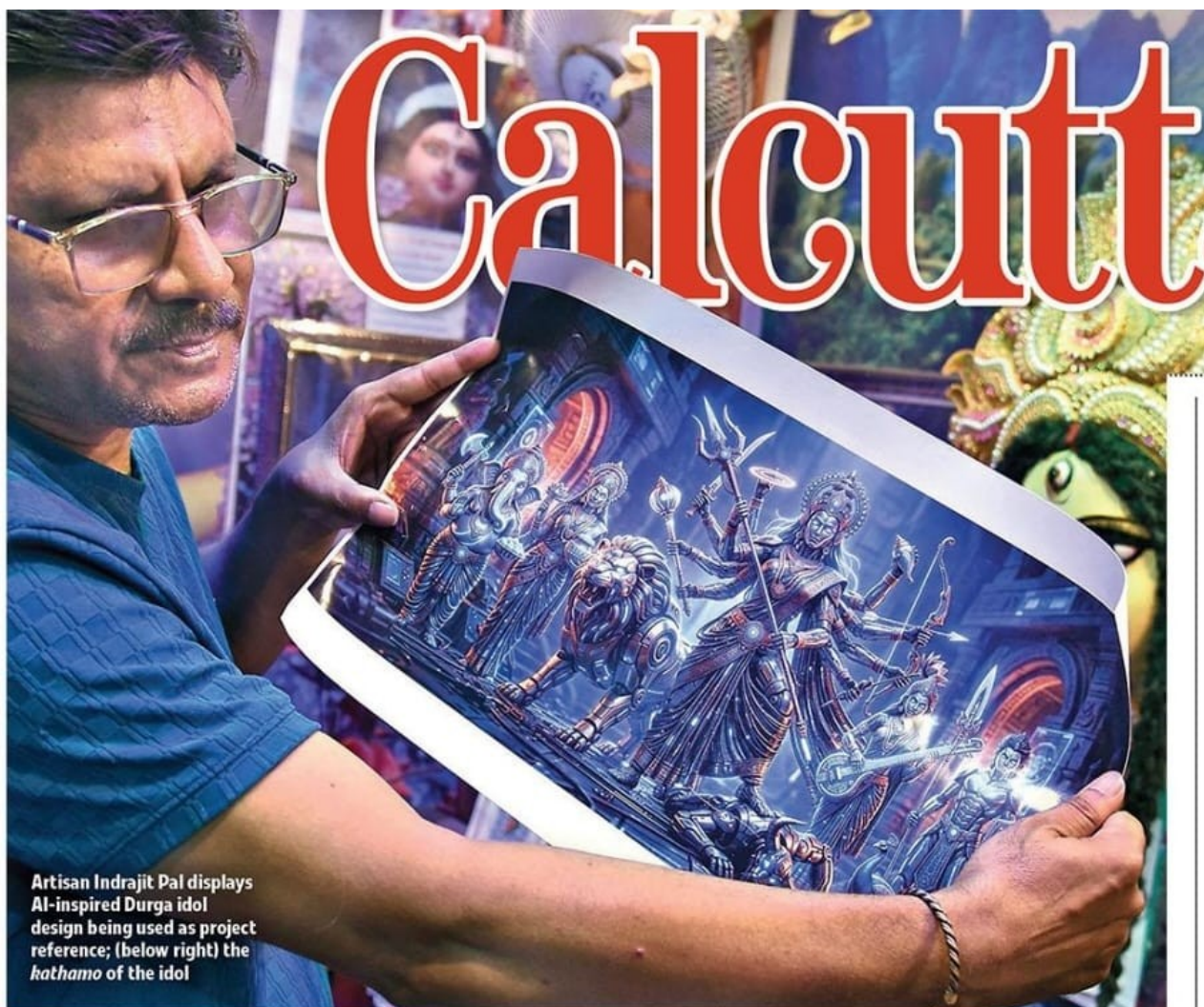


Calcutta

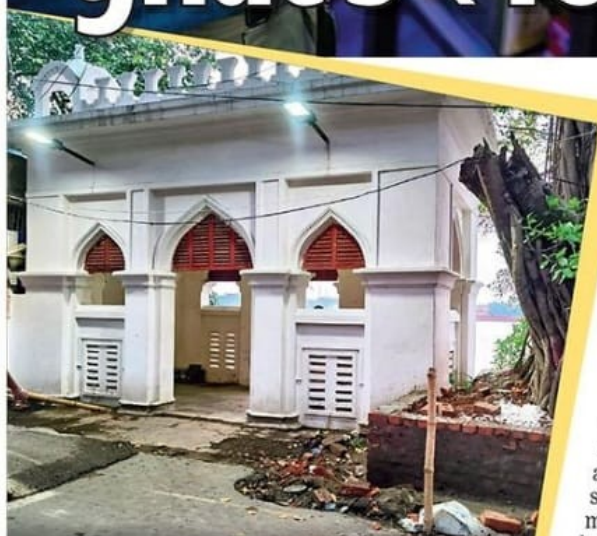


Artisan Indrajit Pal displays AI-inspired Durga idol design being used as project reference; (below right) the *katham* of the idol

