



आरात्रिका 2015

माँ

श्री दुर्गा चालीसा

नमो नमो दुर्गे सुख करनी। नमो नमो दुर्गे दुःख हरनी॥ निरंकार है ज्योति तुम्हारी। तिहूँ लोक फैली उजियारी॥
शशि ललाट मुख महाविशाला। नेत्र लाल भृकुटि विकराला॥रूप मातु को अधिक सुहावे। दरश करत जन अति सुख पावे॥1॥
तुम संसार शक्ति लै कीना। पालन हेतु अन्न धन दीना॥ अन्नपूर्णा हुई जग पाला। तुम ही आदि सुन्दरी बाला॥
प्रलयकाल सब नाशन हारी। तुम गौरी शिवशंकर प्यारी॥शिव योगी तुम्हरे गुण गावें। ब्रह्मा विष्णु तुम्हें नित ध्यावें॥2॥
रूप सरस्वती को तुम धारा। दे सुबुद्धि ऋषि मुनिन उबारा॥धरयो रूप नरसिंह को अम्बा। परगट भई फाड़कर खम्बा॥
रक्षा करि प्रह्लाद बचायो। हिरण्याक्ष को स्वर्ग पठायो॥लक्ष्मी रूप धरो जग माहीं। श्री नारायण अंग समाहीं॥3॥
क्षीरसिन्धु में करत विलासा। दयासिन्धु दीजै मन आसा॥ हिंगलाज में तुम्हीं भवानी। महिमा अमित न जात बखानी॥
मातंगी अरु धूमावति माता। भुवनेश्वरी बगला सुख दाता॥ श्री भैरव तारा जग तारिणी। छिन्न भाल भव दुःख निवारिणी॥4॥
केहरि वाहन सोह भवानी। लांगुर वीर चलत अगवानी॥ कर में खप्पर खड्ग विराजै। जाको देख काल डर भाजै॥
सोहै अस्त्र और त्रिशूला। जाते उठत शत्रु हिय शूला॥ नगरकोट में तुम्हीं विराजत। तिहुँलोक में डंका बाजत॥5॥
शुम्भ निशुम्भ दानव तुम मारे। रक्तबीज शंखन संहारे॥महिषासुर नृप अति अभिमानी। जेहि अघ भार मही अकुलानी॥
रूप कराल कालिका धारा। सेन सहित तुम तिहि संहारा॥परी गाढ सन्तन र जब जब। भई सहाय मातु तुम तब तब॥6॥
अमरपुरी अरु बासव लोका। तब महिमा सब रहें अशोका॥ज्वाला में है ज्योति तुम्हारी। तुम्हें सदा पूजें नरनारी॥
प्रेम भक्ति से जो यश गावें। दुःख दारिद्र निकट नहिं आवें॥ध्यावे तुम्हें जो नर मन लाई। जन्ममरण ताकौ छुटि जाई॥7॥
जोगी सुर मुनि कहत पुकारी। योग न हो बिन शक्ति तुम्हारी॥शंकर आचारज तप कीनो। काम अरु क्रोध जीति सब लीनो॥
निशिदिन ध्यान धरो शंकर को। काहु काल नहिं सुमिरो तुमको॥शक्ति रूप का मरम न पायो। शक्ति गई तब मन पछितायो॥8॥
शरणागत हुई कीर्ति बखानी। जय जय जय जगदम्ब भवानी॥भई प्रसन्न आदि जगदम्बा। दई शक्ति नहिं कीन विलम्बा॥
मोको मातु कष्ट अति घेरो। तुम बिन कौन हरै दुःख मेरो॥आशा तृष्णा निपट सतावें। मोह मदादिक सब बिनशावें॥9॥
शत्रु नाश कीजै महारानी। सुमिरौं इकचित तुम्हें भवानी॥करो कृपा हे मातु दयाला। ऋद्धिसिद्धि दै करहु निहाला॥
जब लगि जिऊँ दया फल पाऊँ। तुम्हरो यश मैं सदा सुनाऊँ॥श्री दुर्गा चालीसा जो कोई गावै। सब सुख भोग परमपद पावै॥10॥
देवीदास शरण निज जानी। कहु कृपा जगदम्ब भवानी॥



KORAL-MED
CORAL-MED

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...



Debasmitha Moulick Nair

The euphoria of our silver year lasted longer than we expected. In fact the excitement lingers! We reminisce those fun-filled days of puja, packed with activities, recollect the last minute challenges, our united effort to deal with them and the immense joy and satisfaction with which we concluded the festivities. We keep taking walks down memory lane, reliving those moments as we go through the photographs and watch the recordings of the scintillating performance by Aneek Dhar at the gala concert. In our section 'recollecting silver jubilee celebrations' we have documented our cherished moments of the milestone year which reflects the passion, zest and love with which we organized the celebration.

2015 was eventful. Undoubtedly the visit of the President of Republic of India to Russia for the Victory Day celebrations; "The Grenadiers" March Past at Red Square, the President of India presiding over the birthday celebration of Rabindranath Tagore and the landmark meeting of the President with the eminent Indologists of Russia – was of immense significance. Aaratrika was present at all occasions and we have quite a few stories with vibrant illustrations covering these memorable events in this edition.

Our President also inaugurated a seven-month-long festival of Indian culture "Namaste Russia". We have featured some fasci-

nating glimpses from the festival that symbolizes the legacy of the cultural dialogue between the two countries. It is with pride and joy we watched the entire auditorium swing to the beats of Soulmate, the well known blues rock band from Shillong, Meghalaya. Audience of all age group thoroughly enjoyed the performance. They excitedly recorded and photographed the concert. Most were taken for a great surprise which elicited excited murmurs like, "Blues in India, really?" And that is the true essence of a festival - celebrating diversity and focusing on the lesser known aspects of our culture, thus projecting the wide horizon of our cultural landscape.

This year on Aaratrika's cover instead of Goddess Durga, we have an image of Goddess Kali. Although worshipped in the two different forms, both Durga and Kali are representations of the same Goddess. The drawing by Eleena Banik in black and white is inspired from the mask of the Chau Dance.

Festivals are fun events. They boost social interaction, promote international cultural relations and encourage meaningful artistic discourse, which is nothing but a part of our shared human heritage. Aaratrika has always worked towards achieving the same. We make new friends every year at the puja and those friends invariably turn up at the next puja with more friends. What can be more heart-warming than this continuous self-evolving chain of friendship? The success of our silver celebration has raised the bar, reiterating our determination to move towards the gold with greater commitment.

This year our magazine reached the press for printing on Mahalaya, the auspicious occasion when the Mother Goddess is invoked, which is exactly a week before Durga puja begins. It would be appropriate to remember a couple of key stotras of Mahalaya that ushers in the aura of Durga puja.



Joy Dasgupta

Jayantii Mangalaa Kaalii Bhadrakalii Kapaalinii

Durgaa Shivaa Kssamaa Dhaatrii Svaahaa Svadhaa Namostu Te

Salutations to the ever-victorious and ever-auspicious Devi Kali, Salutations to Devi Bhadrakali who wears a garland of skulls, Salutations to Devi Durga, the ever-auspicious one, and one with Shiva as His consort, who is the embodiment of forbearance and supporter of all beings; who is Swaha, the cosmic being to whom the individual being is surrendered and Swadha, the cosmic being to whom the sacrificial offering goes; Salutations to You.

Natebhyah Sarvadaa Bhaktyaa Ca-Aparnne Durita-Apahe

Ruupam Dehi Jayam Dehi Yasho Dehi Dvisso Jahi

Salutations to Devi Aparna (another name of Devi Durga) to whom the devotees always bow with devotion and who keeps away the devotees from sins,

O Devi, please grant me spiritual beauty, please grant me spiritual victory, please grant me spiritual glory and please destroy my inner enemies.

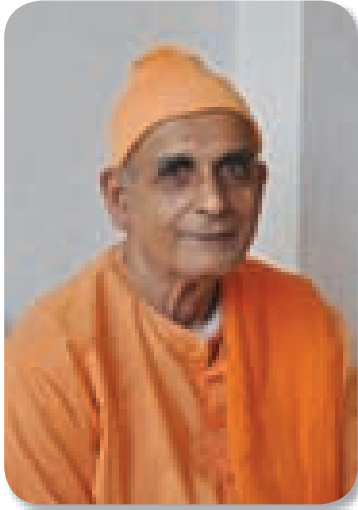
Taarinni Durga-Samsaara-Saagarasya-Acalo[a-U]dbhave

Ruupam Dehi Jayam Dehi Yasho Dehi Dvisso Jahi

Salutations to Devi Durga, who took birth from mountain (i.e. daughter of mountain king) and who enables us to cross the difficult ocean of the samsara, the worldly existence.

O Devi, please grant me spiritual beauty, please grant me spiritual victory, please grant me spiritual glory and please destroy my inner enemies.

SPIRITUAL ASCEND THROUGH RITUALS



Worship of Mother Durga, the embodied Universal Energy is the centre of a great ritualistic festival in India which continues for nine days, five days or even one day in different parts of India and also performed in other countries. Every year it is performed with enthusiasm and mirth and is associated with social, cultural and religious aspects of life. Even then it is a preliminary step for the progress of spiritual

life. To attain spiritual state an inner transformation should come changing our usual way of life. Throughout the year we have a great number of festivals of this kind centering various deities of Hindu tradition allowing the votaries to make choice of a deity according to their mental propensity. Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Kali, Ganesha or any other deities or Avatars like Rama, Krishna and others are the objects of worship. God is one, but he can take all these forms when pleased by immensity of devotion of their devotees. Their desire is fulfilled when the deity is pleased by earnest worship.

For spiritual development daily regular practice is needed offering love and one-pointed devotion. Meditation on the

deity is a superior method for attaining spiritual ascend. But meditation is a very difficult method and needs other preparations to be successful. As our mind is always engaged with many other mundane activities it will not easily settle to be concentrated inward in one point. Here lies the need of ritualistic activities. Through rituals mind can withdraw from other secular thoughts and when it remains busy with rituals gradually turns to the deity whom the devotee is worshipping. That is why in every ritualistic worship, system of meditation is put in the middle when our mind is already settled in the thought of our chosen deity. It is also advisable before starting worship a devotee should take bath and wear clean dresses and enter the place of worship repeating God's name or chanting a hymn in a low voice. These will make it easy for a devotee to purify his mind and quickly settle for worship.

Actually, a person desirous of leading a spiritual life in order to get perfect peace and joy in mind should find a teacher and get guidance from him. There is a Vedic mantra- Acharya- van Purusho Veda- (Chandogya Upanishad 6.14.2) meaning: One who has a competent teacher acquires knowledge. Inner transformation reaches a finer state of mind which needs to be guided by a teacher who knows the pros and cons of such state. Every day a little time should be given for performing ritual for settling the mind to the object of meditation. Even it will be better if more time is given for repeating God's name mindfully which will lead us to meditation eventually. Meditation is nothing but deep and one pointed thinking.

We must not forget that many sadhakas of India like Sri Ramakrishna and others had their first realization of God through rituals.

Swami Jyotirupananda

Founder of Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in Moscow in 1993,

President, Moscow Durga Puja Committee

Sri Sri Durga Mahapuja Schedule 2015

Mahashashti
19th October
Monday

Puja starts at 18:00

Mahashaptami
20th October
Tuesday

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

Mahaastami
21st October
Wednesday

Puja starts at 9:00
Pushpanjali at 11:00
Bhog & Arati at 11:10
Sandhi puja from 13:06 to 13:54
Evening Arati at 18:00

Mahanavami
22nd October
Thursday

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

Mahadashami
23rd October
Friday

Puja Starts at 09:30
Immersion
Sindur Khela
Shantijal

Sri Sri Lakshmi Puja
26th October
Monday

Puja starts at 18:00



राष्ट्रपति
भारत गणतंत्र
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF INDIA

MESSAGE

On the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja, I extend warm greetings to all my fellow citizens both in India and abroad.

