration and I am certain that the Russians will find our festival interesting.

শ্রী সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়

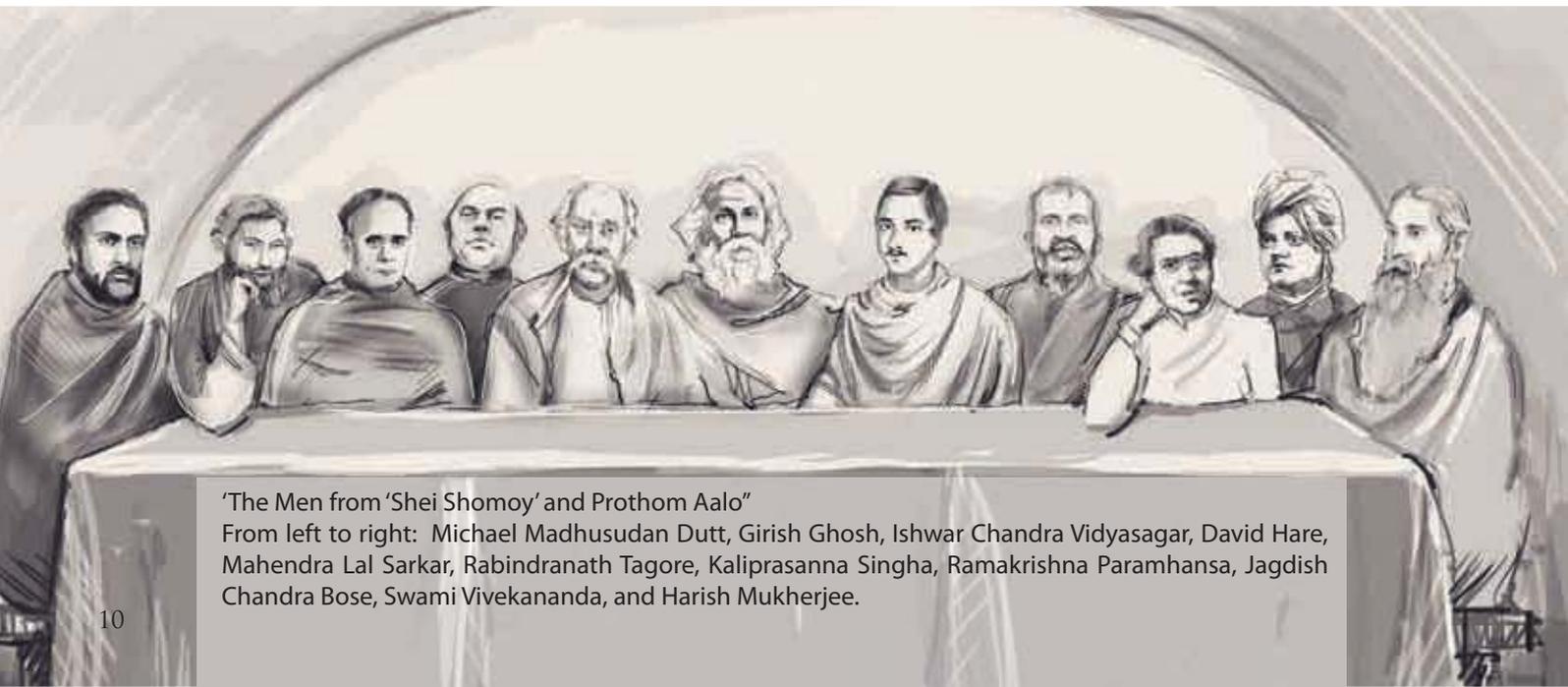


Sunil Gangopadhyay
Photo credit: Sayan Kumar De

Sunil Gangopadhyay is an Indian poet and novelist, founder editor of *Krittibas*, a poetry magazine founded in 1953 that became a platform for a new generation of poets experimenting with many new forms in poetic themes, rhythms, and words. Later, he began working with Ananda Bazar group, a major publishing house in Kolkata. Author of well over 200 books, Sunil is a prolific writer who has excelled in different genres but declares poetry to be his first love. The author had summed up his insights and experiences about Russia in his travelogue «Russia Brohmon».



Some authors can be labelled according to the kind of books they write, for the majority of their works fall within a particular genre, or deal with similar topics and themes. Raymond Chandler, for instance, can quite justifiably be called a writer of detective stories, and Jhumpa Lahiri a chronicler of NRI experiences. Sunil Gangopadhyay is not one of these authors. Even a cursory glance at the most well-known of his works reveals an astonishing variety in terms of subject and style. His first novel, *Atmaprakash*, published in 1966, hinted at the arrival of an Indian counterpart of the Beat authors in America. Like those authors, Gangopadhyay wrote, in his debut work, about the wild escapades and reckless merrymaking he and his friends indulged in, and he describes it all with a candour and cheerful irreverence that indeed reminds us of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg (who, in fact, was a good friend of Gangopadhyay, and mentioned him in the poem *September on Jessore Road*). But his other works would effectively put a stop to any attempt to categorize him as a Beat. *Pratidwandi*, like *Atmaprakash*, is about the experiences of a young man in Calcutta. But this young man, Siddhartha, has less in common with Dean Moriarty than with John Osborne's Jimmy Porter. In other words, Siddhartha and his story is characterized not so much by mirth and countercultural tendencies, but by the kind of raw anger and brooding that the youth in the turbulent 1970s (which serves as the setting of the novel) were prone to. Other works of Gangopadhyay are even more different. There's *Aranyer Din Ratri*, a mix of picaresque quirks, burlesque excesses and romance; *Jibon Je Rokom*, another romance that's far more genteel and tender; *Arjun*, which depicts the titular character's struggle to cope with the difficulties caused by the partition of the country; and *Eka Ebong Koyekjon*, a historical novel that traces, through the lives of two cousins named Badal and Surja, the upheavals in Bengal and the rest of India from the early twentieth century to the independence. And it is the art of writing historical fiction that Gangopadhyay would take to the zenith with his two most acclaimed books, *Shei Shomoy* and *Prothom Aalo*. Set during the Bengal Renaissance of the nineteenth century, these are two highly ambitious and relentlessly engaging accounts of the lives of the key figures of the Renaissance. Luminaries like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, David Hare, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Rabindranath Tagore—among others—have been brought to life with immense credibility: they come across as the great men they were, but register as flesh-and-blood human beings rather than marble statues to genuflect before.



'The Men from 'Shei Shomoy' and Prothom Aalo'

From left to right: Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Girish Ghosh, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, David Hare, Mahendra Lal Sarkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Kaliprasanna Singha, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Swami Vivekananda, and Harish Mukherjee.

Gangopadhyay has also penned some exquisite short stories. Two of them, we believe, deserve a mention. Shah Jahan o tar Nijoshyo Bahini employs whimsy and pathos to tell the story of Haju, a simple, harmless man who is regarded by all and sundry as a hopeless lazybones, but who possesses a childlike sense of wonder and a consummate goodness of nature that make him unique. Few short stories in Bengali have so unusual a protagonist. And Puri Express-er Rokkhita is just as unusual, revolves as it does around the inhabitants of a railway station, and in particular around a mad woman whose past and whose reasons for staying in that station is a mystery. Gangopadhyay's poems, especially those featuring Neera, an imaginary embodiment of ethereal womanhood, as well as his many essays and travelogues, have further consolidated his position as one of the most important contemporary authors in India. His works aimed at younger readers have contributed to his popularity too. These works feature his famous creation, Raja Roychowdhury aka Kakababu, the first character in Bengali popular literature who is a cripple: an accident in Afghanistan had damaged one of his legs, leaving him reliant on crutches. Yet, undeterred by this handicap, Kakababu routinely embarks on dangerous, challenging missions, accompanied by his nephew Shontu. Bhoyonkor Shundor and Sobuj Dweeper Raja are among the well-known Kakababu tales.

Today, even as he is nearing eighty, Gangopadhyay remains a prolific writer. We, his admirers, wish that he remains so, always.

Дань уважения

На некоторых авторов легко вешать ярлыки, в зависимости от того, что они пишут: Большинство их работ относятся к определенному жанру или освещают похожие темы и вопросы. Например, Реймонда Чандлера можно вполне обоснованно причислить к авторам детективов. Джумпа Лахири, как известно, повествует о жизни индийских эмигрантов вдали от родины. Сунил Гангопадхьяй — писатель другого рода. Широкий диапазон затрагиваемых им вопросов и удивительное разнообразие стилей становятся очевидными, даже если бросить беглый взгляд на его основные труды. Публикация первого романа писателя под названием «Atmaprakash» в 1966 г. ознаменовала собой появление индийского соратника у американских авторов бит-поколения. В своей дебютной работе он так же, как и его коллеги из США, описывает безрассудные авантюры и безудержное веселье, которому предавался вместе со своими друзьями. Откровенность и живой нонконформистский стиль изложения напоминают читателю работы Джека Керуака и Аллена Гинзберга (который был близким другом Сунилы Гангопадхьяй и упомянул о нем в своем стихотворении «September on Jessore Road»). Но другие произведения писателя поставят крест на попытках отнести его к категории авторов бит-поколения. Роман «Pratidwandī», как и «Atmaprakash», повествует о приключениях молодого человека в Калькутте. Но у этого юноши - Сиддхартхи — больше общего с Джимми Портером Джона Осборна, нежели с Дином Мориарти. Иными словами, образ Сиддхартхи и история его жизни характеризуются не столько отчаянным весельем и андеграундными тенденциями, сколько своего рода озлобленностью и грустными размышлениями, к которым было склонно молодое поколение смутных 1970-х гг. (когда и происходит действие романа). Другие работы Сунилы Гангопадхьяй отличаются еще сильнее: «Aranyer Din Ratri» — смесь элементов плутовского романа, бурлескных излишеств и истории любви; «Jibon Je Rokom» — еще одна история любви, но гораздо более изысканная и нежная; «Arjun», где описывается, как главный герой борется с трудностями, возникающими в связи с разделением страны; «Eka Ebong Koyekjon» — исторический роман, в котором на примере судьбы двоюродных брата и сестры Бадала и Сури описываются перемены, произошедшие в Бенгалии и в целом в Индии с начала XX в. до обретения страной независимости. Мастерство создания исторической художественной литературы Сунилы Гангопадхьяй достигло своего пика в двух пользующихся всеобщим признанием книгах — «Shei Shomoy» и «Prothom Aalo». В романах, действие которых происходит в период Бенгальского Ренессанса XIX в., в крайне захватывающей манере описывается жизнь ключевых фигур эпохи. Такие известные деятели, как Ишвар Чандра Видьясагар, Давид Харе, Рамакришна Парамахамса, Рабиндранат Тагор описаны удивительно правдоподобно: несмотря на то, что их величие не отрицается, они предстают перед читателем как живые люди из плоти и крови, а не мраморные изваяния, которым следует поклоняться.

Перу Сунилы Гангопадхьяй также принадлежат изысканные рассказы. На наш взгляд, два рассказа автора заслуживают упоминания. В произведении «Shah Jahan o tar Nijoshyo Bahini» в причудливой манере и с чувством сострадания рассказывается история простого безобидного человека, которого окружающие воспринимают как безнадежного лентяя, но который, в то же время, уникален в силу детской способности видеть чудо и необыкновенно доброй души. Немногие написанные на бенгальском языке рассказы могут похвастаться таким необычным главным героем. Рассказ «Puri Express-er Rokkhita» тоже особенный. Его действие разворачивается вокруг жителей железнодорожной станции, в центре внимания находится сумасшедшая, прошлое которой окутано тайной, и цель ее пребывания на станции также остается загадкой. Стихи, написанные Сунилом Гангопадхьяй, в особенности те, что посвящены Неере — символическому воплощению легкой, неземной женственности, а также многочисленные эссе и травелоги способствовали укреплению его позиции как одного из важнейших современных писателей Индии. Росту его популярности также содействовали работы, предназначенные для юных читателей. В этих произведениях фигурирует выдуманный персонаж — Раджа Ройчоудхури ака Какабабу. Впервые в бенгальской популярной литературе появился хромым персонаж: в Афганистане герой попал в аварию и повредил ногу, в результате ему приходится опираться на костыли. Несмотря на это обстоятельство, Какабабу, в сопровождении своего племянника Шонту, то и дело берется за решение полных опасности, нетривиальных задач. К широко известным сказкам этого цикла, среди прочих, относятся «Bhoyonkor Shundor» и «Sobuj Dweeper Raja».

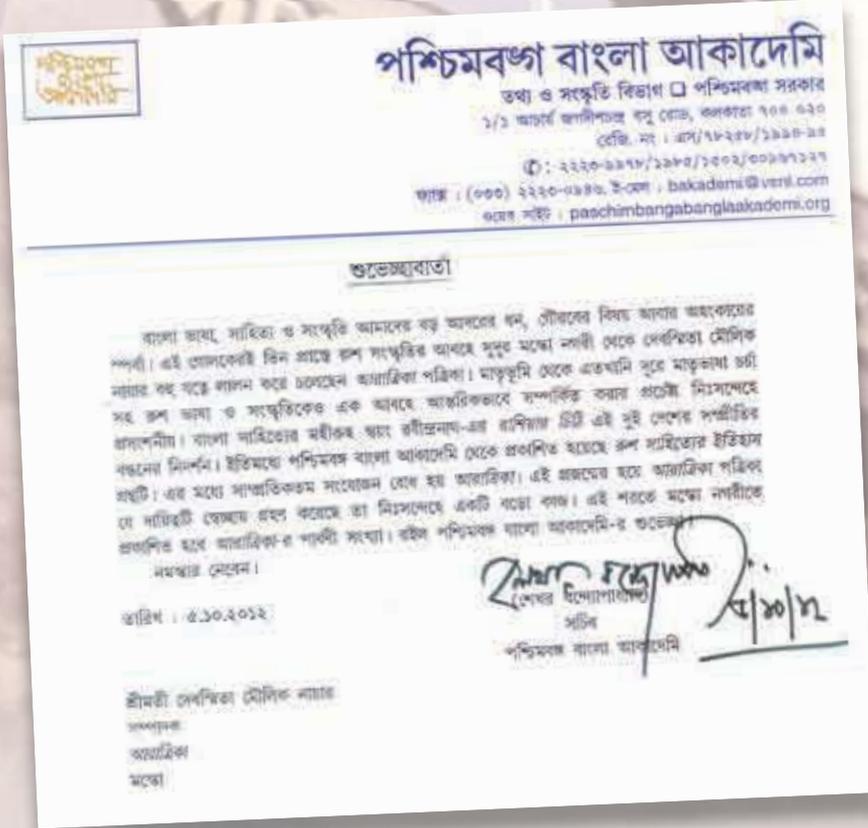
Несмотря на то, что возраст Сунилы Гангопадхьяй приближается к восьмидесяти, он остается плодотворным писателем. Мы, поклонники его творчества, надеемся, что так будет всегда.

Перевод Елены Рябовой
Translated by Elena Ryabova



Illustration artist Darya Prokudina Born in 1988 in Tambov city, 480 kms south of Moscow, Russia. At present lives in Moscow, engaged as a web-designer, draws portraits and illustrations. Loves to travel.

Greetings from Paschimbanga Bangla Akademi



Sekhar Banerjee, Secretary-in-Charge at 'Remembering Kazuo Azuma', Rabindra-Okakura Bhavan 30.08.2012

Bangla Academy of West Bengal Information and Cultural Ministry The Bengali language, literature and culture are our prized possessions. They are something which we justifiably, unashamedly take pride in and boast about. The Bengali publication 'Aaratrika', edited and managed by Debasmitta Moulick-Nair in the faraway Russian capital of Moscow, is a beacon of our culture in a land that's located in another corner of the globe. This endeavour to familiarize the Russian readers to her mother tongue and thus build a bridge between us and them is undoubtedly praiseworthy. Rabintranath Tagore, the titan of Bengali literature, wrote a series of think pieces on the USSR when he visited it, and they were published under the

title Letters from Russia. They reflect the cordial relation that India has always shared with the Russians. The Bangla Academy of West Bengal has published a book on the history of Russian literature, and 'Aaratrika' has been marked out in it as the latest noteworthy publication to have come out of Russia. The responsibility that 'Aaratrika' has taken up on the behalf of this generation to ensure that writings in Bengali keep appearing and thriving is laudatory indeed. This Durga Puja shall witness the publication of a new issue of 'Aaratrika'. We wish the 'Aaratrika' team all the best.

