

# SAARC LITERATURE FESTIVAL

February 27, 28, 29, 2016

New Delhi

Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature (FOSWAL), the Apex Body of SAARC, organised SAARC LITERATURE FESTIVAL at Delhi on 27, 28, 29 February 2016 in partial collaboration with Indian Council For Cultural Relations.

The festival symbolizes the continuation of the tradition initiated by Ms. Ajeet Cour, President of Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature, to build up and strengthen people-to-people contacts among SAARC peoples aimed at fostering peace, mutual understanding, reciprocated respect to cultural diversity within and beyond borders.

The people of SAARC share a history and common civilization. Writers and poets are strong pillars for Track II endeavour, particularly in the context of widespread threat of terrorism. The invitation to the writers and intellectuals was widely welcomed by them. Their active participation in the Festival was delightful to the organizers of the Festival.

To build up people-to-people contacts and to strengthen Track II Initiatives the Festival should include larger number of participants to voice common issues related to minorities, women, dalits and tribals. These issues, no doubt, were a great concern for the participants of the Festival but they needed a wider and louder attention.

The Festival had registered the delegates from the SAARC



Registration of Delegates

countries before the Inauguration.

The Festival began with the introduction of honourable guests by Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, the Director of the Festival. Introducing them to the learned audience. He invited them to take their chairs on the dais. He said :

I have great pleasure in introducing the most esteemed Chief Guest Prof. Ashis Nandy, President of this Festival Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi and the Guests of Honour, to



equally most distinguished audience belonging to the eight SAARC countries.

Madam Ajeet Cour is the hostess of this SAARC LITERATURE FESTIVAL. Talking

about her is more like self-adulation but not doing so is self denial. Perplexed as I am between the two opposites I only say that it is because of her that we have had several occasions to meet each other and interact at many pivotal cities of SAARC countries. We cherish the memories of such happy interactions and gratefully thank her for this.

I am sorry to say that Ambassador Chintapally Rajasekhar, the Director General of ICCR, Government of India, is held up outside Delhi. We miss him today.

Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi, the President of this Festival combines in his personality the energy and spirit of an intellectual, a journalist, a biographer and a social activist. He is involved in social politics without being a model politician. Mr. Gandhi is currently scholar in residence at IIT at Gandhinagar.

Prof. Ashis Nandy, a man of ideas, was chosen by Ajeet Cour, President of FOSWAL, to present the Keynote Address of the Festival. He very kindly agreed to do so. Listed among the 100 top intellectuals of the world Prof. Nandy is associated with social movements dealing with Peace, Human Rights and Pluralism. The younger generation looks forward to him for guidance.

H.E. Mr. M.R.K. Lenagala, Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India, Mr. Kinga Singye, Second Secretary, Embassy of Bhutan in India, H.E. Mr. Krishan Prasad Dhakal is the Deputy Chief of the Mission of the Embassy of Nepal. Their very presence at this Festival indicates their deeper involvement in FOSWAL.

I proudly introduce the honourable guests of Honour from the SAARC countries. Each of them has been closely associated with the Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature. We gratefully cherish their warm relationship. They are :

1. Mr. Mohammad Mansoor Nassimy from Afghanistan
2. Ms. Selina Hossain from Bangladesh
3. Ms. Kunzang Choden from Bhutan
4. Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra from India
5. Mr. Ibrahim Waheed from Maldives
6. Prof. Abhi Subedi from Nepal
7. Dr. Ahmad Salim from Pakistan
8. Mr. Daya Dissanayake from Sri Lanka

This evening we have a cultural programme which includes:

A play written and directed by Ramji Bali. It is based on Saadat Hasan Manto's 'Kali Salwar' and 'License'.

Bharatnatyam, classical dance by Suhail Bhan.

Ajeet Cour welcomed the Chief Guest Prof. Ashis Nandy and the President of the Festival Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi. In her welcome list were also the chief participants from each SAARC country. The delegates were Mr. Muhammad Mansoor Nassimy from Afghanistan, Ms. Selina Hossain from Bangladesh, Ms. Kunzang Choden from Bhutan, Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra from India, Prof. Abhi Subedi from Nepal, Dr. Ahmad Salim from Pakistan, Mr. Daya Dissanayake from



Sri Lanka.

Welcome Speech by Ajeet Cour : Welcoming the distinguished guests and the august audience Ajeet Cour emotionally expressed the sharing of a common concern and cultural identities of the people of SAARC countries. She said, First of all, I take the proud privilege of welcoming our Keynote Speaker Prof. Ashish Nandy, and Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi, both profound scholars, and our Guests of Honour from the 8 SAARC countries.

Let me welcome all of you my friends, writers and scholars and members of our Intellectual Think Tank.

In our SAARC region, besides sharing our clouds and monsoons, our birds and animals, our oceans and rivers, our flora and fauna, we also share long civilisational journeys, horizontally and vertically, on micro and macro levels. We share our pains and anguish too.

If one drew a line from Afghanistan to Bhutan, another from Myanmar to Afghanistan, and another from Kashmir to Sri Lanka and Maldives, one finds that there is no break in communication between any two points.

To decipher SAARC Identity, we will have to go back to our one of the most ancient civilizations of the world : Harappa Civilization, where the roots of our identity can be unearthed and explored.

We, the people of South Asia, are connected at a deeper level through different forms of articulation; through our shared myths, traditions, cosmologies, rituals and folk knowledge systems, that together constitute our cultural identity.

These age-old historical memories are not only alive and vibrant, their sensitivity and rhythm weave a unique kaleidoscopic pattern which is a silent symphony of our lives! A silent stream flowing endlessly in the depth of our awareness and collective cultural and civilization consciousness !

They all go deep down in the roots of our existence, and chisel our sensitivity and our ethos, our moral and social values, and form the core of our cultural consciousness. In the whole of the SAARC region, we share our skies and our lands, our rivers and oceans, our flora and fauna.

SAARC is probably the only region in the world where we celebrate love and marriages, pregnancies and child-births, and even deaths with songs. In our folk tales and folk songs, gods come to earth to interact with human beings, birds and animals speak and tell tales of ancient wisdom.

We have songs for the changing seasons, for harvests, for monsoons !

The idea of creating cultural connectivity among the neighbouring countries sprouted in my mind around 1982. I wanted to get writers and intellectuals and cultural activists of all the neighbouring countries together so that they could work towards peace in the region. Particularly between India and Pakistan.

I approached the Ministry of External Affairs, and I was told that writers from Pakistan couldn't be given visas. But there were plans in the air that probably a union of the neighbouring countries would be formed soon, which might facilitate visas.

Time moved on. This union, SAARC, South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation, was formed and signed by the seven heads of states in December 1985.

When I read the Charter, I was crestfallen, because it had no provision for cultural exchanges among the seven SAARC countries.

So I launched my crusade in 1986. It took me over a year to get the Ministry agree to grant ten visas for the writers from Pakistan. And thus we organised the first-ever India-Pakistan Writers Conference in 1987. Writers from Pakistan set foot on Indian soil, for the first time, after 40 years of Partition.

After that, every year we invited writers from different SAARC countries and organized conferences.

It was all done from my own pocket, because there were no sponsors around.

After thirteen years of our solid work, the Joint Secretary of SAARC Division of Ministry of External Affairs Ms. Meera Shankar, who later became our Ambassador to the United States, approached me and suggested I organize a consolidated conference of SAARC Writers.

“From where will the money come?”

“The Ministry will give you all the required funds”, she assured me.

“Why doesn't the Ministry organize it? I will assist you with all my contacts in the SAARC countries”, I suggested.

“No, we can't. Since culture is not part of the SAARC Charter, we cannot do anything officially. We can only give funds to your N.G.O. because you have been doing this work for many years now.”

Thus started our partnership in 1999.

I told her, “We must invite writers from Afghanistan and Myanmar also. Though they are not part of SAARC, we have civilisational and cultural links with them.”

She agreed.

So the first mega SAARC Writers Conference was organised in April 2000, under the banner of Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature, an offshoot of our original Academy of Fine Arts and Literature.

There was no looking back.

After two years, in 2001-2002 in the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu, all the heads of states agreed that our work had injected new blood in SAARC. They amended the Charter and included culture in that. That was our major milestone achievement.

They also made us the official SAARC RECOGNISED BODY, authorized to do Conferences, Seminars, Festivals involving writers and intellectuals and cultural activists from all the seven SAARC countries but without any funds from them.

The Secretary General of SAARC Secretariat Excellency Dr. Nihal Rodrigo sent me a mail, saying, “All you rogue writers are now the cultural wing of our SAARC Secretariat”.

Perhaps as a result of writers from Afghanistan participating in all our events, Afghanistan was taken on board as the eighth member of SAARC in 2007.

We continued our work tirelessly. Organising two mega festivals every year: SAARC Literature Festival and



SAARC Sufi Festival, besides seminars and conferences on our common problems like environment, terrorism, peace, poverty alleviation, and our civilisational links like folklore and Buddhism.

Our status was elevated to SAARC APEX BODY.

