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WHEELS

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EDITORIAL

Volvo Car India has unveiled its latest BEV – the EX30, at SPL Volvo dealership in Kolkata, setting an innovative benchmark for all electric SUVs. The much-awaited all electric SUV will be officially launched, with price details, during end of September and customer deliveries will begin from October 2025. The EX30 is being assembled at the Company's plant at Hosakote in Bengaluru, Karnataka. More on that in this edition's 'Upcoming Cars' column.

Embarking on a long road trip across India's diverse landscapes can be an exhilarating adventure, filled with scenic views, unexpected detours, and thrills of the open highway. However, the unpredictability of such journeys—from sudden breakdowns to minor mishaps—demands preparation to ensure safety and peace of mind. Equipping your car with essential tools and gadgets is crucial for handling emergencies, maintaining vehicle performance, and enhancing overall comfort. In this edition's 'Car Tech' column, we are going to look at seven essential tools for making your road trips more enjoyable.

Among all the hustle and bustle in the city leading up to the biggest and the grandest festival of Bengal, we were scouting for a quick getaway to get a breather. That is when someone suggested visiting Antpur, merely 38.5 kilometres from the Nivedita Setu. Join Team WHEELS as we take you on a spiritual rendezvous to Antpur.

Happy reading!



Joydip Sur
 Editor



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YANGWANG U9

Track Edition Sets New Global EV Top-Speed

Record By Clocking **472.41** kmph



YANGWANG, BYD's high-end sub-brand, has set a new global electric vehicle (EV) top-speed record of 472.41 kmph at the ATP Automotive Testing Papenburg test track in Germany. The feat was achieved with YANGWANG's latest U9 Track

Edition supercar on August 8, 2025, making it the world's fastest EV.

The YANGWANG U9 Track Edition is built upon the same e4 Platform and DiSus-X core technical architecture as the YANGWANG U9 currently on sale in China. On top of this, it features the





world's first mass-produced 1200V ultra-high-voltage vehicle platform, paired with a thermal-management system optimised for extreme conditions. This combination of an existing technical footprint and ground-breaking enhancements elevates the YANGWANG U9 Track Edition's performance to unprecedented levels.

Breaking world records demands both relentless power delivery and exceptional high-speed stability. The YANGWANG U9 Track Edition's e4 Platform — the world's first quad-motor system to feature 30,000rpm high-performance motors — delivers peak power of 555kW per motor, with a combined system output exceeding 3,000PS. This grants the vehicle an astonishing power-to-weight ratio of 1,217PS per tonne, placing it among the top tier in the global automotive industry.

Beyond this, the e4 Platform's quad-motor independent torque-vectoring system continuously monitors road feedback, adjusting each wheel's torque

at an ultra-high frequency that exceeds 100 times per second. Even at high speeds, it maintains absolute control over body posture, ensuring no wheel slip or loss of traction.

The DiSus-X Intelligent Body Control System performs rapid, independent vertical adjustments to the suspension at each corner of the vehicle during aggressive acceleration and cornering, or on uneven surfaces. This not only suppresses pitch and roll — enhancing driver comfort and confidence — but also actively optimises the contact patch between the tyres and the road, maximising grip. Working in synergy with the e4 Platform, it delivers dual guarantees for vehicle stability and driving safety.

Unlike traditional supercars, the YANGWANG U9 adopts the innovative "e4 Platform + DiSus-X" technical architecture, introducing "body posture control" to racetrack scenarios and exploring the boundaries of safety and performance for supercars in track environments. Furthermore, the YANGWANG U9 Track Edition retains the aerodynamic design



of the current YANGWANG U9 and is equipped with an enhanced, optional carbon-fiber front splitter that is already in mass production, fully verifying the scientific design and technical reliability of the YANGWANG U9 under ultra-high-speed operating conditions.

To enhance tyre performance and durability under extreme driving conditions, YANGWANG, building on data gleaned during extensive testing and achievements in Germany in 2024, has engaged in collaboration with Giti Tire to develop a track-focused semi-slick tyre. This high-performance tyre feature optimised compound materials and a bespoke tread design, while an innovative knurling treatment at the wheel-rim interface, combined with high-viscosity lubricant, minimises relative slippage between the tyre and the rim

during hard acceleration or braking. This reduces torque loss and tyre wear, while improving predictability and stability during dynamic manoeuvres.

The record was set by German professional driver Marc Basseng, who was behind the wheel for the previous global EV speed record in 2024. After completing the high-speed test for YANGWANG, he said, "Last year, I thought I'd peaked. I never expected to break my own record so soon — but here we are, at the same track, with new technologies that have made it possible."

By setting a new global EV speed record, YANGWANG redefines the sustainable supercar. Backed by BYD's innovation and sustainability commitments, YANGWANG employs cutting-edge tech to deliver unmatched performance, safety, and driving experience.

VOLVO EX30

 Joydip Sur

Unveiled in Kolkata

Volvo Car India has unveiled its latest BEV – the EX30, at SPL Volvo dealership in Kolkata, setting an innovative benchmark for all electric SUVs. The much-awaited all electric SUV will be officially launched, with price details, during end of September and customer deliveries will begin from October 2025. The EX30 is being assembled at the Company's plant at Hosakote in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

The EX30 is Volvo's most sustainable car having the lowest carbon footprint of any fully electric Volvo to date, and its attractive interiors are made from recycled denim, PET bottles, aluminium, PVC pipes etc. Incorporating Scandinavian design and cutting-edge technology, the EX30 has achieved five-star rating in the Euro NCAP safety test. The EX30 also features active safety tools like an intersection auto brake to lessen collisions, a door-opening alert to prevent "dooring" accidents, and the much-advanced Safe Space Technology that boasts of 5 cameras, 5 radars and 12 ultrasonic sensors.

The five ambient lighting themes and sounds, inspired by Scandinavian seasons and

sights, give a full immersive experience. With the new Harman Kardon soundbar concept, a 1040W amplifier and nine high-performance speakers, this state-of-the-art system delivers immersive surround sound for everyone. The 12.3-inch high-res centre display is intuitive and adaptable, with Google built in, 5G connectivity, OTA updates and much more. This head-turner has a new sleek design as well and has won many international awards. These include the prestigious Red Dot award: Best of the Best Product Design 2024, and the World Urban Car of the Year 2024.

The EX30 comes with an 8-year battery warranty and includes a wall box charger as a standard fitment. The car also reimagines how one interacts with it. With the NFC (Near Frequency Card), one can just tap onto the sensor and unlock the car. Additionally, with Digital Key Plus in the Volvo Car App, the phone itself acts as a key. It's not just convenient; it's smarter, safer, and surprisingly seamless.

With its advanced electric drivetrain and innovative features, this model offers an unparalleled driving experience while contributing to a sustainable environment.





DURGA PUJA

The Pride of Bengal



Anindya Sengupta

*"Ya Devi Sarva-bhuteshu
Shakti rupena sansthita,
Namah-tasyai, namah-tasyai,
Namah-tasyai, namoh namaha."*



Come September, Kolkata and all parts of Bengal deck up with dazzling lights, artistic decorations, beating of 'dhaks', and the frenzied Bengalees, young and old, would throng in the streets of Kolkata visiting almost every puja pandals. For once, the city would forget all negativity, and would stand in queue for

hours only to have a view of the idol and the elaborate decoration. For once, they would hardly mind waking up at 4 in the morning to listen to the mesmerising recital of late Birendra Krishna Bhadra. Old is gold.

As a Wheeler, I never miss the Durga puja celebration. The aesthetic decorations of the 'Barowari' puja pandals made with bamboo,

cloth, thermocol, paper, clay, glass and recycled materials incorporating intricate creative artwork, differ sharply from that of the pujas of aristocratic houses ('Bonedi barir puja'). Roving across the city, I never intended to have mere pandal hopping, but to seek something more, to know the unknown realms of our rich cultural heritage. It is a journey towards antiquity, exploring the history of Durga puja, the pride of Bengal.

It is said in the Upanishad that Lord Rama broke the custom and worshipped the goddess in early autumn, in the Bengali month of Ashwin, with 108 blue lotuses, and lighting 108 lamps before going to war against Ravana. Hence, this festival is called 'Akal Bodhan' or 'odd season worship' as the custom was to celebrate it in spring.

Browsing through Durga Puja in West Bengal: A Cultural Extravaganza by Vikash Dabriwal, I realised that Durga puja is celebrated in undivided Bengal even when the Mughals ruled India. As early as 1606, the festival was organised by Bhabananda Majumdar, the ancestor of Maharaja Krishna Chandra Roy. However, the oldest Durga puja of Kolkata dates back to 1610, organised by the zamindar family of Sabarna Roy Chowdhury at Barisha 'Atchala' by Roy Lakshmikanta Gangopadhyay Majumder



Barisha Aatchala Bari

Sobhabazar Rajbari



Chowdhury and his wife Bhagavati Devi. It was the same place where in 1698 the descendant of Sabarna Chowdhury and Sir Charles Eyre, son-in-law of Job Charnock, signed the lease agreement for three villages, namely Sataluti, Govindapur and Kalikata. Since then, for over four hundred years, the tradition of worshipping the goddess continued. Presently, the goddess is worshipped with proper rituals at eight different sites, of which six are at Barisha. Animal sacrifice was a custom in the yore, but now only rice pumpkin and sugarcane are sacrificed.

