

## St. Xavier's University Hosts 7th Convocation, Dr. Shashi Tharoor present during the event

Sreemanti Samaddar (MA, Sem 2)

**Kolkata:** St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) observed the 7th Convocation ceremony of the university at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, New Town on February 21, 2026.

Rev. Dr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., Superior General based in Rome, Italy attended the occasion as the Chief Guest along with a distinguished gathering of priests from various parts of India. The Honoris Causa (D.Litt) was conferred upon Dr. Shashi Tharoor, MP from Thiruvananthapuram and also the Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs.

1052 postgraduate and undergraduate students and 25

Ph.D scholars were awarded their degrees at this convocation. 17 students received gold medals in different subjects for their outstanding performance.

While presenting the annual report, Rev. Dr. John Felix Raj, S.J., Vice-Chancellor of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) declared the introduction of the B. Tech programme from the 2026 academic session in the university. This will be another milestone for the university. Father Felix Raj also mentioned, "M.Tech. Course will be introduced in due course of time. The university also plans an array of courses like, Integrated MBA, Integrated B.Ed., School of Design and School of Nursing."

While addressing the gathering, Rev. Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J. said, "We live in a world of extraordinary progress. We often see a loss of meaning, of values and of human connection. Jesuit education challenges us to respond differently.

To balance intellect and empathy, ambition with integrity and success with service; we need to be persons of integrity, socially conscious and compassionate." Dr. Shashi Tharoor congratulated the students of SXUK stating that every degree conferred today represents not only the personal achievements of the students, but also an investment in our republic's bright, young, and beautiful future.



Father Vice-Chancellor and Dr. Tharoor Shaking Hands

## A Roadmap to Sustainable Growth

Mohul Sen (MA, Sem 2)

**Kolkata:** The Union Budget 2026-27, presented on 1 February 2026 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, arrives at a time when both global uncertainty and domestic ambition define the economic mood of India. More than just an annual financial statement, this budget feels like a statement of intent. A reassurance that the country is aiming for stability, resilience and long-term transformation rather than short-term applause.

At its core, the Budget reflects a careful balancing act. On one hand, there is a visible push toward infrastructure and capital expenditure like investments in roads, railways, renewable energy, logistics and digital connectivity. These are not headline-grabbing giveaways, but foundational moves. The idea is simple: when infrastructure grows, businesses move faster, goods travel cheaper and jobs multiply organically. It is a reminder that development is often built brick by brick, not through quick fixes. Manufacturing and innovation also find strong mention. With renewed



FinMin Nirmala Sitharaman holding the Bahi Khata (Source: Google Images)

focus on "Make in India" style initiatives, the government aims to strengthen domestic production in sectors such as electronics, green energy, defence manufacturing and MSMEs. For small and medium enterprises, which form the backbone of employment generation, policy measures emphasise easier credit access and streamlined compliance. The tone is pro-enterprise but mea-

sured, encouraging expansion without ignoring fiscal prudence. For the middle class and salaried citizens, tax rationalisation and simplified compliance procedures bring cautious optimism. While not radically transformative, the changes attempt to ease paperwork burdens and promote savings and investment. Rural development and agriculture continue to receive attention, especially

in terms of irrigation, storage infrastructure and technology integration, signalling that growth must include Bharat alongside urban India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the Budget as reform-oriented and future-ready: reinforcing the government's larger narrative of steady economic momentum. Fiscal discipline remains central, with efforts directed toward managing the deficit responsibly while still funding development priorities. This suggests a long-term vision where macroeconomic stability is not sacrificed for temporary political gain. Ultimately, the Union Budget 2026 is less about dramatic announcements and more about direction. It reflects confidence in India's economic trajectory, combined with caution shaped by global realities. For citizens, it promises incremental but steady improvements in the form of better infrastructure, stronger industry and a continued push toward inclusive growth. In that sense, the Budget is not merely a financial document but a roadmap for how the nation hopes to evolve over the coming year and beyond.

UNIVERSITY EVENT & WORLD POLITICS

# St. Xavier's University Celebrates 10 Years of Excellence with Grand Foundation Day Event



Rev. Fr. Dr. John Felix Raj, Vice Chancellor (Source: Google Images)

**Sreeparna Chakraborty (MA Sem 2)**

**Kolkata:** St. Xavier's University, Kolkata celebrated an important milestone as it marked its 10th Foundation Day on 9 February 2026 with great enthusiasm and pride. The event took place at the Albert Huart Hall and brought together students, faculty members, administrative staff, and several distinguished guests. It was

an occasion not only to celebrate the university's journey but also to reflect on its growth and achievements over the past decade.

