

# SILVER EDGE

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The  
Support Elders  
Newsletter

A bi-monthly round-up  
of the events, stories,  
learning & more at  
Support Elders.

## MD Speak

Dear Reader,

What with the pouring rains and slushy roads, one thing that warms my heart even more than a steaming cup of tea and hot, crispy bhajiyas, is the enthusiasm and eagerness that I see in our members—from participating in the events and discussions that follow to subscribing to our clubs and communities and learning sessions. The smiles on the familiar faces; the keenness to share views as well as the willingness to learn new skills is heartwarming. Our members' joie de vivre, in spite of all the odds motivates our teams to go that extra mile in every way possible. So, along with handling medical emergencies and exigencies and medical care at home, they have been coming up with a bouquet of interesting and engaging sessions, discussions and learning sessions. It encourages us no end to see our members adapt to the digital world and gradually accept it. It is not only their window to the outside world but also to their dear ones living away from them. Our members, who were part of the Support Elders family before the pandemic hit us, know how our engagements and events underwent a sea change to accommodate the new normal—from day trips, picnics, coffee mornings and classroom learning sessions we moved to the world of virtual gupshup sessions, events, clubs, and learning sessions. Social interaction is very important for emotional and cognitive wellbeing—even if it is virtual. After all, while we need to follow rules and protocol, we do not need to let the pandemic change the fundamentals of the life we knew.

So, as the Support Elders Family gears up to celebrate yet another Raising Day and Silver Connect Annual Event, let us take this new world in our stride and march forward!

Happy Reading!

Apratim Chattopadhyay

## Weathering the Covid crisis together

Getting through the second wave of Covid-19 was no mean task. As the nation was hurtling towards the second wave, team Support Elders was busy planning and devising how to get our members vaccinated at the earliest. So, the moment vaccines were made available for senior citizens, the team went all out to get our members vaccinated. New members were also vaccinated at the earliest possible opportunity in spite of the shortage of vaccines. The team ensured that our members were least inconvenienced by minimising the waiting period, being with them for the half-hour period post-vaccination, arranging transport, and so on. Along with the entire nation, we too battled the crisis—the Support Elders team bent backwards arranging for hospital beds, ICUs, oxygen cylinders and concentrators and so on. Despite the grim scenario, we expanded in different locations and are serving elders across different regions/cities.



This stands in good stead, especially for those members who request for or need inter-region medical care. We also expanded our virtual footprint, with four clubs; music, recitation and yoga classes and two cultural platforms, Choir and Recital, to bring a smiles to our members' faces as they continue to deal with with lockdown and social isolation. SE

## Friday Evening Special



### Encounters with the Environment

June 4

From a teacher to an environmental activist, our

member, **Prof. R. Ghosh** explained her efforts to help mankind push back against its own assault on nature.

### Magic of Mathematics Series 1

June 11

**Prof. I. Sarkar** took us into the realms of maths and nature; through petals and flowers into the fascinating Fibonacci sequence, the golden ratio leading to predictable patterns in everything, from atoms to

celestial bodies. Nature uses this ratio to maintain balance but does it impact our daily lives too? The enthralled audience wanted more and Prof. Sarkar promised a follow up talk. SE



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## TRAVEL DIARY

## Sandakphu Saga

*Our member, Mr A. Roy, an avid traveller, took off for a trek to Sandakphu with his classmate, way back in 1986. What an adventure it was...*

Forests and mountains have always attracted our member, Mr A. Roy. In 1986, he and a classmate of his decided to go for a trek to Sandakphu. They spent a night in Darjeeling, where they checked with the tourist information centre about the trekking route and, even though they were not quite satisfied with the information, they decided to start for Manebhanjan, from where the trek would commence. “Our trekker friends in Calcutta had cautioned us that water from the *jhoras* (mountain streams) was not safe for drinking and we had bought some white dates from New Market to help check the saliva secretion and keep us from feeling thirsty.”

They started from the Manebhanjan hotel, fully rested, for the mystic Gairibas village at 11 am, with their backpacks, a bottle of water apiece and a few boiled eggs. They enjoyed the very scenic trek, keeping an eye on the milestones to ensure that they were on the right track. Every milestone had Sandakphu written on it and they could hardly err. At around 3.30 pm, just beyond Meghma, they found the road bifurcating; the right turn going downhill into a jungle.

They had been told that they would have a descent to reach their destination and did not suspect that anything was amiss. After walking for about three or four kilometres down the hill, they found no sign of any village.

Suddenly, they discovered that the reverse side of the milestone said ‘Tonglu’. They remembered the words of caution at the information centre: “avoid the path linking Tonglu” and realised that they were quite lost.

