

Can't celebrate Durga Puja while others are still suffering: APU BISWAS

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

As the joyous Durga Puja festivities begin, the rhythmic beats of the *dhak* and the sweet fragrance of *gadha phul* fill the air in the mandaps. Yet, amid this

spiritual fervour, Apu Biswas, often celebrated for her lively and vibrant energy during Durga Puja, finds herself in a quieter, more reflective mood this year, with no grand celebrations marking the occasion.

Apu Biswas revealed that she hasn't made any plans for this year's Durga Puja, admitting she isn't feeling her best, which is why there won't be any major celebrations.

Explaining further, she shared, "My hometown in the North is still undergoing severe flooding, and this has been weighing heavily on my mind. With so many people affected by the floods, I have decided not to plan anything for Puja this year."

Then again, Apu extended her heartfelt Durga Puja wishes to her fans, saying, "Durga Puja is a special occasion that comes only once a year. I send my sincere greetings to all. May everyone be blessed with prosperity."

The *Koti Takar Kabin* star emphasised how important her fans are, stating that their unwavering support has been key to her success. "To my fans, I offer my deepest gratitude, along with my Puja greetings and endless love," said the actress.

Durga Puja is a time when family, friends, and well-wishers come together, and the absence of loved ones leaves a void that can never truly be filled.

When asked whom she misses the most during this time, Apu Biswas shared, "I miss my mother the most. Honestly, I think about her every day, constantly. But during Puja, her absence feels even more profound."

Reflecting on previously cherished memories, she added, "During Puja, my mother would always make so many plans and preparations. On Mahalaya, she would visit the riverbank. Today, all those memories are flooding right back. If she were still here, she



PHOTO: DREAMS EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY & MD FAHIM ISLAM

would have done so much for all of us."

While talking about her memories of her childhood during Durga Puja, Apu Biswas fondly reminisced, "Pujas during my early years were times of unmatched happiness. That pure delight can never be recaptured. Back then, Durga Puja meant the excitement of wearing new clothes, the house brimming

with guests and endless moments of fun and laughter."

She went on to say, "As a child, the thrill of gazing at the majestic Durga idols filled me with pure wonder. I would admire them with eager eyes and a heart full of happiness. Even now, as Durga Puja arrives, I find myself travelling back to those magical days."

'Stree 2' to release in Bangladesh

Stree 2 starring Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao, is set to be screened in Bangladesh. After achieving record-breaking success in Indian theatres, the film is scheduled to be released in Bangladesh on October 25.

This Indian movie is being brought to Bangladesh by The Abhi Kathachitra, with *Prohelika*, directed by Chayanika Chowdhury, making its

way to India in exchange.

Stree 2, the sequel to the 2018 hit film and the fifth installment of the Maddock Supernatural Universe, also stars Pankaj Tripathi, Abhishek Banerjee, and Aparshakti Khurana.

Directed by Amar Kaushik, the film originally premiered in India on August 15, 2024.



'Latika' to represent Bangladesh at COP29 in Azerbaijan

Samsul Islam Showpon's documentary *Latika* is once again showcasing Bangladesh on the global cinematic stage, this time at the prestigious COP29 climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan. Following a successful festival run, the film will be featured at the summit, highlighting its significance to environmental and cultural discussions.

The short documentary which portrays the life of a resilient woman from the Malo community in Narail, Bangladesh, has been selected for the DokuBaku International Documentary Film Festival to compete in two categories.

The director confirmed that it contributed to the film's selection for the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), scheduled for November 11 to 22.



NEWS

The garage of compassion

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brought whatever first-aid supplies they could find.

One of the doctors' neighbours, Khurshid Jahan, said, "Seeing them wounded only reminded us that we have children too and we must act."

"As ordinary people, we had very little to offer, but I tried to provide as much comfort to the students as was possible while Dr Worthy and Dr Mithean treated their wounds. My husband and daughter provided them with water, first-aid supplies and clothes."

At first, the wounded were being treated in the building's reception area. As more people arrived, two beds were set up in the garage and treatment continued there.

