

KOLKATA ON

# WHEELS

AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY



## BRIDGESTONE WHEELS 8<sup>th</sup> Corporate Car Treasure Hunt



CAR LAUNCH

All-New Renault Triber

ELECTRIC CARS

MINI Countryman E John Cooper Works Pack





# SOURAV GANGULY

Bhi Mantey Hain  
Hum Rakhte Hain Saaf Dil Se

*Manmurti*





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KOLKATA ON  
**WHEELS**  
AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY

# EDITORIAL

**A**s a motoring enthusiast with a garage full of carburetted classics and a heart that beats for the raw, unfiltered roar of old-school engines, India's journey through vehicle emission norms feels like a bittersweet saga. From the rudimentary pollution checks of the late 1980s to the ultra-stringent Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) Phase II norms of today, the push for cleaner air has transformed the automotive landscape, especially in the National Capital Region (NCR) and metro cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Bangalore. In this edition's 'Car Tech' column, we attempt to trace the evolution of India's emission norms through the lens of an enthusiast.

Have you ever felt that great inner urge to escape from the banal and reconnect with something bigger than yourself? If so, then Mayapur is your answer. This town is where divine vibrations collide unrealistically with the scenic beauty. This isn't merely a place but an encounter that lives with you a long time after you have left. Located at the confluence of Rivers Jalangi and Hooghly, it offers a wonderful opportunity to perceive people of all hue and colour melting in a common cauldron called faith. So what are you waiting for? It's time to step away from the daily grind and join Team Wheels as we set out on a journey to explore an oasis of peace and divine energy. Read this edition's 'Drive Out' column for more.

Happy reading!



Joydip Sur  
 Editor

KOLKATA ON  
**WHEELS**  
AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY



## 21 | DRIVE OUT Your Spiritual Escape Awaits At Mayapur



**08** | Car Launch  
Renault Triber Launched In India



**28** | Car Gadgets  
How DRM is Changing Car Radio



**17** | Electric Cars  
MINI Countryman E John Cooper Works Pack



**43** | Event  
Bridgestone Wheels 8th Corporate Car Treasure Hunt

**12** | Special Feature  
The Queen Ant Syndrome

**32** | Event  
Wheelers Meet

**34** | Potpourri  
The Lost Aura of Cinema Theatres of Calcutta

**38** | Culture  
Jor Bangla Temple, Itanda, Birbhum

**40** | Car Tech  
Emission Norms In A Country Full Of Petrol Heads



all new Renault Triber



# All-New Renault Triber Launched In India

 Joydip Sur

**R**enault India has launched the All-New Renault Triber with ex-showroom prices starting at INR 6,29,995. The new Triber comes with a modern design language along with comfort enhancing features, while



retaining its unique DNA of modularity, adopting to rethink space philosophy.

The All-New Renault Triber sports a completely redesigned front fascia, featuring a bold new grille, sculpted new hood, refreshed bumper, new sleek LED projector headlamps with integrated LED DRLs and new LED fog lamps.

Inside, the cabin has been revamped with a stylish dual-tone dashboard, seamlessly integrated with an 8-inch floating touchscreen display that supports wireless Android Auto





and Apple CarPlay. The renewed interior also includes new seat upholstery, a modern LED instrument cluster, LED cabin lighting, and blacked-out door handles for a premium touch.

At the rear, the new Triber showcases a redesigned bumper, updated LED tail lamps, a new skid plate, and a stylish tail lamp connecting embellisher, completing its contemporary makeover.

The car equipped with 35 new features, is the first ever product under Renault's rethink, brand transformation strategy. In line with rethink space philosophy, it offers modular seating with 3rd row 'Easy-Fix' seats configurable as a 5, 6, or 7-seater, complemented by a segment-leading boot space of up to 625 litre, allowing customers to use the car in unique and innovative ways to fulfil their varied lifestyle utilities.

Designed with thoughtful enhancements the new Triber is now available in four new variants, Authentic, Evolution, Techno and Emotion.

The new Triber now comes fitted with 21 standard safety features including 6 Airbags, ESP, TPMS, EBD with Brake Assist to name a few. Further adding on the safety features is Front Parking Sensor, available for the first time in the segment.

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Venkatram Mamillapalle, Managing Director, Renault India, said, "India remains a cornerstone of Renault's global strategy, driven by a strong product pipeline, expanding export operations, and a renewed focus on customer satisfaction — exemplified by the launch of the All-New Triber. This model is also the first in India to proudly feature Renault's new brand logo, symbolizing the company's bold, modern direction and deep alignment with Indian aspirations."

He further added that "As a fully integrated operation with a manufacturing plant, R&D centre, and design studio based in India, Renault continues to develop and produce vehicles tailored specifically for Indian customers — truly by India, for India."

The new Triber is over 90% localized, underscoring Renault's long-term commitment to the Indian market."

Asserting the significance of the new launch, Mr. Francisco Hidalgo, Vice President (Sales & Marketing), Renault India, said, "The Triber has always reflected our deep understanding of the evolving needs of Indian families — blending smart engineering, modularity, and exceptional premium value. With the All-New Triber, we continue to champion our 'rethink space' philosophy, offering India's most spacious sub-four metre car, now with a fully renewed design and features. This launch brings the spirit of renaunt. rethink. to life in the most tangible way, and we are confident it will further accelerate our momentum and strengthen Renault's footprint in India."

All-New Triber delivers a maximum power output of 72 PS at 6250 rpm and a maximum torque of 96 Nm at 3500 rpm. Transmission options include a 5-speed manual transmission available across all variants. The top-end Emotion variant also offers the advanced Easy-R AMT, enhancing driving comfort and convenience. This powertrain setup ensures a smooth and responsive performance suited for both city and highway driving.

Offering an absolute peace of mind, the car comes with 3-year standard Warranty extendible up to 7 years / unlimited km coverage under Renault Secure program. To enhance the accessibility, now the new Triber is available with government approved CNG retrofitment kits across country along with a 3-year warranty.

**New Prices – All India One Price**

Ex-Showroom (INR)	Authentic	Evolution	Techno	Emotion
Manual	6, 29,995	7,24,995	7,99,995	8,64,995
Easy-R AMT	-	-	-	9,16,995







## ANNOUNCEMENT

 15-17  
 Aug 2025  
 (Fri-Sun)

# Independence Day Drive Tour

Destination: Panchalingeswar Only for Wheelers &amp; Family

 14  
 (Sun)  
 Sep 2025

# Annual Meet

Venue: TBA

For Wheelers &amp; Guests

# Happy Birthday to Wheelers

NAME	DATE
S. Sarbadhikary	1-Jul
Riteswar Sikdar	1-Jul
Amrita Acharya	1-Jul
Dr. Manas Kumar Chakrabarti	1-Jul
Mahua Palit	2-Jul
Kaushik Guha	2-Jul
Vinayak Prakash Shaw	3-Jul
Rohan Roy	3-Jul
Paramita Mukherjee	3-Jul
Chirabrata Majumder	5-Jul
Sanjeet Singh	5-Jul
Sarbani Bhattacharyya	5-Jul
Partha Mukherjee	6-Jul
Ajay Kumar Tantia	6-Jul
Aritra Mukherjee	6-Jul
Abhradip Jha	7-Jul
Arindam Bhanja	7-Jul
Joydeep Malya Deb	8-Jul
Subrata Kumar De	9-Jul
Mainak Bagchi	9-Jul
Sudipto Das	10-Jul
Gaurab Mitra	10-Jul
Siddhartha Chakraborty	10-Jul
Sunil Agarwal	11-Jul
Goutam Kumar Mondal	12-Jul

NAME	DATE
Anupam Bhattacharyya	12-Jul
Kausik Sarkar	13-Jul
Sandip Agrawal	13-Jul
Rudra Prasad Biswas	14-Jul
Sudip Kumar Dutta	16-Jul
Sandip Kar	17-Jul
Debjcet Barua	17-Jul
Sunirmal Chakravarthi	18-Jul
Mahua Biswas	18-Jul
Mukulendra Dutt	18-Jul
Kavita Dutta	20-Jul
Kanchan Mukherje	22-Jul
Alok Kumar Das	22-Jul
Niladri Shankar Mukherjee	23-Jul
Goutam Mandal	25-Jul
Samanya Ray	25-Jul
Raja Dey	26-Jul
Kaunish Chakraborti	26-Jul
Alok Das	26-Jul
Dashmeshbir Singh Sodhi	28-Jul
Biplab Roy Chowdhury	29-Jul
Arijit Bhattacharjee	30-Jul
Biswajit Chatterjee	31-Jul
Anjan Kumar Roy	31-Jul

# The Queen Ant Syndrome

 Abhijit Dasgupta



I've walked the streets at the dead of night,  
With lanterns casting flickering lights.  
Sorrow written on the broken walls.  
Dogs barking at midnight brawls.  
But a false sunshine, with a promise of a song,  
Dancing around, wearing a mask in a  
dungeon,  
You are blind, the washed brain fails to  
fathom  
The good, and the depths of wrongs.  
So, dance we, prance we in to the bright  
Only to fry as flying ants, not knowing what  
is right.  
I knew I was blind, so prepared was I,  
Till the light bright, broke the path,  
Alas, now am bewildered, who to trust?

This mirror with a message enshrined in it  
tells a lot. My cousin describes it better. It is  
like a tragic joke where we laugh aloud only  
to realize the depth of the dark sorrows it  
reflects.

