



ABOUT JAGRAN

Jagran Prakashan Ltd (JPL) is India's leading media and communications group, with its main interests across Newspapers, Outdoor, Internet, Magazines, Below the Line marketing solutions, and Mobile Value Added Services.

Dainik Jagran is the flagship brand of Jagran Prakashan Limited. In today's dynamic media world, where consumers have an unprecedented array of choices, Dainik Jagran stands out as a brand that is the choice of millions of Indians as they start their day. With a readership of 5.59 cr, it has been the largest read daily of India for the last consecutive 21 rounds of the Indian Readership Survey (IRS). With 37 editions, Dainik Jagran covers 11 states of India. It has also been declared by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) as the Largest read daily in the world. Not just the largest read, Dainik Jagran has also been voted as the Most Credible Source of News in a BBC-Reuters survey.

The genesis for Dainik Jagran was in the year 1942. The year when the freedom struggle of India reached its crescendo and found expression in the "Quit India movement". Dainik Jagran was launched during this time with the vision of our founder Shri Puran Chandra Gupta, to "Create a newspaper that would reflect the free voice of the people". This vision was as much a reflection of the time when it was propounded as much as it is relevant to us today. Even as on today, when Dainik Jagran markets control the political destiny of the largest democracy in the world, the vision continues to guide us.

Jagran Prakashan Ltd (JPL) is on a continuous path of evolution and has explored newer content delivery platforms over the last few years. The product has changed with the changing times, and the changing requirements of its readers. The e-paper is one such expression. The group publishes i-next, the leading bilingual compact daily of India, Sakhi, a monthly magazine targeted at women and City Plus, which is the first English publication from its stable.

In MiD DAY, the group has India's No.1 Afternoon paper published from Mumbai and Pune which through dynamic product delivery and globally awarded marketing initiatives has been creating a unique experience for its readers and clients. The group has just acquired Nai Dunia, placed amongst the Top 10 Hindi newspapers in India, and has been one of the fastest growing newspapers in the market. The group also publishes Jagran Varshiki, an annual general knowledge digest, and various national and state statistical compilations. Jagran Engage is the Out of Home (OOH) advertising division of the company which provides specialized 'Out of Home' advertising services with a pan India footprint. The company also provides IVR/AVR/SMS services through its short code service 57272 through its arm J9. 'Yatra' is the popular travel guide series. Jagran Solutions provides below-the-line activities like promotional marketing, event management and on-ground activities having pan India presence. Jagran Pehal is the CSR cell of JPL and Radio Mantra is our FM Channel with eight broadcasting centers.

To millions of Indians, Dainik Jagran is not just a newspaper. It is the guiding light of their lives. Dainik Jagran deems it its duty to enlighten the Indian citizens with awakening, education and empowerment through information. The journey of Dainik Jagran so far has been one of truth, of self brief, of enlightenment, of awakening. And it would continue on this path unwaveringly, unflinchingly.



DAINIK JAGRAN
WORLD'S LARGEST READ DAILY



A A M A A R K O L K A T A

আমার কলকাতা

ABOUT THE BOOK

Pegged on 'Kolkata Then & Now', the smooth blend of yesterday and today that has gone on to create an exotic today, Aamaar Kolkata is a book that will be treasured by many. Its documentation of life in this megapolis today, a tightrope walk balancing modernity with traditions, will surely be much sought after by all of those who are Kolkata lovers and in any part of the globe.

This the Cultural Capital of the country rejoices in flavours that are emitted from an amalgam of Marwari, Muslim, Parsi, Anglo Indian, Jew, Armenian and Chinese populace that dot a dominating Bengali presence. The Arts, Music, Theatre and Film, each boast of a long list of names of world fame, who till today top the country's charts. There is no earth-shaking revolution but the younger practitioners in those fields have an adventurous edge which has been probed.

Traditions and festivals have undergone a practical evolution and the changes that have seeped in, in their modern day avatar to keep pace with the world around, is clearly visible. But then yummy, mouth watering food in all genre, continues to maintain the same astronomically high and proven standards.

Music continues to be a way of life. A city that is passionate to the core, thrives on literature and music, this is the age of fusion. Going by the 'old is gold' adage a major part of both is dominated by trends set by the old masters. Rabindra Sangeet still rules the music charts with folk, filmy and adhunik compositions at the same time being churned out in an amazing burst of artistic talent, day in and day out.

The book has also mapped the phenomenal change in the skyline with pictorial depiction of modern architecture, multi-storey and sky scrapers jostling for space with monuments, temples and old constructions.

In short it tells you and shows you too through its pictorial display, the Kolkata of today.

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*Light Khao,
Light Raho.*



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A A M A A R K O L K A T A

আমার কলকাতা



A JAGRAN INITIATIVE



A MAAR KOLKATA



A A M A A R K O L K A T A

A Jagran Initiative



Shailesh Gupta

An absolute today's book on Kolkata, this one from Jagran Prakashan Limited, will make the reader travel through the changes and the signs of the times.

Going through the book one will be able to savour every bit of today's tantalizing tastes while recapturing the elements of past that are still omnipresent.

If it has to take a step backwards to talk about the rich past and heritage, it has taken two forward in every sphere to share how this legacy is being taken forward, albeit with the strong imprint of the present.

An elaborate range of location shots of monuments, representatives of culture, peoples, traditions, festivities, eateries and destinations of passion including those of sports, films and music, are documented in a smooth blend of the years gone by and current scenario.

With this added to the Jagran Coffee Table Books series, the organization is pleased to be able to salute a city that is known the world over for numerous diverse reasons.



SANJAY GUPTA

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



SHAILESH GUPTA

DIRECTOR MARKETING



ALOK SANWAL

PROJECT HEAD



ANAND MADHAB

CONCEPT & VISION



KAUSHIK CHOWDHURY

EDITORIAL COORDINATION



VIKAS BABU

PHOTOGRAPHS



AMIT SINGH

BUSINESS COORDINATION



RAHUL PANDEY

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION



PRADEEP PA
NAVEEN KUN

DISTRIBUTION



SHARMISTHA SHARMA

AUTHOR



SHIPMAN
ADVERTISING AGENCY
DESIGN & CREATIVE CONCEPT

LIST OF CREDITS

P H O T O G R A P H E R

Vikas Babu is a young photo journalist widely awarded for his efforts and vision for wildlife photography and shooting life as such. Not only does he have a fresh and unique style, but his images convey the true mood of the moment that he manages to freeze with just a click. The raw, honest look of his pictures celebrate the essence of life. Having worked with some of the best known media groups over the past six years, he now wishes to carve a niche for himself and as he puts it, chasing creativity. He is now venturing into cinematic avenues too. Vikas, who hails from Lucknow, has a vision that has brought him in the league of some of the top young photo artists in the business.

INDIA

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FOREWORD

Sharmishtha Sharma

Understanding Kolkata was a task both challenging and one fraught with pitfalls. The big question was whether we would be able to fathom the actual depths of the info that we gather. But then we moved ahead with all confidence and sure enough got some very rare clicks to talk about life in the city today.

To our amazement we found, having progressed from Calcutta to Kolkata, has in no way robbed this city in any way of its unique ethnic charm and oriental tastes and beauty. While it has not been resistant to change, the pride and trust it has on its legacy, has made each and every element of change transform and merge into a part of the basic fabric. The roots are strong and deeply entrenched, while the new leaves and fruits prosper in an environment of growth and fresh air.

Where pace of life is concerned, there is a definite change. *Addabaji* has acquired a different tenor. Caught between education, coaching or job related activity, this popular mode of timepass is gradually being given a miss. Some of it has travelled to the virtual world, while with social networking sites, flirting has acquired dimensions taking the youth beyond the neighbourhood hunk or lass. Carom and chess too have taken the backseat as videogames and the internet have taken over.

But then passion for grocery, fish and non-veg shopping is still immense, only street corner *bazaars* and *mandis* are slowly giving way to malls and hyper markets.

So that's Kolkata for you! There are valuable remnants of the past as the *purono bashinde* (old residents) would like to remember and treasure and the slow but steady march as per global needs, that the current generation will of course ensure.

With Amaar Kolkata we are proud to present an opulent pictorial depiction of life that thrives today in this fascinating metropolis.



Amaar kolkata

আমার কোলকাতা

Amaar kolkata



 Life Begins With Pujo	 Life begins with pujo	 Bazaar Cholo	 Bazaar Cholo	 Music, A Way Of Life	 Music, A Way Of Life
 Life In Perfect Style	 Life In Perfect Style	 Deliciously, Yours	 Deliciously, Yours	 Roamncing The Written Word	 Romancing The Written Word
 Of Pillars And Arches	 Of Pillars And Arches	 Best Foot Forward	 Best Foot Forward	 Here Water Is The Bridge	 Here Water Is The Bridge



CONTENTS

Life BEGINS WITH PUJO

Kolkata, the Calcutta of yore ... the land of Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore, Ram Krishna Paramhans and Ma Sharada, throws back its head in ecstasy and exults in the sheer merri-ment of the moment. After all it is Durga Puja time and nothing else matters! It is life at full throttle as the market throbs with new energy and culture revives itself in every nook and corner of the city. The true contours of this heritage city are actually visible completely at this time of the year, when the real Bengali comes out of the closet to celebrate.... And how!!

The traditional Bengali *bhadralok* has been preparing since long, his *dhooti* (*dhoti*) and silk embroidered *panjabi* (*kurta*) with *geelee* (creased) sleeves and matching *nagra* (footwear) and more, to get ready for the four-day extrava-ganza he has waited all year for. His wife is having a tough time choosing which *sari*, from *taant* to net, the latest

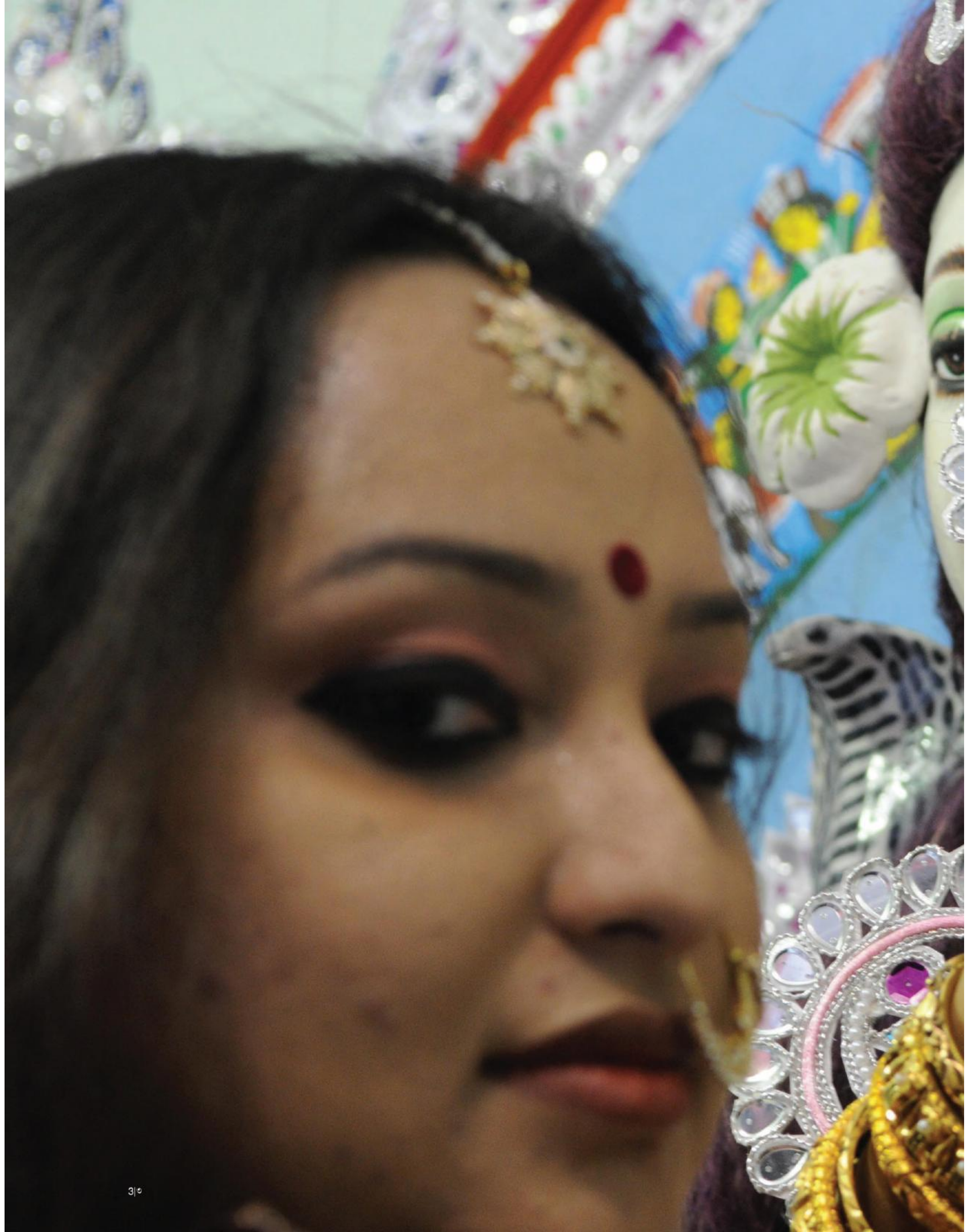
to have joined the list, to wear when, rushing off for the last minute buying spree. The gold jewellery can rest safe in the locker as the burst of accesso-ries takes over in the form of the latest trend-setting model. It is brands that rule the world of adolescents and young Kolakatans, getting as flashy as they can get for this mother of all festivals.

