



Antiquity Natural Mineral Water & Kolkata Centre for Creativity

Presents DEKH RAHE HAIN NAYAN:

Celebrating Habib Tanvir's Birth Centenary & his vision beyond the curtain

On the 100th birth anniversary of Habib Tanvir, one of the most influential playwrights and poets of post-independent India, **Antiquity Natural Mineral Water in partnership with** Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC) are thrilled to present "Dekh Rahe Hain Nayan" – a three-day festival celebrating Habib Tanvir's life, work, and immense contributions to Indian theatre, literature, and art.

The festival is part of Antiquity Natural Mineral Water's platform of 'Free to Discover More', that aims to inspire young India to discover both legendary tales and fresh voices in our rich heritage of art and culture. This celebration is hence, a spectacular journey into India's theatrical roots, and how it shapes cultural expression today.

Curated by M.K. Raina and Tausif Rahman, with research and consultation by Anjum Katyal, 'Dekh Rahe Hain Nayan' is the first major initiative to take serious note of Tanvir's oeuvre, This initiative involves a diverse range of events including an exhibition, masterclasses, panel discussions, film screening, dramatic storytelling, musical performances, book launches, and other cultural events showcasing Habib Tanvir's work and his profound impact on Indian theatre and art.

Scheduled to take place between 30th August and 1st September 2024, 'Dekh Rahe Hain Nayan' festival will have renowned theatre professionals well-versed in Tanvir's work, conducting masterclasses and offering aspiring playwrights and actors unique learning opportunities. Panel discussions by eminent theatre scholars and experts will delve deeply into Tanvir's philosophy, his relevance in the contemporary scenario, and examine his enduring legacy. The three-day festival has a never-seen-before line-up of luminaries and experts in the fields of theatre, music, and literature such as Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Sudhir Mishra, Raghubir Yadav, MK Raina, Atul Tiwari, Danish Husain, Brahma Prakash, Samik Bandyopadhyay, Anjum Katyal, Ashok Vajpeyi, Suman Mukhopadhyay, Bibhas Chakraborty, Chandradasan, Anuradha Kapur, among many others.

There will be folk music performances by Poonam Tiwari and her troupe, and Raghubir Yadav with Subhadeep Guha; *Habibnama* directed by Danish Husain, *Dastaan-E-Ashok-O-Akbar* by Ratna Pathak Shah; songs from Habib Tanvir's theatre by Nageen Tanvir (Daughter of Habib Tanvir); a screening of *Gaon Ke Naon Theatre Mor Naon Habib* directed by Sudhanva Deshpande & Sanjay Maharishi; and book launches by Seagull Books and Orient Blackswan, exclusive masterclasses on acting and direction as well as five panel discussions on the topics of Habib Tanvir and theatre.

Ms. Richa Agarwal, Chairperson of Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC), expressed her enthusiasm for the event, stating, "Habib Tanvir is one of the most exemplary theatre personalities that the entire country looks up to, and additionally for us in Bengal, he has always been referred to as "Banglar jamai", owing to his Bengali wife – the theatre director and actor Moneeka Misra, with whom he founded Naya Theatre in 1959. 'Dekh Rahe Hain Nayan' is a one-of-a-kind tribute to the legendary Habib Tanvir for the first time in Bengal, while providing a platform for insightful discourse and a cross-pollination of knowledge. We want everyone to take genuine interest in 'Dekh Rahe

Hain Nayan’ and be a part of this festival that celebrates one of the greatest playwrights and poets India has ever produced.”

Varun Koorichh, VP and Portfolio Head, Diageo India said, “Art has the incredible power to elevate the ordinary into the extraordinary. Through Antiquity Natural Mineral Water’s brand ethos of “Free to Discover More” we aim to inspire young India to discover India’s rich heritage of art and culture. We are extremely excited to be partnering with a cultural powerhouse that Kolkata Centre for Creativity is and bringing this association that honors a legend to life. Together we look forward to getting the next generation to “Discover More” through Antiquity Natural Mineral Water’s lenses and immerse themselves further into India’s various cultural expressions.”

About Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC): KCC is a pioneering, multi-disciplinary, interactive art centre, purpose-built and housed in an accessible, green building that reflects our commitment to environmental sustainability. Located in Kolkata, West Bengal, India and established in 2018, KCC, a unit of the Anamika Kala Sangam Trust, a not-for-profit public establishment, spans 70,000 sq. ft. and has quickly become a cornerstone of India's contemporary art and cultural scene. Led by Chairperson Richa Agarwal, KCC is dedicated to socially responsible programming that integrates diverse creative and cultural practices. Through curated initiatives, KCC offers arts and culture collaborative efforts, education, research, support, mentorships, and programs for children and DEAI.