In all our SAARC Festivals of Literature and SAARC Sufi Festivals, and SAARC Folklore Festivals, we have academic papers and poetry throughout the day, and literary cultural performances in the evenings.

Now, for the last couple of years the funds from the MEA and ICCR have dipped to the bare minimum. Rest of the expenses are looked after from the personal earnings of my painter daughter Arpana Caur.

The Ministry is sending all the money demarcated for culture to the SAARC Cultural Centre in Colombo. And the SAARC Cultural Centre doesn't part with a single penny. Our Ministry sends them a couple of million dollars every year which they are spending on whatever they want.

Our Foundation, the only SAARC Apex Body in the SAARC region dealing with writers, literature and culture, has done 51 mega events during the last 3 decades, not only in India, but in all the neighbouring SAARC countries including the very difficult and expensive destination Maldives; and has translated and published 48 anthologies of SAARC fiction and poetry and a quarterly journal called 'Beyond Borders', which is quite an expensive job.

We also got SAARC literature translated into English, and published anthologies and a quarterly journal 'Beyond Borders', of poetry and fiction. Because we are convinced that there is no better way to reach out to the hearts of our neighbours than understanding their emotions and dreams through their literature.

Only my madness makes me keep going on my mad but fulfilling journey.

Thank you !

Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi, presiding over the Literature Festival invited Prof. Ashis Nandy to present his keynote address.



Ajeet Cour and Prof. Refaat Ali Khan, honouring Prof. Ashis Nandy, with a Pashmina Shawl



Ajeet Cour and Prof. Ashis Nandy, honouring Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi, with a Pashmina Shawl



Mr. R.K. Sethi, Manager FOWAL, honouring Prof. Refaat Ali Khan, Director of the SAARC Literature Festival.





Mr. R.K. Sethi, Manager FOWAL, honouring H.E. Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Nepal in India



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan and Mr. Praveen of FOSWA, honouring Mr. Daya Dissanayke from Sri Lanka, with a Pashmina Shawl



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan and Mr. Praveen of FOSWA, honouring Dr. Ahmad Salim from Pakistan, with a Pashmina Shawl



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan honouring Ms. Selina Hossain from Bangladesh, with a Pashmina Shawl



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan and Mr. Praveen of FOSWA, honouring Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra, with a Pashmina Shawl



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, honouring Ms. Kunzang Choden of Bhutan, with a Pashmina Shawl



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan and Mr. Praveen of FOSWA, honouring Mr. Mohammad Mansoor Nassimy of Afghanistan, with a Pashmina Shawl

Prof. Ashis Nandy's keynote address focused on the nature of social existence, human potentiality, including in its fold the destructive elements. He expressed concern on the negative aspects of commercialization, particularly the human destruction in the name of development. Culture, being autonomous, in itself is a form of resistance against oppression, he said.



In the last few hundred years of colonialism many noble aspects of our cherished culture have perished. There was only one continent of white peoples now there are many. Development also meant uprooting of millions of people. Social evolution is being re-engineered through massive brain wash, and diversity is being replaced by uniformity in the name of development. Freedom of expression and a dialogue for alternative views are the foundation of the secular democracy.

Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi delivering his Presidential Address thanked Ms. Ajeet Cour for inviting him to this Festival. His central focus was the geographical unity of the SAARC region which binds it in strong socio cultural connectivity. Mr.



Gandhi had a wider context of this socio-cultural connectivity. He wanted FOSWAL to invite neighbouring countries also (other than SAARC) to participate in the Festival like countries east of India and Central Asia.

Walls between countries and also the communities are responsible for prejudice and hatred. The Literature Festival is an instrument

for their destruction.

Prof. Refaat Ali Khan invited the guests of Honour to address the audience. They were Mr. Muhammad Mansoor Nassimy from Afghanistan, Ms. Selina Hossain from Bangladesh, Ms. Kunzang Choden from Bhutan, Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra from India, Prof. Abhi Subedi from Nepal, Dr. Ahmad Salim from Pakistan, Mr. Daya Dissanayake from Sri Lanka.

Each of the Guests of Honour thanked Ms. Ajeet Cour for her warm hospitality. They drew the attention of the organizers and the august audience towards the cultural connectivity as a source of collective security in the whole of South Asia. This cultural connectivity has to be both within and beyond borders.

One of the Guests of Honour Dr. Ahmad Salim from Pakistan asked the poets and writers to ignore the frequently made question WHO KILLED WHOM but to emphasize WHO SAVED WHOM. This alone will restore harmony.

WHO SAVED WHOM BECAME THE SLOGAN OF THE SAARC LITERATURE FESTIVAL.

Other speakers were Dr. Rubana Huq from Bangladesh, Justice Mrs. Leela Seth, Mr. M.L. Lahoty, Supreme Court Advocate, Mr. Kinga Singye, Second Secretary, Embassy of Bhutan in India, and Mr. Padam Talwar, representative of ICCR.

## **Book Release**

The published works of the following authors were released by honourable guests on the dais :

Ms. Nahid Kaiser (Dhaka, Bangladesh)

Mr. Sudeep Sen (Delhi, India)

Mr. Bob D'Costa (Kolkata, India)

Mr. K.V. Dominic (Kerala, India)

Prof. Raamaa Chandramouli (Andhra Pradesh, India)

Mr. Ramakrishna Perugu (Andhra Pradesh, India)

Dr. Indira Babbellapati (Vishakhapatnam, India)

Dr. G.R. Sigma (Coimbatore, India)





Various books was released in Festival.

In the end Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan thanked the honourable guests, the organizers and the learned audience. In his thanks he also said that Ms. Ajeet Cour, President FOSWAL always considers the neighbors as friends. Her Festival guests included delegates from non SAARC countries also like Myanmar, Iran, Turkey, Egypt and many countries of Central Asia.

With the thanks of the Director the Inaugural session came to an end. It was followed by Academic Sessions after Lunch.



A section of the audience.





From left : Arpana Caur, Ms. Usha Gandhi, Ajeet Cour, Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi and Daya Dissanayake from Sri Lanka.



Ajeet Cour with Excellency Mr. M.R.K. Lenagala, Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India



Arpana Caur with Ms. Kamala Wijeratne from Sri Lanka

## ACADEMIC SEMINAR PROGRAMME :

### ACADEMIC SESSION I

POETRY : 1.30 to 4.00

President : Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra (India)

1. Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra (India)
2. Prof. Abhi Subedi (Nepal)
3. Mr. Daya Dissanayake (Sri Lanka)
4. Dr. Anand Kumar (India)



Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra presenting his poems. On the dais from left Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, Director SAARC Literature Festival, President of the Session Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra

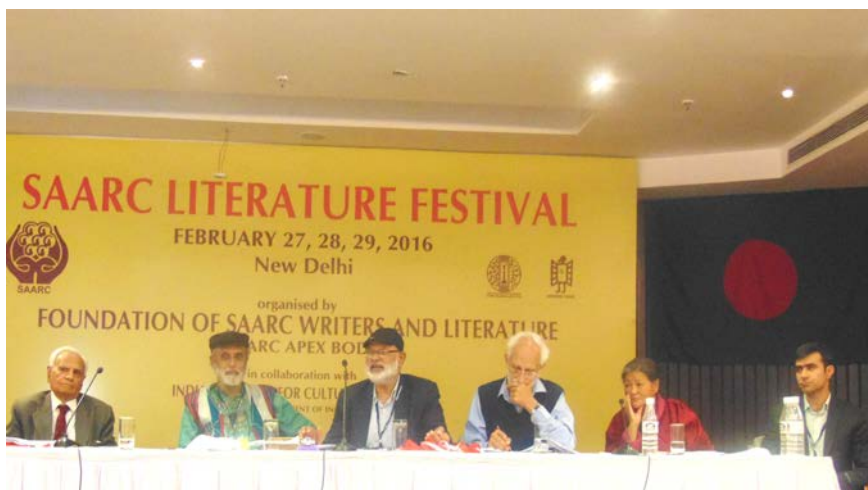
5. Mr. Sudeep Sen (India)
6. Prof. Mohammad Nurul Huda (Bangladesh)
7. Ms. Arundhathi Subramaniam (India)
8. Mr. Sunil Govinnage (Sri Lanka)
9. Ms. Farheen Chaudhry (Pakistan)
10. Mr. Leeladhar Mandloi (India)
11. Ms. Tanni Bose (Bhutan)
12. Mr. Bob D'Costa (India)
13. Mr. Deo Prakash Choudhary (India)
14. Mr. Ramakrishna Perugu (India)
15. Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra (India)

### ACADEMIC SESSION II

PAPERS : 04.00-06.00

President : Dr. Anand Kumar (India)

1. Dr. Chandrasekhar Kambar (India)
2. Ms. Kamla Bhasin (India)



On the dais from left Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, Director SAARC Literature Festival, Prof. Mohammad Nurul Huda from Bangladesh, Dr. Anand Kumar, Dr. Alok Bhalla, Ms. Kunzang Choden from Bhutan, Mr. Ahmad Farid from Afghanistan.

