

## SXUK hosts Second Peace Lecture

**Ansh Talwar  
(MA, Sem 2)**

**KOLKATA:** St. Xavier's University, Kolkata hosted the second edition of its Peace Lecture Series on March 23, 2026, drawing faculty, students, and distinguished guests to a morning of reflection and debate. Themed "Ethical Leadership in Public Governance," the event centred on a question of pressing urgency: how do we preserve human moral agency in a world increasingly shaped by algorithms?

Vice-Chancellor Rev. Dr. John Felix Raj, S.J., opened proceedings by reframing the very idea of peace. For Dr. Felix Raj, peace is not the mere absence of hostility; it is an active, sustained condition of justice and social harmony. This expansive understanding set the intellectual tone for the afternoon. Turning to AI, the Vice-Chancellor called for a measured middle path—one in which AI expands human capability under rigorous oversight, rather than

displacing the human judgment it is meant to serve.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Suman Chakraborty, Di-



(L-R) Dr. Suman Chakraborty, Director, IIT Kharagpur, Rev. Dr. John Felix Raj, S.J, VC, SXUK, Rev. Dr. Xavier Jeyaraj, S.J., Registrar, SXUK

rector of IIT Kharagpur and Chief Guest for the occasion. A graduate of a Jesuit institution himself, Dr. Chakraborty brought both technical authority and moral earnestness to the session. His central argument was distinct: data is not a substitute for character. Algorithmic systems, he cautioned, are seldom neutral—

they reflect the biases embedded in their design and training, and when applied to governance, can produce outcomes that are ethically compro-

mised. His words carried the weight of conviction. "Never outsource your conscience to a system, however intelligent it may be," he told the assembled students. "Algorithms can assist decisions; they cannot replace moral responsibility." He closed with a charge that resonated through the hall: "When history

looks back at your generation, it will not ask whether you built powerful systems. It will ask whether you built a just society in an age when injustice could have been automated." The lecture was followed by an award ceremony recognising academic merit, with silver and bronze medals presented to rank holders across departments—a reminder that intellectual achievement and ethical commitment are twin pillars of the university's mission. Rev. Dr. Xavier Jeyaraj, S.J., Registrar, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata delivered the vote of thanks.

The second Peace Lecture Series has affirmed SXUK's role as a space where rigorous inquiry meets social conscience. In an era defined by the rapid integration of AI into public life, the message from the campus was clear: efficiency must never eclipse empathy, and no system, however intelligent, can be permitted to override the human imperative for justice.

## "Why not?" mindset takes centre stage at SXUK advertising masterclass

**Sagnik Ghosh (MA,  
Sem 2)**

**KOLKATA:** St. Xavier's University, Kolkata hosted an industry-focused masterclass for postgraduate students of the Department of Mass Communication, offering a close look at how the advertising profession actually operates. The session was led by Ms. Sanghamitra Shah, Founder of Sketch Advertising, who drew on her professional experience to give students a grounded, practical perspective on the field. Ms. Shah opened by challenging a common misconception: that advertising is primarily a creative pursuit. In practice, she explained, it is a structured, collaborative process. Strategy teams, client servicing units, and requisition departments each

play a distinct role, and a campaign's success depends on how well those parts work together.

She walked students through the full arc of client engagement—from understanding a brief and developing ideas to execution and relationship management, she emphasised that coordination is as important as creativity. The session's most memorable moment came when Ms. Shah introduced her professional mantra: "Why not?" She urged students to treat the phrase not as a provocation, but as a working habit—a prompt to question assumptions, take initiative, and remain open to experimentation.

In an industry where expectations shift constantly, she argued, adaptability is not optional.

Ms. Shah also covered the legal side of advertising—an area students rarely encounter in the classroom. She explained how contracts establish accountability, protect business interests, and ensure transparency between agencies and their clients. This practical dimension added considerable weight

to the session.

The masterclass was structured to encourage participation, with activities and discussions that asked students to apply what they were learning to real communication problems. Feedback from attendees was strongly positive, with many describing the session

as both relatable and practically useful.

Coordinated by Dr. Manali Bhattacharya, the masterclass reflected SXUK's broader effort to connect academic learning with industry exposure, giving students a clearer sense of what professional life in advertising demands.



