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WORDS FROM CHIEF PATRON



Joy Maa Durga

It gives me immense pleasure to write the opening words for this Souvenir, which is a part of the Sarbojanin Durgotsav celebrations, held between 1st and 5th October 2022 at the Classic Arcade Park, Jaypee Greens Wish Town, Sector 134, Noida.

Coming from a religious family background, I was always inclined towards religious functions. I fondly remember my childhood days spent in listening to Mata Ke Bhajans during Navratras. My joy knew no bounds when I was approached sometime in August by Sandeep Malakar Ji, who happens to be the Vice President of Wishtown Cultural Association, the trust that organises Sarbojanin Durgotsav. I did not think twice before saying 'yes' to his invitation to be a part of this year's Durga Puja celebrations. And here we stand today, having successfully concluded celebrating a mammoth Durga Puja!

*I congratulate everyone connected to this year's Durga Puja
for making it so endearing, grand and memorable!*

I also would like to express my gratitude to all the committee members, especially Sandeep Malakar Ji, for making me a part of your celebrations, which are in their second year!

Hearty greetings for upcoming festivities Laxmi Puja and Kali Puja (Dipawali)!

-Yogendra Kumar Mishra

messaade

WORDS FROM PRESIDENT



Durga Pujas are not religious and cultural celebrations alone, but they are the tools that etch our memories. They have a lot of symbolic and societal significance too! Our Honourable President Droupadi Murmu, in her message to the nation on the occasion of Durga Puja, rightly said that Durga Puja 'is an opportunity to show respect towards woman power'. 'A society where woman empowerment is encouraged at every level in a true sense, can be considered to be a modern, developed and just society. The nine forms of Goddess Durga symbolise the infinite power of the mother nature.'

In its second year, the Sarbojanin Durgotsav was a grand success. It was a testimony to the fact that a few committed people with the right intent can achieve the most astounding feat on earth.

From a humble 5-lakh budget in 2021 to a whopping 15-lakh corpus this year, the scale, magnitude and reach of Durga Puja in Jaypee Greens Wish Town have risen beyond all expectations, thanks to the dedication of the members, the support of the patrons, sponsors and volunteers, and most importantly, the trust reposed on us by the residents.

Together as a family we can achieve even more. May Maa Durga shower her blessings on all of us all round the year and visit us again next year to spend her time in a bigger and grander home!

- Arnab Banerjee

WORDS FROM GENERAL SECRETARY



Maa Durga is a symbol of boundless power. She is also an epitome of kindness. Every devotee across the world is a fan of her charisma. To a Bengali or anyone from the eastern part of India, Durga Puja has a special place in their lives.

The Jaypee Greens Wish Town Sarbojanin Durgotsav is an attempt to fulfil the religious, cultural and moral need of the Bengali diaspora here as well as the other residents who miss Durga Pujas. It is also a symbol of unity between the two prominent Jaypee societies—Klassic and Kosmos. I feel really fortunate to be a part of the initiative by a few fellow residents in 2021, who decided to take the plunge and organise a Durga Puja in our society that year. I still clearly recall the date 26 September 2021, when a handful of residents formally met for the first time at A6 Klassic roundabout to decide on Durga Puja.

In my today's message to the readers of this souvenir, I want to express my gratitude towards Maa Durga, without whose blessings this Durga Puja would not have completed its second year in such a grand way.

A Durga Puja of this scale would not have been possible without the support of our patrons, sponsors, partners and associates. My vote of thanks goes to all dear members and executive members, volunteers and their families. I thank the authorities at Jaypee, police and fire departments for all their support and timely permissions. My sincere thanks to all the wonderful residents of Klassic and Kosmos as well as to all the support staff, the workers, the guards and the housekeeping staff. My special thanks to all the artistes and the participants of cultural programmes, especially the children!

Next year, may Maa Durga bless us to return bigger, better and stronger!

- Alok K. Sasmal



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Late Smt. Smriti Sen

Today we pause to reflect upon the one who shaped our character, moulded our spirits, touched our hearts. We humbly pay homage to the everlasting impact you have made in our lives.

FONDLY REMEMBERED BY:

SHRI PRODEEP KR. SEN, SHRI PRIYOJEET SEN, SHRI. PROTEEK SEN, SMT. SHIKHA SEN, SMT. NISHA SEN AND THE ENTIRE SEN FAMILY





THE FESTIVITY OF DURGA PUJA

Durga Puja is a significant festival of the Bengali community living in India. It is also celebrated abroad with equal fervour. It is one of the largest and most lavish cultural events in the country. Every year the festival is celebrated with a lot of fun and enthusiasm. This religious festival of the Hindus is celebrated every year in the month of *ashwin* (September–October). The celebrations are all about gaiety and grandeur, where the ten-armed Goddess, riding a lion, is worshipped with great passion and devotion. The festivity days of this puja are *shashthi*, *saptami*, *ashtami*, *navami* and *dashami*. *Dashami* is when the devotees take the idol of Durga for *visarjan* (immersion) to the nearby waterbody.

A Global Recognition

Durga Puja is now recognised by UNESCO. In 2021, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO inscribed 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

I would like to offer warm congratulations to India, its people and especially all those who worked on the nomination dossier.

- ERIC FALT, Director, UNESCO New Delhi.

While Durga Puja is one of the most important festivals of West Bengal, it is widely observed by the Bengali diaspora across the country and in major cities of the world. Durga Puja is one of the major festivals in Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and many northeastern states.

Since the beginning of the summer months, the Bengali community starts planning about the *sharadotsav*, i.e., Durga Puja. The planning is about reunion and meeting friends and relatives, menu for *bhog* (*prasad* as community lunch), participation and organisation of cultural programmes, visiting varied pandals, etc. Durga Puja is an experience that satiates our multifaceted facades with the style and trends of our present culture, which is a collage of arts, crafts, culinary expertise, apparels (clothes, shoes, jewellery) and cuisine.

Mythology: Rama's 'Akal Bodhan'

It is believed that the occasion marks Prince Rama's invocation of Goddess Durga before going to war with the demon king Ravana. This autumnal ritual was different from the conventional Durga Puja (Basanti Puja), which is usually celebrated in the springtime. This Puja is also thus known as *akal-bodhan* (out-of-season worship). Thus goes the story of Lord Rama, who first worshipped the *Mahishasuramardini* (the slayer of the buffalo-demon), by offering 108 blue lotuses and by lighting 108 lamps, at this time of the year.

Origin and History

The first grand worship of Goddess Durga in modern history is said to have been celebrated in the late sixteenth-century Bengal. Some say the landlords (*zamindars*) of Dinajpur and Malda initiated the first Durga Puja, while another source accounts Raja Kangsharayan of Taherpur



The Baro-Yaari Puja gave way to the sarbojanin or community puja in 1910, when the Sanatan Dharmotsahini Sabha organised the first truly community puja in Baghbazar in Kolkata with full public contribution, public control and public participation. 'Now, the dominant mode of Bengali Durga Puja is the "public" version', writes M D Muthu Kumaraswamy and Molly Kaushal in Folklore, Public Sphere and Civil Society.

or Bhabananda Majumdar of Nadiya as organisers of the first *sharadiya* or autumnal Durga Puja in Bengal around 1606. The origin of the community Puja can be credited to the twelve friends of Guptipara in Hooghly, West Bengal, who collaborated and collected contributions from local residents to conduct the first community Puja called the *Baro-Yaari* Puja in 1790. The Baro-Yaari Puja was brought to Kolkata in 1832 by Raja Harinath of Cossimbazar, who performed the Durga Puja at his ancestral home in Murshidabad from 1824 to 1831, notes Somendra Chandra Nandy in *Durga Puja: A Rational Approach*, published in *The Statesman Festival*, 1991.

