

RAMDHANU

ৰামধনু

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From the Editor's Desk

সম্পাদকীয়,

দেখতে দেখতে আমরা বছরের মাঝখানে এসে পড়লাম। অনেক চড়াই উতরাই পেরিয়ে পৃথিবীর বয়সও আরো একটু বেড়ে গেল। আর দেখতে দেখতে BASA e-magazine এর দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যা ও প্রকাশিত হল। প্রথম সংখ্যার অভূতপূর্ব সাফল্যের জন্য সকলকে অভিনন্দন এবং ধন্যবাদ জানাই। যেভাবে সবাই তাদের ভাবনা ,আবেগ কে e-magazine এর মাধ্যমে প্রকাশ করেছে তাতে একটা কথা পরিষ্কার যে BASA তে প্রতিভার অভাব নেই। দরকার শুধু একটু অনুপ্রেরনার। সুস্ত প্রতিভার প্রকাশ শুধু e-magazine এই নয় , প্রতিভার বিস্ফোরণ ঘটেছে “কবিপ্রণাম” অনুষ্ঠানেও।

শক্তি দিও জ্ঞান দিও সাহস দিও মাগো,

আঁধার ভুবন করতে আলো, জাগো তুমি জাগো---

কাশফুলের ছোঁয়া, শিউলি ফুলের সুবাস, ঢাকের ঢ্যাম কুড়কুড় আওয়াজ, ধূনার গন্ধের আবেশ, নতুন শাড়ীর গন্ধ, লোকজনের কলরব, শাঁখ ঘন্টার আওয়াজ সবকিছু যেন মাঝেমাঝে শরীরে মনে শিহরন জাগিয়ে চলে যাচ্ছে। কলকাতার কুমোরটুলীতে এখন সাজ সাজ রব, প্রতিমা তৈরীর কাজে লেগে পড়েছে কারিগরেরাও। বড় বড় পাড়ার পুজোকর্তারা ইতিমধ্যেই পুজোর থিম নিয়ে ভাবতে শুরু করে দিয়েছে। ভাবুক বাঙালী তাই অধীর আগ্রহে দিন গুনছে কবে “মা”কৈলাস থেকে সপরিবারে ধরায় আসার তোড়জোড় শুরু করবেন।

Basumita Roy

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা---

হেডলাইনস---

- মমতা ব্যানার্জি বিপুল ভোটে জিতে পশ্চিমবাঙালার মুখ্যমন্ত্রী হলেন।
- তামিলনাড়ুতে জয়ললিতা তার জয়ের পতাকা উড়িয়ে দিলেন সর্গর্বে।
- দীর্ঘ ১৫ বছর ক্ষমতায় থাকা কংগ্রেসের তরুন গণে কে হারিয়ে BJP র সর্বানন্দ সোনোয়াল আসামের নতুন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ঘোষিত হলেন।
- বন্ধার “মহম্মদ আলী” দূরারোগ্য পারকিনসনস রোগে আক্রান্ত হয়ে ৭৪ বছর বয়সে দুনিয়া ছেড়ে চলে গেলেন।
- গনভোটের মাধ্যমে এক ঐতিহাসিক সিদ্ধান্তে ব্রিটেন বেরিয়ে এল EU(European Union) থেকে।
- ভারতের একমাত্র “Mr. Universe”খেতাব জয়ী “মনোহর আইচ”(পকেট হারকিউলিস) মারা গেলেন ১০৪ বছর বয়সে।
- ২৩বছরেও হলো না, আবার আর্জেন্টিনাকে হারিয়ে কোপা আমেরিকা জিতে নিল চিলি।
- আন্তর্জাতিক ফুটবল থেকে অবসর নিলেন মেসি।
- শেষ ওভারে ক্যারিবিয়ান ক্যালিপসো, ওয়েস্ট ইন্ডিজের দ্বিমুকুট(মহিলা বিশ্বকাপে বাজিমাত ওয়েস্ট ইন্ডিজের)।

◦ আমেরিকায় নাইট ক্লাবে ৫০ জনকে খুন করল বন্দুকবাজ ,
জখম ৫৩।

◦ ব্রেস্ট্রিটের ধাক্কায় বেসামাল ব্রিটেন, স্বাধীনতা দাবী করল
লন্ডন।

◦ ইস্তানবুল বিমানবন্দরে আত্মঘাতী হানা, নিহত ৩৬ ,আহত
শতাধিক।

BASA Events

কবিপ্রণাম

এককথায় অসাধারণ, তুলনাহীন, অবিস্মরণীয়, অভূতপূর্ব

আমি আর শব্দ খুঁজে পাচ্ছি না আমার আবেগকে প্রকাশ করার।
বুঝতে বোধহয় অসুবিধা হচ্ছে না যে আমি কিসের সম্মুখে বলছি।
হ্যাঁ আমি বলছি আমাদের BASA 'র কবিপ্রণাম অনুষ্ঠানের কথা।

৫ই জুন Sandton এর “ Theatre On the Square” এর হলে
অনুষ্ঠিত হল “কবিপ্রণাম”। সমস্ত দুনিয়ার কাছে আবার প্রকাশিত
হল বাঙালীর সাংস্কৃতিক মনস্কতার। এবারের থিম ছিল দেশভক্তি।
জাতীয় সংগীত দিয়ে শুরু হল প্রোগ্রাম। প্রদীপ জ্বালিয়ে অনুষ্ঠানের
সূচনা করলেন Consul (Commercial) & head of Chancery
Mr. Naresh Kumar. Consul general of India Mr. Randhir
Jaiswal সমেত উপস্থিত ছিলেন আরো অনেক মাননীয় অতিথিবৃন্দ।

ছোটবেলায় সবথেকে বেশিবার জিগ্সাসিত প্রশ্নটার উত্তর আমি
পেয়েছি অবশেষে---তুমি বড় হয়ে কি হতে চাও? উত্তর আবার
ছোটো হতে চাই। “স্বপ্ন হলেও সত্যি” অনুষ্ঠানে কচিকাচাদের নিপুন
অভিনয় দক্ষতা দেখে সত্যি আমার মনে হয়েছিল ছোটবেলার
অনেক কিছুই শেখা হয়নি।