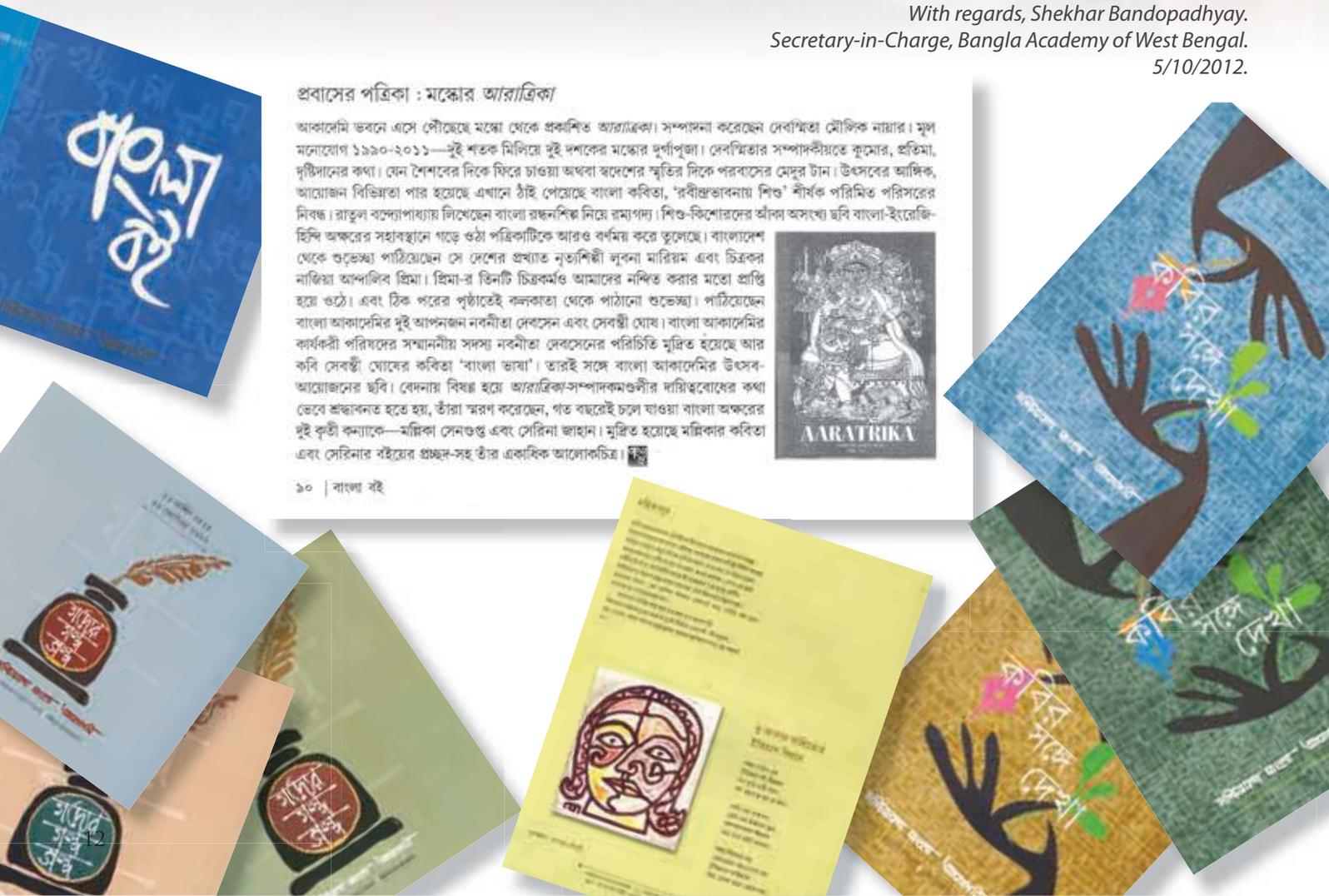
With regards, Shekhar Bandopadhyay, Secretary-in-Charge, Bangla Academy of West Bengal. 5/10/2012.

প্রবাসের পত্রিকা : মস্কোর আরাত্রিকা

আকাডেমি ভবনে এসে পৌঁছেছে মস্কো থেকে প্রকাশিত *আরাত্রিকা*। সম্পাদনা করেছেন দেবশ্রীতা মৌলিক নায়ার। মূল মনোযোগ ১৯৯০-২০১১—দুই শতক মিলিয়ে দুই দশকের মস্কোর দুর্গাপূজা। দেবশ্রীতার সম্পাদকীয়তে কুমোর, হুতিমা, দুষ্টিদানের কথা। যেন শৈশবের দিকে ফিরে চাওয়া অথবা স্বদেশের স্মৃতির দিকে পরবাসের মেদুর টান। উৎসবের আদিক, আয়োজন বিভ্রামতা পার হয়েছে এখানে ঠাই পেয়েছে বাংলা কবিতা, 'রবীন্দ্রভাবনায় শিশু' শীর্ষক পরিমিত পরিসরের নিবন্ধ। রাতুল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় লিখেছেন বাংলা রচনশৈলি নিয়ে রমাগণ্য। শিশু-কিশোরদের আনন্দ অসংখ্য ছবি বাংলা-ইংরেজি-হিন্দি অক্ষরের সহাবস্থানে গড়ে ওঠা পত্রিকাটিকে আরও বর্ণনীয় করে তুলেছে। বাংলাদেশ থেকে শুভেচ্ছা পাঠিয়েছেন সে দেশের প্রখ্যাত নৃত্যশিল্পী লুবনা মারিয়ম এবং চিত্রকর নাভিগ্যা অন্দোলিন গ্রিমা। গ্রিমা-র তিনটি চিত্রকর্মও আমাদের নথিত করার মতো প্রাপ্ত হয়ে ওঠে। এবং ঠিক পরের পৃষ্ঠাতেই কলকাতা থেকে পাঠানো শুভেচ্ছা। পাঠিয়েছেন বাংলা আকাডেমির দুই আপনজন নবনীতা দেবসেন এবং দেবশ্রী মোহা। বাংলা আকাডেমির কার্যকরী পরিষদের সম্মাননীয় সদস্য নবনীতা দেবসেনের পরিচিতি মুদ্রিত হয়েছে আর কবি দেবশ্রী মোহনের কবিতা 'বাংলা ভাষা'। তারই সঙ্গে বাংলা আকাডেমির উৎসব-আয়োজনের ছবি। বেদনায় বিশ্বর হয়ে *আরাত্রিকা*-সম্পাদকমণ্ডলীর দায়িত্ববোধের কথা ভেবে অকাননত হতে হয়, তাঁরা 'মরণ করেছেন, গত বছরেই চলে যাওয়া বাংলা অক্ষরের দুই কৃতী কন্যা—মলিকা সেনগুপ্ত এবং সেরিনা জাহান। মুদ্রিত হয়েছে মলিকার কবিতা এবং সেরিনার বইয়ের প্রচ্ছদ-সহ তাঁর একমিক আলোকচিত্র।



৯০ | বাংলা বই



Sound of Music

A raga has distinctive features with prominent notes, combinations of notes and timings of the day and season. However, there is no logical explanation as to why a raga is seasonal really or for that matter why certain ragas with the same combination of notes become a morning raga or an evening raga. Seasonal ragas have always been an integral subject in the world of Indian classical music. Spring, Monsoon and many other factors associated with nature have very strong representation in the world of ragas. Personally, I have had some very memorable concerts where I have played the 'Rainy Season Ragas' Mian Ki Malhar, Megh Malhar. I recently I composed my first Malhar Raga, Sawan Malhar. My Guru and father Haafiz Ali Khan Saheb did not believe in a long interpretation of a Raga. He was known for his purity of Ragas and also for his aesthetic sense, preciseness, colour and beauty in his music. He did not believe in too much elaboration and extended improvisation. For him, Raga was a living entity and if tortured by any musician, the Raga too could curse! For my guru an appealing interpretation of a raga of fifteen minutes was a complete raga for no book or shashtra mentions how Indian classical music should be presented being an oral tradition.

In the sixties and seventies, there was a phase in which classical musicians took great pride in playing Ragas for two to three hours nonstop. Frankly, after maybe an hour, it was all repetition. However, due to artists wanting to prove a point, a section of listeners drifted away to easy listening. The length or style of presentation of Indian Classical Music was always a personal choice. I believe that by playing the essence of a raga for a shorter period, you are not diluting it. I believe in being traditional and not conventional. In the early eighties, I had recorded an album of short pieces (based on Ragas) in one album. At that time, I was of course criticized for not going into too much ponderous detailing. I am happy to see that today this has become a trend.

There is a very old story about a young musician who sang for the first time on the stage. Seeing two thousand people in the audience the young musician was overtly inspired and lost track of time. After two hours the musician opened his eyes and was disappointed to see only two people sitting. The musician thanked those two people and said 'you two are the most knowledgeable people; non-musical people have left the auditorium'. Out of the two, one said 'I am sorry I am waiting to windup the stage and the PA system'. The musician thanked the remaining one person sitting in the hall who replied 'I am waiting for my turn to perform'. The musician was totally shocked and disappointed. The message of this story shows the importance of sense of proportion and brevity in any profession.

Professional entertainers back in time were called 'Bhaand' in rather crude light. Rajas, Maharajas and Nawaabs had an official Bhaand as

their court entertainers along with many other court interests. The closet western counter part to the Bhaand was perhaps the 'Court Jester' who entertained the Emperor with music, juggling, clowning, and by telling of riddles. The Shehnai prophet Bismillah Khan carried that era of entertainers with him and always had one or two comic performers in his group of musicians. Some musicians were known to create and compose hilarious jokes. No matter whether the musician was successful or struggling, they enjoyed and shared their good or bad with humour and also stood by each other. People of India think of classical musicians to be always very serious. But I have met the best mimics and actors in Indian classical musicians. They have a great sense of humour and phenomenal stalk of jokes!

According to folklore it is believed that Lord Ganesha use to play the Pakhawaj. A low, mellow tone is one of the leading characteristics of Pakhawaj. It is the standard percussion instrument in dhrupad style of singing and also for Rudra Been players. Historically, ancient drums were of one piece like Dhol, Dholak, Naal, Mridangam and Pakhawaj. The sound of the Pakhawaj is very rich and sonorous. While learning the traditional age old Pakhawaj style techniques, a student would be introduced to a number of different strokes which produce a variety of distinct sounds. Legend has it that during a concert, the Pakhawaj player, broke the instrument broke in two pieces because of the intensity with which he had to perform. Yet, he would continue to play with the broken pieces, and to his own surprise it worked and this is how the new instrument called Tabla was born.

In our family my forefathers played with the Pakhawaj. Along with many vocalists and instrumentalists, Gwalior was known its Pakhawaj Players. I have heard many concerts of my guru and father with great Pakhawaj players like the legendary Parvat Singh and Madhav Singh. There was a long lineage of Pakhawaj players like Kudeo Singh of Datia in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Zauravar Singh, Parvat Singh, Madhav Singh and Gopal Singh. There is a story about Kudeo Singh, who was a great devotee of Goddess Kali when the Maharaja of Datia challenged his artistry by asking him, to tame a wild elephant. Though Gopal Singh of Gwalior was a Pakhawaj player, he was a regular Guitar broadcaster on All India Radio. He very inspired by the Sarod of Haafiz Ali Khan Saheb which made him add more strings to his Guitar to match the Sarod. A trend that has now become popular among many Guitar players!

I also enjoy playing to the accompaniment of the Pakhawaj occasionally because of its very masculine and robust sound. I have played with Gopal Das, Arjun Sejwal, Bal Krishan, Pagaldas of Ayodhyay and Purshottam Das of Nathdwara and his disciple Fateh Singh Gangani.

Mridangam is a South Indian version of the pakhawaj. It bears a strong seeming re-



semblance to Pakhawaj but there are major differences in composition and technique. I had the honor of playing with some of the great Mridangam players of South India like Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Palghat Raghu, Vellore Ramabhadran, T.V. Gopalakrishnan, Yella Venkateswara Rao, etc. I also had the honour of meeting and hearing one of the greatest Mridangam icons, Palghat Mani Iyer, when I played at the Rishi Valley School (Andhra Pradesh) at the invitation of the great Jiddu Krishnamurti. Palghat Mani Iyer played many duets with the trinity of our Tabla kings Kishan Maharaj, Alla Rakha and Samta Prasad. Both Pakhawaj and Mridangam have very distinctive sound and character, fortunately we still have outstanding players of both instruments in India and abroad. I think young Pakhawaj or Mridangam players should be encouraged. There are so many talented young musicians in every field. I really feel proud to see the talent and commitment of our young musicians.

Historically there was no custom or system of rehearsing before a concert. In those days, organizers use to decide which tabla player or Pakhawaj player will accompany the singer or the instrumentalist. Musicians could only meet before the concert in the dressing room and discuss what Taal (rhythm time cycle) the main artist will perform. Both the musicians use to be tense and worried about the end result since in many occasions, they were performing together for the first time! Some musicians never discussed this till the time of the concert only to give a good or bad surprise to each other.

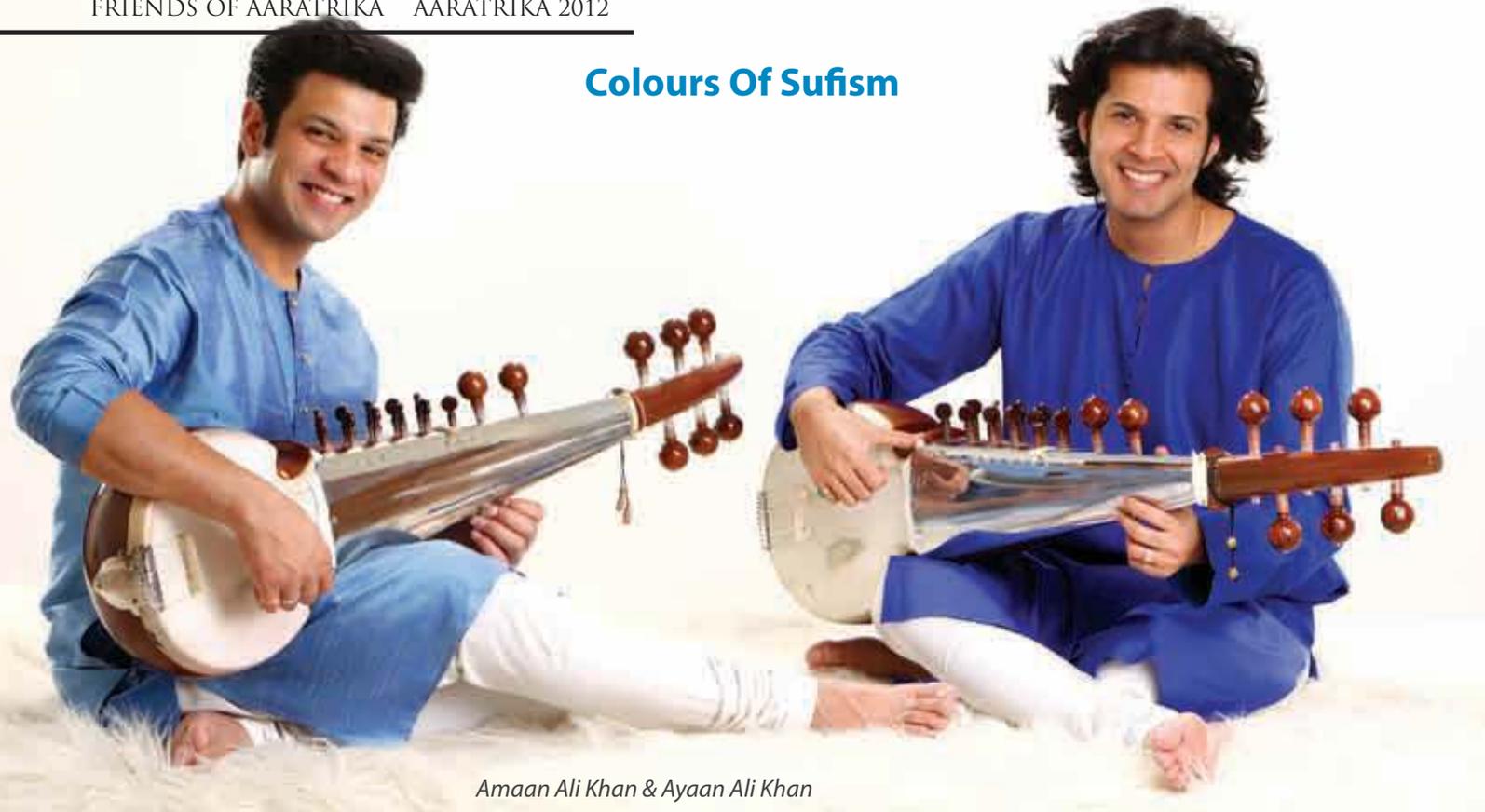
Practice is very important to a good musical performance. At the time when electricity was not in every house (just like our recent power cut!) of India, great musicians practiced all night with very large candle lights. One candle lasted several long hours. Interestingly, some musicians were known as artists who have practiced to the duration of five burning candles, or six burning candles. It was a way of expressing pride and industry talk about the intensity of an artists practice sessions of long durations!

Every raga has a soul and every musical note is the sound of God. The meaning of Indian classical music is freedom within discipline.

Anjad Ali Khan



Colours Of Sufism



Amaan Ali Khan & Ayaan Ali Khan

Since time immemorial, music and dance have been integral elements of human spirituality and no more has it been than in the Bhakti (devotion) movement in India and in Sufism. Many mystics and lay performs in fact consider Music as God's own language. Poet Rabindranath Tagore often felt that music was the expression of the divine within humans.

It is not difficult to understand the importance of music in spirituality because music (and dance) has the power to make us forget our sorrows, pains, trials and tribulations of our daily existence and bring us closer to truth, harmony and beauty, which together take us closer to the God, or the ultimate reality. This theme cuts across not just Sufism but also different forms of devotional paths in Hinduism, known as the Bhakti Marga or the path of devotion.

Times Music has released an album this year, 'Rang - Colours of Sufism' comprising Qawwali interpretations by renowned sarod artistes Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan.

'Rang - Colours of Sufism' features Amaan & Ayaan's rendition of timeless qawwalis in their distinct style. The album has six tracks like Mann Kunto Maulaa, Aaj Rang Hai, Bahaut Din Beete, Main Nizaam, Zihale Miskina and Kaahe Ko Byaahe Bidesa.

Sons and disciples of the sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan, Amaan & Ayaan represent the seventh generation of a musical lineage known as the Senia Bangash School. While being established solo concert artists on their right, they have also assisted their now legendary father at concerts all over the world. They have carved out a niche for themselves in the classical and fusion space.

In this album, the two young artists bring out the beauty, intensity and passion of Sufi music through the sarod, converting themselves and the sarod into very instruments of God!

Amaan & Ayaan Ali Khan send warmest wishes to all in Moscow on the occasion of Durga Puja and Deepavali!

Launch of Rang - Colours of Sufism. From left to right: Amaan Ali Khan, Jaya Bachchan, Subhalakshmi Khan, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Karan Johar, Ayaan Ali Khan, Neema Ali Khan





Greetings from Dhaka

Tarik was born to Tofazzal Hossain and Hosne Hena on 10 September, 1965. His father, an author and journalist, is a veteran poet of the 1952 Bengali Language Movement repute. Tarik studied Political Science at the University of Dhaka, where he had a distinctive role in the cultural movement against the military regime in the late eighties. His awareness of contemporary socio-political realities remains unabated as he keeps progressing in poetry with his unique experiences.

Tarik Sujat wishes the readers of Aaratrika a very happy Pujoi!

Tarik Sujat emerged in the landscape on modern Bengali poetry in the 1980s. Although he belongs to the romantic genre, he distinguishes himself with keen patriotic fervour. His mastery of lyric produces appealing music in poetry. By profession he is an award-winning graphic designer and an entrepreneur in the field of design and media. He has five publications to his credit. For poetry, Tarik was honoured with the prestigious Krittibash Award from India.