3. Mr. Ahmad Farid Sultani (Afghanistan)
4. Prof. Mohammad Nurul Huda (Bangladesh)
5. Dr. Alok Bhalla (India)
6. Ms. Kunzang Choden (Bhutan)
7. Dr. Anand Kumar (India)

Tea : 06.00 - 06.30

### **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2016**

Academy of Fine Arts and Literature

4/6, Siri Fort Institutional Area, New Delhi-49

### **ACADEMIC SESSION III**

POETRY : 10.00-11.30

President : Prof. Abhi Subedi (India)



On the dais from left Dr. M. Jamil Qalander, Dr. Muhammad Arif from Pakistan, Prof. Raamaa Chandramouli, Prof. Abhi Subedi from Nepal, Dr. Savita Singh and Mr. Utsav Khatiwara from Bhutan

1. Dr. M. Jamil Qalandar (Pakistan)
2. Dr. Savita Singh (India)
3. Ms. Anamika (India)
4. Dr. Mahboob Sadiq (Bangladesh)
5. Mr. Arif Farhad (Pakistan)
6. Mr. Chandramouli Rama (India)
7. Mr. Utsav Khatiwara (Bhutan)
8. Prof. Abhi Subedi (Nepal)

## ACADEMIC SESSION IV

PAPERS : 11.30 - 01.00

President : Dr. Yashodhara Mishra (India)

1. Prof. Abhi Subedi (Nepal)



Dr. Praneeth Abhayasundere from Sri Lanka presenting his Paper. On the dais from left : Ms. Kamala Wijeratne from Sri Lanka, Ms. Selina Hossain from Bangladesh, Prof. Abhi Subedi from Nepal, Dr. Yashodhara Mishra, Prof. Sanjeev Uprety from Nepal and Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan.

2. Ms. Selina Hossain (Bangladesh)
3. Ms. Kamala Wijeratne (Sri Lanka)
4. Dr. Praneeth Abhayasundere (Sri Lanka)
5. Dr. Sanjeev Uprety (Nepal)
6. Dr. Yashodhara Mishra (India)

LUNCH : 01-00-02.00

## ACADEMIC SESSION V

POETRY : 02.00 - 04.30

President : Dr. Arundhathi Subramaniam (India)

1. Mr. Nadeem Abbas Shah (Pakistan)
2. K.V. Dominic (India)
3. Ms. Jharna Rahman (Bangladesh)





On the dais from left Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, Director SAARC Literature Festival and Dr. Arundhathi Subramaniam

4. Dr. Binod Khaitan (India)
5. Mr. Rabiul Haque (Bangladesh)
6. Ms. Nazi Karim (Afghanistan)
7. Dr. Indira Babelapati (India)
8. Ms. Sabita Gautam Dahal (Nepal)
9. Mr. M. Ashraf Jewel (Bangladesh)
10. Mr. Bimal Guha (Bangladesh)
11. Ms. Sigma G.R. (India)
12. Ms. Zohra Zahir (Afghanistan)
13. Dr. K. Shriganeshan (Sri Lanka)
14. Dr. Bal Bhandari (Bhutan)
15. Ms. Madhumitha (India)
16. Ms. Nahid Kaiser (Bangladesh)
17. Ms. Kamala Wijeratne (Sri Lanka)
18. Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar (India)
19. Dr. Arundhathi Subramaniam (India)

TEA : 4.30 to 5.00

## **ACADEMIC SESSION VI**

PAPERS : 05.00-06.30

President : Dr. Shahzad Qaiser (Pakistan)

1. Prof. Keshab Sigdel (Nepal)
2. Ms. Varsha Das (India)
3. Dr. Sunil Govinnage (Sri Lanka)
4. Dr. Ahmad Mostafa Kamal (Bangladesh)
5. Dr. K. Shriganeshan (Sri Lanka)
6. Mr. Muhammad Mansoor Nassimy (Afghanistan)





On the dais from left Mr. Sunil Govinnage from Sri Lanka, Dr. Mahboob Sadiq from Bangladesh, Prof. K. Shriganeshan from Sri Lanka, Dr. Shahzad Qaiser from Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Mansoor Nassimi from Afghanistan and Dr. Varsha Das.

7. Mr. Pran Nevile (India)
8. Dr. Shahzad Qaiser (Pakistan)

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

Academy of Fine Arts and Literature  
4/6, Siri Fort Institutional Area, New Delhi-49

**ACADEMIC SESSION VII**

POETRY : 10.00-11.30

President : Ms. Tarannum Riyaz (India)



Dr. Tarannum Riyaz presided over the Poetry Session.

1. Mr. S. Pathmanathan (Sri Lanka)
2. Ms. Nahid Kaiser (Bangladesh)
3. Dr. Nandini Sahu (India)
4. Mr. Suneet Chopra (India)
5. Mr. Rama Krishna Perugu (India)
6. Mr. Nikhil Anand Giri (India)

7. Dr. Tarannum Riyaz (India)

## **ACADEMIC SESSION VIII**

PAPERS : 11.30-01.15

President : Ms. Sadia Dehlvi (India)

1. Ms. Farheen Chaudhry (Pakistan)
2. Dr. S. Pathmanathan (Sri Lanka)
3. Mr. Jayant Prasad (India)
4. Dr. Gopal Parajuli (Nepal)
5. Ms. Jasjit Mansingh (India)
6. Dr. Syeed Aireen Jaman (Bangladesh)
7. Dr. Bal Bahadur Bhandari (Bhutan)
8. Ms. Sadia Dehlvi (India)



On the dais from left Dr. Syeda Aireen Jaman from Bangladesh, Ms. Farheen Chaudhry from Pakistan, Dr. Sadia Dehlvi, Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, Ms. Jasjit Mansingh, Dr. Gopal Parajuli from Nepal, and H.E. Mr. Jayant Prasad, Director General, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis.

LUNCH : 01.15-02.15

## **ACADEMIC SESSION IX**

POETRY : 02.15-03.50

President : Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra (India)

1. Prof. Makarand Paranjape (India)
2. Dr. Shashi Goyal (India)
3. Ms. Varsha Das (India)
4. Dr. Shahzad Qaiser (India)
5. Ms. Nazi Karim (Afghanistan)
6. Prof. Hari Mohan (India)



Dr. Varsha Das presenting her poems. On the dais from left :  
Dr. Shashi Goyal, Mr. Rajendra Milan, Mr. Sushil Sarit,  
Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra and Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan.

7. Mr. Sushil Saxena (India)
8. Mr. Vinod Bhardwaj (India)
9. Mr. Jacob Issac (India)
10. Dr. Rajendra Milan (India)
11. Ms. Jharna Rahman (Bangladesh)
12. Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra (India)

TEA : 3.50-4.15

## **ACADEMIC SESSION X**

PAPERS : 04.15-06.00

President : Mr. Daya Dissanayake (Sri Lanka)

1. Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra (India)



From left to right : Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, Ms. Chador Wangmo from Bhutan,  
Mr. Anwar Wafa from Afghanistan, Dr. Megharaj Adhikari from Nepal,  
Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra, Mr. Daya Dissanayake from Sri Lanka.

2. Mr. Anwar Wafa (Afghanistan)
3. Ms. Chador Wangmo (Bhutan)
4. Dr. Megharaj Adhikari (Nepal)
5. Mr. Daya Dissanayake (Sri Lanka)

## FAREWELL NOTE

On behalf of FOSWAL Dr. Anand Kumar thanked the delegates of the SAARC countries for their active



participation. Dr. Shahzad Qaiser from Pakistan and Prof. Abhi Subedi from Nepal thanked Ajeet Cour and her team for the warm hospitality and care they received at Delhi. Mr. Daya Dissanayake gratefully thanked Ajeet Cour and particularly Ms. Arpana Caur for their

concern for each of the delegate in the Festival. Intervening at the end Ajeet Cour invited the delegates for the Sufi Festival at Jaipur in October 2016.

## THE DELHI RESOLUTION

Prof. Abhi Subedi proposed the following Resolution which was unanimously adopted by the delegates :

We, the writers, artists, thinkers, journalists and social activists who have assembled here at Delhi to participate in the SAARC Literature Festival on 27-29, February 2016 are fully involved in understanding historical traumas, efforts towards reconciliation leading to peace and tranquility in the region, within



borders and beyond borders.

We the socially conscious creative people of SAARC countries are aware of factors leading to destabilize the society. Together we stand against them. Women and children are equal partners in human civilisation, so are the Dalits and Tribals. Minorities — religious, racial or linguist are as much a part of our civilization as others. DIVERSITY IS A BOON. We respect it. OTHERS are our neighbours and friends, we adore them.

Let us work together for equality, tranquility and a war free and fearless society.

Together we thank Ms. Ajeet Cour for her love and hospitality. We pray for her long, happy and healthy life.

## **CULTURAL EVENING OF SAARC LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2016**

The cultural evening of the Festival was organised on the evening of the opening day of the Festival, 27-02-2016. Over hundred delegates of the SAARC countries who had come for the Festival and many more from Delhi witnessed a happy cultural programme consisting of dance performance and Urdu play. This was a wonderful and joyful cultural programme anchored by Ms. Farheen Chaudhry from Pakistan.

