

KOLKATA ON

WHEELS

AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY

PHANTOM

Centenary Private Collection



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EDITORIAL

For 100 years, Phantom has been recognised as the ultimate symbol of success and discernment, chosen by the world's most influential figures. As this legendary nameplate celebrates its 100th anniversary, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars pays tribute with the Phantom Centenary Private Collection, limited to 25 examples. Read this edition's 'Connoisseurs Corner' column to know more.

India's automotive journey has been profoundly shaped by engines that not only propelled vehicles but also defined eras of mobility, from post-independence ruggedness to modern efficiency and performance. Over decades, these power plants have become cultural icons, powering millions of cars across diverse terrains and socio-economic landscapes. While early engines emphasised durability amid sparse infrastructure, later ones embraced fuel efficiency, emissions norms, and driving thrill. This edition's 'Car Tech' column highlights five iconic engines that have left a lasting impact in India.

CARS24 has announced a bold step that redefines accountability in the pre-owned car industry, the launch of India's first-ever 30-day return policy. With this, buyers can return their car within 30 days or 999 km if it doesn't meet their expectations, a first for the Indian market and a move that directly ties product confidence to customer trust. More on that in this edition's 'Used Cars' column.

Happy reading!



Joydip Sur
 Editor

KOLKATA ON
WHEELS
AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY



08 | Connoisseurs Corner

Phantom Centenary Private Collection



18 | Car Launch
New MINI Countryman SE All4



22 | Drive Out
Taki



31 | Motorsports
Bengal Moto Fest 2025



34 | Used Car
CARS24 Launches, 30-Day Return Policy

14 | Special Feature
How to Lose Friends, Forget History, and Befriend Your Enemy

36 | Potpourri
Etched In Humanism, The Wounds In Ghatak's Films

40 | Culture
Giribala Thakurbari of Agarpara

42 | Car Tech
Five Most Iconic Engines

45 | Event
Festive Meet

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Presents The **PHANTOM** CENTENARY PRIVATE COLLECTION

 Joydip Sur

For 100 years, Phantom has been recognised as the ultimate symbol of success and discernment, chosen by the world's most influential figures. As this legendary nameplate celebrates its 100th anniversary, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars pays tribute with the Phantom Centenary Private Collection, limited to 25 examples.

The Rolls-Royce Bespoke Collective

of designers, engineers and artisans poured their skill and imagination into what has become their magnum opus. They immersed themselves in Phantom's world, studying the spirit and identity of each generation from the 1920s to today. They explored defining owners, pivotal figures within Rolls-Royce, the places where Phantom was conceived





and built, and the events that defined its times. These influences, first captured as 77 hand-sketched motifs, are woven into the Phantom Centenary Private Collection through stunningly crafted archival references, creating a statement that honours Phantom's past, defines its present, and projects the principles that will shape the nameplate's next 100 years and beyond.

Each historic moment is brought to life through advanced artisanal techniques, many conceived specially for this rare and collectable tribute. Inside, couturier-designed textiles, sketch-like embroidery, laser-etched leather, and groundbreaking woodcraft — including 3D marquetry, gilding, and 3D ink layering — tell Phantom's story in stunning, intricate detail. Outside, the grille is crowned with a unique Spirit of Ecstasy figurine, reinterpreted from the very first to grace a Phantom, and presented in solid gold to mark this milestone.

Chris Brownridge, Chief Executive, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said: *"The Rolls-Royce Phantom Centenary Private Collection is our tribute to 100 years of the world's most revered luxury item. This uncompromising work of art uses the meticulously engineered Phantom VIII as the canvas to tell the story of Phantom's remarkable life*

and the people who shaped it – from the visionaries within Rolls-Royce to the owners who helped create its legend. For a century, the Phantom nameplate has expressed the pinnacle of Rolls-Royce's abilities. To honour that legacy, this extraordinarily ambitious Private Collection introduces new techniques and is the result of over 40,000 hours of work, culminating in a motor car which reaffirms Phantom's status as a symbol of ambition, artistic possibility, and historical gravitas."

EXTERIOR: AN ELEGANT, BESPOKE STATEMENT

Evoking the timeless elegance of a black-and-white film star, the Phantom Centenary Private Collection's exterior recalls the golden age of Hollywood, when Phantom graced premieres, carried screen icons, and became a symbol of the era's glamour. The motor car is finished in a Bespoke two-tone paint, its long-sided application a nod to the flowing silhouette of 1930s Phantoms. The side body is presented in super champagne crystal over arctic white, with the upper body in super champagne crystal over black. The specially developed finish gives the exterior an extraordinary metallic shimmer, achieved by infusing the clear coat with iridescent particles of crushed glass. For this celebratory Private Collection,

Rolls-Royce paint specialists replaced the clear flakes with champagne-coloured particles and doubled the quantity to create spellbinding depth.

This timeless treatment is crowned with a unique reimagining of the Spirit of Ecstasy. Using the first Spirit of Ecstasy ever fitted to a Phantom as their reference, designers created an homage to this landmark figurine, cast in solid 18-carat gold for strength, then plated in 24-carat gold for a flawless, tarnish-resistant finish. The piece was then presented to the Hallmarking & Assay Office in London, where it received a specially developed 'Phantom Centenary' hallmark.

The base of the figurine is finished with hand-poured white vitreous enamel delicately inscribed with the collection's name. For the first time, the 'RR' Badge of Honour – positioned on the front, rear, and each side of the motor car – is presented in 24-carat gold and white enamel.

Resolving the exterior is a set of Phantom disc wheels, each engraved with 25 lines – honouring the 25 motor cars within the collection and, together, making 100 lines to celebrate the centenary year.

Martina Starke, Head of Bespoke Design, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said:

"Having the privilege to pay a Bespoke tribute to the Phantom nameplate is a

once-in-a-generation opportunity. Seizing on the significance of this moment, a record number of designers spent a year immersed in the motor car's rich history, uncovering the stories that shaped its legend. Their research was distilled into 77 hand-sketched motifs, each capturing a defining moment in Phantom's journey and expressed with levels of detail we have never attempted before. The result is a true collective work of art that celebrates the skill, ambition and imagination of everyone at the Home of Rolls-Royce, and the profound respect the marque's creatives have for this extraordinary motor car."

INTERIOR: IMMERSSED IN THE PHANTOM LEGEND

A century of Phantom's stories elegantly unfold across the many canvases of the Private Collection's interior, through magnificent archival references – some immediately recognisable, others revealed over time.

In homage to Phantoms of the past, Phantom Centenary's interior combines textiles and leather, recalling the marque's foundational years when the chauffeur's front seat was finished in hardwearing leather and the rear cabin in luxurious fabrics. This contrast is a subtle reminder that Phantom has always balanced both





authority at the wheel and absolute serenity in the passenger suite.

REAR SEATS: TAILORING EXCELLENCE

The rear seats of Phantom Centenary are inspired by the famed 1926 'Phantom of Love', commissioned with handwoven Aubusson tapestries. The artwork on the seats unfolds across three distinct layers of storytelling. The first is the background, rendered in high-resolution print, showing places and artefacts from Phantom's history – from the marque's original Conduit Street premises in London to Henry Royce's oil paintings of Southern France. The second layer, also printed in high resolution, portrays great Phantoms of the past in finely drawn detail. The third and uppermost layer is formed of embroideries, abstractly representing seven significant owners from every generation of Phantom.

This complex fabric was developed over 12 months in partnership with a fashion atelier, marking its first commission beyond the world of haute couture. To meet Rolls-Royce's exacting longevity, tactility and aesthetic standards, the high-resolution printing process was perfected with specially adapted inks and techniques devised exclusively for the Phantom

Centenary Private Collection.

The high-resolution printed fabric is completed with embroideries, designed to have a uniquely hand-drawn quality. Described by the Bespoke Collective as "sketching with thread", this embroidery process captures the expression of a pencil line in textile form. To outline and define each image, artisans applied golden sands thread in sketch-like, irregular stitches, creating the illusion of lines floating lightly above the surface. Texture and depth were added with Seashell thread, applied in high-density stitches. Across the full composition, this intricate craftwork amounts to more than 160,000 stitches.

The finished artwork spans 45 individual panels, each precisely aligned and fitted around the curvatures of the seats at the Home of Rolls-Royce: a process inspired by Savile Row tailoring techniques. The result is the most intricate seat composition ever created by Rolls-Royce.

Celina Mettang, Bespoke Colour and Material Designer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said:

"Conceived as a contemporary interpretation of a handwoven tapestry, the rear seats tell Phantom's story through carefully curated details, captured in textiles and embroidery. Every embroidered element was digitally re-drawn by artisans

who selected specific stitch application for every stroke. For example, in the horse motif, we used spaced stitches to recreate the hair texture, then dense stitching to define the muscle. These fine details required extraordinary precision to get right: one motif went through 24 iterations before we were satisfied. This reflects the deep personal pride we felt in creating a fitting tribute to the Phantom nameplate, and the responsibility we all share in carrying its legacy forward."

FRONT SEATS: A DESIGN STATEMENT IN THE DRIVER'S QUARTERS

The leather on the front seats features laser-etched artwork based on hand drawings by a Bespoke designer, evoking the draftsman's craft. Among the motifs are symbolic details that elegantly carry the extraordinary weight of Phantom's 100-year legacy, from a rabbit design – a nod to "Roger Rabbit," the codename for the relaunch of Rolls-Royce in 2003 – to a seagull, the codename for the 1923 Phantom I prototype.