এখানে বনের শেষ মানুষের শুরু
লোকালয় পাবি, আরেকটু এগিয়ে যা
এইতো খানিক দূর, জীবনের ঘর!

each and every day
lands on the edge of the lake
in the clothing of the sun

the black water of the lake
crystal black where
some lights are trapped,
still in the water
some break then shakles
and are transformed into the dawns

though i go to the lake
i go because i feel good
sometimes i travel far
from this place
from known faces
somewhere to a destiny unknown to me

প্রতিদিন দিনের
কোনো মুহুর্তে বেলা
এসেছে কিন্তো পড়ে
কানের ভল ঝল-ঝলো
কিন্তু অদল করে কি
কই জলপথে, কিছু
সুন্দর ভরা অদল
উলি-উলি

কতক এসেছে করে হাই,
হাই, বেলা অদল করে
কানের অদল দুঃ-
সেবাসার বেলা, এসে
কতকবে বেলা দুঃ
কানের অদল



Greetings from Kolkata

Sharodiya Greetings from Soumitra Mitra, director Purba Paschim Theatre Group.

A leading theatre group based in Kolkata, founded in 2005, organizes theatre festivals every year. Aaratrika was present in this year's premiere.





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РЕКЛАМА

Editor's Note For long, Russia (including erstwhile USSR) has occupied a preeminent space in the imagination of Indians, Bengalis in particular. The staggering achievements of Russia in various fields - science and technology, sports, art and culture have continued to inspire Indians. Russian sports heroes - particularly in the area of chess, track and field and gymnastics have mesmerised us for long. Similarly the impact of Russia on our cinema, as well as other fields of art and culture has been significant.

Tollywood refers to the Bengali film industry situated in the Tollygunge region in Kolkata (much as Bollywood is the name of the Hindi film industry of Bombay, now known as Mumbai). One of the oldest regional film industries of India, it has produced both hardcore commercial potboilers and arty fare. Here, we bring you the views of four prominent personae of Tollygunge, both established and upcoming, on Russia and its cinema.



Aparna Sen



Aparna Sen is one of the leading film makers in India, and arguably the most prominent among the female directors in the country. Her films are known chiefly for their sensitive, moving portrayal of women.

36, Chowringhee Lane, Paromitar Ek Din, Paroma and Sati are among her most acclaimed films. Mr. & Mrs. Iyer, the 2001 film that depicted the experiences of a young woman from a conservative Tamil Brahmin family and a Bengali Muslim man who have to pretend to be a couple to avoid the wrath of rioters, won much acclaim and awards, and made her daughter Konkona Sen Sharma, who played the female lead, a major presence in Indian art cinema. The Japanese Wife and Iti Mrinalini are her latest works.



Aparna Sen, the director on one of her film sets



A scene from Mr. & Mrs. Iyer (2001) starring her daughter Konkona Sen Sharma



In Satyajit Ray's 'Teen Konya' (1961)



Iti Mrinalini (2010) by Aparna Sen, starring Konkona Sen Sharma

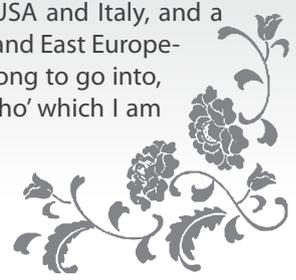


In Iti Mrinalini

I was on the jury of the 34th Moscow Film Festival in 1989. It was a star studded affair with Andrej Wajda of Poland as the Chairperson of the jury. The jurors included people like Emir Kusturica (Yugoslavia), Jiri Menzel (Director of the Czech classic Closely Watched Trains), Zhang Yimou from China. Italian director Maurizio Nichetti was awarded the Golden St. George for The Icicle Thief, and Aki Kaurismaki's Ariel got the FIPRESCI award. Konkona was there with me, all of 9 years old and the youngest delegate at the festival. We had a wonderful time. Since there were producers from USA and Italy, and a Russian critic too on the jury, I learnt a lot about how Russians and East Europeans felt about communism and armed revolution. But its too long to go into, especially since am neck deep in preparation for 'Goynar Baksho' which I am shooting next month.

So, best wishes to all your readers !

Aparna Sen



Amader Moner Manush



Prosenjit Chatterjee's stature in Bengali cinema today is comparable, perhaps, only to Uttam Kumar's from amongst the yesteryear actors. He is a megastar, a one-man industry of sorts, the leading man in a number of potboilers that have enjoyed long runs in the theatres. Of late, he has also made a mark in many an offbeat film, starring alongside Aishwarya Rai in Rituparno Ghosh's *Chokher Bali* (2003), a relationship drama set in colonial Bengal and based on Rabindranath Tagore's novel of the same name, and *Dosar* (2005), also directed by Ghosh, where Prosenjit plays a man trying to cope with the death of his mistress and repair the damaged relationship with his wife. His recent notable roles are those of a successful actor in *Autograph* (2010), the legendary mystic Lalan Fakir in *Moner Manush* (2010), and a police officer with an acerbic temperament in *Baishe Srabon* (2011). *Shanghai* (2012) is a high-profile Bollywood film where he plays a fiery social worker; he is also slated to star in *Jaffna*, an upcoming film set in war-torn Sri Lanka, alongside John Abraham.

Prosenjit Chatterjee on Russia

One cannot think about the nation of Russia without being awash with a sense of awe. The awe derives as much from the vastness of the country as from its numerous socio-political upheavals, which have altered the course of history. We first learned about these events in school when we read about the lives of Lenin and Stalin, and the works of authors like Maxim Gorky. I also happen to remember books of Russian fairy tales being sold in the Kolkata Book Fair when I was a child.

Today, Russia, in my mind, is inextricably linked up with the names of writers such as Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Anton Chekhov, as well as with the many landmark films that have been made by Russian filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Mikhail Kalatozov, among others. Indeed, my love affair with cinema wouldn't be complete without a mention of Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. The earliest work to expose me to Russia via celluloid, though, is David Lean's *Doctor Zhivago*. I was very young the first time I saw it, and couldn't grasp its essence very well, but the robust presence of Omar Sharif stayed with me, as did the panoramic shots of the beautiful, rugged Russian landscapes. Only when I watched it as a grown-up did I come to know that it is a classic, and an adaptation of a much-lauded, Nobel Prize-winning Russian novel by Boris Pasternak. Another Russian literary adaptation that I am very fond of is *War and Peace*, the eight-hour long magnum opus of Sergei Bondarchuk, which was released in four parts after being shot over a period of seven years. The sheer scale of the film, and the effort that must have gone into making it such a magnificent work of cinema, is truly mind-blowing.

I can't watch Russian films like *Ballad of a Soldier*; *The Cranes are Flying*, *Ballad of Siberia*, *Seventeen Moments of Spring* and *Little Vera* without thinking about them for days afterwards. The effect is that strong and indelible. I really wish that in the future, we see more collaborative efforts between India and Russia through joint productions and festivals. Cinema anyway a visual language and can brook all barriers to be; it is, by far, the most powerful medium of connection between peoples.

«Душа компании»

Просенджит Чаттерджи говорит о России как о великой нации. Россия пережила много социально-политических потрясений. Это страна историей, которая стала известна всему миру благодаря литературным произведениям своих писателей. Еще со школы нам известны такие имена, как Ленин, Сталин, Максим Горький. С детства помню книги с русскими сказками, продававшиеся на книжной ярмарке Калькутты. Во всех формах искусства, кино и литературы Россия предстает как супердержава, которая пережила серьезные исторические преобразования. Всякий раз, когда я думаю о России, вспоминаются такие имена, как Антон Чехов, Федор Достоевский, Лев Толстой. Все их работы бессмертны. «Война и мир» Л.Толстого, я бы сказал, имеет и сильное кинематографическое представление. Трудно было выбрать между книгой и фильмом. Я слышал, что потребовалось семь лет, чтобы закончить этот фильм, он был выпущен в четырех частях, так как продолжался 8 часов. Моя любовь к советскому кино не была бы полной без упоминания о фильме «Броненосец Потемкин», хотя мое более раннее воспоминание – фильм «Доктор Живаго». Большое впечатление произвело присутствие на экране Омара Шарифа, которое осталось со мной на много лет. В первый раз, когда я посмотрел фильм, я был слишком молод, чтобы понять его суть, но Омар Шариф действительно смог выразить все очень ярко. Когда я пересматривал фильм много позже, я понял, что это был культовый фильм. Я могу смотреть его много раз. Я чувствую, что есть элемент необъятности в этом произведении. Российское кино всегда производило на меня сильное впечатление, которое сохраняется в течение долгого времени. Мне очень хочется, чтобы, в дальнейшем между Россией и Индией было больше совместных работ по производству фильмов и проведению кинофестивалей. Кино, так или иначе, это визуальный язык и может преодолевать различные барьеры и укреплять связи между народами.



Кадр из фильма *Moner Manush* (2010)



Paoli Dam

Paoli Dam on Tarkovsky



Paoli Dam born in Kolkata, India has a postgraduate degree in Chemistry. Paoli had come into the focus after the success of Kaalbela directed by Gautam Ghose. Recently she made her debut in Bollywood.

I have never been to Russia but have always longed to visit the country, especially the locations where Andrey Tarkovsky shot some of his films. Tarkovsky and Russia are linked in my mind ever since I watched Nostalgia, although that film was not shot in the homeland of the creative genius, and had - indirectly - steered his resolve never to work in Soviet Union again when it was denied the Palm d'Or at Cannes 1983.



Paoli in Kaalbela

To be truthful, I was not an ardent Tarkovsky fan from the word go. Initially I found his films very difficult to sit through. But I kept watching them, fascinated by his use of long takes and trolley shots - in short, his cinematography - and his mesmerising use of locations. His films lacked conventional drama, but the absence of dramatic structure was more than compensated by his philosophic re-creation of life. His films are suffused with a certain spirituality. His themes are metaphysical. He was a poet of cinema, no less. While watching his films, one has to forget everything else and be immersed in the experience of watching his films. He was an auteur in the true sense of the word. It cannot be a coincidence that Nostalgia won the FIPRESCI award and also shared an award with Robert Bresson at Cannes.



Moner Manush

Imagine, a director of the stature of Ingmar Bergman saying: "Tarkovsky for me is the greatest director, the one who invented a new language, true to the nature of film, as it captures life as a reflection, life as a dream."

So, if I ever visit Russia, it would be like a pilgrimage for me – an ode to Tarkovsky.

Photo Credit: Paoli Dam



Russian Maestro Andrey Tarkovsky

Tota Roy Chowdhury

To Russia with Love or In Love with Russia



Tota Roy Chowdhury is among the popular young actors in the Bengali film industry. Starting his career in villainous roles, he soon went on to play characters both more appealing and more complex in films like Shubha Mahurat, Chokher Bali and Dosar. Recently, he has appeared in Tintorroto-r Jishu, a film featuring the popular Bengali fictional detective Feluda. He is an avid martial arts enthusiast.

"For me, Russia is synonymous with the word - FRIEND. From my childhood, being an avid football lover, I was a huge fan of Oleg Blokhin. I tried to replicate his defence splitting runs and amazing goal scoring abilities while representing my school and college in football.

Of the current crop, I really love Andrei Arshavin. I had a huge crush on the Goddess of gymnastics in the 1990's, Svetlana Boginskaya and sat glued to the television whenever she performed in various world championships and in the Olympics.

As of now I use a 100 year old Russian sport in my fitness regime. It is known as KETTLE-BELLS. One of the few training systems in the world which addresses your strength, endurance and stamina, all at once. I have this ardent desire to visit Moscow and learn the finer points of Kettlebells as well as the Russian martial arts - Sambo. Because of the iron curtain, not much was revealed to the outside world, but they have always been miles ahead.



Tota in Chokher Bali with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan

Photo Credit: Tota Roy Chowdhury

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Remembering Joydeb Basu (12.05.1962 – 23.02.2012)

After his studies in Shantiniketan, he graduated in Bengali literature from Presidency College and post graduated from Jadavpur University in Kolkata. His interest in politics led him to become a CPIM member. He began his career as a journalist with Ganashakti news paper and later taught Bengali literature in Dum Dum Motijhil College. He wrote for television, news papers and worked as an interpreter. Many books have been published with his poetry, including Kobita Songroho (collection of his poems) in 2008. He was awarded with the prestigious Sukanta Purashkar. Joydeb Basu was married to poet Sebanti Ghosh and has a son.

Джойдеб Басу родился 12 мая 1962 г. Он учился в Шантиникетане, затем получил высшее образование в области бенгальской литературы в Президентском Колледже Университета Калькутты и ученую степень — в Университете Джадавпура. Джойдеб Басу стал журналистом в газете Ganashakti, преподавал и даже работал в отделе рекламы, но впоследствии стал профессором бенгальской литературы в Колледже Думдум Мотижхилл. Ему принадлежит авторство разного рода сценариев для телевизионных передач. На сегодняшний день опубликовано 8 поэтических сборников автора. Он не любил, когда его называли поэтом, предпочитал называться «покорным слугой литературы». Джойдеб Басу был удостоен награды Sukanta Purashkar. Он также писал статьи для газет, чаще всего для издания Aajkal, и работал переводчиком. Этот талантливый человек ушел из жизни 23 февраля 2012 г. Мы воздаем должное поэту одной из его оставивших след в литературе поэм Bhobishyot, опубликованной в 1992 году.

ভবিষ্যৎ

ঠিক তখনই একটার একটা খুঁটি আমি উপড়ে ফেলছিলাম অ'রিয়েৎ, ঠিক তখনই একটার পর একটা কাঁটাতার কাটেতে কাটেতে আমি হাট করে দিচ্ছিলাম সীমান্ত। যখন রাত্রি প্রায় শেষ প্রহর, মধ্য-সাগর থেকে উড়ে আসছিল কারটেগোর জাহাজের সিটি আর গঙ্গাঙ্গানে ছুটছিল নুনের দেওনারা—ঠিক তখনই, অ'রিয়েৎ, ঠিক তখনই অন্ধকার কামড় বসাল আমার গলায়, জিভ অসাড় হয়ে এল, আমার দেখা হল না সিঁথির সিঁদুরের মতো সূর্যোদয়, ক্লারের মতো, বাণীর মতো আশমান.... কত-কত দিন কেটে গেল, আমার হিশেব নেই মন-আমি, আমরা শুয়ে আছি চুপচাপ আর সূর্যাস্তই দেখছি শুধু, দেখছি গোরস্তানে মাথা কুটে একশৃঙ্গ ঝাঁড়, হলুদ ঘাসের মাঠে ফুটবল খেলেছে ছেলেরা, ট্রামের সম্মুখ থেকে উত্তেজিত ঘোড়াগুলি উধাও হয়েছে, যশোপ্রার্থী পিগমিদের মুখ থেকে ছিটকে পড়ছে খুতু অ দুর্গন্ধ, আর দীর্ঘকায় বিষন্ন গাছেরা ঝরিয়ে দিচ্ছে অকাল-হেমন্তের পাতা-- এই পাতাগুলি রোগা ও অসহায়, অ'রিয়েৎ, আমরা এদের ছুঁতে পারিনা, শুধু চেয়ে দেখতে পারি কবিতার ফিরে আসছে আবার ভাঁটির টান, সমাজদিনের আলো ফুরিয়ে আসছে।

এতদিন কে আমাদের-- আমাদের--কবিতা পড়েছে? ব্যারনের টুপি পরা পাটের দালালরা? শামলা আঁটা সর্দার পোড়োরা? নির্বোধ, লালাসক্ত ঝাণ্ডাকবিরা? হস্তা খাওয়া পুলিশ, বেহায়া সমাজসেবী, পাঁশনে আঁটা মস্তান, তেলাক্ত আল্লারা? কারা আমাদের পিছে এতদিন ব্যান্ড বাজিয়েছে? উত্তরপুরুষে গুন্ডা সম্পাদকরা? খুনীরা? ভয় পেতে ও পাওয়াতে যারা রক্তহীন হয়ে যাচ্ছে ক্রমাগত? বেশ্যারা? আ, অ'রিয়েৎ, উনিশ শতক শেষ, হাড়কাটা গলি থেকে এখন কোটে না আর বিষাদকুমু।

তবে কার জন্য আমি নিজের আদন্ত আমু জ্বালিয়ে দিয়েছি? হ্যাঁ, আমি মাইকেল ডাট, প্রল্ল করছি, তবে কার জন্য আমি মায়ের চোখের জল শুকোতে দিইনি? কার জন্য, অ'রিয়েৎ, তোমাকে বেবাক দিন উপবাসী থাকতে হয়েছে?

'দক্ষিণা'-র মুখ আমি দেখতে পাই আজকাল, বুঝতে পারি কোন কোন বীজাণুগণিতে মানুষের পায়ে কোটে মানুষেরই ফেলে যাওয়া কাঁটা। বৃষ্টি ক্লাস্তি, বিবিস্মা, কামটির ঈশ্বরের চতুর্থ আশ্রম। পাথরের এই দেশে স্মৃতি তবু মাটি ফুঁড়ে ঢোকে; তখন কুম্বাশা নামে, ঘাসের চূড়ায় জ্বলে জোনাকির আলোপরমাণু সন্ধ্যার পাখিরা সব পালকের উষ্ণতায় ক্রমাগত আবছা হয়ে যায়, আমি দেখতে পাই খুলে যাচ্ছে প্রকাণ্ড জানলা : তামাকের কড়া গন্ধ, কক.নি ও ক্রহ্যামের কোলাহল ভেদ করে দৈববানী উঠে আসে, থেমে থেমে বলে যায়--"এই দেশ আমাদেরই গর্ভে ছিল সাপ হয়ে, তক্ষক হয়ে। হে প্রিয় ক্রটাস, পাপ কোনোদিন আকাশে থাকে না।"

ভাই, জাগো হাওয়া, জাগো পৌষ-ফাগুনের আঁধি, জাগো ব্যাসল্টঝড়ের বন্যা, জাগো ঝক., জাগো সাম., জাগো আশা ও দানার চেউ, এই এপিটাক ও অবেলিস্কের শহরে জাগো ঘাস, জাগো নিশানেরা, জাগো মানুষের চিন্তা ও ইচ্ছার স্রোত, নাভি থেকে শব্দকে তুলে আন্তে জাগো। আশা ও নিরাশার মধ্যে কেঁপে উঠছে এই দেশ ঞ ভয়ে কাঁপছে, আকাশায় কাঁপছে, তার স্নানু অ রক্তের মধ্যে কথা বলে। জাগো মোহররামের দুলাদুল, রক্তাক্ত ঘাড় তুলে আকাশে বিদ্ধ করো হ্রেশা ও নিঃশ্বাস। জাগো লাভা, নিশ্চিহ্ন করে দাও সাবেকী শিল্পের স্মৃতি, মীনবাজারের ঠাটবাটা। বৃষ্টিক রাশির নিচে যে মানুষ শুয়ে আছে ভাষাহীন, কণদকহীন, তাকে দাও রূপকথা, তাকে দাও যথার্থ মনীষা।

Joydeb Basu



Photo credit: Sayan Kumar De

জাগো ভবিষ্যৎ। জাগো, নতুন কবিতা।
রাত ১১.৪৮ মিনিট
২১।১।১৮

Editor's note

We pay a tribute to the poet who passed away this year, with one of his landmark poems Bhobishyot published in 1992. We also would like to share with our readers two writings dedicated to Basu by literary stalwarts Sankha Ghosh and Sunil Gangopadhyay. Aaratrika had an appointment with Basu early this year which did not take place as the poet passed away. His sudden demise is an immense loss for the world of poetry. May his soul rest in peace.

