## Meet Gopalganj's lone female idol maker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Meet Suity Das -- lone female idol sculptor from Gopalganj. She has broken the gender barrier by embracing a predominantly male profession -- sculpting idols for the Hindu community.

It is the busiest time for Suity as Durga puja, the largest celebration of the Hindus, starts this week.

On their latest assignment, Suity and his father, Ramesh Das from Noiyar Bari village under Kotalipara upazila of Gopalganj district, were seen sculpting an idol last week on Bagura Road in Barisal city.

Traditionally, the idols for community puja mandaps (temporary stages for worship) are made by male sculptors. Suity's love for the work coupled with her courage supported by her family have paved the way for a new era, when female sculptors may take on idol making as their profession of choice.

"Breaking this traditional barrier wasn't easy. A lot of times I've heard harsh comments [for making idols], but that couldn't drag me down," said

tion for making quality idols," she be made.

said, adding that she made 21 Durga idols for various mandaps in Gopalganj, Kotalipara, Faridpur and Barisal.

Suity's father Ramesh said his daughter showed keen interest in sculpting idols from a tender age, when she used to attempt making small Durga idols at home.

She spent her childhood in

India's Delhi, from where she learned different techniques of sculpting idols. She has been sculpting idols profes-

sionally since 2001, when she was 15 years old, said Suity, who is now 29 years of age.

Narayan Chandra Dey Naru, president of Barisal City Puja Udjapon Parishad, said, "It's a good sign that traditional barriers are being broken. This trend will be beneficial to the community."

Puja organisers, however, tend to pay less to Suity for her work, compared to a similar job done by a male sculptor, observed Suity. "I can make any idol of any size. When it comes to sculpting, gender is irrelevant. Women can do any work."

So far this year Suity sculpted three "I've been sincere with my jobs idols of Durga in Barisal city where all along and I've earned a reputa- at least 35 Durga idols are likely to



Artisan Suity Das busy working on a clay idol of Goddess Durga ahead of the Hindu festival, Durga Puja, at a temple on Bogra Road in Barisal city.

PHOTO:

### Onus mainly on Pakistan

like the United States and the United Kingdom of its involvement in terrorist activities in India and Afghanistan.

Pakistan's tribal region along the border of Afghanistan has been claimed to be a "haven for terrorists".

According to an analysis published by the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings Institution in 2008, Pakistan was, "with the possible exception of Iran, perhaps the world's most active sponsor of terrorist groups ... aiding groups that pose a direct threat to the United States."

Daniel Byman, an author, writes, "Pakistan is probably today's most active sponsor of terrorism."

Postponement or cancellation of a Saarc summit is not a new thing since its birth in Dhaka in 1985.

But what is new this time is that there is a collective voice of the five member countries and the reasons given are more or less identical -- that Pakistanis interfering in the internal affairs of the comembers of the Saarc and promoting terrorism in the region in violation of the Saarc Charter.

Principle 1 of the Charter says, "Cooperation within the framework of the association shall be based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutual

The decision to boycott the Islamabad event scheduled for November 9-10 is perhaps the strongest diplomatic action the five countries have taken till date

Carrying the national flag, banners,

placards, portraits of Bangabandhu,

Hasina and Sajeeb Wazed Joy, they

stood on either side of the streets on

her way to Gono Bhaban from the

airport. They showered flowers and

petals on the PM's motorcade and

chanted slogans hailing her leadership

Leaders of the AL-led 14-party alli-

ance, its associate organisations as well

as various political and socio-cultural

bodies accorded hearty reception to

against Pakistan after the Uri attack.

India has gone on a diplomatic offensive against Pakistan due to serious deterioration of relations after the killing of 18 Indian soldiers by alleged Pakistanbacked terrorists at Uri in India's Jammu-Kashmir.

New Delhi has blamed the Pakistanbased Jaish-e-Mohammed terror outfit for the Uri as well as the January 2 Pathankot airbase attacks.

