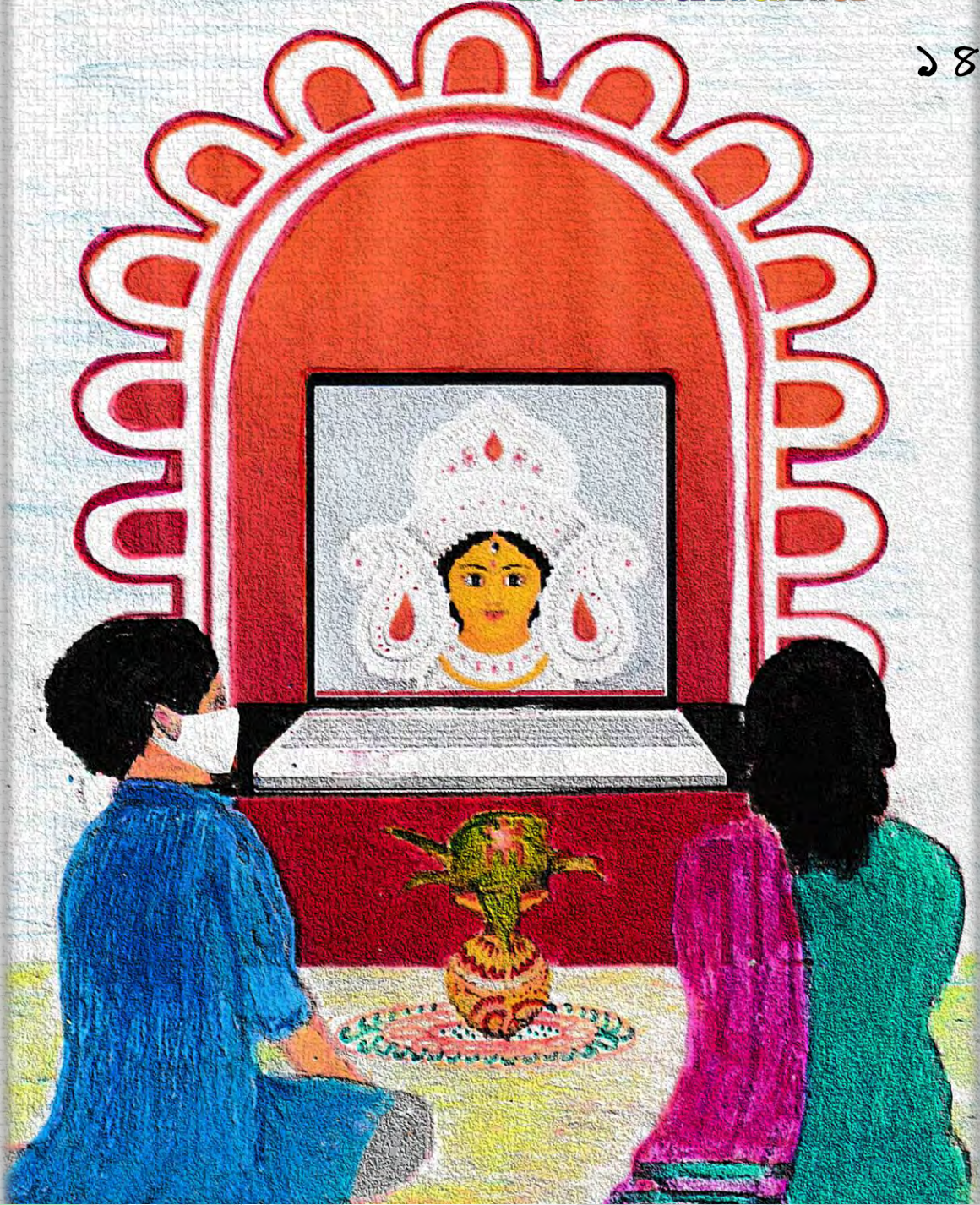


শারদীয়া



Ramdhannu

১৪২৭



BENGALI ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH AFRICA

সম্পাদকীয়

প্রিয় পাঠকবৃন্দ,

দেখতে দেখতে বাঙ্গালীর মহোৎসবের পর্ব শেষ করে, ভ্রাতৃত্বিতীয়া পার করে এলাম। পার করে এলাম জগদ্ধাত্রী পূজাও। উৎসব আমাদের জীবনকাঠি ও একতার প্রতীক। এই উপলক্ষে BASA-র সকল পরিবারের সদস্যদের মঙ্গল কামনা করি। এ বছর অতিমারীর প্রকোপ সারা পৃথিবীকে থমকে দিয়েছে; এনেছে নানান বিপর্যয়, ক্ষয়-ক্ষতি ও প্রিয়জনের বিয়োগ ব্যথা। তবুও সমস্ত গ্লানি, দুঃখ ভুলে গিয়ে, মানুষ আবার নতুন করে প্রাণ ফিরে পেতে চায়, তাই মেতে ওঠে উৎসব-পার্বণের উদ্দীপনায়।

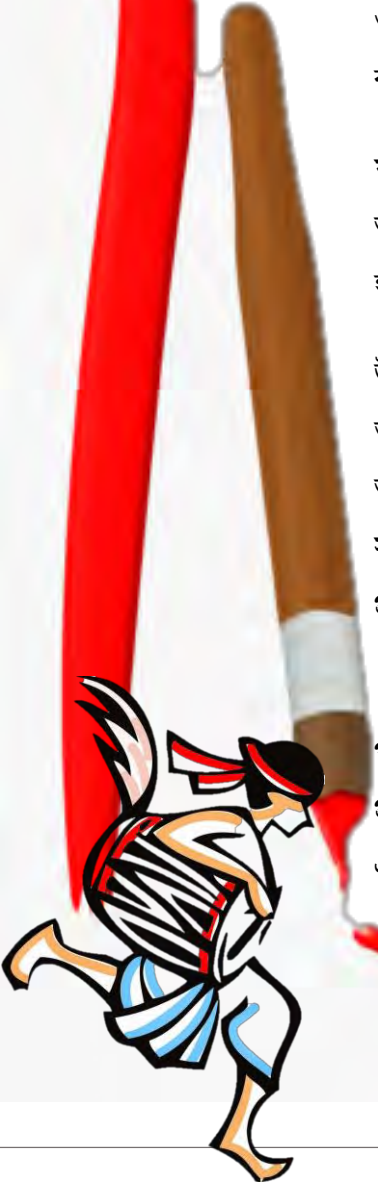
অনেক চেনা ছবির বদল ঘটেছে এইবার, উৎসবে এসেছে পরিবর্তন। মহাশক্তির বন্দনায় নিরাকার দেবী কে বসিয়েছি আমাদের রূপকল্পনায়, চালচিত্রের সামনে প্রযুক্তিকে রেখে পূজা ও অঞ্জলি দিয়েছি। স্বাস্থ্যবিধি অনুযায়ী দূরত্ব বজায় রেখে, মাস্ক পরে মানিয়ে নিতে হয়েছে বর্তমান পরিস্থিতিকে। (এই ভাবনা কে তুলে ধরা হয়েছে ম্যাগাজিনের প্রচ্ছদ চিত্রটিতে)

যদিও virtual পূজা, কিন্তু বিনিময়ে দিয়েছে অনেক কিছু - নিজের সঙ্গে একাত্ম হওয়ার পূর্ণ অবকাশ। নিজেকে খুঁজে পাওয়ার মধ্যেই ছিল এই উৎসবের পরম আনন্দ কারণ আত্মশুদ্ধি হলো প্রকৃত আধ্যাত্মিকতা।

উৎসব-আনন্দযজ্ঞে বাঙ্গালী সর্ববদা নিজের সৌন্দর্য-চেতনা ও সৃষ্টি-প্রতিভাকে মেলে ধরতে চায়। তারই নিদর্শন রয়েছে এই বারের **রামধনু** সংকলনে। বৈচিত্রপূর্ণ এক ভাঙার - আক্ষরিক অর্থে ফরাসি ভাষায় যাকে বলে *Magasin*, যার থেকেই উৎস *Magazine* শব্দের। উৎসাহী সদস্যদের অবদান ও আমার সহযোগী সম্পাদকদের সাধুবাদ জানাই। সকলের সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টার এই সৃষ্টি-সম্ভারকে, সকল পাঠকবৃন্দের কাছে তুলে দিতে পেরে আমার পরম তৃপ্তি।

জগদ্ধাত্রী পূজা চলে গেলা দেবী জগদ্ধাত্রী হলেন সমগ্র জগতের ধাত্রী অর্থাৎ সকলের পালনকর্ত্রী। ২০২০ সাল শেষ হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ধূয়ে যাক সব মলিনতা। আমাদের সমবেত প্রার্থনা “**মুছে মাস্ক গ্লানি, মুঁচে মাস্ক জ্বর, অগ্নিস্নানে সুচী হোক ধরা**” - এটাই হোক উৎসবের মূল আরাধনা।

- অন্নপূর্ণা





সম্পাদকীয় পরিষদ



অন্নপূর্ণা হাজরা
প্রধান সম্পাদক

সুমিত্রা মুখার্জী
সম্পাদক

অর্নব চক্রোপাধ্যায়
সম্পাদকীয় পরিকল্পক

পার্থপ্রতিম ঘোষ
সম্পাদক

সুদেপা ব্যানার্জী
সম্পাদক



সূচিপত্র

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HOW COVID-19 COMPELLED US TO INTROSPECT

The coronavirus crisis has given us an opportunity for self-introspection, analysis, and reflection. This miniscule virus, without a doubt, has taught us some life lessons. It helped us realise the way we think, the relationships we have and our sense of values.

Science is supposed to rekindle the inner quest and conscience of humankind; instead, it has created technology that can obliterate human beings and life in general. Religion was designed to provide social cohesion and maintain conformity in society; instead, it has created divisions amongst us. As humans, we have not realised that we can only survive if we harmonise our ways of living and adapt to the environment. Our greed and intense desire to own more, consume more has led to several ecological crises-- global warming, forest fires, deforestation, loss of plant species or

animal extinction. It is high time for us to acknowledge the importance of the natural world for our growth. As William Blake aptly puts :

‘To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.’

We need to accept, with humility, the core of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world is a family, whose foundation lies on the equality and inter-dependency among humans.

The implications of this pandemic will remain with us for a very long time. So, let's see what we have observed and the lessons that we can already learn. Here is a compilation of four articles by four authors who share their perspectives.

IN PURSUIT OF A LYRICAL NOTE IN THE CACOPHONOUS MAZE



Gargi Bagchi in her article says, “If I have to envision a post pandemic world - I would wish more of understanding, kindness and empathy towards each other at all levels both in the online and offline spectrum...”

‘When you're going through hell, keep going...why would you stop in hell?’

I was particularly struck by the positive reinforcement brought about through the seemingly morbid quote amongst the multitude of inspirational ones flocking the social media platforms.

Indeed, what a helluva year this has been. I dare say that we are going strong by clutching onto our only weapon - our indomitable spirits!

Yes, as clichéd as it sounds - there is light and hope at the end of the tunnel, however dingy it might be. So, let's keep walking!

In the wake of the pandemic - the difficulties, uncertainties, and challenges faced have no doubt been bizarre and unique. Each one of us in our diverse settings has been going through different sets of struggles, some apparent, some carefully camouflaged. We are certainly wading through the challenging waters, tapping our inner strength and wearing our resilience as life jackets. Yes, kudos to us for putting up a brave front and trying to live life despite the lurking fear of the invisible, but the deadly enemy.

However, as every dark cloud comes with a silver lining, gratitude is all I feel for the immensely valuable life lessons that came along. I am sure these are not one-off realisations, and many of us will resonate with these instances. The fact

remains this pandemic did stir us out of our complacency, taught us to take nothing for granted, value relationships more than ever, and prioritise our physical and mental health. Last but not least, reiterated the fact that no amount of preparation or safety net can protect us against nature's fury.

For me, this year has been a year of introspection and revelations. I have loved the space, isolation, call it whatever. I've stumbled upon the happy and content home-loving introvert I truly am inside, and it's been wonderful.

We are lucky to be living in a day and age where technology has revolutionised our lifestyles and brought in global connectivity to an unimaginable degree - think of a pandemic-ridden world like today - sans the internet or social media. How could we have seamlessly carried on our academic pursuits, our jobs or even showcased our lockdown creative talents? Needless to say, life would perhaps be stalled for sure in every aspect, not to mention the painful sense of isolation—one more reason to count our blessings.

On the flip side, however, it's disheartening to note as any conscientious netizen would agree that of late, the electronic platform has become a breeding ground for unlimited negativity, intolerance and toxicity. Hate, misinformation, politics abound. We are living in a strange time where using derogatory and unsavoury words agitatedly to malign a celebrity or war of words between commoners is such an 'in thing'. Mudslinging is misconstrued as being real, brave and



fierce. I feel this virtual blood bath needs to be stopped before it destroys the very fabric of society - our families, friends and the world at large.

If I have to envision a post-pandemic world - I would wish more of understanding, kindness and empathy towards each other at all levels both in the online and offline spectrum. While we have every right to be vocal about issues we strongly feel about, we can consciously follow a particular protocol and an informed, unbiased approach if we are to raise our voice against injustice. While on a debate or a discussion, let's not forget mutual respect, courtesy in great measures along with an openness to accept and acknowledge another viewpoint.

At the moment, let us choose our battles with prudence and not be swayed by the social media-fuelled polarisation of the world. Let us also refrain from making sweeping generalisations based on hearsay.

With the virus claiming upwards of a million lives and plunging so many more into poverty and unemployment, the situation appears bleak. It is unlikely to improve in the future, as countries brace for a long-term economic downturn unlike any other we've had before. All issues we must tackle while juggling the herculean task of adapting our personal lives to a world that only bears a passing resemblance to the one we left behind in March. It suffices to say that it won't be easy.

Do we need anything else at the moment except sincere prayers and compassion?

Hope we emerge from the pandemic as a wiser, balanced, stronger, and gentler society where we care for our fellow human beings more, rather than continually pulling each other down. A haven, where we can breathe in positivity and help our progeny imbibe the right values.

I agree, a Utopian world hardly exists - but at least can we not strive to take smaller pragmatic steps to bring in the much-needed change? How about taking a pledge and working towards the "new normal"- which be like, head and shoulders above the earlier one. One populated with loads of gratitude and free of negativity.

And how can we not dare to dream? As the late American lyricist, Yip Harburg wrote - "*Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue, and the **dreams** that you **dare to dream** really do come true...*"

Signing off with the anticipation that the homecoming of Ma Durga in 2020, although bereft of the usual festive fervour, be the harbinger of a more peaceful, stable and a happier world, where the demons of economic instability, poverty, social injustices, and finally yet importantly - the virus are all consigned to the grave.

THE LIMINAL NATURE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC AND ITS HARDSHIPS



Sanjit Sinha remarks: *Most of the learning will come from the response strategy studies from each country and their respective leadership and how these strategies and actions have shaped the economy and society after exposing the existing dys-functionalities.*

To elucidate on what I expect of life after COVID-19, we need to first reflect upon what the pandemic has exposed our state. Indeed, had we ever thought that such a day can ever come? Not even in our wildest dreams!

We hope to find a cure for COVID. However, the fear of pandemic is here to stay. Most of the learning will come from the response strategy studies from each country and their respective leadership and how these strategies and actions have shaped the economy and society after exposing existing dysfunctionalities. Additionally, the dysfunctional leadership in politics exposed will add to the learning curve of this new lifestyle.

