

Autumn 2016

শরদ শুভেচ্ছা

KATHAN কথন

published by



www.indianculturalsociety.co.uk



From Cottage to Globe

...
*Experience the fusion
of hand-woven silk
and exquisite designed
dresses this festive season*
...



T04 Wishes
Everyone Happy
Durga Puja and Diwali

E: mousumi@t04couture.com
W: www.t04couture.com



It's that time of the year again. The mornings have turned misty, the summer sun has dialled down several notches, and there's more than a whiff of winter in the crisp morning breeze. This is also the time when Bengali hearts everywhere beat to the rhythm of the dhaak as Ma Durga arrives en famille. Pujo means adda; pujo means piety. Pujo means fasting for anjali; and feasting for four straight days. Pujo is longing and belonging. Pujo is pujo bhraman. Pujo is curling up with a pujabarshiki, and being harrassed for a submission for the pujo souvenir. In this spirit of pujo, and more, we present to you **KATHAN** — a celebration of words and ideas. Happy reading and Happy Durga Puja!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Satarupa Sanyal: Kolkata-based poet, social worker and filmmaker.

Tirthankar Bandyopadhyay: London-based journalist and blogger.

Sidin Vadukut: London-based author and journalist.

Joyjeet Das: Delhi-based journalist and film enthusiast.

Rupa Publications
Mint, HT Media

All articles/photos/art contributed by members and wellwishers of ICS. Any data/opinion/inference contained in any of these contributed works are the author's own. The publication is designed and laid out by volunteers of ICS.



CONTENTS

From the president's desk.....	4
Puja and cultural schedule.....	4
How it all began.....	5
Now and again – a starry-eyed journey.....	6
Amar pujo.....	7
Afganir diary theke.....	8
The crow (painting).....	10
Bandhu tui.....	10
On the great Baikal trail.....	11
The beauty and the beasts.....	12-13
Children's section.....	14-19
Everything about Nothing.....	20-21
The diet dilemma.....	22
Refugee.....	23
The mystery of Mr Bakshi's popularity.....	24
Ode to you.....	25
After party.....	26

PUBLICATION TEAM

EDITED BY:	Amrita Roy Nandan Sengupta
COVER ART BY:	Tanima Dhar
LAYOUT:	Amrita Roy
ADVERTISEMENTS BY:	Sima Chakrabarti Tanima Dhar Barnali Ghosh Nandan Sengupta Rajeev Das

PUBLISHED BY: Indian Cultural Society, Cambridge
www.indianculturalsociety.co.uk

From the president's desk

Welcome to our 15th Durga Puja! The Indian Cultural Society, Cambridge, and its activities are very close to my heart and I take immense pride in the knowledge that the ICS family currently has more than three dozen active members and hundreds of wellwishers. I founded this organisation in 2002 with the help and support of my wife Dr Barnali Ghosh, Mr Gopal Dutta and Mrs Flora Dutta. Today, our members are spread across Cambridgeshire, and even beyond.



ICS aims to celebrate the diversity of all immigrated Indian communities, British Indians and like-minded people from local Cambridge communities, and promote harmony. We feel privileged that volunteers from other communities join us to make our festival a success. For more information on our various activities and to follow our annual calendar, please visit www.indianculturalsociety.co.uk.

The Indian Cultural Society is financially supported by Cambridge City Council, devotees and volunteers from all over UK and our members. We have plans to order a new set of deities from India for next year's puja and we need to generate a big fund this year to meet our financial commitment. I would request everyone to contribute separately towards the deity fund.

Enjoy your Puja with your family and fri-ends. Wish you all a very happy Durga Puja.

MANAS DEB

PRESIDENT

INDIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

CAMBRIDGE

Durga Puja & Sharad Utsav

Annual Festival Of Pomp And Grandeur - 2016 || Indian Cultural Society, Cambridge



Puja Schedule:

8 th Oct, 2016	: Saptami & Ashtami	- Puja	: 11:00 a.m.
9 th Oct, 2016	: Navami & Dashami	- Pushpanjali	: 12:00 p.m.
		- Prasad	: 12:30 p.m.
		- Bhog, Lunch	: 01:30 p.m.

Timetable:

Venue: Bewick Bridge Primary School, Fulbourn Old Drift, CB1 9ND.
Bus Route: Citi 1, Opp St. Andrews Church, Cherry Hinton.

Cultural Programme Schedule:

8 th Oct, Saturday (4 p.m.)	9 th Oct, Sunday (4 p.m.)
- Lamp lighting, inauguration	- Bangla gaan er ashor
- Udbodhoni (Chorus & dance)	- Recitation
- Musical repertoire	- Bengali Dance Drama
- Recitation by guest artist	- Bengali Drama
- Bollywood Hungama	- Sindur khela

Suggested Contribution/ Donation:

- Adult	: £10 per day	- Family*	: £30 per day
- Kid (5-12yrs)	: £7 per day	* 2 adults & up to 2 children	



Background credit: <http://sushantmandal.deviantart.com/>

How it all began

BARNALI GHOSH

The Indian Cultural Society is the culmination of a long nurtured dream of a motley group of Indians living in Cambridge. Festivals are a tough time for expatriates everywhere, when the longing for the homeland becomes a palpable physical ache. For the immigrant Indians in Cambridge the sense of loss at the inability to participate in the many Indian festivities was compounded by the distance to the big-ticket London pujas, both literally as well as emotionally.

Fifteen years ago, torn between the longing to return home, and the urge to grow roots in this adopted homeland, a handful of residents and students of Cambridge decided, for the first time in the history of this ancient town, to organise their own Durga Puja. The event marked a new entry in the multicultural Cambridge calendar, leading to the birth of the Indian Cultural Society.

THE FIRST STEPS

Once it was decided to organise a Puja, there were a lot of challenges. The target audience varied from students, local residents, academics. It needed to involve them all, while maintaining the spiritual aspects of a Puja. Such an event had never been organised in the history of Cambridge and there was a lot of expectation around it. It would be massive in terms of size and the audience that it would generate. It had to fulfil the emotional need for a 'home away from home'.

PLANNING IT ALL – AUG 2002

Several decisions had to be made — choice of the venue, generation of funds that a gathering of such scale would involve, and the formation of a committee which would involve the local students and local ethnic residents. Planning permission from the city council, health and safety issues, possibility of some funding from the council, public-

ity — all of these required immense coordination and an assessment of the initial response of the participants. The success of the event depended entirely on the number of people we could attract on the given date, in pre-Facebook days it was a tough ask. A telephone directory was acquired and all Indian sounding name listed was called up.

TIMESCALE

The idea for a Puja was floated in August and the Puja had to be held in early October. It was a proper race against time. Meetings were held every Sunday and the agenda discussed. The idols, the most integral part of a Puja, had to be sourced from Calcutta by ship. On the day of the event, guests had been promised a three-course meal and cultural evening with artists from India. All the artists had to be contacted and their prices negotiated to acceptable limits. Finally, last-minute contingency plans had to be made in case of emergency.

OUTCOME

The event was a success beyond our dreams. It drew 200 visitors, who enjoyed a day of spiritual retreat, cultural enrichment and tasted the culinary delight of the star chef. It also generated funds in excess of £400 after all expenses had been met.

Suruchi Parakh

Couture

✦ **DESIGNER INDIAN ETHNIC
BRIDALWEAR & COTTON DRESSES**

✦ **HAND EMBROIDERED LEATHER BAGS**

For enquiries, call +447926102758



@Suruchi Parakh Couture

Now and again: A starry-eyed journey

SOUMI BANERJEE

When I was a teenager and still in school, just looking at the azure autumnal skies made me happy. For, it marked the countdown to the Durga Puja. Oh! the happiness that enveloped my being and the tiny wish constant in my soul for something good to happen... are inexplicable. It was just a wish of an innocent one.

Of course, good things did happen: new dresses, delicious treats and the holidays. And then there was the added joy of reading the *Pujobarshiki Anandamela*, chockful of adventures of Professor Shonku or Kakababu.

