



Bengali Association of Greater Chicago - Community Newsletter

সমাজ সংবাদ

Volume 39 Issue 4

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সম্পাদকীয়

গীত্যকাল প্রায় শেষ হবার মুখে, আকাশে বাতাসে এসেছে মায়ের আগমনীর পূর্বভাষ। নীল আকাশে সাদা মেঘের দল কোন সুদূরে ভেসে চলেছে। ঝিরঝিরে হাওয়ায় গাছপালারা সোনালী রোদ গায়ে মেখে সবুজ পাতার সন্ধার নিয়ে হাওয়ায় দুলছে। আর কিছুদিনের মধ্যেই এসে যাবে পাতা ঝরার দিন, তবে যাক সে কথা। তার আগেই আসছে বিএজিসি আয়োজিত বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ অনুষ্ঠান, চিরকল্যাণময়ী দেবী দুর্গার আরাধনা। অঙ্গোবর মাসের ৩, ৪ আর ৫ – এই তারিখগুলো ক্যালেন্ডারে দাগ দিয়ে রেখেছেন আশাকরি। বার্টলেট হাই স্কুলে সমবেত হবেন বৃহত্তর শিকাগোবাসী ও আশেপাশের বাঙালীরা। শুক্রবার সন্ধ্যবেলা থেকে এই স্কুলবাড়ী পরিণত হবে এক জমজমাট পূজা প্যাডেলে। সারা বছরের বাসস্থান ‘বঙ্গভবন’ ছেড়ে দেবী দুর্গা পুত্রকন্যাদের নিয়ে যাত্রা করবেন পূজামণ্ডপ অভিমুখে, অধিষ্ঠিত হবেন বার্টলেট হাই স্কুলে অঙ্গোবরের তিন তারিখে। সন্ধ্যের থেকে শুরু হবে লোকজনের আনাগোনা, পূজামন্ত্রে, ধূপধূনার সুগন্ধে ও শঙ্খধ্বনিতে আমরা বরণ করব জগৎমাতাকে।

UPCOMING BAGC EVENT

Sharodiya Durga Puja

Dates: Oct. 3 (Fri) to 5 (Sun), 2014

Venue: Bartlett High School

701 W Schick Rd, Bartlett, IL 60103

See inside for detailed information.

Also see latest information at
BAGC Durga Puja Website:
<http://bagc.net/bagc/events/dp/dp.html>

‘বঙ্গভবন’ এখন ব্যক্ততায় মুখর। নাচগানের রিহার্সেল, নাটকের মহড়ার সাথেসাথে হয়ে চলেছে কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির মিটিং। তিনদিন ব্যাপী এই বিশাল প্রচেষ্টাকে সুষ্ঠু ভাবে বাস্তবে পরিণত করা খেলা কথা নয়। সকলের সহযোগিতা ছাড়া এই কর্মসূচি অসম্ভব। আপনারা যারা কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির আহ্বানে সাড়া দিয়ে এই অনুষ্ঠান সাফল্যমণ্ডিত করতে এগিয়ে এসেছেন তাদের জানাই আমাদের আন্তরিক কৃতজ্ঞতা।

মানুষের জীবন ঘিরে নিত্যই চলে জোয়ার ‘ভাটাটার খেলা। এই বছরেও এসেছে নানা ঘাত প্রতিযাত, অসহনীয় বেদনা, প্রিয়জনকে হারানোর শোক। তার মধ্যেই চলে জীবনদেবতার আরতি, সর্বভূতে বীরাজমান দেবীকে আহ্বান করে শ্রদ্ধাঙ্গলি দান। বিএজিসির তরফ থেকে সাদর আমন্ত্রণ রইল – আসবেন, যোগদান করবেন বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ আনন্দমেলায়। আর আমাদের প্রীতির অর্ঘ্য – শারদীয়া ‘সমাজ সংবাদ’ নিতে ভুলবেন না।

সবাইকার প্রতি রইল আমাদের আন্তরিক প্রীতি ও শুভেচ্ছা –

কাকলি দাশগুপ্ত / বকুল ব্যানার্জি

“Investing is Simple, but not Easy” - Warren Buffet

Are you investing successfully for the long term?

Despite making enough money, most people struggle to achieve their long term financial goals. They employ trial and error investment strategies, trying to pick the next hot stock or mutual fund. Lacking a clear investment plan and execution strategy, they often assume more risk than necessary and thereby diminish their chances of achieving their goals.

What does it take to invest successfully?

