

अप्रैल/२०२८

AARATRIKA

Moscow Durga Puja 2022

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Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya

May the light of knowledge remove the darkness of ignorance

A Joyous and Happy Shaarad Abhinandan from Moscow Durga Puja Committee!

It is that time of the year when the Indian community, especially Bengalis, around the world get ready to welcome Ma Durga — the embodiment of Shakti (Power) — as their beloved daughter coming home for a few days. It is the time to celebrate, it is the time to bond, it is the time to share happiness and it is the time to spread goodness!

After a hiatus of two years — Aaratrika from Moscow Durga Puja Committee is back in print to share this celebration of Ma Durga's arrival with the entire Indian diaspora in Moscow.

The last two years were undoubtedly the most difficult period in our lifetime. We have seen the darkness of the Covid pandemic engulfing every aspect of our lives. We all have experienced devastating losses and have come out on this side of the post-covid world only a part of who we were on the other side. This year Durga Puja is our occasion for solemn gratitude and to celebrate life in a somber manner.

2022 is a proud milestone year for India — 75 years of our Independence from the foreign rule! Indians across the world are celebrating this milestone of Indian history with huge fanfare, memorials, special events and showcasing Independent India's journey during the 75 crucial years. Moscow is no exception. The Indian community in Russia with huge support and participation from the Embassy of India has

been observing Azaadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav across a multitude of venues.

We at team Aaratrika — have attempted to bring a few glimpses of these festivities surrounding the 75 years of Independence, on our pages.

In an effort to start a transgenerational dialogue surrounding India's progress, we have also encouraged the future India — our children — to talk about India — as they know, see and feel proud about — on these pages this year. Team Aaratrika is also grateful to the Leadership team at Embassy of India School, Moscow for their support and help in organizing the Drawing competition among the students under tremendous time crunch to mark the Durga Puja festival in Moscow. The winning creations are showcased on our pages of Aaratrika.

There is yet another glorified moment for the Bengali diaspora to bask in this year — it is the inclusion of “Durga Puja in Kolkata” into the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity!

As UNESCO describes Durga Puja on its pages: *“Durga Puja is seen as the best instance of the public performance of religion and art, and as a thriving ground for collaborative artists and designers. The festival is characterized by large-scale installations and pavilions in urban areas, as well as by traditional Bengali drumming and veneration of the goddess. During the event, the divides of class, religion and ethnicities collapse as crowds of spectators walk around to admire the installations”.*

On this positive note - let us today stand together and pray to That Mother Goddess to show us the path of righteousness, the path of peace and the path of happiness.

ॐ सर्वमंगल मंगल्ये शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके शरण्ये त्र्यम्बके गौरी नारायणी नमोऽस्तुते
ॐ जयंती मंगला काली भद्रकाली कपालिनी दुर्गा क्षमा शिवा धात्री स्वाहा स्वधा नमोऽस्तुते!!





Shri Shri Durga Puja Schedule – 2022

33rd Celebration in Moscow

October 1, 2022 (Saturday) Sashti

- 18:00 Puja Starts (Bodhon, Aamantran- Sthapana)
- 20:30 Pushpanjali / Aarti
- 21:00 Prasad distribution

October 2, 2022 (Sunday) Saptami

- 08:00 Puja Preparations begins
- 09:00 Puja Starts
- 11:30 Pushpanjali / Bhog Nibedon & Aarti
- 11:50 Prasad distribution
- 18:00-19:00 Evening Arati & Prasad distribution

October 3, 2022 (Monday) Maha Ashtami

- 07:30 Puja Preparations begins
- 08:00 Puja Starts
- 11:00 Pushpanjali / Bhog Nibedon & Aarti
- 11:30 Fruit Prasad distribution
- 13:44-14:32 Sandhipuja
- 18:00-19:00 Evening Arati & Prasad distribution

October 4, 2022 (Tuesday) Maha Navami

- 08:00 Puja Preparations begins
- 09:00 Puja Starts
- 11:30 Pushpanjali / Bhog Nibedon & Aarti
- 11:50 Prasad distribution
- 18:00-19:00 Evening Arati & Prasad distribution

October 5, 2022 (Wednesday) Bijoya Dashami

- 08:00 Puja Preparations begins
- 09:00 Puja Starts
- 10:45 Visarjan
- 11:30 Sindur Khela
- 12:30 Shantijal
- 12:45 Prasad Distribution

Puja rituals ends with Visarjan.

October 9, 2022 (Sunday) Laxmi Puja

Puja starts 18:00 onwards

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु चेतनेत्यभिधीयते । नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै, नमस्तस्यै, नमो नमः । ।

- Sri Sri Chandi, 5th ch. 17,18,19

Our obeisance to that the Devī who is known as the Consciousness (awareness, sentience) in all beings; our (bodily) salutations to Her, our (verbal) salutations to Her, our (mental) salutations to Her; our salutations again and again (to Her).

The immutable transcendental Brahman, when manifests Itself in this world of ours through Its inscrutable Maya, as the supreme qualitative power to awaken consciousness in every creatures towards ultimate goodness, that inexhaustible source of goodness (अशेष-कल्याणगुणाकर) is called the Divine Mother of the universe.

"It is Shakti that becomes Avatara (Incarnation)" – says Sri Ramakrishna.

That Primordial Energy (Shakti), embodied in the mortal frame of Sri Ramakrishna, exposed his supreme Godhead three days before giving up his body in August 1886, blessed the devotees gathered round him late noon by uttering the ultimate soul-awakening Maha-mantra — **"May your consciousness be awakened"**. Since then that irresistible soul awakening sound has

been invigorating the whole mankind with indomitable potential power, bringing forth a new era of people fully endowed with divine qualities.

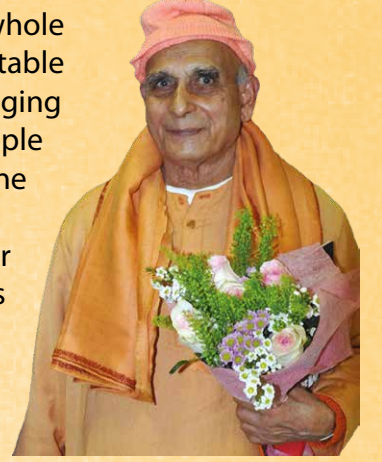
We can remember Swami Vivekananda's prophecy in one place that in future, people will be seen to be born with supernatural power.

May the Universal Mother Durga be gracious enough to awaken our consciousness through Her worship this year also.

Let us repeat the Swami Vivekananda's universal prayer:

"O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a Man!"

Swami Jyotirupananda



PM Sri Narendra Modi Ji at Belur Math

Puja Greetings

Warm greetings from the Embassy of India in Moscow on the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja.