Source: Google Images

## WORLD POLITICS

# Khamenei slain: War shadows deepen

Utathya Raha  
(MA, Sem 2)

**KOLKATA:** Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has been killed in a joint US-Israeli airstrike on February 28. Iranian state media confirmed the 86-year-old autocrat's death the next day, along with

several top commanders. Retaliatory Iranian missiles have since hit Israeli targets and US bases in the Gulf. Hezbollah rockets rain on Lebanon. The Strait of Hormuz, gateway for one-fifth of global oil, faces closure threats.

This sudden decapitation of

Iran's leadership has ignited the Middle East's newest flashpoint. President Donald Trump says the campaign could last weeks and has not ruled out ground troops. Iran vows a long fight. Strikes now ripple across Lebanon, the Gulf and beyond.

The world was already on fire. Russia's war in Ukraine enters its fifth year. Sudan's civil war grinds on with tens and thousands of dead. Myanmar's conflicts and lingering Gaza tensions add fuel. Now the Iran front risks turning regional flames into something far larger.

A power vacuum grips Tehran. No obvious successor exists after 37 years of Khamenei's rule. Hardliners or the Revolutionary Guards may tighten control, supercharging proxy militias from Yemen to Iraq. Russia and China, long Tehran's backers, watch closely. Miscalculation here carries nuclear risk. Full World War III remains unlikely today because no alliance has mobilised for total war, yet experts warn that one wrong strike could drag superpowers into direct conflict. The Brookings Institution calls the aftermath "existential"

for the regime and "chaos" for the region.

India sits in the crosshairs. The country imports over 80 per cent of its oil, much of it via the Hormuz route. Every jump in crude prices shaves growth and fuels inflation. Millions of Indian workers in the Gulf send home billions in remittances. Flights are rerouted as tensions soar. New Delhi has urged "restraint and dialogue" without condemning the strikes or offering condolences - a studied silence shaped by strong US and Israeli ties, past Iranian barbs on Kashmir, and vital interests like the Chabahar port. Officials privately call it pragmatic navigation. Energy security, diaspora safety and strategic autonomy all hang in the balance. As one veteran diplomat put it, "We cannot afford to pick sides when the fire reaches our doorstep."



Source: Google Images

## Beyond the villain: Rethinking Iran's place in global politics

Sneha Barua  
(MA, Sem 2)

**KOLKATA:** Iran stands at the centre of global geopolitics and is often seen as a destabilizing force. However, beneath this common view is a more complicated reality, one where Iran can also be seen as a misunderstood victim of history, geography, and power struggles. The idea that "whoever controls Iran controls the energy lifeline of the future" is not just talk; it reflects Iran's strategic location and vast energy resources. These factors have put it in the spotlight of international interest for over a century.

Geographically, Iran sits at the junction of the Middle East, Central Asia, and close to Russia, which gives it great strategic importance. Its nearness to major energy markets and transport routes, especially the Strait of Hormuz, makes it a critical player in global oil supply. A large portion of the world's oil passes through this narrow chokepoint, making Iran's stability crucial both regionally and globally.

The strained relationship between Iran and global powers began with the D'Arcy Concession when Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar gave British interests control over Iranian oil resources. This was the start of foreign exploitation of Iran's wealth. Decades later, during Mohammad Mossadegh's time, Iran tried to regain its sovereignty by nationalizing its oil industry in 1951. However, this led to the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, planned by the Central Intelligence Agency and British intel-

ligence, which removed Mossadegh and restored the Shah.

Under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Iran saw fast modernization but also increasing authoritarianism. Public frustration grew due to inequality, repression, and perceived Western meddling. Even regional allies voiced concerns; figures like King Faisal of Saudi Arabia reportedly warned the Shah about rising unrest. This tension led to the Iranian Revolution, which brought Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power and turned Iran into an Islamic Republic. While the revolution aimed for independence and to resist foreign control, it also resulted in internal repression and international isolation.

After Khomeini, Ali Khamenei took over, during which dissent has often been tightly restricted. Tensions with the United States have remained a key part of Iran's foreign relations. One main concern is Iran's nuclear program, which the U.S. and its allies fear could lead to the development of nuclear weapons, even though Iran claims its intentions are peaceful.