I was also a great fan of Sanjib Chattopadhyay. I still remember one of his stories called *Ekta Golap*. The story told by a naughty boy who did not like to "waste" time studying and get up to all kinds of mischief that I could only dream of. I could easily put myself in his shoes. I remember the vivid description of the bathroom with huge mirrors and a carpet on which spilling water on the floor was taboo. It opened doors of imagination for me. I would also sneak peeks into the *Pujabarshiki Anandalok*, gazing at the beautiful heroines. Their beauty was like sheer magic. To my gawky teenager eyes the trio of reigning queens of Bollywood, Madhuri, Sri Devi or Meenakshi, seemed to belong to another galaxy. I could only gape in wonder.

And then the day of the Mahalaya would roll around. It began with the shrill alarm



ADITI ARVIND (AGE 6)

going off at 4am. The radio would be switched on and the rich tenor of Birendra Krishna Bhadro would fill the slightly chilly dawn as his *Mahisasuro Mardini* poured forth from transistors in every home. I remember being told to keep my hands folded while listening to the *Chandi Path* and doing so unquestioningly.

Mahalaya meant Sasthi, and the holidays, were just six days away. After that the days passed like a whirlwind. Today it all seems to be a hazy dream.

I still remember visiting an air-conditioned 'mandap' once and

enjoying the coolness amid the sweltering crowds. The irony of the air-con being a massive crowd puller had been quiet lost on me.

Probably this all sounds clichéd. True. How can I deny that? I can only tell you that the exuberance at just looking at the different new dresses for Puja was enough. That symbolized happiness. Such was the spirit.

Now, when I look back, I realise that the Puja was a harbinger of dreams to realise, wishes to fulfil and hopes to keep us moving forward in life. The teenager's innocence is long gone. But the azure skies still beckon. The mellow golden sun still warms the heart and announces that Durga Puja is just round the corner. And this incorrigible optimist's heart misses a beat — good things will happen. Can you not hear the drum beats?

আমার পূজো

শতরূপা সান্যাল

সেই কবেকার কথা। আমার ছোটবেলায় পূজোর ছুটি মানেই কলকাতা থেকে আমাদের সপরিবারে বর্ধমানে ঠাকুরদার বাড়ি যাওয়া দুর্গা পূজো হত এক পাকা মন্ডপে। লোকে বলত কালিবাড়ি। তার সিঁড়িতে লেখা ছিল “হিরন্ময়ী স্মৃতি সোপান”। হিরন্ময়ী আমার ঠাকুরমার নাম। তিনি প্রয়াত হয়েছিলেন যখন আমার খুব একটা জ্ঞান হয়নি, বোধ হয় আড়াই তিন বছর বয়স ছিল আমার। আমার ঠাকুরদা তাঁর বন্ধুদের নিয়ে প্রতিদিন বিকেলে ঐ কালিবাড়িতে আড্ডা দিতেন। ঠাকুরদার সেই বন্ধুরাও সকলেই ছিলেন কাশ ফুল মাথা, হাতে লাঠি, ধুতি বেনিয়ানের সব বয়স্ক যুবক! তারা ই ছিলেন দুর্গাপূজোর উদ্যোক্তা। কাজেই বারোয়ারি হয়েও সে পূজোটা ছিল বাড়ির পূজোর মতই। পূজোর ছুটি পড়লেই মনটা উড়ু উড়ু হয়ে যেত বর্ধমানের জন্যে। কারন ঐরকম বুন্দো স্বাধীনতা কলকাতায় কোথায় ? পূজোবাড়ির বাতাসে ভেসে আসত ধূপ ধুনো নারকেল কর্পূর আতপচাল ভেজানো



মিষ্টি একটা গন্ধ। ঐ গন্ধটা কখনও কলকাতায় পাওয়া যায়না। সকালে পূজোর ঢাক যেইনা বেজে উঠত, আমরা খেলা ফেলে দৌড় দৌড় সেই মন্ডপে। ধূপ ধুনোর ধোঁয়ায় দেখতাম জ্বলজ্বল করছে দেবীর মুখ। সবাইকে হাত জোড় করে বিড়বিড় করতে দেখে মাকে জিজ্ঞেস করেছিলাম, ওটা কি ব্যাপার? মা বলেছিলেন, ওরা মা দুর্গার কাছে প্রার্থনা করছে, কিছু চাইছে। মাকে বললাম, আমিও কিছু চাইব। কি চাইব? মা বললেন, বলবে-“ বিদ্যা দাও বুদ্ধি দাও স্বাস্থ্য দাও সকলের কল্যান করো” ! আমিও বছর বছর এই এক প্রার্থনাই করে এসেছি।

সবার কল্যান চেয়ে প্রার্থনা করেও কিন্তু ভীষণ হিংসে হত ঢাকির সঙ্গে আসা ছোট ছেলটাকে দেখে। ও আমাদের সাথে খেলতনা কখনও। পূজোর কটা দিন গ্রাম থেকে এসে ও শুধু বড়দের মত বড়দের সাথেই গম্ভীর হয়ে বসে থাকত আর মাঝে মাঝে ওর যা দায়িত্ব - কাঁসি বাজানো, সেটা করত। একবার ছেলটো এল ধুতি আর চাদর পরে। গলায় একটা সাদা দড়িতে চাবি বাঁধা। আমরা ওকে ঐ সাজে দেখে হাসছিলাম। মা আমায় ডেকে বললেন, ওভাবে কাউকে দেখে হাসতে নেই। বাড়ির কেউ মারা গেলে এসব পরতে হয়। ছেলটো গম্ভীর হয়েই রইল পূজোর দিন গুলোয়। বিজয়া দশমীর পরদিন সকালে যখন প্রতিবারের মত ঢাকি এল আমাদের বাড়ির উঠানে বিদায় নিতে, মায়েরা কাপড়, চাল, সস্তী এইসব প্রতিবারের মত তাকে গুছিয়ে দিয়ে দিচ্ছেন, আমরাও প্রতিবারের মত ঢাক আর কাঁসি নিয়ে আনাড়ি হাতে বাজাতে শুরু করলাম। সে এক তান্ডব আর কি ! আমার এঞ্জিনিয়ারিং পড়া জ্যেষ্ঠত্বতো দাদা আমাদের সরিয়ে বলল, সর তোরা, দেখ, এমনি করে ঢাক বাজাতে হয় ! বলে, কাঠিদুটো নিয়ে দারুন ঢাক বাজাতে শুরু করল। আমিও কাঁসিতে লাঠি ঠুকে ঠুং ঠাং শব্দ বের করতে লাগলাম। দাদা বলল, হচ্ছেনা, তুই ঐ ছেলটাকে দে। ও বাজাবে। আমার খুব রাগ হল। তবু কাঁসি ফেরত দিলাম। তারপর ঢাক আর কাঁসির এমন এক দারুন যুগলবন্দী হল, সব ঘরগুলো থেকে বড়রা বেরিয়ে এল। মা তারপর সেই ছোট ছেলটাকে আদর করে নাড়ু সন্দেশ টাকা পয়সা দিলেন। ছেলটো তখনও কিন্তু গম্ভীর মুখ করেই রইল। ওরা চলে যেতে মাকে বললাম, দেখলে মা, ছেলটো কেমন ? তুমি এত যত্ন করলে, তবু ও একটুও হাসল না? মা নিজের চোখ মুছে বললেন, ওর কি আর এখন হাসবার সময়? ওর যে মা চলে গেছে! ঐ টুকু বয়েসে মাকে হারানো খুব কষ্টের। তোরা বুঝিনা, বাবা!

