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TOLLY TATLER

THE TOLLYGUNGE CLUB NEWS AND FEATURES MAGAZINE

AUTUMN 2025





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Foreword

Dear Members,

As I flip through this Autumn 2025 edition of the Tolly Tatler, I feel that familiar warmth we all know as Tolly. Our President reminds us that the heart of our Club truly lies in its people, and you can feel that spirit woven throughout these pages.

This issue is a vibrant mix, offering deep insights into happiness along with some delightful, humorous reads. It beautifully captures the universal themes of change and transition, especially through our sporting farewells.

Our travel section is a real treat, whisking you away to majestic waterfalls, exciting wildlife encounters, and inspiring expeditions to distant lands. We also shine a light on the ambitions of our young athletes and explore a variety of culinary traditions. You'll find thoughtful reflections on the unique essence of our Club and some modern relationship insights too.

We're celebrating the lively Club life with highlights from Women's Day, engaging library events, and thrilling golf, bridge, darts, and swimming competitions. Cultural highlights are brimming with traditional festivals, classical music, captivating performances, and diverse musical acts.

It's a joy to share these articles and stories with you. My heartfelt thanks go out to all our members for their contributions and to our Brands Committee, supported by the Tolly Club Team, for bringing this magazine to life.

Enjoy every page!

Warm regards,
Vijay Jacob Parakkal

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President SPEAK

So, we all agree – Tolly is the best. But what really makes the Tollygunge Club great? Is it the food? Its range of facilities? Is it the sweeping lawns, the emerald Golf Course? Is it the horses, the jackals, birds, butterflies - the beautiful flora and fauna? Or is it its storied past and the elegance of its heritage buildings?

Now that I have had the privilege to serve in a role that allows both an insider's view and a fly-on-the-wall perspective, I have come to believe the answer lies elsewhere — in its people. And by that, I mean the mosaic of members and the staff who bring life, character, and colour to this institution. Tolly is not just a club. It is a vibrant, evolving community — and it is the people who make it so.

During the Republic Day celebrations each year, I often hear members on the microphone remark that Tolly represents the country in every fashion. I can now see that more clearly than ever. Nowhere is this truer than in the diversity that defines us. We are home to individuals from nearly every walk of life — corporate leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals, artists, civil servants, academics and sportspeople. Our members range from spirited juniors just picking up a squash racket to wise octogenarians who remember the Club in sepia tones. It is a rare & beautiful thing: a multigenerational club where the past, present, and future coexist — and enrich each other.

This diversity is our strength — and it is what gives Tolly its energy and its grace.

A Tapestry of Culture

Culturally too, Tolly reflects the many shades of our city and country. Where else will you find a week that begins with a programme of Tagore songs on the lawn pavilion and ends with a rock band by the poolside? Where classical dance shares space with jazz, where Hindi theatre, Bengali natok, and English drama all find an appreciative audience — and where a ghazal evening and a quiz night can draw equal applause?

Look at the sheer diversity of sports and games we host — seventeen disciplines featured in this year's Tolly Fest alone! From golf to riding, poker to darts, scrabble to pickleball — there's something for every interest, age group, and personality.

Our food offerings tell the same story — from old-world colonial cuisine to quick-service bites, Bengali to South Indian to continental — a table set for a truly cosmopolitan palate. Our F&B team works behind the scenes with care and creativity, ensuring that a classic mutton cutlet continues to share the menu with wellness bowls and modern fusion fare. It is a culinary metaphor for what Tolly strives to be: tradition meeting innovation, comfort meeting curiosity.

Even our approach to dress is a reflection of that balance — practical, permissive, and progressive. Where else can one walk across a club’s lawns in comfortable casuals, without the fear of being told to swap out sneakers for leather shoes before dining? This is Tolly’s quiet revolution — where pragmatism and tradition find common ground.

Evolving With Intent

As the world evolves, so must we — and we are. But we’re doing so with deliberate care and intent. Whether it’s modernising club operations, upgrading infrastructure, or evolving norms to reflect a more contemporary and inclusive mindset, we remain mindful of preserving the core ethos of Tolly: understated elegance, gracious conduct, and shared respect.

In the past year, we’ve made renewed efforts to engage younger members and families, encourage cross-generational participation, and create more platforms for connection and creativity. The calendar now reflects the diversity of our membership — from poetry readings to pet shows, vintage car rallies to wellness retreats.

Equally, we are committed to recognising the contributions of the staff who work quietly, loyally, and skilfully behind the

scenes. Their silent dedication is the backbone of our daily life, and they too are very much a part of the Tolly family.

The Privilege — and Responsibility — of Membership

But above all, I urge each of us to remember that being part of this Club is not just about privileges — it is about shared responsibility. We, the members, shape the culture and set the tone. Let us treat each other and our staff with courtesy, value our shared spaces, and protect the spirit of Tolly. Let us be calm, measured, and empathetic — ready to step back rather than react. Let us keep making Tolly a space of joy, dignity, and inclusion for all.

As we look ahead, may we continue to honour our past while embracing the future. Let us celebrate what truly sets us apart — our people. It is our diversity, our camaraderie, and our shared pride that will carry this Club forward — for generations to come.



Partha Sarathi Barman

What We Really Want

By Purnima L. Toolsidass



Purnima L. Toolsidass was born in Ratlam, in 1943, the granddaughter of a freedom fighter who was also an animal lover. From him she got Gandhian outlooks, humanitarian and idealistic, and also a love for animals. She came to Calcutta in 1961 when she married Lalit Toolsidass who

was an exporter of Jute goods. She was actively involved in animal welfare activities from 1994 - 2010. She has translated over 50 books of her Guru, Swami Akhandananda Saraswati; these are available for free download on www.archives.com

What every person wants is happiness. Once we've got the basics for our survival and essential comforts, it is natural to wish for pleasure.

The problem is that we mix up pleasure with happiness and believe the end justifies the means. The brain is in frequent conflict with the heart. The heart can – and often does – become the master, compelling the brain to find the means for fulfilling unethical desires. Sometimes the brain compels the heart to submit to its dictate and ignore the conscience.

What are needed are balance and common sense, and the wisdom to prioritize essentials and non-essentials.

Sad it is to see people becoming stressed out over trifles that have fleeting importance. So often we quarrel with loved ones because their reaction differed from our expectations, or because we misunderstood an innocent comment. So often we become filled with agitation because of things that are beyond our control, like someone coming late for dinner, or being patronising, or critical, or supercilious, or not paying a compliment!

It's nothing new to say we can't change the world, but what we fail to realize is that we can change our reactions. It is in your hands, whether you react or respond. It is in your hands whether you allow some insignificant person or occurrence to upset you or counsel yourself and dismiss it as too paltry to give importance to.

Suspicion and jealousy are major causes of unhappiness. So is worrying about things we can't control. Dislike leads to hatred – a poison that ruins peace of mind and relationships. Fear of the unknown, of failure, of being laughed at and being foolish are some of the factors with which we torture ourselves.

It is said that the reason for this is that we see the world as 'they' against 'us'. A feeling of being superior is as bad as a feeling of being inferior. We are what we are. If we focus on the fact that no human can ever be perfect, and success in life is not measured by materialistic measures, we will be spared of much suffering.

We are made to love and get love; to help and be helped; to be sincere in our efforts to improve our life and others' lives. We can never be happy if our enjoyment is at the cost of another's suffering. The kick people get out of giving a snub or bullying someone is short-lived and leaves us a bit ashamed of ourselves. We don't like the feeling, so we smother it, salving our conscience with the thought that the person deserved it.

It's old-fashioned to talk of God, but the concept that God abides in all, sees everything, is just as well as compassionate is a big help in attaining inner peace, contentment, good will and faith. These are what actually give happiness, not wealth or position or power or beauty or intellect.

Beyond the Final Whistle: What Sporting Farewells Teach Us About Change

By Nainika Seth



Nainika Seth is a Sport and Performance Psychologist with an MSc in Sport and Exercise Psychology from Loughborough University, United Kingdom. With 5+ years of experience in sport performance, team development, and leadership, she has designed solutions, delivered workshops, and

created learning courses for developing leaders and high-performing teams. She is dedicated to helping athletes, coaches, and organizations cultivate a winning mind-set. Specializing in high performance, team cultures, and pressure management, Nainika empowers clients to enhance both performance and well-being.

Transitions in sport mark powerful crossroads, when the routines and relationships that have defined an athlete's life give way to entirely new paths. Whether it was a legend retiring from competition, a lifelong club servant moving on, or Test cricketers shifting their focus to limited-overs glory, these moments strip away familiar rhythms and force a reinvention of purpose. Every ending carries the seeds of a beginning, and each farewell can teach us something about navigating our own life changes.



Last month at Court Philippe-Chatrier, Rafael Nadal returned not to compete, but to bid adieu. Giant screens played a cinematic montage of his earliest clay-court triumphs: the heavy, spin-laden left-hand serve that kicked up sharply, the thunderous forehand that shattered defences, and that steely backhand so precise it bent lines and wills alike. Then came the surprise appearances: Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, and Andy Murray—Nadal's

fiercest rivals and closest friends, each applauding as they walked in. Those embraces on the red clay felt like the final scene of a beloved drama, reminding everyone that their careers were intertwined more deeply than any ranking or trophy count. When Nadal spoke of dawn-lit drills, dusty victory celebrations with his grandparents, and the feel of clay under his fingernails, his voice cracked with gratitude—a last dance with the sport that defined him.

Later that same month at Anfield, Trent Alexander-Arnold took his final walk through the tunnel. He wasn't retiring from football, he was moving to a new club. But he left behind two decades of pre-match huddles, set-piece secrets, and the roar of home fans. Trent left more than goals and assists—he left a second home. Swapping familiar chants for the promise of a new club, he faced that bittersweet wrench of loyalty, knowing that every cheer he once fuelled would now accompany memories of a changing identity.



Meanwhile in India, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli embraced a different pivot: stepping away from the marathon patience of Test cricket to the high-stakes theatre of ODIs and World Cups. Their roles now go beyond personal milestones; they carry the responsibility of leading their country to limited-overs glory, nurturing emerging talents, and creating the stage for new heroes to rise. This shift demands more than technical tweaks. It requires fresh mental routines: rapid-fire decision-making in death overs, instant emotional recovery after tight run-outs, and pride in seizing singular moments rather than building innings brick by brick.

What unites these farewells is a current of pride, loss, and possibility that transcends rivalries and loyalties. Nadal's send-off wasn't just a goodbye to victories but also a farewell to the identity he built around his game. Trent's departure wasn't a career end but an unmooring of a home he once called his own. Rohit and Virat's format change wasn't a retirement but a rebirth of focus. Their emotions were universal—scrubbing away team colours and borders—because these goodbyes tap into something deep in all of us. They remind us that saying farewell stirs pride, nostalgia, and hope in everyone who's cheered them on.

As a sports psychologist, I see how each story reflects a common thread: the need to rebuild identity, find belonging, and develop mental routines suited to a new chapter. With Nadal, it's about helping him honour the grief for his clay-court days while guiding him toward a fresh purpose, whether that means mentoring young players or exploring a new role in sport. For Trent, it's about easing social adjustment and translating camaraderie from one locker room to another so he can feel at home once more. For Rohit and Virat, it's about forging mental routines suited to the explosive pace of limited-overs cricket: visualization for last-ball thrills, rapid recovery from errors, and finding meaning in fleeting but powerful moments.

If you're approaching your own crossroads—whether you're hanging up a racket, changing teams, or pivoting your career—these lessons apply:

- Start early. Explore interests and skills beyond your current role well before you step away. That way, your next chapter can unfold more organically.
- Honour your feelings. Celebrate achievements and allow yourself to grieve what you're leaving behind. You might journal, hold a small ceremony, or revisit cherished memories.
- Lean on your community. Engage friends, family, and mentors who see you beyond your title or routine. Their support can turn uncertainty into opportunity.
- Set fresh goals. Define clear, exciting targets for your next phase, whether it's mastering a new skill, pursuing a passion project, or embracing a different role. Having direction fuels motivation.
- Embrace uncertainty. Stepping into the unknown often reveals hidden strengths and opens doors you never imagined.
- See endings as beginnings. View every farewell not as a loss but as the first step of a new play, an invitation to apply lessons learned and write your own highlight reel.

In sport, as in life, a final serve, a last tunnel walk, or a format change isn't an ending but a gateway. When the applause fades and the stadium lights dim, the true triumph lies in stepping onto the next court, tunnel, or stage with the same courage, curiosity, and resilience that carried you through your greatest victories.



The 18th Shamiana's Makeover



Col. Debashish Nag



Dulal Mukherjee

*Col. Debashish Nag (Retd), member of the Properties and Club Suites Committee, in conversation with renowned architect **Dulal Mukherjee** regarding the recently completed repairs to the 18th Shamiana. Mr. Mukherjee, the architect of the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre and presently entrusted with the restoration of the Grand Oberoi, was also the architect behind the renovation of our Clubhouse, the AC Auditorium and the outdoor swimming pool.*

Debashish Nag: Mr. Mukherjee, the 18th Shamiana has been a landmark for members for decades. What prompted this major repair and renovation?

Dulal Mukherjee: The Club approached me because the Shamiana hadn't undergone significant repairs since 2006 — and members were understandably keen to see it addressed. In our early discussions, several options were considered: should we air-condition it, modernize it, and even make it a double-storey building? But heritage concerns – and the reality that any major change would need sanction from the city's Heritage Committee, which is a lengthy and uncertain process – led to a clear decision: preserve the original look and feel while improving safety and functionality. So, in effect, if you notice, there is no change to the area or the main structures.

Debashish Nag: Safety? Could you elaborate on that?

Dulal Mukherjee: Over the years, roof leaks, damaged tiles, and ageing service facilities became real issues – both for member comfort and for basic structural safety. Addressing these problems was a key objective of the project.

Debashish Nag: Those roof leaks were a particular nuisance during the monsoons. How did you solve them without changing the iconic appearance?