Most countries' leadership have tried to take this opportunity to take power in their hands and manage the disaster, which they cannot do in a democracy. However, the irony is that the few small countries demonstrated the best leadership instead of the known powerful ones. A reason for this can be the complex management systems of big countries with tremendous diversities and geography. Leaders were

perplexed on what to prioritise, COVID deaths or death emanating from hunger or the joblessness, and the list goes on. The developing countries and under-developed countries were the real testing ground of how a balanced approach of the leadership can manoeuvre through this crisis.

The economy has been exposed to the most significant vulnerability in this crisis. The negative economic impact that countries are facing explains the reason behind grouping countries as 'developed' and others' developing'. Except for telecom and IT, most industries, in general, have faced challenges due to the COVID. Industries meeting basic needs are still surviving without many changes to their strategies, whereas the sectors providing luxury or leisure needs were only limited to IT and connectivity enabled remote activities.

When going gets tough, tough gets going.

Societies, at large, tend to feel helpless and start depending more on the government. This is the time when socio-economic inequalities have driven the 'haves' and 'have-nots'



further from one another. With social distancing – trust has been eroded. Exclusion of social gatherings has had a massive impact on mental health, cutting across the rich and the underprivileged. However, the slightly more concerning aspect is that the elderly have become more distanced and lonelier.

It's time to reflect upon, take a step back, and realise that we need a completely different approach to build our future. We need to start building a future that exemplifies resilience: which means to drive responsible and accountable leadership, balance the economic activity mix, and most importantly reduce inequality within societies.

LOCKDOWN CHRONICLE



Tushita Mukherjee says, "It has given me the time to reflect and know that as humans, we are resilient and can realise our true potential when we come together, in unison".

The world changed overnight around us when the President of South Africa announced the lockdown. It was imminent but felt surreal. Can you imagine locking up ourselves in the house? Who thought, a microscopic germ would halt the world's crazy pace?

A part of me was upset; climate change has been hovering on us, and yet, no one took such a drastic measure. On the other, as a consultant working from home, the world will now see that remote workers are as or more efficient than office goers.

Post the announcement, Ihaan's (Miku) well-being was our biggest worry. What will the three-year-old think? How will we convey the seriousness of the situation? Looking back, I was amazed at his resilience and adaptability. His insistence on following six-steps for hand washing and wearing a mask showed that children bring hope in such grim situations.

Amlan's comfort and preference of working from home has seen a 360-degree shift in his thought process. I think this experience has given the world to turn to technology as an enabler, where boundaries can be put aside. Personally, it has given me the time to reflect and know that as humans, we are

resilient and can realise our true potential when we come together, in unison.

Keeping Ihaan busy was the most significant task we set ourselves. But he proved us wrong. We spent days learning exciting and new (for him) things--- how bees make honey, dinosaurs across periods and space. Miku's obsession for completing 50-piece puzzles, making impressive structures out of Lego blocks, and 'reading' books (he cannot, but he knew the stories by heart) has been a pleasure to watch.

No access to restaurants meant satiating our cravings! Amlan did a fantastic job of fulfilling what the tummy desired while I got busy managing work and home. As a person who believes in regular exercise, I decided to include Amlan in my regime, and we started walking 5-6 kilometres daily to keep our sanity and guilt-free gluttony.

These six months were unique—it brought families closer, helped us engage in activities we didn't think we had time for, connecting with our friends and family sitting afar. It helped realise that it is good to slow down, enjoy the most important things that make our lives whole- love, togetherness, and celebrating our uniqueness.

COVID, A WAKE-UP CALL



Basudha Modak emphasizes that "it is essential to go back to the ways of nature and follow a simple lifestyle."

COVID-19 and the lockdown must have made everyone realise how essential it is to go back to the ways of nature and follow a simple lifestyle. With that, I mean developing essential life skills as a way of life rather than preparing for full marks in academics or a great paying job.

It taught us all to become deeply involved in gardening and

nutrition; yes, we turned farmers and very health-conscious too with all the early rise to plant and water and prune and pick. Kids got to build muscles by chopping firewood; lit their fire, roasted their food and learnt our ancient chants and their power. Parents learned how to cook from scratch. Freshly picked from the garden, ground their spices, spent time labouring together in the kitchen. Intercommunication and



negotiation skills got wonderfully sharpened without attending any courses. Few of us have become professional growers selling our garden produce and plants.

With this relaxing lifestyle, we finally realised how poor we were trying to earn excess money and shortening our life.

Who said we didn't come out from the lockdown victorious? As a collective conscience, we learnt to stop and analyse and delve within ourselves. The time is for us to no longer go back to our older ways. And that's what will decide if humanity will survive or we need more pandemics to shake us out of anything fake.



Compiled by Annapurna Hazra

AT NATURE'S MERCY



Agniv Datta



FORAGERS



কোয়ারেন্টাইনে ফেলেঞ্জারি

স্থান: ড্রয়িংরুম, ২১ রজনী সেন রোড, কলকাতা

ক্রিৎ ক্রিৎ.....

-হ্যালো

- শুভ নববর্ষ ফেলুবাবু। তপেশ ভাইকেও আমার শুভেচ্ছা জানাবেন....তা কেমন চলছে আপনাদের কোয়ার্টারনাইন পর্ব?

- ওটা কোয়ারেন্টাইন লালমোহন বাবু। এই একটু সুডোকু নিয়ে বসেছিলাম। বিটকেল ভাইরাসকে জন্ম করার উপায় যখন ফেলু মিত্তিরের জানা নেই তখন চুপচাপ বাড়ি বসে রহস্যের যবনিকা পতনের অপেক্ষা ছাড়া উপায় কি বলুন?

- তা যা বলেছেন মশাই। এদিকে বেয়াদপের জ্বালায় জীবন থেকে থ্রিল, পাড়ার দোকানের গরম সিঙ্গারা, আপনার বাড়িতে চায়ের আড্ডা সব বিদায় নিয়েছে। এইসব বন্ধির মধ্যে লেখালিখিতেও আজকাল মন বসাতে পারছি না। অথচ পুজোর লেখাটা এবার শুরু না করলেই নয়। চারিদিকে কি বিশ্রী ব্যাপার চলছে বলুন দিকি। কবে যে এই বন্দীদশা কাটবে কিছু বুঝছেন?

- ধৈর্য ধরতে হবে মশাই। সারা দুনিয়ার তাবড় বিজ্ঞানীরা এর ভ্যাকসিন আবিষ্কারের জন্য প্রানপাত পরিশ্রম করে চলেছেন, ডাক্তার নার্সরা নিজেদের জীবন বিপন্ন করে লড়ছেন, তাদের আরেকটু সময় দেওয়ার জন্য আপাতত নিজেদের ঘরবন্দি রাখা ছাড়া তো কোনো উপায় দেখছি না...

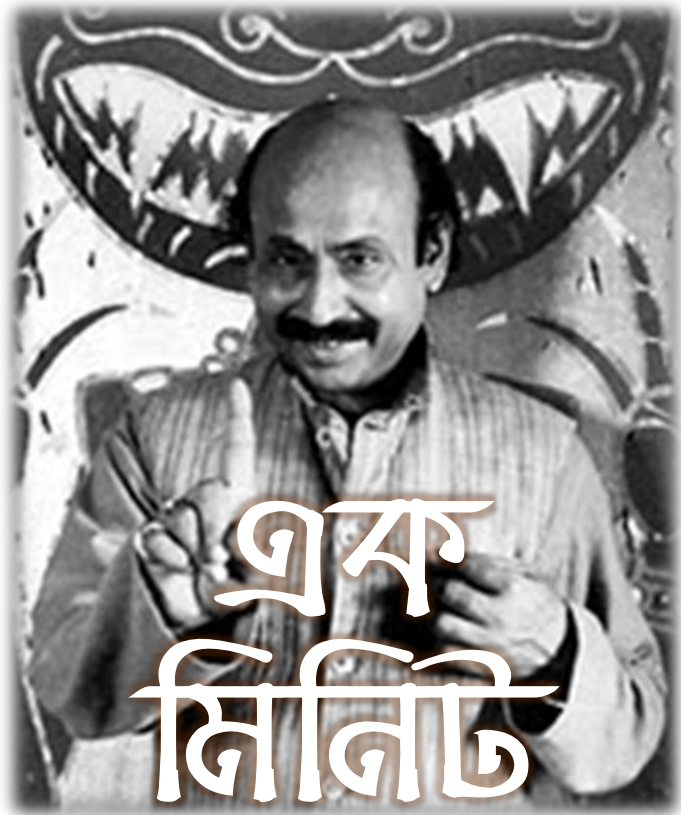
- সেই...সেতো একশোবারাহাজার হোক prevention is cure than betterness কি বলেন। সে মশাই ঘন্টায় ঘন্টায় সাবান দিয়ে কচলে হাত ধুচ্ছি। ছাদে পায়চারি করতে গেলেও মাস্ক পড়ছি। খালা বাজানো প্রদীপ জ্বালানো যা যা বলছে সবই করছি। কিন্তু কোনো কিছুতেই তো এই চাইনিজ ব্যাটাকে বাগে আনা যাচ্ছে না। চিরকাল জেনে এসেছি গরমের দেশে তাপমাত্রা আর কসমিক রে প্রকোপে এসব ভাইরাস ব্যাকটেরিয়া নাকি সুবিধা করতে পারেনা। আর এ ব্যাটাচ্ছেলে কিনা বোশেখ মাসের এই কলকাতার গরমেও শেওয়াগি চণ্ডে ব্যাটিং করেই চলেছে। একি কম তাঞ্জুরের ব্যাপার।

- আপনি ভাইরাসের ব্যাপারে এতো কিছু জানেন?

- আলবাতা, ভাইরাস নিয়ে আমি লিখেছি। কঙ্গোয় কেলেঙ্কারি !! সোল্ড লাইক হট কচুরিস। ওখানে যদিও ইবোলার রেফারেন্সে লিখেছিলাম।

- বটে। কিন্তু আপনার গলার উত্তেজনা শুনে আসল কথাটা যে এখনও বলা বাকি সেটা বেশ বুঝতে পারছি।

- হেঁ হেঁ ধরে ফেলেছেন। আসলে এক আশ্চর্য টোটকার



ফটোমোর্ফ: জয় বাবা ফেলুবাবু (চমচ্চিত্র)

সন্ধান পেয়েছি বুঝলেন। তারপর থেকেই মনে বেশ বল পাচ্ছি আর কি... তাই ভাবলাম আপনাকেও ব্যাপারটা ইমমেডিয়েটলি জানানো দরকার।

- ইন্টারেস্টিং। কি ব্যাপার?

- খুব সহজ। নিজগৃহে বসে করোনা টেস্টিং মশাই। জাস্ট ভাবুন...সকালে উঠে



দশ সেকেন্ড নিশ্বাস চেপে রেখে দেখতে হবে আপনার শুকনো কাশি বা কোনো শারীরিক অসুবিধা হচ্ছে কিনা যদি না হয় বুঝবেন আপনি আউট অব ডেঞ্জার। আমার এক বাল্যবন্ধুর ছেলে সাউথ কোরিয়া থাকে, ছোকরা আমার লেখার বড় ভক্ত, হোয়াটসঅ্যাপে পাঠিয়েছিল বুঝলেন। ওদেশের ডাক্তাররা নাকি গোটা দেশে এভাবেই টেস্ট করে অনেকখানি কাজ করে ফেলেছে। তা আমিও জানামাত্রই টেস্ট শুরু করে দিয়েছি। আমি বলি কি আপনারাও কাল থেকে করুন। এই বাজারে সাবধানের মার নেই ফেলুবাবু।

- তা যা বলেছেন লালমোহনবাবু। এই বিপর্যয়ের বাজারে হঠাৎ গজিয়ে ওঠা এই হোয়াটসঅ্যাপ ডক্টরদের বাড়ি বাড়ি দেখে এবার সত্যি চিন্তা হচ্ছে। চারিদিকে ভবানন্দ আর চ্যালানন্দর ভিড়। অনবরত ভুয়ো তথ্য ছড়িয়ে মানুষকে বিভ্রান্ত করার বা আরও বেশি ভয় পাইয়ে দেওয়ার এ এক অদ্ভুত খেলা চলছে নিউজ চ্যানেল থেকে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া সর্বত্র। আর আপনার মত হাজার হাজার মানুষ আকছার এদের ফাঁদে পা দিচ্ছে। এরকম কঠিন সময় এদের মোকাবিলা করাও ভাইরাসের মোকাবিলা করার থেকে কম কিছু নয়।

- হাজার হাজার ভবানন্দ? হাইলি সাসপিশিয়াস....

- বিলক্ষণ। তাই নেক্সটবার ইন্টারনেটে এরকম কিছু দেখে চটজলদি বিশ্বাস

করার আগে দয়া করে যাচাই করে নেবেন। যেকোনো প্রয়োজনে জাস্ট একটা ফোন কল, এই শর্মা তো আছেই।

- গোটাটাই তাহলে বুজরুকি? বলেন কি মশায়?

- আজ্ঞে। ঠিক আপনার ওই গরমে ভাইরাস বিনাশ থিওরির মতোই। জেনে রাখুন যেকোনো ভাইরাস কোন আবহাওয়ায় কত তাড়াতাড়ি ছড়াতে পারে তা কখনোই তার জিনোটাইপ স্টাডি না করে নিশ্চিত ভাবে বলা যায়না। এর সাথে ওই সূর্যের কসমিক রের কোনো সম্পর্কই নেই।

- কি?? জি...জিনোটাইপ...!!!

- হু... তা এই কসমিক রে ব্যাপারটাও বইতে রেখেছেন নাকি?

- আজ্ঞে... ছটা এডিশন... সিক্সথ

- সাথে শুধরে দেবেন।

.....

- হ্যালো লালমোহনবাবু..... হ্যালো.... হ্যালো....

