

MD Speak

Dear Reader,

Wish all of you a very happy new year! From Nabo Borsho to Ugadi, we have had a most delightful time ushering in the new year, which brought us much-needed good cheer, even as India reels under the second Covid wave. We are happy that we could launch our services in Hyderabad before the second wave struck, as we are able to help the elders in Hyderabad with hospitalisation, procurement of essentials and vaccination. Though we feel relieved that we have been able to help most of our members get completely vaccinated, we would still request our members to be careful and stay home as far as possible till the current spike subsides.

The Support Elders family stands strong. We are there for you, ready to serve you in every way possible and although we will be curtailing physical visits, like last year, we will be there for you at all times; taking care of your medical exigencies and emergencies; calling to check on you; and procuring medicines, essentials or home-cooked food, as and when required.

We have come a long way since March 2020, when physical isolation had meant complete isolation. It is not so anymore. We are now digitally connected. I would request you to also stay connected with the world outside your home. Do participate in our cultural programmes; tune into our learning sessions; and join our clubs and communities. Staying connected and staying happy is the key to our well-being in these times.

Happy Reading!

Apratim Chattopadhyay

The Support Elders Family Now Includes the Senior Citizens of Hyderabad!

After serving the senior citizens of Kolkata and its adjoining areas and Durgapur, and impacting almost 1,400 lives, we are now serving the elders of Hyderabad. We launched our Hyderabad operations last month with an event chaired by Deepanwita Chattopadhyay, Chairman and Co-founder, Support Elders, at Taj Banjara in Hyderabad.

Very well-known in her field, Ms Chattopadhyay is the Chairman and CEO of the IKP Knowledge Park, headquartered in Genome Valley, Hyderabad, and has been an integral part of the start-up ecosystem. In fact, very recently, she received the FICCI FLO Influential Women Awards 2021 for Outstanding Contribution to the Innovation Ecosystem but, as she says, "Supporting start-ups is my job, supporting elders is my passion".

Mr Apratim Chattopadhyay, Founder, CEO & MD and

Mr Sukhwant Grewal, President – East and South, along with

members from the Hyderabad team, were also present at the event. We have tied up with Hyderabad-based Call Health, one of India's leading HealthTech companies, to provide complementary services to each other's members in Hyderabad. When asked about our services during the pandemic, Mr Chattopadhyay pointed out, "Our pre-emptive planning and process-driven approach facilitated uninterrupted service through remote working and an intensive preventive protocol, while taking care of the members' needs, which included taking care of them during medical emergencies and exigencies; delivering essential medicines and groceries; arranging for delivery of home-cooked food; helping with out-of-home work, etc. Now, we are working with the healthcare service providers to make the vaccination process as smooth as possible for our members." SE



Friday EVENING Specials

Beautiful beginnings

April 16, 2021

From Ugadi to Nabo Borsho, our members and friends of Support Elders from Telengana



and West Bengal celebrated new year in style with story-telling, cooking, singing and floral decorations. What a treat it was!



Members go a-cheffing

April 02, 2021

From the Easter cake to a Hyderabad breakfast, from a khichra lunch to a tea time coconut pattie with



a piquant salsa, Members of SE-Gourmet treated us to a fabulous fare. SE



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DOWN MEMORY LANE

Terror tale from Tezpur

Sometimes there is reason for fear; at others fear itself creates the problem. Our member, Ms S. Mukherjee, shares a rather scary episode in her life, when she lived in Tezpur, during the Indo-China war of 1962.

Wife of an Indian army colonel, posted in NEFA, a non-family station, Ms Mukherjee chose to stay, along with other few officers' families, in bungalows in the town of Tezpur, where the husbands could occasionally visit. It was a quiet, peaceful and a beautiful town on the bank of the Brahmaputra, with rolling green hills and hillocks, parks and lakes. Her husband was based in Tawang and she had the advantage of an attendant family, living in her outhouse. The lady attendant helped her to take care of her three children, especially the youngest, only three months old.

Suddenly the Chinese army turned towards Tezpur and the town became a war zone. The officers' families were asked to be prepared for any untoward incidents and have some weapon ready to protect themselves. Every night she would wait for a phone call from a husband's colleague, who would inform her that Col Mukherjee was fine. She put her children to bed and waited anxiously for the midnight call.