Goddess Durga is the embodiment of Shakti. She is the divine feminine force that governs all cosmic creation, existence and change. Durga Puja celebrates the triumph of righteousness over evil.

May this festival help us rise above all man-made divides and spread peace, happiness and prosperity in our country. Let us pray that Goddess Durga bless us with strength, courage and determination so that we can succeed in our efforts to build a just, humane and equal society.

Let us, resolve to accord the highest of honour and respect to women at all times.

Pranab Mukherjee

(Pranab Mukherjee)

New Delhi
August 28, 2014

In conversation with H.E. P.S. Raghavan, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Russian Federation



With Rabindranath Tagore statue at RechnoyVokzal in Moscow

Summarizing the first three quarters of this year, one of the most significant events this year is undoubtedly our President's visit to Moscow for the Victory Day celebrations. Please could you comment on some interesting aspects of this visit.

The visit of our President to Moscow for the Victory Day commemoration was a significant event in India-Russia relations. It was an expression of solidarity of India with Russia and the recognition of the immense contributions that this country made through sacrifices of million of its citizens to the outcome of the World War II.

Our President had a warm and cordial meeting with the President of the Russian Federation, when they discussed the entire range of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

One of the highlights of the President's visit was also his meeting with Russian Indologists. The stimulating interaction between our President and the distinguished Indologists on May 10 made a profound impression on him about the depth of



President Pranab Mukherjee meeting the Russian indologists in Moscow

scholarship on India and commitment of Indologists. It was this meeting that inspired the idea of an Annual Award for Indologists from around the world to recognise their scholarship and commitment. From November 21 to 23 this year, an international conference will be held in New Delhi, which will gather Indologists from all over the world. The Indologist Awards will be announced at this conference.

We recently celebrated Gandhi Jayanti in Moscow. Recently, you met with Alexander Ryabichev, the well known sculptor who has created the statue of Gandhiji that is placed at our embassy. Please share your impressions about his work.



With the Ryabichevs, from left Sofia, Alexander, Daniela, Alexandra

The statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Embassy of India was created by Alexander Ryabichev and presented to the Embassy on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 2007. It is a bronze replica of the original statue at Raj Ghat, the Mahatma Gandhi memorial in Delhi, which was sculpted by Alexander's father, Dmitry Ryabichev.

The statue of Jawaharlal Nehru on Lomonosovsky prospect in Moscow was the last work of Dmitry Ryabichev, who died in 1995. His son Alexander completed the sculpture, which was installed in 1996.



With sculptor Alexander Ryabichev

Alexandra Zagryazhsraya, wife of Alexander Ryabichev and their daughters, Daniela Ryabicheva and Sofia Zagryazhsraya are also accomplished artists.

Over three generations, this family of artists has devoted a large proportion of their works to India, including sculptures, paintings in various techniques and rare and unusual photographs of India. An exhibition of the art work of the family will be held in the Embassy in the near future.



Interestingly, I came across a statue of Mahatma Gandhi made by sculptor Gautam Pal at the entrance of the Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow. The statue was installed during the official visit to Moscow of our Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003. We plan to install a plaque on the pedestal of the statue.



Mahatma Gandhi statue
at Library of Foreign
Literature, Moscow

With autumn the festival season begins in India and we are gearing for Durga Puja celebrations. We were delighted that you could join us last year for our silver jubilee celebrations. Please could you share your impressions of the event.


The 25th Anniversary celebrations were very well-organised and I was impressed by the participation in them of a wide cross-section of the Indian community.



With Mrs. Barbara Raghavan at Gandhi Jayanti celebrations 2015

Your wishes to our readers on the occasion of 26th Durga Puja celebration in Moscow.

I extend my warmest felicitations to your readers on the occasion of the 26th Durga Puja celebrations in Moscow. I deeply appreciate the initiative of the Durga Puja Committee to mark this festive season through events which bring together all sections of the Indian community in Moscow. It is a useful contribution to sustaining the Indian cultural links of the population of Indian origin which has made Moscow its domicile.

With cordial greetings and best wishes to all,


IN CONVERSATION WITH H.E. DR. S. M. SAIFUL HOQUE, AMBASSADOR OF BANGLADESH TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



Last year, Moscow Durga Puja Committee celebrated their 25th anniversary. You have been involved with the Moscow Durga puja since its inception. Your comments and wishes for our readers as we step into our 26th year.

It gives me immense joy to note that the Durga puja which began 26 years ago on a small scale has grown into an event uniting so many people from different backgrounds, even different countries. I feel privileged that I have been a part of this wonderful annual event. Given the violence and aggression in the name of religion in today's world, events like Durga puja, which unites people irrespective of religion, or belief,

has great importance. Such events affirm the rich intercultural diversity while helping foster cross cultural respect and understanding.

On the auspicious occasion, I wish you joy and prosperity. Also would like to wish the Moscow Durga Puja Committee great success in their future endeavours.

You had met with the Indian President when he paid tribute on Rabindranath Tagore's birthday. Your recollections.

Yes, it was my honour to lay flowers and pay tribute to Tagore on his 154th birth anniversary together with the Indian President Sri Pranab Mukherjee, who is such an accomplished and experienced politician. It was most remarkable that our two countries jointly celebrated the occasion in Russia, where Tagore is widely known and loved. It was a great pleasure exchanging words with him about bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation between our countries.

In September, a spectacular, weeklong cultural festival of Bangladesh was held in Russia. Please tell us about it.

"Hand in Hand, Heart to Heart" was the tagline of the Bangladesh Cultural Festival that was held from 10th to 17th September in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. This was a big scale project that involved a team of sixty members who flew in from Bangladesh. The group included well known artists like the folk singer Momtaz, classical vocalist Priyanka Gope, Sufist A S M Shafi Mondal, as well as choreographers like Shamima Ara Nipa and Shibli Mohammad. Programmes which depicted the rich and diverse Bangladeshi heritage were organized at Sokolniki Park and Maly Theatre in Moscow.

Warmest wishes to Moscow Durga Puja Committee on the occasion of 26th Durga Puja!



Bangladesh cultural festival 2015

FROM THE MAESTRO...

Editors Note:

Since the last decade Aaratrika is extremely happy and proud to receive an annual message from Ustad Amjad Ali Khan who has visited Russia on several occasions. This year Ustadji shares some delightful memories from his diary.



An artiste appreciates and values nothing more than recognition by ones fellow citizens. I feel a sense of great pride when my music is appreciated and have occasionally been surprised by an unexpected honour.

One such occasion happened during the visit of His Royal Highness Prince Charles and Princess Diana. It must be said that Prince Charles is a keen listener of music and I have had the opportunity to play by myself and also with my sons, Amaan and Ayaan on numerous occasions both St. James Palace as well as at High Grove, his country home, where he has constructed a special concert hall for small, intimate gatherings. I must mention here that I feel amused when we have to mention in India itself to organisers that round tables at a concert is not very respectful, whereas, overseas it is always a theatre style seating even at private events as a respect to art and the artist.

During their visit to India in 1992, there were numerous functions all over the country in their honour but the dinner at the then Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao's residence was very special because the number of invitees was only twenty. My wife, Subhalakshmi and I felt very honoured to be invited to this exclusive dinner with the royal couple.

The dinner was in the lawns, very beautifully arranged. I found that I had been seated at the main oval table with the guests of honour, in fact, directly opposite Princess Diana.

It was the month of February for there was a chill in the air. At a certain point, I realised that people were looking worried. I asked what the matter was and I was told that the princess was feeling cold and that they were looking for a shawl! Now, as we were leaving home, my wife had suggested that I carry a very antique Jamevar. For a moment I felt hesitant to offer the shawl, which was lying on my lap, to the Princess. But seeing her shivering, I got up and put it around her much to her relief.

During the dinner, the Prince Charles brought up the point of communal tension since at that time there were a few incidents reported from various parts of the country. "Why are Hindus and Muslims always fighting?" he asked, directing his question at the PM. Hearing the question I happened to turn towards Rao Saheb. Catching my eye, he deftly transferred the question to me saying, "Khan Saheb will answer your question." I suddenly felt the attention of the table directed towards me. I turned to Prince Charles and said, "Your Highness, this is not a problem of Hindus and Muslims but a problem of militants and destructive terrorists which exist in every religion and in every country."

Then I turned my face from the political discussion and carried on the conversation with Princess Diana. She was looking so beautiful and graceful in the shawl, which though was a men's piece, seemed to complement her tall, elegant figure.

When the royal couple was getting ready to leave, the Princess was looking for me to return the shawl. I told her, "Please keep it as a gift from us." While she was hesitating, I added "Please do accept it". Meanwhile, another gentleman stepped forward offering his jacket instead. At that the Princess said that she preferred the shawl and wrapped it around herself again.

The next day, Lady Fenn (the British High Commissioner's wife) called up to find out whether we wanted the shawl back. Subhalakshmi declined saying, "We Indians mean every word especially when we present a gift. It is a humble token of our love and admiration to the Princess"

My wife and I will always the memory of having met Princess Diana in her prime and who was in every way a fairy tale princess, and despite the controversies that followed, received the affection and attention of the whole world.

I am happy to know that Moscow Durga Puja Committee celebrated their Silver Jubilee last year in a big way and music was central to the celebration. On the occasion of Durga puja, wishing you peace and harmony.

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan

VOICE OF SARANGI

The lovers of classical music in Moscow were delighted to be able to listen to Ustad Gulfam Sabri on the 21st of August 2015. His concert was organized by JNCC at the D.P. Dhar Hall. Ustad Sabri had performed at the same venue last year and Aaratrika had carried a story about his concert in the last year edition.

The maestro told Aaratrika *"I am delighted to return to the capital of Russia and interact with the students of JNCC and other musicians who take keen interest in Indian Classical music. Sarangi is a very old traditional classical instrument and expresses the very soul of Indian feeling and thought."*

On the occasion of Durga puja I would like to wish you all happiness, joy and peace."



FESTIVAL & MUSIC



Shantanu Moitra is most known for his music direction in films **Parineeta** (2005), **Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi** (2005), **Lage Raho Munnabhai** (2006), **Laaga Chunari Mein Daag** (2007), **3 Idiots** (2009), **Madras Café** (2013), **PK** (2014) and has cultivated a reputation as one of India's most creative music directors.

In 2006 he received the Filmfare R.D. Burman Award for **Parineeta** and in 2014 the National Film Award for Best Music Direction for **Na Bangaaru Talli**. He started his musical career composing music for advertising jingles and having done more than 2000 ads, he still loves composing them. Recently he won a Bronze Lion at Cannes in the category of best music for a Happydent advertisement and has many friends amongst Hollywood and European stars.

His father is a sarod player and mother is an artist, so Moitra grew up in an environment of creativity. From childhood he was fascinated with folk music from around the world as he believed the cheapest way to see a place is to hear its music. Tchaikovsky is one of his favorite composers and a big inspiration for his works. Shantanu dons many hats; he is a



keen trekker, avid photographer and an amateur astronomer. He is also a big football fan, having attended the 2014 Brazil WC and looks forward to the 2018 WC in Russia.

"The greatest musical masterpiece I have ever heard, Mahalaya, helped me get interested in composing. So Durga Puja is always very special for me. I am what I am thanks to Durga Puja in Delhi. It's the tradition of self composed songs sung by young boys and girls which kindled my interest in composing."

Wishing the Indian community in Moscow a very happy Durga Puja!

GREETINGS FROM SOULMATE



Soulmate is a Blues band from Shillong, Meghalaya which was formed in 2003. The band is composed of guitarist Rudy Wallong and vocalist Tipriti Kharbangar who use various session musicians while playing live. Rudy Wallong and Tipriti Kharbangar came together to form a band which would promote Blues, Blues-Rock, Soul, Rock 'n' Roll and Funk. Soulmate have launched three albums – Shillong, Moving On and Ten Stories Up.

