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Ashwini Ghosh



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Mohonia Mondal : An Eulogy



Many of you knew my mother as "Monidi". A native of Kolkata, she arrived in the UK as a young mother with a 4 year old son. She soon settled in and adapted well to Scottish ways. She even managed to make a career for herself working in the Dept. of Social Security, where she made many good friends, before retiring after long years of service. And of course, many of you are familiar with her voluntary work in BSP.

She was a wonderful person who showed her kindness through care and consideration for her family and friends. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother who loved the company of others, whomever they might be. With a truly stoical nature, Monidi always put others ahead of herself, living a life of dutiful service and sacrifice - but always with generosity and joy, and a light heart.

Following my dear father's passing in 2021, health and mobility issues made it impossible for Monidi to maintain contact with the people she loved the most, and ultimately, her spirit succumbed to loneliness and isolation.

We will remember her warmth, her easy-going nature, always looking to help and to please. I am immensely honoured to call her my mother. My wife Maria, our two children Leonardo and Giovanna, and I, will cherish her dearly for the rest of our days.

In Leonardo and Giovanna, her spirit of harmony and affection transcends the tribulations of the past and the present to a bright, loving future.

Chandra Nath Mondal

Dear Friends and Devotees,

As we come together to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja, it fills my heart with immense joy and gratitude to witness our community's unwavering devotion and spirit. This festival is not just a time for worship, but also a time for us to connect, share and renew the bonds that tie us together as a community.

Durga Puja symbolises the victory of good over evil, a reminder of the strength that lies within us all to stay in solidarity against any negative deeds. As we worship Maa Durga, may we also draw inspiration from her courage and resilience to face the challenges in our lives with faith and determination.

This year, our Puja celebration may look a bit different, a bit subdued due to the current circumstances in our motherland which has shaken our souls but the essence of our tradition has to continue. I am proud of the collective efforts that have gone into organising these events and creating this magazine, which serves as a reflection of our shared values, creativity and dedication.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the sponsors, volunteers, participants and everyone who has contributed in making this Durga Puja a memorable one. Let us embrace the spirit of the festival, cherish our traditions and continue to support each other in all our endeavours.

Wishing you and your family a joyful and blessed Durga Puja!!

Heartfelt regards,

Gautam Kumar Patra

Chairperson, Glasgow Durga Puja Committee



The Right Hon The Lord Provost of Glasgow
Councillor Jacqueline McLaren



As Lord Provost of Glasgow it gives me great pleasure to send the city's very best wishes to everyone celebrating Durga Puja here and beyond.

Durga Puja is an ancient and widely observed Hindu festival in celebration of the Mother Goddess with a universal theme of good triumphing over evil. A tale of morality that remains relevant today. Demonstrating the power of peace and unity.

Glasgow is glad to celebrate Durga Puja. A multi-cultural festival celebrating diversity, friendship and the importance of mutual respect. Values that chime perfectly with those of our citizens.

Glasgow is a multi-cultural city famed for its generosity, kindness and sense of fun. I'm delighted to wish our Hindu community a joyous and uplifting festival and look forward to the joy, energy and colour Durga Puja generates.

**Councillor Jacqueline McLaren
The Rt Hon The Lord Provost**

Councillor Lorraine Cameron
Provost of Renfrewshire

Renfrewshire Council



To Whom It May Concern

It is a great honour for me to once again welcome this festival to Paisley.

In the beautiful Coats Memorial Church, we will celebrate Indian culture and hope to meet people from diverse backgrounds who are taking part in this piece of traditional history.

I would urge as many people as possible to go along and witness this wonderful spectacle and revel in its cultural and colourful display.

Kind regards

Councillor Lorraine Cameron
Provost of Renfrewshire

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Painting by Ashmita Ghoshal

Highland Harmony:

**Bengali & English notes
in Scottish symphony**

Choddo Prodeep

Anjana Sen

'Tis the season of ghosts and ghouls
and things that go bump at night.
Its also Diwali as the weather cools,
the festival of hope and light.
The night before this day of lights,
in West Bengal we pray to ghosts.
An annual homage, as per their rights,
we invite them home and be their hosts.
Fourteen lamps, we light at night
for fourteen generations before us gone.
Under the moonless sky the flames burn bright
and for one night only, we cease to mourn.
For they visit us then, forefathers all
mothers, grandmothers, late and great.
They troop in silently, answering our call
and bless us well as we accept our fate.
My lamps are ready, and so am I
I'll light them tonight with extra care.
And challenge the weather with a menacing eye
'Go on, rain, if you dare.'
Because I believe two souls will come
to touch me gently on my head.
They never saw this house when alive
so, they'll visit tonight, now they're dead.

For the love of Kolkata – What it means to a little boy

Rituparna Kole

It must be so fascinating to see the world through the eyes of a child. Everything is so new and untainted by the raw hardships of daily life. There is a special kind of magic in which borders of real and imaginary are blurred, making everything so exciting.

I took my son to Kolkata when he was about three. On the way home from the airport he pointed through the taxi window and shouted “Mama look!!!”

Now I was expecting him to point out perhaps the cows, dogs and goats walking on the road. Or the multicoloured buses and lorries. But no. So typically Scottish and deprived of good weather, my boy shouted “Look Mama Look! The Sun! The Sun!!!” I could not help but laugh out loud.

Free from any car seat and bouncing excitedly on my knee, he spent the entire journey pointing out vehicles, animals, people, and colours. He could hardly take it all in! The “beep beep” of the horns, the chaotic traffic, and the people in bright colours rushing from one place to another. His little eyes darted about with innocent excitement. Ever since then he has been captivated by what is lovingly known as the “City of joy”. “Mama we were just making smoke for our movie! It’s cool!” He says while gesturing clouds of smoke with his hands. Do I laugh or do I cry as my mum and I look at each other gobsmacked. “Someone is going to have to clean this up” I say with raised eyebrows. Before anyone can react, my Dad walks by and does a slippery slide on the powder and just about saves himself from falling flat on his face.

“What happened here???” He asks. “Ummm, your grandson was making a cloud movie” A giggle threatens to escape from my lips as I look at his bewildered expression. My son then asks “But Mama, how did you know it was us?”

I think in my head, “Because of experience Son. I have done much worse when I was eleven” so I will keep quiet before Dida & Dadu (my Mum & Dad) spill the beans and tell you of MY sins.

Other little experiences that he remembers with fondness is going to see “Rath” and decorating and pulling his own during Ratha yatra with his cousins. He witnessed Ram bijoya and got carried away with the celebrations and pomp, and had the privilege of experiencing Durga puja on one occasion at a time we managed to go to Kolkata during his October break. He could not believe there could be so many people in one city!

He was moved by the emotional moment when he was given a Rakhi for the first time and refused to take it off because he said it was so special. Things we took for granted as we grew up there.

He is fascinated by "Indian McDonalds" and how the spicy chicken burger, which he shares with his grandmother, is apparently way better than the UK. Phuchka and fish fry, ghugni and chop, jilipi and misti doi are all part of an ever growing list of "When I go to Kolkata I want to have...". This is often followed by "Dadu, do you have Hojmola? Dadu always has Hojmola!"

He has had his fair share of roaming in Kolkata too, prompting the question "Mama, who is that lady in all the posters? (The "Poster Girl" being Mamta Banerjee of course!). Howrah Bridge, Victoria memorial, Jora Shakho, Netaji Bhawan, the Indian Museum, and Birla Planetarium peppered with experiences of public transport including buses, trains, Kolkata metro, Toto, Auto and rickshaws. All the time a look of fascination on his face as to how everything is so big and loud and how everything functions amongst chaos in the big city and how history weaves in between. A contrast to the quiet orderliness of home in Glasgow.

The inventions of day to day convenience are what he loves the most. How simple things can be used in day to day life to make things easier. Like a rope to open the door downstairs so that you don't have to go all the way down to open it. Or a bag or bucket on the end of the rope dangled from the balcony to pick up the newspaper, milk or Puja flowers etc. He even asked the Amazon Man to put the package in the bag so he could haul it up!

His favourite is standing behind my mum while she does Puja so he can have first dibs at the Prasad!!! One day he caught her off guard during her Puja time and said "Dida! Can I do a Pooooo!" Flustered she said "Ehh? Obviously, you know where the toilet is! Ja Ja!" He promptly picked up the Shankhya (Conch shell) and blew into it, making a POOOOOOO sound..... Doubled over laughing and forgetting about her Puja rituals, she realised her mistake and marvelled over the antics of her grandson.