মানিক বাবু,

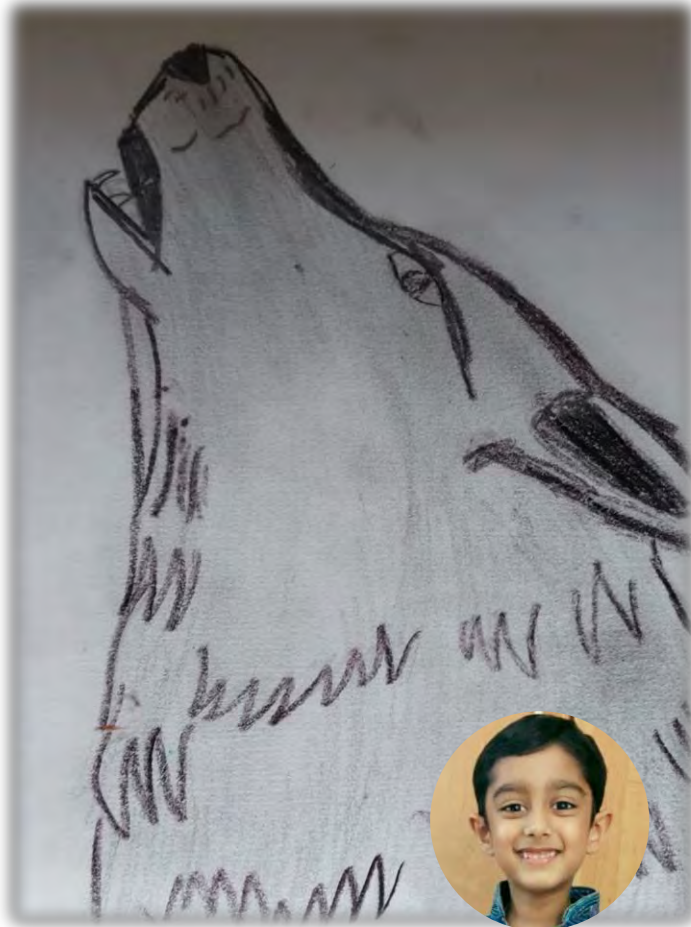
আজন্ডা... আজন্ডা, তুমিই আমাদের অনুপ্রেরণা



প্রতুসে হালদার



JUNGLE LIFE



Aarav Chatterjee



Antareep Das

হারিয়ে মাছে ছোটবেলা



উনিশশো উনসত্তর সালের ৩১ ডিসেম্বর, এক সুদর্শন বখাটে যুবক "মন্টু" আপামর বাঙালিকে রাস্তার মোড়ে দাঁড়িয়ে টুইস্ট নাচতে শিখিয়েছিল। আমার জন্মের ১১বছর আগের সেই ড্যান্স স্টেপ আজ পঞ্চাশ বছর পরেও একইরকম পপুলারা দেশ থেকে বহুদূরে এসেও দেখেছি "কে তুমি নন্দিনী"-র সাথে বাঁ-পা টা সোজা রেখে, ডান পা টা দিয়ে সৌমিত্র কায়দায় টুইস্ট করার প্রলোভন কোনো বাঙালি সচরাচর এড়িয়ে যেতে পারে না।

ঠিক চোদ্দ বছর পর ১৯৮৪ সালে, বছর পঞ্চাশের ক্ষিদা বাঙালি কে নতুন করে ফাইট করতে শেখালো। আমার তখন বছর তিনেক বয়স; সিনেমাটা দেখেছি অনেক পরে ডিডি বাংলা তে কোনো এক শনিবার বিকেলে।

১৯৮৬ তে ক্ষিপ্র, খর্বকায় এক দূরদেশবাসী ছাব্বিশ বছরের যুবককেও বাঙালি

আপন করে নিয়েছিল - দিয়েগো আর্মান্দো ম্যারাডোনা। জানি না সেদিনের বাঙালি ল্যাটিন-আমেরিকান যুবকের খেলা দেখতে দেখতে দাঁতে দাঁত চেপে বলেছিলো কিনা "ফাইট ম্যারাডোনা, ফাইট"। হয়তো বলেছিলো, হয়তো আমাদের ক্ষিদাও বলেছিলো। তবে সেদিন সারাবিশ্ব দেখেছিলো একজন মানুষকে একা ফাইট করে বিশ্ব জয়, বিশ্বকাপ নয়.. বিশ্বজয় করতে।

১৯৯০ তে প্রথম ওয়ার্ল্ড কাপ ফুটবল দেখি, ম্যারাডোনার ফাইটটা দেখি। হেরে যাওয়া রাজপুত্রের সাথে সেদিন রাতে আমিও কেঁদেছিলাম; না আর্জেন্টিনা হেরে গেছে বলে নয়, আমার বাবার হিরো, আমার হিরো - ফুটবলের রাজপুত্রের কান্না দেখে কেঁদেছিলাম। মাকে কোনোদিন ফুটবল ম্যাচ দেখতে দেখিনি আমি, কিন্তু সেদিন মাকেও কাঁদতে দেখেছিলাম।

কিছু ক্ষণজন্মা মানুষ আসেন যাঁরা দেশ কাল সময়ের বেড়াজাল পেরিয়ে আমাদের আপন হয়ে ওঠেন। নিজেদের অজান্তেই গড়ে তোলেন আমাদের ছোটবেলাটা।

নভেম্বর ২০২০, চলে গেলেন এই দুই অপরাধিত নায়ক - হারিয়ে গেলো আমার, আমার মতো অনেকের ছোটবেলার একটুকরো।

তারাদের মাঝে ভালো থেকে, ভালো রেখো আমার... আমাদের ছোটবেলাকে।



অর্ণব চট্টোপাধ্যায়

REMEMBERING THE ICON WHO DEFINED BENGALI CINEMA



শিল্পীঃ অনিরুদ্ধ মিশ্র

ছবি সৌজন্যেঃ এই সময়

Soumitra Chattopadhyay evokes many moods and feelings in all our hearts. I remember after having read *Sonar Kella*, I pestered Ma about watching the film. She said that I could only if I would write reviews of the book and the movie separately. I thought to myself, if I have been given the opportunity to watch it, I should take up the offer. Indeed, few books can have the same effect when converted into a film, and *Sonar Kella* did complete justice. I was enamoured by Feluda, aka the legend-Soumitra Chatterjee.

By a decade and a half later, I watched most of his legendary movies, many created by his mentor and my forever favourite- Satyajit Ray. *Apur Sansaar*, *Charulata*, *Ghare-Baire*, *Hirak Rajar Deshe*, *Debi*, among many others are movies par excellence and shows his versatility and love for the craft. Years later, his movies such as *Bela Sheshe*, *Posto*, and *Peace Haven* have left us wanting more.

I have been privileged to see Soumitra-ji act on stage in the 2000s. I vividly remember that his sheer presence on stage made me emotional. I could not believe that I saw our beloved Feluda in real life. Post the show, I shyly stood amidst a small crowd engaging with him. He looked at me from the corner of his eye, saw me all teared up and hugged me like a grandfather would and spent some time talking to Ma and a few others present. While actors are said to have big egos, he was gentle, down-to-earth, and humane.

No photos, no selfies. Sometimes memories serve better than evidence. While he reunites with his mentor (and my icon)—we struggle to fill the void



Tushita Mukherjee



SETI IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM AND BEYOND

For millennia, humanity has looked to the stars and wondered, “Are we alone in the universe? Is there extraterrestrial life?” This essay explores humanity’s search for this life, and the places it may lead us.

HOW SETI (SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE) BEGAN

While humans have theorised about alien life for a long time, the first real efforts to find it began in the 20th century alongside the Space Race and the advent of radio technology. Radio telescopes have always been the preferred method for SETI due to their range and their ability to send radio messages to potential alien civilisations.

The earliest modern investigation into extraterrestrial life was Project Ozma, conducted in 1960 by Cornell University astronomer Frank Drake. He used a radio telescope at Green Bank, West Virginia to examine the stars Tau and Epsilon Eridani, however, he found nothing of interest.

Another notable early SETI experiment was conducted in the Ohio State Universities Radio Observatory, which was the first continual SETI project, lasting for thirty years. This programme rose to fame in 1977 when Jerry Ehman a project volunteer, witnessed an abnormally strong radio signal received by the telescope. He quickly circled the signal on a printout and labelled it “wow”, before sending it to his superiors. This signal is now known as the Wow signal, the best candidate for an artificial extraterrestrial radio signal.

SETI NOW

There are currently five ongoing SETI projects in the world- The Allen Telescope Array, SERENDIP, Breakthrough Listen, FAST, and a UCLA project. Out of these, Breakthrough Listen is the most expansive programme, logging thousands of hours on two large radio telescopes. This programme has collected so much data they built specialised hardware near the telescopes to process it. In recent years, they have begun a collaboration with the team supervising TESS (Transitioning Exoplanet Survey Satellite) to scan exoplanets. There is also FAST, the world’s largest telescope built for a SETI programme. FAST is 500 meters wide and is built and operated by the Chinese. So far, none of these projects has found anything yet, but they will continue to search and listen for extraterrestrial life.

ALIEN LIFE IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Astronomers may not have to look far to find extraterrestrial life. Several planets and moons in our solar system may harbour life. However, it will not be intelligent, sapient life but a simple, microbial life.

MARS

Mars has long been depicted as a source of extraterrestrial life in popular culture, finding mention in classic sci-fi stories like Ray Bradbury’s Martian Chronicles. Scientists thought that Mars’ canyons were canals made by martian engineers to supply their cities with water, but several unmanned missions

to Mars quickly changed this notion. Mars is a habitable zone, and there is evidence that suggests Mars once had oceans. However, it lack one crucial component required to hold life- a stable magnetic field. Mars’ oceans have vaporised due to solar winds, and its atmosphere has been reduced to a thin layer of CO₂. But there is still hope for life on Mars. Small warm pools of liquid water exist under the planet’s surface, that may well contain thousands of different species of microbial life.

THE MOONS OF JUPITER AND SATURN

These two planets have the most moons in the solar system, and some of these have the potential to host life. Jupiter’s moon Ganymede and Saturn’s moon Rhea have thin oxygen atmosphere, although they are still barren and inhospitable.

Jupiter’s moon, Europa holds more promise- it is theorised that there is a massive ocean under the moon’s surface, which may well host life. Another potential candidate is Saturn’s moon, Enceladus, which is a solid ball of pure water ice with occasional spurts of water vapour emanating from its surface. This moon may also be home to small extremophilic microbes.

Another possible candidate for a life-bearing moon is Saturn’s moon Titan, the second-largest moon in the solar system with its predominant nitrogen atmosphere and methane/ethane oceans, where life cannot survive for long periods. However, life similar to the first primordial life forms found on the Earth may still survive and thrive there.

VENUS

Like Mars, Venus also used to be depicted to have extraterrestrial life. Most early sci-fi depicts Venus as a steamy swamp or tropical rainforest. However, missions to Venus have shown that while it is technically within the Sun’s habitable zone, it is far too hot to have oceans and its atmosphere is a thick layer of CO₂.

However, scientists have recently discovered the presence of a chemical called phosphine in Venus’ clouds. This discovery is important because, on Earth, phosphine in the same amounts as detected in Venus is only produced by an industrial process and microbes that do not use oxygen.

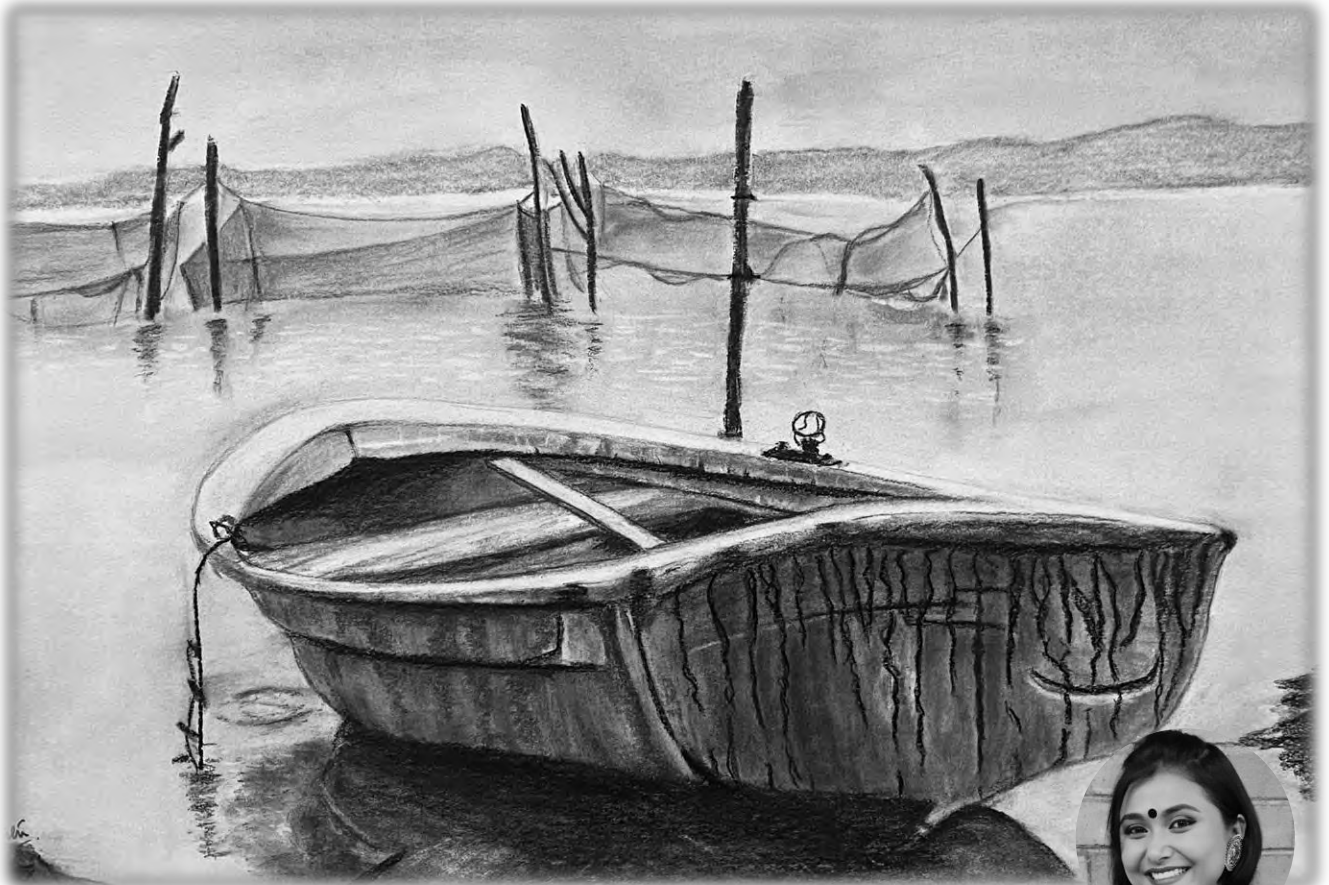
Whether there’s life in Venus remains debatable, as while the clouds of Venus are a lot cooler than the surface, they are 90% Sulphuric Acid which is more acidic than what any known life form can withstand. Despite this, Venus may be the first planet where we discover extraterrestrial life. Microbial extraterrestrial life, but extraterrestrial life, nonetheless.



Abhigyan Chakraborty



QUIÉTUDE





THE TREES ARE LOSING THEIR LEAVES AND NOT ONE OF THEM IS WORRIED ~ DONALD MILLER



Sitting crossed-legged on the streaked floor, I observed the glittering light peeking through the high verdure surrounding me. The air felt moist and the forest was green with life. The trees were captivating, and I sat, engrossed, in my pensive state.

I had once read a peculiar book that was found in the shadowy corner of a mysterious secondhand bookstore. The edges of the pages were tinted with age but the words it held within still breathed magic into the reader's mind. It had said that there were two categorizations that humanity slipped itself into. One class valued truth, the other chose happiness and contentment.

A leaf from above fluttered downwards, into the heart of my lap. It lay flaccid and remained limp in my palm when I held it, inspecting the veins that once fed it life.

As I had grown older, I begun to see the divide that the book had discerned between people, which remained so well concealed under humanity's chaotic synergy. Some took comfort in the unwavering devotion to their belief of higher powers, protecting themselves from the potential comprehension of existential loneliness. Others lived their whole lives in a permanent air of doubt, dashing between ideas and philosophies to try find a truth to substitute the void of helplessness that departure from theism had left them with.

