

Why have food outside when you can make them, inside? Go ahead and recreate your favourite snacks, home-style.

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Nine days of festivities, pre-puja and some interesting facts to go with it.

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The Golden Shooter of India with a zeal for learning and experience to provide, for inspiration.

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PUJO BRIEF

Miniature pandals introduced for the first time in 2020

95 Palli Jodhpur Park pujo committee in Kolkata has come up with a unique idea. They are planning a miniature pujo pandal, which they can carry around the whole area and spread the blessings of maa durga to everyone.

Mahisasur vs. Coronasur- Kumartuli artisans' concept

Not Mahisasur but Coronasur is the concept for the Kumartuli artists for this year's pujo. The Kumartuli artists call the demon Coronasur, which implicates the novel corona virus. As 80 artists from Kumartuli tested positive and currently they are all well, they think the reason behind their wellness is Durga maa.

Mamata Banerjee announces protocol for this year's pujo

Some orders were given by CM Mamata Banerjee to the pujo committee, to be strictly abided by. She asked to place hand sanitizers into the pandals, mandatory masks for everyone, and asked the pujo committees to keep the pandals open from the side or from the top for proper ventilation.

Kolkata pujo committee comes up with a unique idea of "robot" in this pandemic

A robot is introduced in the biggest festival of West Bengal for the first time. The Thakurpukur SB Park Durga Pujo committee has come up with the idea. The robot welcomes everyone at the entrance of the puja pandal by giving them hand sanitizer, which is a unique concept in itself in this Covid-19 pandemic.

Bengal's mega festival all set to go "virtual"

Madhusree Dasgupta

madhusreedasguptaa

The mega annual call of the Durga Puja festival is round the corner to ablaze the hearts of Bengal. With a handful of days remaining, the air is imbued with "pujor gondho" and the kash-fool reckons the quint-essential flavour of the maturation of the golden "Devi paksha". But this year's COVID-19 pandemic situation is to blame for a major breakdown in the 5-day arrangements. Having taken a virtual detour, this year's Durgotsav perhaps will be a rare sight devoid of the crowded familiar streets, illuminated high-budget pandals, the gallone of dhaaks and the free-minded pandal hopping. Several organisers of Kolkata have decided to implement the concept of "Virtual pujo" in

their celebration arrangements, maintaining the social distancing guidelines of the West Bengal government. For instance, the Tala Barowari Durgotsab in the northern fringes of Kolkata are all set to organise their Centenary year mark without faded spirit, taking aid of the "new normal" virtual bonanza.



To avoid the advancement of the deadly virus The Puja App arrived as the savior. This is a digital app that lets you enjoy 360-degree Ultra HD quality VR Ready Digital Walk through of the best installation art (pandals) of Durga Puja, using the Power of Virtual reality in a very different

way. One of the company's executive Shatarupa Banerjee says, "If shopping can be done online, why not pandal hopping!" This year The Puja App 8.0 is presented by Sister Nivedita University-Techno India Group and 360° VR labs. The main Motivation under making

and running such an Online Application is to let users explore, experience and enjoy all the artistry, creativity, innovation & concept from the pandals, no matter where the viewers are". The chief motive is to archive all of these great works of Art and Cre-

ativity. She says "It is an interactive experience, zoom in to anything at all, and you are touching it right there, you are to decide how much of what you want to see." A person sitting in some other country can experience just as much as a person sitting right next to the pandal. It is global in outreach but local in flavor. That's the brilliance of it. People will have to adapt to the "alternative platform" of digitization to witness Durgotsav

2020 and carry a different perspective other than the traditional "touch and feel" experience.

Dark clouds for Bengalis or a new positive change?

Koustav Sengupta

koustavsengupta_

According to a few studies, it is expected that in a few years' time, Durga Puja will not be organised by the elderly members of the locality but by the event management companies, adding a corporate touch. Although there are many pros and cons to it.

Mr. Saswata Basu of Hatibagan Sarbojonin implied that Durga Puja committees will ask event management companies to take over soon enough. "Our volunteers and the security guards are enough as of now. See, the young generation will not be so much into organising a durga puja". On the other hand, the puja will be disciplined and organised. The crowds will be controllable and there will be many fun activities.

However, we still won't see our mothers and aunts arranging 108 lotuses for Ashtami pujo or 108 diyas for Sandhi puja. There would be employees working in uniforms of the event management companies, with walkie-talkies attached to their ears. DJs will keep the tracks ready, not forgetting the traditional Dhaki's presence for Bhashan dance. The vintage Durga puja might get systematised but lets hope for the best.