“চেতনা” অনুষ্ঠানের মধ্যে যে সব কলা কুশলীদের চেতনা সামিল
ছিল তাদের সেলাম জানাই। অসাধারণ concept, script
writing, choreography, performance-----এককথায়
দৃষ্টিনন্দনীয়।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের কবিতা “হোরিখেলা” র নাট্য রূপান্তর হল
মঞ্চে। কলাকুশলীদের অভিনয় , নাচ দেখতে দেখতে আমিও যেন
রানীর মহলে ঢুকে গিয়েছিলাম। মনে হচ্ছিল আমিও যেন সেই

ঘটনার সাক্ষী হলাম যখন রাজপুত্র রানী পার্ঠান বীর “কেসের খাঁ”
কে কতল করে তার স্বামীর হত্যার প্রতিশোধ নিল।

আরো অনেক গান , নাচ , কবিতার সম্ভারে পরিপূর্ণ ছিল
“কবিপ্রণাম”। পরিশেষে মনচস্থ হল hilarious নাটক “বৌদির
বিয়ে”। চার দেওর মিলে আবার বৌদির বিয়ে দিল দাদার সঙ্গে।
কিন্তু এই ছোট্ট ঘটনা কে যেভাবে মল্চে পরিবেশিত করা হল
তা দেখতে দেখতে এবং সংলাপ শুনতে শুনতে পেটের মধ্যে
হাসির ফোয়ারা চলছিল। বিয়ের পর বৌভাতের খাওয়া দাওয়া
সেরে আর সুজির হালুয়া নিয়ে সবাই বাড়ী ফিরলাম।

পিকনিক

ফুলকো ফুলকো লুচি, গরম গরম আলু ফুলকপির তরকারি দিয়ে
জলযোগ, সঙ্গে পেঁয়াজি আর মিষ্টি -----আহা আর কি চাই। এটা
দিয়ে যদি পিকনিকের শুরু হয় তাহলে তো আর কথাই নেই।
ঠিক এমনটাই হয়েছে Bengali Association of South
Africa'র পিকনিকে।

২৩শে এপ্রিল Meyerton এ Vaal নদীর কাছে আয়োজন করা
হয়েছিল BASA পিকনিকের। খাওয়া দাওয়ার পাশাপাশি বড়দের
ক্রিকেট খেলা, ছোটদের sports সবকিছুই ছিল। মহিলারাও
কোমর বেঁধে খেলাধুলায় অংশগ্রহণ করেছিল। আলস্য জড়ানো
দুপুরে অনেকেই মাঠের মধ্যে গল্পগুজবে মগ্ন ছিল। Go cart এর
আনন্দ উপভোগ করতে বাবা-মায়েরাও যেন তাদের ছোটবেলায়
চলে গিয়েছিল কিছুক্ষনের জন্য।

গরম গরম পাঁঠার মাংস আর ভাত ছাড়া তো পিকনিকের কথা
চিন্তাই করা যায় না। BASA'র পিকনিকেও এর অন্যথা হয়নি।
খাওয়া দাওয়ার পর এবার বাড়ী ফেরার পালা। বাড়তি পাওনা
হাতভর্তি prize আর gift...

BASA Ladies Day Out

সাজগোজ করে পরিবার ছাড়া শুধু বন্ধুদের সঙ্গে যদি পুরো
একটা দিন যদি অতিবাহিত করা যায় তো কেমন হয়-----আমি
নিশ্চিত অধিকাংশ মহিলাই বলবে আরে এটা তো স্বপ্ন । আর
ঠিক এমন স্বপ্নকেই সত্যি করতে BASA'র কিছু মহিলা একত্রিত
হয়েছিল ১৮ই জুন Wandereds Club- এ।

Pink আর Black এর থিমে সাজানো হয়েছিল পুরো টেবিল।

খিম রঙের পোশাক পরে অষ্টাদশী যুবতীর মতই সবাই কথাবার্তায় মশগুল ছিল। ক্লাসে ডুব মেরে কলেজের ক্যান্টিনের সেই আড্ডার কথা মনে পড়ে গেল। আড়চোখে ছেলেদের একটু দেখা, আয়নায় চুলটা ঠিক করা বা লিপস্টিক টাকে আরো গাঢ় করে ঠোঁটের উপর লাগানো -----কোনো কিছুই বাদ যায়নি। খাওয়া দাওয়া, আড্ডা , গল্প, photo shoot সব মিলিয়ে ৪-৫ঘন্টা সময় যেন পাখীর মতই ডানা মেলে উড়ে গেল। কিন্তু উপহার দিয়ে গেল সংসারের চাপে ভুলে যাওয়া কলেজের সেই সব দিনগুলো। “ স্বপ্নের সেই দিন” যদি কেউ উপভোগ করতে চাও তো পরের বছরের **BASA Ladies Day Out** যেন miss না হয়।

BASA Cricket Day (Lalkar Cup)

ছোটবেলায় গলি ক্রিকেট খেলেনি এমন ছেলে বোধহয় কমই পাওয়া যাবে। ছাড়া মেরে পাশের বাড়ীর জানালার কাঁচ ভেঙে মাসিমার উচ্চস্বরে চিৎকার শুনেই তো সচিন -সহবাগ রা বড় হয়েছে। আমি কিন্তু বিশ্বখ্যাত সচিন তেন্দুলকর বা বীরেন্দ্র সহবাগের কথা বলছি না। আমি বলছি Bengali Association Of South Africa ‘র সচিন , সহবাগের কথা।

ব্যাট বল হাতে কেউ বা ধোনি তো কেউ বা যুবরাজ। গতবছর থেকে **BASA Cricket Day (Lalkar Cup)** শুরু হয়েছে। খেলা আন্তর্জাতিক মানের না হলেও স্পিনারের গুগলীর দূর্বল ধাক্কায় যখন ব্যাটসম্যান কুপোকাত বা ব্যাট ঘুরিয়ে ব্যাটসম্যানের square cut মেরে চার রান যখন হয় তখন মাঠের মধ্যে উওজনা কিন্তু আন্তর্জাতিক মানেরই হয়।খেলার মান আরো আন্তর্জাতিক করতে উপস্থিত থাকে Cheer Girlsতথা Ladies রাও। কারণ অধিকাংশ দর্শকরাই তাদের husbandদের অনুপ্রানিত করতে মাঠের বাইরে বসে Cheer Leaders এর ভূমিকা পালন করে।

গলি ক্রিকেটের উওজনা যদি কেউ ফিরে পেতে চান তো **20th July** এর আগে অবশ্যই নিজের নাম **Register** করুন।

Jana Ojana!