They have played in Kathmandu (Jazzmandu), France, they toured the USA playing in Memphis Tn., Brown University, Rhode Island & Colorado and were twice semi finalists at the 23rd & 26th International Blues Challenge, Singapore (Mosaic Music Festival), Bhutan, Indonesia (Jakarta Blues Festival), Norway, Du World Music Festival (Dubai) and from there on to the US where they sold out two shows at the Kennedy Center, in Washington DC representing India during the Massive India Festival.

On the 22nd of September in the framework of Namaste Russia, JNCC hosted a concert by Soulmate in the International House of Music in Moscow. The concert was immensely successful. When Aaratrika spoke with the audience most of them said that they are very surprised to know that Blues is popular in India as they are mostly aware of the music from Bollywood when it comes to India. Audience in particular was mesmerized by the depth and strength of Tipriti's voice and the magical power of Rudy's guitar.

Soulmate also performed in three other cities of Russia – Novocherkassk, Kislovodsk and Pyatigorsk.

Speaking to Aaratrika Rudy said "The response in Russia has been overwhelming. The audience in Russia is truly delightful and we enjoyed performing in all the four cities of Russia."

Jazz



LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE



Mir Afsar Ali, popularly known to us as Mir is the host of Mirakkel, a very popular TV laughter show on Zee Bangla. Mir is also a radio jockey, television anchor, singer, comedian and actor. He also takes part in the Sunday audio suspense show called Sunday Suspense on Radio Mirchi.

Mir's message to the readers of Aaratrika is simple – laughter is the medicine! If you believe in the healing powers of humour, it can even work as a stress-reducer. Also through humour one can express criticism about injustices those which cannot be legally expressed otherwise.

I am very pleased to know that the Indian community in Moscow has been celebrating Durga Puja with so much devotion and attention. Wishing you all a very happy puja and Subha Bijoya!



PROMOTING BENGAL OUTSIDE BENGAL



Durga Puja, Khichudi, and Misti (sweets) are the trio that Bengalis across the world love to identify with. While Khichudi and Misti have a stronger association with taste than with emotion and nostalgia, the PUJO thing deals with the soft corner of the theist Bengalis. Owing to the nostalgia attached to the Puja, Bengalis across the globe unite together despite all diversities in dialect and culture to celebrate Pujo with equal dedication.

Bengalis in Delhi are no way different in this regard and, in fact, to give everybody a homely feel, the Probasi folks started the trend of Baroyari Pujo (community) in 1910 which is till date celebrated maintaining actual traditional rituals.

The Durga Puja in Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi, was started in 1970 by the residents charged with firm commitment, religious faith and traditional grandeur. Today, it has grown from one single Puja to a number of them and themes at pandals across CR Park vary from each other, transforming the area into a carnival zone. Lacs of people throng the pandals during Puja and they expect more grandeur with each passing year, making it one of the largest Durga Puja celebrations outside Bengal. Several multinationals and Indian companies are vying with each to sponsor activities. Apart from stalls selling clothes and accessories, one can find authentic Bengali food at the venues.

Meanwhile, the Puja committees are doing every bit to 'go green'. For instance, one of the organizers has decided to do away with the ritual of immersing idols into Yamuna. The committee has instead designed and fabricated steel tanks

of various sizes to be used during immersion ceremony. They say, "Government spends huge sums of money for cleaning our rivers. As responsible citizens, we cannot afford to pollute the water further".

Tina Basuroy



Shopping as well as exchanging clothes as gifts are an integral part of Durga Puja and shops are decorated to felicitate the festival



Renowned Italian football player Alessandro del Piero and other international players from ISL's Delhi Dynamos FC attending Durga Puja in Chittaranjan Park



Rasul G. Gamzatov - 1923 – 2003. Was the most famous poet writing in the Avar language. Among his poems was Zhuravli, which became a well-known Soviet song. He was born on September 8, 1923, in the Avar village of Tsada in the north-east Caucasus. His father was the teacher who taught him the art of writing poetry. A number of different poems of Rasul Gamzatov also became songs, such as "Gone sunny days". Among the many awards of Gamzatov was the prestigious state Stalin award, the Lenin award, the international Boetov award, Jawaharlal Nehru award and Saint Apostle Andrey Pervozvanny award.

ЖУРАВЛИ

Мне кажется порою, что солдаты,
С кровавых не пришедшие полей,
Не в землю эту полегли когда-то,
А превратились в белых журавлей.

Они до сей поры с времен тех дальних
Летят и подают нам голоса.
Не потому ль так часто и печально
Мы замолкаем, глядя в небеса?

Сегодня, предвечернею порою,
Я вижу, как в тумане журавли
Летят своим определенным строем,
Как по полям людьми они брели.

Они летят, свершают путь свой длинный
И выкликают чьи-то имена.
Не потому ли с кличем журавлиным
От века речь аварская сходна?

Летит, летит по небу клин усталый -
Летит в тумане на исходе дня,
И в том строю есть промежуток малый -
Быть может, это место для меня!

Настанет день, и с журавлиной стаей
Я поплыву в такой же сизой мгле,
Из-под небес по-птичьи окликаю
Всех вас, кого оставил на земле.

সারস

রাসুল গামজাতভ

রক্তে রাঙা রণক্ষেত্র থেকে
সৈন্য, যারা ফেরেনি আর ঘরে-
হয়তো তারাই, নিজের মনেই ভাবি,
মাটি ছাড়িয়ে সারস হয়ে ওড়ে।

স্মরণাতীত সময় থেকে আজও
কথার পাঁতি এমনি উড়াল আসে
তাই কি শোকে ভারাক্রান্ত মন
স্তব্ধ যখন তাকাই দুরাকাশে।

আজকে দেখি সাঁঝ ঘনাবার আগে
সুনির্দিষ্ট গঠন কুয়াশায়
এই মাটিতে যেমন হেঁটে গেছে
তেমন করেই আকাশে উড়ে যায়।

উড়াল তারা কাদের বা নাম ডাকে
আকাশে যায় দীর্ঘ রেখা এঁকে
“আভার” ভাষার সঙ্গে সারস ডাকায়
তাই বুঝি মিল চলে যাচ্ছে রেখে।

তীক্ষ্ণ ক্লান্ত তীরের ফলার মতো
কুয়াশাকে চিড়ে দিনশেষে উড়ে যায়
এতটুকু ঠাই আমার জন্য ফাঁকা
পাব কি ওদের পাঁতির গড়নে হয়।

একদিন তো আমিও যাব -ওই
নিলীম ছায়ায় ওড়ে বকের ঝাঁক
তোমরা, যাদের পিছনে রেখে যাব
আকাশ থেকে শুনো আমার ডাক।

This poem "Zhuravli" became a well-known Soviet song.
Aaratrika pays a tribute to the poet through
a Bengali translation of his poem.
Translation by Biswarup Sanyal.

GREETINGS FROM MGIMO



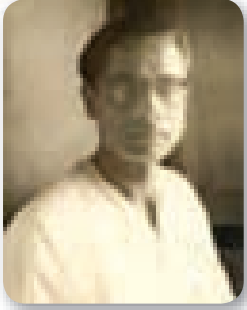
From left: Katya, Slava, Debasmita – editor of Aaratrika,
Irina Prokofieva, Alexander

Aaratrika met with students of MGIMO along with their teacher Irina Prokofieva at the lecture of Prof. Sergey Serebriyani organized by JNCC on 29th September. The students had heard quite a bit about Durga puja celebration in Moscow but none of them had attended the celebration yet. This year they eagerly look forward to participating in the puja and wish the Indian community in Moscow a very happy puja.

Among them Katya had traveled to Kolkata last year during winter. She loved the colonial architecture of the city, in particular Victoria Memorial. She also said although it was her first visit, it felt like home in the City of Joy. She would definitely want to return to the city to explore more, particularly the Calcutta University which sadly they could not visit. Katya is very eager to see the idol of Ma Durga in Moscow, watch the aarti and looks forward to speaking in Bengali with us.

REMEMBERING DHIREN BAL

তুতু-ভুতু



Sri Dhiren Bal - well known artist and children's writer, most famous for his brilliant painting of Tutu-Bhutu. Published in 1959, Tutu-Bhutu was his first book which is illustrated with amazing pictures and is known as one of the most popular and beautiful children story book.



For Tutu Bhutu, Dhiren Bal received several honors and came to be known as the "Walt Disney" of Bengal. The book is widely admired in foreign countries. He received Bhubaneshwari Medal, Moumachi Award, also an award from Sishu Sahitya Parishad.

He wrote poems for children as well. Dhiren Bal was also known for his sketches that were used in advertisements. His art work was used as an illustration for many of his contemporary writers.

In July this year, Aaratrika met with Pritha Bal, daughter of Dhiren Bal who readily shared her father's illustrations for our magazine.



"Wishing all Indians in Moscow Subha Bijoya and special greetings for the children which I send through the drawings of my father." – Pritha Bal



ELEENA BANIK

Eleena Banik, is the cover artist (with her Black and white Kali inspired from the mask of the Chau Dance drawing on paper) gracing Aaratrika. She did her BFA from Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, the international university created by Rabindranath in the year 1995 and completed her MFA in 1997 from the same university. After that she had her first solo exhibition in 1997 in Appa Rao Galleries in Chennai. Her seven years long association with Visva Bharati and the environment of Santiniketan helped her to enter deeper into the world of philosophy and creativity of Rabindranath. She says, 'Probably the mother of all abstraction in my painting is the song of Tagore'. Tagore's songs and paintings are complimentary to each other. Not that the paintings are the visual transformation of his music, neither the songs, in spite of being rich in visual content and landscape element, have any direct relation to his paintings. From this aspect Eleena's painting is very much indebted to the Tagore's world of expression, where visual rhythm contains in itself the essence of musical harmony. Eleena tries to depict this unity in her own work.



After her post-graduation she went to Glasgow School of Art, UK for further studies during 1998-99. From this initial exposure to outside world she has traveled extensively and visited museums and galleries in important cities of Europe.

She arrived at her own creativity during 1990's. Art to her is an adventure, a journey through life and infinite universe. The journey has no end. It only shows her the way of her process of becoming. In this journey Tagore's art, music and philosophy act as a guiding light.

A restless, effusive and prolific artist in search of some indefinable goal, Eleena Banik seems to wear her heart and her art on her sleeves. Always in a hurry, this spirited young woman is unconventional with a mind of her own and seems confident enough to try out every possible material, medium, technique or idea that comes her way. Still in her thirties, she has already covered much ground with a considerable body of work to her credit and comments to offer on most issues of current interest ranging from violence to environment, while feminist concerns and sexuality continue to be the undercurrents for much of her distinct work.

Vacillating between different media- paintings, printmaking, pen and ink drawings, collage, sculptures, film/video and interactive art, she has also worked on some tongue-in-cheek installations with washbasin, the commode, the pipes, the mirror and the taps in her bathroom and the box-

es, chairs, photo frames, flower pots and much else in her studio painted in shades of reds, greens, blues and yellows as well as brightly painted umbrellas that hang upside down.

She believes in versatility; constantly experimenting with colours, forms, style, textures- everything. Eleena also finds a connection to Andrei Tarkovsky's movies not because of his international status, but because he was a surrealist and a visual artist, earthly tender and sensitive to political/human attachments. She is equally fond of Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali for its genuine presentation of rural Bengal. The films of Ritwik Kumar Ghatak are great inspirations for her portraits and paintings as well as social and political ideas.



BANK FOR THE UNBANKED

Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, Founder, Managing Director and CEO of Bandhan Bank



From left: Arun Jaitley - Minister Finance, Chandra Shekhar Ghosh - Founder, MD & CEO Bandhan Bank, Ashok Kumar Lahiri - Chairman Bandhan Bank and Dr. Amit Mitra - West Bengal Finance Minister

Bandhan is a pro poor development organization set up in 2001 to meet the twin objectives of women empowerment and poverty alleviation. It began as a not-for-profit microfinance enterprise with the idea of making a significant contribution towards alleviation of poverty by empowering women. It transformed itself into a non-banking finance company in 2006. **Bandhan Bank**, which opened in August 2015, is the first instance in India of a microfinance entity transforming into a universal bank and has started operations with 1.43 crore accounts, around Rs.10,500 crore loan book and 19,500 employees. To begin with, it has got 501 branches, 2022 service centres and 50 ATMs across 24 states and plans to have 632 branches and 250 ATMs in 27 states by the end of fiscal year 2016.

