

PRESS RELEASE



Kolkata Centre for Creativity

presents

Santali Katha

Tracing Continuity, Change, and Identity in a Living Indigenous Culture

30 April – 10 May 2026 | 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Kolkata, India, April 2026: Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC), in collaboration with the Ila Palchaudhuri Foundation and Emami Art Foundation, presents *Santali Katha*, a multidisciplinary exhibition and symposium that examines the evolving identity of the Santal community through the lens of continuity and change.

Bringing together archival material, contemporary practices, and cross-disciplinary research, the project engages with one of South Asia's largest indigenous communities, foregrounding its cultural depth, knowledge systems, and ongoing transformations.

Spread across KCC's first and fourth floor galleries, the exhibition features Santali art demonstrations, material culture, and rare archival reproductions, including contributions from international collections such as the Volkenkunde Museum, Zürich, alongside curated displays from the Santal Museum, Bishnubati, led by Boro Baski. These are complemented by presentations of artefacts, textiles, and jewellery, as well as anthropological displays that situate Santali life within broader historical and social contexts.

The exhibition is anchored by *Santal 360° and More*, a three-day international symposium that brings together leading scholars, practitioners, and policymakers across disciplines. The programme opens with a keynote by Nobel Laureate **Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee**, alongside a special address by **Jawhar Sircar**, setting the tone for a series of conversations that explore identity, language, governance, and cultural transitions within indigenous contexts.

Sessions across the symposium feature contributions from distinguished academics and practitioners including **Peter Andersen**, **Ashoke Chatterjee**, **Onkar Prasad**, and **Kumkum Bhattacharya**, among others, reflecting a wide-ranging engagement with anthropology, development studies, design, and community-led knowledge systems.

The programme extends beyond formal discussions to include film screenings by the Anthropological Survey of India, lecture-demonstrations such as *Interface of Santal and Classical Dance Forms* by **Mallika Sarabhai**, and thematic lectures addressing subjects from museum practice to linguistic exchange.

A significant highlight of the opening day is the inaugural address delivered on behalf of the Minister of Tribal Affairs, Government of West Bengal, by **Prof. Maroona Murmu**, alongside remarks by **Dr. Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty** and **Richa Agarwal**, and a guided exhibition tour led by **Rita Bhimani**.

Across its duration, *Santali Katha* also foregrounds performance and lived cultural expression. Evenings are marked by music, theatre, and dance, including *Songs of Soil & Toil* by Ranjan Prasad Das & The Seagulls, a Santali play by Blossom Theatre, and a special staging of Rabindranath Tagore's *Dakghar*. The programme concludes with a series of festive Santal dance performances representing Bahā, Sohrai, and other seasonal traditions, offering audiences a direct encounter with the community's performative heritage.

Special focus is also given to material and textile traditions through presentations such as *Galang Gabaan*, a Santali sari showcase by Lipsa Hembram, alongside discussions on indigenous knowledge systems, entrepreneurship, and the intersections of language and regional identity.

Organiser's quote

"At Kolkata Centre for Creativity, we see *Santali Katha* as an important opportunity to engage more deeply with indigenous histories, knowledge systems and cultural practices of the Santal community. Through the exhibition and symposium, the project brings together a wide range of voices and disciplines to reflect on questions of identity, language and continuity, while also recognising the realities of change concerning the community. Such initiatives are central to our commitment to fostering dialogue, supporting research and encouraging meaningful public engagement. They also contribute to a more inclusive and thoughtful cultural conversation within the city."

— **Richa Agarwal**, Chairperson, Kolkata Centre for Creativity

About

Kolkata Centre for Creativity: Kolkata Centre for Creativity is a multidisciplinary interactive art centre based in Kolkata. As a unit of the Anamika Kala Sangam Trust, it promotes research and experimentation while championing inclusivity and 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, it offers collaborative programmes across arts and culture, education, research, mentorship, and community engagement.

Social Media

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