For a little boy who lives in Glasgow, Kolkata has a special place in his heart. For it is chaos and comfort, family and fun. For a curious young mind it is a riot to the senses. A place which to him is full of love, mystery and questions. And as he grows up, perhaps like us we will reminisce of those childhood days in Kolkata and it will fill his heart with fondness.

মশাল

সুদীপ্ত রয়

এখন আমায় জন্ম দিস না মা
এখনো আমায় ধরে রাখ জরায়ুতে,
রক্ত কালোয় ধর্ষিতা এই দেহ
ঘাতকের হাত পিষে দিয়ে গেছে স্নেহ ।

আমিও কি তবে বাবরের মতো হবো
নতজানু হয়ে পশ্চিম পানে চেয়ে,
সন্তান কেন নীল হয়ে গেছে বিষে
কিকোরফেরাবো অম্লান যৌবনে ।

তোরই ঘরে কি জন্ম নিয়েছে পশু
স্নেহ আর আদরে সার্বিক ব্যার্থতা,
তক্ষুনি কেন মারলি না টিপে গলা
লালন করলি মত্ত শাবক শিশু ।

এবার আসুক ধংসের গর্জন
লক্ষ্য মানুষ জ্বলছে অগ্নিময়,
নির্মম হও মুক্ত করো হে ভয়
নবীনের জয় নিশ্চিত করে জেনো ।

Three days in Arran

Arunava Ghosh-Ray

As September neared its end, I availed an extended weekend to sail across the sea to the Isle of Arran, the island known as Scotland in miniature. The plan was to base myself at Brodick and do a walk each day, the choice of walks depending upon the weather. I had booked the Belvedere B&B at Brodick, and the owner, Allan, was happy enough to give me my room long before the check-in time of 4pm. Leaving my sparse luggage behind, I set off with my rucksack to enjoy what the island had to offer.



Day 1: Went up Goatfell, which, standing at 874 metres above sea level, is Arran's highest peak. The walk starts from the Claddach Centre, near Brodick Castle, and is well signposted. The initial stage of the walk is through mature woods that later open up to an expanse of moorlands and good views of Glen Rosa. Looking down the path just traversed is a serene greenery of trees reaching up to the village of Brodick and the blue waters of the Atlantic.

After going past a small wooden bridge, the track becomes increasingly rocky. Further ahead and to the left looms the dark, impressive standalone stature of Goatfell. Looks can be deceptive, and despite the ruggedness, the whole area is part of a fragile ecosystem. The National Trust of Scotland owns these lands and works hard to maintain the footpaths along with the flora and fauna that lie beyond.

The walk approaches the Corbett from the eastern side, and the last section to the summit is a steep climb that requires an occasional scramble. It was a partially sunny day and extremely windy. Gusts of wind at the final stages of the ascent made it a bit of a nervous trek, and at the very top, it was almost impossible to stand still. The summit was misty, and apart from the formidable northern ridge of the mountain, the views of the horizon lay hidden behind a blanket of low-lying clouds. Experienced hillwalkers may continue along the northern ridge and descend to the village of Corrie. For me, it was the same route back, finding a sheltered spot on the way for a break of coffee, biscuits and a sandwich.

Day 2: Sannox to Lochranza is part of the Arran Coastal Way and is regarded by many as the most scenic route of the stretch. I must point out that it is a route that not everyone may enjoy. There are a few long, boggy stretches and an extensive scramble across rocky boulders, where tracks can be non-existent. Said that, for those who tend to take the rough terrain as a minor discomfort, there is a lot to enjoy on this route.



For a start, ten minutes into the walk, one goes past the impressive blue rock, a high walled cliff that overlooks a narrow path running through fern-covered grounds. The walk then leads through a stretch of woods with a stream running alongside till a bridge appears. Past the bridge and following the signs, the track becomes a long lumber along the coastline. Impressive rock faces, tree-covered cliffs and mountain slopes that reach out to the calm waters of the Atlantic dominate the landscape. The trail leads up to Laggan cottage, from where one can either continue along the longer coastal route or take a shorter but more strenuous climb that snakes up from behind the hut.



I followed the Coastal route, which now started to get increasingly rockier. My shoes were rugged and decrepit, and I could feel a crack in my soles. Not an ideal situation when you have to navigate through a long stretch of rocky terrain that runs along the cliffs. Finally, a short but steep climb down leads you back onto an undemanding path, and from here, it is a bit over an hour's walk to Lochranza.

The trail goes past the cottage at Fairy Dell, where once upon a time there was a small fishing community and then passes Hutton's Unconformity, where geologist James Hutton identified evidence leading to the notion that the earth had evolved over an immense period of time.. Soon, the ruins of the castle at Lochranza come into view. The walk hereon is on a proper tarmac road that goes past a golf course to arrive at the village of Lochranza and the end of the walk.

Soon, the ruins of the castle at Lochranza come into view. The walk hereon is on a proper tarmac road that goes past a golf course to arrive at the village of Lochranza and the end of the walk.

Day 3: The saying goes that you save the best for the last. And that is what I did. Glen Rosa! We both played our parts well. Me, by keeping this route for my final day, and the gods, by saving the best of the autumnal weather for the last. It was a glorious day of beautiful sunshine, blue skies with white specks of cloud and a pleasant breeze. One could not ask for more. With a new pair of shoes (I had to ditch my worn-out old pair after my previous day's endeavours), I started from Brodick towards Claddach Centre and the beginning of my walk.

The start from the Claddach Centre is the same as that of Goatfell, but after you enter the woods, head downwards along the first track that appears on the left. The path soon crosses a wooden bridge across a stream, and starts to ascend till a tarmac road appears with a stone bridge spanning the waters. Avoid the bridge, and instead, cross the road and continue following the track, which now runs past the Cnocan gorge. At the next junction, turn left and follow the grassy path downwards with coniferous forests to your right until you reach a dead end. The track is a bit obscure here, and you need to cross the wall on your right and walk through the edge of the coniferous woods till you reach a gate at the far end.



Once past the gate, the forest comes to an abrupt end, and the valley with open moorlands now rule the landscape. The narrow track leads you deep into Glen Rosa, with fern-covered gentle hills sloping downwards. As winter approaches, the ferns dry and turn colour, bequeathing the hills an orange hue. The docile stream of the Rosa valley meanders through the middle, a twist here and a turn there as it journeys towards the sea. Before long, a bridge appears, and a left turn after crossing takes you back to Brodick.

However, before you veer left, take the track to your right and go some distance. It is a detour that you will not regret. The magnificence of the glen truly comes into existence along this stretch of the walk. Short waterfalls cascade over the rocks, while the imposing pointed peak of Cir Mhor and the formidable A'Chir ridge dictates the skyline. It is a place that brings sheer happiness with each step... happiness that will remain etched in my memory for a long time to come. My rucksack lacked a packed lunch, but I had my trusted flask of coffee and a lonely biscuit. That did me just fine as I perched myself atop a large rock and spent the rest of my time in perfect bliss.



শারদ অঙ্গীকার

কল্পনা সিংহ

আজি শারদ প্রভাতে আসিছে ভাসিয়া
আগমনী গান সানাই এর সুরে
করিছে ঘোষণা মা'র আগমন
পূজা আয়োজন করিতে পূর্ণ সেজেছে ভরিয়া
বিপনী ভর্তি পূজা উপহারে রঙিন হয়েছে পৃথিবী।
ভুলে গিয়ে সব দ্বেষ অভিমান
সবাই মিলেছে বিশ্বমঞ্চে মিলিত কণ্ঠে
গাহিছে সকলে মহামিলনের গান॥
অভিষেক আজি হবে যে তোমার
তাই আনিয়ছি প্রীতি উপহার
বোধনের আগে তোমার কণ্ঠে পরাবো আমার মালা
অর্ঘ্য রাখিব পদতলে তব হৃদয় ভরা ভালোবাসা।
শুচিবাস পরি কত পূরনারী পুর সেবিকার দল
পুরোহিত সাথে একমত হয়ে করিল ঘোষণা
অশুচি ও মালা পরানো যাবেনা অর্ঘ্য যাবে না চরনে
পূর্ণ হবেনা পূজো আয়োজন খুঁত থেকে যাবে মনে।
বৃথা হলো মোর বাসনা মাগো, বৃথা হলো উপহার
তোমার চরণ ছুঁতে মাগো মোর নেই কোনো অধিকার।
প্রণমি তোমায় দূর থেকে তাই, অপরাধ ক্ষমা কর
যদি কোনোদিন পাই অধিকার মন্ত্র পড়িয়া চরণ ছোয়ার
সবাকার আগে আপনি আসিয়া
ভক্তিপূর্ণ হৃদয়ে তোমাকে দিয়ে যাবো উপহার
বিদায়ের আগে করে যাই আমি শারদ অঙ্গীকার।

Air Show

Radhika Adhikari



The Wales air show seen from Swansea bay- Red arrows jet

The air show is about planes flying across the sky and shooting smoke colours out of their wings. It is a very beautiful sight to see the colours are mixing with each other as the jet planes dance across the sky.