Previously, India faced several major

terror strikes in which Pakistan was accused of its involvement, including alleged Pakistan-backed terrorists' attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001; attack in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, which has been the biggest attack on Indian sovereignty till date; beheading of Indian soldiers by Pakistani troops on January 8, 2013; and the January 2, 2016 Pathankot airbase attack that killed seven Indian security personnel.

Dhaka has long been highly annoyed with Islamabad's repeated interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs. Pakistan's National Assembly, provincial assemblies and the foreign ministry had passed unanimous resolutions and issued statements condemning the war". execution of war criminals in

Bangladesh since December 2013. Dhaka said the uncalled-for resolutions and comments after each execution of the war criminals were nothing less than a brazen interference in nately are yet to witness any change in secretary and Saarc secretary general Bangladesh's internal affairs, which the situation." was unacceptable.

Thousands of people from all walks

of life thronged the city streets since

early afternoon to convey their hearty

welcome to the leader who achieved

success in ensuring women empower-

ment, education, health and food

security as well as in facing terrorism

Hasina, also the AL president,

responded to the crowd waving her

Grand reception on PM's return

efficiently.

and militancy.

repeatedly summoned several Bangladesh high commissioners in Islamabad and apparently harassed them in the name of voicing concern over the trial of 1971 war criminals.

Bhutan, too, has expressed its concern

over recent escalation of terrorism in the

region, which, it says, seriously compro-

mises the environment for successful holding of the 19th Saarc Summit. Bhutan, in its letter to Nepal, shared concerns of some of Saarc countries on the deterioration of regional peace and security due to terrorism. Kabul's official message sent to the Saarc Chair Nepal on September 27 spoke of the "imposed terrorism" in Afghanistan. It explained that

Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani would not be able to attend the summit as he would be "fully engaged" in combating the "increased level of violence and fighting as a result of imposed terrorism on Afghanistan".

Afghanistan's decision also comes less than a week after its Vice-President Sarwar Danesh, addressing the UN General Assembly, accused Pakistan of backing terrorists waging a "full-scale

In a harsh indictment of its neighbour, Sarwar Danesh told the UNGA, "We have repeatedly asked our neighbouring country Pakistan to destroy the known terrorist safe havens, but we unfortu-

Sri Lanka also expressed its unwilling-Apart from issuing statements and ness to participate in Saarc meet, saying adopting resolutions, Pakistan also the prevailing environment in the region

Battalion, had to face trouble to con-

trol the situation when the PM's

around 7:35pm, Hasina was received

by eminent citizens, including

educationists, cultural activists, artistes

Bhaban, PMO Secretary Suraiya

Begum, Dhaka University Vice

At the main entrance to the Gono

and intellectuals.

On her arrival at the Gono Bhaban

motorcade headed for the Gono abouquet.

the premier for running the country including the police and Rapid Action

Various law enforcement agencies, Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique

street.

is not conducive to holding the Saarc summit in Islamabad.

The ministry of foreign affairs in Colombo, in a statement on September 30, said Sri Lanka condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stresses in this regard the need for dealing with the issue of terrorism in the region in a decisive manner. The US has recently said that it contin-

ues to pressurise Pakistan to act against terror safe havens within its borders while calling for "de-escalation of the political discourse" between India and Pakistan. Diplomats and South Asian affairs

experts say the five countries conveyed a clear message to Pakistan to act against all terror groups, including those tar geting its neighbours.

Meanwhile, the five nations announcement to pull out of the regional summit is also prompting two other member states -- Nepal and the Maldives -- to pull out of the 19th summit.

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka told The Daily Star that Nepal, the current chair of the Saarc, could call off the Islamabad summit. The sources added that Nepal is likely to make an official announcement soon after its top diplomats return home from the UNGA session.

Nepalese media reported that the country has adopted a "wait and see" method, as its foreign minister, foreign are currently out of Kathmandu.

According to diplomatic sources, the Maldives is also likely to announce that it would pull out of the summit.

Hridoy Hote Kakhan Aponi".

with the eminent citizens.

among others.

## Host says it's postponed

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holding the summit.

Though all the five member states said they would not participate in the summit citing the same reason, Pakistan blamed only India for "derailing" the event.

