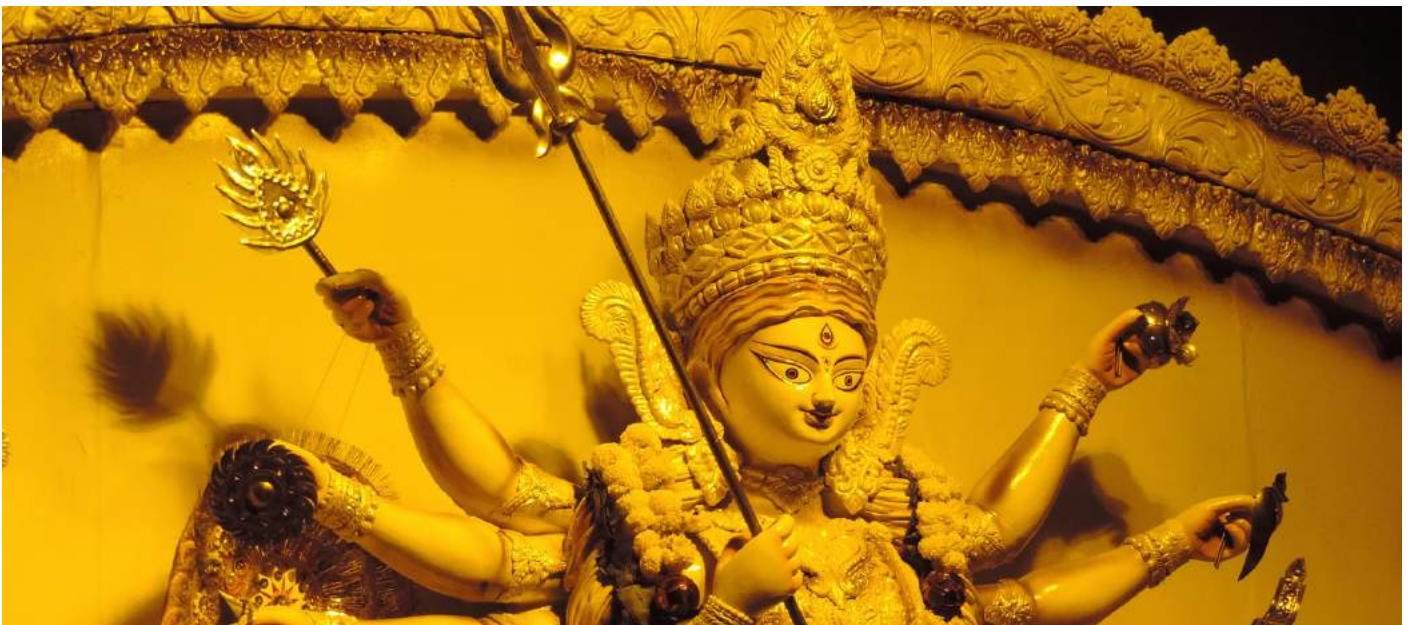




THE BAV GAZETTE

Your quarterly dose of all things happening among the
Bengalis of Victoria



Pic credit: Google

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Surashmi Chatterjee

Dear BAV community members,

I trust everyone is doing well and staying safe, as we navigate through these anxious and unpredictable times.

We are nearing the end of 2021, a year that has so far been far from idyllic; anxieties are higher than ever, times are unpredictable and unprecedented. In these efforts, we have continued to engage with our community and promote BAV to the wider community as well. I encourage you to stay in touch through our social media channel and website.

Unfortunately, to comply with COVID restrictions we have had to streamline, postpone or cancel our planned community activities to date. Our first virtual program during the pandemic will be the Mahalaya along with Durga Puja. We look forward to more such activities in this new normal.

On behalf of the 2021-23 BAV executive committee, I look forward to working with our community and taking our great association forward.



OTHER STORIES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- BAV Seniors' Update
- BAV Treasurer's Update
- From BAV Community
- BAV Events
- Other

FROM THE SENIOR CITIZEN CONVENOR'S DESK

by Dr Asim Das

Our last get-together was held on 14 July 2021 at GWCC. We had 47 confirmations for attendance, however, due to bad weather only 37 people could attend; it was still a good turnout. We would have loved more though.

Mr Vasan Srinivasan (Past President of FIAV, Chair of CIAA, Chairperson of MHFA, AICCT Trustee, Member of Australian Multicultural Council & Patron Australia India Business Council Victoria) was kind enough to spare his valuable time and enlighten us on some current and future projects for the benefit of the Indian Community.



Dr Asim Das
BAV Senior Citizen Convener



Mr Vasan Srinivasan

One of the highlights of his speech was the establishment of Australian Indian Cultural Centre (AICCT) at Rowville a few months ago. BAV Seniors as a group have been invited to use this facility in future for our Seniors' meeting if and when required. This is a great outcome for us.