COVID-19 spurs into curtailing of the height of Durga Pratima

Prerona Munshi

prerona_munshi

Kolkata : The pandemic this year has overshadowed the spirit of Durga Puja and has cast its dark shadow over the artisan's pottery of Kumortuli. With the income drying up, artisans are now staring at an uncertain future. The Bengali calendar is used for scheduling the great festival of Durga Puja. Workers usually start the process of making clay idols for Durga Puja in the month of Baishakh, but this time the situation is completely different, most of them are now unem-

ployed due to a deficiency of work at the workshops. A large number of the hereditary idol makers in Kumortuli hail from the district of Nadia. The workers had moved back to their homes in Nadia and other districts at the very beginning of the coronavirus outbreak in March and now due to fewer number of orders of the idols, the workers are also in the state of dilemma wheth-

er to come to work or not. The Secretary of Kumortuli Mritshilpi Samiti, Babu Paul says, "the business has been gloomy this year, the workers were unemployed for 5 months, but now due to incoming orders of Durga idols which are less and is 75% of the other years, work

has started since 2 months. The number of labour is very less due to fewer number of orders for idols. Furthermore, the height of the idol is shortened this year due to a shortening of the budget in Puja arrangement committees. We usually make Durga idols of 11 foot or 12 foot but this year the orders are for idols of 7 foot, 8 foot or less". They even received orders for 35 or more idols previously, but now the amount has decreased to less than a half. The primary revenue of the year is typically made at this time and usually, there remains no time to breathe at the factory,

but this year the picture is completely different. Bhabesh Ranjan Paul, a senior artisan from Kumortuli says, "Due to the coronavirus outbreak during the Annapurna Puja, the puja committees were in a state of dilemma whether to conduct Puja this year or not with the rising number of Covid-19 cases." A similar cloud of doom is hanging over the other artisans of Kumortuli as well. The potters' fate hangs in great uncertainty but they are not losing hopes yet. They are still waiting for their silver lining amid the virus hovering over their heads.

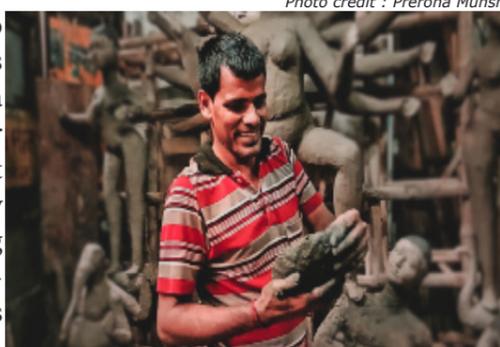


Photo credit : Prerona Munshi

Covid vs. Pujo - A take on battling a pandemic whilst the biggest celebration.

Encompassing Bengal

Divided by borders, united by culture

Diptesh Das

 [diptesh_das](#)

Chattagram; Bangladesh : Bangladesh is home to 17 million of the Hindu population (as of 2020), being the third largest Hindu populated country after Nepal and India. The Hindu citizens' population dropped down from 25% in 1951 to 10% at present.

Dhakeswari temple:

Dhakeswari means 'Goddess of Dhaka'. It is the national and one of the oldest and biggest puja mandap in Dhaka. The Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, visits the puja mandap every year and the Kumari Puja telecasts live on almost every channel. Dhakeswari temple not only gives us the feelings of puja celebration, it also gives the feeling of belonging to a culture that goes a long way.

South Nalapara Sarbojonin Durga Pujo:

This is one of the many prestigious Durga Puja celebrations in Chittagong. Every year, the puja committee comes up with unique and different themes, dazzling lightings and innovative decoration. Last year they came up with the theme "Muktir Alo". The puja committee tries to present a social issue or social message through Maa Durga and

thus this is one of the must-visit pandals.

Azadi golli, Cheragi pahar:

With many themed pujo and different versions of Maa Durga's idols throughout the city, most people still want 'Satwik Pujo' to be normalized. That's why Azadi golli Puja Committee were widely appreciated last year. With beautiful decorations and a wholesome idol of Maa Durga they are bringing a change in the air. One of their members said, "We wanted to show that even without high budget, a beautiful pujo



Azadi golli, Cheragi pahar

can be arranged. Nowadays, pujo has become somewhat of a show & tell of budget with self-created versions of Maa Durga. We wanted to change that and bring back the 'Satwik Pujo' and we have succeeded".

Ramkrishna Mission:

For most of the Chittagonians, Ramkrishna Mission is the place to visit on the morning of Durga Puja. One must be present at early morning because by 9 a.m. the mandir

is so full of people that there are no places to stand or sit. After Anjali they serve a khichuri bhog and it tastes so heavenly that you have to come back every year for that bhoger khichuri. And for that occasion, any morning of Saptami, Ashtami or Nambami must be reserved for Ramkrishna Mission.