আজ বহু বছর পর পূজো পূজো রোদুর উঠেছে। কাশ ফুল ফুটেছে ঠিক আগের মতই। আমার মনে পড়ে যাচ্ছে সেই মলিন বালকটির মুখ। আবছা আবছা কিন্তু তার করুণ চোখদুটো বড় স্পষ্ট। আর মনে পড়ে যাচ্ছে সেই ফর্সা কপালে লাল সিঁদুরের টিপ পরা নরম কোমল আমার মায়ের করুণ মুখখানা। ঐ মুখ আমিও তো আর দেখতে পাইনা, পাবওনা ! কিন্তু মায়ের সেই কথাগুলো যেন স্পষ্ট কানে বাজছে।

মা চলে যাওয়া যে কত কষ্টের তা আর আমার চেয়ে কে বেশি বোঝে আমি জানিনা। তবে, সদ্য মা হারানো বালক পেটের টানে দুটো রোজগারের আশায় যখন কচি হাতে বাপের ঢাকের তালে কাঁসি বাজাতে আসে, সে পূজোর অর্থ আমার কাছে এখন আর আনন্দের অনুষ্ণ হয়ে থাকেনা। চেতনায় ফুটতে থাকে বাবলা কাঁটার মত। হাজার হাজার পূজোর আনন্দের ঢাকে যেন সেই কচি অসহায় মা হারানো বালকের কাঁসির লাঠিটা মাথা কুটে মরে মুক্তির জন্যে।

আফগানির ডায়েরি থেকে

তীর্থঙ্কর বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

“ভোর ছটা! প্রতিদিন এই সময়ে আমার মা বারান্দায় তুলসি গাছের গোড়ায় জল দেন। ঘটির আওয়াজে ঘুম ভাঙে। বুঝতে পারি ভোর হয়েছে। কাবুলের আকাশের লালচে আভা কার্তে পারোয়ায় আমাদের দু'কামরার ফ্ল্যাটের পর্দার ফাঁক দিয়ে ঘরে ছড়িয়ে পড়ে। সবার আগে বাবা লাফিয়ে উঠে পড়েন। তারপরে আমি। সবশেষে আমার ছোটো বোন। বাবার ওষুধের দোকানে যাওয়ার তাড়া। সকাল আটটার মধ্যে দোকান খুলতে না পারলে বাইরে লম্বা লাইন পড়ে যায়। তিন পুরুষ ধরে আমাদের ওষুধের ব্যবসা। বাবা-কাকারা সেই ট্র্যাডিশনই বয়ে চলেছেন। আমিও দোকানে যাই। এই দোকানটা ঘিরেই আমার সব স্বপ্ন।



সে'দিনটাও অন্য আর পাঁচটা দিনের মতো হতে পারতো। সেদিন অবশ্য দোকানে যাওয়ার তাড়া নেই। মায়ের তুলসী গাছের গোড়ায় জল দেওয়ার তাড়া নেই। ছটা বাজতেই মা মাথায় হাত বুলিয়ে উঠতে বললেন। আমি জেগেই ছিলাম। কাল সারারাত দু'চোখ এক করতে পারিনি। মুখ তুলে দেখি মায়ের চোখে জল। আমার সাথে চোখাচোখি হতেই মুখটা সরিয়ে নিলেন। আর ঘন্টা দুয়েক বাদেই আমার কাকা আসবেন। তারপরেই ছিন্ন হবে কাবুলের সাথে আমার আজন্ম-লালিত সম্পর্ক। হৃদয়ের ইতিহাস বইয়ে লেখা থাকবে ১৯৯৮ সালের ২৫শে সেপ্টেম্বর। কাবুলে আমার শেষদিন। কাকার সাথে আমাকে পাড়ি দিতে হবে পাকিস্তানের পেশাওয়ারে। বাবা-মা-বোনকে ছেড়ে। বিছানার পাশে একটা ছোট টেবিল। সেখানে আমার বই, বাইনোকুলার, চশমা, খুচরো পয়সা রাখার থলি। আমার সাম্রাজ্য! তিনতলার ফ্ল্যাট থেকে আমি মাঝে মাঝে দূরে তাকাই বাইনোকুলারটা দিয়ে। হিন্দুকুশের সাদা চূড়াটা কেমন যেন হাতছানি দেয়। পাশ ফিরে টেবিলটাকে দেখি। কোনোদিন আমার কাছ ছাড়া হয়নি। আজ ওকে ছেড়ে যেতে বড্ড কষ্ট হচ্ছে।

যেভাবে যুদ্ধ ছড়াচ্ছে বাবা আর ভরসা রাখতে পারলেন না। দশ বছর ধরে স্কুলে যাওয়া বন্ধ। ইউনিসেফ-এর বন্ধুরা বাড়িতে এসে পড়িয়ে যান। তার ওপর পোলিওতে আমার একটা পা অকেজো। কার্তে পারোয়ায় দু'কামরার ফ্ল্যাট আর মাইলখানেক দূরের ওষুধের দোকান নিয়েই আমার খিড়কি থেকে সিংহদুয়ার। আমাদের বাড়ির পাশে বাঘে-বালা রোড। কার্তে পারোয়ায় সবচেয়ে বড় গুরুদ্বারটা ওখানেই। আগে চারপাশটা সকাল-সন্ধ্যা গুরুবাণীতে মুখরিত হতো। গত পাঁচ বছর ধরে স্তব্ধ হয়ে গেছে। বিধর্মী কাজ করলে দেখে নেওয়ার হুমকি দিয়ে গেছে তালেবান। বাঘে-বালা রোড ধরে এগিয়ে

গেলেই অনেকটা ঘুরে কাবুল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পৌছনো যায়। অনেক স্বপ্ন ছিলো বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে প্রত্নতত্ত্ব নিয়ে পড়াশুনা করবো। এখন ভাবলে মনে হয় যেন আগের জন্মের কথা।

ঘুম থেকে উঠে আমি এ'ঘরে তৈরী হচ্ছি। একটা চটের থলেতে কয়েকটা দরকারি জিনিষ। বাইনোকুলারটাও নেওয়া যাবে না। পেশাওয়ার সীমান্তে নিরাপত্তা রক্ষীরা যদি চটে যায়। গামছায় মোড়ানো একটা পুটলিতে কয়েকটা রুটি আর একটু শুকনো ডাল। আমার হাতে পুটলিটা দিয়ে মা দ্রুত চলে গেলেন চোখ মুছতে মুছতে। চারিদিক কেমন থমথমে। ছোটো বোনটা পর্যন্ত কথা বলছে না। বংশ পরম্পরায় আফগানিস্তান আমাদের দেশ। একটু পরে পেশোয়ারের বাসে চেপে বসলে বহু যুগের সেই সম্পর্ক নিমেষে মুছে যাবে।

কাকার মুখে শুনেছি পেশোয়ার হয়ে দালালরা আমাদের নিয়ে যাবে ইরানে। তারপর স্লেভিনিয়া-রুমানিয়া হয়ে ফ্রান্স। এ'জন্য দালালদের গুনে গুনে বিশ লাখ আফগানি দিতে হয়েছে। এই দেশগুলো আমার কাছে বিশ্ব মানচিত্রের টুকরো ছাড়া কিছুই না। বিশ বছর ধরে যা কিছু স্বপ্ন তা তো এই আফগানিস্তানকে ঘিরেই।”

জন্মভূমি আফগানিস্তান ছেড়ে বছর বিশেক আগে এভাবেই পাড়ি দিয়েছিলো আমার বন্ধু প্রীতপাল সিং। ঘুরতে ঘুরতে এসে পৌছোয় সাদাম্পটনে। সেখানে একবার অভিবাসীদের নিয়ে রেডিও প্রোগ্রাম করতে গিয়ে আলাপ প্রীতের সাথে। সেই থেকে সখ্যে কখনো কম পড়েনি। ওখানেই পারিবারিক ব্যবসার ধারা ধরে রেখে খুলেছে ওষুধের দোকান। দমে যাওয়ার পাত্র প্রীত নয়। এক এক করে ইংল্যান্ডে নিয়ে এসেছে ওর বাবা, মা আর ছোটো বোনকেও।

সম্প্রতি নিজের অভিজ্ঞতা লিপিবদ্ধ করার কাজে হাত দিয়েছে প্রীত। সারাদিন হাড় ভাঙা খাটনির পর খস্ খস্ করে নিজের ডায়েরিতে লিখে ফেলে ওর ফেলে আসা জীবনের কথা। তার প্রতিটা ছত্র যন্ত্রণা-দন্ধ। যেখানে বাস্তবের রুঢ়তায় কল্পনার কোনো মিশেল নেই। সেই কল্প চিত্র তৈরীর দায়িত্বটাই আমাকে দিয়েছে প্রীত। এটা প্রীতের ফেলে আসা দিনেরই এক খন্ডচিত্র।