I am pleased to know that the Indian community in Moscow has been enthusiastically celebrating this festival for over three decades. I commend the efforts of the organisers and look forward to participating in the Durga Puja celebrations.

My best wishes to the Durga Puja Committee and the readers of Aaratrika. May Maa Durga bless us all with good health and happiness.

Pavan Kapoor

Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation



Moscow Durga Puja Committee welcomes H.E. Mr. Pavan Kapoor to Moscow in his new assignment as the Ambassador of India to Russian Federation. He joined the Indian Embassy at Moscow in November 2021. In a diplomatic career spanning over three decades, Ambassador Kapoor has served in different capacities in various Indian

Missions around the world apart from serving in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office in New Delhi.

He also served as an international civil servant with the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.



Presentation of credentials ceremony in Kremlin, 2021



Independence day celebrations, Moscow 2022



The Multipolar World

The leaders of China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan met in the ancient Silk Route city of Samarkand on September 16 for a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The leaders of SCO observer countries — Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia were there along with special guests, the leaders of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met President of Russian Federation H.E Mr. Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the 22nd meeting and discussed furthering India-Russia cooperation in sectors such as trade, energy, defense and more. They also discussed other bilateral and global issues.



This was the first meeting of both leaders this year, which marks the 75th anniversary year of establishment of diplomatic relations. They agreed to remain in touch. The leaders discussed important issues of bilateral cooperation as well as regional and global issues of interest. Discussions also pertained to global food security, energy security and availability of fertilizers in the context of the challenges emanating from the current geo-political situation.

At the summit, heads of the SCO agreed to nominate India's city of Varanasi as the first-ever SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2022–2023. The Indian city holds significance for its ancient civilizational links with the Member States of SCO, especially the Central Asian Republics.

Source: Indian Embassy website



“DRUZHBA” — 75 Years of Diplomatic Relations

Professor Tatyana Shaumyan, the renowned Russian Indologist was conferred with Padma Shri award for her immense contribution to literature and education in 2022. She is the Head of the Centre for Indian Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences. She is a specialist in Indian Foreign Policy and International Relations in Asian countries.

Since 2001 she is heading the center for Indian studies at the Institute of Oriental studies, and has also been a visiting professor in the department of world politics at the Moscow State University. For the past six decades, she has been a frequent guest to India for her research studies.

As an Indologist, she has widely contributed as a columnist in various Russian and international publications. Her books in English include “Tibet — The great game and Tsarist Russia” (Oxford University Press, 2000) and “Britain and Russia — The Bid to rule Tibet” (Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

She is a very modest person with a ocean of knowledge and we had the opportunity to give her a few questions recently.

Why did you choose India as your specialization?

In 1960, after graduating from the History Faculty of the Moscow State University, I joined the Institute of Oriental Studies. I started my career in the Department of International Affairs, which was then headed by G. L. Bondarevsky.

After two years of scientific works, I started my PhD and the topic of my dissertation emerged in the backdrop of the tense relations between India and China. While studying the history and the roots of this conflict led me to the materials

of the Simla Conference of 1913–14, where the famous “McMahon Line” was drawn as the border between India and China and later it became a flashpoint between the two powers. The conference was actually about the problem of delimiting spheres of influence in Central Asia, about the status of Tibet as the center of world Buddhism and a zone of special strategic interests of Great Britain and China with the direct or indirect participation of Russia.

I worked in the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, where unique documents were stored and spent months at the National Archives of India and my publications finally started being published in 1977.

I gradually specialized in Indian foreign policy and the circle of my scientific researches expanded towards various aspects — situation in South Asia, Indian-Pakistan relations, nuclear problems, Kashmir problems, etc. In the context of a constantly changing geopolitical situation and the emergence of new regional and global organizations such as BRICS, SCO and RIC, I believe it was my Karma to be associated with India.

This year India and Russia celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations.

How do you evaluate this long journey together?

In the period after independence, India's goal was to achieve economic self-sufficiency through investment in heavy industry. The Soviet Union helped in the field of heavy machinery, mining, energy production and steel mills. During the second five-year plan in India, out of sixteen projects in the field of heavy industry, eight were started with the help of the Soviet Union. This included the establishment of the world-renowned IIT in Bombay, the Bhilai and Bokaro steel plants. The Russian-Indian partnership has proved resilient to the challenges of an ever-changing environment.

In 2000, during the visit of President Putin to India, the partnership acquired a new qualitative character, that of a Strategic Partnership with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, defense, trade and economy, science and technology, and culture.

The real strength of our relationship lies in the close bonds of friendship between the people and the deep sense of mutual respect for each other. Our leaders have set ambitious targets for bilateral cooperation by adding new dimensions to our relationships and diversifying them, working together for the progress and prosperity of our people.

I would take this opportunity to congratulate our Indian friends on the occasion of Durga Puja, which symbolizes the triumph of good over evil.



Dr. T. Shaumyan receiving Padma Shri, 2022

Musical Bond

The foundation for the studies and promotion of Indian music at the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory was laid in 1976 by composer and musicologist J.K. Mikhailov (1938–1995). He launched a new stream of courses — “Musical Cultures of the world” and the exciting new ideas attracted students and followers with a variety of interests. Among them was Margarita Ivanovna Karatygina, today the head of the Department of International Cooperation and the Center for “Musical Cultures of the World” at the Moscow Conservatory.

J.K. Mikhailov established contacts with leading Indian musicians such as Ravi Shankar, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Amjad Ali Khan, Shiv Kumar Sharma and organized training sessions for students of the conservatory. In parallel, a wide educational program on Indian music was carried out, including lectures, radio/television programs and release of gramophone records of Lalgudi Jayaraman (violin), Parvin Sultana (vocal), L. Subramanyam (violin) and others.

Margarita Ivanovna was closely involved in organizing one the biggest bilateral cultural events — “Festival of India and the USSR” (1987–1988). During the Festival, hundreds of Indian musicians representing various states of India performed in the USSR. The Moscow State conservatory

joined the Festival at the planning stage, developed proposals for the Directorate of Festivals, and most importantly organized educational programs nationwide. She participated in these long preparations and acted as a musical guide on the traditions of Indian music for the Soviet audience (who were mostly familiar with Indian music only from Indian cinemas in those years).

Today, the process continues and there are regular visits by leading Indian musicians at the Conservatory. This year as part of the centenary celebrations of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Moscow State conservatory together with the ministry of culture of the Russian Federation organized a concert of sarod wherein his disciple Atish Mukhopadhyay performed. Mr. Mukhopadhyay is a visiting faculty at the conservatory for the last seven years.

As Margarita Ivanovna says: *“If you want to know something about real Indian music, you should listen to the “masters of traditions”, and not from books. Otherwise, it will look like learning the taste of some food from a cookbook. If you don’t try it once from an authentic cook, you’ll never know how it should really taste.”*

A big “Pozdravleniye” for the Durga Puja celebrations to our friends from India. May music bind us forever.



