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SXUK celebrates Philanthropy Day

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Kolkata: St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, in collaboration with the St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, Alumni Association, celebrated Philanthropy Day alongside the birthday of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Dr. J. Felix Raj, S.J. The Centre of Social Outreach Programme and hostel boarders played a vital role in making the grand event a memorable success.

The highlight of the celebration was the presence of children invited from nearby villages. To bring them cheer, the university organized various fun games, a special puppet show, and interactive entertainment featuring a joker, filling the venue with laughter and joy. The program was enriched by lively cultural showcases. The visiting village children presented a short dance routine and sang a song dedicated to

Rev. Dr. John Felix Raj, S.J. Additionally, the hostel boarders delivered energetic dance and musical performances, keeping the audience captivated.

During the formal felicitation, faculty, alumni, and students extended their heartfelt wishes to Fr. Felix Raj, honoring his exemplary leadership and commitment to education. Expressing his gratitude, Fr. Vice-Chancellor emphasized that true celebration lies in serving society and helping those in need. The event concluded with a grand feast shared by the children, students, alumni, and staff. Through its blending of entertainment, cultural showcases, and selfless service, this Philanthropy Day celebration proved to be a truly grand and unforgettable occasion. It also highlighted the university's strong commitment to compassion, community engagement, and creating meaningful experiences that bring people together through kindness and service.



Fr. Vice-Chancellor celebrates his birthday with the children (Source: Xposure)

Xphoria 6.0 unveils a tapestry of talent and togetherness



Department of Mass communication celebrates Xphoria 6.0 (Source: Sagarnil Ganguly)



A graceful start to Xphoria 6.0 (Source: Subham Dey)

Rooprekha Ghosh (BA, Sem 5)

Kolkata: Xphoria 6.0, organised by the Department of Mass Communication, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, on 31st August 2026, was a celebration of talent, enthusiasm, and togetherness. The event brought students from across the department together, creating an atmosphere of excitement, interaction, and camaraderie.

The event began with an energetic opening dance, setting the tone for an afternoon filled with enthusiasm and excitement. The quiz that followed wit-

nessed enthusiastic participation from the students, while the "One Minute to Fame" segment provided newcomers with an opportunity to step onto the stage, showcase their talents, and become a part of the department in their own unique way.

Another memorable highlight of the event was the skit featuring students from the Bachelor's and Master's programmes of Semesters 3 and 5. The performance showcased the collaborative spirit of the department, with students from different batches coming together to create and present something collectively. The evening concluded

with a heartwarming jamming session, where music brought everyone together and provided an opportunity for students to relax, connect, and enjoy each other's company.

Beyond the performances and activities, Xphoria 6.0 aimed to create a welcoming environment for newcomers, allowing them to interact with their seniors and experience the warmth and spirit of the Mass Communication Department. The event served as a platform for building connections and fostering a sense of belonging among students. The successful execution of Xphoria 6.0 was made possible through

the guidance of Dr. Somak Sen, faculty member of the department and constant support given by all the other faculty members of the department. The contributions of the students, volunteers, performers, and team members were equally instrumental in bringing the event to life.

Xphoria 6.0 ultimately emerged as more than just a departmental event. It became a celebration of talent, collaboration, and community, creating lasting memories and marking the beginning of new connections for the department's students.

FEATURE

Where ideas meet action: XAVMUN'26

Sharaddiya Dey (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: XAVMUN'26 was a two-day fest conducted by the Xavier's University Debating Society (XUDS) on the 21st and 22nd of August 2026. This year, it was the 3rd edition of the fest and the theme of the fest was "Ideas Meet Action: XAVMUN'26!" The professor in Charge of the event was Dr. Indira Chakraborty Bhattacharya, assistant professor of the department of English. The Model United Nations (MUN) is an academic stimulation where the students represent various countries as delegates and speak about their political, global and economic issues. The students get to learn practical skills and expertise in public speaking, negotiation, global awareness, teamwork and confidence.

This year, the fest focussed on mainly 6 committees namely UNGA (United Nations General Assembly), UNSC (United Nations Security Council), UNCSW (United Nations commission on the status of women), IP (International Press), UNHCR (United Nations High commissioner for Refugees) and AIPPM (All India Political Parties Meet). On the 21st of August, the event started with the registrations from 10 am, that lasted till 10:45 am, followed by speech of the chief guest.

Various schools and colleges were a

part of XAVMUN'26, including SXC, BESC and JU. Early registrations give the students high chance to choose their own committees and represent various states according to their own wish and the names of the committees are provided within one month, so that the students have enough time to prepare themselves. When the committees are provided, the agenda, additionally, is also provided to ensure transparency and understanding of the topic.

On the 22nd of January, the delegates put forth their opinion on the country they are representing and the issue that they are discussing on. In XAVMUN'26, the students take up the issue and speak about it stating the possible cause and effect and the solutions. The students walk around the room and team up with the countries they agree upon.

The Secretary of XUDS quoted "XAVMUN'26 was built in chaos. From sleepless nights and last minute crises to plans changing by the minute, there were moments when pulling it off felt impossible. But we showed up, fixed what broke, backed each other when things got tough, and kept moving. What people saw for two days was an event, what we lived through was a journey. And honestly, I wouldn't trade a single breakdown, setback, or 3 a.m. panic for the way we came out of it stronger, louder, and proud. XAVMUN'26 wasn't perfect. It was ours.



