

Stage actor dies after 2-year battle with cancer



Kayem Jayanta Das, a veteran actor of the Delhi stage whom filmgoers would best remember as an outwardly stentorian Bengali father in Shoojit Sircar's *Vicky Donor*, died in the capital on 17.10.2014.

He was 67 and had been battling pancreatic cancer for the past two years.

Das was last seen in the role of an Army general 2013's John Abraham-Nargis Fakhri starrer *Madras Cafe*, another film directed by Sircar.

Das appeared in two other Sircar films — as a school principal in *Udaan* (2010) and also as an Army commander in *Yahaan* (2005). "He was one of the finest actors I have worked with, an adorable man and an honest performer," said Sircar. "I cast him in all my films."

Das acted in a few other films and several TV serials, but it was in theatre that he shone as an actor. "He was a legend of the Delhi stage, particularly Bengali theatre," said Sircar.

He began acting as a teenager with a group called Shanichakra in the early 1960s, joined **The Players** group in Kirori Mal College before forming *Nabodoy Goshti*, a Bengali theatre group that remained active for two decades till the late 1980s, starring in plays such as *Sher Afghan*.

Das also acted with other groups and directors, such as Amal Allana and Habib Tanvir, with whom he worked in *Moteram Ka Satyagraha*. He is also remembered for his performances in the **jatra** genre, a quasi-traditional theatre form with exaggerated, stylized acting. "Das was a complete stage actor. He had a good voice, great modulation skills and used his body very well on stage," said long-time associate Pranab Chakraborty.

Passed away 17.10.2014