

## Press Note:

### Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 – Day 3

#### Event: *'Undivided Legacies'*

Release of Reema Abbasi's *'Historic Temples in Pakistan: A Call to Conscience'*

**Kolkata, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2016:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 witnessed the launch of **Reema Abbasi's *'Historic Temples in Pakistan: A Call to Conscience'***, at Western Quadrangle inside the heritage premises of Victoria Memorial which worked as an evocative backdrop. **Aman Nath**, writer, hotelier, and architectural restorer and **Bina Sarkar Elias**, editor, designer and publisher engaged with Reema in what was a riveting conversation. The session was moderated by **Saba Naqvi**, senior journalist and author. The book was launched by chief guest **Krishna Bose**, educator and social worker and former Member of Parliament.

The book, *"Historic Temples Of Pakistan: A Call to Conscience"* is a reflection of labour of love and conviction, evident from the depiction of a side of the country not many would be familiar with. The story travels through the four provinces of Pakistan — Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh — detailing their landscapes, local populations and temples as well as their keepers. Also incorporated are asides about the celebration of Hindu festivals, and an idol maker in Sindh. These accounts are supplemented with nearly 400 photographs by Madiha Aijaz, the writer's companion during her travels to these sites, as well as archival research.

#### **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**

#### **About the Author:**

**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.

**Aman Nath**, is an Indian writer, hotelier, and architectural restorer. He is the co-founder and co-chairman of Neemrana Hotels the chain along with Francis Wacziarg, which have won awards from UNESCO and the Indian travel trade industry. He has co-written/authored 14 illustrated books on art, history, architecture, corporate biography and photography, two of which have won National Awards. These are also used as the official gifts of the President and the Prime Minister of India. His book Jaipur was the first Indian book to be marketed internationally by Christie's. He has also been the curator at Art Today.

**Bina Sarkar Elias** is Editor, Designer and Publisher of International Gallerie, a global arts and ideas journal founded by her in 1997. Elias began early in life as a freelance writer for Desmond Doig's Junior Statesman, and was employed as assistant editor. International Gallerie was conceived and founded by Bina Sarkar Elias in 1997, as a platform for addressing universal socio-political/cultural issues as interpreted through the arts, and ideas. Engaged in community building issues which she addresses in Gallerie, she received a Fellowship in 2007 from the Asia Leadership Fellow Program and Japan Foundation for research and development of the project: Unity in Diversity: Envisioning Community Building in Asia and Beyond, and the Times Group Yami Women Achiever's award in 2008. She recently received another Woman Achiever's award in Editing and Publishing from FICCI/FLO's Aparajita wing in April 2013. She also dabbles in poetry, her two collections 'The Room' and 'Fuse' have been published in UK and United States.

**Saba Naqvi**, is a senior journalist and author. She is the 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.

**Krishna Bose** is an educator and social worker and was a member of parliament elected from the Jadavpur constituency in West Bengal as a All India Trinamool Congress candidate. During the term of the 13th Lok Sabha (1999-2004) she served as Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs in India which oversees the conduct of India's foreign policy. She taught at City College, Kolkata for 40 years, and thereafter remained principal for 8 years. Krishna has been a columnist for journals in English and Bengali such as Desh, AnandabazarPatrika, Jugantor, Amrit Bazar Patrika, The Statesman, Telegraph, Illustrated Weekly of India. She has also worked in the areas of women and child development and for the welfare of the handicapped. She is a leading contemporary writer of Calcutta with many books and articles. Her books include Itihaser Sandhane (Calcutta: Ananda, 1972), Charanarekha Taba (Calcutta: Ananda, 1982), Prasanga Subhaschandra (Calcutta: Ananda, 1992), 1947: Smriti-Bismriti (Calcutta: Ananda, 1995), Netaji: A Biography for the Young (Delhi: Rupa, 1995), Ek Nambar Bari (Calcutta: Ananda, 1997) and Je Taranikhani (Calcutta: Ananda, 2001). Her most recent book titled An Outsider in Politics has been published in August 2008 by Penguin.

#### **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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