

भारत दर्पण

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INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

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FROM THE DESK OF CONSUL GENERAL

Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to present the Cultural Newsletter of the Consulate: Bharat Darpan/ Indischer Spiegel. The month of October was full of fun and feast as we celebrated the festival of Navaratri. Despite the restrictions due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, people in various parts of India celebrated this festival with fun and frolic. Even in Germany, the Indian community organized various online initiatives to welcome and worship Goddess Durga or Shakti in her various manifestations.

This edition of the newsletter has a special feature on the state of West Bengal- a state where Durga Pujo is celebrated with great piety with many festivities. I am sure you will enjoy this unique treat of art, culture, cuisine and traditions of Bengal.

In October, the Consulate also celebrated the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October and the 145th birth anniversary of Sardar Patel on 31 October as the National Unity Day. Besides, the Consulate also undertook several outreach initiatives. The newsletter covers some of these events as well.

With the disturbing news coming in about rising number of Covid cases in Germany, I urge you all to stay healthy and safe and also pray for your and your family's continued well-being.

Thank you!

With best wishes,

(Amit Telang)



PM calls for ensuring election-like arrangement for Covid-19 vaccine delivery: PM Modi reviewed Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country and preparedness of vaccine delivery, distribution and administration. PM Modi called for making use of successful conduct of elections and disaster management in the country for vaccine delivery.

Reforms in India show our commitment towards Global Food Security: PM Narendra Modi released commemorative coins of Rs. 75 denomination to mark the 75th Anniversary of Food and Agriculture Organisation.



People in rural India get ownership rights and legal papers of their homes : PM Narendra Modi virtually handed over property cards to beneficiaries under SVAMITVA Scheme. Around one lakh beneficiaries from Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh were given ownership rights and handed over the legal papers of their houses.



STARS to transform education sector, improve quality of learning : Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the STARS project that aims to strengthen the country's efforts to transform the education sector and improve the quality of learning. The project covers 6 states – Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Odisha.



Bringing Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh into mainstream of development : In a major move to bring the Union Territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the mainstream of development, Cabinet meeting chaired by PM Modi approved a Special Package worth Rs. 520 crore for a period of five years till FY 2023-24 and ensure funding of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission.

The state of West Bengal is an all-weather tourist destination for all kinds of travellers. From Himalayas to beaches of Bay of Bengal, the geographical diversity of the state offers everything to a tourist. Adding to its natural charms and appeal are the magnificent heritage architecture, colourful folk festivals, beautiful arts and crafts, traditional and contemporary music, theatre and films and delicious ethnic specialities that make West Bengal a unique experience. Tourists with different tastes be it nature, history, culture & heritage, eco-tourism or adventure, West Bengal will not disappoint either of them.

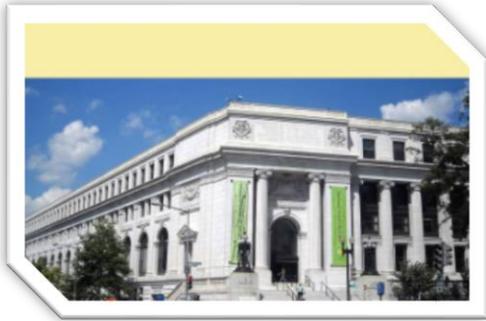
The state offers an unimaginable variety of religious places. Shaktipeeths such as Kalighat Temple, Tarapith; magnificent Hindu temples like Belur Math, Mayapur ISKCON Temple, Hangseshwari Temple and Tarakeshwar Temple; opulent mosques like the Nizamat Imambara and Katra Mosque in Murshidabad, Furfura Sharif and Tipu Sultan Shahi Mosque in Kolkata; Gurdwaras for Sikhs and majestic churches like the Basilica of the Holy Rosary in Bandel, St. John's Church, St. Jame's Church (Jora Girja), St. Paul's Cathedral and Church of the Lord Jesus and spectacular Buddhist monasteries of Ghoom, Bhutia Busty, Mag-Dhog Yolmowa ,Tharpa Choling, Zang Dhok Palri Phodang are all in West Bengal.



For adventure lovers, the state has myriads of attractions. Visit the dense mangroves of Sunderbans for waterway rides to spot a staggering variety of flora and fauna including the famed Royal Bengal Tiger; trek the Himalayan Mountains with their breathtaking beauty or the green Puruliya Hillocks; or enjoy a safari in the misty forests of Jaldapara, Chilapata. Even a visit to the colourful tribal villages of the Santhals or other ethnicities is sure to be a thrilling experience of a lifetime.