THE CROW



Painting
Mekhola
Roychowdhury

জীবন যে এত কঠিন বন্ধু জানতাম না তোর প্রাণ না গেলে
হঠাত করে মেসেজ , তুই নেই আর, চলে গেছিস সবাইকে ফেলে
বিশ্বাস কিছুতেই হয় না, সারাক্ষণ খুঁজে বেড়াই তোর যাওয়ার কারন
সবার কাছে আজ ও তোর আমার বন্ধুত্বের দিয়ে থাকি উদাহরণ

একসাথে আমরা চলতাম স্কুলের পথে ছোট ছোট আঙ্গুল ধরে
কি হাসিটাই না হাসতাম, আনন্দ করতাম প্রাণ ভরে
একটু একটু করে বড় হলাম, বেছে নিলাম নিজের রাস্তা
ধীরে ধীরে বুঝলাম ছোটবেলাটা ছিল অনেক দামী , এ জীবন অনেক সস্তা

একটাই প্রশ্ন আসে খালি মাথায় ঘুরে ঘুরে
তোর ব্যাথা আমি বুঝিনি তোর হাসিটাকে দেখেছি বড় করে
আফসোস - কঠিন জীবনের সৌন্দর্য বোঝাতে পারিনি তোকে
একটি বার যদি দেখা পেতাম আগলে রাখতাম আমার বুকে

অভিমান করে চলে গেলি একগুচ্ছ কষ্ট নিয়ে
দোষ না করে শান্তি পেতে হল নিজের জীবন দিয়ে
এ আমার চিরজীবনের কষ্ট --- হয়ে গেল বুঝতে তোকে অনেক দেরি
আজ ও মনে পড়ে তোর শেষ কথা - জয়ীতা , ফোনটা এবার ছাড়ি

বন্ধু তুই
জয়ীতা সিকদার



Wish you all a very happy
Autumn Festival 2016

With Best Compliments From

IQBRO Grocers
28 Milton Road
CB4 1 JY

Phone : 01223 778504

On the great Baikal trail

PALLAB RUDRA & SONELA BASAK

The sun was just breaking over the horizon when we started hiking on the Great Baikal Trail between the villages of Listvyanka and Bolshiye Koty, in Irkutsk, Siberia. Soon, we had left Listvyanka far behind. Listvyanka, where we had been staying with a local family in a Siberian log hut, or *izba* — which had a dug-out hole for a latrine at the farthest corner of the backyard, much like those in Indian villages, is an idyllic village on the south-western shore of Lake Baikal, with the Khमार Daban mountains on the opposite shore making a stunning backdrop. The villagers were extremely friendly, and greeted us with “India? Raj Kapoor? Mera joota hai Japani...” Remembering an article from an old *Anandaboke* magazine, we replied, “We come from the same part of India as Mithun Chakraborty.” Smiles and handshakes and photos ensued all around.

Baikal, formed in the deepest continental rift on earth, is the world’s oldest lake formed about 25-30 million years ago and contains more fresh water than the North American Great Lakes combined. But the most amazing fact about it is that the lake is still growing at the rate of 1-2cm a year.

The trail initially went parallel to the lake, then went uphill for about 4km. The physically challenging ascent was through forests of silver birches with the dense undergrowth



(ABOVE) Izba, a Siberian log cabin; and a view of Listvyanka and Lake Baikal.

reaching up to our armpits in places. The dense patches of silver fern fronds were a surprise as we had always thought they were endemic to New Zealand. At places, the rhododendron created a riot of pink against the deep green foliage.

We were a group of six led by our guide, a knowledgeable school teacher, who had had to give up his government job as he had not been paid for ‘a few years’. The Perestroika had clearly not been much fun for him. We rumbled through a maze of low shrubs to a large, oval-shaped clearing deep within the pine forests and came upon a remnant of the Cold War — an enormous derelict telescope in what used to be a secret observatory. A spring gurgled past and we refilled our bottles; the crisp clear taste of its water still lingers. To the right, there was a crest which rewarded us with a wonderful view of the lake. The final descent took us to a deserted beach in a rocky bay with views across Baikal and its islands and I could not resist dipping my big toe in the cold water.

Think of the word Siberia, and what flashes across the mind is a feeling of unrelenting cold and an unforgiving landscape. However, the deep blue stretch of Baikal, surrounded by mountains draped in darkest green, is a beautiful contradiction to the stereotype.



The beauty and the b

SOHINI DATTA BISWAS

Fairy Glen Game Reserve, in Worcester, Western Cape, South Africa, is just an hour-and-a-half's drive from Cape Town. Nestled deep inside mountains, this private game reserve offers an African safari experience, their main focus being the "Big 5", the five most endangered and talismanic of African species — lions, elephants, white rhinos, leopards and wild buffaloes. Home to many other species, such as the blue wildebeest, bucks, zebras, springboks and elands, the reserve offers an experience of a lifetime. A night in chalets, watching the moon rise between the mountains and listening to the lions roar while taking tiny sips on local sweet wine made every moment special.



(LEFT) One way to recognise an African elephant is by its ears that have a striking resemblance to the map of Africa.



east



PHOTOS: SOHINI DATTA BISWAS



(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE)

a) The brutal face of poaching, an African white rhino is missing his horn.

b) The king in his lair.

c) The rare sighting of a springbok herd. The springboks lend their name to the South African rugby team.

d) Herds grazing together.

e) A panoramic view of Fairy Glen Reserve from our truck.





It's Puja time!

RAJOSHEE CHOWDHURY, AGE 10

Durga Puja is a day,
When all of us Hindus come to pray.
But it's not only about praying –
Us kids are constantly playing;
And there's a lot of performing,
Playing instruments, singing and dancing!
And when you're hungry,
Just help yourself to some prasad and curry.
Finally, when Durga Puja ends,
You will be sad and you will miss your friends.
But there is nothing to fear...
Ma Durga will be here, next year!

A lesson to learn

ESHA PAUL, AGE 9

One winter afternoon a little boy was sitting under a big tree by the river. He looked very sad; big fat tears dripping down his eyes. He had been there for a while now.

Suddenly he saw a turtle swimming slowly towards him. It was not very big. By the time it reached the shore the boy had stopped crying. But he still looked sad.

The boy knew turtles don't speak or understand human beings, yet he needed to talk to someone and the turtle was the only creature around.

"Hello turtle," he said in a little voice. "Today my teacher gave me my report card. I have not done well at all," he sniffed. "My mum will be so upset. I really love her and don't want to make her sad. Maybe she will be angry. She wanted me to do well. I should have studied harder, but what will I do now?"

The turtle said nothing. But she looked as if she understood everything.

The boy continued: "Perhaps...maybe...I could... I'll hide the report from my mum!"

"Noooo!" came a squeaky voice.

"Who is that?" the boy shivered, afraid of getting caught.

"It's me, the turtle!"

"What!!! You animals can't speak!"

"I know," said the turtle. "But sometimes we do."

The boy was shocked. "What do you think I should do?"

"Don't worry little boy, let me tell you a story."

"Once upon a time, there was a boy called Alex. He also loved his mum like you. He too had a bad report once that made him sad. So he went to his grandpa's house and told him all his troubles. His grandpa was very happy that Alex had come to him. He went with him and stood by his side as Alex told his mum everything. She was happy that Alex had told the truth. So little boy let me be the grandpa and you be a good boy like Alex."

So along they went to his house. As the turtle waited outside, the boy told his mum, "Mommy, my result is really bad as I didn't work hard enough." His mum was angry and scolded him loudly. But she calmed down soon and hugged him. "You are such an honest boy. I appreciate your truthfulness! From now we will work harder. Together."

The boy excused himself and went outside to his friend, the turtle. He took her to the river and as he gently put her back in the water, he whispered: "Thank you!"