Think of the Queen Ant. The male flies  
guarding the bigger queen ant. Once the  
queen has mated, she returns to dig a hole  
and starts laying eggs. The male ants in glee  
jump into a fire and die.

Is this a betrayal? Or Nature's way of  
teaching.

Am I a part of the darkness that my eyes get





habituated to? Or am I also heading towards the blinding fire?

This introspection is my offer.

“The receptivity of the masses is very limited, their intelligence is small, but their power of forgetting is enormous.” So said Adolf Hitler.

1963. I get indoctrinated in a media where truth precedes all other factors and credibility gets injected deep in to my bones.

AIR – TV Centre Calcutta comes up on the 9th of August 1975. Soon, something happens. We get a letter. It is from Mira-di, our Station Director, whose office is less than half a minute away. And the letters come to our office address by registered post. It is marked CONFIDENTIAL.

With my Newspaper experience I fear the end of ‘creative freedom’.

I am in News. I fear a pain that I might need to endure for producing items that might lack believability.

I realize that sycophants get into coveted positions and cause more harm than the leaders. And this is true even today. It is sad that leaders somehow fail to see beyond the flattery-polished surface of these parasite adulators. Or is it the greed for power and quick money that makes them the bootlickers?

For someone who gets trained by the ‘bests’ of the trade- it is a very painful period of forced hibernation. It is EMERGENCY.

But I must admit that during this period, trains ply on time, people attend office on time ... whether they work or gossip is a different matter.

A cat and mouse game begins. It is a new game that we design with a lot of caution.

For me it is all the more provocative because I am assigned some extra weekly programs. They are Delhi ordered, tailor made programs on Sanjay Gandhi’s 5 point and Mrs Gandhi’s 20-point programs.

Delhi suggests the topic of the week. Suggestions are actually orders.

I hardly get two days to research, locate, shoot, edit and telecast. All shootings are on 16mm reversal films that need to be

processed, the sound needs to be transferred to 16mm separate magnetic tapes, then edited and telecast directly from the telecine. The telegrams come on Friday evenings.

This week it is on land to the landless. ‘Land reforms’ is the key. Each week, I get a journalist to present the program. This week I call Sasadhar Bhattacharya. I tell him to approach the Minister. Sasadhar calls me from the Minister’s room. “he has agreed to come to the studio.” I ask him to give the phone to the Minister. I request Shri Gurupada Khan, to go with us to a location where land has been distributed to the landless. “It will be more trustworthy that a studio discussion”. After a little persuasion he agrees. So, the Minister and we, in two cars go to some village near Baruipur. We record two farmers who praise the Minister. Now it is time to record the Minister. Just as we are about to roll, we hear agitated voices. A large group, armed with bamboos surround us. They hurl abuses. They almost beat up the two farmers - ‘Dalal – taka kheyee ja khushi korchis. . .’



The Minister is very uncomfortable. He is pushed into the car by his security and leaves in a hurry. We follow in haste. After driving out of the range of the aggrieved villagers, we stop to discuss.

Sashadhar Bhattacharya is very nervous. He does not agree to interview the Minister

anywhere near any village. Once is enough for him.

We drive to the Calcutta Maidan right at the heart of the city. I tell Biman-da, Biman Sinha the cameraman, himself 6 feet tall, to climb on to the roof of the car. I want him to shoot down – looking down at the ‘mantri’. We have some shots of the village, the surroundings, the interviews of two farmers and now the Minister. The program goes on air on time. Biman-da watches the telecast sitting in the Duty Room. He comes out, uses some real abusive words at no one in particular. Shantanu, the sound recordist, just smiles.

The same late evening, Manik da (Satyajit Ray) calls me. “Did you deliberately place the camera on top of the Minister to look down upon him?” I remain silent. “Be careful – someday you’ll get caught.”

Next day, I get a phone call from the Minister. He is very happy with the program. Then he whispers to me, ‘I can sing very well. Can you record a song?’

We await the next command from Delhi.

Books are being distributed free to poor and meritorious students. I need to produce a program on the Book Bank. I go to Writers Building. The officer-in-charge of the Book Bank is sitting alone. Tea comes in earthen cups with two small biscuits. We talk but the topic of book is avoided. After half an hour, frustrated, he says ‘the books are yet to come. I have to see the books and then decide how to and among whom to distribute.’

‘I show him the telegram; what do you suggest I do?’

He looks at me blankly.

‘Do you have anything else?’

‘I have a letterhead and a new Book Bank rubber stamp.’

I tell Tapan, Tapan Guha Thakurta, the cameraman, to shoot a big close-up of the letterhead. I get the officer to type and sign and stamp on it and Tapan shoots.

This week I am not ready with ‘Ektu Bhebey Dekhun’. This is a program that shows common wrongs and appeals to the viewers to think.



This is Monday. Both the programs are scheduled for Wednesday evening.

I cannot possibly dare to drop the items. Sumitava Roy, the sound recordist, comes up with an idea.

‘People tear off pages from library books. They are lazy and don’t have the time to copy.’

Instinctively I react. I tell Mishra-ji, our driver, to go to the British Council Library. I know Mr Sen Gupta, the librarian. We can shoot two programs together.

I meet Mr Sen Gupta. I tell him about this tearing off of pages from books. He readily agrees. It is a genuine problem.

We shoot. I have two programs and both relate to books. I get a guy to tear off a page from an old magazine. I tell Tapan to shoot big close-ups of text books and close-ups of people reading, but from the back. ‘I don’t want faces.’ The library is established in a very wide shot. I tell Tapan not to bother about the markings on the shelves.

‘Boi kata manush poka’ is telecast in the Ektu Bhebey Dekhun slot.

Janasebaye is telecast showing books in a huge library, close-ups of books and students reading, shot from the back and the rubber stamped signed paper as a montage sequence to begin with. The long shot hardly reveals the markings on the shelves. Debangshu Banerjee lends his voice.

I return home around 10 in the evening. As I enter, the phone rings. It is Mrinal Da (Mrinal Sen). ‘I think I know the library... be careful... you are taking risks.’

We find the production of these programs extremely nauseating and hate going out for such coverages.

We go to Durgapur. This week it is on



power generation. There are problems there. One unit is out of order. The other unit is being serviced. But who cares.



We cannot show electricity flowing. We only have to show the generating station and show people at work. Santanu whispers that he has left behind the microphone. He winks. He holds the XLR connector confidently and 'records'. Biman-da is furious. We discuss. But Biman da does not express his anger in front of the gentlemen. As planned, he begins with an extreme long shot and then pans away exposing the non-operational generating turbines. None can make out unless one minutely notices the meters. On the return journey, Biman-da insists that Santanu buys him a bottle of beer or else he'll tell all about his 'recordings' with just a connector.

'This is blackmail' Santanu protests.

I invite the gentleman to the studio for 'better sound' quality. And in the process, we finish the program with Bibhash Da, Debangshu Da and Indrajit Lahiri – shouting 'power' power' 'power' – in a way that signify misuse of power, and not power generation.

Adding salt to my wounds, my father watches all the programs and waits for me to return home. Over dinner he tells me of the good work being done. I remain silent.

At the FTII, Brian of BBC tells, that over-dramatization or showing someone from the top are actually anti-propaganda tools. We

use these tools in subtle ways in the hope that someone will see through. Overall, we leave no trace of being insubordinate.

Sanjay Gandhi is visiting Calcutta. One Éclair NPR is brought from Cuttack. It can shoot 400 feet rolls at a time, that's nearly 10 minutes at a time.

Debangshu Banerjee, the producer, goes to the Maidan to cover Sanjay Gandhi. I am producing the evening bulletin and accompany Debangshu-da just for fun. He concentrates on Sanjay Gandhi's speech and does not much care to show the crowd.

After the telecast, Debangshu-da is hauled up and gets a memo for 'deliberately' not showing the 'huge support' and an 'unprecedented turnout.'

There were people at the rally. Debangshu-da could perhaps have shown some crowd. But he did not.

To convey the 'right' message, similar things happen on American television too. A reporter, sent to cover Reagan's birthday party, finds nothing much except a few school kids with balloons. It is a live telecast and the poor reporter has no other option but to show that. Later he realizes the mistake... he is hauled up for failing to show 'a grand event of unprecedented magnitude and spontaneous pouring of good wishes.'

Besides news, I produce 'Dristikone' the weekly current affairs program. Shri Ashim Shome - our news editor – is a combination of courage and cleverness calls me aside and we discuss in depth. I execute the program. I hate studio discussions and even though it is far more strenuous, I prefer shootings on location, outdoor. I do on the railway touts and stolen lights and fans from railway compartments, on Calcutta Telephones, on the state of the anarchy in the coal belts, on bridges that have developed cracks within years, and so on. Most are covert investigative stories. I don't make comments. I just show. Often with a silent sound track. Somehow, since there are no sound and no narration, I get spared in spite of this being the dreaded Emergency period.

During the program on the state of affairs

in the coal fields, I cross the 'laxman rekha' and the Chairman of Coal India is furious. He calls Mr Shiv Sharma and requests him to drop the program. Mr Sharma, watches it on the edit table, smiles and leaves without any comment. That is typical of him signifying his consent. I just replace some narrations with a silent track. In the process I befriend Jiten Bhargava. He then Heads the Corporate Relations of Coal India. I don't know if it is a coincidence, but soon after the telecast of the program, he resigns from Coal India. He joins Air India. We are still friends. I get a call the next morning. It is Mrinal-da again. 'Since when have you received this freedom?' he asks. 'Very bold. Be careful.'