The Programme started with a one hour play produced and directed by Ramji Bali, based on Saadat Hasan Manto's 'Kali Salwar' and 'License'. The story of two unfortunate women was rightly depicted to attract women's subjection of social



Glimpses from the Play.





evils.

The second item was half an hour performance of classical dance Bharat Natyam by Suhail Bhan. The young dancer performed several compositions which included Mahaganapatam, a meditational dance; classical dance with melodious song 'Barse Sari Raat' by Lata Mangeshkar; a classical dance on an orchestra by A.R. Rahman and also a dance on Mirza Ghalib's ghazal.

The audience enjoyed the thoughtful play and the lovely dance.



Suhail Bhan performing his Classical dance



Arpana Caur with Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra



Attentive audience.



Ajeet Cour with Ms. Jasjit Mansingh and Dr. A.M. Gondane, Additional Secretary (Political & DGI), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.



## Bonding Across Borders

Spearheaded by AJEET CAUR, the SAARC LitFest is fuelled by her passion for literary, philosophical and cultural exchange across borders in the region, reports

MONA MEHTA

**A**jeeet Caur and her daughter, artist Arpana Caur, have long been working on Track II public diplomacy, building bridges between the member countries of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Under the aegis of the Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature, (FOSWAL), a SAARC apex body, which Ajeet Caur set up in 1986, she has been organising people-to-people interaction through conferences on issues such as environment, terrorism, poverty alleviation, folklore, and Buddhism, along with literature and Sufi music festivals. The recently concluded SAARC Literature Festival in Delhi was the 52nd such mega festival organised in the last 30 years.

### Big Achievement

This year, the festival was attended by 104 writers and poets including Kunguz Choden from Bhutan, Selina Hossain from Bangladesh, Sitakant Mahapatra from Odisha, Abhi Subedi from Nepal, Shahzad Qaisar, sufi scholar from Pakistan, and Daya Dissanayake from Sri Lanka. Two Tamil writers were here from Jaffna — S Padmanathan and K Shrinaneshan — for the first time. "It was a big achievement to get them here, as they are never allowed to go out, nor does anyone invite them. They spoke



AJEET CAUR

### Writers For PEACE

**L**ahore-born octogenarian Ajeet Caur, winner of several awards including the Sahitya Akademi award and Shriromani, is renowned for her short stories in Punjabi. Few know that she is a trained economist as well. But it's her three-decade-old project with writers across borders — via the Foundation of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Writers and Literature — that she is most passionate about.

Ajeet Caur extends herself to bring writers, artists and philosophers together from the region in an effort to forge people-to-people interactions that have nothing to do with politics and the government of the day.

This is what she had to say when asked a few questions related to gender and peace:

#### On women and conflict

Women suffer the most from wars and conflicts; they tend to lose the most. They lose their sons, husbands, fathers. So they end up having to play a pivotal role at home, in the after-

math of conflict. That's why I am saying that women have a lot more reason to push for peace. I don't know what kind of role they can play to prevent war and ensure peace, except by holding demonstrations and protesting, because their voices tend to get drowned out in a patriarchal society.

By nature, women shun violence, they are innately peace-loving. They are more compassionate and have more at stake and so they tend to push for peace rather than conflict.

#### On whether women are really more vulnerable

I would say to women: You are not inferior to anyone. Women are stronger in their resolve and have the potential to face bravely, life's challenges. Women have a far higher threshold in dealing with anguish and suffering. That gives them even more strength. Women should always remember this.

#### On the role of literature in peace initiatives

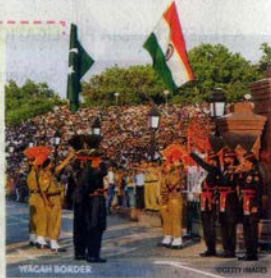
Human relationships are nurtured when we comprehend each other's feelings, try to know people better. Literature explores the inner depths of all people. Through literature, we come to know their social and political concerns.

We come to know the psyche and ethos of people living anywhere. So literature is very essential if you want to understand your neighbours, and whatever they are writing. ■

about the richness of Tamil literature in Sri Lanka," informs Ajeet Caur.

Pointing to the books on the table in her library, Ajeet Caur says, "These books are English translations of works by SAARC writers in different languages. We have published 48 books;

this is what I have been working on for the last 30 years." She goes on to say that human relationships can be nurtured only when we understand each other's feelings, get to know people, their passions, ethos and psyche and talk to them; and reading their literature helps.



WAGAH BORDER

SOCIETY IMAGES

"Literature explores the inner depths of mind of all the people; and through literature, we come to know their social and political concerns. One of the best ways to know people is to read their writings, their literature."

Caur and her team at FOSWAL have been organising literature festivals in all the eight SAARC countries. The first time they held such a festival in Pakistan was in 2002.

"I had collected SAARC writers in Delhi and we were to cross the border and enter Pakistan on foot through the Wagah border. I told my friends that they did not have to come to the border to take us to Lahore, and that we would reach the hotel by ourselves in Lahore in 20 minutes. But can you imagine, more than 5,000 people turned up at Wagah to greet us with garlands and dhols."

#### Love And Hugs

"There were lots of *happies* (hugs) and beating of drums. It was such an emotional experience. It took us two hours to leave the place. When we were about to reach our hotels, the immigration department called. They said they got so drowned in emotion that they forgot to stamp our passports! Can you imagine, they actually came to our hotel and stamped our passports?" she recounts, as the memory brings a broad smile to her face. ■

Post your comments at [speakingstreet.in](http://speakingstreet.in)

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, FEBRUARY 28, 2016

## THE CITY

### Three-day SAARC literature fest takes off

VANDANA KALRA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 27

ALMOST A fortnight before the foreign ministers of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member-states assemble in Kathmandu for the Saarc Mini-Summit on March 17, writers from the region have gathered in the capital for the SAARC Festival of Literature.

With editions held across the region over the years, including Maldives, Pakistan and Kathmandu, the 2016 edition of the three-day festival was inaugurated at the India International Centre Saturday.

"We are convinced that there is no better way to reach out to the hearts of our neighbours than understanding their emotions and dreams through literature," said author Ajeet Caur, founder of the Foundation of

SAARC Writers and Literature, which has been organising the festival since April 2000.

Authors from across the region, as well as chief guest Professor Ashis Nandy and Rajmohan Gandhi, attended the event. The audience included judicial luminaries Leila Seth and M.L. Lahoty.

Speaking at the event, Nandy said, "Culture in itself is a form of resistance, against oppressive states... because culture is autonomous, whether you like it or not."

Suggestions for the organisers came from various speakers, including Gandhi, who proposed that members from other neighbouring countries should also be invited to broaden the horizon of the festival.

The inaugural day also saw the release of books by several authors, apart from poetry reading sessions and a cultural programme.



“Once a friend, always a friend. Why should borders stop that?”  
 — Erin Hunter



# THE SPEAKING TREE

A TIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION <http://www.speakingtree.in>

SPIRITUAL PROMOTIONAL FEATURE | NEW DELHI, SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016, PAGES: 8 PRICE ₹3.00

## Oral Traditions Versus Literature

Bhutanese author KUNZANG CHODEN talks to RANJENI A SINGH about how oral traditions help one relate better with others and nature

Bhutanese literature is only 50 years old in a region that relied for long on oral communication. On the one side is a rich trove of folklore, urban legends and myths — most of them revolving around nature and species — that have been passed down for generations. On the other hand is recently written literature with just a handful of writers in the English language. The country has very little literature in Dzongkha, its national language.

Kunzang Choden is the first Bhutanese woman to write in English and her work of fiction, *Circle of Karma*, is the first novel by a woman in Bhutan. Though she writes in English, she feels oral traditions should continue alongside because it is a form that keeps the younger generation rooted to their culture and keeps them ecologically aware. Choden points out that environmental conservation is a key contributor to Bhutan's Gross National Happiness.

Talking about writing, Choden says that with globalisation of literature, the dynamics are changing. In Bhutan, slowly, people are moving to written works. Since there is not much literature available in Dzongkha language, people turn to writings in English. “In fact, my first book was on folktales from Bhutan. It's something I grew up with and am confident writing about. When one moves from oral to written, one tends to lose a lot of wisdom that has been handed down



since generations. At the same time, it is important for future generations to know about their culture and traditions and it has to

as the individual writer has an individual story,” she says.

The author points out that oral tradition is the original form of education. In olden times, social values and knowledge about the environment were transmitted through oral narratives. “The oral tradition consists of precise knowledge on weather, mountains, birds, animals, plants and non-religious information. For example, there is a story about why a particular mountain is shaped the way it is; it could be about a mountain spirit searching for a bride. So there is always a link. You are never alienated from nature and your dreams are woven into the story.

“Also, the storyteller is not worried if his narratives are reinterpreted by another from a neighbouring village. It is accepted that each person has a special relationship with the spirit forces. In fact, inspired by the stories, people seek guidance from plants, animals and spirits,” says Choden.

