

Celebrating

glorious years of togetherness

Moscow Durga Puja

2014



aaratika



*CORAL-MED wishes the Indian Community
a very happy Durga Puja and Dushera*

*Congratulations
to the Moscow Durga Puja Committee for successful 25 years*



КОРАЛ-МЕД
CORAL-MED

The Journey So Far...



Debasmita Moulick Nair

It is with pride and nostalgia that we set forth towards celebrating the silver anniversary of Moscow Durga Puja – it feels remarkable, to say the least. It is indeed paradoxical that our Puja began during one of the most troubled times – a year before the August Putsch or Coup of 1991 and the Constitutional Crisis of 1993. It was the times when procuring some basic grocery was difficult, and the hope to receive permission to carry out a religious festival indeed very optimistic. It is the remarkable synergy of the entire spectrum of the Indian community that made it possible - Ramakrishna Mission, Indian Embassy, business community, students, friends from neighbouring countries especially Bangladesh and our Russian well wishers. The euphoria of the very first Puja was unique. Only on Dashami, after the *Visarjan* we realized what a feat we had accomplished! And then there was no looking back. There is joke common among us that McDonald's and Durga Puja began in the same year in Russia and we both thrive today! Puja continued to be organized each and every year despite the roller coaster rides which Russia went through in the wild nineties. Even in 1998, the year of Ruble Crisis, or commonly known as the Russian Flu we managed to continue.

The new millennium which marked our 10th anniversary brought relative stability and we could breathe little easy, but not for long. The global crisis of 2008 hit Russia too and raising funds was a challenge. We persevered and Maa Durga continued to visit us every year. In 2001 our website was launched and in 2012 for the first time we invited a cultural group—Chandalika was staged in Hindi by the Mitrayan group from Kolkata.

From a humble beginning with few participants, our Puja has grown to include more and more people, not only from the Indian community but also our Russian brethren, South East

*"The moment you doubt whether you can fly,
you cease for ever to be able to do it."*

— J.M. Barrie, Peter Pan

Asians, and people from other countries. Our annual event has evolved into a platform where the Indian community gathers to participate in socio-cultural events, using this opportunity to bond with our Russian friends who participate with equal enthusiasm to showcase our rich cultural tradition. Our event offers a unique opportunity to learn about our legacy and traditions; wherein we not only raise cultural awareness but also foster greater understanding of other peoples' way of life. Our Puja celebrations are also a cultural footnote to bridge the gap between home and Russia, especially for our children and youth who receive a rich platform to create memories and live the Indian life, albeit for a few days. This is a festival, which takes us back to our roots even after years of being in foreign land, and it helps us grow roots in foreign land too.

Silver Jubilee is all about reminiscing about our milestones and growth, and the time to thank everybody who made the fun filled yet arduous journey possible. So in this special anniversary issue, we bring you a retrospective of our evolution over the quarter of a century. We connect with our old members who share their warmth in 'Nostalgia Revisited'. This section contains precious memories preserved through old photos. The Bengali section also carries some memories from our long time members. In the Hindi section we pay tribute to Padma Shri and Pushkin medal awardee Dr. Madan Lal Madhu who has translated more than 100 works of Russian literature into Hindi. 'The Driving Force' narrates our activities - the new idol of Maa Durga which has been brought from Kumortuli especially for our silver anniversary and the annual food contest Anandamela 2014, which was organized with great verve and vigor. 'Journey of Aaratrika' is the story of our growth, fondly remembering all those who have played a role in the past.

Two other developments are also worth mentioning. At the cultural front, this year on Astami, children with hearing impairment will join us for a scintillating concert from the Kirovsky Orphan School of Kaluzskaya region. In the area of sports, we have launched a sports trophy (Best Sports Student) at the Kendriya Vidyalaya, in memory of sports journalist, Late Sri Hitangshu Kumar Dasgupta, who was also the Vice President of our Committee since its inception.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our founder members, old members, sponsors who nurtured our annual project and to all those who attended, participated and generously donated to help make the event a memorable one for everybody, year after year. The success of our Puja celebrations would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, unflagging hard work and dedication of everyone involved, especially the members of our Puja Committee. We would like to express our thanks to all the dedicated volunteers, our well-wishers and anonymous supporters. Thank you for your incredible effort and the precious partnership.

Where do we go from here? Only further to reach more memorable milestones – ones that make the Puja a melting point of ideas, individuals, where no one remains a stranger.

So cheers to our 25th birthday! And to all of our readers, we look forward to celebrating with you.



Joy Dasgupta

Greetings from the President of Moscow Durga Puja Committee

***"O GODDESS, REMOVER OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE WORLD, BE PLEASED WITH US.
YOU ARE THE GODDESS WHO IS WORSHIPPED BY HABITANTS OF THE THREE WORLDS,
BE GRACIOUS AND OFFER BOONS TO THE PEOPLE WHO BOW DOWN TO YOUR FEET."***

SRI SRI CHANDI 11/35



With great joy in mind, warmth in heart and with a satisfaction of success we celebrate the 25th year of our festival connected with the worship of Goddess Durga, the Divine Mother of the universe. On this auspicious occasion I congratulate the members

of the Moscow Durga Puja Committee, and I also congratulate the participants, who all these years have encouraged and made the celebrations joyful by their elating presence. Many of our old members who had earnestly worked in the previous years are now staying in distant parts of the world; we gratefully remember them on this occasion. Some of them have already passed away, we pray for them: may their souls be in peace by the grace of the Divine Mother.

In our daily lives we are all heavily burdened with different responsibilities and we pass our time in the joys and sorrows of the world. On the auspicious occasion of the Pujas, we forget these things and transport ourselves into a higher sphere of life. We readily offer our time, money and energy to bring a joyful, holy atmosphere where we can share pristine joy with all, as if with one mind, one soul, one identity- no matter who we are- Indians, Russians, Bangladeshis or others.

From ancient times Indians came to the conclusion that there is a Supreme Reality from whom this universe appears, and we are to go back to that original Source, the Existence, Consciousness and Bliss Absolute. There is no other way to transcend our petty limitations and attain the perpetual bliss. All religions though different, are the valid ways to reach that state. Major religions of the world have three parts to follow. First, the philosophy of religion, which presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal and the means of reaching it. The second part is mythology which is philosophy made concrete. It consists of legends relating the lives of men, or of supernatural beings or so forth. The third part is its rituals. Naturally, religions differ from each another in all these three parts which does not really matter much. We are one in search of this Supreme Reality- who may be called God, Brahman or Shakti. We are to make some relation with the Absolute in whatever way it suits us. So, this is the occasion when we accept God in the form of Divine Mother and continue to celebrate this occasion every year. We should know that rituals in every religion are very important to the common people whose mind, senses and body are always occupied with external activities. Through the rituals of Puja we can divert them toward Divine level which is easier to us.

Our prayer to Divine Mother is- May all be happy, may all be free from disease, may all see good in the world and none be an object of suffering.

Swami Jyotirupananda

Founder of Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in Moscow in 1993

Sri Sri Durga Mahapuja Schedule 2014

Mahashashti
30th September
Tuesday

Puja starts at 18:00

Mahashaptami
1st October
Wednesday

Puja starts at 9:20
Pushpanjali at 11:30
Bhog & Arati at 11:50
Evening Arati 18:00

Mahaastami
2nd October
Thursday

Puja starts at 9:00
Pushpanjali at 11:00
Bhog & Arati at 11:10
Sandhi puja from 11:44 to 12:32
Evening Arati at 17:30

**Mahanavami
and Dashami**
3rd October
Friday

Puja starts at 9:00
Pushpanjali at 11:00
Bhog & Arati at 11:50
Evening Arati at 18:30

Dashami Puja Starts
Immersion
Shanti Jal
Sindur Khela

Sri Sri Lakshmipuja
7th October
Tuesday

Puja starts at 19:00



ব্রাত্য বসু
Bratya Basu



মন্ত্রী
পৰ্যটন বিভাগ, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার

১নং, কিরণ শঙ্কর রায় রোড, কলকাতা -১.

নব মহাকরণ ভবন, ৪র্থ তল

ফোন : ০৩৩ ২২১৪ ৫৭৮৯ ফ্যাক্স : ০৩৩-২২১৪ ৩৩৫৭

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MESSAGE

I am glad to learn that some Indians in Moscow gathered twenty five years ago to organize Durga Puja festival in autumn to bring a flavour of Durga Puja at home away from home for them. Aaratrika, Moscow's annual Indian festive magazine was come into being which has been published and funded by Moscow's Indian community.

The Indian community in Moscow will celebrate Durga Puja festival from 30th September to 3rd October in this year.

I convey my best wishes to all concerned and wish grand success to Durga Puja and their magazine Aaratrika.

Bratya Basu
(BRATYA BASU)

Dated: The 17th September, 2014.

To
Debasmita Moulick
Editor
Aaratrika



His Excellency P.S. Raghavan, Ambassador of India to Russia



in Dublin in close proximity to Yeats. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations provided the bust and Dublin City Council (as well as the Irish government) supported its installation. The bust was unveiled in a glittering function in the autumn of 2011. Sadly, I had left Dublin by then.

What is your message to the readers of Aaratrika for the Silver Jubilee?

India is a country of festivals, which are symbols of India's diverse culture. Durga Puja - the ceremonial worship of the mother goddess, is one of the most important festivals of India. Apart from being a religious festival for the Hindus, it is also an occasion for reunion and rejuvenation, and a celebration of traditional culture and customs. It is now celebrated all over India and abroad across religions. The Durga Puja Committee has kept up this unique tradition in Moscow by celebrating Durga Puja every year over the last 25 years. On this auspicious occasion, I congratulate the organizers, participants and all Indians in Russia.

Please share your experience of Durga Puja outside India. Any particular one that you especially remember?

It has been a remarkable experience to see Durga Puja celebrated with much enthusiasm in so many countries around the world, even where the Indian population is not so large. My most-everlasting memory is of a Durga Puja celebration in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam over 20 years ago where a small Indian community drew in the participation of the local Vietnamese community and created a vibrant Indian cultural evening.

Aaratrika is a Durga Puja publication where we recollect classics, pay tribute to literary geniuses and encourage new talents. Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali polymath is often a topic of discussion. In this connection, we would like to ask you about the statue of Tagore in Dublin where you were instrumental in organizing it.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore has a special recognition in Ireland as a litterateur whom the Irish poet W. B. Yeats admired and promoted on the western literary stage. It is gratifying that Tagore's statue now stands in a prestigious central park

These are a few of my favourite things...

Favourite author:

The last book read:

Inspiration:

Favourite sport:

Favourite holiday spot:

Best part of my job:

Favourite festival:

P.G. Wodehouse

Focus, by Daniel Goleman

Causes, more than people and different traits in different people

Cricket (what else do you expect from an Indian?)

Bengaluru

Exposure to many new cultures

All festivals celebrating the triumph of good over evil



Statue of Tagore at St. Stephen's Green Park, Dublin



Independence Day 2014



Tagore's 153rd Birth Anniversary



H.E. with wife Mrs. Barbara Raghavan



Her Excellency Irina K. Bashkirova, Consul General of Russia in India



ГЕНЕРАЛЬНОЕ КОНСУЛЬСТВО
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
В КАЛЬКУТТЕ

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN KOLKATA

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To: the Indian community in Russia,
Moscow Durga Puja Committee,
all Aaratrika readers

Dear friends, subha Bijaya!

I would like to first of all thank you all for bringing the exquisite treat of Durga Puja to Moscow. I know for sure that the festival is popular not only with Indians, especially Bengalis, but also among the numerous Russians fond of Indian culture.

I myself enjoy the celebrations at its heart in the city of Kolkata. For two consecutive years having been posted here as Consul General I made sure to spend Durga Puja pandal hopping together with my friends and colleagues. Frankly speaking, Kolkatans succeeded in virtually impossible task of making this Indian holiday so vibrant and colorful. The sort of spirit one gets circling the magnificent structures that magically grow throughout the city along with millions of other spectators is unique and truly unforgettable.

Family Pujas of a more chamber, intimate kind are probably the brightest examples of real Indian hospitality and Bengali cordiality, whilst the feasts sparkle with the delicacies of traditional local cuisine.

Durga Puja, thanks to your effort has become another cultural bridge between our countries and our nations.

Sincerely yours in Kolkata,

Irina K. Bashkirova
Consul General

His Excellency Dr. S.M. Saiful Hoque, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Russia



As a founder member of Moscow Durga Puja, what are some of your earliest memories?

Ki adbhut sundor onubhuti, epar bangla opar bangle ek hoye, onek katkhor puriye amra shei prothom puja ayojon korechilam, shobai mile khub anonde shei puja ketechilo (I have amazing warm memories of a time when both our countries united, working together and overcoming various

hurdles to organize our very first Durga Puja). We went through the tedious process of wading through Russian official procedure, seeking permission, educating the authorities on the significance of our festival, dealing with logistics and the list goes on. Indeed the Ramakrishna Mission and the Indian Embassy were instrumental in organizing that puja.

I attended all the pujas until I left Russia in 1996. In 2009, when I began my tenure as Ambassador in Moscow once again, I was delighted to reconnect with the puja. The most fascinating element of the puja here is that it unites such a diverse group of people. Devotees come from different cultural back grounds, speaking different languages but with one common mission. And although the puja is religious in essence, the festivities certainly exceed that and become a social event. Regardless of race or religion, everyone is welcome to the puja hall - to partake in the

morning *Pushpanjalis* and the evening cultural shows. This is a wonderful way to showcase our culture and share our tradition with our Russian friends.

What is your message to the readers of Aaratrika, on this milestone location?

I am very proud to say that after initiating the celebration of Durga Puja in Moscow 25 years ago it not only continues to thrive but has grown in size and splendour many fold. Having reached this momentous year, it is important to look back and realize the feats achieved. This is also the time to set future goals and aspirations. I wish that the zeal of the silver jubilee encourages you to multiply the success achieved so far. Let the spirit of friendly camaraderie together with the invaluable contribution from our Russian colleagues and friends lead the puja celebrations to further heights as we share our cultural heritage.

May the festivities of Durga Puja bring happiness in your lives and inspire new beginnings based on understanding and compassion for all humanity.

These are a few of my favourite things...

Favourite author: Rabindranath Tagore

Last book read: India after Gandhi by Ramchandra Guha

Inspiration: My parents

Favourite sport: Football

Favourite holiday spot: Hill stations of Himachal Pradesh in India

Best part of work: Interacting with interesting people from diverse background

Favourite festival: All festivals that foster the spirit of unity, togetherness and joy

Her Excellency Indira Savitree Thacoor-Sidaya, Ambassador of Mauritius to Russia



I am deeply honoured to contribute to Aaratrika by sharing the experience on the celebration of Durga Puja in Mauritius. This is one of the aspects of the Mauritian multicultural environment where different traditions coexist in peace and harmony. Mauritius represents a crossroad of cultures, languages and religions brought from different continents. This multicultural landscape contributes to the beauty

and uniqueness of the island.

In this backdrop, like other religious festivals, Durga Puja is celebrated with faith and fervor in all temples in the presence of a wide gathering of people. It is equally celebrated in households with a lot of spiritual devotion among close relatives, neighbours and friends. The celebration may be more elaborate in the larger ashrams and associations with a wider audience. Shop windows display clothing of red color, temples are nicely decorated and appropriate arrangements are made for people to attend the prayers.

The most inspiring part about this festival and most other Hindu festivals celebrated in Mauritius is how we have adapted them according to our own Mauritian culture and how people from different origins have blended in to form our own special way of cel-

ebrating them. Vibrant music and musky scent all around entices one to learn about, understand and eventually participate in this festival. Durga Puja is a time where people take out the time to be with family, to share a strong emotion of belief, faith and devotion. It is a time where the culture is passed on to new generations who add their own touch to this festival enhancing its beauty and significance. The most memorable part of Durga Puja is always the *Visarjan* where the vibration of devotees coming together to bid farewell to Goddess Durga moves everyone to tears. Nevertheless, paying attention to the mantras and devotional songs always bring back a smile and a feeling of hope for another spiritually and culturally enriching Durga Puja the following year.

Being away from my own land during Durga Puja was a tough experience till I understood that my paradise island is only a microcosm of the world and that being away from my motherland does not take away from my Durga Puja experience but rather enriches it.

I take this opportunity to convey my very best wishes to all the readers of Aaratrika for a pious celebration of the festival.

These are a few of my favourite things...

Favourite author: Rabindranath Tagore

Last book read: Bhagavad Gita (last book read every night)

Inspiration: Nelson Mandela

Favourite sport: Swimming

Favourite holiday spot: Kashmir

Best part of work: Fighting for a good cause

Favourite festival: Deepavali

His Excellency Dr. Ravi Mohan Sapkota Kopila, Ambassador of Nepal to Russia



Dashain or Dussera is widely celebrated in Nepal. Please tell us how you celebrate the festival back home and in Moscow?

I would like to congratulate Aaratrika for reaching its 25th year of publication. In this special year, I am very pleased to share my experience on Durga Puja known as Dashain in Nepal.

Nepal has large number of Hindu followers and

Durga or Bhagawati, a deity of Hindu is worshipped throughout the country. Nepalese festivals are based on the Hindu calendar.

During the months of Aswin and Kartik (late September-early October), we celebrate the biggest festival of the year, Dashain (Dassera). The 15 days of celebration occurs during Aswin Suklapaksha at the start of new moon and ending at full moon. Goddess Durga, in all her manifestations, is worshiped with innumerable pujas and animal sacrifices. Indeed each day of Dashain sees a different celebration with the last day called Vijaya Dashami being the most important day of all. On this day we receive red TIKA and JAMARA (small yellow plants grown of wheat, barley and maize) from our elders. It is celebrated with much enthusiasm and gusto. Homes are cleaned and decorated and the markets are overcrowded with people seeking gifts of clothing. Sweets for offering to the Gods are made. Animals are singled out for slaughter. Offices and schools are closed for sometimes up to a month. As a child, Dashain meant new clothes for me. Readymade clothes at that time were not

easily available. Hence, along with my friends I used to stand in a long queue at the tailor's workshop for hours without worrying of hunger.