The programme began on a solemn note with a prayer led by Fr. Mourlin K. SJ. This was followed by the screening of a specially prepared video that highlighted the university's progress since its establishment. The video captured key moments and

achievements, giving the audience a sense of how far the institution has come in ten years.

In his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Dr. John Felix Raj, set an optimistic and forward-looking tone for the event. He spoke about the university's dedication to maintaining high academic standards while also focusing on social responsibility. His speech emphasised the importance of education in shaping responsible and aware citizens. One of the main highlights of the celebration was a special lecture delivered by Roopen Roy, the Founder of Sumantrana Management Consultants. He spoke on the topic "Academia-Industry Interaction for Future Growth." In his lecture, he stressed the importance of building stronger connections between educational institutions and industries. He pointed out that such collaboration is necessary for innovation, practical learning, and preparing students for real-world challenges.

During the event, an important announcement was made regarding the upcoming convocation in 2026. It was shared that Rev. Fr. Arturo Sosa,

the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, would attend as the Chief Guest.

It was also announced that Dr. Shashi Tharoor would be honoured with the prestigious Honoris Causa degree.

Fr. Felix Raj also took the opportunity to recognise the dedication of the university's staff and faculty. He announced the names of those who had achieved 100 per cent attendance in 2025. As a token of appreciation, they would receive an incentive equal to one month's basic salary. In addition, the university declared a freeship scholarship for students with disabilities (PwD) who are enrolled at the institution. Another significant moment during the celebration was the release of a book titled Footprints – Essays in Honour of Fr. Felix Raj. The event also included a tribute to Professor Ashis Mitra, acknowledging his valuable service and contribution to the university.

Dr. Basab Chaudhuri, Principal of the Heritage Institute of Technology, delivered an address in which he praised the efforts and leadership of Fr. Felix Raj, especially his role in promoting Jesuit education and values.

## Bangladesh 2026 Elections: BNP aims to improve ties with India

**Anweshan Ghosh (BA Sem 4)**

**Kolkata:** Bangladesh successfully conducted its 2026 general elections on February 12 and 13, marking a significant shift in power. Voters across the nation participated in electing the 300 member Jatiya Sangsad, the national parliament of Bangladesh. The results showcased a landslide victory for the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) defeating the Awami League which had been the ruling party for over a decade.

Party leader Tarique Rahman, son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is set to become the new PM following the foundation of the new government. Bangladesh, which is one of the most rapidly growing economies in South East Asia, the newly elected government aims to address key national priorities and strengthen the ties with neighbours India after recent conflicts.

The BNP has indicated that improving bilateral relations with its neighbouring nation will be a key priority under the leadership of Tarique Rahman. Party advisor Humayun Kabir has also addressed the issue of radicalization in the region recently. Bangladesh shares one of the longest borders with India along with deep cultural connection. Since independence, relationship



Tarique Rahman, newly-elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh (Source: Google Images)

between both the nations have gone beyond just trade and security.

BNP leadership has expressed in maintaining similar ties. The emphasis will be on improving commercial and economic partnership, in sectors including clothing, pharmaceuticals, fisheries along with improved connectivity in railways which would benefit both the nation's economy. Energy cooperation and security are set to be the next priorities, as Bangladesh imports electricity from India, aims to

continue it along with collaborating on renewable energy projects.

Counter terrorism is also a key aspect which India has collaborated on with our neighbours, BNP expects to continue the similar operations addressing the challenges across the border. The massive youth population of both the nations are also set to improve cooperation in higher education and industrial opportunities along with multiple initiatives to improve the economic trajectory of

Bangladesh. BNP understands that leading a pragmatic relationship with India would contribute to the recent instability in the region and hinder economic growth in South East Asia. Therefore, in the coming months it is expected that the diplomatic relations between the neighbours will significantly improve, fostering progress for both nations ahead. This positive development may also enhance regional stability and economic cooperation.

