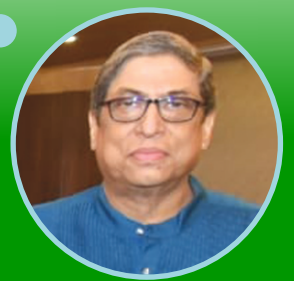




Rotary  
Garden Reach



IMAGINE  
ROTARY



# LIGHT

WEEKLY BULLETIN September 27th, 2022 - Vol. 45 No. 12

President - Rtn. Abinash K Singh • Secretary - Rtn. Debasis Das • TREASURER - Rtn. Chiranjib Sha • Editor - PP Tanu Roy

## A 'pepper' named Barrackpore

Brinsley Samaroo & Rattan Lal Hangloo

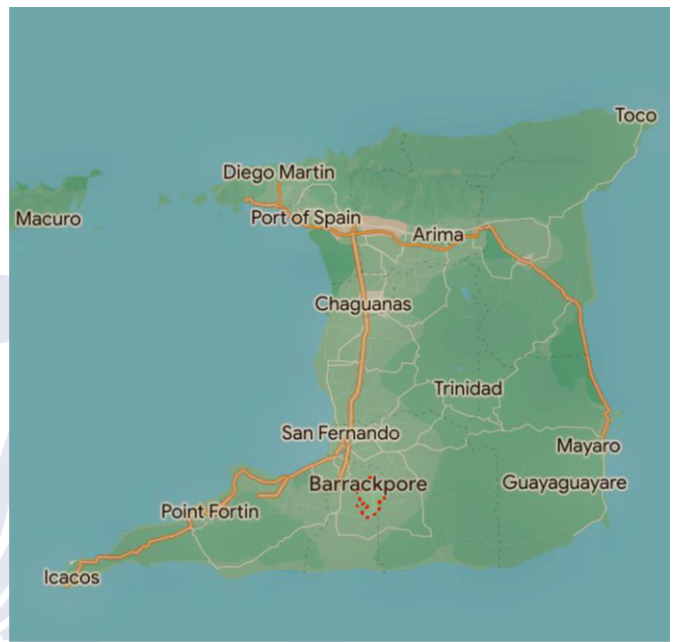
A seemingly modest & wrinkled pepper from Trinidad is probably one of the hottest to exist. This deadly Caribbean pepper is, intriguingly, named after an even more fascinating Indian town where Mangal Pandey sparked the Sepoy Mutiny.



This particular pepper is a 7 Pot *Barrackpore*. The 7-pots-family earned its name due to its ability to heat 7 pots of stew. The Barrackpore is excellent for hot sauces and powders owing to its fantastic flavour, and unrelenting heat. The 7 Pot Barrackpore starts at the same Scoville Heat Unit (SHU) as the regular ones, but its highest level has frequently approached 1.3M SHU, which can easily set your face on fire. How the name Barrackpore came about, though, is quite intriguing.

The pepper was named after the place where it was originally

discovered - the small hamlet of Barrackpore. In southern Trinidad and Tobago, about one hour's drive from the Port of Spain, it was a village with a rich history of sugarcane and oil fortunes. Now why exactly was this village in Trinidad named after a bustling town in West Bengal? Situated in north Kolkata and famous for its tranquil river views, iconic Biryani eatery and the historic revolution of 1857: Barrackpore.



The first British barrack in India was established in Barrackpore, in 1772, giving the town its name. In 1857, the town witnessed greatness when Mangal Pandey, a sepoy stationed at the Barrack, demonstrated his dissent against the regiment, armed with a loaded musket. Mangal Pandey, subsequently, was tried by a court marshal and his death was mourned by sepoys throughout Bengal. Only a month later, his act of rebellion sparked a larger revolution in India. Barrackpore became a hotbed of mutiny.