There is evidence stating full official participation of the British in the Durga Pujas until 1840, after which a law was promulgated by the government banning such participation. In 1911, with the shifting of the capital of British India to Delhi, many Bengalis migrated to the city to work in government offices. The first Durga Puja in Delhi was held in 1910, when it was performed by ritually



consecrating the *mangal kalash*, symbolising the deity at Kashmere Gate, currently organised by the Delhi Durga Puja Samiti in the lawns of Bengali Senior Secondary School, Alipur Road, Delhi. This puja has been celebrated with great fanfare till the present times.

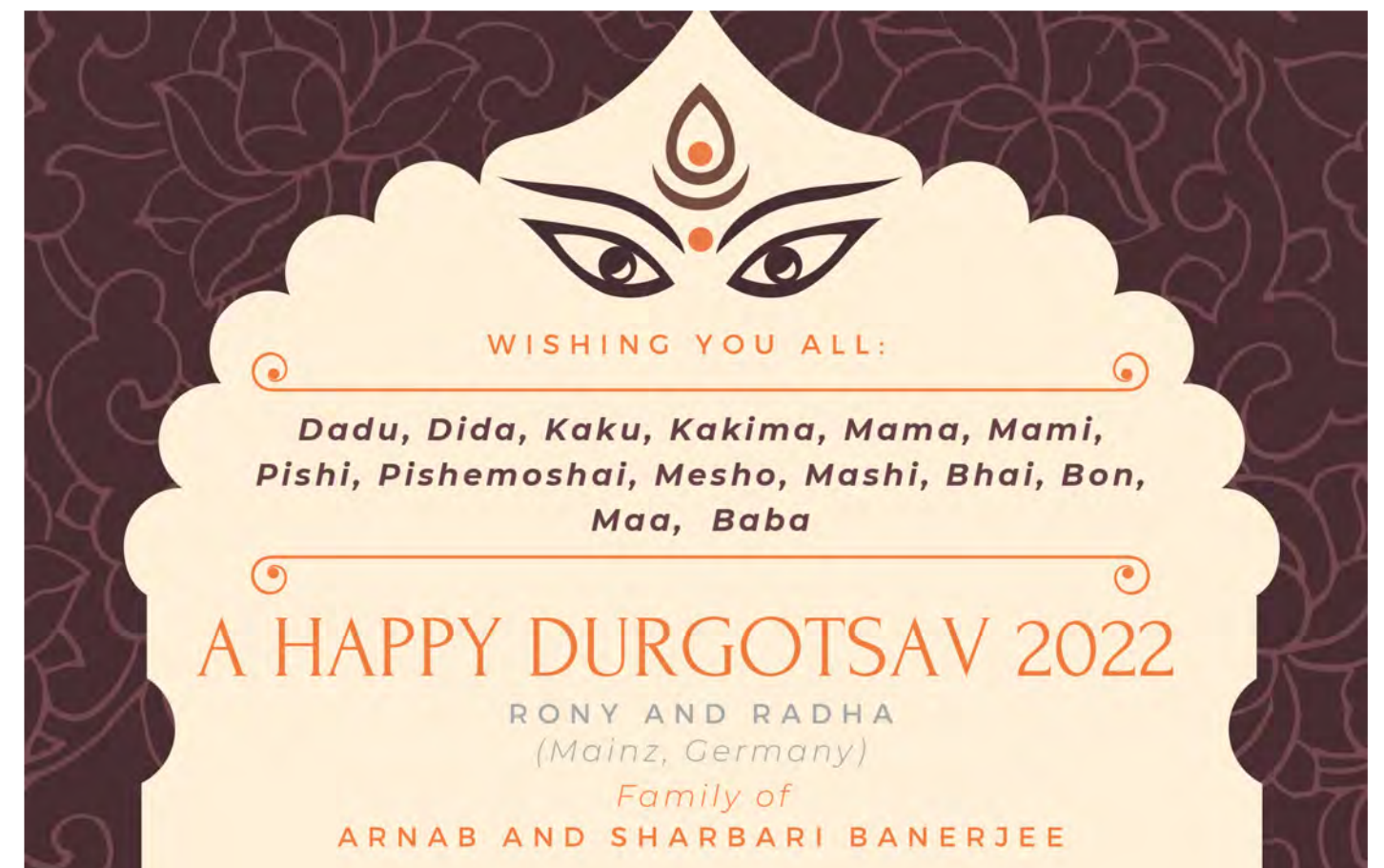
Evolution of the 'Pratima' and the 'Pandal'

The traditional icon of the goddess worshipped during the Durga Puja has been created according to the mantras found in the scriptures. In Durga, the gods bestowed their powers to co-create a beautiful goddess with ten arms, each carrying their most lethal weapons to destroy the evil, symbolised as the Asura. The tableau of Durga also features, as per Shaktism tradition, her four children—Kartikeya, Ganesha, Saraswati and Lakshmi. Kindly note that many other traditions consider Sarawsati and Lakshmi just another forms of Maa Durga, not her children.

A marquee popularly known as *pandal* is the house of Maa Durga with her family for five days. The people residing in the adjacent area of this pandal visit the place day and night to pray and enjoy. The pandal is an innovative creation in Durga Puja every year, where the creators of pandals and the organisers pool all of their resources (individual

perception and materials) to come up with an out-of-the box idea. Many traditional themes, as well as current themes, are depicted to build the Durga Puja pandals. This temporary structure, held by a frame of bamboo, tarpaulin, plastic sheets, cloth, paper pulp, husk and jute, is usually built with eco-friendly and sustainable products. It is draped with colourful fabric or other materials, which depict state-of-the-art styles and traditions offering a visual spectacle of the life we endeavour in the present times. This is a great attraction for numerous visitors who visit the pandals during the five days of Durga Puja. On the dashami day, the idol is immersed in a nearby river. Nowadays, some immerse it in a water pool in their own areas with the intent of avoiding pollution of the river water.

Another belief among the followers is that during Durga Puja, Goddess Durga comes to visit her paternal home along with her children. So, her five-day visit is celebrated with new clothes, exchange of gifts and having fun. We send her back to her home after *sindoor khela* by immersing her in water during *visarjan*, so that she returns to her abode Kailash Parbat. It is a beautiful celebration of a community that looks forward to the splendour every year and recounts reminiscences of different Durga Pujas each member has experienced.



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- Shikha Bhattachryya,
B6, Jaypee Klassic



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Durga Pujas: A Different Perspective

When I started thinking of the other perspectives connected to the festival I was awestruck. There is so much to learn from this festival. So, I thought of sharing with you.

by **Dr Sharbari Banerjee**, KM07, Jaypee Kosmos

According to the movement of the earth, an astronomical chart is prepared, which decides the days to be dedicated for Durga Puja. The whole process is based on the movement of the earth in its elliptical orbit around the sun and the positions of various constellations.

Then comes sound, another important feature of our cosmos. Sounds associated with Durga Puja include the sounds of the bells, drums, anklets, conch shells, the voices of the devotees and the voices of the purohit invoking the mantras. These sounds are all elements of science.

Do you realise that the structure of the pandal is based on pure mathematics, where one has to apply the concepts of length, breadth, height in a demarcated area, ratio-proportion, balance, angles, squares, rectangles, tangents, etc.? Next time, during Puja when you sit in the pandal, do look for the application of these.