Muhammad Ali – By Suvrojita Roy

Muhammad Ali was a very good boxer. His original name was Cassius Clay. Muhammad Ali was born on the 17th of January 1942. His mother was house hold domestic. Some of the

nicknames given to Muhammad Ali by the people were The Greatest and The People’s Championship. He started training at the age of 12. At the age of 22, he won the Heavyweight Championship. He won 6 Kentucky Golden Gloves. Apart from being a boxer, Muhammad Ali also recorded 2 spoken albums and a Rhythm and Blues song. He also received 2 Grammy Award nominations. As an actor he performed in several movies and a Broadway musical. He wrote 2 autobiographies, 1 before and 1 after his boxing career. Ali also claimed in his 1975 autobiography that shortly after his return from the Rome Olympics, he threw his medal in the Ohio River after he and a friend were refused service at a ‘Whites Only’ restaurant. He sadly passed away on the 2nd of June 2016 at the age of 74.

Foodie

The Biryani City- By Suvro Paul

As we landed in Kolkata in Dec 2015, and made our way out completing the immigration formalities I was greeted with the changing landscape of the city which I had left 20 years ago. A glimpse of it was seen from the air during the descent. As we travelled out of the “Ek nombor gate”, and were slowly getting accustomed to the cityscape another thing caught my eye - signboards dotting the word “Biryani” in either side of the road and in plenty. I wondered, the delicacy that I savored in specific restaurants and on special occasions only, has become so easily available! Venturing around later in the evening I could even feel a change in the air – I could smell Biryani.

The love for food is an inherent characteristic of any Calcuttan. Though my exposure to various cities in the world is restricted to a handful of the big names, I am yet to embark on a city which welcomes foods and flavours from various parts

of the world with equal zest and delight, as Calcutta.

From fusion fantasies to Mexican bites to far eastern delights, Mediterranean deli's, Continental, Middle Eastern delicacies, you name it – and the city has it all. But in all these flavours, a distinct aroma comes out prominently and overpowers the rest. Yes, it is that of the Biryani and what I experienced this time was intriguing! Calcuttans don't seem to get enough of it. From traditional 'Biryani House', to specialty restaurants, everyone is dishing out this specialty. Every nook and corner of the city is dotted with not only one but a few Biryani stalls or a 'franchisee restaurant' that excels in the craft of making this Mughlai cuisine. Even a non-descript lane in the city has a hole-in-wall eatery cooking up this magic. A Bengali's love for this can be seen on their faces as soon as the B word is uttered.

One of the foodies had once written that "succulent chunks of meat, the tangy taste of the saffron-and-white rice, the aroma of a mélange of spices intoxicating the senses" is what a Biryani is. What an apt description!

As much as I love Biryani, I somehow feel very nostalgic to see how this food has inched its way to replace the Kathi Roll stalls in Kolkata. Kathi Roll, an all-time favorite - a flaky flat bread fried in fat and filled with chunks of chicken/mutton/cottage cheese/... (the list is long and can go on) and sprinkled with thin slices of onions, drizzled with lemon juice and a sprinkling of some 'secretive' seasoning and then rolled up for easy eating. It is one of the 'must haves' while visiting Kolkata. It used to be one of the quick snacks or for some even a proper meal considering the amount of fillings in the roll. This 'fast food' is not in competition with the Biryani but stands equally strong, and slowly giving its way to Biryani. I must say it is a tough fight.

With Biryani being so easily available, I feel the novelty of eating it is wearing off. Earlier, for having this delicacy we used to get excited and would travel to restaurants specializing in the art of making it. Now that excitement is lost. You can have it within a couple of steps from your doorstep or even get it delivered via a phone call. Though the aroma does "intoxicate your senses" but in certain cases the 'zing' is definitely missing. The novelty is wearing off giving way to commercialization. But I guess this happens to any thing that has a mass appeal and supply is in plenty. And for the Calcuttans - it certainly has the appeal. The love for this delicacy is so much that I am wondering - along with "The City of Palaces" and "The city of Joy", will the city get another feather in its cap - "The City of Biryani"?



I guess I have to wait and watch.....

Healthy Soup - Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients-

- Pumpkin – 1,5 kg
- Onion – 1 medium
- Tomatoes – 2
- Garlic – 1 clove
- Lime, juiced – 1
- A few springs of coriander for garnish
- Red chilli powder – 1 tsp
- Cumin powder – 1 tsp
- Pepper powder, optional – 1 tsp
- Rock salt to taste
- Thick beaten yoghurt – 1,5 cup

Method –

Wash the pumpkin and skin it. Set the skin aside. Scoop the soft centre portion along with the seeds and keep with the skin. Chop the pumpkin into big pieces. Cook the pumpkin with the onion,

tomatoes and garlic along with 3 cups of water. Leave to cool and grind in the liquidiser. Cook the skin and the soft centre portion that you have kept aside with 3 cups of water for 10 minutes. Leave to cool and strain this water. Add this stock to the pumpkin paste. Then add the dry powdered spices and mix well. Serve in soup bowls, pour in a few drops of the lime juice, and add a swirl of the beaten yogurt and garnish with coriander.

Kobial

Have you Heard? – By Dipanwita Gupta

Have you heard a red dragon fly?
Like a rich rose' wine lie,
Shining, glistening, reflecting the Sun.

Have you heard the fish swim?
Quietly, gracefully, rhythmically
A flap of fin here, a whisk of tail there.

Have you heard the Lotus bloom?
Silently opening the petals amidst the muck
Calm, composed, standing its ground.