জয়দেব বসু : সংক্ষিপ্ত জীবন ও গ্রন্থপঞ্জি

জয়দেব বসুর জন্ম ১২ মে ১৯৬২। পরিত্যক্ত বসু ও বেলা বসুর জ্যেষ্ঠ পুত্র। শান্তিনিকেতনের পাঠভবন বিশ্বভারতী এবং উত্তরশিক্ষাসদন বিশ্বভারতীতে প্রাথমিক পড়াশোনা। বাংলা সাহিত্য বিষয়ে কলকাতার প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ থেকে স্নাতক পর্যায়ের এবং যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে স্নাতকোত্তর পর্যায়ের পড়াশোনা।

ছাত্ররাজনীতির সঙ্গে জড়িত ছিলেন ওতপ্রোতভাবে। পরে লাভ করেন সি. পি. আই (এম)-এর সদস্যপদ। কর্মজীবনে 'গণশক্তি'তে সাংবাদিকতা, শিক্ষকতা, এমনকি বিজ্ঞাপনকর্মীরও কাজ করেছেন। শেষমেশ দমনম মতিঝিল কলেজে বাংলা সাহিত্যের অধ্যাপনায় নিয়োজিত ছিলেন। টেলিভিশনের নানাধরনের অনুষ্ঠানের চিত্রনাট্যও লিখেছেন। বিয়ে করেছিলেন কবি সেবন্তী ঘোষকে। একমাত্র পুত্র মৌর্য বসু।

প্রকাশিত কাব্যগ্রন্থ মাত্র আটটি—মেঘনুত (১৯৯০), অমণকাহিনী (১৯৯০), ভবিষ্যৎ (১৯৯২), জীর্ণ পাতা স্রগার বেলায় (১৯৯৩), জনগণতান্ত্রিক কবিতার ইশতহাফ ও অন্যান্য (১৯৯৪), আলমাদিন ও আশ্বর্ষ প্রদীপ (১৯৯৯), সাহিকোপাথ্য (২০০৮), আর-এস চতুর্দশপদী (২০০৮)। তাছাড়া ২০০৮-এ প্রকাশিত হয় তাঁর 'কবিতা সংগ্রহ' আর ২০০৫-এ 'জয়দেব বসুর শ্রেষ্ঠ কবিতা'। পেয়েছেন 'সুকান্ত পুরস্কার', 'কবি'-র বদলে নিজেকে 'কবিত্যত্রমিক' বলতেই ভালবাসতেন। গ্রহিত আছে একটি উপন্যাস—'উত্তরযুগ'। তাছাড়া স্ববরের কাগজে—বিশেষত 'আজকাল' পত্রিকায়—নিয়মিত লিখেছেন ফিচার। অনুবাদের কাজ করেছেন। আগ্রহী ছিলেন চলচ্চিত্রে বিষয়েও।

একেশ্বরেই আকস্মিকভাবে প্রয়াত হন ২৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০১২।

ছেলের তর্পণ করছে বাবা

শঙ্খ ঘোষ

সত্যি কি নিয়েছি কাছে? হৃদয়ে মেনেছি কোনও দায়?
না কি শুধু হিমকরা উদাসীনতায়
বয়ে যেতে দিয়েছি সময়
আর আজ মধ্যরাতে ঘুমহারা অন্ধকারে অপরাধবোধে হই ক্ষয়?

ঠিকই আজ মেনে নেব সব। একদিন
হয়তো ছিলাম অন্যমনে। হয়তো ভেবেছি
যতটা আপন ঠিক ততটাই হেলা করা সাজে।
সাজে না কি?
বাতাসকে কখনও কি বলেছি 'বাতাস তুমি আছ'?
অবশ্য কখনও যদি ঝড় হয়ে ঢুকে পড়ে পড়ে ঘরে
সেকথা আলাদা। তখন তো সে নিজেই
আলুখালু করে যায় সব, প্রশ্নের ঝাপট তুলে গায়ে।
সেই প্রশ্ন আমাদের দিনানুদিনের থাকা নিয়ে, তারই একটানে
'অনন্তের কাছাকাছি প্রসারনশীল অতিবিশ্ব' নিয়ে, ব্ল্যাকহোল নিয়ে,
কবিতাস্বভাব নিয়ে, মাইকেল এম এস ডাট আর বেশি আমাদের রক্তের ভিতরে
আসেননি কেন তাই নিয়ে,
পাটি নিয়ে, তার যত সিদ্ধি যত অবোধগামী অনাচার নিয়ে।
যদিও উদভ্রান্ত আজ, তবু পাটি ছেড়ে দিয়ে ব্যক্তি কতটুকু ব্যক্তি থাকে? একা একা কে সে?
কোন মৃত্যু তারও চেয়ে কম মৃত্যু হতে পারে পোড়া এই মৃত্যুমুখী দেশে?

প্রশ্ন করে যায় নচিকেতা। প্রতি প্রশ্নে কেঁপে ওঠে ভিটে।
নচিকেতা প্রশ্ন করে, অন্যমনে থেকে তার উত্তর পারিনি কিছু দিতে
হৃদয়ে নিইনি কোনও দায়
বলছি বরং অনাদরে
'চল তোকে দিয়ে আসি একাকীর দোরো।'

সব প্রশ্ন ফেলে রেখে আচম্বিতে গিয়েছে সে সরে।

তার পরে কিছুদূর দেখা যায়, কিছু যায় না-বা।
শব্দহীন অন্তরালে আবছা এক দৃশ্য জেগে থাকে
অপরাধভারে কিছু নত,
প্রসারিত দুই হাতে অঞ্জলিতে বাঁধা,
গঙ্গার পিঙ্গল হলে আজানু দাঁড়িয়ে আজ ছেলের তর্পণ করছে বাবা।

শারদীয় দেশ ১৪১৯

পুনর্মুদ্রিত

মজিলা সেনচগু আর নেই। তার একটি কবিতার কয়েকটি পংক্তি :

প্রতিটি বাক্যের পর বাক্যকম থেকে মনে পড়ে
প্রতিটি সঙ্গম শেষে বাক্যকম থেকে মনে পড়ে
জানি সারা বাক্যকমে করে পড়ে জানেব তন্ত্রাধা
ওগো জন, শান্তি আমো গোমে পোড়া শরীরে অমো...

প্রতিটি শব্দের ডাকে বাক্যকম থেকে মনে পড়ে
প্রতিটি শব্দের শব্দে বাক্যকম থেকে মনে পড়ে
বন্দনে কেঁকিন আসে নিলখুপ থেকে জানসায়
এ হবে বিধান কোণা, উপচনো অচল সরোবর...

জানসেব বসু স্বতন্ত্র আর নেই। তার একটি কবিতার কয়েকটি পংক্তি

যাযা। অগাধা ক্রিষ্টি নাকি এমনভাবেই বোনে
গয় জাল। সে মহাকাল, পথের প্রতি কোণে
অবিদ্যান করতে করতে কখন যে বিশ্বাস
করতে করতে হলে হলে, ভিজছে মনুষ্যে।

তখন শুধু ইতোম-বারো প্রশ্ন : তুমি নইবে?
অমলিন এই বর্ষা তুমি চাইবে কি না-চাইবে?
ওয়েছিলম। বিয়েছিলম আকাশ যাতে নিয়ে
কড়-কিছু-খন মেঘের কানভাসে সাজিয়ে...

সেই বক্তব্য-তরুণীরা এখন কবিতা লিখছেন, যারা অন্যায়, উদ্বেগ সঙ্কলকেই এই
শু কবির রচনা পাঠ থেকে শিক্ষা নিতে হবে।

কৃত্তিবাস

কৃত্তিবাস

এপ্রিল-জুন ২০১২

পুনর্মুদ্রিত



From left: Shankha Ghosh, Joydeb Basu, Shreejato, Sebanti Ghosh

Photo Credit: Sayan Kumar De

Editor's note



Michael Madhusudan Dutt was a pioneering Bengali poet, known chiefly for popularizing the sonnet and introducing the blank verse in Bengali. His most famous work, Meghnad Bodh Kabya, is a subversive take on the Indian epic Ramayana, where he presents a positive portrayal of both Ravana, the demon king who is the villain of the epic, and his son Meghnad. Tilottama, Birangana and Sharmistha are his other well-known poems. He also penned a couple of satirical plays called Ekei Ki Bole Shobhyota and Buro Shaliker Ghare Ro, which were very popular. He penned the English translation of Neel Darpan, a highly controversial play by Dinabandhu Mitra, which condemned the British indigo planters for the atrocities they inflicted on the peasants in Bengal. Though an ardent admirer of everything English when he was young—so much so that he converted to Christianity despite the objections of his family—he later regretted his blind emulation of western ways, and composed many verses in praise of his native land and the Bengali language. Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sri Aurobindo and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were some of the Bengali luminaries who admired Michael's works.



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wishes you

a very happy dushera

and a happy diwali





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DUSSHERA TO THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN
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QATAR



القطرية





Kinder Wonder



Sonic the Hedgehog by Manas

I love to play and watch cricket. I love Sonic cartoons, so I have made a sketch. Secretly I love going to Mac Donalds for happy meals because they give very attractive toys. I also go to dance class where I learn Latin American dance. I have been learning it for last two years.

*Manas Kumar
Class 3*



Manas



Ishan Ghosh, 6 years



Little gymnast Aanisha performing in Luzhniki Stadium



Aanisha



*Self portrait
Aanisha Garzon, 5 years*



Hrittika Baruri
Class 1

Me and my brother
My brother is my best friend.
We play a lot together. He takes
care of me a lot. Every year I tie
"Rakhi" and celebrate "Bhai Phonta".
I love my brother very much.



Hritendu Russo Baruri



My favourite festival is Durga Puja, which is one of the most prominent festivals in India. The grandeur of Durga Puja turns Kolkata into a new city during the four days of the festival beginning from Mahashasti till the day when the idols are immersed in the water on *Dashami*. The ritual is performed based on the belief that the Mother Goddess descends to earth on Shasti and returns to her abode on *Dashami*.

My family and I celebrate the festival in Moscow. During this time we worship Goddess Durga who fought the cruel power of Mahisasur and won hence celebrating triumph of good over evil. The children visit decorated *pandal* (marquee) to pray, dance and eat *prasad* (offering) and sweets. Often, in the evenings, we also take part in cultural programs. I eagerly wait for the day when children functions are held as I get to meet all my friends on that day I have a wonderful time celebrating Durga Puja.

Hritendu Russo Baruri
Class 4



The Olympic Mishka created by Victor Chizhikov was the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympic mascot.



Uni, the kitten of winged scow leopard is the mascot for the Summer Universiade 2012 to be held in Kazan, the capital city of the Republic of Tatarstan.



The Sochi Olympics are the first Winter Olympics for the Russian Federation to be held in February 2014. The Polar Bear, Hare and the Leopard are the mascot for the Game.

Interesting facts about horses!

There are about 75 million horses in the world and a horse can drink upto 38 liters of water per day. There is a breed of horse from Russia called Akhal-Teke, it can go for days without food or water. Did you know that Arabian horses have one less rib, one less lumbar bone, and one or two fewer tail vertebrae than other horses! Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up. Horses are not color-blind. An average horse weighs about a half a ton, its brain is the size of a baked potato. Horses have better memories than elephants. A horse can move in four ways: walk, trot, canter, and gallop. The fastest recorded sprinting speed of a horse was 88 km/h.

Yash Dasgupta,
Class 5

Yash





Ayushi Das in Switzerland
Class 4

Scintillating Switzerland

Strange but true, I have enjoyed swimming in a thermal mineral water pool when I was in Switzerland. It was so amazing that at first I did not believe it but after I finished swimming in that pool, I felt my skin so smooth that it looked as if I had put on body lotion quite unlike skin after having a swim in a regular pool with a high chlorine content making the body dry and harsh.

This thermal mineral spa called Thermabald Zurich, is not very far from Zurich and about a 45 minute drive from Rein falls. When I reached the place, I was a little disappointed to see

a long line of people but the guide told us not to worry as the queue moved very quickly.

The Thermalbad has several pools with different temperatures. There is ring pool with currents which is great fun for children. It was the only pool I was allowed to enter with my sister Avishi. My parents liked the 37C pool. It was the best time for me.

Later I visited the many other cities of Switzerland. The town of Basel borders Germany and France and we have influences from both countries present here. In Luzern I saw the home of Albert Einstein. Interlaken is a vacation destination and starting point for many activities and many railways cable cars. Junfrauoch is known as Top of Europe having the highest railway station in Europe. I took the train and cable cars to Schilthorn and to the Piz Gloria revolving restaurant. This restaurant became famous after a James Bond movie was filmed here. At the height of 3000 meters, my sister and I played in the snow.

Following that, with my family, we went to the aqua park. We also went to Bern, the capital city of Switzerland and Villar, a ski resort. Montreux, famous for its annual jazz festivals, is located in the Lake Geneva bay surrounded by vineyards and against the backdrop of



Ayushi with sister Avishi

snow covered Alps. Gruyeres is located between Montreux and Lausanne is famous for their cheese production. Laussane, the second-largest city on Lake Geneva, is both a commercial and business town and a vibrant holiday resort and is also known as the Olympic capital. Vevey is one of the 'Pearls of the Swiss Riviera' and famous for the head-quarter of Nestle. I liked this place due to the monument of Charlie Chaplin. Finally Geneva, a financial centre and the head quarters of many United Nations organizations including the World Health Organization.

Of all the places I went to, I liked Geneva Lake the most and above all, the fountain in the Lake which is also the symbol of the city. It was my unforgettable trip.



The Revenge of The Cactus

This summer I went to Spain with my parents. We lived in a holiday resort in Costa Dorado which is 100 kms from Barcelona. The weather was nice and the sea was warm. Barcelona is a beautiful city, famous for the architectures by Gaudi. We also visited Tarragona, which was the capital of Roman Empire for some time. People still live there in small houses with narrow lanes. But most of all, I liked Port Aventura – a huge amusement park with one of the biggest roller coasters in the world! I tried many rides and the burgers were very good! I accidentally sat on a cactus while photographing which was very unpleasant.

Yash Dasgupta
Class 3



Durga Puja

Durga Puga is special to me because there are many stories behind it which was narrated to me by my Nani and Dadi. I celebrated this festival in India when I was four years old, I don't exactly remember but can tell few things which comes to my mind, I remember buying balloons and toys from the street fair. The idol of Maa Durga was huge and was beautifully decorated. I love to read my favourite book «Akash the Ray of Hope» written by Mrs Shahina. I also love books written by Roald Dahl.

Manwi Singh
Class 5





Richik at Bijoya Party 2011

Jokes, Quotes and Incidents

Third year Mathematics student at Russian Peoples Friendship University - Moscow, partial to high comedy, stimulating conversations and juicy burgers with chocolate milkshake

The elementary part

- ☺ An American customer at Sheremetyevo airport:
Customer: Can I have two tickets to Dublin?
Ticket seller: Kuda blin?
- ☺ A German in an English bar.
German: I need two Scotch.
Bartender: Dry?
German: Zwei.
- ☺ True story: A Mingrelian (Georgian) man had been sent to a Siberian vil-
lage to work during soviet times. It turned out that the village needed a french
teacher for the local school. The mingrelian man did not know french but after
travelling so far, going back didn't appeal to him. So, he took up the job as the french teacher
but taught mingrelian to kids instead and there was no way of finding out as the people of the
village knew neither.

Parlez-vous français,
genatsvali?



Recently, a student of that school wanted to get admission in the french language de-
partment of the Moscow state university. After shocking revelations, the Mingrelian man was

searched for but it turned out that he had just retired having worked for over 30 years.

- ☺ Mathematicians', engineers' and economists' brains were on sale. (Not a true story!)

The respective prices were 5\$, 30\$, 100\$.

A lay man asked why the economist's brain was so expensive.

The shopkeeper replied, «do you realize how many economists have to be killed to collect 1 kg?»

Intermediate part (requires familiarity with the things taught at school):

- ☺ «If you and your friend got the same answer to a problem it is probably correct because two idiots cannot be wrong at the same time.» (from the introductory lecture on probability theory)
- ☺ An «F» in an exam is like a gift, it means that teacher respects you, he does not want you to be recorded in history as an average student and is willing to give you an incredible opportunity to go through the material once again. (knot theory lecturer on «why A and F are the only good grades»)
- ☺ «Physics should be fun to read before bed time, as it does not stress the brain that much». (the differential geometry profes-
sor on «what to do when you are free?»)
- ☺ Classic one:

What would a man do, if he were told to heat a bowl of water?

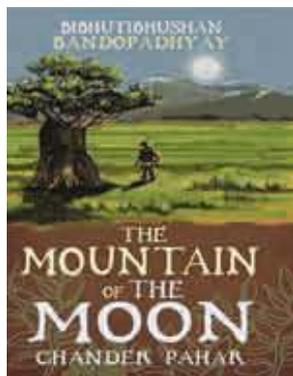
He would pour the water into the bowl, put the bowl on the stove, turn on the stove and turn off the stove when it was done.