SXUK hosts XAVMUN 2026 (Source: @sxukolkata)

And we made it happen."

Day two of the fest included the continuation of the discussion of issues, where at last the delegates wrote a paper-work known as resolution that listed step-by-step solutions to the problems discussed. There are a total of 4 sessions with a 5-10 minute break in between. Up next, the whole room gets to hear the solutions and either agree or disagree to them. The judges give an overview of the event, at the end. Lastly, the organizing committee members arrange for a feedback section where all the committees and it's delegates give a brief review about the entire event and it's happenings. The awards were classified under the following

sections: verbal mentions (3), high commendation (2), special mention (2), best delegate (1) and best delegation (1). Each committee was awarded under the following titles. The closing ceremony took place at 4:30 pm.

XAVMUN was not conducted to teach students about world politics. It was a platform where students of both schools and colleges could come together and find their voice, justify their reasons, express and respect different views and work together as a team. Even though the fests conclude but the students take something better with them, the fact and belief that communication is the key to everything and it can even change the world.

Kolkata's countdown to Durga puja begins

Ashna Dey (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: In August, as the monsoon continues to affect the city, Kolkata has already started its preparations for Durga Puja, the festival this year taking place from 17th to 21st October 2026. The informal signal that the celebrations have begun is Khuti Pujo, the simple yet symbolically significant ceremony in which the neighbourhood puja committees consecrate the bamboo or wooden pole that will form the base of the Durga idol.

In August the event is held with hardly any of the spectacle which characterises the festival in its later days, and Khuti Pujo usually consists of a priest, a small number of committee members, incense and sweets. Nevertheless, for the organisers of the thousands of community pujas in the city, it is the point at which a neighbourhood officially commits itself to carrying out that year's celebration. In the weeks afterwards the committees start to finalise the pandal themes, secure the artists, decide on the budgets and book the lighting and decoration teams - work which becomes more intensive in September.

The narrow streets of Kumartuli, the potter's district of Kolkata that has



A Durgoutsab Poster (Source: Creative Hatti)

existed for centuries on the eastern shore of the Hooghly start to come to life alongside Khuti Pujo. Workers, a number of them coming from families who have for generations been responsible for shaping the image of Durga, begin to put together the bamboo and straw frameworks, called kathamo,

onto which successive layers of river clay will be added over the following weeks. The clay itself, which has traditionally been taken from the Ganga, is valued for its fine texture, a quality that is necessary for sculpting the detailed features of the goddess and her four children - Lakshmi, Saraswati,

Kartik and Ganesh together with the demon Mahishasura.

The size of this annual event is enormous. There are approximately 3,000 community pujas held in Kolkata, more than 200 of which are organised on budgets that go over one crore rupees. Durga Puja in Kolkata was included by UNESCO in 2021 on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, where it was acknowledged as a rare combination of religious devotion, public art and social inclusion.

For the next two months the tight workshops of Kumartuli will go through a series of stages - laying on the clay, drying the frames, and painting the fine details, with the aim of reaching Mahalaya, the day when the goddess's eyes are traditionally painted on to her image, a day believed to bring her to life.

For Kolkata, the Khuti Pujo in August and the initial events at Kumartuli are humble beginnings of what will develop by October into a city-wide celebration of art, memory and homecoming, that long period leading up to five days which define the Bengali calendar year.. These preparations bring communities together, preserve traditions, and create excitement across Kolkata before the festivities begin.

FEATURE

Kolkata's weekend culture : The city awakens during weekends

Srija Mukherjee

(BA, Sem 5)

Kolkata: The weekends are unique days in Kolkata. The working week can be busy, but Saturday and Sunday offer another beat to the city. Whether it is leisurely breakfasts, long adda sessions, street food, shopping, music or culture, the weekend in Kolkata is more about enjoying the little things than rushing.

Adda, one of the most crucial components of the weekend culture in Kolkata. People sit at cafés, tea stalls, neighbourhood corners and talk about everything from films, football, politics, relationships, and more with friends, students and families. The Coffee House has long been linked to such a culture of conversation, and continues to be a place where people go to escape from the hurry of their everyday lives.

Food is also an important part of Kolkata weekend. One fetches the outdoor



A fun filled weekend in Kolkata with food (Source: Pinterest)

to savor all kinds of Bengali sweets, kathi rolls, biryani, as well as phuchka and other traditional dishes. Park Street, Gariahat and the northern part of Kolkata are great places to experience street food and find restaurants. A weekend meal at "somewhere else" for

many families is a little ritual.

Weekends also give a chance to the Kolkatans to witness the city's cultural richness. Several performances of theatre, art exhibitions, music concerts, book events and film screenings are held throughout the city. College Street

is still a popular place for book lovers and cultural venues draw in older and younger crowds. Another favourite pastime is shopping. New Market and Gariahat are still quite full and busy, with shoppers looking for clothes, accessories, books and traditional products. Meanwhile, there's a growing trend toward independent shops and flea markets or pop-up stores for younger shoppers.

If you are more at ease to relax, you can go for a walk by the side of Hooghly River or visit the Maidan.