After all it is Pujo that decides the trending agents of this society for the rest of the year. Bonhomie, camarade-rie, relationships bloom and city's culture comes centrestage, the chang-es evident, the underlying factors jostling with criss-crossing choices and the original fabric of rituals and traditions stretched to the seams. Melodious Rabindra Sangeet enve-lopes the air, even as local bands drum up a genre of music that is now part of the terra firma that constitutes the city of today.



As rituals overlap and arti whips up a hysteria that is engulfed in the incense smoke, the cultural scene literally seems to boil over during Durga Puja with Kumari Puja. A small girl worshipped in the same manner as Ma Durga, looks the very image of the Goddess, bedecked in all finery. Sindoor khela the last day is yet another unique tradition. It is a colours riot as married women dressed mostly in traditional white sari with red border, smear vermilion on each other's face and hair parting. It marks the bidding of formal adieu to Ma Durga before the visarjan or immersion ceremony.







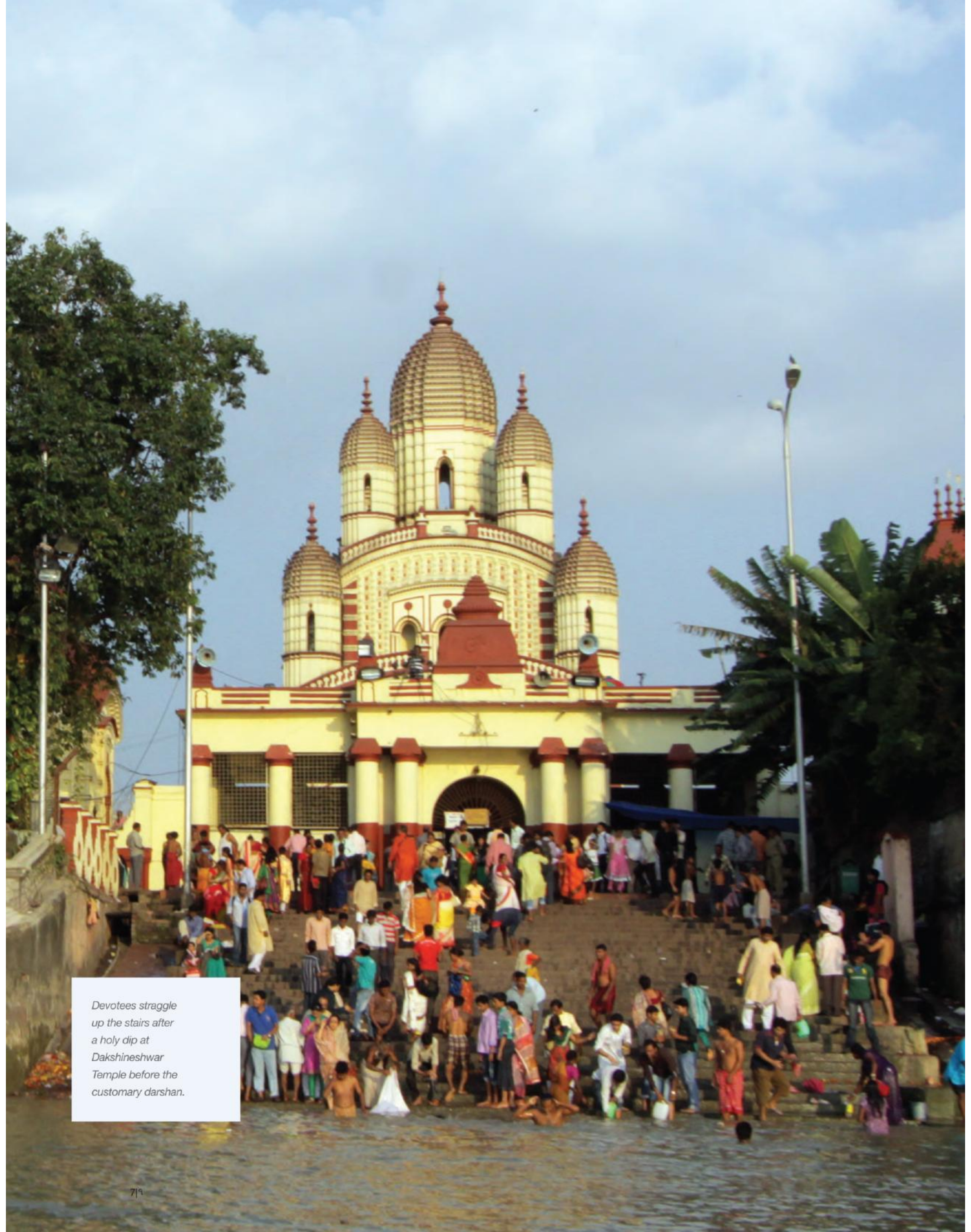
Splurge is the buzzword and sheer opulence the hallmark of Durga Puja, as the festival makes one and all empty their pockets if they have to, for that proverbial best look.



Diwali is Kali Puja time for Bengalis. The awe inspiring dark skinned goddess, characterized with the tongue jutting out and narmunda mala or a garland of skulls around her neck, is shown standing on the reclining idol of Lord Shiva. Following the tenets of tantra sadhana, the worship includes the sacrifice of goat, which however is replaced by coconut ritual now, in many places.



Chhat Puja is ritual driven, observed by only a section of the city, particularly by those belonging to neighbouring Bihar, involving the offering of prayers to the Sun God at sunset and then at sunrise on the banks of the River Ganga, it is a sight that is full of activity and intensely colourful.



*Devotees straggle
up the stairs after
a holy dip at
Dakshineswar
Temple before the
customary darshan.*



PEACE SEEMS TO DESCEND

as the Dakshineswar Temple comes into view. The long-winded queue speaks of the die-hard devotees, who choose to patiently wait for *darshan*. *Chunni*, some flowers and *prasada* in hand, barefooted and a countenance that speaks of absolute devotion, they feel truly blessed even though they may only get a few seconds in front of the idol of Goddess Kali. Pigeons fly around pecking at feed offered by visitors, some of whom descend the ghat to the rear of the structure, for a holy dip. As the string of people start trooping towards the twelve other temples in the complex for a *parikrama*, some foreigners too join

them in their worship. Tranquil, cool and comforting the very air breathes of hope and trust for the Goddess who takes care of all. Close your eyes and perhaps you may imagine Thakur Ram Krishna Paramhans and Ma Sharada too moving about, tending to their daily rituals. A Ma Kali devotee, the room he stayed in has now been converted into a museum.

The scene completely changes as one enters Belur Math. The visitors here seem to be scholars or just simple tourists. Foreigners, curiosity writ large on their faces, go around learning more about the abode of Swami Vivekananda they had heard, read so much about and believed in.



The headquarters of Ram Krishna Mission, Belur serves as a pilgrimage for all of those worldwide, who believe and follow the philosophy and culture of the movement. Founded by the main disciple of Ram Krishna Paramhans, Swami Vivekanand, Belur is the very picture of awakening, mental peace and spiritual strength.





It's truly an absolute visual delight, the mounds and mounds of flowers, particularly marigold grouped according to flower size and colour, all strunged together waiting to get picked by buyers. The Mullik Ghat flower market beneath the east end of the Howrah Bridge has a section of people gainfully engaged in organizing different genre of flowers and leaves for sale across the metropolis.



It is not only visited by the Jainis but tourists and other city folk too flock to the Pareshnath Jain Temple built by Ray Badridas Bahadur in 1867. The gateway is in itself an architectural masterpiece. The temple has a lamp which burns with ghee and is never extinguished. The structure an ornate mass of mirrors, coloured stones and glass mosaic, overlooks a beautiful garden.



Holding hibiscus flowers, chunni and laddus in their hands, devotees line up to pay obeisance to Goddess Kali here at Kalighat Mandir. Regarded as one of the 51 Shakti Peethas, it represents the site where the toes of the right foot of Sati fell.



WHILE RAM KRISHNA MATH

is a monastic organization for men brought together by Ram Krishna Paramhans, the great 19th century saint of Bengal, Ram Krishna Mission was founded by the thought leader of all times, Narendra Nath Datta, popularly known as Swami Vivekananda. The twin organizations which form the core of a worldwide spiritual movement aims at the harmony of religions, without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality. Not surprising that youngsters throng here for knowledge and spiritual guidance, as the immense following that Swami Vivekananda commands across the globe, has also resulted in him getting projected as the

ultimate youth icon. Management as such, stress handling, relationships, you just name it, his books have the ability to show the way. The main goal and objective is to spread the idea of the potential divinity of every being and how to manifest it through every action and thought, to treat all work as worship, and service to man as service to God. His guiding light also leads towards the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden.

This Indian Hindu monk's Chicago address that began with, 'Brothers and sisters of America...' is something that completely bridged the gap between Hinduism and all other religions of the world.



"THE GREATEST RELIGION IS TO BE TRUE TO YOUR OWN NATURE HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELVES"

Swami Vivekananda

The Ram Krishna Mission is where other than Bengalis, people who believe and follow the movement gather for prayers and keertan. For followers all over the world it is a destination which is a pilgrimage of sorts. More and more youngsters are known to have of late joined in for peace, tranquility and with the intent to serve fellow human beings.

SOUTH PARK STREET CEMETERY



A solemn quietude is what one can feel when stepping into the South Park Street Cemetery. While it is frequented by bereaved relatives most times, that also includes those coming from the Great Britain, scholars and tourists too can be seen around at times.





MEMBERS OF THE ARMENIAN, Jewish and Anglo-Indian communities can still be found in areas like the Ripon Street, Elliot Road, Wellesley and Royal Street of the city, though many have either moved out of the city or relocated to new areas, one of them called Picnic Gardens. But then the imprint of the British era is all over Kolkata, particularly so in certain pockets, in the manner of speaking, lifestyle and even skin, hair colour and facial features. Though most Colonial names of roads have been changed, it has been noticed that both old and new coexist. So while churches with unique, traditional architecture housed in mammoth premises dot the city, the South Park Street Cemetery, is

one of the oldest Christian burial grounds here and remains a wonderful oasis of calm with mossy Raj-era graves. From rotundas to soaring pyramids, a walk down the main cemented path, reveals a vast, imperial necropolis, and an open-air museum, of a large number of neo-classical, funerary sculptures. This is the final resting place of those who built Calcutta. Not only soldiers and prominent people, in the service of the Raj, but an unsung army of the middle class too rest here. Today, however, drug-addicts and thieves, enter the premises by scaling the walls, while a lot of people go there for photography, though it is believed to be haunted.



Merry Christmas

Christmas in Kolkata is something that people outside plan for and Kolkatans look forward to. Not just for Anglo-Indians but generally, all roads seem to lead to the bakeries for the plum cake of course, besides the mouth watering cookies and baked delights that come up on shop counters during this festive season. The city looks the very picture of celebration.

A serene atmosphere prevails, as one steps into the premises of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation, established in 1950 by Blessed Mother Teresa. The touch of love and care is visible on the faces of the inmates, some destitute, abandoned, as well as those mentally challenged, lepers, and people with AIDS, amongst others.



Discipline and cleanliness are the hallmark here that sees sisters busying themselves all times of the day serving the people housed in the nineteen homes that it runs in Kolkata. With over 4500 sisters, it has a presence in over 133 countries and has countless schools. Weekends finds Kolkatans, particularly youngsters, walking in to offer their services.



"LOVE ONE ANOTHER
AS I HAVE LOVED YOU"
(ST. JOHN 13-15)
MOTHER M. TERESA M.C.
20. 9. 1910 - 5. 8. 1997
OUR DEARLY BELOVED MOTHER
FOUNDERESS
OF THE
MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY



A place now primarily associated with authentic Chinese cuisine and Indian Chinese food, Chinatown is the ideal destination for foodies. While the imprint of Chinese culture can be found in the manner of dressing and the symbols and icons used in decorations anywhere, from Bow Barracks to Tiretta Bazar, Calcutta's Old Chinatown, temples also make an appearance here and there. Hot homemade food is lapped up by visitors as houses convert into unconventional eateries here.