A mathematician would do the same thing.

But if told to heat the water again, the man would just turn on the stove, while a mathematician would pour out the water from the bowl and leave, hence reducing the task to a already solved problem.

Richik Sengupta

Bibliophile



Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay's Chander Pahar would rank, by any yardstick, among the finest adventure novels of the world. It follows the exploits of a young man named Shankar, who, resisting the temptations of the easy life afforded by a nine-to-five job, journeys to Africa to work for the Uganda Railways. Soon afterwards, he meets a daring Portuguese fortune hunter called Diego Alvarez, and the two embark upon a search for a famed, legendary diamond mine in the mountains of Richtersveld. There are numerous sections in the novel that would keep readers on the edge of the seat. There are Shankar's encounters with a man-eating lion and a black mamba snake; him and Alvarez rushing to safety as a volcano erupts, causing havoc; and Shankar's odyssey across the dreaded Kalahari Desert to reach the city of Salisbury in Rhodesia. This odyssey is a truly gruelling, gripping read, with Shankar battling hunger, thirst, and packs of wolves and coyotes in his struggle for survival. But the true appeal of the book lies in its clarion call to venture out of our comfort zones and to test our mettle, to reject a sedentary life in favour of one where the dangers and joys of discovery await us. It is the search for these joys, rather than the promise of diamonds, that propel Shankar and Alvarez's mission. At the end of the book, Shankar returns to his homeland with plans of coming back to Africa again, and he prays to be one of those people who, in Bandopadhyay's words, "treat the entire sky as the roof above the head, and the whole world as a path to traverse." "Being a beautiful, clear crystal ball that breaks into pieces is better than being a stationary tile on the roof", Shankar opines. It is precisely to imbibe this spirit that readers, especially younger ones, should read Chander Pahar.

A Round The Half World

«The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page»

«To travel is to take a journey into yourself»

«Travel broadens the mind»



Priyanka

I, Priyanka Das, girl of 12 years, residing in Moscow, Russia and my passionate dream from the very day I came to my senses was to travel to foreign countries and get familiar with different cultures and traditions within our wonderful world. Visit famous and ancient cities, exotic and interesting places.

My dream came true in the year 2008 when I boarded the flight for Hong kong. Hong kong known for its expansive skyline and deep natural harbor, is one of the administrative region of China. The other administrative region of China , Macau was also visited, which is the Las Vegas of the east for its number of casinos.

Next two years our destination was Europe which started with Italy

Capital Rome as there is a saying that all roads lead to Rome - the ancient city center of the Italian Renaissance, the city of the great colosseum and many historical and architectural venues. On to Vatican city – the smallest independent state in the world, within a city of Rome which is the residential place for the catholic popes and also the current pope Benedict XVI.

Venice – the land of the canals, the bridges and the gondolas. It is one of the most beautiful city ever built by man, was my next destination. And then on to Pisa where the famous leaning tower stands. City of Florence - the birth place of the renaissance was also visited. Milan – design and fashion capital was also toured. Gardaland – the number one fun park of Italy was of great fun and enjoyment.

After Italy our next destination was Switzerland - one of the richest countries in the world, located in the Alps mountain range with its lush and picturesque landscapes and awesome snow capped mountain ranges. Cities like Zurich, Interlaken and Lucern were visited and also I went to the top of Europe, Jungfrauoch.

Next stop was Austria also a beautiful country in the Alps.

Holland - the land of tulips and windmills with its capital Amsterdam was our next landmark. On to Belgium - hosts of the Nato and EU headquarters and its beautiful cities Brugge and Brussels. Mini Europe park in Brussels was a sight.

Next destination was Spain especially Barcelona - the capital of Catalonia and the land of Gaudi, has a masterpiece church by Gaudi - the Sagrada Familia which is being built for the last 100 years and will take another 25 years to be completed.

Germany - the land of diversities and cities Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin was a part of my tour.

France, especially Paris famous for Eiffel Tower was awesome place to visit.

One of the largest city in the world with its museums like Louvre, cathedral Notre dame and Monmarta and the beautiful street Champ elysses and its famous European Dineyland. Paris by night is very enchanting and so it is called the city of lights.

Mostly our journey in Europe was covered by car, which is the best way to see a country thoroughly.

USA and cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas, New York, San Diego and places like Grand Canyon and Zion was a great experience to visit.

America known for Hollywood, statue of liberty, the skyscrapers - the gone twin towers, Disneylands and other fun parks and studios was breathtaking.

Next time we went to the far east Thailand - cities Bangkok and Phuket, Malaysia - cities Kuala Lumpur with its Petronas tower and Genting Highlands. and Singapore where the night safari is a must watch attraction.

Dubai an emirate within the united arab emirates well known for its tallest building – the Burj Khalifa and desert safari was very enjoyable.

Egypt – Cairo the land of the pyramids and the pharaos and the famous Sphinx was something very unique. This wonder of the world - the pyramids has a mysterious attraction to people and I also got carried away.

Cyprus - the birthplace of the Aphrodite with its beautiful islands and landscapes was another awesome experience.

My latest visit was to Turkey - the land of the ottomans and the byzantine empire, and Istanbul earlier known as Constantinople famous for its mosques such as the Aya Sophia and the blue mosque and the Topkapi Palace museum. Istanbul is only city in the world where two continents meet Europe and Asia.

Accordingg to world tourism organization the 10 most visited places in the world are:Paris, London, New York, Antalya, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Dubai, Bangkok and Istanbul.

Still half way to go. I take leave and prepare for my next trips to countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, United Kingdom, Brazil, South Africa, Scandanavia and lots more.

Exploring new places is an incredible experience.

Priyanka Das
Class 7





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THE HAUNTED FOREST

It was mid November and I was returning with my two colleagues through this dense forest after enjoying a sumptuous meal consisting of Kebabs and Biryani. The waiter would not let us pay for the food and instead insisted on paying for it from HIS pocket in spite of repeated requests because he turned was a friend to my two colleagues who happened to be new college level trainees in the company that I worked for. It was about one o'clock past midnight and we could feel a thunder storm coming up. Since my house and the restaurant were on either sides of the forest we had decided to walk through the forest even though it was quite an unearthly hour to do so. My house happened to be a very old building dating back to the late eighteenth century during the British rule. It then belonged to a British Army officer who is said to have inhabited the house for around four years. There were many rumors doing round of the place about this house of mine being haunted! Though I never really believed in any of those rumors, somehow, I always made it a point to be home by ten pm or so. However, on that particular day, we went easy on this rule and ended up staying out till as late as 1 am!

We kept walking discussing how lovely the meal was, what our new projects were, including a little bit of leg pulling as usual. My new colleagues wanted my guidance at work, since it had been a few days since they joined my office but were yet to get introduced to everybody. Like every outsider, they too were looking for a place to stay.

I did show them a few, one of which was a house close to the Gafoor Railway Station, next to the forest. The railway station was over a hundred years old and it was situated on the road that lead to the Meerut Cantonment which happens to be one of India's largest cantonment built by the East India Company way back during the British rule. My colleagues, however, were reluctant on a place close to the station. They finally decided to put up at the Guest House close to where I lived.

It was dark and the only source of light was a kerosene lantern in my hand. My heartbeat got faster as did my footsteps. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder and I turned back with a jolt only to realize that it was my colleague! "Kya hua? Dar gaye?" He said with a wink and an ear to ear grin on his face, his hand still on my shoulder.

I took a deep breath and managed a wry smile and quipped "Nehin, bas aise hi.... Chalo, lets walk faster, we are already very late". We continued with our walk, this time a little faster

It was a moonlit night and we could hear the howling of the wolves from across the hills. The rustling sound of the dry leaves getting crushed under our feet reminded me of the spooky tales of the Headless Horseman. We were barely a 100 meters away from the guest house as I could see the faint light of the lamp piercing through the eerie darkness of that night!

"Thank God!" I said to myself! We were about to reach the guest house.

I saw them off at the dark corridor of the guest house, Bid Good Night and started heading towards my residence which was still a few kilometers away... "It's time I bought myself a two wheeler". The rustling sound of leaves still continued under my boots and suddenly, I felt a cold shiver run down my spine. I stopped. I Looked around. Relieved that there was nobody apart from me over there I continued with my walk. Suddenly, I felt my lungs come out of my throat with this evil sound of laughter coming from nowhere!

In a reflex, I picked up a wooden tree branch lying on the ground and turned back, and guess what? I was greeted by none other but that colleague of mine who I had seen off just a while ago! It was him laughing at me and pulling my leg about how scared I have been ever since I entered the forest!

"Aap to bahut jaldi darr jatey ho! Itna daroge to iss jungle mein kaise rahoge dost?" The same grin intact on his face!

"I looked at him with disbelief, muttered a "Good Night" and started to walk hastily towards my house.

The next morning started as usual. The newspaper had nothing interesting to offer. My eyes quickly brushed over two stray incidents, one about an old betel nut seller and the other about a train accident.

I grabbed my briefcase and reached office. I was surprised to see that the new trainees had still not arrived!

"They are new here, may be they have gone out sightseeing. They should be here post lunch". I told myself.

The old monasteries, the church dating back to late eighteenth century or even the local mandi had enough color and flavor in them to attract any new comer to this quaint little town.

The day passed by and evening dawned. No news of them. Surprisingly, nobody in the office was aware either! I decided to go check on them at the guest house on my way back from office.

It was already dark by the time I reached the guest house.

Ting Tong, I rang the door bell.

"Ji kahiye?" An old caretaker in his 70s appeared. Sparse salt and pepper hair, trimmed carelessly, freckles all over the face telling stories which his old eyes hidden behind his small round glasses must have witnessed down the decades. It looked like he had been there since ages without much activity. On my enquiring about my colleagues, to my horror, he replied "Sahab, wo dono toh do din pehle hi yehan se chale gaye. Bol rahe thhe ke unhe station jaana hain".

My heart sank! The caretaker offered to show me the torn and tattered guest house register which had details of guests coming in and leaving. "It's ok... aap rehne dijiye.. aap ko yaad nehin hoga", I told him and walked out of the guest house while he kept staring at me through the cracked lens of his spectacle.

"Pata nehin kaise kaise ajeeb se log aa jatey hain" ...I overheard him muttering these words under his breath as the creaky main door of the guest house closed behind me.

I decided to go to that restaurant where we dined the previous night. I walked all the way to the area where the restaurant was located, but where is the restaurant? "Am I at the right place?" I asked myself. I could not have been so wrong! I looked around frantically and the only person I saw was an old betel

but seller. I went up to him and asked him "Yahan pe jo hotel thha, wo kahan gaya??" The look on his face was that of a startled man who had just then seen an alien! He looked at me with confusion in his eyes and babbled "Saab, main yahan par dus saal se hu aur b tak maine yahan par koi hotel nehin dekha, aap shayad galat jagah pe aa gaye ho, idhar pehle se hi aisa ghana jungle hain". no, nO, NO! I cannot be so wrong ! This IS the place ! I held him by his shoulder, shook him up out of desperation and yelled at him "Mujhey sach batao, ya sab kya ho raha hain?? Tum sab jhoot kyu bol rahe ho???"

Scared and baffled by my sudden reaction, he shakily freed himself and handed me a copy of a newspaper and asked me to read a particular news printed in it.

"Saab, is khabar ko padhiye"... he pointed to the same article about the betel nut seller which I had read in the morning

"Mujhey nehi padhna...main isse..." I was about to say something more when he interrupted me and said –

"Saab ye mere baarein mein likha gaya hain. Mere paas ek bhai saab aate the, wo mujhse har roz supaari kharidte the. Ek din unhone mujhse kahan ki wo akhbaaron mein kahaniya likhte hain aur wo mere baarein mein likhna chahte hain"

"Toh main kya karu?? Mere paas itna samay nehin hain yeh sab padhne ka!", I screamed and was about to say something more that he stopped me and asked me if I had read the news of the train accident. I shook my head in a state of trance and told him that I hadn't!

"Saab, iss mein likha hain ki uss train waale haadse mein kuchh logo ki maut ho gayi thhi. Kya aapko nehin lagta ki jinke baarein mein aap puchh rahein hain, ye log wahi hain jinki maut us haadse mein hui hain??"

I did not know what to answer. My head was spinning and my vision was going blurred and incoherent. I could not put things in places.

"Saab, ye haadsa bahut saal pehle hua thha. Par kya aapne ye socha hain ki yeh khabar itne saalo ke baa dab kyun nikli hain?"

I had no reply to his question. I started to walk away, my legs feeling heavy and my head heavier. The old man shouted from behind "Saab?? Us raat maine unko thhik us haadse ke pehle dekha hain! Aur unke saath kuchh log aur bhi the jinhone kale rang ke coat pehne hue the!"

I listened, looked back, my vision blurred, my legs shivering and my head wanting to burst with so many questions unanswered! "Who were they?", "Who were the men in black coats?," "Why did

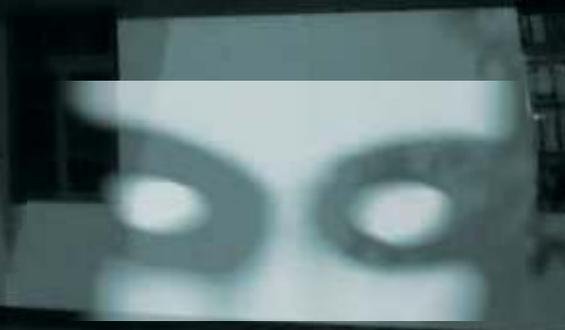
I meet them?" and many more!

It's been twenty eight years since that incident and I have still not got answers to my questions but I still feel that if I were to ever go back to that forest, I would meet my 'new colleagues' and that they would still come to me for guidance.

In these twenty eight years, I too have come across a few people who claim to have been through exactly the same incidents that I did..... two strangers, a moonlit night, a lavish dinner at a restaurant and a betel nut seller All of it to disappear into thin air as soon as the sun rose....

My hunt continues ...

Uditangshu Aurangabadkar
Class 8



Uditangshu





Professor Madhu with wife Tatiana

Launch of Yaadon Ke Ujjle Dhundle Chehre (Memories Relived)

Born on 22nd May 1925. Received Masters Degree in Economics from Punjab University in 1947 followed by PhD in the literary works of Gorky and Premchand. In 1991 was awarded the Padma Shree, in 2001 received the Order of Friendship, the highest accolade given to any foreigner in Russia from the President of Russia. In August this year, his book 'Yaadon Ke Ujjle Dhundle Chehre' (Memories Relived) was launched. Aaratrika warmly congratulates Prof. Madhu and had a chat with him after the launch.

How did it all begin? At 14, Prof. Madhu started writing poems which were published in his first collection of poems UNMAD in 1951. This was followed by another collection entitled SHUNIYA. Both books were warmly received and reviewed in literary journals of India at that time. His latest collection of poems is called GEET AGEET.

How did he come to Russia? After a stringent selection by the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Prof. Madhu came to Russia in March 1957 on the Invitation of the Soviet Ministry of Culture to work in the Foreign Language Publishing House as Translator and Editor. He learnt the Russian language on his own. In fifty five years of work in Moscow, he has translated from Russian to Hindi, more than one hundred books; from children's literature to Russian classics like the works of Pushkin and Tolstoy.

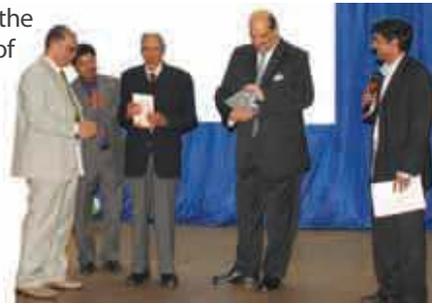


Aaratrika's Layout designer Nadya gifts Dr. Madhu's book to Sri Amitabh Bachchan, Moscow 01.08.2012

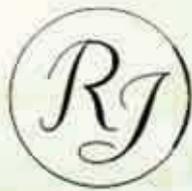
Latest launch: Earlier this year, Prof. Madhu released Part II of his book called "Yeadon Key Dhundle Ujjle Chehre" (Memories Relived). Part I of speaks about his life prior to arrival in Moscow and gives a description of events that happened during his childhood, including the partition of India from Pakistan and his meeting with various writers in Lahore. Part II deals with his life in Moscow and provides an insight into the formation of Hindustani Samaj by the first group of Indians who came to work and live in Moscow. Prof. Madhu is the founder member and was the president of the organization from 1976 to 2007 and at present is its patron.

His upcoming works: A poem on Ashoka which emphasizes on peace and non-violence.

With inputs from Ritu Jethalia



Book launch From left: Yogender Nagpal, A.S. Singh, Prof. Madhu, Ambassador, Vishal Jethalia



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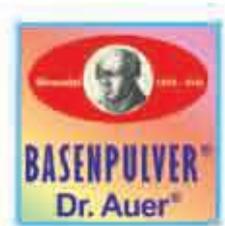
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Namo Namah**

**Ya Devi Sarva Bhutesu Shakti rupena samsthita I
Namestasyai II Namestasyai II Namestasyai II
Namo Namah**

**Ya Devi Sarva Bhutesu Buddhi rupena samsthita I
Namestasyai II Namestasyai II Namestasyai II
Namo Namah**

**Ya Devi Sarva Bhutesu Laxmi rupena samsthita I
Namestasyai II Namestasyai II Namestasyai II
Namo Namah**

**Namestasyai II Namestasyai II Namestasyai II
Namo Namah**

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Seeking Happiness by Vishal Jethalia



Vishal Jethalia

Photo Credit: Nitin Aurangabadkar

A chartered accountant by education, a businessman by choice and a poet by nature. This is me. Love children and feel most happy spending time with them.