Dulal Mukherjee: The Raniganj terracotta tiles are lovely but prone to seepage through the joints – not helped by the occasional golf ball landing on the roof! Rather than replace the tiles, we installed a layer of corrugated aluminium sheeting underneath, supported by the wooden framework. This keeps the roof completely waterproof while retaining the visible tile finish and the original architectural character. The skylights have been retained and exactly at the same place too!

Debashish Nag: The new framework feels lighter and more open. What was your design intent?

Dulal Mukherjee: We replaced the old, heavy M.S. structure with a softer arched design. It's simpler, cleaner, and improves the spatial quality of the hall, making it feel more open while remaining true to its heritage.

Debashish Nag: And those columns - they look so much more graceful now.





Dulal Mukherjee: By removing the thick concrete cladding, we exposed the original slender steel columns. This improves the proportions of the hall and creates a better sense of openness.

Debashish Nag: What about the service counter? Members are saying it's much improved.

Dulal Mukherjee: We completely redesigned it using solid wood. The layout is now far more functional and systematic, which will make service smoother during large gatherings.



Debashish Nag: So, in summary, what does this project represent to you as the architect?

Dulal Mukherjee: For me, it's about sensitive upkeep rather than reinvention. We've fixed long-standing issues - leaks, structural clutter, and inefficiencies - while preserving the Shamiana's character. It now functions better, looks better, and is ready to serve the Club for many years to come.



Art & Science of Happiness

By Avinash Sahai



Avinash Sahai a Member for over 30 years is a Gold Medalist Mechanical Engineer, is a schoolmate of AB from Allahabad. Has 5 decades of experience with L&T, Swedish & Finnish Conglomerates is a popular stand up comedian.

The fundamental reality behind the relationship between success, happiness & pleasure is different than what is widely believed. That is why, due to mistaken beliefs about happiness, people have misplaced priorities in their lives.

There are two widely held misconceptions amongst general masses.

First is the idea that happiness comes with success, those who are successful in life are happier compared to those who have not succeeded or will not succeed.

Second, there is little or no difference between happiness and pleasure, that happiness is nothing more than sensual and pleasurable feelings. For instance, many seek exotic resorts, night clubs, expensive liquor, gourmet meals and travelling to finest places in the world as potential happiness-makers.

One of the main drivers behind these misconceptions in our highly materialistic world, where wealth, status, power, and material goods are central to modern culture. While pursuing success, we generally overlook those things that give us genuine happiness.

If we are chasing material goods with the hope that we will eventually achieve happiness, are we grossly mistaken? The material goods alone can't help us become happy. In fact, the other way round. We may end up becoming more unsatisfied, frustrated.

Various studies have shown that compared to our

ancestors we have become unhappy. The reason is simple, hunter-gatherers were living on a day to day basis. Their main imperative for survival was to forage for wild plants, seeds, fruits, berries and hunt animals. It is believed that there was no competition, among them as available resources for consumption were plentiful.

The lifestyle for hunter-gatherers required little planning for the future, except the threat of wild animals or extreme weather events.

Regardless of whether we are successful or not, our primary aim would ideally be happiness and enjoyment of life to the fullest. However, our actions are mostly directed at becoming successful.

There is often a contradiction in what we aim for and what we do in life. What is required is a fine balance and compliment between success and happiness. This is achievable. We need to prioritise our personal and professional life. We must have a good idea of where we can derive happiness and an overall contentment and satisfaction.

We are living in a highly materialistic world. All around us we have extremely 'successful' people leading highly stressful and unhappy lives. They have all the money and comfort but no time to enjoy life. No doubt with success comes wealth, material goods and comforts, status in society and more powers to enjoy.

That is the reason we strive to be successful in life in whatever way we can. As we move up in the hierarchy, responsibilities and work pressure generally increases. We then want to rise further on the ladder of success or we try to maintain our present position, in both cases struggle creates stressful situations. Expectations also rise as we succeed. Human nature is that. We normally don't feel content with our success.

Mostly there exists a gap between the level of expectation and the reality we experience. Only occasionally do we hear about successful people

giving much of their wealth to charity or donating for some noble cause.

Money is certainly important in clearing the way for happiness but that is true only up to a certain extent. Beyond that point enough money can easily be counterproductive.

What is the hedonic treadmill effect?

A life of physical ease, with plenty of money and comforts around us, can indeed be pleasurable. However, pleasurable feelings by their nature are fleeting. Temptations abound in this pleasure-driven world. Quick fixes such as tobacco, alcohol, sugar, social media drugs and the internet where we can uninterruptedly watch anything are readily available.

However, pleasure never offers true satisfaction or lasting happiness and can invariably make us more miserable than ever. This happens when in order to maintain the pleasurable feelings, we increase the frequency and intensity of things that give us pleasure.

This phenomenon is known as the “hedonic treadmill” In its extreme, it becomes an addiction. Those who smoke or drink must be familiar with it. To maintain their pleasure, they need to increase their nicotine and alcohol. Few can resist it, as the cause lies in our brain - especially in its secretion of one specific biochemical which is known as Dopamine as the cause lies in our brain

Why is pleasure and happiness so confusing?

Life can be filled with a range of pleasurable and joyous experiences. Inner happiness can last for months and even years. It is through these positive emotions that the meaning of life becomes clear among the essential ingredients of leading a happy and joyful life. Pleasure is just a short-lived feeling of intense happiness. We may feel wonderful elated, when we experience it, unable to distinguish whether these emotions are a result of pleasure or the outcome of happiness.

Humans would not have survived without the inner sunshine of joy, pleasure, love and happiness. They gave reason to live, even in extreme adverse and

painful situations. Short pleasure events are among the essential ingredients of leading a happy and joyful life.

Anticipation of pleasure is more exciting

When pleasurable things are easily available in a material-driven world, it becomes all the more tempting to enjoy them more often. When we are stressed, unhappy in a depressed or distressed mood, we feel a need for immediate relief to relax and be happy, through pleasurable feelings. Studies have now established that the release of Dopamine is occasioned not only by pleasure, but even mere anticipation of pleasure.

We are more excited when we plan for an exotic trip to Europe, but when we actually reach there, the excitement vanishes. In fact, the anticipation of pleasure leads to release of Dopamine, even more, compared to the actual pleasure.

What is Happiness

Happiness is a feeling of contentment. It comes when we are satisfied, safe, grateful and eager to experience more of life. Happiness is of two kinds?

First when we feel conditionally happy on a day-to-day basis, and secondly there is a long-term contentment that runs deeper.

We feel good, elevated, joyful and generous when we are happy. Happiness is actually an outcome of many internal factors, including the delicate balance of neurochemicals that are secreted in our brain.

50% of our happiness is biologically determined through our genes,

40% of happiness is controlled by our thoughts, behaviour and actions we take. Our choices are entirely in our hands & the remaining

10% by our life's circumstances

Happiness lies in our minds. It's an outcome of our inner biochemical system. The first such biochemical is Serotonin, which is also known as 'Happy chemical'.

The last neurotransmitter essential for happiness is Oxytocin, the “bonding molecule”.

Pillars of Happiness

There are three pillars on which a strong foundation for happiness can be built

First a healthy body and mind

Second, we should hold high priorities and ideals alongside reasonable expectations

Third, our privilege and greatest joy is to nurture and maintain true relationships with friends and family members.

As we know, lives of great men all remind us, we can make our lives sublime, and departing leave behind us, footprints on the sands of time.

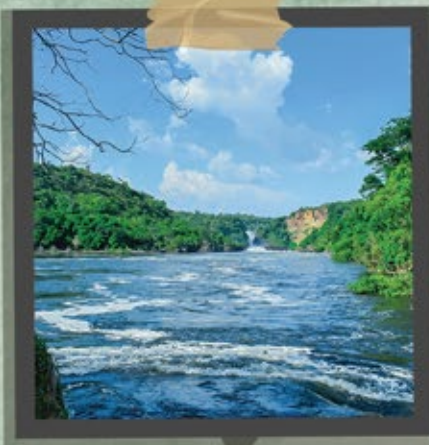
No better heritage can a Father bequeath to his children, than a good Name, nor is there in a family, a richer heirloom than the name of a noble Ancestor.



TRAVEL



BUG



Mahakumbh 2025

By Dr. Vishnupriya Sengupta



Dr. Vishnupriya Sengupta is a former journalist, independent researcher and works for a professional services firm. She is also the Chairperson of the Library Subcommittee.

A gathering of sadhus clad in saffron robes walk up to garland a fellow sadhu who is nearly buried in a huge pile of red hibiscus garlands. Only his face is visible, and you can feel – even at a distance – that he is still breathing slowly but steadily. Soon, you are made to understand that he is gradually letting go of his breath in a bid to take Samadhi.

You realise you are witnessing a spectacle that you may have read about but would never have imagined watching it unfold before your very eyes. But then this is the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, so exception is the norm.

The sight is strangely awe-inspiring, despite the young guide Ayush, a student at the University of Allahabad, pointing out that you are in hallowed company. Most of the Mahamandaleshwar (the evolved spiritual leaders), he emphasises, are present on stage to watch one of their own crossing over.

One of the most trending themes of 2025, the Mahakumbh, irrespective of the news and views around it, meant different things to different people - reportedly 42 crore - who flocked to Prayagraj in January and February this year. For me, it was neither a search for Amrit nor was it driven by what Karl Marx considered as the opium of the masses. Rather, it was a leap of faith.

Taking a dip in the Triveni Sangam was on my agenda but not so much for its much-touted act of purification. Sangam, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati, is for me symbolic of the harmonious co-existence of different streams of thoughts and beliefs. A dip in it simply meant an immersion in the wide, mystical ocean of spiritualism that transcends the boundaries of institutionalised religion, blind faith and cultural parochialism.

What, however, made the entire experience distinctive was perhaps the fusion of sights, sounds and senses filtered through the prism of my consciousness. It reminded me of the lines from T.S. Eliot's *Hollow Men* - between the idea and the reality... between the emotion and the response... between the potency and the existence... between the essence and the descent falls the shadow. This shadow can often be a tricky space, as it was in this 45-day affair that in a sense actually unified people from all walks of life in the spirit of hope – the hope of redemption, liberation, purification and salvation.

From a vantage point, watching crores of people from villages, towns and cities, striding across bridges carrying luggage on their heads triggered memories of migrant workers walking miles on end to return home four years ago. But contrary to those despondent workers, these men, women and children were excited, perhaps at the idea of camping at the Mahakumbh for a few days - sleeping on the pavements and shores of the Sangam, some even in large dry drain pipes, others in makeshift tents erected by the Uttar Pradesh Government – eating street food, sleeping peacefully and bathing religiously without a care in the world.



This picnic-pilgrimage - a break from the daily grind seemed to have sparked in them a sense of bliss.

On the other side were the very important people, either spiritually evolved or the privileged lot, who had the right of way by virtue of their position or prominence holding court in different akharas. These akharas were the pièce de resistance of the grand mela - some jazzed up, others extraordinary. The most talked-about ones included the Juna, Niranjani, Mahanirvani. This zone abounded in tridents, swords, wooden staff and long poles lit up at one end that formed the pathway to a higher realm with portly and lean sadhus, some smeared with ash, strutting around in various forms of dress and undress.



Interestingly, mobile phones had penetrated this world too, for many of them busily exchanged numbers with visitors who were there to seek their blessings, while a few reticent ones gazed fixedly at their phones, entranced. Tiger Baba at the Juna Akhada, for one, was mobile savvy. Ready to exchange numbers, this amicable Naga sadhu sportingly posed for photographs, blessing visitors with a light peacock feather stick and crystal-gazing on their request. Sporting dark glasses at night with garlands adorning his matted dreadlocks, he flashed a dazzling smile, speaking at times in riddles open to interpretation. Then there

was Rudraksh Baba with rudraksh garlands weighing around 30 kilograms adorning his neck - generously handing out rudrakshas to those who approached him for blessings.



At another stall, was a livid Khadeshwar Baba or Standing Baba - who has apparently been standing on his feet 24x7 for over eight years - taking strong objection to a mosquito repellent being sprayed by a meek-looking man assigned with that task. At yet another stall, Haanth Khade Baba who has kept one hand raised for several years as an act of penance seemed indifferent to the sight of his totally distorted arm with long nails piercing his skin.

These fragmented images brought to life a Bharat that exuded a timeless and all-encompassing mysticism. But amidst these scenes, it was the aarti performed to rhythmic beats of drums and chimes of bells intertwined with the smoky scent of frankincense that had me rooted to the spot. Performed in one akhada by a saffron-robed sadhu and in another by a Naga sadhu, it felt like a divine embrace, pure and unpretentious. That perhaps summed up the essence of the Mahakumbh - an unabashed celebration of India's pluralistic spiritual heritage through a vibrant tapestry weaving together faith and fortitude, surreal and real, individual experience and collective memory.



Nature's Hidden Symphony: A Journey to Iguassu Falls

By Chandana Ghosh



Chandana Ghosh and her husband Bhaskar Ghose (who retired as MD Corporate Affairs & Finance of Goodricke Group) have traipsed the world to find the most unusual and endearing places. Chandana is a popular travelogue writer, her articles having been published in

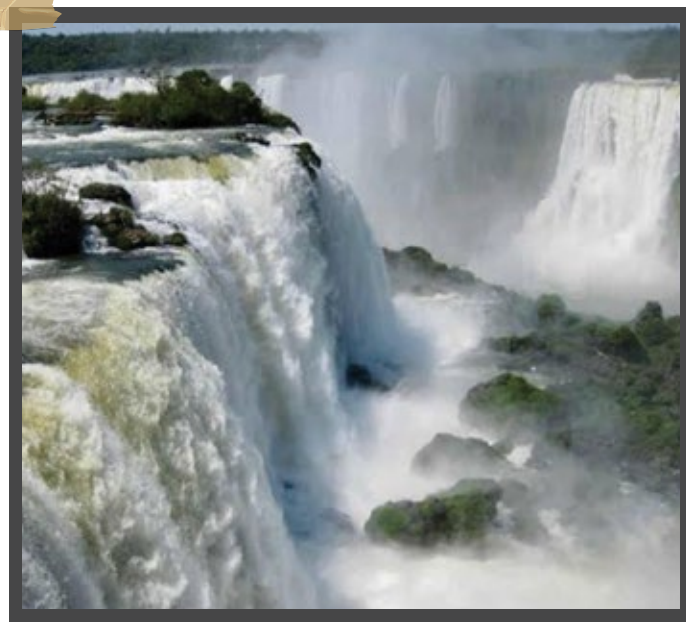
numerous magazines. Daughter of well known actor of yesteryear Kamal Mitra, she has authored a book on him which gives a unique perspective on the golden era of Bengali cinema.