Getting clothes stitched from the tailor was a matter of great excitement! I have been fortunate to have witnessed the last two pujas in Moscow. More than 400 Nepalese residing in Moscow come to receive Tika from my wife and me. The embassy organizes a feast of Nepalese delicacies. I even invite my Russian friends to share a meal with us.

Do you have any message for the readers of Aaratrika on the 25th year of Durga Puja in Moscow?

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Aaratrika for celebrating its silver jubilee and for promoting arts and cultures of South Asian Countries in Russia. I congratulate its whole team for successfully steering it towards the 25th Anniversary. I wish Aaratrika the best for the future and am confident that it will enjoy a bright future of continued growth and success. There is no doubt, Aaratrika will keep readers informed, engaged and entertained with exclusive articles on literature, culture and various other topics.

These are a few of my favourite things...

Favourite author: Maxim Gorky

Last book read: Sakas by Jagadish Ghimire – in Nepali

Inspiration: My mother

Favourite Sport: Football and Badminton

Favourite holiday spot: Pokhara in Nepal, northern hill stations of India

Best part of the job: Promotion of the Tourism in Nepal

Favourite festival: Durgapuja and Deepavali

His Excellency Udayanga Weerathunga, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Russia



Durga Puja denotes the beginning of a long festive season. Can you share with us your thoughts on any of the festivals?

Ayubowan! (May you live long!)

Diwali, the festival of light remains very close to the people of Sri Lanka and it brings together different ethnicities living in the country. Diwali is an ancient Hindu festival celebrated in autumn

every year. Mostly celebrated in India and Sri Lanka, Diwali is quite an important event for Sri Lankans since thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils join Tamils all around the world to celebrate it with the same purpose. This is an event where the members of the entire family would get together and perform different traditional activities.

Diwali or Deepavali sees many rituals being observed and small lamps are lit to banish all shadows from one's house and life. Thus the name, 'Festival of Lights'. This festival has a sublime significance, for it symbolizes the victory of good forces over evil forces. The lamps are symbolic of this celebration and generate hope for a bright and prosperous future. Numerous activities during the festival include illumination, creating enamel toys and making of figures out of crystal sugar popularly known as 'Misiri'. The sugar crystals take the place of sweets.

Burning of fire crackers in the evening of the festival day is a common practice of this festival. Other celebrations include

many of the traditional aspects of Diwali such as games, fireworks, singing and dancing.

Diwali is held for five days and on the last day the sisters invite their brothers to their homes and light fire crackers to celebrate the festival's ending. During Diwali, especially at night, the outline of Sri Lanka glows with lines of bright lights that almost seem as the veins that are connected to a heart. The festival is a truly a fascinating one and is firmly etched in the Sri Lankan society.

Would you want to share any message with the readers of Aaratrika?

It is a honour and a privilege to send my greetings on the occasion of 25th Durga Puja celebrations in Moscow.

I also take this opportunity to extend my warmest wishes and greetings to both readers of this magazine and the organizers of the event for their untiring efforts in continuing this event for last 25 years.

These are a few of my favourite things...

Favourite author: Arthur C. Clarke

Last book read: Dolphin Island

Inspiration: H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka

Favourite sport: Cricket

Favourite holiday spot: Benthota in Western province of Sri Lanka

Best part of work: Meeting and interacting with globally important persons

Favourite festival: Sinhala and Tamil new year festival in Sri Lanka

Passage to India

My dear Indian friends.

On this joyous occasion, I take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy and auspicious Durga Puja. The Durga Puja Committee is leaving no stone unturned in creating a brilliant festival every year. The message of Durga Puja is universal – love of family and community. In India people during Durga puja usually travel home to celebrate the festival. But you all are celebrating Durga puja in Moscow. I feel so happy that you consider Moscow your home and proud that you have accepted me and my students as members of your family.

In 2005, we attended the festivities for the first time, it was indeed a memorable experience.

Amar Priyo Bangla Bhasha



Since then we have regularly participated in this wonderful festival. My students have recited poems, sang songs, danced in the cultural events and written articles for Aaratrika. I shall remain eternally grateful to you for accepting my students with open arms. This boosted their confidence and encouraged them to continue learning one of the most amazing languages – *amar priyo bangla bhasha* (my favourite Bengali language).

Dr. Irina Prokofieva,
Professor, Department of Indo-Iranian & African
languages of Moscow State Institute of International
Relations. Specialization - Bengali language

A Love Affair with India

My love affair with this elusive land began when as a child when I was gifted a book on Indian history by my father. Once I graduated, I went to Delhi University as part of an exchange programme by the Russian-Indian Cultural Centre. I enjoyed my sojourn in India thoroughly – its people, culture, food, festivals. *"Bharat mein mehemannawazi ka koi jawab nehi. Waha meheman ko itna khilate hain ki do din tak who khane ki taraf dekhe bhi nehi"*. (Hospitality of Indians is incomparable. You feed your guests so



much that one does even want to see more food for next two days.) And the gorgeous colours of Holi makes it my favorite festival!

I regret not having participated in any Durga Puja ever. I wish you lots of happiness and success for your silver jubilee celebrations and hope to join you sometime soon!

Dr. Eugenia Vanina,
Professor of History, Moscow State University

Looking Back to Look Forward

Dear Readers of Aaratrika!

The 25th anniversary of Durga Puja in Moscow brings to my memory the year 1990, when this Indian festival was first celebrated in Moscow. For Indians, Durga Puja symbolizes the victory of the Goddess over the evil buffalo demon Mahishashur, the victory of Good over Evil. The days of Durga Puja are the time for joy and fun. In 1990, in this country, there was little fun, but a lot of hope. In 1989 the infamous Berlin Wall had been demolished, and many people hoped that the forces of Good would soon finally triumph over the forces of Evil. So, I think, it was not by chance that Durga Puja celebrations started in Moscow in 1990.

During the following 25 years our hopes went up and down. Fun was also there, but often with a bitter taste. The year 2014 is the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I,



which brought about the collapse of the Russian Empire and the ensuing seven decades of terror, absurdity and various calamities (mostly man-made) in the country, which by now has been partitioned into many countries. By an irony of history, the year 2014 has also witnessed international tensions which looked very much like those ones which triggered the "Great War" of 1914–1918.

So, celebrating the victory of Durga over Mahishasura this year, let us hope that, in spite of all, human solidarity and good will shall overwhelm the forces of Evil and the ideal Trinity/Trimurti of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty (in Latin: Veritas, Bonitas, Pulchritudo; in Sanskrit: Satyam, Śivam, Sundaram) shall indeed prevail everywhere.

Dr. Sergei D. Serebriany, Lecturer at the Russian
State University for the Humanities (RGGU)



Sketches by Andrei Dasgupta Garzon

Festive Greetings from the Bangash Family

Music has been a part of me from as early as I can remember. I cannot remember a particular day when I was initiated into the world of music. Indeed, I cannot think of a moment when music has been separated from my life.

For my father Haafiz Ali Khan, there was no question of a life outside music. Life itself was music and music was Life. And so I came to inherit from him the legacy of five generations of musicians as naturally as a bird taking to the air.

Today we have cell phones, Ipods, so many gadgets. But nobody could create a thirteenth note. These twelve musical notes are the base of every kind of music in the world. In fact music connects the whole world. We, the musicians of the world are like one big family.

When I hear about so much of violence and atrocities across the globe today, as a musician and as an artiste, I often think what is the contribution of education in this world? We are still struggling on account of power, wealth, religion. We need kind and compassionate people in the world and I see classical music as a means to nurture such feelings.

There are brilliant young musicians in the generation of Amaan and Ayaan. So I am not at all worried about the next generation. By the grace of God they can face the world very brilliantly and make it a better place to live in.

It is wonderful to note that Moscow Durga Puja Committee will be celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Over last ten years I have stayed in touch with you during this auspicious period of Durga Puja through Aaratrika. Wishing you peace and harmony and my heartiest congratulations on this very special occasion.

Musically yours
Ustad Amjad Ali Khan



Like cosmic divinity, music knows few barriers or boundaries. Fusion music, a rage among the current generation of music lovers, which sees the world as a global village. Every collaboration has a vision and a concept. It is not about just playing alongside each other but more importantly, the music should be like a bouquet of flowers - complimenting one another and only adding to the beauty!

Celebrating Indian festivals in foreign soil is yet another fusion with a similar goal. I wish you years of happiness and togetherness.

Amaan Ali Khan

Music is life in our family. From the time we were born the language spoken was music, the air that we breathe, was music. Though our father has been a very strict traditionalist, he has always believed in adapting to change. In all honesty, Indi-

an classical music has no rules about how it should be presented or executed. It is very individualistic. Over the years we have tried our best to make the Sarod reach out to a new audience, to listeners that perhaps would not be at a classical concert!

It has been a pleasure for us to present our music to a very revered audience in Russia. It is indeed wonderful to connect to all of you in Moscow annually during Puja. And I fondly remember sketching the cover of Aaratrika in 2007. Wishing you a very successful silver jubilee celebration.

Ayaan Ali Khan

Sharadiya Greetings from a Sarangi Exponent Ustad Kamal Sabri

Kamal Sabri is the son of Sarangi legend Ustad Sabri Khan and the seventh generation of a distinguished family of traditional musicians. He was initiated into the legacy of the Senia Gharana (school) of Rampur, Moradabad music at the tender age of five by his father.

On the 21st of July, 2014 the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC) organized an evening of Indian classical music with Ustad Kamal Sabri. His brother, the renowned singer Gulfam Sabri who is a teacher with JNCC, accompanied him on the tabla.

In India, Kamal Sabri is often heard at the most prestigious music festivals. His music has also created waves in many countries. Rave reviews of his performance continue. His musical brilliance and talent has made him very popular among

vocalists too for duet performances. It was a sheer pleasure to listen to his rendition in Moscow.

Ustad Kamal Sabri spoke to Aaratrika after the concert.

He said that it was a privilege to perform in Moscow. He had a special message to the Indian children in Moscow – "Cultivate love for music by playing any instrument of your own choice – can be sitar, sarangi, drums, flute - because music is very powerful and helps connect to God. Music is in itself a universal language. Also, do not forget your roots".

He said, "Festivals are an ideal time to celebrate with music and I am very pleasantly surprised to know that you will be celebrating the silver jubilee of Durga Puja this year!"

He looks forward to visit Moscow again and so do we.



Tatiana Metaxa
First Deputy Director, State Museum of Oriental Arts, Moscow



Dear members of the Moscow Durga Puja Committee and readers of Aaratrika!

Congratulations on the 25th anniversary celebrations of Durga Puja in Moscow! I am very pleased that this ancient Hindu festival is being celebrated in Russia every year, along with the release of the wonderful annual magazine Aaratrika. This helps our peoples know each other better and for the Russians this is an amazing opportunity to come into contact with the ancient traditions of India.

Srijato Bandopadhyay



One of the most inspirational young poet from West Bengal. He received the Ananda Puroskar for his book *Udanta Sawb Joker: 'All Those Flying Jokers'*. His honest and powerful poetic style earned him great popularity. He sends his greetings from Kolkata through a translation of his poem from his book 'The Story of Katiusha' published in 2006.

Rendezvous with machines

(From "The parables of Katiusha --- an urban hymn")

**How mansions are broken down by smug bulldozers,
 How electric saws bloodlessly slay open the throats of old...old trees,
 How the ego of lofty highlands are broken
 and smoothed into faceless flat lands
 by smug faced cranes,
 How roots of establishments are uprooted
 by callous penetrating drills....
 Well, you needn't explain them to me.
 Explain the machines instead.**



Greetings from Emami



Emami Limited, the main sponsor of the 25th celebrations of Durga Puja in Moscow, has been associated with community affairs for a long time. Established in 1974, the company's vision of "making people healthy and beautiful, naturally" is based on the traditional wisdom of Ayurveda using modern manufacturing technologies. The company has achieved many milestones and diversified into over 25 brands. The focus has been retained throughout, and a combination of innovation based on a deep understanding of consumer needs, use of technology, maintaining quality of product and affordable pricing have made the brands – Boroplus, Fair and Handsome, Navratna, Sonachandi, Zandu household names in the country today. Emami is synonymous with natural beauty and health. Emami contributes whole-heartedly towards the environment and the society by investing in self employment generation schemes for the rural youth viz. Emami Mobile Traders and Small Village Shops in West Bengal and adjoining states.

As we celebrate Durga Puja, we pray for good health, well being and protection. We are happy to enclose a festive message from the joint chairmen of the Emami Group of Companies who have formed the company that provides us with products made with pure and natural ingredients which is highly recognised all over India and internationally.

R.S. Goenka & R.S. Agarwal



A road to Cultural heritage of India...

Indian culture is incredibly complex, but the festivals and celebrations therein create a passage to the most profound aspects of life. Epigraphically, evidences prove that festivals have been celebrated in India since Vedic times. Celebrations also dissolve the ethnic limitations and all religious groups merge into one during the festivals.

These festive celebrations increase the relations and strengthen the bonds among people. Celebrations make the present generation know about our customs and practices. Festivals commemorated in India are of various kinds. Some festivals are religious and few are based on seasons and others are of national importance.



Durga Puja is one of the most important religious festivals in India. The six significant days are - Mahalaya, Maha Shasthi, Maha Saptami, Maha Ashtami, Maha Navami and Vijayadashami. More than just a festival, Durga Puja is a celebration of life signifying the victory of good over evil. It is a time of reunion and rejuvenation, to love, to share and to care.

It's heartening to note that Indian community in Moscow has been celebrating Durga Puja for the past many years in a profound manner. I wish the fastidious efforts of the community and the celebrations all the best and Godspeed.

*M. Vellaichamy
Principal, Embassy of India School*

Moscow Calling

**Aneek Dhar,
our special invited artist
for Moscow Durga Puja's
Gala Concert
on 11th Oct, 2014**



Winner of Zee Sa Ra Ga Ma Pa Challenge 2007, an immensely popular music contest in India. At the Grand Finale Aneek received 3.65 crore votes from India and abroad, when he was only 18 years old! He has provided playback singing to over dozens of films and has several albums to his credit.

"I will be visiting Russia for the very first time to perform with my team. I thank the Moscow Durga Puja Committee for inviting us. I am certain that the experience of my Moscow concert will be embossed in my mind. Can't wait to meet you all! Hoping that you will enjoy my melodies and even tap your feet to my dance numbers. I am curious to visit some of the remarkable spots in Moscow. Guess, this will be one of my most important and beautiful trip to any nation so far. Fingers Crossed!"



The Hindustani Samaj is the oldest Indian organization in Russia functioning since 1957 and has been in the forefront of the community's social and cultural life in Moscow. The organization has been bonding the Soviet and Indian people by showcasing various events in the field of culture and arts. The executive body and the members are delighted to wish the Durga Puja Association their best wishes for conducting the event in such a great manner.

The All Moscow Malayalee Association (AMMA) is a non-profit, nonpolitical, cultural organization, founded in 1975 to foster their moral, social, educational, literary, artistic, and cultural heritage of the Malayalees residing in Russia. The members of the organization congratulate the Durga Puja Association for their dedication in organizing this great festival for the last 25 years.



The Indian Business Alliance (IBA) was founded in 1994 by a team of dedicated Indian businessmen under the patronage of the Embassy of India in Russia, and is exclusively devoted to the promotion of all the interests of the Indian business community in Russia. The IBA members whole heartedly congratulate the Durga Puja Association on the 25th celebrations of the Durga Puja in Moscow.

«DISHA», Moscow (Russia) was established in October, 2010 with the aim to bring the people of India and Russia closer. Its focuses in promoting economic, commercial, scientific, cultural, academic, social, tourism and sports activities among the people of Russia and India. On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Durga Puja in Moscow, DISHA congratulates the Durga Puja Association for their efforts and commitments for organizing this great festival over the years.



The "Overseas Bihar Association" (OBA) is a non-commercial socio-cultural organization of Indians established in May, 2012 to promote Indian Culture through its various activities in Russia. The OBA congratulates the Durga Puja Association on the grand Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

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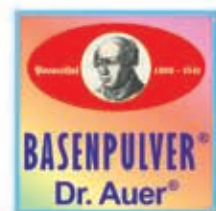
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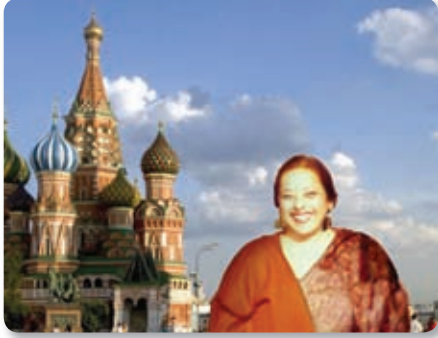
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This year as Moscow Durga Puja Committee celebrates its silver jubilee, we have received many heartwarming greetings, messages and wishes from our dear old members from all over the world. Here are a select few. We miss you dearly and take this opportunity to tell you yet again that we appreciate your sincere contributions through these years, without which we would not have achieved what we have.

Vignettes From The Past *Mrs. Kalpana Sen, New Delhi*



October 1992. We arrived in Moscow for the third time. This time my husband Ronen Sen was posted here as the Ambassador of India to Russia. We had two previous postings here, but it was a different country then - the USSR.

So when we heard that Durga Puja was celebrated in full form, we were pleasantly surprised. We had stopped in London en-route from Mexico City, only to attend Durga Puja, presuming there was no such possibility in Moscow.

