

FROM THE MD'S DESK

Dear Readers,

*Shubho Nabobarsho to all of you!
May the Bengali new year usher in
glad tidings for all and may peace,
good health and happiness be
yours.*

*I'm sure all Bengali music lovers
are familiar with the name Pratul
Mukhopadhyay. Yes, the renowned
creative artist, song-writer,
composer and singer. On popular
demand, we have arranged a
concert especially for our members
and their guests on the 21st of April,
2019. You can call NAC to get the
tickets for what promises to be a
most enchanting evening.*

*In this newsletter, get to know
about our member Mr Shamindra
Nath Sengupta's experience of
being stranded in the Iraq-Jordan
desert; read a poem penned by our
member, Ms Jharna Dutta, when
she was enchanted by the fall
colours; and discover the recipe of
a finger-licking dish by our member
Ms Indrani Dasgupta. Also, enjoy
the lowdown on some of our Coffee
Mornings and the Support Elders
Basanta Utsav. We look forward to
seeing more of you with us at these
events.*

*Happy reading!
Apratim Chattopadhyay*



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NEWS & EVENTS

Live Life to the Fullest

Members of Support Elders had a most engaging session with social psychologist Mr Mohit Ranadip at Commune Hall, near Rabindra Sadan, on February 28. An alumnus of Jadavpur University, Mr Ranadip has been working extensively on matters of human psychology with several social organisations. During the freewheeling discussion, the members put across queries dealing with matters of the mind and the heart. The discussion was so interesting that even the suggestion of a 10-minute tea break evoked murmurs of protest lest it hamper the flow of discussion. **SE**



Movie Outing

TSC members pose for a groupie after watching *Nagar Kirtan* at Priya Cinema. Apart from the usual popcorn, potato chips and soft drinks, some of the members relished chicken rolls. After the show, some even walked down to Radhubabu's shop at Lake Market to savour fish kabiraji. **SE**



Theatre Evening

TSC members spent an enjoyable evening watching the Bengali adaptation of Kannad thespian Girish Karnad's much-acclaimed play *Tughlaq*. Theatre Sansriti presented the play under Debesh Chattopadhyay's direction, at the Academy of Fine Arts. **SE**



TRAVEL

Stranded in a Desert

An excerpt from our member **Mr Shamindra Nath Sengupta's** *My Arabian Nights**, a recollection of his work experiences in Iraq.

A car was going to pick me up before 7 in the morning after I had reached Amman so that I could reach Baghdad before nightfall. It was about 1,000 km journey, the border being approximately halfway. Soon we were out into the suburbs of Amman. It was a rocky and barren landscape not offering much feast to the eyes. It was a chilly winter morning. I rolled up the window because the car cabin was nicely warmed by the heater. Everything seemed fine.

Suddenly, the car stopped, and the driver alighted from the car. There was no civilisation around us and hardly any traffic. It was a narrow two-lane road, considering it was the main artery between for Iraq-bound traffic. I tried to ask the driver, but he did not understand me. Either his knowledge of English was poor or his he was pretending not to understand. I was gripped by a strange fear of the unknown. He tried to wave down the oncoming truck traffic but in futile.

Finally, he took out a petrol can from the car, stopped another car going towards Iraq and went away. I was alone standing in the wilderness still trying to fathom what was happening. When he returned with the petrol, I realised that he had run out of petrol. I was very annoyed with him that he did not have the foresight of to travel with a tank full of petrol knowing that he had a 1000km journey ahead of him. He tried to tell me something, but I could not understand.

By the time we reached the border, it was nearly 4pm, which meant we were behind schedule. The increased density of traffic and population had already announced the approaching border. The border posts were humming with activity. The driver had a look at my visa and papers and drove straight through the border posts saying something aloud in Arabic to the people manning the posts. He drove into the compound of a large bungalow which I realised was the VIP immigration office.

You had to carry some appropriate government papers to be entitled to this privilege. It was a relief because I was not particularly enthusiastic

to standing in the long queues outside. There was a lot of activity inside the VIP lounge, which was full of people from different nationalities. I had to fill up a form and hand it back with my passport. After a short while, a gentleman came out and greeted me warmly. Some years ago, he was posted in Bombay with the Iraqi embassy. I now felt at home because my home was Bombay then. He quickly cleared me through immigration, and I was now in Iraq.

Before we could hit the highway to Baghdad, the driver slipped into a petrol station from the side of the bungalow. Cars and trucks were filling up with as much petrol as they liked, and they paid nothing for it. At the end they would just tip the man manning the station.