*I shut my eyes but the tears keep falling
Tormenting me, making my heart go calling
Foolishly I let you to go and now I stay lonely
In a jungle feeling morose and melancholy
Never knowing your importance till you left
Standing in despair with satisfaction bereft
Please come back, make me smile again
I have lost enough, yet still so much to gain
Help me get priceless memories back to me
Disquiet and anguish never again to be
The mind was foolish, kept asking for more
Not caring for what was already in store
I promise now never to be greedy
Your presence is all I need to be worthy.*

Mitali Sarkar shares a poem of her sister - Sikha Nandan



From *Jadi Mil Ghate*,
a collection of poems
published by Sahitya
Rongberong Publication,
SatyaSadhan Das



অবাক আমি

শিখা নন্দন

সবুজ ঘাস, নীল আকাশ
আমি অবাক।
পাথর কুচি চারধার
শীতল পাটি, বাউল গান,
শরৎকাল, ফুলের সাজি, শিউলি ফুল।
আমি মুগ্ধ, শিশুর মত।
ধানক্ষেত, সরষে ফুল
হলুদ মাটি আর কাশ ফুল।
লাঙল কাঁধে, জোড়া বলদ
ভোর হতেই কৃষক দল।
দাওয়ায় বসা, হাঁকো হাতে ঠাকুর দাদা।
গুরুমশাই, গাছতলায় পাঠশালা।
সন্ধেবেলায়, প্রদীপ হাতে
তুলসী তলায়, শঙ্খ বাজায়
ঘরের বধু---
আমি শুনি ভেতর থেকে,
আমি দেখি বিষ্ময়ে।



Jayita Roy is a student at Synergy University, Moscow, and is doing her Masters in Engineering of Information System and Technology. When not dealing with numbers and figures, Jayita indulges in her passion which are birds and photography and here she shares with us some of the little treasures she found in our city. Her father is her number one fan and her mother, her number one model.



BIRDS

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Woodpecker has a very long tongue; up to 4 inches long and this is used to excavate insects from the tree trunks. They live up to 11 years. The bright patches of red and yellow on their heads and bellies for signaling.

Tree Sparrow

Sparrows may be the most familiar of all wild birds. Many sparrow species commonly live in agricultural areas. The Eurasian Tree and House Sparrows are particularly specialized in living around humans. They love to eat grains and seeds.



Wild European Starling

European Starlings are good at mimicking other birds and can live up to 15 years. Every year, they return to the same nest. They eat seeds, fruits, insects and small animals like caterpillars and spiders. They are not afraid to take over a good feeding spot from other birds.

Grey headed gull

The grey-headed gull is found in freshwater lakes and wetlands. Gulls are highly adaptable feeders and take a wide range of prey like fish, insects, rodents, eggs, reptiles, seeds and fruit and even other birds.





The Bengali Detective Becomes Bengali

Detective fiction in Bengal began, much like science fiction and horror fiction in Bengali, as imitations of the western texts in the genre. The extent of the influence of Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie and Edgar Allen Poe on the Bengali authors is perhaps best evinced in the books of Dinendra Kumar Roy. Though a Bengali himself, Roy created a British sleuth named Robert Blake, who lives in London and works with his assistant Smith. In other words, so deep was the effect of reading British detective stories on Roy, that he couldn't envision a setting and a detective who wasn't British. This can, quite justifiably, be described as an example of the cultural hegemony perpetrated by colonialism, which taught the colonized people to recognize their inferiority to the West in all aspects, and encouraged them to imitate the western model, which was advertised as the epitome of perfection. So, while Roy's Blake series was probably a good means for the Bengali readers of the time to know about London, a city which, to many Indians, was as wondrous as Xanadu, the stories themselves were so much in thrall of the English sleuthing sagas that they remain undistinguished. The same can be said for Panchkari Dey's Debendra Bijoy stories and Nihar Ranjan Gupta's Kiriti Roy tales: while both the authors, unlike Roy, wrote about Bengali private eyes, their works, also, are way too derivative of the western detective fiction canon. Swapan Kumar's paperbacks, featuring a rakish detective named Deepak Chatterjee, was perhaps influenced more by the hard-boiled American detective stories than by the Golden Age mysteries of Britain: the violence and lurid eroticism in these books owe something to the sensibilities of Chandler and Spillane.



Abhirup Mascharak

Abhirup Mascharak – I am a twenty-four year old who, when not fulfilling the bare necessities of life, tries his best to familiarize himself with cinema from all over the world. Steven Spielberg and John Ford among the Hollywood greats, Ingmar Bergman, Francois Truffaut and Werner Herzog among the European mavericks, and Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Mani Ratnam, Satyajit Ray, Vishal Bhardwaj and Sriram Raghavan from among the Indian cinematic pantheon are some of my favourite directors.



1 - Hemendra Kr. Roy; 2 - An omnibus of Hemendra Kr. Roy's work; 3 - A sketch of Jayanta, Manik, Sundar Babu; 4 - Byomkesh Bakshi, played by Rajat Kapoor on Indian television premiered in year 1993

Editor's note

Celebrating 100 years of Indian Cinema, this year Aaratrika is delighted to partner with Film Studies Department of Jadavpur University, Kolkata to offer two extremely interesting articles by young expert Abhirup Mascharak. An active blogger, a born critic, a topper at his University and even a Director of a documentary on Steven Spielberg in 2009, titled 'Steven Spielberg: A Man for All Seasons'. The first article 'The Bengali Detective becomes Bengali' focuses on the evolution of detective fiction, tracing its development into a full-fledged, distinctive genre in Bengali literature. In 'Neo-Noir' (KINO EYE section) the author has brilliantly summed up the sociology and evolutionary issues of Bollywood genre in the last decade.



The first Bengali author who attempted to create detectives who were not mere shadows of their western counterparts was Hemendra Kumar Roy. His sleuths, Jayanta and Manik, are refreshingly free of western affectations. True, they live in colonial Calcutta, read Conan Doyle and LeBlanc, and the rapport the two share can invite comparisons to the Holmes-Watson partnership, but at the end of the day, they remain Hemen Roy's own creations. They have distinctive habits and quirks that set them apart from the others in the tribe (such as Jayanta's tendency to sniff the snuff box whenever he discovers a significant clue, and him playing the flute as he thinks about the complications of a case). The books also have a welcome dose of humour in the form of the obese, bumbling but good-natured police inspector, Sundar-babu, which adds a further degree of individuality to them. Most significantly, there are moments in these stories where Jayanta and Manik clearly voice their disapproval of the Bengalis' penchant for aping westerners, and demand that the young generation develop a more nationalist sensibility. How such sections escaped the wrath of the British authorities, I don't know; perhaps they never considered Bengali popular literature to be important enough to subject it to censorship.

5 - 'Badshahi Aangti' (The Emperor's Ring) by Satyajit Ray, featuring Feluda was first published in 1969; 6 - A sketch of Feluda, Topshe, BanBihari-Babu (the villain of novel) with BanBihari-Babu's henchman dressed as a Sikh driver; 7 - Tollywood superstar Abir Chatterjee played Byomkesh Bakshi in the 2010 in the movie called 'Byomkesh Bakshi' directed by Anjan Dutta



But it is with Saradindu Bandopadhyays Byomkesh Bakshi and Satyajit Rays Feluda that Bengali detective tales really came into their own. Both the authors took care to create a fictional landscape that's entirely their own, despite debts to Conan Doyle. Sure, Byomkesh's exploits are chronicled by his friend Ajit Banerjee, and Feluda's by his cousin Tapeshe (nicknamed 'Topshe'), just as Watson wrote about the cases of Holmes. And Sidhu *iyatha* is certainly the Mycroft to Feluda's Sherlock. But nobody can deny that a distinctly Bengali tenor marks every page of these books. Byomkesh and Ajit, with their dhotis and their laidback lifestyle, could be quintessential Bengali '*babus*'; were it not for the former's razor sharp intelligence, immense daring, and an unnerving ability to see through people, and the latter's wry, self-deprecating style of narration, which hints at a mind that's more alert than it seems to be. The Byomkesh stories may even be read as social works, which depict life in colonial Bengal, the riots during the partition of India, the new dawn of independence, and the problems in the newly liberated country, with much palpability. Feluda is a more westernized figure, be it in his attire or his manner of speech, but that's simply because he was created in a more modern, more westernized Bengal. However, he is no less conscious of his roots than Byomkesh, nor any less proud of it, as is amply demonstrated in his stern reply to a racist Englishman in the novel *London-e Feluda*. Feluda stories are notable, too, for the way they weave nuggets on the history and culture of a place within the stories: few Bengali works evoke Lucknow better, for example, than *Badshahi Angti*.

Among more recent Bengali detectives, Samaresh Majumdar's Arjun, Syed Mustafa Siraj's Colonel Nilandrishekar, and Suchitra Bhattacharya's Mitin-mashi (possibly the first prominent female Bengali detective) deserve a mention. In the hands of these writers, the genre continues to flourish and grow.

8 - Sonar Kella, released in the USA as 'The Golden Fortress', is a 1971 mystery novel and a 1974 film by Bengali writer and director Satyajit Ray. It features Soumitra Chatterjee as Feluda and is the very first film of Feluda in silver screen; 9 - Feluda with Jatayu in the 2010 thriller film 'Gorosthane Shabdhan' (Beware in the graveyard) directed by Sandip Ray, Satyajit Ray's son. The movie is adapted from the novel written by Satyajit Ray

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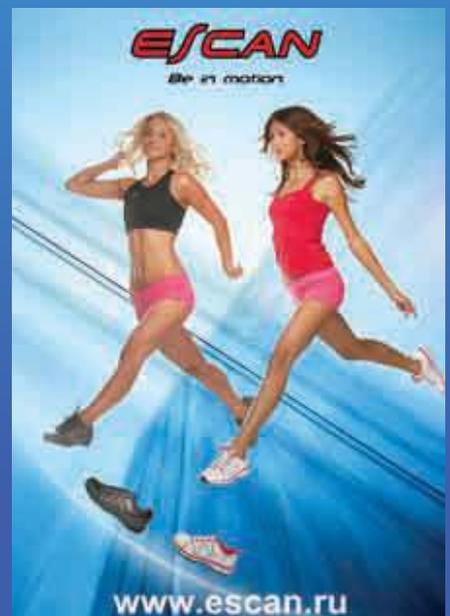


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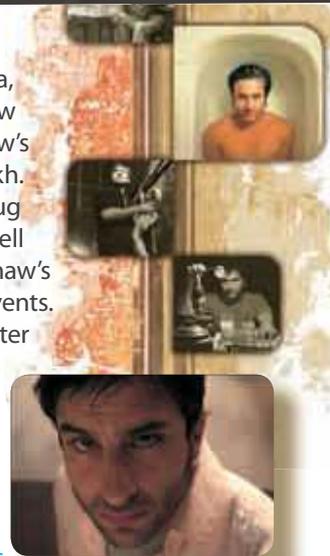
Neo-noir is a very curious thing indeed. The term is familiar to cine-goers everywhere; yet, you would be hard-pressed to find a concrete definition of it. What exactly makes a film a neo-noir? Is it a visual style, one characterized by low-key high contrast lighting and the use of chiaroscuro effects? Or is it an urban setting, and a fascination with a city's seamy underbelly? Or is it, rather, a tone of foreboding and paranoia? Must there be the archetypal noir figures such as the hard-boiled detective and the femme fatale in the film? Or does any film featuring crime is a part of this genre, as Robert Arnett opined when he said, "Neo-noir has become so amorphous as a genre/movement, any film featuring a detective or crime qualifies"? Or is it a combination of all these factors—and maybe some others—that is necessary for a film to be a neo-noir?

People have, and continue to debate about this. A film that one fervently champions as a neo-noir may not seem noir-ish enough to another. At the end of the day, then, it is perhaps helpful to remember what Arnett says about the amorphousness of neo-noir: the genre has always been defined and interpreted with a great deal of flexibility, and it is best that we continue to do so. It is this flexibility, in fact, that has made neo-noir a global cinematic phenomenon rather than an American one—while it has its roots in the classic Hollywood film noirs of the 1940s and 1950s, countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America also have their own formidable bodies of neo-noir films today. After all, which country doesn't have cities with a seamy underbelly, or doesn't give its citizens reasons to feel paranoid and anxious? Private eyes and femme fatales have no nationality either, and thanks to globalization, DVDs of classical noirs are available all over the world, enabling filmmakers to study and replicate the visual aspects of those films. With that in mind, let us take a look at some recent Indian films - released after the year 2000 - that, in my opinion, are neo-noirs, and very engaging ones at that.

BEING CYRUS

The first Indian film of the sort that I remember seeing is *Being Cyrus* (2005). Directed by Homi Adajania, it is a deft, disturbing take on the lethal shenanigans of a dysfunctional Parsi family, the Sethnas. Dinshaw Sethna, a former sculptor, and his wife Katy, live in the small town of Panchgami, while Farrokh, Dinshaw's brother, lives in Mumbai with his wife Tina. Fardoonjee, Dinshaw and Farrokh's father, also lives with Farrokh. In true noir tradition, the characters, it turns out, have their dark sides and secrets: Dinshaw is a wasted drug addict, the promiscuous Katy is having an affair with Farrokh, and Farrokh is abusive towards his wife as well as his ill father. Into this scenario appears Cyrus Mistry, a young man who claims to be admirer of Dinshaw's artworks, and wants to be his apprentice. The arrival of this stranger sets into motion a deadly chain of events. More illicit affairs take place, corpses pile up, people are framed, and the final scenes show that the character who plunged knives into the hearts of others is actually something of a good guy, while the character who seemed to be the most innocuous of the lot is a cold-blooded schemer, a femme fatale of the deadliest sort. The film effectively creates an environ of menace through the darkly tinted images, and keeps us guessing about the nature and intentions of the people we see. This sense of uncertainty, and the feeling of having the rug pulled from beneath your feet at the end, are the very hallmarks of neo-noir. ■

Cyrus Mistry (Saif Ali Khan), the enigmatic protagonist of Being Cyrus.



Anurag Kashyap's *No Smoking* (2007) is another recent Indian noir. The central conceit here is this: a man named K is a chain smoker, and refuses to quit despite his wife's repeated requests. Finally, she leaves K, who then joins a rehab to kick the habit, only to discover that the rehab, and its master, a god-man of sorts named Shri Shri Prakash Guru Ghantal Baba Bengali Sealdahwale, are far more sinister than they seem. Thereafter, the film gradually turns into a Kafkaesque tale of tyranny and nightmares, as K struggles to extract himself from this nefarious rehab. The viewers, meanwhile, are asked to ponder upon the issue of personal freedom: smoking may not be a healthy thing, but does anybody have the

right to compel—with brute force, sometimes, as Baba Bengali does—a man to give it up? This, in turn, may be interpreted as a metaphor for Kashyap's freedom to make movies, which was attacked by the Indian Censor Board when it refused to allow *Paanch* and *Black Friday* to release. The same issue of freedom crops up here, as Kashyap seems to be asking, "You may not like my films, but what gives you the right to prevent me from making them and to prevent others from seeing my films?" While this isn't really his best film—that honour, I think, belongs to his latest effort, *Gangs of Wasseypur*—it remains a notable entry in the Indian neo-noir school. Characters in film noirs are usually seen with a cigarette perched on their lips: as Roger Ebert writes, "Everybody in film noir is always smoking, as if to say, 'On top of everything else, I've been assigned to get through three packs today.'" The resultant smoke creates a visual murkiness that seems to underscore the overall murkiness of a noir setting, and this is almost literally true for Kashyap's film. ■



Kino Eye is the name of a well-known documentary by the Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov. The name signifies his theory that the camera eye is an objective recorder of truth that should be allowed to document reality without any interference.

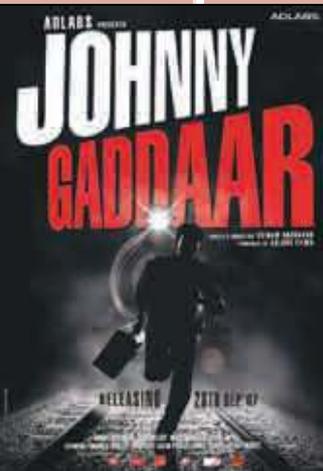
Sarika (Urmila Matondkar) in Ek Hasina Thi, lit in a typically noir style.

EK HASINA THI

Sriram Raghavan's *Ek Hasina Thi* (2004) and Johnny Gaddaar (2007) are sometimes described as a revenge drama and a heist film respectively, but look closer and you shall find that these, too, are really neo-noirs that use revenge and heist as plot points to explore

urban darkness. In *Ek Hasina Thi*, the protagonist, Sarika, is an independent working woman living alone in Mumbai, and from the very outset, the city seems to be threatening her existence. The lecherous neighbour who constantly makes passes at her is an embodiment of this threat, this lack of safety, that plagues individuals living in a modern city. And when a young man named Karan walks into her life and begins a romance with her, we get the distinct feeling that something is wrong: why would this man suddenly come out of nowhere and be so nice, so helpful, towards Sarika? So, when she is framed as being a drug mule by Karan,

we aren't surprised; the surprise lies, rather, in Sarika's subsequent transformation from a nice girl into a borderline psychotic avenging angel, who breaks out of the jail and hunts down Karan, inflicting upon him a terrible retribution. By the end of the film, then, she has succeeded in her quest for vengeance, but there's no triumphant note, for in the process, she has lost her innocence, and perhaps also her ability to love and trust again. ■



A crucial moment in Johnny Gaddaar, where Vikram (Neil Nitin Mukesh) decides that he will go ahead with his plan to double-cross his gang members.