Additionally, Iran's ties to groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis have further complicated its global image, reinforcing views of Iran as a regional disruptor. Recent tensions between Iran and the United States have once again underscored the vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz. Disruptions in this area significantly affect global oil supplies. For countries like India, which depend heavily on energy imports, instability in

this region leads directly to economic problems such as rising fuel prices, inflation, and threats to energy security.

In conclusion, Iran's story is complex and cannot be simplified into a single narrative. It is a nation shaped by foreign intervention, internal conflicts, and strategic needs. While its actions and policies draw criticism, its history shows many instances of outside pressure and interference. Seeing Iran as a misunderstood victim does not mean overlooking its mistakes; it means recognizing the larger context in which it operates. Any future conflict involving Iran will affect not only regional stability but also the global energy landscape, making peace not just desirable but necessary.



Source: Google Images

FEATURE

# Identity rights under fire

Aditi Dasgupta  
(MA, Sem 2)

**KOLKATA:** A new law that redraws the legal boundaries of transgender identity has set off a fierce debate across India. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, introduced in Parliament on March 13, has drawn swift condemnation from activists, legal experts, and opposition leaders, even as the government insists it strengthens existing protections.

The amendment fundamentally alters how transgender identity is legally recognised. It explicitly excludes individuals identifying as trans men, trans women, or genderqueer from its protections, while retaining socio-cultural identities such as "Hijra" and "Kinnar". Crucially, it removes the

right to self-identification — a cornerstone of the 2019 Act — and replaces it with

The government has defended the amendments, stating that stricter verification is

er, critics argue that the law undermines the landmark 2014 Supreme Court judg-

gender communities and LGBTQIA+ groups have staged protests in several cities, claiming the law is regressive and violates fundamental rights such as privacy, dignity, and autonomy. Many activists have also criticised the lack of consultation with the community during the drafting process. Legal challenges have already begun, with petitions filed in the Supreme Court and High Courts questioning the constitutional validity of the Act. Opponents argue that mandatory medical scrutiny "pathologises" transgender identities and could lead to discrimination and harassment.

With courtrooms and city squares both serving as battlegrounds, the fight over trans rights in India is only just beginning.



Source: Google Images

a mandatory certification process requiring approval from both a district magistrate and a medical board.

necessary to prevent misuse of welfare schemes and ensure benefits reach "genuine" beneficiaries. However,

ment that upheld the right to self-identify one's gender. The Act has triggered nationwide backlash. Trans-

## More than a day: The strength behind Women's Day

Incia Raza  
(MA, Sem 2)

**KOLKATA:** Every year in March, we celebrate International Women's Day. Social media fills up with posts, brands roll out campaigns, and people take a moment to celebrate the women in their lives. And while all of that matters, Women's Day is so much more than just a celebration. It is a reminder.

A reminder of how far we have come, and how far we still have to go.

Being a woman has never been easy. We have grown up learning how to adjust before we even learned how to dream—adjust our tone, our behaviour, our clothes, our ambitions. Told to stay safe, stay quiet, and stay within limits that were never meant for us. Despite everything, we continue to rise.

That is what Women's Day truly stands for. Not just appreciation, but recognition of resilience, strength, courage and hope.

It celebrates the strength in the everyday. The woman who shows up despite exhaustion. The one who balances expectations while chasing her own identity. The one who fights silently and still manages to

stand tall. The one who lives for her kids and puts everyone's need above her own, the one who cries behind closed doors and pretend to be tough. Strength is not always loud or visible, and Women's Day reminds us to honour even the quiet victories.

Today, women are not just part of the story, they are rewriting it. History shall not be repeated; no woman should be caged in the shackles of the unjust society. They are stepping into spaces that once excluded them and making it their own. From education to leadership, from creativity to entrepreneurship—they are no longer shrinking themselves to fit in.

However, this day is also a reality check.

Because while we celebrate, there are still conversations that need to happen. Equality is still not guaranteed. Safety is still not a given. Respect is still something many women have to fight for. And that is exactly why this day exists, to keep the conversation alive, to remember that in this unjust world, there is hope.