Aaratrika visited **Bandhan** in June, when the organization was gearing for the launch of the bank. We spoke with Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, Founder, Managing Director and CEO of Band-

han Bank who said, "Our business philosophy is 'customer first'. We are a universal bank and we will have equal respect to all our customers - big and small. Today, all of us in the **Bandhan** family are rededicating ourselves to fulfill the demand of every Indian - banking as a fundamental right. We are committed to usher in a new era in Indian banking."

Most of **Bandhan's** programs are designed in a manner to bring about development of the disadvantaged women. The organization believes that assisting women has multiplier effects in transforming the society. Women are poorer and more disadvantaged than men; therefore there are good reasons to target women. When women are helped to increase their income, the welfare of the whole family is improved since they spend more of their income on their households. Studies have shown that women's increased income benefits their children, particularly in education, diet, health care, and marriage. Conventional wisdom shows that women are better money-managers and caregivers in a family rather than their male counterparts.

Besides microfinance, **Bandhan** also provides other support services viz. insurance (in association with Life Insurance Corporation of India), remittance (in association with Western Union) and pension (in association with Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.)

Mr. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh has shown his eagerness to work with Russia and plans to visit Russia in the near future. "Delighted to know that Durga Puja is being celebrated in Moscow for so long. Antorik Sharad Suveccha!"



Ghosh attends a microfinance group meeting and interacts with the borrowers

LET THERE BE PEACE IN THE WORLD!

Tapos Das, artist



Tapos Das is a self-taught artist from Katwa, West Bengal who has been influenced by great artists like Somnath Hore. He works with sheets of copper and brass which are welded at the joints and seem to be pliant material in his nimble hands. Exposing the metal to acid or heat teases the surface of the brass with textures and lends a patina of subtle shades to the copper. What impresses you is the artist's canny grasp of the human physique in different kinds of movements and gestures. Like the fluid contortions of the body in the action. However, there's an untutored roughness that is quite appealing, a sense of spontaneous play in going not by grammar but his instincts.

This year, Tapos has made the Ma Durga idol for the "Bhagarati Lane Puja" in the Hoogly district of West Bengal. The theme of the composition is "Let there be Peace in the World" and one can notice that there are no weapons in the hands of Ma Durga. He says, "Looking at the ongoing violence and turmoil all around the world, I want to speak about peace through art and Ma Durga can become a symbol of peace and tranquility. When I proposed this idea, most people supported me and I have been working days and nights with the metals to bring this message to the people".

Tapos Das is not only a great artist and above all a great human being. "Hope, with the blessings of Ma Durga, peace will be restored in the world and innocent civilians will cease to die. Sharad Suveccha to Moscovites".

THE 9TH OF MAY 2015



We, Indians in Russia, generally associate 9th May with a pleasant holiday. It's the advent of spring, with nature covering itself with new leaves after the barren harsh winters. The morning generally starts with the Red Square victory parade, for some it is time to enjoy the start of Dacha season. Come 2015, it all changed and for the first time in History and Indians became a part of the most popular, patriotic festival of Russia; the Victory Day. It was the historic 70th year of Victory Day celebrations with the presence of the honorable President of India, along with other heads of state. And on the occasion, the Grenadiers Regiment of the Indian Army led by Captain Vikash Singh Suhag marched past in Red Square. This was, after the Bastille Day parade on 14th of July 2009, the only time that Indian military was invited to march past in Europe.

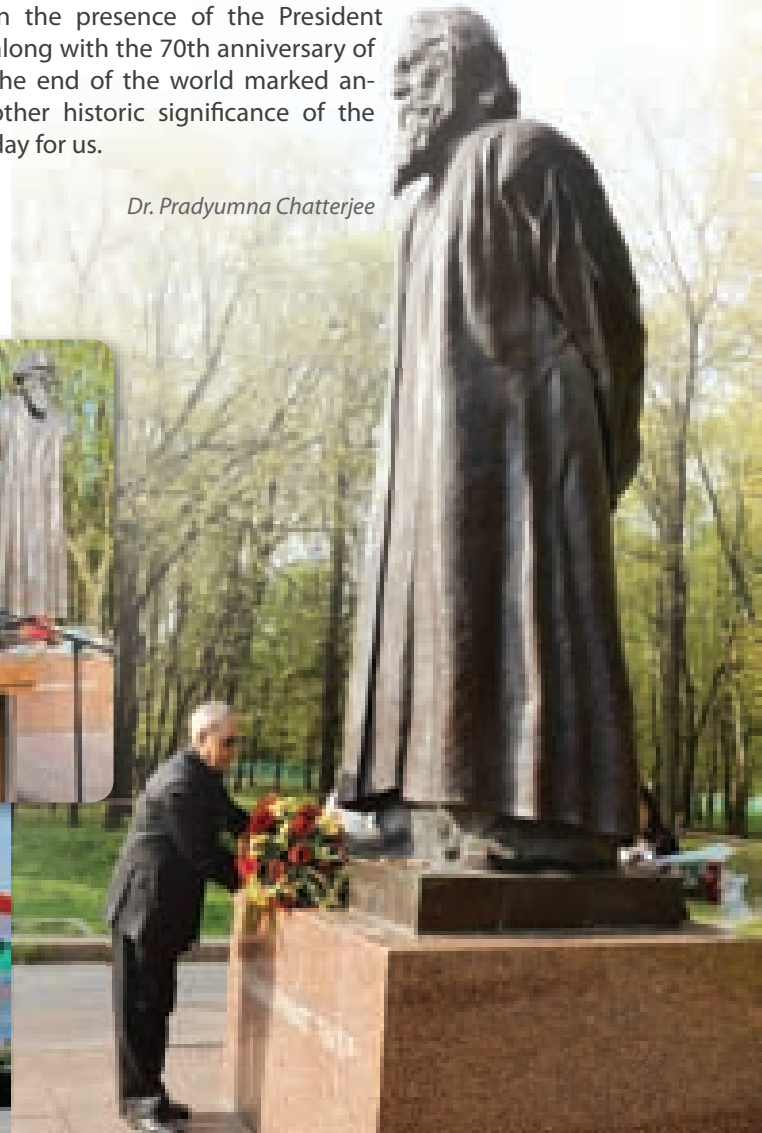
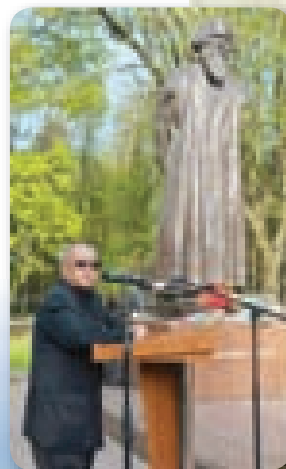
The occasion was a symbolic gesture to highlight the contributions of our soldiers in the Second World War. Unlike Russia, our soldiers of the world war are not referred as national heroes; rather they are symbols of the colonial masters. This despite 2,6 million Indian troops fighting in the second world war for the Allied forces, for Britain, making it the largest volunteer army of modern history, nearly twice more that their own counterparts in the First World War. During the war, India provided 196.7 million tons of coal, 6 million tons of iron ore and 1.12 million tons of steel, and as per records, 35 per cent of India's annual cotton textile production, amounting to about 5,000,000,000 yards went into creating war material. This was apart from the food grains supplied to feed the Allied force which to some extent was the cause of the Bengal famine in 1943 bringing death to more than three million people.

"It was hard to imagine any British victory especially in Asia without the Indian participation"

This was stated by the last commander in chief of the British Indian Army, Field Marshal Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck. Yet India never celebrated the victory day like in Europe or in Russia. Unlike the Russians or British or even The Americans, our soldiers who took part in the world wars were never portrayed on celluloid or literature, because we Indians never associated our national identity or pride with them.

The day also saw celebrations of Rabindra Jayanti by members of the Indian community attended by the president of India for the first time in Moscow. On the occasion, Russian students performed Tagore's songs. President Mukherjee remembered Tagore's admiration for Russia in his work "Letters of Russia" and he mentioned Tagore's concern for Nazi German invasion of Soviet Russia. Tagore didn't live to see the end of the war, but the commemoration his birth anniversary in the presence of the President along with the 70th anniversary of the end of the world marked another historic significance of the day for us.

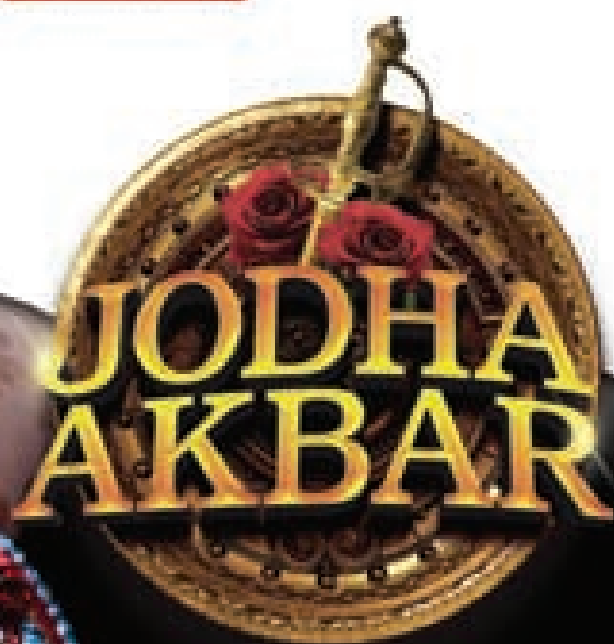
Dr. Pradyumna Chatterjee



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Darbars

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Индийская кухня – это тонкая и нежная смесь таких привкусов, как куркума, карри, имбирь, кориандр, мускатный орех и так 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.

Острые томы можно не бояться – по Вашей просьбе практически любое блюдо может быть приготовлено средним, слабым или совсем не острым.



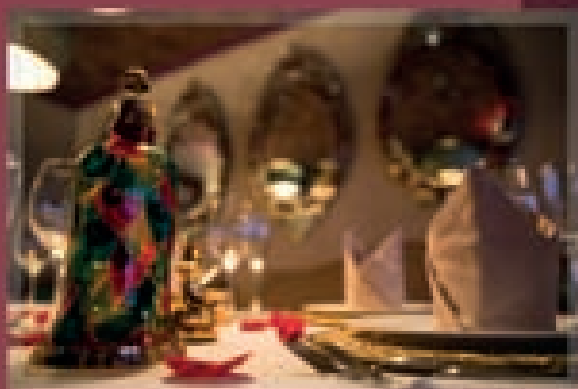
Огромный выбор блюд из разных уголков Индии

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. Нередко бывшие в Москве Вы не попробуете такие блюда как Махари Фенг Карри, Драй Лонг, Карла Ченги Фуай, редкие виды индийских лепешек и блюда из риса, а также многие другие удивительные творения нашего шеф-повара.



Атмосфера чарующего Востока

В дополнение к широкому выбору блюд Индийской кухни Вы сможете в полной мере ощутить атмосферу современного восточного интерьера, украшенного аутентичным убранством. С 18-ого этажа, на котором расположен наш ресторан, открывается прекрасный панорамный вид на Воробьевы горы, Москву-реку и Поклонную гору. Также совсем недавно был открыт ещё один ресторан с аналогичным названием в самом центре на улице Покровка. Оба заведения ждут своих гостей ежедневно с 12:00 до 24:00.



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RECOLLECTING 25TH YEAR CELEBRATION



Uditangshu Aurangabadkar

25 years is a long span, exactly two and a half decades!