“In urban areas people are slowly moving to written works. However, in rural areas, the oral tradition is very strong. Tales revolve around daily life of the farming community and its close connection with nature — the farmer knows it's time to sow when the leaves of a particular tree turns yellow or its time to plant buckwheat when the cuckoo comes. All this knowledge is not written down,” says the author, adding that a nation's culture is all about building on experiences that have been shared over generations. (Choden was in Delhi to participate in the SAARC LitFest organised by Ajeet Caur). ■

THE STORYTELLER IS NOT WORRIED IF HIS NARRATIVES ARE REINTERPRETED BY ANOTHER FROM A NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE. IT IS ACCEPTED THAT EACH PERSON HAS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPIRIT FORCES

be recorded, as a reference point. Otherwise how will they know? Without English translations, much of the folk tradition that exists in oral form would have been lost forever. “Also, writing in English helps foster inter-cultural understanding, English being the unifying factor.”

Though Choden is a writer, she advocates continuation of oral traditions. “When traditional wisdom and knowledge is written down, the concept of community is lost. Written words become more powerful. Oral narratives are collective memories of the community, where-



MANY TRUTHS



THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, FEBRUARY 28, 2016

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# अमर उजाला

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सार्क लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल के मंच पर पंजाबी साहित्यकार अजीत कौर और प्रोफेसर आशीस नंदी।

## साझे चूल्हे की सांस्कृतिक आंच

सार्क देशों के साहित्यकार संस्कृतिकर्मी एक मंच पर मिले। अपनी बात कही। दूसरे की सुनी। आपस में दोस्ती का एक ख्याल तो जगा... अब इस ख्याल को जिंदा रखने के लिए किसी साझे चूल्हे की सांस्कृतिक आंच तो बार-बार चाहिए।

अमेरिकी साहित्यकार विलियम फॉर्किनर ने कभी कहा था- "रचनाओं में समय बर्फ की तरह जमा रहता है। जब भी हम उसे पढ़ना या सुनना शुरू कर देते हैं वह दोबारा से पाठकों के जीवन में बहना शुरू कर देता है।" हालांकि फॉर्किनर ने यह बात उपन्यास के संदर्भ में कही थी, लेकिन कविताओं के लिए भी कुछ ऐसा ही महसूस किया उन लोगों ने, जो नई दिल्ली में सार्क लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल में हिस्सा लेने आए थे। साहित्य और संस्कृति के इस तीन दिवसीय महाकुंभ में जब दूसरे देशों के साहित्यकारों और संस्कृतिकर्मियों ने कविता सुनाई या फिर अपने समाज के गैजिट दौरे में संस्कृति या कलाकर्म के लिए लगातार काम होती जगहों पर अपनी बात रखी तो लगा मानो हमारा कोई भी अनुभव भाषातीत नहीं हो सकता, वह सीमातीत भी नहीं होता और न ही हमारा भोगा हुआ अनुभव समयातीत होता है, वह कभी खत्म नहीं होता और बार-बार अपने को दोहराता है। साधनों की भरमार के बीच अगर दुनिया का भूगोल छोटा हो गया है तो शायद सबकी समस्याएं भी एक सी हैं, निदान भी एक जैसा। लेकिन पड़ोसी जब हाथ मिलाते हैं, बलें मिलते

हैं तो फूल तो खिलता ही है। कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि सार्क के इस मंच पर फूल भी खिले, दिल भी मिले और बार-बार मिलने का वाद्य भी हुआ। पाकिस्तान की लोकप्रिय कवियित्री फरहीन चौधरी हों या भूटान से आई कुनजैंग हों, श्रीलंका से आई कमला हों, बांग्लादेश से आई झरना रहमान हों या अफगानिस्तान से आए अहमद फरीद सुल्तान हों, सबने एक ही बात कही- "यह मंच एक साझे चूल्हे की तरह है, जहां आत्मबंधन की रेंसिपी पकती है और फिर मिलता है संस्कृतियों का स्वाद।"



प्लेटफॉर्म

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत सार्क फेस्टिवल ऑफ लिटरेचर के निदेशक प्रो. रेफाकत अली खान के उद्बोधन से हुई।

रेफाकत अली खान ने सार्क के मंच को एक जरूरत बताया। इसके बाद दूसरे देश के बुद्धिजीवियों ने अपनी-अपनी बात कही। सार्क फेस्टिवल ऑफ लिटरेचर का आयोजन फाउंडेशन ऑफ सार्क राइटर्स एंड लिटरेचर (फोसवाल) पिछले 30 सालों से लगातार आयोजित कर रहा है। इस प्रयास के पीछे हैं मशहूर पंजाबी साहित्यकार अजीत कौर। उन्होंने 1987 में फोसवाल की स्थापना की थी। अजीत कौर कहती हैं- "दक्षिण एशिया के ये

प्रभावशाली देश सिर्फ एक आसमान ही साझा नहीं करते बल्कि इनकी संस्कृति, विरासत, सभ्यता, जलवायु और वनस्पति भी एक हैं। ऐसे में इन देशों को अपने सुख-दुख, विचार और भावनाएं भी मिलकर ही बांटने चाहिए। कोई भी राष्ट्र सिर्फ राजनीतिक और आर्थिक संबंधों के आधार पर ही परस्पर संबंध नहीं बढ़ाते, बल्कि एक-दूसरे को समझने के लिए उन्हें अपनी कला-साहित्य, संस्कृति और रीति-रिवाजों को भी एक-दूसरे से बांटना जरूरी है। फोसवाल का यही मकसद है।"

लेकिन इस मकसद को पूरा करने के लिए इंडियन काउंसिल कल्चरर रिलेशन के अलावा इंडिया अफगानिस्तान फाउंडेशन, इंडिया श्रीलंका फाउंडेशन, इंडिया भूटान फाउंडेशन, बीपी कोइराला इंडिया नेपाल फाउंडेशन और साहित्य अकादमी ने भी सहयोग किया। इसके अलावा इस आयोजन के लिए फंड इक्ट्टा करने के लिए मशहूर चित्रकार अर्पणा कौर ने अपनी कई पेंटिंग दौं। मेजबान की भूमिका भी निभाई। वह कहती हैं- "सार्क देशों की संस्कृति एक धागे की तरह है, जुड़ते रहें तो हम लोगों की ताकत बढ़ती रहेगी।"

इस कार्यक्रम में प्रो. आशीस नंदी और प्रो. राजमोहन गांधी (भारत) ने भी अपनी बात रखी। भारत के अलावा अफगानिस्तान, बांग्लादेश, भूटान, नेपाल, पाकिस्तान, श्रीलंका और मालदीव के रचनाकारों ने इस मंच को साझा किया था। इस उत्सव के दौरान एनएसडी से जुड़े रंगकर्मियों ने मशहूर लेखक मंटो की कहानी पर एक नाटक भी प्रस्तुत किया और सोहेल भान का शास्त्रीय नृत्य भी लोगों के आकर्षण का केंद्र रहा।

-अरुण कुमार





“Once a friend, always a friend. Why should borders stop that?” — Iris Hovner

THE SPEAKING TREE

ATIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION... SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL FEATURE | NEW DELHI, SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016, PAGES 8 PRICE ₹3.00

Mystic-scholar PROF MUHAMMAD JAMIL QALANDER from Islamabad, Pakistan, was in Delhi recently for the SAARC Literature Festival. Chairman of Qalandar Universe Luminous Welfare Foundation International, the professor has translated into Arabic, the Rig Veda's 'Song of Spring'. He speaks to MONA MEHTA about the need to transcend all borders

There is no shortage of faiths and masters. Then why is there no world peace? Actually it is politicians who create problems along with some international forces and vested commercial interests. People have no borders. The people of Pakistan and India, for instance, have no issues with each other, their hearts are one. Our itzkar, our culture, is one; we are part of the same civilisation. Boundaries are artificial creations. No holy scriptures, whether it is the Bhagavad Gita or Quran, speak of borders. The Divine, the creator of all scriptures, Creator of the universe, cannot be divided into portions with boundaries — God is One. Universe means a single system; the second level is unity of life and the third is unity of humankind, and then there is the unity of Satan. All boundaries are artificial; they do not fit into the divine vision because, of their essence is One. So why should we ignore? All these artificial boundaries are nothing but webs woven by Satan.

Border Se AZADI



There are two kinds of forces — good and evil. The force of good is represented by the Divine light and the force of evil is represented by darkness, by Satan. So all those states with lines of control, visas, passports, and governmental sanctions are artificial boundaries. Would the world be a better place if there was no religion? If you mean deleting all scriptures, then I would say 'no', we need to preserve and cherish all sacred texts. They contain universal knowledge, our common ancient heritage; they do not belong to any one religion.

Religion is a particular interpretation of the books. It is the naive, primitive and regional interpretation that should be removed. My approach to the Rig or Yajur Itihs is mystical, trans-regional, and transcendental. Ancient scriptures such as the Quran, Shari and the vedas are transcendental knowledge and they are similar to each other. But, many words occurring in these scriptures are not comprehensible to the average person, and this leads to misinterpretation.



contains subatomic particles and many refined divisions of an atom, and the world has existed for billions of years.