Margarita Karatygina



Atish Mukopadhyay



Parvin Sultana



Shiv Kumar Sharma

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Jazzing up Friendship

The Moscow Jazz Festival was held from 13-19 June, 2022. This year it celebrated 100 years of Russian jazz with more than 700 leading musicians from Russia and abroad performing at various city venues. The festival was supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Department of Culture of the city of Moscow. One of the jewels of the festivals was the grand performance by legendry Dr. L. Subramanian (violin) and

Tanmoy Bose (tabla) and the culmination was a duet with famous Igor Butman (saxophone). Other eminent performers included Moscow Soloists chamber orchestra conducted by Grammy winning viola player Yuri Bashmet and the star of the world opera, double Grammy winning singer Ildar Abdrazakov. It was a real treat for Jazz lovers, which once again proved that music has no boundaries and unites people from all over the world.





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India Day Festival

The 7th India Day Festival, organized by the Indian National Cultural Centre "SITA", took place at the Dream Island park in Moscow from 11 to 14 August. This year the festival was dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Russia and India.

The festival supported the theme of "Ecology & Healthy Lifestyle". The initiative was backed by the global "Save the Soil" movement, initiated by Indian yoga guru and spirituality advocate Sadhguru to save the planet's rapidly depleting soil. Professional Yoga masters conducted meditations and yoga workshops to promote a healthy lifestyle, especially after the Covid pandemic.

This year the India Day Festival included music and dance performances by leading Indian and Russian groups, screenings of Bollywood films, fashion shows of Indian designers, and a children's chess



tournament. One of the most striking events was the presentation of "Ratha Yatra" — the chariot festival, during which a procession of dancers and musicians led the chariot along the main avenue of the park. It was a grand success with over 1.8 mln visitors and 800k online viewers.





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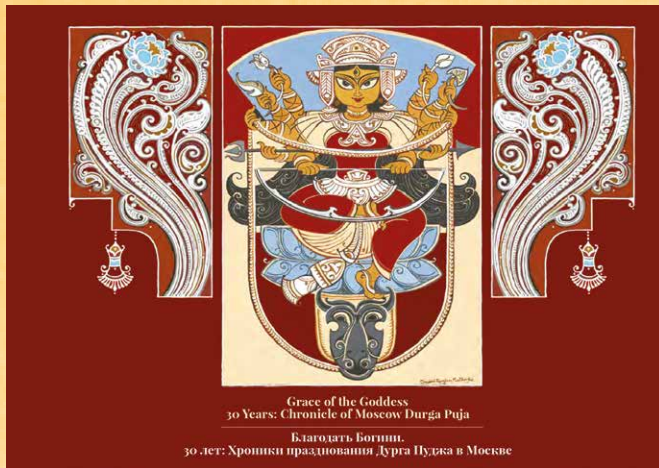
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Grace of the Goddess

The Embassy of India and the Durga Puja Committee produced and launched a special collectors' publication of images, messages and articles chronicling Thirty years of Durga Puja celebrations in Russia. A humble tribute to the initiative that was taken three decades ago by a few enthusiastic Indians to celebrate India's cultural heritage in Russia.



Кадила Фармасютикалз Лимитед



Природный защитник печени с двойным действием

Натуральный растительный гепатопротектор с двойным механизмом действия. Способствует очищению печени, улучшению регенерации ее клеток. Приводит в норму печеночные ферменты, обладает прекрасным желчегонным действием. Улучшает желчевыделение, мягко очищает желчные протоки. Одной упаковки Гепасейв достаточно для полного курса.



Природное спокойствие в животе

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Ya Devi Sarva Bhuteshu, Shakti Rupena Sansthita

Ma Durga- the epitome of strength and courage is the driving force that keeps the world going. It is the latent power within every self, that's waiting to be discovered and drawn on. Will the power build us or ambush us depends on our own conduct, for, it knows no friend or foe. Rightness raises us in glory and wrong ruins our very being. Let us recognize the constructive potential of this power in every individual particularly children and channelize this river of ability into making this world a better place to live. It is this right use of power that will determine whether Ma Shakti will frown or fondle us. Let the female species train the Shakti form in their beings to nurture the world and the male species to respect and revere the Shakti form. When humanity walks on the path carved out by Maa, there won't be any demons to slay or evil to wipe out. The entire world would be a heaven with festive season all-round the year. It is this way that we would be Ma Durga's offsprings in the true sense of the word and turn every day into a festival to rejoice and every moment a memorable experience and every life worthy of living. May Ma Durga bless us all into ushering in the Utopia that she has created for all of us.



Happy Durga Puja to all!

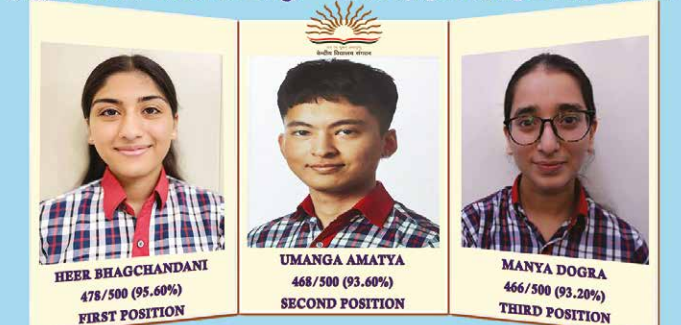
Rita Indrajit Singh
Principal EOI School, Moscow

SCHOOL TOPPERS - X 2021-22



This year the students of the schools have fared with flying colours in the CBSE board exams. Durga Puja Committee congratulates the toppers of Class-X and Class-XII and wishes them very bright futures.