In 2008, our travels took us to one of the most awe inspiring natural wonders of the world – Iguassu (Iguaçu) Falls. The extensive and exuberant subtropical rainforest reserve that makes up the Iguassu National park was declared a world heritage site by Unesco in 1984. It is one of the most stunning sites. Ironically, despite having studied geography in college and for my Master's degree, I had never heard of Iguassu until a friend from the UK urged us not to miss it while planning our trip to South America. That suggestion turned out to be pure gold.

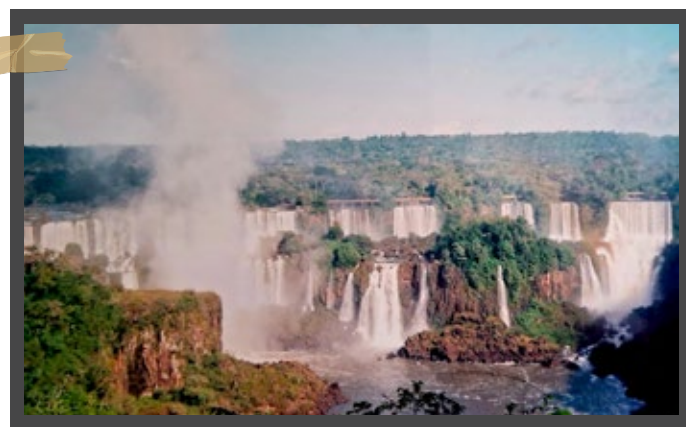
About 135 million years ago a massive volcanic eruption flooded the area with basaltic lava. These basalt layers had minor sandstone layers in between. Moving of tectonic plates caused faults and the Iguassu River gradually wore away softer sedimentary rocks beneath harder layers of basalt. This natural process carved the dramatic drops and chasms that now make up Iguassu falls. The falls stretched across a vast area of nearly 3 km, a breathtaking spectacle of over 270 individual cascades tumbling into the river.

Having spent an exciting time in Rio de Janeiro, we boarded a flight to Foz do Iguacu, eager to witness the legendary waterfalls that straddle the border between Brazil & Argentina. We started our exploration from the Brazilian side where a well laid walkway led us through a lush subtropical forest, where about 2000 species of plants & 400 bird species are found. As we reached the panoramic

viewpoints, the full scale of the beauty unfolded before our eyes. The mighty Devil's Throat, the most dramatic section of the falls, was sending up clouds of mist that create ethereal rainbows. Along the 1.2 km trail in the Brazilian side more panoramic views of the falls can be seen which gives a broader perspective of the entire waterfall while from the Argentine side we got to see a closer view.



Next morning we went to the Argentina side which has the larger portion of the falls. The extensive network of trails & footbridges brought us even closer to the thundering waters. Standing there I finally understood why Eleanor Roosevelt, when she first laid her eyes on Iguassu said "Poor Niagara". Having also seen Niagara & Victoria Falls, I can confidently say that Iguassu impressed me the most.



Rhinos, Elephants & More: A Kaziranga Journey

By Nandita Banerjee



Nandita Banerjee is a retired executive with significant experience in the general insurance sector. She currently holds a position as a faculty member & analyst in insurance. In addition to her professional pursuits, she actively engages in gardening, reading, writing, and extensive travel.

*A rhino dozed peacefully in the sun,
A snakebird dried its wings,
And the silk-cotton tree reached high up to the sky.*

Sorting through my travel memorabilia, I stumbled upon this scribble, and it opened a floodgate of memories of our eventful trip to Kaziranga National Park (Assam) earlier this year.

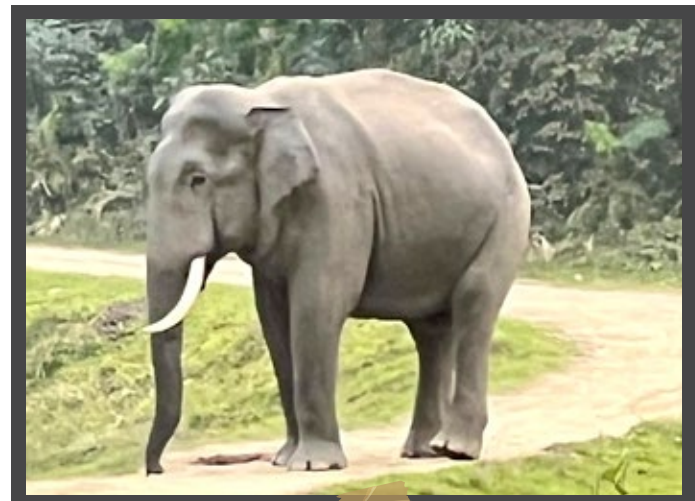
We visited Kaziranga with friends and decided to explore the sanctuary through jeep safaris. Sighting the iconic one-horned rhinoceros a.k.a the 'gentle giant' in its natural habitat was a delight. While on a trail in the Agoratoli Range, we encountered a rhino blocking our path. Though rhinos have poor eyesight we could see it staring at us. Despite the driver's attempts to move it by blowing the horn, the rhino stayed put, much to our consternation. As we could all be at risk if the rhino sensing a threat chose to charge at us, the senior forester accompanying us decided to intervene and

ingeniously used an indigenous bamboo instrument (locally used in Assamese dances) to successfully scare it away.

Picture the thrilling sight of a majestic full-grown tusker standing ahead, right on our tracks, in the Kohora Range! The thrill, the danger and the eventual relief as it decided to move ahead and free up our path made this encounter truly memorable. The jeep tracks that we followed had large quantities of both elephant and rhino dung on either side. And in case, the reader is wondering, I learnt to distinguish between the two, without going into further details!

Other takeaways include the sight of sleek otters frolicking in the crystal-clear waterbodies and turtles sunning themselves on wooden logs. Avian vignettes include colourful jungle fowls blocking our path, pelicans doing synchronized swimming and sunlight glinting off the stunning orange-brown plumage of Brahminy Ducks.

Kaziranga with its rich biodiversity caters to everyone: animal-lovers, birdwatchers or those who simply want to experience nature at its finest in the vast floodplains of the mighty River Brahmaputra. But it is up to us to preserve and protect these natural wonders for posterity.



Travelogue: A Frosty, Furry Fiasco at Brady's Lake

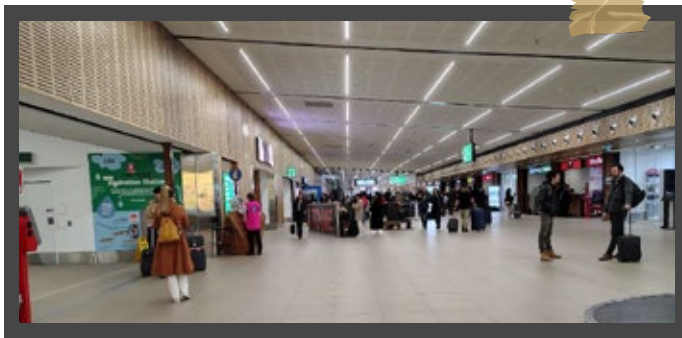
By S N Roy



S.N. Roy (R 338) is an IIT Kharagpur graduate in engineering. He retired from BHEL as Executive Director in Bhopal and is now an Independent Director in Techno Electric Engineering Company.

Travelogue: A Frosty, Furry Fiasco at Brady's Lake

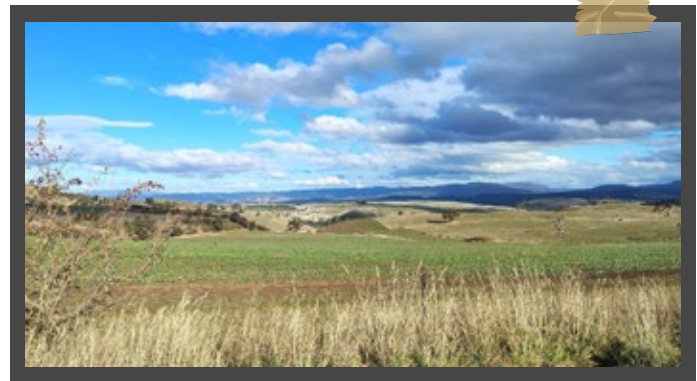
On June 16, 2025, our intrepid trio—my wife Madhuri (the queen of packing snacks), son Anish, and I—hopped a Jetstar flight from Brisbane, touching down in Hobart, Tasmania, by 10 a.m. The winter air hit us like we'd walked into a giant freezer with a personal grudge, a nippy 10°C. Travelers, heed this: leave your apples and carrots behind unless you want Hobart Airport's sniffer dogs to give you a starring role in their next bust. Those floppy-eared enforcers don't mess around!



At the airport, we sidestepped the car rental royalty—Hertz, Avis, Budget, all acting like they're leasing Lamborghinis—and went with Bargain Car Hire. Anish, our family's deal-hunting ninja, scored us a car that looked like it had survived a zombie apocalypse but drove like a champ. Our mission? Reach Brady's Lake, where Anish and his wife Poonam had snagged a lakeside investment property, marked by a "Hakuna Matata" sign that practically sang *The Lion King* theme song. First, though, we raided Coles in Hobart for bread, biscuits, eggs, and enough snacks to survive a siege. Why? Because the nearest shop to Brady's Lake is probably in Narnia. A quick chai or coffee run? Forget it—you'd have better luck convincing a koala

to brew you a latte.

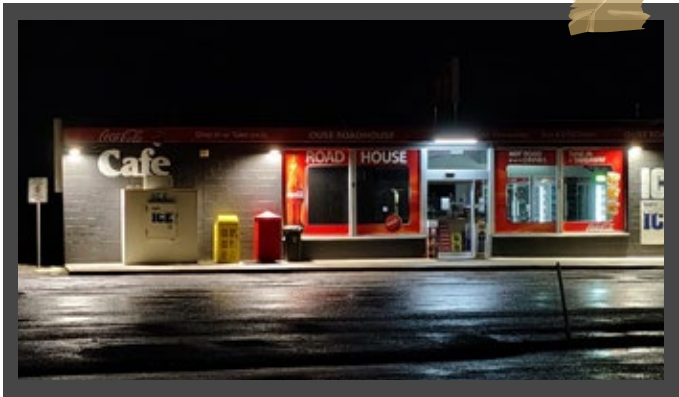
After a KFC pit stop—because nothing screams "wilderness adventure" like a bucket of fried chicken—Anish took the wheel for the 3.5-hour drive. Tasmania's landscapes were a jaw-dropper: meadows so green they looked like they'd been painted by a toddler with a lime crayon obsession, dotted with sheep that probably had their own Instagram accounts. Rolling hills stood like silent bouncers, daring us to question their majesty. Hobart's local radio station was our wingman, blasting everything from Midnight Oil to Billie Eilish, with a DJ yammering like he'd mainlined espresso. We half-expected him to warn, "Watch out for that wallaby doing cartwheels on the highway!" The meadows morphed into national reserve forests, where eucalyptus trees loomed like they were auditioning for a Tolkien flick. Signs cautioned about wallabies, koalas, and ice skids—because nothing says "welcome" like the threat of spinning out while a marsupial photo bombs your crash.



Our first wildlife encounter came early. A wallaby, looking like it had overslept for a meeting, hopped across the road with the nonchalance of a teenager crossing a mall parking lot. Anish slammed the brakes, and we all cooed like we'd spotted a celebrity. "Look at that fluffy daredevil!" Madhuri squealed, snapping blurry pictures through the windshield. Further along, a koala clung to a tree, staring us down like we'd interrupted its nap. "Mate, take a chill pill," I muttered, half-expecting it to flip us off. These critters were just a warm-up for the zoo that awaited us.

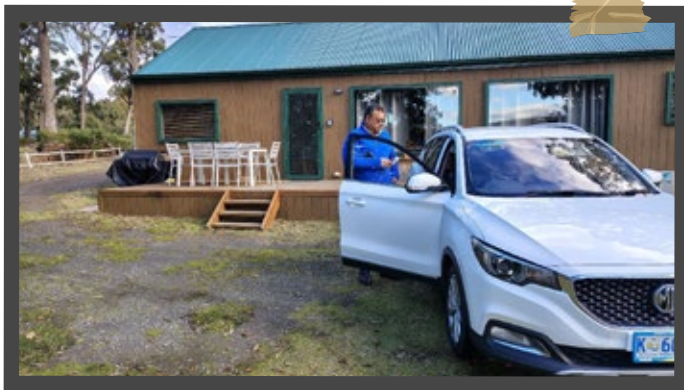
We stopped at Ouse, a village so small it probably

shares a Wi-Fi password with the next town over. We grabbed coffee at a cafe that looked like it was stuck in 1850, half-hoping for a barista in a monocle. Refreshed, we dove back into the forest, chasing Tasmania’s 4 p.m. sunset like we were in a budget remake of **Mad Max**. We pulled up to Brady’s Lake just before dusk, the thermometer laughing at us with a frosty 6°C and a wind so sharp it could shave a yeti. But there it was: the “Hakuna Matata” house, glowing like a warm muffin with a wood fire crackling inside.