The colourful smoke that can be seen are red, blue and sometimes white. They sometimes mix and make the colour purple. The planes will do loop, da loops twirl, twist and spin as the colours shoot out over the sky.

My mom Sonia took these photos of the planes and in one of them you can see the colour is changing to purple. It was such an exciting sight to see.



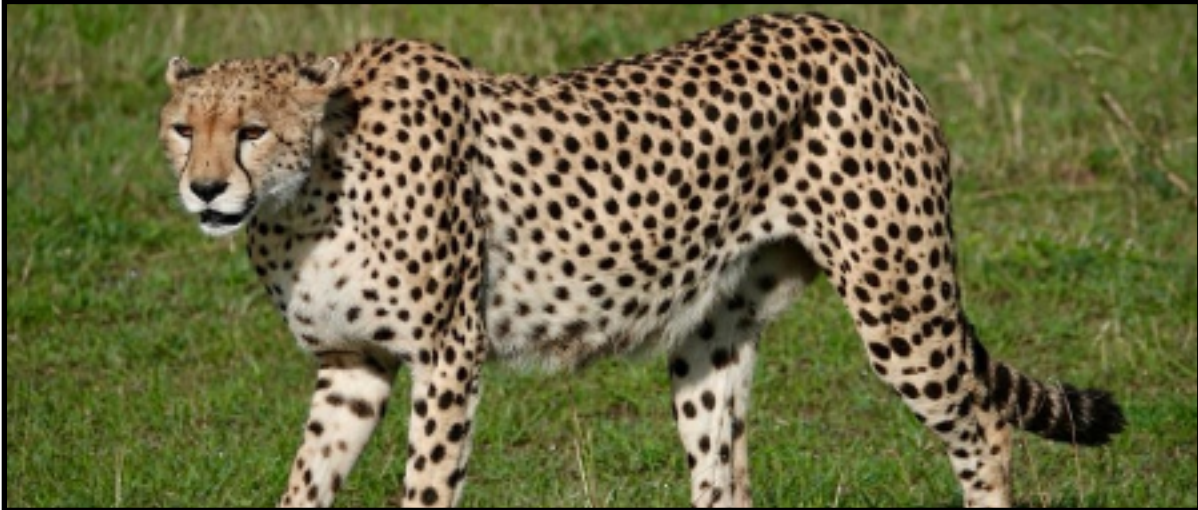
The Enchanting Night

Ritanya Karmakar

It was midnight, we were getting ready for bed, when daddy told me about the chance of viewing Aurora. We were very excited, and wanted to witness and capture this stunning sight. so we wore our coats, sat in the car and ran towards a dark place where the visibility of northern lights would be more clear. When we arrived at the Whitelee Wind farm, everyone was watching the magical aurora changing its colour at a slow pace. At first it was green, then purple and then pink. We were amazed at this sight. Through the green a scatter of pink made it look like ink, a few blinked, few stirred. Was it a dream or real? It looked real and unbelievable but quite surprising and strange. At last the aurora settled and all the colors blended into the black starry sky.

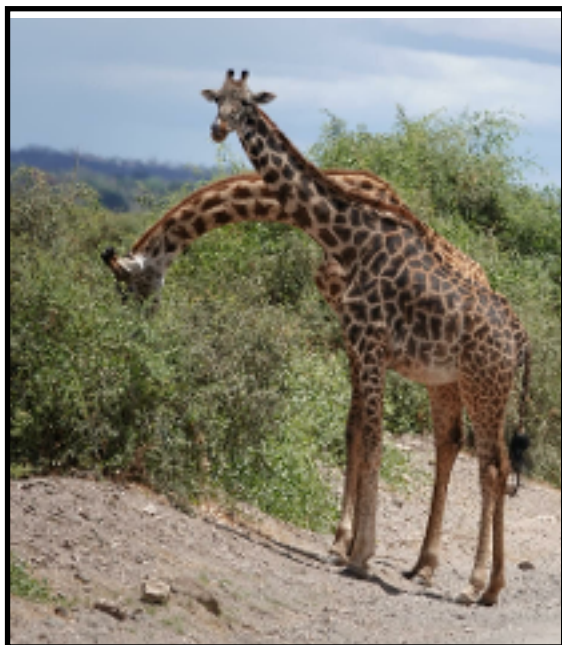


UNFORGETTABLE KENYA



Written by Madhumita Sinha Roy

A special thanks to Aishy Dutt for her invaluable support and contribution,
and Gautam Ray for the photographs

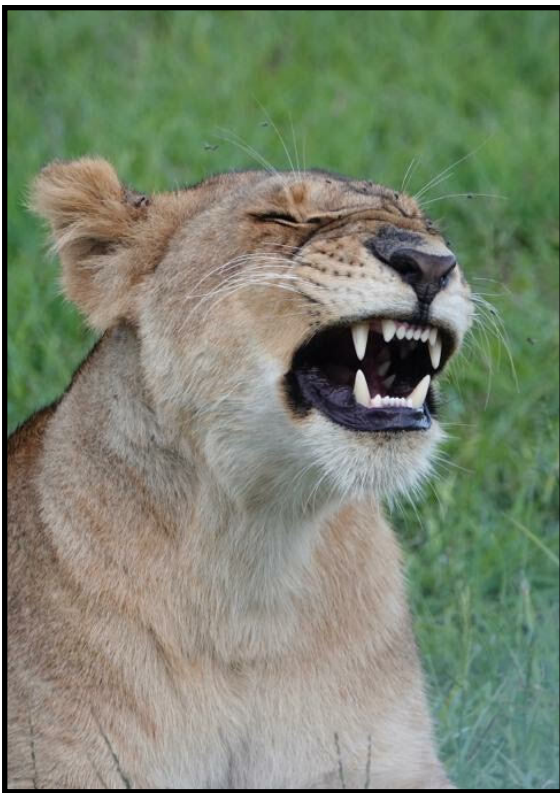


A group of Gokhalites with their families from various parts of the world set out on a journey on 3rd November to enjoy the natural wealth of Kenya under the guidance of tour operator Aparajita, who happened to be another Gokhalite.

After reaching Nairobi, the capital, we made an initial introduction amongst the 9 of us, as well as the tour operator and her tour guide cum drivers who would be hosting us for the next 12 days.

4TH NOV, 2023: AMBOSELI NATIONAL PARK

On finishing up our breakfast, we started for Amboseli National Park, in the foothills of Mt Kilimanjaro. While driving through Nairobi, we saw the city closely, which has sprawling skyscrapers, nice roads, flyovers and over bridges. However, the inner roads are not very well maintained and the traffic is slow. Going past the city there are unorganized outskirts as urban sprawls.



After a journey of 4-5 hours, we reached our destination - being greeted by majestic giraffes on our way. The resort had a cool and quiet environment, with individual cottages and a welcoming spread of lunch.

We started for our first game drive at 4pm and saw plenty of animals like giraffes, zebras, gazelles, before returning to the resort by 7pm, only to enjoy an engaging evening of African songs, dance, food, drinks.

It felt like the real beginning of a fantastic camping holiday.

5TH NOV 2023: GAME DRIVE

The real treasures of Amboseli unfurled on the next day, early morning, when we went out for another game drive at 6am. We were thrilled to see 2 prides of lions, specifically lionesses with 4-5 kids basking lazily in the sun, crossing the roads and playing. We also spotted hyenas, and a family of cheetahs. But the show was stolen by a herd of elephants, including baby elephants, all of whom lined up along the side of the road and one of them started to dance as if showing off her elegance to the spectators. Post lunch, we returned to Nairobi and went for an Ethiopian dinner, a true taste of the African cuisine.