The unique aspect of Kolkata's weekend culture is its fusion of tradition and modernity. From an adda in the afternoon, to a plate of street food, a theatre show or a quiet evening by the river, Kolkata shows that a weekend does not have to be fancy to be memorable. It is this effortless blend of simplicity, warmth and culture that makes weekends in the city truly special. Every weekend has its own charm.

National Handloom Day : A celebration of India's weaving heritage

Ankita Chakrabarty

(BA, Sem 5)

Kolkata: India celebrated its 12th National Handloom Day on 7th August, 2026 with a national event hosted by the Ministry of Textiles at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre (RBCC), New Delhi. This event served as a way to pay homage to India's rich handloom legacy and emphasise the invaluable contribution of handloom workers in the nation's socio-economic development. The event was presided over by Smt. Droupadi Murmu, the Hon'ble President of India. It was also attended by the Union Minister of Textiles Shri Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of State for Textiles Shri Pabitra Margherita, Smt. Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary (Textiles) and Dr. M. Beena, Development Commissioner (Handlooms). The event also involved awarding the winners of Sant Kabir Handloom

Awards and the National Handloom Awards for the year 2025. 19 National Handloom Awards and 3 Sant Kabir Handloom Awards were conferred upon handloom weavers for their exceptional artistry, ingenuity and contribution towards the preservation of



A National handloom day Poster (Source: Wikipedia)

India's handloom traditions.

The occasion stood witness to the release of four commemorative postage stamps celebrating India's rich and versatile handloom weaving legacy.

Two publications—"Earth. Root. Thread – Aal Dyed Handloom Textiles of Central India" and the Handloom Awards Book 2025—were also unveiled at the event. Alongside these events, an exhibition demonstrating

award-winning handloom products such as the Kani Weaving and Wall Hanging Weaving was also organised. It gave the visitors an opportunity to catch a glimpse of India's outstanding craftsmanship.

The National Handloom Day commemorates the launch of the Swadeshi Movement in the year 1905; a movement which encouraged indigenous industries and acknowledged the contributions of the handloom weavers. In 2026, the observance signifies an important milestone in this journey. It indicates the rising significance of handloom among contemporary consumers and its stronger presence in global markets. In 2015, the Government of India designated 7th August as National Handloom Day. The same year Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first National Handloom Day in Chennai.

Established in 2015, National Handloom Day acts as a way to honour the brilliance, expertise, and dedication of India's handloom weavers while maintaining the government's commitment to the handloom industry's sustainable progress, promotion, and preservation.

NATION

Heavy rain brings Kolkata traffic to a crawl



Large areas of Kolkata waterlogged due to torrential rains. (Source : Google)



Severe waterlogging, traffic movement hit across city. (Source: Google)

Kaushiki Paul (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: Widespread waterlogging and knee-deep flooding on major thoroughfare caused severe traffic congestion during office hours, disrupting day-to-day life in Kolkata and adjoining areas like Salt Lake and Howrah, on 17th August 2026. Reduced transport facilities and flooded roads increased travel time and raised difficulties for students and office goers. The India Meteorological Department had reported that a deep depression over the north-west part of Bay of

Bengal has triggered relentless rain in Kolkata and it's neighboring areas. It reported a severe drop in atmospheric pressure, saturated moisture levels and intense downpours that paralyzed normal life. Kolkata recorded 50 mm to over 100 mm of rainfall in different parts of the city. Haldia in Purba Medinipur district recorded the highest rainfall of 134 mm in 24 hours.

Bottleneck areas had drowned causing frustrating traffic congestions. Many vehicles suffered from hydrostatic lock, as floodwater damaged the engines. The heavy downpour washed

away asphalt from major flyovers, creating potholes, the murky waters of the waterlogged regions camouflage deep craters that create risks to motorcyclists and pedestrians. Movement of heavy freight trucks on the flooded roads had worsened it's already poor condition.

The continuous rainfall had a severe impact on the small business owners and the street vendors as the submerged conditions of the roads and pavements forced the shops shut. It also created health concerns since contaminated floodwater carried disease-causing organisms and increased

the risk of infections for the people who were forced to walk or work through it. The health threat therefore extended beyond vehicle congestion and immediate inconvenience of flooded streets. The situation pointed out Kolkata's vulnerability in the face of incessant rain, poor drainage system and faulty urban infrastructure. For thousands of residents, it was a reminder of how rapidly extreme rainfall can bring everyday rhythm of the city to a halt. The flooding highlighted urgent concerns about drainage, infrastructure, preparedness, and effective disaster management across Kolkata.

India's bullet train era set to begin in 2027



India's first bullet train back on track (Source: Google)

Abantika Roy (BA, Sem 5)

Kolkata: India is set to enter a new era of high-speed rail with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor, the country's first bullet train project. The 508-kilometre corridor is being developed by the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) across Maharashtra, Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

The first section of the project is expected to begin operations between

Surat and Bilimora on 15 August 2027, according to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The complete Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor is planned to become operational in phases.

Designed for an operating speed of 320 km/h, the bullet train is expected to reduce travel time significantly. With limited stops, the Mumbai to Ahmedabad journey is planned to take around two hours. The corridor will have 12 stations, including Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar, Vapi,

Bilimora, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad and Sabarmati.