If you intend to witness the celebrations of festivals, West Bengal is again a place to go. Be it Durga Puja, Poila Baishakh (the Bengali New Year), Christmas carnivals, Eid ul-Fitr, Muharram, Buddha Purnima and Ganga Sagar all are celebrated with great zeal.

While West Bengal has a number of destinations that a tourist would love to include to his/her itinerary, we will be able to cover only a few notable destinations of the state. However, each of these destinations are full of attractive locations to enjoy and explore.



Known as the cultural capital of India, there is a never-ending list of places to visit in **Kolkata** the capital city of West Bengal. Kolkata is one of the most sought-after destinations for the tourists from all around the world. It is full of architectural gems of British era, sprawling gardens, historical colleges, universities, museums, National Library, Auditoriums, Theatre Halls, Art galleries and markets. Victoria Memorial, Indian Museum, Howrah Bridge, Alipore zoo, Science City, Birla Planetarium, Birla Mandir, Kolkata Town Hall, Kalighat Temple, National Library of India, Rabindra Sadan, Millennium Park, The Mother House, Academy of Fine Arts, Netaji Bhawan, Armenian Church etc. are just to name a few. If your trip to India only allows you to visit just one or two of India's metropolitan cities, we will definitely recommend Kolkata as one of them.

Darjeeling is a breathtaking beauty crowned by the majestic Himalayas. It is one of the most magnificent hill resorts in the world and is known as Queen of Hill Stations. The dawn light sparkling the crest of Kanchenjunga is a heavenly experience. One of the finest and most opulent teas that we often find gracing the teapots of the world's top brand hotels and restaurants also come from Darjeeling.



The **Sundarbans** a UNESCO World Heritage Site is located at 110 km from Kolkata. It derives its name from one of the mangrove plants known as Sundari (*Heritiera Minor*). Sundarbans are a part of the world's largest delta, formed by the mighty rivers Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna. It is one of the most attractive and alluring places remaining on earth. It is also home to one of India's most iconic wildlife species, the Royal Bengal Tiger. Sundarbans have also been enlisted amongst the finalists in the New 7 Wonders of Nature.



Doors or Duar are the foothills of the eastern Himalayas in North-East India around Bhutan. Duar means 'door' and the region forms the gateway to Bhutan from India. The area is dotted by several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries which attract a lot of tourists from all over India and abroad, making it an important contributor to the economy and also employer of a number of people.



Music, Dance, Art & Literature of West Bengal - Music in Bengal encompasses and surpasses every genre. The most popular form of Bengali music is the Rabindra Sangeet developed by Noble Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Dance is an essential part that showcases the culture of West Bengal. Bengali community is known for their love and respect for art and literature. Most members of a household are engaged in learning and practicing some form or the other. The state has a long tradition of popular literature, music and drama largely based on Bengali folklore and Hindu epics and Puranas. The Bengali literature and theatre are considered to be one of the most advanced in India.



West Bengal is also famous for its beautiful **handicrafts** that use a variety of materials. West Bengal boasts of artisanal excellence with its extraordinary terracotta work, handloom weaves, heritage sarees and various other unique handicrafts. Bengal is known for Baluchari, Dhanikhali and Santipore Sarees. Baluchari Sarees are exclusively hand-woven. Bankura Panchmura Terracotta Craft is another popular craftwork which involves making of different idols, figurines and decorative items from clay.



Bengali cuisine is one of the finest blends of non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes. Bengal is known as the land of 'Maach ar Bhaat' which means 'fish and rice'. The wide varieties of Bengal cuisine in festivals, occasions and seasons are integral part of Bengali Culture. Bengali sweets are world famous.

Some of the Bengali cuisine we recommend are Bhapa Ilish, Ilish Paturi, Chingri Maacher Malaikari, Bhetki Paturi, Bengali Mutton & Bengun Pora and of course, Darjeeling Tea. Your visit to Kolkata is incomplete without having sipped one of the world's best tea brands.





CGI Frankfurt celebrated the 151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October 2020. Dr. Martin Kämchen, eminent author and Gandhian Scholar, was the Chief Guest for the event.

Consulate welcomed Mr. Girish Kulkarni, Mr. Pradeesh Balakrishnan and Mr. Vaibhav Redekar, the winners of the Quiz organized on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.



Mr. Nishad Phatak, singer, presented a song about Gandhi ji with some child artists and also performed an Indian song live with Guitar accompaniment:

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas was celebrated in Frankfurt on 31st October 2020. Local dignitaries and members of Indian community joined the Consulate through virtual mode to celebrate the event. Local dignitaries who conveyed their best wishes to the Consulate and Indian community on this occasion included Mr. Stephan Siegler, First City Councillor, Frankfurt City; Mr. Klaus Klipp, Chairman, Europa Union, Frankfurt and Mr. Jürgen Franz, Chairman, Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V. Aachen.