Raja Nabakrishna Deb of Sobhabazar Rajbari organised the puja in 1757 in honour of Lord Clive, soon after the Battle of Plassey. The British Commander-in-chief Colonel Robert Clive became such a rich and powerful person that he wanted to pay his gratitude to God for his victory against Siraj-ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal. Since the only church of the time was destroyed by Siraj, Clive's Persian interpreter and zamindar, Nabakrishna Deb advised Clive to offer thanks to goddess Durga instead. The historical event set a precedent to the subsequent aristocratic family pujas. In the following years, the upper echelons of the East India Company were invited during the Durga puja. The

Jorasanko Shib Krishna Daw Bari



Britishers enjoyed the 'nautch' (corrupted pronunciation of 'natch') along with beef and ham from Wilson's Hotel (now Lalit Great Eastern Hotel) and drank to their heart's content.

Professor Sukanta Chaudhury mentions that "high level British officials regularly attend Durga Pujas organised by influential Bengalis and British soldiers actually participated in the pujas, praised, and even saluted the deity, but 'the most amazing act of worship was performed by the East India Company itself: in 1765 it offered a thanksgiving Puja, no doubt as a political act to appease its Hindu subjects, on obtaining the Diwani of Bengal.'" (Sukanta Chaudhuri, ed. Calcutta: The Living City, Vol. 1: The Past). It is reported that even the Company Auditor-General John Chips organised Durga Puja at his Birbhum office. In fact, the full official participation of the British in the Durga Puja continued till 1840, when a law was promulgated by the government banning such participation."

Ever since Naba Krishna Deb started celebrating the Durga Puja, aristocratic families started to flaunt their riches. In a way, rivalry among the aristocratic families (bonedi bari) was a precursor of the competition that we find today among the barowari puja committees. This led to

the coining of the famous phrase: 'Goddess Durga adorns Herself with jewelleryes at Jorasanko's Shib Krishna Dawn's house, partakes lunch at Abhay Charan Mitra's house in Kumartuli, and enjoys music and dance at Sovabazar Rajbari.'

In 1790, Rani Rashmoni's father-in-law, Babu Pritaram Das (or Marh), started the puja celebration. Later, Rani Rashmoni celebrated the festival at her residence in Janbazar (13 Rani Rashmoni Road) with traditional grandeur, including whole-night jattras, rather than by entertaining the Englishmen with whom she carried on a running feud. The heritage Durga puja was visited by many eminent persons like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Sree Ramakrishna, who also conducted the puja. Today, the puja is celebrated by her heirs in their respective houses.

The Durga Puja of Bhowanipur Mallick Bari Singha Bahini is almost 400 years old. It is said that in 1614 the ancestor of the Mallick family, Babu Baidyanath Mallick, found the ashta dhatu idol of the Singhabahini Durga at a cave in Chattagram, now in Bangladesh. He brought the idol to Saptagram of Bengal, and after getting divine intervention, started worshipping the idol. The idol is

Bhowanipore Mallick Bari





Guptipara Durga Puja

quite unique in its look. It has an inbuilt gold crown on Her head, and the face of the lion looks more like a dragon. The idol is worshipped alternatively at 22 Jatindra Mohan Avenue heritage house and at Kashinath Mullick Thakurbari of M.G. Road. The idol of Goddess Durga stays with each of the associates of the Mallick family for almost 30 years, who then conducts the Puja.

Hence, well before the barowari puja became a usual practice, goddess Durga was worshipped in the majestic 'thakur dalan' of the rich zamindars who used to flaunt their wealth, display munificence and assert their social and political authority over the common people. Elaborate ritual arrangements, lavish food offerings (or 'bhog'), musical performances and 'jattras' enticed the local people who participated (or gave free service) in the puja celebration, considering it to be a special honour.

With the decline of the zamindari legacy in the nineteenth century, the concept of 'Barowari Puja' began. Etymologically, 'barowari' is a fusion of Sanskrit word 'bar' (i.e. people) and Persian 'wari', which means 'for the public'. The origin of the community puja can be credited to the twelve friends of Guptipara in Hooghly, who collaborated and collected contributions from local residents to conduct the first community puja called

the 'barowari' puja in 1790. The barowari puja was brought to Kolkata in 1832 by Raja Harinath of Cossimbazar, as mentioned by Somendra Chandra Nandy in 'Durga Puja: A Rational Approach' published in The Statesman Festival, 1991.

M. D. Muthukumaraswamy and Molly Kaushal mention in Folklore, Public Sphere, and Civil Society that the 'barowari' Durga puja "gave way to the sarbajanin or community puja in 1910, when the Sanatan Dharmotsahini Sabha organised the first truly community puja at Baghbazar in North Calcutta with full public contribution, control, and participation. Now the dominant mode of Bengali Durga Puja is the 'public' version." The institution of the community Durga Puja in the 18th and the 19th century Bengal contributed vigorously to the development of Bengali culture.

With the passage of time modern-day technology and innovation are used in the making of idols and the pandals. Every year, the barowari puja committees adopt different themes in decorating the pandals. Even the artistic use of low-cost materials for making pandals attracts people. Gold jewellery and armoury of gold are also used by some puja committees, depending upon their budget.

Time rolls on. The wait for the unveiling of the idols will happen soon. As a curious Wheeler "I cannot rest from travel." The lights, artistic decorations, and beautiful idols are alluring me to move out and see the unseen. This enthusiasm is contagious. It will affect everyone.

Barowari pandal



Souradeep & Ibrahim Claim Calcutta By Night '25 Title



Joydip Sur



Photographs courtesy Ranadip Mandal

Calcutta By Night was started by Partha Sadhan Bose who was a well-known rallyist, a true lover of motor sports and a collector & restorer of vintage cars. His son, Deborshi Sadhan Bose popularly known as 'Billy' is carrying the family legacy forward. He has restarted

the event and has committed to make it into an annual motor sports affair.

Over the past couple of years, Calcutta By Night has gradually developed into a 'much-looked-forward-to-event' in the city's motor sports calendar year being one of the few night rallies. Along





promote motorsports in Bengal by breaking the belief that one needs totally modified cars, by breaking the belief that motorsports is always dangerous. We commit to give our next door neighbour a chance to prove their capability as a driver or navigator in the true spirit of motorsports and assure to do more events in different formats. EMSAA strives to put back Bengal as the home of motor sports as to what it used to be.”

with challenges for both driver and navigator, this event also promotes ‘Safe Drive, Safe Night’ with the main focus of passing on the message that our ‘City of Joy’ is a safe city.

The main objective of this event also focuses on promoting motor sports in the ‘Corporate’ and ‘Social Club’ category along with the traditional Expert, Amateur, Novice, Ladies and Couple categories. This year, there was a special category for Sister Nivedita University, one of the patrons of this event. A total of 46 teams took part in this event making it one of the biggest TSD car rallies of the eastern region.

The team of Souradeep Dutta and Ibrahim Ali Shaikh emerged overall winners of the Calcutta By Night 2025. The team of Aniruddha Sk. & Alivia and the husband-wife duo of Sk. Ajgar Ali and Rehana Ali Sk. finished second and third respectively separated by only 5 penalty points. The team of Amit Kumar Saha and Suvrajit Dutta secured the fourth position; while the duo of Subhodev Chatterjee and Saptarshi Basu rounded up the top five positions in the overall ranking. The event spread across two night legs proved to be mighty exciting leaving all the competitors at the edge of their seats.

Deborshi Sadhan ‘Billy’ Bose said, “EMSAA remains committed to

CALCUTTA BY NIGHT '25		
DRIVER NAME	NAVIGATOR NAME	RANK
Souradeep Dutta	Ibrahim Ali Shaikh	1
Aniruddha Sk	Alivia	2
Sk Ajgar Ali	Rehana Ali Sk	3
Amit Kumar Saha	Suvrajit Dutta	4
Subhodev Chatterjee	Saptarshi Basu	5





Social Media and the Downfall of Governments

 Abhijit Dasgupta

When an octogenarian looks at recent happenings, he sees it differently, not by merely watching but through the eyes of years of experience.

We live in an age where a single digital post, a single tweet, or a viral video can shake the foundations of governments. Social media—once designed as a tool for connecting friends and families—has evolved into a powerful marketing tool – used and misused, a weapon of political mobilization, dissent, and sometimes destruction. It is no exaggeration to say that Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp have redefined the relationship between rulers and the ruled.

Today, I intend to pen down about how social media has contributed to government downfalls, particularly looking at Egypt,

Bangladesh, and Nepal. These nations, diverse in culture and history, share one common thread—the immense influence of digital platforms in shaping political destinies.