Have you heard the butterfly walk?
Hush-hush, Lush-lush, mush-mush.
What's the fuss about in your life?

Have you heard the sun rays on your skin?
First warm, then warmer, burning down to your bones
A strange glow flow down your spine.

Have you heard the dog?
Huff-puff, grunt-growl
Going down the pond to cool off.
Have you heard the driftwood stand?
Solid, forbid, morbid.
Its skin furrowed with age, standing free yet in its own cage.
Have you heard the flag flap?
Silently, colorfully.
Telling the bunting to go flapping as well.

Have you heard the gong?
Ringing through the nature ringing, tinging,
pinging, impregnating
Waking me up from my reverie, reminding me
that my luggage is still sitting in Botswana!

Shob Shadhona - By Ashok Kumar Mazumder

পাখি কি খাঁচায় সাজে কতযুগ ধরে?
আয়নায় আঁকামুখ বুকো গান গায়
পাথরে ভাঙছে ঢেউ অশ্রু ঝর ঝর
শোনে বুকো চোরা স্নোতে ফেনা ভেসে যায়।
বিশাক্ত সংসার মাঝে শব্দ হীন ছিলে
দিকে চারিদিকে জাগে শব্দ নির্বিচার
জীবনে জটিল প্রান হাহাকার করে
সাঁঝের আঁধার ঢাকে ঘোর অন্ধকার।
পাখি তো বেরোতে চায় স্বপ্নে ভাবনাতে
পায়ের শিকল ছিঁড়ে সন্ধ্যা ও প্রভাতে
দিনের বাজার সেরে অফিসে মিটিং এ
বাদী প্রতিবাদী হয়ে ফিরে আসে রাতে।
ফিরেতো খাঁচায় পাখি ব্যথিত হৃদয়
শারীরিক পরাজয়ে লজ্জা ও ঘৃণায়
বিশ্বন্ন শরীর ছুঁয়ে হাঁটে যে মিছিল
একদিন সেও বসে শব সাধনায়।

Mogoj Dholai

If Sujan is my uncle's sister's
Granddaughter's son.
What's the closest relationship I can have
with Sujan?

Answer - Sujan is my grandson.

Golpo Dadur Ashor

The Endless Night – By Shreela Gupta Banerjee

Bimala was terrified. It was the last day of the *mela*. Everyone else in the house had already been. The three of them were the only ones left.

Her Mother-in-law had gone on the first week. And her two *Devraani's* last week. But none of them had asked her or Heera to come along. "Till this morning, when her older brother-in-law had smirked deep into his morning cup of tea and jeered at her husband." "Not taking your *Laadli* to the *Mela*, *Badeybhaiyaa*?" Reluctantly, her husband had mumbled, "Yes, I will."

Bimala could not remember when last the three of them had gone out together, as a family. In the beginning, right after her marriage, it was her father or her brothers who had come from Azamgarh to take her to her maternal home. Once her father passed on, she had gone home to see her mother only thrice in all these years. The snide comments, funny looks and her "*bhabi's*" reluctance to let her participate in any family ritual had quietened her need to go to see them even once a year.

As she walked on the dry, dusty road; she remembered when her body was swollen with Heera and the quiet pride in her husband's eyes. As if he was telling the whole world that he, too, had a place in the rightful scheme of things. By then the house was already a cacophony of her *Devars'* sons. It was brutally hot that year. The cool mud floors of their home had cracked into a thousand veins. There was hunger everywhere and water nowhere to be found. But nature knows no mercy. And Heera had arrived after the rains. One muggy afternoon when the sky was dark and her husband's brow was creased. In the last three years she had seldom seen that crease dissolve into a smile. Every time he looked at the sunny eyes of his daughter, the storm clouds seem to descend onto his brows.

Heera looked up now at her "*Babuji*" as she hopped and skipped with joy of this new adventure. A rare treat in her tiny life. Her eyes gleamed as she asked him softly, "Can I buy a red hairband and green bangles?" Bimala clutched at her daughter's knobby shoulders and gently

pressed on them in warning. She didn't want anything to spoil this day, this afternoon- an unexpected ray of joy in their harsh lives.

The *Mela* grounds looked like a fairyland. Everywhere one looked there was colour, noise and people. The big "*jhoola*" swung from the sky and the shrieks of fear mixed with euphoria could be heard from afar. The monkey dancers with their "*dugduggis*", the kite sellers, the kaleidoscope where you could see the whole *Ramayan*, the cotton candy machine spinning out its bright pink clouds, *jelebi walas* spinning hot circles of sweetness.

Once inside, Bimala looked around. She remembered all this so well. These were familiar smells and sounds- from her childhood. This was her world. Once. So much a part of her. Alien since her marriage almost a decade ago. But still known. Her legs moved involuntarily towards the bangle shop on the side next to the aluminum sheets that seemed to beckon her. The circles of gold, green, black and red could still spin their magic. She was drawn mesmerizing to lift up her arm and hold it up. A burly pair of hands held out a tempting mix of bangles looped on a wooden stick for her to choose from. She lovingly fingered the dreams of her youth still spinning on the stick. Glinting and beckoning.

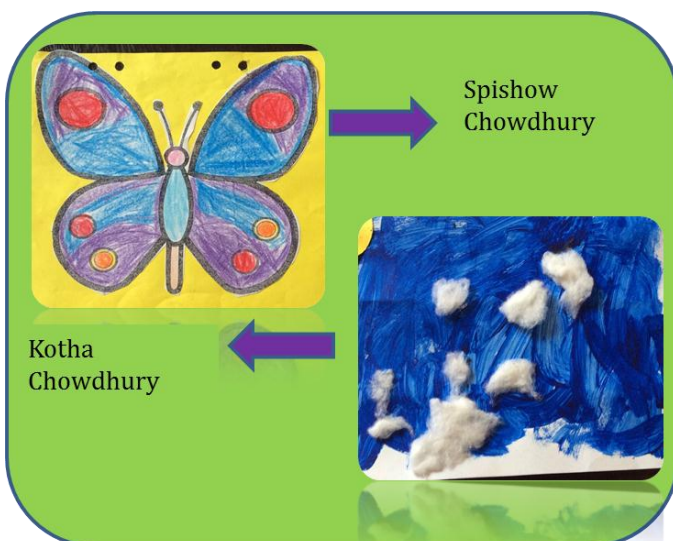
Her husband's harsh voice broke into her reverie. "Heera, where is she? Where is Heera?"