ANTHOLOGY GALLERY: A STORY OF DISTINCTION TOLD OVER 100 YEARS

The centrepiece of the Phantom Centenary Private Collection is the Anthology Gallery. This dramatic composition features 50 3D-printed, vertically brushed aluminium 'fins' interlaced like pages of a book. Each fin is composed of sculpted letters that can be read from both sides, forming quotes drawn from a century of press acclaim.

The sculpture is subtly lit by shifting illuminations that recall the shimmer of falling fireworks. The brushed edges of each fin create a play of reflections, changing with the viewer's moving perspective.

WOODWORK: A SCULPTURAL STATEMENT

The Private Collection features the most intricate woodwork ever created for a Rolls-Royce. Developed over a year and rendered in stained Blackwood, the door panels depict Phantom's most significant and formative journeys. Within each composition, geographical maps, winding routes, sweeping landscapes, floral elements, and depictions of experimental motor cars intersect to form an artwork alive with Phantom's heritage.

The rear doors portray the coastline of Le Rayol-Canadel-sur-Mer, where Sir Henry Royce spent his winters. The right-hand side front door shows the landscape of West Wittering, home to his summer residence, just eight miles from today's Home of Rolls-Royce. The left-hand side front door recalls the epic 4,500-mile journey of the first-ever Goodwood-era Phantom, which crossed the Australian continent from Perth.

Each composition combines 3D multi-directional marquetry, laser etching, 3D ink layering and gold-leafing to create dimension and texture. Etched motifs, which include maps, landscapes, flowers and trees, are applied onto the wood at three different depths using a laser. The roads representing these journeys gleam in



24-carat gold, crafted from squares of gold leaf just 0.1 micrometres thick. Each road is painstakingly crafted, cut and placed.

The rear doors also incorporate depictions of flora native to Southern France — pine, cypress, ferns and palm — while a section of the rear passenger door recreates one of Sir Henry Royce's original oil paintings of the region, translated from canvas to wood. The exact locations of Royce's homes — Villa Mimosa in the South of France and Elmstead in West Wittering — are marked with a single gold-leaf dot just 2.76 mm in diameter.

Katrin Lehmann, Bespoke Colour and Material Designer, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said: *"We drew on an extraordinary range of sources – original texts, diaries, photographs and paintings – to create a composition that weaves together many threads of Phantom's story. New technology developed for this project, including 3D ink layering, allowed us to add details at a scale never before possible – some just 0.13 mm in height – from a boat sailing across the sea to location names on a map. It's a privilege to have the time and technology to realise moments in Phantom's history with the detail and precision the nameplate deserves."*

The wooden surfaces on the doors transform into masterfully embroidered

leather panels. The 24-carat gold 'roads' continue as golden thread embroidery; details of the maps and landscapes are stitched in black, echoing the etched details on the veneered section of the doors.

The woodwork is completed with depictions of the original 1925 Phantom I and the current Phantom VIII, individually etched on the rear picnic tables. The models are mirrored in embroidery on the leather-finished backs of the picnic tables – another gesture uniting past and present.

The Piano Black veneer is infused with gold dust, echoing the central rotary dial, also plated with 24-carat gold.

Phil Fabre de la Grange, Head of Bespoke, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said: *"Phantom Centenary is the most intricate and technologically ambitious Private Collection ever undertaken by the designers, engineers, production specialists and craftspeople of our Bespoke Collective. Developed over three years, this project uses new techniques to blend metal, wood, paint, fabric, leather, and embroidery into a single, stunning composition. The surfaces read like a book revealing 100 years of Phantom's history, rich with symbolic references for clients to admire and decipher over many years to come."*

AN UNFORGETTABLE HERITAGE, IN MOTION

For the designers, engineers and artisans who created the Phantom Centenary Private Collection, this motor car was a once-in-a-generation responsibility. What has been achieved reflects the same spirit that gave rise to Phantom itself: the marque's relentless pursuit of excellence and ambition to craft the best motor car in the world.



HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS, FORGET HISTORY, AND BEFRIEND YOUR ENEMY



Abhijit Dasgupta

Only the most ungrateful or the clinically adventurous can forget their ancestors. A Nation that sacrificed over five lakh lives...A nation whose women lost their dignity by the lakhs...A neighbour who sheltered more than ten million people, fed them, armed their freedom fighters, and risked war to liberate a people who were not its own. Forgetting all this requires either divine levels of amnesia or a Nobel Prize in Lunacy.

But there is a third category too - the perpetually ill-informed. A generation intentionally kept in the dark for fear that knowledge might lead them to inconvenient truths, like who actually saved them. These are the modern students glued to mobile phones, scrolling "facts" crafted by villains disguised as influencers, experts, and digital preachers.

And in this circus of memory loss comes the latest spectacle - Sheikh Hasina





Muhammad Yunus of being “a stooge of the United States” and “selling the nation.” Whether one buys that claim or not, his fascination for America is less rumour and more open secret. And let us not forget; in 2011, Bangladesh’s central bank removed him from Grameen Bank over allegations of irregularities involving



sentenced to death by hanging by a tribunal that itself seems unsure of which branch of jurisprudence it belongs to. Legally, perhaps yes, the tribunal can pass such a verdict on paper - Bangladesh’s laws allow domestic prosecution for crimes against humanity. But internationally? Fairness? Transparency? Independence? These words appear to have skipped the hearing entirely, probably stuck in Dhaka traffic in some narrow corridor.

The three-judge bench features Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, Justice Md Shofiul Alam Mahmood, and retired judge Mohitul Haque Enam Chowdhury. For a trial of this international consequence - is a retired district judge the right choice? Where is the global oversight? A neutral foreign judge? A seasoned Supreme Court figure? The answer lies neatly folded within their designations, this was never international.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hasina - speaking from exile via Facebook audio - accuses

approvals and benefits to his own network. Fourteen were convicted. Many are still part of his extended empire. Also, charging poor villagers 20% interest was hardly philanthropy, it was capitalism in prayer beads.

And academically? Assistant Professor of Economics at Middle Tennessee State University, a tiny institution, hardly the stuff of Ivy League myth-making. If Harvard and Oxford are towering lighthouses, this is a single LED lamp tucked behind a bookshelf.

Bangladesh today stands at yet another crossroads, a defining moment, once again. They’ve had so many defining moments that definition itself has become undefinable. If history were a student, Bangladesh would be the one perpetually repeating the same exam, scoring the same marks, but printing new slogans on the cover page each year.

This time, the choice is between progress and piety, between the marketplace and

the madrasa. Economists call it the clash between GDP and God's Direct Plan.

Once upon a time, the national motto was liberation, democracy, garments, and growth. Today, it resembles a confused sermon yelled through a megaphone.

Dhaka's geopolitical love triangle doesn't help either;

China, the dragon with deep pockets and shallow patience;

The Pakis, offering theology with a complimentary side of dogma; and

India, the big brother next door, concerned, calculating, and watching.

And now, possibly entering stage right: Dr. Zakir Naik, whose sermon videos should come with a statutory warning: "May cause sudden bouts of self-righteousness, brain inflammation, and a lifelong allergy to critical thinking." Banned in multiple countries, he has earned a certain celebrity among those who treat prohibition as a badge of honour. His presence would tilt an already delicate religious balance into a full-blown theological rollercoaster.

His spiritual content? Like instant

noodles, cheap, fast, addictive, and guaranteed to cause intellectual acidity.

Meanwhile China is busy building roads, bridges, and deep debt traps. Pakistan exports no tiles or textiles now, only ideology marinated in nostalgia of the mid 40s. And India? The affectionate yet anxious neighbour holding a calculator in one hand and popcorn in the other, watching the drama unfold like a daily soap titled "Bangladesh: The Balancing Act."

For Bangladesh, the stakes are existential.

A secular dream could morph into a theocratic theme park, complete with moral police, imported sermons, and an unlimited subscription to outrage.

But political forgetfulness is only a symptom of a deeper, national phenomenon: Bangladesh forgets kindness faster than its youth forgets log-in passwords.

Human beings in general remember insults forever but forget kindness before the next election cycle. Gratitude evaporates like a puddle on a Dhaka afternoon. But Bangladesh takes this to Contra-Olympic levels – welcomes in deep gratitude those who raped their grandmothers!

Help someone in crisis, lend money, offer shelter, listen to tearful midnight confessions, and they swear they'll never forget. Six months later, they meet you with the same expression they give to someone who once delivered their Amazon package.

Bangladesh loves its glitter. Gleaming cars everywhere, yet 92% of them are reconditioned castoffs. A nation obsessed with shiny exteriors often forgets that engines matter too, both in machines and in people.

Gratitude's greatest enemy is pride. To say "thank you" is to admit weakness. So people rewrite memory:

"We did it ourselves."

And just like that, your contribution becomes a deleted scene.

For some, forgetting is strategic - the





so-called diaspora revolutionaries, sipping imported coffee on white carpets, instigating unrest online while their families remain safely abroad. They outsource chaos like a gig economy service.

In Bangladesh, gratitude has the shelf-life of a mango in May, sweet, brief, and gone before dinner.

Half a century after the Liberation War, the memories are fading. School textbooks have amputated history. Students know more about TikTok activists than the Mukti Bahini.

India's massive role, sheltering ten million refugees, training freedom fighters, fighting Pakistan, has been shrunk to a small font footnote. A kindness paid in blood now reduced to a 6 point font.

Worse still, what of those heroes whose names never made it into the classroom?

The frogmen who used modified limpet mines from Jadavpur University and sank over twenty-five Pakistani ships in a single night, now erased.

The submarine defectors in France who risked execution, vanished from memory.