Last year the Moscow Durga puja Committee celebrated its 25th year with pomp and joy! Why was last year special? Well, it was so special because Aneek Dhar came to Moscow for the first time and the first time the Durga Puja Committee had invited any artist from India to Moscow.

I think, this was the only puja where everyone from the editors to the janitors in the Puja mandap worked day and night to make 25 years special! Even the young kids below 6 yrs, who usually run around outside the auditorium for 'Fun' were surprisingly quiet and disciplined this time during the Aneek Dhar concert!

I think 25 years was the most successful puja in the history of Moscow Durga Puja!



Andrey Garzon

The last Durga Puja celebration was a grand event for me. The preparations for the 25th anniversary were very special. Never before have the organizers been so excited and busy as this time. The grandeur of the celebrations was also highlighted by the presence of celebrity guests, which attracted many people who had not attended this festival before. Personally, I remember the festive atmosphere not only for the joyous mood, but also for the fact that this tradition has been going on for 25 years.



Sagarika Sanyal

Sadly I could not attend the puja last year but I did watch the video of Aneek Dhar's concert which was organized specially for the occasion of Silver Jubilee of our puja. The programme was a huge success. I liked the music, the high energy of the artist and the cheerful audience.

Rohan Jethalia

Friends, never had I imagined that at a young age of 14, I would be present in person to witness 25 years of Durga Puja celebrations in Moscow. Extremely lucky, Fortunate and of course Blessed is what I call myself when I was present all 5 days to witness this divine celebration. There was such a wonderful festive atmosphere of praying, music and of course the most delicious food to eat all the days. The cultural programs once again highlighted the depth of Bengali culture and which culminated with a scintillating performance by Bengal's own rock star Aneek Dhar.

Already looking forward to this year's Durga Puja and sincerely pray to Durga Ma to bless us all in Russia.



Prarthana Mukhopadhyay Sanchari Mukhopadhyay

From childhood we have been celebrating Durga Puja in Moscow. After celebrating 1 year in India, we missed Moscow Durga Puja to a great extent. Last year's 25th Durga Puja celebration in Moscow was very special as a famous singer from India had come to perform. These types of programs should be repeated every year. We get so excited when Durga Puja comes as we start shopping new dresses and then there is more excitement to wear them. Every Durga Puja is differently celebrated and every Durga puja is unique. The Moscow Durga Puja committee provides us the stage to expose our talents. Durga Puja is one of the events everyone is excited and waiting for. After 24 years when we get older, we have a dream to organize the 50th anniversary of Durga Puja celebration in Moscow.



Hritendu Baruri Hrittika Baruri

Durga Puja is always fun where we can meet with friends and play together. Last year's Puja was special as many more people came and we celebrated in a grand way. We liked the food at the Ananda Mela and the music-dances at the Gala concert. We met with many friends and look forward to the 2015 Puja.



Aakansha Kumari

We celebrated the 25th year of Durga Puja in Moscow with grandeur. To mark the Silver Jubilee Celebration a Gala concert was organized which included performances by talented local children and a famous singer from Calcutta. I myself participated in a short play based on Ramayana. We all had a good time at the 25th anniversary celebrations and hope such interesting items will be continued in the future Pujas.

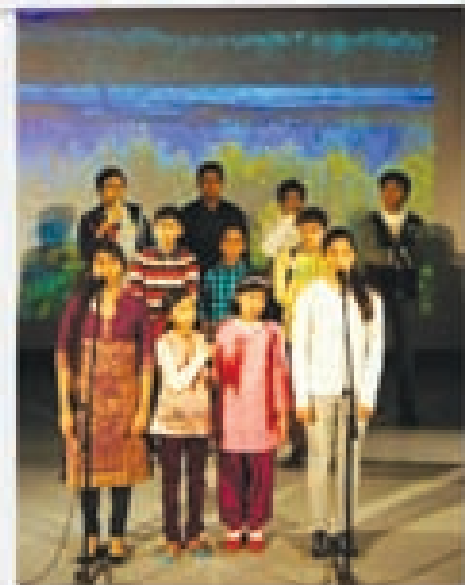
শ্রীমতী সান্ধ্যা কুমারী



শ্রীমতী সান্ধ্যা কুমারী
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গীত: শ্রীমতী সান্ধ্যা কুমারী
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গীত: শ্রীমতী সান্ধ্যা কুমারী
সংগীত: হারি দাস

শ্রীমতী সান্ধ্যা কুমারী
গীত: শ্রীমতী সান্ধ্যা কুমারী
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RECOLLECTING 25TH YEAR CELEBRATION



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Pradyot Mukherjee, Moscow



It's with great pride and a sense of achievement that the Indian community of Moscow joined hands to celebrate the 25th year of Durga puja. We were very excited and happy with the arrival of our new idol from Kumortuli which was ordered especially for our Silver Jubilee celebration. I was involved with the organizational aspects of Aneek Dhar's visit. It was not an easy task as event management demands lot of planning and attention to details. However, with joint efforts from our sponsors and members we were able to organize an extremely successful concert. I remember the audience which comprised of different age groups, swaying to the popular hits sung by the young talented artist. I am very passionate about music and indeed it was very satisfying that we could organize Aneek's concert at this joyous occasion.

Anindita Ghosh, Mumbai



MOSCOW the name itself brings so many memories. A wonderful three years stay in this lovely city were we witnessed so many celebrations. Amongst all these celebrations, celebration of 25 years of Moscow Durga Puja was an epic moment. We witnessed the arrival of new Durga pratima.

Anandamela-food festival was organised which gave us the opportunity to taste the flavours of different states.

Then began the 5 days of celebration which was celebrated with all pomp and grandeur. Ma yer pujo, aarti, bhog and in midst of all these meeting everyone under one roof laughter "adda" and coffee. What a wonderful experience it was.

The celebration didn't end after visarjan. A grand cultural programme was arranged by Moscow Durga Puja Committee where a celebrity singer Aneek Dhar entertained Moscovites with his songs.

The celebrations came to an end with gala dinner with Aneek Dhar. The celebrations were over but the memories are still fresh in my mind.

It was an honour to be a part of this celebration where we enjoyed thoroughly. Thanks a lot to Durga Puja Committee members for giving us such lovely memories.

Dr. Ranjana Banerjee, New Delhi



I have very fond memories of several pujas in Moscow. I received a copy of the Silver Jubilee issue of Aaratrika which was beautiful and informative. I came to know about the 25th year puja and was delighted that the celebration was so well organized. Would like to wish the Moscow Durga Puja Committee and all my friends in Moscow a very happy puja and shall look forward to joining with you in the future.

Dinesh Chakraborty, Kolkata

It has been 4 years since I have left Moscow. But I still have a part of the city that gets so vibrant with the Indians coming together to celebrate Durga



puja. I miss the rituals, of which I was very much a part, the cultural programs, where we always found the diversity of Indian diaspora and Bollywood as well as newly found talents all on the same stage, the Anandamela, where they brought the amazing food that we as students rarely got a taste of otherwise.

Last year it was the 25th year.... And the keen interest on what happened was fed by photographs and descriptions by friends there about how they celebrated. Got to know how Aneek Dhar mesmerized the crowd with popular songs and how the puja mandap was decorated.

It indeed is one of those events that I still get curious about, even though I cannot be physically present.

I wish you all a very Happy Durga Puja and a wonderful time ahead.

Chanchal Bhattacharya, New Delhi



I was fortunate enough to attend the very first puja in Moscow. Recently, I met my friend Bijan Saha from Bangladesh while he was visiting India and came to know the details of the Silver Jubilee celebrations. Very happy to know that Moscow's puja has continued over the years and reached this milestone, despite the challenges that one faces in Russia. My heartiest congratulations and best wishes for puja.

RECOLLECTING 25TH YEAR CELEBRATION

Lochna Mahadevan

As the autumn season sets in and the trees start changing their colors, Muscovites know that Durga Pooja is nearby.



Got associated with this festival of Durga Ma for several years and it is a divine experience. It helps you to get the inner engineering of body, mind and soul done. It is celebrated for five days in Moscow following all the puja rituals firmly and accompanied with cultural activities. First day evening when you see the idol of Durga you feel the energy all over. Yes she has come. In the consecutive

days you can see her in various forms as Durga, Saraswathi and Lakshmi. All the five days celebration gives totally a uplift in the energy level. It's a sort of getting recharged for rest of the year. It's the belief of a seed that makes it, into a tree. It's my belief on HER makes everything positive. With all the divine changes that I get out of this Pooja, I have also increased my vocabulary in Bengali and got well versed with puja methods. These are the feelings of a Madrasite with Bengali thought about Durga Pooja who waits eagerly for the puja every year.

Nitin Aurangabadkar

It was a landmark year and a challenge for the Puja Committee to make 25 years grandiose and unforgettable. Committee members with their full commitment, dedication and "personal touch" worked hard and made it a great success.



Idol of Maa Durga was the main attraction as to mark 25 years. I never attended Durga Puja in Kolkata but I can proudly say that I also never missed Puja feeling as Moscow Puja is keeping the essence of Puja very much lively, uniting Indian "Moscovites" and all states of India, at Moscow. It was a coincidence that with Moscow Durga Puja, I also completed my tenure of 25 years in Moscow and entered into a new era of life with the blessings of Maa Durga.

When I look back the years of early 90's, I never would have thought that one day I will have to play a small role in the most prestigious organization of Moscow and would be celebrating 25 years with family, friends and whose members do not belong only to one state of India, but comes from different parts of India and celebrate this festival, which is the beauty of Moscow Durga Puja.

We, all members are a family now and I can only wish a long journey to this family.

Mitali Sarkar

I had been participating in the Moscow Durga Puja since 1997. It is a great moment that the Durga Puja in Moscow completed 25 years, I consider myself fortunate to take part in Puja so closely and to get the opportunity to serve in the Puja just like in my home in Shovabazar in Kolkata. I am a big fan of music and on the occasion of the 25th year, I enjoyed the concert of the Anik Dhar.



Rathin Chatterjee

25 years passed by since the start of Durga Puja in Moscow. I remember, in the beginning we had huge enthusiasm, but we didn't have the required utensils and other commodities for the Puja. Now we have most of those things. Before we didn't have deficit of people knowing details of the Puja, over the years that has diminished,



but of course we still have enough people to do the Puja. Nowadays the Puja is conducted very smoothly and we are able to do many things which were not possible before. The Puja is no more limited to the Bengali community and people from many parts of India participate in the Puja adding new impetus to the festival with their participation. This makes the festival more dynamic and we saw that last year on the 25th anniversary. This is a very positive development and I thank Mr. Nitin Aurangabadkar and all the members for making it happen.

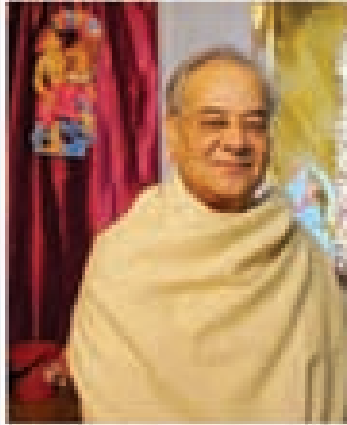
In short, with the blessings of Ma Durga, the festival of Durga Puja in Moscow is conducted very smoothly every year

Jitendra Kumar

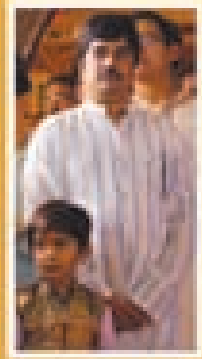
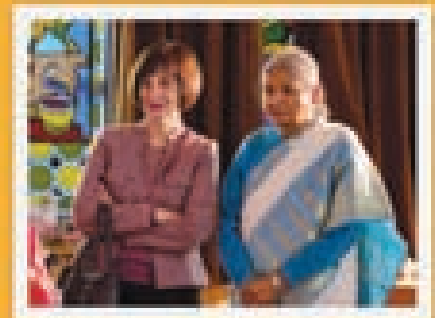
We are a very small Indian community in Moscow. Last year we celebrated the 25th year of Moscow Durgapuja. It was my pleasure to be a part in celebration of silver jubilee of Moscow Durgapuja. It was celebrated in grand style which will be a sweet memory in my life. I thank all our Indian community and members of Durgapuja committee for organizing such an event in Moscow.



