

BENGALI CHRONICLE 272, APRIL 2023



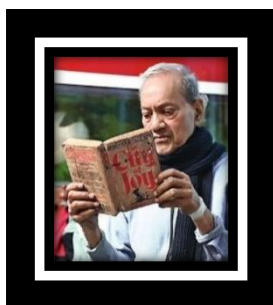
DEATH OF NANDA the 18th March 2023.

Brain attack and hemiplegia first, and demise at hospital the day after. He never recovered. Being in the last degree of diabetes with very High tension, he used to suffer a lot, but without complaining. He had a large family who chased him, refused to visit him event for the cremation. That's why his mood was always somber and his attitude gloomy, without ever smiling. One month before, I cracked a joke with him while taking his picture, and he laughed heartily. A very first! He had no real friends, but two old men were crying like children when he left. He was very pious and in my daily visits, he used to answer to me with up to five minutes prayer, which irritated the others. But everyone had different ways to answer my namaskar!



Above the herse in the way to cremation, his face was very peaceful! Puja at his place.

DEATH OF REGINALD JOHN FROM SEVA SANGH SAMITI



(LEFT PICTURE FROM AVTM) Above in december 2021 for his 50 years of work at SSS.

He died from a liver cancer, and I have visited him last year. He was first suffering a lot, but after some times he could think he was cured. But I have warned him that, like his dear wife some years ago, it was a fatal disease! He was the key-man of the organization. We have made together the training of social work in the slum, he, from his catholic background of a middle-class family, and I in my life with the suffering people and the lepers. During eighteen years at Pilkhana, he became my best friend (but I never met him outside his work), and I could totally rely on him in time of cataclysms, to organize everything so that my own team of 12-24 volunteers could start the Emergency relief wherever needed! Besides, immediately he became the trusted man of SSS and ASSS, being cashier, accountant, and administrator. No one will be able to replace him!



Gopa and Markus, then Maya, offering garlands. More than 60 Muslim women and some Hindus came from Pilkhana! A nice testimony for the death of a Christian social worker!

THREE WEEKS OF HARD PREPARATION FOR THE CASTING OF THE ARMED CONCRETE TERRASSE ON MOTHER TERESA BHAVAN.



Two new rooms are prepared (refectory and games) The Jasmine tree is preciously conserved and thousands of bamboo's pillars posed as sustaining the future concrete block.



Blessing ceremony by Gopa of the first concrete, of the mixer, the concrete machine and on the terrasse!



It has never been seen that an aged woman climbing high ladder. But Gopa was full of courage!



62 workers were employed this day !



Our engineer and Palash are checking everything. What a nice work!

Concrete operation from 10.30 to 20.30 WITHOUT A STOP !,



At the end, the engineer proposed me to climb above through the skip of the concrete elevator. In less than 3 seconds, I am above to admire the really nice job done. Only the last step is under finition.

Splendide terrasse bien polie, mais il faut encore terminer une branche avant la nuit !



Gopa has been called but was angry to see me up. But Binay explained her that there was no danger through the elevator!



An astonishing precision work from down to above, to fill the mixer, send the elevator, fill up the two wheelbarrows, bring them to the last stretch of armed concrete and come back just at the time to pick the last flow. Not one minute wasted the whole day, except two times for myself. I was very grateful for their satisfied smiles and energy!



At 18, the sunset...and work is not finished. At 20.30, I am still with them to take the last picture.



NEXT DAY MORNING, WE CAN CONTEMPLATE THE WORK DONE§



It just remains to fill up water on the concrete during 7 days.

On 29 and 30th, one can remove the bamboo's pillars.



The two new halls.



One of the 6 rooms



The veranda and the future entrance.



THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING MEANS THE COMING OF HOLI!



'Holi' has always been a religious sign, even for some Christians. It will be our last days with our young school boys and girls who came some days for vacation. Rather sad days for all of us also!



The spastic girls are happy...and so the three adult families of Gopa, Mampi and Keka at last together, with daughters and sons-in-laws!



Binay and his wife Mampi. All took advantage of their number to shower lot of colors above the old grandfather...Of course, all agreed that at his age, this kind of game is not serious, especially without champion to help him...for the big girls have just left! Poor chap!!

DEFINITIVE DEPARTURE OF ALL OUR BIG GIRLS AND BOYS AFTER 12 TO 10 YEARS WITH US



With their teacher SUPORNA: Subhobose (17); Tania (19); Azyma (18); Josna (19 in June) ; Mollika (17). Two Adivassis, two Bengalis (including the boy), and one Muslim. All HAVE TO LEAVE US ! But the impossible situation of some of them shall oblige us to help them!