Successful investors have a well thought out investment plan and strategy, which they execute consistently over the long haul. Just as successful athletes have a plan and strategy in place and achieve success with the help of a coach, successful investors need a good investment plan and strategy that they can execute with the help of a good investment adviser.

V2 Financial Group, an Independent fee-only advisor, provides sophisticated advice and manages your investment accounts on your behalf

Our Services

Portfolio management (manage your IRA's, 401(k)'s and other investment accounts)

Planning (Insurance planning, Retirement & College projections and planning)

Why V2?

Fiduciary (unlike brokers), operating with your best interests in mind

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Unbiased product selection. No Commissions. Conflict-free advice

Sophisticated, holistic approach

VENKAT KRISHNAMURTHY & VENKATA VEDAM



V2 FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC

**1536 East Bailey Road
Naperville IL 60565
(630) 364-4529 (Phone)
(630) 839-6169 (Fax)**



www.v2financialgroup.com

Please contact us for a no-obligation consultation

venkat@v2financialgroup.com

vedam@v2financialgroup.com

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All investment strategies have the potential for profit or loss. Changes in investment strategies, contributions or withdrawals may materially alter the performance and results of your portfolio. We only transact business in states where we are properly registered, or are excluded or exempted from registration requirements.

BAGC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



September 10, 2014

Dear Members,

Can you hear the drums beat? Do you feel the nip in the air? Yes, Durga Puja is round the corner! The BAGC 2014 Executive Committee has planned a joyous celebration with three days of fun-filled festivities from Oct 3 through Oct 5, 2014 at Bartlett High School. The Puja Committee, in conjunction with our priest, Ramanuj, and veteran, Subrotada, have made meticulous arrangements to conduct the worship of the Mother with utmost devotion and care. Several members of the association have volunteered to make *bhog*, sweets, and donations for the puja. We accept and acknowledge their contributions with open arms.

As in every year, the most important aspect of the festivities is the act of coming together as a family to worship Ma Durga. The spiritual ambience and the love and affection we express to one another during these three days, sustains us as a united family throughout the year. The Executive Committee seeks the active cooperation from all members and attendees to maintain a spirit of amity and be vigilant in preventing any mishaps to anyone or damage to the school property. The puja timings will be communicated through various forums as we get closer to the event.

On the cultural front, BAGC members, both

adults and youth, will be taking in several plays/dance dramas. In addition, we have lined up eminent guest artists from Kolkata to entertain you one each of the three days. On Friday, we shall present "RagaSphere", featuring the musical trio – vocalist, Sounak Chattpadhyay, percussionist Rishab Dhar, and instrumentalist/percussionist Gopal Das. They will explore the confluence of melody and rhythm in a wide array of genres ranging from devotional to classical, folk to fusion. On Saturday, we shall present Pratik Chowdhury and his band, performing Bangla and Hindi popular music. On Sunday, Parnava Banerjee will regale us with Bangla Adhunik songs of the golden era and contemporary music. In order to prevent cost overruns, we shall try to adhere to the program schedules and we seek your cooperation in this matter. We are also planning some supervised afternoon activities for our young children.

And of course, Durga Puja celebrations cannot be complete without attractive and ample food. We have arranged for a delicious array of non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes for the three days.

Our Registration Team is working very hard to streamline the on-site registration process. However, to avoid long lines, we strongly encourage attendees to complete the registration on-line. Our Webmaster is in the process of completing the configuration of the on-line system and will shortly be sending out announcements regarding when the system will be opened up.

We shall also be using EVITE to get an estimate for attendee headcounts for each day. Although that it is not practicable to expect a response from every one, we would still encourage you to make good use of the RSVP functionality of EVITE.

Our key goal this year is to provide a hazard-free, peaceful, customer-friendly, and orchestrated festival experience, where we maintain the core "*prabashi Bangali* family" values of our organization. We rely on you to help us to live up to those principals. Please attend, along with your

family and friends, to make the event a grand success with your presence.

Our third quarter has been active. In addition to the annual picnic, where we had a decent turnout, and the Children's Day festival, we organized several ticketless events – two summer concerts, and a Youth Oration Event, where BAGC youth presented some outstanding speeches and recitations. We hope to have another event for the youth later in the year. Early in June, we celebrated the unveiling of the Banga Bhavan plaque with a short ceremony followed by an informal *adda*. We celebrated *Janmashtami*, with a beautiful puja and *kirtan*, attended by more than 75 members several of whom contributed generously to the Puja with donations and prepared food. Finally, we celebrated the third anniversary of Banga Bhavan with a scintillating sitar-table concert on Aug 30, featuring Indrajit Banerjee and the illustrious Pandit Kumar Bose, performed before a packed house. This was a ticketed event, attended not only by BAGC members, but also several persons from the mainstream community. We wrapped up the anniversary celebrations with a special *arati* on Aug 31, where several members contributed by preparing *prasad*/dinner for the attendees.