The project incorporates Japanese Shinkansen technology, bringing advanced systems for signalling, track construction, electrification and safety to India., Around 90% of the route will run on elevated tracks supported by pillars. The project also includes tunnels, bridges and India's first under-sea rail tunnel beneath Thane Creek.

Beyond faster travel, the project is expected to strengthen connectiv-

ity between major economic centres and smaller industrial cities. It is also creating opportunities for employment, technical training and the development of domestic expertise in high-speed rail infrastructure.

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train is therefore more than a faster mode of transportation. It marks India's first major step into high-speed rail, combining advanced technology, improved connectivity and a vision for modernising the country's transport infrastructure.

SPORTS

The tricolour triumph : Commonwealth Games 2026

Shamvobi Ghose (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: Glasgow may have hosted the Commonwealth Games, but India ensured that the spotlight went with their athletes. Even if Glasgow was the backdrop, it was pretty clear that India carried the momentum. With records set, firsts achieved, and a rather complete dominance in the boxing ring, India delivered an unforgettable campaign at the Commonwealth Games 2026. Indian athletes brought back a total of 39 medals—13 gold, 17 silver and 9 bronze, and they finished joint fourth on the medal tally, which honestly felt like a big statement.

The whole thing kicked off with Mirabai Chanu, who claimed the first gold medal and then followed it up with her hat-trick of Commonwealth Games titles. As usual, weightlifting stayed among India's core strengths, and the younger competitors also made their presence count on the global stage. Still, the real noise came from the boxing ring. The Indian boxers produced an all-time great performance, winning 10 medals in total, including seven gold medals. That kind of success didn't just reflect single standout brilliance, it also points toward the growing strength of Indian sports across the board, more broadly. India also had other firsts in different sports. Asmita Dey became India's first

Commonwealth Games gold medallist in judo, while athletics added some new landmarks. Gulveer Singh became the first Indian track and field athlete to claim two individual medals at one edition of the Games, and Tejaswin Shankar wrote another first by winning India's inaugural decathlon medal.

And the Para athletes? They did their share too, posting what was described as the best-ever performance by India at the Commonwealth Para Games. Those results underline how the diversity and competitiveness of Indian sport is getting sharper, not just bigger. However, the significance of the Commonwealth Games 2026 went beyond the medals. With the closing ceremony of Glasgow marking the end of the current edition of the Games, attention focused on Amdavad, India, the venue of the Centenary Commonwealth Games in 2030.

Thus, the Commonwealth Games 2026 was not just a sporting spectacle for India. It was much more than that, and it was a declaration. A declaration that Indian athletes are no longer just participants on the global stage—they are taking control and preparing to bring it home. From the podiums of Glasgow to the future games in Amdavad, India's story in the world of sport is far from over. The journey ahead promises even greater achievements for India.



Inauguration event for the Commonwealth Games 2026 (Source: Wikipedia)

India take 1-0 lead in Sri Lanka after Suthar special



Manav Suthar during one of his spells (Source: BCCI)

Aditya Sehgal (BA, Sem 5)

Kolkata: The ongoing two-match Test series between India and hosts Sri Lanka has produced plenty of drama, with India securing a hard-fought victory in the opening Test to take a 1-0 lead. Batting first, India posted a formidable 462, with important contributions from their middle order providing the foundation for a commanding total.

Sri Lanka responded with 284, with Dhananjaya de Silva making a valuable contribution while Sonal Dinusha stood firm with a resilient innings. India's second-innings total of 193 set Sri Lanka a challenging target of 372 runs. Although the hosts fought determinedly, they ultimately fell short, with Dinusha once again emerging as the most prominent figure in Sri Lanka's batting effort.

India's left-arm spinner Manav Suthar played a decisive role in sealing the victory. Claiming his second five-wicket haul in Test cricket, Suthar finished with match figures approaching

ten wickets and dismantled Sri Lanka's lower order soon after Dinusha's dismissal. His spell proved crucial in bringing the contest to an end and handing India an important victory away from home.

The result carries added significance for India, particularly given their recent struggles in spin-friendly conditions outside the country. India had lost two of their previous three Tests in similar environments, making this victory an encouraging sign for a relatively inexperienced and evolving side still finding its identity in the post-senior-generation era.

Attention now turns to the second and final Test at the SSC Ground in Colombo. India have once again won the toss and elected to bat, giving themselves an opportunity to build on their momentum. Sri Lanka will be determined to bounce back and salvage pride by securing a victory, which would prevent India from completing a clean sweep. India will instead aim to finish the series strongly and underline their progress with another commanding performance.

LOCAL

The city under the city: Kolkata Metro finally taking it's shape



Howrah Maidan station on the East-West Green Line (Source: Google)

Manya Chitlangia (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: India's first metro is no longer a single north-south corridor. Kolkata is witnessing a major expansion of its metro network, with new corridors, tunnel breakthroughs and rising ridership reshaping urban mobility. The expansion aims to create a more connected network, though questions remain over timelines and pending links.