Are there any similarities between the Rig Veda and the Quran? In a verse, the Quran says, a day will come when we will roll back the whole universe, reduce it to the point from where the universe started, just like a Big Bang, from zero to zero and back. The Quranists mention that a day will come when Adam will roll back the entire universe. There are many such similarities. All Hindu symbols are symbolic of that One Idrwat. So is the case with Muslims. They walk around the Kaaba that is a symbol of the Divine. Your dictation, for instance, records your speech, but it is not you. You are a body (hardware) and soul (software) and all your organs are but part of the whole body-soul entity.

What is the significance of gatherings like the one at the SAARC Literature Festival?

The SAARC LitFest's objective and my objective is the same — organise Ajazt Caru's transborder approach. All visual and performing arts, crafts and literature are meant to unite people. There can never be wars between people, nor is there ever any battle between a wise man or an ignorant man because a wise person avoids controversy. But if the world is a virtual hell, it is because of ignorant people, mostly politicians.

I live in Islamabad and visit Panja Sahab, and temples and when I go there, I feel at home. When I come to India, I feel I have come home. In the SAARC region there is one culture, one civilisation. I would like to recite a part of my poem: My the epic of Moses, Mary's, Manu, and Muhammad... Do you know that the upanishads contain the atomic theories discovered by Bohr and other scientists, discovered the subatomic particle much later. An upanishad says matter is inexhaustible and



any battle between a wise man or an ignorant man because a wise person avoids controversy. But if the world is a virtual hell, it is because of ignorant people, mostly politicians.

What is the relevance of ancient scriptures today?

Do you know that the upanishads contain the atomic theories discovered by Bohr and other scientists, discovered the subatomic particle much later. An upanishad says matter is inexhaustible and

Advertisement for Jansatta newspaper, featuring the masthead and contact information.

दुख-सुख का सड़ा उत्सव

Advertisement for a festival celebrating the transition from sorrow to happiness, featuring a photo of a woman and text about the event.

Advertisement for a festival titled 'तोड़ दिए लोहे के देवाजें', featuring a photo of a woman and text about the event.



## **SOME LETTERS OF APPRECIATION**

Your affectionate and gracious letter touched me. You yourself are an institution and you have turned the SAARC festival into an institution too. Future generations, hopefully more free from the hatreds of our time, will recognise your pioneering work in keeping alive the idea of sane and creative society for them.

We planned to be in the conference all three days but a supreme court hearing suddenly forced our plans. We plan to visit you to have a cup of tea one of these evenings before the weather turns too hot.

Warm regards,

**Ashis Nandy**

•

Saarc Writers at Delhi

### **Three Unforgettable Days**

Once again we came together in Delhi like birds flying in, carrying the literature and culture of our individual nations on our wings. Delhi winter was unexpectedly mild. But as writers we knew of the political heat, violence and terror in our countries as we met for three days 27th – 29th February 2016.

The traditional symbolic ritual opening and the first day's programmes were in the India International Centre. After the warm welcome by Ajeet Cour, President FOSWAL, first Sri Rajmohan Gandhi and Ashis Nandy spoke briefly in the inaugural session followed by brief comments from the all the participating Saarc countries. After the inaugural function followed the academic sessions and the poetry readings. The IIC was a nice venue, formal but comfortable with its spread out space. The next two days we shifted to the Sirifort's more intimate surrounding. Aparna's art gallery was the venue both for academic sessions and poetry readings. Gracefully her most loved possessions had made way for Saarc writers' needs.

The Academic sessions were devoted to the various aspects of surrounding socio-political milieu and the way it impinged on the creativity of the writers' community. It is difficult to take names but I remember the poetry reading sessions by Jayanta where he asked me to read my poems in original

followed by translation. While it is true poetry is best listen to in the original language all most all readings had to be in English. But even as we miss the meanings, the sound of the words were sweet to the ears. I was happy to listen to Anamika's poems from her anthology Kavi ne Kaha. There were many memorable poems from different languages. I was happy to hear the Afghan poet in Farsi or Persian. I was looking forward to it because after Afghanistan entry into our Saarc brotherhood we have now Persian language which is only in the other country Iran.

The renewal of friendships with writers was great satisfaction. Each Saarc country had a reasonable number of participants and an informal leader like Abhi Subedi of Nepal. The Bangladesh delegation with Selena and Nurul Hoda was indeed a powerful one. I was happy that Pakistan participated with a fair number of writers. Despite her growing weakness Ajeet Cour was often in the sessions like Arpana. Prof. Refaat Ali Khan was, of course, ever present guiding things on the stage.

After three exciting days of enjoying debates, discussions and poetry the time to say good bye had come. Such occasions are reminders of our warm intimacy, togetherness and growing bonds. The warm hugs, the photo opportunities, the selfies were over. But at the gate there were many of us finding it difficult to resist tears. I saw Arpana wiping her eyes as she was bidding farewell.

### **Sitakant Mahapatra**

•

Dear Madam,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you and your devoted team for successfully hosting the program.

It was great pleasure to be there. Thank u for your kind invitation. I will be always with you for your endeavours.

Hope to see you soon.

### **Krishna Dhakal**

Deputy Chief of Mission  
Embassy of Nepal  
New Delhi.

•

My dear Ajeet ji,

How do you find the time and energy to write such thoughtful letters to the large number of your close friends? I marvel.

And I thank you for your very kind words. For Usha and me it was a wonderful opportunity to spend some time again with a gifted community which you have helped create over the decades.

Love from us both.

**Rajmohan Gandhi**

•

Kathmandu, 15 March 2016

Dear Ajeet ji,

I returned from this year's SAARC literary conference held in Delhi from 26-29 February 2016, with a richer mind and a unique sense of reaching. Normally, it is not easy to say anything about reaching because questions like where did you reach and is the trail you follow to reach the goal is carved out in advance for you? naturally come up when you make any claim of this nature. I am trying to tell you here how I had this sense of reaching this time. I will briefly tell you why I got this epiphany.

You must have heard when I said at the opening how I was overwhelmed to see photo of Ajeet didi standing with the luminaries of India including writer Khuswant Singh, and former prime minister VP Singh ji, and others of the same importance illustrating my essay some years ago in the Nepali English daily The Kathmandu Post written about the SAARC conference with a focus on Ajeet didi's dedication and achievement. Obviously, the editors had goggled that for this purpose. This also shows to me how I have attended her programmes, and seen her working to open borders for writers to come together in the name of peace, sharing and making some creative explosions happen in poetry, stories, scholarly interventions, Sufis songs, folk dances, paintings and classical oeuvres of various orders.

We are caught between a glorious past of South Asia when we all shared the traditions, and the conditions of today that make it difficult to realise the same. I tell you, this is precisely the moment when anybody with any sense of goal, love and creativity should intervene. Unfortunately though I did not see organisations and individuals coming up to fulfil this role over the last two and a half decades. I share you my

conviction, the relentless worker, and a person with vision Ajeet Cour took the onus upon her shoulder; she has brought the entire story to this moment of time. How moving and inspiring to see her work in tandem with her daughter Arpana Cour who is a prominent painter of India! Every time I go to attend a SAARC conference I see a unique blend of arts—words, lines, figures that fill the FOSWAL gallery's walls, and the very sense of fluidity evinced by the kinaesthesia of female bodies in the arts. I have read Ajeet didi's self-storying where this daughter of her enters her life as a text, a responsibility and a witness to her creative pain and joy.

After all these difficult years that we in South Asia have been experiencing, to see a continuum of the above creative history with Ajeet didi, Arpana and all the good people around her—writers and thinkers of SAARC countries, was a great sense of reaching for me. You do not reach but you realise you have covered miles to reach a point of experience where you feel you have reached somewhere.

With prominent scholars of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan and the fine poets, this time the SAARC literary conference achieved a new goal. I found discussions productive and poetry inspiring. It was an amazing and rare experience to hear very senior poets like Sitakanta Mahapatra, Jayanta Mahapatra, Makaranda Paranjapi, Nurul Huda, Daya Disanayake, the Pakistani senior philosopher poet whose name I cannot recall, Alok Bhalla reciting Buddhist dialogic poetic epiphanies, and the poets of new generation like Nandini Sahu, and many others, recite their poems. The opening remarks of Ajeet didi and Ashis Nandy set the tone for the conference. I cannot mention all the scholars who made me feel richer. To hear one medic Anand Kumar's wisdom and warmth of scholarship and his love for all the participants was very moving. Personally for me, the Nepali poets and scholars' presentations were deeply satisfying.

The efforts you and your team put up to make this conference so successful should be especially appreciated. I want to send my greetings to all of them through you. Sending many best wishes for your and your friends' works, happiness and health.

Love,

**Abhi Subedi, Nepal**



# WRITE Foundation

Writers Readers Illustrators Translators & Educators Foundation

To:  
Ms. Ajeet Cour.  
President,  
FOSWAL,  
Delhi

March 14 2016

Dear Madam,

Thank you so very much for having hosted us in Delhi from the 27th till the 29th of Feb 2016. The event was not only well attended, it also gave us an opportunity to interact and mingle with the other South Asian souls in the frankest manner possible.

In spite of the escalating intra-regional tensions and strife, your event was a breath of fresh air as all of us came together for the sake of the friendship and literature.