## FEATURE

### A Shrine on Wheels: Inside Kolkata's 141-Year-Old Rolls-Royce

**Mouboni Majumdar (MA Sem 2)**

**Kolkata:** The city's most unique spectacle, the Rolls-Royce Holi, turned 141 this year. At its heart is a vintage 1921 Rolls-Royce, once owned by Rudyard Kipling and acquired by the Bagla family in 1927. On March 1, 2026, this "shrine on wheels" was transformed into a flower-decked chariot for the idols of Radha and Krishna. The procession rumbled from the Satyanarayan Jee Temple on Kalakar Street, crossing the iconic Howrah Bridge amidst clouds of pink gulal and the sounds of kirtans, drawing thousands of devotees and photographers to the historic lanes of Burrabazar.

What makes this celebration remarkable is not merely its visual spectacle but its deep sense of continuity. Generations of the Bagla family have preserved the tradition, ensuring that the Rolls-Royce remains not just a relic of colonial luxury but a living symbol of devotion. The car, polished to a gleaming sheen before the festivities, is treated with reverence—adorned with marigolds, roses, and intricate fabric canopies that echo temple aesthetics. As it moves slowly through the crowded streets, devotees walk alongside, singing

bhajans, while others shower petals from balconies above, turning the narrow lanes into rivers of colour and fragrance.



*Rolls Royce holi celebration in Kolkata (Source: Google Images)*

Kolkata's mercantile communities added their own distinct flavours to the festivities. The Marwari Sanskriti Manch hosted a grand "Holi Mahotsav" at the Central Park Mela Ground on February 28. Staying true

to the "Phoolon Ki Holi" (Holi with flowers) trend, the event avoided water and synthetic colours. Instead, participants celebrated with petals,

without losing the essence of the festival.

Earlier, on March 2, the community gathered for Holika Dahan, where women performed rituals around sacred bonfires made of barkula (cow dung cakes) to celebrate the triumph of devotion over evil. Clad in vibrant sarees, they circled the fire, offering prayers and singing traditional songs passed down through generations. The ritual was not just symbolic but deeply communal, bringing together families and neighbours in a shared moment of faith and renewal. Children watched in fascination, absorbing stories of Prahlad and Holika, ensuring that the cultural memory continues to thrive. The Gujarati traditional celebrations were marked by high-energy Ghoomar and Dandiya performances. Many families integrated traditional sweets like Gujiya and Jalebi with modern "Dry Holi" trends, focusing on organic colours and sustainable celebrations. Large-scale events at venues like Moon City and PC Chandra Garden saw a fusion of Gujarati folk music with contemporary Bollywood beats, reflecting a community that honours its heritage while embracing the city's cosmopolitan spirit.