It is not just about saying "thank you" to women or buying them a cake. It is about standing for them,

standing with them. Listening to them, supporting them. Creating a world where empowerment is not needed as a concept because equality already exists. A world where a girl can roam around outside without clenching her dupatta, a world where a wife doesn't have to shiver at the sound of her violent husband, a world where women don't hide their struggles and start dying piece by piece.

So, this Women's Day, let's reflect. Let's recognise the strength that often goes unseen and, let's continue to uplift each other, because when women support women, incredible things happen.

We are not defined by the struggles we face, but by the strength with which we rise above them, always and forever

And that is what Women's Day is truly about.



Source: Google Images

## SPORTS

# Femení dismantle Madrid, advance with ease



Source: Google Images

Parth Singh  
(MA, Sem 2)

**KOLKATA:** FC Barcelona Femení defeated Real Madrid Femenino 6-0 in the second leg of their UEFA Women's Champions League knockout tie last month, advancing on a commanding aggregate scoreline. The result was one of the heaviest defeats in the fixture's short history and underlined the gap between the two sides at this stage of their development. Barcelona controlled the match throughout. Their press was relentless, their passing accurate, and their defensive structure rarely tested. Real Madrid were unable to sustain possession in their own half or build any consistent attacking threat. Alexia Putellas dictated much of the tempo in midfield, with Barcelona's movement off the ball repeatedly opening space in Madrid's defensive lines. Madrid's defensive organ-

isation held briefly in the opening stages but deteriorated after the first goal. Without the ball, they were compact; in transition, they were slow. Their forwards received little service and had minimal impact on the contest.

Barcelona's performance was as much about structure as it was about individual quality. Their press forced turnovers in dangerous positions, and their positional play stretched Madrid horizontally.

A 6-0 margin in a Champions League knockout fixture is statistically uncommon. It reflects both the form Barcelona Femení carried into the tie and the broader difference in squad depth, coaching resources, and match experience between the two clubs. Barcelona have competed at the highest level of the women's game for several seasons; Madrid are still consolidating their position among Europe's elite.

# Speed, strategy, and shifting power in Formula 1

Sreyash Basak  
(MA, Sem 2)

**KOLKATA:** As the engines roared back to life in March 2026, the new Formula 1 season quickly delivered drama, intrigue, and signs that the competitive order may be changing. Two races set the tone, offering fans a mix of raw speed, smart tactics, and new storylines that could shape the championship battle ahead.

The season opener at the Bahrain International Circuit saw familiar names back at the front, but not without a challenge. Max Verstappen showed why he remains the driver to beat — his precision and aggression earned him an early victory, but the margins were tighter than in previous seasons. The rivals are no longer playing catch-up; they are ready to compete.

Leading the charge is Charles Leclerc, whose performance signalled renewed strength from Ferrari. Better reliability and sharper race strategy allowed him to challenge Verstappen throughout the weekend, suggesting a genuine title fight. Ferrari's pit wall, often criticised in past seasons, looked more deci-



Source: Google Images

sive — an encouraging sign for the team's prospects.

Mercedes, meanwhile, continues to rebuild. George Russell delivered a strong podium, demonstrating speed and composure, while Lewis Hamilton remains a strategic force

capable of converting difficult weekends into valuable points.

The second race, held under the lights of Jeddah, added another layer of unpredictability. The high-speed street circuit tested every driver's nerve, and it was here that younger

talents began to assert themselves. Lando Norris made the most of smart tyre management and a well-timed safety car to secure a top finish, confirming McLaren's quiet rise into the front-running conversation. Oscar Piastri, too, impressed — his composure under pressure marks him as one of the grid's most promising talents.

Technical development has tightened the competition across the field. Teams have adapted well to the regulations, producing cars that are closely matched and races that are harder to predict. The midfield battle, in particular, has become genuinely compelling, with several teams capable of scoring big on any given weekend.

Strategy proved decisive in both races. Tyre management, pit timing, and pace control separated the winners from the also-rans, and in a field this tight, small errors cost significant ground.

If March is any indication, the 2026 season promises not just speed but sustained suspense — and the real possibility of a championship fight that runs to the final race.