M. often crying for her future without...future; A. not knowing what to expect in her uncle's family and her mother in brickfields; J. tense to avoid crying; T. with her mason mother and her younger daughter of 17 would like to work since she has 19. We shall search for training. This is the most industrious girl of all!

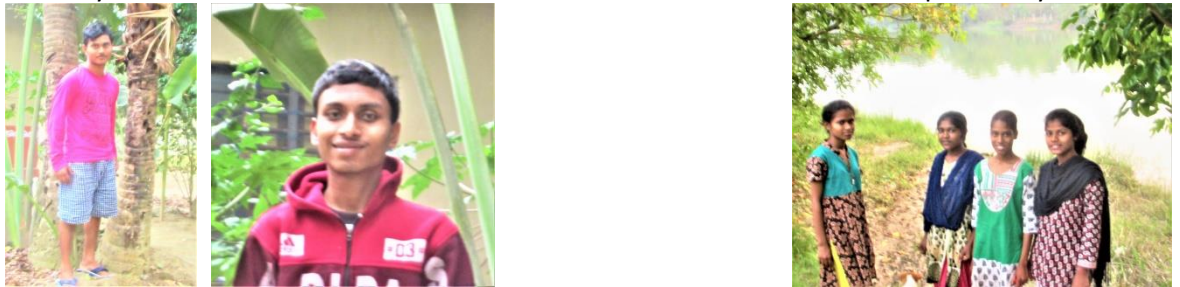
Our five young orphan school children who have been transferred to RAJAPUR. But no one wants to go back since there are no green fields there. But they have no choice!



Clearly, their faces are less smiling than at the vacation time down !



The first two have their mentally sick mothers at ICOD. The second is going to school but is mentally retarded. The third (16 years) is the younger sister of T. and the oldest in the Rajapur, where she is appreciated for her permanent smile and her help for the younger. The first boy is the most unruly and the last of his class, but has an excellent spirit of collaboration. As for the last one, he is, and by far, the most intelligent of all our ICOD's youth. We have found a sponsor for him and he may be transferred in a better school. But all remain under our direct responsibility.



19 years, he possesses an angelical sweetness...but next to zero in his Class XI. He will be admitted in HSP. As for the last one, we sincerely do not know what to do with him! Good boy, but close to stupidity! Last picture: ultimate emotional visit to our river!

OUR SOMA AND HER DARLING SWEETHEART OF ONE DAY after her delivery.



The first day, silence! The next, why is he crying day and night? I search for the cause, and I discover that his forearm cuff is too long...I rolled them up, and within a second, he put three fingers in his mouth,

quickly followed by the fourth! Twice a day I am going to teach the young and somewhat silly mother the basic of baby's care. But after 21 days, her mother-in-law came to claim her as she was orphan. It is Suporna, our schoolmistress who escort them.

Since my Nursing studies, I cannot have enough of newborn and infants to love!



What a joy also to welcome Pinky, orphan from Pilkhana, with her delightful girl! She remained 16 years at ICOD before founding her ideal husband. This child is always asking her parents to visit her grandfather, and since very young. Few children are like that. "Be careful never to despise a single of those children, said Jesus, because their angels stand continuously in front of my Celestial Father!"

NARAYANI PUJA



Father Chevrier, founder of Prado, is enjoying the heat of the sacred vedic fire.

Since most Hindus are worshipping,
under different names, the One Universal God,
when faithful of various religions are praying together,
each one according to his/her own way,
worshipping the God they have together

In common
and in their own,
becomes a shared spiritual prayer.



When a Muslim is blowing the 'Shankha',

and a Sarna Adivassi (animist) ringing the « Jhahj »,
he only Christian present remains in contemplation of Christ,
here incarnated in a 'VIVID FLAME OF LOVE'!

TWO DAYS OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE RESPONSIBLE OF ASIATIC AFP

(Association France Presse)



I dislike interviews, especially with one interviewer, one videographer and one photograph (happily the last two Indians!) But LAURENCE HOFFMAN was so comprehensive and delicate in her questions, that we came to pass hours in deep exchanges...It was for me a great happiness to discover Europeans media people caring about persons of other sensibilities and respective of our environment! Believe me when I state that there are so few westerners able to do it! My gratitude, Laurence!

SOME GUESTS



- 1) SUPRYA, has come to invite me for her marriage, but being sick I could not go. I was quite sad, but her whole family got viral bronchitis...She will come with her husband one day...
- 2) Samopti, a Doctor's daughter, has married a cousin of Gopa. For the first time she came to visit me...
- 3) MAYA, a Christian orphan who was at Pilkhana when I arrived in 1972. No one wanted to help her when she decided to get married with a Hindu. I have done the necessary and she is quite grateful since this time. Good husband, but always sick, with a son of 30 years working in factory. Always in some kind of distress, for they are very poor. She has sent to ICOD several orphan people. But she remains a very difficult woman and very few like her, even in ICOD.

