

MD Speak

Dear Reader,

Last month saw us celebrating our members on 1st October—the International Day of Older Persons. We had a very engaging discussion on a topic very close to my heart. It has always seemed a very prudent idea to me to actively involve elders in all spheres of life. With their immense knowledge, gained through years of experience, as well as their objectivity, elders are in a position to not only guide us gently forward but also be at the helm of things, be it corporate or creative. It was also heart-warming to see the wonderful performances of some of our members.

Though the pandemic is slowly losing pace and will hopefully peter out soon, we cannot afford to forget the lessons taught by this pandemic. Just the way, masks and sanitizers are here to stay, so is the change in our healthcare system. For instance, we, at Support Elders, continue to see a high demand for our Well@Home service, as this technology-backed comprehensive solution enables remote health monitoring, thereby reducing the need for regular visits to clinics/hospitals. The member's general physician or doctor can even define the health parameters to be measured and define medical rules, basis the thresholds and can access the data captured, as and when required. Similarly, our virtual programmes and clubs have become an integral part of our members' lives and will be here to stay, although we plan to organise offline events when things get better.

With that in mind, let us enjoy the festive season and look forward to 2022 with renewed faith and hope.

Happy Reading!
Apratim Chattopadhyay



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Every year, we host the Support Elders Annual Day to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons on 1st October. This year, we hosted an inspiring session on productive and happy ageing, interspersed with delightful cultural performances by some of our members. The session was opened by Dr Indrani Chakravarty, Gerontologist and founder of the Calcutta Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology. Padmashree Professor Amiyo Kumar Bagchi, distinguished Indian political economist, talked about how Ramananda Sengupta, the cinematographer, and Professor Bhabatosh Dutta, in spite of their age, were curious about everything and extended their helping hand to many people. Mr G Udaya Bhanu, distinguished Telugu theatre personality, actor and director, and founder of Bhoomika Theatre Group, talked about how the elderly can contribute to theatre. Ms Baruna Bhattacharjee, Art Historian and Curator and Founder of CIMA Art Gallery, talked about the story behind discovering the talent of Shakila Sheikh, the

Support Elders Annual Day

renowned collage artist, while Mr Hiran Mitra, renowned painter and Lalit Kala Academy award winner talked about how age had helped him to dream new ideas. Our member, Mrs Preeti Roy, a well-known social worker, talked about how the elderly can contribute positively in social work. The evening was further enriched by the performances of our talented members: Ms Manjushree Gupta sang *Aaj jaaney ki zid na karo*; Ms Mita Paul, practitioner of multiple Indian classical dance forms, danced; Ms Tanika Ray sang a *thumri*; and Ms Sewli Basu, renowned esraj player of the Bishnupur *gharana*, gave a fitting end to this programme by playing the esraj. The programme was enjoyed by all who attended it. Wg Cmdr B. Guha said, "Wonderful evening. We enjoyed and enlightened ourselves. Thanks a lot." Ms A. Sanyal said, "Very nice programme and done in a thoughtful way", while Ms L Bose said, "Cheers to Support Elders participants for making this programme a great success." SE

Friday Evening Special Medley of Melodies

October 8

Our members spent a most enchanting evening listening to some of our members play a variety of musical instruments. They expressed their appreciation when two of the participants joined the interactive session on Zoom by applauding and complimenting them. Ms & Mr S. Sen said, "More and more members will be encouraged by the effort taken by



Support Elders," while Ms S Ghosh said, "Wonderful programme! I was very happy to see all the talented members coming together to share their musical piece. It was a treat." And to top it all, son of member, Ms S Basu, who played the esraj said that he liked the programme very much and it was "nice to see mom playing her favourite instrument." SE

MEMOIR

Where Honesty is the Best Policy

Our member, Ms S. Chatterjee, married an officer in the Merchant Navy and had many memorable experiences. She shares one such memory with us.