The Kilo Flight pilots who flew tiny makeshift aircraft into danger, remembered, if at all, as trivia.

These were the original influencers - long before hashtags and ring lights, shaping a

nation's destiny with courage, not captions.

A nation that forgets its heroes eventually forgets itself.

A nation that remembers only slogans soon needs subtitles for its own history.

Ingratitude writes its own punishment.

Bangladesh today is not merely choosing a government- it is choosing a soul. Between debt and dogma, between identity and ideology, between its real saviours and its fashionable villains.

History is whispering...

"Choose wisely. Define something. Anything."

Because if this defining moment is also forgotten, Bangladesh may not get another.



The New MINI Countryman SE All4 Debuts In India

 Joydip Sur

The new MINI Countryman SE All4 was launched in India at an ex-showroom price of INR 66,90,000. The car will be available in the country as a completely built-up unit (CBU) and can be booked at all MINI India authorised dealership. Deliveries for the same will commence immediately.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Brar, President and CEO, BMW Group India said, "The new MINI Countryman SE All4 is a car that's full of confidence and adventure. It's electric, it's fun to drive, and it's perfect for exploring the city and the great outdoors. With its spacious interior, eco-friendly tech, and

signature MINI style, every drive is a special experience. The sporty design and John Cooper Works trim make it a great choice for those who love performance and sustainability."

The new all-electric, all-wheel-drive MINI Countryman SE All4 is the epitome of versatility and driving pleasure. The modern, minimalistic design with clear surfaces and wider wheel arches reinforces the look of the new MINI Countryman SE All4. The character of this SUV is underlined through the vertical orientation of body details. Its distinctive front grille, striking headlights





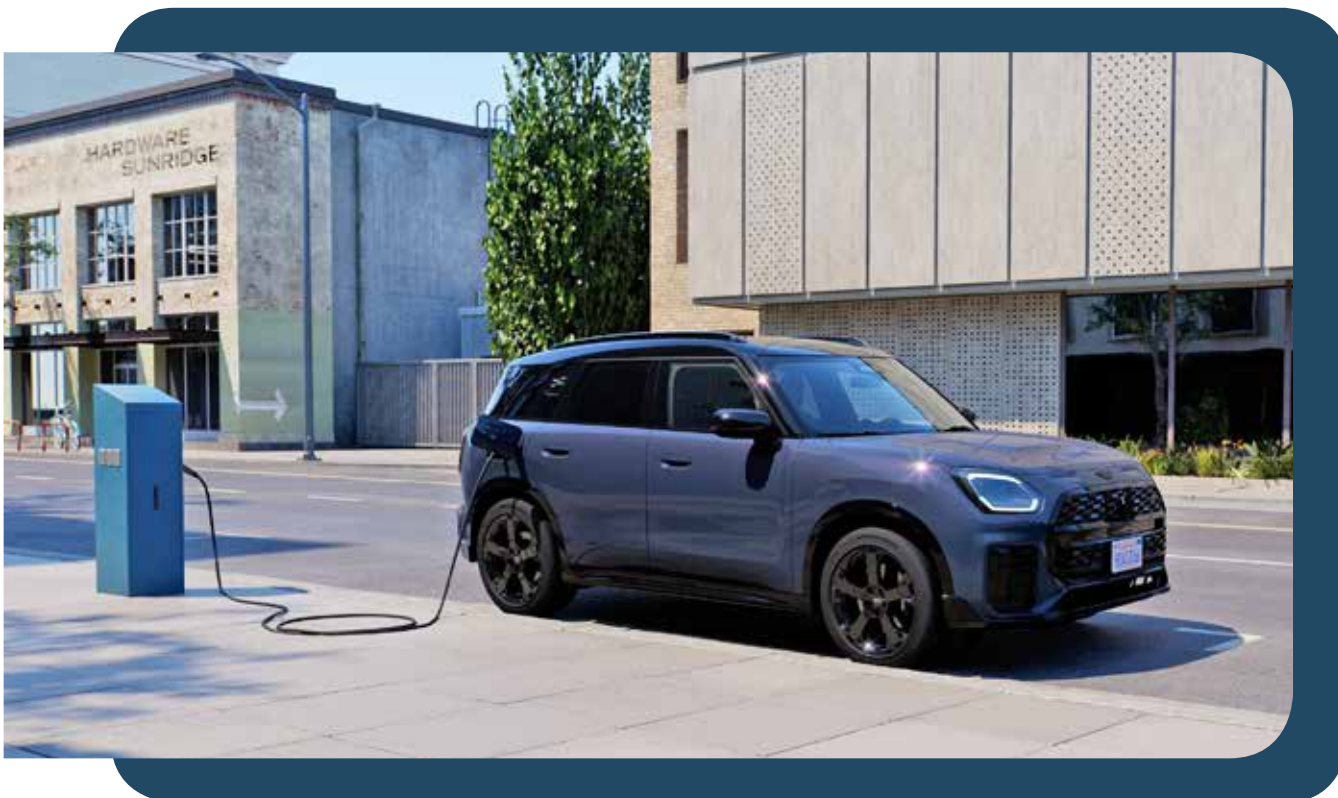
and the very sculptural bonnet enhance the overall appeal. Short overhangs and slim contouring give the vehicle's silhouette an elegant definition. The visual three-part division into the vehicle body, surrounding window area and a jet black roof ensure the MINI is instantly recognisable. The surfaces look particularly exciting thanks to an integrative treatment of details. Flush door handles and absence of side scuttles 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 SE All4 has a significantly enhanced presence.

With its dynamic, sporty exterior and exclusive JCW trim, the new MINI Countryman SE All4 stands out as the epitome of driving fun and individuality. The exterior colour options legend grey or midnight black is 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 elevate the sharp character.

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 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. Electric seat adjustment with active seat for the driver is available as standard. 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 panoramic glass roof adds to the bright and spacious atmosphere.

The focal point of the cockpit in the MINI Countryman SE All4 is the round OLED display. The central instrument with a diameter of 240 mm and a high-quality glass surface simultaneously controls the infotainment and assistance systems. With the new MINI Operating System 9, all vehicle functions can be operated intuitively via touch or voice assistant. 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.

The versatile and powerful electric drive makes it a perfect companion for unbridled driving fun even off the beaten track. With 313 hp and a maximum torque of 494 Nm, the new MINI Countryman SE All4 sprints from 0-100 kmph in just 5.6 seconds. It has a top speed of 180 kmph. The standard all-wheel drive system distributes its power precisely and reliably, providing the sporty SUV with sufficient grip and traction even in challenging conditions. 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 440 kms. The new MINI Countryman SE All4 also 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 22kW AC – 0 to 100% in 3 hrs 45 min. 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.

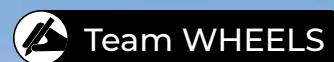
The standard minimalism technology includes auto start/stop function, brake energy recuperation, active cooling air ducts and electromechanical power steering. The wide range of alloy wheels depending on the variant, radiate confidence while reducing carbon footprint thanks to their lightweight design 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.



TAKI

An abode of peace, close to home



Just when you think that Kolkata is running out of reasonably priced prawns, Taki springs up a host of surprises. With Ichhamati River as witness, this historical riverfront has many tales to tell; only if you are willing to listen. This picturesque river retreat is just a two-hour drive from Kolkata, located 67 kilometres northeast of the city in North 24-Parganas, a gateway to the Sundarbans, bordering Bangladesh. As the winter quietly tiptoed into our city, Team WHEELS set out to discover the sights and sounds of Taki.



Cruising on the Basanti Highway en route to Taki

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

On a wintry November morning, we set out on our day trip to Taki. We set our trip meter to 'zero' at Science City and proceeded straight on to EM Bypass. We made a right turn from Parama Island towards Ruby More. Thereafter, we immediately entered the left diversion beside the flyover adjoining P.C. Chandra Gardens on the left. From here onwards we drove on to Basanti Highway which heads towards Bantala Leather Complex. Soon the landscape started changing rapidly from urban to semi urban and finally rural. The route is dotted by vast fisheries on either side of the road and bordered with several patches of refreshing greenery. This road is mostly used for transporting fish, especially prawns to the Kolkata markets from the hinterlands.

After entering the Basanti Highway, we soon crossed the Bantala Leather Complex on the right followed by Bhojerhat, Kajirhat, Narayanpur, Bhangor, Ghatakpur, Chandipur, Bhushighata, Kanchanpur,

Minakha, Kalitola, and slowed down at Malancha Bazar. We made a left turn from this point on Basanti Highway towards Malancha Bridge on Bidyadhari River.

After crossing the Malancha Bridge, we followed the main road and passed by Trimali, Nimich, Bhebia Bazar until we reached a major junction called Murari Shah Choumatha also known as Bhebia More. We entered the road on the opposite side and followed the same path leading to Habaspur, Makhalagacha, Talpukur Bazar, New Thhuba Rail Gate, Thhuba More before finally reaching Taki.

The road up to Malancha Bazar is remarkably good and enjoyable to drive on. After crossing the Malancha Bridge, the road leading to Taki continues to be fairly decent but being a local thoroughfare, it is narrower in width than the Basanti Highway. Therefore, the motorists are advised to drive with caution and at reasonable low speeds.