NASA inspires me

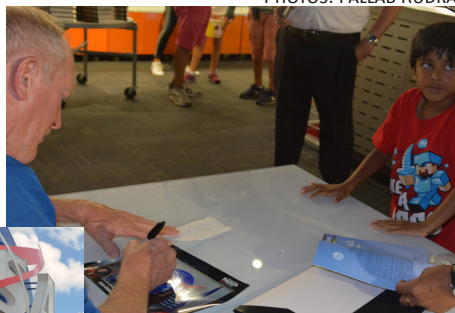
PROJJOL RUDRA, AGE 7

PHOTOS: PALLAB RUDRA

NASA is the place where rockets are made. I want to go to Mars and also be the first person to find out if we can go out of the solar system. So, this summer holidays, I went to NASA with my parents to learn about rockets and space.

I saw some old rockets which have travelled to the moon. Then I heard about this new, extremely powerful rocket called SLS which NASA is building. It will be ready in about 2 years. A type of SLS will go to Mars. The first person to go to Mars is now between the ages of 6-16. I thought, "Good, I could be the one!"

My most memorable moment was meeting astronaut Sam Gemar. He has been to the space three times. We had lunch with him.



(ABOVE) At lunch with Sam Gemar; and Projjol wants to be an astronaut.



He also taught us stuff. I asked him:

1. Are aliens real?
2. How do you eat in space or the moon?
3. How do you go to the loo in space?

He answered all my questions patiently. He even gave me a book. I came back from NASA happy, knowing lots more about space and rockets.



ESHAAN SIKDAR, AGE 10

Worth every penny!

MAHI DEB, AGE 10

Overwatch Origins Edition is a multiplayer shooter where you play as a character called an Overwatch. There are 21 Overwatch characters to choose from, and play in various amazing game modes.

My favourite thing about this game is how evenly all the characters are balanced out. What I mean by that is none of the characters are too good so I don't have to always play as one guy because he is better than everyone else. I also think that all the characters have had a lot of thought on how they look as they all look super cool.

I also love that there are ab-

solutely no bugs or glitches in the game at all and all the animations for the character's power-ups are fantastic, which shows how much time it took.

My main tip for being good at the game is to not leave your team behind when you are trying to capture places in the capture mode, or you will almost definitely die. Stay as a team. My second tip is to work on your aim in the training grounds with new characters you are trying out so you get used to them. Don't stop training!

The price is £37.00, with free delivery, and I would say it's worth it. I would give this game 4 and a half stars.



What is my colour?

SMERA SACHIN, AGE 9

It is the large pencil case I use in school.

It is the roaring lions that roam in Africa.

It is the gold fish that swim in the shallow pond.

It is the spinning umbrella going through the heavy rain.

It is the squarish spelling book that has my spelling test in it.

It is the frilly dress which I wear to fancy parties.

It is the helium balloon which is fun to play with.

It is the wonderful marigolds growing in the field which seems to be everlasting.

As proud as a peacock

SHOPNO BHOWMIK, AGE 8

The peacock is a native bird of India. It is one of the most beautiful birds in the world. Peacocks love rain forests and hills and live in small groups. The male is called a peacock, the female is called a peahen.

The male has a head crowned with a tuft of blue, green and purple feathers. Its face has white stripes and its back is green, black and blue. Peacocks have long tails which covered with blue and green spots that look like eyes.

You may have heard the saying that someone is "as proud as a peacock", it means that the person is very proud and likes to show off in the same way that a peacock does when it opens up its long feathers for everyone to see his beauty and admire it.

The Fen Causeway Heron

TANISHA BISWAS, AGE 8

One day, on my way to school, at a place called Fen Causeway in Cambridge I saw a beautiful bird. It was tall, with a long white neck and a bright blue body. It also had three short black feathers on the top of its head.

I really wanted to find out what this bird was, so I asked Mamma to buy me a book about birds. Mamma bought me a Bird Encyclopedia. I opened the book, and there it was! The bird I saw on the way to school was a Great Blue Heron, but I decided to name it My Fen Causeway Heron.

The Heron waited for me everyday at the same spot. It would sit on the bottom branch of a giant, half-broken tree, waiting for me to pass. Some days I would speed by, catching just a glimpse, unable to stop because of the rush to get home. On other days I would pray for bad traffic so that we would have to stop for sometime and then I could wave at my Heron and see if he waved back.

Slowly the term came to an end. We started preparing for our Christmas holidays, presents and vacation. I forgot all about my Heron in the excitement. On the last day of school I thought I would say bye to Heron, my friend. But when we arrived at the Fen Causeway, I couldn't see the heron! The branch was there, the river was there, I was there, only he wasn't.

I was rather miserable for the holiday. I knew my friend was sad but I didn't know how to get him back and say sorry. Mamma saw how sad I was and she showed me in the book that herons go to the coast at winter.

It was my turn to wait now. I waited another term, peeping out from the car at the swamps to see if he is back. Each day I would



TANISHA BISWAS

hope to see him sitting at his usual spot. The days got warmer and finally summer arrived, bringing my Fen Causeway Heron with it. Now I know when the time comes, it will go away again. But I won't be sad, as I know he will come back again.



Singing & Piano Lessons

Have you ever wanted to start singing or piano lessons?

Come and try an initial consultation lesson with a fully qualified and DBS checked teacher for only £15!

Each lesson is tailored to the ability and age of the student.

Contact Emma:
07977552710

Of being a Bengali in Britain

OISHANI GOSWAMI, AGE 10

Being a Bengali in Britain is great fun. You get to speak a different language, go to festivals that last for almost three whole days, get presents every once in a while and even get some days off from studying!

It's also about going to Kolkata. There are many places where I go to when I am there — to the cinemas, or shopping at New Market with my mum's friends and not forgetting our local Mela, which comes along every December. The long, sunny winter days are also about getting to see my relatives, both the ones who fly back to India from all over the world, and the ones who actually stay there.

Ah, the thrill of a rickshaw ride on a crowded bumpy road, or buying bangles and jewellery from different roadside shops... not to be missed!

Oh, and did I mention our almost-every-other-year Puri trips with all my family — 4-80 year olds, chattering and laughing away, packed in half-a-train compartment, with bunk beds to sleep on? When we finally get there the next morning, ready to have some fun, we spend hours playing in the waves, and in the evening sometimes watch the sun set. And last, but definitely not the least, I absolutely *love* savouring my annual *papri chaat*!

In my school, I have a group of five friends who feel like sisters to me, and I'm sure they feel the same way. All of us have roots in different countries — Singapore, Ghana, China, Italy, England and India. We're similar in many ways, but also very different. I am really proud that I can contribute to our little group of six by being who I am.

So here's to Being Bengali In Britain!

My dream car

TRIJIT DAS, AGE 12

My dream car would be a Rolls Royce with a magical star filled night sky ceiling, as well as be sound proof... Silence!

The leather would be the softest, hand-stitched to perfection, and in perfect harmony with the lacquered veneer that glistened in the sunlight.

The shimmering blue piece of exquisite art would come alive at a gentle touch.

When I unlocked it, lights on the door handles would gently turn on, guiding and welcoming me into the plush interior. Ambient lighting would make me feel like I'm in the spotlight.

The deluxe display key would make it almost impossible to take the extravagant machine out of your hands; a Pro navigation screen which would enhance the sense of luxury. If you feel exhausted by a long ride, an in-built massage system in the seats would help you relax. The fluffy carpet made of sheep wool would make it feel soft as a panda. And the 17-inch TV screen with Bose speakers would make the luxury real.

The 20-inch alloy wheels would make the car glide. And the sport steering wheel would be sheer joy to held. The car would drive itself, allowing me to relax and enjoy my quiet ride.

All this put together would make my dream car the experience of a lifetime. What's yours?



Keep going!

RITISHA BAIDYARAY, AGE 10

Every bad deed deserves a punishment and I am determined that today shall be that day — the day of revenge. I have suffered in silence all along, unable to protect my reputation, unable to stand up for myself, unable to protest against lie. But there is a limit to how much I can endure!

Why, it was just the other day...I was singing as usual. Well, there might be disagreement as to what can be termed as song, but to me, it's the sweetest and most melodious song someone can ever sing! The boy hit me hard on the head, twisted my ear roughly and pushed me away angrily. I landed on the floor; God knows how long I lay there - my whole body sore and bruised. I felt like going to sleep forever, so that I don't have to withstand such torture, but my sense of duty kept me going. And to top it all, the boy complained to his parents, I wasn't doing my work properly, called me an old, ugly wretch and asked them to throw me out of their house.