Kusum Kumari City Corporation Girls High School:

This puja is organised by Chittagong City Corporation. The puja is very well known for its lighting and sound system and is mainly for the young generation. After hopping every pandal, they come to this mandap to dance their heart out because of the light, music and a disco vibe all together. But because of Covid-19, Durga Puja won't be celebrated like every year. There will be no lighting and no high-budget theme pujo this year. The number of crowds are to stay limited. Sanitisation booths will be kept in the front gate so that every visitor can sanitise themselves before entering the pandal. The visiting hours will be very limited. All we can do is to pray to Maa Durga to heal the world so that we can say the phrase again, "Asche Bochor Abar Hobe."

Nine nights of devotion and Festivity

Ankita Kumari

 [_ankitasharmaaa](#)

Navratri- Nava (nine) and Ratri (night), is a sacred nine-day long festival which is widely celebrated in the Hindu culture. It is dedicated and celebrated to honour Goddess Durga, who symbolizes power and purity. It is famous for the rituals of fasting all through the 9 days.

While the core reason behind the festival remains the same – the victory of goodness over evil, only the history differs in various parts of the country. During Navratri, people dress up in traditional clothing, offer prayers to the lord and go around distributing sweets to relatives and friends. They also celebrate by dancing to the traditional dance form, Garba and Dandiya Raas, and visit pandals and public celebrations.

According to the Hindu mythology, the first embodiment of Shakti was as Shailputri. The other incarnations of Goddess Durga are: Brahmcharni, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandmata, katyayani, Kalratri, Mahagauri and Siddhidatri and all the Shakti are worshiped as 'Nava- Durga'. Though there are four seasonal Navaratri celebrations, it is the post- monsoon autumn festival called Sharad Navratri that is celebrated the most. The Vasanta Navratri during spring (March-April) is the next most significant Navratri celebration.

One popular ritual is Kanya Puja, which takes place on the eighth or ninth day. In this ritual, nine young girls are dressed as the nine goddess aspects celebrated during Navratri.

THE LAND OF BEAUTY- PURULIA

Kajal Dutta

 [_kajal_dutta_](#)

Purulia : Purulia is a land of natural beauty. With the lush green landscape, verdant hills and dense forests. It is a perfect tourist destination that gives a rustic and peaceful ambience to weary city dwellers. This westernmost district of West Bengal unravels her untapped mystery and wondrous beauty. For a perfect holiday in this puja, then welcome to the land of beauty, 'Purulia'.

Ayodhya Hill:

42 kms away from Purulia via Sirkabad, Ayodhya is a famous tourist destination. Kolkata to Ayodhya Hill distance via NH16 is 329.7 km and via NH19 it is 325.5 km. Ajodhya Hill Arcade is a well-known hill view hotel. They have a trained staff whose daily job is to disinfect the rooms, offer fresh room linen, sanitize common areas, follow safe kitchen practices, maintain social distancing and check the guest and staff body temperature, according to Covid-19 protocols.

 You can reach Purulia Station and take

connecting buses to Ayodhya Hills. The 30-km journey takes close to two hours.

 (+918967569357).

Garpanchkot:

The foothills of the Panchet Hills in Purulia, Garpanchkot is a fort consisting of a temple



Garpanchkot

at the hill top, that is lately turning out to be a popular tourist attraction in the area. Kolkata to Garpanchkot distance via NH19 & AH1 is 250.4 kms. You can see the beauty of the place from Royal Bengal Lodge. It is

safe to stay in, during the current COVID-19 situation.

 The journey from Purulia district town, Garpanchkot is a distance of 65 kms. You can avail the following daily Buses or you may hire a private taxi or contact a carriage service to reach Garpanchkot.

 (+91 90028 29327)

Baranti: A less crowded, more peaceful and intimate location, Kolkata to Baranti distance via NH19 is 236.2 kms & via NH16, it is 301.7 kms. This area surrounded by the picturesque hills, greenery of the forest, and a lake, turns out as the perfect hideout for nature lovers. Hotels are strictly abiding by the government rules and regulations on COVID-19 to offer safe and sanitized accommodation to guests.

 Take the Delhi road up to Asansol, then turn towards purulia. Then finally turn towards Baranti from Muradi which is 8 km from Asansol on the Asansol-Purulia road. If one likes to avail train services from Kolkata side, they have two options. Either drop in Asansol or drop at Adra.

 +917407971456).