### A Silent Epidemic: Mental Health Among Indian Youth

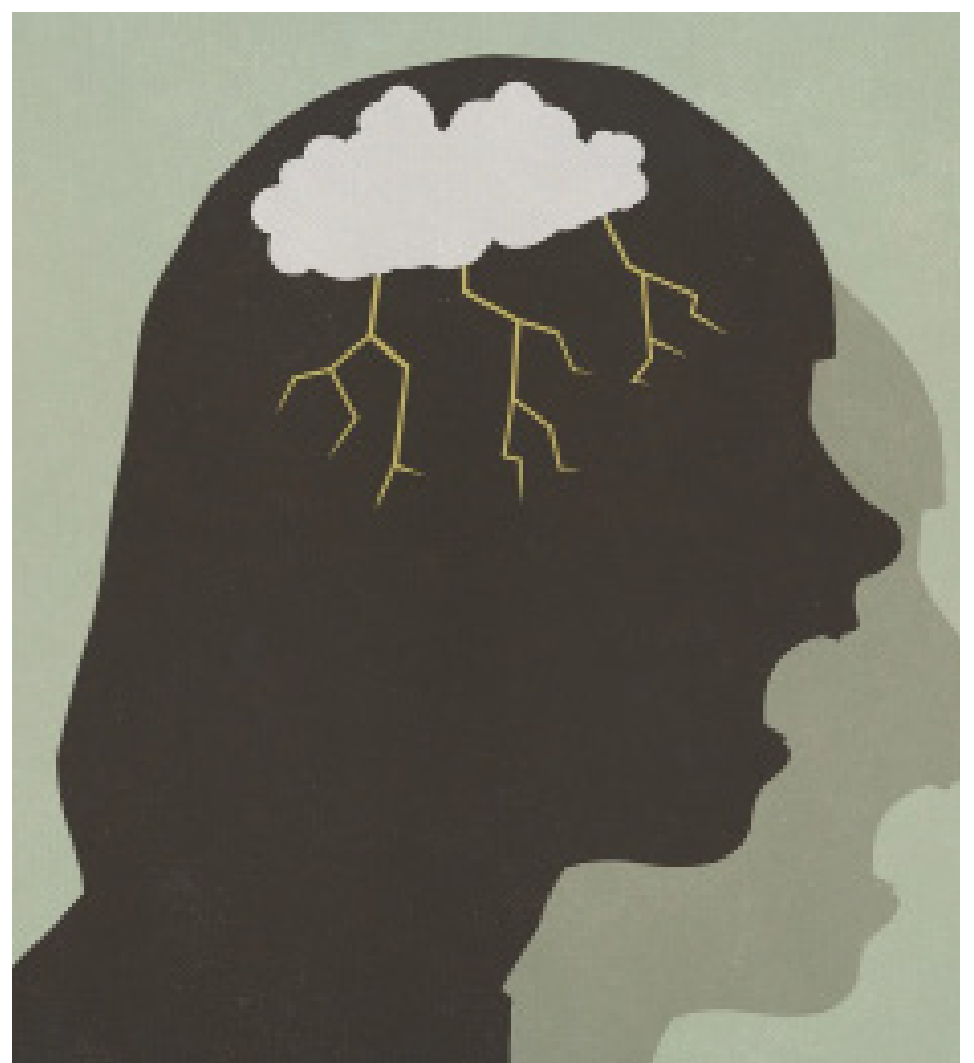
**Kasturi Shaw (MA, Sem 2)**

**Kolkata:** In a country where academic success is often considered the highest measure of achievement, thousands of young minds struggle silently behind the glowing report cards and smiling Instagram photos. Mental health issues among young Indians are emerging as a growing social concern, yet discussions about them are limited, suppressed, or ignored. From the pressure of board exams to competitive entrance exams, students constantly face expectations from parents, teachers, classmates, and even themselves. Academic competition is increasing in cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, and Delhi, where "failure" is often equated with personal inadequacy. Social media further exacerbates this stress, setting unrealistic standards of beauty, lifestyle, and success.

According to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety are among the leading causes of illness among adolescents globally. However, mental health remains stigmatized in India. Many young people hesitate to seek help for fear of being labelled "weak" or "dramatic." As a result, emotional struggles often remain hidden until they escalate.

Educational institutions are slowly responding. Some universities have started counselling rooms and peer support groups. Awareness campaigns and workshops are becoming more common, encouraging students to speak openly. Still, accessibility and affordability of professional mental health services remain a challenge, especially in smaller towns and rural areas.

Real change must begin at home and in the classroom. Parents and teachers must replace pressure with understanding and encouragement with comparison. Listening without prejudice can make a life-saving difference. Mental health must be taken as seriously as physical health. India's youth is ambitious, creative, and resilient. But resilience shouldn't mean suffering in silence. Breaking stigma, normalizing therapy, and building supportive communities are essential steps forward. Mental health isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. And perhaps the most important lesson we can teach the next generation is this: it's okay not to be okay --and it's absolutely okay to seek help. Irrespective of the challenges attending to mental health, the world keeps moving.



*The major mental health disorders currently faced by the youth in the Indian subcontinent are depression, anxiety and substance use. (Source: Google Images)*

## FEATURE

# Silent Screams: Addressing the Rise of Domestic Violence in Kolkata

Anushka Nandy (MA, Sem 2)

**Kolkata:** Kolkata, often celebrated as the “City of Joy,” is known for its rich culture, intellectual heritage, and a reputation for relative public safety. Yet, beneath this comforting image lies a stark and unsettling reality—one that unfolds not on the streets, but within the privacy of homes. Recent insights reported by The Hindu challenge the widely accepted notion of Kolkata as one of the safest cities, especially for women. While public spaces may offer a sense of security, danger often persists behind closed doors.

Domestic violence continues to be a pervasive social issue affecting women across all sections of society—students, professionals, and homemakers alike. According to the latest NCRB data (2025), West Bengal has recorded over 20,400 victims under Section 498A, which addresses “cruelty by husband or relatives”—the highest in the country. In Kolkata, although overall crimes against women have reportedly decreased by around 7%, cases of domestic cruelty remain the most commonly reported. This suggests not a decline in violence, but rather a shift in how and where it is reported.

Experts believe that the rise in reported



*Violence against women in Kolkata: A National Crisis (Source: Google Images)*

cases is not entirely negative.