I shall conclude with an update on the BAGC Mortgage Loan Pay-down Initiative, which we launched on Jul 1, 2014. We have received > \$16,000 between Jul 1 and Sep 9, 2014. We have been aggressively reducing our principal balance throughout the year. We started off the year with a loan balance of \$225K. Between Jan 1 and Sep 9, we have paid off \$51K in principal payments. Our loan balance as of Sep 9, 2014 is \$174K. We hope to continue reducing the loan balance aggressively in the remaining months of the year with your support and donations. An updated cumulative list of donations received for the Banga Bhavan project since inception will be put up on the web-site in a short while.

We look forward to seeing you at Durga Puja.

Warm regards,

Debasish Gooptu

BAGC President 2014

News from the BAGC Board of Trustees (BOT) — Third and Fourth Quarterly Meeting

Dear BAGC Members:

Greetings from 2014 Board of Trustees. Hope you have had a good summer and have an enjoyable Autumn. BOT had its third and fourth quarterly meetings on July 5 and

September 6 respectively. Following is a synopsis of subjects that BOT is currently working on:

- A) A Task Force created by BOT and lead by Dr. Narayan Das, to report on Safety of Food Distribution in BAGC events, was scheduled to have submitted the final report by this time. Unfortunately, this has been delayed. However, Dr. Das has assured the BOT of submittal by mid September.
- B) BOT has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which will stay with BOT as caretaker and will be updated as needed.
- C) Banga Bhavan (BB) security system is fully operational.
- D) In response to BOT initiated special project to develop procedures for safety and security of BAGC members and assets, an Emergency Preparedness Manual has been developed. The manual will stay with BOT and updated as needed. A copy of the document will be given to EC. As a part of that endeavor EC volunteer will go over the emergency exit procedure in future BAGC gatherings.
- E) BOT initiated a special project to Re-evaluate various BAGC Committees. A committee has been formed with Achintya Ray as the BOT representative in the committee. The committee is moving expeditiously and their recommendation is expected in the near future.
- F) BOT has been developing procedures to preclude EC from running up huge financial deficit as done in 2013. For starters, following three steps are proposed and will be implemented starting with 2015 EC:
 1. Submission of initial budget at the first BOT

meeting.

2. At quarterly BOT meetings present updated budget.
3. Any major deviation from budget, like adding a new event or bringing in a high priced artist, will require prior BOT approval. Requesting BOT approval must

include estimated cost and viable funding method.

Additionally, at every quarterly BOT meeting, a status report of Special Funds (SF) shall be presented by EC. Any expenditure from SF must have SF Committee's prior approval as required in the Constitution.

G) BOT members, in the meeting held on July 5, unanimously elected Dipak Ghosh to serve as the Chairman of the 2014 Nomination Committee. He has formed the Nomination Committee to seek nominations for various BAGC positions for 2015. The deadline for submission of nomination is October 5. Additionally, BOT members in the meeting held on September 6, unanimously selected Dipak Ghosh to be the BOT Chairman for 2015.

We will keep you advised of BOT activities through Newsletter and e-mails. Thank you.

Subhas Bose, 2014 BOT Chairman

Seeking Nominations for 2015 BAGC Positions

Dear BAGC Members,

BAGC Nomination Committee is seeking nominations for the following committees:

1. 2015 BAGC Executive Committee: The Executive Committee nominees shall be identified as a slate (elected in whole, not individually) headed by the Presidential nominee. The nominee chooses Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chair Person for Banga Bhavan, and various Members at large .The term of the office is one calendar year (January 1 to December 31). The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the day to day operation of the

tion. All members shall be in good standing.

2. Board of Trustees: There are two (2) vacancies with term of office for three (3) years. BOT is an oversight body of the Association directly representing the General Body. Candidates shall be at least 35 years of age and a member in good standing.

3. Special Fund Committee: There are four (4) vacant seats in the committee. The term of office is for two (2) years. This is an advisory committee that considers projects and events that require special funding. The nominees shall be a member in good standing.