The following year I eagerly awaited the celebrations. I started making enquiries in August, only to be told that Swamiji was going to be away in Belur, and without his guidance it was not going to be possible to perform the religious ceremony.

I was naturally very disappointed. Then suddenly one day close to the Pujas, I got a call from Indrani Majumdar, one of the pioneers who started the Moscow Puja just three years before. Indrani informed me that the Indian priest from Siberia, a professor of Ayurveda, was available to conduct the ceremonies.

However at the eleventh hour, there was no suitable venue available. So the onus was on me!

I felt terrible that there was no space available for Ma Durga in Moscow, and offered the Embassy cultural hall as a venue. This was the beginning of a great learning experience. In India, I had grown up being involved in all the cultural events of the Pujas. Apart from the Pushpanjali and Aarti, I did not know much of the details of the 5-day long celebrations.

In Moscow, I learnt that water had to be heated for Ma Durga's 'snan' every day. Using hot water from the faucet was not allowed. She had to be offered drinking water in a metal tumbler, not glass. So I borrowed my Lakshmi's miniature steel glasses from my personal altar.

Since we could not perform a 'hom' without a real fire, we had to manage with a few twigs, so that the smoke alarm would not go off. For fresh dubba - we pulled out some frozen grass from our garden. It was a feat to carry by hand the 'Kala Gatch Bou' (the navapatrika) while warning the security not to dare touch Ganesh's wife!

The real challenge came with the immersion of the puja offerings. People teased me that when the Moskva River would thaw, and the red bordered sari would float up, the Russian authorities would catch me!

I could go on and on, flooded by so many memories of five Pujas in Moscow. It is hard to believe that 25 years have flown by since. It is all so vivid in my memory that it feels like it was only yesterday.

I am so glad that this beautiful festival continues to be celebrated ever since. I wish the present Puja Committee all the very best, and pray that Ma Durga continues to visit Moscow in the coming years and showers her blessings on you.

Moscow Durga Puja 1990 - Reminiscing from 25 Years Ago

Dr. S.K. Ganguly, New Delhi



Dr. S. K. Ganguly & Swapna Ganguly with their grandkids Shiuli & Sheel at India Gate, Delhi 2010

Come October this year, the Durga Puja in Moscow will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. Looking back, this seems almost unbelievable. Back in 1990, while trying to organize the first Durga Puja, hardly any one of us would have ever believed what we started would last a quarter century. For back then, we weren't thinking about years and decades ahead, but rather the nitty-gritty of organizing such an event - we were too engrossed in solving the numerous issues that kept cropping up one after another. Some issues got solved with the combined effort of the organizers. Others required assistance from the most unexpected of quarters.

Ma Durga's blessings made it happen for sure. But looking back now, a critical factor that enabled us to start the Puja, when we did, was the times that we were living in. It was a time when rapid changes were taking place in Russia, not only in the body polity of USSR and the physical world surrounding us, but also in the realm of thoughts and beliefs in this great country. This is what really helped us in starting the Puja.

The biggest problem facing us was finding a suitable venue for holding the four day long Puja. Though the D.P.Dhar Hall at the Embassy was an option, many of us felt the need to organize the Puja at a different venue. The first meeting was held at our home at Oktyabarskiy Ploshad in June 1990. Seated across from the huge statue of Lenin, which still stands today, we charted out a plan. The meeting was mainly attended by persons residing in Moscow for quite some time. Amongst those who attended were the late Subir Majumdar, Shankar Mukherjee, Manoj Majumdar, late Hitangshu Dasgupta (universally known as Bishuda), late Deepak Ghosal, Rathin Chatterjee, my wife Swapna and me and some others.

We were very lucky to find a good, centrally located venue suitable from all points of view. It was a three storied building which belonged to the district youth centre and until a few years back such centers were fully under the control of the Communist Party. Organizing such a religious festival at such a venue would have been unthinkable in the past. However, to paraphrase Bob Dylan,

“times were changing”. In these changing times, such centers were expected and encouraged to be financially self sufficient. This led them to search for various avenues for earning money. One of the usually adopted practices was to rent out the premises to outsiders including foreigners. For the first two years the Puja was held there. There was no difficulty whatsoever. However, the city fire-fighting authorities thereafter raised an objection regarding an open fire lit during the yagna- an essential part of the Puja. The building authorities were helpless. The venue therefore had to be changed. Since then, for these last twenty two years the Puja is being held in the premises of the People’s Friendship University.

The idol of the Goddess made of sholapith (very light sponge-wood) was ordered from Calcutta and received well before the Pujas. We now faced the the most complex issue i.e. of finding a competent and suitable Purohit who would perform the Puja. It is then that we approached Swami Jyotirupanandaji of Ramkrishna Mission for help, advice and guidance. Swamiji explained that being a Sanyasi who has renounced the world of rites and rituals it would not be possible for him to take the role of the Purohit. However he assured us that he would willingly help, advise and guide us in this matter and became the soul of the Puja ever since.

The issue of finding a suitable Purohit continued. As time was passing we were getting restless. Around this time a business man

friend of mine Shri Ratan Bagaria who used to visit us whenever he was in Moscow for business came to our place. Being a deeply religious person he was very happy to learn that we were trying to start a Durga Puja in Moscow. When I mentioned this problem of finding a suitable Purohit, he immediately undertook to solve this issue for us. He agreed to arrange to send two competent Purohits and all the necessary Puja utensils from Calcutta and bear all the expenses for this. But Ratan Bagaria set only one condition that his name for this help would not be mentioned. I complied with this then. Today however when the 25th anniversary of this Puja is going to be celebrated I think this needs mentioning.

The first Puja went off smoothly. There was an ambience of great festivity all around. Almost the entire credit for this belonged to the Bengali student community. Not only from Moscow but students from many other cities and towns in USSR came and actively participated and helped in any and every matter connected with the Puja.

Today, when all of you are celebrating the 25th anniversary of this Puja, I wish the organizers all success. I do hope that a quarter century hence when the 50th anniversary of this Puja will be celebrated many of you will still be around and remember its humble beginning.

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Quarter Century Back Moscow & our Durga Puja

Manoj Majumdar, Kolkata



October 1989. On a freezing cold day of Moscow, I reached there with my wife and eight year old daughter, to join my new assignment. After a couple of months of stay at Gostinita Akademicheskaya, adjacent to Octyabarskaya Ploshad, we moved to a so called Dip Corpus at 26, Rubloys-kee Schause. My son, who was in Class IX back in India, joined us next year after we

got well settled.

I was then forty years old leaving a cushy job at Bombay, to join a newly formed Indo-German joint venture company in Moscow. To most of us Soviet Union was a mysterious land of Tolstoy and Rasputin. It was a land of Yuri Gagarin and mighty tanks. It was a land of ancient tyrant Tsars and romanticism of Lenin’s equality. Rouble was 31 times to Rupee whereas US Dollar was only 26 times! But above all, from our childhood we all knew that Russians are our friends. True friends they were to us. Little did I know that Moscow would be our home for the next 12 years.

Sometime in July 1990, Ganguly-da and Swapna-boudi called us at their home for an evening meeting to discuss seriously the plans of starting Durga Puja at Moscow – and that too for full five days. No week end short cut, as done mostly in the western world, was the resolution passed. Every week or two, we met and one by one the numerous knots of achieving a lofty goal of starting Durga Puja at Moscow got un-entangled. I still remember that we were never served Vodka or Whisky, not even Beer by Swapna-boudi, till the meetings got over. Ganguly-da found the hall, Mr Bagaria arranged to send *puja samagri*, a senior and an assistant purohit and idol from Calcutta (not Kolkata). Ma Durga was on her way to the land of Perestroika and Glasnost. Back at home in the evening, pensive I asked my wife (Indrani) in a

hushed tone as to how the idol with ten hands with a lion beside her, standing atop a vanquished man would get cleared at customs. Indrani was not amused at all because she knew that Maa Durga would come. Branding me an atheist she asked me not to worry about such matters and instead help out in an area where I had some expertise. I made a hasty retreat and decided to follow my wife’s advise. On reflection I realized that public relations and organizing cultural programs for each evening were my forte. First and foremost for the sake of continuity and success, we needed more people to participate, other than the six or seven Bengali families. We needed their wives and children to come every evening and what better solution can there be, other than participating in cultural programmes? I took responsibility for inviting all and sundry - all Indians irrespective of their linguistic background, Bangladeshis and even some Russians. True to my wife’s prediction Maa Durga landed at Moscow as scheduled. The old guard of the Bengali bastion must have pulled some ropes and we were all set for the next four days of sheer extravaganza and good time.

For us, Durga Puja was a good time in days of grey drab and dimly lit Gastronoms and serpentine queues to get two packs of 55 kopec rice (max), frozen vegetable pack (if lucky) and milk or egg as available. For few dollar shops, we had to be on look out for supplies from Finland. There was no internet or online order in those days. Sometimes we used to get a part of exotic vegetable (bhindi, phulkopi, pati lebu, or kanch lanka) from our good friends in the Embassy. We used to cut those in further smaller parts and kept the rest for future, may be special days. In such trying days, four days of gorom khichuri, begun bhaja, tomato chutney with papad and payesh were straight from the heavens.

Anyways, everyday Bhog (for Maa Durga) was prepared by some of the ladies under the strict guidance of Swapna-boudi. Downstairs in a corner room, Bishu-da was in charge of preparing the bulk bhog with help from Subir Majumdar and some of us – no ladies were allowed there, since a shot of Vodka intermittently kept the cold away. Limited instances of tasting were permitted, but had to be done without touching the main utensils.

Each evening we had cultural program after puja, had bhog for dinner and the four days went by like a breeze – breeze generally on Sasthi and Saptami.

On Oshtomi evening before Sandhi puja, the assistant (roga purohit as was his nickname) was all set with puja samagri spread out waiting for his senior (mota purohit). Time ticked on and soon jokes turned into panic. Frantic search was launched by one and all since start of Sandhi puja at exact time is of paramount significance. At the nick of time, the young bunch of student brigade came to our rescue. There we saw on the lower floor our mota purohit merrily sleeping and snoring away to glory under a massive aquarium. By then we knew he was dead drunk. With the help of the young brigade he was physically lifted, taken to the heap of freezing snow and bingo! By some divine intervention he sprang up to his feet, shivering. He rushed back, took some

hot lemon tea, rinsed and was ready for Oshtomi puja. None of our guests and dignitaries had a whiff. Oshtomi puja was performed with all rituals.

Later on I sat down with some of the students and soon came to know that our main purohit was feeling cold during the day and wanted some medicine. He was coaxed into taking some white cognac (Tsar's cognac as explained to him albeit Vodka) as a substitute for medicated brandy. Soon he took a liking to it and rest we all knew. Unilaterally we decided to censor the news, though some leaks happened later.

On Dashami, the big group of devotees thinned out apprehensive of getting caught by Militsia. The Student community came to our rescue and we went to the famous Moscow River late at night, with two ends of the bridge being manned by our members. It was peaceful!

With best wishes from Indrani-di and Manoj-da



Mrs. Reeti Dutta with family

Mrs. Reeti Dutta, Mumbai

Our best memories of Moscow Durga Puja is the devotion with which our Puja was performed by Rathin da under the guidance of our revered Swami Jyotirupanandaji Maharaj. We participated wholeheartedly and the experience is a truly memorable one.

25

Puja: A Flash Back

Bijan Saha, Bangladesh

A few days back Pradyumna asked me to write something for Aaratrika and I agreed to dig deep into my memory with a hope to find something precious. I remember in my childhood how we waited eagerly for Durga Puja in my home in Bangladesh. However, as I grew up, influenced by Marxist theory, Durga Puja and its rituals had lost its relevance for me. So in 1990 when I heard about puja in Moscow, I went there to attend it just like any other social occasion. It took place in a club not far from metro Shabolovskaya. I met few friends there. But the atmosphere I was familiar with was missing. No sound of drums or conch (*No dhak, no dhol, no shonkhyo dhvoni*) – just an-



other Soviet style function of Indian or Bangladeshi Zemlyachestvo (association). Nevertheless, it was something exceptional, something extraordinary in Soviet reality.

In 1996 together with my family I moved to Dubna and my contact with our people was shelved for many years. Then in 2001 I visited the Puja again. It took place in the PFU Inter-Club. After many years I met many old friends. Since 2009, I began to visit the Puja regularly. It made us feel Bengali even though far from homeland. The festive mood takes me back to those days of childhood, gone by. And like those days now I wait for the Puja to come, to bring friends together.

Happy anniversary to everyone!

Soumen Ganguly, Boston MA, USA

I was in Moscow for the 1989 to 1991 Durga pujas. As an 11 year old at the time of the first puja, I have extremely fond memories. The excitement of being able to take off from school for 1 week, helping unpack the "sholar protima" from its box all the way to the "bisarjan" in the Moscow River. But one memory stands out distinctly - on the first day of the puja, heading out to a small patch of grass early on a somewhat frosty Moscow morning, looking for "dubbo" (grass). The purot moshai was very particular about what he wanted and it took us a while to find it!

I live with my wife, Sutanuka and 9 month old daughter Saina, in Boston now. We attend the local Boston puja every year, and as always it's a time to gather and enjoy with friends. The Moscow puja holds a special place in my heart though as I had a true sense of strong involvement as a child helping in my own small way on those first few pujas!



Soumen with wife Sutanuka and daughter Saina



Memories Relived

Mitali Sarkar, Moscow

I have never thought that I would ever share my Durga Puja experience in Russia. It was on 13th January 1993 that I landed in Russia, mesmerized by the view at first sight. This was just beyond my imagination: streets were fully covered with snow, as if someone spread a white carpet. I did my Masters from the Belgorod University and the only Indian there!. In 1996, after having completed my Masters, I came back to Kolkata. I got scholarship for PhD from the Gorky Sadan Russian Cultural Center. Then destiny brought me to Russia once again. This time, I found myself in Moscow. While doing PhD at the People's Friendship University (PFU), I joined the Indian Embassy as a librarian. It was at the Embassy where I met Mr. Sen (the-then Ambassador of India to Russia) and Mrs. Sen (Kakima). Kakima told me that in 1997 the Durga Puja festival would be held in the "Interclub" under the PFU. I was so glad to learn this as my hostel was located two steps from the "Interclub".

My involvement in Puja started off with the arrangement of flowers and 'Bel Leaves' (a sacred leaf) which are offered to Goddess Durga. I was also assigned with the duty of opening and locking the Puja hall and decorating it with ritual objects and flowers. With passage of time, I was vested with more responsibilities.

In Moscow, Puja is celebrated during five days: Sasti, Saptami, Asthami, Nabami and Dashami. The Indian calendar is closely observed here. The Ramkrishna Mission participates with full vigor and Puja is organized under Swami ji Jyotirupa Nanda's supervision. Every year, meetings are held by the Puja preparation committee. As a member of this committee, I participate at the meetings on an annual basis. The committee discusses important issues related to Puja and takes decisions.

Normally, meetings start in June – July. All the Puja belongings are brought from Kolkata markets. The whole Puja responsibilities are divided among participants. Ladies come early in the morning to do all the preparations for Puja, including decoration. Cultural programs and Anandmela food competition are also performed. Every three years, a new idol replaces the old one and the latter is given as a gift to various organization (eg., the Russian State Library, the PFU and other), since it is just impossible to immerse the idol here.

Now more Russians take part in Puja. They help in many ways. Every year, a Russian girl makes garlands for the idol. Puja starts Sasti evening. Then the immersion of ghot in dashami marks the end of Puja with a Shanti jaal (i.e. Holy water). As the Puja tradition goes, both the festival participants and visitors put on new dresses and everyone has a chance to enjoy Indian food specially cooked on this occasion. The whole picture looks very beautiful, like a dream, and you hardly believe that you are thousands miles away from Kolkata.

I am feeling so blessed and happy, and I can say that Durga Puja in Moscow has become an integral part of my life.



Shoma Chakraborty, USA

I was in Moscow during the 1990 to 1995 Durga Pujas. The 1989 puja I was in India visiting my grandparents at the time – but I heard a lot of stories about that first Puja, there was indeed a palpable excitement amongst all the Bengalis that something historic had taken place!

"Here in the USA I have been fortunate to visit multiple pujas, ranging from Oklahoma to California, Hawaii to Washington & finally Georgia. Each has been different yet same, food is always very important, as are the cultural activities. However what holds major similarity between the Puja here and Moscow is the wish that on those 4 days or so, every Bengali wants to hear the chant of the Anjali mantras and the sound of Dhak, be surrounded childhood memories of growing up in India. Here in Atlanta too, as in Moscow, the Puja is very "gharua" (homely) everyone is involved in some capacity and that makes it memorable. Moscow always holds a special bond for me, it's the place of my birth and I spent many years of my life there, so the Durga Pujas spent there with my parents will always hold a special place in my heart and mind!"



Dr.Rabindra N.Chakraborty, Shoma, Shiuli & Sheel at Bengali Association of Greater Atlanta Durga Pujo 2011 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Guru-Shiksha Parampara Re-lived

Dr. Dinesh Chakraborty



Early autumn, 2004. Moscow, Russia: All of a sudden Suraj bhaiya and Aranya da, two of my seniors, enticed me to go to some puja meeting organised by Indians in Moscow. More than the prospect of getting involved with the puja, it was the lure of the hot samosas and Indian masala chai of Devi cafe that enticed me and a couple of newly admitted students from Moscow Medical Academy to the PFU campus.

There, I was nominated to officiate as the priest for the upcoming Durga Puja of Moscow. Though I hailed from a Brahmin family and had heard a few Sanskrit incantations my dad used to recite during his daily worship, but THAT certainly didn't qualify me to be a priest for Goddess Durga! It's no joke. I felt like a sacrificial goat at the thought of performing the task at hand.

