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Citizens cherish one last joyride on the iconic

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From singing retro classics to engaging in a nostalgic adda over ‘cha’, Kolkatans celebrated everything that makes the city’s trams special

Vedant Karia | Kolkata | Published 01.10.24, 06:44 PM



The iconic Kolkata tram was decked up before its final ride from Gariahat tram depot to Esplanade

All photographs by Krishnugshu Gangopadhyay

- f** Trundling through several busy parts of the city, trams had always been our favourite mode of transport till fast life took over. Much like the spirit of Kolkata, the non-polluting tramcars stood for getting you to your destination slowly but surely. As the city prepared to bid it farewell after 150 glorious years together, people couldn't help but throng to the Gariahat tram depot for one last ride on September 29. **My Kolkata** was in the passenger seat.

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Backstage Siblings aka Raghav and Prachi Agarwal, along with anchor Saahil Agarwal and percussionist Sabyasachi Ghosh, ensured that the journey was complemented by music. 'It was my first, and possibly last tram ride, and it was extremely emotional. This journey shows how Kolkata knows how to touch every chord of your heart,' said Saahil

The mood in the depot was far from sombre, with the tram decked up in colourful balloons. The intention was to cherish the time spent together, rather than lament over loss. With 10 minutes still left for the tram's departure, a motley crowd of 90 people gathered at the depot. A huge chunk comprised first-timers.

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The city's trams received a heartfelt goodbye from Kolkatans over one last ride from Gariahat to Esplanade, made memorable with music and a nostalgic adda.

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When the tram left the depot for the busy streets of Gariahat, the roar from its passengers would've reminded passers-by of the roller-coaster at Nicco Park. From the screeching of the wheels to the distinct sound of the horn, everything seemed to be accentuated by nostalgia.

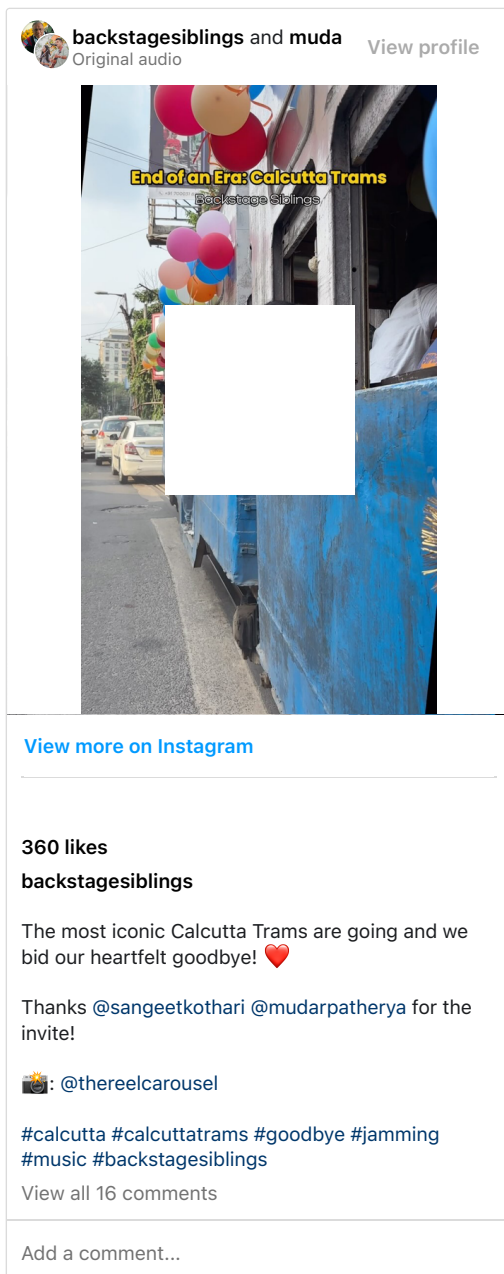
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'Of the 90 people who turned up today, a majority was travelling on a tram for the first time in their lives,' said Mudar Patherya

The trip seemed like a vignette from the most beautiful Kolkata-themed postcards and table placemats, as the tram glided from the plush neighbourhoods of Ballygunge to the heritage charm of Esplanade. A troupe of musicians belting out classics from Rafi and Kishore made people forget all the traffic din and honking.



Upon arriving at the tram depot in Esplanade, passengers were greeted with *bhnrer chaa* and *singara*. The best views though, were reserved for the return journey to Gariahat, as the sky painted gorgeous pictures, courtesy a spectacular sunset.

There was a heaviness in every heart as the tram finally came to a halt, with many finally acknowledging the true weight of the loss. However, the city soldiered on with a laugh, basking in what was, rather than what could have been. Mudar Patherya, a columnist with **My Kolkata** who brought the troupe together, summed it up perfectly. “We just had a few more days left with our trams. We could’ve either wept beside them, or celebrated the lovely time spent together. As citizens, we decided to end this tenure on a happy note!”

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