On one hand, it empowers citizens, amplifies marginalized voices, and creates solidarity across borders. On the other hand, it destabilizes governments, spreads misinformation, and fuels mob psychology. Fake posts have become a science and a technology more often used for ulterior motives.

The Arab Spring showed us that revolutions no longer require guns—they require hashtags. In South Asia, movements no longer need manifestos—they need memes and viral videos. Social media has become the battleground of legitimacy,



and often, governments fail to win it. They, therefore crackdown and inject a sense of fear by harassing the post creators.

Egypt offers perhaps the most iconic example. In 2011, the Arab Spring swept across the Middle East, but in Egypt, it was the social media that lit the fire.

Facebook pages such as “We Are All Khaled Said”—created after the brutal killing of a young man by Egyptian police—mobilized millions. Even Facebook journalists and Twitter reporters emerged.

Twitter hashtags helped protesters coordinate rallies at Tahrir Square, making the movement leaderless yet incredibly organized. The recent Nepal movement too was bereft of the so-called leader.

Videos uploaded on YouTube documented state violence, generating global outrage and strengthening international pressure against Hosni Mubarak’s regime.

Within 18 days of sustained protests, fueled and sustained online, a three-decade-old government collapsed. Mubarak resigned in February 2011.

But here lies the irony—while social media toppled the government, it also contributed to instability afterward. Competing voices, unchecked rumors, and misinformation flooded the digital space, making post-revolution Egypt fragmented and vulnerable. The very tool that empowered democracy also weakened governance.

Moving closer home, Bangladesh presents another example. Here, social media has been both a platform for accountability and a spark for unrest. Worth the mention of some Bangladesh nationals residing abroad dared to the extent of instigating and adding fuel



through the use of crude language.

In 2013, the Shahbagh Movement began largely online. Young Bangladeshis used Facebook and blogs to demand capital punishment for war criminals. The digital sphere allowed a generation to bypass traditional media and pressure the government.

Again, in 2018, the Student Road Safety Movement spread like wildfire through Facebook Live videos, Twitter updates, and mobile messaging. Students protesting road safety laws brought Dhaka to a standstill. The world watched as teenagers used their smartphones not just to document events, but to challenge authority.

However, the downside was equally visible. Social media rumors led to violence. Fake news about political conspiracies intensified polarization. The government, struggling to control the digital narrative, resorted to internet blackouts and censorship—ironically confirming the power of social media in undermining authority.

In Bangladesh, governments may not have fallen outright, but certainly the digital platforms became the catalyst that accelerated the movement. The credibility, stability, and grip over the public process of imagination have been consistently weakened by social media waves.

Now to Nepal, a country where political transitions have already been fragile. Social media has become the new parliament of the people, where frustrations with corruption, governance, and instability erupt daily.

During the 2015 Constitution protests, Facebook and Twitter gave citizens a real-



time platform to critique lawmakers, mobilize protests, and voice ethnic grievances.

In the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake, dissatisfaction with government relief efforts exploded online. Citizens used social platforms to compare the sluggish state response with the more efficient work of NGOs and volunteers. This eroded the government's legitimacy further.

More recently, campaigns like #EnoughIsEnough in 2020, demanding accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic, gained massive traction on social media. These movements pressured leaders, destabilized policies, and forced governments into defensive positions.

In Nepal, where governments rise and fall due to shifting coalitions, social media has become an accelerant. Leaders are exposed overnight, their mistakes amplified endlessly, and their legitimacy weakened in the eyes of young, digitally savvy citizens.

When we compare Egypt, Bangladesh, and Nepal, some patterns become clear. Social media accelerates protests from small gatherings to mass uprisings in days, sometimes hours. Hashtags make national protests international. Governments no longer control their narratives; the world is watching live. In all three countries, governments lost trust not just because of their actions, but because social media amplified every failure. While social media toppled or weakened regimes, it also left a vacuum, often filled with instability, misinformation, and political fragmentation.

Governments are built on constitutions, laws, and institutions. Social media platforms, however, are built on algorithms,

engagement, and virality. The mismatch is stark and risky. With AI, this can make a Frankenstein.

A constitution may take months to amend; a tweet can go viral in seconds. A government may rely on bureaucratic processes; a protester relies on live-streaming. No wonder governments find themselves one step behind.

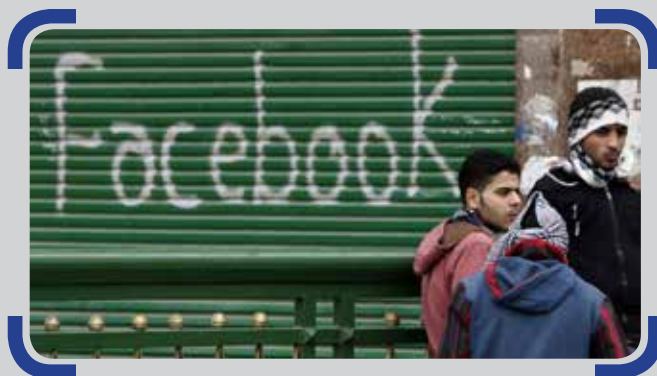
This is the uncomfortable truth—governments of the 21st century do not fall only because of bad governance. They fall because of bad optics, viral outrage, and digital revolutions.

However, governments have increasingly misused these digital platforms, turning them into instruments of propaganda, control, and manipulation rather than tools for democracy and progress.

The spread of state-sponsored disinformation, instead of providing accurate information, flood social media with half-truths or outright lies to shape public perception, discredit critics, or manufacture consent for controversial policies. Troll farms and bot armies are often deployed to amplify politically motivated narratives and silence dissenting voices, creating a distorted version of reality.

"Over the 2024 campaign, the U.S. President's team leveraged digital platforms by spreading disinformation, deploying AI-generated content and manipulated imagery, coordinating cross-platform messaging, exploiting lax moderation (especially on X/Twitter), and amplifying misleading narratives in swing states to shape public perception and voter behavior."

Another misuse lies in surveillance. Social



media, which citizens use to express opinions, is closely monitored by state agencies. This surveillance often leads to intimidation, harassment, and even arrests of individuals who dare to question government actions. Such practices stifle free expression and foster a climate of fear.

Governments also manipulate algorithms by exerting pressure on social media companies or passing restrictive regulations. This can result in biased visibility of content—boosting state-friendly material while suppressing critical or oppositional posts. In authoritarian settings, internet shutdowns and mass censorship further weaponize digital platforms against citizens.

The misuse of social media by governments undermines democracy. Instead of encouraging dialogue, accountability, and citizen participation, these platforms become tools for control. The challenge ahead is to ensure that social media remains a space for open debate, truth, and empowerment rather than political exploitation.

Egypt taught us that social media can topple even entrenched dictatorships. Bangladesh showed us how student voices can disrupt governments and force accountability. Nepal reveals how fragile democracies can be shaken by hashtags and online campaigns.

Social media is not just a mirror of society—it is the stage, the script, and sometimes the final verdict. Governments that fail to engage with it, to respect it, or to counter it, risk not only losing power but also legitimacy.

The age of the printing press brought revolutions. The age of television brought mass politics. But the age of social media brings something even more potent—instant revolutions. And in this age, governments may not fall in parliaments; they may fall on Facebook, on Twitter, or in a viral video that refuses to disappear.

After the RG Kar murder, social media initially sparked outrage but failed to sustain mass protests. Heavy surveillance and legal threats created fear, while misinformation diluted messaging.



Violent disruptions and weak police response eroded trust and safety. Much online activism was performative, lacking on-ground follow-through. Student and doctor leaders faced fatigue under academic and emotional strain. As protests faded, investigations slowed, further discouraging public engagement. Without consistent online and offline synergy, momentum cannot sustain. Ultimately, repression, disinformation, superficial engagement, and institutional apathy combined to ensure that social media outrage did not translate into a sustained people's movement.

But once beaten and fooled, it will be unwise to take this as a precedence. Police restraints can often backfire. It can instigate intensive reactions and the social platforms can fan the fire. Banning internet is no more a solution. Social media protests struggle under internet bans, losing speed and reach. Yet, they can survive if rooted in strong offline networks. Protesters shift to word of mouth, phone calls, posters, and street presence. Egypt's 2011 uprising showed that when grievances run deep, blackouts may strengthen, not silence, dissent.



Antpur

The Art of Spirituality



Team WHEELS

Among all the hustle and bustle in the city leading up to the biggest and the grandest festival of Bengal, we were scouting for a quick getaway to get a breather. That is when someone suggested visiting Antpur, merely 38.5 kilometres from the Nivedita Setu. Join Team WHEELS as we take you on a spiritual rendezvous to Antpur – home to the Ramakrishna Math and some of the most beautiful terracotta temples you will find closest to Kolkata.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION



The Toyota Hilux strikes a pose outside the Ramakrishna Math in Antpur

We set our trip meter to '0' at the Toll Tax Plaza at Nivedita Setu and kept driving straight until we met NH-19 at the end of the road. At 3.3 kilometres on the odometer, we kept to the left on NH-19 and avoided going on to the flyover. Thereafter, we continued driving straight going past the Par Dankhuni crossing with the odometer indicating 4.1 kilometres. Finally, we exited NH-19 with 4.9 kilometres on the odometer and turned left on to TN Mukherjee Road

which later merged into SH-15.

