

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: A NEW HEIGHT

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It is a matter of pride and satisfaction for all alumni that the new government has acknowledged the importance of excellence in the sacred domain of education and conferred a special status rightly to Presidency University, by creating a mentor group with Shri Amartya Sen as the chief advisor and also by promulgating a separate ordinance for governing Presidency with a view of making it a centre of excellence. Perhaps, for the first time, the role of the Alumni Association in transforming Presidency University into a Centre of Excellence has been so well pronounced. The chairman of the mentor group Shri Sugata Bose himself interacted with the alumni members in the last Annual General Meeting to understand and share the expectations from each other. Of late, the policy makers have recognised the non-political, constructive and goodwill of the Association and are consulting it for the cause of development of the university. It is matter of fact that the association has played a key role in transformation of the college into a University. However, the role of the Alumni Association needs to be acknowledged by the government officially by offering a nomination, may be ex-officio, to its representative in the policy making body of the University.

The calendar year 2011 has been eventful for the Association. We can organise more academic programmes this year. The Sisir Mazumdar Endowment lecture was held on 6 January, 2011, at 3 pm at the Physiology Department where Dr. Chandan Sen, Professor of Surgery, Ohio State University, USA, delivered a lecture on *Vitamin E in Stroke Therapeutics*. On 18 January, 2011 at 1 pm, Dr. Nirupam Chandra Roy Centenary Memorial Lecture, was held in collaboration with the Bengali Department where Shri Tapabrata Ghosh, Rabindra Adhyapak, Visva Bharati University, delivered a lecture on *gitabitaner golpogochchhu - phire dekha* at the AJC Bose auditorium, Presidency University. Sm Amita Chatterjee, Vice Chancellor of Presidency University, presided over the function. Sm Madhusree Ghosh, alumnus, created this endowment through the alumni association in memory of her father, Nirupam Chandra Roy. She also donated several books to the Bengali Department. With the support of the Alumni Association, the English department organized a lecture on *The State of Human Rights in India* by Shri Satyabrata Pal on 11 March, 2011 at 3

pm at AJC Bose auditorium. Prof Krishna Bose introduced the speaker and Sm. Amita Chatterjee, the then Vice Chancellor of Presidency University presided over the function.

The Annual Cricket Match between the past and present students was held at the College ground on 15 January, 2011. This was the first time the Alumni Association introduced trophies for the winner and the runners-up team. Senior alumni members, Shri Anindya Mitra and Shri Asim Ganguly, participated in the match. The present students won the match and received Trophy from the President of the alumni association Shri Anindya Mitra. Shri Mitra also invited the participants to the evening tea organized at the college lawn.

The Founders' Day of the college and the Reunion for the year 2011 were celebrated on 20 January 2011, at the Derozio Hall and the college lawn, respectively. Shri Barun De was the President and Prof Mihir Rakshit acted as the Chief Guest in the function. The Alumni Association organised a Reunion Tea on the college lawn with sumptuous food from Bijoli Grill. The ready tea for the party was sponsored by the Tea Board of India.

On 30 January 2011, a steamer party was organized on the Hooghly on a specially chartered *Mayurpankhi Nao*. The alumni, their family members and friends thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The boat left Babughat at 10 am and returned at 5 pm.

The Alumni Association, founded in the year 1951, celebrated its Diamond Jubilee year in 2011. The Association decided to celebrate it through a panel discussion on the future of Presidency University. On 11 June, 2011, at the Centenary Hall of the Calcutta University, the panel discussion was held where the speakers were Shri Amal Mukhopadhyay, Shri S P Mukherjee, Shri Bikash Chandra Sinha, Shri Sujit Basu, Shri Prasanta Ray, Shri Sukanta Chaudhuri, Shri Sibaji Raha, Shri Kankan Bhattacharya, Shri Abhirup Sarkar and Shri Sugata Marjit. The moderator was Shri Anindya Mitra. Sm Amita Chatterjee, Vice Chancellor of the Presidency University, delivered the key note address on her experience in the making of Presidency University. Shri Bivas Chaudhuri delivered the welcome address. Shri Sankha Ghosh was present in the audience along with many academics and

former Principals of the college. Sm Sreyashi Ghosh anchored the programme. The panelists discussed various parameters and put forward suggestions for transforming the present University into a centre of excellence. The programme was given much importance by the Press and it was partially telecast live by the media channel, Star Ananda. Outstanding rendition of *Rabindra Sangeet* by Sm Rajashree Bhattacharya and Shri Sugata Mazumder in the opening and closing ceremony enthralled the audience. It was decided in the discussion that a vision document for the University would be prepared based on the suggestions of the panel for submission before the appropriate authorities.

