

# DELHI DURGA PUJA CHARITABLE & CULTURAL SAMITI (Estd 1910)

**Kashmere Gate**







DELHI  
DURGA PUJA  
CHARITABLE &  
CULTURAL  
SAMITI (Estd 1910)

Kashmere Gate



## Brief History

- Delhi Durga Puja Charitable & Cultural Samiti (DDPS), popularly known as the Kashmere Gate Puja.
- Started in 1910, it has celebrated its Centenary during 2009.
- Celebrating 113<sup>th</sup> year of Durga Puja this year.
- After being held in various locations viz, Roshanpura Kali Mandir, Laxminarayan Dharamshala in Fatehpuri, Delhi Polytechnique Kashmere Gate, it finally settled in Bengali School Alipur Road, which itself is a century old institution in the year 1968.







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## Brief History

- The oldest puja of Delhi is celebrated with full traditional gaiety and rich cultural fervour and is considered to be a heritage puja of Delhi.
- It is a must for every Bengali to visit this puja irrespective of distance to be covered.
- It is a popular belief that one needed to be seen in this pandal for its nostalgic, prestigious and traditional importance.







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## Famous Visits:

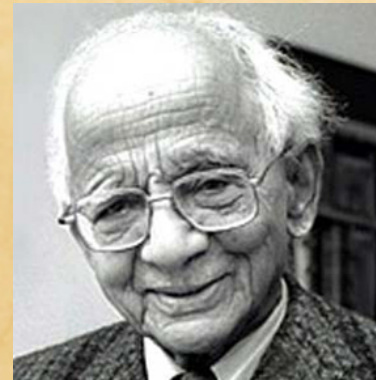
There are many famous personalities who visited this Durga Puja. However, the most prominent among them are:



Netaji Subhas  
Chandra Bose (1935)



Smt Indira Gandhi,  
then Hon'ble Prime  
Minister of India (1969)  
offered Ashtami Puja



Dr Nirad C Chaudhuri  
(Famous Author, Sahitya  
Akademi Awardee,  
Duff Cooper Memorial  
Awardee) also happened  
to visit our Durga Puja  
quite frequently



Smt Sheila Dixit  
(2009), then Hon'ble  
Chief Minister of  
Delhi offered Puja  
and had a glimpse of  
our "Sandhya Aarti"





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## Centenary Celebration 2009 – Glimpses







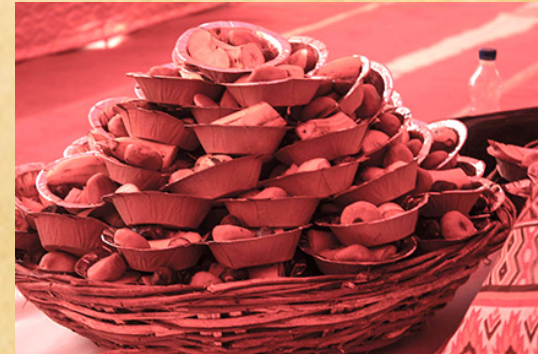
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## Prasad & Bhog / Bhandara

- Prasad and Bhog are distributed to all the devotees.
- Huge gathering of 6000-7000 visitors from all sphere of society throng the Pandal during distribution of Bhog.
- To have Bhog during these three days of Puja is must for every Bengali.
- The distribution is done in a very simple but in a unique way. One has to visit to get on-hand experience.