1976: Our member, Ms S. Chatterjee, was all set for what was to be one of her most exciting journeys—she was flying to Japan with her husband, who was to board his ship from there. The aircraft took off from Bombay (as it was then called) and the first stop was Osaka. She was all decked up for the special occasion. “I was young then and as it was my first airplane ride, I dressed up nicely and wore some jewellery too; I wore a gold chain given by my mother-in-law when I got married.”

They landed at Osaka and were taken to an airport hotel, where they were to take rest before catching their flight to Tokyo, from where they were to board her husband’s ship. Ms Chatterjee removed the gold chain from her neck and carefully put it under her pillow before going for a nice hot bath, though her husband cautioned her against it. Presently, she had a meal and got ready to catch the connecting flight. Just after the flight took off, she realised to her utter dismay that the gold chain was not around her neck. It was still under the pillow in the hotel. She was filled with dread and regret.

The thrill of the flight was all but gone. The gorgeous view outside meant nothing to her. The crew announced that

the aircraft was flying over Mt Fujiyama and the aircraft circled the mountain twice to allow passengers to have a good view but she was too upset and worried to enjoy it. When the cabin crew noticed and enquired, she explained that she had left her gold chain at the hotel. The air hostess did not quite follow her and asked her to write down the problem. She did and handed over the paper to the air hostess, with no expectation whatsoever. The lady took the paper, went into the cockpit and that was that.

They landed in Tokyo and stayed there for a day. The next day, they got ready to board the ship from the Port of Kashima, about four hours’ drive from the hotel. “The journey was beautiful... the road smooth, bordered by manicured fields and wonderful sceneries. Though I saw everything, I was constantly thinking of my chain.” Soon, they were dropped off at the port. A gentleman standing near

her husband’s ship came up and spoke to them. He was carrying the chain. The gentleman saw her joy when he handed over the chain to her and said, “This is Japan, Ma’am.”

“I remembered that Japan was ranked one of the most honest countries in the world and it had lived up to its reputation. I realised that the air hostess had handed over the paper to the pilot, who had relayed the message about the missing chain from the flight. By then, the hotel housekeeping had found the chain and had handed it over to the hotel authority. The pilot had informed them where we were headed and they had the chain waiting for us at Kashima. My husband remarked that the chain had travelled faster than us. I was so moved by the gesture of the country and its people that even now whenever I think of Japan, the first thing comes to my mind is the honesty of the Japanese.” SE

(As narrated to Support Elders by our member.)



FESTIVALS

Happy Times!

Our member, **Ms Gayatri Sen**, shares her childhood memories of Durga puja.

I spent my childhood in Ranchi, which, then, was a city where people came mainly to regain their health. There was only one Durga Puja in the entire town. The potter used to come from the nearby village to make the idol and it was great fun for us kids to watch the idol being created from scratch. First, the straw and bamboo structure was created; then it was covered with clay, which slowly took the shape of the deity. The craftsmanship of the potter mesmerized us. We all loved him as he used to make small dolls and animals with the excess clay for us. There was a lot of excitement and much ado amongst us to find out who had got which animal. The family elders from each household were actively involved in the puja rituals. We kids had to collect flowers from the neighbourhood gardens and make garlands. There wasn't much decoration or art related to the puja but it was very close to our hearts. Every evening, there was a *jatra* (open-air theatre). I still remember shivering during the cold nights; we had to carry heavy shawls and sometimes blankets to cover ourselves.



Picture courtesy: Ms Gayatri Sen



Picture courtesy: Ms Gayatri Sen

Singapore Durga Puja

I still miss the innocent enjoyment of those years.

I remember another Durga puja which I had enjoyed very much. I had gone to my son's place in Singapore. The homely atmosphere and the involvement of every Bengali family reminded me of the Ranchi Durga Puja days. The ritual that I liked the most was the one in which the women wore similar sarees, carried a different *bhog thali* (food offered to the Goddess) and arranged the *thalis* in front of the deity, one after another. It is very unique to the puja there.