"Pakistan deplores India's decision to impede the Saarc process by not attending the 19th Saarc Summit in Islamabad on November 9 and 10," Pakistan's leading newspapers Dawn and The Express Tribune quoted a Foreign Office statement as saying. "India's decision to abstain from

the summit on the basis of unfounded assumptions on the Uri incident is a futile effort to divert attention of the world from the atrocities perpetrated by India in occupied Kashmir," said Nafees Zakaria, spokesperson for the Foreign Office. Pakistan Foreign Ministry said said

all preparations were made to hold the summit, but had to be called off after impediments by the Indian government, which contradicts the PM Narendra Modi's call to fight poverty in the region. The Foreign Office said Pakistan

cooperation under the Saarc umbrella and it is committed to Saarc objectives for promoting the welfare of people in the South Asian region. "Pakistan remains committed to hosting the 19th Saarc Summit at

attaches great importance to regional

Islamabad at the earliest so that the objectives of regional cooperation under the Saarc umbrella can be pursued more vigorously," added Zakaria According to the Saarc Charter, the

conference is postponed should any member state decline to participate. But Nepal, as current Chair, and

Pakistan, as host country, did not make any such announcement in last three days although four countries on and eminent singer Rezwana September 27 pulled out. Choudhury Bannya on behalf of the

There is no fundamental problem if famed citizens welcomed the PM with the host country makes the announcement of postmen, said a Bangladesh Bannya sang part of the famous foreign ministry official, adding that it Tagore song -- "Aji Bangladesher should be done in consultation with Cultural personalities Ramendu the Chair.

But Nepal as the current Chair has Majumdar and Nasiruddin Yusuff to announce fresh dates through consultation with all member states, he added.

Though there was no official reac-

tion from the Bangladesh government

following the latest development yesterday, a senior official at the Saarc Wing at the foreign ministry told The Daily Star last night that Dhaka was aware of the situation.

Without naming anyone, the official said a particular country's repeated attempts to interfere in Bangladesh's internal affairs created an environment which is not conducive to the successful holding of the summit.

Tensions between India and Pakistan mounted in recent weeks, after militants suspected to have entered from Pakistan stormed an Indian army base in Uri on September 18, killing 18 soldiers.

In efforts to isolate Pakistan in the region, India first pulled out of the summit on Tuesday citing "growing interference in the internal affairs of member states by one country creating an environment that is not conducive to the successful holding of the sum-

India blames Pakistan for the Uri attack, which Islamabad denies.

#### Colombians vote Sunday on historic peace deal

AFP, Bogota

Colombians vote in a referendum Sunday on whether to ratify a historic peace accord to end the 52-year war between the state and the communist FARC rebels.

The accord will effectively end what is seen as the last major armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere. The war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced mil-

The stakes are high -- the Colombian government says it has no Plan B if voters reject the accord -- but polls indicate it will pass by a wide

margin. Colombians are sick of war, even though many resent making concessions to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which

some foreign powers had classed as a terrorist group.

# People given Friday shock

and achievements.

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FROM PAGE 1 As party men poured in on the streets in their thousands and headed for the airport from different parts of the city, Dhaka came to a

virtual standstill. Thousands of people remained stranded for several hours since around 3:00pm as vehicular movement came to a complete halt, causing immense public suffering.

Adding to their misery, parts of several roads, including the busy Agargaon-Khamarbari road, one side of Manik Mia Avenue and Bijoy Sarani to Rangs Bhaban intersection was made off-limit to traffic.

Hundreds of men, women and children were seen walking in the scorching sun towards their destinations, after remaining stuck for hours. Patients and those too frail to walk had to count extra money in waiting

charges. Several correspondents of The Daily Star who were present at different key points witnessed such sufferings first-

hand.

go through such a mess on the week-

Many asked for the prime minister's phone number so they could directly talk to her, seeking her intervention so they don't have to suffer like this in

The tailback on Airport Road started immediately after Juma prayers when a huge number of AL men took to the streets with placards, festoons, banners and national and party flags to greet the PM, who landed at the airport at As a result, vehicular movement was 6:45pm and reached the Gono Bhaban around 7:30pm.