Too exhausted to retrace their steps uphill they found another bifurcation. This time they chose a track turning left in the fond hope that it would lead to a habitation. It had got dark by then and a heavy fog was settling down, making for very poor visibility. Even with a powerful torch, they could not see beyond a metre and stumbled on the boulders before spotting a cottage in the middle of the forest. It was a PWD cottage. Emboldened, they knocked at the door. After a while, a male voice asked who they were. They said that they were trying to get to ‘Trekking’ Hut’ at Gairibas. The voice suggested that they move on, without the man even opening the door. Left with no choice they trudged on and came to another cottage and knocked; even longer. A lady with a lamp in her hand peeped through the door but would not allow them in. They pleaded and when she heard what their destination was, she pointed them ahead. Apparently it was within shouting distance for she called out to the host in the local language about the visitors who were on their way.

The invisible person yelled back that he was not bound to allow anyone after 6 pm, even if they did have a booking. The trekkers recalled that the letter confirming the booking had informed them that “hosts may not allow guests

after 6 pm”. Nevertheless, they walked down to the cottage and pleaded, explaining how they had got lost. It was 7 pm; the host heard about their route, looked visibly shaken and let them inside.

That route was dangerous not only because of the wild animals as well. He was surprised to find them unhurt. The two rested, got up the next morning and started off for Sandakphu, finally reaching their destination at 3.30 pm. The mighty peaks of Mount Everest, the clearly visible Kanchenjunga, Lhotse and Makalu that greeted them on the second day of their stay at ‘Trekking’ Hut’—the clouds were thick on day one—made it all worthwhile. On the first night they had a few foreigners (British, German, Kiwi) for company. On the second day, a Bengali family arrived and they had a good time.

It was time to return—go down and then ascend the steep path and reach Rimbick, from where they were to take a bus to the foothills. Once again, they lost their way and reached a village much below Rimbick, hungry and thirsty. They stayed at a private house for a night. Fortunately, the bus from Rimbick passed through the village and they managed to catch it the next day. The apparently much smarter Bengali family was on that bus too. Their story was even more exasperating for our duo. They had followed Mr Roy’s hunter shoe print and lost track of it mid-way. Unwittingly, they had taken the right path! SE

*(As narrated to Support Elders by our member)*



## DOWN MEMORY LANE

## Trivandrum tales

*Our member, Ms S. Bhattacharyya, lived in Trivandrum, Kerala, of the mid-sixties and has wonderful memories of the “the town of the Lord”.*

From Bhawanipore, Kolkata, to Trivandrum was a major change but our member, Ms S. Bhattacharyya, who went there with her husband after they were married, could not have loved any place more. Trivandrum, which had not been renamed Thiruvananthapuram (‘the town of the Lord’) then, was a seaside city built on seven hills—its undulating terrain and many beautiful temples made it fascinating.

The newlyweds settled in a lovely rented house with a tiled roof. Most houses in the neighbourhood were architecturally similar with large gardens in front. Their landlord was a paternal man with two young daughters, who quickly became Ms Bhattacharyya’s friends. The girls helped her to learn the local language and they went around the city, when her husband was at work. “I would unthinkingly leave my front door unlocked often. On returning, I would find our landlord sitting inside my room and keeping watch; sometimes scolding me like my father did.” The house was near the sea and visits to the pristine beaches were a must. She bought a lot of fish every time she went to the beach. “We threw some fish for the crows to eat while we descaled them.” There were the fresh vegetables in every kitchen garden and papaya-laden trees too. “I waited for the green papaya to fall on the ground because it was impossible to pluck them off the trees.”

The architecture, the historic monuments, the backwaters and the cultural heritage of the place are memories that come tumbling out of her mind. “It is nearly 60 years since we left Trivandrum and I want to go back for a visit,” she

## From Pringle case to pen holders

Give her an empty container and watch Ms Mandira De make magic. She has taken two empty Pringles containers, painted them black using poster colour. On the first she created Mandala art, dipping pencil ends in paint and making round circles, which she has surrounded with dots and circles. Mandala art helps to increase concentration. For the second container, she dried up a bunch of grapes and painted the dried up stalks yellow and the grapes red. SE

## Member-Chef

## Chicken ball Muitha

Our member, Ms S. Das Chaudhuri, was in a quandary. She had five guests for lunch on very short notice and all she had in the fridge were four or five pieces of chicken. There was no one who could run to the bazaar for her. Suddenly she thought of the popular Bengali dish, *Chitol Machher Muitha* and wondered if she could make a quick chicken ball *muitha* on those lines. What she made was a hit and it became a very popular item on her menu for meals on many occasions.

