

## Press Note:

### Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 – Day 4

**Event:** *‘From Poetry to Politics’*

Ben Okri reads his works of poetry

Followed by a debate on *‘Media and Social Change: More Bark than Bite’*

**Kolkata, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2016:** The Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival closing ceremony in the majestic Indian Museum lawns was a fitting way to bid adieu to phenomenal four-day literary extravaganza that made up its seventh edition. Internationally acclaimed poet and Man Booker Prize winner **Ben Okri** enthralled the audiences by reading from his works of poetry and then followed a debate on what is perhaps an important discussion that must be heard loud and clear in the nation.

*‘Media and Social Change: More Bark than Bite’*, session at the AKLF 2016 closing ceremony saw panelists discuss the power of mass media to change society, what impact media has had in the last five decades on society as well as remarkable growth & evolution of media made possible with technological advances.

Distinguished political psychologist, sociologist of science, **Ashish Nandy**, the best-known Indian journalist of his generation **Vir Sanghvi**, senior journalist and author **Saba Nqavi**, Writer, celebrated filmmaker, provocateur and widely read columnist **Ruchir Joshi**, CEO of the Yes Foundation **Perna Langa** and Nigerian Poet and novelist **Ben Okri** views of what media is doing right, what indeed it is doing wrong and what more needs to be done to enable media to play a stronger role in social change made the session interesting and befitting closure to the community initiative of Apeejay Surrendra Group – Apeejay Kolkata Literary festival’s seventh edition. Held at the majestic Indian Museum against its magnificently illuminated lawn, the setting added a palpable sense of occasion and social history.

#### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF): 2016**

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata’s pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grew out of the bookstore’s year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the seven 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 nearly 100 year-old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favours 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. In 2016 AKLF celebrates diverse themes encompassing books, theatre, the arts and cinema. AKLF’s focus is on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. The 7th edition of AKLF is poised to scale new heights, with an outstanding and meticulously

curated programme, bringing the world and the nation to Kolkata. Continuing to celebrate the city's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites the festival rediscovers the quaint and hidden charms of the city through heritage walks. AKLF highlights several unique concepts with a fresh approach that reflects current concerns such as diversity, gender equality, continuities across borders and youth engagements, which are also broad themes running through the festival. AKLF signature heritage sites include Nandan, Town Hall steps, The Indian Museum, Presidency University, Tollygunge Club and Victoria Memorial. AKLF 2016 has participation from Australia, Israel, Scotland, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal as well as England, France, Germany, Pakistan, Bhutan and others. Some of the prominent personalities who will be part of the literary extravaganza are Ben Okri, Meera Syal, Christine Manfield, Ashis Nandy, Vir Sanghvi, Bharathi S Pradhan, Shatrughan Sinha, Shobhaa De and more. The four day long, multi-faceted event has several stimulating components designed to give visitors and the audience an enriching experience, with a great blend of literature, culture, art and heritage. And all of this is absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

### **Notes to Editors**

**Ben Okri** OBE FRSL is a Nigerian poet and novelist, born in Nigeria and lives in London. Okri is considered one of the foremost African authors in the post-modern and post-colonial traditions and has been compared favourably to authors such as Salman Rushdie and Gabriel García Márquez. Ben Okri has published 8 novels, including *The Famished Road* which was awarded the 1991 Booker Prize and Starbook, as well as collections of poetry, short stories and essays. His work has been translated into more than 20 languages. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and has been awarded the OBE as well as numerous international prizes, including the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Africa, the Aga Khan Prize for Fiction and the Chianti Rufino-Antico Fattore. He is a Vice-President of the English Centre of International PEN and was presented with a Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum.

**Ashis Nandy** is a Senior Fellow, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi. He is a distinguished political psychologist, sociologist of science. His research interests centre on the political psychology of violence, cultures of knowledge, utopias and visions, human potentialities, and futures. Presently he is working on genocide. The running themes in his work have been concern and respect for marginalized categories and systems of knowledge and a robust scepticism towards expert-driven, packaged, professional solutions to human problems. Nandy's books include *Alternative Sciences*, *At the Edge of Psychology*, *The Intimate Enemy*, *The Tao of Cricket*, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, *The Savage Freud and Other Essays in Possible and Retrievable Selves*, *An Ambiguous Journey to the City*, *The Romance of the State and the Fate of Dissent in the Tropics*, *Time Warps*, *Time Treks*, and *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias*.