SCHOOL TOPPERS - XII SCIENCE 2021-22



SCHOOL TOPPERS - XII COMM. 2021-22

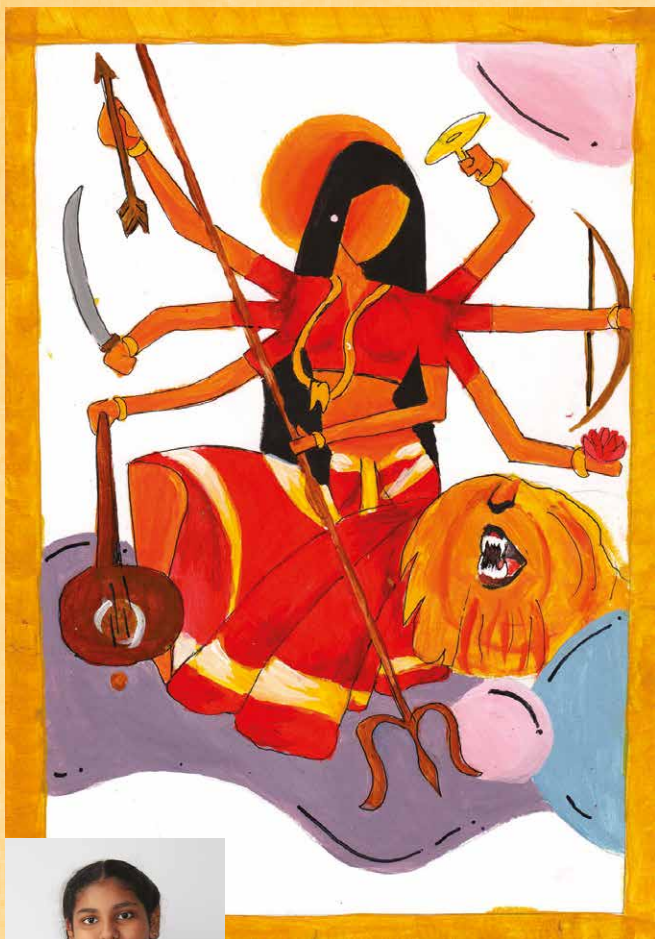


Goddess Durga - As you see Her

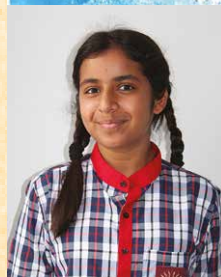
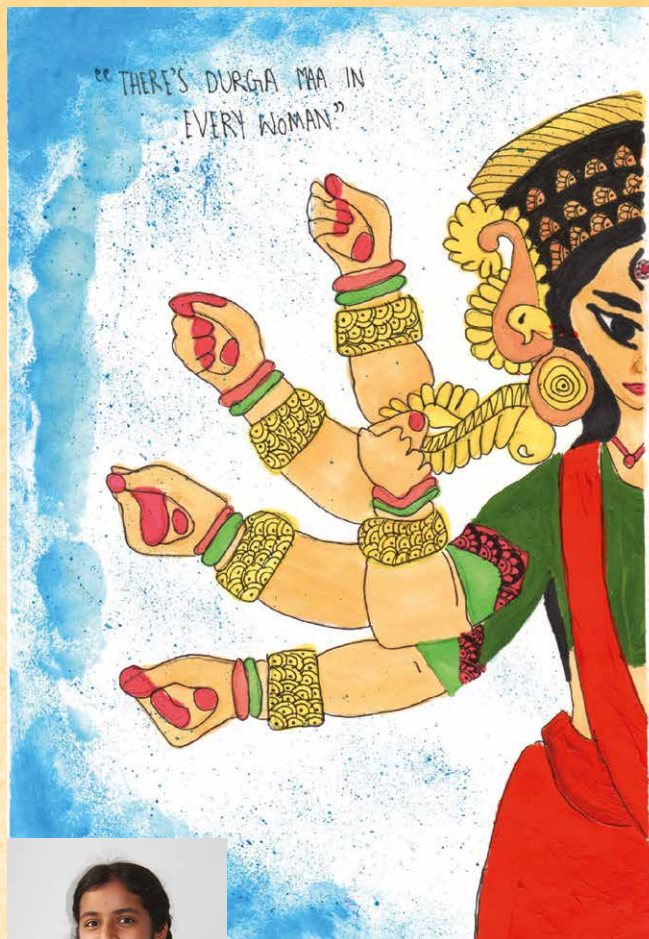
As part of the Durga puja celebrations in Moscow, the EOI school organized a drawing competition on behalf of the Durga Puja Committee amongst the students of the school. It was conducted in two categories: Class V-VIII and Class IX-XII.

The topic was - "Goddess Durga - As you see Her".

We were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and response of the children. The Durga Puja Committee heartily congratulates the winners and thanks all the participants. The Committee is very grateful to the Administration of EOI, Moscow for their support and help in organization of the competition.



1st - ANUSHKA SONI
(CLASS VI)



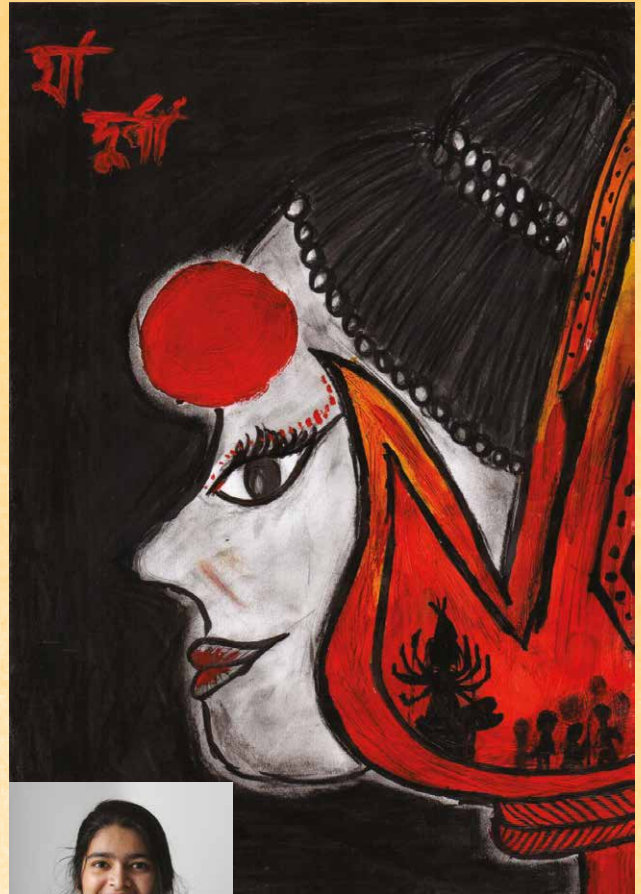
3RD - SIYA B.
(CLASS VIII)



2ND - JANVI GUPTA
(CLASS VIII)



1st – SHAILY SINGH
(CLASS XII)



2ND – FAKHIMA AKTER
(CLASS XI)



3RD – AYUSHI
(CLASS XI)



**Wishes happy Durga Puja
and Dushera to all Indian
community in Moscow!**

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delicious and healthy**



Proud Moments

The commonwealth games, often referred to as the friendly games, is an international multi-sport event recurring every four years, contested by athletes from the commonwealth nations.

The first event was held in 1930 and has run successfully every four years since, with the exception of 1942 and 1946, due to World War II.

The commonwealth games are managed by the commonwealth games federation, based in London, England, and athletes with a disability are included as full members of their national teams since 2002, making the commonwealth Games the first fully inclusive multi-sport event.

India made their debut at the Commonwealth Games in 1934, and have participated in each event barring 1950, 1962 and 1986. The country has so far won 564 medals.

This year, India dominated the weightlifting and wrestling and performed outstandingly in the various sports, as the athletes returned home with a whopping 61 medals, of which 22 were gold, 16 silver and 23 bronze.