Walkways, artisan kiosks, a futuristic Durga

Inside Kumartuli ghat's ₹10-cr revival

Pics: Samik Sen



I would prefer to describe it as the revitalisation of Kumartuli ghat and not just beautification. The idea is to preserve its heritage through a balanced approach

— Anjan Mitra, architect & principal urban designer, Kumartuli Ghat Project

Ruman Ganguly

Kumartuli, the iconic river-front hub of idol-making, is witnessing a dual transformation ahead of Pujo. A ₹10-crore redevelopment led by Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port with Adani Ports is reviving the 18th-century ghat, built by Raja Nabakrishna Deb, across a 300-metre stretch between Kumartuli and Champatala. The project will introduce viewing decks, cultural zones and civic amenities while preserving its heritage. Simultaneously, clay supply disruptions CT had earlier reported for *entel mati* and *Ganga mati* are gradually easing after SOPs and NOCs enabled fresh arrivals. There is also a futuristic twist shaping up at the hub — an AI-inspired robotic Durga idol.



CONTINUED ON 3

'We plan to reimagine the ghats of Kumartuli, not just beautify it'

Pics: Samik Sen



Beautification Project of the Kumartuli Bank of the Ganga River

Courtesy: Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata

Anjan Mitra says, "Even Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to visit this neighbourhood. We want to bring these stories back and reconnect citizens with our heritage"



This year, demand for sabeki protima has increased by over 90 per cent. We hope puja committees will begin giving baynas (token money deposits) from mid-July onwards

- Babu Pal

Clay flow resumes in Kumartuli, shortage continues

Kumartuli's clay supply crisis is slowly easing after weeks of uncertainty and mounting concern among idol-makers, following restrictions on riverbank digging in the South 24 Parganas. It disrupted the clay supply needed for idols and raised fears of production delays. Fresh supplies of *entel mati* and *Ganga mati* have begun reaching Kumartuli from areas such as Diamond Harbour and Uluberia, allowing artisans to gradually resume work after discussions between the district administration, local leaders and artisan representatives.

"A new system has been put in place to allow clay to be collected legally with the required permissions. Under the new arrangement, clay can be sourced through a SOPs backed by No Objection certificates, providing clarity to suppliers and transporters. Officials have also assured artisans and suppliers that transportation-related issues and extra charges will be addressed," said Babu Pal, secretary of Kumartuli Mritsilpa Sanskriti Samity. He added, "We are hopeful that the new framework will ensure a smoother flow of raw



materials in the coming weeks."

Despite this, artisans say the situation is not yet normal, with limited supply and rising costs ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi, Vishwakarma Puja and Durga Puja. Artisan Kalu Pal said, "The clay problem has not been resolved yet. The situation has improved a little compared to before, but it is not like previous years. Prices have gone up while quantity has come down, and we risk losing orders."

Artisans Jitendranath Pal and Narayan Chandra Pal noted that orders remain lower than usual. Narayan mentioned that prices have increased from ₹1,200 to ₹1,500 per *khop* (mound of clay).

Artisan and supplier Ashok Pal said, "We need around 500 lorry-loads of clay, but only eight lorries have arrived so far," highlighting the continued shortage.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

REIMAGINING KUMARTULI GHAT

The project includes strengthening the riverbank, restoring heritage structures and shrines, and developing walkways, viewing decks and boating facilities, along with CCTVs and architectural lighting. It also plans dedicated zones for artisans and cultural activities, as well as food kiosks, souvenir stalls and toilets.

Debasish Bhattacharya, convenor of Kumartuli Sarbojanin Durgotsav said, "The redevelopment will transform the ghat into a vibrant public space while retaining its cultural identity. Plans include fibre-glass sculptures and installations by Kumartuli artisans, which can be refreshed periodically to keep the riverfront dynamic. There will also be food kiosks and seating areas for visitors to relax. The garden space is being expanded for a more comfortable environment, particularly for senior citizens. Overall, the project is designed to make the ghat more welcoming, aesthetically appealing and community-friendly for all ages."



SEPTEMBER DEADLINE FOR PROJECT COMPLETION

The beautification project aims to preserve the site's historical character while enhancing its accessibility and overall appeal. Artist Amar Sarkar, who is working on the project, said, "The idea is not to change its identity but to enhance it in a way that respects its legacy. The redevelopment will bene-

fit locals, senior citizens and artisans. Special attention is being given to idol immersion activities by creating wider, more organised spaces. The riverfront will be expanded and made more accessible, ensuring smoother movement during the festive season. The old heritage houses will be painted and illuminated, adding to the area's visual appeal. We expect completion by September."



If a nominal fee is introduced to help with the upkeep, it could be a positive step. Most importantly, it should remain accessible to everyone

- Dhiman Das, owner of an iconic sweet shop & resident of Kumartuli