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Indian Messenger Committee:  
Sudakshina Kundu Mookerjee, Editor  
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Debasis Raychaudhuri  
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Jayati Gupta  
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Editor : Sudakshina Kundu Mookerjee  
Jt. Editor: Amit Das

Email: theindianmessenger@gmail.com

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in agreement with it.

## INVOCATION

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers,  
but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but  
for the heart to conquer it.

- *Rabindranath Tagore*

\* \* \* \* \*

The purpose of life is not to be happy.  
It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some  
difference that you have lived and lived well.

- *Emerson*

\* \* \* \* \*

Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one.

- *Marcus Aurelius*

### Editorial

Religion, as it is widely accepted by our civilization, is more about an identity which is conditioned by one's family and society at large and less about the awakening of one's inner self, consciousness and our ultimate thought processes. Therefore, the sharp contrast between religious practices and spirituality becomes only too obvious.

Religion on one hand gathers and unites a large population under its folds, training them to nurture similar beliefs and adhere to like practices and rituals, while on the other, it builds up a larger division from others who do not embrace those ideas. This is the religion of the masses and for the masses. But there is little room for the spiritual realization of an individual. Awakening of the mind and soul is something that cannot be acquired through systematic training. It comes to those who yearn for it through one's personal longing. It is a realisation that dawns through individual endeavour.

Spirituality is not only about the sublime quest for the Supreme Being; it is also about rationality, ethics, morality and a sense of justice. It is manifested through an awareness that helps to judge right from wrong, not only according to the societal dictates but prescribed by one's own conscience and sense of judgement.

An atheist may not believe in God. An agnostic may question His presence. But, in spite of their negation or doubt can they not attain spirituality through the path of righteousness? Can they not be in harmony with the world order and prepare their minds for an awakening of the spirit and consciousness? Buddha himself never mentioned about 'God' in his teachings that showed the path of righteousness and justice. Even Rammohun Roy wanted to break away from the shackles of practiced religion and gross materialism for a spiritual reawakening of his countrymen.

Religion therefore has the capability to lead to mass hypnotism or mass hysteria. Even the most rational of all teachings may ultimately become dogmatic if the faithful choose to follow its tenets blindly. Therefore, the true religion of man teaches one to think rationally - to learn from the past, sieve it through the present experiences and shape it for the future by using one's own intelligence.

Through ages, whenever the path had become cluttered and the clear stream has lost its way, wise people have tried to clear the muck and revitalise the flow. In this issue, the second part of Shri Rajib Gangopadhyay's article on Advaita – Vedanta Philosophy is analysed through the teachings of Shankaracharya and interpretation of Raja Rammohun Roy. We pay tribute to the Bird Man of Bengal, late Ajoy Home through the third part of the reminiscences of his daughter Smt. Sutapa Roychoudhuri.

## ADVAITA–VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY: SHANKARACHARYA AND RAMMOHUN (Part – 2)

Rajib Gangopadhyay

If we examine Rammohun’s commentary on the Vedanta, it becomes evident that among his precursors in this domain, he held the deepest reverence for Shankar and his exposition of Vedantic philosophy. Rammohun even considered it an honour to regard himself as a disciple of the Acharya (Acharya Shankar). Several factors contributed to this intellectual and spiritual affinity. Foremost among them was Shankar’s uncompromising interpretation of the Vedantic scriptures purely in terms of Brohmo, without recourse to any sectarian or anthropomorphic deities. Moreover, among the Vedanta–Acharyas, Shankar was remarkably free from the influence of the Puranas. He did not employ the prevailing Puranic narratives as the foundational basis of his interpretations. (It is true that a few Puranic verses appear in the introductory portion of the *Shwetastvatar Upanishad* commentary, but most scholars agree that this work cannot be positively attributed to Shankar himself.) His analytical explanation of the scriptures is based mainly on *Gyankanda* of Shruti — that is, the Upanishad — which he regarded as the highest and most direct revelation of philosophic truth. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly says about him, “He tried to bring

back the age from the brilliant luxury of the Puranas to the mystic truth of the Upanishads.” Thirdly, Rammohun, himself a non-dualist, found strong support for his views in Shankar’s interpretation of Vedanta philosophy.