My boldness though, is short lived.

Mr Shiv Sharma, who retires later as the Director General, in the foreword of my book writes about me - 'he was polite yet firm, a straight talker whose outgoing manner embarrassed bureaucrats more than once. Some of his Current Affair's programs were too vividly true for a Government organization to swallow. At some risk I allowed him for a while. He was multi-skilled and it showed in the other programs he produced.'

'For a while' - was actually - 18 weeks!

I know of my predecessors who belonged to two categories... very distinct from each other. One was the flunky flatterers of the British and made a fortune through various means and their siblings today meet only at the court.... and there was another group who vehemently protested even at the cost of being prosecuted or suffering business losses. My successors today are doing sycophancy with better AI driven tools.

Darkness admits its emptiness, its inherent danger, and its bitter cold. You can brace for it. But false light pretends to guide, only to mislead. It generates a safe feeling while pulling you deeper into the vortex of confusion and harm.

In society, you always have the dirt seekers and grave plunderers. They have been there for ages feeding on spoils. They squeeze out the dirt from the kitchen sink sponge to reveal the black soot.



They claim, "the first four months of 2025 have delivered a sobering verdict on the state of free speech and press freedom in India. From targeted killings of journalists to government-imposed censorship, retaliatory criminal cases, and the choking of digital media spaces, attacks on the fundamental right to freedom of expression have intensified at an alarming rate. The Free Speech Collective (FSC), which tracks violations across the country, records 329 incidents of free speech suppression between January and April alone—underscoring a pattern of rising repression."

Touching 80, I feel there is some good in every bad. One needs to learn to read the pros and cons and decide for themselves.




Durian is terrible because it smells like raw sewage, and does not look shiny as a red Kashmir apple, but am told it tastes good. The proof of the pudding is in eating... the only question is can you digest it?



# MINI COUNTRYMAN

## E John Cooper Works Pack Arrives In India

 Joydip Sur

**M**INI India announced the launch of the new MINI Countryman E John Cooper Works Pack at an ex-showroom price of INR 62,00,000. The car will be available as a completely built-up unit (CBU) and can exclusively be booked on the MINI Online Shop ([shop.mini.in](http://shop.mini.in)). Only 20 units of this limited edition MINI will be available for sale.

The electrified third generation MINI Countryman, now with the John Cooper Works Pack combines progressive technology with sportiness of the JCW Pack, along with the basic principles of MINI body

language and origins. It packs an innovative punch with a new personality and hallmark driving dynamics.

The new MINI Countryman E John Cooper Works represents the comprehensive transformation that is reflected in the new design language 'Charismatic Simplicity'. It combines the traditional MINI values with progressive innovations in a particularly authentic way, reducing the vehicle design to the essentials. With its dynamic, sporty exterior and exclusive JCW trim, the special edition MINI Countryman E John Cooper



Works Pack stands out as the epitome of driving fun and individuality.

The new MINI Countryman E John Cooper Works JCW Pack is the vehicle for the whole family, with sporty details on the exterior as well as interior. The exterior colour options Legend Grey or Midnight Black are complemented by roof and mirror caps and Sport Stripes in Black. The John Cooper Works trim stands out with unique design features of the Grille, Bumpers, Side Skirts, Rear Spoiler and Door Entry Sills. The JCW Aerodynamic styling, JCW Sports stripes in Black, Black Roof rails offer a dynamic appearance.

The Piano Black Exterior Trim and wheel arches add to the sporty look of the car. The 19-inch JCW Runway Spoke Black alloy wheels further elevates the sharp character. The visual three-part division into the vehicle body, surrounding window area and contrasting roof ensure the MINI is instantly recognizable. The surfaces look particularly exciting thanks to an integrative treatment of details. Absence of side scuttles and flush door handles underline the clear and modern overall impression. A clearly defined shoulder area gives a decidedly athletic body. A wide

stance on the rear, characteristic charisma and a modern minimalist design with clearly designed surfaces ensure the new MINI Countryman E John Cooper Works Pack has a significantly enhanced presence.

The striking appearance of the car is enhanced by three selectable Signatures Modes (Classic, Favoured and John Cooper Works) for the Daytime Running Lights (DRLs) of the LED headlights and the redesigned matrix rear lights. All three modes begin and end with a specially orchestrated welcome and goodbye animation. The intelligent High Beam Assistant takes care not to blind oncoming traffic during night-time driving.

Minimalist design, digital innovations and an immersive user experience are the hallmarks of the interior. The sportiness is elevated with JCW Sports Seats, Vescin/ Cord combination JCW Black upholstery and JCW Dashboard Trim. The JCW Steering Wheel with paddle shifters adds to the hallmark MINI go-kart feeling. The Headliner Anthracite elevates aesthetics inside the cockpit. The dashboard and door panels are completely chrome-free and leather-free, using recycled 2D knitted fabric lining. The textile surface is made luminescent





by ambient lighting and projections from the MINI Interaction Unit that make even rush hour relaxing.

The MINI Interaction Unit takes a quantum leap into the digital age with the hi-resolution 240mm Circular OLED touchscreen display. It is the defining feature of the interior with a completely new feel and versatile functions. It has moved closer to the driver and can be operated similar to a smartphone. The new MINI Operating System 9 is optimized for touchscreen and voice control and provides advanced connectivity for maximum ease of use. The new MINI Intelligent Personal Assistant (IPA) can be activated by saying "Hey MINI" to control a wide range of functions such as navigation, telephony, entertainment and others. The innovative MINI Digital Key Plus turns the smartphone into a car key via the MINI App and can be transferred to different users, along with their personal vehicle settings. Head-up Display projects all relevant information directly in the driver's line of sight. A Fisheye Camera can capture selfies, fun moments and videos with sound, inside the cabin and is capable of transfers via a QR code. Harman Kardon Surround Sound System is an aural treat. Other features include Navigation, Remote Services, Remote Software Upgrades, Apple CarPlay / Android Auto, Teleservices, In-Car Weather and Intelligent Emergency Call.

With the MINI Experience Modes, one can choose from several immersive driving experiences, from the race-inspired 'Go-Kart Mode' to the energy-saving 'Green Mode' or the lively 'Vivid Mode' and more. MINI Experience Modes extend the indoor experience by tuning the light, sound and graphics settings.

A distinctive Toggle Bar Island gives access



to the important driving functions including start/stop, gear selector, parking brake, experience modes and volume control. General storage area below the toggle bar provides space for a smartphone to be wirelessly charged.

JCW Sport Seats are covered in Vescin Black- a high-quality, perforated, artificial leather-free upholstery made from recycled materials. The panoramic glass roof adds to the bright and spacious atmosphere. Electric seat adjustment with Active Seat for the driver is available as standard.

The versatile and powerful electric drive makes it a perfect companion for unbridled driving fun even off the beaten track. With 150 kW/204 hp and a maximum torque of 250 Nm, the all-electric MINI Countryman sprints from 0-100 kmph in 8.6 seconds. It is powered by a lithium-ion battery with gross capacity of 66.45 kWh and has ample WLTP\* driving range (combined) of up to 462 kms. The all-electric MINI Countryman ensures fast and hassle-free charging. Charging time is – 130 kW DC Charger – 10 to 80% in 29 min (100 km top up range in 8 min) and 11 kW AC – 0 to 100% in 6 hrs 45 min. (\*WLTP = Worldwide harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure). JCW Sport Brakes impress with direct response and a better pedal feel.

Advanced assistance systems such as Cruise Control and Parking Assistant Plus with 360 degree Camera increase comfort, control and safety and relieve the driver from monotonous and less demanding aspects of driving. With Comfort Access, the car is locked / unlocked automatically as it recognises the key is at a distance of less than 1.5 meters.

The standard MINIMALISM technology includes auto start/stop function, brake energy recuperation, active cooling air ducts and electromechanical power steering. The wide range of alloy wheels depending on the variant, radiate confidence while reducing

- ▶ Sport Stripes in Black (Only with Legend Grey Exterior Colour)
- ▶ JCW Trim: Grille, Bumpers, Side Skirts, Piano Black Exterior Trim, Door Entry Sills
- ▶ 19" JCW Runway Spoke Black
- ▶ JCW Sport Brakes
- ▶ JCW Steering Wheel with Boost Mode
- ▶ JCW Sport Seats
- ▶ Vescin/Cord Combination | JCW Black Upholstery
- ▶ JCW Dashboard Trim

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President and CEO, BMW Group India said, "The MINI Countryman



carbon footprint thanks to their lightweight design and use of recycled Aluminium.

The standard safety equipment comprises of front passenger airbags and side curtain airbags, Brake Assist, 3-Point Seat Belts, Dynamic Stability Control, Crash Sensor, Anti-lock Braking System, Cornering Brake Control, Rear View Camera, and Tubeless Tyres with Tyre Pressure Indicator.

#### **Features exclusive to the new MINI Countryman E JCW Pack**

- ▶ Legend Grey/ Midnight Black Exterior Colour

E John Cooper Works Pack is the more elusive version of the MINI Countryman E. It is a perfect fit for someone who likes to stand out from the rest and wants the racetrack flair in the urban setting. With exclusive design attributes, the MINI Countryman E JCW Pack is the uncompromisingly dynamic edition that takes inspiration from MINI's motorsport genes and legendary racing successes. It surely makes driving the MINI even more exciting."



