



MIDLAND INDIAN ASSOCIATION

57-59 Lower Forster Street, Walsall, WS1 1XB,
MIA Tel. No: 07955703738 Secretary Tel No: 07801816506

Committee Members

President: *Dr. Anup Kumar Chaudhuri*
Vice President: *Dr. Kartik Chandra Ray*
Secretary: *Mr. Amit Paul Choudhury*
Asst. Secretary: *Mrs. Sukla Maji*
Treasurer: *Ms. Susmita Mitra*
Asst. Treasurer: *Mr. Sumanta Mitra*

Mrs Anuradha Banerjea
Mr. Ronan Ghosh
Dr. Jayasri Chaudhuri
Mr. Surajit Basu
Mrs. Kasturi Mukherjee
Mr. Aniruddha Chakravarti
Dr. Jayanta Mukherjee

Trustees

Dr. Pranab Ghosh
Dr. Sankar Maji
Mr. Dilip Roy
Centre Manager:
Dr. Arabinda Kundu

5 October 2020

Dear Friends,

At the stroke of midnight of 2020, we all wished ourselves a very happy New Year. Hardly did we suspect what was forthcoming. It turned out to be a year of the pandemic and a year which will be experienced perhaps once in a generation. Keeping with the lockdown and further restrictions we in Midland Indian Association (MIA) had to curtail all our activities so far this year and tried to keep you informed accordingly.

The obvious question however in everybody's mind has been about the biggest event in our calendar - Durga Pujo. This is one festival which is part of our existence as Bengalees and is almost unthinkable not to celebrate any year. However, a deadly 'virus' has turned up in the form of 'Mahishashur' this year trying to thwart our efforts.

On this current background and restrictions our MIA Executive Committee has decided on two options. The first option is to celebrate Durga Pujo at our venue in accordance with the regulations set out by the government of United Kingdom. Unfortunately, that means we are unable to allow our members access to the venue due to restrictions in numbers. Only some essential workers will be allowed inside the venue to perform pujo thereby keeping the numbers to a bare minimum of 7 or 8. This will include the priests, pujo helpers and personnel involved in online streaming. The pujo will be streamed live across multiple social media platforms including You Tube, Facebook and Zoom. Pujos will be held only during the daytime from 22nd to 25th of October, while cultural activities are planned for these evenings which will again be performed in individual homes and streamed online. Our members will be able to access our pujo and cultural activities online from the comfort of their homes. There will be proper measures put in place at the venue according to government regulations including risk assessments, social distancing, sanitisation etc.

The second option is to perform Pujo in the house of one of our priests, Dr Jayanta Mukherjee. Pujo will be carried out by Dr Mukherjee with the help of his wife and hence will be in an abbreviated format. There are also some technical issues regarding streaming Pujo from his house and hence it will not be accessible to our members and other devotees which would be possible with our first option.

Our Executive Committee always keeps the interest of our members in mind. Hence in our meeting we were unanimous regarding preferring the first option if possible. We've decided to have the bare minimum puja ceremony, to keep continuity, help the mental wellbeing of all our members by seeing Ma Durga, and being as inclusive as we can to all our members through streaming via the internet. This allows the celebrations to be shared as equally as we can with as many members as we can whilst observing all current safety regulations and acting responsibly. We hope you support our sensible, responsible, and inclusive approach. However, if you have any objection regarding our preferred option and would rather chose the second option then I would request you to kindly provide your views in writing (letter or email) to our President by 15th October. Please remember that we are only a few weeks away from Durga Pujo and hence a decision needs to be taken at the earliest.

However, we need to remember that the situation currently is volatile with new restrictions being enforced every few days keeping with a second wave of COVID. We are keeping a very close eye on the situation which might have an effect on our plans for pujo as mentioned above. There might also be a possible 'lockdown' during the second half of October which will then make it impossible to go ahead with any celebrations this year. Please consult our website (mia68.com) or call Executive Committee members to get regular updates (contact numbers given below). You can also contact our Treasurer Ms Susha Mitra for the financial update as the accounts have not been completed yet by the Accountant due to COVID. Finally, I would like to request all members to pay your membership and any donations by online transfer or cheque addressed to Midland Indian Association.

1) By cheque:

Made payable to "Midland Indian Association"

Posted to: Susmita Mitra, 18 Glen Court, Compton, Wolverhampton, WV3 9JW

Please write your full name and address on the reverse of the cheque.

2) By bank transfer to the Midland Indian Association

Account name: Midland Indian Association

Account number: 52623137

Sort Code: 40-45-19

Ref: Your postcode and House number (eg WV39JW18)

Please mention 'Membership' or 'Donation' as reference

Due to the restrictions on food handling, we cannot accept any fruits or sweets as pujo offerings. However, if you wish to make such offerings please call Sukla Maji or Jayasri Chaudhuri so that MIA can purchase this on your behalf. You can pay for these via bank transfer or cheque.

As Secretary of MIA I can assure you that we are very optimistic of celebrating Durga Pujo this year albeit in a different format keeping with this changed world. At the same time, we would ensure transparency to all our members regarding our plans and activities. I sincerely hope we will be able to go ahead with our celebrations and enable you to be part of our 'virtual' Durga Pujo this year.

Thanking you.

Amit Paul Choudhury
Secretary,
Midland Indian Association

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