

When waters speak

MUSIC

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While humans carve the earth with borders — claiming dominion over land and faith — the river flows boundless and unpossessed. It glides as a stateless storyteller, carrying the weight of ancient memories, stories, and a deep sense of belonging to faraway shores. When these tales are embraced by people in a new land, they become their own. *Kolkata ki Jalkatha*, a musical per-

formance, aimed to bring these tales to life. The stories of a land belong to everyone. That is especially true of Calcutta, a city where countless different communities have arrived, put down their roots, and called it home. It was likely that this shared bond drew people to a packed KCC auditorium to witness *Kolkata ki Jalkatha*, which unfolded through a blend of music, dance, and the traditional art of *dastangoi*.

Moving softly between reality and folklore, *Kolkata ki Jalkatha* traced the life of Job Charnock and a fictitious story of how Calcutta was saved. Conceived by Palash Chaturve-

di and led by Sukrit Sen, the performance also wove in the lost tales of the city's waters. Thus, enmeshed in the telling were a set of diverse — disparate — elements, ranging from *kochuripaana*, Charnock's love story, and the ponds of Bengal to the fable of Bonbibibi and the rich Armenian heritage that survives in the city.

The standout performances were those of the children, especially Izara Kaushik and Aradhika Chatterjee. The unity and the team spirit of the young performers were apparent in the way the minor glitches, such as an occasional missed dialogue by the performers, were handled.