**H**ave you ever felt that great inner urge to escape from the banal and reconnect with something bigger than yourself? If so, then Mayapur is your answer. This town is where divine vibrations collide unrealistically with the scenic beauty. This isn't merely a place but an encounter that lives with you a long time after you have left. Located at the confluence of Rivers Jalangi and Hooghly, it offers a wonderful opportunity to perceive people of all hue and colour melting in a common cauldron called faith. So what are you waiting for? It's time to step away from the daily grind and join Team Wheels as we set out on a journey to explore an oasis of peace and divine energy.

# Your Spiritual Escape Awaits At **MAYAPUR**





The Skoda Kushaq  
en route to Mayapur

## ROUTE DETAILS:

**Distance from Kolkata to Mayapur** - 130 kilometres approximately

**Driving time:** 4 hours including a quick pitstop for tea & snacks

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION

We started for Mayapur at around 10 am from Ultadanga, took the VIP Road and continued driving straight. Turning left as the road bifurcates near the NSC Bose Airport at Dumdum we entered Jessore Road and NH-34. We continued on NH-34, leaving behind Barasat, Amdanga, Barajaguli, Chakdaha, Ranaghat, Fulia and Beldanga Morh reaching Krishnanagar at around 12:30 pm. Once you leave Krishnanagar look out for a left hairpin bend at Hansdanga Morh in Dhubulia. At this point we left

NH-34 to enter Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Marg, the final 10 km leg of the 130 km long drive from Kolkata. This stretch is a single carriageway lined with lush green trees on both sides with moderate traffic and average road condition. At some places it passes through congested neighbourhoods and so one should drive cautiously. There is no street light almost on the entire stretch, though a good number of commercial vehicles ply and so driving after sundown should be avoided at all cost.



## SKODA KUSHAQ

Our wheel of choice for this spiritual rendezvous was the Skoda Kushaq Prestige, courtesy Global Skoda. Measuring 4225 mm in length, 1760 mm in width and standing 1612 mm tall, the Skoda Kushaq is a well-engineered and intelligently designed product. The 2651 mm wheelbase translates in an adequately spacious passenger cabin that can comfortably accommodate four adults and one child. It also comes with 385 litres of boot space which can make room for enough luggage for your weekend getaway. The air conditioning functions superbly well cooling the passenger cabin in no time. The seats are well bolstered and despite being on the road for more than

260 kilometre in a single day, we didn't feel fatigued at all.

The suspension set up with MacPherson strut in the front and torsion beam in the rear is perfectly tuned for Indian road conditions as the Skoda Kushaq Prestige absorbed the undulations on the road with relative ease. The ground clearance at 155 mm ensures that the Kushaq effortlessly sails over majority of the speed breakers and potholes.

The Skoda Kushaq Prestige is powered by 1.0-litre, 4-cylinder, turbocharged petrol engine mated to a 6-speed manual transmission gearbox that boasts of good driving dynamics with excellent throttle response resulting in enough power in the tap while overtaking in the city and

The Skoda Kushaq poses with the new temple in the background





on the highway. The ride and handling are praiseworthy with the Skoda Kushaq remaining firmly planted even while navigating sharp corners. Overall, we thoroughly enjoyed our journey in the Skoda Kushaq Prestige which proved to be an excellent travel companion for Team WHEELS.



The Skoda Kushaq traversing through the rural roads en route to Mayapur



Skoda Kushaq takes a break

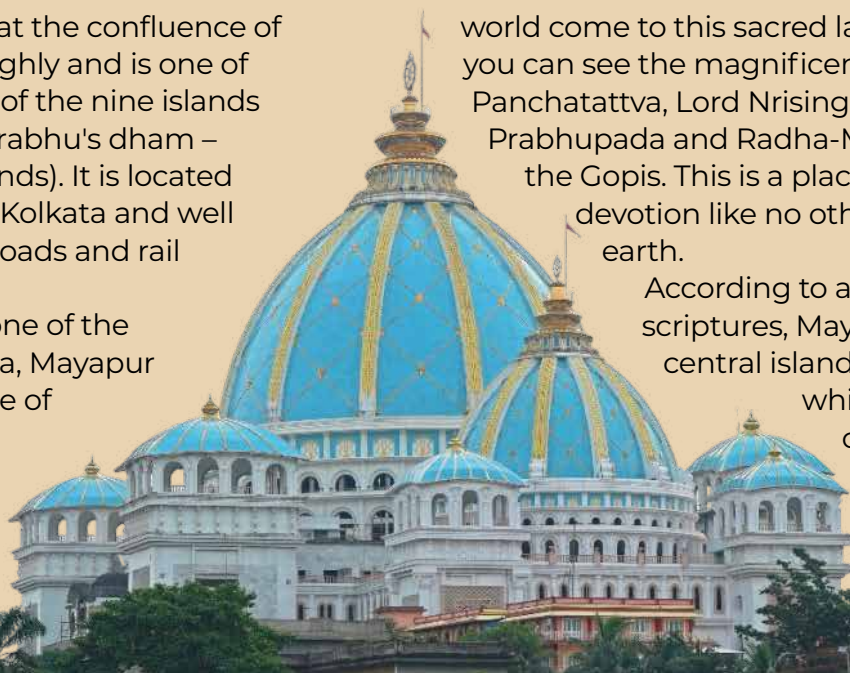
## MAYAPUR – THE LAND OF HARE KRISHNA

Mayapur is situated at the confluence of Rivers Jalangi & Hooghly and is one of the most important of the nine islands of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's dham – Nabadwip (Nine Islands). It is located 130 kilometres from Kolkata and well connected by both roads and rail networks.

Considered to be one of the holiest places in India, Mayapur Chandrodaya Temple of ISKCON is the major reason why devotees from all over the

world come to this sacred land. Inside, you can see the magnificent deities of Panchatattva, Lord Nrsingha Dev, Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Madhav with the Gopis. This is a place flowing with devotion like no other place on earth.

According to ancient scriptures, Mayapur is the central island of Nabadwip which was the capital of Bengal in the



The new temple being constructed at ISKCON Mayapur



11th and 12th century. Located in the Nadia district of West Bengal, Nabadwip is a popular destination, particularly for believers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, being the birth place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu - an incarnation of Lord Sri Krishna and the founder of Vaishnava cult. Mayapur attracts a large number of devotees, including foreigners. Mayapur Chandrodaya Temple, one of the major attractions of the region, is the world headquarters of International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). With the state-of-the-art facilities for visitors, it draws around a million visitors every year.

The holy site of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birth place known as Yogapith is marked by a temple of Gaudiya Math and is only a kilometre away from the ISKCON premises. It is said that the original Neem tree under which Lord Sri Chaitanya was born and his ancestral maternal house are still present at the location.