She looked at him in bewilderment. "She was with you, sh-she was holding on to your hand."

"No, no, no. She was here. She was with you!" "No, no, no. She was not with me. No, she was not" "Hey Bhagbaan! What will I do now, where will I look!?" Bimala's hands turned cold. The world seemed to tilt on its axis. She could see her husband run helter-skelter, calling out "Heera, Heera, Heera!" She heard his voice on the "mikes" calling out again and again. Bimala ran

from shop to shop. From one stranger to another. Her eyes searching, her lips dry with fear. For Heera, for Heera and again for Heera. The police were here. Two men in soiled "vaardi", their eyes red with hooch. They asked her so many questions. She was in a daze, voiceless with fear. All she heard was her husband's voice, demented, desolate, "She is mine. My Heera. My life. My *jigaar*". But Bimala knew. Knew then that it was too little, too late. The evening sky had turned to night long ago.

It was cold that night. Cold and dark. The lights of the *mela* were long gone out. She crept out from where the cows slept at night, near the fields. Her eyes were red with weeping. She had not touched food nor drink for hours. Yet there was no weakness in her, only determination. She reached the grounds and slowly hunched, felt and moved towards the aluminum sheet. She reached in carefully and pulled out a frail body from behind the sheet. It seemed to have no life till she wedged it against the heat of her own body. It stirred a bit. In sleep or in fear. But she wrapped her shawl around it and whispered "Shhhh, shhhh, shhhh... Not a sound. We have a very long way to go".



smARTies!!

Freak Week – By Tina Bhattacharjee

Dear Robot Diary,

Sorry to leave you in mid-conversation, I found my creative writing teacher Mr. Kevin hiding in the basement with me.

Let's cut to about three hours ago, I was staying after school to go over my writing assignment with Mr. Kevin. Our assignment was to write a series of Civil War style love letters to a fictional lover from a fictional lover, which is a terribly ironic assignment due to the very obvious divorce Mr. Kevin is going through. "They're too in love!" he asserted, waving my printed letters in a frenzy. "I mean, what's Eleanor's biggest flaw here? That she spends too much time loyally waiting for Charles to return from war? Phewrrghhh," he raspberried his lips in such disbelief that I felt his spit on my face from across the room. "Like she doesn't get bored and start to bat her eyes at one-legged Johnny at the saloon, or smile at three-toed Trevor in the Inn or hook-up with her college 'roommate,' Nancy, in a bathroom at the DMV whole you were taking your eye test!"

There was an awkward silence, and then Mr Kevin, "It's raining cats and dogs out there!" I got nervous because I thought he was starting a spoken word poem about his pain but when I looked outside the window, I saw that it was *literally* raining cats and dogs.

It was an overwhelmingly bizarre and adorable sight and both Mr. Kevin and I couldn't look away until we heard the voices of Mia and my other friend Zoe running down the hallway.

"It's a classic Shih Tzu storm y'all!" Zoe yelled leaning her head into the classroom. Mia popped her head in under Zoe's, "We gotta get to the basement and hunker down. Freak Week is starting!"

“Talk about being up Shih Tzu creek without a paddle!” Mamrie started. “Speaking of dogs, one time I let a Great Dane drive me 6 blocks before I realized it wasn’t my uncle—“but before we could finish her story we hustled her out the door.

And so I’m here. This is where I’ll be spending Freak Week 2021, I guess. Stuck in the basement with Mr. Kevin, Mia, Zoe and potentially anyone else that got stuck in the school when this storm started and happens to find their way down here. We can’t risk going outside now. We wouldn’t make it home and the weather has already gotten worse. French Bulldogs have also joined the mix (my favourite wiggliest dog breed!). It’s raining Shih Tzus and wiggles outside, you guys. But it’s not the outside that scares me (the outside is actually crazy cute right now), it’s the burning, emotional junk inside of us that does. The hidden freaks in all of us are bound to come out...

As you’ve already figured out I’ve decided to document this year’s Freak Week in you, Robot Diary. I’m hoping that by sharing all my thoughts and observations it might keep me from sharing them with anyone else. See what I’m getting at? It’s a science!

Currently Mr. Kevin, Mia and Zoe are assessing our supplies (aka trying to distract themselves from our inevitable awkwardness by coming up with the cheesiest acapella group names).

“AcaSMELLYa!” Zoe shouts. Mr. Kevin and Mia stare at her blankly until a familiar voice cuts the silence, “Aca-smells like a hero just arrived!” A high-pitched giggle fills the air as Harry struts into the room. Great, guess Harry just joined our Freak Week festivities.

“Sorry Harry,” a shadowy voice from behind starts, “your misogyny was overshadowed by your idiocy in that last one.”

The shadowy figure steps forward and I see that it’s Crush, my *actual* crush. Yes my crush’s name is Crush” get over yourself, Robot Diary. And let me tell you something, Crush is by far the coolest, smartest and most attractive person in my whole high school and BY FAR THE LAST PERSON I WANT TO BE LOCKED IN A BASEMENT WITH DURING FREAK WEEK.

My mission is to survive.

I’d also like to be less dramatic overall as a person, but beggars can’t be choosers.

I have to get through Freak Week without completely embarrassing myself in front of Crush.

I’m sorry I didn’t tell you I am super in love with someone earlier, Robo-D. That’s usually how teenage lady diary entries begin but I like to be different. I mean, I’m not, like, *in love* per se. I would just definitely like to spend the rest of my life with Crush until we both simultaneously each other’ arms from a rare and beautiful form of heart disease brought on by loving too deeply. Oh God, Harry is trying to see my tablet and I’m worried he caught a glimpse of the words ‘loving’ and ‘deeply’ and is desperately trying to make a gross joke and embarrass me in front of Crush.

I’m leaving before anything remotely close to that happens. Write more later.

7 days and counting.

