



Rotary 
 Club of Bombay West
THE FLYING CARPET
 CLUB BULLETIN

IN SERVICE
 OF HUMANITY...
 SINCE 1954

VOLUME 71
 23RD OCT, 2024
 ISSUE 15



FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

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PRESIDENT - RAHUL GOENKA

Deep Utsav

We, of the Himalayan Sub-continent, have been handed a vibrant culture, representing a beautiful and profound system of morality, veiled in allegories and illustrated with symbolic rituals and traditions, seemingly esoteric at times. The third darkest night of the year is celebrated Deep Utsav, primarily a send-off for our heavenly Ancestors, who visit us in Shraad Paksha, bless us with joy and abundance during following Shukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha, and return to their heavenly abode on Deepawali Amavasya, as we light-up their return path with Aakash Deepam (sky lights or fire crackers). Over the millennia, this departure of our heavenly Ancestors also marks the return of our victorious exiled King, with the aakash deepam serving as guiding lights to his Pushpak Viman on a dark moonless amavasya night.

My Nani used to send a big tokra (a basket traditionally used to send fruits), big enough to fit a 10 year old child, wrapped in red, blue and white ribbons, filled with patake. Continuing these traditions I take my daughter and son, every year, to shop for the festive fire crackers, though now-a-days shopping is tempered, keeping in mind the noise and air pollution and the soaring prices of fire crackers (sigh).

My mother helped my kids get their pick of crackers at the shops selling crackers, littered on both sides and pavements of the road, with festive shoppers teaming streets. In the crowd I noticed a few urchins, around the same age as my children, loitering and begging for alms. This was usual. As I stood, with my hands in my pocket, guarding my wallet and mobile phone against pickpockets, my sight caught the eyes of one such young vagabond, white and steely, devoid of joy.



Back home, I could not shake-off the momentary gaze of that vagabond child... a profound sadness dwelled, amidst festive lights. While others rejoiced, her gaze a melancholy hue, a sorrow that refused to wane. In contrast to the twinkling decorations, a cruel irony, as she wandered, lost, through streets adorned with lights unbound. Her eyes, probably once bright, now dimmed by hardship's grind. No family gatherings, no warm embrace, but just the endless, lonely space. In crowded markets, she seemed to search for scraps, while others indulge in festivities with cracker wrapped. Her eyes, a window to a soul forlorn, the gaze holding a silent plea, a heartbreaking reminder of a childhood torn.

I convinced my family, to burst crackers on the streets, this year, instead of our society compound. My kids were excited... something new. Got my mom to pack a dozen food packets. Post puja and dinner, we went back to the festive market. We found the group of urchins still loitering. We parked and opened the car's trunk. As if on cue, we were surrounded by a litter of urchins, expectant of handouts. Got my children to distribute the food packets and requested them all to eat.

My children was pleasantly surprised to see more than the usual cache of crackers. I explained that I wished them to share some with the all the children surrounding our car. After a moment of puzzlement, my son expediently started distributing the sparkler-sticks and my daughter lit the candle. We invited all the present urchins to join us in bursting crackers... a deafening cheer filled the air. I flashed back, as the cheer resonated with my joy, as a child, receiving my Nani's hamper or a Kwaliti orange-stick ice-cream at Juhu Beach. The joy on their faces was exquisite, they shared opinion on optimal way of bursting crackers, like a gaggle of turkey, and their observing safety was nothing short of a parliament of owls. Laughter, shrieks of joy and crackling of crackers surround us all.

As I lit an aakash deepam, the rocket raced skywards, lighting its path, and all eyes followed the rocket, but mine looked for the little vagabond girl. My heart pounded fast till I could hear it thump in my own ears. There she was, with the same white eyes, but... a contrast to what I saw about an hour ago, as they were now sparkling, filled with joy and overflowing with life. An involuntary laugh escaped my lips, as this girl mingled with my kids, enjoying the fire crackers well into the night.

As I lay on my bed that night wondering, for I has spent on a season's worth of crackers in a single night and gave it away to strangers, to urchins. For What? Why? I could have spent that money to feed all of them for a week, or got a pair of new clothes for all, or atleast paid one year's school fee for one of them... wouldn't these alternatives been more meaningful. Then, I had an epiphany, as I understood the difference between price and value. I just needed to see that young child smile... nature urged me to bring that joy in her life, even if it was for one night. To see her steely eyes light up with joy, and the colour of the fire crackers, was an indescribable experience. When she celebrated her Diwali, it was a lifelong Diwali for me.

A moment's joy, no matter how irrational or financially inconsequential, is sometimes more valuable and priceless than anything of material value.

Wishing you, and all your loved ones, a Deep Utsav filled with joy and prosperity.

**Aapka
Rahul**

PS: I write this experience as a prayer, for all who may chance to read it, to experience that priceless joy atleast once in their life, like I did this Deep Utsav night. Subhkamnayan.



Diwali Celebration

Team RCBW organised a fantastic and unprecedented Diwali party at the Juhu Gymkhana Activity Hall, which was a delightful experience for everyone. Chirag Jethwani's mentalist and illusionist show was mesmerising and remarkable. The food was exquisite, and the arrangements were impeccable, creating a perfect atmosphere for celebrating Diwali. This gathering fostered camaraderie and fellowship among members.

A big thank you to President Rahul Goenka, First Lady Anuja Goenka, and Kinny Kaul for their outstanding arrangements, which contributed to a memorable evening. Additionally, Rtn. Prashant Patel deserves appreciation for his generous sponsorship of the event. Overall, it was an unforgettable evening and a fantastic way to kick off an auspicious Diwali celebration.





BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS



Rotarian Birthdays

- 25 Oct. Mr. Maneet Shah
- 29 Oct. Mr. Aniljit Singh
- 30 Oct. Rtn. Apurv Gangar

R/Ann. Birthdays

- 26 Oct. R/Ann. Anuja Rahul Goenka
- 29 Oct. R/Ann. Shirin Ashok Mehta
- 30 Oct. R/Ann. Meera Pankaj Sheth
- 30 Oct. R/Ann. Deepti Sharavan Punjabi

Anniversaries

- 28-Oct. Rtn. Zoeb & Shenaz Kanorwalla
- 31-Oct. Rtn. Dr. Manohar & Mugdha Shaan