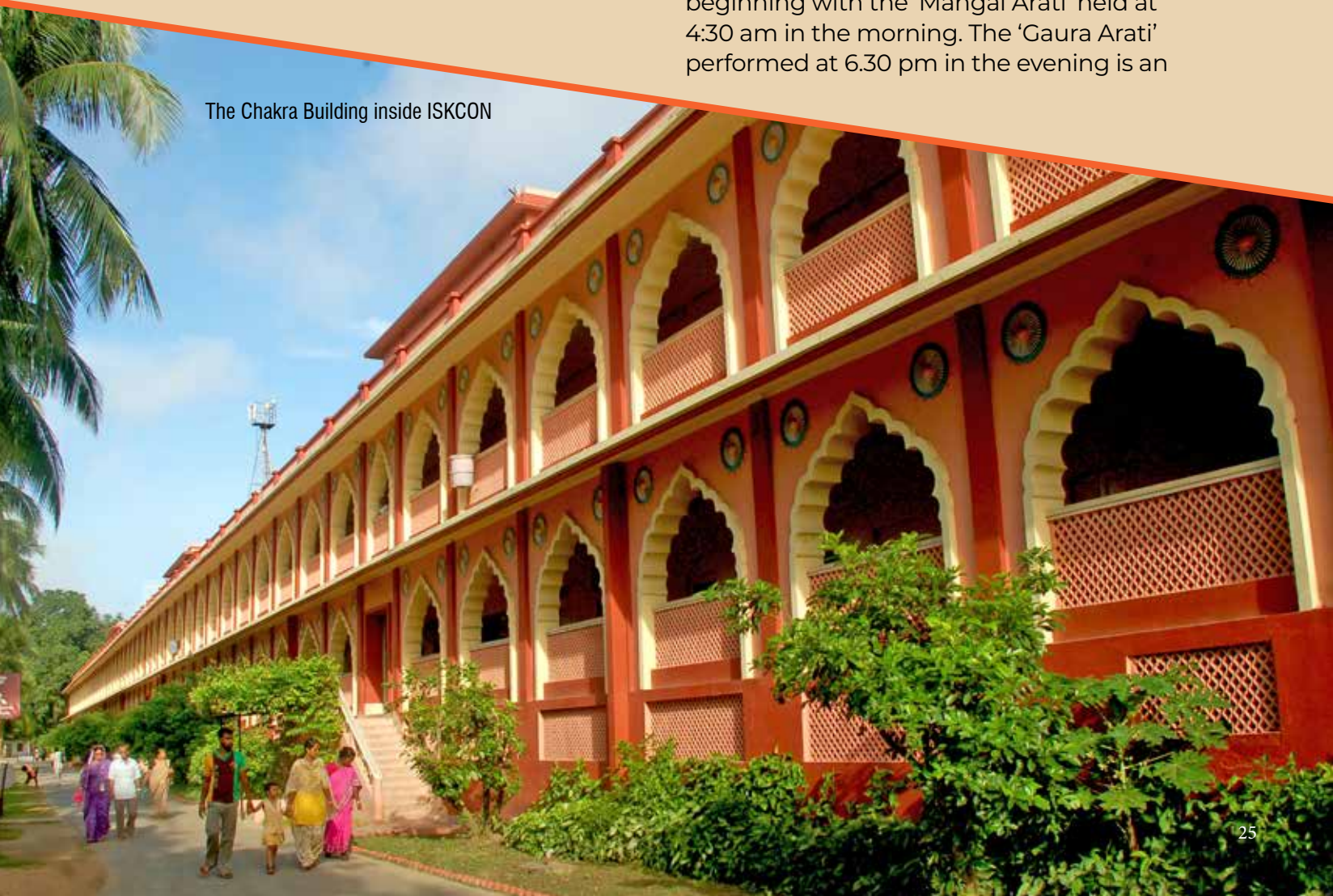
The ISKCON premises include a massive

temple, three guest houses and three dining halls, the 'Pushpa Samadhi' which is an impressive monument built in memory of its founder Srila Prabhupada, a unique Gurukul ashram, a goshala (dairy), multiple vegetarian restaurants and many souvenir shops. There are beautiful and extensive gardens all around.

At the Chandrodaya temple complex, the main deity is that of Sri Radha-Madhav along with their eight Gopis, four in each side along with Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Giri-Govardhana. The deities are of larger than life size and beautifully adorned. In the centre of the complex is the deity of Lord Nrsingha Dev in a half sitting posture. There are also deities of Panchatattva namely Advaita Acharya, Prabhu Nityananda, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Gadadhara and Srivasa Thakur. These deities are very unique and are the tallest deities in the world made of astadhatu (a combination of eight auspicious metals).

Aratis are performed throughout the day beginning with the 'Mangal Arati' held at 4:30 am in the morning. The 'Gaura Arati' performed at 6.30 pm in the evening is an

The Chakra Building inside ISKCON



enchanting one with kirtans, devotional songs accompanied by musical instruments and rhythmic dancing by devotees from all over the world and is worth experiencing. Spiritual classes, meditation and yoga are also held for devotees.

Mayapur is also famous for various festivals celebrated throughout the year like Durga Puja, Deepavali, Govardhan Puja, Gopashtami, Sri Krishna Puspa Abhisekh, Gaur Purnima, Ram Navami, Akshay Tirthya, Narsimha Chaturdasi, Krishna Phula Dol, Salila Vihara, Ratha Yatra, Ulta Rath, Radha Govinda Jhulan Yatra, Sri Krishna Janmastami, and Radhastami. The highlight of the festivals is the spectacular Puspa Abhisekh (bathing) of deities, gorgeous flower decorations, cultural programs, harinaam and prasada distribution, providing a visual delight.

Close to the temple is Srila Prabhupada's Puspa Samadhi. It is one of the most beautiful and majestic marble shrine with gorgeous mosaic works on the ceiling inside

its dome. The life size image is of brass. A garland placed on the Srila Prabhupada during his samadhi in Vrindavana was brought and laid here. On the upper tier of the temple, is the museum where the life history of Srila Prabhupada is depicted through miniature models for public exhibits. There is also an auditorium for holding cultural programmes.

Presently, a construction is underway at the centre of the premises for the largest temple of India at a cost of \$100 million which will also include a Vedic city, a temple with a Vedic planetarium depicting the Vedic perspective of life along with the present structures.

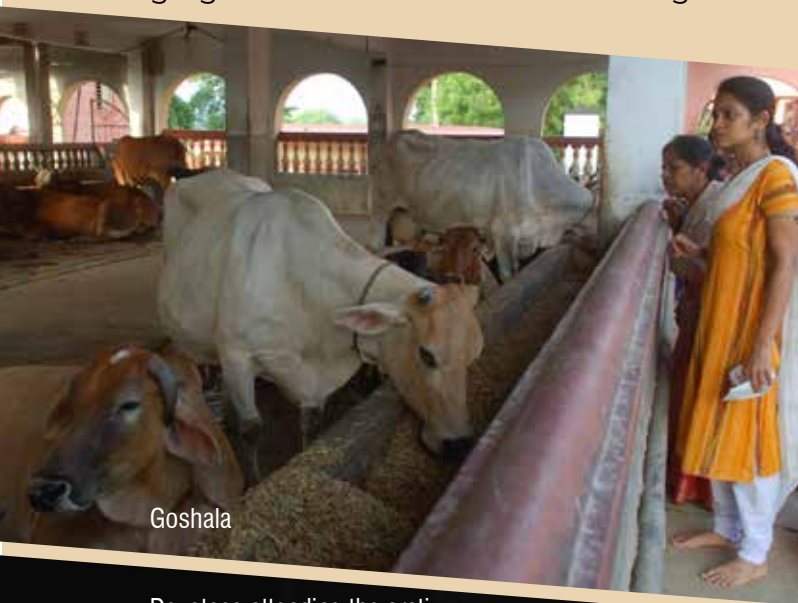
The other attractions here are the two elephants named Bishnupriya and Laxmipriya and a dairy or the Goshala with more than three hundred cows and an abundance of milk and all other dairy products.

The Gurukul which is out of bounds for the visitors is a pathshala (school) for the children of whole-time resident devotees. They learn to live life according to Vedic principles. They live in simplest rooms and are taught to be self-dependent.

Outside the ISKCON premises are also the Chand Kazi's Samadhi and Ballal Dhipi. According to legend, Chand Kazi was a Muslim official who was greatly touched by the personality of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Located in the Bamanpukur market area (about 3 km from ISKCON), the tomb is said to be more than 400 years old.

A mound known as Ballal Dhipi is also a place of tourist attraction. It had generated much excitement in the 1980s when it was being excavated by the Archeological Survey of India. The remnants of a large terracotta brick building enclosed on four sides were unearthed. Some scholars believed it was the remnant of a Buddhist stupa, while locals would like to believe that it was built by King Ballal Sen.

Mayapur also offers a spectacular view of nature during sunset by the riverside. One can go on a boat ride and perform Ganga Puja arranged by Mayapur Tourism during the evening to witness this beautiful sight at



Goshala

Devotees attending the arati







The idol of Radha Madhav in  
ISKCON, Mayapur



Devotees participating  
in the arati

the confluence of Rivers Jalangi and Hooghly. An unspoken thought arose amongst us — the two distinct streams of water merging together seemed to symbolize the harmony in apparently diverse elements of life.

The ISKCON headquarters symbolizes this harmony all over, drawing scores of people from diverse origins, faith and countries yet one in their spiritual quest. In contrast to the materialistic world all around, the philosophy of simple living and spiritual thinking is practiced and encouraged here. ISKCON's efforts in popularizing the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu across the world, has led to regeneration of our old spiritual tradition.

The beautiful temples, lush green premises, the aratis, kirtans and continuous chanting of the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra coupled with a multi-cultural society living in harmony with Vedic values and principles left a unique impression on our minds as we left Mayapur after a day's visit.

## Accommodation

There are three bhavans located inside the ISKCON premises namely Gada Bhavan, Conch Bhavan and Ishodyan Bhavan which are available for accommodation on a pre-booking basis. These bhavans are strategically located from a number of prominent tourist places some of which are within walking distance. These bhavans are also surrounded by lush green flora and fauna with a majestic view of the campus. The bhavans provides the perfect getaway for business travelers and families looking to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Apart from the bhavans located inside the ISKCON premises, there are several other hotels and guest houses located outside the premises that will suit everyone's budget and requirements.

## Food

There are multiple prasadam coupon counters spread across various points inside the ISKCON premises. These coupons need to be acquired within a stipulated time each day. Bhog is served inside the dining halls of the bhavans. Apart from that, there are multiple outlets of the Govinda Restaurant inside the ISKCON premises, where one can savour a wide variety of delicious vegetarian food and beverages at affordable prices. Apart from this, one always has the option to step outside the ISKCON premises and enjoy a meal at a nearby food stall. However, non-vegetarian food is not very commonly found in the immediate vicinity of ISKCON.

### For reservations of Mayapur ISKCON contact:

Manager

**MAYAPUR TOURISM**

**Mobile:** 9474751202

**Landline:** 03472 245620 (10 am - 5 pm)

**Email:** mghb108@gmail.com

**Web:** [www.visitmayapur.com](http://www.visitmayapur.com)



# From Static to Stunning How DRM is Changing Car Radio in India

 Wheeler Sandipan Basu Mallick

**T**he world of car audio in India is evolving rapidly, and one of the most significant advancements in recent years is the integration of Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) receivers. With its ability to deliver high-quality digital sound, enhanced features, and efficient spectrum usage, DRM is redefining how we experience radio while on the road. This article explores the evolution of DRM technology, its current presence in India, including the major DRM radio stations operating on FM and MW bands, and how modern car models are embracing this innovation.

## WHAT IS DRM TECHNOLOGY?

Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) is a set of digital audio broadcasting technologies designed to replace traditional analog radio transmissions. Unlike conventional AM and FM broadcasts, DRM offers crystal-clear audio quality, improved reception, and additional data services such as text, images, and emergency alerts. The technology supports broadcasting on AM (MW and SW), FM, and VHF bands, making it versatile and adaptive to different geographic and infrastructural needs.