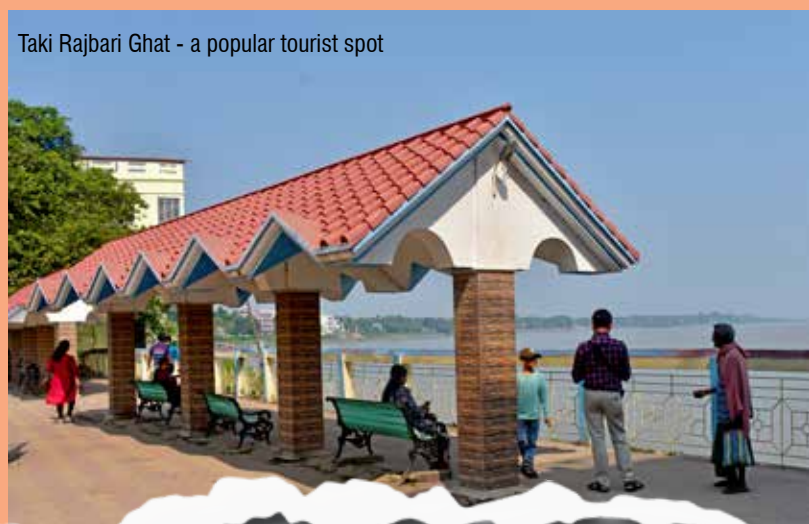
TAKI

Taki is the erstwhile capital city of an old and defunct kingdom. It is presently a municipality under Hasnabad Police Station, Basirhat Subdivision in North 24 Parganas. It is separated from Bangladesh by a natural border of the Ichhamati River.

Situated by the Ichhamati River, Taki was a land of zamindar families. These zamindars ruled from the time of the Mughals and served even in the time of the British Raj. The first zamindar Krishna Das Raychowdhury (Guha) was a descendent of Birat Guha - one of the first five Kayasthas who came to Bengal from Kanauj. Although presently two-third of the property has been swallowed by the Ichhamati River, the ruin of the zamindar's palatial house (Rajbari) continues to be a crowd puller.



Durga Dalan of the Ghosh Family



Taki Rajbari Ghat - a popular tourist spot

Boatmen waiting to ferry passengers





A snapshot of the Durga Puja immersion at Ichhamati River in Taki

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

The Ichhamati River remains the biggest tourist attraction of Taki. An imaginary line through the middle of the river separates India and Bangladesh. The vastness of the river along with its enthralling view on either side of the border is something you have to witness to experience. Sreepur town of Bangladesh is located just on the opposite side of Taki. Former Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy's ancestral house is one of the important landmarks of Sreepur.

The local people have an annual reunion on the day of Dashami during the immersion of Goddess Durga. On that day, people from both sides of the border hoist their national flags on boats and carry the Durga idols meant for immersions on the Ichhamati River.

The benches along the Taki Rajbari Ghat in front of the Rajbari are the best place to spend leisurely evenings. The paved riverfront near the Jetty Ghat is beautiful and

wears a festive look during the evenings with the hustle and bustle of roadside eateries and shops selling toys, trinkets and various other knick knacks.

The Ramakrishna Mission Temple is within walking distance from the river front. One can attend the evening arati there if they desire. The 300-years old Kuler Kali Bari and Jora Mandir situated over a huge pond are famous tourists' attractions as well.



Jora Mandir



Plantation inside the Golapata Forest

GOLPATA FOREST

The most exciting visit during our day trip to Taki was to the neighbouring Golpata Forest. Located around five kilometres from the Taki Rajbari Ghat, Golpata Forest is often referred to as the Mini Sundarban.

The roads leading from the Rajbari Ghat towards Golpata Forest are very narrow and I would recommend that instead of driving down in your car, you may choose to park your vehicle at one of the numerous paid parking spots near the Rajbari Ghat and take a Toto (e-rickshaw) and visit this place. Book the Toto for a return journey including the waiting time. However, if you still prefer driving down in your car, then there are paid parking spots available just before arriving at the BSF check post.

Please note that all the visitors have to pass through a BSF check post to reach Golpata Forest. It's mandatory to have some form of government identification like an Aadhar Card, Voter ID Card, Passport, Driving License or PAN Card

The concrete bridge leading to Golapata Forest



Visitors enjoying a walk inside Golpata Forest



Golpata fruit from which the name Golpata Forest is derived from



which needs to be submitted at the BSF check post. The BSF personnel will assign a serial number to your ID card and you need to collect the same on your return from Golpata Forest.

The reason for this stringency is due to the fact that Golpata Forest along with the adjoining villages is at an extremely close proximity to the Bangladesh land. At one point during low tide, the distance is less than 150 metres. This is the last check point on the Indian side and BSF personnel do not operate inside the village or Golpata Forest area. Thus, at the end of the day, the BSF needs to ensure that any tourists going inside the Golpata Forest should have returned before sun down.

No outside vehicles are allowed beyond the BSF check post. Once you cross over, you have an option of either walking for a couple of kilometres to Golpata Forest or take a shared motorised van. The walk can be quite enjoyable taking you past village

houses provided the weather conditions are conducive.

As I said earlier this place is known as the Mini Sundarban due to its mangrove plantation.

Generally, it becomes difficult to walk inside any mangrove forest as they would either be half-submerged underwater or even when the water recedes during low tide, the place is usually very muddy making it difficult to walk upon.

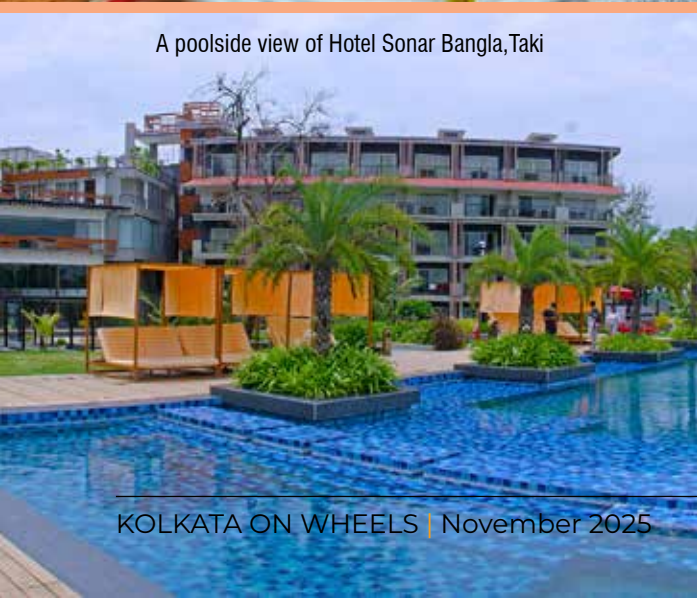
However, in the case of Golpata Forest, the forest authorities have constructed a concrete bridge in a labyrinth manner taking you around the forest to ensure that you can enjoy nature without having to walk on slushy mud or knee-deep water.

The name Golpata Forest comes from the presence of several Golpata trees (*Nypa fruticans*) that surround this small area. The entry fee for this place is INR 10 which needs to be paid at the entrance of the forest pathway.

Cruise on Ichhamati River during dusk



A sumptuous Bengali meal at Hotel Sonar Bangla, Taki



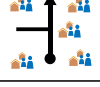
A poolside view of Hotel Sonar Bangla, Taki

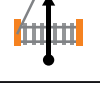
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

Several hotels and guest houses have come up in Taki. Many of these are located in the vicinity of the Rajbari Ghat overlooking the Ichhamati River. Accommodation of various categories spread across different price points are easily available if one chooses to stay overnight at this river retreat. Food options are aplenty, available both at local roadside eateries or hotels and guest houses. However, pre-ordering your meals at the hotels and guest houses at least two hours in advance is recommended.

TAILPIECE

In the evening, we settled down along the bank of Ichhamati River. Dusk descended slowly and the stars lit up the sky. The fishermen tied their boats near the shore and retired for the night. The full moon, the boats dancing in the high tide, the murmuring sound of the water and a boatman singing bhatiali at a distance made for a perfect rural rendezvous. Later that evening, we began our return journey to Kolkata with the eternal memory of the sights and sounds of this beautiful river front retreat.

ROUTE MAP KOLKATA – TAKI			
DISTANCE (km)	DIRECTION	ROAD NAME	ROUTE DESCRIPTION
0.0		EAST TOPSIA ROAD	Set Trip Meter to '0' at the entrance of Milan Mela Grounds & ITC Hotel on Left.
0.2		EASTERN BYEPASS	Take right from Parama Island towards Ruby
0.7		TOWARDS BASANTI HIGHWAY	Keep PC Chandra Garden on left and proceed straight through the bylane beside the bridge
1.0		ON TO BASANTI HIGHWAY	Turn left from this point on to Basanti Highway
9.0		BASANTI HIGHWAY	Bamanghata Market. Proceed straight
13.6		BASANTI HIGHWAY	1st Gate of Kolkata IT Park & Bantala Leather Complex on right. Proceed straight
14.4		BASANTI HIGHWAY	2nd Gate of Kolkata IT Park & Bantala Leather Complex on right. Proceed straight
16.4		BASANTI HIGHWAY	Bhojerhat Notun Bazar. Proceed straight
16.7		BASANTI HIGHWAY	Road meets from right. Proceed straight
19.6		BASANTI HIGHWAY	Pagla Notun Bazar. Proceed straight
25.1		BASANTI HIGHWAY	Ghatak Pukur junction. Proceed straight
33.2		GO TOWARDS MALANCHHA	Bidyadhari River on left. Proceed straight
33.5		GO TOWARDS MALANCHHA	Kulti Bridge. Go straight