One night there was no call and she was in a state of panic. It was past 1 am and she was desperate to call the colleague but hesitant to disturb someone in the middle of the night. Suddenly she heard a vehicle stop outside the house; it was pitch dark and she shuddered with fear when she heard heavy footsteps stomping up to her door from the gate of the compound. Her husband had asked her to be prepared for any eventuality. She grabbed a big

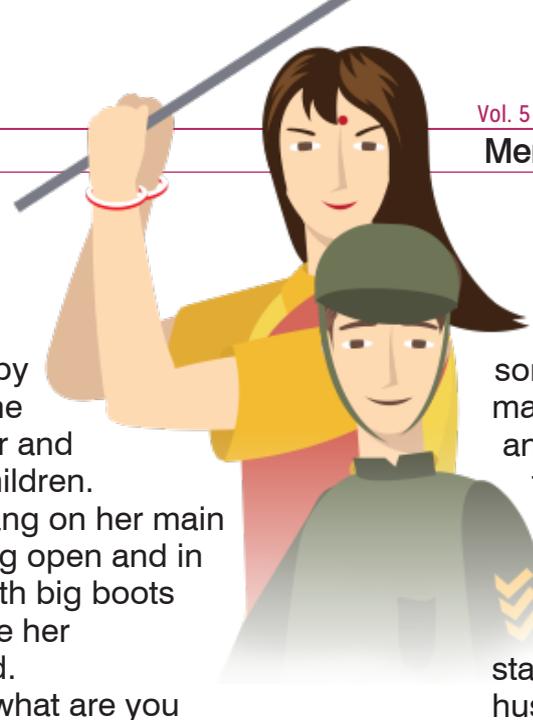
rod and stood by the door. No one could get to her and her sleeping children. There was a bang on her main door and it flung open and in came a man with big boots and down came her rod on his head.

"Ki korchho?" (what are you doing?) shouted the intruder. Oh no! It was her husband's voice. The victim of the blow had sprung up and turned the lights on. There was Colonel Mukherjee, in battle fatigues, covered with dust and quite unrecognisable from the person that her husband was. An army man, the colonel knew how to protect himself and had a helmet on in any case. His angst was not about the assault but the fact that the door was unlatched and all that he had to do was bang, for it to fly open. His family was totally unprotected. The embarrassed and yet relieved Ms Mukherjee muttered that she had left the door open for the attendants to come in if their rooms outside got very cold. They were probably happier in their own room outside and the door remained unbolted. Her husband had come home from Tawang unexpectedly as he wanted to help his wife pack up and return to Kolkata immediately because Tezpur was no longer safe. She packed everything that night because they were to leave the next morning. She sent her eight-year old to her neighbour's house the next morning to check if anyone else wanted to leave with them. The little one returned with the news that "All the aunties have left Tezpur, except one family". She realised the urgency of matter. The other family wanted to come along too. Ms Mukherjee also requested her attendant to accompany them to Kolkata but she was reluctant to leave her home at Tezpur. However she packed

some food, mainly biscuits and Lactogen for her kids and they left for the Tezpur railway station. Her husband was

there to see them off. The platform was packed with civilians and army *jawans*. "I asked my elder daughter to hold her brother's hand and hold my "pallu" (one end of the saree) with the other hand because I was carrying my three-month old on my lap." The Mukherjees and the other family managed to find seats on the train. It was to be a never-ending journey, over more than seven days and her husband reminded her not to accept food from the *jawans* because they had limited rations. The travellers survived on biscuits and Lactogen as the train moved at its own pace, stopping at several stations, with the *jawans* getting off, cooking food on the platforms, having their meals before the train moved again. They generously offered to share their food but Ms Mukherjee refused politely. Finally, they reached Kolkata. There was panic at home too because no one knew what was going on with them. Their stuff had arrived at her uncle's home before she did and no one had a clue about what had happened to them. She only managed to get a message across just before reaching Kolkata that she was returning while Col Mukherjee had stayed back at the front. Her mother-in-law was extremely worried that her son had been left behind and the entire family waited in anxiety. Then one fine morning Col Mukherjee arrived. The war had ended and all was well with her world. SE

(As narrated to Support Elders by our member)



TRAVEL DIARY

Remembering the Rann Utsav

Our members, Ms D. Sengupta and Mr A. K. Sengupta, took off for the Rann Utsav in Kutch last month. The natural beauty, creativity and culture on display made the visit very memorable, as Ms Sengupta told us

The Rann Utsav conjures images of amazing creativity on display on a shimmering white landscape, from October to holi. The carnival of music, dance and folk art becomes glorious on a full moon night, when the natural beauty of the White Rann gets enhanced manifold. This was the sight that greeted our members at village Dhordo about 85 km from Bhuj. It was during the pandemic but Gujarat Tourism took utmost care from the time they landed at Ahmedabad, where the tourist bus was waiting for them. There were tourists from all over the world. "We chose to visit the fair on a full moon night and were in raptures over the nocturnal beauty. The white serene expanse under the moonlight offered stunning creations of nature as we were indulged in a world of pleasure, leisure and merriment."

The village had become a city of tents with more than 250 luxury tents, equipped with modern amenities, pitched on a vast field.