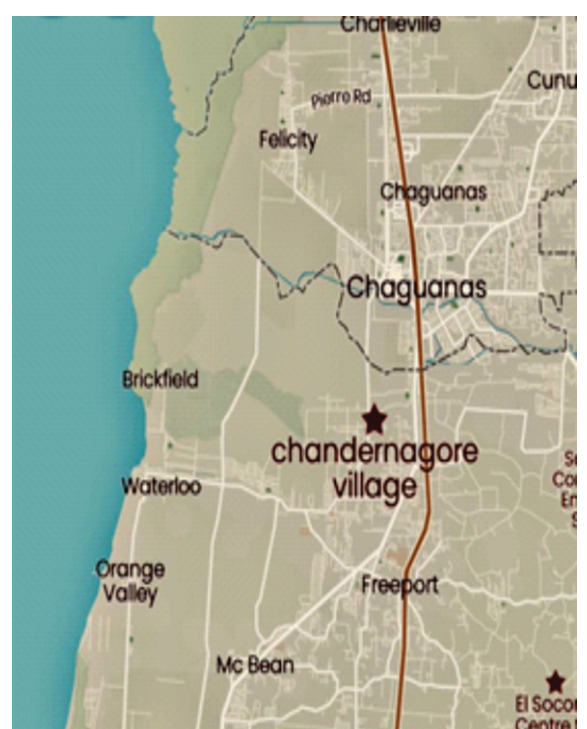
What does that have to do with the island in the Caribbean, though? We travel back to May 1845, when 'Fatel Razack' became the first ship to transport indentured labourers from India to Trinidad. The practice continued to bring thousands of Indians to the Caribbean up until 1917.



Over 140,000 Indians were brought to the islands during this time. Along with their religion, food, and clothing, the indentured labourers also brought the names of the towns they were from. And there lies our story. The vast majority of these Indian immigrants came from North India via the port of Calcutta, where they were known as **Kalkatiyas**; those who left from South India via the port of Madras were referred to as Madrasis in Trinidad.

Intriguingly, they gave familiar place names to the areas where they settled in Trinidad, mainly after the places the migrants came from. There were settlements named after Calcutta, Fyzabad, Coromandel, Malabar, Madras, and Patna, to name a few. However, it was not just the landless Indian peasants who came to Trinidad. Several academics assert that many Indian Sepoys who participated in the great 1857 uprising and fought against the British also fled to Trinidad to avoid execution.

Several accounts claim that the Sepoys from the cantonments of Barrackpore gave their settlement the name after the Bengal town where the uprising originated. It's not a mere coincidence that there is another settlement named Chandanagore, not too far from Barrackpore. The idea that their ancestors participated in the Great Sepoy Mutiny was one that many people in this Trinidadian community deeply embraced. A true tale has been kept hidden by the working-class community in the southern Trinidadian sugarcane fields.





**Today is our 2193rd**

**Members attended last RWM : 10**

***Birthday Greetings :***

Sept 25th Rtn. Dr. BN Jha

Sept 27th Bhavna, Daughter of PP Naresh Jain

Spouse Leema, Wife of Rtn. Chiranjib Sha



**Aarohan: 5th Installation Ceremony of Rotaract Garden Reach at BNROC on September 24th, 2022.**

**LITRAG and Save the Children  
partner to support our youngest learners**

One of my best memories as a young mom is reading books with my son when he was a newborn and as he grew through being a toddler, little boy, and into to his early school years. Together, through books, we explored so many places as we explored the richness of language and the power of the written word. It was a special experience between a parent and a child and one that helped ensure that he would be ready for academic success when he entered school.



Similar early experiences with language and literacy, sadly, are lacking for many children. To help close this early learning gap, **LITRAG (Literacy Rotary Action Group)** and Save the Children launched a partnership, Together We Read, to reach underserved and hard to reach children and their families. The partnership uses the best of both organizations to build awareness and initiate local programs that will close the achievement gap among some of our youngest learners by providing support, resources, and strategies so all parents can be their child's first best teacher.