Although he shared with Shankar several foundational tenets—such as the recognition of *Brohmo* as the inexpressible and self-luminous principle of pure consciousness, the subordination of ritual action (*karma*) to knowledge (*gyan*), and the assertion of the essential non-duality (*abhed*) between the individual self and the supreme consciousness of Brohmo, he did not, however, blindly shadowed Shankaracharya. In a letter to Lord Amherst recommending modern western scientific education, Rammohun wrote “Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of the society by the Vedantic doctrines which teach them to believe, that all viable things have no real existence, that as father, brother etc. have no actual entity, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore, the sooner we escape from them and leave the world, the better.” Many critics, through a superficial reading of this statement, have concluded that Rammohun was neither a

genuine devotee of Vedanta nor regarded its philosophy suitable for inclusion within the curriculum of modern education. In truth, his opposition was not directed against Vedanta itself but against the bookish and unscientific scholasticism prevalent in the traditional “*Tol-Chatushpathis*” (Sanskrit schools), where scriptural study had become a mechanical and lifeless exercise. He objected to the way in which the “Mayanism” of Vedanta had been misrepresented, fostering among students a detached indifference that undermined natural human affections toward parents, teachers, and society. Such distortion, he believed, weakened the moral character of youth, rendering them an impediment rather than contributors to social harmony. Rejecting Shankar's exclusive doctrine that the realization of Brohmo-gyan (knowledge of Brohmo) and attainment

of *Nirvan–mukti* or *Moksha* (liberation) are reserved solely for the Sannyasi (renunciant), Rammohun asserted that the *grihastha* (householder) also has full right to the intuitive knowledge of Brohmo.

(To be continued)

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[Author: Shri Rajiv Gangopadhyay is the Editor of Tattwakoumudi.]

## The Birdman of Bengal – Ajoy Home

(Part – 3)

Sutapa Roychoudhuri

The memories of my childhood are still fresh in my mind. In winter my aunts and cousins used to come down from Shillong. It was my father's pleasure to accompany them to the zoological garden. He had struck a special friendship with the Royal Bengal tiger called 'Bhola'. The tiger was very young at the time. We would watch them from a distance while Bhola would stand on his hind legs and put his front legs on father's shoulders. The keeper of the tiger kept a watch on them. My father and Bhola were very happy to play together and made sounds of enjoyment. It did not appear as strange to us then as we took it for granted. Father developed a very foul odour after this encounter, which persisted even after he washed his hands and face, so that on our ride back he had to sit separately from us. The other tigers were annoyed when my father crossed Bhola's enclosure to caress him. So he had to put his hands inside their cages through the bars and netting and caress them as well at which they made a very peculiar sound, not their usual roar. The tigers liked him too.

He had another special friend at the zoo. It was a Chimpanzee. He was known as Mohan. He was just a baby when he was

taken ill with fever and refused to take his food. As my father spread his two arms towards him, he jumped on his lap. He had cold and a runny nose. So father requested Mr. Ram Krishna Lahiri, the Superintendent of the zoo to get him a mug of hot tea along with a piece of bread. Mohan started eating and drinking. Father took out a handkerchief to wipe the runny nose. My mother and aunts ran away from the enclosure rebuking my father who only said "he is just a kid".

At home he had a pet lizard called 'Trilokeswar'. As father made a sound of 'Tak, tak', he would come out from behind the frame of a portrait of a violinist hung on the wall. The lizard would eat grains of rice. All the birds of the locality, the crows, pigeons, sparrows and such like would troop down to eat from his hand. The kites would sweep down to catch the gills of fish he threw at them. If he failed to feed them they would give out their typical shrill call.

Ajoy Home formed a study circle with Geetimama (late Sambaran Chatterjee) the Head of the Department of Chemistry, City College, North, and Ajumama (late Ajoy Das) of Press and

Publicity, INA, who was the grandson of the legendary Dr. Sundari Mohan Das. They would read a book as a relay, each covering a few pages at a time and then discuss. Mother often joined them. Their favourite book was Thor Heirdahl's 'Kontiki Expedition'. Other books were also read. Mother prepared snacks and delicacies that she served them with tea.