4. By-Laws Committee: There is one (1) vacancy for this committee and the term of office is two years. The committee proactively reviews the Association's constitution and by-laws and, when appropriate, prepares amendments for presentation to the General Body for consideration and ratification. The candidates shall be a member in good standing.

We strongly recommend all those who want to submit nomination to visit our web-site (bagc.net) and click 'Constitution' where all the requirements are explained in great details.

The deadline for submitting the nomination is October 5, 2014.

Nomination forms for the offices have been distributed to the members (via e-mail on August 25,2014). Forms are also available in the BAGC web site (www.bagc.net) under a new folder "2015 Committee Forms".

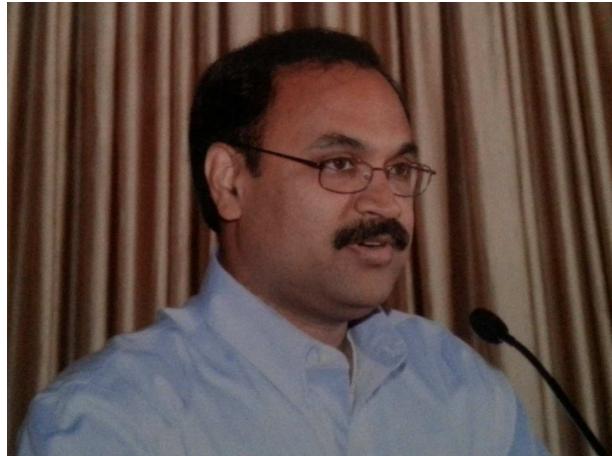
Best Regards:

2014 BAGC Nomination Committee

**Deep Bandyopadhyay, Alak Bhattacharyya, Shouvik Dutta, Purabi Majumdar, and Dipak Ghosh
(Chairman, Nomination Committee)**



BAGC THANKS ITS PLATINUM SPONSOR



Mr. Gopi Addanki

President, Media Systems Inc,

869 E. Schaumburg Rd, Ste #274,

Schaumburg, IL 60194

Contact Phone Number : 847-882-0321

Email: info@mediaus.com

URL : www.mediaus.com



Bengali Association of Greater Chicago

1148 N. Main Street
Glendale Heights, IL 60139
www.BAGC.net

2014 DURGA PUJA REGISTRATION FORM

Here are the Durga Puja rates for 2014. In order to avoid inconveniences and long delays at the front desk, we encourage you to please log on to your account at www.bagc.net and complete the on-line registration form. Alternatively, you may complete this paper form and mail it to the following address, along with a check payable to BAGC:

Uditt K Mukherjee, Dy. Treasurer, BAGC
1525 Baytree Drive,
Romeoville, IL 60446

Durga Puja Rates per person (*includes Puja, Food, and Cultural Program*):

PUJA DAY	MEMBERS (non-GFP)			NON-MEMBERS			
	Adult (>18 yrs.)	Child (6 - 18 yrs.)	Child (<6 yrs.)	Adult (>18 yrs.)	Child (6 - 18 yrs.)	Child (<6 yrs.)	Self-Supporting Student*
FRI	\$35	\$20	\$0	\$40	\$25	\$0	\$25
SAT	\$55	\$30	\$0	\$65	\$40	\$0	\$40
SUN	\$35	\$20	\$0	\$40	\$25	\$0	\$25
FRI & SAT	\$85	\$45	\$0	\$95	\$50	\$0	\$60
SAT & SUN	\$85	\$45	\$0	\$95	\$50	\$0	\$60
FRI & SUN	\$65	\$35	\$0	\$70	\$45	\$0	\$45
3-DAY	\$110	\$55	\$0	\$125	\$60	\$0	\$70

*To qualify for the rates of Self-Supporting Student, you must satisfy all the following criteria:

- (a) You are a full time college student
- (b) You pay all your college expenses (Tuition and Lodging) without any help from your spouse or parents
- (c) For the purpose of tax returns, you are not claimed by anybody as a dependent
- (d) You do not file joint tax returns with your spouse who is gainfully employed.