The materials acquired for the construction of the pandal and for puja are gifts of nature—bamboo, wood, clay, husk, ropes, cloths of varied types, like thick sheets to cover the top; dainty prints and fine cloth pieces to beautify the pandal; nails to set the structure; rice, dal, vegetables, fruits and flowers—most of them from the earth or from the crops grown by our farmers. The *kaulabou*, a personified representation of Maa Durga worshipped from the saptami day, is basically a banana tree.

The social, emotional, physical, gathering of a community, where members participate together, share their joys, build empathy, tolerance and respect for each other, are a part of social science connected to Durga Pujas. It reflects the society we have created, where we appreciate and critically analyse each other but move forward to develop a stronger bondage and culture.

I believe that the fundamental arrangements during Durga Puja depict the other necessities in our lives. Let us see how.

- The pandal is the land on which the house is built.
- The stages built for the idol and cultural activities are the foundations of a house, which is constructed with great care and specifications.
- On a philosophical note, the idol of the Durga, which is moulded by the traditional idol maker, depicts our inner soul that we create aesthetically.
- The ornaments and clothes with which the goddess is adorned depict the clothes we like to wear along with ornaments or jewellery.
- The cuisine is the type of food we like to cook, eat, and hence, offer it to the goddess.
- The daily rituals, traditional customs and beliefs are the methods

of our day-to-day living.

- The priest (purohit) symbolically represents the whole community, and on behalf of the whole community prays to Maa and showers the gratitude and reverence we owe to the supreme power, the Almighty.
- The *dhaki* plays the drums, reminding us that every moment in life has a rhythm, a structured pattern, a harmony without which our mere existence will be jeopardised.
- Durga Puja is also an example of inclusivity and a celebration of entrepreneurship as the festival connects us to entrepreneurs like idol makers, *dhaki*, handloom weavers, jewellery craftsmen, cooks, food suppliers, shopkeepers, weavers, tailors, cobblers, etc., who earn their living while people enjoy.
- The management team manages the financial part, upkeep of the premises, publicity etc., which are an essential part of any governance.
- All art forms—music, dance, drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, poetry, literature, traditional folk visual and performing art—synthesise to make the whole experience aesthetic. Hence, this festival is 'arts captured holistically': sculpture is the idol, the saree-clad Divinity symbolises the costume and jewellery we love to wear, the stages—one for the idol and the second for the cultural presentations—signify how one is able to exhibit or showcase human talents.

The other logistics of light, sound, technology, seating arrangement, construction of varied corners for medical aid, reception area, food served as culinary delights and so many other features are part and parcel of our lives. Aren't all these a total depiction of life we lead?

All these are relatable and relevant to the knowledge we have acquired over centuries—our developments and evolution of the contemporary times. Yet, we find their rootedness to the indigenous culture and customs in our lives. People who join in this festivity join for fun, but if you observe closely, the whole experience is a portrayal of our lives, beliefs, socio-economic status, human relationships and above all our creative potential. Each member of the community contributes to the event in their unique ways. This unique system and traditions have helped all adults and the children to absorb and learn subconsciously. The whole affair is dedicated to handling various situations in life (*adhichitta*—training in the higher mind).

Ever thought why we immerse the idol with such fanfare? There are many observations regarding this symbolism. One could be this: *O Maa, until this part of the year whatever we achieved due to your blessings, we have offered to you. Next year, we shall rejuvenate and try to offer something better!*

OUR NEXT-DOOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Giving is an art. But most people think that 'giving' is impossible without 'having'. Meet Deepa Tiwari Ji, our next-door social entrepreneur, who proved to the world that giving is a choice, and that giving is possible even when we do not possess any fancy riches.

by **RANJIT K. SHARMA**, A9 Jaypee Klassic

Bhavani Poojas and Bhandaraz, founded by Deepa Tiwari, has been cooking around 6 quintals of meals daily and feeding around 3,000 people daily for the past six years. Her beneficiaries include both the poorest of the poor like the rag-pickers, the jobless labourers and the students from the downtrodden societies and the not-so-poor people like salaried executives who lost their jobs and elderly couples who live alone.

A fellow-Jaypee resident in Noida Sector 128, Deepa Ji's contribution to the society during the first and second waves of COVID-19 was recognised by Dettol by featuring her profile in their liquid handwash bottles, under 'Our Protectors' series in the famous #DettolSalutes campaign. The campaign included the following inspiring words on her: When the entire nation was going through testing times, you stood up to selflessly dedicate your time and resources for those in need.

I was not aware of Deepa Ji's selfless work until May 2021, when all the four members of my family were home isolated. As all of us tested COVID-positive, we ran out of options for procuring hygienic, home-cooked food, with no possibility of hiring cooks or ordering food online. Then, came the help from Deepa Ji's Bhavani Poojas and Bhandaraz in the form of free, hygienically made food delivered at doorstep.

With Maa Bhavani's blessings we all tested negative in no time. It was from those days of my encountering Maa's love through the selfless services of Deepa Ji that I was able to reaffirm my belief on the significance of charity—the art of giving back to society.

I started sharing Deepa Ji's story among my friends and family members. I encouraged them to contribute to her efforts in whatever way they can. I also made it a point to send her some one-off contribution amounts, whenever these were possible for me from time to time.

Starting with just 40 children, Deepa Ji set off her social work as a response to the regular sight of street children under Noida Sector 18 Metro Station pestering passers-by for alms. One day she decided to ask them about what they would do with the money they got as alms. Their reply was: *buying tasty food items*. She asked further with some hope if they were interested in studying if she would regularly provide them 'tasty foods'. They agreed to her proposal at once.

But then she did not even know how she could help these children. She did not know how to cook community lunches. She took the help from Youtube videos to train herself on this. Armed with her new skill, she booked a venue and invited the children to have food there on a regular basis. She also taught them their school lessons and how to draw. This was followed by training on personality development.

From then there was no looking back. Deepa Ji knew her calling in life. Besides helping children, her organisation also helps differently abled people. Deepa Ji also mobilises funds to conduct marriages for those who cannot afford. In her own words, she says, 'I cannot help the needy without the help from those who can pay and want to serve. I am only a mediator between those who want and those who give'.

Deepa Ji's role model is Freedom Fighter Bhagat Singh. She sums up her future plan with a spiritual two liner: *Har ghar bhakti. Tabhi aayega satyug*. (Let every home be rooted in devotion. Only then can we imagine good times for everyone.)

If you are inspired by Deepa Ji's story, do reach out to her and help her in her noble endeavour in whatever way you can. You can contribute in procuring the daily ration that includes rice, pulses, refined oil, gas cylinder refills and the like. You may also personally volunteer in helping the needy by paying a visit to Bhavani Poojas and Bhandaraz, near Bhavani Shiv Mandir in Sector 128.

Following are her social media handles. Do visit them and like, subscribe and share.

Youtube: youtube.com/c/bhavanipoojas

Instagram: instagram.com/bhavanipoojas

Facebook: facebook.com/bhavanipoojas

Twitter: twitter.com/bhavanipoojas

To make donations using GooglePay or PayTM, use the number 8373999200. You may also call her on the same number or write an email at bhavanimaaseva@gmail.com.

Her organisation's tagline दो मुट्ठी भवानी के नाम (Two fistfuls in the name of Bhavani), matches Sarbojanin Durgotsav's very purpose of spreading love and unity in the name of Maa Durga! I think telling her story to the world will be one of the best devotional acts to honour Maa this Durga Puja.