The excitement and the charm related to the puja is not there anymore, but I cherish the memories of those days. **SE**

(As narrated to Support Elders by our member.)

Friday
Evening
SpecialJaya Jaya He
Mahishasura
Mardini

October 15



The programme visualised by our member, Professor Rita Chattopadhyay, was indeed an enchanting one.

An interesting interactive session followed, wherein the discussion ranged from the Bengali *Dashami* to the Kashmiri rituals followed at this time of the year. On Ms B. Chowdhury's request Prof Chattopadhyay promised to send the script to her, as she wanted to know more on the subject. Our members, Ms M. Ghosh said, "It was a nice and well thought-out programme. Prof Chattopadhyay described the theme very well", while Ms L. Bose said, "The description with the slides was very good." **SE**

Ladies offering bhog to the deity

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Announcement!

Smart Phone Sessions

The smart phone session which takes place twice a month on 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. has been very popular. The trainer patiently guides our members and answers their queries. To make the steps easy to understand, we share video capsules prepared by her, on Google Meet, which is then followed by an interactive Question & Answer session. The video capsules are then sent to the participating members, so that they can watch it again and can resolve their queries before the next session starts. Some of our members, who are conversant with the basics, have requested us to help them with online shopping, cab booking, online delivery of food and grocery and other useful applications of mobile phones. Watch this space for more on smartphone learning sessions!

Go Clubbing!

Celebration@Clubs

The festive fervour lingers long after we have bid adieu to Ma Durga. Our members celebrated *Bijoya Sammelani* online this year. All the participants of the different clubs like Antakshari, Gupshupp, Music Choir, SE-Poet, Recitation class celebrated *Bijoya* by showcasing their talents and regaling each other with their memories of Durga Puja. "We are having an enjoyable and engaging *Bijoya Sammelani*. Only the sweets are missing," remarked a few of the club members. One of the members of Gupshupp club, who is going to the UK to be with her children, even promised to join from there as she doesn't want to miss any of the *adda* sessions. SE

NOVEMBER



Of Lights and Flowers

We will be celebrating Diwali, the festival of lights, and Bathukamma, the festival of flowers, with our members, who will share their memories of these festivals, along with a dance and a couple of musical numbers on Diwali.

Date: 5th November, 2021



Bridging Miles

On the occasion of Childrens' Day, our members' grandchildren express their love for their grandparents by showcasing their talents.

Date: 12th November, 2021



Telugu Theatre Part III

Enjoy the third part of our tryst with Telugu theatre. Mr G Udaya Bhanu, director, actor and a much-respected Telugu theatre personality talks about its rich heritage and history.

Date: 19th November, 2021



Rendezvous with Raga Khamaj

An enchanting evening for music lovers, wherein the nuances of Raga Khamaj will be explored with the rendition of popular songs that are based on this raga.

Date: 26th November, 2021

DECEMBER



Round the World in an Evening

Our members, Dr Arup Roy, Ms Bipasha Sarkar, Ms Suparna Saha and Ms Anuradha Dasgupta will narrate their travel stories and share their travel pictures.

Date: 3rd December, 2021



Rendezvous with Raga Todi

An enchanting evening for music lovers, where in the nuances of Raga Todi will be explored with the rendition of popular songs that are based on this raga.

Date: 10th December, 2021



Telugu Theatre Part IV

Enjoy the fourth part of our tryst with Telugu theatre. Mr G Udaya Bhanu, director, actor and a much-respected Telugu theatre personality talks about its rich heritage and history.

Date: 17th December, 2021



Merry Christmas!

A fun evening with our members celebrating the spirit of Christmas with jingles and songs.

Date: 24th December, 2021



Movie Date

Our members celebrate New Year's Eve together, as they watch a Hollywood classic, followed by a discussion on movies of days of yore.

Date: 31st December, 2021

**Programmes are subject to last minute changes due to unavoidable circumstances*