With 32.6 kilometres on the odometer, we exited SH-15 at Gazar More and turned left on to Jangipara Road. From this point onwards, we continued driving on the narrow meandering road until we arrived at Torar More with our odometer indicating 38.1 kilometres. We took right from the Y-Fork and continued for another 400 metres before arriving at Antpur with the Ramakrishna Math on our right and the RKM Math office on our left.

TOYOTA HILUX

Our wheel of choice for the drive to Antpur was the Toyota Hilux Black Edition, courtesy Saini Toyota.

Be it city roads, highways or rural trails, the incredibly powerful and capable Toyota Hilux is well equipped to take it all in its stride - a 4X4 like no other which takes on any road or no roads with the same ease.

Built to be powerful, and designed for style, the Toyota Hilux proved to be the perfect companion for our road trip to Antpur. Its masculine look and dynamic style turned heads wherever we went.

The interior are plush and luxurious making our drive both comfortable and safe.



The Toyota Hilux en route to Rajbalhat

HISTORY OF ANTPUR

Antpur is a village situated within the jurisdiction of the Jangipara police station under the sub-division of Serampore, a part of Hooghly district of West Bengal. Previously, one had to cross a village named 'Tara' in order to reach Antpur and therefore even today, many elders often refer to this village as 'Tara Antpur'. The Vaishnava text 'Bhaktiratnakar' has a reference to this in its thirteenth Canto. Still earlier, this village was known as 'Visakhala' or 'Viskhali'. The Vaishnava book 'Vaishnabachar Darpana' has a reference to the name of Visakhala. It is said that during the Muslim rule two powerful Muslim landlords, named Antur



Terracotta design

Khan and Anur Khan lived in Visakhala. In course of time, the Zemindary of these two came to be known as Antpur and Anarbat.

RAMAKRISHNA MATH, ANTPUR

Antpur has gained prominence as a pilgrimage. The temples with beautiful sculptures, the spacious pavilions for the worship of Goddess Durga, the Dola Mancha, the Rasa Mancha of Lord Krishna, and the large ponds with culturally declining beautiful brick-built banks, all bear eloquent testimony to the glory and fame of this village in the bygone days.

Lord Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and almost all his fellow disciples have set foot on this village, thereby making it holy and blessed. In this village, on the night of December 24, 1886,

nine intimate disciples of Shri Ramakrishna, including Swami Vivekananda took the extreme vow of renouncing the world and living the life of monks.

This village has also become a great pilgrimage being the birth place of Swami Premananda, a disciple of Lord Ramakrishna. At the birth place of Swami Premananda, the premises of the maternal uncle's house, a temple for Shri Ramakrishna has been built, and in front of his ancestral house a beautiful and artistic pavilion known as Dhuni Mandap for lighting the Holy Fire has been set up in commemoration of the sacred vow of Sannyasa taken by the nine disciples of Shri Ramakrishna including Swami Vivekananda.

The rooms used by the Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swamiji Maharaj are preserved. The Holy Mother came to Antpur twice. First on February 5, 1889. Along with her came from Calcutta, Swamis Vivekananda, Saradananda, Yogananda, Premananda, the Venerable Mahendra Nath Gupta – Master Mahasaya and Sannyal Mahasay. After a week, she went to Kamarpukur by bullock-cart via Tarakeshwar. The second time, she came from Belur during the Durga Puja in 1894 A.D.

Ramakrishna Math in Antpur





The Toyota Hilux takes a break outside Ramakrishna Math in Antpur

The Durga Puja at Antpur (Ghosh household) was resumed that year after it had been stopped for some years. The Ghosh family was deeply elated to receive the Holy Mother and Golap Maa, Yogin Maa, Santiram Ghosh (brother of Baburam) and Swami Sadananda. With the advance of time, this house was reduced to shambles, and through the efforts of RK Mission it has now been brought back to its pristine beauty.

Going upstairs, one comes across the room where the holy mother stayed. Now, a beautifully crafted wooden throne is adorned by a wonderful photograph of the mother. It is as if the mother is back, resplendent in full glory. In the room on the right Matangini, Baburam's mother lived. An oil painting of Matangini now hangs

in her room. In another room Swamiji and his fellow disciples lived in December 1886, January 1887 and February 1889.

This hallowed residence of the Ghosh family rich in heritage and history stands erect. Locally, this building is now known as Mayer Bari (Mother's house). Matangini collected Thakur's tooth-cleaning small stick, socks, and the chappals and worshipped them with reverence. Behind this house is the pond 'Jalahari' which is said to have been used by Mother. Antpur is blessed with the footprints of Shri Ramakrishna, Shri Saradadevi, Swami Vivekananda, Brahmananda, Saradananda, Ramkrishnananda, Yogananda and others. Blessed are those who were around them. Today, people who visit there go through a rich, ennobling experience.

RADHAGOBINDA JIU TEMPLE



Entrance of the Radhagobinda Jiu Temple

In Aatpur, there are around nine temples built by the Mitra family. Many of these temples are adorned with exquisite terracotta sculptures and are worth a visit. The 50-feet-high Radhagobinda Jiu is easily the most beautiful structure, decorated with terracotta figures. It was constructed inside a closed compound with a Nahabatkhana at its entrance. The temple was built by Krishnaram Mitra in 1786.

The sculptures on the temple are reminiscent of scenes from Puranas, Ramayana and Mahabharata with decorative panels depicting the social life of a bygone era. Inside the sanctum, on a high platform, you will find the idols of Radha and Gobinda perched on an exquisitely crafted metal throne.

It is noteworthy that regular rituals have been conducted in this aatchala styled temple along with annual festivals of Jhulan, Raas and Dol for the past 240 years. It is managed through a devattar trust, Radha Gobinda Jiu Debattar Estate. Surrounding the temple complex are the Zemindary cutcherry and sheds built as resting places for fakirs, monks, and traveller.

TEMPLE OF RAJBALLAVI DEVI

This temple of Goddess Rajballavi stands approximately six kilometers to the west of Ramkrishna Math, Antpur. Goddess Rajballavi is said to be very powerful and attracts a large number of devotees from far and wide. The temple is said to be more than 750 years old, having been built by Raja Sadananda Roy who had a vision of the goddess and had the idol made accordingly. Devi is larger than normal female, standing, fair-complexioned. She is two-handed, her right hand holding a knife and the left a human skull. Her right foot is placed on the chest of Mahakala Shiva. Mahakala again lies with the chest thrust, and the hands and the feet somewhat raised. Her left foot rests on the head of a Bhairava, known as, Birupaksha. She has three eyes, bedecked with many ornaments, a huge crown resting on her head. She wears a sari, the usual attire of a Bengali female. The original temple, which was completely ruined, has been replaced by a new temple



about ninety years ago. The mother has vegetable and fish as Bhog. And she smokes a hookah. The mother is worshipped twice daily and is also known as White Kali.

ROUTE MAP KOLKATA – ANTPUR			
(K DISTANCE)	DIRECTION	ROAD NAME	ROUTE DESCRIPTION
0.0		NIVETITA SETU (Toll Tax Point)	Set your Trip meter to '0'
1.3		NH - 19	Take right fork on to NH-19 towards Bardhaman/Delhi
3.3		NH - 19	Take left fork on NH-19. Don't go on to the flyover
3.6		NH - 19	Keep left and continue straight
4.1		NH - 19	Proceed straight. Road on the right leads to Old Delhi Road
4.9		DANKUNI SH - 15	Turn left from Dankuni Housing More on to TN Mukherjee Road
5.3		SH - 15	Go on to flyover. Congested area. Drive cautiously
6.8		SH - 15	Follow the main road
10.5		SH - 15	Follow the main road towards Champadanga
11.3		SH - 15	Under construction toll booth. Proceed straight
18.2		SH - 15	Proceed straight
22.7		SH - 15	Seakhala Morh. Proceed straight
32.6		SH - 15	Turn left from Gazar Morh on to Jangipara Road
38.1		JANGIPARA ROAD	Take right from the Y fork at Torar Morh
38.5		JANGIPARA ROAD	Arrive at Ramakrishna Math in Antpur