**Why focus on early childhood literacy? Consider these facts:**

- ✓ *0 For at-risk children, the academic achievement gap starts early and can be measured in babies as young as 9 months old.*
- ✓ *Young children without access to high-quality preschool or early education are 25% more likely to drop out of school, 40% more likely to become teen parents, and 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime*
- ✓ *For every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five education programs there is a \$7 annual return on investment.*

Together, We Read, connects the early education programs of Save the Children with Rotary clubs and districts to build public awareness and support for programs that close the early learning gap and increase literacy rates, especially in rural communities. This partnership connects Save the Children's expertise in early literacy programs with Rotary's expertise in advocacy, connecting community leaders, developing and implementing projects, and driving public awareness- all with the aim of measurably increasing education outcomes for young children living in poverty.

As a result of Together We Read, Clubs and District have reached out to their communities with great results. Their first task was to coach clubs in how to do a local community assessment - to identify needs in the community and identify assets they could build on. One of the surprises from the community assessment is the feedback from many parents that they do not feel confident to be their child's teacher. One of the Rotarians' challenges in designing outreach programs was how to get parents involved with their child's early learning in a way they feel comfortable. Another identified need was for young children to have access to books in the home. The Greater San Gabriel Valley Rotary learned that foster children often have few things they can call their own, so they created Literacy Care Bags - filled with colouring and activity books, crayons and markers, games and a few books that the children chose themselves. Rotarians partnered with local businesses to acquire the materials and with social services to get them to the children. An added benefit: children had literacy

activities to do while at home during the quarantine. *Through the designated use of District Grants, many clubs were able to launch new early literacy programs - helping to stretch their fundraising and encourage potential partners to match Rotary project funds.*

## **PM Modi announces “PM-SHRI Yojana” for development and upgradation of 14,500 schools across India**

On the occasion of Teacher's Day, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has announced development and upgradation of 14,500 schools across India under the Pradhan Mantri Schools For Rising India (PM-SHRI) Yojana.

The PM-SHRI schools will have a modern, transformational and holistic method of imparting education. Shri Modi said that he is certain that the PM-SHRI schools will further benefit lakhs of students across India in the spirit of NEP.

The Prime Minister tweeted;

*"Today, on #TeachersDay I am glad to announce a new initiative - the development and upgradation of 14,500 schools across India under the Pradhan Mantri Schools For Rising India (PM-SHRI) Yojana. These will become model schools which will encapsulate the full spirit of NEP."*

"The PM-SHRI schools will have a modern, transformational and holistic method of imparting education. Emphasis will be on a discovery oriented, learning centric way of teaching. Focus will also be on modern infra including latest technology, smart classrooms, sports and more."

"The National Education Policy has transformed the education sector in the recent years. I am certain that the PM-SHRI schools will further benefit lakhs of students across India in the spirit of NEP."



## **A moment with Rotary that changed my life**

**Dean Rohrs, Rotary Foundation Trustee**

A few years back, I was taking part in a polio immunization field trip in northern Nigeria, vaccinating children against the disease. After a dusty trip on non-existent roads right into the northern Nigeria countryside, I was dropped off under a tree with a Rotaractor translator, one other Rotary member, and the local polio immunization team. This is an area frequented by Boko Haram and although I grew up in Africa, and am adventurous, I wasn't sure that I would ever be found again.

The whole morning, women and children came to us





for their polio vaccinations - winding their way to our tree through the fields. But by the early afternoon when the women start preparing the evening meal, there were no further children to immunize. I then took the opportunity to wander through the groups of compounds looking for children to immunize. While doing so, I came across a simple well with a rope and bucket and little girls - aged 10 to 12 years - collecting water, filling containers, and then disappearing into the bush with their water.

I asked the head of the village where they were going, and he told me that there were two other settlements in the area - one 2 kilometres away and the other more than 3 kilometres away. These settlements had no water. These little girls walked twice a day to fetch water for their families and thus never attended school.

When I got back to the tree and back to the team, I asked this leader what it costs to dig a simple well like that. That answer changed my life - and the realization of how little it takes to change lives.

When I got back to my hotel that night, I took out my spending money and my travel emergency fund and laid the money out on my bed. I had enough money - not only for one well - but to dig two wells and to rehabilitate the well that I had seen that day.