ROUTE MAP KOLKATA – TAKI			
DISTANCE (km)	DIRECTION	ROAD NAME	ROUTE DESCRIPTION
42.5		MALANCHHA	Take right bend towards Malancha Bazar
42.6		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Take left bend towards Malancha Bridge/Taki. (The main road goes towards Sonakhali/Basanti)
43.1		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Proceed straight. Cross Malancha Bridge on Bidyadhari Rivar
48.2		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Nimich School on left. Proceed straight.
51.7		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Take s soft left bend from Bhebia
54.7		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Murarishah Chowmatha. Proceed straight.
56.5		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Cross the bridge and proceed straight
63.4		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Railway level crossing (New Thhuba Rail Gate). Proceed straight
63.9		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Chowringhee More (Thhuba More). Proceed straight
64.3		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Take left from the "T" junction. Ramakrishna Mission on left
64.9		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Taki Hospital on left. Proceed straight
65.5		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Taki College on left. Proceed straight
65.7		TAKI HASNABAD ROAD	Arrived at Taki. Harendra Smriti Saikat - Rajbari Ghat



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KOLKATA ON
WHEELS
AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY

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Venue:



**Date: Saturday
December 20, 2025**

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**CITY BY THE
NIGHT**



Bengal Moto Fest 2025

Indian National
Autocross
Championship
Qualifier

 Joydip Sur





Bengal Moto Fest 2025, a 4 Wheeler Autocross & Indian National Autocross Championship Qualifier, delivered an absolute thriller at Jyotirmoy Knowledge Park near Sonarpur in front of a huge local crowd during the weekend of 8th & 9th November, 2025. This was the fifth consecutive year that this championship was being held here in West Bengal which witnessed a nail-biting competition among the top drivers of the eastern zone.

The event was ably supported by Vamcy Merla & JK Tyre. The championship featured eight categories divided according to engine capacity and modification, to make the competition as fair as possible. There was a separate event planned for the amateur drivers and ladies as well.

The total number of 184 entries were received which included three lady participants. Kolkata local lad Raunak Jana emerged as the fastest man on the





explained that the main objective of the event is to woo the youth from unsafe road racing to regulated motorsports, where safety of the drivers is of paramount importance.

The goal of FMSCI Octane Pits Indian National Autocross Championship is to identify young budding talents from different parts of the country and thus Bengal Moto Fest 2025 is a big step forward to the eminent goal. Motor Sports Association of Eastern India, the organising club of this event wants to be the guiding force of many raw talents in the future.

track clocking an impressive 1min 59.531 seconds in the National Championship Qualifier' while Nilanjan Banerjee clocked the fastest timing of 2 minutes 03.972 seconds in the open event. Amongst the others Babit Lyngdoh (from Shillong), Karan Choudhury, Areeb Rahman, Uday Ganguly, Srijita Shome and Anish Das emerged victorious in their respective categories.

Speaking on the occasion Saurav Chatterjee, the key organiser of the event,



CARS24 Launches India's First And Only 30-Day Return Policy On Cars

CARS24 has announced a bold step that redefines accountability in the pre-owned car industry, the launch of India's first-ever 30-day return policy. With this, buyers can return their car within 30 days or 999 km if it doesn't meet their expectations, a first for the Indian market and a move that directly ties product confidence to customer trust.

 Joydip Sur



Conversations with thousands of car owners and first-time buyers revealed a consistent truth, when it comes to pre-owned cars, peace of mind matters just as much as price. Buying a car is one of the biggest financial decisions for most families and people want the assurance that what they are driving is truly dependable, not just on day one but after they have lived with it. The 30-day return guarantee was designed to close that trust gap and give buyers the time, space and confidence to know they've made the right choice.

India's pre-owned car market, valued at over INR 3 lakh crore and growing nearly three times faster than new car sales, has long faced a single barrier: uncertainty around quality. CARS24 is tackling that challenge with rigour and transparency. Every car undergoes 300+ quality checks for performance, safety and structural integrity and only about 15% of inspected cars make it to the retail line-up, the rest are filtered out at the quality gate.

To make quality measurable, CARS24 uses AI-led inspection technology that can detect even micro-level defects

invisible to the human eye. Each car is certified through Cartruth, the company's proprietary inspection framework that ensures consistent standards of quality across every city in India.

"Trust has always been the hardest currency in this business," said Himanshu Ratnoo, CEO, CARS24 India. "Even new car manufacturers don't let you live with a car for a month and return it if it doesn't feel right. We're doing that because we're so sure of our quality and because accountability should start with us. We stand behind every car we sell. The 30-Day



Return Guarantee sets a higher standard for trust, one that proves quality through experience. We can offer it because we are certain our customers won't ever have to return the car"

The process is simple. Customers have 30 days to experience their car. If it doesn't meet expectations, they can raise a request through the CARS24 app or email. After a quick re-inspection, the car is picked up and the refund processed within days.

With this move, CARS24 becomes the first company in India to bring e-commerce-like consumer protection to the auto space. As the used car market grows at nearly three times the rate of new car sales, initiatives like these could shape a new era of confidence-led car buying where quality is proven through experience, not promises.

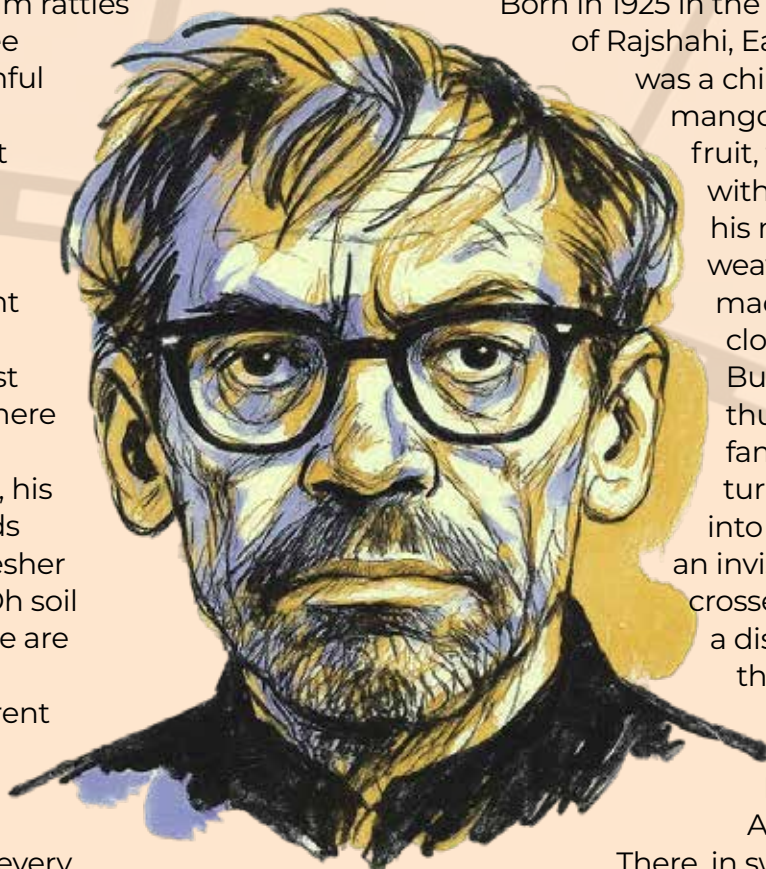
ETCHED IN HUMANISM, THE WOUNDS IN

Ghatak's Films



Sandip Banerjee

In the dim, rain-slicked alleys of old Kolkata, where the Hooghly laps at the ghats like a lover too weary to embrace, Ritwik Ghatak's films unfold like half-remembered folk tales whispered over endless cups of milky tea. Picture the scene: a tram rattles past a cluster of refugee shacks, its bell a mournful toll for the homes left behind in some distant East Bengal village. Smoke curls from a roadside tea stall, mingling with the scent of wet earth and jute sacks piled high against the monsoon. Somewhere in the distance, a baul singer strums a dotara, his voice cracking on words of longing—o amar desher maati, tumi kothay? (Oh soil of my homeland, where are you?) This is the world Ghatak knew, a world rent asunder by Partition's cruel knife, where every face bore the map of displacement, every song the scar of separation. And it is here, in this terribly beautiful chaos, that his humanism pulses like a fevered heart, refusing to still. Today when we look back at Partition of 1947, we find it historically present with emotive pulsations that draw contemporary reactions.



Humanism, for Ghatak, was no abstract ideal penned in drawing rooms or debated in the coffee houses of Park Street. It was the crude, aching empathy for the human, the ordinary soul battered by history's indifferent boot.

Born in 1925 in the lush, riverine cradle of Rajshahi, East Bengal, Ritwik was a child of abundance:

mango groves heavy with fruit, the Padma swelling with monsoon promise, his mother's voice weaving kirtans that made the Gods seem close enough to touch. But 1947 came like a thunderclap, uprooting families overnight, turning neighbours into strangers across an invisible line. Ghatak crossed into West Bengal, a displaced with a rage that would simmer into genius. He found solace in the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA).

There, in sweat-soaked rehearsal halls echoing with Rabindrasangeet and agitprop chants, he learned to channel personal grief into collective cry. "I make films for the people who have no voice," he once slurred to a circle of wide-eyed students at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), his eyes red-rimmed but fierce.

Those students—Kumar Shahani, Mani Kaul, Adoor Gopalakrishnan—carried his torch, remembering the man who edited reels while humming bhatiyali boatman's songs, tears tracing paths down his unshaven cheeks.