Isabella

Click, Click.... – By Arijit Chandra



Maths Puzzle

By Partho Pratim Ghosh

Problem 1, July 2016:

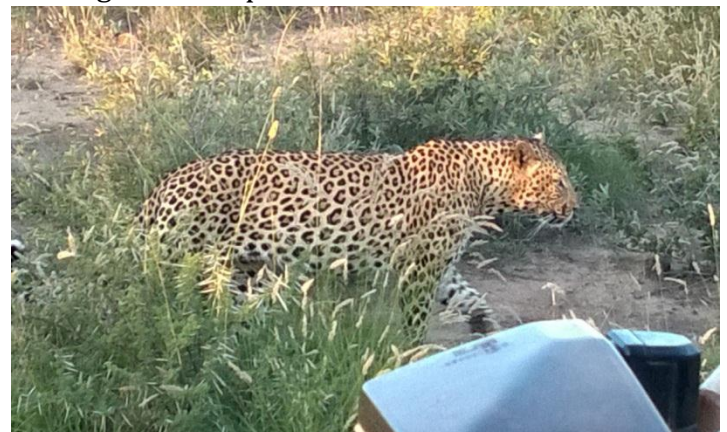
Gogol finds himself very hungry with only R20 in his pocket, and he sees that Pick n' Pay selling a mango for R3 while a banana for R4. Given his hunger, he decides that he would spend all of his R20 for buying either mango or banana. How many bananas or mangoes can he buy?

See page 15 for answer

Dure Kothao

Tracing of a Leopard – By Suvomita Roy

Here's some advice if you are a ranger and if you have 8 visitors on your jeep, who are extremely eager to see the last animal of The Big 5, the majestic leopard. I recently went to Madikwe. It's a private game lodge in the North West province. It was the 31st of April. It was a sunny afternoon, the radio went, "Leopard spotted!" Our eyes were sore looking for this one leopard over an area of 5 km. We drove through the thick bushes and reached there as the 3rd jeep. There were already 2 cars there looking for the leopard. Our ranger and the other two rangers got out of the car, took their rifles and started walking through the bushes. I was freaking out in the jeep as there were no rifles and no rangers to protect us. Suddenly, a bull elephant crossed our way. Then we saw the rangers running toward the cars. They had finally spotted the leopard. They told us it was sitting in a thick of bush. I was excited. When we reached there, I couldn't see the leopard. Finally, I saw some spots, Whoa! That leopard was enormous. By the time we had reached there and the other two cars had left, the leopard had decided to walk. It went through the thick bushes and we followed it cutting our way through the thick bushes. It had crossed a road, we did the same but finally we had to leave, because of many other cars wanting to see the moving and active leopard. It was definitely my best leopard spotting adventure and an unforgettable experience!



Trip to Victoria Falls – By Shohan

Chaterjee

16th of June was fabulous. We went to the airport to catch a plane to Livingstone, Zambia. The name of our flight was British Airways. The flight took two hours to get to Zambia. We took a taxi to our lodge. Our lodge was called The Maramba Lodge. We went to have lunch by the Maramba River. We saw hippos and crocodiles in the river. After we ate, we went to take picture of the falls. After we took pictures we went back to the lodge and had dinner there. While we were waiting by the fire. I played on my PSVita. Then I put logs in the fire. Then we went to the cottage and slept.

The next morning we went for a helicopter ride. It was beautiful. In the evening we went for a game cruise. I drank a bottle of coke and after that I had Sprite. It was the best day of my life. We saw 3 crocodiles, 1 baby crocodile, hippos, kingfisher bird, monitor lizard and a baby elephant. We saw a giant hippo next to our cottage. It was exciting. It came out from the river and grazed grass next to our cottage.

The next day we went to another lodge. The lodge was called Avani. We saw 6 impalas, 4 giraffes and zebras there. I took a horse ride and the horse was called Storm. It was a black horse. It was 11 years old.

The next day, we went to eat breakfast in a buffet. There were crazy monkeys there. Then we went to the airport to take the flight back. It was a beautiful trip.

Mogoj Dholai

That attorney is my brother, testified the accountant.

But the attorney testified he didn't have a brother.

Who is lying?

Ans – Neither, the accountant was his sister.

Return to Innocence – By Joydeep

Majumdar

What I am looking for

Who doesn't love their childhood!! It defines and shape what they are now. Often any reference to the good old days, bring in a misty eye and waves of nostalgia follows. So back in 2009 when we cousins decided to make a trip to the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, it was return to innocence for me.

Flash Back

The year was 1986, when my father working for the Border Roads organization (BRO), was posted to Bhutan. Indian Army still protects the tiny kingdom, which used Gross National Happiness (GNH) instead of Gross domestic product (GDP) as an index for countries success. I was 5 years old then to understand such intricacies of politics. My only concerns were the rivers, mountains and sky, ghosts and my friends. Our camps was in a place called Simtokha (an half an hour's drive from the capital, Thimpu), the camp is curved out on one side off a mountain. At the base of the mountain was the paddy field followed by the river and an even steeper mountain on the other side.

The Journey

How has things changed, in the last 23 years!!! That thought came to my mind as Teesta Torsa express rolled into the station. It was late in July so the monsoon was quite strong ,it was raining when we got into the coach and the same followed us inside the compartment .We were lucky that the compartment was almost empty so we changed the seats and the ticket collector was not fussy about it. The landscape changed to green paddy fields and distant palm trees, a quintessential rural Bengal. My mind waivered into the hills, the gusty rivulet and the thundering rain clouds. The train reached New Jalpaiguri Station (NJP) 2 hours late. Our driver Wandue took all our belonging and packed it neatly into the vehicle. We started our journey after a brief breakfast. Dooars always excites me

and reminds me of the innumerable ghost and adventure stories written by eminent writers. It took us 6 hours to reach the boarder Jaigaon / Phuentsholing. The permits being sorted out and it takes another 8 hours to Thimpu our first stop. Though the distance is around 350 Km but it's a meandering road and prone to landslides. I remember vividly during the monsoons father had to attend the emergencies and he would go / return at the odd hours, professional hazards. Though I was around 8 when I left Bhutan, I could recognize some of the landscapes, near Chukha there used to be a BRO canteen, only eatery in the 350 KM stretch. To my delight the canteen still stands, we had a quick snack and off we went. The difference I spotted now was numerous little villages that has crept up on the way to Thimpu, so the numbers of eatery has grown too. Around evening we were approaching Simtokha, my delights knew no bounds. The first thing I spotted was my first school it was still perched on the mountain lap as it was 23 years back ,it way bigger now . Next we passed the camp barring few modifications it was almost the same. What I realized was that the scale of magnification was way smaller then I remembered, may be to a 5 year old things look way magnified then to an adult or maybe the complexity of the real world contributed to it. The paddy field is no more now, it has been replace by 4 lane highway. As I was pre occupied with my thoughts, we reached our hotel in Thimpu.