CGI, Frankfurt organised 9 Conversation Sessions with 9 Indian women to mark the festivities of Navratri. These women shared with us their experience, motivation and success stories in their respective fields of profession that make them a true role model of women power. Some of these conversations have been covered in our commercial newsletter. You can watch all the conversations in the given link: [9 women, 9 success stories](#)



Ms. Anuradha
Captain of the German
National Women's
Cricket Team & Research
Scientist



Ms. Gayatri Puranik
Managing Director
OM Vital Vertriebs GmbH.



Ms. Ruchi Goyal
Counsellor for parents
of children with special
needs.



Ms. Sowmya Reddy
Shamanna
Author of Tana Bana
world of Sarees.



Durga puja / Navratri Celebrations: Consul General of India conveyed his warm greetings to the Indian community on the eve of Durga Puja/Navaratri & Dussehra while raising the curtain to series of virtual sessions on Facebook and You Tube to celebrate nine days of festivities.

Ananya Ravula, Sahana Kommuri, Niyati Karthik, Manasa Kommuri & Angelene Amalorpavaraj, students from the Indian Music Academy, Frankfurt students sang Saraswati vandana on the occasion of Navaratri/Durga Puja festival.



Mr. Bala Nagaraj, professional singer & teacher of Carnatic music, presented a mesmerising singing of "Haridasa and Carnatic music".



Mrs. Sharvari Dixit Bhalerao, an exponent of Kathak gave nine performances to worship nine Avatars of Goddess Durga on the occasion of Navaratri.



Ms. Kamini Mehta shared with our viewers the basic steps of Garbha, the traditional Gujarati dance performed during Navaratri festival.



Spectacular celebration of Durga Puja Festival by Bengali Community in Germany.



Ms. Sukanya Modak shared with us the recipe of a traditional Bengali desserts and popular Indian sweet, Rasgulla.



Children from Indian Community Association, Bihar Fraternity put up a show of Ram Leela to mark the occasion of Dussehra



A popular Bengali Folk Dance performance by Indian Community Associations "Bengalis in Hessen/Rhein Main Area" on the occasion of Durga Puja/Navaratri



Special performance showcasing the various Avatars of Goddess Durga put together by Indian Dance in Frankfurt



Members of Gujrati Samaj in Germany shared with us recipes of two traditional Gujarati delicacies, Fafda and Khandvi.



Indian students in Siegen, Duisburg and Essen losing themselves to Garbha dance to celebrate Navaratri





Sukanya Banerjee

1. Will you please introduce yourself to our readers ?

I am Sukanya Banerjee, from Kolkata, West Bengal. I am a Singer, a Radio Jockey, a Voice Over Artist, a Writer, a Motivational Speaker and an English Trainer by profession. I am excited to be part of this wonderful initiative.

2. Tell us about your journey as a singer and a voice artist ?

It began from my school days. I started participating in inter-school competitions from a very early age. I was awarded with a Nokia Music Series Phone for winning the 'Nokia Dare To Sing Contest' at an Inter-College Fest.' In 2009, I won 'The Times of Youth Challenge' singing competition organized by 'The Times of India'. Back to my school days, I was very fortunate to have won 'The Sreeleathers Christmas Carol Cup' for three consecutive years. Then moving on, the journey continued and I have been performing at various programmes both as a singer and also as an anchor. Recently in 2018, I was selected as a Kolkata Contestant for the Zee Saregamapa Mega Audition. I have also done my debut playback for a non-commercial movie titled 'Paradiso'.

3. Who has been the biggest inspiration behind your career?

My inspiration are my parents. It's all because of them that I could pursue a career in Media and Music.

4. You are multi-talented. What role of yours do you enjoy most?

I would say communicator as it incorporates all the other roles that I play. Communication is what keeps us going.

5. Is there in particular any favourite composition of yours that has been a guiding light to you?

Lata Mangeshkar's famous song, a beautiful composition by A.R. Rahman, titled 'Ek Tu Hi Bharosa' from the Bollywood movie, Pukar. This song is almost like a prayer for me and has been a source of inspiration which has helped me to keep going in these Pandemic times.

6. You have also had the opportunity to perform in reputed movies with big production houses.

Would you like to share an experience or two with us?

I was a small part of the Bollywood Blockbuster movie Te3n. Even though it was a very insignificant and small role, to me it was a dream come true. Cinema plays a very big and important role in my life.

धन्यवाद
Danke schön