Ghatak's life was a tapestry of triumphs and tragedies, each thread dyed in the ink of unyielding humanity. He wept on stage during IPTA runs, not from weakness but from the unbearable weight of what art could—and could not—mend. Legend has it he once halted a midnight screening at a dingy Tollygunge studio, insisting the projectionist replay a scene of a mother's farewell because "the light didn't catch her sorrow right." His loneliness was profound, a refugee's isolation amplified by the bottle, yet it fuelled a cinema that embraced the marginalised with the tenderness of a lover's touch. In Ghatak's lens, the worker hauling jute bales, the woman scrubbing pots in a one-room tenement, the folk performer crooning to an empty riverbank—they were not extras but protagonists in the grand, tragic epic of existence. His humanism whispered that to be human is to suffer, to yearn, to persist; it celebrated the dignity in struggle, the spark of hope in despair's embers.

The film that everyone should remember and yet most people tend to forget is 'Nagarik' originally framed in 1952 but released in 1977. Film critics try to compare this movie with 'Citizen Kane'. The film features a young man looking for work in post-partition Calcutta. It is the story of not one individual but that of every family who have lost everything in Partition. Poverty does not appear in statistics but in empty utensils, humanity cries to find reciprocation from human beings. Many film analysts opine that if 'Nagarik' would have released before 'Pather Panchali', then it might have become the face of modern Indian Cinema.

Consider Meghe Dhaka Tara (1960), that lacerating portrait of sacrifice etched into the soul of every Bengali who has ever shouldered a family's burden. Nita, played by Supriya Choudhury with eyes that hold oceans of unspoken pleas, is the eldest daughter in a refugee family teetering on the edge of



oblivion. Calcutta's post-partition sprawl—those makeshift colonies of tin roofs and flickering kerosene lamps—becomes her prison. She teaches, she cooks, she mends, her dreams of love and study crumbling like the plaster on their walls. Her fiancé Shankar drains her vitality as casually as one sips tea, while her invalid father quotes Tagore in futile rebellion against their lot. The film's humanism crests in that shattering climax: Nita, ravaged by tuberculosis, flees to a hillside overlooking the city's indifferent sprawl. The camera, Ghatak's unblinking eye, circles her like a predator, the wind whipping her sari as the sky fractures in whip-pans that mimic a breaking heart. Then, the cry—"Dada, ami banchte chai!"—Brother, I want to live! It rends the air, a primal howl against the Gods of economics and exile.

This thread of fraternal longing weaves through Komal Gandhar (1961), a film as intimate as a diary entry, as expansive as Bengal's lost unity. Drawing from his IPTA days, Ghatak conjures a troupe of actors divided by the very border that cleaved his heart. Anima and Bhriгу, lovers and performers, navigate the chasm between East and West Bengal troupes, their rehearsals a microcosm of national fracture. The stage becomes a battlefield of egos and ideologies, songs of harmony clashing against the discord of displacement. When they finally unite for a performance of Call of the Road, the camera swoops in ecstatic arcs, capturing bodies in fluid motion, voices blending in kirtan-like fervour. Yet Partition's scar festers: a displaced aunt's tales of drowned

villages, the hollow ring of empty theatre seats. “We are all shards of the same broken raga,” he seems to say, his off-screen voice humming along to the flute’s melancholy wail. The film ends not in triumph but in quiet resolve, the lovers parted but their song enduring—a fragile bridge over the abyss.

No exploration of Ghatak’s soul can sidestep *Subarnarekha* (1965), that riverine elegy for innocence drowned in the currents of fate. Ishwar and Sita, orphaned siblings, wash up on the golden banks of the Subarnarekha, refugees forging a fragile idyll amid the flux of lives uprooted. Years pass in montage: the river’s inexorable flow mirroring time’s cruelty, folk tunes lilting over scenes of childhood games turned to ash. Sita grows into a woman of quiet fire, her laughter a rare bloom in the grey of Calcutta’s underbelly. But caste, poverty, and the brothel’s shadow conspire to shatter them. The recognition scene—Ishwar, now a broken man, spotting Sita’s anklets glinting under a dancer’s veil—is cinema’s cruellest gut-punch, a whip-pan slamming us into the horror of familial bonds severed by society’s blade. Sita’s suicide, the child Abhiram’s lynching: these are not mere plot points but indictments of a world that devours its own. Yet Ghatak infuses the despair with defiant humanism—the river, that ancient witness, carries their story onward, and in the final frames, a new generation dips toes in its waters, hinting at cycles broken, if only in dream.

Even the inanimate stirs Ghatak’s compassionate gaze, as in *Ajantrik* (1958), a

tender fable masquerading as road movie. Bimal, a lanky taxi driver in the dusty lanes of rural Odisha, lavishes affection on his decrepit Chevrolet, Jagaddal—the World-Eater—a rusting relic coughing black smoke like an ailing grandfather. In a landscape of tribal drums and monsoon-muddied paths, Bimal converses with his machine, polishing its hood with the devotion of a ritual bath. When Jagaddal finally sputters to death in a scrapyard, Bimal’s grief is childlike, raw; he weeps amid the wreckage as village children clamber over the corpse, their laughter a chaotic symphony. Ghatak’s genius lies in this extension of empathy: if a man can mourn a car, forged of steel and forgotten dreams, what depths of love await the truly forsaken? The film hums with folk rhythms—dholak beats underscoring chases, a baul’s drone over sunsets—reminding us that humanism bridges the animate and inert, the living and the lost.

Ghatak’s final whisper, *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam* (1973), drifts like mist over the silted channels of a vanishing world. Adapted from Advaita Malla Barman’s novel, it chronicles the Malo fishermen of the Titash, a river that births and buries its people in equal measure. Kishore and Basanti’s love blooms amid net-casts and cradle-songs, the community a tapestry of shared labours and laments. But progress—dams, droughts, migrations—erodes their banks, turning abundance to aridity. Basanti, widowed young, becomes a madwoman haunting the dry bed, her cries echoing the ghosts of abundance. Ghatak, his body failing from years of drink, shot on location in feverish bursts, infusing every frame with the river’s pulse. The humanism here is ecological, almost spiritual: the Titash as mother, lover, grave, its folk songs—bhatiyali oarsmen’s chants, women’s harvest refrains—a lifeline to cultural memory. In the coda, as the river revives in myth if not in fact, Ghatak affirms that communities, like rivers, carve paths through stone; loss forges resilience.

There is a very popular Bengali saying, “Bhabo, bhabo bhaba practice koro”. This is what Ghatak wanted to convey when he filtered his message of humanity through



his movies. 'Jukti Tokko Aar Goppo' makes us question and keep on questioning till we get the appropriate answer. Here humanism struggles to keep faith in reason, dialogue and art. A century later his birth, Ghatak is still not finished talking to us. His 'Jukti and Tokko' seems to shake our mental blockage about human identity for it is this quest for identity that figures the director's love for humanity.

Folk music threads the humanistic narrative of Ghatak: the haunting pull of bhatiyali, the devotional surge of kirtan, and the revolutionary pulse of IPTA anthems, all underscoring the soul's indomitable song. Refugees and their rootlessness form the chorus—sharanarthi colonies as crucibles of reinvention, their makeshift hearths glowing with stories swapped over dal and rice. Trams and trains slice through frames like veins of steel, ferrying souls toward uncertain dawns; riverbanks cradle confessions, their muddled edges blurring self and other. Mythological echoes abound: Durga's lion-roar in a sister's defiance, the epic's cyclical suffering in everyday endurance. Kolkata, that brooding muse, breathes through it all—the clatter of Russell Street trams, the neon haze of New Market at dusk, the intellectual ferment of Basusree cinema hall where Ghatak's reels unspooled to hushed awe. In those pre-Nandan days, when film societies huddled in borrowed rooms, his work ignited debates that spilled into dawn addas. Satyajit Ray, ever the patrician, praised Ghatak's "raw power" in private letters, though their paths diverged like the Ganges' forks. Mrinal Sen hailed him as the "voice of the voiceless," crediting Meghe Dhaka Tara for teaching him cinema's social spine. Adoor Gopalakrishnan recalls FTII nights when Ghatak, bottle in hand, dissected a Ruskin Bond story, insisting, "See the humanism in the hill folk's quiet rage—it's Bengal's too." Kumar Shahani, in a teary interview years later, confessed Subarnarekha "broke me open," birthing his own formal experiments. Mani Kaul echoed: "Ritwik taught us that film is not decoration; it's the wound made visible."

Philosophically, Ghatak's humanism was Marxist in marrow, Tagorean in spirit:



cinema as socially responsible act, a mirror held to society's bruises. He celebrated the ordinary—rickshaw pullers dodging puddles, seamstresses threading needles by candlelight, performers whose art outlives their names. "The people are the heroes," he declared in a faded manifesto, "not kings or stars, but the ones who build and break under the same sun." In an era of escapist Bollywood gloss, his refusal to prettify pain was revolutionary; his empathy, a call to arms. He believed art must disturb the comfortable, comfort the disturbed—echoing IPTA's creed, but laced with personal melancholy.

Today, in a world more fractured than the Bengal of 1947—borders bristling with wire, migrations swelling like untamed rivers, inequalities gnawing at the social fabric—Ghatak's cinema feels not relic but revelation. His films teach empathy as survival skill, the dignity of struggle as sacred rite. In Kolkata's transformed streets, where trams yield to flyovers and refugee tales fade into footnotes, his cry lingers: a reminder that to be human is to reach across the divide, to sing through the silence, to affirm life's fierce, fragile beauty. Ritwik Ghatak did not heal the wounds; he made them sing. And in that song, we find our own indomitable spirit—the enduring humanity, the emotions flowing eternal. Ghatak's crave for humanity has made him exactly what he wanted to be; a bridge between history's deepest wounds and art's attempt to heal them.

