

## **Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival hosts the Book Launch of 'Return of a King' by William Dalrymple**

**Kolkata, January 10, 2013:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013 hosted the launch of "Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan 1839-42" by William Dalrymple, award winning historian, writer and curator, as well as a prominent broadcaster and critic. Presented in association with Bloomsbury India and British Council, the launch commenced with an audio visual presentation of the history of the Afghan War, as depicted in the book, followed by a riveting discussion on the first Afghan war, which ended with Britain's greatest military disaster in the 19th century.

The book has a compelling narrative that illustrates the Afghan war and Britain's greatest imperial disaster. The book analyses the circumstances when the British army was humiliated and forced to retreat after its installation of Shah Shuja as King of Afghanistan. It elucidates how the West's first disastrous entanglement in Afghanistan has clear and relevant parallels with the current deepening crisis today, with extraordinary similarities between what NATO faces in cities like Kabul and Kandahar, and that faced by the British in the very same cities, fighting the very same tribes, nearly two centuries ago.

The book unfolds to the readers with exemplary graphic details that seem like a cinematic screenplay. The author's remarkable talent as a researcher, historian and a writer makes the book beyond a textbook chronology.

### **About the author**

William Dalrymple is the bestselling author of In Xanadu, City of Djinns, From the Holy Mountain, The Age of Kali, White Mughals, The Last Mughal and most recently, Nine Lives. He has won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award, the Sunday Times Young British Writer of the Year Award, the French Prix d'Astrolabe, the Wolfson Prize for History, the Scottish Book of the Year Award, the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize, the Asia House Award for Asian Literature, the Vodafone Crossword Award and has three times been long listed for the Samuel Johnson Prize. In 2012 he was appointed Whitney J. Oates Visiting Fellow in Humanities at Princeton University. He lives with his wife and three children on a farm outside Delhi.

### **About the book:**

"Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan 1839-42" is a history which resonates with contemporary politics and reads like a richly drawn novel. Using previously undiscovered Afghan sources, here for the first time is the full story of Britain's disastrous adventure in Afghanistan that begs the question: have we learnt anything

from history? With a riveting narrative and a complex cast of characters -shahs, amirs, sepoys, British generals and Russian ambassadors - Return of a King is history at its best.

### **About Bloomsbury**

Launched on 21st September 2012, Bloomsbury India upholds Bloomsbury's tradition of publishing books of the highest quality in fiction, non-fiction, children's, academic, business and education by both Indian and international authors. Bloomsbury India's launch list includes the first Wisden India Cricketers' Almanack 2013, the spectacular Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan by William Dalrymple, whose previous books were Number 1 bestsellers in India and Manil Suri's bold and controversial new novel The City of Devi. Bloomsbury has an exceptional list of South Asian writers including Kamila Shamsie, Romesh Gunsekera, Rajesh Parameswaran, Roshi Fernando, Jaspreet Singh and Tishani Doshi. Bloomsbury India's authors include the international bestselling writers J K Rowling, Khaled Hosseini and Elizabeth Gilbert; Booker Prize winners Margaret Atwood and Howard Jacobson; Nobel Prize winner Nadine Gordimer; Orange Prize winners Madeline Miller and Anne Michaels and cookery books by the Michelin starred Chefs Heston Blumenthal, Atul Kochhar and Raymond Blanc and bestselling Anthony Bourdain. Bloomsbury India will distribute both UK and US Bloomsbury imprints including the critically acclaimed and popular Arden Shakespeare. A rigorous academic list will focus on business, economics and management.

### **About The British Council**

British Council is the United Kingdom's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It is a registered charity; 209131 (England and Wales) SC037733 (Scotland). It creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide.

### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:**

A Community 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 Ramachandra Guha, William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhuri, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia, Shobhaa De 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 Festival's

collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize to recognize and encourage new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

**For event videos & pictures Log On to <http://www.aklf.in/>**

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