On Independence Day, Metro Railway General Manager Prem Sagar Gupta announced that Kolkata's met-

ro network is expected to expand to approximately 130 kilometres in the coming years. The transformation is significant. India's first metro opened on 24 October 1984 as a 3.5-km stretch. Four decades later, Kolkata has a five-line network spanning roughly 73 km with 58 stations. The next phase aims to turn these corridors into an integrated grid. Demand has grown substantially. Metro Railway carried 23.60 crore passengers in 2025-26, averaging around 6.5 lakh commuters daily. Earnings between April and July 2026 rose 34% year-on-year to ₹166 crore. Smart cards,

QR tickets and digital tokens through the Aamar Kolkata Metro app are also becoming increasingly popular. The network underwent a major transformation last year when Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off three important stretches: the East-West Green Line from Salt Lake Sector V to Howrah Maidan, featuring India's first under-river metro beneath the Hooghly; the Yellow Line from Noapara to Jai Hind, connecting the city to the airport; and an extension of the Orange Line to Belegkata. Esplanade emerged as a key interchange, while Howrah and Sealdah were connected through the underground corridor.

This year, the focus has shifted towards closing the gaps. In May, the launching girder at Chingrighata, part of the Orange Line's missing link on EM Bypass, was completed after extensive traffic-clearance negotiations. Train services connecting the corridor to Sector V are targeted for December, advancing the approximately 30-km New Garia-Airport corridor, which could reduce travel time to under an hour. The Purple Line has also progressed. On 11 August, tunnel-boring machine Divya broke through at Vic-

toria, completing the final twin tunnel on the Khidderpore-Victoria stretch. The long-delayed Joka-Esplanade corridor is currently targeted for completion in 2029. Despite the progress, challenges remain. The Purple and Orange lines operate as incomplete corridors, while work on Blue Line platforms at Kavi Subhash is underway. The proposed Yellow Line extension beyond the airport towards Barasat also faces land-related issues. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's announcement of 60 new-generation metro rakes over the next four to five years will be important, but tracks and signalling must keep pace.

Still, Kolkata's metro expansion marks a major shift. As the Orange Line moves towards Sector V and Kavi Subhash moves closer to integration, the Blue, Orange and Green lines could form a far more connected network. For a city long dependent on crowded suburban railways and constrained by the EM Bypass, the expansion offers more than new tracks. It offers the possibility of a faster, more accessible and better-connected Kolkata, provided the remaining links are completed on schedule.

What does freedom mean to young minds?

Mahima Dutta (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: We know the story of how India became free as we have heard it in classrooms, seen it in films, and watched it being remembered every year. But for a generation born decades after Independence, freedom is no longer something that belongs only to history books. For Gen Z, it raises a question: How free am I to question the world I was born into?

The recent scenes at Jantar Mantar offer one way of looking at this question. Youth of the nation gathered, protested, and demanded to be heard. The agitation also raised questions about whether the right to protest meets the need to maintain public order. But beyond the debate itself is something worth noticing: how young Indians still care about having the space to speak, question, and disagree. That is where the meaning of Independence has shifted.

The generation that fought for independence wanted freedom from

colonial rule. The generation growing up in an independent India is dealing with a different question: what does it mean to be free within a democracy? It can mean disagreeing with a teacher, questioning a tradition, or simply choosing an unconventional career, or saying, "I don't agree," without being immediately labelled as disrespectful. For some young people, freedom means financial independence. For other it means choosing a path which is different from the traditional routes, and for young minds, it's having the confidence to make mistakes and having the confidence to take their own decisions.

There is also a different side of freedom, where Gen Z has access to more information than almost any generation before it. Social media has given access to all sorts of information that can bring news, opinions, education, and opportunities within seconds. Yet access to information does not always mean thinking independently. The freedom to think also requires the willingness to question what appears on our



Beyond history books: What freedom means to us today. (Source : Google)

screens, including opinions we agree with and those we strongly oppose. This is more about understanding what we are saying and accepting that someone else may think differently.

Independence today begins not only with the freedom to live, but with the freedom to learn, question, and form an opinion of our own

rather than simply inherit one.

Maybe that is what Independence Day means to young Indians in 2026—not just remembering freedom in 1947, but asking what we do with it today. Political independence was achieved once; the freedom to think, question and disagree must be practised by every generation.

FEATURE

The world is watching: E-sports takes over

Smit Roy (BA, Sem 3)

Kolkata: Teenagers glued to screens used to be an easy joke. These days that joke doesn't land so well, stadiums now sell out for the same thing, and somewhere along the way it turned into a business worth billions.

The numbers explain why nobody's laughing anymore. Roughly 640 million people tuned into e-sports this year, a figure that puts it ahead of the NFL's global audience, which is no small thing to say about a sport most people over forty have never watched. A large chunk of that audience is young, and that's where the worry starts creeping in. Talk to any parent of a teenager these days and screen time comes up fast, with late nights, and restlessness that wasn't there a few years ago. Kids treat tournament nights the way their parents treated a World Cup final, except this happens every week, not once every four years. And it's not only about the fans. Any streaming platform will make you realise the daily routine of the fifteen-year-olds these days. Skipping meals to grind for hours, chasing a spot on some team, convinced that's their shot at going pro. Somewhere in there, watching a match stopped being just watching a match. Brands caught on early. Sponsorship money, media rights, and tournament revenue combined have pushed the industry



The biggest tournament in Valve's Tactical Shooter (Source : FiReSPORTS)

close to 5 billion dollars in value, more than double what it was bringing in just two years back. Asia-Pacific remains the centre of gravity here, holding onto well over half the world's viewers, and China together with the Philippines accounts for a striking portion of that fanbase on its own.