Giribala Thakurbari of Agarpara



WHEELER Kinjal Bose

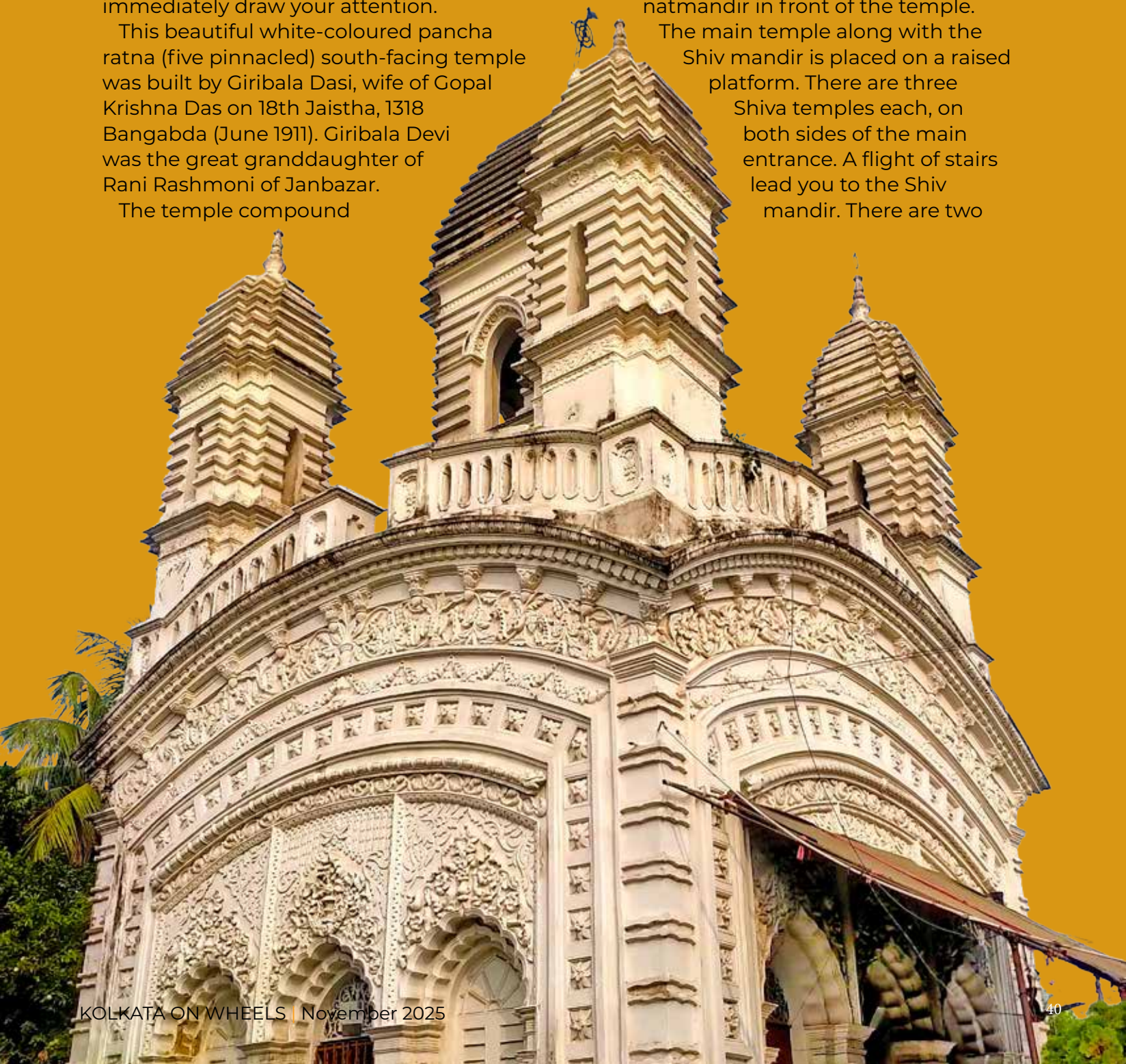
A beautiful pancharatna temple by the side of the Ganges at Agarpara in North 24 Parganas district will immediately draw your attention.

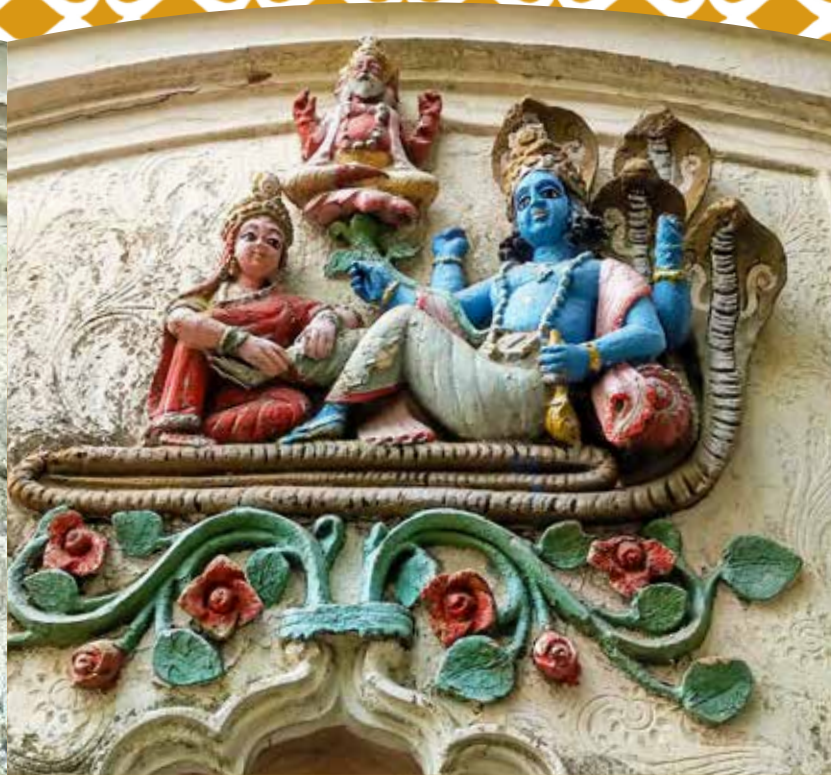
This beautiful white-coloured pancharatna (five pinnacled) south-facing temple was built by Giribala Dasi, wife of Gopal Krishna Das on 18th Jaistha, 1318 Bangabda (June 1911). Giribala Devi was the great granddaughter of Rani Rashmoni of Janbazar.

The temple compound

comprises of a pancharatna temple dedicated to Radha Gobinda Jiu, six aatchala Shiva temples and a natmandir in front of the temple.

The main temple along with the Shiv mandir is placed on a raised platform. There are three Shiva temples each, on both sides of the main entrance. A flight of stairs lead you to the Shiv mandir. There are two





stairs on the southern and northern sides.

Each Shiva lingam has a distinct name. From the southern side they are referred to as – Rameswar, Rajeswar and Gopeswar; and from the northern side they are known as Tarakeswar, Bhuvaneswar and Giriswar. One can find beautiful stucco works not only in Radha Gobinda temple but also at the top of each entrance of the Shiva temples. It is testimony to the

exquisite craftsmanship of the artisans.

The temple compound is well kept. There is a big natmandir just in front of the temple. The ceiling of the natmandir rests on a number of beautiful pillars. The floor of the same is made of white marble.

The festivals which are celebrated here with great pomp and splendour are Rashyatra, Dolyatra, and Janmastami.



Natmandir



The main entrance to the temple

FIVE MOST ICONIC ENGINES

That Powered the Indian Automotive Scene

 Promit Hazra

India's automotive journey has been profoundly shaped by engines that not only propelled vehicles but also defined eras of mobility, from post-independence ruggedness to modern efficiency and performance. Over decades, these powerplants have become cultural icons, powering millions of cars across diverse terrains and socio-economic landscapes. While early engines emphasised durability amid sparse infrastructure, later ones embraced fuel efficiency, emissions norms, and driving thrill. This article highlights five iconic engines that have left a lasting impact in India.



BMC 1.5-litre

Originally a British Motor Corporation design, it stands as a cornerstone of India's early automotive history, powering the Hindustan Ambassador from the late 1950s

until its discontinuation in 2014. This inline-four petrol unit, later adapted with Isuzu diesel variants in the 1980s, delivered around 55-75 bhp and was renowned for its indestructible build, surviving rough Indian roads, monsoons, and overloading with minimal maintenance. Commonly used in government fleets, taxis, and family cars, it symbolised reliability in an era of limited options, with over four million Ambassadors

produced. Its simple overhead valve setup and cast-iron block made it a favourite for mechanics. Even today, restored Ambassadors evoke nostalgia, underscoring how this engine democratised personal transport in post-independence India.



Suzuki F8B 796cc

The F8B revolutionised mass mobility when it debuted in the Maruti 800 in 1983, powering India's first affordable people's car and dominating the market into the early 2000s. This three-cylinder petrol mill, producing 35-45 bhp, was lightweight, frugal (up to 20 kmpl), and easy to service, making it ideal for congested cities and budget-conscious buyers. It extended to models like the Alto and Zen, with millions of units sold, transforming India from a scooter nation to a car-owning one. Its carburetted simplicity evolved to fuel injection for BS norms, and its commonality in second-hand markets ensured parts availability nationwide.