ANNOUNCEMENT



Festive Meet

Venue: TBA

For Wheelers & Guests



Car Treasure Hunt

Venue: Nazrul Tirtha


Open for all

Happy Birthday to Wheelers

NAME	DATE
Sudip Kumar Ghosh	1-Sep
Prasun Shaw	1-Sep
Dr. G.r. Ashok	1-Sep
Sandipan Basu Mallick	1-Sep
Shib Nath De	1-Sep
Shilabhadra Banerjee	3-Sep
Reema Mukherjee	3-Sep
Sanjay Mukherjee	4-Sep
Baichitra Sarkar	4-Sep
Keka Dutta	5-Sep
Sougata Ghosh	5-Sep
Bitan Biswas	5-Sep
Dr. Mahua Basu	6-Sep
Sumit Kumar Sinha	8-Sep
Adwitia Gangopadhyay	8-Sep
Kaushik Saha	9-Sep
Sutirtha Talukdar	9-Sep
Partha Sarathi Kar	9-Sep
Pravin Nahata	9-Sep
Kaushik Ghosh Chowdhury	9-Sep
Prakash Kamath	10-Sep
Sumitava Basu	12-Sep
Arindam Datta	12-Sep
Rajarshi Maitra	14-Sep
Piyush Kumar Jain	14-Sep
Subhabrata Ghose	14-Sep
Saurabh Sha	15-Sep
Anindya Mookerjee	15-Sep
Debashis Ghosh	16-Sep
Jyoti Prakash Banerjee	16-Sep

NAME	DATE
Chandra Kant Ved	16-Sep
Rohan Adhikary	16-Sep
Arpan Ray	16-Sep
Ashok Kumar Basu	17-Sep
Subir Kumar Nandy	18-Sep
Ranadhir Sinha	19-Sep
Sragdhara Ghosh	20-Sep
Sapna Dey	20-Sep
Prasanta Kumar Bose	21-Sep
Subhash Chandra Goenka	21-Sep
Anil Kumar Saraogi	22-Sep
Debapriya Brahma	22-Sep
Prabal Nag	23-Sep
Sonjoy Biswas	23-Sep
Arup Mukherjee	24-Sep
Debojit Kolay	24-Sep
Pradip Kumar Banerjee	25-Sep
Joy Natta	26-Sep
Jayanta Kumar Basu	26-Sep
Pravin Agarwal	26-Sep
Shivaji Sengupta	27-Sep
Prosenjit Dey	27-Sep
Rakesh Tandan	27-Sep
Ananda Chowdhury	27-Sep
Uday Sankar Sarkar	28-Sep
Saikat Nandy	28-Sep
Abhisek Chowdhury	29-Sep
Subham Poddar	29-Sep
S. Bardhan	30-Sep

Kia Launches EV Production In Europe With The EV4

 Joydip Sur



The five-door Kia EV4 is the brand's first fully electric vehicle to be manufactured in Europe, as Kia begins series production of the new model. The start of production follows extensive updates to Kia's sole European manufacturing facility in Slovakia and represents a major step forward in Kia's electrification strategy for the region.

An electric hatchback designed specifically for the European market, the EV4 is assembled exclusively at Kia AutoLand Slovakia.

"The start of EV4 production is a huge milestone for us. It demonstrates the technical capability and flexibility of our

European operations," said Marc Hedrich, President and CEO of Kia Europe. "From 20 August, Slovakia will build fully electric cars alongside models with hybrid and internal combustion powertrains. Through the expansion of our production capabilities, we are supporting our diverse European customer base even more."

"We have been preparing for the EV4's production launch for a long time,"

said Tomáš Potoček, spokesperson for Kia Slovakia. "By combining advanced manufacturing technology with the dedication of our skilled workforce, we have successfully begun mass production of this model."

Built on Hyundai Motor Group's Electric Global Modular Platform (E-GMP), the EV4 delivers a balance of performance and efficiency. It is available with two battery options: a 58.3kWh battery and a larger 81.4kWh variant, offering a range of up to 391 miles on a single charge. The EV4 boasts advanced energy innovations, such as Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) and Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) capabilities*. The model features an aluminium bonnet to reduce weight and enhance handling, as well as the choice of five eye-catching exterior paint finishes.

The EV4's design combines bold, sharp lines with Kia's award-winning 'Opposites United' philosophy. It was first unveiled globally in February 2025 and is tailored to meet the needs of customers seeking innovation, performance, and electric mobility.

Kia's manufacturing facility in Žilina, Slovakia, is a cornerstone of the company's European operations. Opened in 2004, the two-square-kilometre plant is strategically located for serving key European markets. It employs around 3,700 people and operates with more than 600 advanced robots. The plant is capable of producing multiple model variants simultaneously across five main production areas: press, body, paint, engine, and assembly.

Following a €108-million investment, the production lines have been modernised with new technologies, including an EV battery conveyor at the chassis line in the assembly shop.

The Žilina plant produces other models such as the Kia XCeed and Kia Sportage. This includes hybrid and plug-in hybrid variants, which have accounted for 25% of the facility's total annual output as of 2024.

With an annual capacity of 3,50,000 vehicles and 5,40,000 engines, the facility has produced more than five million units since opening, which are exported to 83 countries. These figures account





for approximately 11% of the company's global vehicle output.

Kia has integrated sustainability measures into the plant's operations. Since 2014, Kia Slovakia has reduced electricity consumption per vehicle by 11%, water usage by 28%, and CO2 emissions by 13%. The factory currently runs entirely on renewable electricity and plans to meet approximately 1.5% of its total energy needs with a new photovoltaic power plant by the end of this year.

While the five-door EV4 will be manufactured at Kia's European plant in Slovakia, its saloon-bodied sibling, the EV4 Fastback, will be manufactured in Kia's homeland of Korea at the brand's Autoland Gwangmyeong EVO plant.



Jogendra Jaiswal and Chandan Sen Emerge Victorious In Monsoon Drive 14



 Joydip Sur

Kolkata based sports management group 'Just Sportz' was back with their popular motor sports franchise – Monsoon Drive. Now in its 14th edition, this year's Monsoon Drive was also the third round of the INTSDRC 2025.

Leg 1 of the rally was flagged off from Country Roads in Panchla on Saturday, September 6, 2025. A total of 37 competitors took part in this TSD car rally battling for top honours as they navigated through rural roads and broken tarmac.

The 217-kilometre rally route began from Panchla followed by Nandakumar, Haldia City Centre, Balughata, Norghat, Kalinagar, Petuaghat, Junput, Shoula, Chaulkhola and Tajpur before reaching Shankarpur just after sun down where the leg 1 of the rally concluded.

Later in the same evening, the competitors





participating in the INTSDRC 2025 got behind the wheels once again to compete in leg 2 of the rally which was flagged off from Hotel Nest, Shankarpur.

This 13-kilometre local leg put the competitors in a tough spot as they had to tackle a short but tricky route before the rally finally culminated in Shankarpur at night.

The team of Jogendra Jaiswal and Chandan Sen emerged victorious in the INTSDRC-1 category and took home the trophy for the overall winning team with 23 penalty points. The team of Soham Hazra and co-driver Chandrashish Roy secured the second

position in the INTSDRC-1 category with former INTSDRC champion duo of Subir Roy and Nirav Mehta clinching the third position in the category.

The team of Sudip Kumar Ghosh and Arindam Ghosh secured the first position in INTSDRC-2 category, finishing second overall with 39 penalty points. The team of Subhudev Chatterjee and navigator Saptarshi Basu finished second followed by the pair of Souradeep Dutta and co-driver Ibrahim Ali Shaikh taking the third step on the podium in the INTSDRC-2 category.

In the INTSDRC Mixed category, the duo of Barun Chowdhury and Sunita Prasad finished first, also securing the third position in the overall INTSDRC ranking with 52 penalty points. While former INTSDRC champion Ajgar Ali Sk teaming up with his wife Rahana Ali Sk secured the second position; followed by the husband-wife team of Nirmallya Das and Ipshita Das clinching the third position in the INTSDRC Mixed category.

The prize distribution ceremony of Monsoon Drive 14 was held on Sunday, September 7, 2025, at Hotel Nest, Shankarpur.



CATEGORY: INTSDRC - 1		
DRIVER NAME	NAVIGATOR NAME	RANK
Jogendra Kumar Jaiswal	Chandan Sen	1
Soham Hazra	Chandrashish Roy	2
Subir Roy	Nirav Mehta	3
Sk Aniruddha	Rudrangsho Dey	4
Satish Gopalkrishnan	David Sharon	5

CATEGORY: INTSDRC - 2		
DRIVER NAME	NAVIGATOR NAME	RANK
Sudip Kumar Ghosh	Arindam Ghosh	1
Subhodev Chatterjee	Saptarshi Basu	2
Souradeep Dutta	Ibrahim Ali Shaikh	3
Sandip Bosu	Koustav Kumar Kolay	4
Subhajit Show	Soumyajit Saha	5

CATEGORY: INTSDRC - MIXED		
DRIVER NAME	NAVIGATOR NAME	RANK
Barun Chowdhury	Sunita Prasad	1
Ajgar Ali Sk	Rahana Ali Sekkh	2
Nirmallya Das	Ipsita Das	3
Srijita Shome	Uday Ganguli	4
Abhrajyoti Som	Jhilik Digpati	5

CATEGORY: INTSDRC - OVERALL		
DRIVER NAME	NAVIGATOR NAME	RANK
Jogendra Kumar Jaiswal	Chandan Sen	1
Sudip Kumar Ghosh	Arindam Ghosh	2
Barun Chowdhury	Sunita Prasad	3
Subhodev Chatterjee	Saptarshi Basu	4
Soham Hazra	Chandrashish Roy	5



Photographs courtesy Ranadip Mandal



DURGA PUJA

A FESTIVAL OF HARMONY



Sandip Banerjee

As autumn sets in, the whole environment in Bengal wears a garb of festivity. Gentle breeze whispers in the ears of the flowers, and white clouds flit across the azure of the sky. Amidst this décor of nature, arrives Goddess Durga, resonating our hearts with an echo of pristine joy. It is the fulfillment of a year-long wait. Each year, we patiently await the onset of Durga Puja,

and at the end of four days of this festival, we are gripped by grief that lingers in our hearts for some time as a festive hangover. To us, Durga is not just a deity; she is our own family member who has come to her paternal home with her children. Everyone rejoices in this emotional bonding.