I was informed that I would be interviewed by the highly venerated Swami Jyotirupananda Maharaj at the Ramakrish-

na Mission and only then I would qualify to perform, what would be a lifetime experience for me. I was picked up by the secretary of the Durgapuja Committee, Nitinda and his wife Sudeshnadi and met the monk of one of the holiest sect of Indian monks at his spiritual abode. He seemed like a cheerful grandfatherly figure and just a short glimpse of him convinced me that he was a kind and angelic soul. He made me read out the principle invocation mantra of the mighty Goddess – "Jatajuta samayuktam, Purnendukrita Sekharam...." from the fat book of incantations and explain the literary meaning. I still remember how scared I felt, but the assuring smile of Swamiji kindled my confidence. He declared me qualified and announced my training as the priest for Durga Puja from next weekend.

Never before I had experienced so much of energy flow through me when he taught me, literally word by word, the various vedic rituals and mudras, and their significance in worshipping this deity, who is the source of all that exists in creation. The following one month, every weekend, was time for thorough training under the watchful perfectionist Swamiji followed by a sumptuous, mouth-watering Bengali meal, that I so badly missed otherwise in Moscow. Swamiji was a great teacher and I was his student, a good team. And what followed during the end of that autumn Navratri was something written in Gold for me - a lifetime experience!

Our Doctors from Kolkata

The Durga Puja in Moscow and every body associated with it played a very constructive role in making us feel at home, far from my family. We will forever remain grateful to The Moscow Durga Puja for that. Wish our Moscow Durga Puja a fulfilled, prosperous and grand 25th year!



Dr. Debasmita Chattaraj with husband and daughter Rituja



Dr. Sumana Ganguly with husband and son Megh

25



Dr. Nabarun Majumdar with wife



Dr. Agnibh Mukherji, Moscow



Artwork by Dr. Agnibh Mukherji

Hello everyone! This is Dr. Agnibh Mukherji I have been in Moscow for almost a decade now and consider myself really fortunate to have been able to contribute, even though

in humble proportions to the social and cultural life of this great city as well as being an eyewitness to the evolution of the Bengali community which has been tirelessly involved in various cultural activities, most notably the Durga Puja, being organized for whopping 25 years now! Each Puja celebration that I attended in Moscow is still vividly etched on my memory, decorated with the most beautiful moments of varied hue, mirth and din in the prayers, anjali, bhog bitaran, songs, dances etc. in short an atmosphere, which an Indian student like me missed and craved for the most outside India. My heartfelt wishes to our outstanding Bengali community for their commendable non-stop engagement and a big thumbs up to Aaratika team, for whom I hold a special place, for meticulously and dedicatedly documenting and archiving each Pujo, making the magazine an invaluable asset for the future generations.

Unlocking Memories Moscow Durga Puja Committee

Nitin Aurangabadkar, General Secretary

Twenty five years is indeed a noteworthy milestone for our Puja, which we have reached through hard work of our old members in the past and the continuous efforts of the current Committee and our well wishers at present. We are one of the very few organizations in Moscow to have achieved such a fabulous landmark.

One of the most important tasks before our Committee from its first day of working was to provide a platform to the Indian diaspora and unite them under one umbrella, thus making it a "Durga Puja of every Indian in Moscow" I am



happy to say that we have succeeded and have even extended our hospitality to the people from the sub-continent. We have also attracted a huge number of our Russian friends, some of them being well known experts of Indian literature and culture. This Russia-India bridge is very dear to us.

I feel that Maa Durga gave me an opportunity to serve this organization and with all humility I express my sincere gratitude to the Committee members and to the entire Indian community and well-wishers spread across the world.

*Dr. Debashish Sengupta
Coordinator, Cultural Events*



Fondly remember the *natoks* like *Lokhoner Shoktishel*, *Ho Jo Bo Ro Lo* which we staged specially for Puja involving our children. To me, this is the best way of celebration – joining hands to deliver something creative, specially tailor made for the Puja of that year.

*Pradyumna Chatterjee
Member Editorial Board*



Moscow Durga Puja is a place which I feel is my home abroad, and it's people are my family in my small world. It was this family who had stood by me in 2005, providing me with the strength to be in the Puja like every other year, after a hard event in my life. As a son of a priest, from the time I remember life I had seen my parents doing Puja and three years ago when I had the privilege of performing the Puja in Moscow, I knew that their life had not ended, but continuing with me here.

*Dr. Chitralekha Dasgupta Garzon
Treasurer*



Months ahead of Puja, we begin preparations. But during the 4 days of Puja in particular we have to make ourselves available almost 24 hours to take care of purchase and accounts. There are times when we have to buy last minute groceries, like a coconut or flowers for Puja. Sometimes there is a crisis, but we manage the situation quietly without panicking. We keep track of petty accounts during the day and then at night check the entire day's accounts and keep things ready for next day. Strangely we do not feel tired at all; Maa Durga gives us all the strength.

*Dr. Durga Nand Mishra
Food & Administration Coordinator*



In the early nineties I remember going for *Visarjan* to the Moscow River - a memorable moment! Our Indian idol being symbolically immersed into a Russian river, what a wonderful symbol of the merging of two cultures! Arranging Puja food is always challenging, problems need to be solved immediately and silently.

25



DURGOTSAV



Souvenir 1995

Organised By

DURGA PUJA COMMITTEE, MOSCOW

DURGA PUJA



1996

MOSCOW

এক লেখালেখি



১৯৮৫
১৯৮৫

MOSCOW DURGA PUJA CELEBRATION



1999

Moscow Durga Puja



2000



"রূপ দেহি জয় দেহি,
যশো দেহি দ্বিধা জহি."

Moscow Durga Puja Celebration
2001

মা দেবী স্বকীয়নিধু মানু রূপেণ হোমিলা
নামস্কৃত্যে -নামস্কৃত্যে -নামস্কৃত্যে -নমো নমো



Moscow Durga Puja Celebration
2002

शरणागत दीनार्थं परित्राण परायणे ।
सर्वसर्तिहरे देवी नारायणी नमस्तुते ॥

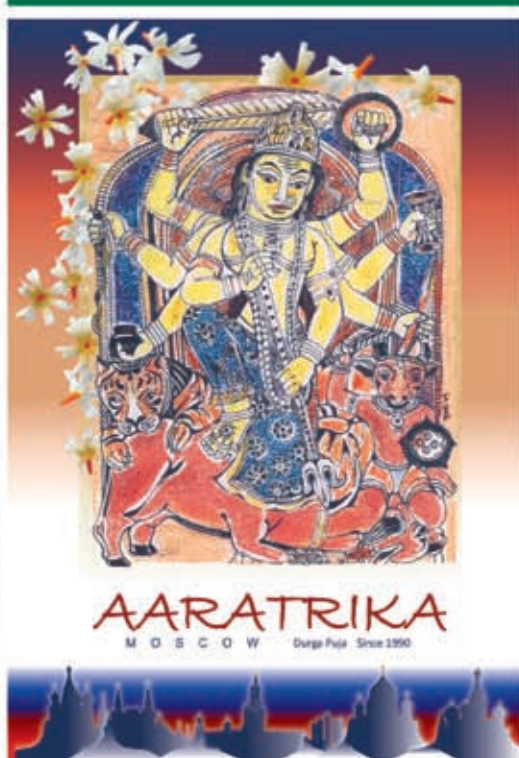
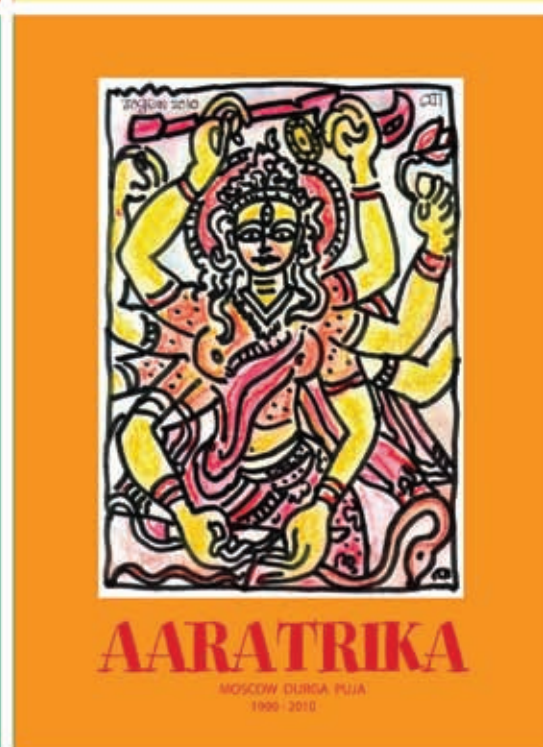
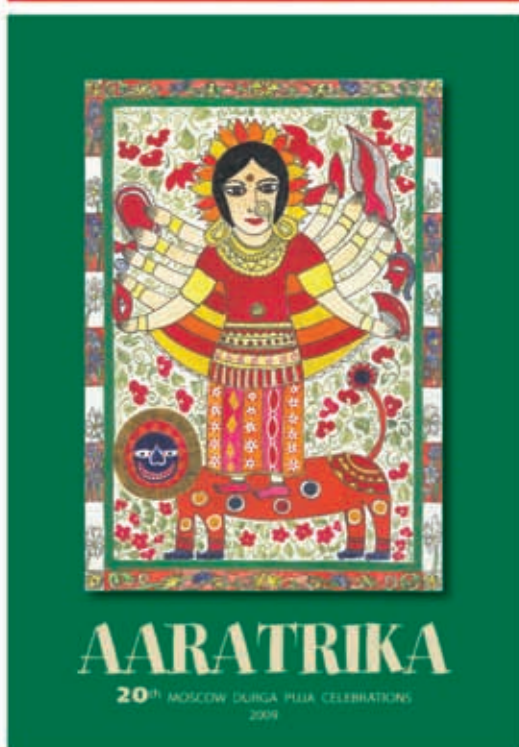
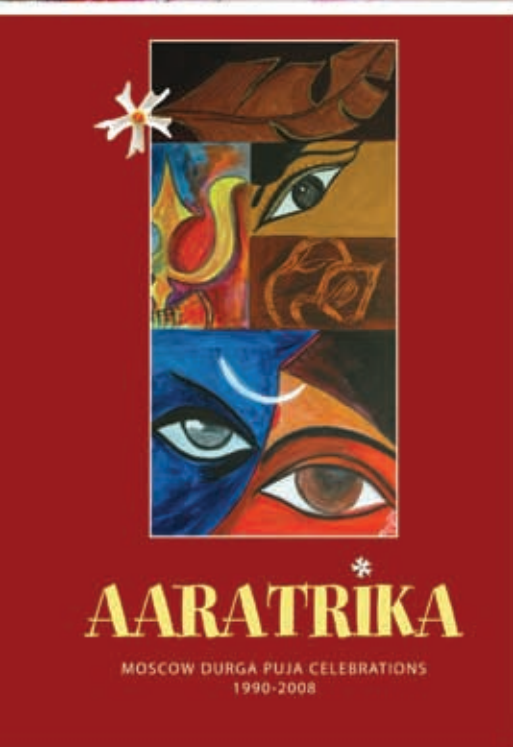
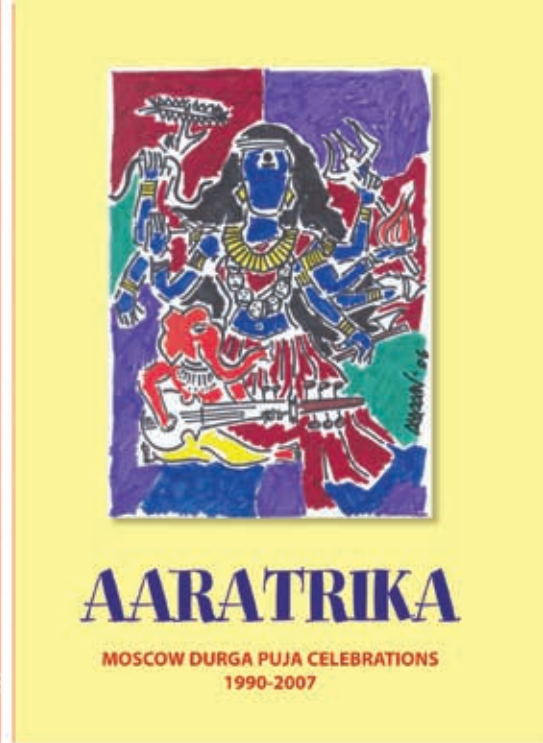
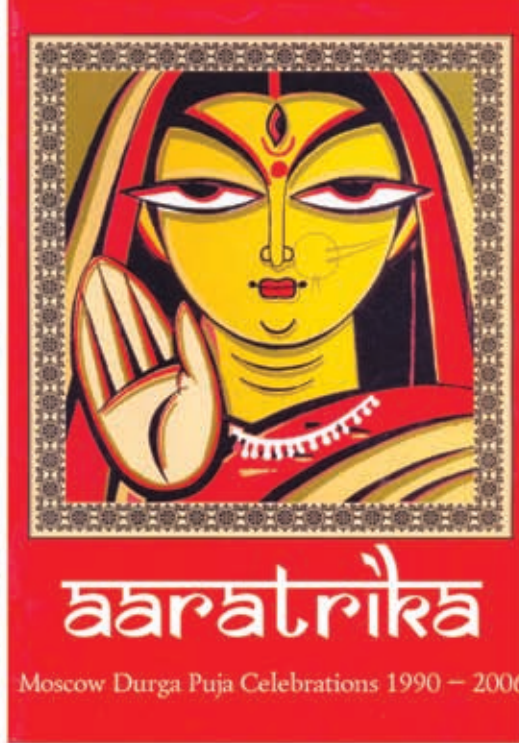


MOSCOW DURGA PUJA CELEBRATION
2003

SARBAJANIN DURGOTSAV



MOSCOW
1999/2001



Through the years, into the present – a glorious journey...

This year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Moscow Durga Puja and with that we also celebrate 25 amazing years of our history so far. And how better to do this, than by undertaking a survey of the previous editions and earlier incarnations of our magazine, Aaratrika? After all, isn't it the written word left behind, the work of art created in the past, the stray images left behind that combine to make history? So we invite our readers to join us in retracing this glorious journey.

The birth – previous incarnations of Aaratrika

The journey began in 1990 with the publication of a two page magazine. Years 1991 to 1994 did not see any formal publication, but the Puja continued to grow by strength by embracing more participants. Then from 1995-1997, the magazine resurfaced. 1998 came with the financial crisis and it had its sad impact on our magazine too - no publication was possible. May be that led us to a comeback in 1999 with fervor and to publish our first magazine in colour. 2003 saw the magazine go through significant changes and it taking shape of a complete magazine. 2004 – Stepping towards a full-fledged magazine. Responding to the felt need of the local community to have a platform for creative expression, and to share a part of their lives in print, the full fledged magazine was launched, edited by Debashish Sengupta. The publication was made possible through generous donations made by advertizes and supporters.

Namakaran, the coming of age

2005 - Aaratrika, meaning the festive lamps used in the rituals of Goddess Durga, that dispel darkness, also symbolic of spiritual enlightenment. Thanks to Dr. Smita Sengupta, one of our founder members for such a pertinent namakaran!

Breaking new ground

2011 – Paschimbanga Bangla Akademi congratulates Aaratrika with an article in their journal. Aaratrika is mentioned in Russia India Report (RIR), a multilingual news resource.

The cover page

Over the last 7 years Aaratrika is honoured to have works of eminent artists like Ayaan Ali Khan (2007), Nikolai Kostromitin (2009), Jogen Chowdhury (2010), Ramananda Bandopadhyay (2011), Sukhen Ganguly (2012). The art works have inspired us and has promoted Aaratrika to a higher level.

2014 - The Silver Issue: 'Celebrating 25 glorious years of togetherness'

To celebrate '25 years of togetherness' we chose to design the cover ourselves. After much brainstorming, a concept was shortlisted. Avik Roy, the young talented designer from Kolkata gave expression to our thought.

Collage on the Cover

The idea behind the collage is to essentially throw light on the power of the supreme Goddess which is an interesting juxtaposition of calmness, stability and immense power. The intricate red motifs on the top right side of the image have been inspired and drawn from the Indian motifs from the crown of

This photo feature would not have been possible without Sri Rathin Chatterjee, who has lovingly and painstakingly preserved old copies of our magazine from the nineties. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his love for Aaratrika and for sharing his copies with us for this feature.

Bolshoe Spasiba for making Aaratrika worth enough to be offered to the Goddess.

A little bit more about Aaratrika...**3 core values**

Excellence, Reverence and Friendship

Purpose

To provide a platform for the Indian community and Russian friends and to help imbibe the values of different aspects of our culture and heritage in our children; to bring south Asians together and also create a bridge between Russia and India.

What's unique

Aaratrika has brought together contributions in four languages, from authors in 30 countries from the five continents, aged from all of 3 to 83, from novices to celebrities.

Recognizing & nurturing young talents

The Committee organizes annual contests - essay writing, story writing and drawing. The best works are published in Aaratrika with a photo of the budding authors. Providing a platform to showcase the nascent talents, Aaratrika watches with pride how they gradually mature. Some leave Moscow, but do remain in touch through warm annual messages.

The pencil sketches used as illustrations throughout our magazine is done by 17 years old Andrei Dasgupta Garzon.

Trivia

While working for our silver issue:

- we have 1673 emails in our inbox and 2479 in our outbox
- it's always sunny and bright in Moscow every year when we edit Aaratrika - Indian summer at its best
- we consumed 17 jars of coffee along with 23 slabs of Korkunov hazelnut chocolates

the Goddess. Her face has a lot of calmness and she is looking down at the earth and blessing us all. The kaash phool (Kaash flower) which you can see on the bottom left corner of the page blooms only during saratkaal (early autumn) and is a sign of the upcoming festive season that begins with Durga Puja.