Riyadh played host to this year's Esports World Cup, and the prize money on offer, 75 million dollars, was the largest ever handed out in competitive gaming. Crowds in the millions still show up for League of Legends, Mobile Legends, and Counter-Strike whenever a major tournament rolls around, though how

people watch has shifted quietly but decisively: this is the first year phones have overtaken computers as the main screen fans use to follow the action.

There's a business side to all this that rarely makes headlines. Streaming platforms and broadcasters have gotten very good at keeping eyes glued to the screen, recommendation algorithms nudge viewers from one match to the next, autoplay rarely gives anyone a natural stopping point, and in-game purchases get pushed hardest during the most exciting moments of a match, when a viewer is least likely to think twice. Betting and fantasy-league tie-ins have also crept into broadcasts,

dressed up as fan engagement but functioning much like the odds boards at a casino. None of it is accidental. It's a well-tested playbook, the same one traditional sports broadcasting has used for years, just adapted for an audience that grew up online and is far more comfortable spending money inside an app than at a stadium gate.

Running an operation this size takes more than good players. There's a whole crew working behind the scenes that fans rarely think about, coaches drilling strategy, analysts poring over match data late into the night, production teams keeping broadcasts running, streamers building their own following on the side. Add it all up and you get an industry quietly employing tens of thousands of people, most of whom probably told their parents at some point that gaming would never pay the bills.

Football and cricket needed generations to build the devotion their fans show today. E-sports has reached something similar in barely twenty years. New games emerge, rosters change every season, sponsors rotate, yet the audience keeps showing up, tournament after tournament, never quite ready to log off. Whether this signals a healthy new sporting culture or a warning about how easily attention can be bought remains a question the industry hasn't answered. For now, scoreboards keep climbing, along with the number of people watching them.

The slowdown: A new generation reclaims its time

Angelina Gomes (BA, Sem 5)

Kolkata: In a city that rarely seems to pause, slowing down is becoming a conscious choice. From limiting screen time to returning to books, home cooked meals and outdoor walks, slow living is gaining renewed attention as people reconsider how much of their day is consumed by work, technology and constant activity.

The consequences of an always connected routine are increasingly visible. A December 2025 study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), based on more than 14,000 respondents across 14 countries including India, found that people spending more than five hours a day on personal screens were more likely to report poorer well being. The study also identified inadequate sleep and low

physical activity as important factors associated with poorer well being. Kolkata offers its own reminders of the need for a slower rhythm. The city's crowded commutes, long working hours and increasingly digital routines leave little room for unstructured time. At the same time, familiar spaces such as the Maidan, College Street's bookshops and neighbourhood parks continue to offer opportunities to walk, read, talk and simply spend time without a screen. Recent reporting has also highlighted Kolkata residents turning to digital detoxes, nature walks, reading and face to face conversations to improve their well being and relationships.

Slow living does not demand abandoning ambition or technology. It asks for greater control over how they are used. A phone free meal, an evening of reading, cooking at home, a walk after work or setting aside time without notifications can create space



In a city that never stops, slowing down matters. Source: Google)

for rest and real world connection. These small changes can bring more than a quieter schedule. Better boundaries with technology can create time for sleep, physical activity, relationships and hobbies that often

disappear beneath the pressure to remain productive. Perhaps the return of slow living is therefore not about doing less. It is about making room for what truly deserves our attention and care. In a city that never truly sleeps.

INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL

Rainfall turns record-breaking in South Korea

Brishni Chattopadhyay
(MA, Sem 1)

Kolkata: For weeks, the fields of South Gyeongsang Province had been cracking under a relentless dry spell. From July 1 through August 16, the region received just 141.8 millimetres of rain, that is, 19 percent of what the season normally brings, was enough to dry out 2,100 hectares of farmland and leave about 5,700 households struggling for water. Then, in three days, nearly all of it arrived at once.

Torrential rain topping 800 millimetres swept through southeastern Korea through Monday, August 18, unleashing floods and landslides that killed at least one person, injured four others, and forced nearly 160 residents from their homes.

Geoje bore the worst of it 851.1 millimetres over three days, alongside a single-hour record of 124.5 millimetres at 1:32 a.m. that the city had never seen



South Korea: From drought to deluge (Source: Google)

before. A landslide tore into the first floor of an apartment building in Okpo-dong in the early hours, killing one resident. By Monday morning, Geoje and Tongyeong together had logged 1,947 emergency calls, with firefighters pulling 136 people to safety.

The disruption reached beyond the immediate disaster zones. Public trans-

portation shut down across parts of Geoje. Hanwha Ocean and Samsung Heavy Industries told workers to stay home. A resident in his fifties told local media he had spent the night jolted awake by three consecutive emergency alerts, each warning of rising floodwaters and urging evacuation. "It was still raining heavily in the morning," he said, "and I heard that low-ly-

ing areas were flooded and in chaos."

Meteorologists traced the deluge to the remnants of Typhoon Dolphin, whose low-pressure system drew warm, moisture-heavy winds across southern coastal waters running at 27 to 28 degrees Celsius. Where those winds met the mountainous coastline, they were pushed upward, squeezing out rainfall at record intensity.