Debjani & Tapan



Sukhamay & Chaitali

We welcomed newcomers Sukhamay & Chaitali Gangopadhyay and Tapan & Debjani Kar, who introduced themselves to the community.

A survey was conducted in August to assess the nature of activities preferred by our Seniors'. Once lockdown restriction are eased, we plan to organise a F2F workshop to discuss the interesting outcomes and plan our future activities.

The Winery Bus Trip to Yarra Valley planned for 11th September, has now been rescheduled to 4 December. We hope that by then a large proportion of the community will be vaccinated to allow some free movement and enable us to enjoy the much-awaited trip. We now have 35 seniors who have confirmed their attendance and still have at least 5 more spaces available that will be allocated on a "first come first serve" basis. Please feel free to contact the convener to reserve your place.

We also cancelled the Independence Day Celebration on 15th August and the planned get-together for 20th September.

BAV Seniors is open to all Senior Citizens of the community. Please contact the convener at 0499 073 332 or via email to seniors@bavwebsite.org.au, for further details.

STAY WELL STAY SAFE

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

By Narayan Banerjee

It is a pleasure to be on the Executive Committee as the Treasurer and serve the BAV community.

The basic function – as is commonly known - is to try and ensure that revenues cover expenses with the annual result yielding a surplus (although this does not always happen). This surplus will then go towards building a fund for any major future expense, e.g., replacement of Protimas or any approved activity requiring substantial outlay of funds. This will keep the Balance Sheet strong.

In the current climate where events & programs are on-line, revenues are severely constrained. Grant monies are also in short supply. This makes the financial balancing act somewhat challenging. In this context, reliance on membership subscriptions has to increase so that costs, (not offset by direct revenues), e.g., storage, free events, etc., can be managed. I take this opportunity to request all those who have not yet paid their membership fees to do so.

All the above makes the Treasurer's role interesting. Charting out a course to see where we are likely to end up financially is a duty. Its happy ending is a wish, a strong wish. In between, comes the interplay of a host of activities (how we fund them) and decisions (involving risk and return).

All said, it's a journey to be experienced and enjoyed. I would say to the younger members who have not been in this role – 'come forward and get involved'. It helps in understanding the activities (e.g., Grant applications) from close quarters and how they translate into financial figures at the end, not to mention the various factors in the decisions that impact.

The bottom line is to engage, contribute, enjoy and have a good laugh - and keep the financial health of BAV strong. Sharing a few snippets from our Durga Puja and Kali Puja celebrations from the past which would not have been possible without the community's support.



Narayan Banerjee



Rupankar Bagchi LIVE ONLINE - মহা অষ্টমী ২০২০

Cultural evening,
@Durga Puja 2015



Kali Puja, 2017

Cultural evening
@Durga Puja 2020



JOURNEY OF OUR COMMUNITY MEMBER(S)

BAV has a long heritage and a tapestry of back stories from the diverse journeys of our community members, migrants who have settled in Victoria. The idea for this column took shape when I met Mrs. Deepika Shome during a recent BAV Seniors get-together at the Glen Waverley Community Centre. It was the middle of July and we were in between Victoria's lockdowns; it was an upbeat evening and we were all quite relieved to be able to meet face to face.

Following that meeting, I had reached out to Anand Da. Deepika Mashima agreed to be the first to record her reflections, which she did during the last week of August.

Subsequently, she fell ill and despite all signs of a smooth recovery, passed away peacefully in her sleep on the morning of September 15th. The BAV Community is deeply saddened by the loss of such a doyen of Hindustani and Bengali vocal music in Melbourne who nurtured so many youngsters and transformed many aspiring lives.

Deepika Mashima was a gentle, noble soul with great warmth and humility. She had an extraordinary ability to talk to anyone at their own level. She will be missed dearly.

*Here is Deepika Mashima's story, as written in longhand by herself.
- Indranath Modak, Vice President, BAV Exec Committee*

My journey - By Mrs. Deepika Shome

This November (2021) I turn ninety years and am reflecting on the nine decades of my life. I have seen a lot of change from Barishal in East Bengal to Melbourne in Australia.

The first ten years were idyllic. Barishal was a land of plenty, fish, rice, jaggery, mangoes, and sweets. I spent hours swimming in the turbulent rivers using coconuts as a float. I had an elder sister and three brothers to play with. My father was a principal of a school so he helped us with our education. My maternal uncle was Pannalal Ghosh, the flutist. At the age of twelve, I began learning classical music and began performing at local functions.