The Magic Pen

by **Jhuma Malakar, KD1, Jaypee Klassic Shaurya**

There was a boy named Raghav. He was a happy-go-lucky boy and also a little naughty. He was very popular among his classmates of class 4 for his jovial nature. But many times he also offended his parents and teachers with his behaviour. But Raghav was least bothered about it.

One evening, Raghav was playing with his friends in a park. They were all enjoying the game of 'catch me if you can', when Raghav ran into a man passing by them. Raghav was expecting a scolding from him, but to his surprise, the man went away without even looking back. Raghav realised that something dropped out from the man's pocket. He picked it up. It was an old fountain pen. He looked here and there but the man had vanished.

Raghav showed the pen to his friends, but no one was interested as it was old, and they were not allowed to use the pen in school. Without any other choice, Raghav was now the new owner of the old pen. He took it along and went back home.

He thought of telling his mother, but was scared as his mother instructed him many a time not to pick up stray things. He decided to keep it safely hidden in his study table drawer, but the thought of the pen was not moving out of his mind.

After his dinner he went to sleep, but the thought of 'THE PEN' was taking away his sleep. He was not able to make out why he was so attached to the pen. He got up and took out the pen and thought of writing something. He wrote, 'I WILL SCORE 10/10 IN TOMORROW'S MATHS TEST.' He was feeling much better now. He went to bed and easily went to sleep too.

Next morning, the first period in school was the Maths period. All students were worried about the test. Raghav was not much worried. Test sheets were distributed and, guess what, Raghav knew all the answers. He was surprised. He was very happy when he scored 10/10.

He came back and shared the result with his mother. She hugged him in happiness. Raghav was overwhelmed, and after his dinner was ready to go to sleep. He was again sleepless. He got up, took out the pen and wrote, 'MY MOTHER WILL BAKE A CHOCOLATE CAKE TOMORROW'. To his surprise, his mother welcomed him with a chocolate cake in the morning. Something struck Raghav: HE WAS THE OWNER OF A MAGICAL PEN!

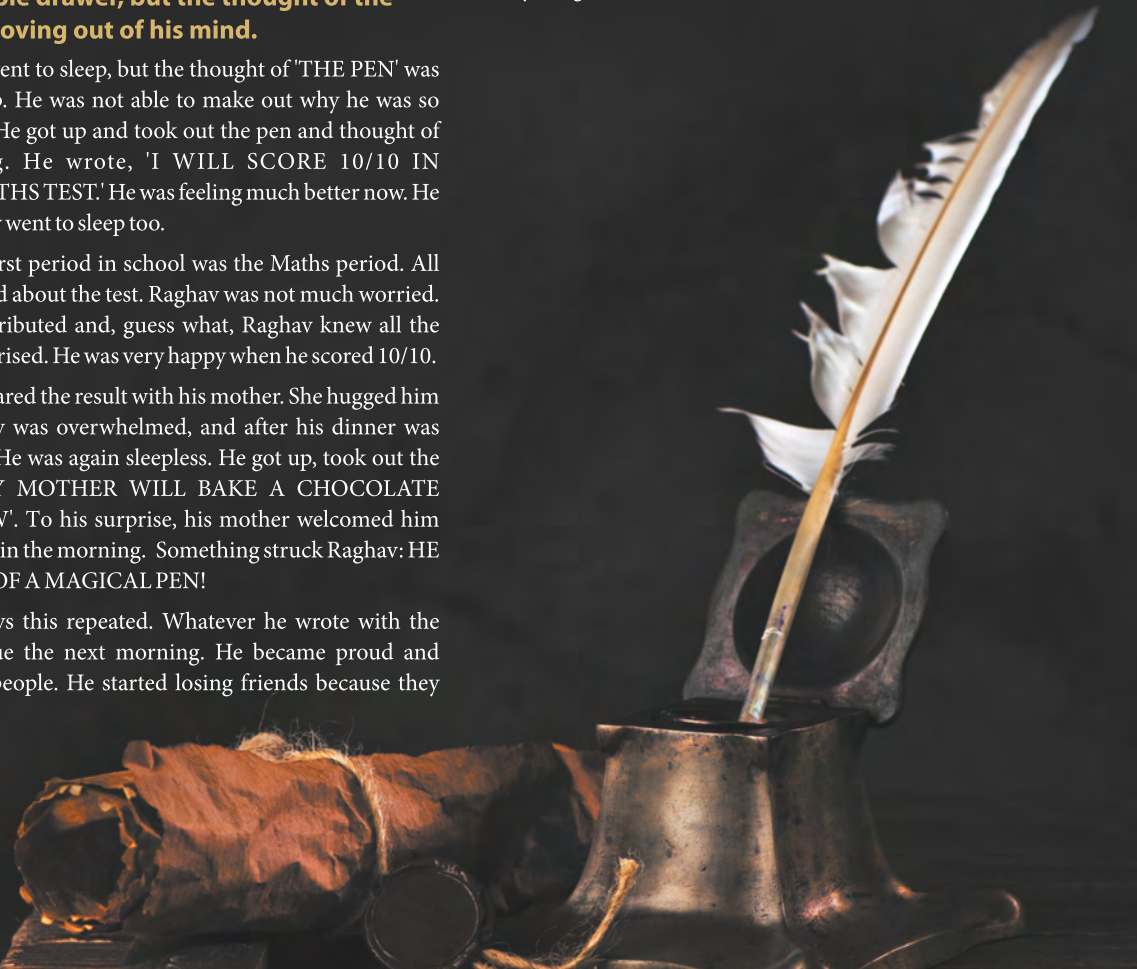
For the next few days this repeated. Whatever he wrote with the magical pen was true the next morning. He became proud and started threatening people. He started losing friends because they

did not enjoy his company anymore due to his rude behaviour. Raghav was no more a happy-go-lucky boy. He was all alone.

He was in his room when his mother came in. He was so depressed that he hugged his mother and started crying. His mother consoled him. He opened his heart and shared the whole incident with her. His mother explained to him that getting extraordinary power is good, but misusing it for our own benefit is harmful, as it can leave a person alone with no peace of mind.

Raghav promised not to use the pen again, but his mother insisted on using it one more time. Raghav was really scared to do so, but with all his courage he took out the pen and wrote, 'EVERYTHING BE AS BEFORE'. He was relieved when he saw a smile on his mother's face. She hugged Raghav as he made the best decision. Both of them went for a walk in the same park. Raghav was happy to see his friends who welcomed him with open hands. Just then he saw the same man who dropped the pen. He smiled at Raghav and went away.

Once he was back, he opened the drawer to take out the pen. To his astonishment, the pen was no longer there. He was happy that he learnt an important lesson in life: never to feel too proud about anything.