India experienced several historical firsts, including their first ever medal in lawn bowls, won in gold by the women's fours team consisting of players Rupa Rani Turkey, Nayanmoni Saiki, Lovely Chaubey and Pinki Singh. They also brought home a silver medal won by Avinash Mukund in steeplechase, and bronze by Sandeep Kumar in race walk.



Hrittika Baruri

Among strong competitors like Australia, England and Canada, India has ranked 4th overall in the medal standings, and with each passing year our athletes come out stronger and more resilient, ready to take on the various hurdles ahead of them and bring glory to the nation.

I along with the whole nation, are proud of each and every athlete that competed in the 2022 Commonwealth games and the years prior. And we look forward to see the hard work and dedication in Indian athletes, as they stand on the podium with the tricolor and medal.



S.NO	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
1	AUSTRALIA	67	57	54	178
2	ENGLAND	57	66	53	176
3	CANADA	26	32	34	92
4	INDIA	22	16	23	61
5	NEW ZEALAND	20	12	17	49
6	SCOTLAND	13	11	27	51
7	NIGERIA	12	9	14	35
8	WALES	8	6	14	28
9	SOUTH AFRICA	7	9	11	27
10	MALAYSIA	7	8	8	23



India Through My Kaleidoscope

This year as we celebrate the 75 years of independence, we asked our younger generation who are growing up outside India to reflect on their thoughts and impressions about India and what it means to be an Indian.



Avishi Das

India is a country known for its plurality of culture, heritage and diversity. As soon as we hear the word India- we associate it with many things. India is at the peak be it art, literature, medicine or science. Not a single day goes by in my life without the mention of India.

The first thought that came to my mind when I thought of India was of my family, my nani-nanu, dadi-dadu, all my uncles, aunts, cousins and friends! They mean the world to me and I love reminiscing upon the sweet memories I share with them.

I was born and brought-up in Moscow and I visit India every winter during my vacations and this has always been the most exciting time of the year for me. But living here in Russia thousands of kilometers away from India, I never felt the distance because I have grown up with the most incredible Indian community around me. The songs, dances and skits have helped me understand the enormous diversity that exists in our nation and also the traditions of different states and their importance in our lives.

What is life without food? Absolutely meaningless. Food is another thing that we Indians are proud of. Be it butter chicken from Punjab, fish curry from West Bengal, Dhokla from Gujarat or idli-sambar from Tamil Nadu, it definitely makes our mouth water.

Another aspect that makes our country colourful is its variety of languages. In my school, every morning we learn a few phrases in a new Indian language. This is called 'bhasha sangam' and with this I have been acquainted to so many languages that I didn't know before.

My parents have helped me a lot in staying tied to my roots. My mother since a very young age has been practicing yoga and has taught me its significance. Yoga has now become a global phenomenon – and it can be seen in every part of the globe.

Participating in Independence Day celebrations by singing patriotic songs with my friends and performing on stage folk dances such as ghoomar, garba, bhaangra has always been exciting for me; it reminds me how beautiful my country is. Sports is something that can bind us as a nation. When the matter comes to a cricket match between India and any other country then patriotism and love for the country reached great heights. There is nothing better than sitting and cheering on for India to win a match!

No discussion about India is complete without the mention of Bollywood. Die-hard fans of this movie industry are spread across the world. Bollywood has had such a big influence on the life of Indians especially on the youth. Famous dialogues have become a part of our daily conversations and we often find our elders taunting us by saying: "Zyaada Shah Rukh Khan mat bano".

So in a nutshell India means a lot to me. It has shaped my past, is shaping my present and will shape my future. I am proud to say that I am Indian. I salute my nation!

JAI HIND!

"At the stroke of midnight on the 15th of August 1947", a tale of the tryst with destiny begun, a tale which was reflected in the blood of thousands and sacrifices of a million, a beautiful tale which created its own legacy, the tale of INDIA.

With the success of the experiments with a well-functioning democracy and a smartly carved constitution, we proved the critics wrong, those critics who formulated the downfall of India just after its independence.

India, for me, is not just a country, I can proudly call India my home, India is something which gives me my true identity specially living in a foreign country, we are proudly recognized as Indians.

Food and agriculture sector has seen India thrive in the production of items consumed by people all over the world, art and literature has been a part of Indian culture since the paleolithic times. India has one of the largest military forces compared to the rest of the world which

ensures the wellbeing and integration of the nation. India's growth has skyrocketed in recent years in the space sector, led by the Indian space research and organization.

India has climbed the peaks of many mountains of achievements in the world, but this achievement has only come to our doorstep after non-stop hard work from each and every citizen of the country and this motivation only comes from the fact that our country is our mother India. A tale which began 75 years ago is now a legacy and will continue to dominate till the end of time.



Arnab Kumar

India Through My Kaleidoscope

*If someone were to ask what the first thing that pops
in my head when they say
"INDIA"
I'd say
sitting on my grandmother's bed
looking out the window
on a still
Kolkata afternoon
I hear
the salesmen on the streets calling out to the people
"Ice cream"
I smell
The sweet aroma of
Roshogolla and Shondesh
I can feel
The rain flavored air
Fill my lungs
I think of the random honking in the middle of the
day
Sleeping
after lunch
I think of all my ancestors who fought for the land
With tricolor in hand
And their backs unhunched.*



Aarushi Chatterjee

India displays a wide variety of cultures, cuisines, dances, holidays, music, religions, and many other things. India is panoramic, which sends a notion of togetherness and vibrancy, rather than just being the name. This wealth is a result of the lengthy history and distinctive geography of the area. In contrast to the metropolitan areas' portrayal of a modern, developed India, distant places continue to value and protect their diverse tribal populations, soil, vegetation, and clean air. All the contemporary organic elements are still fresh in my mind.

The fact that the Indian currency itself has 15 different languages helps us understand the language diversity. To manifest abundance, it only takes a modest token. Our Indian religion and culture are incredibly vibrant. No other nation can compete with the religion and culture of our own India. Twelve months of the year or three hundred sixty five days would be less for our festivals and celebration.

Cuisines are also at the top of the list for their decadence. We offer anything you can imagine. Can we ignore clothing and fashion? It has the most stylish and posh appearance. It's mind-blowing how the music and dance combine. With it, we can unwind and even party hard. India is renowned as a forebrain drain because of how adaptive the savant and wisdom are. Ayurveda is a pure herbal system of medicine.

These characteristics will make our nation the leading world conqueror in the ensuing years.

The world is already viewing our competencies in every field. I wish all the readers a happy and healthy India.



Aarav Parin

JAI HIND



Moscow - 875 Years Young!



Yash Dasgupta

Moscow is a city with its majestic antiquity and its modern and dynamic pace of life, the charm of its cosy parks, lanes and streets and abundance of business and cultural events. This year the city celebrated its 875 years in a grand way with over 200 concerts, festivals and sports competitions covering 19 central and district venues. 420 events were organized in parks, museums, exhibition halls, libraries and cultural centers.