Bazaar CHOLO!

If you have not jostled and bargained, fumed over letting go a good buy or jumped in the air on finding just the stuff you had been looking for, you have not shopped in Kolkata.

Shopping malls may come and go, but the typically local markets in Kolkata will always remain. Chaos rules and a variety of shoppers armed with bargaining prowess, move purposefully, all looking for some specific item, sure that the prices are far more affordable than in some swank outlet in an upmarket shopping area or mall. Talk about Burrabazar, it is one of the largest wholesale markets in India. Bounded by Posta and Jorabagan to the north, Jorasanko and Kolutola to the east, BBD Baghon, the south and Hooghly River to the west, Lalbazar and Bowbazar are at the south-west corner of Burrabazar. Divided into highly specialised sub-markets, according to the commodity it deals in – Dhotipatti, Fancypatti, Tulapatti, Chinipatti and so on, a popular saying, 'Anything and

everything is available at Burrabazar,' is so true you will only feel on reaching there.

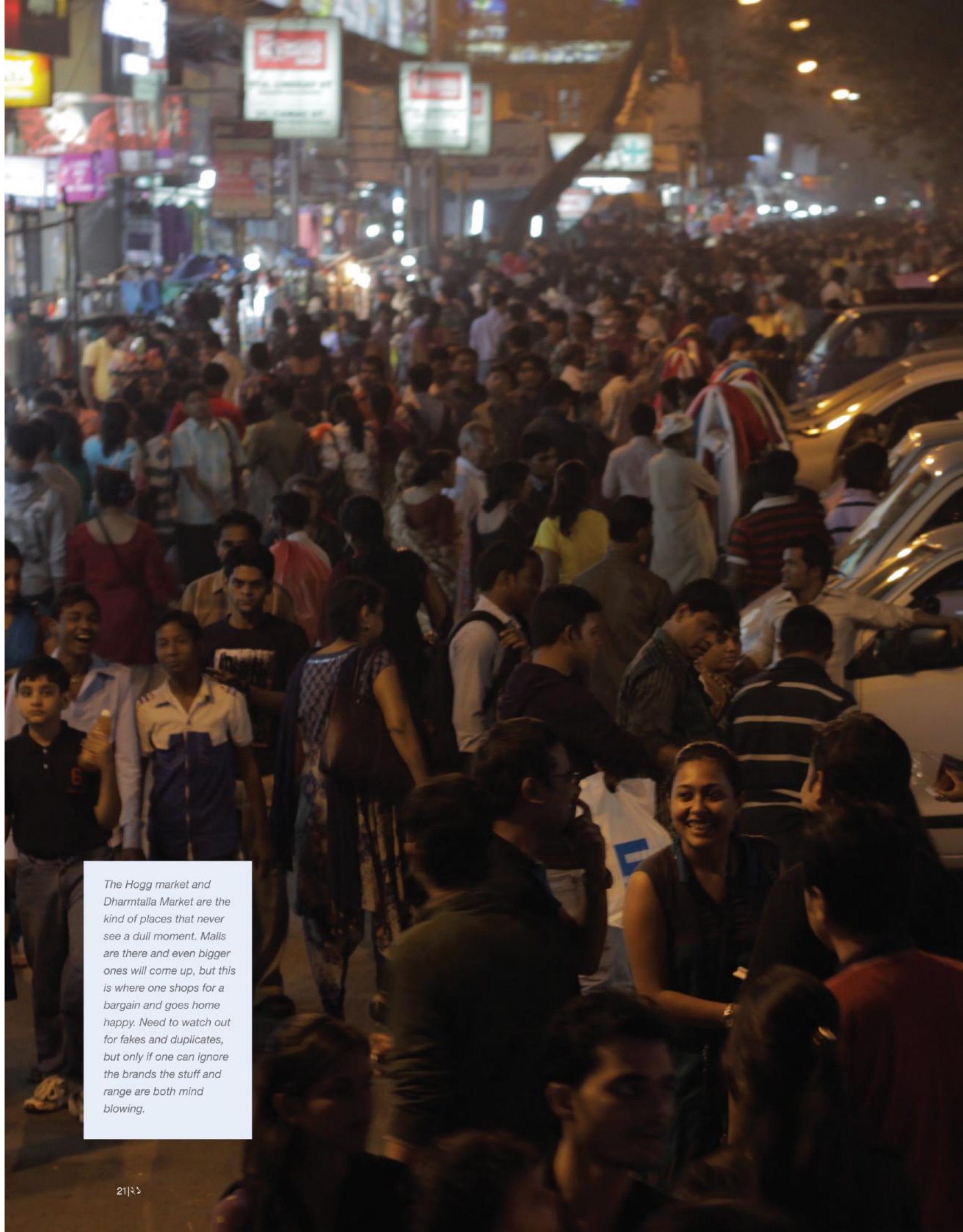
But then what about those who just cannot give Hogg Market, also known as New Market, a miss? Inseparably located in Esplanade, more than three hundred years old, the shopping is oh so enjoyable as from branded to customized, from air-conditioned shops to street dallas, it is all here in modern as well as traditional avatar. In its early days, New Market had a distinctly upper class British air about it, but it's well and truly evolved into something completely Indian. But then the knick-knacks that one can pick up at Dharamtalla Market are perhaps available nowhere. Bang on the road, so unusually busy, this long stretch in front of Oberoi Grand, serves a specific list of goods that shoppers root for.

After a sojourn through the city, one thing gets clear, that it is in the multiple local markets that Kolkata lives, its very heart beats!



tWhen it comes to Bhowanipore Market, the slightly more upmarket feel seeps in. At the same time the garden fresh vegetable and grocery display, makes it much sought after. After all kitchen is the most important area in any Bengali household!





The Hogg market and Dharmtalla Market are the kind of places that never see a dull moment. Malls are there and even bigger ones will come up, but this is where one shops for a bargain and goes home happy. Need to watch out for fakes and duplicates, but only if one can ignore the brands the stuff and range are both mind blowing.








Shop till you drop is an expression perfectly applicable here. Even the mall going generation is not able to ignore the attraction of the New Market area, so enticing is the fare, whether of consumer goods, garments or knick-knacks. Shopping here is a wholesome experience as combining chillout time, youngsters spend endless hours bonding too. Connected with the Esplanade, it is also a foodie's paradise.



The South City Mall, one of the largest shopping complexes in India, endowed with international features and lying in close proximity to Jadavpur and Tollygunj area, boasts of the biggest brands under one roof. The shopping experience is quite like a leisurely outing, as spread over 1,50,000 sq ft on each floor, it facilitates easy movement and scope for chit chats. Fame South City is the first 6-screen ultra-luxurious multiplex in Kolkata.



A close-up portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a red bindi on her forehead and a large, ornate gold maang tikka. Her earrings are large, gold, and feature intricate designs with red and green gemstones. She is wearing a wide, gold necklace with a similar design. On her right wrist, she has a large, gold, textured bangle. Her right hand is resting on a red fabric with a gold border. In the background, a mirror reflects a person wearing sunglasses.

Gold is the only precious metal in Kolkata and ornaments for more than ninety per cent of the people here mean those made of this yellow metal. Such is the lure that the basic ornaments on a person can never be the benchmark of his or her real status. But then even today, ornaments and not clothes come first for the class conscious traditional Bengali here, be it white and even pink gold that too have made an appearance. The gold trading zones are Shyambazar, Bowbazar, Bhowanipore and Gariahat to name a few. People here have invested in gold through the ages and still continue to do so, more than ever in recent times.





Foreigners can be seen looking in awe as people nonchalantly perch themselves onto this archaic mode of travel, hand-pulled rickshaw, particularly in central and south Kolkata. There is an element of old world charm, as well as culture tucked away behind the 'ricksha' which today means much more than just a cheap transport option.



A wave of nostalgia sweeps through as one looks at the tram, now plying only at only a few selected places. A remnant of the British era, the slow speed transport, is part of the rich heritage of the city, offering this ride also to view some of the beautiful heritage sites.



Designed like chariots, with leather cover convertibles, a ride on the horse driven carriages available at Maidan is a literal wind-blown experience. Chugging rhythmically through wide-open streets right upto Fort Williams, tourists and localites look for a family or romantic couple ride, during sunny winter afternoons and summer early mornings.



A bus ride is what a large multitude of people prefer for transport, even though the local train and metro seem more comfortable and efficient. Used to taking this most common mode of commuting, Kolkatans feel most comfortable hopping into one.



Once the local trains came along, life took an absolute somersault as commuters from adjoining areas too began to pour in for work, education or any other requirement or activity. Even as the floating population increased, so did competition and opportunities too opened up



The metro that came up first in Kolkata in the entire country, gave the much required mobility, speed and the never-before kind of movement option to the citizens here.





MUSIC, **A WAY OF LIFE!**

Rabindranath Tagore, one name that conjures up images of poetry and prose rich in thought and expression, set to beautiful, heart warming music compositions. In fact his creations may be termed as part of a movement of sorts, that has totally captured the Bengali spirit and qualitative essence for the entire world. Jorasanko his birthplace and Shantiniketan his creation of an university with its unique nature-oriented philosophy, are places both synonymous with whatever is literary. There is perhaps no adjective that can describe this Nobel Laureate, who was also Knighted by the British. If it is Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali that is considered most popular worldwide, his poetries, songs, novels, stories, plays and operas have moulded the culture and thinking of Bengalis through generations. His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthem: India 's *Jana Gana Mana* and Bangladesh' s

Amaar Shonar Bangla

The Josasanko Thakur Bari, the birthplace of Bengal's greatest poet Rabindranath Tagore is one of the many heritage buildings of the city. Now part of the Rabindra Bharati University campus and has been turned into a museum. Visitors here can also view the wonderful art works of Rabindranath Tagore and the famous painter Abanindranath Thakur, while light and sound effects too magnify the heritage of the building to a very great extent. The melodious voice of Bengalis till today nurture and relish Tagore songs, teaching, singing, recording them, thus making an entire economic model come up so very naturally and with the active and emotional consent of all. The society here draws inspiration and strength from this literary giant who was born and spent most of his life as well as last days, at Jorasanko.



Visiting Jorasanko is like going on a pilgrimage for Bengalis anywhere, who worship this legendary poet. It will not be wrong to say that Bengal literally thrives and lives off the magic of music, culture and philosophy created by Rabindranath Tagore.

Rabindranath tagore





Music shops, sparkling with smart window dressing and a wealth of rare collections of CDs and a range of synthesizers, harmonicas, mouth organs etc do a brisk business at all times, but it is the Durga Puja time that sees a particular kind of craze. Open till late hours, they see connoisseurs from all walks of life making a beeline for the latest Chandipaath or the latest releases on the occasion.



FOR PEOPLE IN KOLKATA, very life is synonymous with music. While fitting in coaching hours for physics or geography perhaps, a youngster also fits in music lessons somewhere. Be it a boy or girl, learning Rabindra Sangeet, classical music, *adhunik* or modern songs or *ghazals*, even playing some instrument is as important as preparing for the Boards. The rhythm here is perfectly set to notes and beats and tuned for a perfectly balanced existence. If it is not a celebration, an occasion or festival, it could be simply raining to make one feel like just sitting down with a harmonium to sing a string of melodious rain songs with befitting

couplets, perfectly in sync with the mood of nature! Such is the musical spirit of the city and its people. All through the day, strains of different genre waft through the air, with those in Bangla dominating, closely followed by Western Pop and Hindi Bollywood numbers. Keertan and Bhatiyali derived from folk music occupy prime position among favourites. No household is complete without its stock of music CDs, books of songs and devotional music and of course the omnipresent harmonium followed by the tabla. Other instruments like the guitar, both Spanish and Hawaiian find an equal number of takers while the sitar too follows closely.

The shops selling new as well as second hand instruments record good sales throughout the year, while the repairs wing too stays fairly busy.





The Musical Fountain at Citizen's Park, Kolkata is all about timed sound waves, timed light against water particles that results in automated choreography. A happy atmosphere prevails with the foot tapping music and water sprays lifting spirits, particularly in the hot summer months. A perfect outing for Kolkatans looking for some quality family time.