Johnny Gaddaar follows Vikram, the youngest member in a group of five criminals, as he tries to double-cross the other four and run away with a large sum of money that is supposed to be divided among them. Theft, initially, is the only thing on Vikram's mind: he isn't really cut out for murder, and thinks he can get away with the money without killing anybody. However, murder is precisely what he ends up committing, multiple times, due to unavoidable circumstances. And as he is forced to kill again and again, the film ceases to be about the heist and becomes, instead, a fatalistic tale of retribution and comeuppance, delivered by that omniscient puller of strings, Fate, who mercilessly, gleefully yanks Vikram around, driving him to an end that's both surprising and shocking. This element of fatalism is intrinsic to many noirs, where the characters seem destined to suffer and meet ignominious ends. *Out of the Past* (1947) is a good example. It tells the story of a man whose dark past catches up with him and destroys him, and there's a sense of inevitability to the tragedy; it is bound to happen, no matter what. So is the case with Vikram in *Johnny Gaddaar*, who seems to have signed his document of doom the moment he decided to carry out a heist, and nothing he does subsequently can change his fate. And his plans going awry may well be interpreted as the uncertainty of life in modern urban landscapes, where anything can happen to anybody at any time, and the best laid plans can be rendered ineffectual by obstructions from unlikeliest sources. ■

Kaminey (2009) is somewhat different from the aforementioned films, in that it owes more to Indian popular cinema than it does to western noirs in terms of tone and narrative devices. Vishal Bhardwaj, the director, has used a number of age-old conventions of Bollywood—song and dance sequences, romance, comedy, and the motif of twin brothers on opposite sides of the law—to map out a noir setting. Charlie and Guddu are the twins, who have grown estranged since a childhood mishap. But when Charlie steals a guitar case full of expensive cocaine, and Guddu tries to elope with the sister of an influential politician, the two find themselves embroiled in a massive mesh of trigger-happy gangsters, corrupt cops, dangerous drug-lords, and sectarian politics, from which they can emerge alive only if they learn to rely on each other. While more light-hearted than others of its kind, the film remains a disturbing take on contemporary urban reality in India, where crime and death are all too palpably present. Also of note is the multiculturalism of the criminal metropolis in the film. There are Marathis, Bengalis, North-Easterners, UP-ites, even Africans, trading in drugs, weapons, diamonds and what not. The different ethnicities of the characters are effectively used to etch them out, providing them with distinct features, so that each character is set apart from the others in the huge ensemble cast, and each is a colourful, textured figure. ■

I could go on to discuss other films of the sort. *Manorama Six Feet Under* (2007), *Dum Maaro Dum* (2011), *Yeh Saali Zindagi* (2011), *Kahaani* (2012)—the list is long. But I believe I have spoken sufficiently for the uninitiated viewers to take an interest in the Indian neo-noirs. If you have a penchant for the dark side to the glittering urban reality in this country, watching these films would be a good way to satiate it.

From the runway...

FASHION WEEK KOLKATA

Year 2009, the month of April, Kolkata opened its doors to its first ever Fashion Week. Excitement was in the air as Kolkata geared up to watch high profile Bollywood stars like Bipasha Basu and John Abraham take to the ramp dressed by their favorite designers.

Conceptualized and organized by event director Yudhajit Dutta, Kolkata Fashion Week started with a bang! The likes of Bipasha Basu, John Abraham, Minisha Lamba, Zeenat Aman, Dino Morea and Chitrangada Singh set the ramp on fire when they strutted on the ramp amidst loud cheers. Aaratrika was present in this very first Kolkata Fashion Week way back in 2009 and we featured Bipasha Basu dressed as a stunning new age Bengali bride by designer duo Mona and Pali. Kolkata has always been hailed as the cultural capital of the country. Needless to say, KFW was one such platform which reiterated the fact once again. Themes like "Return to Roots" and "Weaves" aim at promoting the long lost traditional art forms of Bengal and eastern India. Block prints,

Madhubani Prints etc rule the ramps of KFW. Promoting the weavers of Bengal is a prime motto of KFW organizers and we have seen stalwart actors like Zeenat Aman take to the ramp dressed in a beautiful ensemble assembled by the weavers of Bengal. Raima Sen, the eternal beauty Suchitra Sen's Grand daughter also walked the ramp in a gorgeous handloom woven silk saree and looked most elegant. Not to forget our own girl Bipasha Basu in her traditional avatar all resplendent with Shakha Pola and a red bindi! I noted and internationally acclaimed film maker Mr. Rituparno Ghosh also took the crowd by fascination when he walked the ramp as a show stopper for designer Abhishek Dutta! The KFW also boasts of bringing in talented designers like Bibi Russel from Bangladesh who has been the face of international fashion magazines like Vogue, Harpers Bazaar and Cosmopolitan. She made the traditional Gamchha a Haute Couture with brilliant styling and clever use.



Wish you all a very Happy Puja & a Prosperous New Year.....

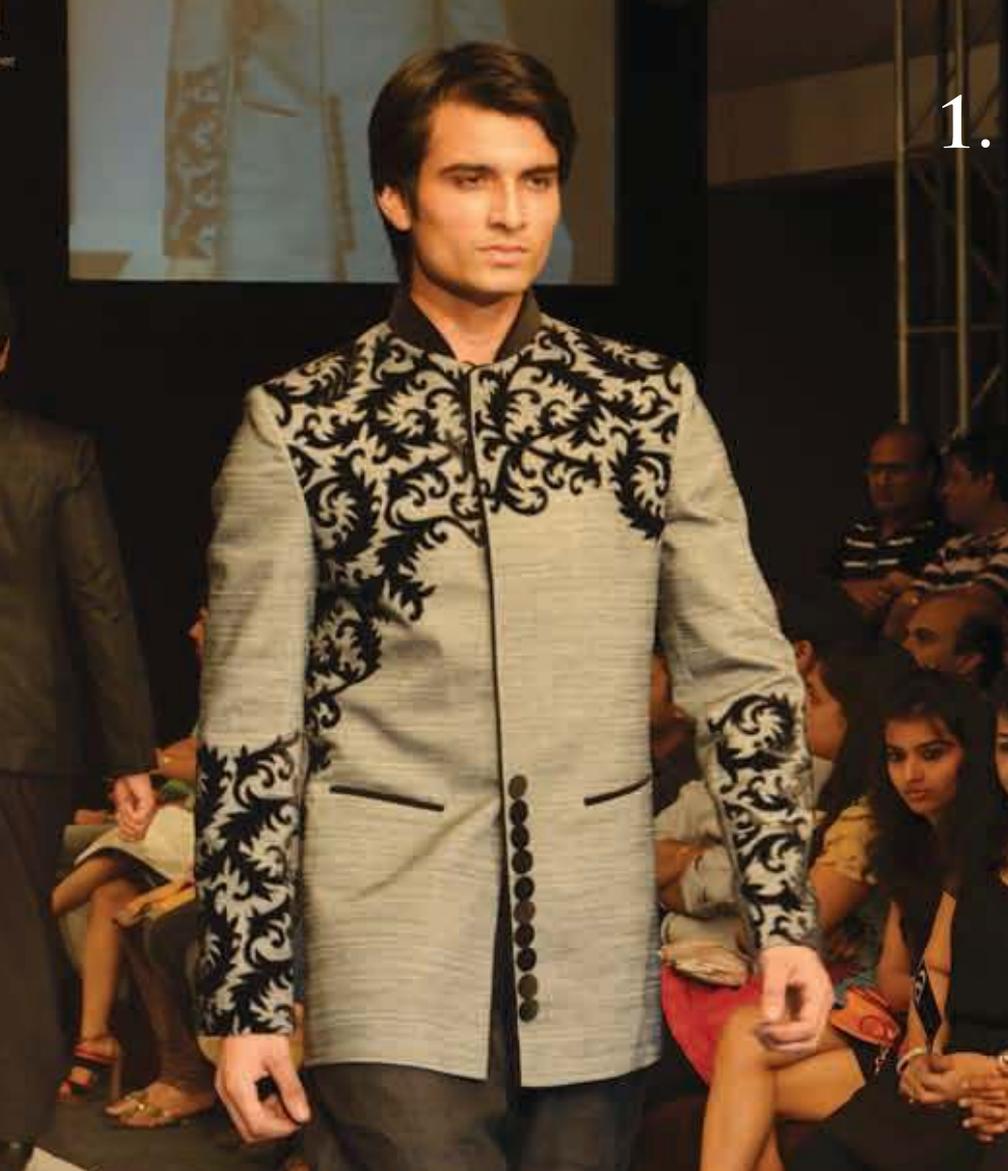
Pansari

This year, between September 14 till 17, Kolkata witnessed a colorful extravaganza of fashion, style and expression! Menswear designer Surbhi Pansari showcased her collection on the eve of September 16th to a gallery packed with audiences and paparazzi! Needless to say Aaratrika did not want to miss out on this golden opportunity to be a witness to her fabulous range of menswear and share it with all of you.

Her collection, aptly called 'A Royal Salute' was a beautiful juxtaposition of the past with the present, striking a perfect harmony and balance between the regal attire of the past and the chic minimal 'less is more' attitude of the present. The range comprised of zany cocktail suits and waist coats teamed with stylish slim fit trousers to Jackets with exquisite hand embroidery. What was interesting to watch is how she teamed these up with lowers which resembled breeches, but yet so comfortably stitched in fabrics like linen and silk. The icing on the cake was the finale collection which showcased some breathtakingly beautiful men's wedding wear called 'Sherwani' and we almost missed a heart beat seeing the models on the ramp sport those with gorgeous silk head gears and some exquisite pieces of jewelry. Talk of Royal Salute She is here to stay and how Aaratrika caught up with Mrs. Surbhi Pansari soon after the show and here is an excerpt from the tête-à-tête... Enjoy!



Clockwise from top left: Zeenat Aman, Bipasha Basu, Bibi Russell, Raima Sen, Rituparno Ghosh



1.



2.



3.



4.

Aaratrika - Hi Surbhi, what has been your design inspiration for the following collection?

Surbhi - Hi, first of all, I would like to welcome you to Kolkata Fashion Week and thank you for watching my show My inspiration for this particular collection has been the royal sartorial past that India and the Indian Subcontinent has had. I was always fascinated by the elaborate costumes that our men used to wear in the earlier ages. Of course with time and the fast life, things have undergone a sea change but this is such a good way to pay a tribute to that past of ours which is so glorious.

Aaratrika - Yes indeed, but why menswear in particular?

Surbhi - I was always keen on menswear. May be because in India there are very few menswear designers and I always wanted to bring in some new elements and aspects of menswear designs especially for our Kolkata men. Some of us still feel that a man need not really bother much about what his wardrobe stocks. Today a man can spend as much time to put together a Look that would make heads turn...

Aaratrika - What kind of style would you recommend to our men in Russia?

Surbhi - Given the cold climate in

Moscow, I would suggest a Chinese Colared Jacket made in pure wool, if possible, one could opt for an Indo Western Jacket with an embroidered collar or yoke. Wear this with a pair of smart slim fit trousers. Alternately, one could also opt for an embroidered long Kurta in a warm fabric like tweed. Elegantly drape a heavy shawl with beautiful embroidery. For a change, you could wear it with a pair of Aligarh Pyjamas instead of the regular Churidar.

Aaratrika - Thank you so much! I'm sure a lot of our friends back in Moscow would learn a lot from your fashion tip. Tell us Surbhi, what is Style according to you?

Surbhi - Style is a way of saying who YOU are without having to speak!

Aaratrika - Thanks Surbhi! Last but not the least, any message for our friends in Moscow?

Surbhi - Yes! I would like to wish all of you a wonderful Durga Puja and a fabulous Happy New Year in advance! Lets hope we get to meet in Moscow some day! Enjoy, have fun and be safe

... & we went *click click click!*

With Avik Roy from Kolkata

Photos:

1. A grey linen jacket with intricate Velvete embroidery.
2. A beige Georgette Banarasi Angarakha with an elaborate headgear and Churidar
3. A mauvish brown silk kurta with an embroidered waist coat and silk patiala
4. An embroidered jacket with dazzling button details worn with a silk head gear, tussar silk kurta and black churidar.



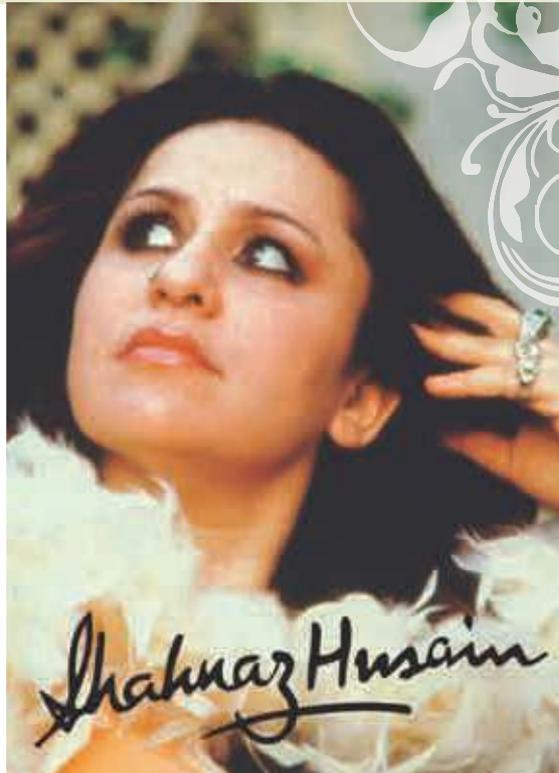
Avik Roy

An ardent lover of minimalist style, a huge fan of Russian designer Ulyana Sergeenko and her 'Dior Meets - Kremlin' style statements, Avik seeks solace in cooking and music that's soothing to the ears. Connected to one of India's leading textile giants as a Brand Manager, Avik strongly believes that 'a smile is the best accessory one can wear'.

In conversation with Shahnaz Husain

SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Padma Shri Shahnaz Husain, founder and CEO of Shahnaz Husain Group of Companies is an eminent Indian female entrepreneur best known for her herbal cosmetics, skin care products in particular. A visionary and an innovator, she introduced the new concept of Ayurvedic "care and cure" and is credited with bringing Ayurveda to the western world.



You have visited Russia in 2005 and in 2010. What fascinates you about the country? Did you notice anything distinctive?

During my trip to Russia, I was really taken up with the beauty of the country, specially the architecture. I saw a fabulous ballet and what really fascinated. What also struck me is the similarity between the people of India and Russia. I think that is why our two countries respect each other's culture and history.

What really struck me was the great interest in the Indian philosophies of Yoga, Meditation and Ayurveda. We represented India and Ayurvedic beauty care at the NICE Ideal Beauty Exhibition in St. Petersburg, organized by RESTEC and supported by the Government of St. Petersburg. About 80,000 agents had also collected to hear me speak on Ayurveda and its miraculous effects and how it is the ideal alternative to chemicals, for both beauty and health care.

Any interesting experience that you would like to share?

A memorable part of my visit was a spectacular Baltic cruise. Three sailing ships sailed from St. Petersburg to promote the Shahnaz Husain Ayurvedic treatments. The ships were beautifully decorated with fairy lights and attracted a huge crowd. We were entertained with flowers dropping in the form of fireworks, with the initials SH, which is the logo of our company. The firework flowers really looked beautiful against the midnight sky. It was a magnificent promotion. I gave more than 400 free consultations, followed by talks and demonstrations of our specialized beauty treatments. The main attraction was a Lottery, where two cars were given away as prizes.

Russian women are strikingly beautiful; they are aware of their beauty and are keen in maintaining it. You mentioned in one of your interviews that Russian women are very much aware about ingredients in their cosmetics; they look for natural ingredients and have a significant interest in Ayurvedic products. Is the Russian market among your strategic priority? How do you view the growth opportunities?

Yes, we are looking at the Russian market, in terms of product distribution, as well as our franchise salons. As already mentioned, there is a great deal of interest in Ayurvedic products. Bilateral trade between India and Russia continues to do well. In fact, according to a leading Indian paper The Economic Times, India and Russia will increase co-operation in many sectors and home to triple bilateral trade to \$20 billion by 2015. The growth potential is vast and we expect great opportunities for growth in Ayurvedic products.

*As told to Aaratrika
on 11.02.2012
New Delhi*



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Greetings from New Delhi



Agnih

I am an ex-student of the People's Friendship University of Russia, having just embarked upon the post graduate course in cardiology this year. I have certain peculiar (at least so considered within my circle of friends) interests, like my unflinching devotion towards songs of Tagore, a serious passion for western classical music (at one time even tried learning the forte piano in Russia though unsuccessfully) and a very strong attraction towards fine arts and world literature dating back essentially to the baroque and the impressionist era. Having said that I am still very much a doctor, who is passionate about human physiology. That is me in short.



माझी

किसी तट पर मैं खड़ा हूँ
अकेला, अनजान, खुद से,
और उस तरनी के सपने मुझे
आ आकर सताते,
जो मुझे माझी समझती थी स्वयं का .

उग्र उठती लहरियों को
देखकर डरता कभी था,
भरोसा वो दिलाती थी .
आज सबसे दूर कितना,
वहां कोलाहल था इतना,
तोड़ने को अति आतुर भावना को !
और कुछ उद्गार अस्थिर,
पागलों से बह रहे जो अतल मन पर,
आज भी हैं लेके आते ज्वर फिर फिर .
टूटने का डर वहां है .
उसी सागर के किनारे
लगी है वह किस सहारे,
देखने का एक अवसर भी न पाता !

आज किसका राग ये मन गुनगुनाता !

Agnih Mukherjee

Saptak – The Gamut of Seven Notes



Dinesh

Dr. Dinesh Chakraborty, an alumnus of I.M. Sechenov, 1ST Moscow State Medical University, now lives and works in Ahmedabad, India, as a consultant with International Drug Regulatory Authorities. He learns Classical Indian Music at the Saptak School of Music, still loves cooking for his friends on weekends and travels around, whenever he finds time.

The famous Russian composer and concert pianist Sergei Rachmaninov had once said that, "Music is enough for a lifetime, but a lifetime is not enough for music."

Time and again this has proved true. No truer than in Ahmedadabad, Gujarat, a 600 year old Historical and Heritage City; also one of the cultural hubs of Western India. Though I keep complaining about the miserably managed traffic to my new friends here, I cannot but admire the beautiful architecture of Sarkhej Roza, the magnificence of the numerous havelis in the old city, the grandeur of several beautiful Jain Temples and most importantly the warmth of the people and the food they make which makes this place so very special.

I was particularly delighted to learn that the 'Saptak School of Music' is located here, the place which organizes one of the most renowned and biggest Indian Classical Music Festival 'The Saptak Sangeet Samaroh', a 13 day music festival (1st till 13th of January) featuring both emerging talents and established performers.

I took it as my good fortune and got admitted at the first opportunity in the Vocal Music section under the tutelage of Shri Vikas Parikh, one of the illustrious students of Pandit Jasraj of the Mewati Gharana. The very first day Guruji started teaching me Desh raag. Given that it was monsoon with dark clouds hovering above and the dancing of the exotic peacocks practically everywhere mesmerised me in the heavenly melody of the raag.

So when I am not at my office or hanging out with my friends I am at Saptak. It's a wonderful experience. Though Ahmedabad is nowhere close to Moscow in certain aspects, the music that I have found here certainly links me to my college days in Russia. I wonder at times, if I could go back and perform in front of the audience that I have cherished.