Kolkata-based feminist organization Swayam notes a 4–6% increase in registered complaints, interpreting it as a “breaking of silence.” More women are stepping forward, challenging long-standing norms of silence and endurance. However, a 2025 study by the organization also brings attention to a less-discussed issue—“natal family violence.” This form of abuse occurs within a woman’s own family, involving parents or siblings, further highlighting that domestic violence is deeply embedded in social structures, extending beyond marital relationships. Behind these numbers are lived experiences often concealed under the weight of societal expectations.

Many women choose to remain silent to protect family honor or avoid social stigma. The continued prevalence of dowry-related harassment—despite being illegal—remains a troubling trigger for abuse. Recent local reports indicate that even high-profile families are not immune, with several cases reaching Kolkata Police in recent months.

What makes domestic violence particularly complex is its invisibility. Unlike crimes in public spaces, the emotional and psychological scars of abuse often go unnoticed. Victims may lack access to support systems, and even when help is available, fear, dependency, and social conditioning act as barriers. Legal provisions

exist, but their implementation and accessibility remain inconsistent.

Moreover, the pandemic years have had a lingering impact, intensifying domestic tensions and trapping many women in abusive environments without escape. Mental health repercussions—such as anxiety, depression, and trauma—have only added to the burden, often without adequate counseling or institutional support. Grassroots organizations and helplines have attempted to bridge this gap, but resources remain limited compared to the scale of the problem.

To truly address this crisis, Kolkata must look beyond its “safest city” label. Ensuring women’s safety requires more than surveillance and policing—it demands a transformation in societal attitudes, stronger community support systems, and proactive education about gender equality. Families, institutions, and policymakers must work collectively to create environments where speaking out is not met with shame, but with support.

Only when safety is ensured both outside and within homes can Kolkata genuinely uphold its identity—not just as the City of Joy, but as a city of dignity, equality, and justice for all.

# India’s Effective Take on Polio : Endemic to Eradication

Swastika Roy (BA, Sem 6)

**Kolkata:** India has been perceived as a developing country on medical grounds due to recurring resistance faced by the government. Our analysis of India’s developmental scenario speaks a lot about following the trail laid out by the modernization model propounded by D. Lerner in 1958. This has failed multiple times, which has later evoked the indigenous models suitable for the Indian subcontinent.

One of the concepts under the Indian models is the “Diffusion of Innovation” which is a reflection of the participatory model. As the nomenclature suggests, diffusion of innovation disseminates new ideologies, concepts, information and awareness among the citizens of India. Polio, being on its endemic terms, pierced into the Indian economy during the 1970s and 1980s. There was a developmental crisis due to lack of awareness and information which kept creating a dynamic pressure on the government. Therefore, catering to the need of the hour, the Pulse Polio Immunization programme was launched in the year 1995.

Notable researchers, like Dr. Uma Narula has stated that the only reason India could surpass other nations to eradicate Polio by 2014 is solely due to communication for development (C4D). By driving behavioural change

and community ownership, India was declared a ‘Polio-free nation’ by the World Health Organization (WHO). Considering the systematic stages which followed Polio endemic in India to total eradication of the disease, are the knowledge phase, the persuasion phase, the decision phase, the implementation phase and lastly the confirmation phase. The knowledge stage was the most critical stage of all, as it was the first step towards stimulating the natives by creating knowledge and awareness across all states. Social Mobilization Networks (SMNets) were deployed in huge numbers and were largely women to educate the households. The bottom-up approach was adopted to directly target the ones who were not even aware about the programme. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were targeted more as they were under the high-risk radar. Eventually Polio eradication camps were set up in both rural and urban areas, as well as campaigns were introduced.

Thereafter, the persuasion stage crept in as the government understood that constant feeding of the message was a mandate to reach the grassroots. A huge backlash was faced, as natives had a preconceived notion that it was against their religion. Misinformation spread like wild fire as antagonism peaked in the medical landscape. The government decided to handle this



*Early polio eradication implementation in India (Source: Google Image)*

situation with great care and sensitivity, hence they appointed officials to visit households and delve into interpersonal communication. Instead of generic messaging, targeted communication brought about positive results. Addressing cultural or religious myths, explaining the procedure and benefits, cleared the air in the minds of the masses. After an inclination towards believing in medical sciences, the mass decided to experiment. Here, India transcended into the decision-making stage. Regional as well as community based camps were set up. A handful of natives started visiting these camps and were satisfied with the results. No implications were reported. The government started gaining the trust of the citizens. Real-time data from surveillance was used

to identify unvaccinated clusters, allowing immediate communication and immunization responses.

