

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee Observes Rakhi Bandhan & Khuti Puja - Ushering in the 13th Puja in its 30th Year

Kolkata, August 9, 2025

A Historic Beginning

The courtyard of Sonagachi resonated with a different rhythm today, as Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) performed its Khuti Puja and observed Rakhi Bandhan Utsav, heralding the onset of Durga Puja. This year's occasion carried a special resonance: DMSC steps into its **30th year of collective existence**, and Durbar Mahila Durgotsav Committee prepares for its 13th Durga Puja. The theme for this year captures the essence of the journey - “*দুর্বার ৩০ শের ১৩ তম পূজা, শক্তির যুদ্ধে দেবী দশভূজা*” (“*Durbar at 30: Thirteen Autumns with Maa Durga's Blessings in the Fight for Justice.*”).

Khuti Puja – Laying the Foundation

The day began with the sacred Khuti Puja - the ritual that plants the foundation of the Durga Puja celebrations. As incense curled into the morning sky and chants filled the air, it marked not only a religious beginning but also a symbolic reminder of resilience rooted in community strength. The sacred ritual was performed by the priest, joined in prayer and chanting by DMSC's Secretary along with members of the Executive Body, marking the collective spirit of the Khuti Puja.



Rakhi Bandhan – Ties of Solidarity

Rakhi Bandhan Utsav - a ceremony that transcended social boundaries. Members of the sex workers' community tied rakhis to each other, to invited guests, and to dignitaries, extending the bonds of trust, care, and mutual responsibility. The gesture evoked Rabindranath Tagore's historic call for harmony, proving once more that solidarity can weave together differences of caste, creed, and faith.

Guests and Reflections

Among the distinguished guests, Ellora Saha, Councillor of KMC Ward No. 24, reflected on the enduring message of Rakhi Bandhan and questioned the continued marginalization of Bengalis in present times. She praised the sex workers' community for preserving the spirit of unity and inclusivity at a time when divisions often take center stage.

Other guests included Dr. Pavitra Mohan, Mr. K.P. Sengupta - a long-time ally of Durbar, Renu Pandey of IWC Khidderpore, and Dr. Aparna Dey, Principal of South Calcutta Girls' College, who fondly spoke of the ongoing engagement between the college and DMSC through student internships.



Outreach Beyond Sonagachi

The celebration was not confined to Sonagachi alone. A delegation led by the Secretary of DMSC extended the message of Rakhi to several esteemed institutions:

- **Indian Football Association (IFA), West Bengal:** Rakhis were tied to the Secretary, and other senior officials of IFA.
- **West Bengal State AIDS Prevention & Control Society (WBSAP&CS):** Rakhis were tied to the Project Director, Joint Director of TI Division, the Joint Director of CST Division, and the Additional Director of TI Division, along with other senior officials.
- **West Bengal State Legal Services Authority (WB-SLSA):** Member Secretary, Registrar cum Deputy Secretary, and other staff received rakhis from the DMSC team.
- **District Legal Services Authority – Kolkata:** Senior Officials including the Secretary of DLSA (Kolkata) were tied rakhis.
- **Pratidin Newspaper Office:** Rakhis were tied to Shri Kunal Ghosh, Editor-in-Chief, and the editorial team.
- **Press Club Kolkata:** The President, Treasurer and other staff were tied rakhis.

Through these gestures, the simple thread of Rakhi extended beyond the community, strengthening Durbar's bonds with institutions that influence public life and policy.

Sweet Conclusion

The day concluded with the distribution of sweets, a gesture that spread joy and warmth among everyone present. But more than the sweetness of mishti, it was the exchange of rakhis, the prayers of Khuti Puja, and the presence of allies that made the occasion unforgettable.

Looking Ahead

For three decades, Durbar has stood as a testament to resilience and the power of collective assertion. Today's Khuti Puja and Rakhi Bandhan served as both a remembrance of that legacy and a promise for the future - a future that continues to be guided by courage, unity, and dignity.

Moments from Khuti Puja and Rakhi Bandhan -



Fig: Khuti Puja



Fig: Tying Rakhi to the Editor in Chief of Sangbad Pratidin



Fig: Pinning Badges to a WBSLSA staff



Fig: Ellora Saha tying Rakhi to Dr. Pavitra Mohan



Fig: Secretary tying Rakhi to Dr. Aparna Dey



Fig: Tying Rakhi to the Joint Director of CST Division - WBSAP&CS



Fig: Tying Rakhi to a Sangbad Pratidin Staff



Fig: Tying Rakhi to a Press Club Official



Fig: Gathering in Khuti Puja and Rakhi Bandhan Event