PERIWIGS OF GODS

Pallab Sarkar

 [pallabbb](#)

Howrah : There is a small village in Howrah district of West Bengal, Shaikpara, where people show us that in this world, Brotherhood and humanity still exists. The Muslim community of that area create wigs for idols of Hindu religion. They do it with contempt and happiness and they have been continuing this work for three generations without a feeling of religious disparity. The season of Durga Puja, is the time when they have to work for maximum hours, with high income in return, because they supply their products not only in Kumartuli, but also in the states of Assam and Tripura. They basically use raw jute, jute sticks, colour and fabrics to create the product. They usually work for 5-6 hours but during the season, their workload increases to about 10-12 hours. In that village there are 15 to 18 families where everyone is individually involved, mainly women.

Amidst this pandemic, they have received very less orders but in spite of that, the sense of brotherhood remains the same.

Cuisine Bite

Binging roadside snacks, home-made style

Jishnudeep Bhora

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In this COVID-19 pandemic situation it's not at all safe to eat road-side food during Durga puja, so these are some simple recipes that will give you a festive feeling and you can enjoy them while watching Durga puja live on TV or on social media.

Chicken Kabiraji

Ingredients

- 5 eggs
- 250 gm chicken
- 1/2 tablespoon grated garlic
- 2 green chilli
- 1/2 teaspoon Red chilli powder
- 1 cup Refined oil
- 500 gm onion
- 2 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 tablespoon grated ginger
- 2 pinches salt
- 2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoon breadcrumbs

Instructions

- Grind the grated onions, ginger, garlic, and green chillies in a food processor.
- Cut chicken pieces in a bowl and add the above mixture to it. Add cumin powder, red chilli powder and lemon juice.
- Marinate chicken pieces and leave the mixture for about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk eggs in a bowl.
- Dip cutlets in the whisked egg and roll on

breadcrumbs to have a crispy exterior.

- Heat oil in a pan. Add marinated chicken pieces. Keep frying till they become golden brown in colour.
- Serve hot with your choice of sauce/chutney.

Chicken Lollipop

Ingredients

- 6 full-size chicken wings

Batter

- 1/2 cup flour (60 g)
- 1/2 cup cornflour (60 g)
- 1 tablespoon chilli powder
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup water (60 mL)

Instructions

- Add all the marination ingredients into a bowl and mix until fully combined, set



Photo credit : Google

- 2 cups oil (500 mL), for frying
- #### Marinade
- 2 teaspoons chilli powder
 - 2 tablespoons ginger garlic paste
 - 1 teaspoon pepper
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce

aside.

- Slice a full-size chicken wing into three parts along the joints.
- For the drummed (the upper, meaty, one-bone part of the wing), cut along the circumference of the thin end so that the bone and the meat are no longer con-

nected. Then push down the meat so the drummed becomes a lollipop.

- Place the prepared chicken lollipops in the marinade. Stir and cover. Marinate in the fridge for at least 1 hour.
- Mix all batter ingredients until smooth without lumps.
- Dip the meat end of the chicken lollipops into the batter.
- In a medium-sized pot, heat the oil to 170°C (340°F). Deep fry the chicken for 5 minutes or until the batter becomes golden brown and the chicken is cooked throughout.



Photo credit : Abanti Mukherjee

Sneak peek to what Maa feasts on in the Bonedi Baris!

Prerona Munshi

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Abanti Mukherjee

 [ha_ami_pagol](#)

Kolkata : The beats of dhaak and sound of shankh will echo through every Bengali neighbourhood within a few more days. The once-pompous festivities might have lost some colour with time but, in these old mansions (Bonedi Baris) life still revolves around the nine days of Devi Paksha. A notable trait of the Bonedi Barir Pujo is the bhog offered to Goddess Durga- a remote wail from the spicy khichuri and payesh generally served at Baroari Parar Puja pandals on Ashtami afternoons. Khichuri is not a part of bhog menu at several of these pujas and only Brahmins have the privilege of offering 'anna bhog' to the Goddess. However, a mouth-watering variety of sweets substitute the khichuri. Unfortunately, this bhog is reserved only for members of the family and invitees.



The inside look of a 248 years old, Shabeki Durga Puja. A prevalent celebration extending years of culture and tradition.

Sabarna Roy Choudhury's Maha-Bhog:

The city's oldest Durga Puja in their Barisha address, started in the year 1610 and is older than the city itself. Right now, eight separate Durga Pujas are hosted by the different branches of the family, namely, Aatchala, Boro Baari, Mejo Bari, Majher Bari, Benaki Bari, Kalikingkar Bari, Nimta and Birati. However, the archaic Atchala Durga Puja is still now performed at its original site.