Implementation was at its peak. A greater number of booths were set up. Even schools and hospitals were identified as localised booths for reaching out to every corner of the nation. To attract children and their parents, incentives were provided. However small be it, people did show up for toffees, chocolates or even stationary items. India saw a participatory and decentralised approach among its citizens. The strategic approach of involving ambassadors for a greater purpose was a successful take. The “Do Boond Zindagi Ki” campaign featuring Mr. Amitabh Bachchan successfully motivated the masses to take the shot.

## CAMPUS SNEAK-PEAK

### Where Chai Meets Conversation: Food Culture at St. Xavier's University

**Ankita Mishra (MA, Sem 2)**

**Kolkata:** At St. Xavier's University Kolkata, food quietly becomes one of the most human parts of campus life—the part that isn't written into the syllabus but somehow teaches just as much.

Between the rush of morning lectures and the slow drag of afternoon classes, hunger creeps in almost unnoticed. It starts as a distraction, a missed breakfast, a quick glance at the clock. And almost instinctively, students drift toward the Student's Café. Not in big, dramatic waves, but in twos and threes—friends, classmates, sometimes strangers who just happen to share a table.

The café itself is simple. Nothing flashy. Steel counters, the hum of conversation, the occasional clatter of plates. But that's exactly why it works. It doesn't demand attention; it just exists, steady and familiar. You don't go there expecting anything extraordinary—you go because it feels easy. Safe, almost.

Someone orders chai. Someone else insists on getting samosas for the whole group. There's always that one friend who says they're not hungry and then ends up finishing half your plate. Conversations overlap—half

about assignments, half about life, and the rest about things that don't really matter but somehow feel important in the moment.

Time stretches in these spaces. A ten-minute tea break turns into an hour. Notes get passed around, jokes get recycled, plans are made and forgotten just as quickly. And in between all that, something quieter happens—people start to belong.

Step beyond the campus gates, and Kolkata steps in with all its chaos and charm. The streets don't slow down for anyone, but somehow, they make room for students anyway. Food stalls line the roads like they've always been there, waiting.

There's the sharp tang of pani puri water, the smoky sizzle of kathi rolls, the comforting steam rising from momos. Nothing is plated perfectly, nothing is measured, and yet everything tastes exactly right. You eat standing up, balancing plates, laughing mid-bite, wiping your hands on tissues that barely do the job.

And then there's the adda—that endless, meandering conversation Kolkata is known for. It doesn't start or end; it just flows. One topic leads to another, arguments flare up and fade just as quickly, and somewhere in



*Food culture at SXUK cafeteria*

between, you learn how to listen, how to disagree, how to laugh at yourself.

For students who've come from far away, these places become more than just food stops. They're a kind of emotional anchor. A cup of tea can remind you of home. A shared meal can turn unfamiliar faces into something warmer, something closer.

For others, it's about discovery—trying a dish you've never heard of, sharing food from different cultures, realizing how much there is to learn from something as simple as what's on someone's plate.

And over time, these small, ordinary moments start to build something bigger.

The café table where you once sat

awkwardly becomes “your” spot. The street vendor starts recognizing your order before you say it. The people you shared meals with slowly turn into the people you rely on—the ones who sit with you before exams, celebrate with you after results, and stay a little longer when days feel heavy.

Because in the end, food here isn't just about taste or convenience. It's about pause. It's about connection. It's about finding pieces of yourself in conversations, in laughter, in shared silence.

At St. Xavier's, meals don't just fill you up—they mark time. They hold memories. Sit down, take a breath, and just be with people who make it all feel a little lighter.