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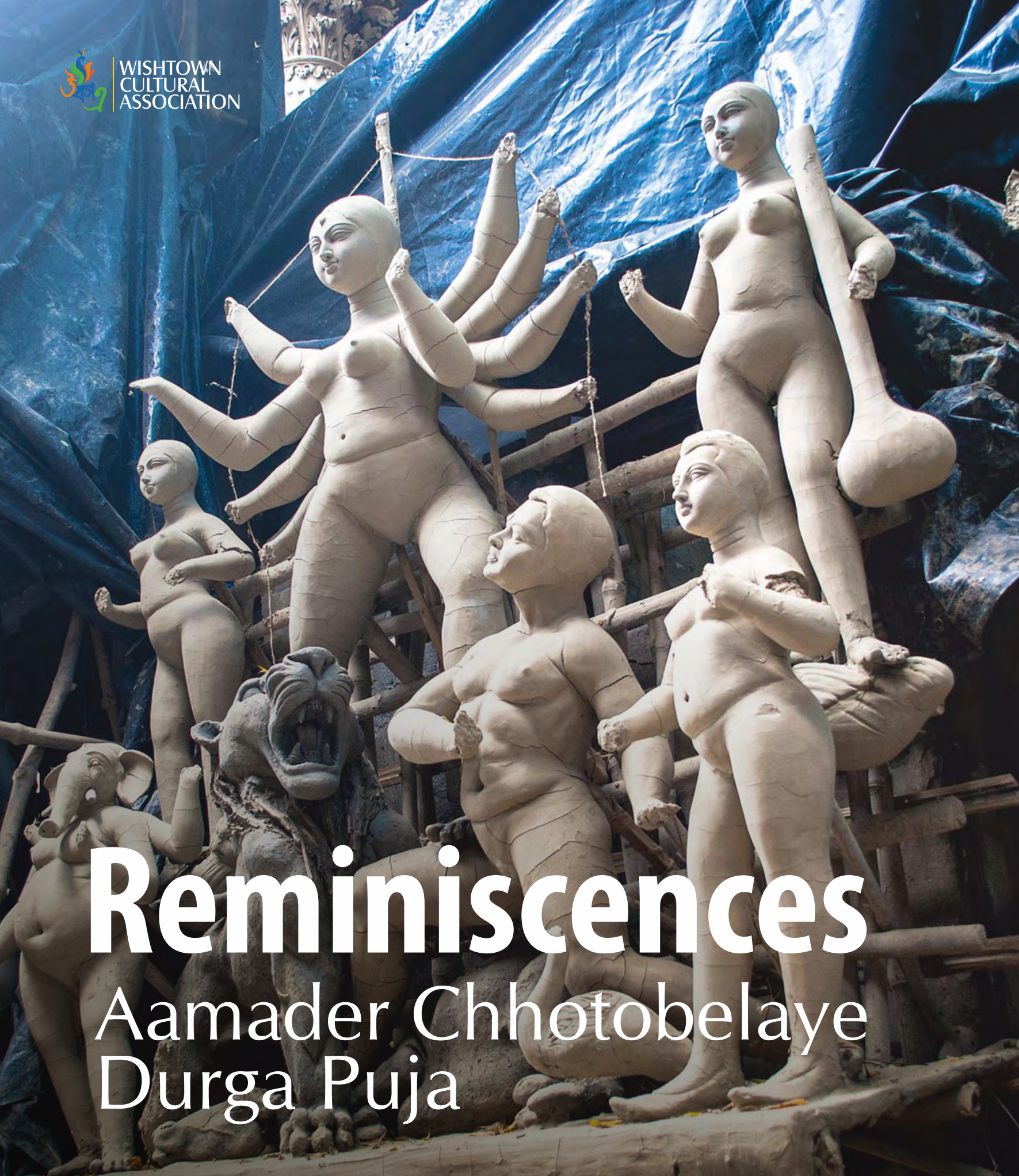
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The members of Jaypee Greens Wishtown Sarbojanin Durgotsav assembled to celebrate the biggest festival of the Bengali community, Durga Puja. What a blessing! Each arrived from different places and incidentally met here to celebrate the festival together. While sitting in one of the addas for Durga Puja management tasks, many members felt so nostalgic. They spoke about their childhood days when each one celebrated Durga Puja in their village / city / town. So, I compiled this as a memoir of those unforgettable days.

Durga Puja has been the most awaited time of the year. I am so nostalgic about those days when during my childhood I lived in Kanpur, and celebrating Durga Puja was such joy and excitement. We did pandal hopping in new dresses and footwears with parents and friends along with balloons, badam (peanuts) and *jhal muri*. I still cherish those three days of eating out, especially dosa and mughlai paratha. There was no match to standing in a queue to get Maa-er *khichudi bhog* along with *labdra*, *chaatni* and *payesh*. Going for regular practice for the programmes and then enjoying unforgettable moments with others are also part of an inseparable memory. Dances, songs, acts, *jatras*, *natoks* and sport activities were the awaited entertainments of pujo. Last but not the least, it was Pujo time, so no studies! Incidentally both of us had the same childhood memories.

Jhuma Malakar
KD 1, Jaypee Klassic Shaurya

I lived in Delhi, and since childhood Durga Puja has been the most awaited occasion. It brought the feeling of love and togetherness. Starting from the preparation of dance performances to planning of games to be played, presenting skits to showcase our talents and the happiness we all felt. For me, those days of Puja created the best of memories that will always be cherished.

Reema Jha
KM17, Jaypee Kosmos

I spent my school life in the city of Guwahati, Assam. Durga Pujas were very special occasions, whose countdown would begin from around July with newspaper ads and street hoardings flashing the words 'Durga Puja Sale' all over. The frequent outings to choose my new clothes, shoes and even sweaters would begin soon. On all Puja days, my family and friends would together go pandal-hopping. We would cover 10-15 pandals each day. My home would be filled with a variety of sweets, *mishti doi*, *aam doi* and *jilapi*. I fondly remember the very different kinds of fragrances I would get to smell in every pandal. I would like to call these fragrances unearthly and divine, as they originated from different agarbatties and a plethora of perfumes worn by ladies and gents. The entire second half of Dashami would be spent standing on the main road to count and witness every big and small Durga idol being transported on trucks for immersion.

Ranjit K Sharma
A9, Jaypee Klassic

Durga Puja to me is a celebration and not just a puja. The best period of a child's life is with puja holidays, discussing with friends how many new clothes we got and which dress is for which day. Puja started with the listening of Birendra Krishna Bhadra's *Mahisasuromardini* at 4 am sharp on the Mahalaya morning. On saptami, I remember my mother applying *kharimati* on the entrances. Going to pandals wearing new clothes for anjali, waiting for puja bhog and again in the evening hopping back to the puja pandals with friends, participating in musical chairs, *antakshari*, watching the cultural programs late at night: this routine was followed for all 4 days. On the day of navami, I along with my parents and sister visited all the prominent puja pandals. Dashami was the saddest day of Puja when I always felt that Ma Durga was also crying along with us. On the night of dashami, we went to the neighbours' and relatives' houses to receive their blessings. Regardless of how far I am from my home, somewhere in my heart I always feel that my Ma Durga is still in Durgapur, where I spent my childhood days with my parents and sister.

Baishali Datta Mishra
A9, Jaypee Klassic

I spent my school life in a village named Deulpur in Howrah, West Bengal. During those days, we would eagerly wait for Durga Puja, months before the actual event. We would spend sleepless nights in anticipation of the cheery get-together with friends and family members. By the time, the pandal-making started, our joys would know no bounds. On the other hand, we would feel melancholic when the pandal was dismantled. One special ritual that I fondly remember even today is related to the Dashami (Dussehra) day. We would collect 108 three-pronged *belpata* (bel leaves) and write 'Shree Shree Durga' on each of them, using sticks of *bet* (cane plant). During visarjan, all these 108 leaves were also consigned to water along with the idol of Maa Durga.

