

Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 – Day 2

Event: *'Crossing the Line'*

A panel discussion on sub-continental discoveries and surprises

Kolkata, 15th January, 2016: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 hosted a stimulating discussion on *'Crossing the Line'*, which delved into sub-continental discoveries and surprises. The panel comprised of writers and authors from across the borders, Writer and editor, **Rabi Thapa**, writer, translator and columnist **Farah Ghuznavi** and journalist and author **Reema Abbasi**. The session was moderated by **Sandip Roy**, Journalist.

The panelists shared various insights of evolving society in terms of economics, culture, literature and history across the borders of the sub-continent and how it brings together individuals of various cultural diaspora. The discussion was about discovering and sharing that commonality as well as surprises of the sub-continent, little known otherwise.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival

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 with a 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 the Editors

Rabi Thapa is a writer and editor based in Kathmandu. Rabi Thapa is a writer and editor from Kathmandu, Nepal. He was the Editor of the weekly paper Nepali Times from 2010 to 2011, and is currently the Editor of La.Lit, the bilingual literary magazine from Nepal. In 2011, he published the short story collection Nothing to Declare (Penguin India).

Farah Ghuznavi, is a writer, translator and newspaper columnist, with a background in development work. She holds an undergraduate and two postgraduate degrees from the London School of Economics, and has worked for the Grameen Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as NGOs in the UK, Bangladesh and elsewhere. Farah's work has been published in a number of story collections and literary magazines in Britain, US, Canada, Singapore, India, Nepal and her native Bangladesh. These include the fiction anthologies *The Storm is Coming* (Sleeping Cat Books, USA), *Curbside Splendor Issues 1 and 2* (Curbside Splendor, USA), *The Path*, Winter Issue 2011 (*The Path to Publication*, USA) and *Woman's Work* (Girl Child Press, USA); *Lady Fest: Winning Stories from the Oxford Gender Equality Festival* (Dead Ink, UK), *The Monster Book for Girls* (Exaggerated Press, UK) and *Journeys* (Sampad, UK); *The Rainbow Feast* (Marshall Cavendish, Singapore); *La.Lit Vol. 1* (Nepal); *What the Ink?* (Writer's Block, Bangladesh), *Sticks and Stones Vol. 1* (Sticks and Stones, Bangladesh) and *From the Delta* (UPL, Bangladesh); and *Lifelines* (Zubaan Books, India). Her story "Judgement Day" was highly commended in the Commonwealth Competition 2010, and "Getting There" placed second in the Oxford GEF Competition. She is a regular contributor to *The Star Magazine*, which is affiliated to the *Daily Star* newspaper in Bangladesh, and writes a fortnightly column entitled "Food for Thought".

Reema Abbasi, born a Pakistani in the Netherlands, is a journalist. She was the recipient of the Gender in Journalism Award 2003 from UNESCO for the most gender sensitive reportage. A journalist for almost 19 years, she began with culture and lifestyle at *The News International*, moved on to crime and socio-political writing with *The Herald Magazine* and then became an editorial writer at *Dawn*. At present, she is a columnist with *The Daily Mail*, *Mail Today* and an independent contributor with *Dawn* and *The Indian Express*. Her other passions include music, reading, writing and research, cinema, travel, art, poetry, and yoga. In 2007, she was awarded the Fulbright scholarship for photography. Her work has been exhibited in Pakistan, the United States and South Africa. In 2011, her short story *Swimming Pool* was adapted for radio by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association. She currently teaches photography at IVS. Her book *Historic Temples in Pakistan: A Call to Conscience* is an attempt to record in pictures the history of an Islamic country's Hindu past, where she contrasts stories of desecration of temples, whether due to a backlash or land disputes or commercial gain, with visits to shrines that represent a fusion of faiths, untouched by social disturbances.

Sandip Ray, was Senior Editor at the popular news portal *Firstpost.com* and blogs for the *Huffington Post*. He has been a longtime commentator on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*, the most listened-to radio programme in the US, and has a weekly radio postcard for public radio in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is also an editor with *New America Media*. Sandip

has won several awards for journalism and contributed to various anthologies including Storywallah!, Contours of the Heart, Because I Have a Voice: Queer Politics in India, Out! Stories from the New Queer India, New California Writing 2011 and The Phobic and the Erotic: The Politics of Sexualities in Contemporary India. His debut novel Don't Let Him Know brings together the two forms of the short story and the novel, narrating the story of secrets and sagas of a middle class Indian family, traversing between India and US. The novel was included in the long-list for the DSC Literature Prize 2016.

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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