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## Footfalls

- The 113 year old Kashmere Gate Puja is the most popular puja of Delhi because of its traditional fervour.
- More than one lac visitors visit the pandal during puja days.
- Most strategically located venue between old secretariat and prestigious IP College, is also surrounded by famous residential area like Northend Road, Flag Staff road, Rajpur road, Shriram road etc.
- It provided huge opportunity for the Advertisers/ Sponsors to showcase / display their products/ services.
- The opportunity can be provided in following ways :
  - ❖ **Main Gate Sponsorship;**
  - ❖ **Publicity Octonorm Stalls;**
  - ❖ **Publicity Banners;**
  - ❖ **Side panels near stage;**
  - ❖ **Stage Background Banners;**
  - ❖ **Sponsorship of Cultural Programmes;**
  - ❖ **Other Sponsors, Advertisers, Donors etc.**







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Some of the Sponsors who have contributed and have continued patronage over a period of time to help us to continue this heritage and most popular puja, the list includes the following:







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## Cultural Extravaganza

- Various renowned artist from Bengal and Delhi performed during these three days.
- We provide great platform where the artists showcase their talent.
- The cultural extravaganza includes Classical Music and dances of various form, Rabindra Sangeet, Bengali folk music, Band, Ballet, Mime Show and Modern Song, Magic shows are performed.

➤ Prominent artists visited are :

- ❖ Uday Shankar & Group (Ballet);
- ❖ Shovana Narayan & Group (Kathak);
- ❖ Dwijen Mukherjee (Rabindra sangeet);
- ❖ Sagar Sen (Rabindra sangeet);
- ❖ Jogesh Dutta (Mime);
- ❖ Birendra Krishna Bhadra (of Mahalaya fame);
- ❖ Krishna Chattapadhyay (Dwijendrageeti songs);
- ❖ Dhiren Basu;
- ❖ Manoj Mitra (Theatre Stalwart);
- ❖ Shreya GuhaThakurta (Rabindrasangeet);
- ❖ Justin McCarthy (Bharatnatyam);
- ❖ Lopamudra Mitra (Modern Songs);
- ❖ Purnadas Baul (Baul Songs);
- ❖ Amar Pal (Bengali Folk);







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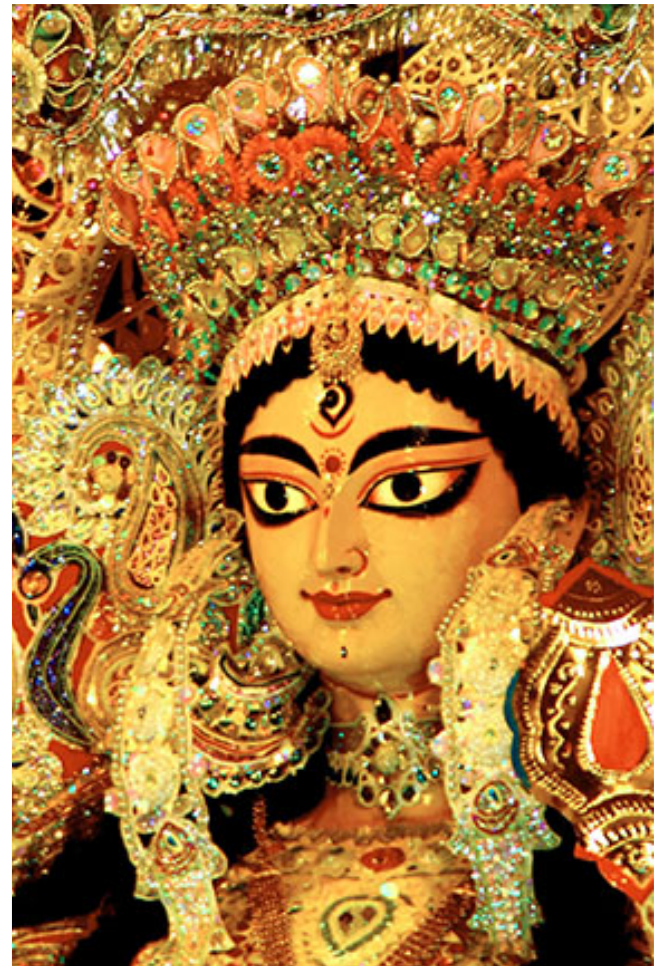
Kashmere Gate



## Information about our website, Contact etc.

The official / correspondence  
address of our Puja Samiti is:

Delhi Durga Puja Charitable & Cultural Samiti  
316, Main Bazar Road  
(Near Robin Cinema)  
Subzi Mandi, Delhi – 110 007  
Ph : 011-2385 4058  
E-Mail: [ddpskg@gmail.com](mailto:ddpskg@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.ddpskgate.org](http://www.ddpskgate.org)







THE HINDU • FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2009

## Delhi puja turns 100 this year

## Special arrangements made for five-day festival

Urvashi Sarkar

- Attire of the Goddess to be made of reed
- "Ananda Mela" expected to be a big draw

**NEW DELHI:** To commemorate its hundredth year of Durga Puja celebrations in the Capital, the Delhi Durga Puja Samiti has made special arrangements for the five-day festival beginning September 23.

"Since it is the centenary of the Kashmere Gate puja, which is one of the oldest pujas in Delhi, it will be unique," said Samiti president Kamalleshwar Sen at a press conference here on Thursday.

Mr. Sen said certain features seen at previous Durga Puja celebrations would be retained in this year's puja as well. "The structure of the idol

which is traditionally one piece, has been retained. The size or height too cannot be changed because of logistic difficulties. The attire of the Goddess will be made of reed which is close to Egyptian papyrus and is a bio-degradable material," he added.

Mr. Sen said the puja pandal would be designed along the lines of places of worship in the houses of zamindars in the Kolkata of old.

"Though we are not in favour of commercialisation of pujas, it cannot be

avoided," said Mr. Sen, adding "Stalls will be encouraged to sell cultural items such as books and CDs."

In addition to the regular "anjali", "bhog" and "aarti", plays, music and classical dance performances will also be held. Another attraction will be the Dhunuchi dance which is performed in front of the Goddess while holding containers emitting smoke and heated with charcoal, husk of coconut and incense.

The "Ananda Mela" in

which home-cooked delicacies are sold to the public is also expected to be a big draw.

He outlined the long history of the pujas organised by the Samiti since 1909. The periodic struggle to find a place to host the celebrations resulted in a change of venue every few years. The Samiti found a permanent place on the grounds of the Bengali Boys' Higher Secondary School in 1940, where the puja celebrations have been held since. The nature of celebrations was also determined by external events such as the shifting of the British raj capital to Delhi, the Partition of India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination.

A photograph of a Hindu festival scene featuring two large, ornate statues of deities, likely Durga and Lakshmi, adorned with garlands and holding various symbolic objects. A person's hand holding a camera is visible in the foreground, capturing the scene.

# A HUNDRED YEARS OF DEVOTION

pujetime

**DELHI'S OLDEST**  
Durga Puja will  
celebrate its  
centenary with  
the beginning  
of festivities  
later this week

Gar

[illegible]

There was no idol at this puja held at the Bhawan, says Tamsak in the

There was no idol in this part of the country, but the people of Chondal Chowk, also known as *mangal ghāt* — a pot filled with *ganga* jaal — are enjoying the festival of *ganga puja* for the first time in 1982, when the deity had to be brought in a boat from Varanasi.

The history of the Kashmeer Gate Ganga Puja has been traced back to two similarly old institutions. One, the Bengali Boys School in the Civil Lines area started in 1894, where the *ganga puja* is held in the Bengali Club, going back to 1925, from where *rakhs* the organizers, the Delhi Durga Puja Committee are drawn.

Unlike the smarter, more popular *ganga puja* of South Delhi, the Kashmeer Gate *ganga puja* is known for its traditional *ganga* jaal.

Mukherjee, who looks after religious rites.

The idol is the traditional deity of the *ganga puja* in Delhi. Jagad Saranwati, Ganesh and Kartik, stayed on the same pedestal. Duddam, the deity of the *ganga puja* is taken to the nearby *ganga*.

No rock bands or film stars for the cultural events held every evening at the *ganga puja* in Delhi. *ganga puja*. This year too, the organizers have lined up similar fun, with songs from Kodaka like singers S. P. Balasubrahmanyam, and actors Kishan Mukherjee and M. Math and a Bengali troupe, C. Mitra (C. Mitra).