Alok Sasmal
A6, Jaypee Klassic

ছোটবেলায় আমার কাছে দুর্গাপূজা চরদিনের ছিল না। মাঝখানেকে আগে থেকেই শুরু হয়ে যেত। রোজ কুমোর পাড়ায় গিয়ে দেখতাম কতটা মূর্তি গড়া হল। দাদাদের সাথে আলোচনা হত সিংহের কেশর আর অসুরের লম্বা বুলফি নিয়ে। এখনকার মত অনলাইনে বাজার করতাম না আমরা পূজের বাজার করতে যাওয়ার মজাও ছিল আনন্দ। আমাদের ওখানে মহালয়ার দিন খুব আনন্দ করতাম, জোর থেকে পটাকা ফাটান এবং রেডিও তে মহালয়া শোনা। তারপর আসত সেই প্রতীক্ষার চরদিন। নতুন জামা পড়ে বাবা কাকুর সাথে ঠাকুর দেখতে যেতাম আমাদের আসানসোলে

Reminiscences

Aamader Chhotobelaye Durga Puja

নবমীর দিন পাঠাবলি ও মোষবলি হত। একরাশ জয় নিয়েও দেখতে যেতাম, এখন অবশ্য বন্ধ হয়ে গেছে। আমার কাছে দশমীর দিনটাও খুব আনন্দের হত। সকালে মায়ের সাথে সিঁদুর খেলায় অংশ নিতাম সন্ধ্যা বেলায় আসানসোলের সমস্ত ঠাকুরে লাইন দিয়ে আমাদের বাড়ির সামনে দিয়ে যেত বিসর্জনের জন্য। লাইট 'মাইকে' পটাকা ও মশাল নিয়ে এক ক্লাব অন্য ক্লাবকে টঙ্কর দেবার চেষ্টা করত আর আমরা উপভোগ করতাম তারপর শুরু হত বড়দের প্রণাম করা ও নাদ্কেল নাচু দিয়ে মিষ্টি মুখ করা।

Moushumi Das
KM07 Jaypee Kosmos

I lived in Jamshedpur. Overworking or over-studying is unhealthy, as we all know, 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'. So, Durga Puja was that time of the year when I would enjoy 'all play' during my school days. We spent our time in maximum enjoyment and recreation. Celebrating these festivals with our family members was great fun. During the festival, we put on new dresses on all 5 days. We also decorated our houses on this occasion.

I also remember a tragic incident from those days. We used to go to watch *jatra* (colony plays). There was a scene in a *jatra*, where the character playing the role of a soldier was killing another soldier. The scene ended but we realized that the soldier who got 'killed' was lying down showing no signs of life. Naturally after a few minutes, everyone rushed towards him to check the actual problem. To our utter dismay and shock, later we came to know that he suffered a massive heart attack on the stage and lost his life. He did not stand on his feet again. What a terrible thing to happen! This incident taught me that life is so unpredictable. We are like the characters of a big drama. We should live life to the fullest.

Shyamali Jana
KM14, Jaypee Kosmos

The female deity Ma Durga is worshipped in different ways in different states of India. I am married to a Bengali and have been following Shashti to Bijoya Sarmelan rituals for almost three decades now. Ironically when I was in school, I had no idea of Bengali culture at all. Being a South Indian, we organised 9 days of Navratri Golu at home, i.e. displaying clay dolls and God's idols on makeshift steps using iron trunks / stools/ tables and covering them with white cloth. There would be a *kalasham* with water, mango leaves and a coconut mounted atop. In the evening, local ladies would be invited for *taamboolam* (*paan supari, haldi, kum kum*, one fruit and a blouse piece), and a *prasadam* of boiled chickpeas and grated coconut would be distributed with hot cups of filtered *kaapi* (coffee).

All would wear nice Kanjivaram sarees and the unmarried girls would wear half sarees. All would have jasmine *gajras* in their hair. Everyone would be asked to sing a devotional song.

We were technically Probashi South Indians, being born and brought up in Delhi but all the children were either into Carnatic music / Bharatnatyam / Veena Vadan. I used to play Sitar and was learning Carnatic music which was left midway. Evenings were much looked forward to and the next day of Dashami was very sad and boring.

All the above would be within the house. There would be no celebration in school, being run by a convent. We had full ten

days of holidays in those days. Meanwhile, in the locality there would be a daily Ramlila, which my family and I never missed. And the Ravan Dahan was highly exciting, as the 'Hanuman' was my friend's elder brother!

Anju Roy
KM 29, Jaypee Kosmos

In our childhood, we were waiting all year round for the Durga Puja celebrations. Four months prior to the Puja week, I would start cribbing and negotiating on the number of dresses I would get for Puja. Gladly and very proudly I would showcase my dresses to all relatives whosoever visited our home. The most exciting part was when we were getting pocket money from all the relatives for Pujo expenses. Counting and comparing my money with my dada and those healthy fights are such cherished memories. The next fun was hopping to the different Pujo Dalaans: no restrictions on eating and having long chit-chats with friends. And above all, no studies for a few days ... I do remember the ride on rickshaws to Puja Dalaans and the fun to have bhog while sitting on the carpet ground and waiting for that awesome bhog.

Shilpa Ghosh
KM12, Jaypee Kosmos

Durga Puja has been special to me like any Bengali. I lived in Delhi and my early memories include getting dressed early in the morning with new clothes and going to the pandal with friends. I was 6/7 years old when we were in the railway colony, where we used to have a big Pujo.

I would have those potka guns in my hand and was allowed to eat a bit of junk like the packet pepsis and also the cotton candies (*budi maar chool*). As a child, I used to believe that Durga Ma would come with the permissions to have fun, as we went out with our family in the evening, hopping among Puja Pandalas to say 'thank you' to her!

Moutusi Ghosh
KM01, Jaypee Kosmos

Durga puja: I considered it as the biggest occasion for the Hindu people. The nine-day long festival was celebrated with decorated pandals, a gorgeous idol of Goddess Durga and sumptuous food. Durga Puja begins on the sixth day of Navaratri. Therefore, people of every religion attended this ceremony. Dressed in our best during *pushpanjali*, we regarded Goddess Durga to be a strong woman and mother. There were many interesting parts of the Puja: be it *sandhya aarati* or *sandhi pujo*. The huge pandals were points of attraction and pandal hopping was a must with our cousins. Once we did pandal hopping the whole night on a rickshaw at Prayagraj!

The festival was so holistic with the spiritual aura of festive lights, afternoon bhogs, recitation of hymns and chants by priests. Durga Puja imbibed the culture of devotion, happiness and respect for women in our childhood. This celebration taught us to connect with our families, ancestral roots and rituals. We still wait for Durga Puja, 1-2 months upfront.

Sohini Mukherjee
KM42, Jaypee Kosmos

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By August–September, the weather would change, and I would know that Mother is coming. So, the excitement began. Families coming together, wearing new clothes, feasting on yummy food from Anandomela, tasting divine flavours of afternoon bhog (sometimes even serving it with a feeling of absolute privilege), evening fun with Dhunuchi dance, cultural shows: all these would end with endless chat sessions with friends past midnight. Before you know it, Ma would be gone with the lingering feeling that she would return the next year.

Manjira Majumdar
KM12, Jaypee Kosmos

I used to celebrate Durga Puja at my village, which is 50 km far from Kolkata at Naihati, North 24 Parganas. We celebrated throughout the 5 days. We used to enjoy the delicious food, the glimpses of lights and the decorated pandals. We friends used to count the number of pandals we visited. We used to go to Kolkata at least one night, and roamed around various pandals throughout the night, enjoying delicious street food. There was no pressure for studies, as we used to get a month long holiday. I used to wait the whole year for ashtami's pushpanjali. Dashami has always been special to me. I used to go to neighbours' houses to take the blessing from elders and to get narkel naru and mihidana nimki.