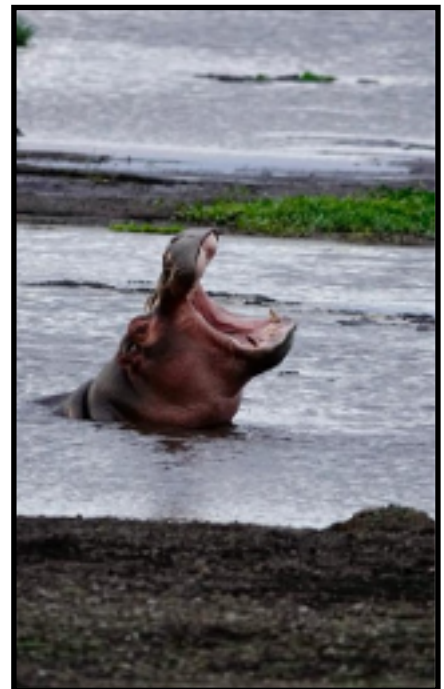
6TH NOV 2023: NIGHT SAFARI IN ABERDARE NATIONAL PARK



Having covered the east of Nairobi, we then started off on a long Safari towards the West and North of Nairobi, up to Masaimara. This side has hilly terrain, newly built roads, and a pleasant weather. There were large stretches of cultivated fields on both sides of the road, growing pineapple, mango, orange, papaya etc. A picture of happy, healthy villages.

We reached the Aberdare National Park by afternoon, and checked into the “Sweet Water Resort”- a private forest resort which had about 40 tents. It was a very calm and peaceful environment with an enchanting sight to behold - Gazelles grazing just in front of the tents and Rhinos across the barbed wire fencing.

My son Mayur was determined to go for a night safari that night as he couldn't wait any longer to see “Mufasa” the Papa lion. Hence, the five of us boarded into a jeep and a high powered focus light to help locate the animals. We had hardly moved 500 metres from the resort, when the driver spotted something moving in the field beside the road. He ventured out into the field and the wheels got embedded into the mud formed due to the rains in last few days. The driver tried his best to lift the car out from the mud, but in vain. The 5 of us inside kept still, frozen in fear that we might have to spend the night in the jeep since our phones were also not working. It was a chilling experience as we could hear the howling of lions from nearby, and deer were seen running away. After waiting for 2 hours, another rescue vehicle came to our aid and took us back to the resort. This experience will remain etched in our memory.



7TH NOV 2023: TREE HOUSE

The next day, 7th November, we went inside the park to see scores of African Rhinos milling about. We also saw the famous Jane Goodall sanctuary of chimpanzees. Having eaten a lavish lunch at the country club, where we were spoilt for choice, we left for a place called "The Ark" a hotel in a tree house! It has viewing galleries at 4 levels with a water body and a salt lick pit in front of it. A mini bus takes all the tourists for the night stay at the hotel and the place gives an antique, damp, spooky feel. Prior to sunset, we climbed on the wooden bridge attached to the hotel. over looking the vast and thick forests over hilly regions and saw birds like hornbills. But The real entertainment begins after sundown when the animals come out.



During the daytime we could see only a few bison moving around the water body tirelessly but as the night progressed we saw elephants, hyenas, warthogs entering the arena from different angles. However, the spotlight was on a young elephant who seemed to be in his adolescence and was playfully bathing in the water and frequently trumpeting in excitement. He urged the other animals to come and play with him by poking them, but the others shyly avoided. No Oscar winning movie could parallel this live show of exuberance in the wilderness.

8TH NOV 2023: LAKE NAKURU

The next site to be visited was lake Nakuru, which is one of the saline lake system lying in the Great Rift Valley of Eastern Africa. Lake Nakuru's wild life includes giraffe, lions, Rhinos, hippos and large flocks of flamingos. Nakuru is the 2nd largest city of Kenya and has sizeable Indian population. But the coexistence of city and wild life was startling when we saw 2 lionesses sleeping on the branches of a tall tree at the very entrance of the park. The accommodation was again very good with high end facilities.

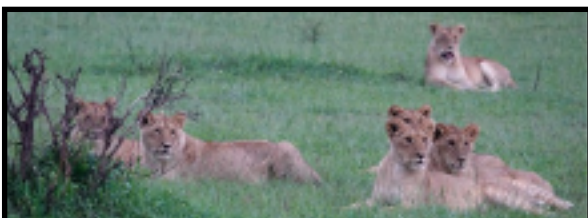
9TH -11TH NOV, 2023: VISIT TO MASAIMARA

We set out in the morning for the final destination of our journey, the famous Safari Park of Masaimara. On the way we saw the great Rift Valley of Africa which stretches from Egypt all the way down to Mozambique in South Africa. When the African plate separated from the Arabian plate some 30 million years ago, there were several volcanisms, which created a longitudinal rift of 4000 miles which cradles wild life sanctuaries including Masaimara wild life sanctuary.



Another interesting feature we experienced on this journey was crossing the equator, marked by clockwise and anti clockwise movement of a cork in a bucket of water. In the northern hemisphere it's anticlockwise and clockwise movement in southern hemisphere, this being called the Coriolis effect. We reached the Fig Tree hotel by afternoon on the northern bank of Talek river, joined by a hanging bridge . The stream was full of families of Hippos swimming and playing all throughout the day. Like all previous resorts, the food here was excellent, mainly continental. We stayed in tents with modern amenities but the entrances were to be kept shut always to keep away snakes, and monkeys.

10th November was scheduled for a balloon ride. We woke up to a chilly and sunny morning at 5 am and the safari vehicle took us to the open field where a huge balloon was already kept ready by another group of African men. We had a lady pilot who was originally Scottish, and she would fly the balloon for the next 1 hour. The balloon took off and kept floating above the African savannah land and we could watch big groups of elephants, zebras, giraffes, deer from the sky. The balloon landed on the field and we were greeted with an elaborate breakfast including champagne - the experience reminded us of similar pictures in the film " African Safari". Post breakfast we went for a game drive in 2 jeeps and that's when we saw prides of lions consisting of males, females and cubs hanging out together. The lions crossed the road and encircled the vehicles- their very body language showing that they were used to seeing hoards of visitors and vehicles everyday- throughout the year. We also saw 2 lions about to chase one zebra, but they stopped after a little while- and we missed an opportunity to see a shot of catching the prey.



9TH -11TH NOV, 2023: VISIT TO MASAIMARA

11th November

Day started with having breakfast under a fig tree. We were thrilled and scared to step out in the wilderness and sit for a picnic breakfast, but animals respected our privacy. We went back to the den of lions and kept waiting nearby in pin drop silence to see the activities of the group of 16 lions - playing, cuddling, making love as if enacting the “Lion King” experience for us.

We also saw a Cheeta family - a mother with 3 cubs going up and down a bushy tree which seemed to be their dwelling. We luckily saw a family of Leopards also, but from quite a distance, as they are reclusive by nature.



12th November Back in Nairobi

We spent the last day of Safari with a sumptuous lunch in the famous eatery of Kenya called Carnivore- where we tasted various sorts of meat- like Ostrich, crocodile, Bison etc. After the spending the next 2 days in the warm comfort of our friend Aparajita’s house- we said farewell to Kenya by Air India flight - via Delhi - but murmuring softly “ will come back soon”.



The Tale of the Three Cuppas

Nandini Sen

I have written this piece based on a painting(Three Cups) by a fellow local author Jane, also from Edinburgh. My recent trip to Darjeeling/ Himalayas and Kalimpong/Himalayas influenced me as well.

I invite you, oh! mysterious traveller to the country of tea, tears, and turmoil,

Whichever place you seek it might seem to be where clouds and mist are twin sisters.

The cups talk to each other and us with each bite of aroma, cinnamon, mixed with intense melancholia...

The mood catered inside those potions in the cups mixes with humanity, protests, obsession with the morning raga (musical note), and your embrace of love for adventures.

The warm smokes from abstract beverages speak for the way they dance and overcome the pain of separation.

The ghazals (Sufi spiritual music), the flowers, and the poems of Ghalib, Amir Khushro, and Tagore will definitely make me drink more chai...

Oh! Traveller, tell us more.

What else have you tried to say?

Lest we think about our beloved, maybe multiple, or our belonging...

Have you ever been confused

by the light of the day, the storms, rainfall, landslides or floods

and think hard enough with your choice of cuppa...

One day I will like you to halt at my shelter,

share and exchange our stories on melodies created by the birds,

might try the first flush of Darjeeling fog.

Let us spend our afternoons together in those caves

in the mountains joking about our pasts, fantasies, and dreams.

All the wise animals like elephants, tortoises, owls, and camels will join us in the corner participating in all our games.

Stars are settling down on the windows,
The Planets align themselves
Encouraging us to board a caravan.
The caravan starts for the dawn of an unborn tomorrow.



Cancun Visit - A Memory Recount

Naliniranjan Maiti

It has always been a dream of mine to visit Cancun, a beautiful city in the state of Quintana Roo on the Yucatan Peninsula in Southeast Mexico. Situated by the Caribbean Sea, Cancun is one of the most popular holiday destinations, attracting visitors from all over the world. The all-inclusive family resorts here are ideal for water sports, family fun, exploring Mayan wonders, and relaxing on beaches with clear waters and white sands.