Nabarun with Sinjini

Greetings from Kolkata

I am at present working as a Housestaff in the Dept. of Cardiology, in IPGME&R and SSKM Hospital. Got married on 6th April 2012. The past one year has been good but have missed all of you and the Moscow Durga Puja a lot. Hope to visit Moscow with my wife Sinjini someday. We wish you all a very happy Durga puja.

Dr. Nabarun Majumdar



Sarkhej Roza, Ahmedabad



Our new idol received from Kumartoli in 2011

Moscow Durga Puja Celebrations

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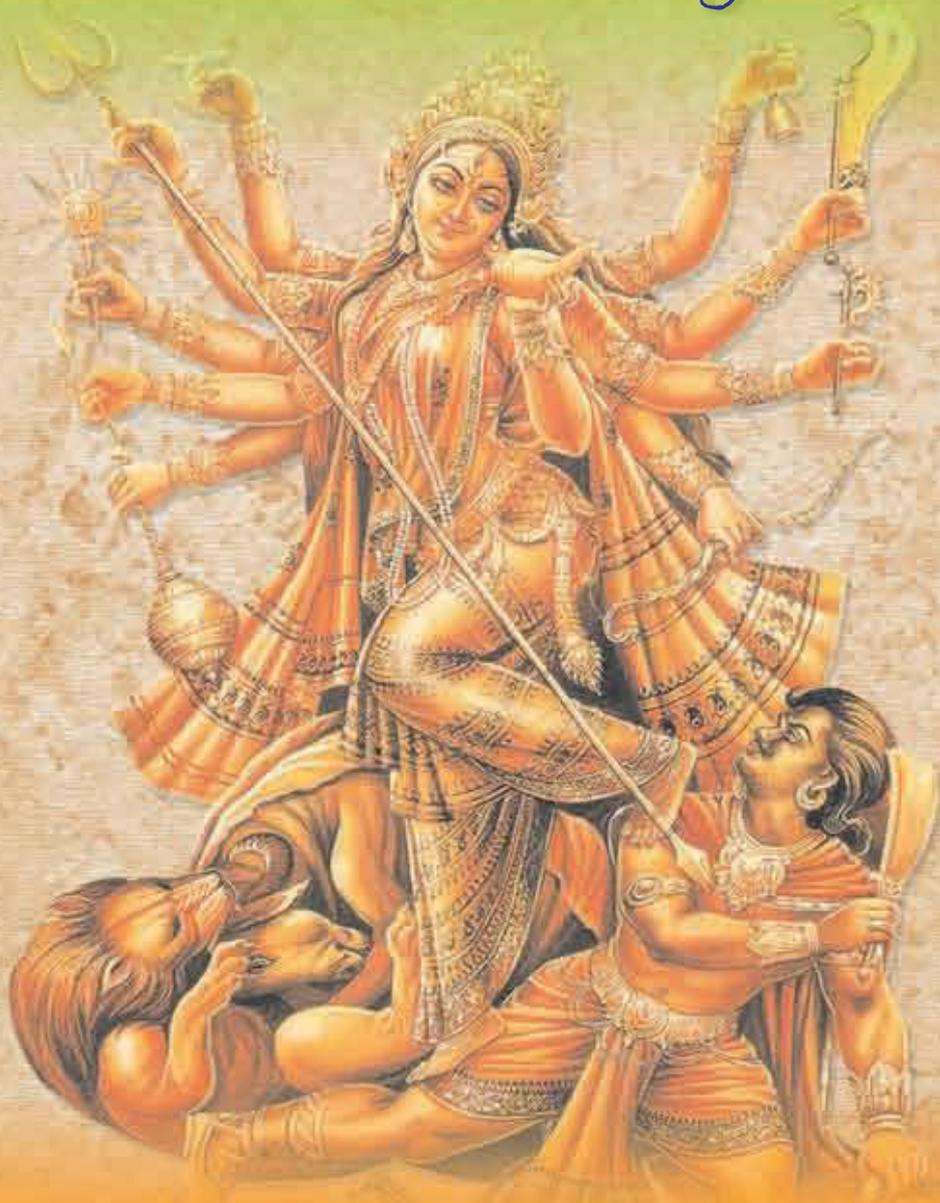
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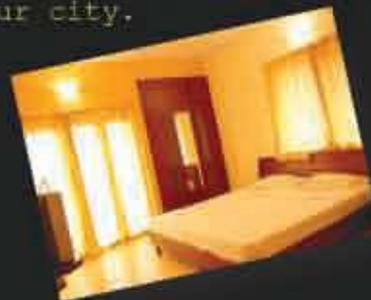
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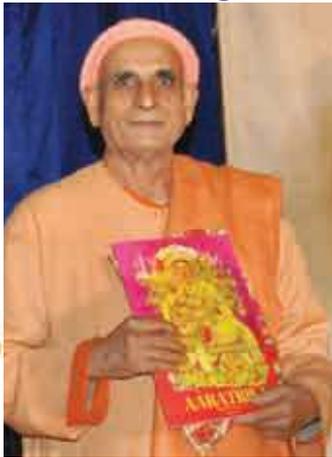
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Greetings from the President of Moscow Durga Puja



Swami Jyotirupananda

Since 1991 (second year of Durga Puja in Moscow) our pujas have been performed under the guidance of Swami Jyotirupananda. He is the founder of the Society of Vedanta Centre, Moscow (established in 1993) and the President of the Moscow Durga Puja Committee.

*Dear Valued Readers,
This year, my hectic schedule and travels to Europe have left me with no time to write my traditional message to you. My warm thoughts and prayers are with you on this auspicious occasion. Happy Durga Puja and may Ma Durga's blessings be with you always. Swami Jyotirupananda*



Sri Sri Durga Mahapuja from 20nd to 24th October 2012

Mahashashti 20th October Saturday	Puja starts at 18:00	Mahanavami 23rd October Tuesday	Puja starts at 9:20 Pushpanjali at 11:30 Bhog & Arati at 11:50 Evening Arati at 18:30
Mahashaptami 21st October Sunday	Puja starts at 9:20 Pushpanjali at 11:30 Bhog & Arati at 11:50 Evening Arati 18:00	Vijaya Dashami 24th October Wednesday	Puja from 10:00 to 11:00 Shindur Khela from 11:00 to 12:00 Immersion from 12:00 to 12:30 Shanti jal 12:30
Mahaastami 22nd October Monday	Puja starts at 9:20 Pushpanjali at 11:30 Bhog & Arati at 11:50 Evening Arati at 17:00 Sandhi puja from 18:32 to 19:20	Sri Sri Lakshmi puja 29th October Monday	Puja starts at 19:00

Recollecting



Durga Puja 2011



Brief insights into a glorious life: In conversation with Artist Prof. Sukhen Ganguly

Retired Professor Sukhen Ganguly is one of the foremost artists of Shantiniketan. In his early eighties he represents one of the last few of his generation who studied fine arts in Kala Bhavana* under the Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan from one of pioneer of modern Indian art – Acharya Nandalal Basu. This was during the pioneering days of the institution, barely a few years after the passing away of its founder Bengali Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

Over a long and illustrious artistic career, Prof. Ganguly has exhibited at various venues in India and abroad. Not satisfied with merely pursuing his art, as a member of faculty of fine arts in Kala Bhavana, Prof. Ganguly has readily and liberally shared his knowledge, skills and perspective of art with hundreds of students, ensuring the continuation of the hoary artistic tradition of Shantiniketan. He retired from this august institution after having reached its summit – as the Head of Kala Bhavana.

While the Bengal School of Art has been a dominant influence on Prof. Ganguly's artistic sensibility, like a true artist, he has been open to a variety of aesthetic influences from all over India and abroad, to which he has added his own individualism to create something that is unique and very personal to the artist. In the opinion of the editor he has pioneered the art of mosaic in India and has taken it to great heights in the county. His art is largely characterized by an element of romanticism, subtlety and restraint, which combine to create a sense of joy amongst his viewers. Prof. Ganguly has worked in various mediums and some of his prominent creations are art work for the Kolkata Metro Railway. Prof. Ganguly has depicted contemporary life in Bengal, in addition to painting on mythological themes. Aaratrika is delighted and honoured to provide its readers a few glimpses into the work and life of this great artist and expresses its gratitude to the artist for his invaluable contribution to this issue, which includes the painting of goddess Durga in the cover page. Originally a sketch, on request, he specially coloured the sketch for the cover page of Aaratrika.

Aaratrika is also very happy to include an interview of the artist, taken by the editor during the last Poush Mela (the winter festival in Shantiniketan) at his residence and subsequently over phone on 13th July 2012. In the following interview, as the artist speaks to Debasmita Moulick Nair, we get glimpses of the magnificent life as well as the influences and work of an artist extraordinaire.

Aaratrika: What/who is your inspiration?

Prof. Ganguly: I would say entirely my teacher Acharya Nandalal Bose, who we used to lovingly call Master-moshai (Revered teacher in Bengali). I distinctly recall the circumstances that led to my coming to Kala-Bhavan in Shantiniketan to learn fine arts. It was 1947 and I had then joined the Scottish Church college in Kolkata. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, the Indian revolutionary leader had in the same year, dodging the British police disappeared from India, never to re-emerge. Our college organized a function in Netaji's hon-



Kala Bhavana

or and I drew a portrait of Netaji on that occasion. Seeing the painting, the principal of the college, an English gentleman exclaimed that I was wasting my time in Scottish Church college and said rather prophetically that I should be studying fine arts instead!

That was the turning point in my life. I decided to proceed to Kala Bhavana – the foremost institution of fine arts in India. Unfortunately, by the time I reached Kala Bhavana, it was already November and the admissions had long closed. Those days admissions were open twice a year – in January and July. Undaunted, I proceeded to meet Master-moshai, who I was told by some people in the Shantiniketan Ashram, could be found at the Kala Bhavana office, which at that time was a simple, modest building and not the one we see today. Walking past the well adjacent to the boys' hostel, I bumped into a dark complexioned, spectacled gentleman in pyjamas, worn high above the ankles. I asked him where I could find



Master-moshai Acharya Nandalal Bose. The gentleman pointed to a building (the Kala Bhavana office) and asked me to go there. I went inside the building looking for Master-moshai and within a few minutes the very same bi-speckled gentleman in pyjamas walked in! My embarrassment was acute because as a prospective student, I had not recognized my Guru, that too a renowned person as Acharya Nandalal Bose. Master-mosai saw my work, liked it and asked me to join in following January, after annual Poush Mela festival. That was in 1948. With that started my journey as an artist and rest is history.

I graduated in 1952 amongst the very first batch of University graduates. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu (poetess and freedom fighter) was then the Vice Chancellor and I received my degree along with the symbolic token of the seven whorled Chatim leaf, also called the Saptaparani (Alstonia Scholaris) - the symbol of scholarship.

Aaratrika: The Shantiniketan now is obviously very different from the one when

you were a student there. It is often difficult to picture the environment and life of Shantiniketan in those early days. Can you please share any interesting event or story which gives us a picture of the life of Shantiniketan in those days?

Prof. Ganguly:

Life in Ashram: One of the hallmarks of Shantiniketan was the simplicity and modesty of the people who lived there. Hierarchies were hardly apparent or enforced and from external appearance and from one's conduct it was difficult to make out a person's real status. The legendary Guru of Indian Classical Music, Baba Allauddin Khan (the guru of greats like Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Smt. Annapurna Devi and Pandit Ravi Shankar) was then a visiting professor at Visva-Bharati. A person of his stature would often be found bathing in the open by the well in the Ashram, adjacent to the Sangeet Bhavana (School of Music) boy's hostel. He would do his riaz (practice) on the sarod regularly in the evenings and would also often sing a Keertan (Hindu devotional music) dedicated to Goddess Kali. Can you imagine how fortunate we were getting to hear this colossus of Indian classical music play his Sarod and sing every day!

Ragging: Well natured ragging was common in the campus, but of course not of the nature you see these days. As students of fine art, we had to study the human body and had a human skeleton in the studio. Often in the nights, we would place lighted cigarette behind the skeleton's eyes to scare new-comers.

Even the world famous journalist and author Mr. Khushwant Singh, who had enrolled in Visva-Bharati was ragged. Young Khushwant was given to deep sleep in the nights and one of the nights when he was asleep in the hostel, my friends and I silently lifted the cot along with the sleeping Khushwant and carried it till the Khoyai river bank. In the morning when he woke up, to his utter surprise and disbelief, he found himself not in the hostel room, but by the banks of the river! Not sure if this was the reason, but soon thereafter he left Vishwabharati.

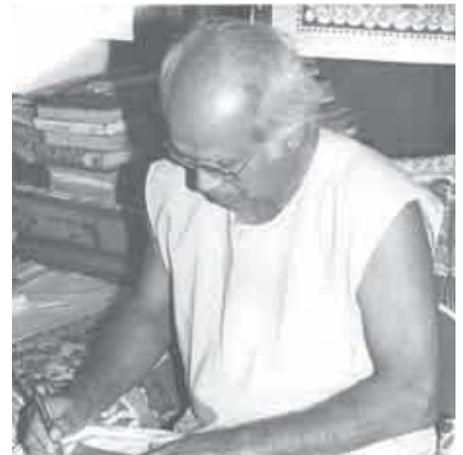
Meals at ashram: The general kitchen meal for the students those days cost Rs.50 per month and it included fish, the favourite of Bengalis. Kala Bhavana's own kitchen however served only vegetarian meals because Kala Bhavana had many staunch vegetarian students from Gujarat and other parts of India. The Kala Bhavana meal was therefore Rs 15. Obviously the Bengali students of Kala Bhavana dearly missed their fish. We couldn't do much but to find solace in the frescoes of the famous artist Binod Bihari, who would draw images of the fish inspired by the traditional Kalighat paintings of Kolkata. We would look at the paintings of fish, eat vegetarian meal and imagine or pretend that we were eating fish! The power of the image and that of imagination can both be formidable.

Breakfast with mouse: Later in life, as a professor of fine arts at Kala-Bhavan, I used to live in the teacher's quarters. I was also married by then. Breakfast generally

used to be eggs and milk which got delivered at our doorstep every morning. One morning, while still in bed I saw a mouse dragging an egg and not being able to pull the egg all by itself, the mouse was helped by another mouse who was in turn pulling the first mouse by its tail! Together the two friends succeeded in dragging the egg. You see there are so many stories of friendships.

As the interview drew to a close, I couldn't help laughing, visualizing the sight and at the same time was highly amused that Prof. Ganguly kept watching the two mice carry away his breakfast, without bothering to retrieve it from the mice. Indeed I was transported to a time long gone by, a time of great simplicity and innocence and even greater charm and beauty. Indeed it was a wonderful insight into a glorious life and time.

*With Shumon Sengupta
in Sierra Leone, West Africa*



A touch of Colombia in Moscow

I am 15 and I understand good food. My mother feels I am always hungry but I think I am hungry only after breakfast, lunch and dinner. I like to cook and play soccer. My mother is from India and father from Columbia, so I speak Russian, Spanish, English and understand Bengali and Hindi.

This summer the most delicious meal I had was Colombian food called «embueltos». I eat this meal once a year – in summer, but it continues to be my favourite. I like this meal because it is sweet and savory at the same time. You can have embueltos either for breakfast or lunch or dinner.

Cooking procedure

My family usually makes it in the end of August, when the corn is soft and juicy. So the ingredients of this meal are: corn, flour, cheese, butter, salt and sugar. Embueltos are covered with banana leaves which make this dish more delicious. Usually, as I know, embueltos are made not for one person, but at least for twenty.

The process of cooking is very annoying and takes a day. I not only love this dish, but I love to cook it too. I don't take part in the final preparation, because my favorite thing is to separate each corn and take off the «Corn hair». Also I like to make corn mixture which contains corn, cheese and a little butter.

So in conclusion I like very much «embueltos» and wish you to taste it, I am sure that you will like this dish.

Andrei Garzon



Andrei preparing embueltos with Tia (aunt) Isabell and cousin Gilermo in their Moscow Dacha

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Cover picture: Sukhen Ganguly



In loving memory of Assia

Assia Bhaduri (01.09.1964 - 19.08.2012)

The time she spent with us was so short, but so full of love and memories. She was shy and soft spoken, but a very intelligent and helping person... a loving mother, a dutiful daughter, a passionate wife and a dependable friend.

She lost her fight with cancer, but her memory will never be lost to those who knew her.

with inputs from Natasha & Joy Dasgupta

মৃত্যুর গন্ধ

পার্থ ভাদুড়ী

বেঁচে থাকা মানে
নাকে রুমাল দিয়ে
তোমাকে ভুলে থাকা, পাশ কাটিয়ে যাওয়া।
এই যে সবাই ছুটেছে,
অসংখ্য আশা আর লক্ষ্য
জীবনের কড়াইতে ফুটেছে,
এ সব কিছু নয়,
সন্ধ্যার পরে, তুমি আসবে,
আমাকে, একে, ওকে, বাছবে,
বলবে, অনেক হয়েছে,
তারপরে, রাতের অন্ধকারে, চুপচাপ, হাত ধরাধরি করে,
তোমার পিছু পিছু চলে যাওয়া,
কাল্লা আর অনেক শূন্যতা পিছে ফেলে,
তোমার জগতে, বিস্মৃতিতে।
তবে কখনও কখনও এমন কিছু হয়,
তোমার নিয়মে কিছুই হয় না,
কেউ কেউ গিয়েও যায় না, কেউ কেউ হয়,
তোমাকে বড়ো আঙ্গুল দেখিয়ে
তুমি আসার আগেই
নিজেকে ছড়িয়ে দেয়
সকালের শিউলিফুলে, হিম ভেজা ঘাসে,
জ্যাংলাভরা আমবাগানে, গাছের ছায়ায়,
তারা বেঁচে থাকে,
অনন্ত বেঁচে থাকে তাদের চোখের তারায়,
অনির্বাণ, পরিপূর্ণতায়,
তারা নাক ভরা প্রশ্বাসে
সব্বাই বাঁচিয়ে, নিজেরাও বাঁচে,
বাঁচার আশায়, বাঁচার নেশায়।
মৃত্যু গন্ধ ভুলে---

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From Marburg, Germany



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