A desert region, the days are hot and the nights are extremely cold at Dhordo. The air-conditioning took care of the fluctuating temperature. Vegetable buffet meals were so well managed by the



Member-Chef

Coriander (*dhone pata*) Fish

Our member, **Ms D. Dutta**, shares a recipe that her children love.

Ingredients:

- Katla fish (*gada*/pieces from the rear end): 6 pieces
- Coriander leaves: 100 grams
- Mustard seeds: 1 teaspoon
- Khus khus* (*posto*): 1 teaspoon
- Ginger: ½ inch
- Lemon juice: 1 lemon
- Green chillies: 4
- Turmeric powder (*haldi*): 1 teaspoon
- Salt to taste
- Mustard oil: 5 tablespoons

Method:

Wash and dry the fish pieces. Add turmeric powder, salt and lemon juice to the pieces and keep aside for 15 minutes. Make a paste of ginger and coriander leaves.

Make another paste of *khus khus* (*posto*) and mustard seeds (*sorsay*). Put the wok (*kadhai*) on the oven and heat it well so that the fish pieces do not stick in the wok. Add mustard oil and lightly fry the fish. Do not over fry. Remove the fish from the wok and add the two pastes, one by one, in the remaining oil. Saute until it the *masala* (spices) and the oil



Image Courtesy: Tapati Banerjee

separate. Now add the fish pieces, carefully turn them over so so that they do not break. Add the green chillies.

Switch off the oven, add a teaspoon of mustard oil and keep the wok covered for 20 minutes. The coriander fish is ready. Serve with hot rice. **SE**

courteous staff that there was never a rush during meals. What stole their hearts were the handicrafts on display; from the *bandhini* sarees to traditional ornaments, the folk artistes and the cultural programmes; not to mention the tours to the salt desert on camel carts. One could even take a city tour, if one wished to. Mr Sengupta's interest in architecture and design took

them to the colossal statue of Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel. "We went up on a lift up to a certain level and had a bird's eye view of proceedings. The complex has a memorial garden and museum, a viewing gallery and an exhibition area." The colourful creativity, culture, crafts and generous Kutchi hospitality made the stay memorable. **SE**



(As told by our member to Support Elders)



(Images: Courtesy Ms D. Sengupta)

Big Ticket

May 14, 2021

Just transitions

There are few socio-economic imperatives for India that are more important than moving towards net zero carbon emission. Our member, Mr P. S. Bhattacharyya, former chairman, Coal India, explains a possible way forward for India to reach its climate goal. Managing the coal sector that contributes 50% of commercial energy and around 75% of power generation will assume critical dimensions.



Lifelong learning

Computers are Cool!

Fear of technology or technophobia troubles some folks but not our members; never mind that some have are not comfortable with them. Some reached out to us to help them make their computers their friends. Sure enough, we had a delightful interaction at our first computer class on April 24, as our members quickly got into the groove, learning all about the parts of the computers as some journeyed from zero familiarity to confidently answering questions on parts of the computer. Over another four classes, we expect to enable them to strike deep friendships with their machines. We are excited to take this journey with them as they become computer savvy and engage with the wider world using the computer not just for emailing but also for ordering food and finance, zoom in to meet their grandchildren, teleconsult with their doctors, pay their bills or just 'hang'. SE

MAY

07.05.2021



Trading fair and square

Prof. Indro Dasgupta takes us through the world of Fair Trade and its impact on artisans and artisanal products.

09.05.2021

Image Courtesy: Wiki



On the wings of poesy

Our members present a celebration of Tagore on his birth anniversary.

14.05.2021

Image Courtesy: Pixabay



Just transitions

Our member, Mr P. S. Bhattacharyya, former chairman, Coal India, explains the process of energy transition, focusing on how to make it just, least painful and genuinely sustainable.

21.05.2021

Image Courtesy: Pixabay



Songs of the Summer

SE-Sing2Win, our antakshari club, plays with summer numbers in a heartwarming presentation.

28.05.2021

Rock-cut!

Mr P. Dasgupta, heritage writer, introduces us to Indian art as represented in the murals of Ajanta.



JUNE

04.06.2021

Image Courtesy: Bela Geletneky From Pixabay



Encounters with the Environment

Our member, Prof. Ratna Ghosh, has taught in leading institutions globally. She shares her learnings from her many environment-driven projects on the eve of World Environment Day.

11.06.2021

Image Courtesy: Pixabay



Magic of Mathematics Series # 1

Our member, Prof. Irene Sarkar, talks about the relationship between mathematics and nature.

18.06.2021

Image Courtesy: Pixabay



Eat What You watch

SE-Gourmet, our cookery club, presents its bi-monthly 'cook and learn' treat with a culinary cornucopia.

25.06.2021

Image Courtesy Ms Sanjana Ghosh



Textile Traditions

Textile and design curator, Mayank Mansingh Kaul, presents 'The Banarasi'.

*Programmes are subject to last minute changes due to unavoidable circumstances