When I turned sixteen, my family faced the tragic partition of India. I moved to Calcutta and my marriage was arranged with Bimal Kumar Shome. Before I turned twenty, I had a daughter Nivedita and son Anand. Nivedita lives in New York and Anand lives in Melbourne.

My husband moved from Bombay to Kanpur to Madras. I had to learn English, Hindi, Tamil and Marathi, as I only knew Bengali. In Bombay, we lived in the Reserve Bank quarters near Nariman Point.



Deepika with Anand, Nivedita and Bimal Kumar Shome

JOURNEY OF OUR COMMUNITY MEMBER(S)

Contd.



When I turned thirty, I passed my graduation from Calcutta University and went on to do a Bachelor of Education, and two Master's degrees.

This enabled me to work as a music teacher. I joined Kendriya Vidyalaya which had over seven hundred branches. I was judged to be the best teacher. Mr. Narasimha Rao presented me an award, after which we were all invited to have tea with Mrs. Indira Gandhi at her residence in Delhi.

I have had a few gurus in my time. Amongst them, Ustad Hafeez Ahmed and Pandit Ramesh Nadkarni influenced me the most. In India, I performed for All India Radio; and was very humbled to perform for the prestigious Swami Haridas Sangeet Sammelan.

At the age of sixty-five, I joined my son's family in Melbourne.

Seventeen students ranging from age five to seventy-five still learn music with me. I get a lot of joy and energy from my students and their families. They have been loving and affectionate. A few organisations have been very kind to felicitate me and offer me awards for my humble contribution to music. I was thrilled to be given an award by Ustad Rashid Khan when he visited Melbourne.

I have four grandkids, two of whom have graduated from Ivy league institutions like Columbia and Princeton. One twin girl has become a doctor. The other twin has become a lawyer. Both girls live in USA. Of the other two grandkids, one works as a social worker in Monash Health. My grandson works as an associate in a finance company in Melbourne. Lastly, I have three great-grandchildren aged five, six, and seven.

I am happy to have moved to Australia.

My best wishes to Bengali Association of Victoria. Thank you for letting me share my story with my friends.

Melbourne, August, 2021



Deepika Shome with her great grandkids
Jonah and Omiya

Seventeen students ranging from age five to seventy-five still learn music with me. I get a lot of joy and energy from my students and their families. They have been loving and affectionate. A few organisations have been very kind to felicitate me and offer me awards for my humble contribution to music.

BAV EVENTS

In the last two months we planned two face to face events on 15 August to mark India's independence and Anondo Mela on 28 August. Due to COVID restrictions we had to cancel them. We are hopeful that we will still be able to do a few events before the end of the year, but for now, we have arranged a few online events.

Mahalaya

Date: 3rd October 2021

Time: 5 pm

Via Zoom

Theme: 'Bohumukhi Soumtira' (60 minutes)

The online event will be opened with Agomoni songs and poetry to mark the beginning of Durga Puja festivities. This will be followed by a tribute to the late legendary actor Soumitra Chattopadhyay.

We are delighted that his daughter, Poulami Chattopadhyay, will join our panel to share stories about his life, his acting career, his movies, his recitation and much more.



Durga Puja

Date: 16 and 17 October

Time: Morning puja and cultural evening

Via Zoom

Pujo and pushpanjali in the day. Information regarding timings will be sent through a separate email.

Theme: Reminiscing Kolkata (program duration - 60 minutes)

We can never forget the essence of Kolkata during Durga Puja - the remarkable craftsmanship of artists at Kumhar Tuli, the varying sizes of protimas, the pandal decorations, the food stalls and that whole atmosphere of festivity. We have curated a cultural program this year keeping these thoughts in mind.

16 October: Showcasing local talent performing different pieces that bring back those nostalgic moments.

17 October: Showcasing a wonderful overseas performer who will certainly bring Kolkata to you!

Other events

We are hoping to host a face to face Kali Puja and possibly one more before the end of the year, keeping in mind COVID related restrictions. We will send related communications in subsequent newsletters and the next Gazette.

BAV Membership is open now.

To become a member and stay tuned for all updates, [click here](#).

GOOD TIMES WILL BE BACK SOON

The years 2020 and 2021 have been hard for everyone. But we are looking forward to a time when the community will be able to meet and celebrate all the festivals together.



Till then, stay safe, stay connected, and check out these pictures depicting the different aspects of our celebrations - dhunuchi, bhog, chotoder naach (kids dance), stalls and adda! For more pictures, check out this [link](#).



Next Gazette:

- Highlights from 2021 Durga Puja and information on upcoming events
- Another guest column about life of a Bengali in Victoria

Stay tuned!

Get Involved:

If you want to contribute, share your news with the wider community, take part in an event or learn more about our activities, feel free to write to us at -

info@bavwebsite.org.au

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)