Theatrical Brilliance at Rabindranath Tagore University: A Journey from Chekhov's Irony to Bhasa's Tragedy



On **June 14 and 16, 2025,** the Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts at Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal, witnessed the powerful staging of two stylistically diverse plays – "Chekhov Ki Duniya" and "Urubhanga". These productions were presented by the students of the MPA (Drama) and PG Diploma in Natyashastra as part of a national theatre workshop held from May 7 to 16, marking the culmination of their second semester curriculum. Through these performances, the students skillfully bridged classical Indian theatrical traditions with modern experimental aesthetics.

The two productions stood as compelling contrasts. While one portrayed the ironic absurdities of modern Western society through humour, the other breathed life into the deep emotional undercurrents of Indian mythology through poignant

tragedy.

“Chekhov Ki Duniya” – A Humorous Reflection of Social Irony

Staged on June 14, “Chekhov Ki Duniya” was based on three comic one-act plays by Russian literary master Anton Chekhov – Cheeenk, The Bank Manager, and Surgery. Under the seasoned direction of Shyam Kumar and co-direction of Shraboni Saha, the play brought forth the complexities hidden in seemingly trivial incidents. From the social awkwardness triggered by a simple sneeze, to the oppressive nature of bureaucratic banking systems, and the cold commercialization of healthcare – each vignette was rendered with biting humour and subtle irony.

The ensemble cast brought these stories to life with remarkable authenticity. Sehej Harjai served as the narrator, with Ankit Chaudhary (Pyare Mohan), Tanshree Rane (Pyare Mohan’s wife), Sainand Valvaikar (General), and Oindrila Goswami (General’s wife) portraying Chekhovian characters with flair. Supporting roles by Santosh Rajput (Bank Manager), Sauptik Bhattacharya (Assistant Manager), Pooja Kewat (Woman), Praveen Namdev (Compounder), Davinder Singh Grover (Patient), and Deepak Bhardwaj (Audience Member) were met with hearty applause from both guests and viewers.

The backstage team worked with admirable precision. Stage management was handled by Davinder Singh Grover and Sehej Harjai. Costumes were designed by Deepak Bhardwaj, Santosh Grover coordinated props, lighting by Praveen Namdev, and musical direction was led by Vansh Rathore.

“Urubhanga” – A Mythological Tragedy That Stirred the Soul

Performed on June 16, “Urubhanga” is a poignant classical tragedy written by the Sanskrit playwright Bhasa. The play explores the psychological turmoil, remorse, and transformation of a wounded Duryodhana on the eighteenth day of the Mahabharata war. Under the direction of Dr. Sheetanshu

Tripathi, the production delved into the devastating aftermath of war and internal conflict, deeply moving the audience.

Shubham Srivastava's sensitive and intense portrayal of Duryodhana left an indelible mark. As the narrator, Pankaj Diwan effectively connected the audience with both the intellectual and emotional threads of the narrative. Supporting roles were performed by Adeeb Ansari, Sanjay Singh Negi (Ashwatthama), Prateek Chauhan (Dhritarashtra), Neeraj (Krishna), Richa Kalra (Gandhari), Shikha (Pauravi), Nisha Kudaikar (Malavi), Shubham Shivalikar (Durjaya), Unnish Pratap Singh (Baladeva), and the younger characters – Rahul Gupta, Prashant Kumar (Harshit), and Kartik Namdev – all delivering memorable performances.

The scenic design and costuming, supervised by Deepak Bhardwaj with active involvement from Kartik Namdev, enriched the stage with symbolic depth and aesthetic elegance.

Both performances were graced by distinguished guests – Chancellor Shri Santosh Choubey, Vice-Chancellor Prof. R. P. Dubey, and Dr. Prasad Bhide from Central Sanskrit University, Bhopal. After witnessing "Chekhov Ki Duniya", the Chancellor lauded it as a sharp portrayal of social reality and commended both cast and crew. Regarding "Urubhanga", Dr. Bhide praised its seamless fusion of ancient dramaturgy with modern theatrical techniques. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dubey described both plays as commendable and emphasized the importance of sustaining such creative academic endeavours at the university.

The entire event was coordinated under the guidance of Dr. Sanjay Kumar Dubey, Dr. Savitri Singh Parihar, and Sh. Abhishek Deshmukh, whose leadership transformed this semester-end production into a rich academic and cultural experience.

"Chekhov Ki Duniya" and "Urubhanga" stand as testaments to the theatrical acumen, emotional insight, and creative potential

of the students at Rabindranath Tagore University. These productions point towards a promising future – where tradition meets innovation, theory meets experience, and Indian roots engage meaningfully with global perspectives.