In December 2021, Durga Puja in Kolkata was included in UNESCO'S Representative

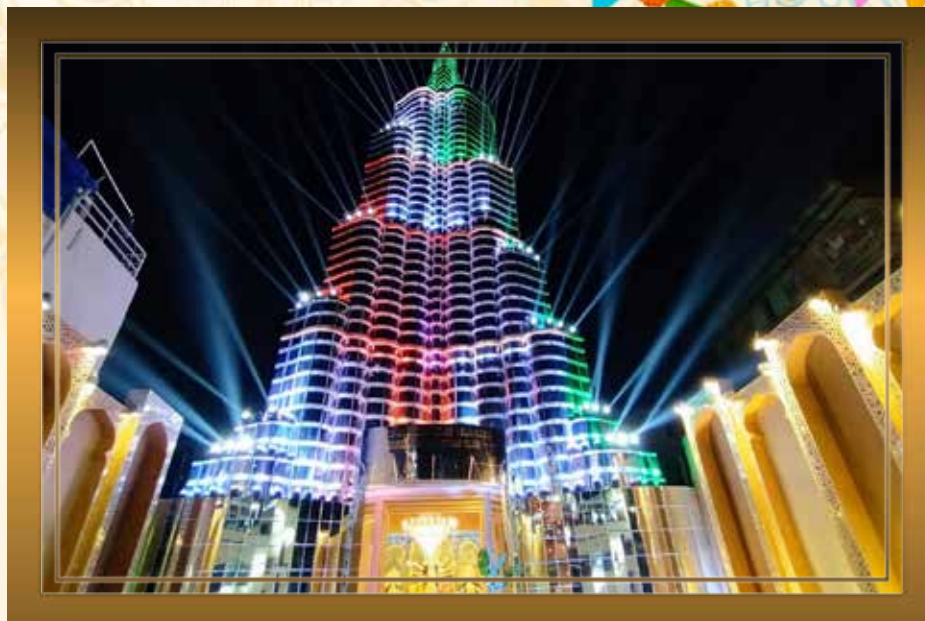


List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This very recognition suggests that Durga Puja doesn't belong to any particular religion or race; it encompasses everyone in the dalliance of its festivity. To UNESCO, it is a religious festival that has gradually evolved into a melting pot of culture and a festival of harmony. It has also developed into a platform for social and artistic activities.

Durga Puja is seen as the best instance of public performance of religion and art, and as a thriving ground for collaborative artists and designers. During this event, the barriers of class, religion, and ethnicities collapse as thousands of spectators gather to admire the various 'installations' of the deity year after year. This bears testimony the all-inclusiveness of this festival. During the four days of the Puja, crowds from all corners gather, thronging the streets from the morning till night, hopping tirelessly from one 'pandal' to another in the company of their friends and families.

Everyone must at least once experience Kolkata's Durga Puja, for it is a euphoria that unites all. Durga Puja also comes as an economic boon for many as thousands of people belonging to various faiths are associated with this festival in different capacities. It might interest you to learn, that many artisans who toil day and night to create the embellishments which are put on the deity, actually belong to the Muslim community. To them, the festival transcends the contour of religious demarcation, for it also provides sustenance to their livelihood.

Durga Puja is also cosmopolitan and multicultural, as it allows and encourages contemporary and modern variations of idol sculpting and art installations. For example,



we have witnessed pandals being designed on the themes of popular Hollywood movies like Jurassic Park and Titanic; or showcasing images of Princess Diana or Saddam Hussain. With 'theme pujas' gaining popularity, Puja installations transcend from one discipline of culture to another. The pandals often reflect art in Islamic style or neo-classical pattern. We have also seen pandals replicating the 'Mahismati Palace' and the famous 'Burj Khalifa' tower.

What is presently happening in Bangladesh is extremely unfortunate. Some radical fundamentalists are protesting against celebration of Durga Puja citing prevention against road obstructions and water pollution arising from immersion of idols. Such signs of hatred do not yield benefit to the interests of the community at large. Unfortunately, in India also certain reactionary forces are trying to project Durga Puja as a Hindu festival, where participation of all communities is not desirable. Both the attitudes are wrong and antagonistic to social health. It is also a violation of historical truth.

Muslim artisans significantly contribute to Durga Puja by creating essential embellishments like 'jari medha', artificial hair for idols, and elaborate pandals. Muslim families in places like Cuttack have long



been involved in crafting cosmetic jewellery for the deity. It is an art which is passed down from one generation to the other. In villages like Parbatipur, one will find the largest productions of artificial hair and surprisingly, most of the workers are Muslims. They are experts in this special skill that involves plucking, dyeing and drying jute. Most of the pandals too are constructed by the Muslim labours and artists. When people flock in a spillover crowd to view pandals of various noted puja sites, it is to be remembered who have mostly lent their hands in providing such aesthetic pleasure to our eyes. The Muslim scroll painters enhance the visual artistry of the festival, creating thematic decorations and art installations for the pandals. The best part of the story lies in the collaboration of the Hindus and the Muslims in the creation of all forms of artistry involved in this autumnal festival. These collaborations serve as powerful narratives

of syncretic culture, demonstrating how different communities can unite to create a shared cultural event, embodying the principle of assimilation and camaraderie.

The sheer involvement of people from the various sections of society makes Durga Puja truly diverse in cultural contour. It is not surprising to find nuns from Missionaries of Charity sharing space with their Hindu neighbours inside a puja pandal. In another pandal, one will witness the puja rituals being performed jointly by Hindu and Muslim women, while sex workers are helping out help with the arrangement for the rituals. There are so many pujas across the state where the organisers are Muslims, promoting peaceful co-existence. There are also many pujas organised by the Muslim community for more than 50 years. One such example is Five Star Club in Munshigunj. In Assam, art director Nurrudin Ahmed attempted making a 100-feet tall bamboo statue of

Goddess Durga in 2017. There are so many other idol makers who are non-Hindus and yet their dedication to the art of idol-making is perhaps second to none. Across the length and breadth of the state of West Bengal and beyond, there are several examples to showcase how Muslim majority areas have amalgamated with the Hindu minority. If we simply look at the crowd during the puja-days, it is almost impossible to segregate any particular community, for all of them remain busy in celebration. Friends of different ethnicity share the bite of the same egg-roll without being bothered about their companions' caste or creed or religion.

