



## Mahalaya

**Source: PIB**

Recently, the **Prime Minister** wished the **Bengali community** on the occasion of **Mahalaya** that marks the beginning of **Durga Puja festivities**.

- Mahalaya marks the day when **Goddess Durga** is believed to **descend to Earth** and vanquish the **demon king Mahishasura**, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.
- On this day, artisans **paint the eyes of Goddess Durga**, a moment also known as the '**Chokkhu daan**' (granting the eyes to the Goddess).
- It marks the end of '**Pitru Paksha**' and the beginning of '**Debi Paksha**' (the era of the Goddess Durga).
  - Pitru Paksha is a **16-day period** during which Hindus perform rituals to pay **homage** to their **forefathers**.
- **Durga Puja in Kolkata** has been inscribed on the **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity**.
  - It is the **first festival in Asia** to achieve recognition as **UNESCO ICH of Humanity**.

**Read More: [Durga Puja on UNESCO's ICH](#)**

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