The House by Brady’s Lake

This house was pure fairy-tale vibes, a wooden gem that looked like it had wandered out of a Brontë novel and decided to kick back by the lake. Its giant glass windows framed Brady’s Lake like a 4K nature documentary, complete with misty waters and forested hills. The wood fire was the MVP, snapping and popping like it was roasting marshmallows and telling ghost stories. Huddling around it felt like we’d gone full pioneer—minus the dysentery and



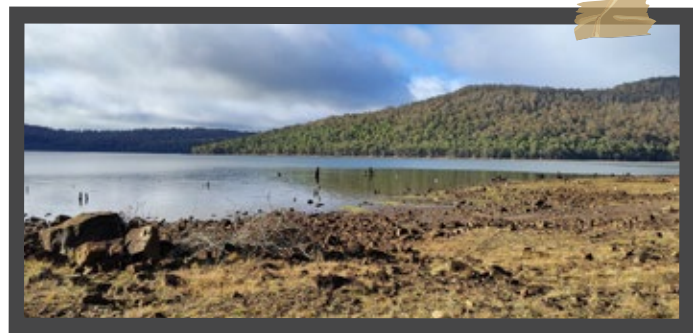
questionable hygiene. The smoky scent made us feel like rugged bush folk, even if my idea of “roughing it” is usually a hotel without room service. We spent the evening defrosting, sipping hot

drinks, and cackling about how we’d have to ration the biscuits since the nearest shop was a pipe dream. The electric bed warmers were our saviors, turning our beds into toasty burritos. Without them, we’d have woken up as popsicles with regrets.



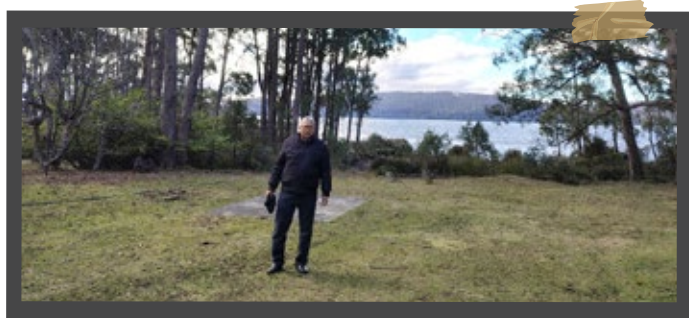
Exploring Brady’s Lake

Brady’s Lake, tucked in Tasmania’s Central Highlands, is a stunner that doesn’t play nice with city slickers. The lake, a hydro reservoir, looks like it was crafted by a deity with a flair for drama, its glassy surface ringed by hills and meadows. On June 17, I braved the drizzle for a walk, expecting a bustling hamlet. Nope. The place was deader than a dodo’s dance party. Coming from India, where “quiet” means only 100 auto rickshaws are honking, this was mind-boggling. The only locals were wildlife, and boy, did they show up.



During my stroll, a wallaby bounced past, close enough to high-five. It froze, stared at me like I’d crashed its yoga class, and then vanished into the bushes. Later, I spotted a Tasmanian devil—yes, **the** Taz—scampering near the lake, looking less like a cartoon and more like a caffeinated raccoon. “Slow down, mate, you’ll burn out!” I called, but it was too busy plotting world domination. Back at

the house, Madhuri swore she saw a platypus doing laps in the lake, though Anish teased it was probably a log with ambition. We spent the day indoors, toggling between TV and gawking out the windows like we were in a wildlife safari with room service. The meadows around the lake were greener than a kiwi's daydream, swaying like they were choreographed for a Bollywood number. The nearby national forest, part of the Central Plateau Conservation Area, was a tangle of eucalyptus and myrtle, with trails that whispered "adventure" but also "bring an umbrella, you numpty."



The isolation was both magical and maddening. Need milk? Tough luck. Craving chai? Start praying to the lake gods. We joked that the wallabies might open a pop-up cafe if they sensed our caffeine withdrawal. "Wallaby's Brew: One Leaf, Two Twigs, No Refunds," Anish quipped, and we lost it.

The Geography and Beauty of Brady's Lake

Brady's Lake sits in the Central Highlands, a region that feels like it was designed by a poet with a side hustle in landscape architecture. Part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, it's a hotspot for critters—platypuses, wallabies, devils, and birds that probably have their own folk band. The lake's flanked by hills that pose like they're on a magazine cover, with frost-dusted meadows that glitter like they've been sprinkled with fairy dust. Winter cloaks the area in a hush, with mist drifting over the lake like it's auditioning for a gothic novel.

The Return Journey

On June 18, we hauled ourselves out of bed at 4 a.m., pre-sunrise, for the slog back to Hobart Airport. The darkness was thicker than my grandma's dal, and Anish drove like he was in a video game called "Marsupial Mayhem." The road was a full-on wildlife

rave. Wallabies hopped across like they were late for a Black Friday sale, one nearly dive-bombing our hood before Anish swerved. "Mate, get a Fitbit and stay off the road!" I yelled. Koalas lounged in trees, their eyes glinting like they were judging our life choices. One looked so smug I swear it was clutching a tiny latte. Then came the owl, swooping low like it was delivering an urgent memo from Hogwarts. But the showstopper was a Tasmanian devil, darting across the road with the energy of a toddler on Red Bull. "Chill, Taz, it's not a race!" Madhuri laughed, but we were all gripping our seats.

The Hobart radio station, now in late-night mode, played chill tunes like it was trying to lull the wildlife to sleep, with a DJ who sounded like he was one yawn from passing out. We'd pinned our hopes on Ouse's roadside cafe for a coffee lifeline, but it was shut tighter than a roo's pouch in a cyclone. "Bet the wallabies unionized and demanded a day off," Anish groaned, as we nursed the car's sad, lukewarm coffee dregs. The meadows, barely visible in the pre-dawn fog, teased their emerald glory like a burlesque act hiding behind a frosty curtain. As we neared Hobart, the sky softened into pinks and purples, making us forget our caffeine crisis—almost.

Final Thoughts

Our Brady's Lake adventure was a side-splitting, fur-filled romp through Tasmania's winter wonderland. The meadows were greener than a leprechaun's wardrobe, the forest wilder than a rock concert mosh pit, and the wood fire cozier than a puppy pile. The road trip, with its chatty radio and acrobatic critters, felt like driving through a Pixar movie directed by David Attenborough. The "Hakuna Matata" house was our cozy bunker, even if we had to ration biscuits like we were stranded on a deserted island. The lack of a nearby coffee shop had us dreaming of wallaby baristas, but it only added to the trip's quirky charm. Tasmania, you're a frosty, furry masterpiece, and we're already scheming our next wildlife-packed getaway—koalas, devils, and all.

A Clean-Up At Everest Base Camp

By Vineet Saraf



The author is an avid golfer, a Paulite, who is happily married to Shalini & have three children. One of their daughters used to swim for Tolly. For this trek, their leader was Padmashri awardee Premlata Agarwal.

I was part of a trekking trip organized by the Rotary Club of Calcutta Yuvis to the base camp of Mt Everest. It was complete with nature's winter bounty. For we witnessed an avalanche and got into a snow storm and lots of trekking and more snow fall. The terrain was breathtaking with fantastic views of the world's highest peaks and starry nights to boot!

During the trek, our team members took an amazing initiative—to remove 225 kgs of trash from the highest mountain in the world. This was our march towards a sustainable environment!

We visited Sagarmatha Foundation, who have taken a pledge to clean the mountains. It is a nonprofit organisation which is creating awareness about trash and polluting items in the mountains and have made a museum to help visitors

understand and participate by taking back 1 kg of trash from the mountains and drop the same at the airport where the foundation recycles the waste and creates memorabilia which they give out to people who help in removal of waste.

I am happy to report that the money was collected on 17th April and handed over to the head guide who in turn organised the trash collection through Sagarmatha and completed the removal of 225 kgs in a matter of three days.

I hope this initiative will spur on more trekkers to focus on the environmental degradation and indulge in waste removal apart from their enjoyment of the mountainous splendour which can only improve with such small acts.



Whispers Beneath the Northern Lights: A Circle of Arctic Dreams

By Dr. Saumendra Nath De



Dr. Saumendra Nath De is an international civil servant at the United Nations in New York, with a distinguished two-decade career impacting global policy across India, Italy, Oman, Haiti, South Sudan, and the United States. He holds a Ph.D. from St. John's University, New York

and four master's degrees, including one in Conflictology from the University of Catalonia, Barcelona, and multiple global certifications, seamlessly blending academic excellence with transformative global leadership. Dr. De is celebrated for spearheading strategic oversight, reviews, policy reforms, and digital transformations worldwide, earning numerous accolades for his pivotal role in advancing international diplomacy and his steadfast commitment to serve the people and its planet.

In the lands of midnight sun and celestial whispers, I journeyed across Norway, from the cultural pulse of Oslo to the frozen poetry of Tromsø and returned transformed.

Oslo greeted me with the graceful sweep of fjords and the quiet grandeur of Karl Johans gate. I strolled from the stoic Cathedral to the cheerful hum of Dasselokket and paused beneath the golden glow of the Royal Palace. My steps traced the elegance of Stortinget, Opera House and the Akershus Fortress. From the Barcode skyline to the rooftop view at Eight Bar, Oslo whispered stories of time and tide. But the true soul of Oslo shimmered during the fjord cruise, a silent symphony adrift on glassy waters. As the vessel slipped through the Oslofjord, the city revealed itself like a brushstroke on canvas. Harbours softened into sculpture-strewn



shores, and Tjuvholmen melted into the timeless charm of the Dyna lighthouse. In that gentle drift between sky and sea, Oslo did not pass by, it lingered and stayed.

And then, northward to Tromsø, a realm where dreams crystallize in frost. Dog sledding across a snow-kissed wilderness, I touched the edge of the Arctic Circle, earned a polar certificate, and fed reindeer by firelight. But it was the Aurora, ethereal and electric that silenced even science. A physicist that I am, know the how, but only the soul can feel

the why. Under those dancing lights, I surrendered to the cosmos.

There, where Norway kisses the heavens, I found something eternal. The Arctic carved itself into my spirit, like runes in ice, like wind through pine. I returned home with snow still in my breath, the Northern Lights woven into my veins, and a heart humbled by nature's unspoken grace.

From fjords to frozen skies, this was more than travel, it was transcendence.



Mad Cup 2025 (Madrid Cup 2025)

By Nirvaan Mukherjee



Nirvaan Mukherjee is currently pursuing his high school education at St. Xavier's School.

St Xavier's Collegiate School Kolkata created history. It became the first Indian youth team (under 16) to participate in the MADCUP football 2025 in Madrid Spain.

I was privileged to be part of the team and represent St. Xavier's, my school, and India.

The tournament was hosted from 20-25 June 2025 at the sports center of Atletico De Madrid which is one of the world's largest football clubs. I was the team goal keeper and it was a once in a lifetime experience to face the top global clubs from Europe and South America.



We knew that it would be a tough task to face the top global clubs but our team gave it all they had and competed hard.

Our first match was against Atletico De Madrid, the host team.

The opening ceremony of the tournament took place at the Metropolitan Stadium (which hosted the UEFA Champions League final in 2019). This ground hosted the likes of Messi, Ronaldo, Mbappe. Madrid is the epicenter of global football and even getting to touch the grass of the Metropolitan Stadium was a privilege.

The real goosebump moment was when I got to carry the Indian flag at the opening ceremony of the tournament.

The Indian Ambassador to Spain met and hosted the team at the Indian embassy in Madrid.

It was tough defending the curve balls hit at high speeds towards me in every match by top U16 strikers globally, but I gave it my all.

Tollygunge Club had a huge contribution towards my physical fitness. From when I was 6-years old I started swimming at the club and that really helps in cooling down and managing wear and tear of muscles and keeping yourself fit for such a high performance sport.

We also got lucky. On the way back to India from Madrid via Rome, we got to visit the Vatican.



Bavaria Beyond Bratwurst

By Madhumita Basu



A consultant, speaker, and marketing professional, the author combines her passion for travel with a deep interest in management, mentoring, diversity and sustainability – topics she writes about with insight and curiosity.

Food is more than sustenance — it is an expression of culture, heritage, and creativity. Experience it firsthand or stay with beliefs, “German food is all about frankfurters and bratwurst”, like we did before our Munich trip.

Bavaria's varied landscape, from mountainous areas to fertile plains and a lake large enough to be called the Bavarian sea, has influenced what crops and livestock are raised, leading to regional specialties. Additionally, Bavaria's history as a crossroads for trade and migration has brought in diverse culinary traditions.



Our exploration understandably began with sausages. We met the famous Weißwurst – in Marienplatz, which claims right of origin on these delicate white sausages, simmered in hot water to leave a mild, tender and juicy flavour. The ‘little-finger-length’ sausages of Nurnberg still grilled over beechwood, date back to early 14th century and tell its own story of economic hardship when

the locals settled for smaller portions of their favourite food and made it a city tradition.

The Spätzle, an egg pasta topped with crispy brown onions and cheese, is a deceptively simple but tricky dish to get right. The soft dough is dropped directly into boiling water to make tiny dough balls affectionately called Spatzles or little sparrows. Ergo, if the dough sticks or gets lumpy the cook is chided for making “ravens”.



It is amazing how you find in distant lands familiar flavours of home. The Leberknödel or liver-dumpling soup was like a cross between a Kashmiri Gushtaba — that single large dumpling, and a Rishta, for its brown gravy. The pounded meats in all three dishes break down in their delicate soups to make a nourishing mouthful.



The knotty pretzels and beers would make for another piece all together. Before signing off, however, one has to mention the Obatzda, a soft, spiced cheese-spread topped with chives and onions—so good with the salted pretzels and washed down with beer.