Father was very particular about his tea, especially the Darjeeling variety. He would often meticulously prepare the tea himself. When guests arrived, he would order his servants to prepare tea. If he said 'Cha banao' (prepare tea), it invariably meant he had asked for the special 'Orange Pekoe with broken Pekoe Susong. In other cases his instruction was 'Cha Karo' (make tea), which meant CTC tea.

In anyone asked about his hobbies, he would sing an old tune 'Don't speak about the hobby, I have realized that it is all a sham' (শখের কথা বোলো না আর, বুঝেছি শখ কেবল ফাঁকি).

Ajoy took pride in two aspects: first he was the first person to listen to the famous book by Sukumar Roy entitled 'Ha-ja-ba-ra-la; and the second was his attending the program of 'Barshamongal' at Jorasanko. There at the request of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, the poet recited the poem "Neel nabo ghane, Ashar gogone," (নীল নবঘনে, আষাঢ় গগনে, তিল ঠাঁই আর নাহি রে) in his incomparable voice.

Father used to say that things you love and admire, are scattered everywhere around you; it is for you to find them.

Interested readers may subscribe for our English / Bengali Journal "The Indian Messenger" / "Tattvakaumudi" (তত্ত্ব-কৌমুদী). Subscription form is available in the website of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj at [www.thesadharanbrahmosamaj.org](http://www.thesadharanbrahmosamaj.org)

## Brahmo Samaj

### 196th Maghotsava Celebration at Sadharan Brahmo Samaj

Maghotsava is a manifestation of the collective resolve, devotion and dedication of people, inspiring by their unwavering faith. With this consciousness this year Maghotsava began with special Divine service and annual commemoration for Maghotsava were held at City College school, Brahmo Balika Shikshalaya, Brahmo Samaj Mahila Bhaban, Baniban Brahmo Samaj, Sadhanasram, Brahmo Primary Teachers Training Institute 16th January 2026 (2<sup>nd</sup> Magh 1432 B S) to prepare mind for attainment towards spirituality

**4th Magh (18th January'26) Yuva Utsav & Udbodhan** – It commenced with Yuva Utsav (festival for youths) in the morning with Kirtan performed by Sri Koushik De and others followed by Divine service conducted by Smt. Sujata Banerjee. The Minister explained the importance of Maghotsava and invoked for blessing of Supreme God for all worshippers. She prayed to God so that the evils of sectarianism are removed and asked the youths to take up the mantle of the society. Hymns were sung by Brahmo youths under the direction of Smt. Rita Chakrabarti. Participants included Moushumi Chatterjee, Sayan Kumar Gupta, Upamanyu Pal, Sabrin Sultana, Madhabi Talukdar, Subrata Pal, Sudeshna Roychowdhury, Rajnath Das, Aban Saha, Ritashree Bhattacharya, Shankhamala Khan, Gargi Chakrabarti and Sukla Sengupta. Malay Kanti Das was on table and Shyamal Dhali on Esraj. In the evening Smt. Dipanwita Ganguly performed the prayer service with Sudeshna Roychowdhury performing the hymns. After that a special Brahmasangeet programme was performed by Dinantika under the direction of Smt. Rima Dasgupta

**5th Magh (19th January'26)** This day was dedicated for Brohmosangeet Smt. Surupa Datta performed the prayer service. Brohmosangeet was performed by the members of Surapradip under the direction of Pradip Dutta. Audience present enjoyed the overall performance.

**6th Magh (20th January'26)** Exhibition of products prepared by inmates of Brahmo Samaj Mahila Bhaban was inaugurated at 4 pm at Samaj premises which continued till 26th January'26.

This day was dedicated for Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. In the evening brief prayer service was offered by Smt. Raka Barman and hymns were sung by Smt. Subrata Pal. A special lecture was arranged on Maharshi entitled – Maharshi Debendranath and 19<sup>th</sup> century perspective. Prof Avra Basu, of the Bengali department of Viswabharati delivered the lecture which was widely appreciated by the knowledgeable audience

**7th Magh (21st January'26)** On this day we had a wonderful session of Brohmosangeet with recitation of the slokas from the Upanishads. The group “Avigyan” under the tutelage

of Agniva Bandyopadhyay rendered beautiful Brohmosangeet compositions of the Tagore family interspersed with readings from the Upanishads. Prayer hall was full of devotees who were immersed in the melody of the evening's programme.