DRM is widely recognized for its spectral efficiency, allowing multiple audio channels to be transmitted within the same bandwidth as a single analog channel. This not only improves the listening experience but also optimizes the usage of the radio spectrum, which is a crucial resource in today's connected world.



## EVOLUTION OF DRM TECHNOLOGY

The journey of DRM technology began in the late 1990s with a vision to enhance radio broadcasting by leveraging digital transmission. Over the years, the technology has matured significantly, with multiple phases of development:

**DRM30 (AM Bands)** – This version operates on the Medium Wave (MW) and Short Wave (SW) bands, primarily designed to upgrade the quality and reliability of long-distance broadcasts.

**DRM+ (FM Bands)** – Introduced as a digital alternative for FM radio, DRM+ extends the benefits of digital audio and data services to local and regional broadcasts.

**Hybrid Mode** – DRM also supports hybrid transmissions where digital and analog signals are broadcast simultaneously, facilitating a smoother transition from analog to digital for listeners.

India has been a forerunner in embracing DRM, especially in the Medium Wave (MW) band. All India Radio (AIR), the national broadcaster, has been actively deploying



DRM transmitters across the country, making digital radio accessible to millions.

### BENEFITS OF DRM FOR RURAL AND URBAN USERS

One of the standout advantages of DRM technology is its versatility in serving both rural and urban listeners.

**Benefits for Rural Users:** Wider Coverage: DRM broadcasts, especially on MW and SW bands, reach far-flung rural areas where FM signals are often weak or non-existent.

**Emergency Alerts:** In regions prone to natural disasters or unpredictable weather, DRM-enabled radios can broadcast emergency alerts instantly with clear audio and visual text support.

**Local Language Broadcasts:** DRM's ability to multicast allows multiple local languages to be broadcast simultaneously, ensuring people get news and updates in their native tongues.

**Cost-Effective Access:** With simple DRM receivers, rural communities can access high-quality broadcasts without the need for internet connectivity.

**Real-World Experience:** Rajesh, a farmer from a remote village in Maharashtra, shares his experience: "Earlier, I could barely hear the news on my AM radio. With DRM, I get clear audio and even see the names of the songs and news headlines on the screen. It's like a whole new experience."

### BENEFITS FOR URBAN USERS

**Crystal Clear Sound:** Urban areas are often

plagued with signal interference due to dense buildings and electronic noise. DRM cuts through this, offering clear, distortion-free audio.

**Data Services:** DRM receivers display song information, news tickers, and real-time traffic updates, enhancing the listening experience during city commutes.

**Multiple Stations on One Frequency:** DRM's spectral efficiency means more channels can be packed into the same bandwidth, giving urban listeners more options without crowding the spectrum.

**Digital Upgrades:** As newer car models come with DRM receivers, urban users are experiencing seamless integration with in-car infotainment, making radio listening smarter and more interactive.

### DRM IN MODERN CAR MODELS IN INDIA

The Indian automobile industry has also begun embracing DRM technology. Major car manufacturers are now rolling out DRM-enabled car audio systems in their latest models. Brands such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Toyota, MG Motor, Mahindra, Mercedes-Benz, and Tata are incorporating DRM receivers in their flagship cars, aligning with the government's push towards digital broadcasting.

Some popular models featuring DRM receivers include: Maruti Suzuki Baleno, Hyundai Creta, Tata Nexon, Mahindra XUV700, Toyota Fortuner, and MG Hector. These vehicles are equipped with infotainment systems that support DRM broadcasts,

### Car Brands with DRM Digital Radio

According to the information made available to the DRM Consortium, the following car brands include DRM digital radios in India:





enhancing the in-car listening experience with static-free, high-quality audio.

### REAL-WORLD LISTENER STORIES

Vikram from Delhi shared his experience: "I was surprised when my new Creta picked up a crystal-clear radio station on a highway stretch where FM usually fails. It was DRM, and it was fantastic."

Sunita, a teacher in rural Bihar, mentioned: "The radio is the main source of information in our village. With DRM, I can listen to news and educational programs without the static I used to face with AM."

Here are the primary **Medium-Wave DRM frequencies for Akashvani (formerly All India Radio) in Kolkata:**

▶ **648 kHz (Kolkata A – Geetanjali/ FM Gold simulcast):** Operates in AM+DRM hybrid mode with 200 kW power

▶ **999 kHz (Kolkata B – Sanchayita/ FM Rainbow simulcast):** Operates in AM+DRM hybrid mode with 100 kW power

In addition, other DRM-capable MW frequencies in the region include:

▶ **594 kHz (Chinsurah – External Services, sometimes off-air/tests)**

▶ **1134 kHz (also Chinsurah – External Services)**

These DRM-enabled channels broadcast content such as **Geetanjali, Sanchayita,**

### IDENTIFYING DRM RECEIVERS AND TUNING STEPS

**Look for the DRM Logo:** Check your car's infotainment system or radio settings for a 'DRM' option.

**Access Digital Radio:** Navigate through the radio interface and select 'Digital Radio.'

**Scan for Stations:** Initiate an auto-scan to find all available DRM stations in your area.

**Save Presets:** Store your favourite stations for quick access.

### THE FUTURE OF DRM IN INDIA

As DRM infrastructure continues to grow and more car models adopt this technology, the future of digital radio in India looks promising. Its robust coverage, superior audio quality, and innovative features position it as the next big leap for radio broadcasting, transforming listening experiences across urban and rural landscapes alike. Government initiatives and increasing consumer awareness are expected to drive further expansion, paving the way for a fully digital radio ecosystem in India.

**and FM Gold/Rainbow simulcasts,** offering a diverse listening experience—from music and news to cultural programs—with clear digital audio and text metadata.

You can tune your DRM-capable car system to **648 kHz or 999 kHz**, select the digital radio (DRM) mode, and enjoy high-quality, interference free audio on the move through Kolkata and beyond.





# Au Revoir, Alok Da!



Wheeler Arnab Bhowmick

Where do I start? What words do I use? I feel so much and yet there is a vast emptiness inside me. As all eloquence deserts me, I must declare in the simplest of words that we are devastated by the untimely passing away of Senior Wheeler and Team Wheels Member Alok Nag.

It just feels like yesterday that our beloved Alok da was among us attending the Wheels Drive Tours, Wheelers Meets and Team Wheels Meetings. It has been extremely difficult for all of us to come to terms with the fact that we won't be seeing him around anymore.

A thorough gentleman by words and action, Alok da touched the lives of many who knew him. He was full of life and positivity which often rubbed off on those who interacted with him.

He was caring, helpful and kind; a rare quality that separated Alok da from the rest. An avid football lover, Alok da was a die-hard fan of Mohun Bagan; and we of him.

# WHEELERS' MEET



Wheeler Sandip Hunday



**T**he Wheelers' Meet was held on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at The Lawn Bar at Outrum Club, Kolkata. Around fifty Wheelers along with their family attended the meet.

Aruna Ghosh, Chairperson of Team Wheels delivered the welcome address. Team Wheels member Wheeler Debapom Banerjee announced the unfortunate passing away of Senior Wheeler and Team Wheels member Uttam Bose (Lal da) who left for this heavenly abode on Friday, June 13, 2025. Subsequently a minute silence was observed by everyone to pay respect to the departed soul.

The Advisory & Team Wheels Members were introduced by Wheeler Debopom Banerjee followed by the introduction of the new Wheelers who joined in recent times.

A report on the







planned, on-going activities of the Voice Of Wheelers Committee was shared by the committee's Chairman Wheeler Jayant Basu.

Wheeler Sandip Hunday (Secretary - Team Wheels) walked everyone through the Event Calendar of 2024-25 highlighting the events that were completed along with the ones coming up in the next few months till the Annual Meet which is scheduled to be held on Sunday, September 14, 2025.

Wheeler Sudip Ghosh and a few others suggested that the Wheel Drill workshop should be held every year which is very informative, educative and helpful for the Wheelers.

Wheeler Aritra Sardar (Jt. Secretary - Team Wheels) shared his recent long drive experience.

A brain storming session in the form of group discussion was conducted by Wheeler Sarbajit Mookherjee and Wheeler Amitava Banerjee to identify various events and activities that can be taken up by Kolkata on Wheels in the near future, followed by Q&A session.

The programme concluded with fellowship and dinner.

