

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025**

Good evening and a warm welcome to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual General meeting.

We have completed all the pujas and cultural functions last year very well and credit goes to YOU all for our success. You stayed with us through thick and thin and made all the activities happen smoothly.

The Annual General Meeting last year was held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July'24 at Gandhi Hall at 6 pm. 28 members attended the meeting. Various decisions were made at the meeting. They were to have better transparency around finances and around initiatives to be put in place. These include implementing a digital payment facility on the website. The proposal for further sub – committees to build a strategic vision and the next phase of GMBHCA to embed a culture of collaborative idea generation and problem solving and to develop a sense of belonging within GMBHCA members was brought up by Shuma Pal. The suggestion was received positively by all members present at the AGM.

Our first ECM was held online on 17<sup>th</sup> July'24, followed by several follow up meetings. Soma Ghosh volunteered to produce the Community feedback google form. It was decided we will claim for Gift aid from HMRC for up to 4 years back. A membership database will also be produced by Ipsit, helped by Tapas. New receipt books to be printed. It was agreed that the Front desk collection rota will be made for the Puja. New membership IDs will also be produced. A new phone/ LTE -tab will be purchased to help with sum up machine and general help. Regular Sponsors will be requested to sponsor once again. Soma, Chumki volunteered to be the mail lead in the kitchen. Members will be requested to submit brochure articles and advertisements. For Gieo Gita, our members would join for performances on 11<sup>th</sup> August'24. Groups and sub-groups were created. These are kitchen, shopping, decoration, event management, feedback and relationship building. Fund raising group also to be created. Other existing sub - groups are Ladies Working Committee, Puja preparation group, Cultural group and Members / Volunteers group.

Our volunteers met at the Gandhi Hall for puja preparation, Mahalaya rehearsal and naroo making on 28<sup>th</sup> September'24 throughout the day at different times.

We organised Mahalaya celebration on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> October'24 to welcome Ma Durga with traditional agomoni songs, chanting of mantras and dances. It was very well presented and was enjoyed by the audience. This year keeping in mind the Abhaya case in R G Kar Kolkata,

we observed a one minute silence at the end of the show. The Members of GMBHCA gathered together with posters and candles to pay tribute to Abhaya and joined in shouting slogans of “Justice for R G Kar” to show support to all who were fearlessly fighting to end corruption. Sayan who had helped plan this gathering also paid respect to Abhaya along with others while Falguni’s rendition of music almost brought the audience to tears.

The five days of Durga puja started on 8<sup>th</sup> October with Maha Sashthi and ended with Bijoya Dashami on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> October. As usual, we had a huge crowd in all the evenings and to avoid overcrowding in the Gandhi Hall, we had set up a marquee in the car park for 5 days

2

with proper sitting arrangements and adequate heating and lighting where our members met after puja and chatted and had evening prosad and meal there. The hall decoration team led by Dr Joydeep Mookerjee did an excellent job in decorating the hall and the stage for the puja. The team mainly consisting of Joydeep, Parag, Alok, Tapas, Abhishek, Sabyasachi, Bhavna, Debopam, Sourav, Ahana and Sanjoy made sure that the hall was clean and tidy at the end of each puja day.

Our Annual Durga Puja magazine was produced by our Brochure Secretary, Subrata Pal. It was released on Maha Shashthi day.

All the pujas were performed with much devotion and sincerity by Mr Sankar Bhattacharjee, assisted by Mrs Iti Bhattacharjee and our very willing and able young helper Mr Deb Banerjee. On behalf of all, I thank them profusely from the bottom of my heart. It’s a big responsibility to organise Durga puja and a lot of work required beforehand for this. Our much dedicated ladies team started working on it at least a month before and took responsibilities for various areas and it was done smoothly. Many items were bought from India by Dr Sutapa Mookerjee and some others. The ladies who helped took leave from their respective jobs much before the commencement of puja to be there to prepare for puja. Thank you so much to all the ladies. I feel so proud of you all. Regular puja preparations, making garlands for all the deities, making bhog for am & pm, arranging for kumari puja, Sandhi puja, Hom & Balidaan, shopping for puja etc, you have been at it, fully absorbed since last few years. A few new enthusiastic girls also joined to help with puja as well as kitchen and general help.