I visited Cancun from November 21-26, 2023, traveling from Dallas, USA, along with my elder daughter and her family friends from New Jersey. An American visa is sufficient to cross the border into Mexico. Our flight was in the evening, so we arrived in Cancun around 9 PM, just as the resort restaurants were about to close. Thankfully, our friends from New Jersey, who arrived before us, arranged our dinner, allowing us to eat before checking into our rooms. The resort attendants took our luggage to our allotted room, giving us extra time to relax in the reception area after dinner. The resort management also arranged our transportation to and from the airport.

We stayed in a sea-facing room on the second floor of the Moon Palace Resort, which offers five-star hotel facilities. The resort comprises three parts: Moon Palace, Moon Palace Grand, and Moon Palace Nizuc. It spans over 140,000 square feet and can accommodate up to 10,000 attendees at one time. Its all-inclusive rates cover lodging, food, drinks, beverages, water sports, and transport between the resorts. Drinks are even served to residents during

swimming sessions from the poolside bar. In addition to the restaurants, food is available around the clock through room service, with a suggested tip of one dollar for the delivery staff. The snack and coffee center in the main building is open day and night.

During our stay at Moon Palace, we enjoyed the food, bar facilities, and live music. We also visited the Grand and Nizuc for special lunches and spa treatments, which we pre-booked from Moon Palace. The resort staff members were cordial and friendly throughout our stay.

One of the most exciting events was our tour of Xoximilco Xcaret Park. We were taken to the park by bus from the resort, located 59 kilometers away along the Caribbean coast. The park offers all-day admission and features a paradise theme park on the Mayan Riviera with over 50 fun activities, free food, and cultural performances. On our way in, we were greeted by a procession of flamingos.

I encountered a bit of trouble during our visit to the Mayan village within the park, where I was captivated by one of the dance performances and lost track of my family. I nearly had a nervous breakdown, but a kind Mexican couple helped me find my way back.

During the water sports, some children from our group and I became separated from our family members but eventually found them after a long trek along the park trails. Scuba diving was one of the water sports offered. Most of our group members, including the children, entered the lake with oxygen masks. However, two ladies and I weren't brave enough to dive. Instead, the Xcaret staff arranged an alternative activity: parasailing over the Caribbean Sea. I thoroughly enjoyed this adventure, even at the age of 75.

Our day at the park concluded with the Mexico Xcaret Espectacular Show at the Gran Tlachco Theater at 7 PM. The show featured a vibrant re-enactment of Mexico's history and culture, performed by over 300 talented artists. It began with portrayals of ancient rituals, including owl dances and a traditional ball game, and culminated in the clash of civilizations—depicting the encounter between the civilized and the uncivilized. The performance left a lasting impression of Mexico's cultural splendor.

The following evening, we dined at Habibi Restaurant in Grand, where we enjoyed Lebanese food accompanied by belly dancing and live music. Our dinner at a Mexican restaurant in Nizuc was equally sumptuous, showcasing the incredible diversity of Mexican cuisine. I was particularly amazed by the chef's impromptu coffee preparation, where he heated steel mugs over an open flame and poured the coffee water from about half a meter high to create a perfectly blended drink, served with a dramatic flare.

My five-day stay at Moon Palace in Cancun and the various activities we enjoyed made for an unforgettable experience. I will cherish these memories for a lifetime.

অমানিশা

ঋদ্ধিমান কর্মকার

অন্ধকারে রাত ভেসে যায়
চাঁদের আলোও ল্লান।
শারদীয়া আজ বর্ণহীন,
স্বলিত নারীদের সম্মান।

অনাচারের ক্রুর থাবা
আঘাত হানলো দরজায়।
আক্রান্ত আমরা সবাই,
তাই চুপ থাকা দায়।

প্রতিবাদ ছড়িয়ে পড়ুক
দুনিয়ার প্রতিটি কোনায়,
একজন অপরাধীও যেন
ছাড় না পায়।

খতম করতেই হবে
অসুরদের সব আশ্ফালন।
এবছর একাই এসো মা,
করতে অসুর দমন।

ছিন্নভিন্ন কর সব
শয়তান রক্তবীজদের।
ভয় মুক্ত কর মাগো
তোমার সন্তানদের।

আগামীতে এসো মা
জগৎজননী হয়ে।
শস্য শ্যামলা ধরিত্রীতে
তোমার সন্তানদের নিয়ে।

Durga Pujo

Anulekha Mukherjee

We look forward all year for this auspicious event Durga Pujo
With joy and excitement you couldn't possibly apprehend
We buy new dresses and eat delicious food
It brings a certain smile on our face the type that someone never could
Every year when Maa Durga comes
We always pray for our loved ones
Hail Maa Durga mother of all
Your mighty season comes right after fall
5 days of fun and dance
Many hours filled with prance
Now the days are done
I'm very sad to see you go
But until next year Maa Durga
Your audience still grows



Jamai Shashti

Anjana Sen

My husband is sad today. And I realise yet again how the departure of my own beloved parents has left a hole in his world, that will remain an open wound forever. Today is the day celebrated every year when his relationship with them did not involve me.

Today is *Jamai Shashti*, the Bengali celebration of the *Jamai*, or the son-in-law. An antiquated ritualistic marking on the calendar when fish prices soar to their highest. When elderly Bengali couples spend wild sums to feed their *jamai*, who aging himself, incongruously becomes the deity worshipped for the day.

As a family, we mocked this ritual! My father and I were both averse to anything that did not make sense to us and tended to shred it with scorn and pragmatism. Ma would join in nervously, in this collective derision, but also make a quiet point about wanting to celebrate her own *jamai*, who was more of a kindred spirit to her than her own children were. And in the same quiet way, she always had her own way.

For the first two decades of our marriage, it was easy to avoid the day, living as we did oceans apart, first in China, then Zimbabwe, before finally 'settling' in Scotland. However, the day was always marked between the two of them, mother-in-law and son-in-law, over the phone. And whenever we met and exchanged a year's cache of gifts, he got presented with an extra shirt or kurta or *Panjabi* for the missed *Jamai Shashti*. It always irritated me, this upsetting of the neat balance of gifts, with him getting one more than me, and the debate would rekindle itself about the lack of *Bou* (daughter-in-law) *Shashti*.

Always in good spirit though, as all arguments in our family tended to end with my father singing strange songs, atrociously out of tune.

However, since the year 2009, Sarajit has managed to successfully place himself strategically in Calcutta on this day.

Things worked in his favour professionally, with a transfer to Delhi for seven years. After retiring from his company, a leader in the energy sector, his only job of thirty-six years, he set up his own engineering consultancy in Calcutta, thus straddling both countries to his convenience. It worked well, a little space never harmed a marriage, and with him spending half his time in and around West Bengal, our parents (my two and his mother) were better cared for in their old age.

And thus, it was, that for the last decade or so, I would feign indignant horror at the extravagant offerings on the lunch table at D46, Mahavir Vikas. Plus, the mandatory shirt, of course.

As time went on, and they got frail and bent with age and illness, the shirt turned into an envelope containing Rs 4000, to spend on what he liked. And this sixty-year-old man of mine treated these envelopes as reverentially as a six-year-old with his first pocket money.

Both my parents left us just before the pandemic, dodging the covid bullet, so to speak. I am thinking of all this now, through misty eyes, my own permanent grief put to one side. Who am I to scorn rituals which brought them joy?

I think I shall buy him a shirt. Or maybe give him £40 from his own bank account to spend on whatever he likes!

মেঘের রাণী

জয় ভট্টাচার্য্য

আবার কবে আসবি রে তুই
ও মেঘের রাণী
তোর লাগি মন কান্দে রে ।
আবার কবে নাইবো রে তোর শ্রাবণেতে
ও মেঘের রাণী
তোর লাগি মন কান্দে রে ।
বছর দুয়েক সময় হল তোর নাই যে দেখা
তোর পানে মোর আঁখি মেলে বসে আছি একা ।
ও মেঘের রাণী
তোর লাগি মন কান্দে রে ।
আবার কবে আসবি রে তুই করাবি স্নান
দিন পেরিয়ে গোধূলী হচ্ছ আকাশ স্নান ।
আবার কবে আসবি রে তুই
ও মেঘের রাণী
তোর লাগি মন কান্দে রে
তোর লাগি মন কান্দে রে ।

Feluda Quiz

1. What was the name of the film which was based on Jatayu's novel, Bombaiyer Bombetey?
2. Which famous Indian actor portrayed the role of Feluda in a Hindi short film aired on Doordarshan ?
3. What is the name of the story in which Feluda first appears?
4. What was the name of the circus in "Chinnamastar Abhishap"?
5. What was the prized weapon of Lalmohan Ganguly (Jotayu) in Baksho Rahasya?
6. What is the real name of "Captain Spark" in "Joy baba felunath"?
7. In Ghurghutiyar Ghatona, what was the combination code for opening the safe? Hint: "trinoyon o trinoyon ektu jerou"
8. What was the toothpaste brand that Feluda used?
9. What is the name of the musical instrument mentioned in the story - "Samaddar er Chabi"?
10. Feluda used to maintain a diary. The language he used to pen down his notes was Bengali but the alphabet he used, belong to a different language. What was that?