Prof. Ashis Nandy's remarks on the hyper secularism destroying nationhood along with his observations on religiosity based on scriptural texts, was humbling and thought provoking.

Prof Rajgopal Gandhi's observations on the impact of geographical boundaries which ultimately lead to regional brotherhood, also inspired the general feeling of oneness.

However, as much as I loved hearing you speak, it was heart breaking to hear you share the realities of lack of funding.

I sincerely hope that the SAARC secretariat will re look into the matter and press Colombo to release funds to further the cause of literary pursuits that FOSWAL engages with.

In case of us doing our part, I pledge complete support to strengthen your organization as I too am proud to be a part of yours.

With profound respect and warmest wishes,

Rubana Huq

**WRITE FOUNDATION**

**General Secretary**



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Apt # K-1, 5th Floor, House # 39, Road # 35/A, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh  
Phone: +880 2 8952704, Fax: +880 2 8959254, Email: <info@writefoundation.org>

Dear Ajeet Cour Jee,

Warm Greetings

Many congratulations for organizing the SAARC Festival of Literature 2016 in such a befitting manner. It was so nice to interact with delegates from different SAARC countries. You have provided a unique intellectual, cultural and literary platform which stands for a unified vision while paying due reverence to cultural plurality. It is the metaphysical principle of 'unity in diversity' which we find realized in the events held by FOSWAL. It is your genuine concern for universality and humanity, which attracts us to your Forum.

Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan Director with his vast experience conducts the Sessions with excellence and grace. He always remains responsive during the conduct of these proceedings. Beti Arpana Caur is really a gift of God to you. Her humanism keeps the environment humane. She has put in a great effort for the success of the event. Please convey my compliments to them.

I thank you and your team for hosting this great event and for extending warm hospitality to the delegates .

Best regards,

**Dr. Shahzad Qaiser, Pakistan**

•

On behalf of the Sri Lanka Delegation for the SAARC Literary Festival 2016, held from February 27 to 29th in Delhi, may I congratulate you and your FOSWAL team for a very successful festival.

During the three days of the festival we from all South Asian countries gathered as one family, and confirmed that we have one culture and one literature, even if we write in different languages.

The festival also proved the need for further interaction among all South Asian Writers, and to have more opportunities for such festivals and also for publications of SAARC Literature in English and in English translation of creative works written in other South Asian languages.

We thank you for the opportunity given to us to participate at this great event and look forward to attending the future festivals and to offer our best efforts to make the future events successful.

With metta,

**Daya Dissanayake, Sri Lanka**

•

Dear Ajeetji,

Thank you for having invited me to the SAARC Literary Festival again. You, along with Arpana and Rafatak Ali Sahib, Have always been generous and kind hosts of the festival. I have felt privileged to be part of it in my own small way. What is unique about the festival is that it honours genuine writers, stays away from the ones who are in fashion, and it does not invite film stars. And because its scale is small, one gets a chance to talk to writers from our neighbouring countries. Over the years that i have participated in the festival, I have also formed friendships with writers whom I would never have had the chance to meet otherwise. So, thank you.

With best wishes

**Alok Bhalla**

•

Dear Ajeet ji,

SAARC Literature Festival organized by you on February 27, 28 and 29 at New Delhi was a successful attempt towards knowing our neighbours personally and also through their literature. It was interesting to see commonalities and also cultural differences, which only enriches our sensibility.

All this was possible only because of your passion and commitment for the cause, and the strong support by your well-known artist daughter Arpana Caur. Because of your personal care it felt like a family get-together!

Hearty congratulations!

Wishing you all the best and with warm regards,

**Dr Varsha Das**

•

Most respected Ajeetji,

I am immensely impressed by the diversified gathering of writers belonging to various generations and origins from South Asia and beyond this time in Delhi marking the SAARC writers festival organized by FOSWAL under your most dynamic leadership. Our stay in Hotel was comfortable and the academic sessions and poetry readings prove hugely rewarding for us. We from Bangladesh took much delight in launching the Bangla version of your story book edited by Selina Hossain and Rubana Haque. Our team was

one of the biggest with 11 participants composed of representatives from various generations. I believe that this festival has generated a compulsive for unification of South Asian creative mind on the basis of aesthetic oneness in this part of the world. I AM PROUD TO BE A PART OF IT.

Regards,

**Mohammad Nurul Huda, Bangladesh**

•

Respected Madam,

Thank you for your immense contribution for SAARC organizing the Literature festival. We are back to Kathmandu safe accumulating a lot of insight and creative thought which will definitely help to do something better to make a harmonious and homogenous society in South Asia.

I wish there would, at least, be few other people having the spirit and thought like yours. In the world of "indifference" the mothers are needed. I am glad that we have one that is Maa Ajeet. I pray for your sound health.

Thank you so much for being the mother of South Asia. Entire region is indebted to you Maa jee. I am glad that I met you and got to know so many things and people in the region.

Best Regards,

**Megharaj Adhikari, Nepal**

•

Dearest didi,

We all reached Kathmandu safe.

Thank you for your love and affection in inviting us to such an important and historic event of literature.

Please kindly convey my gratitudes to dear Arpana didi for her care and love.

Also convey my thanks to Mr. Sethi ji and Praveen ji for their tremendous effort in managing the event to make it a huge success

It was good to hear to more new and brilliant poets along with presentations from distinguished scholars. Border crossing has remained a very contested but unavoidable reality. SAARC festivals have since long resisted the hostility of border crossing and the humanitarian exchanges have become possible. Actually, this region survives with the hope that we can dare to make it a reality. Your dream now



becomes our dream, and ultimately our hope too!

Warmest regards,

**Keshab Sigdel, Nepal**

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Dear Madam,

It was a fantastic stay in Delhi and we enjoyed the Lit Festival 2016 very much. The life in your hotel was very comfortable.

I am Dr. K. Shriganeshan from University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. I presented a paper on “Contemporary Creativity and Political-Social Scenario reflected in Tamil the Literary Scene: a study of Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry- An Anthology by S.Pathmanathan”.

And also rendered three poems which I translated.

**K. Shriganeshan, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka**

- 

Respected Madam, Pranams..

Reached safely my home town yesterday evening..

This time i found the festival went very fabulously..

Met many of our old friends and some of the new and young ones..

All this is possible for the great opportunity given by Foswal and specially by the Padmashri Ajeeth Courji.. Thank you for everything..

Felt very happy to see FOSWAL Office and the art gallery..

My heartiest Congrats to Arpana Cour –extraordinary world fame artist. Amazing works she did.

Regards..

**Ramakrishna Perugu**

- 

Dear Ajeet jee,

this is just a little note to thank you for the wonderful conference we had in spite of many constraints. I particularly want to mention the stay in the hotel..it was a novel and absorbing experience.

Thank you.

**Kamala Wijeratne, Sri Lanka**

-

Respected Ajeet Cour jee,  
I have reached home safely. The SAARC conference ended successfully only for your foresight and guidance. I gratefully remember your love for fellow writers. You are working tirelessly at this age, which encourages us very much, and also our next generations. At the same time, I remember with full respect Arpana Caur jee for her love and care for all of us. Thanks are due for Mr. Sethi and Mr. Praveen to follow your guidance to make the event success.

We will keep you in mind always with full respect and love.

Affectionately yours,

**Bimal Guha, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

•

Dearest Ms Ajeet and SAARC team.

We would like to thank you for inviting us and letting us be part of this amazing Festival.

We were honored to meet you and share our thoughts with others and learned from their experience.

Sincerely,

**Nazi Karim on behalf of Afghanistan delegates**

•

My dear Ajeet,

I would like to say that the performance of SAARC literature was great and thank you so much for your nice comments exactly the same feeling was from my end.

SAARC literature festival is like a torch in the darkness where it can unite not only South Asia, but for the whole world to be followed and pave the grounds for the unity and prosperity across the globe.

The excellent sound, voice, professionalism of members in the program was quite unique.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to be a part of SAARC literature festival and we got such a inspiring and pleasure time together through the festival in India.

Thank you again for a very special event. I hope to be see you all again.

Regards,

**Mohammad Mansoor Nassimy, Afghanistan**

•

My very dear Didi,

Your are absolutely right.

It was a memorable event this time too. In addition to that the artistic atmosphere of the Academy of Fine Arts, added to the beauty of the Literature Festival.

Calm environment, like-minded people, greenery and flowers, and amazing food, what more can a creative mind ask for.

Your presence and supervision, and Arpana ji's personal interest to make everyone comfortable was something you both deserved kisses and hugs for.

Your staff has been, as always, brilliant.

We met old friends from this wonderful SAARC writers' community and also, new poets and writers. Some of them senior and some new faces and that's what makes a festival memorable.

A day before the festival, I had been in my valley. I had stayed there for many days even after failing to see my mother for one last time.

I wish you good health and long life.

We all love you and am sure you know it.

Thank you for everything dearest Didi jaanum.