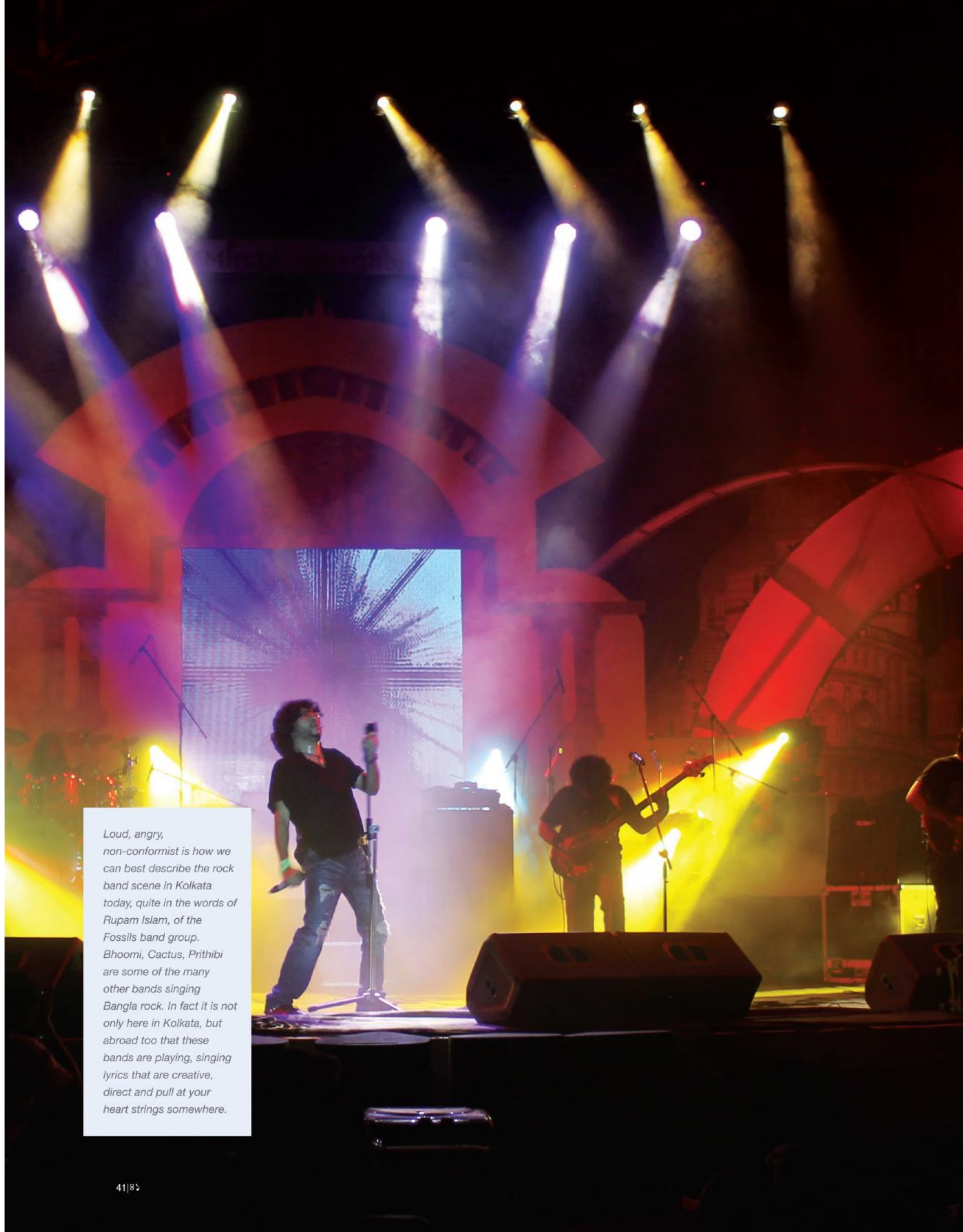


While ofcourse music rules as the most preferred art in the city, Kolkata's love for cinema and documentaries too is immense. The Nandan Complex built by the government, is a storehouse of information regarding stalwarts like Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen with the archives well stocked with a wealth of material that impart an amazing range of inputs regarding the numerous stages of the much revered Bengali film world and its history. In addition, rare books and journals on films completes the quest for research documents on Indian and world cinema. Cine enthusiasts wait for the film festivals to unfold and in their wake bring prominent film

personalities and their understanding of cinema, from the world over to this the Cultural Capital of the country. Besides, Nandan is also host to multiple workshops and seminars throughout the year and is a place frequented by people who enjoy exchanging ideas, even gossip in an atmosphere of heightened mental jugglery and exercise. Creative juices automatically flow here. The Star Theatre, one of the first institutions of commercial Bengali theatre, is primarily a cinema hall, but plays too are staged here and several renowned actors have performed at this famous theatre. Spandan and Nadikar are two well known groups of the city.



At Trincas at Park Hotel on Park Street, the live music band with drinks and some great snacks on the menu is a wonderful setting for unwinding. Starting with some judiciously picked, melodious Bollywood numbers, the band gently slips into Westerns, thereafter playing on as the crooner works up a crescendo till well past midnight. Trincas is a destination for the music loving, classy, nattily dressed with most well versed in English etiquettes, gentry of the city. Besides being known as the heritage food and drinks place, it also has an unique contribution to Western music in Kolkata.



Loud, angry, non-conformist is how we can best describe the rock band scene in Kolkata today, quite in the words of Rupam Islam, of the Fossils band group. Bhoomi, Cactus, Prithibi are some of the many other bands singing Bangla rock. In fact it is not only here in Kolkata, but abroad too that these bands are playing, singing lyrics that are creative, direct and pull at your heart strings somewhere.







After a short lull, Bengali Tollywood is once again back on its feet with well made, critically acclaimed films and today's actors, the likes of Srabanti and Prasenjeet making a mark among actors. Known for Indian cinema's most critically acclaimed parallel cinema art films, with several of its filmmakers gaining international acclaim, most notably Satyajit Ray, Indrapuri studio, Technician, Dashnim are famous studios here that have given us legendary artistes like Suchitra Sen, Sharmila Tagore, Uttam Kumar, Mithun Chakraborty among others.



Life IN PERFECT STYLE

Dressed with casual ease, whether in a trendy cotton sari or kurta and jeans, or a T-shirt perhaps, the smart, evolved look is hard to miss. Playing mind games, generally flirting or simply talking shop, the enthusiasm here to enjoy festivals, family moments, or just I-me-myself time is truly amazing.



Let's talk, gossip, do some adda baji.... and why not? Life is all about balancing chill time and leisure, with work, study, meaningfully spent moments... and all this in equal proportions. So when a Kolkatan works hard, he makes it a point to positively party even harder.





Life is a roller coaster ride in this metro city, what with having to brave traffic blues, deadlines, appointments, commitments. But when in Kolkata, one can see the ultra-traditional feel not quite going away even in stressful situations. A small prayer while travelling in the bus, sure is a way to stay cool and composed.



Shopping is a great pastime as well as a necessity so why not combine it with some quality family time! This is exactly what most do in the city, whenever possible that is, because commuting time eats into whatever little time one is able to eke out for an outing.



Waxing eloquent over a cuppa on preferred subjects, politics, films, you just name it, Coffee House located opposite the Presidency College at College Street, is the meeting ground for intellectuals and students. History meets the modern times here as artists, literati, musicians, all meet to discuss everything under the sun truly an awesome place to hangout with friends. Here the coffee comes as coffee, no frills, no fancy names, laced with aroma and a dash of nostalgia!

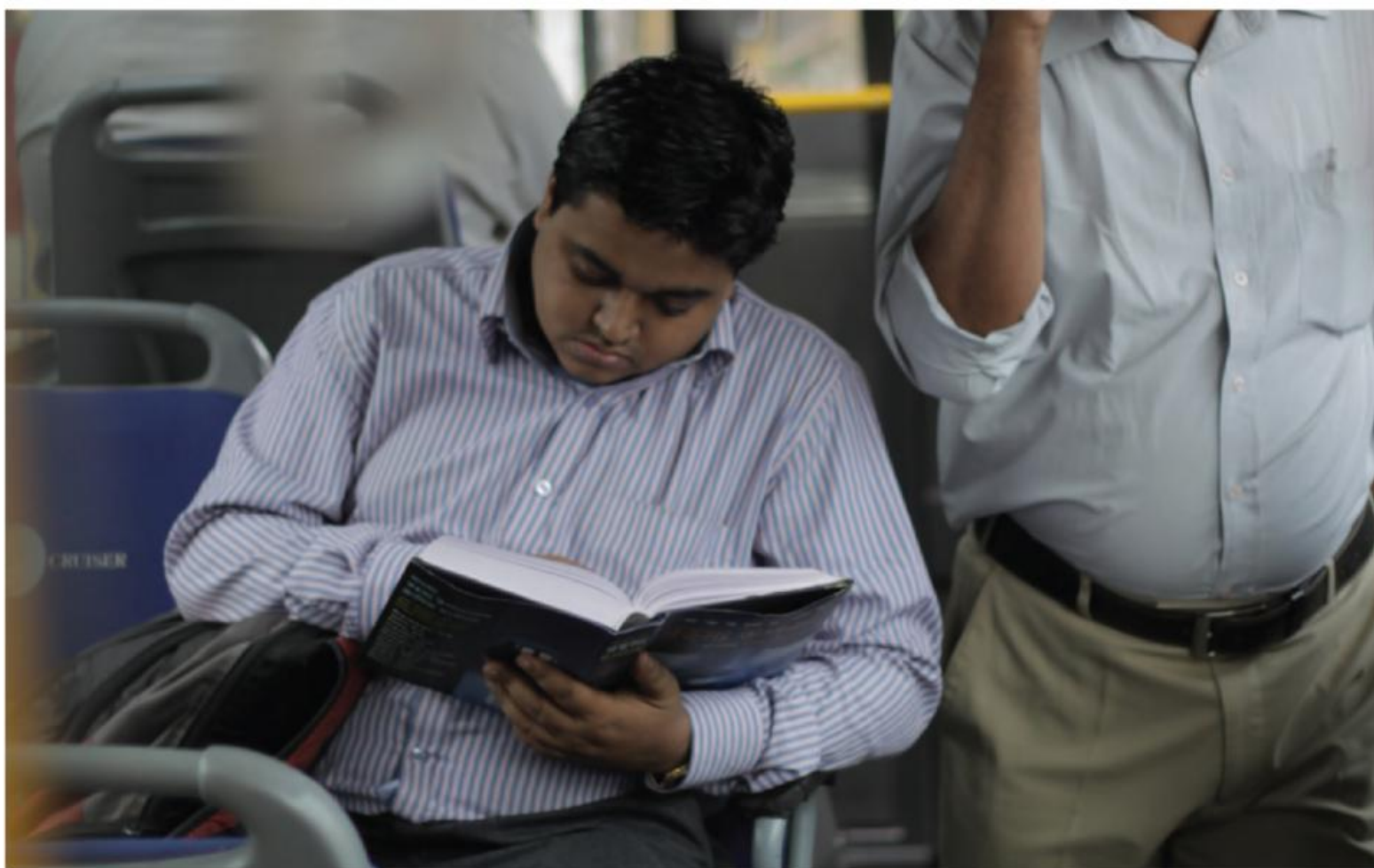


Leisure, so precious to people in Kolkata, is spent with friends engaging in adda, playing carom, generally fooling around, reading and listening to or practicing music. No amount of stress or workload can steal these moments from the people here, be it kids or adults. The periodic outing with an ice cream treat perhaps is a must for the children. For adults, meal times, siesta are not to be given up for business or for work, because all is meticulously planned around it





Jostling crowds, frayed nerves, do not deter people here from masking there taunts with wit and humour. The respect for ladies and the elderly shows among the travelling populace as seats are immediately vacated on public transport.



Read, read and read is the dictum handed down through generations, that all follow. The addiction to books is so strong that it is hard to resist for this young boy, even on a moving bus!





DeLiciousLy, YOURS!

If it's Christmas or New Years, Kolkata is the ideal destination for those who wish to savour the multiple tastes, sights and sounds of the season. All roads for many regulars and chance tourists as well as foreigners lead to this city and not without a reason. While connoisseurs wait the entire year for that special plum cake or pastries, it is snacks, patties, sandwiches, puffs and quiches, besides choco pyramids and Swiss rolls too, that are whipped up with more gusto in celebration. The yummy, lip-smacking delicacies when teamed in the backdrop of the flavours of the Raj in terms of décor and atmosphere, it is a definite not-to-be-missed kind of treat that one looks forward to and laps up. Well, the feeling is heavenly!

The tastes of colonialism literally still linger and seem to flourish through the bakeries in the city that throw up an exotic range of products, made painstakingly with the original, traditional procedures, the ingredients, some of them very rare, meticulously put together. While names like the

Kathleen chain, Monginis, Kookie Jar, Upper Crust, Bakers Square dot the city, satiating discerning tastebuds that seek out specific baked delights, it is Nahoum and Flurys, among a few others that rule the popularity charts. Their more than a century old history pulls one and all as the exquisitely done up ambience combined with mouth watering range of offerings on the menu, that are all but simply irresistible. The 30s look still persists further adding to the charm of visiting these outlets, as the uniformed trained workers cater to and fuss over all, shuffling around flower bedecked, scrumptious cookie counters.