I sat motionless through the murk of chilly nights and sunlit kisses of the day. The wind had howled its sorrows to me, and the clouds had rained its tears to hear such woes, but I remained captivated by the serenity of the seraphic trees in front of me. One-by-one, a procession of leaves floated from their rightful perches, embellishing the ground with rich, warm hues. I observed the trees with a heedful eye, attempting to gauge their reaction. They had remained in their former position, upright and seemingly without regard for their fallen elements. They had the luxury of care-freeness, since another hoard of leaves would be presented to them next season.

As the years glided by, the name and the story escaped the confines of my mind. But the observation made within the book still echoed in the darkest corners of my conscious. We are born into a world where can choose to discover the salient grievances of humanity; however distant the heartache may be from ourselves. Comparatively, we may also evade the despair of current events to protect our gaiety. An entity as unexceptional as the existence of news divides us between pursuing veracity or hiding from existential perturbation.

Snowflakes drifted from the heavens. Despite the gelidity within my bones, I remained in my cross-legged position on

the forest floor. The trees stood bare, devoid of the foliage ornamentation. No movement or objection was composed by the trees. They had grown accustomed to a soft delight - which acknowledgment of circumstances can annihilate, leaving only caution and gloom in its smoldering wake. Therefore, the trees remained affixed to their frivolous fantasies whilst an expanding whir sound shattered the tranquility of the forest.

The division between the chase for erudition and the shielding of our innocent pleasure of naivety arouses in all sectors of humanity. Even within the disarray of our thoughts, the eternal battle plays. Over time, as we add knowledge to the confines of our thoughts, equanimity of the mind is bled out. The indulgence of intended ignorance grows as tantalising as the shimmer of exorbitant diamonds. As we grow into our world, it becomes intelligible as to why many choose to deflect the intrigue of truth.

Despite the grating mechanical noise growing to a deafening crescendo, the trees made no movement to inquire, still desiring to be lost in their fanciful stupor. A booming thud reverberated around the forest, followed by the echo of many others. Harsh sunlight shocked my skin as the once angelic trees lay horizontally around me, abandoned by their souls. The harvester drove off into the horizon, as I sat frozen; unable to comprehend that the presence of the demure trees could be slit in such a repulsive manner. As twilight set, I watched with abhorrence at the felling of the trees until the naked eye could see.

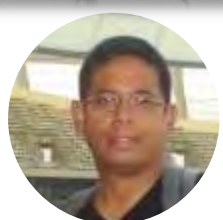
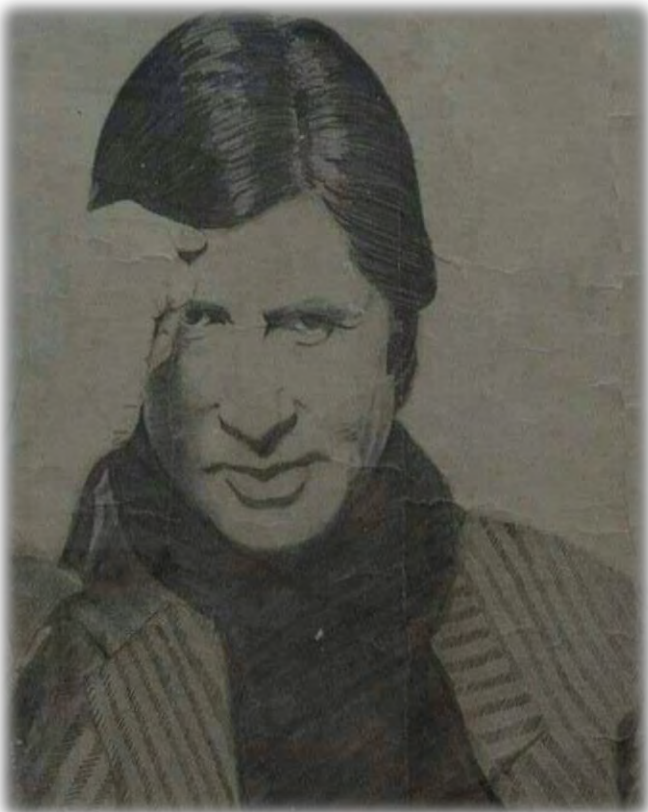
The antique book and its revelations came to mind. I had observed the divisions between the search for knowledge and sheltering of the mind from perturbation not only in groups of people but struggle relentlessly within our conscious. Yet, these trees had proven that ignorance is beguiling. Dependency on evading erudition moulds a mind to disregard critical matters, even as it rises behind you, ready to charge an assault. The seraphic trees never needed to be wary of the depletion of their leaves, since they would flourish once again; but these trees become so reliant on their ignorance of the surroundings that they chose not to notice the blaring felling of the adjacent trees. In the end, the trees lost everything, including their souls, to the trivial delight of ignorance. As heart-wrenching as it may be, the obligation lay within us to pursue knowledge in spite of perturbation, for it is the only protection we have; else humanity becomes the forest that becomes obliterated by our erroneous perception of reality.



Ahana Mukherjee Maharaj
Niece of Annapurna Hazra



মুখাচ্ছবি



Agniv Datta

অলকানন্দা

আয়নার সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে বারবার নিজেকে খুঁটিয়ে দেখছিল অলকানন্দা। এতো মন দিয়ে, যত্ন করে নিজেকে সে বহুকাল নজর করেনি। সে ঠিক নিজেই জানেনা আজ সে নিজের প্রতিবিশ্বের সাথে কেন এই খেলায় মেতে উঠেছে? রোজকার মতো আজও অফিস থেকে ফিরছিল সে। স্কুলের চাকরি থেকে অবসর পেয়ে অলকানন্দা আজকাল দিশা ফাউন্ডেশন নামক এক এন.জি.ও-র সাথে যুক্ত এবং একজন সক্রিয় কর্মী হিসেবে খুব অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই সে সবার প্রিয় হয়ে উঠেছে।

সেরকম কোন পিছুটান নেই তাই কাজে ব্যস্ত থাকারাই অলকা ভালোবাসে। মা বাবা বেশ অনেক বছর আগেই মারা গেছে। একমাত্র ছোটভাই পরিবার নিয়ে বাইরে থাকে। দুই বছর অন্তর আসে কলকাতা। আর আত্মীয়স্বজন যারা আছেন তাদের সাথে সম্পর্কটা অনেকটাই ফর্মাল হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে আজকাল। মাঝে মাঝে ফোন করা ছাড়া যাতায়াত নেই বললেই চলে। একা থাকাটা বাধ্যতা থেকে কখন জানি অভ্যেস ছাড়িয়ে ভালো লাগাতে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে অলকার। সেই কবে থেকে জীবনের প্রতিকূলতার সাথে লড়াই করতে করতে আজ সে একটু অনুকূল নিজের কাছে। আর তাই নিজেকে নিয়েই থাকার তার পরম শান্তি।

জানলার পাশের সিটে বসে রোজকার মতো আজও স্মৃতির ঝাঁপি খুলে বসেছিল সে। হঠাৎ বাসটার আচমকা ব্রেক কষা তাকে ফিরিয়ে আনল বর্তমানে... ত্রিশ বছর পার করে। চারিদিকে চেয়ে দেখল বাসটিতে বেশ ভিড় হয়ে গেছে, সে টের ও পায়নি। ভাগ্যিস সে আগে উঠেছিল তাই বসার একটা জায়গা পেয়ে গেছিলো। হঠাৎ তার চোখ গেলো সামনে দাঁড়ানো মেয়েটির দিকোরোগা পাতলা চেহারার একটি মেয়ে, পিঠে তার গন্ধমাদন পর্বত, হয়ত পড়েই ফিরছে। ব্যাগের ভাঙে বেচারি দাঁড়াতে পারছেন না ঠিক করে অলকার বড় মায়ী হল মেয়েটির ওপর। অলকানন্দা আজকাল টের পায় দিন দিন তার মাতৃম্নেহ স্থান কাল পাত্র বিবেচনা না করেই প্রকট হয়ে উঠছে। হয়ত এই সুখ থেকে বঞ্চিত বলেই একটা অপূর্ণতা আছন্ন করে রাখে তার মনকে।

-‘ব্যাগটা আমার কাছে দাও। অলকা মেয়েটির কাছ থেকে ব্যাগটা চেয়ে বলল।’



-‘না না আন্টি খুব ভারি, তোমার কষ্ট হবে।’

একটু হেসে অলকা বলল-‘আমি তো বসে আছি। দাও আমার কাছে।’

অলকার ব্যক্তিত্ব আর দৃপ্ত ভঙ্গি মেয়েটি কে ব্যাগটা দিতে বাধ্য করলো। ব্যাগটা নিয়ে অলকা বুঝল ব্যাগটা সত্যি কতো ভারি। তার মনে হল স্কুল গুলোতে এতো কি পড়ায় আজকাল?? পিরিয়ড টাইম, স্কুল টাইম, টিফিন টাইম সব তো একই আছে, তাহলে পড়াশোনার চাপের সাথে এই রকম ব্যাগের চাপ দেওয়াটা কি ভীষণ অন্যায়।

অলকা লক্ষ্য করছিল মেয়েটি অপলক ভাবে তার দিকে চেয়ে আছে। নাঃ অলকা তো মেয়েটিকে আগে দেখেছে বলে মনে হয় না। তবে কি মেয়েটি কারো সাথে মিল পাচ্ছে তার?? এরকম কারো একভাবে চেয়ে থাকার খুব অস্বস্তিকর। অলকার ক্ষণিকের জন্য সেদিনের কথা মনে পরে গেল, ঠিক রুদ্র র গভীর চোখ এরকম অপলক ভাবে তাকে দেখে যাচ্ছিল ছোট চায়ের দোকানের বেঞ্চে বসে। ভারি অস্বস্তিতে ফেলে দিয়েছিল রুদ্র সেদিন ওকে। অলকা আজ আবার হারিয়ে যাচ্ছিল সেই গভীর চোখে।



ঢাকুরিয়া ঢাকুরিয়া বাস কন্ডাক্টরের তীব্র চিংকারে সন্নিহিত ফিরে পেল সে। তার নামার সময় হল। সেলিমপুরে নামবে সে। ব্যাগটা মেয়েটিকে দিয়ে নামার জন্য উঠে দাঁড়ালো অলকা।

মেয়েটি হঠাৎ বলে উঠলো- ‘আন্টি একটা কথা বলবো???’

-‘হুম বলো’

-‘তুমি কি বরাবরই এতো সুন্দর?’

কথাটা শুনে অলকার মুখে একটা রক্তিম আভা ছড়িয়ে পড়ল, যা মেয়েটির চোখে ফ্রেমবন্দি হল। অলকা বেশ লজ্জা পেয়ে হেসে বলল- ‘খুব পাগলি মেয়ে’...বলে সে নেমে গেল।

বাড়ি ঢাকা অন্দি কানে কথাটার প্রতিধ্বনি হতে লাগলো। এই কথাটা সে তার জীবনে খুব কমই শুনেছে বা শোনেইনি। এই দেশে খুব সাধারণ দেখতে একটি কালো মেয়ে তার জীবনে কেউ তাকে সুন্দরী বলবে এই আশাটা ছোটবেলা থেকেই ত্যাগ করে। অলকার ক্ষেত্রেও তার ব্যতিক্রম ছিল না।

জীবনের শেষ প্রান্তে এসে ‘সুন্দরী’ কথাটা আজ তাকে বারবার তাড়া করছে। হয়ত মনের কোথাও একটা ভালো লাগার অনুভূতি ও আছোচোখ ঝাপসা হয়ে আসছে।

এক জোড়া কালো চোখ, ছোট কপাল, নাক, ঠোঁট সব একই রকম আছে তাও যেন আজ অলকার নিজেকে দেখতে কেন এতো ভালো লাগছিল। বার্ধ্যাকের বলিরেখা গুলো নদীর মতো শাখা প্রশাখা বিন্যাস করে ওর মুখমন্ডলে এক অপূর্ণ ভাস্কর্য সৃষ্টি করেছে। না কোন কবির কল্পনার শ্রাবস্তীর কারুকার্য না, দীর্ঘ ষাট বছরের জীবনের অভিজ্ঞতার প্রতিচ্ছবি অলকার মুখ তথা সারা স্বভাব। অলকানন্দা লক্ষ্য করছিল রেখা গুলো একে বেকে নদী হয়ে বয়ে চলেছে তার সারা মুখ জুড়ে। বর্ষার নদীর মতো তারা কানায় কানায় পূর্ণ...যা পূর্ণতা দিয়েছে তার সমগ্র জীবনকে। ষাট বছরের জীবন তাকে সুন্দর করেছে তার স্নেহ দিয়ে, বলিষ্ঠ করেছে তার শাসন দিয়ে, তাকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে গেছে হাত ধরে। সে পূর্ণতা লাভ করেছে নদীর মতো।

সে অলকানন্দা...পূর্ণতা তার সমস্ত জুড়ে।



জন্মিতা ভট্টাচার্য



ଅର୍ଧନାରୀଶ୍ଵର



Suren Saha



LOL: LAWS OF LIFE

Imagine that in a stadium, a challenging military obstacle course is going on where millions of tiny living bodies are aiming for a single spot after the finishing line. The fight is tremendous and they face incredible odds. Some are exhausted, some collapse, some become directionless and finally BOOM! One is able to win this fertilization race. Yes, the sperm united with the egg and you were born. This is just to suggest that you have been favoured in these odds and hence you are precious. You are here because the universe entirely conspired to create your existence in that very moment. So, you should feel lucky and seek for a fulfilling life.

But first I must ask you, would like to live an ordinary life or a life worth living? Would you like to get carried away with all the stress, anxiety and frustration and make life a burden? Of course not! Rather live a meaningful life with a purpose. Here are my three laws of life for meaningful survival, which I would like to share with you.

LOL 1: BE ACTIVE AND TRY NEW THINGS.

Step out of your comfort zone and do things that make you happy. I feel that the worst constraint one can put on, is following a routine. There are so many things one can do in any given day. I find it preposterous that people would rather do what they already do, than try out something new. Maybe go to a new place, try out a new sport or talk to someone you haven't formally met. Yes, you will feel a bit anxious at first, but it's only natural to feel so. However you should turn that anxiety into excitement. There is always an exhilaration in trying out something new.

LOL 2: FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS.

This may sound cliché and it truly is. Even though we are told continuously, we still do not realize and accept our true dreams. People are told to conform to society's standards - get a degree, then a job, create a family and then die peacefully. I assume most of you want to live like this, but there is no fun in that. Be diligent towards your goals. Your dreams don't have any due dates, keep them alive and try to achieve them.

LOL 3: LIVE EVERY DAY AS IF IT IS YOUR LAST.

What would you do if you had 24 hours left to live? Some would choose to spend the last 24 hours with friends and families that are dear to them. Others would choose to spend that time experiencing new things, something exotic maybe? Others as you might have expected, would choose to spend the last 24 hours bungee jumping or snorkeling. Now I ask you, what is keeping you from doing all of this right now? You have 24 hours and more to do all of these, so take the initiative to make it happen.

So there you are with my three laws of life. Sounds so simple when you just think about it, right? Step out of your comfort zone, try new things, follow your dreams and live every day as if it is your last. Do not wait for the countdown to be placed on your life by a doctor before you can truly start to enjoy it. You currently have more than 24 hours, so LOL! Yes, lots of laughter to keep yourself happy.