Out of the 3 years when we stayed in Bhutan, almost 2 years we spend in Thimpu, in fact my 2nd and 3rd standard was done in a Primary school called CGPS (Changangkha Primary school). The most cherishing aspect of going to school and coming home was, that there was not a single school bus or parents queuing out of the school to get the kids home. It was the kids walk to school and back all together in a group. The concept seems to be absurd in present cosmopolitan environment, but it was a reality then and what's amazing is, its sill the same now. Scores of school children walking back after school, playing and joking on the way home across the meadows and the brooks, the time seems to be frozen in these paradise.

To be continued.....

Ka Tobo Khunti – By Basudha Modak

অনেক ছোটবেলার স্মৃতি। এক শীতের ভোরে ঘুম ভাঙলো,লোহার কড়াইএ খুন্তির আওয়াজে।আহ গুড স্বাল দেওয়া হচ্ছে।দুপুরে খাওয়ার পর আমরা বাচ্চারা বসে থাকতাম ,কখন আমার আয়া "কা" সেই লোহার খুন্তি দিয়ে বালির মধ্যে আস্তচিনেবাদাম ভাজা করে খেতে দেবে।

এবার এই হঠাৎ শীতে সেই লোহার খুন্তির কথা বড্ড মনে পড়ছে।আহ সেই পেতলের হাড়িতে লোহার খুন্তি দিয়ে তৈরী দিদার হাতের পায়েস।দিঘীর থেকে হাবুয়ার হাতের তৈরী ছিপটিতে যে পুঁটিমাছ ধরতাম সেটাও ভাজা হতো লোহার খুন্তি দিয়ে।

বাড়িতে উৎসবে বাবা-দাদারা লোহার খুন্তি দিয়েই রান্না করতো।বড্ড মনে পড়ে ,কেউ মারা গেলেও উঠোণের কোণে রাখা মাটির উনুনে ,সেই লোহার খুন্তি ছুঁয়েই, স্বশাণযাত্রীদের ঘরে ঢোকান অধিকার হতো।খেলা থেকে ফিরে নোংরা জামা মোজা সেই হাঁড়িতে ডুবিয়ে লোহার খুন্তি দিয়েই নাড়তে হতো।

ছোটবেলার বিশাল অংশ জুড়ে থাকা সেই লোহার খুন্তি স্মৃতি, মায়ের হাতের রান্নার মতন ফিরে ফিরে মনে আসবে সে আর আশ্চর্য্য কি!!তাই অভিযানে বেরোলাম, লোহার খুন্তি কিনেই বাড়ি ফিরবো।

সবার আগে গেলাম ফোর্ডসবাগে...এখানে থাকা দুইবাংলার মানুষের জুতো সেলাই থেকে চন্ডিপাঠ ,সবকিছুর জোগানের বাজার। স্টীলের খুন্তি পাওয়া গেলেও লোহার খুন্তি নৈব চ। ওখানের অনেক স্বজাতির আশ্রাস পেলাম,চীনা মলে নিশ্চয়ই পাবেন।মনেমনে বেশ খুশী হলাম, ছোটবেলার অনেক স্মৃতির ডুপ্লিকেট নিয়ে বাড়ি ফিরবো। হা তব খুন্তি,বিস্তর মল-মল ঘুরে,বিয়েবাড়ির বাজার(জানিনা কার), প্রায় শেষ করে, লোহার খুন্তিবিহীন বাড়ি ফিরলাম।

এবার জেদ চেপেই গেলো।দেশে না ফিরলে কি আর লোহার খুন্তি পাবো না?কেউ এলেও আনাতে পারবো না,কারণ ওটা ছুরির মতনই বিপদজনক।এসব ভাবতে-ভাবতে,পাশের বিল্ডার্স এ গেলাম।বাগাণে প্রচুর সস্তী হচ্ছে ,দুটো ফুল হলে ভালই হয়। মনে সেই লোহার খুন্তি।হঠাৎ ..একী,আমি কি স্বপ্ন দেখছি?ওই তো,ওই তো আমার লোহার খুন্তি!!লম্বায়ে তিন ফুট বটে,কিন্তু লোহার খুন্তি,,তাও আবার.....made in india..লেখা..Indian Spade..

আঃ কি আনন্দ,দেশের জিনিষই শেষে পেলাম।সেই লোহার খুন্তি,আজ আমার বড় প্রিয়। শুধু রান্নায় নয়,বাগানেও খুব কাজে আসছে ,মাটি কোপানোর জন্য।ওপর থেকে জিনিষ নামানোর জন্য।ছোটবেলা পেলাম বটে,মানুষগুলো ছাড়া।

Bhabona Kahare Koy

An Autobiography of a tree - By

Ambika Ghosh

Here I am, planted on the grounds of 1 Eton Road, the office of the Indian Consulate. I am a young Jacaranda tree, but I have grown quite tall. So far I have been seeing many people coming in and out to get their visas, passports and their other official work done. I would see people coming out happy or sad. I would then realise that they might have not got their permits.