'Their' house! Well, can't you see, it's my house too? It is this house I stepped in fifty odd years ago, my majestic figure glowing with pride, my resplendent ears beaming of sophistication and my jewel encrusted head echoing grandiosity! I was the pride of my parents, my dad never stopping to gush about me to his esteemed guests and my mum caressing me with utmost love and care. But gone are those days now! I am a miserable, 'old wretch' to his son's family. Nobody pauses to think how much service I have rendered to them over the years, my body battered, bruised and knackered but my will power keeping me going...

It's almost night time now. I hear the family saying, the surgery was successful. Thank God! The boy is going to get better! That's

My sushi recipe

DISHA MONDOL, AGE 12

Sushi is a delicious Japanese dish that dates back to the 8th century. Today, it is popular around the world. Here's how to make your own mouth-watering sushi in a few simple steps:

Ingredients:

500g sticky rice ; a pack of nori sheets; vegetables (cucumbers, peppers, carrots and anything you fancy!); fresh fish, prawns, crab, lobster, or tempura vegetables (optional); rice vinegar

Method:

1. Boil sticky rice as per instructions on the packet. When cooked, add a splash of rice vinegar.
2. Lay the nori on a sushi mat and spread a layer of rice (one or two rices thick).
3. Carefully cut strips of veggies or fish and lay them out on the nori, about ½ inch away from the edges.
3. Tightly roll the mat with the nori over the filling. When the filling is covered, it should look like a sausage!
4. Cut the sausage into 2cm pieces and you have your sushi! Enjoy!

For the dipping sauce, simply mix soya sauce, fish sauce and a bit of sesame oil and you are ready to enjoy the most fantastic sushi you've had.

all I wanted — to look after my parents' family after they are gone. It doesn't matter how they treat me, what only matters is I keep going and fulfil my duty. No, as you can understand, I couldn't take revenge. I woke them up in time, sounding off my alarm or singing my song, as you may like to call it so that they could keep the hospital appointment.

After all, that's all an 'old, wretched' alarm clock like me can do for my family, the only family I have.

Everything about Nothing

SIDIN VADUKUT

In Gwalior, there is a fort commonly known as Gwalior Fort. Next to the fort is the small Chaturbuja temple. Inside the temple is a statue with four arms but no face. It did once have a face, but it has since been vandalized. There are two inscriptions in this temple. One is engraved over the main door. The other is inscribed into an indentation, roughly square in shape, on the left wall of the sanctum sanctorum as you enter it, to Lord Vishnu's right.

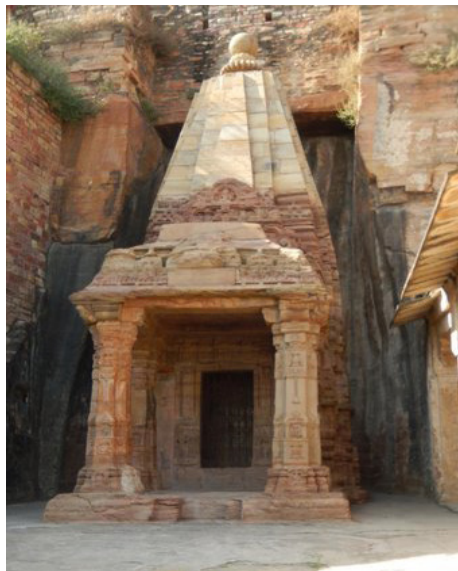
The temple had fallen into ruin long before the first archaeologists began studying it in the late 19th century. The inscription over the main door lay unnoticed even after initial excavations. It was first noticed, copied down and translated into English in 1883 by our old friend and expert Indologist, Eugen Julius Theodor Hultzsch (remember him from Chapter 2?). The second one inside the sanctum sanctorum had been transcribed before, but Hultzsch copied it down again anyway.

Hultzsch seems surprised at the quality of the prose in the inscription over the door:

The first inscription consists of 27 Sanskrit verses and must have been composed by an ingenious pandit, who was well versed in alamkara. His extravagant hyperboles will appear startling and amusing even to one accustomed to the usual kavya style.

The second inscription from the tablet next to Vishnu is not so great. It is written, Hultzsch says, in 'incorrect Sanskrit prose'.

But then, history and discovery are eccentric muses. Sometimes they care not for art and aesthetics. The first



The temple of zero: Chaturbhuj temple; (facing page) one of the inscriptions; and Indologist Professor Hultzsch.

inscription that impressed Hultzsch has passed into the annals without emitting even a low whimper. Nice, but meh.

The second, shoddy inscription, on the other hand, is one of the most important records in the history of mathematics. If there is any record in all of India that is fully deserving of generating and maintaining its own cannon of India facts, this is it. There should be entire museums complete with multimedia displays and gift shops dedicated to this inscription.

So what does this piece of inscription say? Does it reveal the name of a mysterious king? Give a concrete date for a historical episode that experts had argued over for decades? Does it tell the future, then, in some Nostradamian way?

Bewareth thee the phone that is all

touch but no buttons. For children will buy expensive apps...

No. It is merely an inscription informing one of a donation that has been made to this temple. It goes like this:

Om! Adoration to Vishnu! In the year 933, on the second day of the bright half of Magha...the whole town gave to the temple of the nine Durgas...a piece of land belonging to the village of Chudapal- li k a ... 2 7 0 royal has- tas in length, and 187 hastas in breadth, a flower-garden, on an auspicious day...

Then, a little later, the transcription says: ...And on this same day, the town gave to these same two temples a perpetual endowment to the effect...for the requirements of worship, 50 garlands of such market flowers as available at the particular season.

There is more to this second Gwalior inscription.

But these lines are the relevant its.

So, what is so groundbreaking about these lines?

Simple. The numbers in them. Especially the two measures in hastas and the number of flower garlands. Inscribed in 876 CE, this inscription is the oldest text anywhere in India in which the zero is used in exactly the way we use it today. (The inscription itself refers to year 933 in the Saka calendar. In case you're wondering.) And not just because the zero in 270 hastas or 50 garlands looks like the modern zero—it does; it looks like a small circle. But also because it is used in the way it is, both as a placeholder for no value and a number in its own right.

There is broad agreement amongst researchers that the inscription at the

Chaturbuja Temple in Gwalior is one of the earliest records anywhere of the modern zero. In February 2007, Bill Casselman, a professor at the University of British Columbia, wrote a brief essay titled 'All for Nought' for the website of the American Mathematical Society. In the essay, he talks of a journey he made to Gwalior to have a look at the inscriptions. He wrote:

What is surprising about these numbers is that they are so similar to what modern civilization uses currently. The more you learn about how our current number symbols developed—transmitted from the Hindus to the Persians, then to Mediterranean Islam, and differently in East and West—the more remarkable this appears...

What the Gwalior tablet shows is that by 876 CE our current place-value system with a base of 10

had become part of popular culture in at least one region of India.

So, are we done with this chapter, then? Pats on back all around, 10/10 for this 'India fact'? Also, what is all that confusing talk of placeholders and numbers and usages?

Alas, that is the problem with the history of the zero. It is much more complicated than a little circle that stands for nothing.

And this is why establishing India's ownership of the zero will take a little more sceptical enquiry, one that will take us far, far away from that little abandoned temple in Gwalior.

Excerpted from The Sceptical Patriot, Exploring the Truths Behind the Zero and Other Indian Glories, published by Rupa, New Delhi.



The diet dilemma

SUSMITA CHOWDHURY

How many times have you thrown your hands up at yet another BBC science article telling you to change your diet? All you want is to lose that belly fat and live longer and healthier. So, can you eat butter again? And what really is the best way to lose those 5kg gained over the last few years? As a public health doctor, I'm going to try to answer a few niggling questions based on the ever evolving evidence.

Which is the best diet for losing weight?

