

**Greetings from banglanatak dot com!**

April to June was an interesting time with many events and activities. We also successfully took forward and qualitatively enriched some of our initiatives and experimented with new ideas during this period!

**Youth, Entrepreneurship & Culture**

**Y4BIZ Boot Camp**



Our Youth for Business or Y4BIZ initiative, supported by the U.S. Department of State under its Global Entrepreneurship Summit, aims to mentor youngsters from the eastern Indian states of Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar and Bengal to evolve into entrepreneurs. A total of 57 youths were initially selected for a free online capacity building course of the IC2 Institute of University of Texas. This was followed by a four-day residential Boot Camp in Kolkata from 17 to 20 May, attended by 34 participants. They were guided by 11 mentors, including bankers, investors and technology leaders. Altogether 29 business ideas were presented at the Boot Camp. The ideas covered various sectors like solar energy, tech-enabled services, education, digital healthcare, agro processing, animal husbandry, soft skill training and food. Finally, 15 participants have been shortlisted for further grooming and incubation with the help of Nexus Start-up Hub. They include three women. Two of those selected are from Assam, two from Jharkhand, four from Bihar and seven from Bengal.

**Learning Together: Young Bengal Team Visiting U.S.**



The last three months were an exciting and creative time for cultural exchange under the Communities Connecting Heritage (CCH) programme supported by the U.S. Department of State and administered by World Learning. As a participant, we have the Smithsonian Center for Folklore and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) as our partner under the initiative 'Learning Together Towards A Brighter Future'. There were weekly virtual exchanges between young rural artists of Bengal and the CFCH participants through the 'CCH Learning Together' Facebook page and blogs. From the last week of June, a five-member team from Bengal, including two Baul singers and a Patachitra artist, are attending the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington D.C. where they are meeting and interacting with the CFCH team.

**Organizing Youth against Human Trafficking and Child Marriage**

**TIP Conclave Youth Forum 2018**



We organized a two-hour session at the American Center in Kolkata on 26 April where 250 youngsters from different schools were sensitized about the recent trends in human trafficking as part of the TIP Conclave Youth Forum. There was special focus on a study by the International Justice Mission that revealed a shift in hotspots of commercial sexual exploitation of minors from identified red light areas to private and public establishments through personal networks.

**Taking the Swayangsiddha Initiative Forward**



Swayangsiddha is an initiative supported by the Government of West Bengal to stop human trafficking and child marriage. We are working with the district administration of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal Police and UNICEF to reach out to 200 schools and colleges. With its own website now Swayangsiddha ([www.swayangsiddha.org](http://www.swayangsiddha.org)) has emerged as an effective platform for exchange of ideas, thoughts, and initiating and reporting actions on the ground.

**Attending Events at Global Forums**

**UNESCO-ICH: 7th General Assembly**



We attended the UNESCO 7th Session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held from 4 to 6 June in Paris. We, as part of the ICH NGO Forum presentations, along with 25 other NGOs, showcased Patachitra artist Swarna Chitrakar whose work was highly appreciated. The Indian Ambassador to France also congratulated Swarna at his Paris office.