1. Jet Bahadur 2. Shashi Kapoor 3. Feludar Goyendagiri 4. Great Majestic Circus 5. A boomeran
6. Rukmini Kumar 7. 39039820 8. Forhans 9. Melochord 10. Greek

Answers:



Lochs & Luchi:

A Culinary Journey for Scottish Indians

Sushi

Sonia Adhikari

Here's a simple sushi recipe you can try at home, focusing on basic sushi rolls (maki).

Ingredients:

- 2 cups sushi rice
- 2 ½ cups water
- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- Nori (seaweed sheets)
- Fillings (e.g., cucumber, avocado, cooked prawn, cooked chicken or smoked salmon)
- Soy sauce, pickled ginger, and wasabi (optional, for serving)

Instructions:

1. Cook the Sushi Rice:

- Rinse the sushi rice under cold water until the water runs clear.
- Cook the rice in a rice cooker or a pot with the 2 ½ cups of water. Once cooked, let it sit for 10 minutes.

2. Prepare the Rice Seasoning:

- In a small bowl, mix rice vinegar, sugar, and salt until dissolved.
- Gently fold this mixture into the cooked rice while it's still warm, using a wooden spoon.

3. Prepare the Fillings:

- Cut your desired fillings (like cucumber, avocado, or fish) into thin, long strips.

4. Assemble the Sushi Rolls:

- Lay a sheet of nori on a bamboo sushi mat or clean surface.
- Spread a thin layer of sushi rice on the nori, leaving a 1-inch gap at the top.
- Place the fillings in a line near the bottom edge.

5. Roll the Sushi:

- Using the mat, gently roll the nori and rice over the fillings, applying pressure to make a tight roll.
- Seal the roll by wetting the exposed edge of the nori.

6. Cut the Sushi:

- Use a sharp knife to cut the roll into bite-sized pieces.

7. Serve:

- Serve with soy sauce, pickled ginger, and wasabi on the side.

Enjoy your homemade sushi!



Dhokar Dalna

Suhas Mitra

Preparation for Dhokas

Ingredients

- Chana Dal 160 gm
- Toor Dal 40 gm
- Green Chillies 2
- Turmeric 1 gm
- Cumin Powder 3 gm
- Grated Ginger 12 gm
- Coconut Grated 12 gm
- Kalonji seeds 1 gm
- Hing 1 pinch
- Sunflower Oil
- 1 Tablespoon for dhoka mix + for deep frying dhokas

Grinding Process

- Wash Dal thoroughly and soak for at least 8 hours. Preferably with boiling water.
- Divide dal into 2 equal portions.
- Grind each portion with one green chili, 1/2 teaspoon sugar, salt (preferably rock salt to help grinding process).
- During the grinding use the reverse grind option to allow for the mixture to grind coarsely and prevent it from becoming smooth.
- Use very short grinds and after every grind re-mixed the dal mixture with a teaspoon.

Preparation Dal Mix

- Keep a large chopping board ready and apply the surface lightly with some oil.
- Heat some oil (not too much) in a medium heated kadai keeping flame medium-low.
- Add hing and the kalonji seeds.
- Add grated coconut and wait for it to turn brown.
- Then add the ginger and allow it to cook through a bit and allowing the raw smell to go away.
- Add turmeric and cook it through for a few seconds.
- Add cumin powder and let that cook for a bit. If needed, add splash of water.
- Add the grounded dal mixture and mix on a low flow flame.
- Slowly but steadily the dal mixture will start coming of the sides of the kadai and form into a dough ball. Allow time for this stage to be reached.
- Place the dal dough ball on the 2 greased chopping boards.
- Flatten the mixture to 2cm height and prepare into a diamond shape.
- If possible, try make one side of the diamond around 20% longer than the shorter side. This will allow close to $4 \times 5 = (20)$ evenly shaped diamonds to be cut.
- Use a cleaver to shape the sides of the diamond.
- Shaping of the diamonds needs to be quickly before it starts to dry!
- Immediately after shaping the diamond keep a large bowl of cold water to wipe your knife as and when necessary while cutting out diamonds

- When the dal dough is still warm and soft cut the large diamond into diamond sized dhokas. This will give 4x5=20 diamond dhokas.
- Leave to dry for at least 1 hour.
- Make a slurry of water mixed with plain flour.
- Add a bit of this slurry to the sides of the dhokas which will stop crumbs falling into the oil making a bitter taste.
- Finally deep fry the dhokas in sunflower oil

Preparation for the gravy

Ingredients

- Grated Ginger 50 gm
- Cumin Powder 7 gm
- Coriander Powder 4 gm
- Turmeric Powder 1 gm
- Chili Powder 2 gm
- Bay Leaves 2
- Whole Red Chili 2
- Melon seed paste 10 gm
- Hing 1 pinch
- Sunflower Oil 2 tablespoons
- Cumin Seeds 1 teaspoon
- Cinnamon stick ½ Inch
- Green Cardamon 2
- Cloves 2
- Garam Masala Powder ¼ teaspoon
- Tomato Diced 1 medium sized

Cooking Steps:

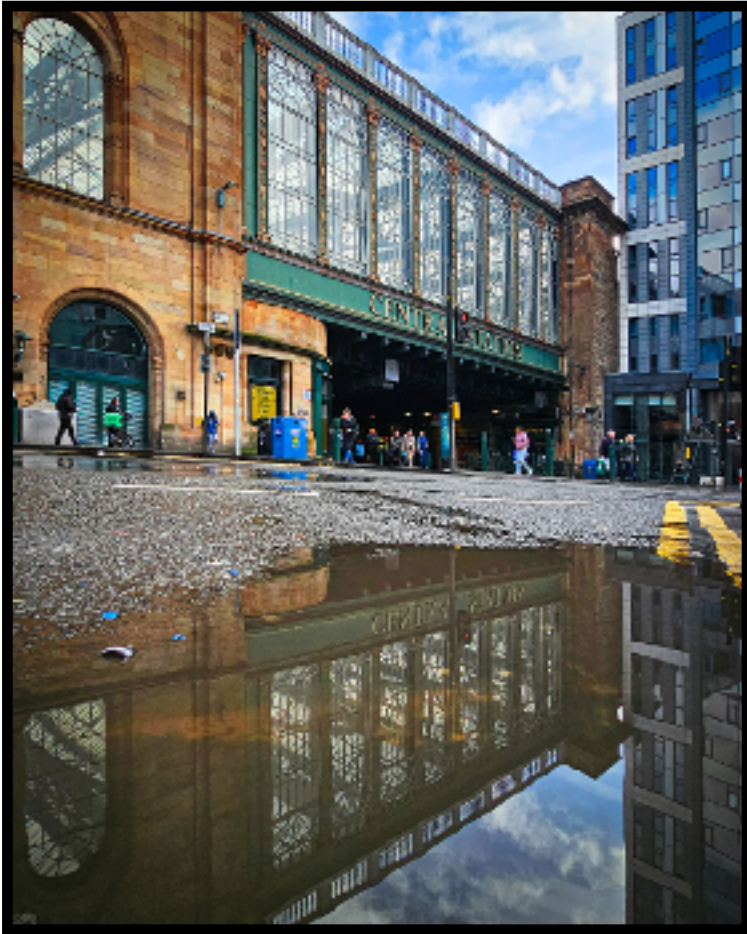
- Heat a kadai to a medium heat and add the oil
- Add the red chillies, bay leaves, cumin seeds, cinnamon, cloves and cardamon to the oil
- Add pinch of Hing to the oil
- Add grated ginger. Stir the ingredients to prevent sticking to the kadai.
- Mix the turmeric, coriander, cumin and chili powder with water and add it to the pan. Keep stirring for around 30 seconds.
- Add the diced tomato and keep stirring till the oil floats through the spiced tomato. This could take several minutes.
- Then add the melon seeds paste.
- Once the raw smell of the past has disappeared add one cup of water.
- Increase the heat to high and bring the gravy to a boil.
- Finally add the dhokas to the gravy and simmer for 5 minutes.
- Before turning off the heat sprinkle finely ground garam masala over the gravy.