What's in a name?

In the magazine name - AARATRIKA, the letter "I" has been custom designed keeping the Goddess and Durga Puja in mind. The main stem of the letter "I" shows the nose of the Goddess with a large nose ring in red. The nose ring is said to be the mark of a married woman which again denotes the Goddess. The top end of the letter "I" bifurcates into two branches and looks like a 3 headed spear also known as a trishul. The centre head of the spear has a large red dot. This has two significance – firstly the 'Bindi' which is a red dot adorning the forehead of Indian brides between their brows. It denotes power and the positive energy. Secondly the Third Eye of the Goddess Durga which again signifies power.





Rituals and Milestones



New idol 2014



Bonanza of Culture and Entertainment



Anandamela Food Competition on 13 September 2014 at Talk of The Town



The winners are:

STARTERS

1 St Prize - Sangeeta Ravel (BANARSI CHAAT)
2nd Prize - Preeti Chowdry (PLATTER OF KACHORI)
3rd Prize - Nita Alpesh (KHANDVI)

MAIN COURSE

1 St Prize - Anu Kapoor (ROGAN JOSH)
2nd Prize - Madhu Agarwal (LITTI CHOKA)
3rd Prize - Poornima (DAAL BAATI)

DESSERT

1 St Prize - Vandana Soni (PLATTER OF LADDUS)
2nd Prize - Yaesmin Mishra (RABRI)
3rd Prize - Hina Khureesh (SHEER KHURMA)



The most talented chefs and the most fair judges



JUDGES

Darbars: Deepak Singh Suman Pokhrel
Talk of the Town: Tanmoy Banerjee Bhagwati Prasad

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Darbars

Индийская кухня

Индийская кухня – это тонкая и нежная смесь таких пряностей, как куркума, кардамон, имбирь, кориандр, мускатный орех и мак из которых составляется неповторимый вкусовой букет для каждого блюда.

Одной из основных особенностей индийской кулинарии является то, что вся еда подается только свежеприготовленной, и не допускается использование никаких полуфабрикатов.

Остроты тоже можно не бояться – по Вашей просьбе практически любое блюдо может быть приготовлено среднее, слабо или совсем не острым.



Огромный выбор блюд из разных уголков Индии

Более 10 лет ресторан "Дарбарс" радует своих посетителей прекрасной кухней собранной из разных штатов Южной и Северной Индии, включая более 50 вегетарианских блюд и широкий выбор блюд, приготовленных в печи Тандур. Нигде больше в Москве Вы не попробуете такие блюда как Малбар Фиш Карри, Драй Лэмб, Керала Чикен Фрай, редкие виды индийских лепёшек и блюд из риса, а также многие другие удивительные творения нашего шеф-повара.



Атмосфера чарующего Востока

В дополнение к широкому выбору блюд Индийской кухни Вы окунётесь в волшебную атмосферу современного восточного интерьера, украшенного аутентичным убранством. С 16-ого этажа, на котором расположен наш ресторан, открывается прекрасный панорамный вид на Воробьёвы горы, Москву-реку и Поклонную гору. Также совсем недавно был открыт ещё один ресторан с одноимённым названием в самом центре на улице Покровка. Оба заведения ждут своих гостей ежедневно с 12:00 до 24:00.



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ИМЕЮТСЯ ПРОТИВОПОКАЗАНИЯ, ПЕРЕД УПОТРЕБЛЕНИЕМ КОНСУЛЬТИРОВАТЬСЯ У ВРАЧА



*"Ma Durga" by Aanisha Dasgupta Garzon,
Class 2, Progymnasium №1723*

*"Privet, I am 7 years old. I am learning synchronized swimming and figure skating.
I love to play with my dog Linda. I also like to sketch. During Durga Puja,
I wear new clothes and play with my friends."*





"Happy Butterfly"
by Amrita Bhattacharya, 5 yrs,
attending kindergarten

"I like to play around and drawing is one of my favourite pastime. I love to travel to the seaside with beaches full of sunshine and fun. Of course with my teddy and plentiful of my favourite chocolates and ice creams."



"Magic Castle" by Ayanna Chatterjee
Class 1, Gymnasium №2

"This August I turned 7, and on 1st September I went to school for the first time!"



"Flower Composition" by Ishan Ghosh
Class 3, EOI

"I like to play the piano and I love to sketch. I have attended 2 Durga Pujas in Moscow. I like to wear new clothes, meet with friends and play with them. I also love to tie the holy thread on my wrist from Rathin Jethu on Vijaya Dashami."



"My pet" by Anna Subramanian
Class 5, School №1498

"I love drawing, reading books and singing songs I'm also very fond of horses and train at the nearby Pony Club."

As today's young people are crucial for the shaping of our future, it is imperative that they are enabled to develop to their full potential. To give young people the opportunity to write about their own opinions regarding the world in which they live, we invited entries in the following themes from EO1:

Class I-VI: "My most memorable birthday" / "If I were a Superman" / "Person I admire most".

Class VII-XII: "A day without Google" / "What would I do if I became invisible for a day?" / "An ideal school in my view"

Young writers were encouraged to explore these themes and their relevance to their lives in fun, academic, witty and most of all creative ways. We are publishing some of them. A big thank you to all participants who entered the competition and we highly appreciate their efforts and talents.

My Most Memorable Birthday



Hrittika Baruri
Class 3

I was born on 6th May 2006. I was too small to remember the first three birthdays, but my 4th birthday was the most memorable one. As it happened, I was once at the McDonald's with my family and I saw a little Girl's birthday was being celebrated there. I liked it so much that I convinced my parents to celebrate my birthday at the same place. So on my 4th birthday in 2010, my whole family and friends went to the McDonald's at Obruchevo. The party room was decorated with colorful balloons, posters, pictures and mostly with my favorite pink balloons. All my friends gathered and we sang, danced, screamed and shared gifts. I had a special birthday cake with beautiful decorations on it. We had a lot of fun and I will remember my 4th birthday for a very long time!

My most memorable birthday was my 8th birthday in 2011. My parents took me to a very big restaurant for dinner and then to a shopping mall to buy my birthday present, which was a video game. I was very happy and thanked my parents a lot. They told me that there is one more surprise waiting for me. I was very curious to know and asked them again and again what it was? But they didn't tell me and I had completely forgotten about it until they took me to



Hritendu Baruri
Class 6

a restaurant on 22nd January. Half an hour later I saw many of my friends coming to the restaurant. That's when I realized that the second surprise was my birthday party! It was a great fun and truly a very memorable birthday.



Every child is excited for his/her birthday. On the eve of my most my memorable birthday, my Grandfather came from India to Moscow. One day before my aunt whom I call Nanhi mausi called me at midnight 12oclock and wished a happy birthday. When I woke up in the morning I wore my new birthday dress and my whole family came to my school. I cut my birthday cake and every one in my class was singing the happy birthday song then I gave chocolates and gifts to my friends. My teacher, Lochana madam, celebrated my birthday very nicely. My grandfather also visited my school that day and he liked my school very much. Then my grandfather suggested that on this occasion we should visit the temple. As there is only one ISKON temple in Moscow everyone got ready to go to the temple we took sweets and fruits to offer it to God. In the evening my parents arranged a grand party at the famous restaurant 'Talk of the Town'. They gave me various gifts and we played many games with my friends like musical chairs, pin the tail on donkey, dance with balloons pass the parcel and etc..... When I arrived home I immediately opened the presents and liked them all. My favorite was the doll that my grandfather gave. It was my most memorable birthday.



Avishi Das
Class 3



Ayushi Das
Class 6

My most memorable birthday was my 5th birthday. The day before my birthday I was very excited. I got many calls for wishes in the morning and my Mom and Dad gifted me a new dress which I planned to wear on my birthday at Kids Club. In the evening my father organized a grand party and also called an entertainer with monkeys, doves and gymnasts to do tricks. He also called a magician and a joker for the occasion. There were many guests in the party and different types of games were organized to entertain us. Then it was the time to cut the cake. It was a huge 'Mickey Mouse' cake, which was even longer than me. I could hear people singing the birthday song for me. I was delighted. My friends were putting the cake on my face, and it was time for the piñata. Then everyone started to enjoy the food. At last, it was time to go home as I was very anxious to see the gifts. After reaching home immediately I started to open all the presents and there were toys, clothes, bags etc.... Next day I celebrated my birthday at school also. After school, my mom took me to the ISKON temple to take blessings from God.



An Ideal School in My View



*Yash Dasgupta
Class 7, School №1637*

An ideal school in my view is a school, where teachers and students improve together. This is a place where you are respected and your opinions are being considered. Where, they teach and learn with pleasure. Where, there is peace, kindness and love. Where, we want to learn not "just to know", but also because it's a shame "not to know". Where, we debate to prove the truth. Where, you are appreciated and you are proud of!

An ideal school in my view is colorful, bright and comfortable with lots of animals and birds singing. There should be beautiful furniture and nice sports facilities. An ideal school should give students the right to choose subjects, teachers,

type of activities and individual pace. An ideal school is a school of free choice, where each student can choose the practical trainings in which he is interested in and that are important to him personally. In an ideal school, education should be like in a good large family. In one class, students of different ages can learn together, help each other and the teachers are like parents, helping when you need support and care.

This is a school in which the teachers would understand that for every problem of a student, they are to be blamed in the first place. In this school, the time table should be made for the convenience of the students. Teachers in this school have to remember that they come to school for the students, and not vice versa. Teachers should be friendly with each other and invite students to visit them. The teachers should not be biased to some students and all should be treated equally.

That's what an ideal school is in my view!



A Day Without Google



*Uditangshu Aurangabadkar
Class 10*

We all use this interesting six letter word "Google" at least once a day, but do we even know that this word was misspelt. The original word was "Googol" that means 1 followed by a hundred zeroes!

Now this mistake has completely changed and revolutionized our world. We cannot live without it even for a minute. Now the topic arises that a day without Google, is it possible?

In reality we could've lived without google, but our lifestyle needs everything processed and readymade - information, food, clothes and the list continues. A day without this Gizmo would be the same as a day without water! We cannot live without this. We rely and depend on our Google more than our parents nowadays. Now if we live without Google even for a day, we might get bored and fall asleep or even play a game. Google has become a source of knowledge for every individual. Now if we were to live without Google for a day, (that too before the exam when we need it most), we might get frustrated and start kicking the CPU or banging the keyboard with all our strength.

Google has become also a courier and messenger for some. It provides everything you need, names of good restaurants, recipes, e-mail, messenger and so on. Now if these people are left without Google, they might get depressed and may end up weeping the whole day. These are some serious consequences if we live day without google.

Now internet or should I say Google is becoming the town square for the global village and we are mere villagers.



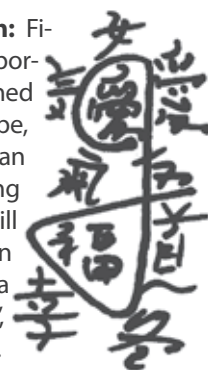


Andrei Dasgupta Garzon
Class 11, Lyceum at Sparrow Hills №1525

Gmail: Although there are many alternatives, Gmail after all is one of the most popular one. But if there were no such mail services then I don't know, how we would live in this modern world!



Google search: Finally the most important. As I mentioned regarding YouTube, the search engine can find about anything and about anyone. Just search and you will be surprised to know about your relatives in KGB and Skolkovo, about Tolstoy and Shakira who are divided only by the line "Download", the artist drawing everything that you like. It is difficult to estimate the role of Google in our everyday life, though we use only a few Google functionalities. But we perfectly understand that if we disconnect Google, our civilization will be time-machined to centuries ago,

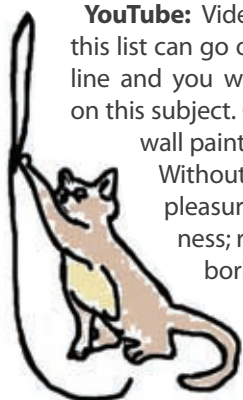


A Day Without Google

Google ... This word is known to everyone. Let's look and see if it is true that we can't live even a day without Google?



Google maps: Although there are many other services (for example Yandex which is so popular in Russia) but Google is the most comfortable, useful and simple for users. In many countries people can't even imagine their lives without navigators. After all, if there is Google maps + traffic + route, then why do you need to know the city as well as your own five fingers? Shutdown the service for a day and it would cause disaster on most of the roads (it is of course very exaggerated but it is necessary to understand the importance of the service). But again I will add that it would not happen everywhere, but only in "lazy" countries!



YouTube: Video with kittens, reviews, clips, trailers ... this list can go on. Enter anything absurd in the search line and you will immediately find about 100 videos on this subject. Goat licking a dog, Cat plays the guitar, wall painted with hair and anything such absurd. Without YouTube the humanity will lose the pleasure of seeing kittens; dogs, asking forgiveness; reviews of movies... and life will become boring!

Google translator:
"Yes-no-probably";
"Is to drink - No, is is";
"hukhry-mukhry" –

these phrases were translated from Russian (word to word), but I don't think they make any sense in English (and no internet-translators will help you to understand). But when you translate without using such peculiar phrases, Google translator is a very useful thing. For the tourists, a day without Google translator will lead to hours of search for locations as there will be language barriers with the locals. So if you want to see Paris and die – don't forget your phone with the Internet and the Google translator!



and nobody will answer the question "How to make a shovel without Samsung Galaxy Note?" or "How to kindle a fire when the gas in a lighter has ended?"

And who know maybe this text was translated by Google too...



Grand Canyons



Rohan Jethalia
Class 10

Hi Everybody,

This is Rohan Jethalia back again with new accounts of my latest travel escapades which took me this time to the Grand Canyons in the Arizona district of United States of America.

Long considered as one of the natural wonders of the world, I was amongst one of those 5 annual million lucky visitors who flock every year to see this unique and breath taking combination of geological color and erosional forms. With its ever-changing and dramatic scenery of enormous proportions, the Grand Canyon is one of the world's most spectacular landscapes. Its pine and fir forests, painted deserts, sandstone canyons, mesas and plateaus, volcanic and geologic features, the Colorado River, perennial streams, and waterfalls breath-takingly combine to form one of Earth's greatest landmarks.

Awesome, Mind Blowing, Amazing, Exhilarating....were few of the thoughts in my mind when I first set my eyes on them. Never before in my life I had seen something so grand and magnificent! Words are few to describe how I felt that time as I simply allowed my mind and body to absorb in the natural amazement which was before me. I simply bowed my head down to the Mighty Supreme above us as I marveled at this creation of his, which was nothing less than magical and unbelievable!

It is a steep-sided canyon by the Colorado River in the state of Arizona of USA. It is 277 miles long, up to 18 miles wide and attains a depth of over a mile having two rims the South and the West. Nearly two billion years of earth's geological history have been exposed as the Colorado River and its tributaries

cut their channels layer after layer of rock while the Colorado Plateau was uplifted.

Trekking around, taking photos or watching the various plants and animals, which if you are lucky enough, is the best way to spend your time in the canyons. The ultimate part of my journey although was the personal helicopter ride which took us well inside those canyons and made it feel so real and alive. Silent and grand it stood big and tall, making me realize what Nature is all about and how we all are lucky to witness such wonders of the world.

I do wish all the readers of this journal to have one such chance once in your lifetime to go and see this most gorgeous creation in this world!

Bye from me till I visit my next destination and come back with stories more galore!

Memories



Sagarika Sanyal
Class 10

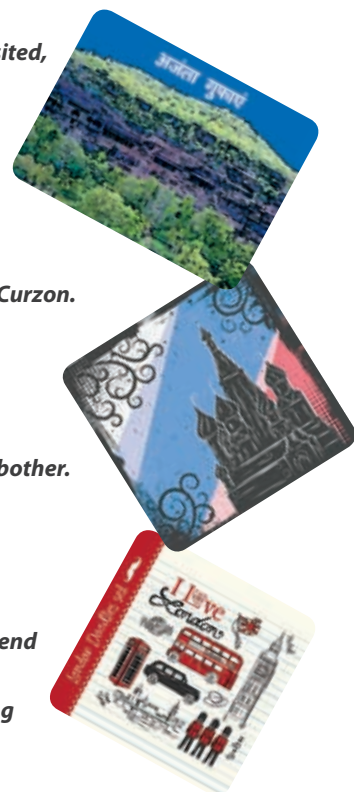
*I gazed at the sea waves, but they
Were out of my view when I went far
I looked at the Ajanta Caves, but couldn't
See them anymore when I came home after an hour.*

*The snowy Kremlin of Moscow I had visited,
But it was gone when I toured Kuskovo
Where Shermetev had resided*

*In Auckland I met a person
A smiling friend he was-
But I couldn't see him anymore 'cause-
In England I went to visit the Palace of Curzon.*

*The whole world I had travelled,
Everything had me baffled.
But I couldn't see everything together,
That was the only thing that made me bother.*

*And then I closed my eyes, and opened
A small suitcase of my mind;
Together I saw -
the waves, the snow, the palace, the friend
And all the sceneries.
Then I came to know that, the best thing
In life is -The Small Suitcase of mind-
Memories!*



From a Teacher's Diary



Sketch by Andrei Garzon

My long journey as a teacher began some 18 years back in Moscow where I started my career with the Embassy of India (EOI) School while I was a research scholar in the Institute of Oriental Studies. Later I joined the Slavic Anglo-American School followed by other Russian schools. So, having a vast experience in dealing with different types of students, I can share some of my experience with you.

Everywhere in the world the students are almost the same. They are friendly, playful, impulsive and even empathetic at times. Unlike our EOI school children, the Russian children are lucky to have 3 months of summer holidays along with winter, fall and spring holidays.