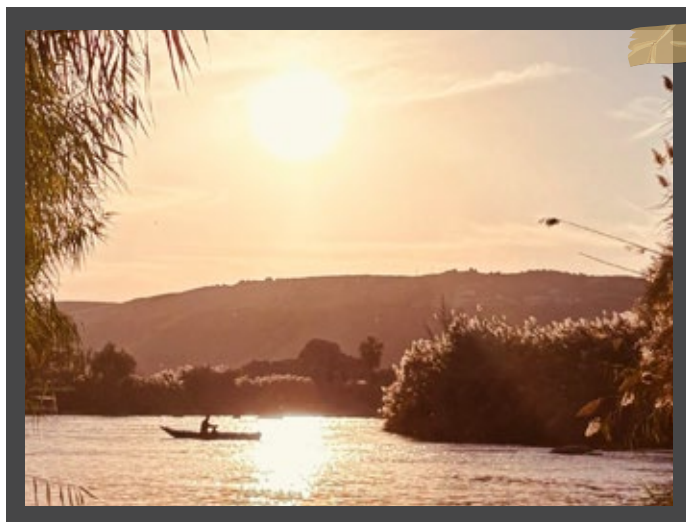
A Date with Nile

By Runa Mullick



Runa Mullick is a retired HR professional who navigates life's fairways in golf and cue sports. She explores the world with wonder in travel and captures beauty through the lens of photography. She also prioritises fitness and wellness.

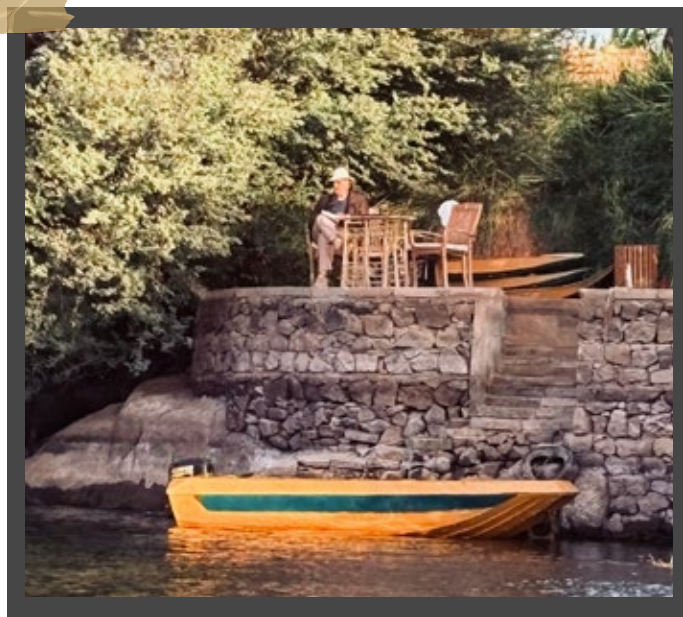
As I stepped onto the riverbank, the warm sun on my skin seemed to match the gentle warmth of the Nile's gaze. The river's tranquil waters sparkled like diamonds, inviting me to take a stroll along its banks.



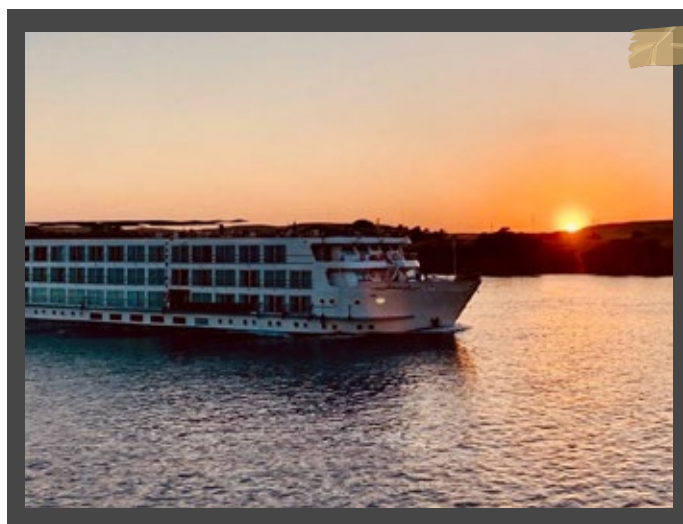
We began our date with a leisurely felucca ride, the sail billowing in the breeze as we glided effortlessly across the water. The Nile's soothing voice whispered secrets of the ancient civilizations that once flourished along its shores.



As we drifted along, the Nile pointed out a hidden treasure - a traditional Egyptian village nestled among the trees.



We disembarked at a secluded spot, where the Nile had prepared a romantic picnic. As we sat together on the riverbank, watching the stars begin to twinkle in the evening sky, the Nile shared stories of its ancient history and the mysteries it holds.



Our date ended with a breathtaking sunset, the sky ablaze with hues of pink, orange, and purple. As the stars took center stage, the Nile whispered a gentle goodbye, leaving me enchanted and spellbound by our magical encounter.

The Red Knight

By Wing Commander D.J. S. Kler (Retd)



The author has won a Vayu Sena Medal for Gallantry. A member of Tolly for over 30 years, D.J.S. Kler joined the NDA and then the IAF as a fighter pilot and clocked over 3000 hours of fighter flying. Married to Suchi for 53 years, he is an actor both on stage and cinema, the only polo

commentator in Kolkata and a feisty Tambola caller.

The war clouds were on and well formed by October.

We were on high alert and carried out border patrol sorties to let East Pakistan know we were ready for them at Kalaikunda.

In 1965 they had carried out a preemptive strike on Kalaikunda airbase and achieved great success catching us literally with our pants down. We lost 3/4 aircraft which were lined up on the tarmac (open area where aircraft are parked and kept ready for flying).

So, this time in '71 we were ready with all aircraft dispersed and in sandbag and concrete blast pans. We also kept a detachment of our aircraft at Dumdum to be able to intercept them before they penetrate the Kalaikunda airspace.

It was in the midst of all this that cupid bit me and just as I announced my engagement to my lady on 19th October, which is my birthday, at a party in Kalaikunda, I decided to get married to the lady I loved and had been courting.

She was to leave for Bombay to join her Air India training as an air hostess on 21st October.

So, I proposed to her in front of all my squadron mates – Sir Lancelot style – on one knee and all that drama. AND SHE ACCEPTED!

And so we got married on 25th October. I was given 24 hours leave as we were on continuous duty 12 hours on and 12 hours off near our loaded and armed aircraft ready to take off in five minutes should the order come.

I requested my buddies to cover for me and managed to extricate myself from the roster for 3 duties spanning 36 hours.

I charged to Calcutta to meet my Lady love, in my 2-door Green Standard Herald (with a yellow

sunflower) at 12 noon after my duty and was with her in a matter of three hours.

We had a Gurdwara wedding and went and registered our marriage with the marriage registrar too. I was back on duty at 4 am on 27th morning. On the 29th I took my wife with me to Kolkata as it was my turn to be a part of the detachment at Dumdum. I was given the Burmah Shell guest room to stay with my wife which was rechristened The Honeymoon Suite.

Every day was hectic flying but the Gnats were all down by Sunset after the dusk border patrol. My wife would drive my Herald to the end of the runway and park my car and sit on the bonnet and watch all aircraft landing from Hunters and Gnats and Canberras and transport and civil aircraft. Every time a Gnat landed, she would vigorously wave at them welcoming them back.

There was great cheer in the crew room about the new wife welcoming all the pilots back.

I just asked her casually why she was waving at everyone.

She very embarrassingly replied that she waved to every one as she couldn't make out who was who and didn't want to miss me at any cost as we all looked the same with only our head and shoulders visible in the cockpit.

I thought to myself that she is my wife and is waving at everyone.

Jealous of her actions, I decided to make myself different, so I went and copied the Red Knight Whisky Dragon and painted it on both sides of my flying bone dome (the outer helmet). Now Suchi would look for the Red Dragon and wave only at me. There was talk in the crew room that Suchi had stopped waving to the pilots.

So, one of them asked her why she had stopped

“ I now know which one is my husband–my Red Knight” she exclaimed. The Red Knight Dragon became my signature helmet and I wore it all through my career flying all types of aircraft in the Airforce inventory – Hunters, Migs, Iskaras, Kiran, Jaguars, HT2, Gnats and all Mig Trainers. It was my good luck charm as I came unscathed from numerous emergencies and accidents during my career of 30 years of flying!

What Do They Know of Tolly Who Only Tolly know?

By Shivaji Dasgupta



Shivaji Dasgupta is a writer and an autonomous consultant in Brand Communications, associated with the Advertising industry for over 25 years!

Firstly, much gratitude to Trinidadian writer CLR James for loaning the headline, with (hopefully) posthumous blessings. 'Cricket', in his memoir 'Beyond a Boundary' being substituted by 'Tolly' in this dilettante submission. Both are matters of thoughtful passion, enticing reason and romance with deserving gusto.

In rewind mode, the evidence is rather ample. The murder of Tipu Sultan in Seringapatam and the subsequent exile of his family to Tollygunge, post the Revolution of Nellore (1806), is reasonably viral. As is the journey of William Cruickshank, President of the Bank of Bengal (a beta version of State Bank of India), our visionary founder and framed witness to many a conversational joyride, in the bar that bears his fame.

In this fluid narrative, there are many tantalizing anecdotes - the first civil aviation escapade in 1910, a dramatic yet unverified possibility of being an indigo plantation and hosting the Paper Chase for the Prince of Wales (short-lived King Edward the 8th) and his consort Dickie Mountbatten in 1921. Most certainly, there are other such tales lurking in some affectionate boondocks, guarded zealously by stoic jackals, the dynastic protectors of the terrain.

Tolly has always been an accomplished 'Country Club', with deep-rooted pedigree and abundant spaces. Most recently, over the last three years or so, it has acquired the happy hues of inclusive engagement, a valuable ingredient for member delight. Thus, ensuring its sustainable continuity in a rapidly evolving universe, balancing timely profits with timeless purpose.

A fine example is the Tolly Debate, especially this year's edition, which deservedly enjoyed a packed house. Tactically, never attempting to be a me-too replica of the 'epic' gravitas flaunted by the Bengal Club and Calcutta Club versions, it has developed a character that resonates with the values of our, 'no-less-epic', institution. Light hearted yet deeply meaningful, attractive to many and fathomable by all.

Quite in tune with the literary and quiz events, that have become a pleasing part of our social calendar. The mood is always spontaneous, with inhibitions melting as effortlessly as the manicured chicken sandwiches. Tolly is today a destination that simplifies erudition, in tune with contemporary sentiments. Thus, being a valuable adhesive to unite the ages, the voracious 'today' and the educative 'yesterday'.

This pattern persists with live music and theatre, bolstered amply by the swish AC Auditorium, a five-star conference venue that satiates luxury sensibilities. Notably, Hindi and Bengali now co-exist merrily with the traditional English gigs, as our appetite for culture becomes as diverse as our palates. Appropriately, in the tables of the gravel, the upma blends fluidly with crispy bacon and the rustic chicken masala toast finds pleasing company in the aesthetic juices.

The bridge between history and continuity has many more suitable connections. Residential rooms surpass any such crossover experience in the country, amenities breaking bread with authenticity. Pickleball has found a new home in the ample tennis arena and is catching on furiously. Our beloved Shamiana is set to embrace architectural evolution, while retaining its simplistic majesty.

The Tolly Fest is the community unifier that was truly needed, the T20 avatar of the classic test match forays, chiefly the Christmas-New Year festivities. A compelling calling card of an

institution, blessed with the wisdom and the finesse to build a future on the grounds of the present, while zealously nurturing its core value system. Clearly, an arduous struggle for most peers in the city and country.

The line inspiring the headline was in turn inspired by Rudyard Kipling's "What do they know of England who only England know"? Echoing a larger

belief that civilisation is the largest master of all, every palatable subset subservient to its aura. Tolly, in recent years, clearly subscribes to this world-view, in thought and action. The future seems as exciting as the past and there's no escaping the magic in the air.



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Artist's Impression

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Collision Course

By Cdr Abhijit Ghatak (Retd)



Abhijit Ghatak served in the submarine arm of the Indian Navy for 20 years as chief engineer of IN submarines, and other sundry appointments ashore. After taking premature retirement, he went on to acquire a degree in Artificial Intelligence from Stevens Institute of Tech, USA and

thereafter worked as a research scholar for the European Union, Horizon 2020 project on Internet of Things & Data Analytics. He has also authored two books on Artificial Intelligence. He presently reads, writes, travels and enjoys playing golf at Tolly, Wellington Gymkhana, amongst other GCs.

'It was just what the Navy had prepared me for, at the Academy', mused Sub Lt Roy, as he took stock of the situation on the bridge.

'There aren't many of those fishing boats you'll find, Sub', said the captain as he tapped the last bit of ash from his pipe.

'And in case of help you can call me on the voice-pipe, how about it?'

'The ship is going to be alright, Sir', replied Roy with a reassuring smile and, as he heard the last of his boots on the bridge ladder, he realised that he was alone. The whole ship, with her 150 odd officers and men, was under him and he could change course, alter speed and make orders, whenever necessary. As far as Roy was concerned, the ship was a going concern, a smoothly run ship, which would not fail in any way.

Leaning over the bridge rail, he could see the forepart of the ship, clear in the moonlight, cutting across a phosphorescent sea. The dark, gaunt hills on the starboard quarter seemed to be drooping below the horizon.

The bridge, the nerve centre of the ship, with Sub Lt Roy in command. None of his friends would believe it onshore. He grinned at the thought and nearly felt heroic.

As the ship heaved and rolled, he felt a queer sensation in his stomach. It had always been like

that but as long as it was not an attack of mal de mer, he had on his first cruise, it didn't really matter.

But right now fear was a tight knot where his stomach should have been.

The strong crosswind moved like an echo of yesterday. The swell was making the ship roll, heavier than before.

On one corner of the bridge, Roy, intent on something which had caught his eyes, straightened up. An eerie silhouette of something bloatingly familiar was moving in on the ship's course — a submarine perhaps. A spurt of adrenalin flowed down his veins, as he tried to take stock of the crisis.