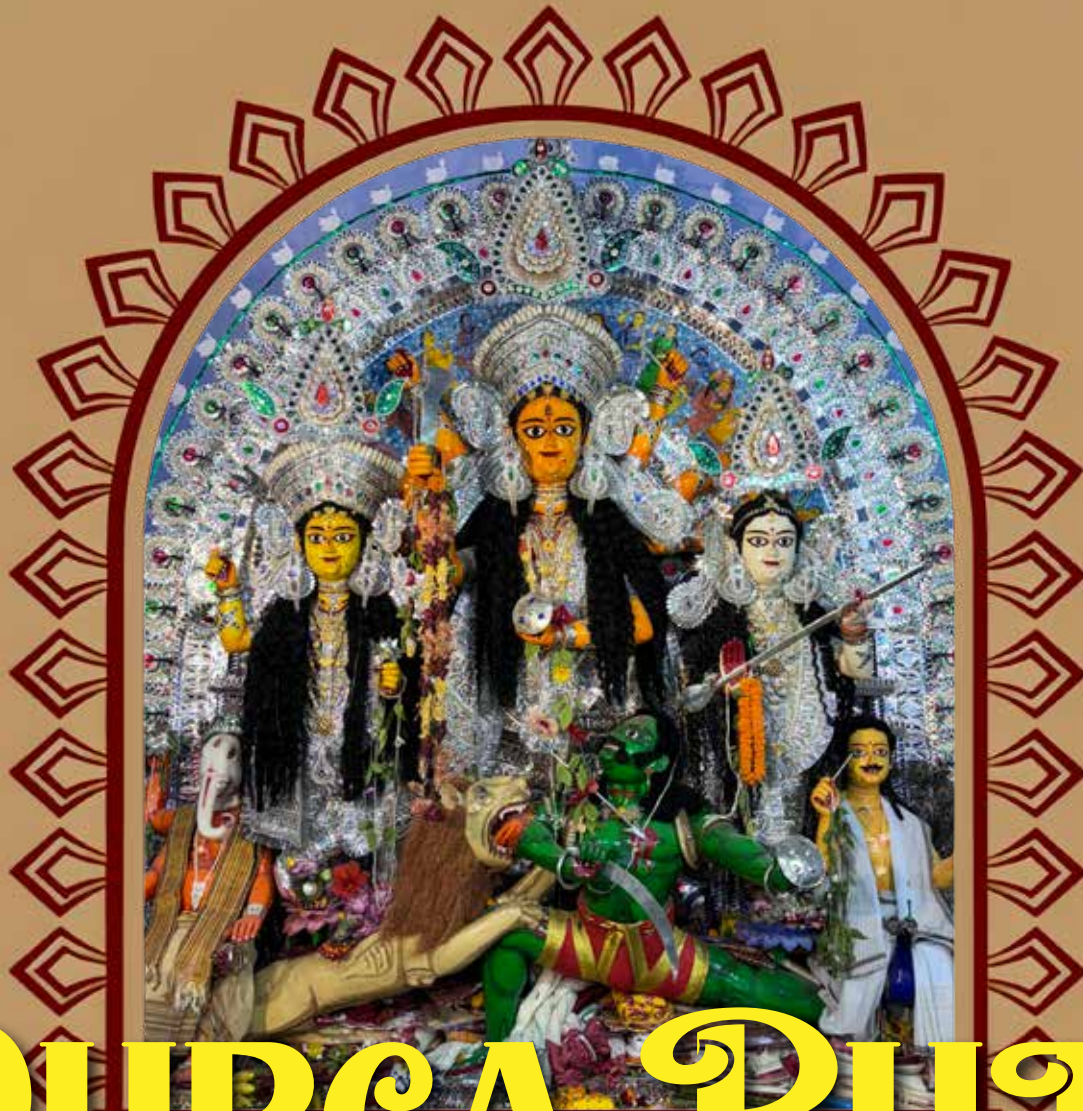
As a festival, Durga Puja has certainly transgressed the confines of state or country. There are a huge Bengali and Indian diaspora in many countries who eagerly await the festival as much as we do in West Bengal. In Europe or in the USA the immigrant Bengali community participates in the observation of this autumnal festival. In many other states of India, the same picture emerges where the major locals of other religion associate themselves with the Bengalis. These kinds of stories are numerous. It makes one wonder what makes this festival so special as to embrace all within its spirit. Perhaps, religious fundamentalism has failed to dent the fabric of cultural symbiosis. It is to be noted that long before India's independence Hindus and Muslims resided as neighbours for centuries, mingling culturally and being economically inter-dependent or maybe it is reverence to the Goddess herself.

When we think of a festival implying to uphold cultural ethos then it is bound to collate the best of creativity. Now

when that is desired, mental barriers are bound to be broken. Durga Puja is for all - not just because lot of people participate in it but actually because they contribute in various ways in making this festival a social affair. From pandals depicting lives of sex workers to a unique tableau made for the visually impaired. Durga Puja is a secular spectacle. Every community enjoys the spirit of this great celebration in its own way.

Food and music are two inseparable parts of this great festival. Here too, the non-Hindus take a lead on many situations with items like mutton biryani and chicken chaap emerging as the hot favourites, without which the celebration remains incomplete. It is a kind of a cultural fusion whose essence emanates in the air with a fragrance of oneness. Attracting tourists from all parts of the country fosters a great sense of pluralism. It is this pluralism that makes all passions converge and unfurls the love of life, and fostering the warmth of being together. Durga Puja is not just about worship; it goes beyond religion to draw inspiration from everything. Durga Puja is not a religious but a social festival where emotions merge with sense of oneness; feelings melt in unification, and pleasure remains unbiased.





DURGA PUJA

of Surul Sarkarbari

 WHEELER Kinjal Bose

Durga Puja is celebrated in a grand way in the homes of many 'bonedi' families with deep roots in West Bengal. Surul Sarkarbari or Surul Rajbari, which is roughly 5 kilometres from Bolpur railway station in Birbhum, is home to two family lineages, namely, Baro Taraf and Choto Taraf. Here Durga Puja is held with much pomp and grandeur.

The road leading to this house is usually crowded with people, many from Kolkata, and parked cars. A number of temporary shops selling various items are also set up in front of Surul Sarkarbari, giving it a look of a fair.

On entering Surul Sarkarbari (Baro Taraf), one will come across a large courtyard with a Natmandir in the middle. A large chandelier hangs from the top. A number of other lamps, made of Belgian glass also hang hanging from the ceiling. These lamps are lit with castor oil. In the evening, these lamps in the large courtyard (thakur dalan) and the Natmandir provide a deep feeling of nostalgia.

According to family sources, this nearly 290 years old Puja is held following the shakta rituals. Like other bonedi houses, the protima (deity) is made in this dalan



after performing the kathamo puja on the auspicious day of Rathayatra.

There is a pancharatna (five pinnacled) terracotta temple dedicated to Lakshmi Janardan and two Deul shaped temples dedicated to Lord Shiva outside the courtyard. Two terracotta panels of Goddess Durga, one in the Pancharatna temple and another in the Deul are placed close to each other. After completion of the puja of Lakshmi Janardan, the salagram sila is taken to another place, followed by animal sacrifice on Mahastami. Scarifice is also conducted on Saptami and Nabami. On Saptami, chalkumro (a vegetable) and on Nabami both chalkumro and sugarcane are also ceremonially sacrificed outside the Natmandir.

Seasonal fruits and eighteen different types of sweets, all prepared in the household are offered to Devi Durga from Tritiya, the third day of celebration.

The stucco work in the Dalan belonging to Baro Taraf was built by Srinibas Sarkar. It is noteworthy that Kumari puja and dhuno porano are not performed here. Additionally, Sindur khela or vermillion play, which is a common feature in barowari and household pujas, are not performed here.

The puja of Sarkar Bari (Choto Taraf) is held in a separate dalan just behind Lakshmi Janardan Temple. The Nabapatrika

is carried on a palanquin by four Brahmins. Like Baro Taraf, the Protima is prepared in thakur dalan following the Kathamo puja. According to a family member of Choto Taraf, earlier there was a single puja. However, today both the Protimas are prepared by the same artisan.

All the rituals and practices of the Boro Taraf puja are conducted here at Chhoto Taraf Puja, except that chandeliers at Natmandir are lighted by electricity.





7 Essential Tools For Road Trips

 Promit Hazra

Embarking on a long road trip across India's diverse landscapes can be an exhilarating adventure, filled with scenic views, unexpected detours, and thrills of the open highway. However, the unpredictability of such journeys—from sudden breakdowns to minor mishaps—demands preparation to ensure safety and peace of mind. Equipping your car with essential tools and gadgets is crucial for handling emergencies, maintaining vehicle performance, and enhancing overall comfort. In this article we are going to look at seven such tools essential for road trips.

Dash Cam

A dash cam serves as an invaluable eyewitness during long road trips, capturing high-definition footage of the journey to protect against disputes in accidents or provide evidence for insurance claims. On extended drives, it records scenic routes while monitoring for road rage incidents or perilous conditions, with features like loop recording and G-sensors ensuring continuous operation without manual intervention. In India, popular market options include Qubo's Pro series with 2K resolution and app integration for easy playback, alongside 70Mai models offering dual-channel views for front and rear coverage. Prices typically range from INR 3,000 for basic 1080p models to INR 18,000 for advanced 4K variants with night vision.



Tyre Inflator

Maintaining optimal tyre pressure is essential for safety and efficiency on long road trips, where varying terrains can lead to gradual air loss and increased risk of blowouts. A portable tyre inflator allows quick roadside adjustments, preventing delays and ensuring stable handling over hours of driving. Cordless models with digital gauges and auto-shutoff features make it user-friendly, even in remote areas without power outlets. In the Indian market, AGARO's Galaxy series stands out for its rechargeable battery and multi-purpose use, while Bergmann and Michelin offer durable wired options with high PSI capacity up to 150. Pricing varies from INR 1,500 for compact entry-level inflators to INR 5,000 for premium cordless versions with LED lights.



Puncture Repair Kit

Encountering a puncture midway through a long road trip can strand you for hours, but a compact puncture repair kit enables temporary seals on tubeless tyres, allowing you to reach the nearest service station safely. It typically includes plugs, reamers, and insertion tools for straightforward application, ideal for minor leaks from nails or debris on highways. These tools save time and towing costs, proving indispensable when spare tyres are cumbersome. Prices generally fall between INR 200 for basic rubber strip kits and INR 500 for comprehensive metal-tool versions.

Inter-Car Communication For Convoys

When traveling in a convoy on long road trips, an inter-car communication device like a walkie-talkie ensures seamless coordination, from signalling rest stops to alerting about hazards ahead, especially in areas with spotty mobile coverage. Models with clear audio and range up to 5km facilitate group navigation without distractions from phones. Market prices range from INR 3,000 for basic two-unit sets to INR 10,000 for advanced multi-channel systems with noise cancellation option include Motorola's T series, which offers rugged, weather-resistant units with voice activation, and brands such as Baofeng and Wavex, which provide budget-friendly alternatives.





