

# India's top court takes up rape, murder case as nation protests

FANS OF RIVAL FOOTBALL CLUBS — EAST BENGAL & MOHUN BAGAN — JOIN IN

India's Supreme Court has taken up the high-profile rape and murder case of a Kolkata doctor that has shocked the nation and unsettled the medical community.

A three-judge bench, led by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud will hear the case tomorrow, according to media reports. The Calcutta High Court had previously intervened, ordering the investigation to be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after the woman's parents and others, dissatisfied with the state police's handling, filed an appeal.

The court has expressed frustration with the police and administrative response, citing delays in allowing the family to view the body, issues with the postmortem report, and a hurried arrest of a civic volunteer, which some viewed as an attempt to prematurely close the case, NDTV has said.

## Hasty cremation

Doctors suggest that the extent of the woman's injuries indicates the involvement of more than one attacker. Claims have also emerged that the police cremated the body hastily, though the Kolkata Police deny these allegations.

The state's Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accuses the police of covering up the crime, particularly after an attack on the hospital on August 15 during a statewide women's "Reclaim the Night" protest.

The BJP alleges that this attack was intended to destroy evidence, with Leader of the Opposition, Suwendu Adhikari, claiming the police tampered with the doctor's viscera and other evidence.

The 31-year-old doctor was murdered early on August 9. After a 36-hour shift, she had gone to rest in an empty seminar room at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital. Her partially clothed body, with multiple injuries, was discovered the next morning. Sanjoy Roy, a civic volunteer with the Kolkata Police stationed at the hospital, is the prime suspect.

Roy was arrested, based on CCTV footage showing him entering the building where the doctor was found murdered, and a Bluetooth headset near the victim was identified as being paired with his phone.

## Rare display of unity

In a rare display of unity, supporters of Kolkata's arch-rivals — East Bengal and Mohun Bagan football clubs — gathered near Salt Lake Stadium yesterday evening to protest the doctor's rape and murder.

The Telegraph Online reported that the Durand Cup match between the two teams was cancelled due to law and order concerns. Fans from both clubs and Mohammedan Sporting Club came to-



Supporters of arch-rivals East Bengal and Mohun Bagan shout slogans as police baton-charge to disperse them during a protest march in Kolkata yesterday.

AFP



Photos: ANI/AFP

- **Above:** Doctors take out candle march demanding justice for the deceased doctor of the Kolkata RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, at Connaught Place, in New Delhi, yesterday.
- **Right:** Medical professionals light candles as they pay tribute to the young medic from Kolkata, in Amritsar, yesterday.

gether, holding each other's flags and chanting for justice. Notable figures, including actor Usashi Chakraborty and theatre personality Sourav Palodhi, joined the protest in their club jerseys. The demonstration spilled onto the busy EM Bypass, causing traffic disruptions.

"We want justice for the sister who was gang-raped and murdered. Fans of Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, and Mohammedan SC have come

together peacefully. Why are there so many policemen? Why was the match cancelled? Don't we have the right to demand justice?" said Bittu Senapati, a Mohun Bagan supporter.

The police responded by detaining some protesters who defied prohibitory orders imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), effective from August 18 to August 24, with restrictions from 4pm to midnight.



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Additionally, a CBI team examined and conducted 3D laser mapping in the emergency ward of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital and conducted psychological testing of the main accused.

## Harbhajan demands justice

Former Indian cricketer and Aam Aadmi Party parliament member Harbhajan Singh expressed his "deep anguish" in an open letter to West Bengal

Governor C.V. Ananda Bose and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, calling for justice.

Addressed also to the citizens of India, Singh's letter is a call for "justice and introspection." In the two-page letter, shared on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, Singh condemns the violence as a grave assault on the dignity and safety of women, urging for systemic change and decisive action by the authorities.