There were too many things to be done; establish radio contact, change course, inform the captain and the safety of the crew, in his capacity as the officer of the watch. A collision course seemed inevitable.

'A recklessly irresponsible skipper of a *tin-fish* dead ahead sir' he yelled in the voice-pipe.

As he heard the captain's steps on the bridge ladder, he held his breath; the bow of the ship cutting through the water dangerously close to the dark unidentified object.

There was a faint lifting of the darkness in the East and the horizon lost its vagueness and took a harder outline. A dazed Sub Lt Roy lifted his head and peered out into the twilight. Life was slowly returning to his rigid limbs.

A school of dolphins after disbanding their file had broken into a frenzy of gay abandon.

'What's the matter Sub?' asked the Captain.

A bunch of dolphins playing truant, Sir', replied Roy.

Just then the ship's bell sounded the end of the middle watch. As far as Sub Lt Roy was concerned, the ship was still a going concern.

But who cares?

Where Fauji Chai, Akuri and Tranquillity Rule Supreme

By Rajanvir Singh Kapur



*A member of the Indian Administrative Service, **Rajanvir Singh Kapur** is also an acclaimed contemporary artist known for integrating culture into urban spaces. He brings creative vision to both his canvases and the city.*

In a ‘Mahanagari’ that often behaves like it’s late for a tram it hasn’t boarded, there exists an island of serenity known to the chosen few as Tollygunge Club – or as we affectionately call it, “Tolly.” It’s not just a club, mind you. It’s Calcutta’s answer to nirvana, with slightly better upholstery and a vastly superior breakfast menu.

As a civil servant by profession and an artist by passion, I often find myself in calamitous need of both peace and pastry. And where better than the South Verandah of Tolly - where the Akuri is fluffy, the Fauji chai robust, and the general mood reminiscent of a Satyajit Ray film with better lighting?

Morning walks here are not just walks. They’re otherworldly recalibrations. Surrounded by antique trees and the occasional squirrel with a British accent, one finds oneself cleansed of bureaucratic blues and ready to face the files with a newfound (if slightly chai-stained) optimism.

Then there’s Belvedere – the Club’s culinary gem, where the continental fare could convince even the most die-hard butter chicken-naan or machh-bhaat loyalist to defect. The Singapore Chicken Steak alone deserves a Padma Shri.

But more than the food or the foliage, it’s the surreal feeling. That indescribable Tolly feeling – of old-world charm blended with the comfort of acquainted faces and the occasional cry of “Fore!” from the golf course.

In a city constantly reinventing itself, Tolly remains gloriously unchanged – a haven where time, for once, sits down and takes a nap. I really must stop dreaming of Tolly and drink my tea -- the chai’s getting cold, and a fresh stack of files has landed on my table like relatives after clearing the IAS exam.



Champagne and Saddles: The High Society Sport

By Ayesha Singh



Ayesha Singh, Company Director, Everest Agro-Industries (P) Ltd; Alumna of Loreto House, Calcutta; Lifestyle Coach, Spoken English & Etiquette Trainer, Former journalist for The Indian Express, holding IBM diploma in Advanced Computer Applications. Member of reputed clubs, think tanks & NGOs.

International equestrian sports have long symbolised sophistication and prestige. Today, they have evolved into dazzling showcases of glamour, wealth, and global status. From the manicured arenas of Ocala, Florida, to the estates of Ascot and Chantilly, these events are not just about sport—they're elite social spectacles.

The glamour begins with the settings: lush green courses flanked by champagne bars, luxury brand sponsorships, and VIP lounges attracting royalty, celebrities, and the ultra-wealthy. Events like the Longines Global Champions Tour and CHIO Aachen are as much about haute couture and designer tack

as they are about riding skill. Horses are flown across continents in top-tier comfort, and riders—often from affluent or aristocratic backgrounds, are as fashionable as they are athletic.

Exclusivity is central to equestrian culture. The cost of participation—covering breeding, training, travel, and equipment is among the highest in sport. Winning a top-level horse can cost more than prime real estate. Elite riders often require private coaches, support teams, and access to premier stables to stay competitive.

Nevertheless, the appeal keeps growing. This rare mix of athleticism, tradition, and luxury draws increasing global attention and media focus. Within this world, equestrian sport is a lifestyle—deeply tied to heritage, refinement, and status.

In today's image-driven culture, international equestrian events offer a compelling fusion of performance and prestige. They are more than competitions; they are curated experiences where horsemanship meets high society, offering a rarefied thrill that few sports can rival.



Our Cover: Rahil Gangee Driving at The Old Practice Range



Swaroop Mukerji was a professional artist whose paintings adorn the walls of the Belvedere and rooms at Tolly. He travelled widely with his art and exhibited in major international capitals and venues like the Nehru Centre, London, the Indian High Commission and the World Bank, in Washington D.C., the Hague, Netherlands, and the National Academy, in Wellington, New Zealand. He did a series on Rashtrapati Bhavan at the invitation of former President Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The cover picture of his recently executed watercolour of Rahil Gangee driving at the old practice range, is our tribute to the late Painter Babu.



The late Swaroop Mukerji had written to Tolly Tatler saying: "This is a watercolour painting I did of Rahil Gangee driving at the old practice range. He has done proud for Tollygunge Club golf and has taken his talent far beyond its walls. I thought this nostalgic image should find a space in the Tolly Tatler. I am sure the golfers would agree."

For Tolly Tatler Autumn Edition – Report from Environment Sub-Committee January to June 2025

By Diti Mookherjee

Jackal Census

The second phase of the Tolly Jackal census was held from March 24th to 28th, 2025. Teams comprising administrative staff, ground staff and Club members covered the 9 feeding points. A pilot effort was made to use drone technology. The census yielded an average of 70 jackals within the Club premises.



Sustainability Fair

On 1st June 2025 a sustainability fair was held by the Tollygunge Club in association with Hulladek. Awareness regarding management of electronic and electrical waste and setting up state-of-the-art waste collection systems were some of the themes addressed. E-waste collection points were set up in the Club. There were stalls selling sustainable products.

Monsoon Plantation

In July 2025, twenty-one tree saplings were planted in the Club. These include Buddha's coconut (Pterygota alata), Heaven lotus (Gustavia superba), Banyan (Ficus bengalensis), Bakul (Mimusops elengi), Tejpatta (Cinnamomum tamala) and Jamun (Syzygium cumini). All the saplings were raised in the Club nursery.

We would like to applaud the efforts of the Golf Superintendent, Gaurav Pundir, Assistant Golf Superintendent, Sudip Chakraborty, Anand Kumar and the ground staff for their tireless efforts to preserve and enhance the natural heritage of Tolly.



Waste Management

From January to June 2025 our recyclers, Vital Waste collected 1201.5 kgs of dry waste from the Club which included 873 kgs of burnt oil. This generated revenue of Rs. 13866/- for the Club.

During the same period we generated 792.9 kgs. of compost from kitchen waste.

Diti Mookherjee

Chairperson Environment Committee

Bridge

By Anu Bindra



I have been playing Golf for many years. I took Indian women's Golf Team to 10 countries in Two years time. I was Chairperson of Indian Golf Union for two years in the year 2005 & 2006. My best memory is when I took the team to Lahore, Pakistan. How much they looked after us. I hoisted

the Indian Flag in all these countries. Most of the Asian countries, I took the team and also to Australia. My husband was a very good Bridge player and I followed his footsteps and started playing Bridge. Now I am Chairperson for Bridge in Tollygunge Club. I am doing my best and have a very supporting Bridge Committee.

The Bridge room is buzzing with activity several days of the week. There has been a manifold increase in the number of budding bridge players. This has been due to the coaching sessions organised by the committee and the inclusive atmosphere in the bridge room. We have a number

of younger players too. Players organise duplicate matches amongst themselves.

These new players are very enthusiastic and in the in-house tournaments are performing extremely well.

The selection process for representing the Club at various tournaments has been seen to be transparent and fair by most. Participation in members tournaments as well as Invitational sees a packed bridge room.



Weekend Competition

By Pehr Nayak



Pehr Nayak is an 18 year old whose passions include horse riding, writing and music. She loves spending her Sunday mornings in the stables with the horses in Tollygunge club. She's currently pursuing a bachelors degree in Economics while continuing her riding journey in Delhi.

The stables are alive with the energy and enthusiasm of young equestrians aged 8 to 20, all gearing up for the much-anticipated weekend competitions. Over the course of the past 2 weeks—it's been a celebration of growth, learning,

and community spirit. Riders train intensively during the week, fine-tuning their skills, understanding their horses better, and building confidence with every stride. The highlight of each week is the friendly Sunday show, where riders of all levels get a chance to compete, cheer each other on, and showcase their progress. From first-time jumpers to seasoned teens refining their technique, everyone has a place in the ring. The atmosphere is warm, encouraging, and filled with laughter, hoofbeats, and applause. With each passing day, not only do the riders improve, but friendships deepen and the bond between horse and rider grows stronger.



Reflections From The Green Baize

By Runa Mullick

There's something quietly magical about the Cue Room at Tolly. The hush of concentration, the gentle clink of cue balls, and the occasional laughter breaking through when a shot goes very, very wrong (or surprisingly right). It's not just a games room, it's a crucible of camaraderie, quiet rivalry, and good-natured ribbing.

This pre-summer saw the return of our much-loved club tournaments, and as always, it was a spirited affair, with sharp play, sharper banter, and the occasional philosophical debate over the rules of Lightning Snooker.

We began with the Arun Nevatia Handicap Lightning Snooker, where Saurabh Jajodia stormed through the draw to take the win, with Adnan Ariff finishing as a gritty runner-up. Adnan, incidentally, seems to have taken up permanent residence in second place, as he went on to repeat the feat in the Arun Nevatia Handicap 8 Ball Pool, this time losing out to the ever-calm VISHAL Sahay.

Closing the series was the 6 Red Handicap Snooker, a faster, more frenetic version of the game, where Arunagata Das held his nerve and his angles to emerge champion, with Abhishek Banerjee as the runner-up.

What makes these tournaments so special is not just the friendly competition, but the culture that lives and breathes in the room. It's a place where juniors, seniors, super seniors, weekend warriors, and serious cueists all come together—mostly to play, sometimes to watch, and always to belong.

And on many days, you'll find Sourav Kothari, World Billiards Champion and Tolly's very own maestro, rather we call him Cue Room's BLUE STAR, practising quietly at the centre table - reminding us that greatness too, finds its rhythm within these walls.

Here's to good sport, good company, and green baize evenings that never lose their charm.

All of us from the Tolly Snooker / Pool family would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our Chairman Dinendra Kaka Singh and Captain Saurabh Jajodia along with the entire committee comprising of Prava, Mudit, Varun and Arijit for their tireless efforts in maintaining the Cue Room's exceptional standards. Their dedication ensures that our green baize evenings remain a treasured experience for all members.



Wiggling Toes and Wobbly Knees: A Tolly Club Revelation

By Avijit Nandi Mazumdar

25% of adults over 50, suffer chronic knee pain, a figure that's higher among golfers and runners due to repetitive stress and biomechanical imbalances. Our recent wellness session on July 12th with member Varuna Shunglu focused on knee and foot health which is an often overlooked yet critical part of workout regimes.

The session proved successful as members giggled while attempting individual toe movements. The science revealed fascinating connections: the big toe requires 60-70 degrees of extension for efficient walking. When stiff, it creates a domino effect of compensation throughout the kinetic chain.

Members explored ankle mobility through the "knee-to-wall" test and more. Most people need 10-15 cm clearance for proper squatting mechanics. Limited ankle mobility forces knee collapse inward and can cause future problems. The simple remedy? Daily calf stretches and ankle circles during morning coffee.

Members were reminded that their bodies are their most valuable investment. Practice these movements daily – knees and golf games will thank you!



First-Ever Tolly Darts League 2025

By Neha Suraiya



Neha Suraiya Tolly Darts captain...

In a first for the Tollygunge Club, the Tolly Darts League 2025 was held on June 14 and 15, marking a milestone in the club's sporting calendar. With darts steadily gaining popularity among members and across the city, the event showcased the club's commitment to fostering emerging sports and bringing the community together through competition and camaraderie.

The League featured 6 teams, each comprising 8 players, making for a total of 48 participants. The team names - Bullseye Bandits, Dart Vaders, Dart Knights, Dart Warriors, Darting Titans, and Sharp Shooters - reflected the playful spirit of the event.

The player auction ensured a fair and strategic distribution of talent. Players were categorised by experience and darting proficiency, leading to balanced teams that encouraged close matches and spirited rivalries. The enthusiasm was palpable throughout the 2-days event as both seasoned darters and enthusiastic newcomers participated



shoulder to shoulder.

The format followed a round-robin structure, with every team facing each other once. The top four teams then moved into the semi-finals. Dart Vaders, led by Tolly Darts captain Neha Suraiya, topped the league table after the round-robin stage but were edged out in a well-fought semifinal by Sharp Shooters.

The grand finale between Sharp Shooters, captained by Raghu Damani, and Bullseye Bandits, led by Anshul Chauhan, was nothing short of electric. The match went down to the wire - a nail-biting finish in the final decider leg - keeping the audience on the edge of their seats. Ultimately, Sharp Shooters emerged victorious, clinching the title in a dramatic finish.

The success of the first Tolly Darts League is a testament to the rising interest in darts at the Club and the sporting spirit of its members. The atmosphere over the two days was electric - filled with energy, competitive zeal, and sheer enjoyment.

As the curtains closed on this inaugural edition, one thing was certain: this is just the beginning. The players are already looking forward to an even bigger & better Tolly Darts League in the years to come.



Golf at Tolly

By Harmander Singh Bindra



Harmander Singh Bindra
Tolly Golf Captain.

The latter half of the golfing season has been vibrant and action-packed, with enthusiastic participation from our members across a variety of events - our Skipper Pipes Leaderboard tournaments, inter-club encounters, marquee fixtures, and exciting new corporate golf days.