The Annual Cultural Programme was held on 2 July, 2011 at Sisir Mancha where the play *Chalochitto Chanchori* was staged under the direction of Shri Arun Mukhopadhyay. After almost two decades, this play brought together two veteran thespian alumni Shri Arun Mukhopadhyay and Shri Bibhas Chakraborty. The other participants were Shri Bitan Bindu Bandhyopadhyay, Shri Subir Bhattacharyya, Shri Subir Mukhopadhyay, Shri Milan Bhowmik, Shri Somok Roy, Shri Arnab Khasnobis, Shri Mainak Sengupta, Shri Rajat Kanti Roy, Shri Subharthi Pal, and Shri Krishnendu Sinha. The music for the play was arranged by Shri Somjit Chatterjee. The play was preceded by a dance drama entitled *Mandakranta*, based on Kalidasa's *Meghdoot*. The participants were Sm Swarnali Barua, Sm Ananya Goswami, Sm Balaka Chatterjee, Sm Sagnika Chaudhuri, Sm Ankita Das, Sm Subhangi Sen, Sm Ankita Saha, Sm Rupsa Bramhachari, Sm Pritha Das, Sm Anindita Sarkar, Sm Ritoja Sinha, Sm Jayanti Sarkar. The dance programme was conducted under music direction of Shri Somjit Chatterjee, choreography and stage direction of Sm Monalisa Banerjee and overall direction of Sm Soma Basu. The total cultural programme was coordinated by Sm. Urmi Chatterji with the support of Sm Swapna Kar and Sm Aparajita Roy.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on 9 July, 2011. The amended constitution of the Association was passed. Shri Sugata Bose, Chairman, mentor group, interacted with the members on various issues of the University.

With a view to assisting the University financially for creating academic chairs and offering infrastructural help, a registered Presidency Alumni Trust Fund has been created on 9 September, 2011. As suggested by the mentor group, the Association is also working on establishing chapters at UK and USA for generating funds and attracting talents to the University. From the year 2012, the Association will provide two scholarships in the name of Presidency Alumni Scholarship to the students ranking first in the University in arts and science group at the undergraduate level.

Bijoya Sammilani was organised on 29 October, 2011 at Derozio Hall. Gazal by Shri Somjit Chatterjee and baul songs by Shri Santanu Mitra and his team enthralled the audience. Adda with high tea was the main attraction for the alumni.

Santiniketan programme during 2-3 December was

very interesting. The excellent hospitality extended by Shri Anindya Mitra, Shri Jayanta Mitra and Smt Rupa Bandopadhyay individually at their respective houses in Santiniketan to all alumni and their family members needs a special mention. Kaleidoscopic cultural programme like santhali dance, baul song and rabindrasangeet by alumni members were added attraction. Shri Susanta Duttagupta, Vice-Chancellor, Visva Bharati, a former teacher of Physics in the Presidency College, shared his thoughts with the audience.

Udayan Mukherjee Memorial Debate between past and present students was organized on 17 December. The motion was: 'in the opinion of the house, for the poor in India, country' economic development is a joke'. The team alumni comprising of Shri Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Shri Subrata Talukar, Sm. Puja Kankrania and Sm Sakshi Arora opposed the motion whereas the present students proposed it. Shri Jayanta Mitra acted as the moderator with Sm Krishna Bose, Shri Samik Bandopadhyay, Shri Subhas Chakrabarty and Shri Prasanta Roy as judges. The motion was defeated through the voting of the audience. Sm. Taniya Bhardwaj, a third year student of Political Science, was judged as the best speaker.

A classical programme with Shri Partha Bose on the sitar and Shri Swapan Chaudhuri on the tabla was organised on 22 December, at the GD Birla Sabhagriha at 6:30 pm. This programme was sponsored by the Khadder Group. The association and the sponsor also felicitated alumni Shri Anindya Mitra, Pt Budhhadeb Dasgupta, Shri Sugata Marjit for their contribution to classical music.

There is a common complaint from the members of not receiving information about the programmes. Actually, paucity of funds has rendered us incapable of advertising each and every programme in the newspapers or intimating by post. However, all programmes are announced well in advance in our website www.presidencyalumlnal.com.

The year 2011 has turned out to be an extraordinarily eventful year for the Alumni Association which has been possible only with the support from our alumni members and well-wishers. This time we fervently appeal to all our alumni to donate generously to the Presidency Alumni Trust Fund. Compared to our peer group, we receive very less financial support from our alumni members for undertaking some creative work. Most of our alumni became members with one-time life membership subscription of Rs. 250/- or Rs. 750/- long time back. The average annual budget of the association is around Rs. 8 lakhs which only very few members gather by strenuous endeavours. Such fund is spent for academic and cultural programmes, serving sumptuous refreshments during the Founders' day celebration and AGM and providing the journal Autumn Annual, for which no additional cost is charged to the members. Notwithstanding this expenditure, since last five years, addition to the coffer has been accelerated with a minimum deposit of at least Rs. 2 lakhs per annum. The association has already announced that from the year 2012, the Presidency Alumni Scholarship will be awarded to the students ranking first in arts and sciences. Therefore, at this

craving need of the hour, when the newly formed university is marching towards becoming a centre of excellence, alumni ought to muster strength to fulfil the expectation of the University and the mentor group by accumulating funds to provide support. This may be considered as an appeal to our alumni members to donate generously to the Trust Fund.

Finally, it appears necessary to reiterate that the Association is a platform for all alumni with two primary objectives of establishing a great Presidency family by bringing all together and assisting the University wherever necessary, as a token of love, attachment and respect towards the alma mater. All our programmes are primarily performed and attended by our alumni family only. We carry a different responsibility.

About the Author

Statistics (1980-83)