Auxiliary Lights

Long road trips often stretch into low-visibility hours, where auxiliary lights significantly enhance safety by penetrating fog, rain, or darkness, helping to prevent accidents on unlit roads. These add-on beams, such as LED fog lamps or light bars, provide broader and more intense illumination than standard headlights, making it easier to spot obstacles, wildlife, or road hazards. Waterproof and adjustable models integrate seamlessly with car wiring, ensuring reliable performance even in challenging conditions. In the Indian market, Hella's Black Magic series, with up to 20,000 lumens and IP67 waterproofing, excels for off-road and foggy conditions, while local brands like Vaishnu offer spot-flood combos for versatile coverage, and Autofy provides lightweight LED bars. Prices range from INR 1,000 for basic halogen auxiliaries to INR 25,000 for advanced laser-LED kits.

Jumper Cables

A drained battery can halt a road trip abruptly, but jumper cables allow quick restarts by connecting to another vehicle's power source, essential after leaving lights on during overnight stops. Heavy-duty cables with insulated clamps ensure safe, efficient energy transfer without sparks. Opt for longer lengths for easier manoeuvring around cars. In India, Auto Pearl's 500Amp models with alligator clamps and AllExtreme's 600Amp variants are reliable choices, known for durable copper construction. Pricing typically ranges from INR 500 for standard 10-foot sets to INR 2,000 for professional-grade 20-foot options with carry bags.



First Aid Kit

Scrapes, headaches, or motion sickness can arise during long road trips, making a first aid kit vital for prompt treatment to keep everyone comfortable and avoid detours to medical facilities. Stocked with bandages, antiseptics, pain relievers, and scissors, it handles common issues like minor cuts and bruises, headaches etc. Compact, vehicle-specific kits fit neatly in glove compartments. Indian market favourites include generic Amazon-sold boxes with 50+ items and branded ones from Emergency Kits India for comprehensive coverage. Prices vary from INR 300 for basic essentials-packed kits to INR 1,000 for expanded versions.





Aamar Pujo, Aamar Starbucks



 Joydip Sur

This Durga Pujo, Starbucks India invites food connoisseurs across Kolkata to celebrate the festivities with its first-ever Pujo-inspired menu. 'Aamar Pujo, Aamar Starbucks' is a specially curated experience that introduces indulgent food and handcrafted beverages, bringing together Eastern India's culinary flavours and the Starbucks signature coffee expertise with a twist.

Chingri Turnover: A golden-brown pastry turnover filled with spiced prawn (chingri) stuffing and topped with black sesame seeds, combining coastal flavours with buttery richness

Bhetki Bhaja Sandwich: A classic take on fried bhetki fish, layered with shorshe mayonnaise, fresh vegetables and lettuce, served in mustard panini bread

Aloo Poshto

Burger: A crumb-fried patty made with lightly spiced potatoes and poppy seeds, paired with fresh vegetables and served in a poppy seed-topped bun – a take on the homely favourite

Kasundi Chicken Burger: Succulent chicken cooked in traditional shorshe-

style gravy, formed into a fried patty and layered with pickles, tomatoes and lettuce in sesame-topped burger buns

Dhakai Chicken Wrap: Spiced chicken inspired by the flavours of Dhaka, wrapped in a flaky paratha for a festive handheld treat And for those with a sweet tooth, can try the traditional mithai with a contemporary flair

Mihidhana Brulee: A fusion of Bengali mihidhana and brulee, made with thickened milk and finished with a caramelized sugar top, saffron strands and

pistachio for an elegant touch

Kalakand Pie: A Bengali-style kalakand mixture baked into a pie for a rich texture, creating a fusion of traditional mithai with a coffeehouse-style bake

Chocolate Foam Cold

Brew: Starbucks signature cold brew, slow-steeped for 48

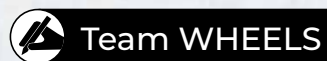
hours, topped with silky chocolate cream cold foam and finished with a dusting of cocoa powder

Jaggery Cloud Latte: Starbucks rich espresso balanced with the natural sweetness of jaggery, topped with a delicate cloud-like layer of jaggery powder.



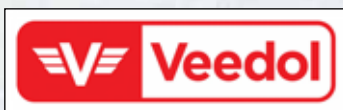
13th Wheels Annual Meet

Celebrating Community, Passion, and the Open Road



Lubricant Partner

Drive Partner



Kolkata on Wheels, Eastern India's largest and longest-running motoring magazine, once again brought together its vibrant community of life members—fondly known as Wheelers—for the 13th Wheels Annual Meet. The gathering took place on September 14, 2025 at the elegant Hotel DeSovrani in Salt Lake City, Kolkata, and was a perfect blend of nostalgia, celebration, and forward-looking enthusiasm.

The day began with a warm welcome from Chairperson Aruna Ghosh, who acknowledged the invaluable support of sponsors and the

dedication of the Wheelers, without whom the community's enduring journey would not have been possible. This was followed by the President's address by Suchandan Das, who reminded everyone of the collective spirit that keeps Kolkata on Wheels rolling strong.

A heartwarming segment followed as newly enrolled Wheelers—those who joined since last year's annual meet—were introduced. Each came forward to share their excitement at being part of this unique fraternity. Their words reflected the sense of belonging that has always



Team WHEELS poses for the group photograph



Voice of WHEELERS



Display of car by Saini Toyota



Wheelers attending the annual meet



Group photo of WHEELERS

been the hallmark of the Wheelers' community.

The mood then turned solemn as Senior Wheeler Debopam Banerjee remembered two stalwart members, Uttam Bose and Alok Nag, who passed away earlier this year. The Wheelers observed a minute's silence, a moment of reflection on the contributions and camaraderie of those who came before. Yet, as in the circle of life, the mood lifted again as Sarbajit Mookherjee was inducted into Team Wheels as its youngest member—a symbolic gesture of continuity and renewal. The team then posed together for a group photo, immortalising the occasion.

The official proceedings moved forward with Kolkata on Wheels Editor Joydip Sur presenting the Annual Report of the Magazine. Among the many highlights of the past year, the celebration of Kolkata on Wheels' 200th edition stood out as a landmark achievement. Next, Team Wheels Secretary, Sandip Hunday, reviewed the 2024–25 event calendar and built excitement with the unveiling of the 2025–26 calendar. To the delight of the audience, he announced that the number of events had grown steadily—

from 11 in 2023–24 to a planned 16 within just a couple of years—thanks to the tireless work of Team Wheels and the enthusiastic support of its members.

Adding further depth to the day, Voice of Wheelers (VOW) Chairman, Jayant Basu, presented VOW's Annual Report. He shared updates on white papers and research undertaken, while also outlining topics for future exploration. He posited that this intellectual angle to motoring is something that sets the Wheelers apart, as they balance passion with insight.



President of Team Wheels, Suchandan Das

The special guest of the day was none other than renowned Bengali actor and fellow Wheeler Badsha Moitra, a true motoring enthusiast himself. His lively address, filled with driving anecdotes and practical insights, captivated the audience. Later, he felicitated the corporate guests, adding star power to the proceedings.

Then came one of the most anticipated moments—the Awards Ceremony. The symbolic Passing of Wheeler's Mantle saw last year's last-enrolled member, Debashish Banerjee, handing over the shield

to this year's last-enrolled member before the meet, Harsh Sovasaria. From there, a flurry of honours followed:

- ▶ Highest Participation Award went jointly to Sanjoy Biswas and Subhankar Pal for their exceptional presence at KOW events.
- ▶ Longest Drive of the Year was claimed by Arun Bhatia, who clocked an astounding 7,792 km, narrowly beating runner-up Subhankar Pal by 179 km.
- ▶ Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to veteran Wheeler Pavan Mukherjee, famed for his adventurous drives through Europe.
- ▶ The coveted Wheeler of the Year Award went to Sarbajit Mookherjee, recognised for his multifaceted contributions—from rejuvenating Kolkata on Wheels' social media presence to his photography, articles, and meticulous planning of sightseeing during drive tours.

An interactive session followed, with Wheelers sharing experiences and discussing the mental

preparation required for long-distance drives, particularly those stretching beyond 2,000–3,000 km. Such conversations reflected the practical wisdom and passion that unite this community.

The meeting was concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Joint Secretary Aritra Sardar, before everyone gathered for the traditional group photograph. The day ended on a high note with a sumptuous lunch spread at Hotel DeSovrani, where the crisp and perfectly cooked Fish Fry stole the show.

As the Wheelers disbanded, the spirit of the 13th Annual Meet lingered. It was not just about awards or reports—it was about celebrating the enduring love for motoring, the bonds of friendship, and the shared excitement for what lies ahead. With the 2025–26 calendar promising more drives and more memories, the Wheelers left the venue with their engines revved and spirits soaring, ready for another unforgettable year on the road.



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