‘Walk for books’: Hundreds march in Kolkata against attack on bookstalls

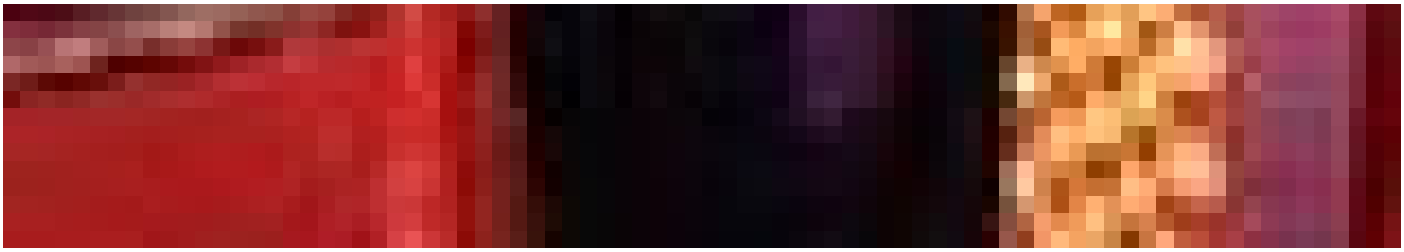
Shrabana Chatterjee

People walk on a march, organised on College Street, popularly known as the books neighbourhood of Kolkata, holding books, banners, and posters, in protest against attacks on bookstalls on October 31, 2026 | Photo Credit: Special arrangement

Hundreds of people walked holding books in their hands at a rally in Kolkata on Saturday (October 31) protest against recent attacks on books and bookstalls, blamed on right-wing groups and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The march, “Walk for books”, was conducted without any political banners, with common citizens, activists, professors, and politicians taking part in it.

The march was organised on College Street, popularly known as *Boipara* (books neighbourhood) of Kolkata, as hundreds walked holding books, banners, and posters. “*Boi amader bondhu, boi-er jonno hathun”* (Books are our friends, walk for books), read one of the banners.



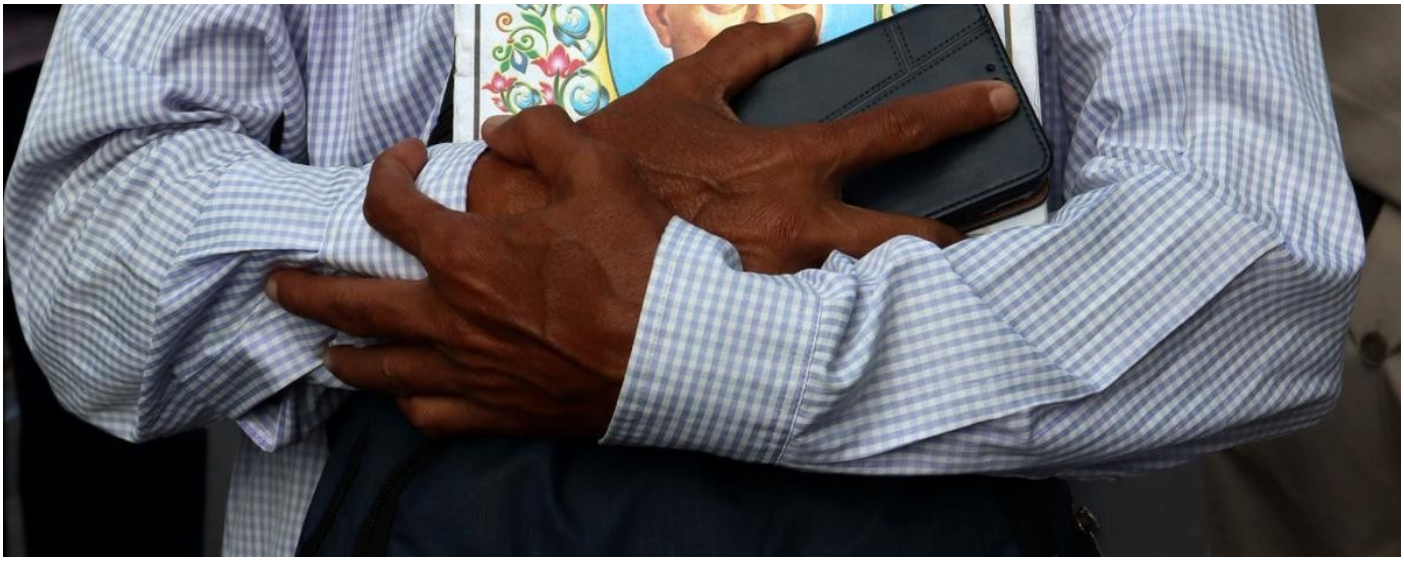


Senior Communist Party of India (Marxist) leaders, including State secretary Mohammad Salim, Sujan Chakraborty, Biman Bose, and others, showed up at the protest.