Though the perfect English breakfast in a laidback epicurean, total feel good style is there in the typically niche outlets, incredible though it may sound, this does not stop the list of bakeries from getting longer. The fact that currently popular brands too have come into play, is proof enough of Kolkata's insatiable proverbial sweet-tooth indulgences that have provided space for all to thrive.



The old world charm shows prominently at Peter Cat, a restaurant where cocktails are said to be cheaper than the food!! The food, a mix of Indian and continental, makes it a favourite joint among both locals and visitors and the environment is quirky as well as unique







Time to whip up the exclusive batter for yummy Christmas cakes, complete with nuts soaked in brandy and wine and what better way to do it than mark the event with some celebrity involvement! And Flurys on Park Street just does that each year to launch Christmastide.



The British look and feel is ever so heart warming and absolutely enchanting as one steps into Park Street. The retro atmosphere and the warm behaviour of the staff at Mocambo is enough to satiate part of the appetite. When the food comes in, albeit a little late, the Devilled Crab, Prawn Cocktail and Chicken Kiev are simply awesome, besides a range of veg as well as non-veg continental fare that is simply mouth-watering to say the least. A stylish, trendy presentation of dishes and decor caters to a crowd that dittos similar sentiments and qualities.





Roshogolla or Rasgulla is truly a rare sweet. Sink your teeth into one and feel the sweetness of the soft, white delicacy envelope your tongue. Termed as Bengal's gift to the world, a must-have item on all auspicious occasions for Bengalis it needs no introduction. If Nobin Chandra Das is credited with its discovery, it was his son KC Das who canned it for wider sales and export. Sweets in Bengal are generally made of *chhena*, or cottage cheese. Additionally, flours of different cereals and pulses are used and there we have the *Shôndesh*, *Laddu*, *Pantua* etc. But then no account of Bengali sweets is complete without *Mishti Doi* or sweet yoghurt. Set in earthen bowls,

sometimes with jaggery syrup, making it reddish in colour, every meal comes a full circle only after a round of this dessert. So whether it is *Kancha Gola*, *Sandesh*, *Roshogolla* or *Mishti Doi*, Kolkatans with their sweet tooth do not stop anywhere, surely not being in the habit of bothering about the calories. 'Mitra Café', 'Bhim Chandra Nag', and 'Girish Ch. Dey & Nakur Ch. Nandy' are shops that have been witness to a large chunk of Kolkata's history with their amazing variety and quality of sweets. During festivals, these shops pull off all stops to bring out newer delicacies, year after year protecting their pride and stature with these, the best sweets on offer.



A FOODIE'S PARADISE,

besides fine dining and the restaurant experience, Kolkata is a city known for exotic street food. This is ready-to-eat stuff sold in street corners or other public places, such as a marketplace or fair perhaps by a hawker or vendor, often from a portable stall. Meant to suit all pockets, such is the range that from a staple lunch of rice, *dal* and *sabji*, to chowmien, *idli*, *dosa*, *uttapaam*, *ghoogni bhelpuri*, *golgappas*, *jhaal muri* and *pakodas* besides of course the many varieties of non-veg rolls, seasoned meats or vegetables and *chutneys* wrapped in thick *parathas*, the city displays a special attitude towards food, cooked

and served hot on the streets. No one is embarrassed of picking up a quick bite here, of a *kathhi kebab* roll perhaps. Food served between the traditional meal hours - - is also high in demand. Famous joints are located especially in the BBD Bagh, Dalhousie area. Long stretches on Theatre Road, Russell Street, Lord Sinha Road, Camac Street are famous for *pav-bhaji* and *moong dal vadas*. Kolkatans visiting Esplanade or Chowringhee never forget to visit Dacres Lane. The exotic cuisine, a heart warmer of sorts, Chinese dishes at roadside stalls are always an attraction. Not to be missed either are Bengali sweet shops, whose products fill the life of all in Kolkata.








An amazing sight for any avid fish eater of the city. The lined up 'silver beauties' are a visual treat as for numerous in Kolkata walking into a fish market is a pleasurable exercise. A morning sans fish shopping is boring and a holiday without some special buying and then monitoring the cooking as well, can well be extremely upsetting, such is the involvement of this city's connoisseurs of fish cuisine with this aquatic food variety. A delicacy for cats too, this feline pet is most popular in households, pampered with love and a wide range of delectable fish varieties.



The fish markets in Kolkata are flooded with carps and fish varieties like *rui* (*rohu*), *koi* (climbing perch), the wriggling catfish family of *tangra*, *magur*, *shingi* and the pink-bellied Indian butter fish, the *pabda katla*, *magur* (catfish), *chingri* (prawn or shrimp), as well as *shutki* (small dried sea fish). Varieties of *chingri* are *kucho* (varieties of shrimp), usual (prawns), *bagda* (tiger prawns), and *galda* (scampi). But the salt water fish (not sea fish though) *hilsa* (*ilish*) is very popular among Bengalis. Gariahat, Maniktola, Gongajoyara, Diamond Harbour markets and multiple ones side by side with vegetable markets, together with house-to-house vendors

all make fish the most easily available as compared to any other grocery. In fact the number of vendors selling aquatic foods of all types is much, much higher than meat. Freshwater fish, the marine variety, cultured fish and then there is the wild species that is sold live, all make for an impressive line-up . While some come from Andhra Pradesh, small live tilapias and carps come from the East Kolkata Wetlands. Though it is *machher jhol*, *jhal* or simple *bhaja* that reach the dining tables, dishes like *bhapa ilish* or *daab chingri* need some planning as the average Kolkata housewife too has diversified into other personal as well as perhaps official activities today.



The grandeur cannot be missed, so imposing and opulent is the very sight of this hotel in the heart of Kolkata, The Oberoi Grand. This multi-facility world class hotel, is the pride of the city and is its nerve centre. The celebrity quotient is a heightened one and its connection with the elite total and complete.





The long queues at the ticket counters, flashy cars with celebrities heading for the VIP enclosures, all go to make Eden Gardens a much sought after destination for sports lovers. An iconic cricket stadium, the second largest in the world in terms of the seating capacity, Eden Gardens is also host to, aggressively and passionately played as well as watched, football matches. East Bengal & Mohun Bagan, the two age-old football clubs have virtually divided the city into two, which has often resulted in devastating fights between the two rival supporters.





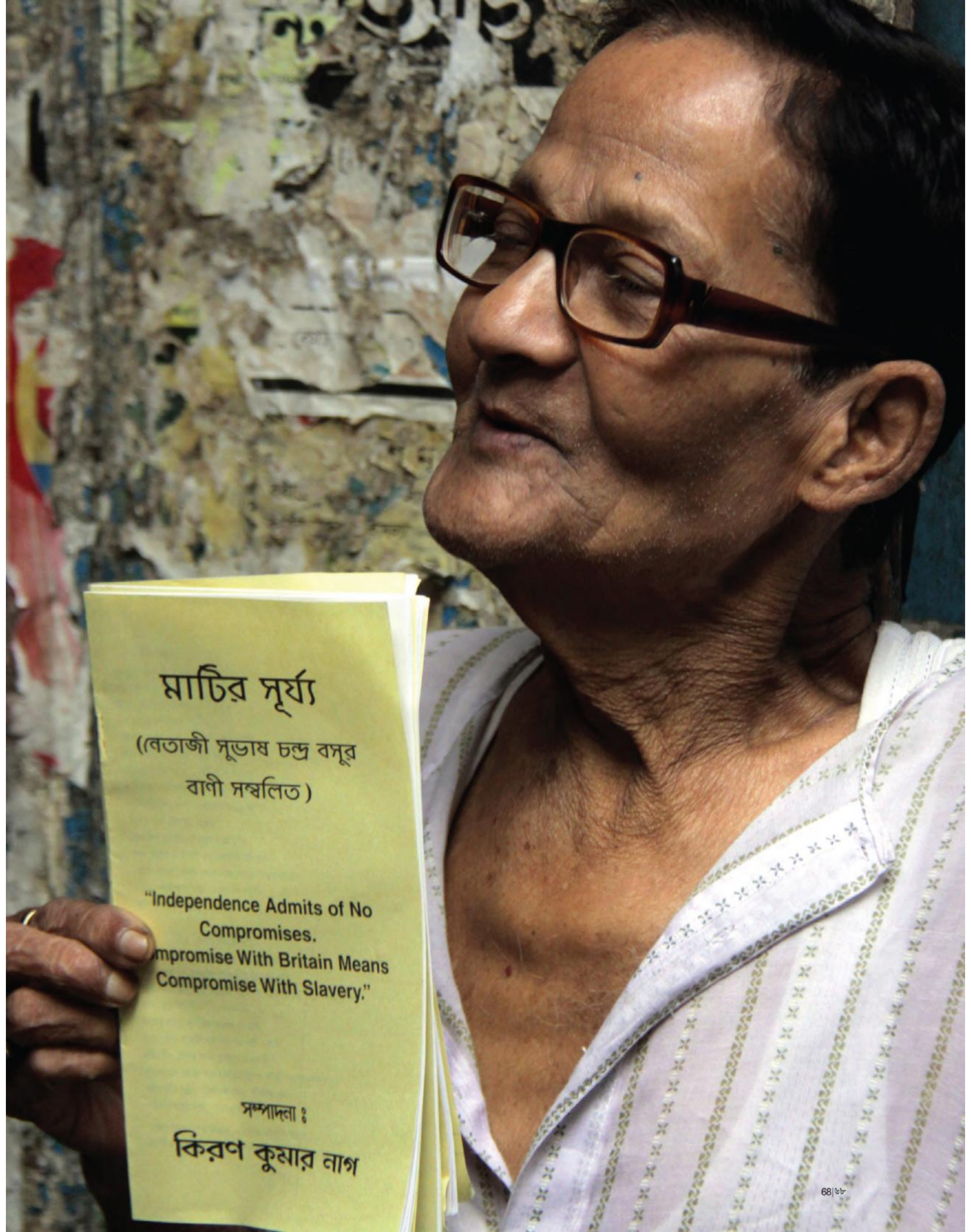
Romancing THE WRITTEN WORD

Boi Para or College Street in Kolkata is somewhere any bibliophile would love to be in. Kolkata is a city where both young and old, defying universal trends, are ready to devour the written word and come back asking for more. Looking for rarities, this is the place! Even books in and out of print in France, Germany, Russia and England can be picked up here. In fact any title ever sold in Kolkata may be found here in the bookstores both big and small. With several places of intellectual activity surrounding the area, the most prominent being the Presidency College, the crowd is representative of the thinking, learning populace of the

city. Here leisure is valued and reading is a favourite pastime. For that matter, spending time among books is a huge personal treat! To say that the soul of the city rests here will not be wrong, as literature and poetry flow unabated through the minds of the people, which is also reflected in normal, everyday conversation or exchange of ideas. The lingo is laced with philosophy and quotes. Wit and at times sardonic humour both titillate and pinch, as comments fly. And all this bestows a particular character to the populace that talks sense, big and sounds intellectual, all due to the quest for knowledge that naturally drives the city.



The largest second hand book market in the world and the largest book market in India, you may get CDs, e-books, whatever, but as the browsers, and buyers will vow, none ever will be able to take away the charm of holding a book in one's hands, turning the pages, putting in a bookmark and sometimes even underlining portions.