The Maha Bhog of this Bonedi Bari is a stunning spread comprising of ghee bhaat, basanti pulao studded with dried fruits, khichuri, an array of deep-fried vegetables and bori, curries and traditional fish preparations, along with sweets like Doi,

Payesh, Jibhe Goja and Narkel Sandesh. On Dashami, Maa Durga is treated with a unique spread of panta bhaat, khesari daal, kochu saak, koi machher jhal and chaltar ambal. All these preparations are cooked without using onions. But this year due to the pandemic situation, the families are facing a huge problem in

upholding all the rituals. They confirmed that this year, the Bhog which is usually offered to Goddess Durga at the very beginning of Mahalaya (Bodhon) from Krishnavami, is not happening this year because of the time gap between Mahalaya and Durga Puja being 1 month due of 'Mal Maas'. Maintaining the Covid-19 restrictions, some rules are made for performing the required rituals. Only 10 people will be allowed at once and bhog will be limited only to family members and invitees.

Sovabazaar Rajbari's Monda-Mithai:

This puja was started by Raja Naba Krishna Deb in 1757. The Debs' Durga Puja now has two addresses on the same street, hosted by the two branches of the Deb family, one being the Choto Barir Pujo and another being Boro Barir Pujo. The auspicious Shandhi Puja has been performed to the sound of cannon fire for years. The Boro Bari of Deb family doesn't offer anna bhog to the Goddess. Instead, an incredible variety of monda mithai are mightily prepared on the Rajbari premise by 14

Brahmin cooks arriving from the district of Medinipur. Some of the items on the menu are pantua, mithey goja, chauko goja, peraki stuffed with cinnamon flavoured kheer, katkati, shingara, nimki, and radha ballavi. A unique item is the motichoor, a mammoth laddu which, unlike regular motichoor, is pristine white in colour. They carry out the rituals and ensure that an extravagant bhog is offered to Maa Durga with more than 50 dishes, an extraordinary one being 'Mete Chocchori', offered on Navami. The Choto Rajbari also serves a splendid lunch of pulao, luchi, alur dum and sweetmeat. But this year, some changes are taking place due to the



The prevalence of Pujo celebration that go years behind the history of the city alone.

current Covid-19 situation. Strict security checking will be there at the entrance along with sanitization of the whole hallway twice a day. Also instead of 14 Brahmin cooks only 4 cooks will be brought this year for preparing the Bhog. Limited people will be allowed to enter at a time and will not be permitted to go up the Thakur Dalan.

Story-hub

The inevitable vanquish of 'asura'

Senjuti Dey

 [senjuti3iii](#)

Saptami

-How could you post that? Were you drunk or something?

- What are you saying? I seriously have no clue.

- Seriously dude?! How can you post such a picture on Facebook? It has surely gone viral by now.

- What picture? I didn't even get time to touch my phone today!

- Check your account first.

- Okay. Let me check.

The password was showing incorrect in both her Facebook and Email ID. Meanwhile she got a WhatsApp notification. Someone sent her a screenshot. It was the screenshot of that post.

Astami

It had been 30 minutes since Arati pisi was knocking on Rini's door. "How can she sleep like this? Surely, she is like Kumbhakarna." Bularam please bring me the duplicate key of Rini's room!" Arati pisi said. After opening the door, Pisi screamed. Rini was hanging from the ceiling, her throat tied with a dupatta. Shreya called the police.

The police came and took Rini's body. They sealed that room and prohibited everyone from leaving the city before the case was solved.

"Rini was chilling with us up to 2 am. How could she attempt suicide just within the next 4 hours?! something must have happened to her." Shreya was sobbing.

Shreya was a cousin of Rini, pursuing her graduation. She came to Kolkata for witnessing the 25th year of their Ancestral puja. Rini's father Sanjay Dutta had died in a car accident when she was a kid. Her moth-

er had died while giving birth to her. Rini had been brought up by Arati Pisi, who was unmarried. Shreya's Father Mahesh Dutta was a businessman in UP. They had come to Dutta bari after many years. This time being the first for Shreya and their cousin brother Arun and his newly-wed wife Sonali. So this Durga puja was a get together for the Dutta family. They arrived on Panchami except for Rini and Arati pisi since they already live there.

"The post mortem report said Rini died between 4:30 am to 5:30 am. We checked Rini's social media accounts and found out that an obscene picture of hers had gone viral on Facebook. But the picture seems to be posted from her account which is awkward. Maybe her account was hacked. The person who did this is the cause for Rini's suicide." Inspector Indrajit Sen who was handling this case said on Ashtami morning. He promised to solve this case before the Puja ends.