Paleo? Atkins? Weight Watchers? You could google up to 20 more diet fads. Initially, most diets produce dramatic results. But after six months of weight loss, many people stop losing weight and may even recover it once they stop dieting. Thus, most diets fail to help you maintain the size you acquired after painstaking months of staying off the cheesecakes. However, there *is* an answer. All we need to do is to 'create a habit' of a low-calorie, balanced diet.

One diet reliably proven to be good is the Mediterranean diet — rich in seafood, nuts and legumes, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and olive oil, and red wine in moderation. But, what all 'good' diets seem to point at is the avoidance of the big bad refined carbohydrates and free sugar.

What should the ideal diet look like?

First, we need to limit our total calorie intake. Once you add up the calories you have on an average day, when that latte, croissant, biscuit, 'healthy' M&S lunch, cola, crisp, sweet, fruit and that delicious dinner at the party have all been accounted for, you will realise, you have eaten enough for three days in one!

Dieting doesn't equal excruciating sacrifices: "No more *rossogollas*!?" No way! It is gradually limiting the total calorie intake to, initially, much lower than that recommended; eating delicious balanced meals, while avoiding the 'baddies' like refined carbohydrates and sugars. Reward yourself now and then (yes, even with *rossogollas*) for meeting your calorie goal. Any whole natural food in moderation is also fine — so both butter and cheese are back on the table. Reducing meat intake and increasing fruits, vegetables & water are always good.

Over time, after a satisfactory reduction of weight, find a calorie intake level that is sustainable. And to keep in check: weigh yourself every few months and make sure you loose any extra weight gained on top of that weight you painstakingly arrived at, by limiting calories for a few weeks. It's really all about creating a new habit; and many people, whose physique we admire and envy, do exactly that.



Wish you all a very happy
Autumn Festival 2016

With Best Compliments From

Notun Bangla Bazar
194 Mill Road
Cambridge CB1 3NF
Phone : 01223 413369

Ode to You

MOUMITA CHATTOPADHYAY

It was certainly not the best of times; possibly it was the worst of times. The unwelcome intruder called exam was ravaging my otherwise mundane life and the bliss called stability was a far-fetched yearn. It was in this tumultuous climate, 'you' entered my life. The initial emotion of this new found relationship was sceptical, to say the least, cradled in the cynical mind set characteristic of civilised, educated womankind. But along with it, was this hitherto alien interest to be part of 'you' and a desire to be accepted by the greater 'you'. Was I getting old and pining for a long overdue new relationship? (A little disclaimer - I am not talking about a handsome hunk, readers, I'm talking about the society which knits us together – ICS, are you listening?)

My heart skipped a few beats when I entered the rehearsal for the first time. After all, I had the label of 'an unsocial converted into an antisocial' by people who claim to know me. In fact, I couldn't fault them as I had nurtured the same ideas about myself all my life. Am I going to gel with a society of mainly Bengalis on 'phoren' soil?

I was yet to know that I had embarked on the voyage to rediscover myself. Such was the affability of the community, that I found myself basking in the warmth and eager to mould myself into a more acceptable format. From being someone, who would shy away from anything remotely involving group exposure, slowly but steadily, I metamorphosed into someone who would happily return home past midnight after hours of fruitless conversation about one particular topic done to death, tap heels to rocking music in her first ever night out with friends (girls, of course!) or hardly have a weekend free when not sweating in front of the oven trying to save the chicken from overcooking. More importantly I learnt to smile, even laugh or giggle (my close friends would disagree with that I'm sure, as even now their main complaint is, they can't see my teeth flashing in the photographs). I learnt to share few of my closely guarded secrets, which I never dreamt of doing in seven lifetimes. I found myself forming groups meant to exist 'forever', logging into my facebook account to leave likes and comments and glued to my iphone with fingers tapping away in the middle of a busy day engaged in needless chitchat. I reached a point where people would disbelieve I could have been anything but very social all my life! I can't believe now I pose for photos, attend parties regularly (at the cost of 'healthy' debates with co-passenger throughout the travel time, though), buy sarees and wear make ups!

My better (or worse) half has often commented I have changed. My answer to that is — 'change' would be an understatement, I have 'mutated'. What triggered the mutation is unknown to me and I had been often left wondering, was I a social person at heart and only wore a cloak of aloofness outside or did I really mutate? Or worse still, do I, or did I, suffer from Split Personality Disorder? More importantly though is this transformation for better or worse? I'll leave it up to you to decide, dear friends! I can only say currently, it feels like, it is certainly not the worst of times, possibly it is the best of times!

The mystery of Mr Bakshi's abiding popularity

JOYEET DAS

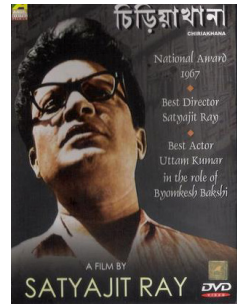
How do you hook on a new generation of Bengalis to Bangla cinema? A generation equally comformatble at Sector V and Silicon Valley; that teaches the world how to make *maachher jhol* via YouTube while binge-watching the latest Netflix show?

Simple. You turn to a *dhoti*-clad young man who walked nonchalantly into Bangla fiction eight decades ago. Byomkesh Bakshi. Saradindu Bandhyopadhyay's Satyanweshi – seeker of truth – has always been popular with fans of detective thrillers ever since the first story was published in the early 1930s. Not that there ever was a dearth of crime solvers in Bangla literature. But Byomkesh successfully held his own. So much so that Satyajit Ray, himself an accomplished writer of the genre, filmed *Chiriyakhana* (1967) way before he brought his own Feluda onto the silver screen with *Sonar Kella* (1974), starring none less than Uttam Kumar. The same year, *Shajarur Kanta* was produced by yesteryear actress Manju Dey.

However, it won't be an overstatement to say that for the generation who grew up in '90s India, it is two north Indian actors who started in Basu Chatterjee's series for Doordarshan — Rajit Kapoor as Byomkesh and Ajit Raina as Ajit — who are the face of these quintessentially Bengali heroes.

Since the first decade of the millenia, Bengalis, and Indians, have rediscovered Byomkesh. Every second filmmaker wants to create his own version and the audience is lapping them all up.

In 2010, Anjan Dutt decided to try his hands with Byomkesh, with Abir Chatterjee in the lead and Saswata Chatterjee as Ajit. He



took quite a lot of liberty with the story *Adim Ripu*, on which his *Byomkesh Bakshi* was based, changing the timescape completely from the Partition era to the 21st century. Yet, it went down pretty well. Dutt repeated his success with *Abar Byomkesh*, based on *Chitrachor*. He completed his trilogy with *Byomkesh Phire Elo*, his take of *Beni Sanghar*. In 2013, Rituparno Ghosh upped the ante with his *Satyanweshi*. Interestingly, he chose fellow filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh as his hero.

Year 2015 saw not one or two, but FOUR Byomkesh films. In a surprise move, another director Saibal Mitra cast thespian Dhritiman Chatterjee as Byomkesh in *Shajarur Kaanta*.

But the big surprise was *Detective Byomkesh Bakshi* by Dibakar Banerjee. With this Yash Raj production Byomkesh went big-budget Bollywood. Banerjee chose Sushant Singh Rajput as his 'detective' and got Niraj Kabi to play a super-villain in his version, a mix of the first Bakshi story and *Arthamanartham*.

Banerjee has a three-film deal Yash Raj. Will his truth-seeker make a comeback? Maybe. But one thing is for sure. Byomkesh has found a new generation. And it is loving him.