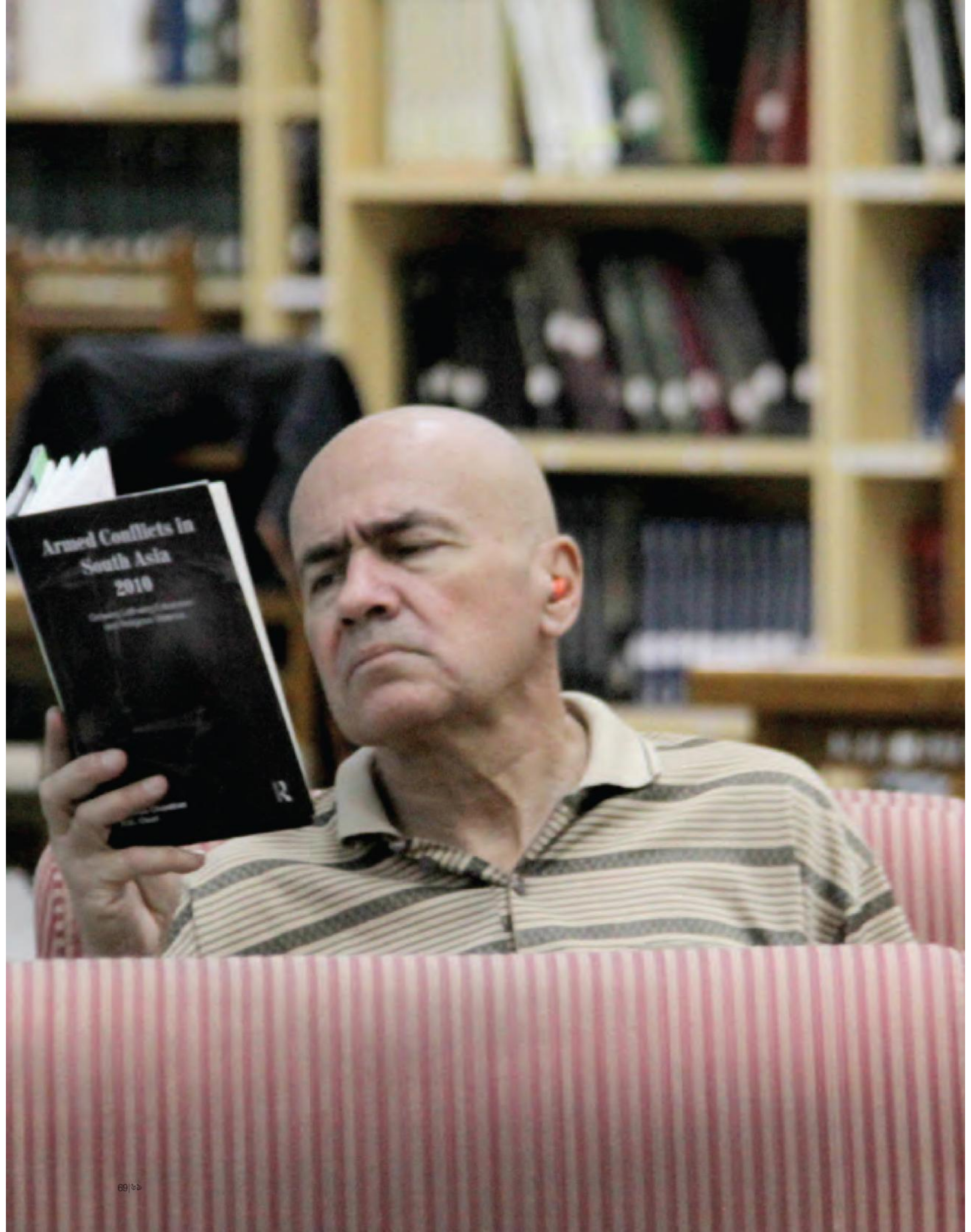
মাটির সূর্য

(নেতাজী সুভাষ চন্দ্র বসুর
বাণী সম্বলিত)

"Independence Admits of No
Compromises.
Compromise With Britain Means
Compromise With Slavery."

সম্পাদনা :

কিরণ কুমার নাগ





WALK INTO NATIONAL LIBRARY

and the mood changes to somber. People of all age groups, nationalities, communities and social segments enter the precincts to browse, pick some required material, or just for the love of books, spend some leisure hours leafing through and enjoying every written word. Completely absorbed, serious and pensive faces greet you at the library, where the word disturbance seems non-existent. Views and thoughts get exchanged in hushed tones, while some can be seen furtively noting down information gleaned from various books selected under one theme. The National Library, said to be the second largest public

library in Asia, has about 20,00,000 books and 5,00,000 manuscripts. Housed in the former residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, the building was constructed in 1700 A.D. In 1953, February 1, its doors were opened for public use. Famous donors have added to the value and content of books here. Around a thousand readers daily gather to read the rare books, valuable manuscripts of the pre-British and British days, original letters and notes of eminent personalities, books from the 16th century special bindings and illuminated editions. Original water colour paintings and palm-leaves too are found here.

Supported by the Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India, the National Library has books in almost all the Indian languages. Serving as a public library, it is a permanent repository of all documents published in India and has elaborate arrangements for physical conservation of books for posterity.



THE JEAN CLAD GENERATION

was never so visible as one can see at the Jadavpur University or JU. Casual dressing is in and a cigarette in hand is not a style statement but accepted norm! Kurta, chappals a muffler perhaps and a big leather or cloth bag completes the ensemble. The crowd here flaunts the 'intellectual' tag and does not mince words when he or she needs to elaborate on the JU status. Yes, it is an advantage each one of them is proud of. Primarily recognized for research, after the IITs it has been ranked sixth in terms of research output in India for its engineering faculty. While the main campus is at Jadavpur, the new one is at Salt Lake. With three departments, Engineering,

Science and Arts, it is an autonomous state university. Admission is highly competitive, as it consistently ranks amongst the best colleges in India. It has one of the largest libraries among universities in India. One gets to hear some very fine pronouncements in perfect diction, radical views flying around, with excited debates and exchanges being the order of the day. A number of clubs and associations like, Quiz Forum and Debating Society, Jadavpur University Chess Club, Jadavpur University Photography Club, Jadavpur University Music Club, sees to it that the campus is forever alive with talents coming to the fore everyday.

For men it is the tousled hair, a one-day-old stubble look, while for girls thick kohl lined eyes is the ultimate in terms of make-up. Chunky jewellery and rolled shirt sleeves are the other preferences, that immediately sets a JU student apart from the rest of the city.





CONSIDERED TO BE BEST

for Commerce and Science, St Xavier's College, Kolkata, has always featured among top three undergraduate colleges. The college has entered into a collaboration with the University of Manitoba in Canada. The canteen, Green Benches, however, is the place that sees students animatedly engaging in debates, arguments and discussions, the intense mental exercise thereby generating food for thought for many, who then take it forward in the interest of their individual academic pursuits. Throughout the year, the premises play host to celebrities, who attend functions, grace occasions and

promote their events and films perhaps. Another institution of repute, said to be one of the oldest of western education in South Asia, Presidency College was initially established in 1817 as the Mahapathshala wing of Hindu College and was renamed Presidency College. Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, an ex-student has now upgraded it to the university level. The list of luminaries from this college who have earned national and international acclaim for their work, is extremely long here. The studious, intelligent look, dominates the campus, the students in smart casuals moving about with an air of academic orientation.

Such is the aura of the St Xavier's College, that the very name tag is assurance enough of a particular discipline and style of its students. Needless to say, in the course of time, they find place in prestigious locations later, relentlessly carrying forward the legacy of their alma mater. A Xavier's student looks, dresses and talks like one, carrying the imprint of the reputed college on his or her person, such is the impact of the place and the peer group.



The Calcutta Medical College, established in 1835, has made a place for itself in the state for its specialty and super specialty facilities in different disciplines of medicine. One of the largest hospitals in Kolkata, it imparts a systematic education in medicine.



Of PILLARS **AND ARCHES**

Keeping up with the heritage laden city is the ongoing process of development, that aims to pit the city's rich past with an affluent future. Real estate development in the city has taken a firm hold on defining newer houses and a large part of the city has moved on to multi-storeyed apartments. Offices and commercial plots have seen newer delights of ultramodern architecture, with all modern amenities, the best example being Rajarhat- the latest and fast developing township in the city.

This one and other townships coming up here, provide complete solutions of schools, hospitals, markets and all other essentials available close by.

So throwbacks on colonial architecture and its dominating presence on the cityscape, pushes whatever is modern, quite into the shadows of the rising spires and arches. While the blend of

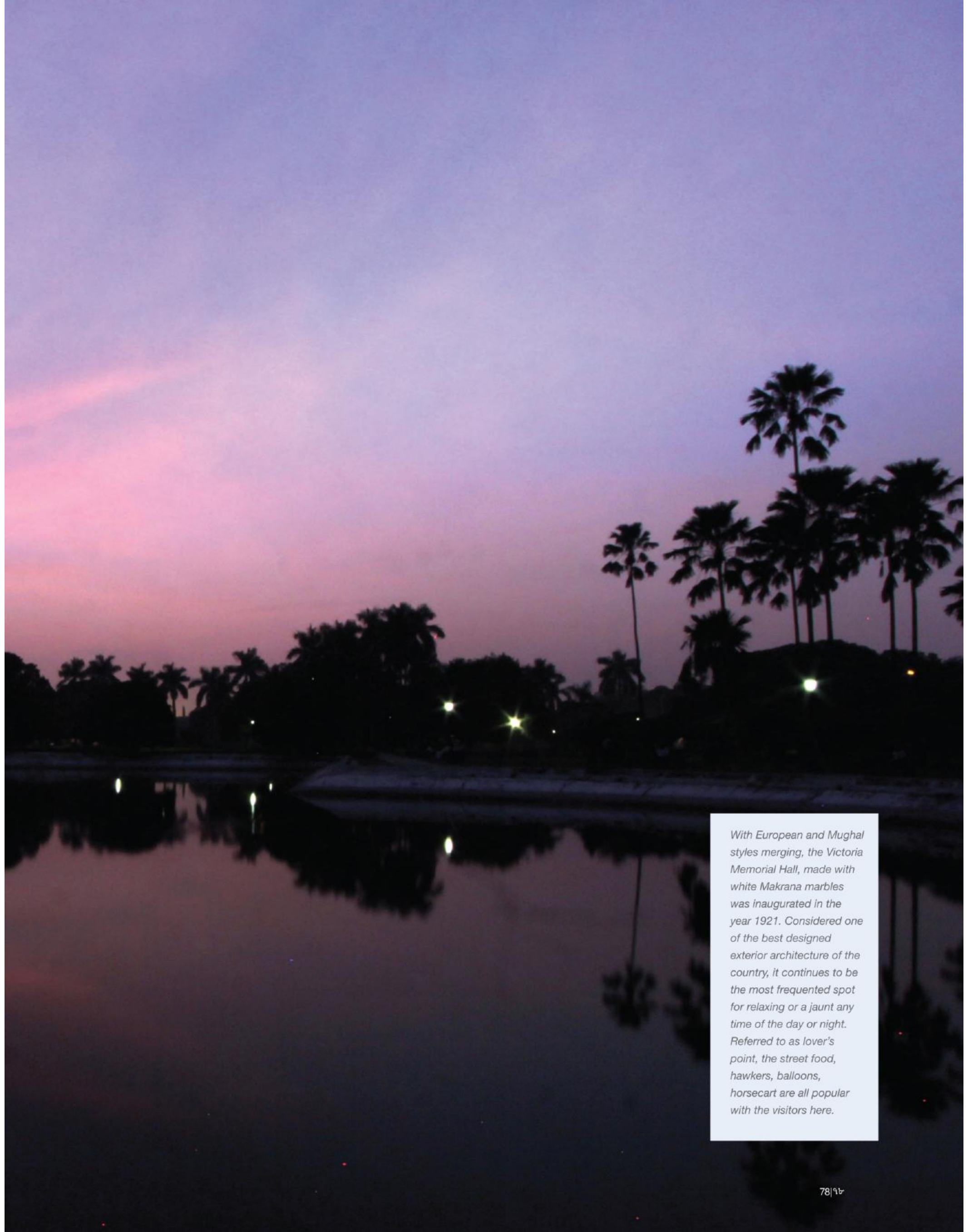
Mughal and British architectural styles abound, with the Victoria Memorial emerging as prime example, even today, one looks with awe at the Gothic structures of Kolkata High Court and the thick pillars that rise into steeples at the St John's Cathedral. Though with modern housing trends and apartment culture rearing up its head, gradually but surely the City of Palaces is undergoing a makeover, this place of architectural wonder owes so much to its past in this genre that it is only in terms of high rise constructions that one sees the skyline changing. Whether it is the Belur Math with its Hindu, Muslim, Christian styles merging or the Nakhoda Mosque, an example of Indo-Saracenic architecture, Kolkata is and will always remain a tourists' paradise!



The Victoria Memorial, a monument that truly enchants due to its sheer architectural splendour! It possesses characteristics that are a unique blend of British and Indian architectural styles of the times, so much so, that a comparison with the Taj Mahal is considered obvious. Today, tourists, scholars as well as locals, queue up to revel in its verdant surroundings with architectural opulence in the background.







With European and Mughal styles merging, the Victoria Memorial Hall, made with white Makrana marbles was inaugurated in the year 1921. Considered one of the best designed exterior architecture of the country, it continues to be the most frequented spot for relaxing or a jaunt any time of the day or night. Referred to as lover's point, the street food, hawkers, balloons, horsecart are all popular with the visitors here.



The first Episcopal Church of the Orient, St. Paul's Cathedral, is known for its awesome designing in the Indo-Gothic architecture style by Major W.N. Forbes. Situated at the southern end of the Maidan, the main hall of the cathedral is very large containing splendid carved wooden pews and chairs. A meditation point set up recently in collaboration with distinguished citizens of Tagore's Shantiniketan, sees youngsters of all communities assembling here to pray and meditate in the tranquil atmosphere of the church. Among others, elegant St James' Church also referred to as Jora Girja for its twin spires, is one of the largest churches in Eastern India, while, St Andrew's Church is listed as a Grade I Heritage Building. Lit up with decorative lights, every evening it twinkles like a star on the city's skyline.



