



**Azad Hind Fouz Smriti Mahavidyalaya
Domjur, Howrah**

RAKSHA BANDHAN

‘Raksha Bandhan’ in Sanskrit, literally means “the bond of protection”. It is a popular Hindu festival observed on the full moon of the Hindu calendar month of ‘*Shravana*’ which usually occurs in July or August each year.





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Cultural Sub-Committee
in collaboration with the IQAC celebrates

Raksha Bandhan

*Even the simplest threads can
carry the strongest bonds.*



11.8.2025 ★ CONFERENCE ROOM ★ 1 PM

‘Raksha Bandhan’ was originally celebrated in Northern India from where it gradually spread to other parts of India and abroad. On this day, sisters tie *rakhi* (a sacred thread) around the wrists of their brothers to symbolically protect them and pray for their wellbeing. The brothers also pledge to protect their sisters.

In 1905, Rabindranath Tagore gave ‘Raksha Bandhan’ a new significance – broadening the concept from a bond between siblings, to a bond uniting a community. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, proposed the Partition of Bengal on religious lines on 16th October 1905, for ease of governance. But this decision had the underlying political motive of weakening Bengal. Tagore chose this day to promote unity and brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. He encouraged people to tie rakhis on each other and stand united against the British. Following Tagore’s call, hundreds of people in Calcutta, Dhaka and Sylhet took to the streets and tied rakhi threads on one another. The statement was clear: ‘Do not Divide us’. Thus, ‘Raksha Bandhan’ became a symbol of unity and resistance against the Partition of Bengal.

The 1905 decision to divide Bengal was reversed in 1911 by Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, during the Delhi Durbar in December 1911. The intense and widespread protests across the country, especially the Swadeshi Movement which aimed to boycott British goods and promote Indian industries, forced the British rulers to reunite Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore, a visionary, had realized that the rakhi – a simple thread steeped in mythology and folklore – had the power to unite thousands of people invoking the spirit of brotherhood across communities.

However, after the re-unification of Bengal, the capital of British India was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi.

Maitreyi Devi in her book *Mongpu-te Rabindranath (Tagore by Fireside)* writes:

He [Tagore] transformed the religious tradition of Raksha Bandhan to a secular motif of unity among diversity ...



Rabindranath Tagore's Hindu-Muslim Rakhi (Raksha) Bandhan initiative in progress in Calcutta, October 1909

Source: Open Magazine

<https://openthemagazine.com/cover-stories/an-east-bengal-in-west-bengal/>

Today, the 'Raksha Bandhan' festival has become more symbolic but remains a highly popular occasion of renewing sibling bonds. 'Raksha Bandhan' is also practiced among men and women who are not blood relatives, to establish voluntary kin relations, across caste, class and religious divisions. People tie rakhi on their friends, relatives, neighbours, doctors, teachers, soldiers who guard our frontiers, police personnel and even strangers on the street, for their wellbeing and protection.

There are fascinating stories, regional customs, historical incidents about the familiar Raksha Bandhan tradition that most people do not know:

- Raksha Bandhan is mentioned as a sacred ‘vow of protection’ in ancient Hindu texts like the *Bhavishya Purana* and *Vishnu Purana* indicating that the ritual is over 6,000 years old. Originally, this was not only about sibling relations – it was also a pledge of protection, honouring relationships and fulfilling promises.
- One of the well-known stories of Raksha Bandhan is from *The Mahabharata*. When Krishna injured his finger during battle, the Pandava queen, Draupadi, tore a piece of her sari and wrapped it around his wound. Krishna promised to protect her always.
- Some medieval legends narrate the story of Rani Karnavati of Mewar who sent a rakhi to the Mughal Emperor Humayun, requesting his help against the invasion of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Humayun reached Mewar too late. The Rajput army was defeated by that time and the queen had performed ‘Jauhar’ to save her honour. However, modern historians consider this incident to be a fable rather than a historical fact.
- Raksha Bandhan may be celebrated even without siblings, by taking a pledge before the Divine, to live righteously.
- Raksha Bandhan has been uniquely used to promote ecological balance and ethical awareness by environmental activists and animal lovers in the modern world. They tie rakhis to trees and animals to pledge their protection of the environment and other living beings.



The Nirmala Institute of Education, of Panjim Goa, celebrated the *Vruksha Raksha Bandhan* as a gesture of protecting and safeguarding our green siblings for a better tomorrow.

Source:

<https://www.nirmalainstitute.org/nie-sac-vruskha-raksha-bandhan-celebration-held-23rd-august-2021>

Raksha Bandhan showcases the rich cultural diversity of India and also highlights how a festival can adapt to the changing times and take on different meanings across the country.

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