I love to meet my Russian students after long summer months with a good suntan, blonde hair with beautiful blue eyes and pink lips. They usually carry a huge bouquet of flowers on the 1st of September. They are basically obedient and cooperative with a foreign teacher like me.

I rather appreciate the sense of humors of my students. Sometimes I couldn't even give them low marks for not doing their homework, because their excuses are so funny. If it's a Monday the best excuses are - 'forgot all the notebooks at *da-cha*'; 'yesterday was aunt Polly's birthday, indigestion after eating a huge cake'. But the most hilarious one came from one of my favourite student who happens to be a good singer. Once he was absent from my lessons for some 4-5 days. At the examination hall he was little bit nervous but as usual cheerful. Later while checking his answer sheet, I burst into laughter. He wrote, 'Ma'am, I couldn't answer anything as I went to Sochi Olympics to sing at the inaugural and closing ceremony. Promising you that I will fetch the highest mark in the next quarter. But for this time, please give me the pass marks!' Was there any option left for me, other than giving him the pass marks? But the boy kept his promise.

There were quite a few students from the African continent when I used to work at EOI School. Teaching them Indian syllabus was a hard job for other subject teachers as well. But for me as a History teacher, the job was in particular challenging. They had to learn from Harappa and Mohenjo-daro civilization to the Mauryan dynasty ending with Mahatma Gandhi! Sometimes they wrote that Kanishka, Ashoka and Bimbisara, all of them were cousin brothers. I couldn't even scold them properly. Because starting a day with an Indian prayer and national anthem and finishing with the lesson of Indian constitution was certainly not easy for them!

Sudeshna Aurangabadkar



Halloween celebrations



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Vice President - Vishnu Kant Kushwaha

OUR BUDDING TALENTS

Aaratrika congratulates our young talents and wishes them great success in their events to reach new highs in sporting careers and make the Indian Diaspora proud!

Ayanna Chatterjee started training in gymnastics at the age of 5 years. Now at 7, she actively participates in various championships. In May this year, she won distinctions at the Rhythmic gymnastic championships held at Krasnagorsk (Moscow region) in the age group of 6-7 years.



"I like when people clap me after my performance. I want to become a champion like Alina Kabaeva!"



"Every day I go straight from school to the skating rink, and I train until evening. I do ballet twice a week, and other trainings. I don't really have a lot of extra time. Right now I want to go to the nationals at a higher level, and maybe one day go to the Olympics."

Roman Verma is 12 years old and plays football for the "Strogino FC" in the Junior Russian Football League. He is one of the key players to bring his club to the 5th position scoring against the grands like Spartak FC, CSKA FC, Lokomotive FC and Dynamo FC. This year, he is the highest goal scorer of his team and his coach sees very big potential to be a great player and represent the country in World Cup!

"I always play forward or in the midfield although sometimes my coaches like to rotate all the players in different positions. I have played in defense as well but I do enjoy the thrills of offense and I have scored many goals for my team. My favorite player is James Rodriguez of Columbia."



Yash Dasgupta, 12 years old, has a passion for horses. He started Equestrian sport as a hobby but soon took it up seriously. He trains at the famous Equestrian Sport Club "Izmailovo" and represents it in various championships. This year, he won the Silver medal at the Moscow Open Championship in the junior group. Besides this, he loves tennis and rap music.



"Many people simply ride horse for pleasure, but as a sport it is a difficult one. Your results depend not only on your performance but also on the mood of your horse on a particular day. Sometimes they refuse to jump a hurdle if distracted or nervous. You need to have a good connection with the horse to make it comfortable and confident. I love challenges as they are highly motivating."

Olympics is Off My To Do List, Thanks to Sochi



The Olympic Games are a major event for any country. But if you haven't been there it is hard to realize their significance and the grandeur. I arrived in Sochi on the 27th January, 2014 and came here to work as the only Indian volunteer. In a couple of days, I received the accreditation and the uniform and was ready to work. My accreditation read that I was a VMO (Venue Medical Officer) – assistant to the doctor in chief, though technically I was a translator and helped in communication between injured sportsmen, their teams and the medical crew. I was stationed at the "Rosa Khutor" Extreme Park, which had two stadiums holding the most spectacular competitions: namely HAM (Half-pipe, Acrobatics, Mogul) and PSX (Parallel slalom, Ski-cross, Parallel giant slalom, Slope style, Snowboard-cross). My work wasn't the best job one could ask for, as I always had to communicate with badly injured sportsmen and see their dreams of winning a medal shattered. From the medical team I learned that ironically the only thing that

helps when a sportswoman is lying before you with a broken neck and eyes full of tears, is the sense of humor and usually it works better than painkillers. So, had to cheer up the patients with a joke or two.

I was lucky to watch the opening ceremony live, which was truly 'mind-blowing'. The unopened ring didn't affect it a bit. Probably, it was the best thing that happened in Sochi. The atmosphere was very lively and friendly and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. Time flew and soon it was time to depart. By that time, the strain from working round the clock took its toll and most of us fell ill in the last days. It was a great experience working as a volunteer which completely changed our mindset and outlooks on professional sports and we returned home much more motivated and compassionate.

*Richik Sengupta, 5th year student
MSc. Maths, PFUR Moscow*

Life Painted with Every Colour of the Vibgyor



For centuries, Madhubani painting was addressed to the gods and goddesses, both prompted by and a key component of a family's interwoven daily activities and spiritual and ritual life. The painting was traditionally done on freshly plastered mud walls and floors of huts, but now they are also done on cloth, handmade paper and canvases. It is believed that Madhubani painting tradition started when Raja Janak commissioned local artists to paint murals in his palace in preparations for the marriage of his daughter Sita to Lord Ram.

I learnt Madhubani painting while I grew up in Bokharo. My sister and sister-in-law are very good artists too. I am passionate about

Madhubani paintings as it speaks of tradition of my region, and the fact that a painting can tell a story. During weddings in Bihar, the bride and groom stay in 'Kohbar Ghar' or the nuptial chamber, where the walls are essentially painted in Madhubani paintings with Sun, Moon, Stars, Fishes (considered shubh), Bamboo shoots (since they are long, signifies long life), Tortoise (also long life). This form of painting is a living language - with its own distinctive rules, grammar, meaningful images, icons, and motifs.

*Pushplata Mishra
Madhubani painter*



Lord Ganesha with his wives Riddhi (wealth and prosperity) and Siddhi (intellectual and spiritual powers)

Moscow Durga Puja bridges Russia - India relations.

And here are some Indians who have excelled in foreign soil which makes Indians loved and respected in Russia. Their contribution is indeed praiseworthy.

R. Baskaran, Member, Board of Director, Universal Food Technologies



Hails from Chennai in India, earned his PhD in Agriculture from the Peoples' Friendship University (PFUR) and has been living in Moscow for over 40 years. He is a multi-talented – Russian language is as good as native, translated books from various fields like Biography of Mahatma Gandhi, Psychology of Adolescence, History of World War II from Russian to Tamil while with Progress Publishers, was a radio anchor, a talented photographer. He loves to watch movies and is always updated on the latest releases!

Mr. R. Baskaran entered the tea business and has risen to be one of the most respected names in the Russian tea market. He took to new heights the name of J.V. Gokal,

one of the most reputed names in the Indian tea industry in Russia and CIS. He is indeed an encyclopedia on tea. His thoughts on the tea market were that, "The market will surely repay if you are dedicated. So proper pricing, smart marketing and strategic planning through dedicated honest work can help India do well in the tea market globally. I hope that India and Russia trade relations will reach new heights as the potential is truly immense."

"It was Mr. T. K. Chakraborty (Ex-Director of Tea Board in Moscow), I call him Dada, who introduced us to Durga Puja in the second half of the nineties. Ever since then we have been active participant, especially my wife Raji who looks to offering pushpanjali and preparing the bhog on Navami. Do you know that she was mistaken for a Bengali? Durga Puja is a social and cultural event uniting every one. We hope to be a part of this celebration always and propagate, and try and bring in more people."

Dr. A.S. Saravanan, Orthopedic Surgeon

Moscow Regional Research Clinical Institute named after M.F.Vladimirsky, a State Budgetary Healthcare Institution

Another Chennaite amongst us, who studied medicine in India and came to Russia for a Ph.D and decided to stay back. Today he is a known name among Russian doctors and his colleagues rightly refer to him as 'our treasure'. He initiated the process of establishing the Centre for Research and Studies in his institute for the doctors from the region.

Dr. Saravanan is a simple person, so truly enlightened, who believes in serving mankind through his services. He says, "Being a doctor is indeed the noblest of profession! My dream? To



establish a hospital in India which would provide high quality treatment and yet be inexpensive. I have a team who are already working on this project."

A believer in the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa, he quotes the Mahatma, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." He also says, "Love your profession."

The doctor wishes our readers *ni boleite!* Stay healthy. We also wish him, his wife Olga and 9 month old Nikhil a very happy Puja.

Dr. Rameshwar Singh, President, Disha



Dr. Rameshwar Singh & Nadya receiving GIA award in Kochi (Kerala), 2013

Hails from Sultanpur in U.P. in India and has been living in Russia for the last 32 years. He completed his Masters in Linguistics from PFUR and later Ph.D. in Philology from the prestigious Moscow State University. Now married over 25 years, he and his wife Nadya brought up their children, Amit and Rati, in cultural harmony while teaching them good values of both the cultures. The couple is famously known for their strong advocacy in giving new dimensions for strengthening the relationship between

the people of India and Russia and has founded the popular organization "DISHA". In 2013, the Global Indian Association (GIA) awarded Dr. Singh for his outstanding contribution to the community affairs.

With the democratic reforms Russia, there have been many changes in the country. This summer, Dr. Rameshwar Singh was nominated for the Moscow City Council (MosGorDuma)

elections. This is the first time in the history of Russia that a person of Indian origin contested for a seat in the Primaries as an independent candidate. "Aaratrika" met this humble gentleman and gave a few questions.

"Aaratrika": What motivated you to enter politics in Russia?

Dr. R.S.: "Personally, from the very beginning of my teen age I was groomed as a social activist with a clear vision in world peace and human rights. I have lived in Russia for more than half of my life and I feel it is my duty to serve the local people, who have given me so much in my life. The support of the local Russians motivated me".

"Aaratrika": What would you like to tell your supporters?

Dr. R.S.: "As an independent candidate, it is very difficult to win over other seasoned politicians in the first contest. But

I want to assure my supporter that I will continue to stand up and speak out about the problems of our society and the solutions that will be necessary to ensure a better future of our residents."



Wishing Moscow Durga Puja Committee a very happy Silver Jubilee!

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With best wishes from Sanjay Yadav & family

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হাঙ্গিলাম IFS পরীক্ষার জন্য, এ পরীক্ষা দেবার সময় হঠাত্‌ দিল্লি থেকে শমন এল উচ্চশিক্ষার জন্য মস্কোয় যাওয়ার। তখন মস্কোয় দুর্গা পূজা হত না, দুর্গা পূজায় উপস্থিত থাকার সুযোগ হয়েছিল ১৯৮১ সালে কলকাতায় গিয়ে, ১৬ বছরের বিরতির পর। তাই ১৯৯০ সালে সোভিয়েত কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতি পাওয়ার পর মস্কোয় পূজা আয়োজনের কথা যখন ওঠে আমরা সকলে বিপুল উত্সাহ নিয়ে লেগে পড়লাম। মস্কোয় একটা টেকনিক্যাল কলেজে হল ভাড়া নিয়ে দুর্গা পূজা শুরু হয়। উদ্যোক্তাদের মধ্যে প্রথমেই নাম করতে চাই ভারতীয় দূতাবাসের শ্রী সন্তোষ গাঙ্গুলির। তাছাড়া, বিশেষ করে উল্লেখ করতে চাই যে, এ কাজে সে সময় থেকে সর্বদা আমাদের সঙ্গে রয়েছে রামকৃষ্ণ মিশন। মিশনের প্রধান - স্বামী লোকেশ্বরানন্দ আমাদের সেই প্রথম পূজায় উপস্থিত ছিলেন। আজও মস্কোর দুর্গা পূজায় আমাদের সঙ্গে রয়েছেন স্বামী জ্যোতিরপানন্দ। তাঁর সাহায্য ছাড়া মস্কোয় দুর্গা পূজার কথা কল্পনাই করা যায় না।

বিশেষ করে মনে পড়ে ১৯৯৩ সালের দুর্গা পূজার কথা। তিন বছর ঐ টেকনিক্যাল কলেজে পূজা আয়োজন করার পর, চতুর্থ বছর, শেষ মুহূর্তে তারা আর হল ভাড়া দিতে রাজি হল না। অত কম সময়ের মধ্যে নতুন জায়গা খুঁজে পাওয়া সম্ভব ছিল না।



অনেকের মনেই তখন এ চিন্তা এসেছিল - দুর্গা পূজা কি এবার মস্কোয় হবে না!! তবে, মনে হয়, মা দুর্গার আশীর্বাদ ছিল, তিনিই উপায় করে দিয়েছিলেন। সে সময় মস্কোয় ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত ছিলেন শ্রী রণেন সেন। তাঁর স্ত্রী শ্রীমতী কল্পনা সেন আমাদের সকলের সাথে সমানভাবে পূজার আয়োজনে অংশ নেন। তাঁদের কল্যাণে সে বছর পূজা হয়েছিল দূতাবাসে, যা একটা ব্যতিক্রম বলা যেতে পারে। আমার মনে হয়, এর দ্বারা শ্রী রণেন সেন প্রমাণ করে দিয়েছিলেন যে, ভারত সত্যিই ধর্ম-নিরপেক্ষ দেশ, ধর্ম-নিরাসক্ত নয়। এখানে কাজের মেয়াদ শেষ হওয়ার পর মস্কো থেকে বিদায় নেওয়ার সমারোহে মস্কো দুর্গা পূজা কমিটির তরফ থেকে তাঁদের ধন্যবাদ জানিয়ে এ কথাটাই আমি তাঁকে বিশেষ করে বলেছিলাম।





টুকরো ভাবনা, কিছু ছন্দ, তত্ত্বজাল

-বিশ্বরূপ সান্যাল

একটা শতাব্দীর এক চতুর্থাংশ পেরিয়ে আসা হল প্রায়। প্রথম মস্কোর দুর্গাপূজার থেকে চব্বিশ শরত পেরিয়ে এই পঁচিশতম আয়োজন।

সেটা ১৯৯০ সাল। যারা সে পৃথিবীতে বাস করেন নি, তাঁদের পক্ষে বোঝা সম্ভব নয়, ১৯৯০ আর ২০১৪-র মধ্যে পার্থক্য কতটা। বাহ্যিক, আত্মিক, মানবিক, মানসিক- সব দিক থেকেই সেটা অন্য ভুবন। ব্যক্তিজীবনেও, বিশ্বপ্রেক্ষিতেও।

সোভিয়েত ইউনিয়ন তখন তার বুননের প্রতিটি জায়গাতে চাপ অনুভব করছে, দেশটা সংস্কারের পথে ঠিক কোথায় শেষ অবধি দাঁড়াবে, তার নিশানা জরীপ করছেন পৃথিবীর সর্বত্র দণ্ড- মুণ্ডের কর্তারা। কারন, এ দেশটা ঠিক কোন চেহারাতে থিতু হবে, তার ওপর নির্ভর করবে দুনিয়ার অনেক কিছু।

তথ্য প্রযুক্তি তখন একেবারে আঁতুড়ে বলা যায়। মোবাইল ফোন তখন মুষ্টিমেয় অতি ধনীদেব সম্পদের সূচক, কম্পিউটার- ও তাই। ইন্টারনেট সাধারণের কাছে আসতে আরও বছর ১০ দেরি।

মনে পরে, হয়ত জানা গেলো- অমুকে দেশ বা বিদেশ থেকে অমুক গানের ডিস্ক এনেছে। সিডি নয়, ভাইনাইল ডিস্ক। তাকে বাড়িতে ফোন করে, একাধিকবার না পেয়ে বারতা রেখে, হয়ত এক মাস বাদে তার বাড়ি গিয়ে সেটি শোনার সুযোগ হত, সাথে কখনো কখনো তার পরিবারের গজগজানি... ক্যাসেট- এ তুলতে দেওয়া হবে কি না, তার নিশ্চয়তা ছাড়াই। এখন... ইন্টারনেট- এ যে কোনও গান, বই, ফিল্ম পেয়ে যাওয়া কয়েক মিনিটের ব্যাপার।

আমাদের ছাত্রাবস্থায় প্রতি গ্রীষ্মে সবার দেশে যাওয়ার রীতি ছিলনা। যারা যেত, বাকিরা মুখিয়ে থাকতো তাদের অপেক্ষায়। কি বই আনবে, নতুন দেশ পত্রিকার সংখ্যা আনবে কি না, সমরেশ মজুমদারের কালপুরুষ বা কালবেলা... আর ভাবতো সেগুলো সবার আগে হস্তগত করার নানান ফন্দি ফিকির।

এমন-ও হত, কোনও খিলার তিন বা চার ভাগে ছিঁড়ে তিন- চার জন একসাথে পড়া হত। ফ্রেডরিক ফরসাথ-এর ডগস অফ ওয়ার এভাবে পড়েছিলাম- যার শেষ ভাগটা দিয়ে আমাকে পড়তে শুরু করতে হয়েছিল।

আমাদের এক দাদা সন্ধ্যা হলে স্নান করে গায়ে এসেম্স দিয়ে পার্লিক ফোন থেকে বান্ধবীকে ফোন করত। তিন মিনিটে ২ কোপেক। আমরা দুট্টু ছিলাম, ওনার জন্য ২ কোপেক-এর মুদ্রা জমাতাম। বিনিময়ে নানান সুযোগ সুবিধা পাওয়া যেত।

বাঙালি কয়েক জন একত্রে বাস করতে শুরু করলে, বাধা যদি না থাকে, তাহলে দুর্গাপূজা একটা শুরু হয়ে যায়। মস্কো- ই বা ব্যতিক্রম থাকে কেন?