Please detach along perforated line

Primary Member Information

New/ Changed Address

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State / ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Alternative E-mail _____

ADDITIONAL REGISTRANTS

Name	Relationship	Category	Rate	Amount
TOTAL AMOUNT				
Check # / Bank			Date	

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BAGC DURGA PUJA 2014 - PUJA TIMINGS AT A GLANCE

SCHEUDLE	Item	Time
Day 1	Fri, Oct 3. 2014	
	Puja Start	6.00pm
	Anjali	7.45pm
	Arati	8.00pm
Day 2	Sat, Oct 4. 2014	
	Puja Start	10.00pm
	Anjali	1.00pm
	Arati	1.30pm
Day 3	Sun, Oct 5, 2014	
	Puja Start	12.30pm
	Anjali	2.30pm
	Arati	3.00pm
	Bisarjan	3.45pm
	Devi Pranam/Sindur Daan	4.15pm



BAGC DURGA PUJA 2014 - CULTURAL PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Day 1	Friday Oct 3, 2014		
Time	Item	Performers/ Artists	Brief Description
9:00 PM to 11:00 PM	Raga Sphere	Sounak Chattopadhyay (vocal), Rishabh Dhar (percussion), Gopal Das (saxophone, dhaak)	RAGA SPHERE is a colorful, vibrant and versatile concept that explores the union of the two arms of Indian classical and contemporary music: melody and rhythm. The core concept has been developed by Sounak Chattopadhyay (classical and contemporary vocalist) and Rishabh Dhar (classical and contemporary percussionist). They are joined by Gopal Das a multi-talented young musician who plays both melody and percussion instruments. The trio explores various genres, meandering from Bangla ataman songs to folk music, classical dhrupad and kheyal to thumris and bhajans, from ghazals to Hindi film music, from traditional to fusion. Apart from various songs and compositions, the team features rare interactions and dialogues in music between the two percussion masters – Rishabh (Pakhawaj) and Gopal (Dhaak) and a rousing finale where all three musicians join in a scintillating climax.

BAGC DURGA PUJA 2014 - CULTURAL PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Day 2	Saturday Oct 4, 2014		
Time	Item	Performers/ Artists	Brief Description
5:30 PM to 6:30 PM	"Phand Pata Bhubane"	Leela Majumdar's play in Bengali, directed by Devipriya Roy. Performed by BAGC adults	A romantic comedy where young hearts finally unite in marriage, despite financial and other obstacles.
6:30 PM to 7:30 PM	"The Land of Cards"	Dance Drama directed and choreographed by Taposhi "Beauty" Jarvis. Performed by BAGC adults, youth, and children, along with guest artists (classical ballet).	An adaptation of Tagore's evergreen dance drama, "Tasher Desh", using narration in English, intertwined with the original songs in Bengali. The choreography is an exciting blend of traditional Indian, classical Western ballet, and contemporary styles of dance.
7:30 PM to 8:45 PM	INTERVAL (DINNER)		
9:00 PM to 11:00 PM	Pratik Chowdhury and his Band	Pratik Chowdhury (vocal), and his four member band	An exciting mix of foot-tapping Bangla and Hindi modern and film songs and soulful ghazals.

Day 3	Sunday Oct 5, 2014		
Time	Item		Brief Description
4:30 PM to 5:15 PM	"Stolen Lines"	Directed by Anjan Ghosh. Performed by BAGC youth.	A play about the rise and fall of a young poet, exploring questions thought provoking issues such as whether populism in art overwhelms genuine appreciation, and whether certain actions or situations merit a second chance.
5:20 PM to 6:00 PM	Play "Borda"	Music by Subhasis Mukherjee Directed and performed by Dev Hazra	A one-actor play, where the protagonist shares his affectionate memories of his elder brother during his fun-filled school days. While the protagonist plays truant, the elder brother is focused and hard-working. Yet it is the younger sibling who aces the exams in every term, while the older keeps on failing. From the reminiscences of the protagonist, the image of the ridiculous loser in the elder brother fades into a larger-than-life image of a man who brings before us the essence of family ties, social bonding, education, and inherited values.
6:00 PM to 7:15 PM	INTERVAL (DINNER)		
7:30 PM to 9:30 PM	Evergreen Songs	Parnava Banerjee (vocal) and Bikram Ghosh (keyboard)	A mesmerizing blend of golden era Bangla/Hindi adhunik and film songs, with contemporary Bangla and Hindi songs.

2014 Executive Committee Members

President Debasish Gooptu/847-722-9216
Treasurer Bikramjit Dewanjee/630-802-7060
Secretary Ashok Ghose Dastidar/630-310-7666

Vice President Amitava Deb/815-469-4010
Deputy Treasurer Uditt Mukherjee/630-235-7774
Banga Bhavan Chair Monisha Datta/630-776-0676

For information on other EC members, please visit:<http://bagc.net/bagc/node/6>

Will miss you very much!