Nabami

By Nabami, Inspector Sen solved the case. He clarified Neel, Rini's boyfriend, as accused. It was found out that Rini had emailed the same photo to Neel. He was the only one with whom Rini shared her Facebook password. Inspector Sen arrested Neel and he did a press conference.

"But what was the motive of Neel?" A journalist asked Sen.

"They had a fight that night which was implied from their messages. Apparently they had a fight and it went too far, leading to a break up. Neel posted that picture to take a revenge." Sen answered.

Dashami

The Dutta family had arranged a memorial. Inspector Sen also came to that memorial.

After everyone's speech, he announced that "NEEL IS NOT GUILTY. It was my trick to reach to the criminal. And it worked. I got to know who the real criminal is, on the day of inquiring Neel. But I had to arrest him unless I had proof against the original culprit. The culprit is too dangerous and she even has a strong political connection. Students of her college are afraid of her. She used to rag people and no one ever dared to report against her. Her father has a very good rapport with the local MP. She killed a student of her college in front of everyone because he protested against her. No case was filed. I am talking about Shreya Dutta. Would you like to tell us why and how did you do this crime?"

"No, you don't have any proof and I won't admit. You can't arrest me without any proof." Shreya vowed.

"Okay. I'll narrate it then. Please do correct me if I say something wrong." Sen answered.

Shreya saw Neel on Sashti evening and she fell for him. She repeatedly proposed to Neel and requested him to accept her but he refused. She felt insulted and became infuriated with the rejection.

When Neel told Rini about Shreya's proposal, Rini didn't trust him and they had a fight. Shreya intended to frame Neel and wanted to make Rini believe that he posted the picture since he was the only one who knew the password for Rini's facebook account. Rini sent that picture only to him, so that they would break up. Isn't it Shreya?" Indrajeet asked

"How would you prove your story without having a proof and when there are proofs against Neel?" Shreya smiled.

"Well, I have someone here."

"Please come inside Amit."

"He is a professional hacker. Shreya hired him for hacking Rini's Facebook and Email account. They took that photo of Rini from her Mail ID which was sent to Neel. And they used a different VPN while posting that photo into Facebook so that the device could not get traced. I found Amit's number in the call details of Shreya. She called him 15 times on Sashti after threatening Neel. There was a money transaction as well from Shreya's bank account to Amit's. And we collected the call recording between Shreya and Amit where Shreya is clearly heard ordering Amit about hacking Rini's accounts. Amit has agreed to give a testimony in court. So, with all the evidences, I am arresting Shreya. And thank you all for cooperating with me to solve this case, especially Neel. Come Neel. You will tie the handcuff in her hand." Indrajeet stated

Neel tied the handcuff against Shreya's hands.

On this Dashami, like always, Asur lost the war against Maa Durga.



'Dhakis' faces tough times in Bengal amidst Durga Puja

Shonai Dey

Howrah: Since my childhood days, I have seen my father hustling the dhak and I learnt it from him, to perform in different festivals. But never in my life have I seen such a pathetic condition during this particular time, with Durga Puja being just around the corner. Though I'm born and brought up in a dhaki family in Howrah, our primary and annual source of income is from labour jobs, but we wait for this festive time of the year to earn some extra money which is an utter disappointment this time.

During Durga Puja every year, I used to earn around Rs 6000 to 8000 by playing the dhak in different puja pandals for five days. However, this year I have only been called by my neighbourhood club committee so far where I will be paid Rs 3500. I don't know how I will keep up with my family needs on this scanty income.

