

## I miss my mother the most during Durga Puja: Kumar Bishwajit

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Legendary singer and composer, Kumar Bishwajit has carved a special place in the hearts of the Bangladeshi audience with his melodious voice and strong personality. In a career spanning almost four decades, he has earned many prestigious awards including the 'Bangladesh National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer' in 2010.

Even with the passing of time, his songs have never lost their wonderful charm.

In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the musical maestro shared his memories of puja and much more.

"During my childhood, Durga Puja was one of the most joyous times. I will never get those

golden moment back in my life. I used to spend my Durga Puja in the village, where the festive spirit of Puja would start from 15 days before. We would make the pandals for the Puja using the sarces of our mother. I remember waiting 11 months until Durga Puja would come again and we could celebrate," reminisced Bishwajit.

"I remember that a *dhuli* from Raujan would come to our neighborhood during Puja. Even today, I can clearly remember the scene of him playing the *dhul*. I would stand in front of him the entire time. Sometimes, I also used to play *kasor* plate. Seeing my obsession with the *dhul* and *kasor*, my father angrily asked me if I would grow up to become a *dhuli*. He even hit me once, because of this obsession," continued the artiste.



Smiling fondly, as he recalled the memories, Kumar Bishwajit noted how even though he did not grow up to become *dhuli*, one always accompanies him on stage whenever he performs.

"It reminds me of the beautiful days of my childhood. I always used to think how can anyone play the *dhul* so wonderfully. That's why I have an obsession with the instrument," added Bishwajit.

Taking a moment to gather his thoughts, the artiste continued, "I miss my mother the most during festivals, especially when it is time for Durga Puja. She used to cook many delicious dishes, including *Pachon* (a dish made from a mix of vegetables). The taste of this dish still lingers on my tongue. Now, Puja comes every year, but I can't eat my mother's cooking. I can no longer take blessing from my mother during Durga Puja. What can be worse than that? I miss her deeply."

Somewhat emotionally, the artiste recalled how his mother would always wait for him to return home, before she would sit down for a meal.

"We would eat together. I used to inform my mother whenever I would go out. This became one of my habits. Sometimes, when I return home, I still look for my mother. Then, I remember that she is no longer with us. I hope she stays happy, wherever she is. Puja is coming again, but she is not with me to celebrate. However, I believe that my mother is watching over me and sending her love and blessings for me," concluded Kumar Bishwajit.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Translated by Antara Raisa

## Chanchal and Prosenjit post heart-warming photo together

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Chanchal Chowdhury, who went to Kolkata to attend Hoichoi's event, has been having a great time, mingling with celebrities from both sides of the border.

Recently, the actor posted a profile picture on Facebook with one of Kolkata's biggest stars, Prosenjit Chatterjee, also endearingly known as 'Bumba da'.

"After taking pictures with everyone else, he told me that he wants to take a picture in the same pose as they used to dance in 'Moner Manush'," wrote Chanchal. "This is Bumba da".

Hoichoi's event saw many heartwarming interactions between Bangladeshi and Indian celebrities, notably Mosharraf Karim and Prosenjit in their show of mutual respect.



## Bachelor Point removes recent episodes with controversial dialogue



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The popular series, "Bachelor Point" faced a lot of criticism on Facebook due to some dialogues in the fourth season—due to which the digital platform, Dhruba TV, removed some episodes from YouTube. However, it was not verified whether the dialogues were in the episode aired on the channel or on television.

The controversy over Marjuk Russell's dialogue calling someone "the son of a sex worker" sparked controversy on social media.

Recently, Dhruba TV announced on Facebook that they have removed the objectionable episodes of "Bachelor Point". The channel also stated that they will be more careful not to post any kind of content that imposes an adverse impact on society and culture.

# NEWS

## 15 hurt in AL-BNP clash in Hazaribagh

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Witnesses said the clash began around 3:00pm when Awami League supporters tried to obstruct BNP activists going in processions to the rally.

Both groups engaged in chases and counter-chases and beat up their opponents with sticks until police brought the situation under control, according to witnesses.

Later, the ruling party men took up position at the Tally Office intersection behind a police barricade, they said.

The law enforcers also put up a barricade around the BNP rally venue to prevent further clashes.

The rally ended peacefully with the presence of a large number of law enforcers.

Ehsanul Ferdous, additional deputy

police commissioner of Dhanmondi zone, said, "BNP leaders and activists were marching towards the rally venue with sticks. I heard that when the procession came to the Tally Office Road in Hazaribagh, there was a clash with Awami League leaders and activists. Two people may have been injured in the incident. But the situation is normal now," Ehsanul said.

Addressing the rally, party's standing committee member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku said they held the rally braving many obstacles as the ruling party men secretly attacked BNP activists from different lanes and alleys on their way to the programme.

He thanked law enforcers for cooperating with the BNP to hold the rally.

Recalling that many members of

the police sacrificed their lives for democracy during the Liberation War, Tuku called upon the law enforcers to stand beside people who are carrying out a struggle for democracy.

He said his party activists were being forced to take up sticks in their hands for self-protection since the ruling party men were attacking them.

Speaking there, BNP south city unit convener Abdus Salam slammed the ruling party for attacking their leaders and activists without provocation.

Tuku said the ruling party always tried to make a political gain by involving BNP with Jamaat, but it is time now to censure Awami League for involving Jamaat.