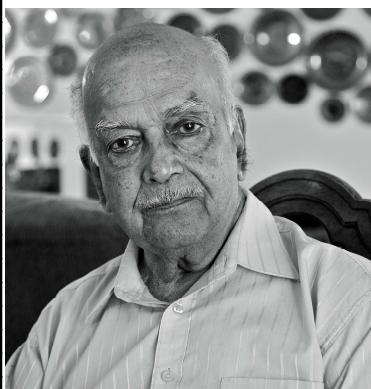


It is with overwhelming sadness that we announce the passing away of **Guru Prasad Sengupta** on August 23, 2014 in Kolkata. He is survived by his wife, daughter Anindita (Tutu), son-in-law Dibyendu Mukherjee (Dipu) and two loving grandchildren.

He was **BAGC's third President** and was always very active in different aspects of the Bengali community, before and after BAGC was formed. But his greatest passion was for drama as an actor, director and any way, he could be part of it. Even during latter part of his life, drama was one thing that would always excite and motivate him.

He was a Mechanical Engineer and graduated from Jadavpur Engineering College in 1959. During his professional career, he worked for Heavy Engineering Corporation in Durgapur, Sargent & Lundy in Chicago and finally retired from Larsen & Tubro in India. He left Chicago number of years ago to settle back in India. Although he made several trips to this country since then, he was always missed by all who knew him as an energetic and friendly young man.

Rajat Gangopadhyay, only son of Shubra and Ashok Gangopadhyay and brother of Piyali Gangopadhyay fondly known as Raja was born on December 20th, 1995 in Elmhurst, IL. Raja attended Glenbard North High School and graduated in 2014. He was planning to attend University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign in the Fall of this year. However, he left us on July 17th, 2014. Raja had a passion for dancing, was a member of the school speech team, an honors student and an active member of the ISA (Indian Student Association). Raja will be always remembered for his courteous nature and pleasing personality.



It is with great sadness that we inform you that **Narendra Nath Sanyal**, a long-time member of BAGC, passed away on August 26, 2014. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Aparna; his son Nirmalya and his daughters Mohua and Papiya. He was born in Lucknow, India received a MS degree in Physics from Lucknow University and then went on to Pilani Rajasthan for his degree in Electrical Engineering. Later he received his MBA from Drexel University. After spending some years in various Indian industries, he immigrated to The US. He worked in steel and aluminum industries in Philadelphia and greater Chicago area. He enjoyed reading, music, and travel and treasured the company of others and good conversation.

You make us proud!



Tanya Mookerji, daughter of Dr. Sharmita Misra and Subhash Mookerji from South Barrington , IL has graduated from The University of Chicago with Honors in the month of June, 2014. At UOfC, Tanya studied Economics and Public Policy. Tanya will be working as a Business Analyst in the Management Consulting Practice of The Cambridge Group.

You light up our lives!



Samir and Dolly Basu are proud to announce their first grandchild Krish, son of Sanjay and Palav, who was born on Thursday, July 10 2014 in San Francisco, California.

Special Recognition

BAGC congratulates **Dr. Sanjib Basu** who has been named a Fellow of the American Statistical Association (ASA), the nation's preeminent professional statistical society. Dr. Basu is a Professor and Director of the Division of Statistics at Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, USA.

To be recognized as a 2014 ASA Fellow, each honoree must make outstanding professional contributions to and have exhibited leadership in the field of statistical science. Dr. Basu was honored for substantial and novel contributions to the theory, methods, and applications of nonparametric and robust Bayesian inference; for innovative and wide-ranging statistical collaborations; and for outstanding service, teaching, and leadership to promote the interests and profiles of the statistical community.

Girl2B Foundation for Kolkata

Bakul Banerjee



Bengalis have been immigrating to the US in significant numbers for more than half a century. It is not uncommon for them to return to their country of birth to initiate and sustain charitable organizations. However, it is heart-warming to see that the children of immigrants are returning to Bengal to do the same on their own utilizing the energy, organizational skills, and resources they have acquired in this country. BAGC is proud to note that **Anita Chatterjee** has joined Christine & Alfonso Paradinas, co-founders of the charitable organization called Girl2B to serve underprivileged girls in Kolkata. Girl2B is a non-profit 501c3 New York corporation.

According to their web site, the mission of the organization is: "Through the empowerment of education, Girl2B Foundation works to give every young girl a chance to reach her full potential, freeing her from the unfair cycle of poverty, and making her an agent of change." To achieve this mission, Girl2B opened the doors to the empowerment center in April 2014 to host 28 young women. It is located at 4/5 Russa Road (South) 1st lane Kolkata – 700033.