VISIT OF WOHAB and KOMOL SAHA



My very dear friend Wohab has invited us for **the 40 years' celebration of SHIS**. We shall go there on 13th April. ICOD also has worked many years with Komol Saha on the other side of the Ganges. Some nice projects were there, but family's quarrels prevented them to grow. He proposed us to come and see what can be done...I don't know if I would be able to cross the Ganges on the boat with its very long narrow gangway...

TWO PEOPLE LEAVING ICOD

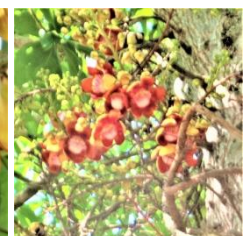


- 1) **TRIPTI**, AFTER NINE YEARS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BIG GIRLS, Has reached the age of the retreat. She has only an old mother, and her two brothers refuse to help her...A really big problem for her...and for us!
- 2) **PORITOSH**, 19, just has passed the BAC, but with very bad results. He is a very nice boy, and we are sending him to HSP for special training.

SPRING FLOWERING



Nag-ling, 'cannon-balls'tree's flowers.



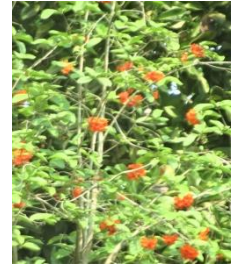
There are hundreds of scenting flowers along the trunk !



Bougainvilliers on Nivedita Hall...



Fall of hibiscus on the Birds' island....



Cordia sebesthenia

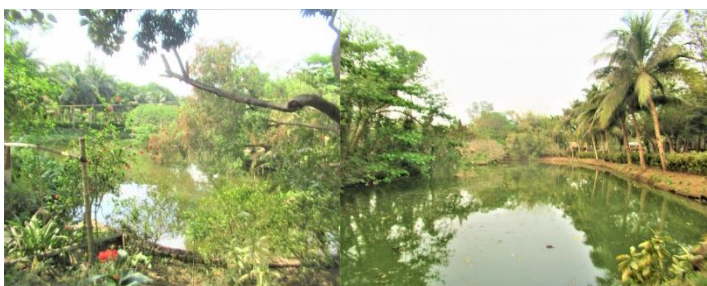


Seen from our Gandhi garden, those « Callistemon-Bottle-brush-trees », despite being gravely damaged by the cyclone, have for the first time bloomed during three weeks, happily without rain !



Two artistic pictures: one natural, and the other taken by Gopa since I could not reach this exceptional plant from my wheel-chair. After the only night shower, the 40 cm rise of a palmetto's heart is absolutely impressive with its various colours!

LANDSCAPES



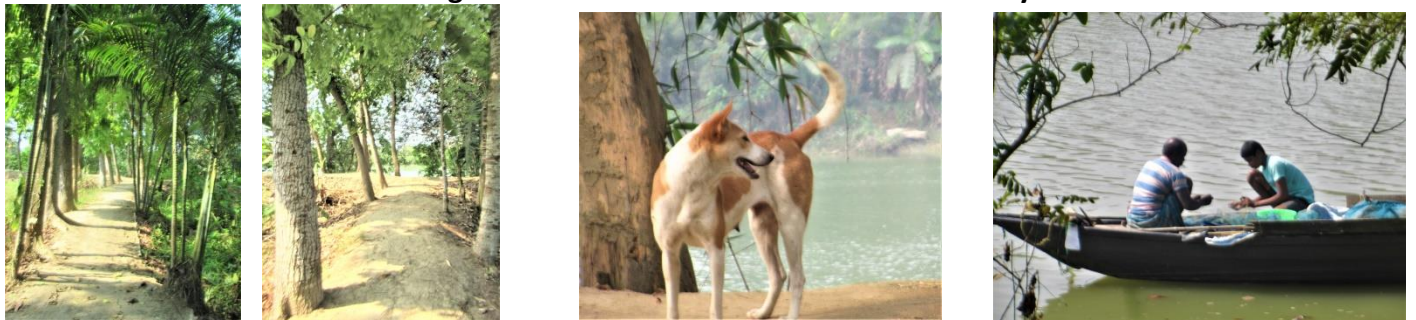
View from Gandhi's garden... The pond is at last full... The coconut trees and grand Banyan seem better!



Scenery around the statue of Christ (not yet super elevated!)...First spring sun from my backward window.



Third time this year: all dead leaves are covering the soil due to the huge draught. A real autumn amidst the mahogonies ! We start to fear for the life of many trees!



River's alley lining by several mahogonies, by now cyclable. We can meet here dogs and fishing boats.



Nice scenery, but sad coloring of herbs and foliage due to 8 months draught!