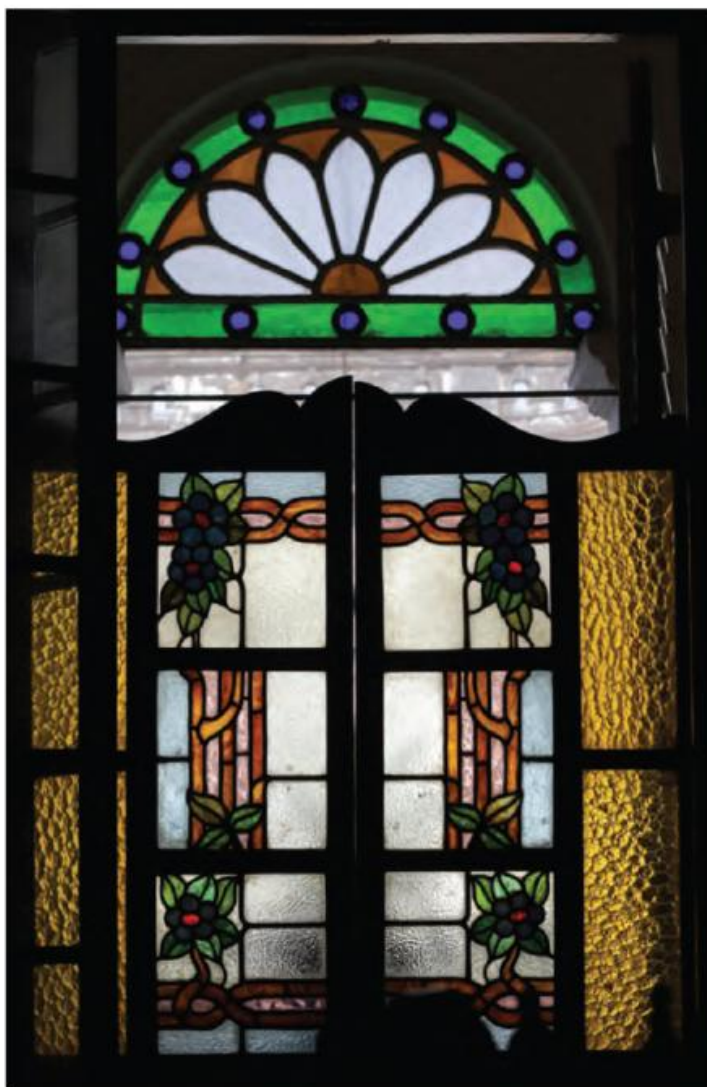
No community is insecure in Kolkata and does not need to live in ghettos. So the thirty three per cent Muslim population too here is interspersed among the rest, with some bit of concentration happening at places like Rajabazar, Park Circus, Chitpore and Chandni Chowk. Few among the present generation girls can be seen in *burqas* like everywhere else, while the men easily merge with the crowds anywhere. It is only the clerics and the intensely devout who strike a different note with their flowing beards and mane and attire that is typically Afghani in style. Typically so, the mosques too are located in these areas, all relics of architectural and cultural heritage. But

then the fact that Muslims in Kolkata are a comfortable lot may be gauged from the fact that it actually has 450 mosques. The only discomfort came during the '92, '93 riots. Today once again, when things have settled down, like it has in the rest of the country, the followers of Islam here too have loosened up, though many have gone on to retain their relocated establishments. The largest one Nakhoda mosque, is a unique blend of Indo- Saracenic architecture which has two minarets and twenty five tiny pillars all around. Constructed on the lines of Akbar's tomb in Sikandra, Agra, it is able to accommodate at a time, 10,000 worshippers for offering *namaaz*.

The Tipu Sultan Mosque is one where people from all sections of society and religions are allowed to visit and take pictures of this historical premise. Tourists and foreigners here can be seen taking special interest in clicking and taking close-ups of the ornate design elements like florets and geometrical patterns strewn all over the architectural structures. Built by Prince Ghulam Mohammed, the youngest son of Tipu Sultan, later the Waqf Committee built another one like it at Tollygunj.



Porticos and colonnaded verandas are features that characterize the Laha Bari near College Street. The oriental motifs inside offset the exquisite chandeliers and stained glass windows that create a Indo-British picture of high living and a rich legacy.





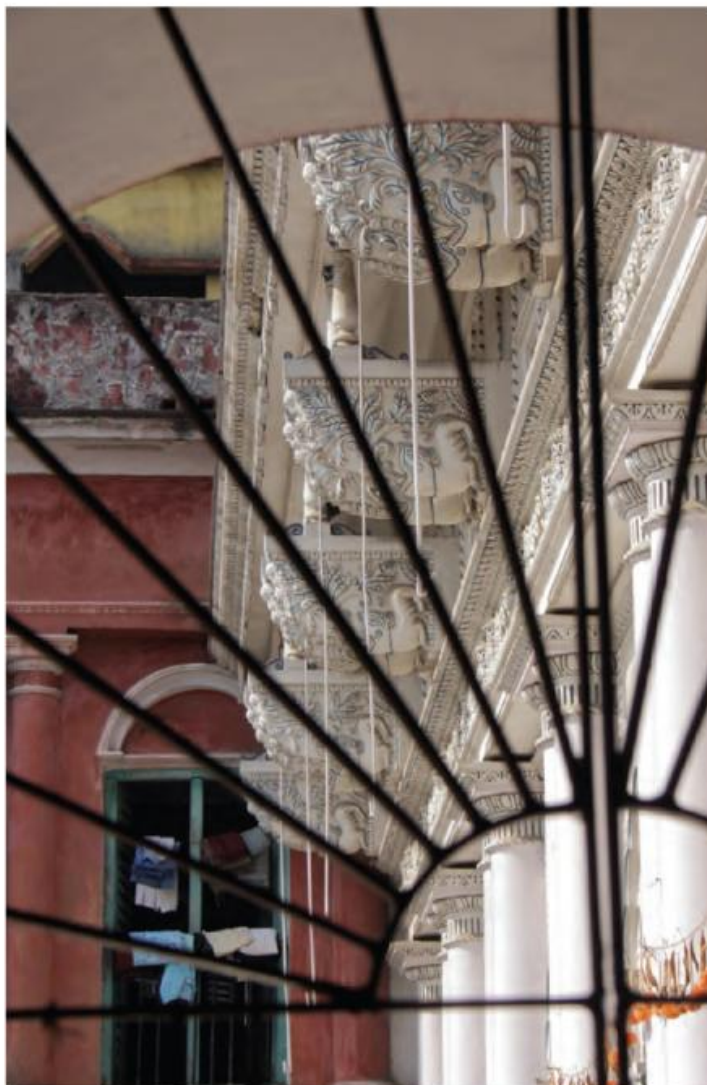
The Dutt Bari with Gothic style veranda in the front but some parts in state of decay, joins the list of palaces in Kolkata, with high overtones of British architecture.



Mural panels, marble busts, at Mullick Bari, represents typical architectural trends of 19th century Bengal. The façade is in the classical Doric/Palladian and Neo-classical style, with fluted Corinthian pillars.



Largely traditional Bengali with open courtyards, the Marble Palace is basically built in the Neoclassical style. Adjacent to the courtyard, there is a thakur-dalan, or place of worship for members of the family. Tall fluted Corinthian pillars and ornamented verandas with fretwork and sloping roofs, it is built in the style of a Chinese pavilion.



Shobhabazar Rajbari is a Bonedi Durga Bari that sees a lavish spread in every sphere during Durga Puja. Although originally a saat-mahala house with multi-foliolate arches supported on pairs of squared pilasters, pairs of columns with plain shafts rise up between the arches to support the entablature above and a set of eight massive Tuscan columns support a wide projecting cornice at roof level.



The architecture of Mitra Bari is heavily drawn from ancient Hindu and Jain art unlike the others. This is yet another Bonedi Durga Bari that is Kolkata's pride in both architectural high points and cultural heritage.



The National Museum is the largest museum in India, and has rare collections of antiques, armour and ornaments, fossils, skeletons, mummies, and Mughal paintings. This oldest museum in the world, with multidisciplinary activities is being included as an Institute of national importance in the seventh schedule of the Constitution of India.



'Without doubt one of the finest Government House occupied by the representative of any Sovereign or Government in the world', is how Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India chose to describe the Raj Bhavan and not without a reason. Designed by Capt. Charles Wyatt it follows a Neoclassical style with distinct Baroque overtones. The grandeur of the entire building inspires just a sense of awe what with its grand Ballroom with rare paintings, Yellow, Blue and Brown Dining Rooms, Marble Hall, Banquet Hall and Library.



Sombre looking, the imposing structure of the 150-metre-long Writer's Building, is a massive red building, originally built as a residence for the British East India Company's clerical and administrative staff called Writers. On any given day, it has end number of people seeking entry, for some kind of administrative support, while the staff moves about purposefully dealing with multifarious affairs. The chief minister including the other ministries too conduct the functioning of the state from this building that covers the entire stretch of a water body locally called Lal Dighi in BBD Bagh area.



Best foot **FORWARD**

With some of the notable Indian and multinational companies like Wipro , IBM, NIIT technologies, HCL technologies , CMC limited , Technopolis etc setting up office in the many high rise buildings in Sector V, at all times of the day and night the Salt Lake Sector V is abuzz with professionals flitting about, smart and purposeful. Around 1.2 Lakh people employed here, this part of the city has a different culture altogether. Many call centers, BPOs and KPOs are here, where people work in shifts and several mostly in night shifts. So as it comes alive at night, one can see young boys and girls moving about in the area, chatting, having tea and taking a break at all times of the day. The ongoing process of development here, aims to pit the city's rich past with an affluent future. The real estate development in the city has taken a firm hold on defining newer houses, while a substantial part of the population has moved to multi-storey apartments, selling off independent

houses in the old areas. The fully modernized area serves as a strong pull for the upwardly mobile today's investors in real estate. Offices and commercial plots delight in ultra modern architecture, with all amenities contained inside.

The best example is that of Rajarhat- the latest and fast developing township in the city. The skyline has expanded as apartments are now aiming for the sky , with duplex flats and pent houses coming up majorly. Last but not the least , these townships are complete with schools, hospitals, markets, while all essentials are made available close by. But then the value of property, specially the commercial ones are very high. The new residential townships are also getting developed at Rajarhat Newtown, which is well connected to Salt Lake. The modern, plush and luxurious, all are here and together make the development statement for Bengal.



High energy exchanges, a more IT enabled crowd and those clued in about modern education norms and tenets, Salt Lake is a geek's paradise.





The Salt Lake area of Kolkata is proudly referred to as the hub of economic, social development and IT in the city. Neat roads, planned construction and a flyover make the area look decidedly different from the rest of Kolkata.







Science City Evolution Park is one place, where one can undergo the optical illusion experience and enjoy the aquatic world of fishes as well as the mysterious world of insects. The time machine will allow visitors to take us on a voyage to outer space, there is an artificial Jurassic park, in simple words it is a journey into the world of experiments and discoveries. With over 2000 seating capacity, Grand Theater, the largest auditorium in eastern India, can accommodate 100 performers at a time on the stage, while, Seminar Building is an ideal venue for conference and seminars.




Being the educative recreational initiative concept of Nicco Park in Salt Lake City, the entrance of every ride offers explanations of the scientific principles behind their working. Non-conventional energy sources in community life like solar energy, also finds place here and in keeping with its green theme, a Green House sells various types of plants. The park's cable cars and Eiffel Tower provide panoramic views and natural attractions include a Rose Garden and a forty feet high waterfall.



Nicco Park, called the Disneyland of West Bengal, the amusement park has thirty-five rides that include the Toy Train, Tilt-a-Whirl, Magic Carpet, Paddle Boat, Water Chute, Water Coaster, Flying Saucer, Pirate Ship, River Caves, Cyclone and Moonraker. The Giant Cyclone is among Asia's largest. A Food Park, bowling alley with restaurant and bar, Souvenir Shop and the water park, Wet-O-Wild, sees families trooping in for absolute chillout time. Rain dance performances and 4-D movie theater keep the youngsters of the city vastly entertained.





Here water IS THE BRIDGE!

The morning scenes of Kolkata from this Golden Gate Bridge, Vidyasagar Setu, that connects the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah, are simply beautiful. With nine lanes of traffic routes, it handles more than 85,000 vehicles everyday and is one of the longest bridges of Asia. Predictably, film producers have always tried to explore the beauty of this Second Hooghly bridge as it provides an excellent view of the Kolkata skyline.






