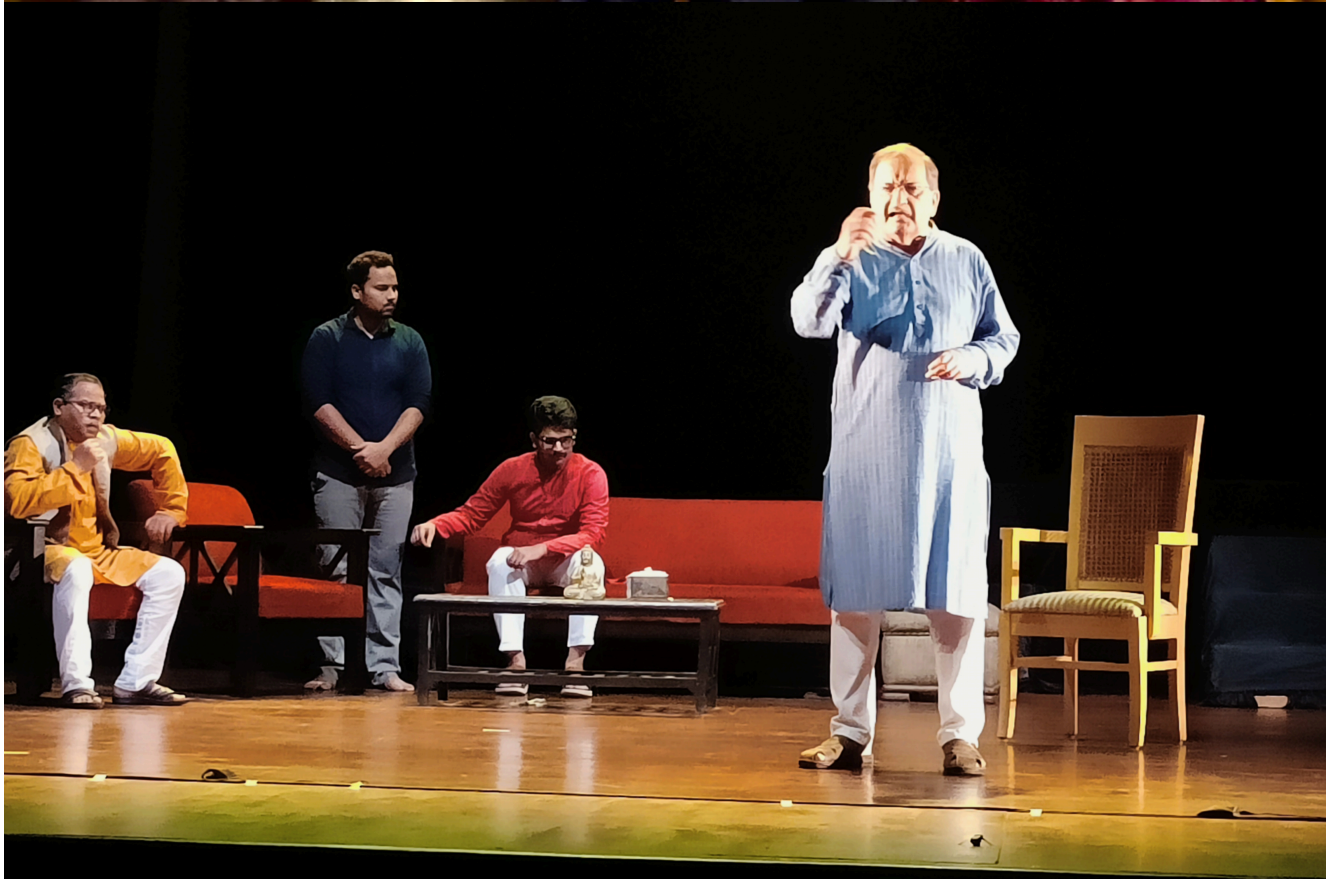


'Aapatnama': A Powerful Theatrical Reflection on India's Emergency



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Kamani Auditorium witnessed a deeply moving theatrical experience as '**Aapatnama**', based on **Anil Goyal's** acclaimed novel *Naya Savera*, was staged under the auspices of the **Hindi Academy**, Department of Art, Culture & Languages, Government of Delhi. Adapted and directed by **Sunil Rawat**, the production revisited one of the most defining chapters of India's post-independence history—the **Emergency of 1975**.



Rather than presenting history as a mere sequence of political events, *Aapatnama* brings to life the stories of ordinary people whose lives were transformed by fear, uncertainty, and state control. The production portrays the atmosphere of

censorship, arbitrary arrests, restrictions on civil liberties, and the silent struggles of countless families. The controversial forced sterilization drive also finds its place within the narrative, illustrating how government policies deeply affected the everyday lives of common citizens.

At the heart of the production is **Anil Goyal's** compelling writing. His narrative goes beyond political commentary, capturing the courage, resilience, and quiet resistance of people who endured one of the darkest periods in India's democratic journey. The play succeeds in transforming historical memory into an emotionally engaging theatrical experience.

One of the production's greatest strengths was its **music**. Thoughtfully woven into the narrative, the songs became an emotional bridge between scenes, enriching the storytelling and adding depth to the dramatic moments. Their powerful lyrics and soulful compositions remained with the audience long after the performance ended.

The ensemble cast delivered sincere and engaging performances, creating a convincing portrayal of life during the Emergency. The principal cast included **Kapil Pal, Komal Munshi, Raj Sharma, Prasoon Narayan Srivastava, Komal Singh, Prajanya Arora, Meenakshi Rajdan, Priyanka, Abhishek Anand, Ishwarchand, Aarav, Ritesh, Aditya, Vikramaditya, and Vishnu**. The production was further elevated by **Rajeev Singh's** music, **Dalchand's** costume design, **Divyang's** lighting, and **Rashid Khan's** makeup, all of which contributed significantly to the overall theatrical experience.

The evening was graced by several distinguished personalities, including former Union Health Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Ram Bahadur Rai**, Chairman of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, senior journalist **K.N. Gupta**, eminent playwright **Prof. Pratap Sehgal**, and renowned theatre writer **Dr. Harisuman Bisht**, along with leading theatre practitioners, journalists,

and literary figures. Adding a profound historical dimension to the occasion were individuals who had been imprisoned during the Emergency, as well as those who had courageously provided shelter to people during those difficult times.

In his address, **Ram Bahadur Rai** described the production as a significant effort to preserve an important chapter of India's history through literature and theatre. **Dr. Harisuman Bisht** praised **Anil Goyal** for his insightful portrayal of the period and the remarkable way in which historical realities were woven into the narrative.

The evening concluded with the introduction of the entire cast, warmly applauded by the audience. As a gesture of appreciation, **Dr. Harisuman Bisht** felicitated director **Sunil Rawat** by presenting him with a sapling, symbolizing creativity, growth, and the enduring spirit of theatre.

More than a historical play, *Aapatnama* is a poignant reminder of the value of freedom, democracy, and human dignity. With its compelling narrative, evocative music, committed performances, and thoughtful direction, the production emerged as an unforgettable theatrical experience that left the audience reflecting on the lessons of history and their relevance today.