Hi Aviral

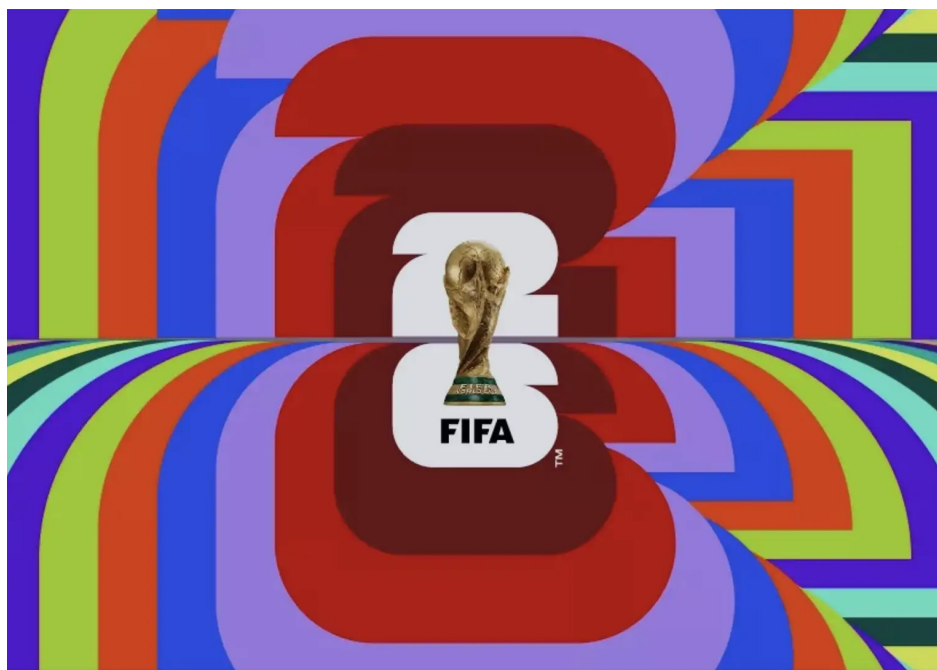
Get ready!

**Tu Nahi Hoga Mera has been finalized for digital distribution and is about to be delivered to digital platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, TikTok, Instagram, Amazon Music, YouTube Music, Deezer, Pandora, and 150+ more. You can check the specific delivery status for each platform from within the Digital Distribution section of your CD Baby members account.**

*Kolkata: It is indeed a proud moment for any University when a student excels in any form of endeavours. These are an epitome of their hardwork, dedication and unwavering passion in whichever field they shine in. Its an extremely joyous and heartfelt moment for Aviral Bhardwaj as he announces the confirmation of his first solo release . Days of consistent hardwork and perseverance have finally yielded this imaginative dream into a reality. As he announces the distribution of his song across multiple streaming platforms, SXUK takes immesnse pride in sharing this and always promises to create an environment that fosters enhancement and utmost encouragemnet.*

## SPORTS

# The FIFA World Cup returns to North America



Official logo of FIFA World Cup 2026 (Source: Google Images)

**Sreyash Basak (MA, Sem 2)**

**Kolkata:** The Football World Cup's return to North America in 2026 will not doubt be worthy of being called the world's most followed sporting event. This event will create a different transformation. The upcoming World Cup which Canada, Mexico and United States will host will become the biggest and most ambitious football tournament ever.

The tournament will start on June 11 and end on July 19 while it will connect fans throughout different time zones and cultural spaces to experience what FIFA president Gianni Infantino described as "the global festival of football...not just the World Cup." The first World Cup in men's soccer will be jointly hosted by three nations which each display their own unique soccer culture. The three nations which host the event bring their own distinct soccer styles.

The United States brings its entire country which follows sports through its extensive network of stadiums and its widespread commercial influence. The United States brings scale through its massive stadiums and its extensive commercial operations.

Canada provides growth through its fast expanding soccer community. Alphonso Davies, the Canadian football star made a crucial statement about his country's football future when he spoke after his team achieved World Cup qualification. "Canadian children will experience an entirely new World Cup because European soccer made up their childhood. The world brings its football competition to our Canadian home now."

Mexican coach Jaime Lozano used

his country's third World Cup hosting as a chance to reflect. The World Cup which Mexico hosts becomes a national festive event that unites all citizens. The United States football tournament provides a chance for the nation to become an international focus after two decades since its last World Cup in 1994. The U.S. head coach Gregg Berhalter explained the team's duties when he said, "the hosts who organize the event must fulfill their responsibilities. The team must prove itself on the field because fans now expect different results from their performance." The tournament expansion will add 48 teams which will replace the previous limit of 32 teams. The new format includes 12 groups of four teams top two from each group qualify eight best third-place teams advance and a round of 32 knockout stage.

The World Cup becomes a month-long worldwide celebration through its 104 scheduled matches.

French superstar Kylian Mbappé previously expressed cautious optimism about expansion. He stated that "More teams means more dreams which will make the World Cup special. The World Cup must maintain its high standards which makes the tournament exceptional."

Argentine legend Lionel Messi stated that the tournament has developed through time. He said that "Every World Cup feels bigger than the last. Football keeps finding new places to grow."