Fiat 1.3-litre Multijet diesel

Badged as DDiS in Maruti vehicles, the Fiat 1.3-litre Multijet emerged in the mid-2000s as India's 'national engine,' fuelling a diesel revolution across hatchbacks, sedans, and compact SUVs. Delivering 75-90 bhp and 190-200 Nm, it powered icons like the Maruti Swift, Dzire, Ritz, SX4, Tata Indica Vista, and even Fiat's own Linea, with over 20 models adopting it due to its efficiency (25-30 kmpl) and peppy low-end torque. Licensed to multiple brands including Tata and GM, it became ubiquitous in the BS4 era, but wasn't updated to comply with the BS6



norms and got killed off. Its common-rail technology balanced performance with low running costs, making it a taxi fleet favourite and enthusiast tuner base.



Honda 1.5-litre i-VTEC

India's go-to petrol engine that roared into life with the 1998 City Type-Z and never

really left. Badged simply as VTEC back then, it unleashed 105 bhp and a screaming 8,000 rpm redline that turned every expressway run into an exhilarating experience. By 2008 it evolved into the smoother, smarter i-VTEC, pumping out 118-120 bhp and 145 Nm across the City, Mobilio and BR-V. With 17-18 kmpl real-world efficiency and that addictive VTEC 'kick' at 5,500 rpm, it became the default choice for enthusiast as well as sensible buyers. Bullet-proof reliability, endless tuning potential, and a soundtrack that still gives goose bumps made it essentially a dependable fun daily. Even in the BS6 era it soldiered on with minor tweaks, refusing to die facing tough competition from the hybrids and the turbos. It still lives on in the current generation City and Elevate.

Toyota 2.5-litre D-4D Diesel

Launched with the Innova in 2005, it epitomises unbreakable reliability, powering the Innova, Fortuner and Hilux through multiple generations into the 2020s. This four-cylinder common-rail unit, producing 100-150 bhp and 320-343 Nm, excels in torque delivery for laden hauls, achieving 12-15 kmpl while enduring abuse in taxis, tour operators, and family fleets. Upgraded to GD series for BS6 compliance, it's common in MPVs and SUVs, clocking 3-5 lakh kilometres without major issues. Its over-engineered design, low maintenance, and quiet operation made it a staple for long-distance travel, solidifying Toyota's reputation in India and continuing to influence the commercial and personal vehicle landscape today.



Wheelers Celebrate The Festive Season In Style

 Wheeler Sarbajit Mookherjee

As the festive fervour of Durga Puja, Kali Puja, and Diwali gradually mellowed across Kolkata, the Wheelers family gathered once again — this time not for a road trip, but for a different kind of celebration. On the evening of October 25, 2025, life members and their families converged at Udayan Banquets (a fantastic venue courtesy Wheeler Sudip Ghosh) for the much-awaited Festive Meet, an evening that combined camaraderie, culture, and culinary indulgence — all in true Wheeler style.

The theme for the evening was “Ethnic Elegance,” and the venue came alive with vibrant colours and festive spirit. Members arrived decked in

traditional wear — the men in crisp punjabis and kurtas, and the ladies in elegant sarees and salwar suits. It was a refreshing change of pace from the usual Wheelers’ gear, as conversations flowed easily over laughter, memories, and the unmistakable warmth of shared friendship.

What made the evening even more special was the nostalgia that surrounded it. Many members had only recently returned from the Durga Puja Drive Tour, an adventurous expedition through the misty mountains of Sikkim and the lush jungles of Dooars. The experience had clearly left an imprint — stories of winding mountain roads, jungle safaris, and convoy camaraderie dominated the adda sessions, punctuated with laughter and good-natured banter.

As the evening grew darker, the stage lights came on, and the night’s cultural extravaganza began. The Wheelers’ community has always been about much more than cars — they are about talent, creativity, and togetherness



— and the performances that followed were proof of that.

The younger Wheelers set the tone early, dazzling the audience with their confidence and artistry. Mrityika Das, Arati Roy, Devanya Banerjee, Drishtika Dey, and Rahul Singh took turns captivating the gathering with spirited singing and dance performances that earned rousing applause. Their energy and enthusiasm brought infectious joy to the entire gathering.

Among the spouses, Ananya Banerjee delivered a soulful singing performance that left everyone spellbound — her voice filling the room with melody and grace. Then came the Wheelers themselves, showing that their flair extends well beyond the driver's seat. Chittaranjan Das, Aniruddha Chakraborty, Copinath Adhikary, Sambuddha Deb, Amit Mukhopadhyay, and Tathagata each took the stage with renditions that mixed nostalgia and verve, while Sumit Kumar Sinha's instrumental performance added a refined musical touch to the evening. All through these delightful performances, trays of piping hot starters made the rounds — crispy

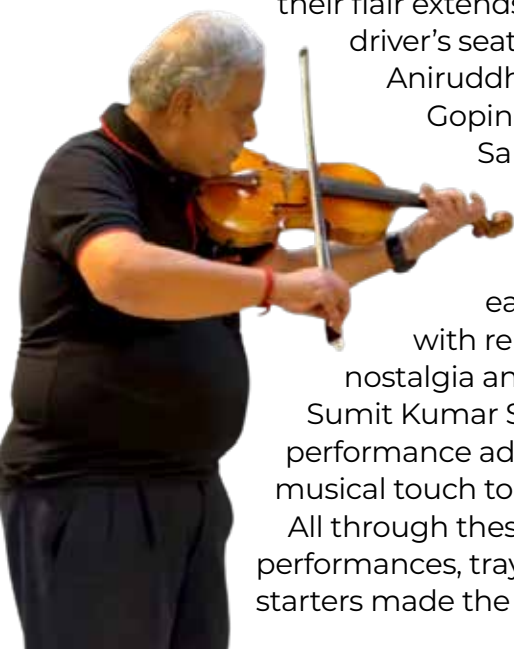


chicken and paneer pakoras adding to the festive flavour. Glasses clinked as members enjoyed their preferred poison, deep in conversation and laughter. The air was alive with the unmistakable sounds of fellowship — music, chatter, and the occasional cheer from an appreciative audience.

As the performances drew to a close, the aroma of Bengali delicacies began to fill the air, signalling the grand finale of the evening — dinner. The lavish Bengali cuisine spread was a feast to remember, with traditional favourites taking centre stage. The Fish Fry, in particular, was unanimously hailed as the star of the meal — perfectly crisp, flavourful, and quintessentially Bengali.

By the time the evening wound down, there was a palpable sense of warmth and satisfaction in the air. Members slowly dispersed, still exchanging smiles and promises to meet again soon. It wasn't just another social gathering — it was a reaffirmation of the bond that defines the Wheelers community: friendship, fellowship, and the joy of shared experiences both on and off the road.

For the Wheelers, the engines may have been silent that evening, but the spirit of togetherness was very much in motion — driving yet another unforgettable chapter in the club's cherished story.



Happy Birthday to Wheelers

KOLKATA ON
WHEELS
AUTOVENTURING GUIDE AROUND THE CITY

NAME	DATE
Suranjan Paul	2-Nov
Suman Mukhopadhyay	2-Nov
Partha Sarathi Sengupta	2-Nov
Mahesh Kr Keyal	2-Nov
Ruchir Mohunta	3-Nov
Saibal Roy	3-Nov
Pronobesh Poddar	3-Nov
Vishal Sikaria	3-Nov
Bholanath Chatterjee	3-Nov
Sambuddha Deb	4-Nov
Ayan Das	5-Nov
Raktim Nag	5-Nov
Shyamal Kumar Sen	5-Nov
Shantonu Moitra	5-Nov
Vinesh Kumar Joshi	6-Nov
Ranaji Ganguli	6-Nov
Swapan Banerjee	7-Nov
Joydip Maitra (Badsha)	9-Nov
Sabyasachi Ghosh	9-Nov
Soumen Ganguly	9-Nov
Pradip Chakraborty	10-Nov
Avijit Das	11-Nov
Debasis Chakraborty	11-Nov
Dipanjan Ganguly	11-Nov
Pradeep Chowdhury	11-Nov
Shyamal Kiron Bose	11-Nov
Sanatan Ray Chaudhuri	12-Nov
Tapan Kumar Ghosh	12-Nov
Suman Ghosh	12-Nov
Shukla Sinha	12-Nov
Abhishek Biswas	12-Nov
Supradip Mullick	13-Nov
Pratik Das	14-Nov
Amit Tibrewal	14-Nov
Gautam Ghosh	14-Nov

NAME	DATE
Jayanta Mitra	14-Nov
Bikash Pradhan	14-Nov
Bharat Bhushan Rakheja	14-Nov
Kaustuv Roy	14-Nov
Gaurav Surana	15-Nov
Soumya Brata Dhar	15-Nov
Rakesh Bajoria	16-Nov
Manish Debnath	16-Nov
Aritra Sardar	16-Nov
Sudip Auddy	17-Nov
Sujata Sinha	17-Nov
Prabir Choudhury	18-Nov
Siddhartha Ghosh	19-Nov
Arnab Kumar De	19-Nov
Dr. Dibyajyoti Basu	20-Nov
Anuj Chaturvedi	20-Nov
Noshir Naval Framjee	20-Nov
Arup Ghosh	21-Nov
Anirban Mukhopadhyay	22-Nov
Shubha Ranjan Nandi	22-Nov
Kaushik Bhattacharyya	23-Nov
Swarnabha Paul	23-Nov
Atish Ghosh	23-Nov
Amit Singh	25-Nov
Saradindu Sanyal	25-Nov
Dilip Sarkar	26-Nov
Prabal Chowdhury	26-Nov
Partha Chatterjee	27-Nov
Sudipta Chakraborty	27-Nov
Sumit Soni	29-Nov
Debanjan Dutta	29-Nov
Debajyoti Datta	29-Nov
Debasish Kumar Sinha	29-Nov
Subir Ghosh	30-Nov
Sreejit Poddar	30-Nov

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