They assembled in long queue by both sides of the road stretching from the PM's official residence Gono Bhaban to airport intersection to welcome their party chief. Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on the busiest Airport Road from afternoon till around 9:00pm.

Farmgate, Mohakhali, Banani, Tejgaon, Gulshan, Kuril Biswa Road and Uttara are among those areas that

witnessed severe traffic congestion. In most cases, traffic movement was ings. Commuters were frustrated that at the mercy of the AL men, as traffic

they had to endure such an ordeal and police looked on helplessly.

Contacted, Additional Commissioner (Traffic) of Dhaka

Metropolitan Police Mosleh Uddin

Ahmed said it was only natural that

there would be some public suffering

during movements of VVIPs. Awami League leaders and workers said. on the streets did not contribute to the suffering that much. There was a huge pressure of vehicles in the streets today [yesterday] as it was weekend. slow sometimes," he claimed, adding that they tried to keep AL men off

About making parts of some roads off-limit to traffic, he claimed there was no such thing except some "optional diversion".

All traffic officials were in the street to manage vehicular movements, and they helped keep vehicles moving despite huge presence of AL leaders

and workers. Senior AL leaders refused to talk to The Daily Star about the public suffer- stuck there.

Savar from her relative's house at the city's Kathalbagan, could not get on a bus in two hours since 3:30pm. She then started walking towards Mohakhali to get a transport.

Bachchu, dancers Shibli Mohammad

and Shamim Ara Nipa were present,

The PM also exchanged pleasantries

"I am suffering on the street. But "I can say that the presence of what can I do? I have to go home," she

Like her, many people narrated how they suffered in the gridlock. They questioned whether the AL could accord the reception at the Gono Bhaban or if the prime minister could use an alternative route to reach home.

Fahmida Akter, who spent three hours to reach Dhaka Orthopedic Hospital from the airport by a CNGrun three-wheeler, said, "There should be a limit of harassment on the streets."

Manuel Richil was standing at Airport intersection with his niece on his lap. He and his sisters came from Haluaghat in Mymensingh to go to Natunbazar. They had to get down at the airport intersection as traffic got

"I don't know what to do now," said ODI. Aleya Akter, a service holder who Richil, after waiting there anxiously for Today will be their last opportunity started for her house at Hemayetpur in more than an hour. to find form and find answers ahead of

## Tigers' last chance

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Going by the first two ODIs, all that the Afghans need to work on is their finishing. They managed to keep a tight leash on Bangladesh for long periods of time in both the ODIs, but crumbled at the end on both occasions. Thankfully for them, they managed to hold on towards the end of the second ODI.

For Bangladesh, this series is a reminder of how unprepared they are for the England series. They have a number of problems. Their key opener Soumya Sarkar has not been firing. They are yet to find a player at number three and hence the shuffling of the order continues. That could also be a reason why none of the batsmen managed to make the most of their starts in the last game.

In addition, their two key fast bowlers are not hitting the right line and length. Taskin Ahmed seems out of sorts ever since his return, while Rubel Hossain, who was Bangladesh's hero the last time the Tigers faced England, has already been dropped for the third

first ODI on October 7. The one change that Bangladesh are

the England series that begins with the

likely to make is including slow leftarmer Mosharraf Hossain. He replaced Rubel Hossain in the squad for the third Will Bangladesh go into the game today with three specialist spinners? Or

will they stick to their policy of playing three pacers? If they stick to their current policy, then they might bring Shafiul Islam in

place of Rubel Hossain and replace

Taijul Islam with Mosharraf Hossain. However, if they want to play the extra spinner, then Mosharraf might just replace Rubel.

There are also a few questions regarding Soumya. There is a chance that the team management might have a look at Imrul Kayes in the opening position.

If Bangladesh win today, they will have dodged a bullet and also notch their hundredth win in ODIs and perhaps celebrate a bit as well.

Regardless of the result, the outcome of the series isn't likely to change the fact that they really have plenty of things to work on before they face the English.