The priority now is to assess the full extent of the destruction. Roads, homes and public infrastructure have been affected across several areas. Rescue teams continue to assist those stranded or displaced by the floods. Authorities are also working to restore essential services and clear damaged routes. For many families, however, recovery will take much longer than the storm itself. The focus now shifts from rescue to rebuilding and rehabilitation. Officials have urged continued caution as affected areas recover. Communities are also coming together to support those in need.

India's mining law opens a new federalism battle



Parliament in session (Source: Google)

Adrija Sanyal (MA, Sem 1)

Kolkata: Parliament has passed a mining law that could change how financial powers over minerals are shared between the Centre and the states. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, was passed by both Houses on August 13 and is now waiting for the President's assent.

The main change comes through a new Section 9D. Under it, state governments will not be able to impose taxes, cesses or other charges on mineral rights or mineral-bearing land un-

less the Centre permits them to. The amendment also gives the Centre more control in dealing with mineral-bearing land, raising concerns about how much control states will retain over resources. What has made the legislation controversial is its retrospective effect. It cancels state tax dues and stops companies from claiming refunds. The move comes after the Supreme Court's 2024 judgment in Mineral Area Development Authority v. Steel Authority of India, which recognised the states' power to tax mineral rights. Critics argue that the new law reduces the impact of that ruling. Mining companies



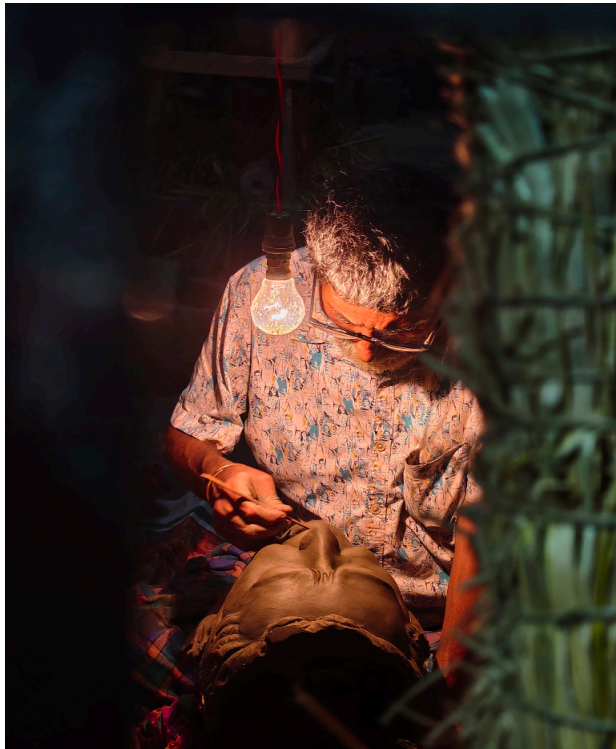
Workers working in a mine (Source: Google)

could receive relief. Coal India and its subsidiaries, as well as the Steel Authority of India, could benefit from the cancellation of tax liabilities. For mineral-rich states such as Jharkhand, the amendment could mean losing a source of revenue. States are expected to challenge the law in court, arguing that the Centre is taking away powers that the Constitution gives them. The government has defended the amendment as a way to make taxation more uniform and predictable, which it says could encourage investment in mining. It has linked the reform to India's push to reduce dependence

on China for critical minerals. China supplies about 90 per cent of India's rare-earth magnets, making domestic access to these resources important.

Ultimately, the amendment touches a wider question of federalism which is how much control should the Centre have over States? While the government sees the law as necessary for investment and resource security, states fear losing both revenue and authority. With legal challenges likely, the amendment could become another test of Centre-state relations in India. Its impact remains to be seen.