Leaving those funds in the hands of the local Rotaractors - 10 months later I had photos of the "Canadian wells" in those two new settlements and the cover and new surround of the original well.

Every time I look at these photos, I remember how little it took to make a difference. I remember the sight of those little girls with their small dusty bare feet, their buckets and containers on their heads, and their strong little backs as they not only faced with courage and stoicism their walk home reach through this dangerous bush, but also the life they lead and will lead.

Just a brief moment and a few dollars from my life - but what did it mean to those girls? A safe environment of not walking through dangerous territory. A chance to go to school and better themselves. A community that could now focus on living instead of always stretching for the daily water.

*We all have these moments in our Rotary journey. But what we do with them is really what counts.*



**RCC Badartala: Sarees, Lungi-Vests were distributed by Rotary Garden Reach; Children's outfits by Rotaract Garden Reach.**

## Rotary President Jennifer announces US\$150 million pledge

Rotary International President Jennifer Jones appeared on the main stage at the star-studded Global Citizen Festival on 24 September to highlight Rotary's commitment to eradicating polio and announce an additional US\$150 million pledge toward that end.

Jones, who spoke in front of 60,000 people in New York City and tens of thousands more online and on TV, noted the state of emergency that the governor of New York State recently declared to combat a resurgence of polio in the region.

Jones stressed that polio is preventable through vaccines and that wild poliovirus is endemic in only two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although female vaccinators are critical to building relationships with mothers and reaching children in these areas, they sometimes can face harassment or even attacks.

In Pakistan, "frontline female health workers put themselves at risk every day," Jones said. "They are committed, even with obstacles, to reaching every last child with polio vaccines." The vaccination program works with the local police and government to ensure the safety of these health workers.

Jones talked about the effect of polio vaccinations in some countries being disrupted by COVID-19. She pointed out that in 2021; about 25 million children went without critical immunizations. "The world has beaten back this disease significantly, but we must redouble efforts," Jones said.

The additional funding Jones announced will go to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which said in August that it was seeking new funding commitments for its 2022-26 polio eradication strategy. "We want this to be the start of a massive effort to reach the initiative's US\$4.8 billion funding goal," Jones said.

Rotary members have been at the centre of the worldwide effort to eradicate polio for more than three decades. Rotary launched PolioPlus in 1985 and helped found the GPEI in 1988,



when there were an estimated 350,000 polio cases across more than 125 countries in one year. Since then, cases have plummeted more than 99.9%, sparing more than 20 million people from paralysis. Rotary has helped immunize nearly 3 billion children against polio, contributed more than US\$2.5 billion to global polio eradication efforts, and helped secure more than US\$10 billion from donor governments.

**The Global Citizen Festival**, an annual music celebration, urges world leaders to end extreme poverty, take action on climate change, empower girls and women, and dismantle systematic barriers. This year's Global Citizen Festival, which took place in New York City and in Accra, Ghana, called on global leaders to invest US\$600 million into the future of women and girls, narrow the US\$10 billion climate change shortfall, and provide US\$500 million to help farmers in Africa to respond to the global hunger crisis.

*The New York component, hosted by actor and Global Citizen ambassador Priyanka Chopra Jonas, included performances from Metallica, Charlie Puth, Jonas Brothers, Måneskin, Mariah Carey, Mickey Guyton, Rosalía, Angélique Kidjo, and Billy Porter. Presenters included celebrities Amber Ruffin, Bill Nye, Connie Britton, Katie Couric, Tamron Hall, Katie Holmes,*



and more.

Global Citizen says that since its first concert in 2012, more than US\$41 billion in funding has been dispersed that's affected the lives of more than 1.1 billion people.

Jones urged people to get involved: "Global citizens, use your voice — help us call on governments, businesses, and other leaders to join us in pledging ambitiously at the World Health Summit in October to end polio forever."