The *ganga puja* will be the first of its kind in Delhi.

## THE ASIAN AGE

September 10, 2009

**looking back** Dipayan Mazumdar

## How Delhi's oldest Durga Puja got started at Kashmere Gate

With this year's Durga Puja just two weeks away, organisers of Durgoldest puja at Kumbh Mela Gate, which dates back to 1905, are preparing for the centenary celebrations. The work takes a walk down memory lane—

1910 it was performed by violently consecrating the *manjusha*, symbol of the Devi, the Roshanpura Kali Manse near Kashmir Gate. The enthusiasm and interest took more concrete form in 1912 when the *pratishta puja* first started, at a rested *dharanala* in Balli Maran. One can imagine the sense of excitement in the minds of Jullah Bengalis then as they readied themselves to celebrate the puja with the installation



A sensitive eye. Sensitive to the touch of the sun.

[illegible]

\_\_\_\_\_

the forms and shaming/berbs — a hun

attraction at this puja — which has, for the past 25 years, been prepared by Mohammed Yasin of Chitle Kaba Chaudhni Chowk. For around 25 years before this, his father Bhooji Mian, had made the biriyani.

But there will be one important difference with tradition — "This year's puja will be 'green,'" says Digvijay Mazumdar, vice-president of the DDPS. So the id will be built with fast-dissolving 'Akash' (clay cups); all the diaries' ornaments will be removed before immersion; and vegetable dyes used as colour. Even the flowers used in the puja will be given to an NGO to be recycled into organic colour.

**DURGA PUJA IS ALSO A LOT ABOUT FINGER-LICKING FOOD. HERE'S WHERE TO GO:**

- The K Block & B Block CR Park pujas have stalls by Karims, Delhi Durrer, Muri Mahal, etc.
- The K Block & B Block pujas also have a Bopali Grill stall. Check out the Chingri Cutlet.
- The New Delhi Kali Bari puja has a Beefish stall, famous for its Fish Fry.
- Anandam, where women of the locality cook and sell various dishes, is another goody-pole tradition. The CR Park Pocket 40 Anandamla is worth checking out.

[www.durrer.com](http://www.durrer.com)

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# DELHI DURGA PUJA CHARITABLE & CULTURAL SAMITI (Estd 1910)

Kashmere Gate



# The Statesman

KOLKATA NEW DELHI SILIGURI BHUBANESWAR LC 10+4+4 Rs 3

## Kashmere Gate Puja reaches milestone

By Mahender S Manral

NEW DELHI, 23 SEPT. Durga Puja festivities in the Capital take on a special hue this year as the Kashmere Gate Puja organised by Delhi Durga Puja Samiti (DDPS) celebrates its centenary.

On this momentous occasion, the DDPS has decided to celebrate the Puja in the traditional manner, but in keeping with environmental concerns, the organisers have incorporated some 'green' elements. The Pratima (idol) has been built with fast-dissolving khari mati (dissolving clay) and the flowers that will be used on all the Puja days will be handed over to an NGO to be recycled into organic colours.

DDPS vice-president Dipayan Mazumdar said, "We started organising Durga Puja since 1909 and this year we are completing 100 years. This time we have decided to celebrate in a more traditional manner. For that we are starting our Puja with a Mahayagna that all the Maharaj of



Preparations are in full swing at Kashmere Gate pandal. ■ SINS

Bharat Seva Ashram will be attending."

"This time the height of the idols of all the five deities - Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Anesh and Kartik - will be 19 feet and vegetable dyes are being used. Our budget is Rs 20 lakh. Before immersion the ornaments of all the deities will be removed," added Mr Ma-

zumdar. DDPS secretary Himangshu Bose said, "Our Durga Puja is part of the heritage of Delhi. It was started in 1910 in a small Kalibari in Old Delhi's Roshanpura. Most of the organising committee members are from a heritage institution, Bengali Club, which is also more than 100 years old."