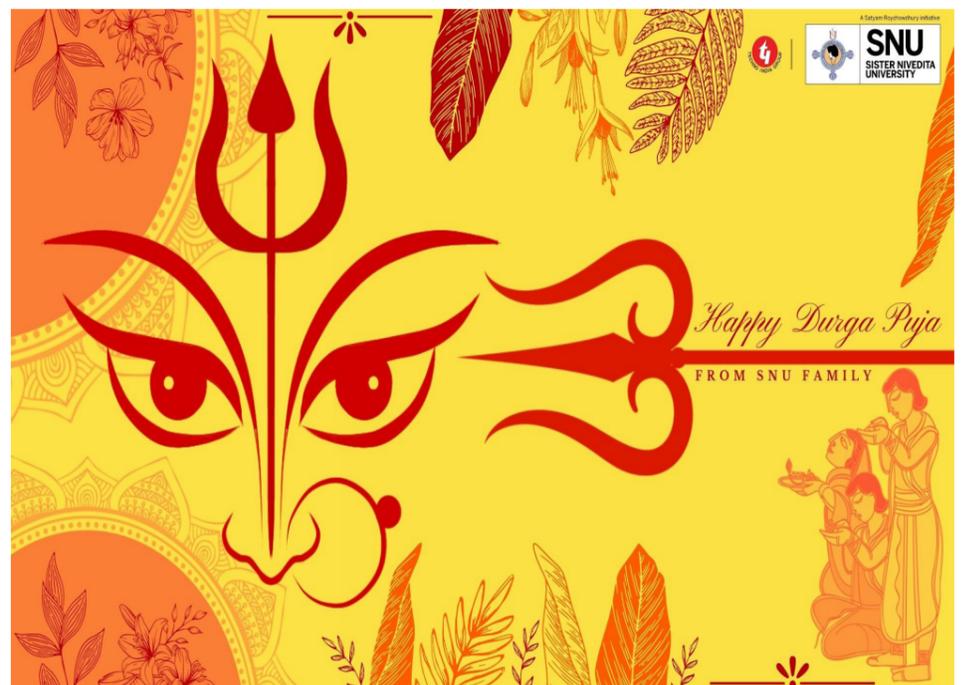
Dhakis are an integral part to almost all festivities in Bengal but the art of playing

the huge barrel-shaped membranophone instrument is succumbing in a slow death. Due to the pandemic situation, the dhakis are facing numerous problems in receiving orders. On the other hand, the dhak-makers and repairers are not receiving any order either. Every year around this time, we remain under huge pressure because this is our only hope for a proper income.

My son also beats the drums with me during Durga Puja in various club pandals and contribute to the family. This year a very few puja committees have informed us that they were not able to collect subscriptions from people due to the Covid-19 pandemic. And because of that they had to lessen their expenses and are not calling us. My family members are also afraid, and they are also mourning as to how we will celebrate the festival this year.

With the fund for the community pujas being tightly drawn up, the demand for 'dhakis' are sinking which is leading to our financial crisis and we are facing an uncertain future.

Source : Prerona Munshi



Sportfolio

BENGAL'S BOWLER OF GLORY

Jishnudeep Bhor



ARNAB NANDI
Bengal Cricketer

(Champion of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2011, champion of 2012 Vijay Hazre Trophy under Sourav Ganguly's Captaincy, runner-up of Ranji Trophy 2019-2020, appeared for trials both for Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals franchise)

Jishnudeep- Since IPL, a major sports event in India this year is held in Dubai, will the new environment, pitches & crowd-less stadiums have any impact on the players?

Arnab- Yes, it will be tough for cricketers to play in a new pitch, but they'll manage as they practice. It is more painful for the fans that they can't cheer for their favourite teams by visiting the stadium and catching their live performance and the cricketers will somehow have a negative impact to showcase their skills in crowd-less stadiums.

Jishnudeep- The Wimbledon & The Olympics are both staged in 2021 but IPL was delayed. Yet now it started in September 2020. IPL or so called Masala Cricket due to its commercialised gaming, boosts up the economy. So, is it the reason for its upholding?

Arnab- No, I don't think there is a matter of commercialisation. I just have my opinion that Dubai has accepted BCCI's proposal to proceed with IPL slot in their stadiums. And thus, they are conducting as per schedule this year only. And Dubai claims to have a Covid free and sanitised environment too.

Jishnudeep- Eminent personalities like Sourav Ganguly and MS Dhoni are from

the Eastern Zone, but no such cricketers are in Indian team now. What is the exact reason for this?

Arnab- Cricket is highlighted more than any other sport because of its huge fan base, so it has more sponsors that they would like to invest here to gain profit. This is the reason no other sports in India gets much facilities and isn't highlighted as much as cricket. I think we should contribute to every sport, so they get more importance and more talented athletes are produced in different arenas.

Jishnudeep- People view sports as a gateway to jobs in India. What are your views? Also tell us that how much is mental strength necessary beside physical strengths.

Arnab- Sports have an objective to obtain the top most rank and if in that stage you get a job, it should be taken as a bonus. Athletes prioritising jobs affects their mindset and they lose focus on their ultimate goal. Legendary cricketers like David Boon & Arjuna Ranatunga looked like they were extremely unfit but they led their country towards victory, endless number of times. Mental toughness plays a major role in parallel to physical fitness, maybe the body says no but the mind can be the game changer.

Source : Jishnudeep Bhor

The Golden Indian Shooter

Jishnudeep Bhor



MEHULI GHOSH
Indian 10M RIFLE SHOOTER

(Asian champion, Youth Olympics silver medalist, 2018 ISSF world cup bronze medalist, 2019 South Asian games 10m Rifle gold medalist, 2018 Commonwealth Games silver Medalist)

Jishnudeep- Online Shooting Competition is the new normal for shooters. What are the pros and cons of this virtual system?