Moscow is considered to be one of the most beautiful and comfortable metropolises in the world as the city has been putting large-scale development programs over the past decade. Besides the rapid growth in infrastructure like the Big Circular Line (the world's biggest metro ring), Moscow High-Speed Diameter which allows the entire city can be crossed within 40 minutes, the revival of the famous VDNKh

and other historical venues continues. The Moscow Sun observation wheel, the largest in Europe, was opened to public. VDNKh displayed horseback stunts by riders from the Kremlin Riding School, a classic car rally, a skateboarding competition, Traveling in Color street art festival, etc. The green theater hosted a romantic musical stage performance, the Museums offered guided tours, while the Moscow City Scale Model Pavilion lighted up the sky with a light show.

In the down town area, the Tverskaya Street was the hub of all colorful carnival shows, demonstrating various themes from historic to modern era. The Tverskoy Boulevard offered fashionable and fascinating things with 90 Russian fashion designers presenting their special collections dedicated to Moscow. There, everyone was able to buy original jewelry, listen to presentations on fashion and style, get advice from professional make-up artists or get a stylish haircut.

The celebrations concluded with grand fireworks, illuminating the Moscow sky with millions of sparkles! It was an unforgettable celebration, which will remain in our memories for a long time.



Our Cover Artist

This year, our cover page was designed by eminent artist from Kolkata, Sri Krishna Prasad Dasgupta, a self taught sketch artist and painter. A prodigy who loves to sketch and paint from a very young age, works with the medium of line drawing (Sketching), water colour and acrylic mural painting.

He is a homebody with a nomadic heart. He draws to express his imaginations which are inspired from his travels and general life, spending his life after retirement at its fullest.

He heals with his art, inspiring many generations along the way. His paintings range from daily life sketches of the ghats of Banaras to idols of Kumartuli, being highly inspired by Indian mythologies.

Moscow Durga Puja Committee expresses its deep gratitude to Sri Krishna Prasad Dasgupta for his friendly gesture and support towards the Durga Puja celebrations in Moscow.



Sri Krishna Prasad Dasgupta

A Spiritual Connection



Lochana & Mahesh Mahadevan

With a mixed Indian community, Durga Puja celebration in Moscow includes every Indian in Moscow. So myself and Mahesh were not excluded from this. We were associated with the puja celebrations for more than 15 years. Initially the connection was through our kids' participation in cultural activities, and then slowly it became part and parcel of our life in Moscow.

For the past two years Durga Puja celebration did not take place in Moscow due to the covid situations. I am glad that this year it is going to take place on a grand scale. Though we will be missing it, I am happy that it is going to happen. Which takes me back to those Durga Puja fond memories.

"The calendar days in Moscow get marked with Durga Puja days. The days before the puja are spent by getting prepared for the celebrations and the days after the puja, will be spent by recalling how successfully the events took place with Maa Durga's blessings."

An interesting part of Moscow Durga Puja before Covid was Anandmela, where all ladies compete with their culinary skills was an interesting food competition. I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of it. Cultural evenings brought the whole society under one roof. Great opportunities for Moscow kids and elders. Mahesh took an active part in singing and ended up singing Bengali songs. Which of course he thoroughly enjoyed doing it

My favorite part was the Puja rituals, where I was blessed to be in the puja mandap and take an active part in the pujas. What a divine feeling it used to give me.

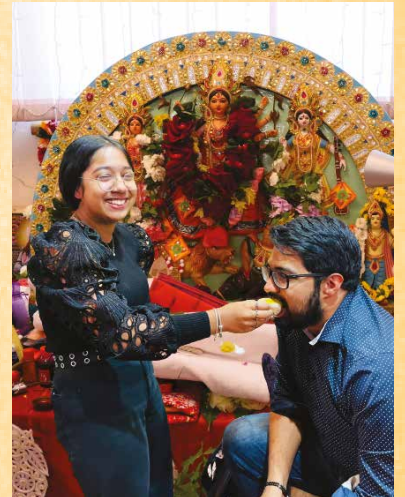
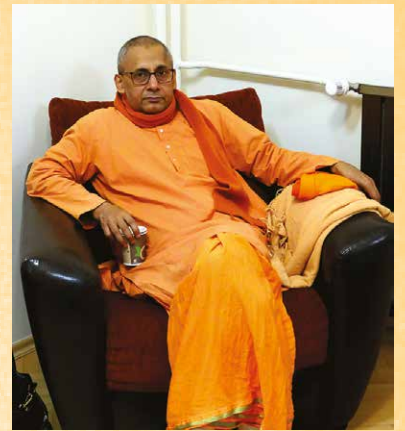
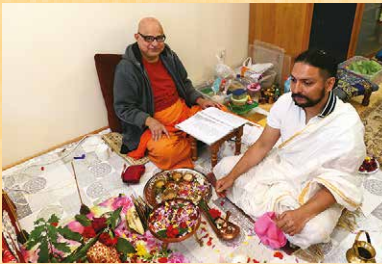
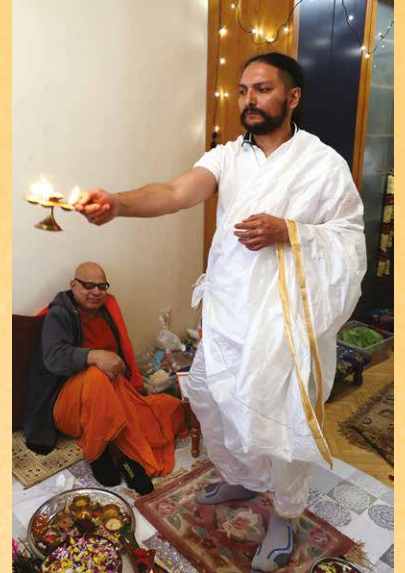
The last day -Dashami - ended with 'sindoor-khela', which is a vibrant and emotional time - while saying goodbye to Durga Maa. I was celebrating Durga Puja every year in Moscow and never knew that I was creating memories, as we had to relocate this year after spending decades in Moscow. With very fond memories I pray that this year will be a great celebration for all.

FLASHBACK 2020

In 2020 and 2021 the pandemic affected every aspect of life worldwide, which made it impossible to celebrate Durga Puja publicly. However, to continue the tradition, we were forced to organize it with very limited participants. Even most of our members could not attend due to the restrictions put up by the local administration. Here is a glimpse of the abridged version of our celebrations.