Poulomi Nag, a regular visitor, said, "Kashmere Gate Puja has its own ethnicity. I attend this Durga Puja every year despite the fact that I live in south Delhi where there are many pujas. The traditional programme of this Puja is very amazing and they also serve the best bhog."

Mr Mazumdar said, "We

have designed a special corridor, Thakur Dalan, 90 feet long which is inside the pandal adjacent to the Pratima (idol). Many have witnessed this unique feature in films featuring the old Raj Baris of Kolkata."

The organisers are focusing on cultural programmes that are to be held every evening on all four days of the Puja. Rock bands and big stars from Kolkata, generally popular imports during the Pujas in Delhi, have been given a miss. However, singers Shivaji Chatopadhyay and Arundhati Hom, actors Ksharaj Mukherjee and Manoj Mitta, a Bangladeshi troupe and a play by Chena Mukh (Known Face), one of Delhi's oldest theatre groups, are part of the cultural line-up for the Puja festivities.

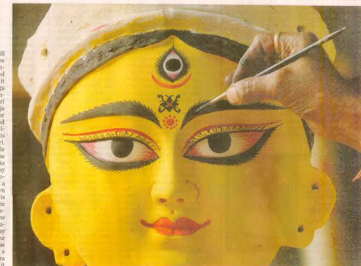
Mr Bose said, "The centenary celebrations will bring back old memories with the staging of a play 'Bhushondir Math' by members of the Bengali Club. There are two other plays, one by the ladies and the other by children."

## Roots run deep

FESTIVAL Delhi Durga Puja Samiti, which hosts the city's oldest Durga puja, is all set to celebrate its centenary this year. DIPAYAN MAZUMDAR traces its history

One September, Delhi and the National Capital Region will see a heritage of Durga puja celebrations. The city's oldest Durga puja, the Kashmere Gate Puja, will be celebrating its centenary this year. For Delhi's oldest Durga puja, organised since the Kashmere Gate, will enter its hundredth year. Durga Puja, which is celebrated in the city since 1910, is a unique event, all geared up for the centenary celebrations spanning six days from September 23.

Delhi saw its first Durga puja in 1910. It was an effort on the part of the pioneer Bengali immigrants in the city itself. Yet another name and so to speak, to the history of Durga puja in Delhi, which is celebrated in the city since 1910, is a unique event, all geared up for the centenary celebrations spanning six days from September 23.



TRADITION LIVES ON As artist giving final touches to an idol of goddess Durga last year. PHOTO: V. KARANJIA

## hindustantimes

HINDUSTAN TIMES, NEW DELHI  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2009

## Bangla beat in the heart of Delhi thumps to a century this year

Jatin Anand

jatin.anand@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI Arguably the Capital's oldest Bengali association, Bengali Club of Delhi Durga Puja Samiti located at Kashmere Gate celebrates its centenary this year.

"Established in 1910, the club has strived to maintain the ethos of Bengali culture down the ages," said Kamaleshwar Sen (78), the club's president.

"A manifestation of this has been the Kashmere Gate Puja, which the club has been organising since 1909."

Associated with the Kashmere Gate Durga Puja for more than 60 years himself, Sen

(Established in 1910, the club has strived to maintain the ethos of Bengali culture down the ages.

KAMALESHWAR SEN  
President, Bengali Club

announced the centenary edition of the Delhi Durga Puja this year.

"The five-day festival begins September 23 onwards and will draw participants from all over the Capital as well as from different generations," he said. The programme will see a

procession of more than 800 idols loaded onto trucks with devotees and traditional dhak (or drum beaters) showering petals. The heritage pandal (traditional bamboo structure where prayer is conducted) of the Durga puja (idol) at Kashmere Gate before continuing to the Yamuna for immersion on the day of Dashain/Dussehra.

"The Sandhya Aarti (evening prayer) at Kashmere Gate will be the city's main attraction. We will attempt to relive the good old days as men dress in traditional dhotis and women in traditional red-bordered saris."