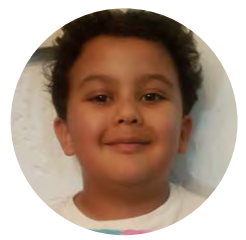


Ambika Ghosh

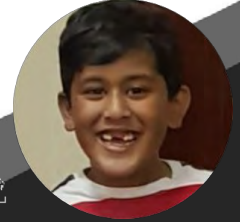




MY BEACH HOUSE



Josh Bhattacharyay



Hemav Chatterjee

MARK AND ME

I was on a hike in the woods. Suddenly a tree started talking to me.

The tree said, "Help me please, I heard that they are going to cut me down and I am so frightened".

While I was coming back from hiking I felt so bad for him. That night, I stayed in the woods wide awake. I sat beside the tree and guarded him the whole night. He became my friend and I named him Mark.

Next day in the morning, I had to go to the market to buy some fruits but when I came back I found the tree was cut down. All the branches of the tree were shredded and it looked like a skeleton.

The wait was long..... but slowly new branches and leaves started to grow. Finally, I got back my happy friend Mark. Every day I pass through the woods and spend several hours with Mark talking. He is my best friend forever.





MY BEST FRIENDS



Mahi Ghosh



ACHIEVING A GOAL

Have you ever been shocked after achieving something that seemed impossible? I have, and it was one of the most surreal experiences in my life so far.

My story starts way back in 2018 when I was in grade 7. At that time, I was a senior at British International Preparatory School. Our school had the tradition that every year a group of seniors would become either a monitor or a counsellor. Counsellors got their title and benefits while monitors got just their title. At some point of the year, every student's goal was either to be a monitor or a counsellor. In my case, I was not informed about any of these as it was my first year at the school.

At the final assembly of the first term, I was taken aback when my name was called out among a few other fellow classmates. We were all confused as to what was happening. When the announcement for the new monitors were made, I clearly remember how astonished we all were and all our faces looked so startled. I could not believe that I was given this opportunity as I had only been to school for about two months. After all the names of the counsellors were announced, I made a promise to myself that I would work as hard as possible to become a counsellor at the next final assembly.

As the term continued, I stayed true to my promise and tried my best to do every job successfully. Suddenly all my aspirations were snatched right out of my hands when our grade received insight of who would be added to the list of monitors and counsellors. Out of all the names on the list,

mine was nowhere to be found. I was devastated; it felt as if all my hard work and effort had gone to waste.

The next day was the final assembly for term two. I woke up feeling drained out, as if I had run a Marathon despite having a full night of sleep. I sluggishly crawled out of bed and got ready for school while trying to convince my mother to let me stay at home. She firmly refused and said that I needed to celebrate others' success as well and not just my own. Even though I disagreed, I still went to school.

As the names of the new monitors and counsellors were being announced, I felt an emptiness within me. People started going up on the stage as their names were announced and I just sat there dejected. When I thought everyone had gone up, my name was called out. I still sat there for few more seconds while my brain was processing what had just happened. My name was called again and this time, I gathered myself and walked down the aisle to the stage feeling super excited. After the assembly was over, I was congratulated by my teachers and friends, for being promoted to a counsellor. This was one of my proudest moments to this day and I will cherish it forever.



Gaurika Chatterjee

NATURE'S CRAFT



Srihaan Chakraborty



PLACID LOOK



Agniv Datta



ঈশ্বর

ক্লাস সিন্ধের অঙ্ক পরীক্ষায়
ছ নম্বর উত্তর ভুল করেছিলাম,
মা সরস্বতী কে কানে কানে কত বলে রেখেছিলাম
বিসর্জনের দিন, শুনলই না।

আজ ভোরে স্বপ্ন দেখলাম,
বিশালকায় বুদ্ধ,
চীনের ওপর হাত বুলিয়ে দিচ্ছে,
পুরো দেশটা এক নিমেষে সুস্থ হয়ে গেলো।

সেই একই সময়, দেখলাম জেরুজালমের ক্রুশ বিদ্ধ যিশুকে, ভ্যাটিকানের চার্চ থেকে বেরিয়ে,
ইতালির রাস্তায় রাস্তায়, মৃতদেহে হাত বুলিয়ে, সবাই কে বাঁচিয়ে তুলল।

এক লাফে আটলান্টিক পেরিয়ে,
আমেরিকায় ছুটলো।
মক্কার হজরত, হাত তুলে ইরানিদের আশির্বাদ করলো, পুরো ইরান ভাইরাস মুক্ত হলো।

ভারতে, বাবরি মসজিদের গর্ভ গৃহ থেকে বেরিয়ে এলো রাম, হিমালয় থেকে নেবে এলো শিব,
মারাঠায় শ্রী গণেশ, বাংলায় দুর্গা, মথুরা থেকে মুরালিধর। এক ফুকে ভারতকে করলেন ভাইরাস মুক্ত।

কোনো মৃত্যু নেই, জ্বরা নেই, যুগ যুগ ধরে প্রার্থনার
এই তো ফসল, তবেই না হাসপাতাল না করে গড়েছি মন্দির, তবেই না সকাল সন্ধ্যা পড়ছি নামাজ, বিজ্ঞান শিক্ষা ভুলে।

আর বিশ্ব বিদ্যালয়ের থেকেও বড় করে
বানিয়েছি ভ্যাটিক্যান।
তবেই না কত দাস্তার ইতিহাস লিখে, হাজার হাজার ঘন্টা দেশের সময় নস্টকরেছি,
মন্দির না মসজিদ বানাবো বলে।

সে কি নয়নাভিরাম দৃশ্য, চক্ষু সার্থক হলো,
তিরুপতি, যীশু, হজরত দান পাত্রের সব ঘুষের টাকা, আমজনতাকে হরিলুট দিচ্ছে।
টিভি সিরিয়ালের মত গণেশ, হনুমান ছু মন্তরে সমাধান করছে ঘর বন্দী দিন মজুরের পেটের জ্বালা।

ঘুম ভাঙলো, স্বপ্ন ভাঙলো,
কোরোনা র ড্যাশবোর্ডে,
বেড়েই চলেছে মৃত্যুর হাতছানি,
সং অসং, ধনী দরিদ্র, হিন্দু, বৌদ্ধ, ঈশাই, মুসলমান, নির্বিচারে, কেউ বাদ নেই।



ফাল্গুনী পট্টনায়ক

टाका टाका

टाका हररे ...
 टाका आह श
 टाका किलविल
 टाका थिलिखल्
 टाका बन् बन्
 टाका बन् बन्
 टाका ना एले
 बूक टन टन
 टाका भिक्का
 टाका शिक्का
 टाका प्रनामि
 टाका इनामि
 टाका बूम बूम
 टाका देय घूम
 टाका शिन्ना
 टाका चिन्ना
 टाका शान्ति

धुतुर... शुधु अशान्ति...



ज्योति चड्ढार्य

स्वाधीनता

आज आप से हाँथ नहीं मिलाना है,
 आज आपको गले नहीं लगाना है।
 आज आपके निकटता से मैं भयभीत हूँ,
 और इस भय से स्वाधीनता मांगना है।।

यह कैसा युद्ध ? ना लहू बहाना है,
 यह कैसा युद्ध ? ना ही कपड़े जलना है।
 आज आपके द्वार तक भी न आके,
 सामाजिक दुरी से मुस्कुराना है।।

आज आपके निकटता से मैं भयभीत हूँ,
 और इस भय से स्वाधीनता मांगना है।।

प्रतिदिन कामना करता हूँ,
 आज कोई अचरज हो जाए।
 स्वाधीन हो हम इस कालकूट से,
 जीवन फिर से सरल हो जाए।।

फिर से खुल जाए मेरा मक्का मदीना,
 फिर से हवन-तिलक सर चढ़ जाए।
 फिर से ईसा के चरणों तले,
 मुझे वह स्वर्ग का राह दिख जाए।।

आज आपके निकटता से मैं भयभीत हूँ,
 और इस भय से स्वाधीनता मांगना है।।

प्रतिबिम्ब और परछाई आज निकट मित्र बने हैं,
 साथ दोस्तों के हंसी की गुहार लगाना चाहता हूँ।
 आज मैं बेफिक्र हो कर अपने स्वाधीनता का,
 एक बार फिर अनुभव लेना चाहता हूँ।।

नयी भोर की मांग जीवन से आज है,
 फिर से बच्चों को खेलने जाना है।
 स्वाधीन दुनिया का अदना सा प्रतीक हूँ,
 एक बार फिर भय मुक्त सांस लेना है।।

आज आपके निकटता से मैं भयभीत हूँ,
 और इस भय से स्वाधीनता मांगना है।।

आज आपके निकटता से मैं भयभीत हूँ,
 और इस भय से स्वाधीनता मांगना है।।



शुभदीप घोषाल

প্রিয়তম

(উৎসর্গ: মহামারী পীড়িতদের সেবা করতে, যে সব চিকিৎসা কর্মীরা প্রাণ হারালেন।)

তপ্ত হৃদয়ে, ভরিও পৃথিবী,
মৃদু সমীরণে দুর্লিবে করবি।
প্রদীপ জ্বালইয়া মনে,
জীবন ভরিনু যুদ্ধ জয়ের গানে।

প্রিয়তম মোর আসিছে ফিরিয়া
এতদিন ছিল আমারে ভুলিয়া,
সে ছিল সেচ্ছা নির্বাসনে,
শক্তি জোগাইতে সভ্যতারই প্রাণে।

পৃথিবী যখন কাঁপে থর থরি
চারিদিকে শুধু মৃত্যু মহামারি,
জিবক আমার অতন্দ্র প্রহরী,
রাখিয়াছে মান সে আমারি।

নিজের জীবন ত্যাগীয়া সে,
বাঁচিয়ে গিয়াছে সহস্ররে,
তারে নিল তুলি রক্ষাকর্তা,
এ নহে তাহার শবের যাত্রা।

আমার ললাটে সিঁদুর আঁকিয়া,
সখী তোরা সাজা আমারে নবোঢ়া,
বরণ থালি রহিবে সাজিয়া,
দাড়াইব আমি পুষ্প লইয়া।

খুলিয়া রাখোগো সিংহ দুয়ার,
ওই দেখ সেই সচ্ছ নীলাম্বর,
রুখিয়া আমার আঁখির জোয়ারে,
বরণ করিব বীরেরে।

নগরবাসী দাও করতালি,
সে আসিল লইয়া কানন কাকলী,
মলয়ে ভরিল কুঞ্জ সবার,
কাটিয়া গিয়াছে গহন আঁধার।।



ফাশুলী পট্টনায়ক





ভারত তোমায় ভালো বাসি

আমি ভালোবাসি তোমার সবকিছু,
তোমার আবর্জনা, তোমার সুন্দরতা।

হাজার হাজার বছরের সাধনার ফসল তুমি,
তুমি কত বার করেছ রক্ত স্নান,
কত উৎসৃষ্ট মানুষ তোমার ওপর
রাজত্ব চালিয়েও অবশেষে হয়েছে ম্লান।

আমি ভালোবাসি তোমার সবকিছু,
তোমার মরুভূমি, তোমার নদী নালা।

কত সভ্যতার সাক্ষী তুমি,
তুমি কত বার পথ দেখিয়েছো বিশ্বকে,
কত মনীষীর জন্ম দিয়েছ তুমি
ভরিয়ে দিয়েছে তারা আলোকে।

আমি ভালোবাসি তোমার সবকিছু,
মানবিকতার নগ্নতা, বিরুদ্ধে গর্জে ওঠা।

কত শ্রেণী সংগ্রামের সম্ভার তুমি,

কতবার বসেছো পরীক্ষায়,
কাউকে দূরে না সরিয়ে,
সবাই কে দিয়েছো আঁচলে আশ্রয়।

আমি ভালোবাসি, তোমার সবকিছু
তোমার বটবৃক্ষ, তোমার ধানের ক্ষেত।
কত বিজ্ঞানের সঞ্চয়িতা তুমি,
কতবার করেছ আবিষ্কার,
যতবার দুর্যোগের ঘনঘটা
জয় হয়েছে মানবতার।

আমি ভালোবাসি, তোমার সবকিছু
তোমার আকাশ, জোনাকির জ্বলে ওঠা সন্ধ্যা বেলা।

আমি ভালোবাসি, তোমার সবকিছু
তোমার সন্ধ্যাতারা আর সূর্যের লুকোচরি খেলা।

আমি ভালোবাসি, তোমার সবকিছু
বউ কথা কও ডাকা, টগরের গাছে টুনটুনির বাসা।

আমি ভালোবাসি, তোমার সবকিছু

সরষের ফুলে, মক্ষীর গুঞ্জন।

ভালোবাসি, প্রলয়ের মাঝে তোমার জেগে ওঠা,
ডমরু বাজিয়ে নৃত্য আর, অশ্রু ভরা নয়ন।

আমি ভালোবাসি, তোমার সবকিছু
তোমার শক্তি, আর নতুন দিনের আশা।

ভারত তোমায়, আমার ভালোবাসা।



ফাল্গুনী পট্টনায়ক



#HEARMERIGHT AND LISTEN TO BUNNY ZAFFER UNCUT

This article is based on an interview of Bunny Zaffer, one of the key person of the initiative LoveandLight. The interview is taken by Basudha Modak and is available in the youtube link: https://youtu.be/yz0i_H9C2wY (#JoinTheCauseSA 🇷🇺). It is an inspiring conversation that reveals the positive aspects of social media.

Basudha: You are one of the person in South Africa, who can guide us how social media can be used for the good of others. Your group #LoveandLight reinstates my faith in humanity, that whatever happens we can help each other and become better versions of ourselves. Please give us a short history of Love and Light.



B. Zaffer: Early in the lockdown a Facebook post was sent out by Riaz Rashid basically offering assistance to any neighbour who had no food. This post circulated extensively and before long people requested assistance. This was primarily in the Pretoria area. These requests were answered by well-wishers who offered their own food resources to needy neighbours.

Within 24 hours the requests for help started coming in from other areas. At this point Gerhard Lourens joined Riaz and the group was born. It started as #JoinTheCause. Samantha Lourens joined as admin and Prabashni Naicker, Tracy Muller, Mariaan Loubser were followed by Zaheer Soomar as admin. I joined shortly after. Bev Schoombie a donor then, joined us followed by Sean Lurie and Pranell Naidoo.

The group is not funded by the state in anyway nor does it align with any religion, race or creed. It is entirely reliant on donations. We help anybody who approaches- South Africans and foreign nationals alike.

Basudha: What are your outreach activities and how did this become such an event?

At this stage we were still receiving messages for help and then posting these without personal information requesting assistance. The group membership started swelling rapidly and we were using the tools on Facebook to manage our program. We soon decided to utilise the grocery voucher as a form of food assistance because we were now getting requests from all over the country. It even spread overseas. Someone from the Phillipines also contacted us and now have started a group there too.

We were fortunate to receive thousands of donations for vouchers from individuals, companies, communities, etc. We had no idea the group would grow to what it has become and soon saw ourselves collaborating with several other groups in SA. The Admin team basically reached out to their own network of friends, family, business and work associates to sponsor vouchers. Our group posts also generated tremendous interest and support from local well wishers and donations from Dubai, Canada, Australia, UK and USA assisted. We also assisted with hundreds of care packs to young girls in Reiger Park.

Basudha: Over time, your team has grown from strength to strength. Please give us some updates.

Our calculations indicate that we have 26000 members in our group and that we have assisted approximately 15 000 families since our inception. The assistance via vouchers, hampers the mainstay of our efforts and soup packs on a smaller scale. This translates into about 70 to 100k people reached with food. In many cases families received assistance multiple times.