CPI(M) leader Satarup Ghosh, who took part in the march, said that such a protest was unheard of in Kolkata, because such an attack on books was also unheard of. “The type of attack will determine the type of protest. Many who are walking in this march have no relation to the Left ideologies, but they have shown up for the love of books,” Mr. Ghosh said.

Many sang, recited poems, played musical instruments, raised slogans, and held their copy of books high above their heads or close to their chests as they marched on.



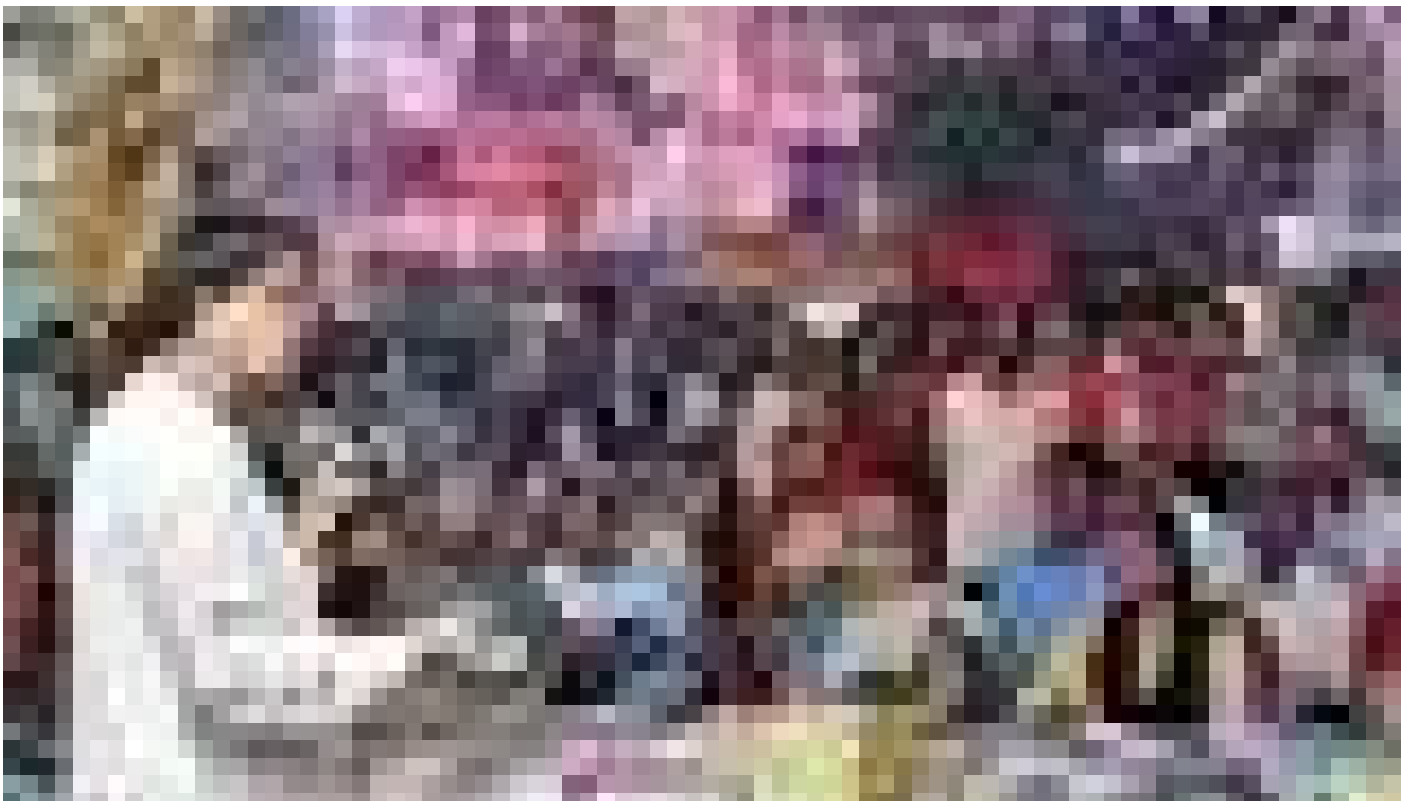


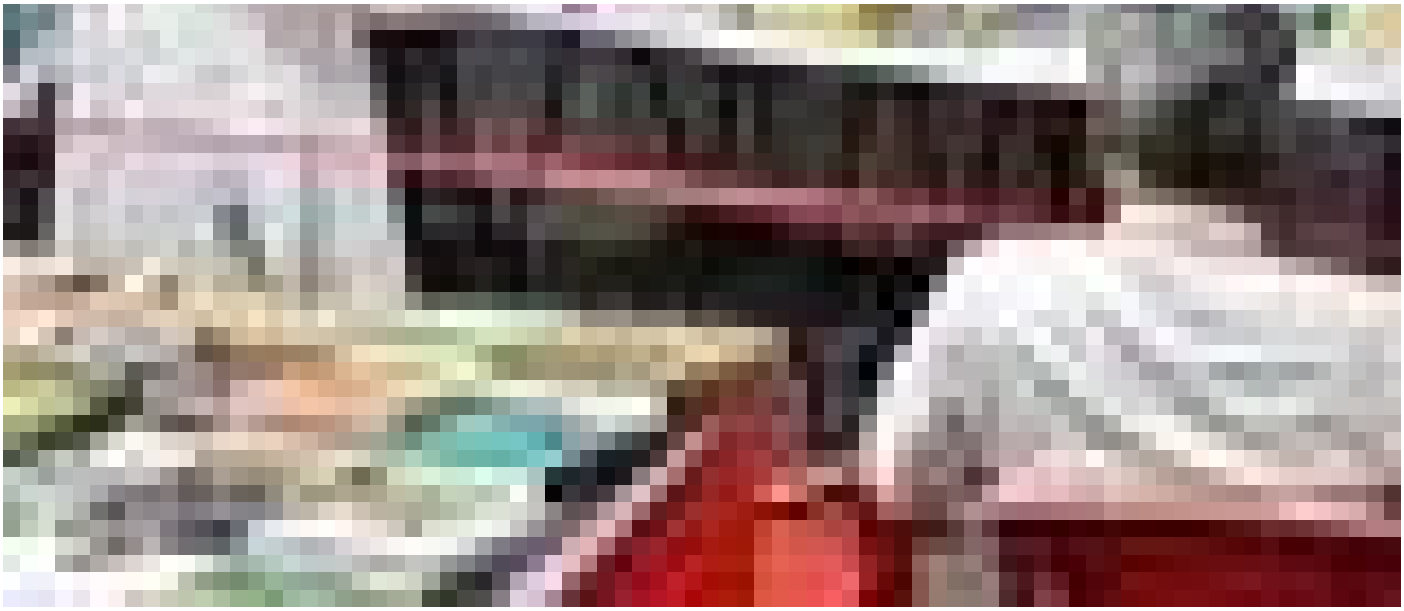
A participant in the rally holding a book close to his chest.

“It was heartfelt to see such an organic march for books; I have never seen such a thing before. People from ages 8-80 were all walking together. As a book lover and publisher, it is my responsibility to walk in this march,” Subrata Das, a publisher and owner of Setu Publication, told *The Hindu*.

“Education is one of the most important things in the contemporary world, but this attack on books by the current government is pathetic. They want to crack down on education and books so that people do not learn and do not ask questions,” a research scholar from Jadavpur University, who took part in the march, said on the condition of anonymity.

A call for the march was written and signed by several prominent personalities in the State such as academician Pabitra Sarkar, former MP Jawhar Sircar, journalist Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, actor Sabyasachi Chakraborty, playwright Chandan Sen, and many others.





Books vs bulldozers

The march was organised in protest against recent repeated attacks on Left parties' book stalls during the Durga Puja festivities. According to senior CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty, at least 292 stalls were vandalised. However, the attacks worked in their favour, as common people and politicians alike showed up at their stalls in solidarity in large numbers and drove up sales beyond ₹1.5 crore.

Several right-wing groups and BJP workers are blamed for these attacks. However, the BJP has denied these allegations and condemned the attacks even as Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari continued his verbal attack on the book stalls.

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