The doctors tried to provide utmost care – they removed pellets, dressed deep wounds and offered counselling.

Worthy said, "Some of the injuries were horrific – backs, heads and chests riddled with shotgun pellets lodged deep into their muscles. At least 10 victims came with pellets in their eyes."

The more severe cases were referred to trusted clinics that were willing to help, despite the fear of a ban hanging over their heads.

One particular patient left a lasting mark on Worthy – a 10-year-old who had come with pellets all over his body.

"I treated him and told him to go home. Within a few hours, he returned with another pellet in his forehead. I treated him again and he left."

"Later that day, some students showed me a video of the same boy,

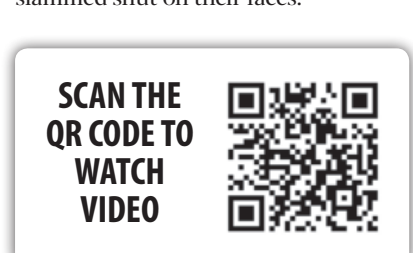
lying lifeless on the street ... I didn't know his name, but I couldn't stop thinking about him ... I still suffer from sleepless nights at the thought."

The next day – July 19 – the curfew was imposed and helicopters hovered overhead.

But the doctors continued treating the wounded – students, guardians, pedestrians, whoever came for help.

Even when supplies ran low, the building's residents reached out to pharmacy owners and managed more.

As word spread, more and more people came to this unlikely of clinics for help, when all other doors were slammed shut on their faces.



THREATS AND SURVEILLANCE

Around 8:30pm on July 19, police fired tear gas shells towards their building, situated on Satmasjid Road, forcing them to close the gates and bring students inside for safety.

Some men in civilian clothes questioned the building's guards, asking who the residents were and why they were treating protesters. They threatened them with dire

Shakib wants countrymen by his side

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cricketing journey has been written by you! So, in my last match, the last chapter of this story, I want you by my side. I want to say goodbye [to cricket] along with all of you. During this farewell, I want to hold the hands of those people whose applause made me play well.

"In this farewell, I want to look into the eyes of those people whose eyes have been filled with joy at my good game and with tears during my bad matches.

"I hope -- not just hope, I believe -- that you will all be with me in this farewell. Everyone will draw the end of the story together as the hero of the story is not me, but you!" his post read further.

Last month, before the second Test of the Tigers' ongoing India

tour, Shakib announced in Kanpur his retirement plans from all three formats. He expressed his interest in playing at least the first Test against South Africa in Mirpur if not the entire two-match series.

The first Test will be held in Mirpur from October 21-25 while the second Test will take place in Chattogram from October 29-November 2.

However, Shakib's participation in the South Africa series depends on his selection in the squad and the security concerns that he brought up when he announced his retirement plans in India.

As a former lawmaker of the ousted Awami League government, Shakib's urge for a "safe exit" from the country after playing his final Test looked a bit far-fetched considering how reluctant the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)

consequences if anyone stepped outside.

"Initially, I didn't focus on the threats. But when they asked about us, I was a little nervous. We, however, carried on with our work ... Our primary duty was to humanity. Whatever I did, I did for my country," Mithean said.

Soon enough, residents began noticing drones flying above the building.

"Some colleagues from the media informed me that only three houses in the Dhanmondi area were under surveillance. Ours was one of them," Worthy said, adding that their phones were also being tracked by then.

Despite the anxiety and fear of arrest or interrogation, nothing could come in between these doctors and their sense of duty.

"I found peace knowing that I treated those students out of my duty to my profession. Helping others should be driven by humanity, not politics – blood carries no political identity."

"Despite everything, the gratitude from the students made it all worthwhile."

After the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government, the students who had found refuge in the garage returned on August 6. They thanked the two doctors for standing by them when no one else did.

For the new Bangladesh, Mithean hoped that no one else would fall victim to oppression.

"We achieved victory for the brothers and sisters who gave their lives. The shedding of their blood must not go in vain."

officials and some top government officials were regarding the issue initially.