We've consistently ensured optimal playing conditions throughout the season. Our pristine fairways and true-rolling Tolly greens have drawn widespread praise. Full credit to our dedicated course maintenance team, led ably by Superintendent Gaurav Pundir. Kudos to the entire team!

Tata Steel PGTI Players Championship 2025

We had the honour of hosting the Tata Steel PGTI Players Championship - India's premier professional golf tour's opening event - from 11-15 February. The Pro-Am on Saturday, 16th February was a memorable day, giving members the rare opportunity to tee off with the professionals in a fun scramble format.

The legendary cricketer and PGTI President, Kapil Dev, graced the Pro-Am and prize distribution ceremony. He also headlined a special evening talk show hosted by PGTI at our club.

Congratulations to Yuvraj Singh Sandhu for yet another stellar win at Tolly—truly his happy hunting ground!

A golf clinic on 13th February, conducted by international professionals Dominic Piccirillo (Italy) and Koichiro Sato (Japan), proved to be an enriching experience for our members. The professionals were effusive in their praise of the course conditions - once again, hats off to the team!

Enhancing the Playing Experience

One of the major milestones this season has been the much-needed course and slope rating exercise which we successfully carried out in the month of May this year and implemented with effect from 1st July 2025. After the adoption of the World Handicap System (WHS), bringing our members in line with global standards, it was needed to re-assess our course and slope ratings

Chief Rater Mr. Chandra Sekhar, assisted by Mr. Prantor Barua and Mr. Raj Kumar, completed ratings for both Men and Women across all tee boxes—Blue, White, Yellow/Red. With thicker roughs and premium fairways, the upgraded course rating reflects the enhanced challenge.

New stroke indexes for Men have been implemented based on the recommendations of the certifying body, purely based on data.

We've also introduced a unified scorecard for Men and Women, now featuring the full course layout and key details—bringing our presentation on par with international standards. We're proud to have 360-One as our official scoring partner.

Tournaments & Triumphs

Tolly continues to be a hub for competitive golf, fostering camaraderie and spirited sportsmanship.

■ BGA Triangular Cup (23rd Feb): Team Tolly emerged victorious at SEPTA, edging out RCGC and SEPTA with a winning score of 721. That's 3 wins in the last 4 editions - a proud run!

■ Inter-Club vs Beldih (16th March): A dominant 16.5 - 2.5 home-leg victory, matched by warm camaraderie. The evening was filled with laughter, good food, and fond memories.

■ Tolly vs RCGC Annual Fixture (29th March): A legendary fixture, made more special by the inclusion of Ladies and Seniors. With 18 better-ball matches, the contest ended in a thrilling 9 - 9 tie. Honours shared, trophies split - and celebrations carried on well into the evening.

Corporate Golf Events

We were proud to host several marquee corporate events this season:

- TMILL Corporate Golf Invitational (1st Feb): A delightful outing on a crisp winter morning.
- Business Today Golf Invitational (8th Feb): A gathering of top business leaders showcasing their skills on the greens.
- HDFC Corporate Golf Day (30th March): A unique event featuring their top brass. Every participant had the opportunity to play a hole with Ladies Tour Pro Riddima Dilawari - a memorable highlight for all.

Marquee Member Events

- Caddies Benevolent Golf Tournament (21-22nd March): Over 150 members participated in this meaningful event supporting our caddy welfare initiatives. We hope to grow this even further next year.
- Tolly Monsoon Cup (18-20 July): Back with a bang and proudly presented by HDFC, with support from Keventers, Absorbia, Nanofix, and Bara Dighi. Despite weather challenges, over 400 golfers teed it up—our largest turnout ever! Kudos to Protouch, our event partners, for seamless execution.

Winners:

- * Overall: Sabyasachi Bhattacharya & Arnab Basu (49 pts, countback)
 - * Gross: Gurmehr Bindra & Suveer Kapoor (42 pts)
- The prize distribution and gala dinner brought the tournament to a perfect close.



National & International Tournaments at Tolly

We proudly hosted:

- TATA Steel PGTI Players Championship: 120+ top professionals and amateurs, including international talent
- IGU Eastern India Ladies & Junior Girls Championship (May): Over 80 elite participants from across the country.

Intra-Club Competitions – Skipper Pipes Leaderboard

It's been a fiercely competitive season with high participation at every event. The race for Golfer of the Year remains wide open in the Nett and Seniors categories.

Key highlights:

- The legendary Leander Paes has taken an unassailable lead in the Gross Leaderboard and clinched the 36-hole Club Championship
- Ashwani Sareen lifted the Carmichael Cup Matchplay title.
- Akash Tantia took home the Jackson Cup Matchplay.
- Akash Tantia and Ashwani Sareen currently lead the Nett Leaderboard, closely followed by Hitesh Gurtu.

A Legacy of Excellence & Tradition

This has been a transformative year for Golf at Tolly. From infrastructure upgrades, Course ratings and WHS alignment to marquee events and top-tier competition, every initiative has been aimed at enriching the member experience.

As I prepare to pass the baton to our incoming Captain, I do so with great pride and gratitude. Here's wishing all our members continued joy and excellence on and off the golf course.

Let's continue to make Golf at Tolly great again!





Swimming

By Tushar Choudhary

Our swimming pools at the Tollygunge Club continue to provide members with a host of activities as well as the opportunity to enjoy leisure swimming.

The new year saw the continuation of our winter training under the coaching of Akbar Ali Mir and his team, providing beginner, intermediate as well as advanced levels of coaching to members' children as well as to adults who wished to either learn or just work on fine tuning their swimming skills. The program was once again restarted in May, offering the same options with the addition of a General Members coaching.

In the last week of April, our Tolly Sharks participated at the 48th Saturday Club Sports

Carnival, which was a great success as we claimed the winners trophy, showcasing immense talent and perseverance in the pool! The team, comprising of swimmers from the ages of 7 up to 65, fought hard and came away victorious.

The 15th of June marked the one-year anniversary of our new outdoor pool, which we celebrated with a fabulous pool party! Members and their guests were invited to enjoy an evening of great music, food, drinks and dancing. Interactive pool games and activities were also organized for the children who thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

To conclude, it has been a busy, albeit productive summer season at the pool, and we aspire to continue with the same in the coming months.



Modern Love: Are We Closer or More Disconnected?

By Nekita Batra Khurana



I am a counselling psychologist with 3 years of experience, passionate about supporting individuals and couples through their emotional and relational journeys. With experience across diverse client concerns, I offer a safe and empathetic space for healing and growth. My work

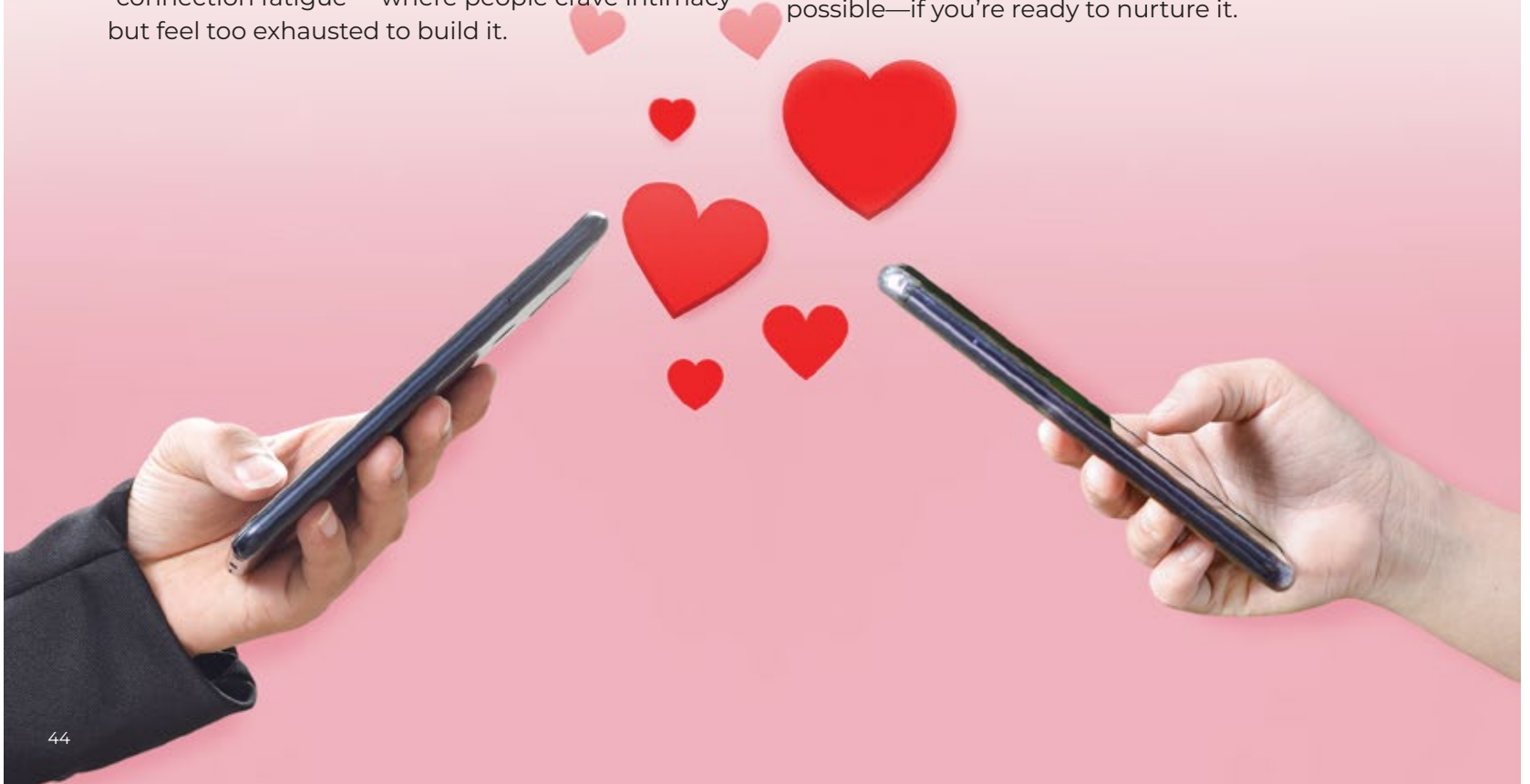
blends evidence-based practices with a client-centered approach. I aim to empower people to navigate life's challenges with greater awareness and resilience. I offer a safe and empathetic space for healing and growth. My work blends evidence-based practices with a client-centered approach. I aim to empower people to navigate life's challenges with greater awareness and resilience.

In today's world, love looks different from what it did even a decade ago. Dating apps, social media, and fast-paced lifestyles have changed how we connect, how we love, and, unfortunately, how we disconnect too. Modern love is both exciting and overwhelming. On one hand, people have endless options—swipe left, swipe right—meeting someone new is literally in your hands. But with choice comes confusion. We're seeing what I call "connection fatigue"—where people crave intimacy but feel too exhausted to build it.

What's also interesting is how fear plays a silent role. Fear of vulnerability, of wasting time, of choosing "wrong". So many of my clients share stories of relationships that start intensely and fade out just as quickly. Ghosting, breadcrumbing, situationships—terms unheard of in traditional love stories but now part of everyday conversations.

Yet, modern love isn't all bleak. I also see people valuing emotional availability and communication more than ever before. Couples now openly discuss mental health, boundaries, and personal goals, which earlier generations hesitated to do. So, what's the solution to finding meaningful connections today? Slow down. Be intentional. Know what you want beyond just "someone to talk to". Most importantly, work on your own emotional health. The strongest relationships today aren't built just on romance, but on friendship, trust & emotional safety.

In this fast-changing world, love still remains a basic human need. But how we approach it needs a blend of modern awareness and old-fashioned effort. After all, whether it's through a swipe or a chance meeting, meaningful connection is always possible—if you're ready to nurture it.



Women's Day

CELEBRATION

By Dr Meenu Sareen



Dr Meenu Sareen is Presiding Officer, POSH Committee of Tollygunge Club.

She is an Industrial Psychologist/ HR Expert/ Executive Coach with 30 years of industry experience.

event featured felicitating women employees individually, cake cutting, some fun games with many prizes to be won, followed by a sumptuous lunch. Women staff members were welcomed with gift hampers acknowledging their valuable contributions. The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks, leaving all participants feeling empowered and valued.

The POSH Committee of Tollygunge Club organized a vibrant Women's Day celebration to honour and appreciate the women employees of the club. The

We would like to thank Tollygunge Club and the Entertainment Committee for their all-out support.





*Dear Madam,
Participating in the Women's Day celebration was an inspiring and deeply empowering experience. The event was thoughtfully curated, highlighting the strength, resilience and remarkable achievements of women from all walks of life.*

It was heartening to witness so many passionate individuals came together in a shared commitment to gender equality. The celebration not only acknowledged the progress we've made but also emphasized the journey that still lies ahead. I left the event feeling uplifted, appreciated, and proud to be part of a community that genuinely champions the empowerment of women

Thanks & Regards,

Angana Hazra
Executive-Rooms Division



*Dear Madam,
I am truly grateful for the opportunity to attend the Women's Day event organized by our office this year. This was my first experience of such a celebration, and I thoroughly enjoyed every moment - from start to finish.*

There were a variety of engaging activities & fun games throughout the event, and I was happy to participate in most of them. The food was excellent, and the entire experience went far beyond my expectations.

I sincerely hope that we will continue to celebrate Women's Day in such a meaningful and enjoyable way every year.

Thanks & Regards,

Camaliya Sen
Executive-F&B



We had a lovely experience celebrating Women's Day this year! It was the first time this event was celebrated on such a grand scale in our office, and it truly made the day special. There were plenty of fun activities, games, and cheerful moments. Most importantly, we had the chance to engage in meaningful conversations and light-hearted interactions with our wonderful colleagues-something we rarely get to do amidst our regular work routine.