১৯৯০ সালে বিধি নিষেধ অনেক কেটে গেছিল। আর তার মাঝেই-

প্রভাতের একটি রবিরশ্মি

রুদ্ধদ্বারের নিম্নপ্রান্তে তির্যক হয়ে পড়েছে,

সন্মিলিত জনসংঘ আপন নাড়ীতে নাড়ীতে যেন শুনতে পেল

সৃষ্টির সেই পরম বাণী,

‘মাতা, দ্বার খোল’।

দ্বার খুলে গেলো...

উৎসাহী যারা ছিলেন, আজ কেউ কেউ তাঁদের মধ্যে ইহলোক ত্যাগ করেছেন। মস্কো ছেড়েছেন আরও অনেক বেশী। তা সত্ত্বেও, ২৫ বছর পরন্তু যারা এই উদ্যোগ ভাসিয়ে এনেছেন, তাঁদের কৃতিত্ব- কে প্রণাম।

কেউ কি জানত, সেদিনের সেই শুরু পঁচিশতম বার অবধি যাবে?

আমাদের মাঝে কেউ -ই ত বলীবর্দ গণংকার ছিলোনা, যে বলে দেবে এই কর্মকাণ্ডের আয়ু কতটা।

বর্ষাশেষে বঙ্গদেশে শরতের মেঘ আকাশে ভাসলে উৎসবের আমেজ একটা এসে পড়েই।

কালো মেঘের কোলটি জুড়ে

আলো আবার চোখ চেয়েছে

মিশির যমী জমিয়ে ঠোঁটে

শরতরানী পান খেয়েছে

মেশা মিশি কাল্লা হাসি

মরম তাহার বুঝবে বা কে

এক চোখে সে কাঁদে যখন

আরেকটি চোখ হাসতে থাকে...



বিদেশে বাস করলে দেশের কথা মনে আসেই। বিশেষ করে উৎসবের সময়। হয়তো সেই শূন্যতা পূরণেরই চেষ্টা এই দুর্গাপূজার আয়োজন।

মানুষের আয়ু নাকি শত শরত... যদিও দুঃখী- সুখী- ব্রষ্টাচারীরা অত দিন বাঁচেনা। মরনের আগে বোকা চোখে দেখে- সমস্তই অসম্পূর্ণ। চাঁদ- সূর্য-তারা অসংলগ্ন বালি হয়ে উড়ে যায়। ভোলা যায়না কেবল- মুকুতা, সন্তাপ, উল্লাস, আরও কত কি, যা ঘটে যায় জীবনে। মাঝে মাঝে টের পাওয়া যায়- কোনও কোনও সঙ্গির হাত ফসকে গেছে, হারিয়ে গেছে সময়ের খর স্রোতে, কোন পাড়ে ঠেকবে বলে- সে পাড় কি ইহলোকে, নাকি অন্য কোথাও, অন্য কোন খানে?

কৃতজ্ঞতা স্বীকার-লেখাটিতে চেনা- অচেনা কিছু লেখক- কবিদের মনে আসা কিছু টুকরো ব্যবহার করেছে, চর্চা না থাকায় মনে করতে পারছিনা কোনটি কার থেকে। গদ্যে লেখা প্রায় সবটা নিজের, পদ্য-গুলি অন্যদের। প্রথম- টি শিশুতীর্থ- থেকে। বাকিগুলি মনে করতে পারছিনা।



আমার পূজার দিনগুলো কলকাতা থেকে বর্ণালী মজুমদার

আমাদের কয়েক বছরের
মস্কোর জীবনে দুর্গাপূজার
কথা কখন ভুলতে পারবনা।
দুর্গাপূজা আসার বেশ
কয়েক মাস আগেই মিটিং

আরম্ভ হয়ে যেত। পূজা, সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান নিয়ে আলোচনা
চলতো দেবী কাফে-র সিঙ্গারা বা ভাজা - ভুজির সাথে, শেষ
হত চা পর্ব দিয়ে। এর পর রিহাসাল। বাচ্চাদের একটা
নাটক, বড়দের একটা। দেবাশিস পরিচালনায়, স্মিতা নৃত্য
পরিচালনা, দেবারতি আর তুষ্কীক গানে। পার্থ, জয়,
কৌশিক, সুমিত, নিতিন, দেবাশিস ধর, আরও অনেকে
স্টেজ- এর সরঞ্জাম তৈরিতে হাত দিত।

দেবপক্ষে তৃতীয়া বা চতুর্থী-তে আমি নারকোল নাড়ু
বানাতাম। পঞ্চমী- ষষ্ঠীতে ঠাকুরের মণ্ডপ তৈরি হত। দুই
অরুণ, অরিজিত, দুর্গা, আরও অনেকে মিলে মণ্ডপ তৈরি
করত। আমি, জ্যোতিবৌদি, সান্ত্বনাবৌদি, মৌ, চক্রবর্তীবৌদি,
রীতিবৌদি, মিতালী, দেবারতি, দত্তবৌদি মিলে ফল কাটা
ইত্যাদি করতাম। সাথে এসে হাত মেলাত মঞ্জুলিকা, সুদেষ্কা,
শ্রাবণী, তনু, আরও অনেকে। চন্দনবাটা, মালা গাঁথা এই সব
করতো রামকৃষ্ণ মিশনের মহারাজ স্বামী জ্যোতিরূপানন্দ-র
রুশ ভক্তরা। মহারাজ আসতেন, পুরো পূজার বিধি বলে, সঙ্গে
বসে থেকে রথীনদাকে দিয়ে পূজাটা করাতেন। রথীনদার রুশ
স্ত্রী লেনাবৌদি সহ আমরা সবাই তাতে সাহায্য করতাম। রিক্সু
রাখতো হিসেব। ওর বর মইসেস-এর দেশ কলম্বিয়া থেকে
অবর্ণনীয় সুন্দর ফুল আসত। যেমন রং, তেমন গন্ধ সেই
ফুলের। সুদেষ্কা, চক্রবর্তী- বৌদি, আত্রেয়ী- বৌদি, জ্যোতি-
বৌদি, রীতি- বৌদি, সুমনা ও আরও অনেকে ভোগ রান্না

করে আনত। অভিজিৎ, উল্লী, সুরেশ আমাদের বাড়ি থেকে
নিয়ে আসা, পৌঁছে দেবার জন্য সব সময় তৈরি থাকত।
দাদারাও সবাই আমাদের কাজে সাহায্য করার জন্য সব সময়
তৈরি রাখতেন নিজেদের। চক্রবর্তীদা, নন্দনদা, প্রিশ্বিদা,
রতনদা, বিশ্বাস দা, দত্ত দা, ধুবদা- এদের কথা কখনো
ভুলবনা। মেডিক্যাল ছাত্র-ছাত্রী আর্য, সূর্য, তুষ্কীক, দীনেশ,
অরিজিৎ, অরুণ্য, সুমন, প্রসেনজিত, তৃষা, সুমনা, ছোট
দেবস্মিতা পূজার কাজে সব সময় আমাদের সাহায্য করত।

নবমীর দিন আনন্দমেলায় সবাই খাবার বানিয়ে এনে বেচত
আর দেশি- বিদেশী রান্নার প্রতিযোগিতায় যোগ দিত। মইসেস
তার কলম্বিয়ান সুস্বাদু এস্পানাদার জন্য প্রাইজ-ও জিতেছিল।
বাংলাদেশী সালমার হালিম ছিল মুগ্ধ করা। ঝক, রিচিক,
পলিনা, অর্ক মিলে জল আর কোন্ড ড্রিঙ্ক- এর দোকান দিয়ে
খুব লাভ করত। দৈনিকের খাওয়া দাওয়ার ব্যবস্থাটা দেখত
দুর্গা আর সুদীপা। নিতিন, অলোক, পুন্ডরি, প্রদ্যুত, উল্লি,
সুরেশ পূজার জন্য টাকা, লটারির ব্যবস্থা করত। লটারিতে
বেশ আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার- ও থাকত। সন্ধ্যাবেলার সাংস্কৃতিক
অনুষ্ঠান দেবস্মিতা, সুদেষ্কা, স্মিতা, দেবাশিস সেনগুপ্ত মিলে
আয়োজন করত, কে ভি স্কুলের বাচ্চারাও নাচে গানে অংশ
নিত।

দশমীর দিন বিসর্জন- এর পর সন্ধ্যায় আরম্ভ হতো বহু
প্রতীক্ষিত সেই নাটক। প্রথমে বাচ্চাদের, পরে বড়দের।
আমাদের মেক আপ করাতো লালি, নাতাশা, ওল্লা, স্মিতা,
সুদেষ্কা। একবার একটা নাটকে আমি আর পাপু স্বামী- স্ত্রী
সেজেছি, পাপু বেচারির বয়স তখন ১৯ আর আমি ওর চেয়ে
অনুত্ত ১৫ বছরের বড়।

সবশেষে বলি পূজার পত্রিকার কথা। প্রত্যেক বছর নতুন
করে সেজে এটার প্রকাশ হতো, এখনো হচ্ছে। তাই ২৫ তম
পূজাবার্ষিকী-তে রইল সবাইকে অনেক ভালবাসা ও শুভেচ্ছা।
সবার কথা হয়তো বললাম না, কারণ ৮ বছরের ব্যবধান
অনেক কিছু ভুলিয়ে দিয়েছে। সবার কাছে এর জন্য
ক্ষমাপ্রার্থী।



শারদ শুভেচ্ছা

আনন্দময়ীর আগমনে সারা
দেশ আনন্দে ভরে ওঠে,
ধনী-নির্ধন নির্বিশেষে
ছোটবেলা থেকেই দেখে
আসছি শারদ উৎসবের এই

আনন্দ কি ভাবে সবাই সবার সাথে ভাগ করে নেয়া উপহার আদান প্রদান,
ষষ্ঠীর দিন এক টুকরো হলেও নতুন কাপড় অঙ্গে তুলে নেওয়া, খাওয়া-
দাওয়া ও খাওয়ানো-দাওয়ানো সবটাই খুব সমষ্টিগত আনন্দমেলা বলা যায়।
মনে পড়ে, পূজো আসছে পূজো আসছে এই ব্যাপারটাই ছিলো একটা অন্য
রকম গন্ধ মাখা রোদ্দুরটাও ছিলো অদ্ভুত সোনালী। আকাশটা এতো নীল আর
সাদা হালকা মেঘের উড়াল যে মনটাই গেয়ে উঠতো 'বাজলো তোমার
আলোর বেণু'। মামা বাড়ি থেকে নতুন জামা আসতো, কেনা হতো নতুন
জুতো। শপিং মল ছিলোনা। কিন্তু ছিলো আলোয় সাজানো দোকান। কী ভীড় সে
সব দোকানো পূজোর ঠিক আগে আগে সে সব দোকানে ভীড় আরো বাড়তো
কারণ কর্তারা বোনাস পেতেন আর গিম্মিরা সেই নিয়ে কাচা-বাচা সমেত

ছুটতেন পূজোর বাজার করতো। আমাদের-ও তার ব্যতিন্দম ছিলোনা। তাড়া
তাড়ি পা বড়ো হয়ে যায় বলে ছোটদের জুতো ও জামা কেনা হতো একটু
বড়ো মাপের। তেমন ফ্যাসন সচেতন ছিলোনা সেই সময়ের শহরটা। আজকের
ছেলে মেয়েরা এ সব শুনলে হাসবে।

আবার আসছে শারদ উৎসব, আসছেন আনন্দময়ী মা। ঢাকের কাঠিতে টান
পড়লো বলো সারা দুনিয়াটাই বদলে গেলো এই তিরিশ-চল্লিশ বছরে, তো
আমাদের দেশ তার ব্যতিক্রম হবে কি করে? এখন থিমের পূজো,
প্রতিযোগিতা পূজো কমিটি গুলির মধ্যে দর্শনাধী টানা নিয়ে, প্রতিমা দর্শন
করার জন্য পায়ে নতুন জুতোর ফোসকা নিয়ে ঘুরে বেড়াবার কোনো
প্রয়োজন নেই, সব দেখা যায় টেলিভিশনে, শারদ অর্ধার নতুন বাংলা গান
উধাও, সব-ই প্রায় বদলে গেছে, ডিজিটাল প্রযুক্তিতে মা এখন নবকলেবরা।
তবু তিনি অসুর-দলনী, অশুভের বিনাশকারিনী। এই উৎসবের ছোঁয়া সুদূর
রাশিয়াতেও যাঁরা নিয়ে গিয়ে পৌঁছে দিয়েছেন প্রবাসী বন্ধুদের, সেই উদ্যমী
উৎসাহীদের সাধুবাদ জানাতেই হবে। আমার প্রাণ ভরা ভালোবাসা ও প্রীতি
পাঠালাম। সবাই খুব ভালো থাকবেন, আনন্দে থাকবেন, মুখগুলি অন্তত এই
চারটে দিন আলোময় যাতে হয়ে ওঠে তার আয়োজন করবেন সাধ্য মতো।

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दुर्गा पूजा विभिन्नता में एकता



संपूर्ण भारत के विभिन्न राज्यों तथा विभिन्न भाषाओं के मध्य नवदुर्गा के ये नौ दिन तथा देवी उपासना के साथ सम्पूर्ण भारत के कोने कोने में विजयदशमी के भव्य समारोह भारत में अन्तर्निहित

विभिन्नता में एकता को दर्शाती है। आदि काल से ही देवी पार्वती के इन नौ रूपों की उपासना भाद्रपद मास के शुक्ल पक्ष की प्रथम से नवमी तक की जाती है। संपूर्ण भारत में इस पर्व को अनन्य श्रद्धा तथा भक्ति भाव से मनाया जाता है। संपूर्ण भारत में पुरव से पश्चिम तथा उत्तर से दक्षिण में इस पर्व को अपनी-अपनी तरह से आयोजित किया जाता है। १८८१ में श्री रामकृष्ण परमहंस तथा स्वामी विवेकानंद जी ने बंगाल में दक्खिनेश्वर के कली मंदिर से इसका प्रचार तथा प्रसार आरम्भ किया था। नौ दिनों के लिए शक्ति के विभिन्न स्वरूपों की प्राण प्रतिष्ठा तथा विजय दशमी को विसर्जन की प्रथा सम्पूर्ण भारत में चल निकली।

विभिन्न भाषाएँ पर उद्देश्य तथा उपासना एक, भारतीय विभिन्नता में एकता को दर्शाते हैं। पश्चिम भारत में मुख्या गुजरात में दुर्गा पूजा का आयोजन बड़े ही आकर्षक ढंग से किया जाता है। यहाँ पर स्त्री-पुरुष तथा बच्चे बड़े ही आकर्षक वस्त्र धारण कर गरबा नृत्य तथा डंडिया रास खेलते हैं, तथा पूर्ण आस्था तथा विश्वास से देवी पार्वती को प्रसन्न करने का प्रयास करते हैं।

उत्तर भारत के विभिन्न राज्यों में इस पर्व को नव दुर्गा के नाम से संबोधित किया जाता है। रामायण के अनुसार भगवन श्री राम ने रावण के वध से पूर्व देवी पार्वती के इन शक्ति रूपों की उपासना कर उनको प्रसन्ना किया तदोपरांत विजय दशमी को रावण तथा कुम्भकरण आदि का वध किया। इसी उपलक्ष में यह पर्व हर्षहुल्लाहस से आयोजित किया जाता है। अधर्म पर धर्म की इस विजयको आज भी लोग एक आश्चर्यजनक घटना मानते हैं।

दक्षिण भारत में इस पर्व को नवरात्रि बोला जाता है। भारत के इन राज्यों में देवी दुर्गा के साथ-साथ लक्ष्मी तथा देवी सरस्वती का भी पूजन किया जाता है। साथ ही साथ बच्चों के खिलोनों जैसे गुड्डा गुड्डिया आदि का भी पूजन किया जाता है।

सम्पूर्ण भारत में देवी के शक्ति रूपों की उपासना अधर्म पर धर्म के विजय के उद्देश्य से ही करते हैं। इस महँ पर्व में भारत एक ही सूत्र में बंधा हुआ प्रतीत होता है। तथा सम्पूर्ण भारत में विभिन्नता में एकता परिलक्षित होती है। इस प्रकार देवी इन नौ दिनों में भारत के विभिन्न धर्मों एवं जातियों के लोगों को एकत्रित करती हैं।

शालिनी त्रिपाठी

विलुप्त होती हिंदी भाषा



हमारे देश को आज स्वतन्त्र हुए ६७ साल हो गए हैं फिर भी ना जाने क्यों हिंदी भाषा आज विलुप्त सी होती जा रही है !! यह बहुत हैरानी की बात है की हम सब इसको जानते हुए भी इसका

कोई इलाज नहीं कर रहे हैं। पश्चिम देशों में जहाँ अपनी मात्र भाषा का प्रयोग एक गर्व की बात मानी जाती है वोही हमारे देश के हर शेत्र मे आज अंग्रेजी को जादा महत्व दिया जाता है।

आधुनिकता के नाम पे हम सब पश्चिम सभ्यता के अधीन हो चुके हैं और शायद इसलिए माँ बाप भी अपने बच्चों को यही सिखाते हैं की वोह अच्छी से अच्छी अंग्रेजी बोले भले ही खुद की मात्र भाषा वोह अपनाये या ना अपनाए .. क्यों हमें इतना परहेज हो गया है खूद की भाषा बोलने में ??

