

Dilli Chalo !



Hon'ble Chief Justice of India & Ravi Shankarji greeting the prisoners at Siri Fort Auditorium

Govt of West Bengal arranged the visit of the "Taser Desh" troupe to Delhi, on our request, for performances at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on 18.11.07 and at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi on 19.11.07. The entire 'Taser Desh' troupe comprising 24 prisoners of Berhampore Central Correctional Home travelled by train to Delhi as free citizens without any security arrangements for this. They were accompanied by a few correctional staff of Berhampore Central Correctional Home and the Superintendent K.K.Pramanick. Pradip Bhattacharya, the Director of the play also chose to travel along with the troupe with his team of assistants for the shows. There was also a team of NSHM with their cameras in the train compartment for capturing the moments of joy in the lives of the 24 convicts brought about by this excursion to Delhi. We also took 25 children of prisoners for their training as Community Social Workers at Delhi, which was arranged by Smt. Sreerupa Mitra Choudhury, National Advisor & Programme Implementation Head, NALSA. The troupe as also the group of prisoners' children were accommodated at Shramik Referral Centre, New Delhi and generously hosted by Smt. Sreerupa Mitra Choudhury.

The prisoners of Berhampore Central Correctional Home thus had a rare privilege of performing at IITF and Siri Fort Auditorium. For the show at Pragati Maidan Open Air Theatre, Sri Hem Pandey, Resident Commissioner, Govt of West Bengal, Sri Anup Matilal, Director, Culture and Shri Niloy Ghosh, Director of Information were present. At Siri Fort they performed in front of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Mr. K.G. Balakrishnan, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ashok Bhan, Executive Chairman of NALSA, Hon'ble Mr. Justice V.S. Sirpurkar, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.K. Sarma, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court. Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of Art of Living was a huge attraction in the special show who was also present as the Guest of Honour. The Hon'ble Chief Justice of India felicitated Sri Pradip Bhattacharya, the Director of the play as also all the artists. He also met the 25 children of prisoners taken by us to Delhi for training in Community Social Work by Smt. Sreerupa Mitra Chowdhury, National Advisor, NALSA. Shri Ravi Shankar presented medals to all 24 artists before the show. The effort of West Bengal Correctional Services in imparting a sense of dignity to the prisoners through such cultural workshops and the performances by the prisoners was widely appreciated. Thus, both the performances aroused considerable interest and surprise as Delhiites had never seen such a thing before. The Police officials deployed for the security duty were also perplexed.

We also had a special show of the play "Taser Desh" for National School of Drama at Chinmoy Mission on 20.11.07. Dr. Anuradha Kapur, the Director of National School of Drama was all praise for the effort including the concept and quality and expressed her desire for a continuing relationship with West Bengal Correctional Services to support our effort in the field of culture therapy.

During the visit, the "Taser Desh" troupe as also the prisoners' children were invited to dinner by Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Minister, Rural Development, Govt of India on 20.11.07 at his residence. They also had the privilege of calling on the Chief Minister of Delhi, Smt. Shila Dikshit on 21.11.07.



A group photograph with prisoners at Siri Fort Auditorium