However, to some extent, the situation has changed in Shakib's favour recently as he found strong support from Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud, who said that he wishes for the premier all-rounder to play his final Test match in Bangladesh.

Shakib, who was heavily criticised for staying quiet during the student-led movement that eventually toppled the Awami League government on August 5, apologised for his role in that period.

"I respect the sentiments of those of you who have been hurt or distressed by my absence during this critical time and I am sincerely sorry for that," Shakib's post said.

Ratan Tata passes away

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Ratan Tata, who ran the conglomerate for more than 20 years as chairman, had been undergoing intensive care in hospital.

He became chairman of the Tata Sons, the autos-to-steel conglomerate, in 1991 and ran the group founded by his great-grandfather more than a hundred years ago until 2012.

He founded telecommunications company Tata Teleservices in 1996 and made IT company Tata Consultancy Services public in 2004.

After stepping down, Ratan Tata was conferred with the title of chairman emeritus of Tata Sons, Tata Industries, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, and Tata Chemicals, the company website says.

On graduating with a degree in architecture at Cornell University, US, he returned to India and in 1962 began working for the group his great-

Joy, Palak sued

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They allegedly allowed Digicon Global Services Limited to use the NID data for business dealings with various organisations without ensuring national security and personal data protection.

The data was sold to approximately 182 entities, both domestic and international, resulting in concerns over public security, the plaintiff said in the case.

The other accused include Tareque M Barkatullah, former director of the data centre; Wahidur Rahman Sharif, director of Digicon; NM Ziaul Alam, former senior secretary of the ICT ministry; Mahbubur Rahman, former executive director (additional responsibility) of the Bangladesh Computer Council; Abdul Baten, former director (operations) of the National Identity Registration Wing at the Election Commission Secretariat.

The Detective Branch of police arrested former data centre director Tareque in the Kafrul area yesterday morning.

Ashraf Hossain, former senior maintenance engineer at the Election Commission Secretariat; Lt Col (ret'd) Rakibul Hasan from the National Telecommunication Monitoring Center (NTMC); Rezaul Islam, former deputy secretary of the Cabinet Division; Haider Ali, retired professor of the CSE department at Dhaka University, and Muhammad Mahfuzul Islam, former vice chancellor of the Canadian University of Bangladesh, were also accused in the case.

Hezbollah pushes

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Hezbollah, Suhail Hussein Hussein.

Burn victims from Israeli strikes are being treated at the burn unit in Beirut's Geitaoui hospital, the only one of its kind in the country. Reuters journalists saw nurses gently change the gauze on patients, some of whom were wrapped neck down because of the severity of burns.

Meanwhile, Tehran has told Gulf Arab states it would be "unacceptable" if they allowed use of their airspace or military bases against Iran and warned that any such move would draw a response, a senior Iranian official said.

One to die

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default of which they will have to serve another year in jail.

The judgement comes at a time when incidents of deadly mob beatings are on the rise in the country.

The judge yesterday acquitted eight people as the charges brought against them were not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Renu, 40, a single mother of four-and-a-half-year-old Tuba and fifth-grader Ta-seen al Mahir, went to Badda Utar-Purba Primary School on July 20, 2019, to enquire about admission.

But a mob beat her to death in front of the school gate, suspecting her to be a kidnapper.

RSF urges Yunus

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8, signed by RSF Director General Thibaut Bruttin and Director of Advocacy and Assistance Batta Antoine Bernard, the international press freedom watchdog expressed concern over the state of media freedom in Bangladesh.

"For a long time, our organisation has regularly denounced the widespread violations of press freedom in Bangladesh," the letter said.

RSF pointed out that Bangladesh's ranking in its World Press Freedom Index had declined, now standing at 165th out of 180 countries.

"We are hopeful that your desire for concord, after years of state repression, will contribute to putting an end to your country's dramatic decline," the letter said, adding that RSF trusts Yunus' interim administration will bring about the necessary changes to ensure press freedom and the right to information.