Bipul Halder
KM33, Jaypee Kosmos

I reminisce about my fond memories of Durga Puja often. Being born and brought up in Chittaranjan Park, Delhi, the elegance and uniqueness associated with joy during the five days are almost an ethereal experience. The pandals with their dynamic themes, intricate designs and decorative lights enhance the festive mood. From early morning till midnight, taking part in various Puja activities and competitions, joining the excursions with friends, eating out authentic Bengali food and hopping pandals late at night with family members did not add the slightest amount of stress. Though Durga Puja lasts for 5 days, but throughout the month we remain in festive spirits.

Madhumita Biswas
A6, Jaypee Klassic

I prefer to write in Bengali language with an English script.

Aamaar chhotobela ketechey Kolkata thekey praaye dusho kilometre durey, poshchim baunger chhotto ekta oitthaashik shahor Murshidabad-e.

Chhotto shahor tai haategona kayektaa sarbojanin pujo, e chhaara sthaniyo jomidaar baadir pujo. Kintu pujor uddipona shuru hoe jeto Thakurer kaatham pujo din thekei. Taarpaur praaye bikeler khela sheshey, baadi feraar pauthey bondhuraa miley dekhetey jetaam protimaa gaurar kaaj kautodoor egolo—ekmaati, doomaati, khori dewa, raung kaura, sari kapod parano ebong shabsheshey thakurer chokh aankaa.

Kolkata theke babar kiney aana kaapor diye toiri hoto aamader bhaiboneder notun jaama kapod. Rickshaw kore Baharampur jetaam Batar juto kintey.

Dharmo barno nirbisheshey bhai bon bondhu bandhob shakaley miley notun jaama kaapod porey thakur dekhetey berotaam. Eki Thakur baar baar dekheo aash mitho naa kauhkono. Shondha belaye bichitranushthaan, jomidaar baritey natok dekha ebong ghurey ghurey E paaraa O paaraa thakur dekha, shangey badambhaja chanachur, kakhono ba baudoder naujor diye baurofer ice cream.

Pujor deengulo bhor naa hotei dhaaki dhaak bajije ghoom bhangato aar paadaar Mashima / Kakima, Amaar Maa toiri hoe maundopey jeto pujor jogaad kortey. Thakurer pujoye Anjali diye prasad khawa chilo nittokarmo. Chhoto Pujo kajeyi dupure bhog khawanor baipaar chhilo naa gharey gharey proshaad billy kara hoto. Aamader baditey Ashtami o dashamitey kulo debotaar pujo ebong shooshaad bhog khawa chilo ektaa biraat aakorshan.

Shaara bachor baari baari ghoorey Mushtibhikkha kaura hoto ebong pujor dingulo shei bhikkhar chaaal daal diye khichuri toiri korey hoto Doridro Narayan Sheba.

Dashamir shakaley 108 baar Durga naam likhey thakurer paye ditaam. Oidin shondhaye ganga nodir teerey / paadey shara shahorer thakur prodorshini ebong bisharjoner ayojon hoto. Bicharokder mautanujayi protima shilpider puroshkaar dewa hoto.

Ekadoshitey shuru hoto aattiyi shajan, paada protibeshider baari baari giye bijayar pronaam o daikha kauraa paala. Cholto kojagori lokkhi pujo obdhi. Bijayey khawanor jonno baaditey tiro hoto narkol naadu, chandrapuli, nimki o nana rakamer mishti.

Arnab Banerjee
KM07, Jaypee Kosmos

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DURGA PUJA, FOOD & CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

by **Abhishek Biswas**, KM42, Jaypee Kosmos

I grew up in C.R. Park, the mini Kolkata of Delhi and the much-awaited festival of Durga Puja was a source of pure joy and excitement. As a child, I eagerly looked forward to the mesmerizing decorations, the grand idols, and most of all, the mouthwatering food stalls that lined the puja pandals.

As the festive season approached, the whole C.R. Park transformed into a wonderland of lights, colors, and fragrances. The aroma of incense and fresh flowers permeated the air, setting the stage for the glorious celebration. Streets were adorned with artistic pandals, each one more elaborate than the last, depicting scenes from ancient legends.

Amidst this splendor, the food stalls emerged like culinary havens, offering a tantalizing variety of treats. I would find myself drawn to them like a magnet, my senses overwhelmed by the mouthwatering aromas that beckoned me closer.

One of my fondest childhood memories was visiting a particular food stall with my family. It was a small, humble stall tucked away in a narrow alley. The owner, a warm and smiling gentleman, welcomed us with open arms. His stall was a treasure trove of delectable delights. As I stood in front of the stall, my eyes widened with excitement. There were plates of steaming hot *luchi-potato curry*, *crispy kathi rolls stuffed with succulent kebabs*, and *fragrant biryanis* that seemed to transport me to a different world. I couldn't decide where to start!

With my heart pounding and taste buds tingling, I made my choice. I opted for a plate of *Mughlai Paratha*, freshly fried and served with *Aaloo'r Shobji & Kashondi*. As I took my first bite, the burst of flavors exploded in my mouth, sending waves of delight through my entire being. It was pure bliss. My family and I would often gather around a small table near the food stall, sharing laughter and stories as we savored the delectable treats. The joy of Durga Puja and the aroma of the food stalls created an atmosphere of togetherness and happiness that remains etched in my memory.

As the years passed, the food stalls became a symbol of my childhood and the joyous spirit of Durga Puja. Each year, as the festival approached, my heart would fill with anticipation, relishing the thought of reuniting with those familiar flavors and creating new memories with my loved ones.

Looking back, I realize that the food stalls were not just about the delicious food they served; they were about the connections they fostered and the stories they witnessed. They were a reflection of the vibrant culture and rich traditions that made Durga Puja a cherished festival for all.

This year, as I walk through the food stalls during Durga Puja at our Jaypee Sector 134, the food stalls still captivate me. The tantalizing aromas, the colorful spreads, and the bustling crowds remind me of the magic that can be found in the simplest of experiences.

And so, the story of Durga Puja, food stalls, mouthwatering food, and my childhood memories intertwines with the larger narrative of the festival itself. It is a tale of love, joy, and the flavors that forever bind me to the spirit of this extraordinary celebration.



Wish you a happy Durga Puja!

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DURGA PUJA WISHES FROM

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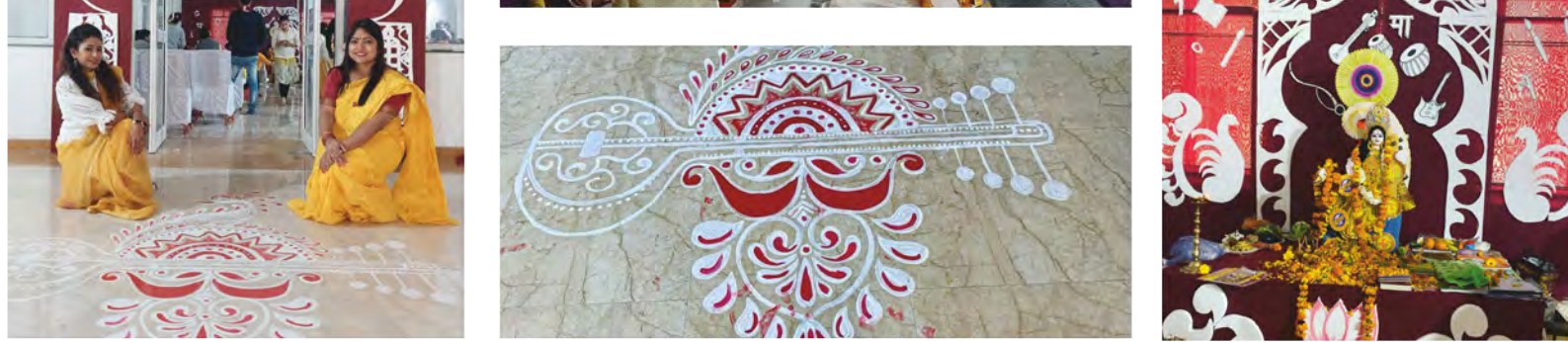
Kosmos Tower 17/006