The road cum rail link between the Calcutta Port and its hinterland, Vivekananda Setu, over the Hooghly River is also called Willingdon Bridge and Bally Bridge. It links Howrah, to Kolkata, at Dakshineshwar. The wide expanse of water, the sharp breeze, and a boat or steamer ride below the majestic bridge with its reflection in the water, is an experience many cherish and yearn to relive.



Strains of Bhatiyali folk songs waft through the air as the boatmen row along, even as life in Kolkata, as it moves over the bridges across the Ganges come into full view from the Princep Ghat. Named after the one person who researched Kolkata for the outsiders, James Princep, it is indeed a befitting tribute to the scholar. The ghat is an ideal location for photographers and romancing couples too, looking for a quiet, close to nature spot.



The traffic is mind boggling as a steady stream of rickshaws, cars, scooters, bicycles and buses ply with no let up throughout the day, over this bridge. The 705 meters long and 97 feet wide Howrah Bridge, also known as Rabindra Setu spans over River Hooghly and is considered to be a marvelous engineering work by the British. The busiest cantilever bridge in the World, it acts as the gateway to Kolkata, connecting the city to the Howrah Station. With no nuts and bolts used for the whole structure, the bridge has become an iconic landmark and symbol of Kolkata.





A romantic holiday beach in the Bay of Bengal is how Digha is popularly described as. Just 187 km away from Kolkata, this sea resort is one place that is closest to nature. Casuarina plantations girdle the beach making the sand dunes further stand out. But what tourists go to see and enjoy at the beach is the sunset and sunrise that is reflected in the Bay of Bengal. Almost heavenly, the sea at Digha being calm makes it quite safe for swimming.





The fishermen never had it so good as at the Digha, the catch from the brackish water, including Pomfret, Parshe and Prawns fetch them some great price at the Digha morning fish market, which is always a sell-out and help them earn a decent living.



WHERE THE SUN NEVER SETS...

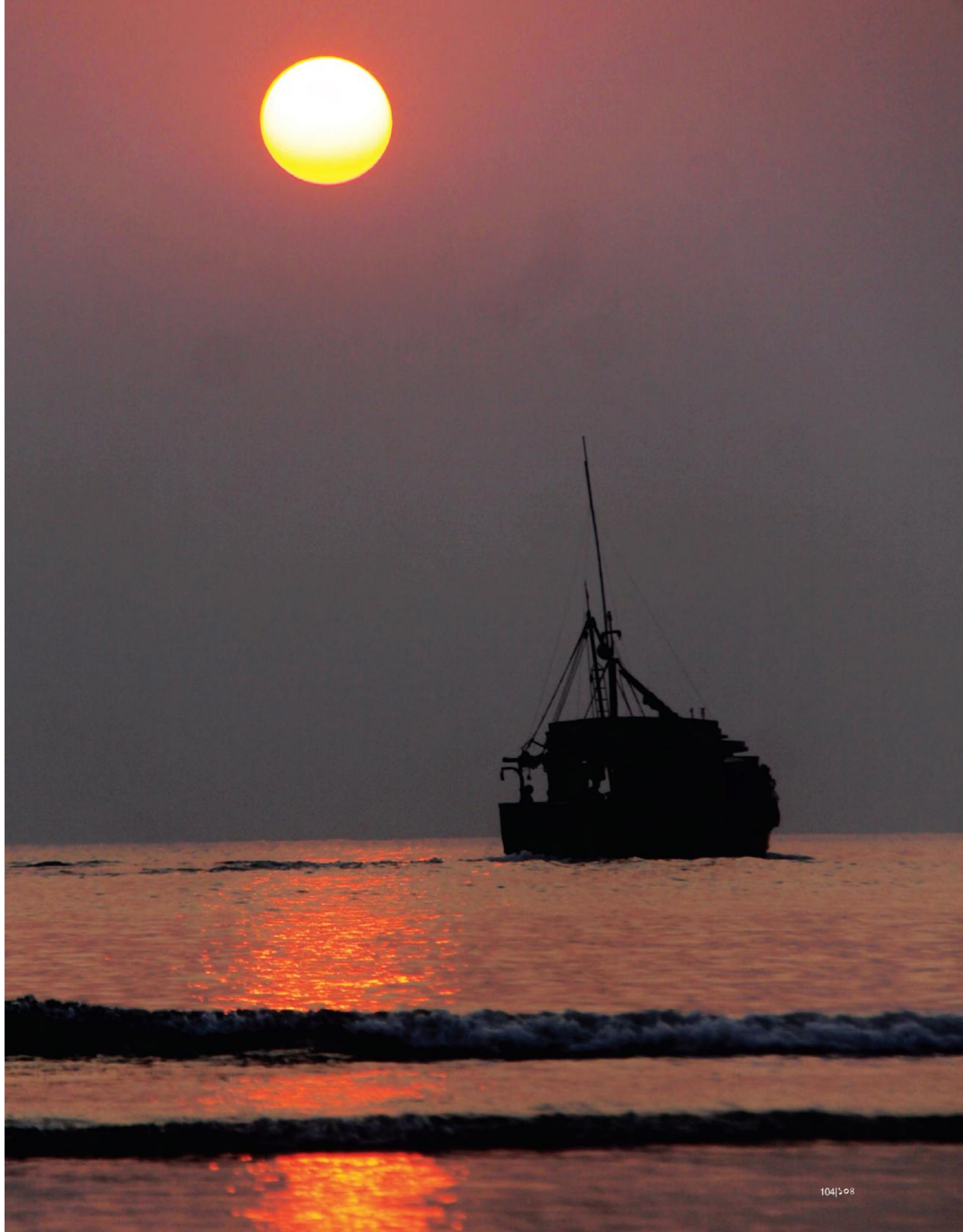
Kolkata, what a city! One that truly kicks it up in life, almost on a song set to perfect rhythm that goes unplugged during Durga Puja. It lives in the minds of its people, the litterateurs, the intellectuals, who think and write in poetry and prose, such is their temperament. Though the sunset at Digha is beautiful, the sight of a sailing boat silhouetted against the azure blue sky, is enough to make shutterbugs reach for their cameras. But then the city is loaded with such locations, some natural, some architectural and others that are simply all about the sights and sounds that set any two cities apart. Riding high on the notes of Rabindra Sangeet, Kolkatans give equal weightage to western pop and folk music. They, at the same time, rely heavily on the written word in terms of a pastime and also a mode for earning a livelihood. The poetic, literary mind of Kolkatans strives at all times to be at its creative best, that has through the ages manifested itself in the wondrous architectural structures that

dot the city. Laid back, they are perhaps, not given to sacrificing their afternoon siesta for anything in this world. In fact, leisure is something they know how to value, spending time doing *adda baji*, playing carom or cricket, reading and listening to music or simply playing an instrument or singing, without fretting about some work left undone. The temperament is clearly different here. But that surely does not stop them from being IT enabled and upwardly mobile, as is displayed in the growth achieved at Salt Lake City Sector 5. Acutely aware of sights and sounds, how can they ever leave taste behind. So there we have a long list of tantalizingly lip smacking fare, starting from Indian to continental and of course the not-to-be-missed street food of Kolkata. The Anglo-Indians have ensured the city has the best of bakeries while the Chinese in different localities have ensured the cuisine finds a place for itself. Truly this is a metropolis where the sun never sets.

Jamini Roy
যামিনী রায়



Talking about Kolkata, how can one miss out on Jamini Roy and for that matter, the repertoire of painters and sculptors of today? But then this is what the city is all about. Whatever we may write or showcase, for Kolkata, it will actually never be enough!



One who believes in taking up challenges

Subhash Jain
AGI Infra Ltd.

Kolkata, the Calcutta of yore ... the land of Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore, Ram Krishna Paramhans and Ma Sharada, throws back its head in ecstasy and exults in the sheer merriment of the moment. After all it is Durga Puja time and nothing else matters! It is life at full throttle as the market throbs with new energy and culture revives itself in every nook and corner of the city. The true contours of this heritage city are actually visible completely at this time of the year, when the real Bengali comes out of the closet to celebrate.... And how!!

The traditional Bengali bhadralok has been preparing since long, his dhooti (dhoti) and silk embroidered panjabi (kurta) with geele (creased) sleeves and matching nagra (footwear) and more, to get ready for the four-day extravaganza he has waited all year for. His wife is having a tough time choosing which sari, from taant to net, the latest to have joined the list, to wear when, rushing off

for the last minute buying spree. The gold jewellery can rest safe in the locker as the burst of accessories takes over in the form of the latest trend-setting model. It is brands that rule the world of adolescents and young Kolakatans, getting as flashy as they can get for this mother of all festivals.

After all it is Pujo that decides the trending agents of this society for the rest of the year. Bonhomie, camaraderie, relationships bloom and city's culture comes centrestage, the changes evident, the underlying factors jostling with criss-crossing choices and the original fabric of rituals and traditions stretched to the seams. Melodious Rabindra Sangeet envelopes the air, even as local bands drum up a genre of music that is now part of the terra firma that constitutes the city of today.



As rituals overlap and arti whips up a hysteria that is engulfed in the incense smoke, the cultural scene literally seems to boil over during Durga Puja with Kumari Puja. A small girl worshipped in the same manner as Ma Durga, looks the very image of the Goddess, bedecked in all finery. Sindoor khela the last day is yet another unique tradition. It is a colours riot as married women dressed mostly in traditional white sari with red border, smear vermillion on each other's face and hair parting. It marks the bidding of formal adieu to Ma Durga before the visarjan or immersion ceremony.





Devotees straggle up the stairs after a holy dip at Dakshineswar Temple before the customary darshan.



PAST PROJECTS

as the Dakshineswar Temple comes into view. The long-winded queue speaks of the die-hard devotees, who choose to patiently wait for darshan. Chunni, some flowers and prasada in hand, barefooted and a countenance that speaks of absolute devotion, they feel truly blessed even though they may only get a few seconds in front of the idol of Goddess Kali. Pigeons fly around pecking at feed offered by visitors, some of whom descend the ghat to the rear of the structure, for a holy dip. As the string of people start trooping towards the twelve other temples in the complex for a parikrama, some foreigners too join them in their worship. Tranquil, cool and

comforting the very air breathes of hope and trust for the Goddess who takes care of all. Close your eyes and perhaps you may imagine Thakur Ram Krishna Paramhans and Ma Sharada too moving about, tending to their daily rituals. A Ma Kali devotee, the room he stayed in has now been converted into a museum. The scene completely changes as one enters Belur Math. The visitors here seem to be scholars or just simple tourists. Foreigners, curiosity writ large on their faces, go around learning more about the abode of Swami Vivekananda they had heard, read so much about and believed in.

Devotees straggle up the stairs after a holy dip at Dakshineswar Temple before the customary darshan.

The headquarters of Ram Krishna Mission, Belur serves as a pilgrimage for all of those worldwide, who believe and follow the philosophy and culture of the movement. Founded by the main disciple of Ram Krishna Paramhans, Swami Vivekanand, Belur is the very picture of awakening, mental peace and spiritual strength.

ONGOING PROJECTS



Dummy Text

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UPCOMING PROJECTS



is a monastic organization for men brought together by Ram Krishna Paramhans, the great 19th century saint of Bengal, Ram Krishna Mission was founded by the thought leader of all times, Narendra Nath Datta, popularly known as Swami Vivekananda. The twin organizations which form the core of a worldwide spiritual movement aims at the harmony of religions, without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality. Not surprising that youngsters throng here for knowledge and spiritual guidance, as the immense following that Swami Vivekananda commands across the globe,

such, stress handling, relationships, you just name it, his books have the ability to show the way. The main goal and objective is to spread the idea of the potential divinity of every being and how to manifest it through every action and thought, to treat all work as worship, and service to man as service to God. His guiding light also leads towards the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden. This Indian Hindu monk's Chicago address that began with, 'Brothers and sisters of America...' is something that completely bridged the gap between Hinduism and all other religions of the world.

Devotees straggle up the stairs after a holy dip at Dakshineswar Temple before the customary darshan.

The Ram Krishna Mission is where other than Bengalis, people who believe and follow the movement gather for prayers and keertan. For followers all over the world it is a destination which is a pilgrimage of sorts. More and more youngsters are known to have of late joined in for peace, tranquility and with the intent to serve fellow human beings.



It is not only visited by the Jainis but tourists and other city folk too flock to the Pareshnath Jain Temple built by Ray Badridas Bahadur in 1867. The gateway is in itself an architectural masterpiece. The temple has a lamp which burns with ghee and is never extinguished. The structure an ornate mass of mirrors, coloured stones and glass mosaic, overlooks a beautiful garden.



Holding hibiscus flowers, chunni and laddus in their hands, devotees line up to pay obeisance to Goddess Kali here at Kalighat Mandir. Regarded as one of the 51 Shakti Peethas, it represents the site where the toes of the right foot of Sati fell.

WHILE RAM KRISHNA MATH

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