



Kolkata International Film Festival  
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# Festival Diary

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The exit of a giant from the cultural space of Bengal has left a huge vacuum behind that will be almost impossible to fill.

The family, friends and co-workers of

Soumitra Chatterjee all agreed and lamented his absence at the 26th Kolkata International Film Festival during the Cine Adda at Nandan. Poulami Bose his daughter remembered her father as a fighter who taught his children to keep their spine straight in the face of all adversities. She also remembered with great fondness how he had introduced her to all kinds of music dance and books. She expressed her gratitude on the wonderfully mounted exhibition of Soumitra Chatterjee. His son Sougata recited one of his poems *Cholte Cholte* where the poet talks about *Theme Jawa Padatik* or the *Traveller Halted*. Shankar Chakraborty, the actor who had acted as his son in *Bela Seshe*, had fond memories of him especially of Soumitra Chatterjee's wisdom as the lifelong President of the Artists' Forum.

Haranath Chakraborty who directed Chatterjee in films like *Mahan* and *Daye Dayitto* considers himself lucky to have known him. He reminisced the many lessons he learnt from him in the make-up room addas and remembered his punctual and disciplined nature. Sudipta Chakraborty, his co-actor in *Mayurakshi*, remembered that

she couldn't even bid him a final farewell because she was infected with Covid when he passed away.

Sohini Sengupta who first met him in 1984 when Soumitra Chatterjee was shooting for *Ghare Baire* with her mother, remembered him as the first Prince of her life. As a child she would roam around his house freely. While working with him as a co-worker in *Paromitar Ekdin*, she remembers him as a "curious learner". During Covid times when they were once working together, Sohini asked him whether he should be more careful considering his age and he retorted "How much more can we be afraid?"

Rituparna Sengupta recollected him as a man who dedicated his life to cinema. "He breathed cinema and all forms of art. Today it's time to celebrate him." She also recalled him as someone who was more interested in perfecting his art of acting than projecting his star image. Director Suman Ghosh who moderated the discussion remembered Chatterjee's last days through his Whatsapp exchanges with Poulami from his American residence which remains as the last memories of the great actor.

When the evening ended, the air was filled with nostalgia of a multi-talented, multifaceted wonder called Soumitra Chattopadhyay and the portals of the Kolkata Film Festival was in Poulami's words "Soumitramoy" (filled with the essence of Soumitra).



Prosenjit Chatterjee inaugurated the centenary exhibition of Pandit Ravi Shankar, Hemanta Mukhopadhyay and Bhanu Bandopadhyay at Gaganendra Pradarshanshala in the presence of acclaimed directors Anubhav Sinha, Haranath Chakraborty, Arindam Sil, eminent artist Suvapasanna and the Chairman of KIFF, Raj Chakraborty.

An exhibition celebrating the life of legendary Soumitra Chatterjee was inaugurated yesterday at Nandan Foyer by Goutam Ghose in the presence of Anubhav Sinha, Suvapasanna, Poulami Bose, Sougata Chattopadhyay, Haranath Chakraborty and the Chairman of KIFF, Raj Chakraborty.





## SATYAJIT RAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

### Of Art Films and Cultural Identities

The earliest memory of Kolkata that Anubhav Sinha has is of a city where art films were patronised by viewers and the only place where Satyajit Ray and Arvind Sinha would figure on the same page. Bengal was a place which conserved its cultural identity. The big cultural question is where does India begin and where does it end? There is one India which is the Hindi heartland and the rest of India was regional India. Sinha realized that the more local you are, more global you are. India and its diversity depends on respecting the identity of the individual. In a patriarchal society, Sinha was made to feel responsible to look after the women in his family. However he also saw that the existence of such a structure undermined the importance of women and created disrespect and disregard for them. The roots of his film "Thappad" lies in that.

At Aligarh Muslim University his friends from Africa, Somalia, Palestine and elsewhere spoke about the same structural violence and he thought "What is going on in this world?" His world was crossing boundaries and he was looking at a different society to call his own.

"There was a man who was fighting for Indians in South Africa and then comes back to India to fight for Indians and gave his life for it." He refers to Gandhi and says that any responsibility has a price and Gandhi paid with his.

As a filmmaker, Anubhav Sinha feels that he cannot assure radical changes in terms of societal progress but what he can do is to bring the discussion to the table. While making Thappad, he was not anticipating any significant change in the behaviour of Indian men towards women, but he felt the urge to address the issue.

He also shared one of his encounters from the festival, where a fan walked up to him and said "I am a big fan of yours. But the kind of films you're making, your life is in danger." Anubhav Sinha acknowledged the fact, yet pledged to continue making socially responsible films in the future.



### All for the love of Cinema



Director Premendu Bikash Chaki did not let Covid stagnate his passion for film-making. His lockdown short 'Laptop' was screened at KIFF yesterday. The screening was followed by a press conference at the Media Centre where PB Chaki and Rituparna Sengupta discussed the difficulties of making a film with limited resources with moderator Sudeshna Roy. "Art and creation can never be stopped, no matter what the situation is. It is our survival medium. It is like oxygen for me," said Rituparna.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Topic : Digital Platform is Changing the Language of Cinema  
Venue : Ektara Mancha  
Time : 5pm.  
Moderator : Saurav Das  
Speakers : **For the motion** - Abir Chattopadhyay, Arjun Chakraborty, Riddhi Sen, Arijit Dutta, Haranath Chakraborty, Dhruva Banerjee  
**Against the motion** - Anindita Bose, Isha Saha, Rwitobrata Mukhopadhyay, Tuhina Das, Sauraseni Maitra, Saurav Chakraborty



### PRESS MEET

- Fire of Teak Flame of Chinar (Asian select) by Kumar Chowdhury at 2pm.
- The Rooftop -The Story of a Psychiatrist and a Raped Girl by Avirup Biswas at 4pm.
- Manab Manabi (Bengali Panorama) by Subrata Sen at 5pm.

### Editor's Pick



**Aquarium**  
2020 | Colour | 96 mins  
Director : Deepesh T  
Country : India  
Nandan I  
Time : 12 Noon



**Paan Singh Tomar**  
2012 | Colour | 135 mins  
Director : Tigmanshu Dhulia  
Country : India  
Rabindra Sadan  
Time : 12 Noon



**Holy Rights**  
2020 | Colour | 53 mins  
Director : Farha Khatun  
Country : India  
Nandan III  
Time : 3pm



**Bohomaan**  
2019 | Colour | 104 mins  
Director : Anumita Dasgupta  
Country : India  
Sisir Mancha  
Time : 6pm



**Nadia, Butterfly**  
2020 | Colour | 107 mins  
Director : Pascal Plante  
Country : Canada  
Chalachchitra Satabarsha Bhavan  
Time : 3pm



**Laptop A Lockdown Film**  
2020 | Colour | 25 mins  
Director : Premendu Bikash Chaki  
Country : India  
Kolkata Information Centre  
Time : 11am

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