We are a diverse group of people who know each other primarily through Facebook. Riaz, the founding member is an ex-pupil I taught some 27 years ago. The Admin are all volunteers and in many cases themselves donated vouchers and hampers.



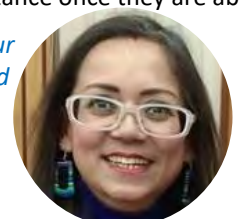
A meal voucher supports a family of four

Basudha: What are the current activities or future plans for this initiative?

B. Zaffer: In the last 6 to 7 weeks most of our admin team have had to return to work and normal life as it were and we currently have two active admin members. Due to the steep decline in donations and sponsors probably through donor fatigue and worsening of the economy we have had to curtail our activities drastically. The group was formed overnight in response to an obvious food need and there was no long term plans. We considered amending our role to finding support for unemployed people through self-help activities or other means of getting people in need to be self-supporting. This latest idea is still under consideration.

A point to note is that some donors are pensioners yet they make every effort to donate, even if it is R100 a month. Another beautiful development is that of people we assisted who in turn come back to offer assistance once they are able.

Basudha: Thank you for your time. Our viewers and readers will be motivated by this phenomenal endeavour of your team.



Basudha Modak

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

Dear Members,

As we slowly draw towards the close of what can be called one of the most challenging years to humanity, we reminisce the challenges we faced and how we as BASA came forward to help the needy and kept the spirit that defines our very organisation's strength in community outreach activities. The year tested everyone right from COVID to economic turmoil to Amphan that especially hit our mother state. We would like to convey heartfelt gratitude on behalf of

1. Ramakrishna Mission Johannesburg
2. Ramakrishna Mission Durban
3. Mukti Foundation
4. West Bengal Chief Minister Relief Fund
5. Kannada association on behalf of stranded Indians
6. Baul Community of Shantiniketan

For the assistance and aid, we could provide when it mattered most.

None of the above would have been possible without the open hearted contributions of our members, who even in these tough times came forward and helped. The EXCO would like to thank each and every one of you for the same and also congratulate each of us for keeping the spirit of BASA alive in these trying times.



Ayan Chatterjee

[on behalf of BASA Executive Committee, 2020]

COVID RELIEF THROUGH RAMKRISHNA MISSION SOUTH AFRICA



The Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa – Johannesburg

COVID – 19 Winter Relief Initiative

The Centre successfully provided support to 100 families within the impoverished community of Lenasia, Greyville.

Items distributed included: nutritional hampers, equipped with disinfectant cleaning liquids, face masks and soaps to protect themselves against the pandemic. In addition literature on social distancing and basic hygiene was provided.

We thank our donors, authorities and volunteers for making this initiative possible. We look forward to your continued support.





DONATIONS TOWARDS RATION FOR 20 BAUL FAMILIES IN SHANTINIKETAN FOR A MONTH.

Together For Folk
A global solidarity

First ever Digital Bengali Concert co hosted LIVE across continents

GSPC bringing the World together for a Cause #BeByTheBauls

19th Sep 2020 (Sat)
India 9 PM
Singapore 11:30 PM
UK 4:30PM
USA 11:30 AM EST

Open to ALL

Debojyoti Mishra Initiative in Association with GSPC, New Jersey, USA
www.gspcnj.org

DONATE

AMPHAN CYCLONE RELIEF THROUGH MUKTI FOUNDATION - KAKDWIP





WE THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUR CSR ACTIVITIES WITH ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2020

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| <input type="checkbox"/> ABHIJIT CHAKRABORTY & SEMANTI CHAKRABORTY | <input type="checkbox"/> GAURAV CHATTERJEE & HEMANTIKA CHATTERJEE |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> AMLAN DAS & TUSHITA MUKHERJEE | <input type="checkbox"/> PARTHA PRATIM GHOSH & ANNA PURNA GHOSH |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> ARIJIT CHATTERJEE AND POULOMI CHATTERJEE | <input type="checkbox"/> SANJIT SINHA & MADHUMITA SINHA |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> ARJIT MOOKERJEE & RUBINA MOOKERJEE | <input type="checkbox"/> SAUGATA DAS & PIA DAS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARNAB DAS & REETUPARNA DAS | <input type="checkbox"/> SOMDEB BANNERJEE & SHREELA GUPTA BANNERJEE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARUNABHA DAS & SASWATI DAS | <input type="checkbox"/> SOMNATH MODAK AND BASUDHA MODAK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AYAN BAGCHI & GARGI BAGCHI | <input type="checkbox"/> SUDEEP BISWAS & SUDESHNA BISWAS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AYAN CHATTERJEE AND APARNA CHATTERJEE | <input type="checkbox"/> SUJOY DAS & POPPY DAS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHAYAN BHATTACHARYAY & PAPIA BHATTACHARYAY | <input type="checkbox"/> SUVRA SANKAR PAUL & ANINDITA PAUL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHITTA RANJAN DAS & FALGUNI DAS | <input type="checkbox"/> TAPASH KUMAR BHATTACHARJEE AND CHAMPA BHATTACHARJEE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DEBAJIT SHOME & MONALI SHOME | <input type="checkbox"/> TUSHAR DAS AND SREERUPA DAS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DEBASHIS BASU & JAYATI KUSARI BASU | |

In addition to the above list, there are four other members who wanted to remain anonymous. We salute all BASA members who have supported towards relief work through other organizations as well, this year.

NB: If we have missed any names please let us know, we will include the same in the revised edition.





FROM THE CULTURAL TEAM

Dear Members,

We are indeed grateful to all the members for your enthusiasm and dedication that created magic in the sphere of BASA cultural programme this year in 2020. We appreciate all the hard work of each and every participant in making all the programmes a stupendous success. Online programmes have its own challenges, but in spite of all odds the perseverance of kids, their parents and all participants demand a huge round of applause. The video editing team had been the backbone of all these endeavors. Their technical skills and aesthetic sense created the visual treats. I believe

these cultural programmes will be for keeps like previous years. The links of all the online programmes of 2020 are listed here for you to enjoy during your spare time. We hope your creative excellence will grow from strength to strength. Our heartfelt appreciation to all from the cultural team.



Annapurna Hazra

[on behalf of BASA Executive Committee, 2020]

LINKS OF ALL PROGRAMMES OF 2020

Bhasha Divas organized by Indian High Commission:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP_zTcMYe74&feature=youtu.be

BASA Rabindra Jayanti programmes

- i. Sondhay Rabi Part 1: <https://youtu.be/4wsGZmi-aiU>
- ii. Sondhay Rabi Part 2: <https://youtu.be/balFhre3ihs>
- iii. Sondhay Rabi Part 3: <https://youtu.be/h7wESI5lp-Q>

Independence Day programme organized by India Club:

https://youtu.be/iP_zTcMYe74

BASA Mahalaya Programme JAGO TUMI JAGO:

<https://youtu.be/qp8-lcKdNxA>

BASA Durga Puja Cultural programmes :

- i. **Lecture** by Swami Swatmaramanandaji Maharaj, Ramkrishna Centre, Johannesburg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thnYTjbR57U&feature=youtu.be>
- ii. **CHOTODER PUJO:** <https://youtu.be/bfdgn6nvYQo>
- iii. **GANEY GANEY PUJO Part 1:** https://youtu.be/2l_vZ9P9hRU
- iv. **BASA PRAKTONI**, Dur Hotey Esho Kachey: <https://youtu.be/ZhKvcRbd0Kw>
- v. **GANEY GANEY PUJO Shesh Porbo:** <https://youtu.be/KAgMYVPDg-o>



SWIMMING WITH THE SHARKS

December of 2019, we went for a holiday to what is called the south coast of South Africa - The coast south of Durban. That's where the **Aliwal Shoal** is, a rocky reef which is the remains of an ancient sand dune approximately 5 kilo metres off the coast of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The reef is inhabited by many kinds of hard and soft corals and a variety of tropical and subtropical fish species. Aliwal Shoal was named after the near-sinking in 1849 of the three-masted vessel "Aliwal", captained by James Anderson. There are two wrecks near the reef that are popular recreational dive sites. The Norwegian bulk carrier MV *Produce* sank in 1974, and SS *Nebo* sank in 1884. Aliwal Shoal has diverse marine life, including large predators, and is popular as a recreational scuba diving destination. The Shoal is known especially for its abundance of Grey Nurse Sharks (known locally as ragged tooth sharks or "raggies") between July and November when the sharks congregate there to mate.

As you drive into Pennington, you are greeted by big hoardings calling you to experience shark cage diving and scuba dive with the raggies. Scuba diving involved an investment of 8 hours a day for three days. So I decided to do shark cage diving, which was quicker since there was no training involved. I choose the 6 am slot and was mentally all set to say hello to the raggies. I am a big animal lover and I am not scared of the sharks. But my fear comes from swimming in open waters, rather any water body where my feet doesn't touch the ground. I had a bad experience getting entangled in the weeds of a dam in Southern Drakensberg. We were away on a holiday, and I ventured out to swim not cognizant of the fact that we need to carefully choose the spot to enter the waters. If they hadn't come to save me in the boat, I would have drowned that day. That experience stayed with me and I am slowly learning to let go of the fear by swimming in the Olympic size swimming pool in the aquatic centre when I swim weekly. But swimming in the Ocean is a totally different story all together.

When I arrived that morning at the Dive Centre, I could see the scuba divers in their wet suits smoking or having coffee and talking excitedly about the diving with the sharks. People from all over the world come here to swim with the sharks. There was a German scuba instructor who runs a scuba diving school off the coast of Malta, besides other divers who had scuba-dived across the world. I heard their stories gingerly, telling myself I have a long way to go before I get where they are.

They ushered me to the office, where the receptionist declared that they are not taking the cage today since the sea is unusually choppy and it can be nauseous getting tossed around in the cage. I wasn't ready to go if they were not taking the cage, telling myself that they must be joking. The lady must have thought the same that I was joking about not going. When she realized that I was serious about backing out, she knew she had trouble on her hand plus the revenue

loss from a customer backing out. As a last resort she suggested that I speak to my trainer.

Rudy, looked like a Viking towering above me at 6feet 5inches with flowing long hair. He stuttered, perhaps nervous that convincing me was his task now. Ever since I was a child I could sense energy of spaces and people and that has got sharpened ever since I became a Reiki healer in 2017. Rudy had such a gentle energy around him and I thought well, if he is with me nothing can really go wrong. A little assured I put forward my condition of saying yes – For the duration of the dive, his one arm belonged to me. He could do whatever and go wherever as long I could hang on to his one arm. Did he have a chance to say no? Of course not.

With that I stepped into my diving suit. People who have ever got into diving suits will know that it is quite claustrophobic. The experienced divers wear their swim suits underneath and don't put the diving suit fully on till you are just about to dive into the waters. But I did not know this till I was on the boat and I had no option at all. With that I said bye to Preetesh and we got into the bakkie which was supposed to drive us to the beach where we had to play our roles in launching the boat into the ocean. Remember I told you that the ocean that day was unusually choppy so launching the boat was a mission. It kept getting thrown back by the waves. Once the boat was launched, we were supposed to jump into the boat. Instructions to the boys was to allow the girls to jump in first and the boys were supposed to jump in after that.





The skipper announced that today as per the reports coming in, the sharks were much further out into the sea, so we had a forty-minute boat ride. Once the skipper was busy taking us out to the sea, the most experienced scuba trainer repeated the instructions. We were supposed to keep our hands stuck to our body. If we use our hands to do what is a usual swim stroke motion, there is danger of shark biting off our hands mistaking it for a sardine. Otherwise sharks do not attack humans but they do check us out trying to figure who are the new inhabitants. He also subtly reminded us that sharks have many more teeth than us and much sharper. As it is with any wild animal interaction, we must respect that we are in their habitat and they are the boss. The words stayed in my head.

Once we got to the spot where sharks were supposed to be, they first throw in the white canister with dead sardines. The sharks having a strong sense of smell start circling the sardines-canister. Then they throw in a few dead sardines – smelly fish they are. Then they dive in, followed by the scuba divers who dive to about 8 metres below the surface followed by the people who will snorkel. I saw the whole rigmarole begin and executed with great proficiency. There were 2 scuba instructors with 6 scuba divers and they jumped in. Then it was Rudy's turn to jump in followed by 3 of us snorkelers.



As I jumped in, I could see my fears coming back. Rudy was true to his word and offered me his hand to hang on. A sense of relief washed over me. I soon realized that my snorkelling gear was a bit loose and when I signalled to Rudy, he suggested that I take it off and swim like I would normally do. Thankfully, I can hold my breath for a long time under water.

As I ducked in, the underwater scene took my breath away. There must have more than a dozen ragged tooth sharks and deep below I could see the scuba divers. They were circling us, nudging our flippers. It was truly a surreal experience. An experience which I have been struggling to put in words ever since. I swam with them for what seemed like a long time. As we were quite far from the Aliwal Shoal, so the only other fish to be seen were the Pilot fish. They eat parasites on the

sharks besides the small pieces of food that the sharks don't eat. I was a bit disappointed. I was eager to see some sea turtles. I love sea turtles. So after about 40 minutes of watching the sharks and the Pilot fish, I hopped back into the boat, freeing Rudy to tend and help the others. I had some interesting conversations with the skipper about his experiences in the last 30 years of being a skipper in the seas. He mentioned that the best experience was to swim with the humpback whales when they come to give birth between July and November. The waters are rife with whales, dolphins and the great white sharks trying to attack the young calves of the humpback whales.

When the divers came back up, they had an interesting tale to narrate. There was one bull shark and bull sharks are the dangerous ones. The bull shark soon figured that one of the female trainer diver was the smallest in size in the group of divers and he started pushing her away from the group. The chief scuba trainer was quick to realise what was happening and signalled to the other divers to get closer to the lady. Once the bull shark saw this behaviour he backed off and our divers decided to abort the dive.

Soon the skipper turned the boat on our way back home. I couldn't stop putting my hand into the sea and reliving the surreal forty minutes with the sharks. Oh sure I will be back to swim with the whales and dolphins. That would be so much fun. Also added to the list is diving in the reefs of Mozambique, which the divers told me is much more beautiful because of the shallow depth and the colourful fish underwater. My appetite hasn't been whetted but rather tickled for more.

But with this Covid 19 disruptions, that would have to wait for a while.



Dipanwita Gupta



MY FIRST AMAZING MPUMALANGA ADVENTURE

My best friend Kotha and I did not have much time to spend together. We didn't do any trips or adventures together too, so we decided to go on a trip to Mpumalanga together. We packed our luggage the night before our trip. We woke up literally at midnight, got ready and started our journey before sunrise. It took us six hours to reach Mpumalanga.



We checked in at a hotel at Graskop, dropped off our luggage and went outside to discover the new place. It was really very beautiful. First, we went to the Berlin Falls. It was very impressive with amazing views all around. It is located close to the God's Window and is the highest waterfall in

Mpumalanga.

Near God's Window, we found small curio shops. Our parents looked for some souvenirs while we played around. We went to the entrance where two paths led to two different directions. Kotha and I were a bit confused as to which one we should choose. After some thought, we decided on one path and carefully followed each other. We continued through the long stairway and reached the viewing point of God's Window.

