

Laughing Matters: Bengal Political Cartoons from Both Sides of the Border- Interrogating the Nation State

Kolkata, 12th January, 2013: The National Library in association with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), with support from India Foundation for the Arts, presented *Laughing Matters: Bengal Political Cartoons from Both Sides of the Border - Interrogating the Nation State* on the occasion of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013.

An illustrated talk by **Dr. Subhendu Dasgupta** of the University of Calcutta, brought to the fore how, in the decades post-independence, Bengali cartoons have exemplified political satire mingled with comic relief, interrogating and questioning the state heads, in Bengal, India and Bangladesh. This was followed by an interaction with eminent cartoonist **Debasish Deb**.

The talk was part of one of AKLF 2013's key themes of "The Asian Neighbourhood." Political cartoons were and continue to be a very popular form of comic illustration conveying political and social messages based on current news. These graphical presentations are a regular feature in daily publications which have been in practice since colonial times, provoking people to look at political incidents in a different light.

About Subhendu Dasgupta

An economist by training, Prof. Dasgupta has taught for many years in the Department of South and South-East Asian Studies in the University of Kolkata. He has always had a scholarly interest in the visual arts, and has written extensively in Bengali on various aspects of the visual in Bengali journals and periodicals. His extensive research into visual humour and the cartoons of Bengal has resulted in several publications and presentations.

About Debasish Deb

Bengali cartoonist Debasish Deb is associated with famous works like Narayan Debnath's **Baantul The Great**, **Nonte Fonte** and others. His work appears regularly in leading Bengali dailies.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:

An initiative by the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the annual literary festival hosted since 2010 in Kolkata is the first international literary festival in Kolkata, a city celebrated for its intellectual depth and cultural heritage. An array of special curated discussions, performances and some of the finest literary events are scheduled for the fourth edition from 9th- 13th January, 2013. A noteworthy literary and cultural representation from across India and overseas will be seen at the Festival, amongst the finest minds from India and overseas. Prominent personalities attending will be William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhari, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia and Tishani Doshi and several others. Events are scheduled at significant cultural and heritage venues across Kolkata like National Library, St John's Church, banks of Hooghly, Lascar Monument, and at India's finest and most

loved 92 year old iconic bookstore- Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata. Amongst the many highlights is our collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize for new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

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