The carrier for the pratima

will be the same bullock cart which the club has used to ferry the idol to the Yamuna's banks since 1909," added Sen.

In addition, Sen has also conceived and designed a traditional 90-ft long "Thakur Dalan" (traditional enclosure for idols) to be placed at the pandal.

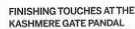
"Not many in Delhi have witnessed this unique corridor, which can often be seen in films featuring the Raj Baris (traditional Royal Palaces) of old Kolkata," said M.M. Ghoshal, Chairman, Press and Publicity, Bengali Club.

"The overall art and design work is being executed by members since early May."





Delhi's oldest Durga puja has come a long way from a quiet start in the heart of the Walled City



By Damayanti Datta

For one hundred years, the devi and the asura have been battling it out under one roof. For one hundred years, she has been decked up in milky white, created by three generations of the same family. For one hundred years, her devotees have offered up mouthwatering gourmet *bhog*. For one hundred years, the L.M.H Press has sold books to anyone who cared to visit the spot; and for one hundred years, a bullock cart has lugged her to the Yamuna after five festive days and nights.

The devi has turned 100 in the heart of Mughal Delhi, surrounded by rubble-built walls, labyrinthine lanes and arched gates. History and tradition have joined hands with prayer and piety at the Kashmere Gate Durga puja—the oldest in Delhi—to reach a quiet signpost this year.

"The history of worshipping the devi dates back to the Mughal era," says Kolkata-based journalist Sudeshna Banerjee, who has authored *Durga Puja: celebrating the goddess then and now*. By the mid-18th century, it had become an occasion for the *babus* of

Kolkata to flaunt their wealth. Slowly the community took over. In a strange coincidence, this year marks Kolkata's first public Durga puja too.

"Delhi's first puja was kicked off by Parmananda Biswas, a Bengali Christian, who set the great tradition of a puja for all communities," says Deepayan Majumdar, vice-president of the Delhi Durga Puja Samiti, Kashmir Gate. In 1926, the samiti procured the first *pratima* (idol) in Delhi; 1950 sounded out the first drum roll of the *dhak*; and in 1970, former prime minister Indira Gandhi, set it off.

Meantime, the master artists are adding final touches and steadying up their nerves for the dramatic moment of "restoring life" to the idol: *chakshudan* ceremony, or painting the dev's eyes, while drummers go wild with drum fills. September 23 will showcase the gala *yagna*—a centenary special. Babu Mian's son is gearing up to step into his father's shoes on that day. Mian has been serving up his famous biryani at the Bengali Club stall for the last 50 years. His son will serve the same lip-smacking recipe at the same spot.

We celebrate hundred years of Delhi's coronation as the capital of India by taking a look at its golden heritage



Namya Sinha  
@namya.sinha@hindustantimes.co

A hundred years ago in 1911, the capital of imperial India was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi. That same year, the foundation of New Delhi was laid by King George V and Queen Mary at the site of Delhi Durbur at Kingsway Camp, in present day's north camp of Delhi University. We commemorate the defining century by taking a look at some of the landmarks in the city from that period, which have withstood the test of time.

**Maidens Hotel, Civil Lines**  
A low-rise building with colonial architecture done in white paint, the heritage hotel was established in 1903. The Cavalry, the hotel's in-house bar opened during those times is still functioning. If you want to catch the magnificent and charming historic moments of the city, visit the hotel, which has hundreds of photographs dating back to the early 1900s, adorning its walls.