North America will host matches in sixteen cities which include Vancouver and New York/New Jersey and Mexico City.

Estadio Azteca will perform its historic function again during the final match which will take place at MetLife Stadium.

Former Brazilian coach Tite once described playing in North America: He said that "The distances are huge. the stadiums are enormous. the mental aspect of the game becomes a new kind of challenge."

Players will travel farther than ever before because their teams need to balance their player strength and match readiness. The expanded competition structure now provides smaller football nations with actual chances to compete at international tournaments. The tournament stands out because it established this as its primary athletic achievement.

Japanese coach Hajime Moriyasu spoke about expanded access. He said that one World Cup will create life-changing opportunities for upcoming generations in developing football nations.

African teams will gain substantial advantages from extra qualification slots because these slots will enable the continent to achieve its highest level of representation.

The tournament will produce multiple billion-dollar economic effects which will originate from both tourism and business activities. Cities are enhancing their transportation systems, stadium facilities, and areas where fans gather.

The cultural effects of the project will bring greater benefits than its economic advantages.

American midfielder Christian Pulisic described the emotional weight of hosting, "Kids here grow up watching the World Cup at odd hours.

In 2026, they'll walk outside and feel it everywhere."

The World Cup will showcase different languages and culinary traditions and weather conditions and cultural practices which demonstrate that football is a global sport. The 2026 event has distinctive qualities which extend beyond its massive dimensions to its deeper symbolic value. The three nations share borders with each other while fans use those borders to travel freely and the sport serves as a connector between their cultures.

Former manager Arsène Wenger, now dedicated to global football development, stated that "Football's power is simple -- it makes strangers feel like teammates." The 2026 event will be defined by that concept. The tournament will begin with an opening kickoff and end with a final whistle to determine a champion. The event will show how sports can bring together people from different continents. The World Cup will become more popular as teams finalize their rosters and qualification matches progress. The World Cup has always been football's grandest stage but this tournament will achieve its goal of becoming the most accessible World Cup ever. The final trophy will be lifted in July 2026 after millions of people have traveled to watch the event and billions of viewers have watched it and children have introduced themselves to the game. The stands will contain a future superstar who will experience his first moment of love for football. The 2026 World Cup will leave its true legacy through its ability to inspire the entire world instead of just recognizing its champion.



Argentina celebrating World Cup 2022 win (Source: Google Images)

## PHOTO GALLERY



*Chandrashekhar Chatterjee (MA, Sem 2)*



*Abir Mullick (MA, Sem 2)*



*Arunima Veronica Thakur (MA, Sem 2)*

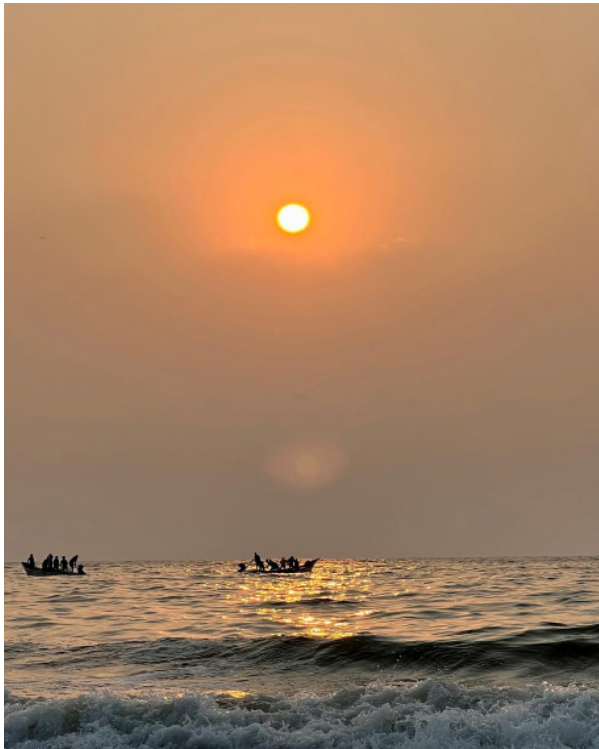


*Divyansh Jhunjunwala (MA, Sem 2)*



*Ridoy Roy Chowdhury (MA, Sem 2)*

## PHOTO GALLERY



*Preeti Mall (MA, Sem 2)*



*Chandrashekhar Chatterjee  
(MA, Sem 2)*



*Ridoy Roy Chowdhury (MA, Sem 2)*

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