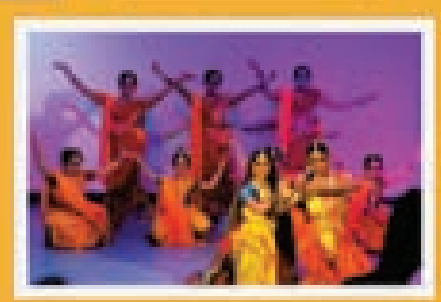
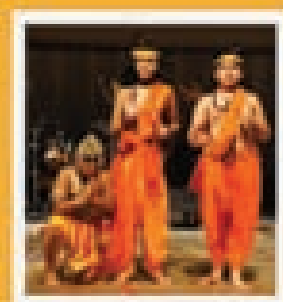
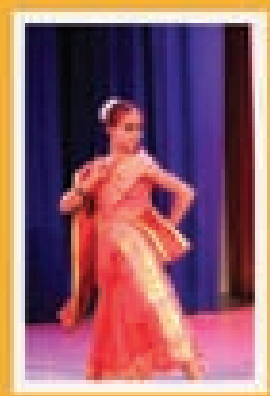
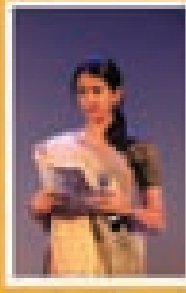
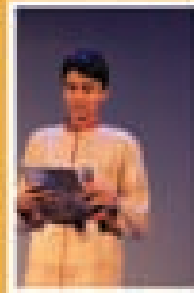
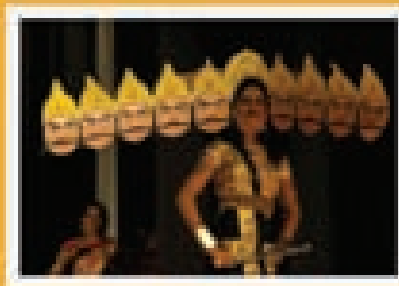
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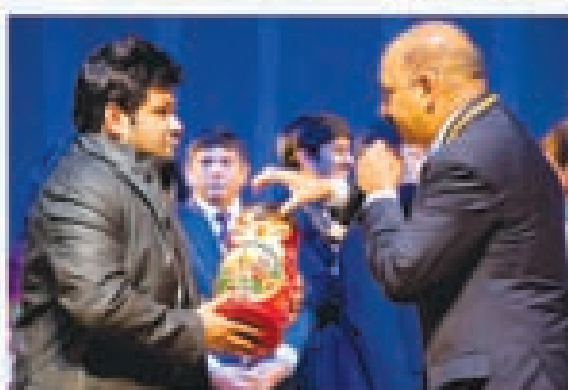
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Delta Wilmar

*Delta Wilmar
wishes you
a very happy dushera
and a happy diwali*



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WISHING YOU ALL
A HAPPY DUSHERA

SARVA MANGALA MAANGALYE
SHIVE SARVARTHA SADHIKE
SHARANYE THRIYAMBHIKE DEVI
NARAYANI NAMOSTHUDE

ANANDA MELA 2015

Ananda Mela is our traditional food festival competition showcasing the diversity of incredible India and judged by professional chefs from famous Indian restaurants. This year the competition was unique as the participants were divided into 10 groups, each representing the dishes of one state in "Delhi Haat" style. The chief guest of honor was H.E. Mrs. Barbara Raghavan and she was the Chief Judge. All aspects including taste, flavor, presentation, originality, decoration were taken into consideration while making the final verdicts.



Panel of judges: Sammy Kotwani, Bhagwati Prasad, Khushpreet Singh, Deepak Singh, Chitralekha Garzon, Sumana Mukherjee, Meena Gupta, Hritesh Baruri, Indu Baruri, Ritu Jethalia, Mitali Sarkar, Sudeshna Aurangabadkar, Suyogya Sharma.

ANANDA MELA 2015

The winners:

1st prize:
Bihar (Bhojpuri Zaika)

Team:
Anjali Singh,
Anmol Omar,
Sony Rai



2nd prize:
UP (Awadhi)

Team:
Supriya Gupta,
Anu Kapoor,
Abanti Behra



Joint 3rd prize:

West Bengal
(Shonar Bangla)

Team:
Gunjan Poddar,
Madhu Agarwal,
Sangita Raval



Maharashtra
(Marathi Matti)

Team:
Naina Hadiya,
Sapna Maheshwari,
Monica Goswami



Master Chef Contest
(Winner of the winners)



Winner: Madhu Agarwal



Andhra Pradesh



Rajasthan



Punjab



Kerala



Gujarat



Kashmir

Moscow Durga Puja Association congratulates the winners and thanks all the participants for their great efforts and beautiful displays

HAPPY DAYS IN VARANASI

Editors Note:

One of the aims of Aaratrika is to celebrate cultural links between Russia and India. Moreover, the recent visit by the President of India to Russia highlighted the importance and value of Russian Indologists.

Hence we thought it relevant to include an excerpt of an article by Prof. Sergei Serebriany from the book *Building Bridges between India and Russia. A Festschrift for Prof. J.P.Dimri*, compiled and edited by Prof. Ram Das Akella. Kolkata: Power Publishers, 2012. The story captures the author's experience as a student of the Benares Hindu University. Prof. Serebriany sent the abridged version of the story especially for Aaratrika.

In 1962, at the age of sixteen, I entered the Institute of Oriental Languages (now called Institute of the Countries of Asia and Africa) which was (and still is) part of Moscow State (Lomonosov) University. The Institute had been founded only six years earlier, in 1956, the year which has got a symbolic significance in our history. In February of that year, at the concluding session of the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin – in a “secret speech” that soon became known to the world at large and to most Soviet citizens as well. The founding of the Institute of Oriental Languages must have been part of the “Thaw” (usually associated, not quite properly, with the name of Khrushchev). The “Thaw” meant not only a relative liberalisation of domestic policies, but also a significant, if half-hearted, opening of the “Communist” regime towards the outer world, including the so called Orient.

The Institute offered to its students courses in several “Oriental” languages. India was represented by Hindi. I opted for Hindi. In later years I often had to answer questions why on earth I had chosen such an exotic subject and such a strange profession as “Indology”. I do not remember exactly how I explained (if at all) to myself my choice in 1962, but later, in retrospect, I formulated an explanation which sounds quite plausible. People of my generation came of age in the years following the death of Stalin (which took place in 1953). Disillusionment was our daily bread. Khrushchev denounced Stalin, but did it in a very clumsy and obviously insincere and incomplete way. Khrushchev's own performance was often quite controversial, to put it mildly. So, like many other people of my age group, by the time of graduating from secondary school I was rather fed up with the “Soviet reality” and wanted to go away from it as far as possible. India looked far enough and attractive enough.

The second half of the 1950s had been the “honey moon” of Soviet-Indian friendship. Soviet “leaders” (Khrushchev, Bulganin and others) visited India, Indian politicians and public figures visited the USSR. The most memorable were the visits of Jawaharlal Nehru. His books “An Autobiography” and “Discovery of India” were published in Russian translations, and I remember reading them



avidly at the beginning of the 1960s. In 1961 the birth centenary of Rabindranath Tagore was widely celebrated in Moscow. From all this an image of India emerged (not quite realistic, of course) as a land of great culture, different from and apparently in many ways better than what we had at home. By contrast, China's image was associated with the mug of Mao and timid groups of Chinese people, all clad in a kind of blue uniform, that could be seen from time to time in the streets of Moscow. It was also different, but obviously worse than what we had at home.

So no wonder that I opted for India and Hindi. The five years that we were supposed to spend at the University included an academic year in the country of the studied language... This is how I came to Varanasi in October of 1967, together with Vsevolod (for short Seva) Sementsov (1941–1986). He was a remarkable person indeed. Had he not died prematurely, he might have become a really outstanding and famous scholar...

In Varanasi we were first assigned to Banaras Sanskrit University, alias Varanaseya Sanskrita Vishvavidyalaya (now Sampurnanand Sanskrit University). One of the first persons who greeted us at the University was a student from Yugoslavia, a Serb by name Branco Letic. A picturesque figure, with dark eyes and black beard, he addressed us in Russian, and all through the following months in India I talked to him mostly in Russian. Branco was what may be called a “russophile”. Soon he told us the sad story of his life. In his youth (it must have been in the late 1940s or early 1950s) he was arrested in his native Yugoslavia, then ruled by Marshall Tito, who, though a Communist, asserted his independence from Stalin. Tito opposed Stalin with quite Stalinist methods and sent many opponents (real or imagined) to prison-camps. Branco's love for Russia was interpreted as his sympathy with Stalin – and he was also sent to a prison-camp. Fortunately, he survived and later managed to



adjust himself to life. In Varanasi, at the Sanskrit university, he studied Sanskrit and something else (I do not remember what exactly), but was obviously rather bored. He was, no doubt, very glad to meet two young Russians. He talked to us a lot in Russian (which he knew indeed very well) and even sang to us Russian (actually Soviet) popular songs...

I regret that I did not keep a diary in Varanasi and never described on paper the happy days and months I spent there. My life in Varanasi was so intense, so full of strong and memorable impressions, that I immensely enjoyed every moment of it. Discoveries awaited me at every step. My previous life at home had been pretty safe and secure, not at all associated with any hardships, but with years I had come to feel more and more acutely (like many other people in my country) that we were rather cut off from the rest of the world, that our informational and intellectual food, so to say, was too limited and controlled by the establishment. It should also be recalled that the years after Khrushchev's dismissal, in October of 1964, and up to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, in August of 1968, was, in the Soviet Union, the time of hopes, naïve as they proved to be later. Many people hoped that the country would develop along democratic and humane lines. The hopes finally died at the beginning of the 1970s and reappeared again only by the end of the 1980s, with the advent of Gorbachev...

I came to India at the height of that time of hopes. It was my first trip outside the USSR, and I was eager to see the world, to learn more, to understand more. Varanasi happened to be the place where I got an opportunity to discover for myself not only real India, but the world at large and, strange as it may sound, first of all the West which I had not been able to see properly from behind the "iron curtain". I remember what a delight for me were the book shops near the BHU (on the street called Lanka) full of books in English. "Western" books were not sold then in the USSR, and even in libraries the access to them was limited. I spent much time in those book shops, just looking through books. I had never seen before so many books in English so easily available. Of course, I did not forget my Sanskrit and Hindi studies. Already in Delhi I



Banaras Hindu University (BHU)

hastened to buy the Sanskrit-English dictionary of Monier-Williams. But among the first books I bought in Varanasi was "History of Western Philosophy" by Bertrand Russell. Later, in Bombay, I bought "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" by Leonard Shapiro and read it through even before coming back to Moscow. My thirst for true information, for true knowledge about my own country and the world at large was so strong, that sometimes

I almost forgot that I had come to India to learn more about India in the first place.

Fortunately for me and for my Indian studies, Varanasi was the place where one could not help discovering India, even if one was inclined to forget that task...

After a month or so I moved from the Sanskrit University (which did not inspire me at all) to the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). I stayed there at the International Guest-house which was inhabited mostly by "Westerners": Americans, Germans, Frenchmen... A black student from Jamaica, an Arabic speaking Jesuit from Malta, a musician from Chile and a Protestant Burmese were also considered "Westerners". As I was "white" and English speaking, I was accepted in that family of "Westerners", even though my being Russian sometimes caused surprise to new-comers. An individual Russian, moving by himself, was then (unlike nowadays) quite a rare phenomenon in India.