The economics became clear to me. The Iraq-bound cars would never travel with tank full because the price of petrol in Jordan was very high. Once they entered Iraq, petrol was virtually free. Therefore, a very unstable situation existed at the border and smuggling of petrol from Iraq to Jordan was rampant. We now took a tank full of petrol. SE

* Published in the Glasgow Auld Students' 53rd Annual Reunion Magazine

POEM

*Mesmerised to see the fall season in New Jersey, our member, **Ms Jharna Dutta** wrote this beautiful poem during her visit to the U.S.*

প্রকৃতি – ঝর্ণা দত্ত

প্রকৃতির রূপে আমি মুগ্ধ যে হয়েছি
 বার বার তার কাছে ছুটে আমি গিয়েছি
 আমি বলি প্রকৃতিরে, কে দিল এত রূপ ?
 মিটি মিটি হাসে সে, হয়ে থাকে নিশ্চুপ
 শুনে আমি তারে বলি, কে এর স্রষ্টা ?
 প্রকৃতি হাসিয়া বলে, পৃথিবীর কর্তা
 আমি বলি প্রকৃতিরে, বল মোরে তার নাম
 প্রকৃতি হাসিয়া বলে, তার নাম ভগবান।



SEPL EVENT

Coffee Mornings provide our members and their guests the perfect escape from routine life and help forge new bonds. Smell the aroma of a few:



Pic 1: Adda in full flow at Mrs Magpie in Salt Lake on January 30

Pic 2: Full-house fun at Café Drifter on Jatin Bagchi Road on February 9

Pic 3: Happy reunion: Ms Jaya Dutta (right) was delighted on seeing her school friend, Ms Jayasri Sett (left), after 50 years at Abar Baithak in Jodhpur Park on March 13

Pics 4 & 5: An enjoyable morning at Mrs Magpie in Salt Lake on March 9

RECIPE

Pui Saag (basella) Chochhori with Mutton Liver

Our member, **Ms Indrani Dasgupta**, shares a special Dashami Pujo recipe that is cooked at their ancestral Durga Puja at the Bhawanipore Mullick Bari.

Serves: 6 | Preparation time: 25 mins

Ingredients:

Pui saag: 4 bundles
Mutton liver 400g
Pumpkin: 250g
Brinjal: 2 medium size
Potato: 250g
Onion: 2 big size
Garlic: 4 cloves

Ginger: 1 inch
Green chilli: 4
Coriander powder: 1 tsp
Cumin powder: 2 tsp
Turmeric: 1 tsp
Salt: to taste
Mustard oil: 4 tbsp

Process

- Cut onion, ginger, garlic into pieces.
- Put mustard oil in a kadhai (wok). Put vegetables and mutton liver together and saute for a few minutes.
- Add salt, turmeric, cumin and coriander powder and cook it for a few minutes.
- Add a little water and cover the kadhai to soften the contents. Once fully cooked, add 1 tbsp of mustard oil and leave it for a few minutes after turning off the gas.
- Serve the dish with steamed rice. **SE**

SEPL EVENT

Basanta Utsav: Shades of Spring Joy

Preparations for the Basanta Utsav began in right earnest from the end of February. The dedication and enthusiasm of The Silver Circle (TSC) members and our staff was palpable from Day 1. So, after umpteen rehearsals, long telephonic discussions over song selection and finalisation of the venue, caterer and menu, the Support Elders Basanta Utsav was celebrated with much fervour on 20th March in South Kolkata.

On D-Day, around 75 members and guests gathered at the community hall on the Golf Green Phase 1 Durga Puja ground. The programme took off with a speech by our member Mr Sujoy Roy followed by the TSC members' spirited rendition of songs welcoming spring, all of which were highly appreciated. The other members and guests sang along and tapped their feet to the rhythm.



Our member Mr Manas Dasgupta recited an excerpt from Tagore's *Rakta Karabi*, while Mr Kanti Bhushan Sarkar, another member, picked up the baton with his recitation of *Shesher Kobita*. The *shruti natak* on hilsa performed by members Ms Shipra Chattopadhyay and Mr Akash Dutta had everyone in splits. Support Elders member Mr Ajoy Bose read out a write-up of his experiences in Japan.



Another full-throated performance by TSC members brought down the curtains on the event but not before many of our enthusiastic members rose from their seats, shook a leg and sprinkled colours. Member Ms Ratna Ghosh's free-spirited dance and *mudras* held everyone spellbound.

Prof. Abhijit Mukherjee, another member, confessed that it was the first time he had danced since his college days—that too with back pain. "In fact, I feel better after the jig!" he quipped. A lip-smacking lunch provided the perfect finale to the spring event.



Member Ms Sreela Bose was happily surprised to meet her distant nephew, Mr Subir Kr Karmakar, after 55 years. Mr Karmakar was quite emotional on hearing his nickname, 'Khokon', on someone's lips after ages. Ms Bose was glad to meet Prof. Amiya Bagchi, the husband of her late teacher, Prof. Jasodhara Bagchi. SE