Amit Chorge
amitchorge.uk

Kilts & Clicks:

Through the lens in Caledonia



Reflections of untold stories

Bodhisattva Dasgupta



Sacred Harmony

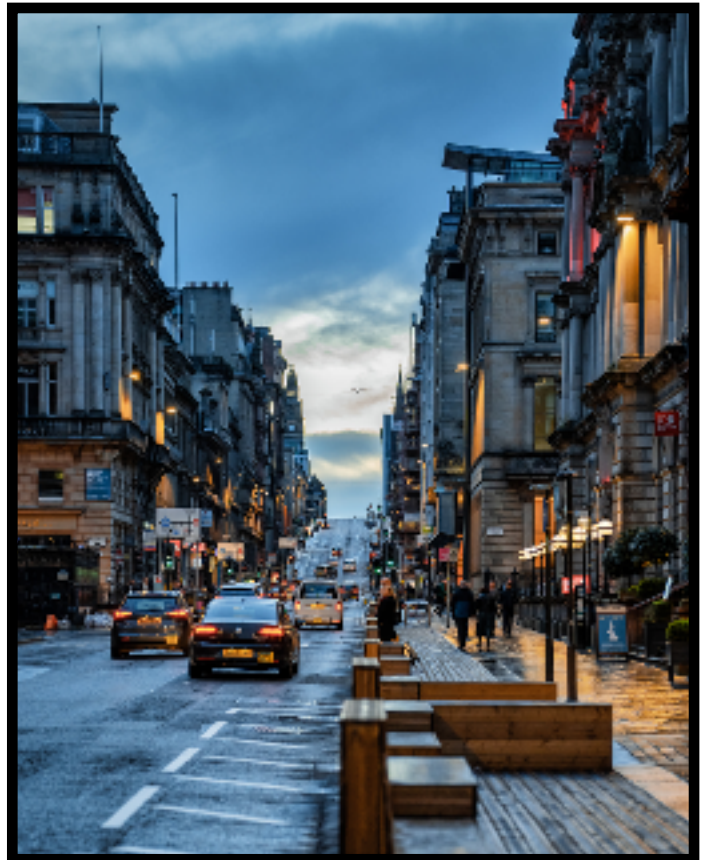
Arnab Purakayestha

Edinburgh Castle
Bodhisattva Dasgupta



A rain-soaked Bath Street glows in the colors of the setting sun

Bodhisattva Dasgupta



From Kolkata 2024
Alan Conlin



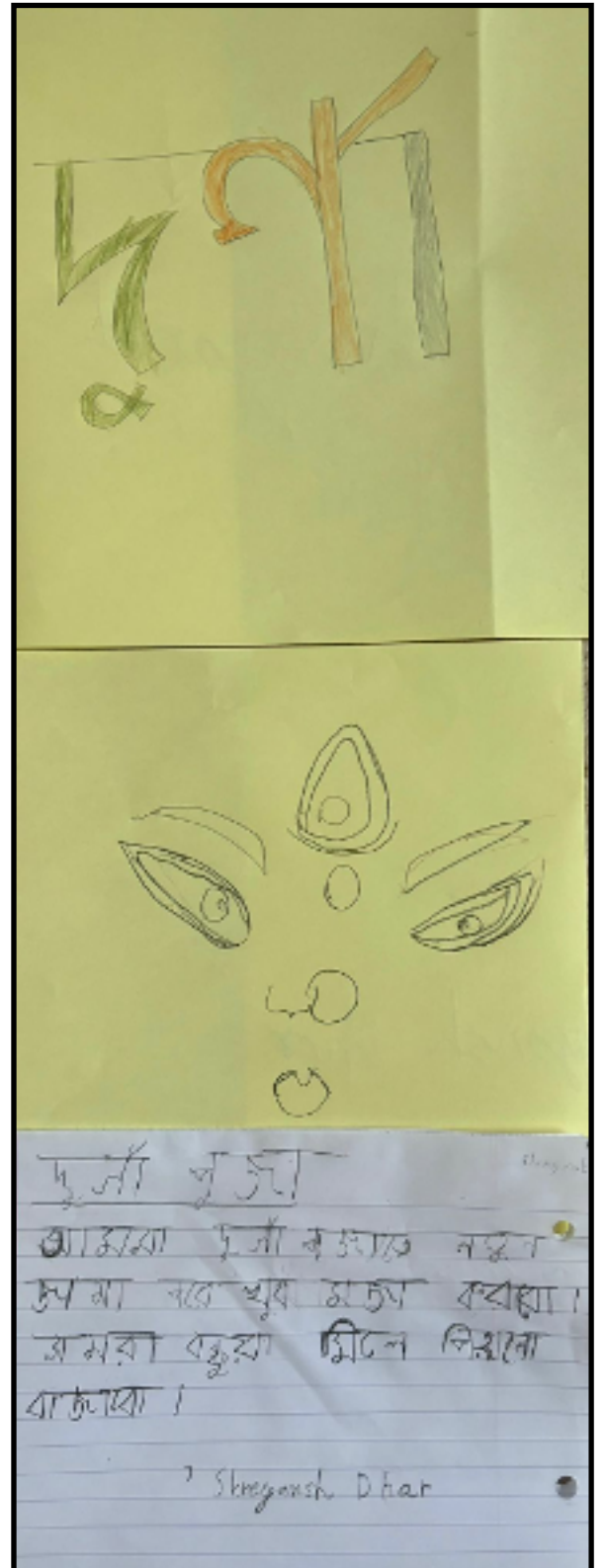
Ritanya Karmakar

Kiddie Kilts to Saree Strokes:

A Dual Heritage of
Artistic Brilliance



Anushree Sinha



Shreyansh Dhar



Satyajit Ray

Sonia Adhikari



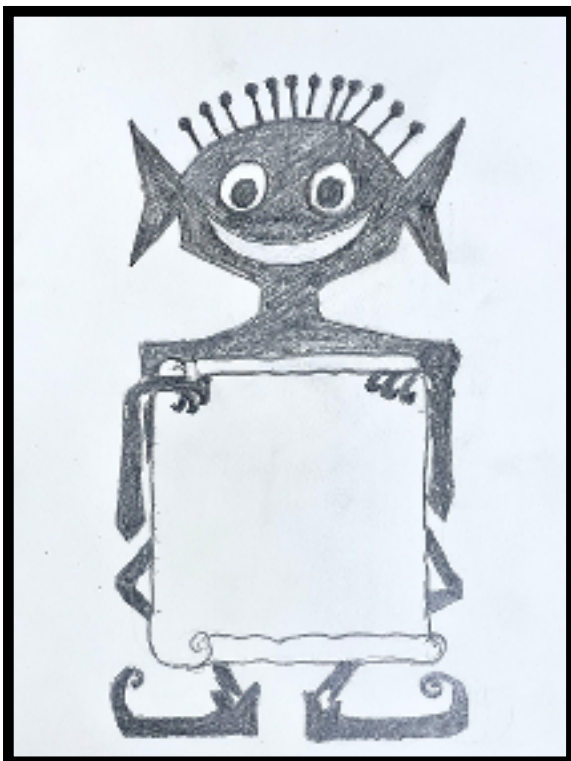
Satranch ke khiladi

Moumita Dey



Devi Durga and Glasgow Skyline

Jayanta Bhattacharya



Bhooter Raja Dilo Bor

Moumita Dey

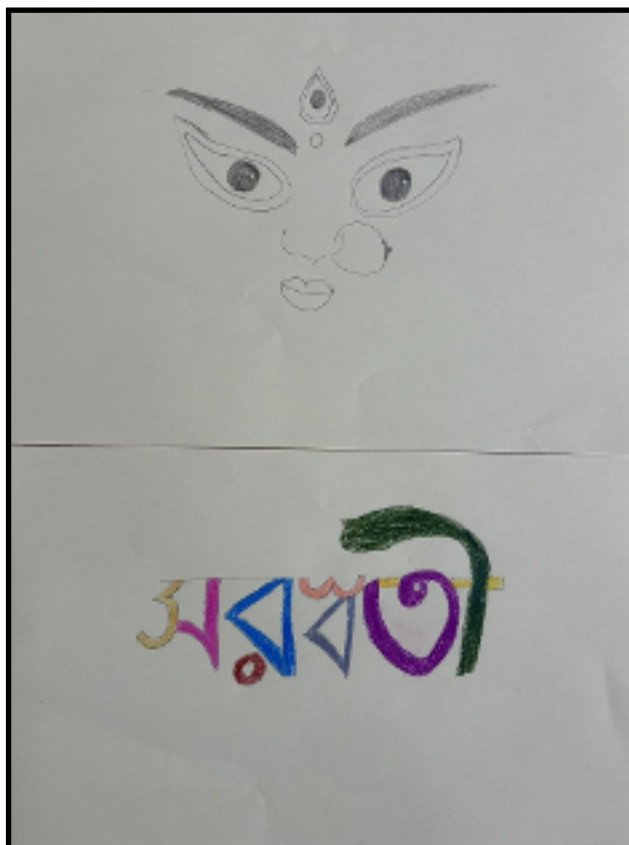


Jalsaghar

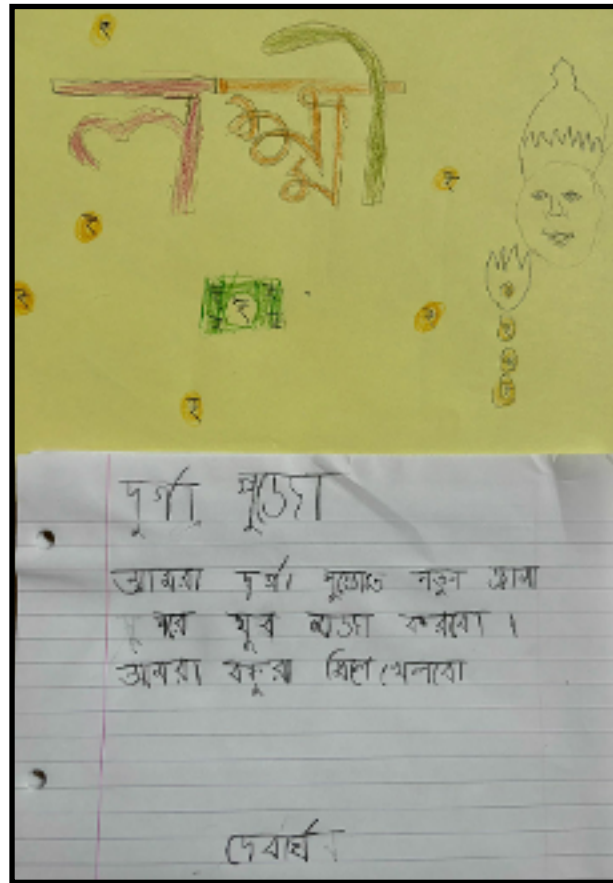
Sonia Adhikari



Kushagra Paul



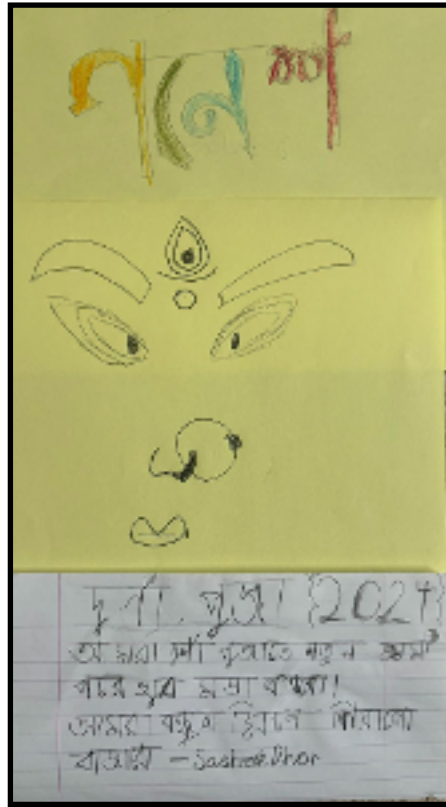
Aratrika Ghosh



Debarghya Mitra



Aryan Banerjee



Sashree Dhar



Smayan Kulkarni



Nishka Mondal



Kushagra Pal



Acrylic paint on glass bottles by Pallavi Parijat.
From L to R: Strings of Spring, Scales in Blaze, Mood Mirage, Vivid Fragments



Ma Durga
Gargi Maity



Smayan Kulkarni



Souradeep Podder



Ankush Chatterjee



Samstha Bhattacharyya



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Food

Archana & Rupam Pathak
Meghali Phukan & Prathamesh Kala
Shakuntala & Mrinal Guha
Doyel Tapli & Dipen Saha Bhowmick
Shreyasi & Jayanta Bhattacharyya

Sweets

Anjana & Sarajit Sen

Shashthi

Flowers

Atasi & Sandip Dhar

Fruits

Sudatta & Gobinda Chowdhury

Food

Atasi & Sandip Dhar
Pallavi Parijat & Bodhisattva Dasgupta
Mohua & Gautamananda Ray
Archana & Rupam Pathak

Sweets

Gargi Maiti & Amit Swarnakar

Saptami

Flowers

Shikha & Anand Biswas
Jayeeta & Sanjoy Biswas

Fruits

Shikha & Anand Biswas

Food

Shikha & Jayanta Majumdar
Anamika Nath Purkayastha & Dibyajyoti Nath
Mayatree Bhattacharya & Hiranya Bhowmik
Sneha & Souvik Sanyal
Sukanya & Somsuvra Sarkar
Monalisa & Argha Banerjee
Archana & Rupam Pathak
Smita Tekale & Subhajit Roy
Suchandra & Ajit Kar
Portia & Soumitra Dey

Sweets Debosmita & Rohitabja Halder
Sunetra & Amit Deb
Priyangi & Devang Sarkar

Ashtami

Flowers Sheela Mukherjee
Flowers (sandhi pujo) Rini & Rima Chakrabarti
Fruits Srirupa & Santanu Bhattacharjee
Kalpana & Mihir Mukherjee
Food Indrani & Arijit Mukherjee
Sraboni & Sanjeet Bhattacharya
Shalini & Amit Datta
Debjani & Gautam Patra
Sangeeta and Bimal Kumar
Madhumita & Sudipta Roy
Sweets Mallika & Hemant Kadam
Dev & Rono Mukherjee

Nabami

Flowers Sonia & Sondipon Adhikari
Doyel Tapli & Dipen Saha Bhowmick
Fruits Ruma Biswas & Avijeet Dass
Food Rituporna Sengupta & Subrato Chatterjee
Mousumi & Rajdeep Routh
Sunetra & Amit Deb
Shivani Tandon & Sanjeev Prasad
Rituparna Kole & Suhas Mitra
Archana & Rupam Pathak
Sweets Anamika Nath Purkayastha & Dibyajyoti Nath

Dashami

Food

Kamalika Ghosh & Arnab Purakayestha
Arunima & Arijit Mukherjee
Pinki & Abhishek Chatterjee
Shilpi Roy & Saptarshi Chakraborty
Anindita Mukherjee & Arunava Banerjee
Soumita & Sunando Dhar
Ria & Tamal Bhattacharya
Arushka & Ashmita Ghosha
Triparna Mukherjee Ghosh & Sayantan Ghosh
Sudipa Deb & Riddhiman Karmakar
Sohini Mukherjee & Surajit Sett

Sweets

Rick Mukhopadhyay

Laxmi puja

Flowers

Pallavi Parijat & Bodhisattva Dasgupta

Fruits

Aadit Arya

Aishikha Mallick & Arnab Sarkar

Food

Archana & Rupam Pathak

Binita & Sanjay Das

Shreyasi & Jayanta Bhattacharyya

Sweets

Anjana & Sarajit Sen

Kali puja

Flowers

Shakuntala & Haradhan Dutta

Srirupa & Santanu Bhattacharjee

Fruits

Uma & Satya Chakrabarti

Meat

Moumita & Joydeep Dey

Food

Shikha & Anand Biswas

Aditi & Mihir Palchaudhuri

Archana & Rupam Pathak

Ruma Biswas & Avijeet Dass

Sweets

Shikha & Anand Biswas

Saraswati puja

Flowers

Arunima & Babulayeb Mukhopadhyay

Fruits

Arunima & Babulayeb Mukhopadhyay

Food

Sudatta & Gobinda Chowdhury

Archana & Rupam Pathak

Ashmi & Rio Deb

Sweets

Mallika & Hemant Kadam



Mahalaya 2021

Photograph by Bodhisattva Dasgupta



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Painting by Gargi Maity



Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark- Rabinĉranath Tagore

শারদ সঙ্ঘার

Glasgow Durga Puja Committee

BSP Glasgow, Charity SC047561