God's Window is 2000 m higher than the sea level. It has breathtaking views. One could get a panoramic view of the Lowveld which is more than 900 m down into the lush indigenous forest. That is why it is called the God's window.

One can see the forest and the hills all around. We took a hiking trail in the forest which was very rocky and all of us slipped and toppled over several times. Inside the forest, we had spectacular views and I took a very funny photograph of my dad sitting on a rock.

With magnificent views of canyons, rock formations and waterfalls, God's Window is truly a wonderful place to visit. It is no wonder that Mpumalanga is known as Paradise Country.

Next day our plan was to visit the Graskop Gorge Lift Company. It is the latest and most innovative tourism development in South Africa and famous for its natural beauty and world-renowned viewing attractions. The Graskop Gorge Lift provides passage into the heart of one of Mpumalanga's last forested wonderlands. There are elevated walkways and suspension bridges leading to the forest.

Our next stop was the Big Swing where there were long zip-lines. Kotha and I were very scared to ride that.





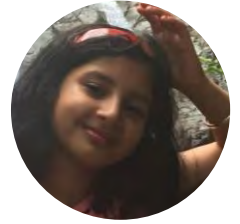
My dad, uncle and elder sister went for the zip-line while we enjoyed the other viewpoints there. There was a wobbly bridge and a river flowing underneath. Both Kotha and I held each other's hands tightly and crossed the bridge. It was great fun.

Then we went to the Panorama Chalet and took some breathtaking photographs near the swimming pool. The swimming pool is at a great height amidst the hills covered with clouds. Such beauty can rarely be seen. We had our lunch there and the food was yummy.

Before leaving, we went to Nelspruit Botanical Garden. That was also very beautiful. We took two baskets of litchis and lots of fruits. Next, we went to an amazing mango farm with hundreds of mango trees all around. My dad climbed onto a

mango tree. We collected the mangoes that fell on the ground.

It was the last night of our trip. We returned to the hotel feeling a bit sad, knowing that we had to leave the next day. That night I slept on the bunk bed with Kotha and had a long chat, not realizing when we both fell asleep. Morning was busy: packing luggage and getting ready to travel back to our respective homes. Our first adventure in Mpumalanga was amazing and will always remain a memorable one.



Anwasha Das





THE PAINTED LADIES BY THE EVENING: A SAN FRANCISCO LANDMARK



RivooBagchi
PHOTOGRAPHY

A VIEW OF HIGHWAY UNDERPASS AT LOS ANGELES BY MIDNIGHT



RivooBagchi
PHOTOGRAPHY



Rivoo Bagchi



CAN WE GET A VACCINE FOR CORONA VIRUS SOON?

If we want to know the answer, we need to know:

What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is a human made, preventive measure against a specific organism/germ. Having a vaccine, known as vaccination (though from production to introduction into a living entity should be the definition)

What is vaccination?

Vaccination is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases, before they come in to contact with them. Vaccine uses human body's natural defence system to build resistance to specific infections.

Most of the vaccines (available now) are injectable but they may also be given orally or as nasal spray. There are several types of vaccines:

1. Live-attenuated vaccines use a weakened form of the germ or the organism that causes a disease. Live vaccines protect from MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubela), small pox, chicken pox, yellow fever vaccines.
2. Inactivated vaccines use the killed germs that causes a disease. Such vaccines are Hep-A, Flu, Polio and Rabies vaccines.
3. Sub unit, recombinant, polysaccharide and conjugate vaccines : use specific pieces of germs like its protein, sugar, capsid (a casing around the germ). As these vaccines use only specific pieces of the germ, they give a very strong immune response to key parts of the germ. such vaccines may need booster shots to get ongoing protection against diseases. These vaccines protect

against Hep-B, HPV, Whooping cough, Pneumococcal disease.

4. Toxoid vaccines use toxin made by the germ that causes a disease. They create immunity to parts of the germ that causes a disease instead of the germ itself, i.e. the immune response is targeted to the toxin instead of the germ. These vaccines are used for Tetanus, Diphtheria

How a vaccine works?

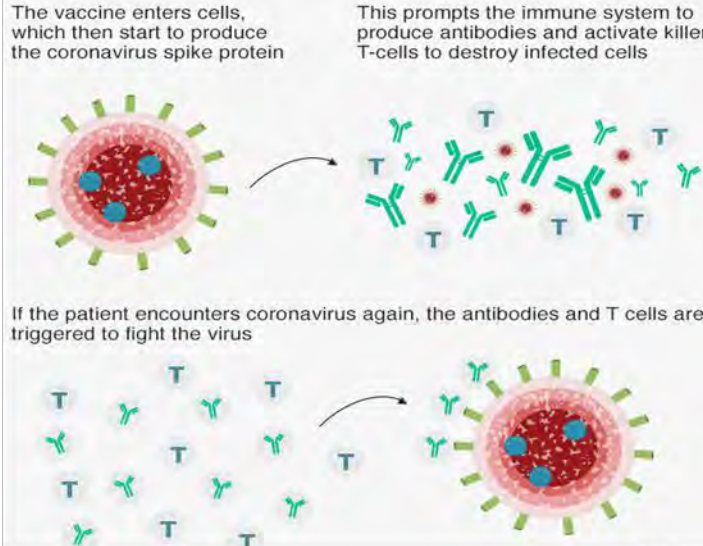
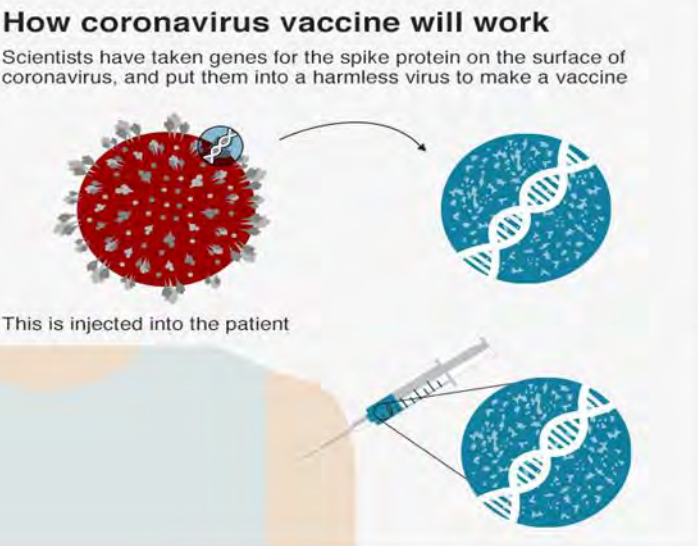
Scientists are still working to create new types of vaccines like:

- 1) DNA vaccines which are easy and inexpensive to make and they produce strong long-term immunity.
- 2) Recombinant vector vaccines (Platform-based vaccines act like a natural infection, especially good to teach our immune system how to fight germs)

Scientists now, designed genetic material, called mRNA to help our body to build immunity to certain viruses, including Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes Covid-19 (Corona Viral Disease-19).

In a nutshell Corona vaccines are mRNA vaccines;- SARS-CoV-2 mRNA vaccine. mRNA vaccines are made in the laboratories from biologically living cells (for example an egg). RNA vaccines are relatively quick and inexpensive to make and safer to use to control over the spread of infectious diseases, including Covid-19.

Vaccination is one of the major success stories of modern medicine. Vaccines reduce the incidence of infectious diseases





like measles and eradicate others such as small pox.

All the above discussions are to explain how we can prevent a disease by means of a human-made vaccine for example Corona Vaccine.

Regarding COVID-19, almost 200 corona vaccine-trials are going on worldwide. 38 of them are on their final trial. A vaccine production is a long process and not a guaranteed process.

From a virus to a vaccine, it is a long way where a virus, its antigen, antibody, RNA, mRNA, DNA all are proteins (sub microscopic), and protein is life. A vaccine is an antigen, (mRNA or a weak virus without any pathogenicity) given to a living body. Body will produce antibody in response to that particular antigen, using body's immune system. The antigen given is harmless and will not affect the body. Now antibodies made by that antigen will fight the real organisms (for example, corona).

The latest news about corona vaccine by Pfizer was that, they have finished their 3rd or final trial of Corona vaccine on 43000 people and found 90% success.

UK, UDA, Russia, Germany, China, South Africa all are trying for a vaccine for Corona. You may notice 90% success of corona vaccine, by Pfizer, that means 10% are still at risk. Pfizer's vaccine should be preserved at a temperature of -70 degree Celsius. It means from production to application to a vaccine candidate, the vaccine should be kept at a temperature of -70 degree Celsius.

Before marketing a vaccine, it should prove that it's 100% safe, broadly (if not 100%) effective, no remarkable side effects, easily available for human consumption. A vaccine, before getting approval for human or other animal consumption, it goes through different phases, which is time consuming.

Therefore, this is a time to live with CORONA and fight it out by changing our life styles:

- i. It is best to follow these precautions:
- ii. Wear a mask and wear it properly while outside,
- iii. Keep 3 feet/1 meter distance between persons,
- iv. Avoid mass gathering,
- v. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, before touching eyes, nose or mouth(eating),
- vi. Seek medical advice, if you feel sick,
- vii. Listen and follow the advices from your local government,
- viii. Practice cleanliness right through

Friends, Corona is a fact and hence accept it. Among 100 corona infected patients, 80% remain asymptomatic or display mild symptoms, 15% will need oxygen and 5% will need ventilation or ICU. Let's hope for the best and be ready to face challenges.



Dr. S. K. Saha.

References:

- i. American Medical Journal
- ii. British Medical Journal
- iii. South African Medical Journal
- iv. <https://www.vaccines.gov/basics/types>
- v. Coronavirus: First patients injected in UK vaccine trial By Fergus Walsh



হাঙ ঘাঙ

ভুড়ি ভোজ ছাড়া উৎসব পার্বণ অসম্পূর্ণ। পূজোর সময়ে রসনার তৃপ্তি, মনের ফুর্তি কে আরো বাড়িয়ে দায়। প্রতি বছর দশমী - ভোজের দিন BASA-য় "ঘাটি বনাম বাঙাল" নিয়ে মজাদার হেঁচৈ হয়েই থাকে। কিন্তু এইবার ছিল না তার অবকাশ।

কিন্তু এক সদস্য, রান্না-বান্নায় শামিল করলো "ঘাটি বনাম বাঙাল"। হ্যা, ঝাল ঝাল কাচকি মাছের পাতুরি আর চিংড়ি মাছের মালাইকারি, পাতে পড়লেই সব কলহের সমাপ্তি - কী বাঙাল বা কী ঘাটি দেশি ডাল-চিকেন এর জুটি আর বিদেশি রান্না নিয়ে ভোজের থালা সাজালেন আমাদের সদস্যরা।



কাচকি মাছের পাতুরি

ছোট মাছ খেতে ভালোবাসেন না এমন মানুষ কম আছেন। কাচকি মাছ আমাদের দেশের অন্যতম একটি পছন্দনীয় আইটেম। গরম ভাতের সাথে যদি লাউ পাতা দিয়ে কাচকি মাছের পাতুরি হয় সেটার স্বাদের তুলনা হবে না।

রান্নার উপকরণ যা যা লাগবে

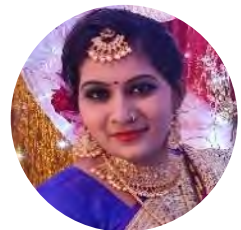
1. রান্নার উপকরণ যা যা লাগবে
2. কাচকি মাছ ২৫০ গ্রাম
3. লাউ পাতা ৫টি (বড়ো)
4. পেঁয়াজ ২টা
5. কাঁচা মরিচ ২টা
6. হলুদ গুঁড়ো ১/৪ চামচ
7. মরিচ গুঁড়ো ১/২ চামচ
8. লবণ পরিমাণমতো
9. সরিষার তেল ২ টেবিল চামচ
10. কাঁচামরিচ ফালি ৪ টি
11. ধনেপাতা কুচি ১ টেবিল চামচ



প্রস্তুত প্রণালী

কেচকি মাছ ভালো করে ধুয়ে জল ঝরাতে হবে। এবার একটি বাটিতে কাচকি মাছ নিয়ে একে একে পেঁয়াজ কুচি, গুঁড়ো মসলা, লবন, তেল, কাঁচা মরিচ কুচি, ও মরিচ ফালি, ধনেপাতা কুচি আর সরিষার তেল দিয়ে সব উপকরণ মিশিয়ে ১০ মিনিট রেখে দিতে হবে। তারপর লাউ পাতা গুলো ২/৩ মিনিট সিদ্ধ করে নিয়ে সেই পাতাগুলো বিছিয়ে কাচকি মাছের মিশ্রণটি ঢেলে ভালো করে মুরে সুতা দিয়ে আটকে নিতে হবে যাতে খুলে না যায় এবার

চুলায় কড়াই বসিয়ে সামান্য তেল দিয়ে মোড়ানো মিশ্রণ গুলো দিয়ে দিতে হবে। এবার আগুন কমিয়ে মাঝারি আঁচে ঢেকে রাখতে হবে। আবার একপাস হয়ে গেলে উল্টে আবার ঢেকে রাখতে হবে। দুইপাশ ভালো করে ভাজা হয়ে গেলে লাউ পাতা মোড়ানো খুলে পরিবেশন করতে হবে গরম গরম ভাতের সাথে...