For the last few months there was a big change, which I would like to share with you. Normally the Consulate is closed on the weekends. But on one fine winter Saturday afternoon, a group of people came in with their children. Later I realized that they all belonged to BASA (Bengali Association of South Africa). They all gathered under my shade, waiting for others to come. When everybody arrived they started their rehearsals. All the children gathered around and practiced their lines, dances and songs. It was a drama called "Shopno Holeo Shotti". All the children put their heart and soul in the drama. As I would peek through the window, I would see the ladies dancing gracefully to the melodious music. Not just the women but the men too were in the dance. To my surprise there was also a fight in the dance with swords. This was a dance drama called "Horikhela"

The next weekend all the men and two women were practicing their parts from a long script. The spectators were bursting into laughter. In one of the scenes two men were swinging another man, as if they were trying to throw him. I was so scared, but soon I realized that it was just a drama. It was called "Boudir Biye". Amidst all these items, there was a beautiful choreography being created. The rhythmic folk tune would make my branches sway from side to side. The dance depicted the life of fishermen and their families. It was a dance drama called "Chetona".

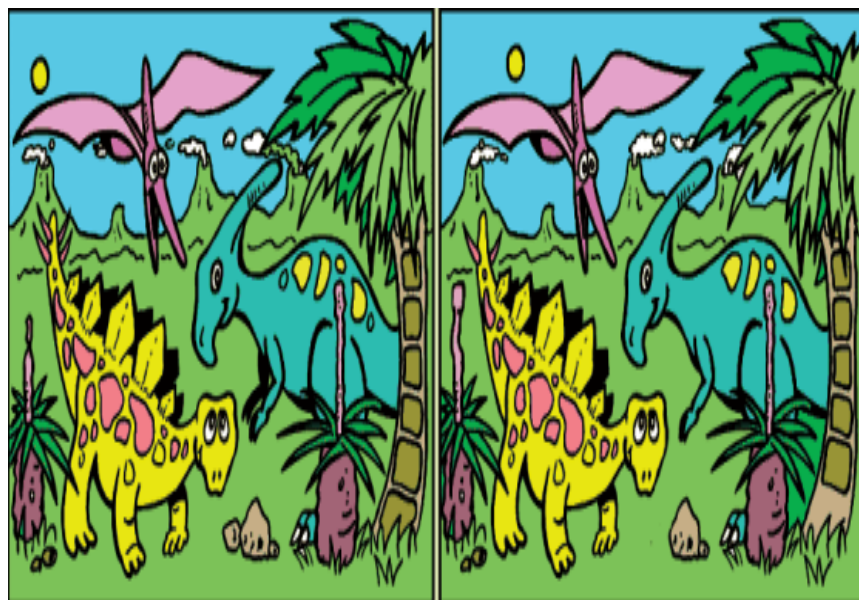
Around 6' o clock the men and women would

run around with kettles full of water to make tea. Sometimes a man would deliver yummy samosas. The children would eat cakes and biscuits. When the rehearsals of the children were over, they would play, run and climb on me. Oh, I loved their tender touch so much. I wish I could have given each one a big hug, as these children made me feel so happy. During the breaks, the men would smoke and gossip under my branches. I wished I could shake my hands with them. The rehearsals were held every weekend afternoon and I would wait eagerly through the week for them to come.

There was also a choir group. They sang the unabridged national anthem of India. They would work very hard to set each line to perfect tune. Even the sweet voices of the children would bring tears to my eyes. I could see the patriotic feeling for their motherland, India. I wished I could sing with them in harmony too.

I was amazed by the dedication and hard work of all the participants. They would practice for hours and hours till they attained perfection. Every weekend after rehearsals, around 8' o clock, all the cars would leave one by one, leaving me alone. I would remember the songs, the play and the dances. Those lovely songs I used to hum, those lovely dances I wished to dance, were an experience a tree would never see.

Spot the Difference



See page 15 for answer.

BASA Newbies!

Welcome to our home

where we treat family like friends

and friends like family.

Joydeep Majumdar Suvam Chatterjee

Sujoy Kumar Das



Joydeep Majumdar

My wife is Jayanti Ghosh. We married back in 2012. I am from Chinsuarh (a suburb near Kolkata), she is from Southern Avenue Kolkata. We came from Botswana to South Africa back in 2013. We love to travel a lot and try out different cuisines. I am an IT professional and Jayanti is an account professional.



Sujoy Kumar Das

I am Sujoy Kumar Das, working here in Ericsson South Africa from 2013. My wife Popy Das, joined with me here in SA from early 2015 along with my daughter, Anwasha Das. 3 Months before God gifted me another angel Aahana Das. My mother, Swapna Das visiting me almost every year in SA.

We moved here from Dhaka. My father Late Sudhir Chandra Das was the Sectary of Bangladesh Election Commission. Before joining to SA, visited some other countries Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand but we liked this country most and thinking for a long term plan here.

Suvam Chatterjee

We, Antara & Shuvam Chatterjee, reached this city at the end of January on a 3 year assignment. Me being a banker and my wife being a homemaker were equally excited and nervous about living in Johannesburg.

At our first glance we found Johannesburg to be culturally very different from Kolkata, the city where we hail from. Immediately we became home sick.

In an alien land we thought our connect with our mother tongue would be restricted to only each other. However, what made us blink with surprise was a quintessentially Bengali traditional Swaraswati puja thrown in with a vibrant bong crowd with roots firmly implanted to their motherland. Since then somehow we have found connect, company and friends in each one of you. It was the first time we felt we were not lost in this bustling metropolis.

You converted this place to work, to a place to live. We would be ever grateful to you, BASA for the hospitality, warmth and company that we have got from being a part of you. For my wife you made a platform to showcase her talents in a way we never thought she possessed.

Hope in coming times this connection would be stronger and deeper and three years hence we would depart for Kolkata and again feel homesick.



Spot the difference

1. Left hand plant changed
2. Spikes in dinosaur's tail
3. Legs from flying dinosaur
4. Arm from other dinosaur
5. Spots missing from right dinosaur
6. Volcano smokes going other direction
7. Segment missing from palm tree trunk
8. Leaf missing from palm tree
9. Rock missing from ground
10. Sun moved in the sky

Answer for the **Maths Puzzle** will be published in the next edition, if you solve it before time, please contact Mr. Partho Pratim Ghosh.

ghosh.parthapratim.ukzn@gmail.com

BASA Gallery!

BASA Gallery takes you back in time with the fond memories of the many events conducted in the previous months... for you to enjoy and cherish them!