## PHOTO GALLERY



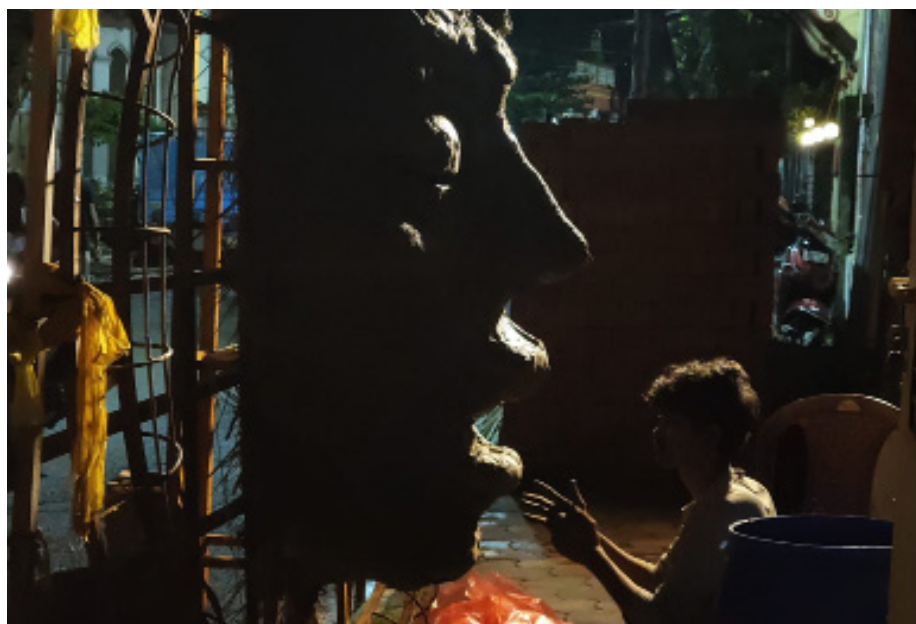
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*Divyansh Jhunjunwala (MA, Sem 2)*



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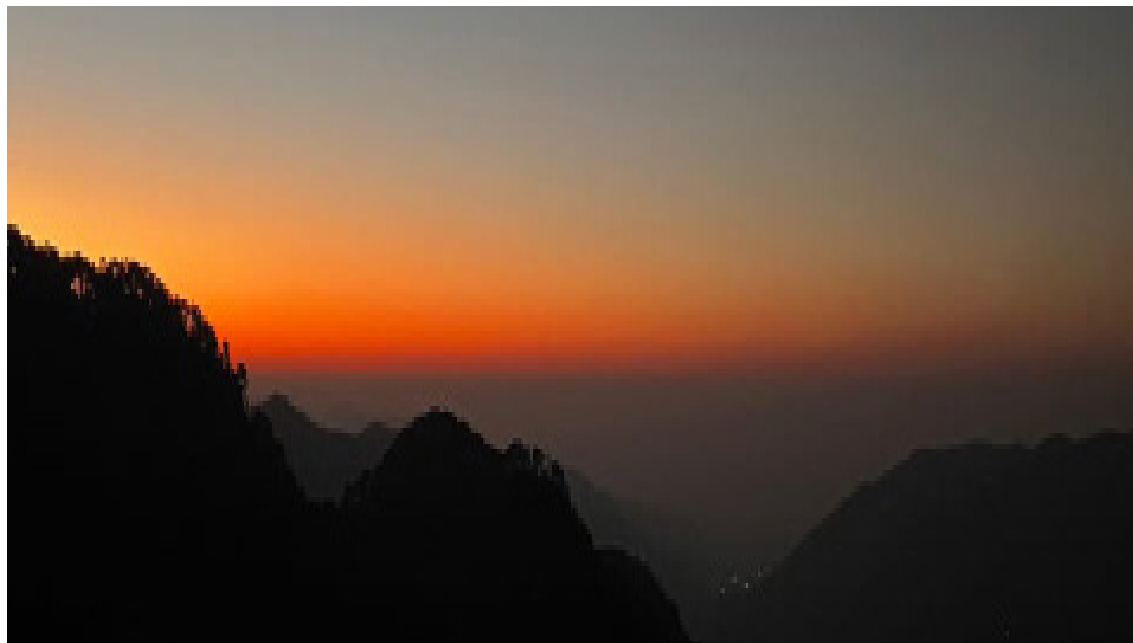
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*Aviral Bharadwaj (MA, Sem 2)*



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