In addition, about 20 additional girls receive services from the organization as they live at home with their parents or in the university hostels.

Girl2B has partnered with the Hope Kolkata Foundation. The foundation executes the guardianship of the young women. Girl2B has been accepted into the Catapult Network that provides on-line crowd funding for girl based NGO's. The first fundraiser was launched to help open the home. The organization was immediately selected as one

of six organizations to receive a grant from Gucci's Chime for Change campaign. You can read more about the project at: <https://mobile.catapult.org/#project/45217>

The Girl2B team has created wonderful websites to spread the words of hope. Shampa's poem on one of the blog postings (<http://girl2b.wordpress.com/2012/12/06/we-the-girls-of-girl2b-are-standing-for-our-rights-are-you/>) will resonate with many of us. After graduating from high school with the help of local NGOs, she is attending university part-time while working part-time. She is the first person to be educated in her family and has fought for many years to stay in school against the wishes of her family. They wanted her help in the fields, with household chores and felt the family was disgraced that she was not married by 14, which was around the time they found a husband for her. She was strong-willed and kept up with her studies, managing to graduate. She also managed to convince her mother to let her younger sister move into the Girl2B home and have a chance at the same bright future. Her poem is a lovely example of how many girls in the program feel.

Anita, the daughter of long-time BAGC members, Nelly and Dipak Chatterjee, serves on the six-member board of Girl2B. The team of volunteers for the organization also includes young women who came here to study.

Please visit the following social media sites for the Girl2B organization:

www.girl2B.org

<https://www.facebook.com/Girl2B>

https://twitter.com/Girl_2B

<http://girl2b.wordpress.com/>

FOR INFORMATION ON RATES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS

IN NEWSLETTER OR WEB-SITE, BOOTH RENTALS OR

SPONSORSHIP AT BAGC EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

SONALI BISWAS

sonali_biswas@hotmail.com, 847-392-7480

or

SHUBHAM SANYAL

somasany@hotmail.com, 847-372-2535

Varosha – Bringing Light and Hope to the Underprivileged in Bengal

Shubham Sanyal

Varosha, the philanthropic organization run by Subrota Mukhejee, Santi Banerjee and Krishna Chakrabarty, has been doing outstanding work in uplifting the lives of hundreds of poor and under-privileged people in Bengal for several years. Last January I was fortunate to see some of Varosha's projects in Bengal: '**Aranyer Alo**' the Fisheries of Sonakhali, '**Aashar Alo**' the Tailoring schools at Jagatpur and Lake Town, Multi-vocational school '**Sonar Alo**' at Sonarpur and '**Dipto Alo**' the Educational Institute for school children at New Alipore. These projects are transforming the lives of the poor folk there and bringing light and hope to them.

Varosha partners with local philanthropic organizations, to run socio-economic projects to uplift the status of poor and underprivileged class, provides funds for training and enables the beneficiaries become economically self-sufficient and lead a better quality of life. 'Health Vision & Research (HVR)' and 'Pub Pashchim' are two such partner organizations of Varosha in Kolkata. Dr. Arup Chakrabartty, a young energetic, enterprising doctor, heads HVR and manages the 'Aranyer Alo', 'Aashar Alo' and 'Sonar Alo' projects. Debshankar Ray, a young professional with unbounded energy and enthusiasm, leads 'Pub Pashchim' and runs the 'Dipto Alo' school and some other projects of Varosha.

Sonakhali Fisheries: Fishery projects are being conducted by Varosha in Sunderbans area at two sites. At Sonakhali - two ponds were donated by local philanthropic industrialist Jaydeb Mandal. At Khulna, one pond was taken on lease by Varosha from government . Aurobindo and Gautam, two local supervisors (paid by Varosha), oversee these fisheries. The beneficiaries of the Sonakhali project are rural poor women, who get economic benefit from the fish sold. Fish spawn sowed in August last year at Sonakha-

li have grown into large fish sellable in the market. During my visit Aurobindo and Gautam organized a 'Netting session' for both ponds at Sonakhali. Professional hired fishermen dragged nets across the ponds, assisted by local members, to catch scores of kilos of *Katla*, *Mourola*, *Follie* and other fish. The proceeds will be distributed amongst the members of the Fisheries project. After the netting I spent time speaking to members of the project, told them about Varosha, and listened to their issues. They spoke about the need for a hospital, which they lack, and local schools. After the meeting with the beneficiaries Shri Jaydeb Mandal treated us to a sumptuous lunch.

