

'Anik-da leaves behind a void'

FIRDAUSAUL HASAN

Firdausaul Hasan, a long-time collaborator of Anik Dutta, shares memories of his friend with Metro. Both were students of St Xavier's College. Hasan produced three of Dutta's films — Meghnadbodh Rohoshyo, Aparajito, and Joto Kando Kolkatatei. A sequel to Aparajito, based on Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali, had been in the works, Hasan said.

I spoke to him on Tuesday night. And the night before. I still cannot believe he is gone.

Anik-da leaves behind not only an immeasurable void in cinema but also a silence, where once there was brilliance, wit, passion, knowledge and relentless artistic pursuit.

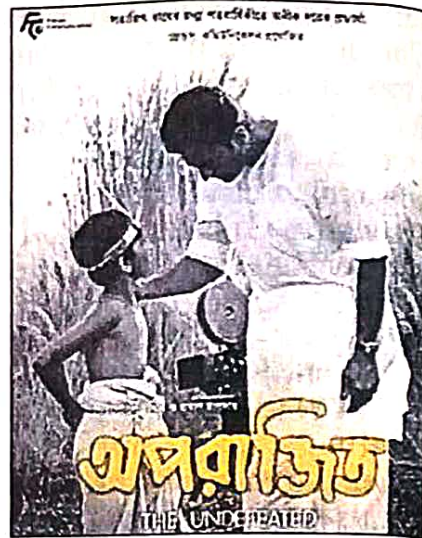
For me, what stands out is Anik-da's supreme conviction in his craft, which is rare.

A personal experience best describes this. Anik-da insisted on Jeetu Kamal playing the protagonist in *Aparajito*. Another actor, a popular hero, was also in contention. After a discussion lasting more than three hours, Anik-da prevailed over me, and Jeetu did the film.

When the film hit the screens, many found a striking resemblance in Jeetu's physical appearance and Ray himself. Anik-da had a vision rooted in deep self-belief.

I had the privilege of producing three remarkable films under his direction. Each journey with him was a masterclass in dedication to cinema.

It deeply pains me that the fourth project we had just begun nurturing together will forever remain incomplete.



A poster of *Aparajito*

So many memories flood my mind today.

Anik-da possessed an extraordinarily sharp eye for detail and an uncompromising commitment to perfection; every frame and every nuance had to meet the exacting standards of the storyteller he was.

His pursuit of excellence often tested the patience of those around him, but as a producer, that obsession drew me to collaborate with him time and again.

Bengali cinema has suffered a profound loss. Beyond his exceptional body of work, Anik-da's erudition and delightfully twisted humour will remain etched in our hearts.

In his characteristic style, he would often joke: "Hasan *chhara ar keu amar sathe kaj korteparena* (No one but Hasan can work with me)," and I was never sure whether to take it as praise or playful provocation.

Anik-da leaves behind an extraordinary cinematic legacy. I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends, admirers and the entire film fraternity. May his gifted soul rest in eternal peace.