Mehuli- Online shooting concept is presented to maintain the rhythm of shooters so that they can get the taste of match pressure and feel the competitive environment even by shooting at home. The problem is, many shooters are without electronic target systems since it is costlier than paper target goals.

Jishnudeep- How difficult is it to get a sponsor in shooting when compared to superior sports like Cricket? How can the fan base of underrated games be increased?

Mehuli- In the recent year, schemes like Khelo India has helped players of underrated sports who compete in the Olympics to get more media coverage. If this scheme works well, sandisc will increase and sponsors will invest and provide the necessary monetary support.

Jishnudeep- Olympics are rescheduled in 2021. But IPL started in Dubai this year ignoring the critical conditions. Is it so urgent or just because it adds a lot to the economy?

Mehuli- When comparing Olympics to IPL, there is a huge decrement in the number of players and also in other staffs needed to organise the event. IPL is conducted

in crowd-less fields with all players properly checked and in sanitised stadiums. And Dubai also claims to have successfully controlled COVID-19. And fans are enjoying too from their homes through live telecast.

Jishnudeep- What do you think schools and colleges should modify so that students get encouraged and engage in Sports activities?
Mehuli- My school Techno India, Hooghly was very much helpful and CBSE board has special allowances for sportspersons. The current Government has taken different initiatives and promoted sports at a much higher rate as it maintains healthy mental state in humans. Institutions should promote sports more so that students can get an optional career as well.

Jishnudeep- Olympics are rescheduled in 2021 and you get one more year to compete & print your name in the selected list. How much are you expecting?

Mehuli- Maybe the same team shall be announced again. I wanted to have the taste of competing with top rank shooters. I knew it would be hard and I wasn't expecting much, but the intense tournaments worldwide helped me to know my extreme limit. So, it's all about experience and learning new things and now I have a clearer vision on what is the competition and how to fight.

Source : Jishnudeep Bhor

Daily Planet

NATIONAL

Feluda vaccine

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed a number of key concerns, including the Feluda paper strip test for the novel coronavirus which is to be rolled out in India over the next few weeks.

Tragic irony

Aarif Khan, one of the ambulance drivers of a non-profit organisation, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Sewa Dal, having ferried over 200 Covid bodies for cremation, succumbed to the Covid-19 virus on the 10th of October morning at the Hindu Rao Hospital in Delhi.

Blue Flag

The Blue Flag beaches are considered cleanest in the world and India has finally made its way towards getting into the list of nations for coveted international eco-label, the Blue flag certification, by an international jury from FEE, Denmark.

INTERNATIONAL

Brain Fogging

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed a number of key concerns, including the Feluda paper strip test for the novel coronavirus which is to be rolled out in India over the next few weeks.

Exceptions

After having recorded around 27,263 cases and 898 deaths on Covid-19, the government of Australia discloses, it is in talks with several nations about quarantine-free travel, but warns that Europe and the US will not be on the list.

Deserved Nobel

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2020 to the World Food Programme (WFP) for its efforts to fight hunger and acting as a drive-in effort to stop the utilization of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.

Pujo Porikrama



Snapfolio



Udit Sengupta



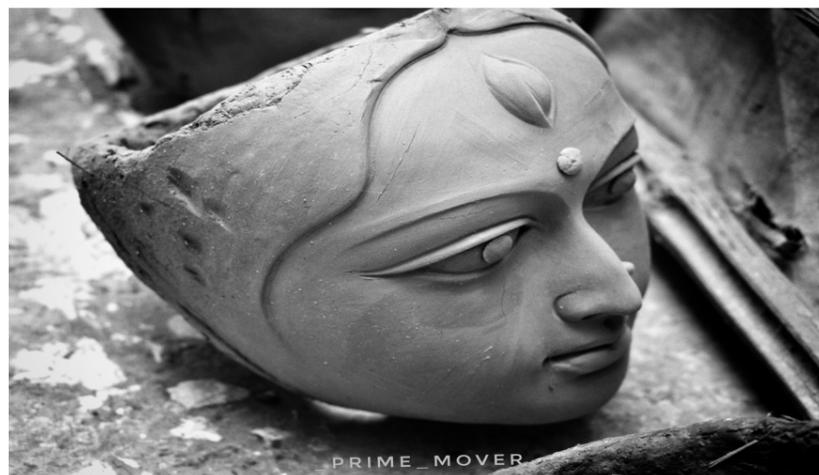
Pratyay Haldar



Soumya Nayak



Tanishq Agarwal



Nandini Dutta