শান্তা সাহা

চিংড়ি মাছের মালাইকারি

চিংড়ি মাছের মালাইকারি খেতে কার না ভালো লাগে। আমাদের খুব পছন্দের খাবার; আর আপনাদেরও নিশ্চয়ই। তাই আমি আপনাদের জন্য নিয়ে এসেছি চিংড়ি মাছের মালাইকারি রান্নার সহজ রেসিপি। চলুন জেনে নেওয়া যাক, কিভাবে রান্না করবেন চিংড়ি মাছের মালাইকারি।

রান্নার উপকরণ যা যা লাগবে

1. চিংড়ি মাছ – আধ কেজি
2. নারিকেলের ঘন দুধ – ১ কাপ
3. মরিচের গুঁড়া – ১ চা চামচ
4. পেঁয়াজ কুঁচি – দেড় কাপ
5. হলুদের গুঁড়া- আধা চা চামচ
6. আদা বাটা – ১ চা চামচ
7. এলাচ – ৩টি
8. দারুচিনি – ২ টুকরা
9. কাঁচামরিচ – ৭/৮ টি
10. লেবুর রস – ২ চা চামচ
11. তেল – পরিমাণমত
12. চিনি- ১ চা চামচ
13. ঘি - পরিমাণমতো
14. লবণ – স্বাদমত



প্রস্তুত প্রণালী

চিংড়ি মাছগুলো ভালো করে ধুয়ে তার মধ্যে লবণ ও হলুদ মাখিয়ে রাখুন ১ ঘন্টা। তারপর কড়াইয়ে পরিমাণমত তেল দিয়ে গরম করে নিন। তেল গরম হয়ে এলে তেজপাতা, দারুচিনি ও এলাচ দিন। এবার চিংড়ি মাছগুলো ভেজে তুলে নিন। ওই তেলেই দিয়ে দিন পেঁয়াজ কুচি, পেঁয়াজ গোল্ডেন হয়ে গেলে দিয়ে দিন বেটে রাখা পেঁয়াজ। পেঁয়াজ বাটা হালকা ভাজা হলে দিয়ে দিন আদা, হলুদ ও শুকনা মরিচের গুঁড়া। সমস্ত উপকরণগুলো ভালোভাবে মিশিয়ে নিন। মসলা কসে গেলে দিয়ে দিন লবন ও চিনি। মসলা ভালো করে

কসিয়ে নিন। মসলা ভালো করে কসে গেলে, ভেজে রাখা চিংড়ি মাছ দিয়ে দিন। এরপর নারিকেলের দুধ দিয়ে জ্বাল দিন। মাছের উপরে তেল উঠলে এবার কাঁচামরিচ ও ঘি দিয়ে দিন। ২ মিনিট পর নামিয়ে নিন।

তৈরি হয়ে গেলো দারুন স্বাদের চিংড়ি মাছের মালাইকারি। এবার গরম গরম পরিবেশন করুন ভাত বা পোলাওর সাথে।



শান্তা সাহা



PHAD THAI NOODLES

Ingredients

- Rice noodles or any flat noodles
- Broccoli florets
- Julienned carrots
- Julienned peppers
- Sliced baby corns
- Chopped spring onions
- Handful of beans sprouts
- 2 sprigs of fresh green coriander
- 1 tsp Chopped ginger
- 1 tsp Chopped garlic
- Pan fried Chicken/ Prawns(optional)
- 2 eggs scrambled(optional)
- Some crushed roasted peanuts(optional)



Sauce

- 1 to 1 1/2tbsp tamarind water
- 2tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp Chinese wine
- 2tbsp of sugar
- 1tsp chilli sauce
- white pepper powder
- 4 drops of fish sauce(optional)
- Mix all the above in a bowl and
- keep them aside



Method

Heat 3 tbsp of oil in a wok on high heat and add chopped ginger and chopped garlic until the oil is fragrant. Add the chopped whites of the spring onions along with all the veggies except for the beans sprouts and spring onion greens. Stir fry them on high heat for 2 minutes. Now add the sauce to the wok. Cook the veggies in the sauce for another minute and add the bean-sprouts. Give them a quick stir and then add the

noodles and the scrambled eggs with the pan-fried chicken/prawns. If you are a vegetarian, then you can skip the chicken/prawn and egg. Toss well to get them coated nicely and to absorb all the flavours from the sauce and the veggies. Switch off the flame and garnish with a sprinkle of spring onion greens. Serve with a lemon slice on the side and some sprinkle of roasted crushed peanuts.



Madhumita Sinha



DAL CHICKEN

Ingredients

FOR CHICKEN

- a. 2 tbsp ghee with 1 tbsp oil
- b. 1 inch cinnamon
- c. 2 small bay leaf
- d. 1 black cardamom's seeds
- e. 7-10 whole black peppercorns
- f. 1 large onion, sliced
- g. 2 medium chopped tomato
- h. Green chillies, slit (according to preference)
- i. 1 heaped tsp ginger garlic paste
- j. ½ kg chicken, on the bone
- k. Salt to taste
- l. 1 tsp red chilli powder
- m. ½ tsp turmeric powder
- n. 1 tsp coriander powder
- o. ¾ cup water
- p. Handful of chopped coriander
- q. 1 tsp garam masala

TO BOIL DAL

- a. 1 cup toor dal
- b. About 2-3 cups water to boil dal
- c. Salt to taste

TADKA

- a. 2 tbsp ghee
- b. 1 tsp jeera
- c. Handful of sliced onions
- d. 2 whole red chillies
- e. 1 tsp red chilli powder

Method

1. Boil the dal with water and salt until its soft, and keep aside
2. In a pan, add ghee and oil
3. As the oil heats up, add cinnamon, bay leaves, black cardamom and black peppercorns and toss for a minute
4. To this, add the sliced onions and fry till golden
5. When the onions are browned, add ginger-garlic paste and fry till the raw smell goes away
6. To this, add the pieces of chicken and fry the chicken on medium flame for about 10 minutes
7. Now, add tomatoes and cook for about 2-3 minutes or until the tomatoes turn soft
8. To this, add salt to taste and all the spices (red chilli powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder) and toss for a minute
9. Transfer this to a pressure cooker, add water and cook for about 2-3 whistles or until chicken is fully cooked
10. After the chicken is cooked, open the lid of the pressure cooker, add the previously cooked dal and green chillies and simmer this on medium flame for about 5-7 minutes
11. Add chopped coriander and garam masala, cook for a minute or two and turn of the flame
12. In a separate pan, heat ghee, add jeera, sliced onions, 2 whole red chillies and toss till the onions brown
13. When the onions have browned, add 1 tsp red chilli powder, mix this tadka well and pour over the cooked chicken
14. Serve with jeera rice!



Swastika Das



THE WINNING RECIPE

Hello everyone! Today I would like to share a recipe with you. But before that I would like to take you on a journey with me.

Many of you know that I went to Unity College. I loved going to school - it was so much fun. Along with English, Maths, Computers, Cookery....I loved my sports too. Playing soccer with my friends was fun. We used to even have inter school matches. And then finally in 2018, I finished my school and by then I had decided that I wanted to learn cooking and baking.

In Dec 2018, right after finishing school, I took up baking lessons privately with a Chef friend. I went there for 6 months and learnt a lot of baking. I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

In 2019, Capsicum Culinary Studio in Rosebank, came up with a special 6 month Rookie Chef course, which I attended. I

loved every class - we cooked and baked, and had a lot of fun doing so.

On the last day we had a final cookoff where we had to make Chicken & Mushroom Risotto. It was blind tasting by 4 of the teachers to pick the best one....and guess what! I won the cook off !!

I now take orders and bake from home under the name "Raunak Bakes" - with all cleanliness and Covid precautions.

My passion lies in baking and I would like to become the best Pastry Chef that I can be.

So now, let me share the recipe with you all.

CHICKEN & MUSHROOM RISOTTO

Method

1. Chop the onion and garlic finely.
2. Chop the mushrooms.
3. Cut the chicken into bite size thin slices.
4. Heat olive oil
5. Add the garlic.
6. Sweat the onions until softened and translucent.
7. Add the mushroom and soften them.
8. When all the water has evaporated and the chicken and mushroom are cooked, keep this aside.
9. Heat butter in a heavy gauge saucepan
10. Add the rice and mix thoroughly.
11. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until a toasted aroma rises.
12. Add chicken stock to just cover the rice.
13. Keep stirring and when the stock has reduced, add more stock.
14. Repeat this until the rice is just tender and most of the liquid is absorbed. *(Each time you add the stock, it should just cover the rice - do not pour all of the stock at once)*
15. Season with salt and pepper – *please keep in mind the stock and the parmesan cheese are salty*
16. Add dried mixed herbs and add the chicken and mushroom cooked earlier. Mix well.
17. Add grated parmesan cheese and mix well again.
18. The dish should be creamy
19. Optional - when you take it off the heat, you may add a bit of cream and give it a good stir (I always add this for a good creamy texture and extra taste)
20. Garnish with shavings of Parmesan and some basil leaves if you so wish.
21. Serve immediately!!

Ingredients

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Onion - 1 | f. Mushroom (button) - 1 pack |
| b. Butter - 50gm | g. Garlic - 2 pods |
| c. Olive Oil - 1 to 2 Tablespoons | h. Chicken stock - 1.4L |
| d. Arborio rice - 480gm | i. Salt & Pepper - to taste |
| e. Chicken breast piece - 1 | j. Dried mixed herbs |
| | k. Parmesan Cheese |



Raunak Paul

Hope you enjoy it!



উৎসবে সাজগোজ

PUJO FASHION ALBUM

বাতাসে পুজোর গন্ধ মানেই, মনে উৎসবের আমেজ | পরিবার, পরিজন, বন্ধু বান্ধব এক সঙ্গে
খুশির উৎসব |

এই বছর, না- হওয়া মিলন মেলার মালিন্য ভুলে, আনন্দকে সমবৃদ্ধ করতে BASA পরিবার
তাদের রঙিন ওয়ার্ডরোব কে তুলে ধরলো | ছোট থেকে বড়, সকলেই সামিল |

তাদের উজ্জ্বল সাজেই এবার আমাদের ফ্যামিলি ফ্যাশন অ্যালবাম |



পুজা মানে

শাড়ী



সাজুগুজু



গয়না



জাডা





স্নিগ্ধ চঞ্চলা অষ্টমী





লক্ষীছানাদের সাজুগুজু



লক্ষীছানাদের মাজুগুজু





জাশা সী জানন্দ



কপোত কপোতি





নীলাশ্বরী





বাহারি জামদানি ঢাকাই





ভাগ্যে শোষণ ছিল মায়ের কাছে





GREETINGS FROM EXCO

Dear Members,

Hope you all had a good festive season. Every year brings its own set of challenges and this year was no different other than the fact that the challenges were of different nature. Let us be appreciative that we have almost pulled through the year.

As the year draws to a close I would like to thank each and every one of you for staying together and being supportive.

As we inch towards the availability of a vaccine, let us pray and hope next year will be much more fun filled and we can

put the 'new normal' as a thing of the past and just have back the 'normal' of the past as we knew.

Best Wishes to all of you,



Suvra Sankar Paul

[on behalf of BASA Executive Committee, 2020]

BONDING



Kanya Mishra



SHUBHO BIJOYA-র PREETI ও SHUBHECCHA

GREETINGS FROM DURBAN

This has been a year of not having what we want but being grateful for what we have. And indeed, I have been extremely fortunate and filled with gratitude for being able to participate in the Durga Pujo festivities held in Johannesburg by the Bengali Association of South Africa (BASA, JNB). What a vibrant, multi-talented, dedicated, hard-working, fun loving group BASA is. For the last 3 years, Ahana and I have marked out the Durga Pujo dates in the calendar early in the year, taken leave and looked forward with fervent excitement as the countdown begins.

With suitcases loaded with new clothing, saris, accessories; the journey to Johannesburg brings about the same joyful exhilaration every daughter feels visiting her home during Pujo. The excitement of arriving at my friend's home in Johannesburg, where I am greeted with familial love and happiness one feels on seeing loved ones after a long time. And then the whirlwind begins - of adda till late in the night, laughter and reminiscence, consumption of mountains of delicious bengali delicacies, dressing up in all our finery, copious amounts of photos and selfies, phone calls to Ma, Mashis for their eagerness to see the daughters and granddaughters all dressed up, giggles and music floating from the girls' room in the early hours of the morning, the rushed drive to the Pujo venue with singing in the car (not caring about the bewildered looks of passing vehicles!).

The Pujo atmosphere is beautiful, as every detail, has been planned meticulously through the year and executed lovingly with great pride by the BASA members. We are welcomed as old friends and acquaintances and partake in all the Pujo

festivities. The atmosphere is charged with great reverence, energy, colour, vibrancy as the Pujo proceeds, interspersed with beautifully choreographed dance sequences, singing and music and spontaneous dhunuchi naach to the ever familiar beats of the dhak. Stunning artworks of BASA artists adorn the walls and people enjoy reading the special Pujo magazine, with kids excited to see their work in print. We meet old friends that we have not seen in a while and make new friendships. And of course, everyone enjoys the delicious lunches prepared at the premise under the guidance of the members, with love distributed in the form of extra mishtis being served and joyous roars of "bolo Durga Mai ki joi". The evenings are filled with beautiful compilations of a myriad of cultural programmes, with soulful music, magnificent costumes, stage décor and audio-visuals. The months of dedication and rehearsals are evident as all ages of BASA performers take to the stage. We are transported to our homeland as this is a rare occasion to see Bengali natok and dance dramas, on stage, in this country.

The sights, sounds and smells of the Pujo has the power to bridge the vast divide that lies between this Pujo bari in southern part of Africa and our homes in India, as we feel instantly connected with the millions that are celebrating this occasion. I am forever grateful to BASA for this opportunity to create precious memories not just for me but more importantly for my daughter. We wish all BASA members Subho Bijoyar preeti o shubheccha and wish them health and happiness always.



Madhupa Mukherjee
Friend of Annapurna Hazra




মশালসা মিলন



BASA'S FIRST ONLINE GENERAL BODY MEETING

Tushar Das is presenting



WELCOME
BENGALI ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTH AFRICA
GENERAL BODY MEETING
6th September, 2020

Guidelines:

- 1) Please keep your video OFF
- 2) Please MUTE your speaker
- 3) Please UNMUTE when you take part in a discussion.

Meeting details

People (30)

- Arnob Chattopadhyay (You)
- Anil Kumar Sur
- Annapurna Hazra
- Arunabha Das
- Ayan Bagchi
- Ayan Chatterjee
- Biswajit Sikdar
- Chayan Bhattacharyay
- Gourish Chakravorty
- Hemantika chatterjee
- Joyant Biswas
- Kanya Mishra
- Kausik Mahalanabish
- Madhumita Sinha



মহাশক্তি



ফলাসৌ ম্নান





মহাসম্বলী পূজা



মহাশ্ৰমী পূজা



মহানবনী পূজা





দশমীর পূজা





শ্রী শ্রী লক্ষ্মী পূজা

শ্রী শ্রী কালী পূজা



শারদীয়া

০১০১
Ramdhanu

১৪২৭



এই দেখ পেনসিল, নোটিবুক এ-হাতে,
এই দেখ ভরা সব ফিল্‌ফিল্‌ লেখাতে ।
ভালো কথা শুনি মেই চট্‌চট্‌ লিখি তাম-
ফড়িঙের কটা ঠ্যাং, তারশুলা কি কি খায় ,
আঙুলেতে আটা দিলে কেন লাগে চট্‌চট্‌,
কাতুকুতু দিলে গল্প কেন করে ছট্‌ফট্‌ ।
দেখে শিখে প'ড়ে শুনে ব'সে মাথা মামিয়ে
নিজে নিজে আগাগোড়া লিখে গেছি আমি এ ।
কান করে ফট্‌ ফট্‌ ফোড়া করে টনটন-
ওরে রান্না ছুটে তায়, নিয়ে তায় লঠন ।
কাল থেকে মনে জোর লেগে আছে খট্‌খা,
মোলাগুড় কিসে দেয় ? সাবান না পট্‌খা ?
এই বেলা প্রশ্নটা লিখে রাখি গুছিয়ে,
জবাবটা জেনে নেব মেজদাফে খুঁচিয়ে ।
পেট কেন কান্‌ড়ায় বল দেখি পার কে ?
বল দেখি ঝাঁজ কেন জোয়ানের আরফে ?
তেজপাতে তেজ কেন ? ঝাল কেন লঙ্গায় ?
নাক কেন ডাফে তার পিলে কেন চমকায় ?
কান নাম দুন্দুডি ? কান নাম অরণি ?
বল্‌বে কি, তোমরা তো রামধনু পড়নি ।



DISCLAIMER

Bengali Association of South Africa is a Non-Profit Organization registered in South Africa. The moto of the organization is to encourage the adoption and continuity of Indian culture in general, particularly Bengali language and culture. As part of our endeavour to encourage the adoption of Indian Language and Culture, the organization publishes this e-magazine named Ramdhanu. Bengali Association of South Africa, ensures that due care is taken to publish the content accurately. The opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints expressed by the contributors in this e-magazine does not reflect the views of the editors of this magazine and the organization. All content is the sole responsibility of the respective contributor and through the act of contributing, the contributor has absolved the organization of all responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content and for any loss or damage of any kind caused by the publication of this e-magazine. This magazine is free for distribution amongst the members, sponsors, supporters and well-wishers of the organization and is available for public viewing.