Dr Mahinder Singh Chauhan
(MDS Prosthodontics & Implantology)

Dr Rishibha Bhardwaj
(MDS Orthodontics)



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HELPLINES AND IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

HELPLINE

- GB Nagar COVID Helpline: 18004192211
- Chief Minister Helpline: 1076
- Child Helpline: 1098
- Women Helpline: 1091 / 1090
- Crime Stopper Helpline: 1090
- Cyber Crime Helpline: 1930
- UP Police Helpline: 100 / 112
- Fire: 101
- Ambulance Helpline: 108 / 102
- NIC Service Desk: 1800 111 555
- Election Helpline: 1800 180 1950
- NDMA (Disaster Management): 1078 / 1070 / 9711077372
- National Helpline for Senior Citizens: 14567

NEAREST POLICE STATION

- Noida Expressway, Sector 135
- SHO: Shri Sudhir Kumar 8595902533

NEAREST POST OFFICE

- Maharishi Nagar, Opp. Sec 110
- Postman: Lalmani Yadav 8851164389

UP GOVERNMENT HELPLINES

- Noida Water Logging Helpline: 0120 2421490
- Shri Yogi Adityanath (Chief Minister): 0522-2239296, 2236167
- Complaint Against Govt Dept.: 1076
- Streetlight Helpline: 18001029574
- U P Women's Commission Helplines: 18001805220 / Whatsapp Number 6306511708
- Twitter Handle of UP Police: @Uppolice
- U P Police Website: <https://uppolice.gov.in>
- Citizen Services U P (E-Municipality Project): Website <https://e-nagarsewaup.gov.in/ulbapps>
- Citizen Services U P Helplines: 0522-2838128 / 2838129

BLOOD AND PLASMA BANKS

- **Rotary Noida Blood Bank**
E-2, Oppsite Ambedkar Hospital, Nithari Village, Sector 31, Noida, UP 201303
Phones: 0120-4553000, 9716099099
- **Noida Charitable Blood Bank**
1-587, 2nd Floor, Moolchand Towers, Block I, Noida 22 Main Road, Sector 22, Noida
Phone: 7042840641
- **National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC)**
9th Floor, Chanderlok Building
36, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001, India
Phones: 011-43509999, 011-23731778
Email: nbtcmohfw@gmail.com

- **Om Charitable Blood Bank**
H-82, H Block, Sector 63, Noida, UP 201301
Phones: 0120-4560063, 0120-4560065
- **Indian Red Cross Society**
National Headquarters, New Delhi
Phones: 011-23359379, 9319982104, 9319982105

HOSPITALS IN NOIDA

- **Apollo Hospital** (E-2, Sector 26): 0120 4012000, Extn: 9 / 0120 2445353 / 8046071053, Website: <https://www.apollohospitalsnoida.com/>
- **E S I Hospital** 2411350 / 2411353
- **Bhardwaj Nursing & Maternity Home (Pvt) Ltd.** (Sec 29, NH1, Noida): 2450111 / 222 / 333
- **Dipakshi Nursing & Maternity Home Pvt.Ltd.** (C-53A, Sec 33, Noida): 2505328329
- **Felix Hospital (Sec 137)** 7835033318
- **Fortis Hospital** 0120 4300222 / Emergency No.: 105010
- **Goodwill Hospital & Research Centre Ltd.** 2500711 / 2500611
- **Gupta Hospital and Maternity Centre** 2491705
- **I-Care Eye Hospital (Sec 26)** 2477621 / 2477600
- **Indo-Gulf Diagnostics and Research Centre (Sec 19)** 4752300-99
- **Jaypee Hospital (Sec 128)** 0120 4122222
- **Kailash Hospital & Heart Institute: (H33, Sec 27)** 0120 2444444 / 2466666
- **Manas Hospital (A 93, Sector 34)** 4243885
- **Max Hospital (A 364, Sector 19)** 2549999
- **Max Multi Specialty Hospital (Plot 4A, Sector 137)** 7161234 / 2352299
- **Metro Hospital and Heart Institute (L 94, Sector 11)** 2522959 / 2442666
- **Muskan Medical Centre (Sharma Market, Main Dadri Road)** 4126064
- **Neo Hospital (Sec 50 Noida)** 4880049
- **Noida Orthopaedic Centre (B 2, Sector 26)** 2527336
- **Prakash Hospital Pvt. Ltd. (D 12, I Sector 33)** 2505266 / 2505265 / 2505555 / 2505264
- **Satya Medical Centre (Sec 34)** 4217808 / 2507020 / 21 / 121
- **Shivalik Medical Centre Pvt. Ltd (Sec 51)** 2485500/41
- **Sumitra Hospital (Sec 35)** 2507725 / 2507625
- **Surbhi Hospital Private Limited (Sec 35)** 2508841 / 42/44 / 46
- **Vinayak Hospital (Sec 27, Atta Market)** 2444333222
- **Vrindavan Hospital (Main Crossing, Ghaziabad)** 2845880 / 1 / 2 / 3
- **Yatharth Wellness Super Speciality Hospital** 18003300000
- Noida: 9582833333
- Greater Noida: 8800447777
- Noida Extn.: 8800110086
- yarthhospitals.com

COVID-19 HELPDISK

- Emergency: 011-23978046
- Helpline: 1075
- Email: ncov2019@gov.in
- Aarogya Setu Mobile App: <https://www.mygov.in/aarogya-setu-app>

ESCALATION SUPPORT MATRIX FOR SECURITY & FIRE (KLASSIC, KPA AND KOSMOS)

Escalation	Helpdesk	Contact
1st Escalation	Helpdesk	8512038444, 8512038555, 0120-6370109 helpdesk.wishtown@jalindia.co.in J P Fire Station-9717399329
2nd Escalation	Field Officer Security Agency	KLASSIC / KO & KM-73 KOSMOS / KD, KI, KNG
3rd Escalation	SO Jaypee Security	Sh. Jagdish 8447660048
4th Escalation	SECURITY DGM	Sh. Arvind Kumar 9319374405
5th Escalation	Fire Department	Sh. Jai Bhagwan-9671720800
6th Escalation	Fire In-Charge	Sh. Santosh Mudliar-9810219212

Wish you a Happy Durga Puja!

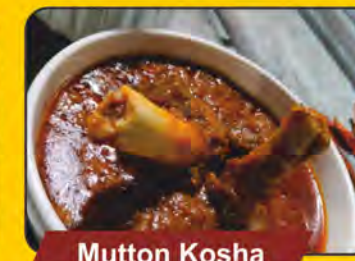


Bong Biryani

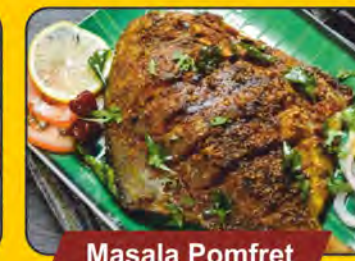
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