**8th Magh (22nd January'25)** A Book release and lecture meeting was organised. Rammohun Roy's "Upanishad" was reprinted and released by the esteemed speakers. Smt. Dipanwita Ganguly offered a prayer. The program was done in collaboration with Purono Kolkata Golpo Society (PKG). The topic for the evening was Heritage structure and their conservation. The speakers were Smt. Swarnali Chattopadhyay, Sri Jayanta Sen and Sri Debasish Mukhopadhyay, a descendant of the Uttarpara royal house Sri Debasish Mukhopadhyay narrated the steps that had been taken to preserve some of the heritage sites of Uttarpara.

**9th Magh (23th January'26)** Lady Members (Brahmica) of Samaj celebrated their annual "Mahila Utsava" in the morning with usual fervent. Smt. Kalyanmoyee Chattopadhyay acted as Minister and conducted Divine service. Hymns were sung by many ladies' member under the supervision of Smt. Tania Ghosh. After completing Divine service lunch was served to all devotees.

In the evening patriotic songs were performed keeping I mind of the relevance of the day. Sanskritiki Kolkata performed under the direction of Sri Sanjoy Chowdhury. Smt. Samita Das conducted a prayer before the songs.

**10th Magh (24th January'26)** In the afternoon, Prayer and kirtan was conducted at Brahma Balika Shikshalaya. Evening Kirtan was rendered by many devotees at Samaj premise and ended after circumnavigating samaj Prayer Hall pulpit. Brahmopasana was organised by members of Calcutta Congregation. Smt. Surupa Datta conducted Divine service, and hymns were sung by Smt. Kavita Mukhopadhyay and other singers.

**11th Magh (25th January'26)** The one hundred and ninety-fifth anniversary of consecration of Brahma Mandir at Chitpur Road —the day considered by Maharshi as a day of dedication and of the renewed search for truth and righteousness. It was observed with due solemnity. Day started with Kirtan and devotional songs called Baitalik performed by Sri Koushik De, Smt. Tania Ghosh, Smt. Tamali Bose, Sri Dhritobrata Bose and Sri Rajnath Das. Sri Debashish Raychaudhuri acted as Acharya and conducted Divine service. In the beginning he remembered our past sages and their spirituality and reminded all devotees about our past heritage, the days of the saints and religious leaders of the different religions who endeavoured to bring about a synthesis of all religions by emphasising the underlying truth in their teaching. In second part he advised Brahma followers to stand by truth as truth is the only salvation and it will always triumph. He asked for deliverance from fear, from the casualties in conflicts and hoped for unity among people. In last part

of sermon synthesis of all religion and role of Brahma samaj. His emotional prayer to the Almighty touched the heart of all devotees. Brahmangeet which is a part of Divine service, was performed by Smt. Rohini Raychaudhuri along with Sri Sourya Mukherjee, Sri Rajnath Das, Sri Protibhash Gupta, Sri Kalyan Chatterjee, Sri Aban Saha, Smt. Tania Ghosh, Smt. Sukla Sengupta, Smt. Doyel Chakraborty, Smt. Bratati Das, Smt. Subrata Pal, Smt. Gairika Basu, Smt. Ritashree Bhattacharya, Smt. Sayantani Karmakar, Smt. Snigdha Mitra, Smt. Lily Biswas, Smt. Sudeshna Roy Choudhury, Smt. Pranati Das under the direction of Sri Koushik De. After the Divine service traditional lunch was served to all devotees. Pleasure to note of this day was huge congregation of devotee which was not seen in recent years.

In the afternoon keeping the tradition, combined Divine service was held at Jorasanko Maharshi Bhaban. Sri Tapabrata Brahmachari from Bharatbarshiyo Brahma Mandir in his part elaborated the significance of this day, day of Brahma Mandir consecration. Sri Aniruddha Rakshit officiated from Brahma Sammilan Samaj as Minister, highlighted on the essence of the Brahma Dharma. Sri Amit Das from Sadharan Brahma Samaj outlined the significance of the days and its celebration in the Tagore household. Hymns were sung by Baitanik group established by Sri Surendran Tagore.