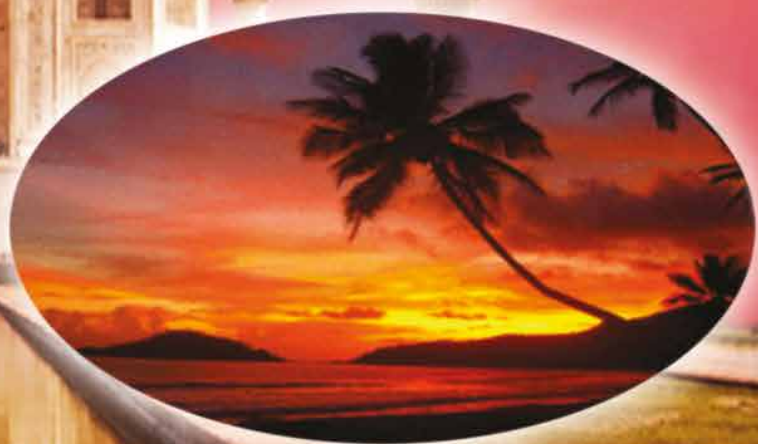


FLASHBACK 2021



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Sraddhanjali

Rathin Chatterjee - Rathin Da to all of us - was one of the founder-members of the Moscow Durga Puja Committee. They founded the committee with the mission to start a tradition of celebrating the festival of Durga Puja in Moscow. This was way back in 1989 - when Moscow looked much different, Gorbachev was at the helm and the country was still the Soviet Union. The founder-members wanted to create an extended period of "get-together" of Indians - living, working, and studying in and around Moscow during that time, to celebrate the Indian festival with fanfare. Today - after thirty years that tradition started by Rathinda and his close friends like Bishu Kaku (Dr. H.K. Dasgupta) - is still going on.

Rathin Da was born and brought up in Patna and came to Moscow in 1963 to continue his higher education. Later, in the early seventies he joined the Bengali service of Radio Moscow (later renamed Voice Of Russia by President Yeltsin) and continued to be part of the Bengali desk of the Russian radio service for more than 35 years. He was also the President of the Hindusthani Samaj in Russia.

Rathin Da and Lena Boudi were an integral part of Durga Puja celebrations in Moscow since its inception and from the late nineties Rathinda also took up the responsibility of performing the entire Puja rituals as the Pujari under the guidance of our Swami Jyotirupananda Maharaj. His dedication to this role and passion to perform even the minutest details of the puja rituals was admirable. He continued in this role for over two

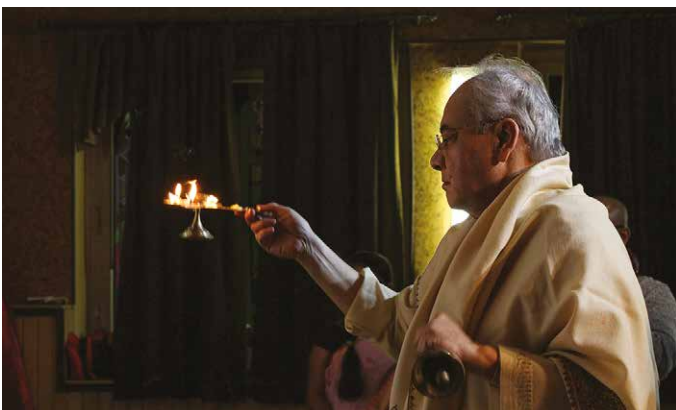
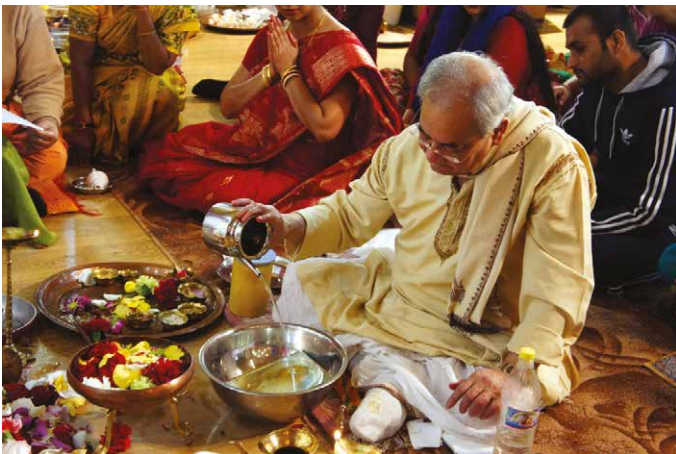


Rathin Chatterjee
28.02.1945 - 15.12.2021

decades. The last few years, due to poor health he could not carry on the rigorous duty of performing the puja, but Rathinda and Lena Boudi tried their best to come to the Puja mandap every day, every year and we were lucky to have his blessings during the puja. He did not miss tying the blessings' thread on our wrists every Navami - till 2019. Rathinda "lived" in Moscow Durga Puja and Moscow Durga Puja will always remember Rathinda with fondness, gratitude, love and respect.

*"Our memories build a special bridge when loved ones have to part
to help us feel we're with them still and soothe
a grieving heart.
Our memories span the years we shared,
preserving ties that bind,
They build a special bridge of love and bring us
peace of mind."*

- Emily Matthews



The Roadyssey

(Motor expedition from Kolkata to Moscow)



My familiarity with Russia dates back to my childhood, but I really don't remember exactly when I first heard the name. The 'Soviet Dosh' and 'Soviet Union' magazines remind me of my childhood. In the past, we used to get those magazines which were slightly bigger in size and had glossy pages, where we could see news, stories and pictures from the far away country. After a few years, I read Rahul Sankrityayan's famous book 'Volga to Ganga' and obviously while growing up in West Bengal during the communist era, I often heard the names Lenin and Stalin etc. Then, 'The Trans-Siberian Railway', Space programs, dissolution of Soviet Union etc. etc. The curiosity and interest about this country have been sparked by a variety of other reasons, both big and small.

The best way to see the world, we believe, is, of course, to take a road trip. That year (2018) we (Me and my crime partner, Debanjali, along with our 4 year young kid, Diyasinee) headed out to see the world from India by road. After India, South Asia, China, Central Asia, the 8th country was Russia. We entered Russia through the Zhaisan border from Kazakhstan, and Orenburg

was our first night stop. The place has an old-world charm, historical buildings, the Sovetskaya Street, and Russia has won our hearts right away. Seeing the Volga for the first time from Samara was also a magical moment, I vividly remember that day was 'Mahalaya'. We moved on to some other places before arriving at Moscow, around Durga Puja. Our minds were hypnotized by the massive displays of Russian structures

in the mega city. The sky touching statues and monuments, the stunningly beautiful metro stations, everything was so captivating. Thanks to Hritesh Da (Baruri), through him, we had the opportunity to see the only Durga Puja in Moscow and got to know a number of people there, some of whom became quite close to us, and the bonding continues. In a place that is so far from home, the days flew by so fast that we didn't even realize how quickly time passed. We felt, rather than a cultural exchange, the Puja days were actually a bonding process between the Indian and Russian people living there. We enjoyed every bit of those days of Puja, Khichuri Bhog, Songs and Cultural functions and making new friends. The Durga Puja ended with Bijaya Dashami and after a few days, another celebration, Bijaya Sammilani. We left Moscow with a heavy bag of happy memories, to St. Petersburg, from there leaving Russia towards Europe. In July 2019, this 8 month long and about 42000+ km road trip finally came to an end in Iran. We shipped back our trusted Car to India from there and we flew back home.