बड़े ही दुर्भाग्य की बात है कि हम पश्चिम सभ्यता से गलत बातों का अनुसरण करते हैं। हमारे देश में आज के वक़्त में जहाँ सभी सरकारी और गैर सरकारी संस्था में अनेक देशों की भाषा का प्रयोग किया जाता है, वहीं दूरसे देशों में सिर्फ उनके भाषा का ही प्रयोग किया जाता है। उधारण के लिए रूस ही ले लीजिए, यहाँ भी सिर्फ रूसी भाषा ही प्रयोग की जाती है कोई और भाषा नहीं।

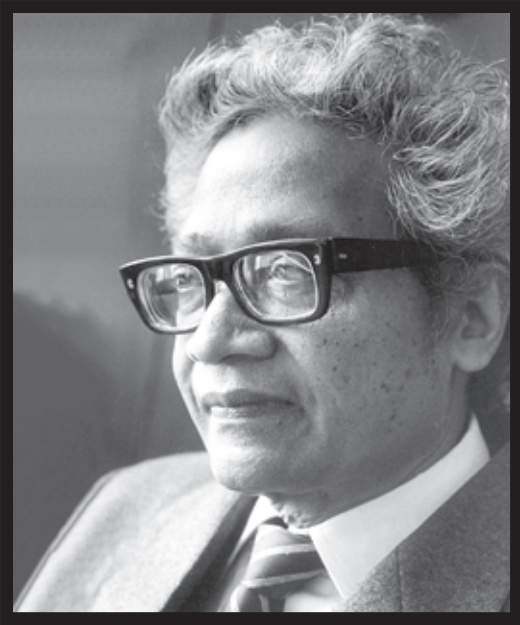
दूसरी भाषाओं का ज्ञान जरूरी है और आवश्यकता पड़ने पर उसका प्रयोग करना भी चाहिए, परन्तु अब हमें इस चीज को बदलना होगा। अपनी राष्ट्र भाषा को विलुप्त होने से बचाना होगा। अपनी भाषा का सम्मान होने से ही देश की युवा और बच्चों को इसका महत्व पता चलेगा।

आज जब दुनिया में भी हमारे राष्ट्रीय गीत को सबसे लोकप्रिय माना गया है तो हमें हमारी भाषा पर गर्व होना चाहिए नाकि उसे नाकारते हुए दुसरे भाषा की ओर आकर्षित होना चाहिए। अगर हम अपने ही भाषा को इस्तेमाल करने में कतरारेंगे तो दुसरो से क्या उम्मीद रखेंगे? हमें अपने राष्ट्र भाषा का सम्मान करना चाहिए तभी तो विश्व में यह गूँज होगी कि,

सारे जहाँ से अच्छा हिंदुस्तान हमारा।

विनीता मिश्रा





एक श्रद्धांजलि- स्वर्गीय पद्मश्री मदनलाल “मधु” भारत के एक प्रसिद्ध लेखक, कवि, पत्रकार, समालोचक और अनुवादक डॉ. मदनलाल “मधु” जी 7 जुलाई को 89 साल की उम्र में इस संसार को सदा के लिए अलविदा कह गए।

पद्मश्री डॉ. मदनलाल मधु जी दस वर्षों तक भारत के कालेजों में अध्यापन और लगभग दो वर्ष तक आकाशवाणी के जालन्धर केंद्र में काम करने के बाद तत्कालीन सोवियत सांस्कृतिक मंत्रालय के निमंत्रण पर सन् 1957 के आरम्भ में अनुवादक-सम्पादक के रूप में काम करने के लिए मास्को चले आए थे।

डॉ. मदनलाल मधु पिछले करीब 60 साल से मास्को में ही रह रहे थे। रूस में रहते हुए उन्होंने इस देश के एक सौ से अधिक लेखकों और कवियों की रचनाओं का हिन्दी में अनुवाद किया। उन्होंने सबसे पहले प्रकाशन गृह “प्रोग्रेस” और फिर “रादुगा” प्रकाशन गृह में कार्य किया। उनके द्वारा रूसी से हिन्दी में अनूदित प्रसिद्ध रूसी लेखकों और कवियों की रचनाएँ भारतीय पाठकों के लिए बड़ी संख्या में प्रकाशित की गई थीं। डॉ. मदनलाल मधु द्वारा अनूदित ये रचनाएँ भारत में दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय, जवाहरलाल नेहरू

विश्वविद्यालय और देश के कई अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों के पुस्तकालयों में पढ़ी जाती हैं। इन रचनाओं में लेव तालस्तोय के “युद्ध और शान्ति” और “आन्ना करेनिना” भी शामिल हैं। उन्होंने विश्व प्रसिद्ध रूसी कवि अलेक्सांदर पूश्किन की कविताओं और गद्य-रचनाओं का हिन्दी में अनुवाद किया है। मक्सिम गोर्की, फ़्योदोर दोस्तोयेवस्की और इवान तुर्गनेव की रचनाएँ भी उन्होंने हिन्दी पाठकों के लिए अनूदित कीं।

डॉ. मदनलाल “मधु” जी अक्सर कहा करते थे कि भारत उनकी जन्मभूमि है और रूस देश उनकी कर्मभूमि बना है। दो खण्डों में प्रकाशित अपनी आत्मकथा “यादों के धुँधले उजले चेहरे” की भूमिका में भी उन्होंने यही बात लिखी है- “भारत मेरी जन्मभूमि है और रूस में मेरे जीवन का दो-तिहाई से अधिक भाग बीता है। अतः इसे मेरी दूसरी मातृभूमि कहा जा सकता है।” इस पुस्तक के दूसरे खण्ड में रूसी-भारतीय संबंधों के विकास की कहानी का विस्तारपूर्वक वर्णन किया गया है। “मधु” जी की जीवनसाथी, तातियाना “मधु” जी ने, जो रूस के दो प्रकाशन गृहों, “प्रोग्रेस” और “रादुगा” में डॉ. मदनलाल “मधु” के साथ काम करती थीं, बताया है कि रूस देश, इस देश के लोगों की आत्मा और रूसी भाषा की बारीकियों को समझने के लिए “मधु” जी ने इस देश के कई नगरों और कस्बों की यात्राएँ की थीं। उन्होंने बच्चों के लिए रूसी लेखकों की ढेर सारी रचनाओं का बड़ी लगन व चाव के साथ हिन्दी में अनुवाद किया। इन रूसी लेखकों में कोर्नेई चुकोव्स्की, सैमुअल मर्शाक और अग्निया बरतो की रचनाएँ भी शामिल हैं।

भारत और रूस के बीच मैत्री को सुदृढ़ बनाने के उद्देश्य से डॉ. मदनलाल मधु ने मास्को में रहते अपने कुछ भारतीय साथियों के साथ मिलकर सन् 1957 में एक सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक संगठन “हिन्दुस्तानी समाज” की स्थापना की थी।

डॉ. मदनलाल “मधु” तीन से अधिक दशकों तक रूस में भारतीय समुदाय के इस सबसे पुराने संगठन के अध्यक्ष रहे थे। रूस और भारत के बीच साहित्यिक और सांस्कृतिक संबंधों को सुदृढ़ बनाने में डॉ. मदनलाल “मधु” द्वारा किए गए योगदान के लिए उन्हें भारत के एक उच्च पदक, “पद्मश्री” से सन् 1991 में और रूस के एक महत्वपूर्ण पदक, “मैत्री पदक” से सन् 2001 में सम्मानित किया गया था। डॉ. मदनलाल “मधु” जी की जान-पहचान वाले करीबी लोग उन्हें “मधु जी” कह कर ही पुकारते थे। वह बहुत ही सनिम्र स्वभाव के व्यक्ति थे। मधु जी हमारे गुरु थे और साथ ही एक बड़े परम मित्र भी थे।

डॉ. मदनलाल मधु जी अब हमारे बीच नहीं रहे हैं। उनके इस दुनिया से चले जाने से रूस में रहते हम सभी भारतीयों, मधु जी के मित्रों और परिजनों के लिए इतना बड़ा घाटा पड़ा है, जिसे कभी पूरा नहीं किया जा सकता है। मधु जी अब शारीरिक रूप में हमारे साथ नहीं रहे हैं, लेकिन उनकी याद सदा हमारे दिलों में ताज़ा रहेगी!

प्रस्तुतकर्ता: कश्मीर सिंह

डॉ. कश्मीर सिंह, पीएचडी (इतिहास)

सन् 1985 से “हिन्दुस्तानी समाज” के सदस्य। 1994 से 2004 तक “हिन्दुस्तानी समाज” के महासचिव। आजकल समाज की कार्यकारिणी समिति के सदस्य। इसके अलावा, आजकल वह “रेडियो रूस” के एक सहयोगी के रूप में काम कर रहे हैं।

मास्को में डॉ. मदनलाल मधु की सामाजिक, साहित्यिक और सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों के 55 वर्ष के कार्यकाल को समर्पित 7 मार्च, 2013 को नई दिल्ली स्थित रूस के विज्ञान एवं संस्कृति केंद्र में डॉ. मदनलाल मधु का अभिवादन करने के लिए एक साहित्यिक संध्या का आयोजन किया गया था और साथ ही डॉ. मदनलाल मधु के संस्मरणों की पुस्तक “यादों के धुँधले उजले चेहरे” का अनावरण भी किया गया था।



इस अवसर पर श्रोताओं को संबोधन करते हुए डॉ. मदनलाल मधु



“यादों के धुँधले उजले चेहरे” पुस्तक का अनावरण



डॉक्टर मधु पत्नी तातियाना के साथ

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Congratulations to the Moscow Durga Puja Committee
for successful 25 years*



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КРАТКИЙ ОБЗОР ОСНОВНЫХ МАТЕРИАЛОВ ЮБИЛЕЙНОГО ВЫПУСКА ЖУРНАЛА «ААРАТРИКА», ПОСВЯЩЕННОГО 25-ЛЕТИЮ ПРОВЕДЕНИЯ ФЕСТИВАЛЯ «ДУРГА ПУДЖА» В МОСКВЕ

Стр. 1 Дебасмита Моулик, Главный редактор.

“... мы начали проводить фестиваль в один из самых непростых для России периодов - за год до августовского путча 1991г. и за 2 года до Парламентского кризиса 1993г. Это было время, когда в магазинах не было самого необходимого и о разрешении на проведение религиозного фестиваля могли мечтать только оптимисты. В том году фестиваль состоялся лишь благодаря физической силе и душевной стойкости членов индийской диаспоры, а также постоянной поддержки Миссии Рамакришны, Посольства Индии, бизнес-сообщества, студенческого сообщества и друзей из соседних с Индией стран, и, здесь особая благодарность Бангладеш...”

Стр. 2 Свами Джотирупананда, Президент Комитета по проведению Дурга Пуджа в Москве.

“... В нашей повседневной жизни мы бываем очень загружены различными обязательствами и проводим наше время под влиянием как радостных, так и грустных моментов окружающей нас действительности. Во время Пуджи мы забываем все постороннее и поднимаем себя в более высокие сферы, мы готовы отдать свое время, деньги и душевные силы для создания радостной и благодатной атмосферы. Мы делим это состояние со всеми окружающими, мы становимся единым целым, одной душой. Неважно, кто мы при этом - индийцы, русские, представляем ли мы Бангладеш или другие страны...”

Стр. 3 Поздравления и пожелания от господина Братья Басу, Министр по туризму Правительства штата Западная Бенгалия.

Стр. 4 Господин П.С. Рагхаван, Посол Республики Индия в Российской Федерации.

“... это замечательный жизненный опыт - иметь возможность наблюдать, как празднуют Дурга Пуджа в различных странах мира и даже в тех, где индийская диаспора не так уж и многочисленна. Самым памятным для меня является фестиваль Дурга Пуджа, который мне довелось наблюдать в г. Хошимине, Вьетнам, 20 лет назад. Очень небольшая по численности индийская диаспора привлекла к организации праздничных мероприятий местное население, и, в итоге, получился грандиозный праздник для всех...”

Стр. 5 И.К. Башкирова, Генеральный Консул Российской Федерации в Республике Индия, г. Калькутта

“Лично я имею счастье наблюдать как проходит Дурга Пуджа в самом сердце Калькутты. Последние два года, которые я нахожусь в Калькутте на посту Генерального Консула, я стараюсь в дни Пуджи обязательно оставаться в городе и проводить это время с друзьями и коллегами. Честно говоря, жители Калькутты делают практически невозможное для того, чтобы праздник был максимально ярким и многоцветным...”

Стр. 6 Господин Сайфул Хок, Посол Народной Республики Бангладеш в Российской Федерации.

“...самые теплые воспоминания остались у меня о том периоде, когда представители двух наших стран работали вместе и преодолевали различные трудности при организации самого первого фестиваля Дурга Пуджа в Москве...”

Стр. 6 Госпожа Индра Савитри Тхакур - Сидья, Посол Республики Маврикий в Российской Федерации

“...Для меня большой честью является возможность поделиться своим опытом с Ааратрикой, как проходит Дурга Пуджа на Маврикии. Это событие давно уже является одним из аспектов культурной жизни нашего государства...”

Стр. 7 Господин Рави Мохан Сапкота Копила, Посол Федеральной Демократической Республики Непал в Российской Федерации

“Я счастлив наблюдать за проведением Дурга Пуджа в Москве последние 2 года. Около 400 граждан Непала проживают здесь и я, вместе со своей женой приглашаем всех на символическое праздничное угощение. Кроме того, Посольство Непала организует в эти дни фестиваль непальской кухни, на который мы приглашаем и наших российских друзей...”

Стр. 7 Господин Удаяннда Виратунга, Посол Демократической Социалистической Республики Шри Ланка в Российской Федерации

“...большой честью для меня является возможность передать поздравления по случаю празднования 25-летия проведения Дурга Пуджа в Москве. Пользуясь случаем, передаю свои искренние и теплые пожелания читателям журнала и организаторам фестиваля...”

Стр. 8 Ирина Прокофьева, профессор, МГИМО.

“...хочу выразить организаторам фестиваля искреннюю благодарность за теплый и радушный прием, оказываемый моим студентам. Участие в ваших мероприятиях вселяет в них уверенность в собственных силах и стимулирует к дальнейшим занятиям одним из потрясающих языков...”

Стр. 9 Устад Амджад Али Кхан, музыкант

“...Когда я слышу о таком количестве насилия и злодеяний, творящихся в мире сегодня, я, являясь музыкантом и артистом, начинаю задумываться о роли образования в этом мире. Мы все еще боремся за власть, благосостояние, сражаемся за религиозные взгляды. А нам нужны добрые и сочувствующие люди...”

Стр. 11 Господин Веллачами, Директор Школы при Посольстве Республики Индия в Москве.

“Культура Индии - довольно сложная и разнообразная система, в которой праздники и фестивали выполняют роль своеобразных переходов между основными аспектами жизни. Традиции празднования различных фестивалей берут начало еще с ведических времен. Фестивали стирают любые этнические разногласия и объединяют различные религиозные группы. Фестивали улучшают взаимоотношения и укрепляют связи между различными слоями общества. Фестивали позволяют живущему поколению знать и сохранять традиции... Дурга Пуджа - один из важнейших фестивалей в Индии...”

In loving memory of Dr. Hitangshu Kumar Dasgupta

11/03/1939 - 17/11/2013



Dr. H.K. Dasgupta, aka “Bishu/da” or “Mama Ji” affectionately, came to the USSR in 1963 to study journalism. After completing his graduation and later PhD from the Moscow State University, he started his professional career with the ‘New Age’ newspaper. He is one of the few Indian journalists who had the privilege to interview top Indian politicians and artists, including Smt. Indira Gandhi, Pandit Ravi Shankar and others during their visits to the USSR. He was a part of the selected few who closely interacted with the Indian cosmonauts during their final preparations before the launch and covered the press releases. He also had very good connections with the Soviet political elites. During the liberation of Bangladesh, he was actively involved in coordinating the movement with the Soviet Foreign Ministry. In 1974 he was given a big felicitation in Dhaka for his active role.

Being a good sportsman himself, he focused more on sports journalism and later became the correspondent of a number of Indian sports journals. In 1980, he comprehensively covered the Moscow Olympics and was highly appreciated for his work. He was a very simple and humble person who was always ready to help in need. He was equally loved by the younger and the older generations because of his friendly character and his charm to win confidence. Scores of Indian businessmen and students were benefitted by his help and connections. He had a great passion for music, cooking and fast driving.

Dr. Dasgupta was one of the initiators of the Hindustani Samaj in Moscow and a founder member of our Durga Puja Committee, serving as the Vice President till his last day. Those who knew him will always remember him dressed impeccably in a well tailored suit, wearing a flamboyant smile, his spirited personality and love for mankind. He will continue to live on in our memories, a spirited person whose absence shall be felt.

“After 50 years of close friendship, there seems to be a vacuum that cannot be filled by anyone else. He was a person who was never afraid of hardships and challenges. Missing him very much.”

— Dr. Rathin Chatterjee,
Ex journalist, Radio Moscow

“The bond that I and Bishumama shared was not by blood, but by heart. In the path of life at every turn I met different characters who shared their knowledge with me. He showed me that one does not need a straight backbone as long as they possess a zeal for life.”

— Debashish Sengupta, CEO, LLC Global Ventures

“Dr H. Dasgupta came to Russia as a professional and established himself as an expert in the field. However, his benevolence, love and compassion to the members of the society, soon turned him to an iconic figure of Bishuda and more dearly Bishumama to all, young and old. I last saw him in 2003, when he bid me farewell on my transfer to India and still remember his touching speech. With a heavy heart, we recently gave him farewell, on his transfer to the other heavenly world. But Bishuda/Bishumama would remain dear to us forever. Our salutations to him.”

— Tapan Chakraborty, Ex-Director,
Tea Board of India in Moscow

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25



Moscow Durga Puja Celebrations 2014

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