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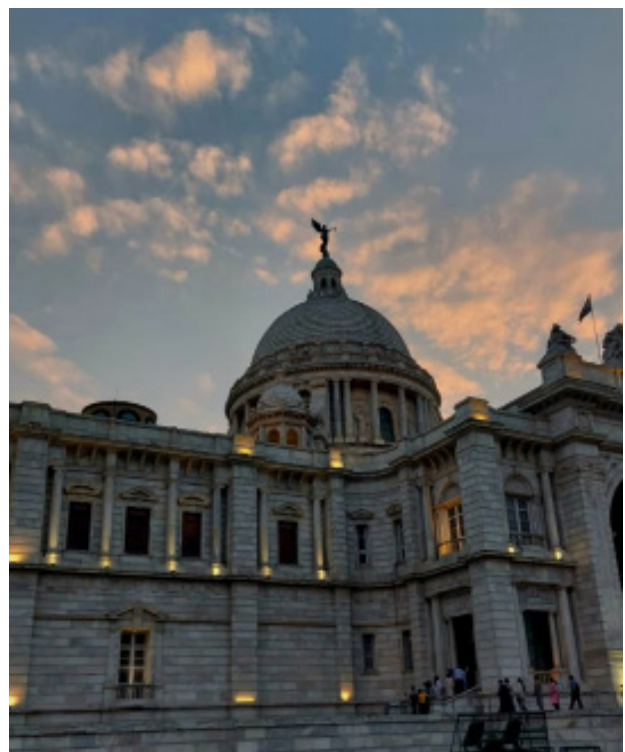
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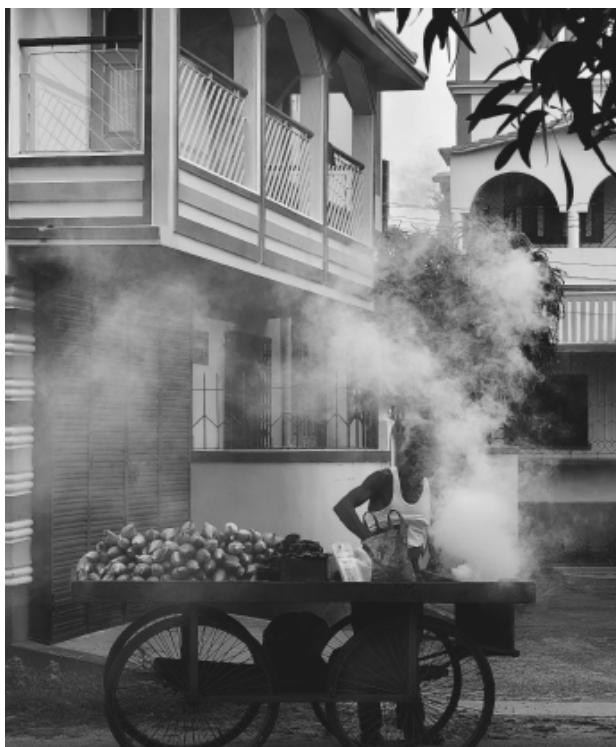
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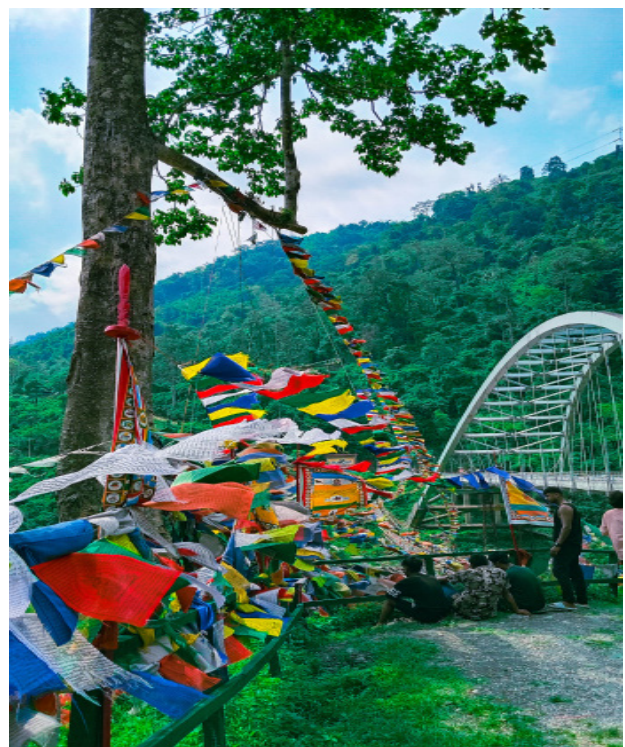
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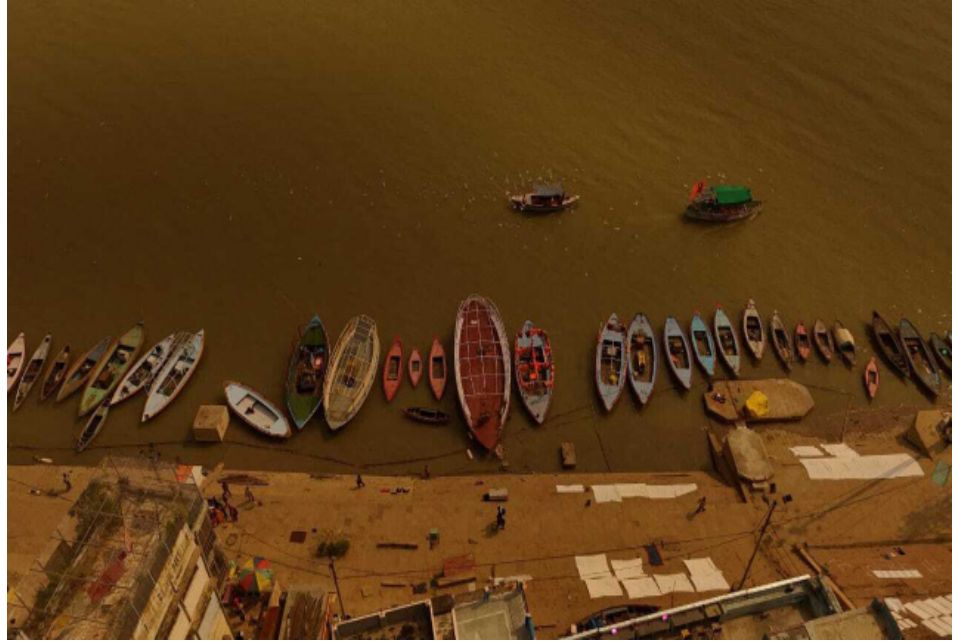


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