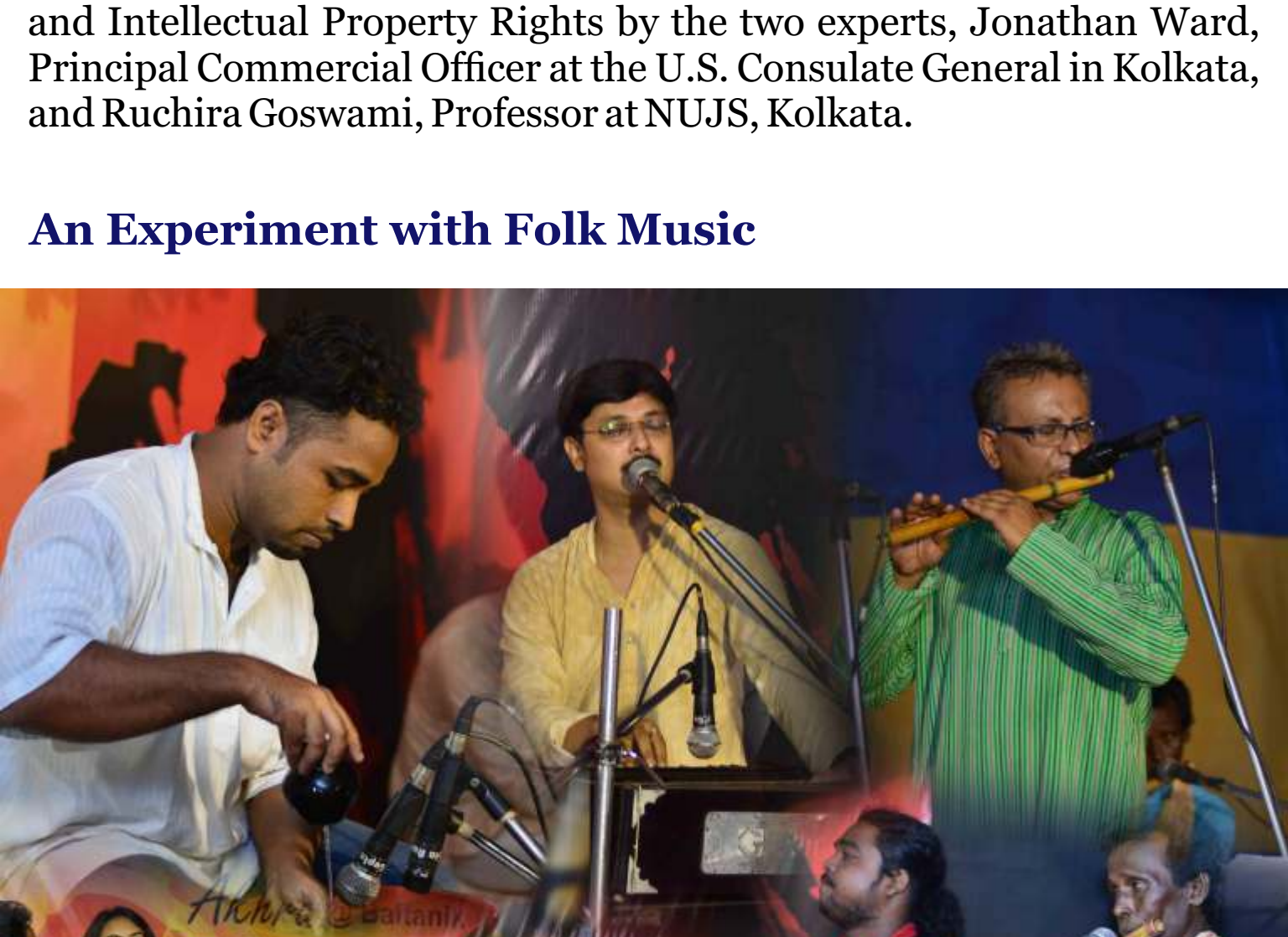
**Celebrating Baul Music in Brittany, France**



A four-member Folks of Bengal team led by Rina Das Baul participated in the Armor India Festival in France's Morlaix, Brittany, from 4 to 10 June. They had three performances where Rina mesmerized the audiences. She was accompanied by Dibakar Das Baul, Sajib Sarkar on percussion and Subhrakamal Chattopadhyay on flute.

**Our Continuing Tryst with Music**

**Launch of Folks of Bengal MusiCal App**



It was a watershed moment for the Bengal music industry when our MusiCal division launched the **Folks of Bengal** App on 21 June, World Music Day, at Akhra@Baitanik in Kolkata. The app leads to a repository of 3,000 songs that one can listen to and download. It is available at Google Playstore and can be played on Android phones. We urge all friends and music lovers to subscribe to the app and explore the world of music through this digital window of Indian melodies! For download: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details>

**World Music Day at Akhra@Baitanik**

We celebrated World Music Day on June 21 at Akhra@Baitanik in Kolkata. However, there was more than music from different genres. Members of the audience were sensitized and enlightened about Music and Intellectual Property Rights by the two experts, Jonathan Ward, Principal Commercial Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata, and Ruchira Goswami, Professor at NUJS, Kolkata.

**An Experiment with Folk Music**



Over the last three months, we initiated an experiment with folk music that was quite challenging and enriching. We selected four young, talented singers and musicians who, in turn, chose their own teams comprising promising and leading young artists. The four — Arijit Chakraborty (vocal), Tarun Chowdhury (flute), Deepmoy Das (vocal) and Tanmoy Pan (percussion) — and their teams created new compositions and presented them at Akhra@Baitanik in Kolkata during weekend events in the month of June.

**Our Continuing Tryst with Music**

**Rural Artists' Exhibition at Akhra@Baitanik**



Bengal is a treasure trove of aesthetically rich ethnic traditional handicrafts. At Akhra@Baitanik, an exhibition showcasing a wide range of such creations by skilled rural artists is on. The focus is on natural fibres, especially Sabai, with its new striking and elegant designs. Do visit to catch a glimpse of the best of aesthetic, authentic and exquisite Bengal handicrafts!

**Upcoming Events**

A four-member Folks of Bengal team led by Debalina Bhowmick will perform at the Salföldi Dalföld Festival (<http://dalfold.hu/>) in Hungary on July 7.

A 12-member folk music and dance team led by Biren Kalindi of Purulia will perform at Karlsruhe Summer Festival in Germany on July 14 and 15. <https://indiasummerdays.blog/>

A five-member folk music team led by Dipannita Acharya will perform at Urkult Festival in Sweden on August 4. Two Madur artists will accompany them to conduct workshops from August 2 to 4. <http://www.urkult.se/en/>