I tried to attend some formal classes at the BHU, but most of the time students were on strike protesting against something. So my contacts with Indian students at the BHU were rather limited. But I was lucky to get (through Branco) an Indian friend, Jagdish Prasad Dimri, a youth of about my age. By that time Jagdish had already started learning Russian – with Branco and, I suppose, at the BHU as well. Later he became a distinguished professor of Russian and general linguistics. Jagdish was always there to help me with discovering Varanasi and India. He himself was part of my discovery of India.

Prof. Sergey Serebriyani



Prof Serebriyani delivering a lecture 'Knowing Russia better; history of India as antidote against Eurocentrism' at D.P.Dhar Hall, Embassy of India on 29.09.2015 organized by JNCC



PARAMPARA OF THE RYABICHEVS

Editor's Note:

We are well acquainted with the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at our embassy. We gather near the statue at several occasions - during the celebrations of Republic and Independence Day. Visitors to our embassy invariably request a photo next to the statue. It is a landmark that we are so used to. This year while Aaratrika interviewed H.E. P.S. Raghavan, he mentioned about his recent interaction with the creator of the statue. Thus, we decided to explore about the amazing Ryabichevs - the three generations of artists who dedicated significant part of their life and work to India. Their inquisitiveness and depth of study in Indian art, architecture and sculpture is astonishing to say the least.

In conversation with Aleksander Ryabichev...

When and how did your father Dmitry Ryabichev start working with India? Why do you think he got attracted to India?

The Indian chapter in work (or lives) of Ryabichevs began in 1981, when out of 300 contestants the Russian sculptor Dmitry (Daniel) Ryabichev won in the international competition for the best monument to Mahatma Gandhi. He was the only participant from Russia. In the same year Dmitry Ryabichev traveled to India to begin his work and his very first assistant was his son Alexander.

The Prime Minister of India referred to Dmitry Ryabichev as 'a dear friend of the Indians' expressing gratitude for his excellent work. Few years later the sculptor would travel to India to create another monument, this time for none other than the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

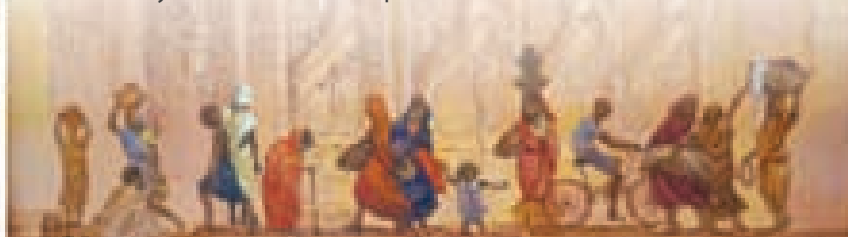
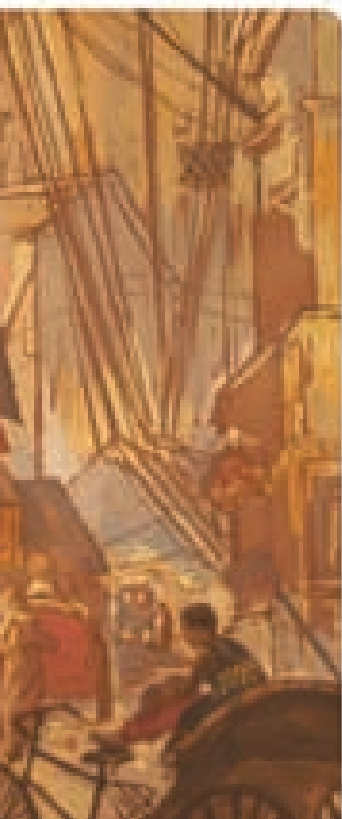
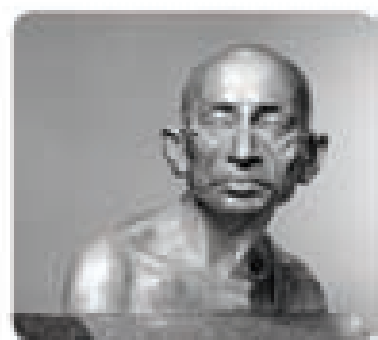
Which are your father's most important works in India? Recollections of working in India.

A sculptural composition - a monument of Indira Gandhi is installed in the Indira Gandhi Park in Bhubaneswar, in the State of Orissa. The sculpture embodies the fascinating image of the Prime Minister.

This portrait of Indira Gandhi became one of the most expressive portraits of women created by sculptor Dmitry and Alexander Ryabichev. Dmitry Ryabichev was personally acquainted with the Indian Prime Minister. He had interacted with Mrs. Gandhi while working on the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Delhi. Hence while creating the composition in Bhubaneswar, he utilized his impression from his own experience of dialogue with this remarkable woman.

We worked day and night before the inauguration of the monument. It was very hot for us, especially during the day, so we kept the most important part of the work for the night. Our Indian colleagues reacted to this with great understanding and helped us a lot and even agreed to work with us at night, when the heat subsides. The idea of the composition in which Indira Gandhi comes down the stairs belongs to Dmitry Ryabichev and the concept was liked in India. Such concepts were not popular in the modern sculpture of the country, but this composition with sweeping staircase fits very harmoniously into the surrounding landscape. It is symbolic: stepping forward which reflects connection with the viewers. In the posture, in the position of the hand, in the turning the head, even in the folds of a sari - a special grandeur and nobility can be felt.

On the eve of inauguration of Year of India in Russia in 2007, I had a gift for the Indian embassy in Moscow - the sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi which was installed



in embassy premise. This gift was as a sign of respect for India and its people and my gratitude from the warm memories of my trip and many wonderful meetings. The sculpture is a replica of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in New Delhi.

Dmitry Ryabichev's last work is the sculpture of Jawaharlal Nehru installed at Prospekt Vernadskovo, one of Moscow's famous monument in Moscow. I completed the work on this sculpture. Nehru's statue was installed in Moscow in 1995 in the Jawaharlal Nehru Square, not far from the University metro station.

I and my father worked together in a creative workshop and we executed many projects together. My first assignment with my father was a monumental composition, now installed in Tashkent, in Uzbekistan. I was 18 years old.

Today, that same studio has turned into the creative workshop where I work along with my daughter Daniela Ryabicheva. Daniela is a second year student at the Institute of Surikov. She chose India as the theme for her thesis for her Diploma at the Art Lyceum of the Russian Academy of Arts.

Daniela Ryabicheva, daughter

Your grandfather and parents have worked extensively on India, obviously that influenced you. What does India mean to you?

Daniela Ryabicheva: India - a country where at each step, an artist can find a theme for painting. The temples, the street, the art, the bright clothes of the people, the dances - everything in this country can become a painting. My grandfather clicked a lot of photographs while traveling and working in India. India seems to me a country of special people, unusual in many ways, people whom I would like to understand. I can recognize India from the photos taken by my grandfather Dmitry Borisovich. There are hundreds of photographs of people who posed for my grandfather, hoping that their sculpture would be created. Today, these photographs help me a lot to work on my paintings.

India is very musical, calm, peaceful, and not similar to any other country. Of course I love India thanks to the influence of my grandfather and father.

Aleksandra Ryabicheva, wife of Alexander Ryabichev

How and when did you meet Aleksander? Please tell us about your family.

I am also a painter and a journalist. Alexander still feels the spiritual support of his father, despite the fact that Dmitry Borisovich passed away twenty years ago. Alexander tries to organize the life and work in the studio of Ryabichevs, where both the sculptors worked together, according to the rules that had been established by Dmitry Ryabichev. And this is why Alexander is the successor in this profession. The bonding in the family is very strong. Alexander remembers his father every day.

We met twenty-five years ago I prepared a story about the artist, and even then I understood how in the family of the Ryabichevs, everyone love and appreciates each other. Alexander's wonderful mother Valentina Ivanovna and his father, both were extremely devoted to their family. Alexander is very similar to his father, and the most important thing that I like about him which I noticed in his father too - bonding with the family comes first, then comes arts and friends. All the things mentioned are priority.

Sophia Ryabicheva, daughter. Curator of art projects, art critic

Your early recollection about India. Which aspects of Indian culture do you research?

All events that happens in the workshop of the Ryabichevs today, is dedicated to the memory of the great sculptor Dmitry Ryabichev. Each project from here is evaluated by curators with a certain expectation - if they correspond to the bar, which Dmitry Ryabichev had set for his art and life. During the launch of the project "The contemplation of the cosmos," in our workshop I realized that a lot of topics reflected in our work have much in com-

mon with the art of India, which is rich in culture, tradition and philosophy. This can be felt in music and in fine arts. When the artist seeks to understand the world, to reflect his spirituality, he turns to the origins of ancient civilizations - to experience, to rise above the daily bustle, to be able to focus on the most important aspects. Indian culture is very popular in Russia, because it meets these aspirations.

I think that a lot of the native culture of India and other countries, is linked not only to the East but also to the West. There are many tales in different cultures around the world which are similar and the primary source is the ancient Indian "Panchatantra". In India, the most fascinating seems to be its architecture. I wonder how the great temples were built thousands of years ago and will continue to dwell for thousands of years more. Dances in India are a special story. Indeed, I still do not know the language of movement, but over the years have learnt to appreciate the professionalism of the dancers.

In particular, I am inspired by the beautiful costumes and ornaments Indian women. They all look like princesses. Every time I see them, I admire.

I think Indian medicine is magical. I feel India has many people with magical powers and with extraordinary abilities.

I adore Indian food. Our house always has Indian spices. I have studied their properties and I am sure that many of them impact not only on our health but also on our mind. I love masala tea. I am a vegetarian and I can prepare some of the Indian dishes like dal and halwa. I often shop at Dzhaganat, the store which sells Indian products.

I am very interested in the Vedas, which I read, of course, only in Russian language, especially of the Upanishads - the spiritual identity and philosophy.

When I went to the meditation, it became clear that the work - is akin to meditation. I quite understand people who are not of Indian origin, who have discovered themselves completely in the Indian culture. One such person with whom I met recently, enlightened Maharaja Radhanatha Swami, author of "The Journey Home". His looks reveal that he is in some kind of wonderful enlightenment.

And I also like the fact that Indian culture is very diverse, and it has a lot of different preaching that evolved over the centuries, incorporating the experience of many people. The fact that India is a multiethnic country just like ours also brings us closer. When people with different beliefs live together in a country, it is both a challenge and a gift from God, because that is how the understanding develops - how to live in peace and harmony together.

Over the years we have met many warm and friendly Indian people. Krishna Roy, who has been living in Moscow for many years is a dear friend and is a personification of kind and sincere love that we experience every time we meet with her.

Dear readers, we wish you much joy and happiness.



Sculptor Ryabichev with the director of JNCC, Mr. Ashish Sharma

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to all readers of Aaratrika

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SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS

Ishita Kapoor (11 yrs)

Ishita has become the Indian National Ice skating champion for the second time consecutively in the sub-junior category. This year she has also successfully participated in the Asian sector by earning distinctions at the ISU World Development Trophy held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and at the Asian Open Figure Skating Trophy held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Ishita is being trained by the world famous Russian trainer, Egor Lutikov, at the Moskovich Olympic Reserve School, which boasts of producing many Olympic, World and European champions like Irina Slutskaya, Tatyana Navka & Roman Kostomarov, Irina Lobachova & Ilya Overbukh and others.



Amrita Bhattacharya (7 yrs)

Amrita loves to learn and for that ready to try new and adventurous activities. Ballroom dancing is one of those and she eagerly looks forward to attend her training at the Dom Kultury (Cultural Center) in her neighborhood. Getting into a dance competition excites her and she won medal in the recently concluded championship. She wishes to participate in one of the popular international television platform of dance someday. As music seems to be the driving force, she is also part of the local folk song chorus group "Zorinki".