Perhaps everyone dreams of reliving the good times in life, and we are no exception. After visiting Russia, we also wanted to visit Russia again, but Covid 19 stalled the entire globe. Russia became the first country in the world to register a Covid-19 vaccine in August 2020, but the world continues to be under house arrest.

Since 2021, things gradually started to improve, and Russia had reopened its borders, which was a welcome development for us. We had seen only a small part of such an expansive country in our last trip, but the desire to see more has been carefully nurtured ever since. The prolonged confinement of Covid 19 and the devil's workshop in our heads led us on another road trip. This time Trans-Siberian Drive with our 2 little kids. Debarnee, the younger one, was only 1 year 8 month old. Another road trip from Russia's eastern to western edge, Vladivostok to St. Petersburg started beckoning. Yes, we believe that travelling by road gives the best moments to have the feel of the places rather than to fly from point A to point B or covering long distances by trains.

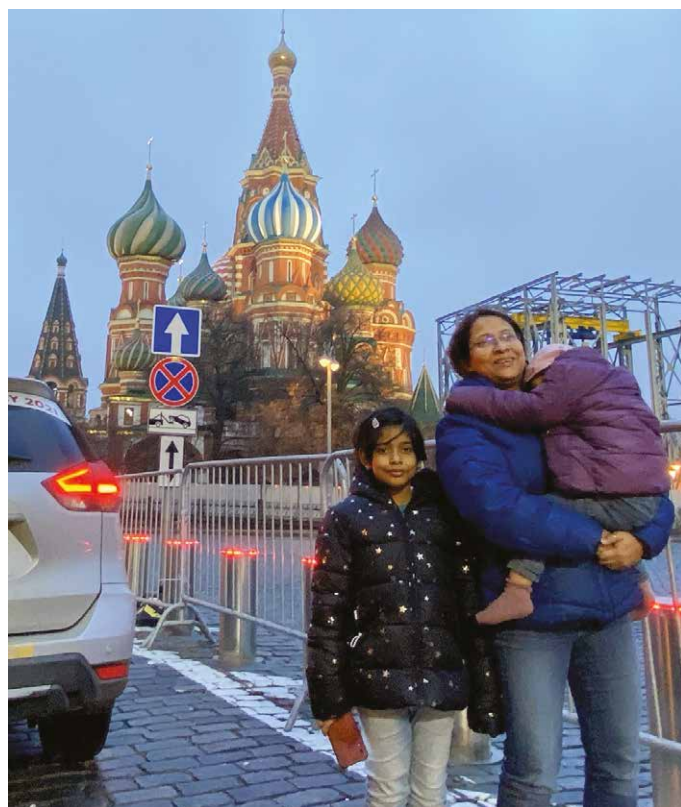
After some fears and doubts, we finally reached Russia again in October 2021, and we must acknowledge that, the assurances from our Russian friends and acquaintances were crucial to make that decision. First, we flew to Moscow, thereafter an eight-and-a-half-hour flight to Vladivostok, where we will begin our road trip.

Mile after mile of dusty wilderness and varied travel episodes is a novel itself. However, this can surely be said, not everyone is lucky enough to have this kind of experience many times in



their lives. The journey of 14,500 kilometers will remain in our memories forever, unaltered. The surroundings were bright with fall colors when we started from Vladivostok, but after some days when we reached Chita, everything around was covered in snow. We got to see China on the other side of the river Amur in Blagoveshchensk, cruised through the Chuisky Track by the breathtaking Altai Mountains to reach Mongolian border, sometimes crossed rivers by ferry, stood at the Asia-Europe border in Yekaterinburg, and a lot more, the list is long. It was a truly unforgettable journey. In between we reached Lake Baikal. No lake is more lake than Baikal; it's effortless to feel the significance of this saying at the first sight of the Pearl of Russia. During our stay there, we were fortunate enough to spend a full moon night on Olkhon Island in the middle of Lake Baikal, where we heard about the winter stories of the lake. In wintertime, it is frozen and gets covered with a solid layer of white ice; the lake becomes an ice highway. This natural wonder has intrigued me since then.

Our bags once again were packed, and we landed again in Russia early in the morning on 24th February 2022. Seeing the Aurora Borealis from the Russian Arctic region and driving on ice-covered Lake Baikal were the main attractions this time. For a mediocre Bengali from West Bengal, the experience of driving on Lake Baikal's ice road, traveling 25 kilometers on an open sledge at - 27°C, staying in practically nowhere for two nights, experiencing the celestial ballet in the sky and enjoying reindeer meat was quite extraordinary. Being lucky enough to see the famous Swan Lake ballet in Hermitage Theatre and seeing



Moscow and St. Petersburg covered in snow is also a memorable souvenir to cherish.

During these travels, 'THE ROADYSSEY' was slowly born, the convergence of our passion and profession. An initiative that offers life transforming road trips and cross border drives in India and some other places around the world. Our goal is to share our experiences with more like-minded people and to help them to have the feel of these adventures.

Places like Kamchatka, Oymyakon, Sakhalin etc., are on our bucket list destinations for Russia. We hope that we will be able to visit the beautiful country with beautiful people again in near future. I thought I would visit again this year, but for various reasons, couldn't make it happen.

Now that I look back, I realize we knew almost nothing when we drove into Russia from India on a cold afternoon. There is definitely something so magical about Russia and our Russian travel memories that always give us warmth and happiness. Now that we have driven over 20000 kilometers in Russia, excluding flight distances, we have become more enamored with the country than when we first visited.

May all the people of Moscow and Russia be well, may the country also be well.

Best wishes for a very happy Durga Puja.
Kaushik & Debanjali Roy



At Durga Puja in Moscow

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General Secretary	:	Nitin Aurangabadkar
Cultural Secretary	:	Debashish Sengupta
Finance Head	:	Chitrlekha Dasgupta Garzon
Puja Affairs Head	:	Mitali Sarkar
Administration Head	:	Hritesh Baruri

Puja Rituals: Swami Shubhavratananda Maharaj, Pradyumna Chatterjee

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Indu Baruri
Ritu Jethalia
Sudeshna Aurangabadkar
Sudha Kumari

❖ **Puja Mandap Decoration**

Moises Garzon
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- ❖ Swami Atmalokananda Maharaj
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JAI MA DURGA!**



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May Maa Durga always guide us in our lives and enlighten us with knowledge.
Warm greetings on Durga Puja and Dushehra to all.

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