## Ranesh Maitra

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former Pabna district correspondent of The Daily Star, is survived by his wife, two sons, and three daughters.

He was the pioneer of journalism in the district and also the founding secretary of the Pabna Press Club.

He organised the Language Movement in Pabna in 1952 when he was a college student. He spent his entire life for movements against oppression.

Born on October 4 in 1933, Ranesh entered political arena during the Language Movement. A key organiser of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, he later joined the National Awami Party (NAP) and the Gonoforum.

Ranesh, who would have been 90 in a week, was involved in Oilkyo NAP before his death.

Ranesh organised valiant freedom fighters during the Liberation War. He went to India for arranging training for freedom fighters.

He spent years behind bars during the East Pakistan period and independent Bangladesh for fighting injustice.

Jakir Hossain, president of Pabna District Workers Party, said Ranesh dedicated his entire life to ensuring financial and social freedom of the ordinary people. "He never bowed to those in power."

Ranesh started his career in journalism in 1951 with "Nawbelal", a weekly paper of Sylhet.

After serving Indian newspaper the Sottoguj, he joined the Daily Sangbad in 1955. He worked for the Daily Morning News since 1961 before joining the Daily Observer in 1967, where he served until 1992.

The veteran journalist then joined the Daily New Nation as the country editor. He worked for The Daily Star from 1993 to 2000.

"Ranesh Maitra was involved in journalism till death as a columnist. He wrote for establishing the rights of the ordinary people," said ABM Fazlur Rahman, president of Pabna Press Club.

He said Ranesh's death was a huge loss to ethical journalism in the country.

The journalist was awarded Ekushey Padak in journalism in 2018. He received many other awards.

Meanwhile, Pabna Press Club yesterday announced a seven-day mourning programme over the death of the senior journalist.

Shoikat, secretary of the press club, said the decision on Ranesh's funeral will be made after the return of his elder son from Australia and a daughter from the USA.

## Drawn into extremism

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This correspondent also talked to colleagues of Nesar who said Nesar did not join work after leave.

Nesar's was not in his Patuakhali hometown, said a colleague of Nesar, requesting anonymity.

The colleague added, "We actually did not notice anything unusual in him."

Shah Mohammad Habibullah, imam of Koba Jame Mosque in Cumilla, has been missing for the last 15 days. He also went on a two-day leave on September 10 and did not return, said law enforcers.

His brother Shah Mohammad Waliullah, a lecturer of a madrasa, lodged a GD with Cumilla Sadar South Police Station in this regard.

Lt Col Jewel said, "We are getting missing persons' reports from different areas. We have kept the missing people under surveillance analysing their communication details."

Asked about the reason for people suddenly going missing, he said an organised group is working. "We are trying to trace the mastermind."

Seven youths went missing from Cumilla city on August 23. Law enforcers later claimed to have found their connections with banned militant outfit Ansar Al Islam.

Although the law enforcers were not able to trace the seven, a source said their last known location was in Patuakhali.

Besides them, missing persons' reports were made in different districts, including Chandpur, Patuakhali and Sylhet, said law enforcers.

Following the incidents, law enforcers began making a list of missing youths.

## Young couple

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Later that night, the building's security guards contacted the police, who broke into the flat and discovered the bodies.

The victims' families said they were unaware that the couple rented the flat.

According to them, Noman went to Saudi Arabia a few months after their marriage and stayed there for six months.

Their bodies were kept at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital mortuary.

Police said a murder case was being filed.

## Red tape, poor infrastructure

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organisation, said the sector has not been able to reap much benefit despite huge prospects.

"The main obstacles are the bureaucratic tangles, inadequate infrastructure facilities, backward communications, and a lack of decent accommodation, safety and security, professionalism and skilled manpower."

Santos Kumar Dev, chairman of the department of tourism and hospitality management in Dhaka University, said Bangladesh has bountiful resources to offer to both local and foreign travellers with its scenic beauty, ethnic diversity, unique cuisines, rich heritage and historical sites, profound religious sentiments and much more.

Toufiq Rahman, secretary general of the Bangladesh chapter of Pacific Asia Travel Association, said cities and towns lack an adequate number of quality accommodation, decent public transport and safe roads.

Besides, he said the tourism infrastructure is not as developed as it should be.

The country is yet to offer quality resorts and hotels with proper recreational facilities that would attract tourists. They also lack well-trained personnel to guide the tourists, and different means of entertainment at the tourist spots.

Moreover, he said the lack of community support is a major barrier

for the sector's development.

Travel agents, tour operators or guides; Haji and Umrah agencies; hoteliers, restaurant owners, resort and amusement park owners; and aviation and transportation owners are among the stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality sector.

According to TOAB, around 40 lakh people are employed in the industry.

At present, the sector accounts for 3.5-4 percent of the GDP.

Experts say this contribution can be easily raised to five to six percent through coordinated courses of action.

Toufiq Rahman further said the tourism sector will not flourish unless foreigners are drawn in droves.

During the pre-Covid time, only around three lakh foreigners would visit the country every year, most of whom were business tourists.

"Only 10-15,000 foreign tourists come to Bangladesh for leisure purposes. We will have to take up more measures to attract foreign tourists for the betterment of the sector."

He added that according to government statistics, there are around 1,600 tourist spots in the country. "But how many of us are aware of those spots?"

"This is because the government does not have proper planning to promote and brand those destinations at home or abroad."