Shibani, Bidisha, Maushami Chatterjee, Sumitra, Jayati, Madhumita, Priya, Debika, Falguni, Adwitee, Satabdi datta, Satabdi Majhi, Saheli, Bhavna and a few others helped with the puja preparation. Akhondo Chandipath was done by Mr Gurudas Biswas on Mahashtami and again on Kalipuja. All the items for Kumari Puja was bought and donated by Anjira. The puja saris, dhutis, shawl and ornaments were donated by our ladies. Puja bhog was prepared by many for morning and evening pujas. We are so privileged to have you all with us. Many thanks to each one of you. A special measure was taken to keep the open fire under observation. Dr Debika took the responsibility for that and she did the job sincerely and with much professionalism. I would like to mention here Mousumi Sengupta who gladly took the responsibility of looking after Sankar and Iti and offered her place for resting during the puja days. Saroni provided special chair for Shankar to use during puja. Thank you Mousumi and Saroni.

Maha Shashthi was sponsored by Safron Spice. Thanks a lot. Maha Saptami was sponsored by Mr Pankaj Sinha and family. Mahashtami day puja was sponsored jointly by Satyaki Banerjee & Sanchari Bhattacharya, Bhavna & Tuneer Ghosh, Adwitee and Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury and Sabyasachi & Satabdi Dutta. Evening puja and meal was sponsored by Sharmishtha and Jaydip Majumdar. Maha Nabami was again jointly sponsored by Moumita & Ipsit, Anjira & Chandrangshu, Misti & Sirshendu, Anindita & Partho, Mousumi & Dipanjan, Nabanita, Sharmila Sen, Suparna & Anindya, Sushmita & Arindam, Debika & Samik, Durba & Ashoke,

### 3

Sartpal Singh & Binita and Divya. GMBHCA is ever grateful to you all for your huge support monetarily as well as for helping in the kitchen.

Lakshmi Puja was performed on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October'24. After the puja , Lakshmi Panchali was read by Iti Bhattacharjee. Delicious food was prepared Ankhi, Soma, helped by Bhavna, Satabdi Dutta , Satabdi Majhi, Saheli. It was a quiet evening. Dr S N & Sabita Laha sponsored the puja. Thank you Dr & Mrs Laha.

Sri Sri Kali Puja was performed on 31<sup>st</sup> October. It was performed meticulously again by Shankar & Iti helped by our young man Deb. Along with puja Chandipath, Balidan & Hom was done. Tapas and Falguni sponsored the Kali puja. Thank you.

It was so lovely to see Deb wearing traditional clothes for performing the puja, dhuti Panjabi & chador and he also did some of the rituals by himself so confidently and well.

Kitchen and shopping was managed mainly by Alok, Tapas, Soma , Chumki, Debasree, Ankhi, Subir, Satabdi, Saheli, Ahana, Bhavna, Sourav, Maushami Chatterjee. There were many more. We have seen you all working there. Thanks a lot to each and everyone. A special thank you to Alok for arranging the cooks and the cleaner. Soma volunteered and with her team, including Chumki and Debasree cooked meal for two days during puja. There were others too who helped in the kitchen. Some of our volunteers were there throughout the day managing both puja and kitchen. There were so many of our volunteers involved in cutting vegetables, washing, helping with cooking, serving food during day and night and did many other jobs too. A new food processor was bought and donated to GMBHCA by Somnath and Chumki and was used quite a lot. Thanks to you both. Food voucher system for non - members was introduced for evening meals on Saptami, Ashtami and Nabami.

