



**KOLKATA CENTRE
FOR CREATIVITY**
A unit of Anamika Kala Sangam Trust

presents

KCC BAITHAKKHANA: CHAPTER 2 | A BENGALI LITERARY MEET

11 April 2025, Kolkata: Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) presents KCC Baithakkhana Chapter 2, an Emami CSR initiative. Curated by Chandril Bhattacharya, Sanchari Mookherjee, and Tausif Rahman, this one-of-a-kind literary meet is a three-day celebration of Bengali literature and culture through thought-provoking talks, discussions, debates, poetry, letter, and story readings, book launches, and musical performances. Scheduled from April 11th to 13th at KCC, this year's Baithakkhana delves into the depiction of the □□□□ (Heyro) / The Defeated in Bengali and world literature and popular media.

Following KCC Baithakkhana Chapter 1 which had "Bengali Middle Class" as its theme in 2024, this year's line-up features renowned writers such as Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Swapnamoy Chakraborty, and Joy Goswami; a **discussion** on the theatre of the vanquished by Debshankar Halder, and Chandan Sen; a **debate** on the Bengali tendency of loser-worship with Somak Ghosh, Anindya Chattopadhyay, Srijato, Swati Bhattacharya, Indranil Sanyal, and Yashodhara Ray Chaudhuri; a **discussion** on Draupadi, the defeated empress by speakers Jaya Mitra, Swati Bhattacharya, and Semanti Ghosh; a **speech** by Chandril Bhattacharya; a **discussion** on Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Meghnad by Aveek Majumdar and Nrisingha Prasad Bhaduri; a **discussion** on the now extinct trio of cassettes, letters, and gentle love by Anindya Chattopadhyay, Saswati Guha Thakurta, and Tanmoy Bose; a **discussion** on famous box office losers by Srijit Mukherjee, Kamaleshwar Mukhopadhyay, and Jagori Bandhyopadhyay, along with multiple **book launches**. **Performances** include music by Kabir Suman; poetry and music by Srijato and Upal Sengupta, a reading of Dipendranath Bandyopadhyay's *Ashwamedher Ghora* by Rajatava Dutta; and letter-reading by Anirban Bhattacharya and Swastika Mukherjee.

Ms. Richa Agarwal, Chairperson, KCC, expressed her enthusiasm for the festival, stating, "What started out as a bold foray into the world of Bengali literature in 2024 is now a back for a grander second edition at KCC. With KCC Baithakkhana, we continue to unify a varied range of renowned writers, actors, musicians, filmmakers, and poets under the same roof. I believe it is essential to have interdisciplinary dialogues between art forms in a contemporary art space – which is why our festival curators have arranged a number of exciting programmes – discussions, debates, dramatic reading sessions, and musical performances – all steeped in a collective love for all things Bengali. I welcome all scholars, artists, and literature enthusiasts to convene at KCC to celebrate this beautiful language and the rich literary and cultural traditions it has given birth to."

Chandril Bhattacharya, Curator, KCC Baithakkhana, says "The celebration of Bengali literature is always delightful. That KCC has decided to add another Bengali literary festival to the calendar of Kolkata is great news. The 3-day festival, KCC Baithakkhana has a specific theme each year. This year it is 'The Defeated'. In literature and culture, heroes are often those who face defeat, and in their downfall, they become the truest embodiments of heroism.

From Draupadi to Devdas, the sufferer and the vanquished have our deepest sympathies. Bengali literature and theatre have consistently championed the defeated—the average person, the clerk, the struggling intellectual—individuals powerless against a system they cannot comprehend. In its second year, KCC Baithakkhana will celebrate the stories of the defeated through speeches, debate, discussions, songs, and performances.”

About Kolkata Centre for Creativity: Kolkata Centre for Creativity is a multidisciplinary interactive art center based in Kolkata. As a unit of the Anamika Kala Sangam Trust, a not-for-profit public trust, it promotes research experimentation while championing inclusivity accessibility at the intersection of arts and society. Led by Chairperson Richa Agarwal, KCC is dedicated to socially responsible programming that integrates diverse creative and cultural practices. Through curated initiatives, we offer arts and culture collaborative efforts, education, research, support, mentorships, and programs for children and DEAI.

Curator's Note | Theme: হেরো (HEYRO) / THE DEFEATED

জয়ীদের আমরা ধূপধুনো দিই বটে, কিন্তু হেরোরা আমাদের অশ্রুতুতো আত্মীয়। আমাদের মহাকাব্যের ক্যালেন্ডারে কর্ণ তাকিয়ে আছেন অভিমানদীপ্ত চোখে, তাঁর রথের চাকা নিয়তি মাটিতে পুঁতে দিয়েছে। আমাদের প্রেমের মানচিত্রে দেবদাস তাকিয়ে আছে অশ্রুক্ষিপ্ত চোখে, তার প্রেমের বেদনা মদের ফেনায় উপচে উঠছে। চায়ের দোকানের বেঞ্চিতে আমরা তাকিয়ে আছি হতাশালিপ্ত চোখে, ল্যাং মেরে প্রোমোশন বাগিয়ে নিয়েছে চালিয়াত। আমাদের নাটকের নায়ক জোতদারের কাছে মার খাচ্ছে, সিনেমার নায়ক সমাজের গ্যাঁড়াকলে হাঁপ টানছে, কবিতার নায়ক নিজের মুদ্রাদোষে আলাদা হয়ে থতমত তাকাচ্ছে। শোলে-র শেষে আমরা ধর্মেন্দ্রর চিংকারের চেয়ে বচনের মৃত্যুর মাউথ অরগ্যানের সুরে প্রাণ সঁপছি। হেরোরা আমাদের আয়না। আমাদের আউডার আনমনা আলো। এবারের কেসিসি বৈঠকখানার মূলসূত্র: হেরো।

In literature and culture, heroes are often those who face defeat, and in their downfall, they become the truest embodiments of heroism. Many of us feel defeated by the intricate, often ruthless, systems of modern life. When we watch Chaplin's *Modern Times*, we laugh, but there's also a bittersweet sting in our hearts. After watching *Sholay*, the image of Jai dying while his harmonica tune echoes through the screen stays with us. Devdas, in both Bengali and Indian literature and film, remains one of the most revered figures, defeated utterly by love.

Our epics are filled with tragic figures: Karna, Draupadi, Meghnad, and Sita, whose suffering and defeat are integral to their heroism. The Mahabharata even suggests that a victory gained through murder and plunder is a true defeat. Bengali literature and theatre have consistently championed the defeated—the average person, the clerk, the struggling intellectual—individuals powerless against a system they cannot comprehend. The history of Indian sports is full of figures like P. T. Usha and Dipa Karmakar, who came so close to victory but never claimed the medal. The Bengali scientific community mourns the lack of recognition for Jagadish Chandra Bose and the tragic death of Subhas Mukhopadhyay, the creator of the world's second test-tube baby.

We may admire the victors, but our deepest sympathies lie with the vanquished. The image of Karna struggling to free his chariot wheel from the ground remains far more powerful than countless victories by Arjuna.

In this edition of KCC Baithakkhana, we celebrate the stories of the defeated. We explore the craft and magic behind how we come to identify with and empathise with the unfortunate and the doomed. We delve into different spheres of life, highlight Greek tragedies, and reflect on iconic Bengali poems, novels, and songs. We poke fun at our tear ducts, all while paying respect to the martyrs immortalised in the pages of timeless literature.