**Tel: 011-2397 5464**  
Nearest Metro Station: Civil Lines

**Old Delhi railway station**  
This red-stone building, built in the year 1901, was opened to the public in 1903. Initially, it started with two platforms, but now has 19 platforms. And by the way, Old Delhi Railway station is

often referred to as 'Delhi Junction'.  
**Nearest Metro Station:** Chandni  
 Chowk

**Delhi Durga Puja Samiti**  
(Kashmere Gate Durga Puja)  
This is the oldest Durga puja committee in the city, which had started in 1910. Initially, the Puja celebrations, held annually during the month of September or October, used to take place at Roshanpura Kali Mandir near Nai Sadak. Now they have moved to Alipur Road in north Delhi.  
**Nearest Metro Station:** Kashmere Gate

**Paranthewali Gali**  
Several shops selling paranthas in the Paranthewali Gali in Chandni Chowk have been around for more than 100 years. Kanhaiya Lal Durga Prasad's Parantha Shop is the oldest — it was established in 1875. When the shop started, it used to sell four kinds of stuffed paranthas. Now it has more than 25 varieties.

St. Stephen's College

This college was founded in 1881. It started in a house in Kinnari Bazar in old Delhi. In 1891, the college was moved to Kashmere Gate. It got shifted to its present location, in Delhi University's North Campus, in 1941.

**Nearest Metro Station:**  
Vishwavidyalaya



Chandni Chowk as seen during the early years of 20th century

**looking back** Dipayan Mazumdar

## How Delhi's oldest Durga Puja got started at Kashmere Gate

With this year's Durga Puja just two weeks away, the organisers of Delhi's oldest puja at Kashmere Gate, which dates back to 1909, are preparing for the centenary celebrations. The writer takes a walk down memory lane...

1910 it was performed by virtually consecrating the *mangal ghata*, symbol of the Devi, at the Roshanpara Kali Mandir near Kachemra Ghat. The enthusiasm and interest took a more concrete form in 1912, when the *prastava* *paja* first started, at a rented *dharamshala* in Balli Maan. One can imagine the sense of excitement in the minds of Delhi's Bregalis then as they readied themselves to celebrate the *paja* with the installation of



the secretary, Dhatarnadas Bandopadhyaya, and the treasurer, Brahlakanta Ray, cannot be forgotten.

That year's history will be incomplete if a particular incident regarding the *desi bharat* is not mentioned here. Due to some miscommunication, the organisers could not get clearance for the immersion procession, and so the immersion had to be completed by making it a part of the Ramfita procession.<sup>1</sup>

In 1913, thanks to Lala Lachmicharan's interest and patronage, the gipsy was shifted to his Fatehpur Bazarokashala. He not only provided the use of his premises, but actively participated in the celebrations and in its financial support, thus ensuring. From 1913 to 1925, the tent used to be procured from Kashu. In 1926, for the first time, the gipsy was made of cloth, and this practice has continued till now. The pioneering support of Lala Lachmicharan has been continuing ever since. The late LAL, who showed similar fervour:

The shifting of the offices of the Comptroller-General of India to Calcutta in 1913, a large number of Bengalis in the city. Many of them participated in the 1913 gipsy here. But a number of them helped to start a new gipsy which was inaugurated by Tinsuker from

In 1948, the huge grounds of the Polytechnic were used for the puja. Kirtan plays, exercise demonstrations by the Bengali Club, dances by young girls, the *concha* mode — all these became a part of this festival.

In the following year, Gour Prasad could not travel to Delhi to make the idol; and Dr Smita Prasad Nag stepped in to make the *pratima*. His design was, however, not appreciated by the devotees, and so from

The following year onwards the process was again made in the tradition.

In 1990, the puja celebrations reverberated with the sound of *dhakis*. In those days the *dhakis* were not called from Kolkata, and were recruited from the village of Suryabanta Kac Choudhary and others. Due to the efforts of Sanjukta Mohapatra—the first female *dhaki*—the tradition was introduced in 1995 for the first time, the joint *Bajras* procession was held.

The performance of Chikita Khatun, a Bengali actress, in the Bengali Chit impasses even Rajshchkar Boso, the well-known writer. Among those who performed the female lead were the famous actresses Habi (Panchanan Choudhary) and Shanti Ranjan Datta Ray. They performed their roles so well that it was practically impossible to distinguish that these were men playing female

10 INDIA TODAY • OCTOBER 5, 2009

# THANK YOU.