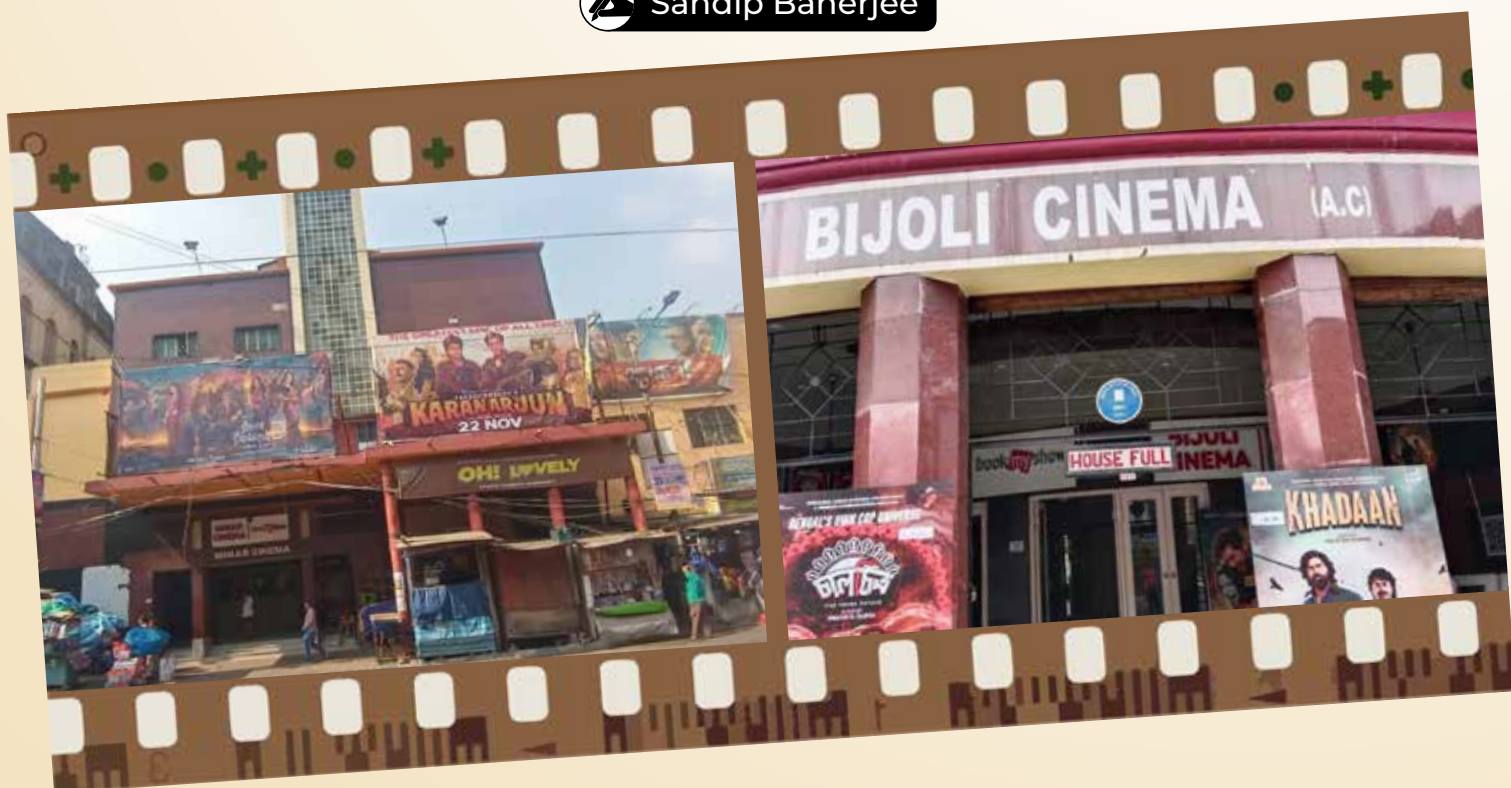




# The Lost Aura of CINEMA THEATRES of Calcutta



Sandip Banerjee



Once upon a time, long before the rise of multiplexes and the domination of digital streaming, Calcutta lived and breathed cinema through majestic theatres that were more than just venues—they were cultural institutions, social hubs, and proud symbols of a modernising metropolis. From the iconic Metro Cinema on Chowringhee to the grandeur of Roxy, the intimacy of Ujjala, and the nostalgia-steeped charm of Minar, Bijoli, and Chhabighar, these theatres told the story of a city in motion. Their stories form a cinematic parallel to the shifting socio-political landscape of Calcutta itself.

To walk into one of these theatres was not

merely to watch a film—it was to participate in a ritual. These were the places where romance bloomed in the dark, where workers and aristocrats shared the same screen time, and where the heartbeats of Bengali middle-class culture throbbed most vividly. Long queues extended in front of ticket counters of the cinema halls and there would be 'blackers' to provide tickets to those who would miss the chance of buying directly from the box office. Of course the price of tickets purchased from these 'blackers' would be slightly higher. Present generation cannot imagine such situations.

The story begins in the early 20th century,





when cinema first flickered to life in British India. Calcutta, the capital of British India until 1911, was among the first cities to embrace this new form of storytelling. The first film screening in Calcutta took place in 1896, mere months after the Lumière brothers' debut in Paris. Over the next few decades, cinema became a staple of Calcutta's cultural diet.

By the 1920s and '30s, a growing Bengali middle class, shaped by the Bengal Renaissance and swayed by nationalist movements, found it drawn to this democratic art form. English-language theatres like Elphinstone Picture Palace (later Minerva) coexisted with Indian film houses. Hollywood epics and British dramas played alongside early Bengali silent films and, eventually, the path breaking talkies of New Theatres.

New Theatres, established in 1931 by B. N. Sircar, was not merely a production house—it was a crucible of talent. Actors like K. L. Saigal, Pankaj Mullick, and Pramathesh Barua crafted

classics that often premiered in the city's theatres, which quickly gained cult status.

The decades following independence saw the emergence of what could be termed the golden age of cinema halls in Calcutta. It was a period when theatre names like Metro, Lighthouse, Globe, Paradise, Jyoti, Elite, and New Empire weren't just buildings—they were experiences etched in memory.

Metro Cinema, inaugurated in 1935 by MGM, was the jewel in the crown. Designed in Art Deco style and located strategically near the Esplanade, it exuded international sophistication. Watching a film at Metro was an event—ushers in uniforms, polished brass fittings, and sweeping staircases added to the glamour.

Lighthouse, with its wrap-around balconies and scent of old wood, was another favourite, often showcasing Hindi blockbusters. New Empire, once a venue for Shakespearean plays, gracefully transitioned into a cinema hall where western flicks and Bond films were a rage.

The central stretch of Chowringhee became a veritable cinema mile—one could start with a matinee at Elite, grab a bite at Kwality or Moulin Rouge, and head to Metro for a night show. Even the suburbs boasted revered theatres—Ujjala in Howrah, Darpana in Lake Town, and Prachi in Gariahat had loyal patrons who came in droves.

During this period, cinema was both a great equalizer and a



mirror to the city's changing pulse. Men in dhotis and women in crisp sarees flocked to matinees, while college students bunked classes for Friday first-day-first-shows. Calcutta was alive with cinema fever.

While Hindi and English films drew huge crowds, the soul of Calcutta's cinema halls was inextricably linked to Bengali films. The works of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, and Tapan Sinha weren't just shown—they were debated, celebrated, and canonized in the dark recesses of halls like Uttara, Basusree, and Ajanta.

These were not mindless entertainments but intellectual events. Films like Nayak, Meghe Dhaka Tara, or Bhuvan Shome sparked conversations on politics, existentialism, and modern identity. Theatres would often arrange discussion circles or publish critical essays on handbills.

Calcutta's cinema culture was deeply entwined with the city's Adda tradition—groups of friends discussing a film in coffee houses, tram compartments, and bookshops. Film-going was not passive—it was participatory, and the cinema hall was the crucible of this public discourse.

Following the 1990s there started a decline of the single screen movie theatres. No wonder there have manifold causes. The

decline, though gradual, emerged inevitable. The reasons were many—economic stagnation, rise in home video consumption, a growing disconnect between the urban elite and local content, and a general degradation of infrastructure.

With few exceptions, most single-screen theatres were ill-equipped to compete with the glitz and air-conditioned comfort of the emerging multiplexes of the 2000s. Patrons began deserting the old halls. The architecture that once defined grandeur began crumbling, as ownership battles, maintenance neglect, and lack of state interest took their toll.

Lighthouse, once thrumming with life, shut its doors in the early 2000s. Roxy struggled, and then faded. Globe Cinema, despite attempts at reviving it as a multiplex, lost its old charm. Metro Cinema, after years of abandonment, was refurbished into a shopping mall and multiplex, a shadow of its original self. Metro was not just a movie theatre it was a popular landmark, where lovers waited for their beloved and others desired the presence of their persons of interest.

Each closure was met with mournful headlines and nostalgia-





laced obituaries. Yet few efforts were made to preserve these spaces as heritage structures. They disappeared, not with a bang, but with a whimper.

The movie theatres of Calcutta are more than just buildings or edifices. They are reflections of the socio- intellectual pattern of the community that thronged the cinema halls. The crowd, often a cosmopolitan one streamed on a pattern of harmony where language and community hardly proved psychologically decisive. To truly understand the significance of these theatres, one must see them as extensions of Calcutta's unique cultural ecosystem. They were places where working-class families watched Amitabh Bachchan rise to stardom, where lovers sneaked in during college hours, where intellectuals argued over Ray versus Ghatak, and where the city confronted its changing face—economic, social, and emotional.

These theatres bore witness to Bandhs, political rallies, and even fire outbreaks and communal tensions—but they survived, often adapting with limited means. In many ways, the story of Calcutta's cinema halls is the story of Calcutta itself—a city of faded grandeur, artistic brilliance, stubborn nostalgia, and resilience in the face of erasure.

Well we all realize that despite the steady aggression of the OTT platforms, movies are best to be viewed in movie theatres. It is also to understand that though multiplex theatres offer lot of variety in defining entertainment, yet the 'locality based cinema halls' are not to be utterly neglected. They still offer convenient choice of enjoyment, may be in a more non-corporate ambience but certainly in an ambience that is more close to the heart of so many.

In recent years, there have been sporadic attempts to revive some of these once-legendary halls. Priya Cinema, for instance, has undergone a modern facelift while trying to retain its original vibe. A few independent filmmakers and film festivals have begun using old venues for screenings, trying to inject life into a fading tradition.