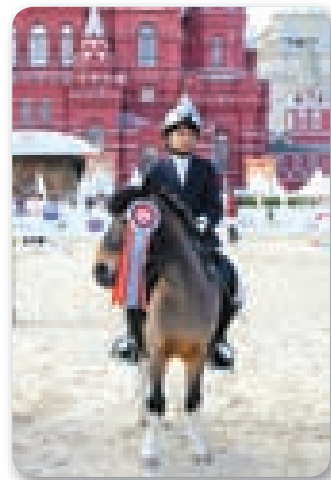
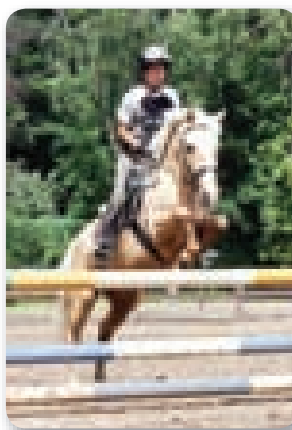
Aanisha Garzon Dasgupta (8 yrs)

Aanisha took up swimming at the tender age of 3. She loves to spend hours in water, where she discovered synchronized swimming and has loved it ever since. Synchronized swimming is a hybrid form of swimming, dance and gymnastics accompanied by music. She has been training professionally at the "Champion" School of Synchronized Swimming for the last 2 years. In 2015 she won 2 gold medals for Synchronized swimming in Moscow championships. Her trainers are very fond of her and consider as a future star.



Yash Dasgupta (13 yrs)

Yash has been training at the Izmailova Equestrian Club for the last four years and has won many laurels for his club in various championships. This year, he has won two silver medals at the Moscow open championships and a bronze medal at the Grand Prix tournament in Moscow (East zone).



Yash was trained by renowned Russian international champion, Vladimir Beletskiy, for the "Spasskiy Tower" tournament held at the Red Square in September. Yash won his individual event there and also bagged the second position in the group event. His icon is the great Ludger Beerbaum - multiple Olympic, World and European champion from Germany.



Aaratrika congratulates our young talents and wishes them great success in sports

UNITING CONTINENTS IN FIGHTING CANCER

Editors Note:

This year Aaratrika got introduced to Dr. Somasundaram Subramanian, MD, Surgical Oncologist and Founder Director, Eurasian Federation of Oncology (EAFO) in Moscow. A cancer specialist focusing more on head & neck and skin cancers he has organized over 150 educational, scientific and social projects for cancer specialists, pathologists, surgeons, policy makers, journalists and non-oncologists in six countries of the Eurasian continent, provides fellowships and stipends for training young professionals from economies in transition. He is Laureate of Medal of Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, has published over 110 papers and is a Member of Editorial/Advisory Boards of five International Oncology, ORL and Ecology Journals, Investigator in more than 10 Clinical Trials, has served as Member of Expert Council on Tobacco Control in the Russian State Duma (Lower House of Russian Parliament).



Dr. Soma, as he is fondly called, is a cancer survivor himself. He says he was gifted with cancer because having recovered from it helps him easily interact with those experiencing the same. He says his profession is his worship and he is happiest shaping and guiding young professionals.

Here are excerpts from his interview, about interesting events from his childhood. The complete interview will be published in our website.

You have an exhaustive list of academic, professional, editorial and sports achievements. How did it all begin?

I grew up in the city of Madurai. During school days I had my own schedule which was very different from that of my classmates. My school was situated in the southern end of the city and my house was in the northern end, around 10 kms away. I was the district champion in cycling and could reach home from school within 14 mins, which would be by 3:59pm. I had a reason to rush. From 4:00 to 5:00pm sharp, my favourite UGC programme would be aired on TV. I would watch it with full concentration and would allow nobody to disturb me during that time. I have never missed a single episode of that programme. After a cup of milk, I would play till 6:00pm. After that I would go to sleep until 9:00pm which was the earliest time my father would return home from work. We would have dinner together watching news on TV. After that, my father who was a doctor (pathologist) and a professor at the Madurai Medical College would work with his microscope, I would mostly watch TV with him till 10:30–11:00pm, which was when my parents would go to sleep. I had a separate room for myself at home. After 11:00pm or even closer to midnight, I would begin my studies and do my homework till 3:00–4:00am, only after which I would go to sleep. My mother did not agree to my unusual schedule and we often argued but I stuck to my own self-designed timetable.

UICC World Cancer Leaders' Summit, Cape Town, South Africa

with Eduardo Cazap - UICC Ex President, Terez Kutluk - UICC President Elect, Luiz Antonio Santini - Director - National Cancer Institute - Brazil and Gary Cohen - IBM Chairman - Africa.



Who had a strong influence in shaping your personality?

Four persons in particular influenced me strongly in my childhood.

My mother, who was very strict and quite harsh.

My maternal grandfather was a fascinating person with whom I had a great bonding and he imbibed in me the basic values of life. I often had differences of opinion with my mother and I found solace in complaining to him. I knew he was always there for me.

I was a voracious reader and my father encouraged me to read, never refused to buy me any books. I recollect one incident when I asked for a book which was very expensive as it was an imported book. His salary was around Rs 2500 then. The cost of the book was about Rs 1000 at the book exhibition in our city. Even without thinking for a moment, he bought the book immediately. I still remember the name of the book, a colourful 600 plus page American book called "Biology: The World of Life". My father was a very hard worker, great doctor, teacher and philosopher for me and thousands of others.

I always questioned a lot. I learnt to ask why, for what and how to everything I did. This was Socrates influence. I was so fascinated by Socrates that I could act the 60 minutes mono act play on Socrates and other roles on one go, that actor Shivaji Ganeshan had played in Tamil language.

You were undoubtedly a very bright student, any particular accomplishment that you would like to share with us?

In 1986 I won the Junior Scientist Award and Medal in Science Talent Exhibition for models on AIDS, which was called 'A Devastating New Problem, 3-D model of HTLV III: Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Virus III/LAV: Lymphadenopathy Virus (now called as HIV)'. Then with the same I had won in the State Level Science Exhibition.

I had created a three dimensional structure of the AIDS causing virus using a football and parts of plastic toy necklaces. Then I made an animated working model by assembling a PCB (printed circuit board) with LED (light emitting diodes) to show how AIDS causing virus' attacks the human immune system - the T cells, how it multiplies, the five to six stages in which it develops, how from one they become many virus and how the virus spreads in human body.



Left (for us) to right in the front row:

Ashok SHAHA (USA), Jatin SHAH (USA), Soma SUBRAMANIAN (Russia), Arif JAMSHED (Pakistan), Pankaj CHATURVEDI (India)
The World Congress on Oral Oncology, Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 2015

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LONDONGRAD

Londongrad - a project written by Mikhail Iдов premiered on STS TV on 7th September, 2015. It's the first Russian TV project to be shot in Britain, mostly in London, and it had the highest viewership rating on the premier.

Although it's about Russian expats and their lives in London, it beautifully portrays the diverse culture and multi ethnicity of Britain. The project also stars many British actors and some Indians living in Moscow including members of the Durgapuja committee.

I was fortunate to be a part of the project and how Mikhail Iдов created me – a Russian speaking British Sikh gentleman, my reincarnation in the make-up room was fascinating! Shooting in London was a great experience, the river Thames episode was the most difficult to shoot as it was raining heavily. The whole unit was present at the location and some of them with buckets of warm water to pour on me so that I do not catch a cold. It was memorable!





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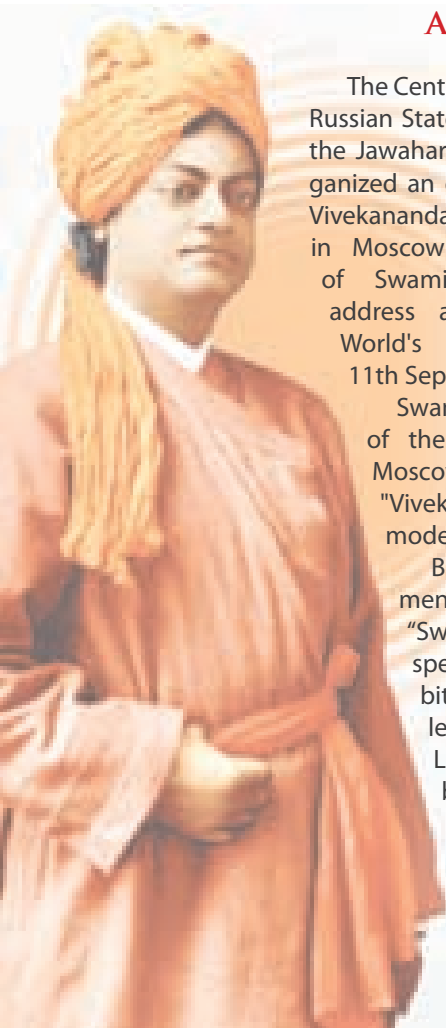
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ИМЕЮТСЯ ПРОТИВОПОКАЗАНИЯ. ОЗНАКОМЬТЕСЬ С ИНСТРУКЦИЕЙ

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA A REFORMER, PHILOSOPHER AND A SAINT



The Centre of Oriental Literature of the Russian State Library Cultural Center and the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center organized an evening dedicated to Swami Vivekananda on September 16, 2015 in Moscow to mark the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's landmark address at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago on 11th September 1893.

Swami Jyotirupananda, head of the Ramakrishna Mission in Moscow delivered a lecture on "Vivekananda's philosophy in the modern world."

Besides this, a documentary film in English "Swami Vivekananda. An Introspect" was shown and an exhibition of books from the collections of the Russian State Library was displayed. Members of Moscow Durga Puja Committee were present.



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of Moscow.

President - Vishnu Kant Kushwaha

In loving memory of Kaushik Das 05/11/1964 - 03/01/2015



Kaushik was a founder member of Moscow Durga Puja Committee. Extremely energetic and creative, he was instrumental in launching our magazine in the early years. He contributed stories and in later years would always eagerly enquire and assist in Aaratrika's preparation. He grew up in the city of Asansol and came to Moscow in 1984 to join the engineering faculty in People Friendship University. He was a brilliant student and passionately played football. He worked in many reputed companies in Russia and later at the Moscow radio. He was very social and helped in various community works.

*You will be
dearly missed.
We shall always
remember you!*

Kaushik was extremely passionate about his work. He had a keen interest in literature, music, fine arts, cinema and sports – football and cricket in particular. He had watched all the films of Federico Fellini and was a voracious reader.

You will be dearly missed. May you rest in peace!

— Dr. Rathin Chatterjee

Kaushik had an encyclopedic knowledge on sports, arts and culture. Reading books in Bengali, English or Russian was a passion, which gave him immense joy and satisfaction. He was inspired by some of the greatest masters and wished to absorb a droplet a day of their thought, and challenged himself to be better at his writing skills. He was very social and easily made friends with people from different backgrounds. For us, he was the heart of our adda (gossips) and we always cherished his humour and wit. He will always be a part of our Puja.

— Joy Dasgupta

They say the soul never fades, the self never dies.

In the nineties, Durga puja in Moscow was unimaginable to me without Kaushik da. He was passionately involved everywhere. I liked the way he addressed members as "jonota" in the puja meetings. He was always a "hero" on the stage. Fascinated, I used to watch him from the backstage. And he will remain that way in our memories, the person with the "prana" and a doting father.

— Dr. Pradyumna Chatterjee

I had never seen such a surrealistic personality like Kaushik. He was a dream man. During Durga puja, he would always get charged up with enthusiasm and helped immensely in the organizational functions.

Pray to the Almighty that his dreams come true in the life of his only son, Rick.

— Debashish Sengupta



Moscow Durga Puja Celebrations 2015

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Our gratitude to:

India Student Association, PFU
Calcutta Yellow Pages.com (P) Ltd.
Ramkrishna Mission Moscow

Vishnu Kant Kushwaha
Manoj K. Agarwal
Aleksei Alkhazov, Oleg Pestov, Olga Tetryakova

Research & Information:

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"AARATRIKA"

Moscow Durga Puja Celebrations
1990-2015

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Design & layout:

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+7 901 512 8734

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