Rotary has worked with Global Citizen for a more than decade, primarily regarding the effort to eradicate polio worldwide. At last year's event in Paris, France, Jones announced \$97 million pledge for sustainable project. At the 2012 concert in New York City, Rotary General Secretary and CEO John Hewko announced Rotary's \$75 million commitment to polio eradication. Rotary and Global Citizen have also connected at Rotary International Conventions, the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meetings, Polio Advocacy events, and Polio funding announcements.



**At RCC Joypur distributing Puja clothes to all beneficiaries.**

### Unbelievable!!!

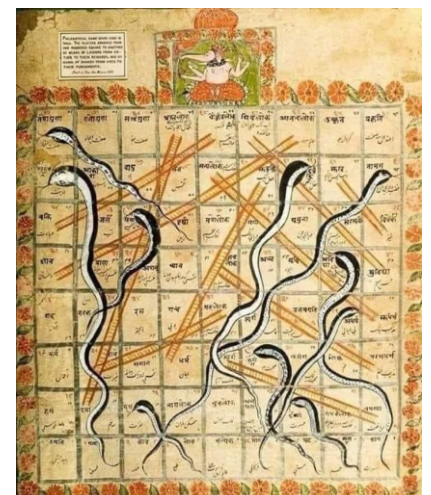
The 13th century poet Saint Gyandev created a children's game called **Moksha Patam**.

The British later named it **Snakes and Ladders** instead of the original **Moksha Patam**.

In the original one hundred square game board, the 12th square was faith, the 51st square was reliability, the 57th square was generosity, the 76th square was knowledge, and the 78th square was asceticism.

These were the squares where the ladders were found and one could move ahead faster.

The 41st square was for disobedience, the 44th square for arrogance, the 49th square for vulgarity, the 52nd square for theft, the 58th square for lying, the 62nd square for drunkenness, the 69th square for debt, the



84th square for anger, the 92nd square for greed, the 95th square for pride, the 73rd square for murder and the 99th square for lust. These were the squares where the snake waited with its mouth open.

The 100th square represented Nirvana or Moksha. The tops of each ladder depict a God or one of the various heavens (Kailasa, Vaikuntha, and BrahmaloKa) and so on. As the game progressed various actions were supposed to take you up and down the board as in life... Amazing, isn't it???

## His ancestor began Durga Puja in Kolkata; he's now documented its history



Kolkata artist Prabir Krishna Deb who, through those works of art, has sought to tell the story of the Durga Puja that's held at his ancestral home.

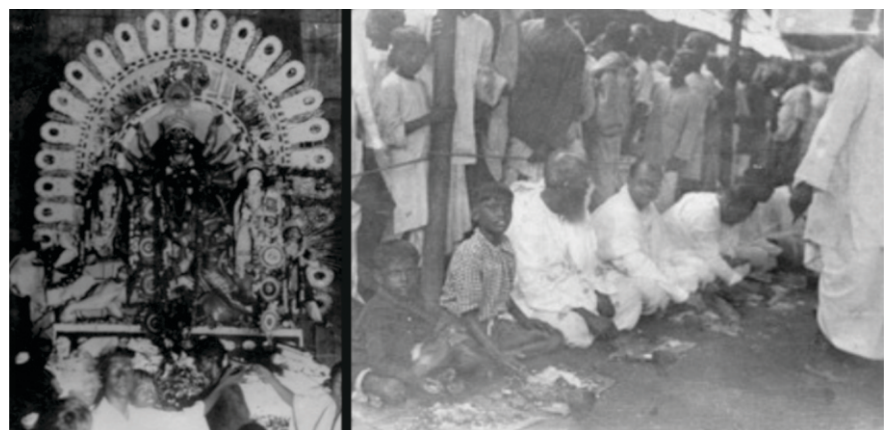
If you wonder what's so extraordinary about his effort — considering that the city is home to a few thousand such celebrations, including those held by once-aristocratic families — it was his ancestor who began the festival of Durga Puja, making it a public event, in the newly founded British city of Calcutta back in the eighteenth century.