We were treated to delicious food, received thoughtful gifts and goodies, and the dress code added a fun touch to the whole celebration!

We are already looking forward to celebrating the upcoming Women's Day with the same enthusiasm and excitement. Perhaps this time, we can plan some meaningful, uniform gifts for all the ladies as a token of remembrance, and a gesture of equality.

Shanti Priya
Sr. Reservation Executive.



It was an amazing Women's Day Celebration, full of joy, energy and appreciation for all the incredible women who make a difference every day.

The event created a positive and inclusive atmosphere and it was wonderful to see everyone come together to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of women at our workplace. A big thankyou to office Management and the organizing staff for making it special.

Sneha Das
Executive - Rooms Division



This year's Women's Day celebration at Tollygunge Club was a truly memorable experience for me. It was a day when we, the women employees, felt genuinely seen, valued, and appreciated. The highlight of the afternoon was the heartfelt felicitation ceremony, where each of us was acknowledged for our contribution to the Club. It was a simple yet meaningful gesture that made us feel proud of the work we do.

The fun and games that followed brought everyone together in a spirit of joy and friendly competition. Tug of War, Treasure Hunt, and Skyscrapers had us all laughing, cheering, and enjoying ourselves like never before. Many of us even walked away with small prizes, which made the experience even more delightful.

One of the most touching moments was the cake-cutting - a sweet symbol of unity and celebration. And to round off the afternoon, a lovely lunch was arranged for us. Sharing that meal with colleagues, relaxing after the fun and excitement, felt incredibly special. It was a day full of joy and warmth, and I am grateful to the management for organizing such a thoughtful and enjoyable programme just for us. It reminded me how good it feels to be appreciated, not just for the work we do, but for who we are.

Sukanya Nag Sarkar
CEO's Office

Of Dialogue & Discovery: Highlights of library events

By Dr. Vishnupriya Sengupta

Over the last six months, we organised several events catering to all age groups, centred around themes of contemporary relevance. Author and columnist Ruchir Joshi spoke about his voluminous historical narrative *The Great Eastern Hotel* to journalist and writer Indrajit Hazra, evoking a sense of nostalgia. Author Jael Silliman's conversation with Michelle Bambawale on her book *Becoming Goan* focused on themes of identity, culture, migration and stereotypes. Former Foreign Secretary of India, Ambassador K. Srinivasan's discussion with well-known journalist Ashis Ray on Ray's recently released *The Trial that Shook Britain* underlined how a court martial accelerated India's path to independence. Rita Bhimani's tête-à-tête with fashion designer Nil on her book, *Meandering Mouthfuls*, took us on a sensory journey into a world of flavours and cultural heritage. Mental health activist Ratnaboli Roy spoke to Prof Paromita Chakravarti and Dr Kaustav Bakshi on their book, *Cultures of Ageing and Ageism in India*, a topic that resonates with people the world over.

From discussions to debate, this year the theme for Tolly's Third Annual Debate was Marriage as an institution has lost its relevance. The debate moderated by Dr Kunal Sarkar saw a packed house. It was also live streamed and

has so far garnered more than 1400 views. At the start, President Partha Sarathi Barman presented a cheque for Rs 45,000 raised through the sale of preowned books generously donated by Tolly members to an NGO, Teach for India.

Tolly's intra-club Scrabble Contest had a nail-biting finish, and the Annual Library Quiz designed by the members, for the members was equally successful - with Jayashree Mohanka and Prasenjit Guha as quiz hosts. Our first-ever collaboration with History for Peace - Seagull Foundation at their Annual Conference at Tollygunge Club to co-present a discussion between Prof Apoorvanand and Prof Krishna Kumar on Kumar's fictional narrative *Thank You, Gandhi* was also well received.

A theatre workshop for young adults with noted theatricians Keshav Roy and Dastango, Zahid Hossain landed well while our regular Quiz Social and Words Worth, a monthly game of scrabble, continue to be big draws. Last but not the least, the large zipped canvas bags now available at the library - perfect for carrying books and other purchases from the club - is also finding homes. If you haven't got your bag, step in to the library to get yours now.

Here are some glimpses from the events:



Book event on *The Great Eastern Hotel* authored by Ruchir Joshi



Book event on *The Trial that Shook Britain* with author Ashis Ray and Ambassador K. Srinivasan



Book event on *Becoming Goan* authored by Michelle Bambawale



Book event on *Meandering Mouthfuls*



Participant at the young adults theatre workshop conducted by Keshav Roy and Zahid Hossain



Rita Bhimani in conversation with Nil on her book, *Meandering Mouthfuls*



Third Tolly Debate with the speakers and moderator



Young adults theatre workshop conducted by Keshav Roy and Zahid Hossain



Dr Vishnupriya Sengupta setting the context at the 3rd Tolly Debate



Prof Krishna Kumar with Prof Apoorvanand at the Thank you, Gandhi book event



Quiz Social 1



Quiz Social 2



Ratnaboli Ray in conversation with Prof Paromita Chakravarti



Annual Scrabble Contest 2025



Annual Library Quiz 2025



The English Nut - 24th August



Sale of preowned books - with Teach for India representatives



Tolly President Partha Sarathi Barman presenting a cheque to Mr. Gaurav Dutt, Teach for India



Audience at the 3rd Tolly Debate



With the winners at the Annual Scrabble Contest 2025



Theatre Workshop Young Adults

Gym Team Excel at Saturday Club Carnival

By Avijit Nandi Mazumdar

Tolly gym team came out with flying colours despite severe adversities in the fitness challenge competition of the Saturday Club Carnival. Varun Swarup and Ritu Lohia set the pace with record timings. Both Varun and Ritu had the best inter club timings in the 41-50 years age category. Tolly gym team started off with Satyajit Banerjee and Anoushka Dasgupta setting the ball rolling in the 18-30 years age category. The circuit was tough, but Satyajit and Anoushka lived up to their reputations and recorded good timings. Madhura Roy Choudhury and Avishek Ghosh took over in the 31-40 years age category and continued from where their

colleagues had left. Both gave their hearts out to record fantastic timings. Varun and Ritu took over and set the floor on fire. As echoes of Tolly-Tolly-let's-Go-Tolly rent the air, team captain Avijit Nandi Majumdar and Sumana Ghosh took charge in the final in the 51-60 years age category. Pushing age to backseat, both pushed hard to record personal best timings. The Tolly gym team ended up with an enviable complete timing of 28:09:19, more than one minute fifteen seconds better than the third placed CCFC and got beaten by a few seconds by the host Saturday Club.



| SN | NAME OF CLUB | TIMING | | | | | | | | TOTAL TIME | POINTS |
|----|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|--------|
| | | 51-60 | | 41-50 | | 31-40 | | 18-30 | | | |
| | | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | | |
| 1 | TC | 5:07:18 | 5:51:39 | 5:36:48 | 5:53:47 | 5:20:09 | 5:39:20 | 5:34:38 | 5:18:50 | 28:09:19 | 03 |
| 2 | CSC | 5:09:05 | 5:38:10 | 5:24:14 | 5:27:27 | 5:23:17 | 5:50:00 | 5:23:19 | 5:19:49 | 30:11:31 | |
| 3 | RCTC | 5:10:38 | 5:17:10 | 5:26:36 | 5:17:20 | 5:17:31 | 5:27:28 | 5:28:39 | 5:38:38 | 31:36:49 | |
| 4 | CC&FC | 5:17:06 | 5:07:24 | 5:27:40 | 5:16:49 | 5:20:29 | 5:28:53 | 5:26:39 | 5:38:47 | 29:23:07 | 01 |
| 5 | SATC | 5:46:07 | 5:09:14 | 5:31:12 | 5:16:49 | 5:22:28 | 5:29:53 | 5:19:54 | 5:19:39 | 27:17:00 | 05 |
| 6 | HC | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | BRC | 5:08:21 | 5:40:29 | 5:21:20 | 5:24:16 | 5:22:15 | 5:37:14 | 5:24:34 | 5:18:54 | 32:15:51 | |

Basant Utsav

Tolly celebrated the advent of Spring and the festival of Dol and Holi with a song and dance programme presented by its members and their children. The programme was curated by Ruby Bhalotia, Madan Mohan Chakraborty and Subhash Mohanti.



Andal

Andal was an 8th century poet-saint and an ardent devotee of Vishnu whom she considered her husband. A dance drama, based on the life of Andal, was choreographed and performed by our very own Jaya Seal Ghosh. A memorable show and much appreciated by the members.



Kobi Pronam

Kobi Pronam, a celebration of the bard's birth anniversary is an annual feature of the Club. On this occasion, the talented Tolly members took the stage to present an excellent song, dance and poetry ensemble.



An Evening with Usha Uthup

A name that needs no introduction – Usha Uthup - graced the Club one evening and kept the Tolly audience riveted with her wit, humour and of course, her musical genius.



Mark Twain

Thespian Keshav Roy embodied the wit, wisdom and spirit of America's beloved storyteller, Mark Twain, in a solo performance, "Meet Mark Twain" written and directed by Renu Roy.



The Great Society Band

All the way from Shillong, Lou Majow and his band set the house on fire with their music making it an evening to remember.



Dui Bondhu Ek Sandhya

Literally translating as 'Two Friends, One Evening' was a unique tango of song and poetry by two friends and internationally acclaimed artistes, Srikanta Acharya and Srijato.



Violons

The group, Violon Tzigane embodies the passion, energy and virtuosity of Gypsy music and is inspired by the musical heritage of Romani people. Presented by Alliance Francaise du Bengal, the music was much appreciated by the audience.



The Seniors' Night

The Seniors' Night on 20th August at the AC Auditorium, was a resounding success again this year! It's a cherished annual tradition where senior members showcase their talents, and it's a heartfelt tribute to their dedication and contributions. The event wrapped up with a delightful evening filled with fun, food, and camaraderie – truly capturing the spirit of togetherness that's a hallmark of the club. Seniors' Night indeed stands out as a signature event, celebrating the richness of experience and the bonds within the club community.



Jiverz Band

In June, we had Jiverz performing retro rock music. The evening was a roaring success with Saugata and his friends taking Simon and Garfunkel to another level.



Kenaram Becharam (Bengali Play)

Kenaram Becharam, the hilarious Bengali comedy by Manoj Mitra, directed by Deb Kumar Ghosh, had the AC Auditorium at Tollygunge Club in stitches on August 2nd! Brilliant performances by Keshav Roy, Biswajit Chakraborty, Hirak Ray, Sayantani Dutta, Samaresh Gooptu, Chandrika Kar, Biswajit Datta, Soumitra Bhattacharya, Suriya Kar, Sujoy Banerjee, Shakuntala R Chatterjee, Somnath Banerjee, Shyamal Bhattacharyya, Sambhi Mitra, Tunir Chakravarti, Urmi Bhattacharyya, Sushmita Datta, Sonakshi Mitra, and Biswadeep Biswas brought the play alive with perfect comic timing. Kudos to Deb Kumar Ghosh, Manoj Mitra, and the entire cast for a truly delightful evening of theatre!



Travels with My Aunt (English Play)

The Tolly English play was a standout production! Graham Greene's "Travels with my Aunt" was brought to life by an all-Tolly cast, directed by Dr. Chandra Sekhar Mukherjee. The innovative use of LED screen to depict the Orient Express journeys added a visually interesting element, transporting the audience to various locations. The person behind the excellent set and stage design was none other than the talented Geetanjali Jolly. The performances, particularly the lead actors and the supporting cast were warmly received by a packed audience, making it a memorable experience.

The stellar cast featured Punam Singh, Keshav Roy, Pradeep Guhathakurta, Sujoy Banerjee, Arjun Navada, Janet Gasper Chowdhury, Reshmi Bose, Anushua Dasgupta, Manav Singh and many more.



Hajamat (Hindi Play)

Tollygunge Club Members Stage Hilarious Hindi Play 'Hajamat'

On Saturday, 28th June, the AC Auditorium at Tollygunge Club rang with laughter as members staged Hajamat — a Hindi comedy written and directed by Bhupesh Kapoor.

The talented cast — Deejay Kler, Shukuntala R Chatterjee, Arjun Navada, Rajshree Gaggar, Shiv Karnani, Poonam Singh, Manoj Pasari, Tapan Gadodia, Bhupesh Kapoor, Ramesh Mall, Anuja Kumar, and Manav Singh — kept the audience in splits with witty dialogues and impeccable timing.

Behind the scenes, Subash Mohanti, Archana Swaika, Rajashree Kundalia, Roshni Ganguly, Shalini Worah, and Gitanjali A. Jolly ensured smooth execution.

With a packed house and overwhelming applause, the evening celebrated talent, camaraderie, and the creative spirit of Tollygunge Club.



Glimpses of Other Events



World Music Day Celebration



World Music Day Celebration



Jiboner Joy Gaan – 4th July



Jiboner Joy Gaan – 4th July



Jashn-e-Azadi (Anjan Datta Band) – 14th August



Jashn-e-Azadi (Anjan Datta Band) – 14th August



Saugata and Friends – 11th June



Saugata and Friends – 11th June



4 Men and A Baby – 6th July



4 Men and A Baby – 6th July



Polila Baisakh – 13th April



Polila Baisakh – 13th April



Adrenalize - The Gym Party – 17th August



Adrenalize - The Gym Party – 17th August



Kolkata Symphony Orchestra - 22nd March 2025



Kolkata Symphony Orchestra - 22nd March 2025



22 se Shrabon - 8th August

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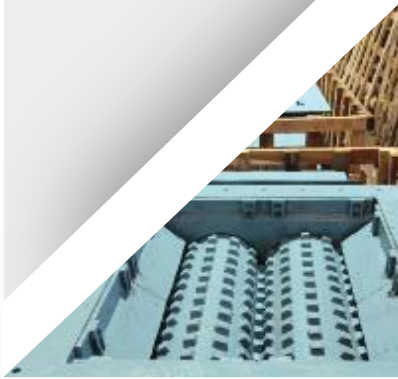
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