Fund raising team was led by Subrata, Ipsit, Chandrangshu, Mr Biswas and Tapas. You all deserve a big thank you for doing the very important job. A special thanks to Chandrangshu, for accepting the role of the Acting Treasurer who took over many responsibilities and performed all successfully over last 20 months.

Saraswati puja was performed on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February'25 by Shashtri ji of Radha Krishna Mandir helped by Pranab. Other helpers were Maushami, Saheli, Jayati, Ankhi and Satabdi. Around 200 devotees came to the puja. The stage was beautifully decorated in a special style

by Joydeep and team. Delicious prasad was cooked by Hanuman ji's wife. Cleaning was done by Anil. Thank you all.

A good quality short cultural programme was arranged by our Cultural Secretaries.

This year we organised our Bijoya Sammilani in a Church Hall, especially with mangsho bhaat in mind. It was an entertaining evening, entertainments being organised by the cultural team. Thanks are due to Somnath and his son for being so supportive in leading the program and providing / handling their full music system. Thanks to all the participants and our audience.

4

The programme was very entertaining. Non veg food cooked by Soma, Chandrangshu and Moumita, helped by Shuma was very delicious and enjoyed by all.

Nababarsho Utsab was celebrated on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> April'25 at the Gandhi Hall. In the first part, Basanto Utsab in Shantiniketan style was performed by our community artists followed by songs and dances from different states of India. It was indeed a brilliant job done by all singers and dancers. I was overwhelmed to see their willingness to perform as well as helping each other making sure it was a unique experience for all. The dances from other states, and other items in the second part were very enjoyable. Many thanks to the whole team for the excellent performances. Thanks are due to Sutapa, Anushree, Ahana for taking the responsibility of selling donated Durga Puja's sarees for the GMBHCA fund. Thanks to Arunava Ghosh for managing the website and updating it from time to time. Thank you to Chandrangshu, Alok, Shuma, Arunava and Gobinda for managing the ticket sale and Bhavna for arranging the stall.

On behalf of the EC committee, I would like to thank Dr S. N. Laha for his advice and support throughout.

I must thank all the committee members profusely and their spouses for understanding, for their constant help by being together unitedly during last year.

Heartfelt thanks are also due to our youngsters, our future, who were actively engaged in community work. Amongst them are Mr Deb Banerjee, son of Drs Debika & Samik Banerjee who supported our priest constantly during puja, Mr Aryan Saha, son of Mr Ipsit Saha and Mrs Moumita Dutta for his contribution in creating the GMBHCA database, and Miss Tanisha Dasgupta, daughter of Mr Tapas and Mrs Falguni Dasgupta for making the GMBHCA membership list. Well done all of you!!

We are glad to announce that Drs Nabanita Ghosh and Debika Banerjee have been appointed as DSOs for GMBHCA. Thank you Nabanita and Debika for accepting the role and taking the big responsibility. GMBHCA also has taken Annual Insurance this year and will continue to make more improvements in near future for the benefit of all.

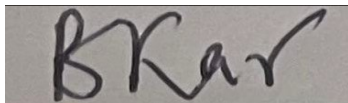
GMBHCA is organising a picnic on 19<sup>th</sup> July'25. It will be a day excursion to Devil's Bridge Waterfalls and Nant yr Arian in North Wales and is being kindly organised by Dr Joydeep Mookerjee, Dr Sutapa Mookerjee and Mr Debopam Mukherjee.

With much sadness I would like to let you know that Mrs Jyotsna Dey, a much devoted wife of our former President and Treasurer and a founder member of the GMBHCA passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> April this year. She was very much involved in our puja since the onset of the puja. She will be missed dearly. May her soul rest in peace.

I would like to conclude this account of the activities of our association during the year by thanking you all for your continuing support. I would like to thank the Gandhi Hall management committee for your support. The association's extended activities will be possible only with your continuing interest and financial support. I am sure we can count on your active support and help to translate our plan into reality.

Thank you. May Ma Durga bless us all!!

Dr Bharati Kar

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'B Kar' with a stylized flourish at the end.

General Secretary GMBHCA