### Battle of Plassey

Until then, Durga Puja was largely a religious affair, confined mostly to the homes of zamindars; but the victory of the East India Company at the Battle of Plassey, in 1757, changed it all, deciding not only the future of modern India but also transforming Durga Puja into a major public event that it is today. That year, Naba Krishna Deb, who overnight became Calcutta's wealthiest man and earned the title of 'raja' for having helped Robert Clive in the battle, decided to begin Durga Puja celebrations at his newly built palace — the rest, as they say, is history.

And now Prabir Krishna Deb, an eighth-generation descendant of Naba Krishna Deb, is seeking to preserve a bit of that history on paper. "There was a risk of the history being lost over time, so I decided to document it," said Mr. Deb, 69, who is a student of the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship.

The 50 illustrations are also being exhibited at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity, where the book, *Shobhabazar Rajbari — A Tryst with Heritage and History*, was released last Saturday. "I began working on the illustrations some seven years ago, but the idea to put them together occurred more recently





when I published a similar pictorial book about our family deity. That book was originally meant for family members but even the general public started showing interest in it. That’s when I thought of documenting the history of our Durga Puja,” Mr. Deb said.

The chief guest at Naba Krishna’s maiden Durga Puja celebrations in 1757 was Robert Clive himself. This grand event — there was music and dance, food and wine — went on to inspire wealthy Bengalis into organising Durga Puja at their homes and competing with one another in inviting high-ranking sahibs for the occasion — a practice that continued until the early decades of the twentieth century.

Naba Krishna Deb, since he had no heir for a long time, went on to adopt his brother’s son, Gopi Mohun. Later, though, when he fathered a son, Rajkrishna, through another wife, he began another Durga Puja across the road, either in 1788 or 1790. Subsequently he split his wealth between the two homes — boro taraf (loosely translated, from the elder wife’s side) and chhoto taraf (younger wife’s side).

### **Intricately depicted**

Mr. Deb, the artist, belongs to the chhoto taraf. The wing of the chhoto taraf palace where Durga Puja is held — intricately depicted by him in one of the illustrations — is said to have been designed by the grandson of the architect of the Taj Mahal.

The artist’s next project will be on the various forms of transport used by Naba Krishna Deb and his descendants. “Naba Krishna was the first in Calcutta to use the elephant as the mode of transport. He was also the first to use the palanquin for personal transport. Then the horse-drawn cars came. The family was also the first to own motor cars in the city. In a way, they shaped modern transport in Kolkata and I am going to document all that,” said Mr. Deb.



**At Amragori Old Age Home: Puja clothes were given to all inmates.**

## MINUTES OF THE 2192ND RWM HELD ON SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2022 AT BNR OFFICERS' CLUB, GARDEN REACH

1. President Abinash called the RWM to order and requested to rise for the National Anthem.
2. President briefed the members about the initiation of our Interact Club on our Charter Day morning at St. Augustine's Day School, Barrackpore. 22 orphan girls were given nutrition and hygienic kits.
3. Rotary Garden Reach has decided upon hosting the RYLA 'Sanhati' at Jhargram. The club contributed Rs. 5000 towards the do.
4. Rotaract Garden Reach will have its 5th Installation on September 24th, 2022 at BNR Officers' Club. DGE Hira has consented to be the Chief Guest.
5. President announced that from Sept 24th-27th, 2022 the club will have various community projects at our RCCs. Distributing clothes for the Puja. Rotaract Garden Reach will be a part too.
6. President announced on October 16th, 2022 the club will organise a Blood donation camp at Arcadia Community at Behala. The proceedings of the project will go towards Thalassaemia Society of India. The coordinator of the project is Rtn. Debasis Das.
7. President & Secretary expressed their gratitude to all the Club members for making the 45th Charter Celebration a success at Haldiram Banquets on September 11th, 2022.
8. Club Secretary, Rtn. Debasis conducted Club business.
9. Minutes of the last RWM were confirmed. President terminated the meeting.



*Rejoice in the glories of Maa Durga and celebrate all the blessings of the goddess with your friends, family, acquaintances and loved ones.*

*Best Wishes from all the Members & family of Rotary Garden Reach on this Durga Puja.*