About Diageo India

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Headquartered in Bengaluru, Diageo India has one of the largest manufacturing footprints in alcobev with 36 facilities across India. It manufactures, sells and distributes Johnnie Walker, Black Dog, Black & White, VAT 69, Antiquity, Signature, The Singleton, Royal Challenge, McDowell’s No1, Smirnoff, Ketel One, Tanqueray, Captain Morgan and Godawan, an artisanal single malt whisky from India, bringing together global expertise and local pride to deliver innovative, world-class products and experiences to consumers. With a strong focus on driving a positive impact on society, Diageo India has been working on collective action to improve livelihoods, championing Grain to Glass sustainability, responsible consumption and nurturing the alcobev ecosystem, to contribute to India’s growth agenda.

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Celebrating life, every day, everywhere.

HABIB TANVIR (1923–2009)

Habib Tanvir was a pioneering Indian playwright, theatre director, poet and actor. One of the most celebrated figures in Urdu and Hindi theatre, he was most known for his work with indigenous people of Chhattisgarh, at the Naya Theatre, a company he founded in 1959 in Bhopal.

In 1954, he produced his first significant play *Agra Bazar* based on the works and times of the plebeian 18th-century Urdu poet, Nazir Akbarabadi. For this play he brought together local residents and folk artistes from Okhla village in Delhi and students of Jamia Millia Islamia creating a palette never seen before in Indian theatre. In 1955, Habib moved to England and trained in Acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (1955) and in Direction at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (1956). For the next two years, he travelled through Europe, watching various theatre activities, including several plays of Bertolt Brecht, produced by Berliner Ensemble. A deeply inspired Tanvir then returned to India in 1958, took to directing full-time, and founded Naya Theatre in 1959. In his exploratory phase (1970–73), he broke free from one more theatre restriction – he no longer made the folk artistes, who had been performing in all his plays, speak Hindi. Instead, the artistes switched to Chhattisgarhi, a local language they were more accustomed to. Spontaneity and improvisation became the hallmark of his new theatre style, where the folk artistes were allowed greater freedom of expression.

The highlight of his seminal play *Charandas Chor* in 1975 was *Nach* – a chorus that provided commentary through song. *Charandas Chor* won him the Fringe Firsts Award at Edinburgh International Drama Festival in 1982, and in 2007, it was included in the Hindustan Times' list of 'India's 60 Best works since Independence which said "an innovative dramaturgy equally impelled by Brecht and folk idioms, Habib Tanvir seduces across language barriers in this his all-time biggest hit about a Robin Hood-style thief." Later, he collaborated with Shyam Benegal, when he adapted the play to a feature-length film, by the same name, starring Smita Patil and Lalu Ram.

His first brush with controversy came about in the 1990s, with his production of a traditional Chhattisgarhi play about religious hypocrisy, *Ponga Pandit*. Though he had been producing it since the sixties, in the changed social climate after the Babri Masjid demolition, the play caused quite an uproar amongst Hindu fundamentalists, especially the RSS, whose supporters violently disrupted many of its shows, and even emptied the auditoriums, yet he continued to show it all over.

In 1993 came *Kamdeo Ka Apna Basant Ritu Ka Sapna*, Tanvir's Hindi adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 1995, he was invited to the United States by the Chicago Actors Ensemble, where he wrote his only English language play, *The Broken Bridge*. During his illustrious career he brought works from all genres to stage, from ancient Sanskrit works by Shudraka, Bhasa, Vishakhadatta and Bhavabhuti; to European classics by Shakespeare, Molière and Goldoni; modern masters Brecht, Garcia, Lorca, Gorky, and Oscar Wilde; Tagore, Asghar Wajahat, Shankar Shesh, Safdar Hashmi, Rahul Varma, stories by Premchand, Stefan Zweig and Vijaydan Detha, apart from an array of Chhattisgarhi folk tales.

During his career, Tanvir acted in over nine feature films, including Richard Attenborough's film, *Gandhi* (1982). He was the recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademy Award (1969), the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (1979), Padma Shri (1983), Padma Bhushan (2002), among other national and international awards during his lifetime.