রিফিউজি

তনিমা ধর

আমার মা বাবা অখন্ড বাংলার লোক; তাদের বাড়ি ছিল চট্টগ্রামে। আমি কোনদিন যাই নি সে জায়গায় খুব তো দূর নয় তবু যাওয়া হয়নি। একটা দেশের কয়েকটা খন্ড নিয়ে গড়ে উঠলো এক একটা নতুন দেশ....কিছু মিশে গেল, কিছু বিনিময় হয়ে গেল বেহিসাবে; বাংলাদেশ, পাকিস্তান। শুধু বাংলাদেশের সাথে আমার একটা আলাদা সম্পর্ক; আত্মার আর ভাষার; ভালবাসার। বড় হয়েছি কলকাতায়... কিন্তু আমার মনে দুই দেশের আত্মীয়তা; ছোট বেলায় ফিলিপস এর বড় রেডিওতে গান শুনতাম ফিরোজা বেগম, ইফফাত আরা খান; কতদিন যে রাতের অন্ধকারে টর্চ এর আলোয় সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী র সাথে ঘুরে বেরিয়েছি দেশেবিদেশে। একটা দেশ আমি চিনেছি এভাবে, তার সংস্কৃতিতে, গল্পে, স্মৃতিচারণায়। আমার কোনো দাদুর বাড়ি ছিল না গরমের ছুটি কাটানোর জন্য। সবাই বলত আমরা যাচ্ছি....দেশের বাড়ি....সারাদিন মাঠে ঘাটে ছুটোপাটি.... ভাই বোন তুতো! সবাই একসাথে ঢালা বিছানা, এর পা তার মাথা...গরমের রাত.....বিশাল ছাদ আর আদিগন্ত আকাশের নিচে দিদা দাদুর কোল ঘেষে রাজার বাড়ি! এমন একটা মজার ঠিকানা আমার খাতায় লেখা ছিল না। আমি শুধু জানতাম দূরে অন্য একটা দেশে আমার মা বাবার ছোট বেলার গল্প লেখা আছে জলছবিতে, পদ্মার পারে....সেইখানে আমার দাদুর বাড়ি; মাঝে দালান, দালান ঘিরে ঘর...ঘরের বাইরে আমকাঠালের বাগান আর দুপুরে ভুতের ভয়; আমার মার ছোটবেলার পুতুল আর তুলোর বর বউআমার বাবা কোনদিন কি তালপাতার সেপাই সেজেছিল, ভাসানের পর লড়ে পাওয়া মাটি ভেজা সোনালী রাস্তার মুকুট? শুনেছি একটা বিশাল বটগাছ ছিল নদীর ধার ঘেষে, সেই বটগাছটা আছে হয়ত এখনো, আগের মত, খেলার মাঠের শেষে একা ভীষ্ম!!!! জানি না কেমন ছিল সেই বিশাল দালান যার একপাশে বাঁশের কাঠামোর গায়ে মাটি লেপা হত পূজোর আগে....আর সেই আম কাঠালের বাগান, যেখানে কালবৈশাখীর পর রাতের অন্ধকারে আম কুড়ানোর প্রতিযোগিতা....বড়মামা, মেজমাসি, সোনামামা, রাঙাদিদু? আমার দেশের বাড়ি ছিল আমার মা বাবার ছোটবেলার গল্পে ...অথচ ছোটবেলার গল্পটা বড় হওয়ার আগেই হারিয়ে গেল হঠাৎ। বড় হওয়ার অনেক আগে বড় হয়ে যেতে হলো; খেলা শেষ হয়নি তবু ডাক পড়ল ঘরে ফেরার, ঘর থেকে পাড়ি দেওয়ার দেশান্তরে; সব আছে আগের মতই, শুধু এর মাঝে কিছু বছর হারিয়ে গেছে দারুন এক যুদ্ধে.....এ ঠিক রাজার সাথে রাজার লড়াই নয়। লড়াই টা পরিচয়ের। আব্দুল না অভয়?

শুরু হলো আর এক পাঁচালি.....'পথের পাঁচালি'....অন্ধকার আর পালিয়ে বাঁচার লড়াই..কে পড়ে রইলো কাঁটাতারের ওপারে ফিরে দেখার সময় নেই....আগে কোথায় যাবে তার ঠিকানা নেই; শুধু চলো, যদি কোথাও পাওয়া যায় এতটুকু মাটি.....বাসা বাঁধা হবে আবার। শেষের পরও কি শুরু করা যায়? হয়ত সম্ভব? যারা ভাঙ্গন দেখেছে তারা বাঁচে আবারও...ওরা জানে ভাঙতে ভাঙতে ও শেষ হতে নেই; কিছু পড়ে থাকা বিশ্বাস আর সাহস নিয়ে কেউ যাদবপুর, কেউ টালীগঞ্জ। বাঁচতে চেয়ে একসাথে -- কেউ তখন কারের মাসি, কেউ বোন; বেড়ার দুধারে দশটা পরিবার.....ডালের ফোড়নে কুচো মাছের গন্ধ; পরেশ দার ধুতির পাশে মিলি বোদির শাড়ি আর এতটুকু জায়গা মামনির লালজামার জন্য। নতুন করে গড়ে ওঠা সম্পর্ক, নতুন জীবন, নতুন পরিচয় - রিফিউজি।



Wish you all a very happy
Autumn Festival 2016

With Best Compliments From

Indian Mini Market
Cherry Hinton

Phone : 01223 214111



AFTER PARTY

Most of us wait all year for the 'pujas'. Some wait all year for the goddess' parting gifts. In the build-up to the Durga Puja festivities in

Kolkata, there is a huge hum of industry: lights, 'pandals', images are erected, transported and arranged in a seemingly ephemeral tableau. For some, though, business is best after the crowds have gone home.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
INDRANIL BHOUMIK/MINT

TEXT BY MANIDIPA MANDAL

*Reprinted from Mint, HT Media Ltd
www.livemint.com*



FROM TOP: 1. This 100kg, Rs1.5lakh chandelier was made locally for the Mohammed Ali Park puja a few years ago.

2. These teenagers work at local factories making bottles, cork stoppers, cardboard boxes and such. During the pujas, they earn a few times their daily wages, making Rs500-700 a day, rescuing the wooden frames of the images and selling them back to the artisans.

3. Two boys fish for coins with their magnets tied to wire lines. During the pujas their usual earnings of Rs25-40 a day rise to Rs100-150.

4. At Kumartuli ghat, Dussehra represents an earning opportunity for dhaakis and the owners and drivers of transport vehicles such as this one.



You'll hear splats, winds, leaves
and the quiet of finest luxuries.

SUGAM HABITAT



Magnificent homes engulfed by plush greens, a lake, open air luxuries, and worldly pleasures.
2, 3 and 4 BHK, 982-1975 sq.ft., each one with a large terrace, designed for ample light and air from all directions. A stellar sky club of very high stature, 13,000 sq.ft. spread of luxuries, 65% left wide open and the rest built with an emphasis on green and sustainable. A true habitat where life only flourishes.

Ballygunge Phari - 2 kms / EM Bypass (VIP Bazar Crossing) - 1 km
Science City - 2.6 kms / Ruby Hospital - 2.2 kms / Gariahat Market - 3 kms / Quest Mall - 3 kms



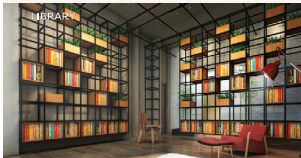
SKY CLUB



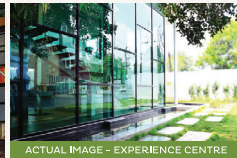
ROOFTOP INFINITY POOL



CONSTRUCTION IN FULL SWING



LIBRARY



ACTUAL IMAGE - EXPERIENCE CENTRE

- Stellar Sky Club
- Concierge
- Boutique Banquet
- Gymnasium
- Expansive Library
- Basketball Court
- Golf Putting Green
- Indoor Games Room
- Natural Waterbody
- Waterside Boulevard
- Children's Park
- Open Air Gym
- Central Lawn
- Palm Avenue
- Five Senses / Herbs & Spices / Zen Gardens

Homes starting at ₹ 55 lacs only
Visit our experience centre today | New tower launched
All statutory clearances received | Approved by all leading banks

Reserve today at: 98305 79700 / 98305 69700 | habitat@sugamhomes.com
Site Address: 158A Picnic Garden Road, Off EM Bypass, Kolkata 700039

Disclaimer: This advertisement is not a legal document. It describes the concept of Sugam Habitat and details furnished are subject to change at the sole discretion of the developer.



www.sugamhomes.com

Meet Photo ID Matched Real People.

GET IT ON
 Google Play



To register login into
www.abpweddings.com

Photo ID Matched


ABPweddings
Real People. Real Relationships.
.com