There is also a slow but growing public



awareness around heritage conservation. Efforts by film societies, urban historians, and nostalgic Calcuttans are pushing for recognition of these halls as part of the city's architectural and cultural legacy. But the path is uphill. Even then we need to remember that the present rests on the past and the past should not be obliterated altogether. If today, the practice of going to movie theatres has evolved, it is because of these single screen theatres. So as we welcome the change, we also need to preserve the legacy for without it our cultural inheritance remains incomplete.

To lose these cinema halls is not just to lose places where films were watched—it is to lose the very spaces where Calcutta saw itself, dreamed, and found community. These were temples of light, to borrow the words of Ray, where reels spun stories that echoed through the city's streets, tram tracks, and tea shops.

In the din of OTT platforms and corporate cineplexes, the echo of a thousand claps after a Chhabi Biswas performance, or the collective gasp at a Hitchcock twist, may now seem like distant whispers. But for those who lived those moments—inside the smoky, cushioned darkness of Elite or Minar—they remain unforgettable.

The lost aura of cinema theatres in Calcutta is not merely a lament. It is a call to remember, to honour, and perhaps, to reclaim. For in the old halls of Chowringhee and Hatibagan, the spirit of a city still lingers, waiting for the reels to roll again.

# JOR BANGLA TEMPLE

## Itanda, Birbhum



WHEELER Kinjal Bose

**B**irbhum has a number of temples of varying shapes and sizes of which the brick-built temple of Jor Bangla type at Itanda located about fifteen kilometres from Bolpur deserves special mention. It is possibly the only jor bangla temple of the district.

This type is said to be an altered and improved style of do chala or also called ek bangla. A jor bangla type is formed by placing the roofs of two ek bangla temples side-by-side. This type of temples are also found in other areas of West Bengal like Jor Bangla Temple at Bishnupur in Bankura;

Chaitanyadev Temple at the temple complex in Guptipara in Hooghly and Jor Bangla Temple at Birnagar in Nadia just to name a few.

There are a number of temples in Itanda of which Jor Bangla Kali Temple is a state protected monument. The temple has been renovated. This south-facing temple was built in the middle of the eighteenth century. It is on a slightly raised platform with intricate terracotta decoration. Legends say that the temple was once housed by a group of dacoits named as Harkata group and they used to worship Kali.

The temple facade had terracotta figures







of extraordinary craftsmanship though some figures got damaged. One will witness some exquisite terracotta panels of war scene between two war ships, rows of soldiers marching with guns, noblemen and soldiers, Goddess Bishnu, Kal Bhairav, dwarpal, Surya in chariot, Sita, Ravana, mrityulata or death-vine, two ladies standing side by side, soldiers on horseback, Shumbha and Nishumbha and Chandi and several other figures. There are plenty of terracotta panels in this temple.







# Emission Norms

*in a country full of Petrol heads*

 Promit Hazra

**A**s a motoring enthusiast with a garage full of carburetted classics and a heart that beats for the raw, unfiltered roar of old-school engines, India's journey through vehicle emission norms feels like a bittersweet saga. From the rudimentary pollution checks of the late 1980s to the ultra-stringent Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) Phase II norms of today, the push for cleaner air has transformed the automotive landscape, especially in the National Capital Region (NCR) and metro cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Bangalore. In this article, we attempt to trace the evolution of India's emission

norms through the lens of an enthusiast.

India's journey toward cleaner vehicular emissions began humbly in 1989 with idle emission limits for petrol vehicles—a time when vintage icons like the 1960s Hindustan Ambassador roamed freely, and pollution checks were a mere formality. The early '90s brought in mass emission limits for both petrol and diesel vehicles, yet they hardly disrupted the nostalgic charm of classic fleets. The real shift came in 2000 with the introduction of Bharat Stage I (BS-I), modelled after Euro I norms, requiring catalytic converters and demanding cleaner fuels. Yet, older carburetted classics were



exempted; their engines still growling with character.

BS-II followed between 2001 and 2003, tightening sulphur levels in major metros and spreading to cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad by 2004. While retrofits became more common, vintage enthusiasts could still keep their beloved machines on the road with minor tweaks. The bar rose further with BS-III in 2005 for Delhi and 11 other metros, targeting NOx and particulate matter, and eventually going nationwide by 2010. Iconic two-wheelers like the Royal Enfield Bullet had to adapt, with owners adjusting carburetors to stay compliant.

In 2010, the BS-IV norms were introduced across 13 major cities and gradually spread nationwide by 2017, slashing sulphur levels to 50 ppm and introducing electronic control units. Delhi, where vehicular pollution contributed to 18% of PM2.5 levels, began stricter enforcement, nudging diesel legends into seasonal retirement. For vintage owners, the financial burden of compliance grew, as retrofit costs and restricted access to urban roads threatened their vehicle's viability.

The landscape changed drastically in 2016 with the bold decision to skip BS-V and leap directly to BS-VI by 2020, aligning with Euro VI standards. This meant a dramatic 82% reduction in diesel particulate matter and sulphur levels down to 10 ppm, with Delhi receiving BS-VI fuel as early as 2018. Restrictions tightened under GRAP-III, banning BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles during peak pollution, grounding once-celebrated classics like Ambassadors and old Mahindra Jeeps.

By 2023, BS-VI Phase II introduced Real Driving Emissions (RDE) norms and E20 fuel compatibility, with real-world testing becoming the new standard. While cities like Mumbai and Bangalore embraced these changes, vintage vehicles were increasingly nudged toward the countryside. The government's scrappage policy, encouraging the retirement of older, non-compliant vehicles, sparked resistance from the





collector community, who saw it as a threat to India's automotive history. Modifying these vehicles to meet evolving norms became prohibitively expensive for many.

Now, with India eyeing a greener future through electrification and alternative fuels, including EVs and hydrogen, cities like Delhi and Mumbai are offering incentives to speed up the transition, projecting a 35–50% EV market share by 2030. Yet, this shift brings new fears - low-emission zones and evolving trials risk turning vintage cars into static museum pieces. While EV conversions

offer a hopeful bridge, their high costs limit accessibility.

As environmental policies grow stricter across urban centres, passionate enthusiasts are calling for a balanced approach - one that allows the preservation of heritage motoring while supporting sustainable progress. These vintage machines, full of quirks and raw driving pleasure, still have a story to tell—and many believe they deserve a respectable space on the road beside the latest EVs, not just a quiet corner in history.







# BRIDGESTONE WHEELS

## 8TH CORPORATE CAR TREASURE HUNT 2025

### THRILLS KOLKATA

 Joydip Sur

**O**n Sunday, July 13, the City of Joy witnessed an intense competition among 50 corporate motoring teams of Kolkata who competed to win the top honours in one of India's largest motoring events the 'WHEELS 8th Car Treasure Hunt 2025'. Powered by Bridgestone Tyres, this unique motoring chase was designed for the Corporate Executives of Kolkata who battled for supremacy in this contest of man and machine.





The Bridgestone Wheels 8th Corporate Car Treasure Hunt 2025 was organised by Kolkata on Wheels in association with Bridgestone India Private Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Jyote Motors NEXA, Hotel DeSovrani, 91.9 Friends FM, Rungta Steel, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Farm To Home Shop and Automobile Association of Eastern India.

Around 50 corporate teams, each team consisting of a minimum 2 adults and maximum 4 adults participated in their own four wheelers. At the flag off/ starting point, each team was given a clue sheet consisting of eight different riddles, and on cracking the riddles, the teams reached a secret destination where their arrival at the correct spot was endorsed on their track card by the marshals present at the spot.

In addition to the aforementioned, this year we added an interesting twist to the event with an element of TSD

format rallying, multiple choice Q&A on automobiles & Kolkata and collecting scavenger items from two mandatory pit stops to make it more challenging and fun. On completion of the event, teams were evaluated on the basis of predetermined points and accordingly the Winner and First & Second Runners Up was selected.

Mr. Joydip Sur, Editor, Kolkata on WHEELS said, "Every year during the month of July, Kolkata on WHEELS - a city centric motoring magazine organises this Corporate Car Treasure Hunt for the Corporate Executives of the city which has gradually gained immense popularity and has now become a permanent fixture in the city annual monsoon calendar. I'm grateful to our sponsors - Bridgestone India Private Limited, Indian Oil Corporation







Limited, Jyote Motors NEXA, Hotel DeSovrani, 91.9 Friends FM, Rungta Steel, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Farm To Home Shop and Automobile Association of Eastern India without whose support organising an event of this magnitude wouldn't have been possible."

The cars were flagged off from Hotel DeSovrani at 10 AM. After completing the competition course, the participants returned to the venue from 1 PM onwards. Post their return to Hotel DeSovrani, the participants was treated to a delicious Bengali lunch buffet. This was followed by the prize distribution ceremony. Noted actor, wildlife enthusiasts and avid traveller Badshah Moitra graced the occasion at the Chief Guest and handed over the prizes to all the winners. Several corporate dignitaries from the sponsor companies and our event partners were also present on the occasion.

## The Winners Are:

### 1st Position

SE Tiles Manufacturing Private Limited

### 2nd Position

Vivaan Steel Industries Private Limited

### 3rd Position

Nayara Energy Limited

### 4th Position

UCO Bank

### 5th Position

Nexcore Communication LLP

### Winner of the Driving DNA Category

Wealth Crop Securities Private Limited





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