

## Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 commences

Leila Seth, Jawhar Sircar, Charles Allen and Shashi Tharoor preside over the inaugural session

**Kolkata, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2015:** The 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival scheduled from 14-18<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 was inaugurated today at the heritage premises of Indian Museum in the distinguished presence of Justice **Leila Seth**, popular historian **Charles Allen**, **Jawhar Sircar**, CEO, Prasar Bharati and award-winning writer and parliamentarian **Shashi Tharoor**.

The evening opened with a rousing dance performance presented by traditional artists of Manipur under the aegis of renowned danseuse **Priti Patel** and her troupe **Anjika** and was followed by a discussion on ***Creating and Sustaining: Cultural Heritage and Contemporary India***. The assemblage of guests in the panel moderated by Swapan Chakravorty urged linking literature with society and as part of the country's cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, which otherwise includes artifacts, buildings, folklore, language, music, cultural diversity and even belief systems. The thought-provoking panel discussion lay special emphasis on not just sustaining heritage but creating heritage for future generations. The opening ceremony was presented in collaboration with **Indian Museum Bi-centenary Year Programme (BcYP)** and the **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS)**

AKLF 2015 explores literature as part of our tangible and intangible heritage, a theme that runs through several sessions of the festival. In the days that follow, AKLF 2015 will pay a special tribute to **'Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary'** with a panel discussion on the topic – **Has India kept her Tryst with Destiny?**, **National Geographic India**, **TASCHEN**, international art book publishers will celebrate over a century of the iconic magazine with award winning Paris based photographer **Reza Deghati** and **Marc Parent**, Director TASCHEN and **Saad Bin Jung**, of the Pataudi Royal House, author, conservationist and former International cricketer will launch, **'Matabele Dawn'** in the august presence of **Shahebzada Wasif Mirza**, descendent of the Nawab of Awadh. For the first time in the city, after three decades, British playwright and novelist **Hanif Kureishi** will interact with the Kolkata audience. Apart from book launches by **Shashi Tharoor**, **David Davidar**, **John Elliott**, **Salil Tripathi**, **Upamanyu Chatterjee**, **Shekhar Gupta**, **Micheal Buckley** and others, there will be discussions on myriad subjects like romance and Bollywood by **Tisca Chopra**, motivation and leadership session, blogging contests, stand-up comedy, literary adda, heritage walk etc adding a fresh elements to the festival. There will also be a special session with a block of crime writers. The festival will also focus on young writers and new voices in an attempt to build an audience for books and reading. An exclusive stage rendition of Viram Seth's poetic parables performed by actor, **Naseeruddin Shah**, **Ratna Pathak Shah**, **Heeba Shah** and **Kenny Desai**, will be one of the highlights along with the launch of **'Honour and Fidelity: India's Military Contribution to the Great World War 1914-18'** by **Capt. Amarinder Singh** in the memory of the sacrifices of the Indian Battalions during the great war, hosted on the verdant grounds of Lascar War Memorial. The five day long, multi-faceted AKLF 2015 has several stimulating components designed to give visitors and the audience an enriching experience, with a great blend of literature, culture, art and heritage.

Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) Kolkata's pioneering literary festival grows out of the bookstore's year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the six years since Kolkata saw

her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a now 94-year-old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favors depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January.

AKLF focuses on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. Prominent personalities attending will be Hanif Kureishi, Naseeruddin Shah, Charles Allen, John Elliott, Mohammed Hanif, Leila Seth, Michael Buckley, Upamanyu Chatterjee, David Davidar, Shekhar Gupta, Shashi Tharoor, Asish Nandy, Ramachandra Guha, Kishwar Desai, Nabaneeta Dev Sen amongst several others. There are some firsts in AKLF 2015. A heritage literary walk, a literary 'adda', a Young Adult litfest for high school students, a bloggers' meet, a children's bookfest crammed with activities, even a standup comic for the college crowd and a leadership training session for young teens on importance of character, karma and individual social responsibility™. Add to that our signature heritage site evenings at The Indian Museum, National Library, Victoria Memorial, Lascar War Memorial, indepth discussions, top of the line authors, thinkers and performers, and you have a literary experience not to be missed.

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