

It's Independence Day today

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Music is the food for life

On Independence Day today, CT salutes the never-say-die spirit of seven-year-old Ayush, who's suffering from leukaemia. Bhoomi, it's heard, has now raised funds for the boy's treatment

RUMAN GANGULY

Ami bachte chai, tomra sunte pachho?"— went the headline of a newspaper article. This was the helpless cry of seven-year-old Ayush, who has been suffering from leukaemia since 2005. Among his interests was mentioned his passion for the canvas and his love for Bhoomi's music. Immediately afterwards, Soumitra, the frontman of Bhoomi got a call from one of his fans informing him about Ayush. "I was shocked when the I read the article. His address was given below and I personally visited his house. What struck me first about Ayush was the spark in his eyes when he saw me. He simply jumped out of bed and didn't know what to do," says the vocalist. As the child went on and on about how he knows all the Bhoomi songs, and considers his day to be incomplete without having listened to Barandaye roddur, Kande sudhu mon and Lal paharir desh, Soumitra was left heart-broken.

"It was on my way back home that I thought, he could have been my son as well. And all of us got together to help the child," Soumitra recalls fondly. Next, the band invited him for one of their shows at Kalamandir, where he shared the stage with Soumitra, Surajit and company. "To everyone's surprise, he also sang the number Barandaye roddur. And the way he analysed the show, I have to admit that he's our biggest critic," he quips.

The US tour was up next and the band had a mission to accomplish. "I got a flex made that had Ayush's picture with his appeal on it. We collected \$ 4,876 which amounts to something around Rs 2 lakh. In fact, we were moved when kids even gave out paltry sums of maybe a dollar that is worth an icecream, to help Ayush. Today, on Independence Day, we shall hand over this money to Ayush's father," Soumitra says.

Ayush's father, Subrata Mukherjee, is floored by Bhoomi's efforts. "I don't have words to thank the Bhoomi members. I only hope that my son recovers from the disease and is able to lead a normal life," he says.

Little aware of all this hullabaloo, Ayush is harbouring dreams of being part of his favourite band, once he grows up. We too, are keeping our fingers crossed!