**Vir Sanghvi** is the best-known Indian journalist of his generation. His career straddles print, television, books and now, new media. He has been a member of many professional, academic and government bodies including the National Integration Council. During Sanghvi's time, the Hindustan Times became a multi-edition newspaper opening new editions in Chandigarh, Calcutta, Bhopal, Ranchi, and most successfully in Bombay where it is now the second largest-selling newspaper. He continues to be a regular columnist for the Hindustan Times and an occasional columnist for Mint. Sanghvi has also run a parallel TV career which began while he was still editor of Sunday. Sanghvi's books include *Men of Steel* (published by Roli Books), one of the biggest paperback bestsellers in the history of Indian publishing which has been translated into 8 Indian languages. His other books are *Rude Food* and *Madharvaro Scindia*, a biography

(Penguin) and India – Then and Now (Roli). Vir Sanghvi has won many awards during his career for both TV and print. In 1993, he was declared A Global Leader of Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum at Davos. Currently, he is a member of the Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), a body that regulates content on entertainment TV channels.

**Saba Naqvi** is a senior journalist and author and daughter of famed journalist Saeed Naqvi. She was the Political Editor at Outlook magazine, based out in New Delhi. Naqvi has authored two books In Good Faith: A Journey In Search of An Unknown India published in 2012 and Capital Conquest in 2015. In Good Faith makes a case for pluralism in India through examples of communities that live in perfect communal harmony and received critical acclaim.

**Ruchir Joshi**, is a Writer, celebrated filmmaker, provocateur and widely read columnist for The Telegraph, India Today as well as other publications. He is best known for his debut novel titled *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh* (2001). He is also the editor of India's first anthology of contemporary erotica *Electric Feather: The Tranquebar Book of Erotic Stories*, published by Tranquebar Press/Westland. Apart from writing regular columns in newspapers and magazines, Joshi made a film on Bauls in 1992, *Egaro Mile (Eleven Miles)* for which he won international acclaim. He also directed, *Memories of Milk City* and *Tales from Planet Kolkata*. He wrote a piece called *Tracing Puppa* which was published in Granta 109 in a series of recollections regarding fathers. Right now he is penning his second novel, set in Calcutta during the chaotic period of World War II.

**Prerana Langa** is the CEO of Yes Foundation, the social development arm of Yes Bank. Prerana holds the distinction of setting up YES Foundation from ground up with a vision to build an empowered and equitable India. She developed the strategic business plan and operating systems for the Foundation. She developed YES! i am the CHANGE, a mindset transformation project, innovatively using the medium of films to ignite the spirit of driving positive social change amongst the youth, enabling them to become agents of social change and creating invaluable communication resources for use of Not-for-Profits.

#### **AKLF 2016 Partners and Associations:**

The AKLF 2016 edition has forged several new, prestigious associations, following its impressive collaborations in first year in 2010. We are proud to welcome on board both our new and regular partners including the Victoria Memorial Hall, Indian Museum, Australian High Commission, Embassy of Italy in India, Bloody Scotland, British Council, Calcutta Debating Circle, Crime Writers Festival, Embassy of Israel in India, Alliance Française, Portugal Embassy, Presidency University, Jaipur Literary Festival, Yes Foundation, FACES, Open Doors, FREED, The Creative Arts, Poetry Paradigm, MAKAIAS, Tollygunge Club, Max Muller Bhavan - Goethe Institute, The Park, Modern High School for Girls, Rakshak Foundation, Aishee, Streets of Calcutta, Calcutta Instagrammers, Wikipedia, Caravan, BEE books, Gibl.in, Bulk Email SMS India, Presto, She and Griffith Review. We also have 91.9 friends FM as radio partner, The Times of India as Print Media Partner, Anderson as Printing Partner, Selvel as Outdoor Partner, Typhoo as Refreshment Partner, Mera Tiffin as Food Partner, Indismart and Anon Production as special partners. A wide cross section of publishers, which include Niyogi Publishers, Future Publishers, OM Books and others will showcase their authors at AKLF 2016. AKLF is proud of these associations and hope they keep growing year on year.

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