'Aashar Alo' - Tailoring Training Centers at Jagatpur and Lake Town

There are two Training Center for Tailoring & Embroidery at Jagatpur and Lake Town, where twenty-five women, (who were 'sex-workers' earlier), are being trained in tailoring and embroidery skills to enable them to give up their earlier profession and take up a respectful, healthy economic livelihood. Though students come and work every day, training is conducted thrice a week at Jagatpur and twice a week at Salt Lake by Ms. Soma Saha, who is a Varosha employee. Over 30 women have been trained in Jagatpur and more at Lake Town. It takes one year to train the students fully. Then they can purchase sewing machines on loan from Varosha and earn money by doing tailoring from home. Most women who took loans to buy these machines have paid it back within one year. The women earn Rs. 3000 per month from their tailoring jobs. Varosha recruits new members mainly through 'word-of-mouth' of existing members in their localities. The students seemed happy at the opportunity they were getting and showed me some of their artistic tailoring work. Dr. Chakrabartty told me that, although he works with other NGOs, no other organization has attempted to uplift this class of poor women in Bengal. It is really commendable and honorable effort by Varosha since it is changing the social status of these underprivileged women.

Sonar Alo' - Multi-Vocational Training Center at Sonarpur

Sonarpur has three training and work centers: Tailoring Training Center, Embroidery Training Center and Chow-Mein Producing Factory

The objective is to make the members, (local slum women), economically self-sufficient by producing Chow Mein, doing tailoring and embroidery work. In the tailoring unit, 10 women students are being taught by Rafique Dhani. Rafique also gets orders for tailoring jobs for the members. Training to make students 'professional' takes about one year. The Embroidery school trained 18 students, who are now professional enough to do their own jobs. In the Chow Mein Factory, 6 women workers are running the Chow Mein machine, producing 10-16 kilos of Chow Mein per day. All six members are now trained and can run the machine on their own. Members of Chow Mein factory earn around Rs. 1000 per month, whereas Tailoring and Embroidery factory women earn about Rs.1500-2000 per month. The women at Sonarpur appeared very happy for the training they were getting and the chance to improve their economic lives. They showed me their work and I found the quality of their tailoring and embroidery quite good.

'Dipto Alo' - Educational Center for Middle & High School

Children at New Alipore

'Dipto Alo', the educational center for slum school children at New Alipore run by Varosha, was a greatly inspiring experience for me. The school runs every day from 4 pm to 8 pm with professional teachers paid by Varosha for teaching children English, Math and Computer Training – skills which would enable them to take up basic jobs after school. The training not only supplements the learning they have had at their regular 'Day schools' but also enhances their possibilities of future success. The school has improved the students' grades in their regular schools and has also kept them engaged positively, keeping them away from 'drug pedaling' and other anti-social activities. The simple, wholesome meal at break-time (Rooti-Torkari) (funded by Varosha) is a great attraction for the kids. At New Alipore

along with 'Dipto Alo', Varosha also runs a tailoring school (as in Aashar Alo). It was wonderful to see such a great bunch of smiling enthusiastic children and how much they were interested in learning at the school. Recently TCS donated 10 PCs for their Computer Training center.

Barriers and Challenges

Varosha is doing phenomenal work despite several challenges which obstruct them in their efforts. Its beneficiaries are mostly underprivileged poor women. Social taboos, conservative and unwilling husbands and In-Laws deter many from participating, the slum women need to balance their time between training sessions and family commitments, local political musclemen and pimps resent an outside foreign organization improving lives of their 'subjects', and 'funds' to pay for expenses of house rents, utilities, tailoring equipment, food and salaries of full-time staff is an on-going challenge for Varosha. It is difficult to get good staff, dedicated workers without adequate compensation, when there are competing jobs to draw them away. Despite these challenges Varosha keeps going, running with the torch. It was very refreshing and encouraging trip for me. And a great pleasure to see that our efforts from America are reaching our old homeland to help and support those who need them most.

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<http://www.bagc.net/bagc/node/6>



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Bengali Association of Greater Chicago

1148 N. Main Street, Glendale Heights, IL 60139

<http://www.bagc.net>



Mark your calendar for upcoming event:

Sharodiya Durga Puja



Event: BAGC Sharodiya Durga Puja

Dates: Oct. 3 (Fri) to 5 (Sun), 2014

Venue: Bartlett High School

701 W Schick Rd, Bartlett, IL 60103