In the same evening at Samaj Mandir, Divine service was held. Sri Amit Das conducted Brahmopasana. In his sermon he reminded our rich heritage of this day and significance of universalism in the Brahma Dharma. Hymns were performed by Brahmangeet school – Smt. Tania Ghosh Poddar, Smt. Doyel Chakraborty, Smt. Sukla Sengupta, Smt. Subrata Pal, Sri Riju Gupta directed by Koushik De.

**12th Magh (26th January'26)** On this day in 1893 Maharshi Debendranath Tagore delivered first sermon of Maghotsava at Sadhanasrm. Following this tradition this year also in the morning Maghotsava was celebrated where Smt. Sutapa Roychowdhury officiated as Minister and deliver sermon. Paying tribute to past missionaries she spoke about austerity and various activities of Pt. Shivanath Sastri for Sadhanashrarm. Devotional songs were sung by Smt. Bratati De, Smt. Doyel Chakraborty, Smt. Tania Poddar, Smt. Subrata Pal, Sri Kalyan Bhattacharya and Sri Koushik De. As usual lunch was also arranged for all devotees.

In the afternoon Balak Balika Sanmelan (Children's gathering) was started with the guidance and supervision of Smt. Samita Das. Children were divided into three groups according to their age. They participated in painting, recitation and singing. Prize distribution was held in the afternoon. Smt. Sudeshna Kundu Mukherjee took the Chair as Chairperson and handed over prizes to the best performed contestants. Sri Rupan Dasgupta anchored the entire programme and keep everybody entertained with his orating expertise.

After prize distribution programme, refreshment was served to all participants. A musical drama “Pujarini” written by Rabindranath Tagore was acted by students of the Montessori section of Brahma Balika Shikshalaya. In the evening, singing competition of Rabindrasangeet and essay writing was held for two groups between 13 – 15 years and 16 – 18 years by age followed by prize distribution.

**13th Magh (27th January’26)** In the evening The Annual General Meeting for the year 2023-24 was held where only the members of Sadharan Brahma Samaj was entitled to attend.

**14th Magh (28th January’26)** This day is the last day of this year Maghotsava and is called as Santibachan. It started with Divine service in the evening. Sri Sanjib Mookerji acted as Acharya. He invoked God’s blessing on the congregation and prayed to the Supreme being to lead His ignorant children towards Himself. “Punashcha” a musical group performed Hymns under direction of Sri Darpanarayan Chattopadhyay. Special dinner was arranged at the initiative of some members of executive committee. Thus pulled the curtain of this year Maghotsava with consciousness to propel Brahma samaj towards new resolution and inspires its fulfilment.

**Acknowledgement**  
**For the month of January, 2026**  
**Donation**

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GL - 1248	Jayati Guha	On the Occasion of death anniversary of Dr. Jibananda Guha	General Fund	2000
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GL - 1250	Sutapa Roy Chowdhury		Maghotsava Fund 2026	1000
GL - 1252	Urmila Banerjee		Maghotsava Fund 2026	500
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GL - 1297	Mahua Chatterjee		Maghotsava Fund 2026	500
GL - 1298	Subhasish Guha		Maghotsava Fund 2026	101
GL - 1299	Tania Ghosh		Maghotsava Fund 2026	3000
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GL - 1306	Amit Das		Maghotsava Fund 2026	4000
GL - 1307	Ketaki Bagchi		Maghotsava Fund 2026	5000
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T.F - 1232	Mala Das	Mala Das T.F.	D.O. Account Fund	500
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T.F - 1234	Debjit Das	Debjit Das T.F.	D.O. Account Fund	500
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T.F - 1238	Balya Dan	Balya Dan T.F.	Maghotsava Fund	462
T.F - 1239	Balya Dan	Balya Dan T.F.	Maghotsava Fund	30
T.F - 1240	K. Brahmanandan	K. Brahmanandan T.F.	D.O. Account Fund	1000