## Ingredients:

Boneless chicken: 5 pieces  
Potato: 1 medium-sized  
Salt: to taste  
Red chilli powder (optional): 1/3 teaspoon  
*Garam masala* powder: a pinch

## For gravy

Onion: 1 medium-sized  
Ginger: 1/2 inch  
Garlic: 2 cloves  
Tomato: 1 small  
*Garam masala* powder: 1/2 teaspoon

Mustard oil/white oil: 3 tablespoons  
Bay leaf: 1 medium-sized  
Salt: to taste

## Method:

Boil and mash the potato Grind the chicken pieces and add the mashed potato to it. Add salt, red chilli powder and *garam masala* powder and make small balls. Boil water in a wok and add the balls and let it cook for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, grind onion, ginger, garlic, tomato and make a paste. Remove the balls from the hot water after 10 minutes and let it cool. Heat oil in a wok and fry the balls lightly to make them nice and soft. Remove them from the wok and keep aside. Add the bay leaf in the remaining oil and put the remaining *masala* in it. Stir it till the oil separates from the *masala*. Pour a cup of hot water and add the chicken balls. Let it boil for a couple of minutes. Turn off the gas and sprinkle some *garam masala*. The tasty chicken ball *muitha* is ready. It is best served with plain rice. SE



Image Courtesy:  
Tapati Banerjee

says wistfully. Some friends still live there and a daughter of their landlord visited her in Kolkata with her husband. “Thiruvananthapuram may have changed into a swanky metropolis with multi-storeyed buildings but I am sure that I will locate my lovely home.” SE

(As narrated to Support Elders by our member)



(Images Courtesy: Pixabay)

# Big Ticket

August 13, 2021

## Movie: *Kismet*

SE Matinée celebrates India's 74th Independence Day with *Kismet*, the first blockbuster in Indian cinema, starring Ashok Kumar, Mumtaz Shanti and Shah Nawaz. The song, *Dur hato duniawalon*, from the movie which escaped the censors, was a hit, coming soon after the Quit India Movement. At screenings, the reels would be rewound and the song played multiple times on public demand.

## Club Couture

### Food for thought

Believe us, 'twas no idle chatter; it was rock solid *adda*, as Bengalis have christened it or *Gupp-Shupp* as we call it in hindi. The club went off to a chattering start with members solemnly saying that laughter is the best medicine in a good "adda" environment. Thus the *Gupp-Shupp* covered fun subjects like experiences with stealing *aachar* from their mothers' kitchen cupboards to eating different kinds of food to how they met their spouses. Did you know that even rotis



are made of rice in places in south India? How our *probashi* and Kolkata Bengali couples lived happily ever after, following a newspaper marriage?

Or even how a member fell for her best friend's brother? The next session will be about travel tales. Come join our '*chatteratti*'. It will be good for your health, heart and soul. SE

## JULY

02.07.2021

Image Courtesy: Hebi .B from Pixabay

### Magic of Mathematics Series 2: Zero The Hero

Our member Prof. Irene Sarkar, formerly with the faculty of Earth Science, IIT Roorkee, will take us through the beauty of nature from a mathematical perspective. For her the zero is the hero.



09.07.2021

Collection: Oliver Impey

### Architectural Landscape of British India

Architect and architectural historian, specialising in modern architecture, urbanism and the cultural landscape of the British empire, Dr Swati Chattopadhyay, Professor in the Department of History of Art and Architecture, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA, gives us glimpses of colonial architecture in India.



16.07.2021

Image Courtesy: Pixabay

### Celebrating a 'grand' relationship!

Our members and their grandkids put together a heartwarming show of poems, dance and songs.



23.07.2021

Image Courtesy: Pixabay

### An ode to the rains

Sing2Win, Support Elders Antakshari Club, is pleased to present its third production. This time we celebrate the rains.



30.07.2021

Image Courtesy: Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

### Humans in the world wide web

Samiran Gupta, India Head of Iconn, tell us all about the world wide web, the internet and their influence on our hearts and minds.



## AUGUST

06.08.2021

Image Courtesy: Alexander Lesnitsky From Pixabay

### A brush with creativity

Our members captivate us with their art and their thoughts on them in a beautiful celebration of talent.



13.08.2021

Image Courtesy: Wiki

### *Kismet*

SE-Matinée celebrates the freedom movement, with this much-loved movie and its *Dur hato duniyawalon* song, which slipped past the censors.



20.08.2021

Image Courtesy: Public domain pictures from Pixabay

### Fun with food

SE-Gourmet, Support Elders cooking club, presents its fourth production with easy to cook recipes. Watch it and cook.



27.08.2021

Image Courtesy: Christel Sagniez from Pixabay

### Wanderings in the Wilds

Writer and photographer, Prosenjit Dasgupta, who has travelled all over the jungles of India, shares his remarkable collection of wildlife photographs and stories to go with them.



\*Programmes are subject to last minute changes due to unavoidable circumstances