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Soumendra Banerjee	500	Minu Halder	200
Goutam Nandan	500	Krishna Chatterjee	500
Amita Nandan	500	Shankha Mala Khan	500
Mitali Ganguli	1000	Krishna Roy	300
Susmita Roy	500	Anupam & Mousumi Chatterjee	1000
Sucheta Dutta	1000	Abon Saha	1000
Shova Roy	500	Chitra Das	2000
Bhaswati Ghosh	500	Asit Kumar Das	5000
Prashanto Maitra	200	Ajanta Das	3000
Prabir Neogi	500	Ankita Goswami	2000
Sudipta Rakshit	500	Samir Chakraborty	1000
Surabhi Dutta	500	Pradip Chakraborty	2000
Chandona Saha	500	Sunando Bannerjee	4000

Jayshri Bhattacharya	500	Deepanwita Ganguli	2000
Sumitra Padmanavan	300	Snigdha Mitra	100
Swati Das	500	Sayantani	200
Nupur Nandi	100	Lili Biswas	200
Naboraj Nandy	100	Gairika Biswas	500
Namita Some	101	Sudeshna Roychowdhury	500
Ayan Kumar Dutta	500	Doel Chakraborty	500
Partho & Nandini Sen	1500	Sukla Sengupta	500
Sanghamitra Gupta	1000	Bratati Das	300
Jishnu Mukherjee	1000	Kalyan Chatterjee	400
Manashi Maity	500	Modhusree Ghosh	500
Sudhsna Basu	500	Nandini Jana	1000
Dinantika	500	Rajdeb Chouhan	1000
Joydeep Hulder	1000	Pritha Gupta	5000
Soumendra Paul & Family	500	Rupnarayan Bose	500
Jayanta Mohanti	500	Manisha Pain	1000
Arunprakash Das	500	Shantosil Pain	1000
Prashanta Gupta	300	Snigdha Pain	1000
Aparna Gosh	500	Sourav Chatterjee	500
Projjal Chakraborty	500	Ajay Haldar	500
Antor Bandyopadhaya	1500	Joydeep Das	1001
Anindita Sen	500	Surekha Das	1000
Sriparna Guha Roy	500	Susanta Das	1000
Rukma Sen	500	Soumitra Roy	2000
Ritashri Bhattacharya	500	Snigdha Roy	500
Samrat Gupta	2000	Anirban Das	500
Rajnath Das and Asit	300	Kaustab Das	1000
Chandana Chatterjee	500	Tapati Das	500
Monojit Saha	500	Sudipta Das	500
Bijan Chanda	500	Sandhya Deb	500
Mouha Chatterjee	1000	Anumita Saha (Dey)	2000
Anjali Sen	500	Sandeep	500
Sunandini Sengupta	1000	Pijush Dasgupta	501
Sucheta Chatterjee	500	Sunanda Das	1000
Chandan Saha	2000	Aditi Banerjee	1000
Nilanjana Sengupta	500	Nikhil Ranjan Nandy	1000

Riktika Bose	1000	Dilip K. Roy & Bibha Roy	500
Madhurima Sen	200	Manabendra Choudhury	1000
Shyamoli Banerjee	500	Surojit Ghosal	500
Suneeta	500	Sraboni Datta	500
Sumantra Deb	250	Monila Roychowdhury	200
Bhaswati Basu	200	Ratna Mitra	1000
Suchita Deb	500	Aditi Bhattacharya	1000
Sujit Mitra	500	Suparna Aditya	500
Suranjita Mitra	500	Narayan Bhattacharya	100
Pradyot Bose	500	Nilimesh Roy	500
Ranjana SenGupta	500	Kasturi Das	500
Nittyenda Banerjee	500	Lata Roy	200
Jotisankar Banerjee	500	Debasish Roy	500
Bipasha Maity	200	Ashoke Mitra	500
Mallika Mitra	1000	Mahua Chatterjee	1000
Manjari Mitra	1000	Tultul	200
Rahul Chatterjee	1000	Sagar Chakraborty	200
Ranjita Sinha	200	Sutapa	200
Anishaa Halder	1000	K.P.Sinha Majumdar	100
Mitra Deb	500	Surojit Das (Rana)	300
Abhijit Dutta	500	Khoma Mitra	1000
Arindam Dutta	500	Rupa & Krishanu Dey	200
Anjali Dey	500	Anita Sengupta	500
Pratik Dasgupta	500	Saerya	300
Pratip Dasgupta	500		