*(Persian ch jaanum da matlab a meri jaan)*

With very warm regards and best wishes,

**Dr. Tarannum Riyaz**

•

Respected Ajeet Courji,

The Festival of Letters by FOSWAL was an extraordinary event and a lifetime experience. Luminaries from all SAARC countries created such goodwill by sharing literature of their respective countries. Speeches of Raj Mohan Gandhi and Ashish Nandi were introspective and sobering. Lectures of eminent writers such as Alok Bhalla, Mohammad Nurul Huda, Kunzang Choden, Abhi Subedi, Sanjeev Uprety, Selina Hossain, Shahzad Qaiser, Varsha Das, Sadia Dehlvi, Jasjeet Mansingh, Sitakanta Mahapatra and Daya Dissanayake stole the show. Poetry was astounding, the best poets of India and SAARC made their poetry. A few impressive names are listed: Sitakanta Mahapatra, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arundharti Subramaniam, Makarand

Paranjape, Leeladhar Mandloi, Sukrita Paul Kumar, Tarannum Riaz, Anamika, Bob D'Costa, Mithilesh Shrivastava, Binod Khaitan, Sudeep Sen and KV Dominic enthralled the audience by their recital. From the SAARC countries, Abhi Subedi, Daya Dissanayake, Kamala Wijeratne, Tanni Bose, Mohammad Reza Mohammadi, Sunil Govinnage, AK Rashid, Jharna Rahman, Rabiul Haque, Bimal Guha, Farheen Chaudhary and Syeda Tahera Ahmad were outstanding. The cultural evening with Manto's play 'Kali Shalwar', enacted by the National School of Drama was an exceptional treat.

Someone from the audience said that the narrative should shift from violence to others to the stories of saviours. This idea reverberated throughout the meeting and various speakers referred to it.

This event created people to people friendship and a desire for dialogue and love in opposition to hatred and terror. Shahzad Qaiser was my greatest discovery. His books enlightened me about Sufism.

I wish that this event is held on a regular basis and be expanded and supported by the SAARC governmental organizations. These festivals are better means of bringing SAARC countries together than official level talks alone.

Respectful regards,

**Anand Kumar**

•

Dear Madam,

Thank you very much for inviting my mother for SAARC Literature Festival.

I want to take a moment to thank you for making it such a worthwhile experience.

Once again the event was excellently arranged and conducted by your able leadership. I know you spent many months planning the event--and it showed.

Specially we enjoyed our stay in the Hotel.

Thank you once again.

Wishing you good health and happiness.

With Metta

**Chandana Wijeratne, Sri Lanka**

•



Dear Madam,

This is to inform your good self that we have reached to Bhutan safely. I am resuming my office from today.

Thank you so much for all the comforts and arrangements provided during our stay down there.

Wish you all a very happy times ahead

Kind regards

**Dr. Bal Bhandari, Bhutan**

•

Dear Ajeet Courji,

Thank you and your wonderful FOSWAL team for organizing this recently concluded memorable SAARC Literature Festival. There have been no such festivals from where I have returned without any added knowledge which I keep storing in my memory and which acts as 'the bliss of solitude.' When is the tentative plan for the SUFI festival?

May I request you to give me the e-mail ID of Ms Kunzang Choden? She has plans to conduct creative writing classes in Bhutan and had aporoached me to help her out. I have given her my card during the festival but she hadn't been carrying hers.

Do feel free to let me know if there is any way I can be of help to FOSWAL from the eastern region of Bengal, eg. a regional office or whatever way the committee deems.

With warm regards,

**Bob D'Costa**

•

My dear Ajeet jee,

Thank you very much for organizing such a successful conference and inviting us to be a part of that. You all had done a marvelous job regarding everything.

I am very grateful to you for the opportunity and all the help you have given us and looking forward to participate in conferences like this in the future.

I wish you good health, happiness and success.

With Metta,

Praneeth Abhayasundere

•

Respected and dear Ajeetji,

Ever since I got back from Delhi I have thinking of you, Arparna and your team at FOSWAL for a wonderful literary festival that I was privileged to participate in February 2016 in Delhi. It is only because of your commitment, dedication and your unwavering belief in fostering the bond of friendship, understanding and mutual respect among the thinkers, writers, philosophers, poets and artist in the in the SAARC countries, that you have spared no effort to organize the festival since 2000, even in the face of many challenges. Over the 16 years I have met the other participants from SAARC countries, because you brought us together again and again to speak, to listen to agree and to disagree and to celebrate our commonalities and our diversity. It is , with admiration, respect, love and appreciation that I salute and honor you. You are doing an amazing job and it hope and pray that your initiative will not only be recognized and appreciated but can be sustained in the years to come.

Thank you for all that you do, we need more people like you who help us to look beyond ourselves and reach out across our borders.

Thank you and with fond wishes,

**Kunzang Choden, Bhutan**

•

Dear Ajeet Cour,

The recent SAARC Literary Festival in New Delhi offered opportunities for exchanging views and sharing goodwill among SAARC countries. It was a celebration of creative thought. The Festival presented a remarkable literary atmosphere. I have marked this time as a period of historical importance. It was memorable event for enhancing language, literature and culture. Almost all poets and scholars expressed their creative views which was based on honesty and sincerity. The Festival was organized and well managed. I would like to offer thanks to you and all the members of organizing body for their warm and lovely management.

I am going to write you this letter for thankful recognition. I got opportunity to vow upon your shoulder with a solemn promise to honor you. Almost all the participants of SAARC region showed their appreciation by giving you hug with

tears in their eyes estimating the importance of the work you have performed. They gave their proper value. All the scholars and writers showed clear perception and recognition for your work of historical importance. The hugging was showing critical notice evaluating peaceful literary situation. This is my written evaluation of love, of reverence and of sincere judgement. We, the delegates of respective countries are grateful and regard you highly for your international work of magnitude. It was your recognition of the SAARC people. We know you are capable of showing appreciation to the people of SAARC countries. I am sensitive to express my views and appreciate your help to disseminate literature and peace among SAARC countries. You are giving life for literature and enhancing peace for years. This signifies the work you cherish for SAARC countries. The Literary Festival, you are conducting, reflects the tradition of language, literature and culture through you, are imparting friendship, love and unity among SAARC nations. Believe me, it is my sincere faith, if time assesses rightly, you deserve Nobel Prize either for literature or for peace.

The Festival was a celebration of intellectual expression and was a celebration of smile and love, let me smile in appreciation. The Literary Festival, in my opinion, was conducted for information, friendship and peace, I assert. Your work is large enough to be recognized and measured if judged with understanding. This is my expression of admiration as I respect you more at admiration. My opinion is formed by discerning you as your works are detectable, discernible and distinguishable.

I am writing this letter to you with sensitive awareness. I am not only your appreciative audience but also one of the faithful actors of your Literary and Sufi Festival. I have judged your Festival with heightened perception. I am the witness of your kindness, love and peaceful appearance and hold in you high estimation. I am the admirer of literary excellence. I think, I deserve to salute you. Your large works have been entered SAARC and the world.

Live long! I want to see you hundred years. I want to see your life in literature and peace forever and ever.

You love Nepal, I love India. I am indebted for your invitation and hospitality.

Regards,

**Gopal Parajuli, Nepal**

•  
Dear Ajeet ji,

While attending the SAARC Literature Festival this year, I felt that there are two distinguished women to whom all the writers of South Asia owe a lot of gratitude. These two remarkable writers are Ajeet Cour and Painter Arpana Caur. They have upheld the 'Foswal' for 30 years.

They organize literature and 'Sufi' conferences every year in various cities in India. They also bring together environmentalists and folklore writers and researchers. Very few organizations can be so successful in arranging these kinds of gatherings that enable writers and researchers to know each other and about their work, in such cordial settings. I have no words to express enough gratitude and respect for them.

The festival this year was also glamorous as usual. The inaugural ceremony was held at the India International Center. Among the eminent guests present were writer and researcher Rajmohon Gandhi, researcher Ashish Nandy, writer Sitakanta Mohapatra who writes in Odisa language, poet from Nepal Abhi Subedi, novelist from Sri Lanka Daya Dissanayake, Shahzad Qaisar from Pakistan, Kunzang Choden from Bhutan and many others. Ajeet Cour herself was there of course.

After the inaugural event, books from different writers were launched. This year we published a book by Ajeet Cour from Dhaka, translated into Bengali, comprising of fifteen stories. In a ceremonious event we handed over the book to Ajeet Cour present on the stage, along with two eminent poets from Bangladesh – Rubana Haq and Md. Nurul Huda. We were delighted to have her book translated, being able to bring some of her remarkable works closer to the Bengali audience and writers.

The day's events were filled with lively discussions from distinguished writers and researchers, followed by cultural shows. Suhail Bhan presented traditional dance. It was an unforgettable evening, full of festivities with Ajeet Jee besides me. When I was leaving the room, holding her hand, Arpana came by and asked me not to let go of her mother's hand. I told to myself, I would never let her go. I want to walk with her for a long time.

Celebrations continued for the next two days at the



Institution built by Ajeet jee and Aparna Cour : Academy of Fine Fine Arts and Literature. I went their many times. The events were organized in Aparna's Galleries, filled with vibrant conversations, presentations of papers, and sharing of wonderful thoughts and ideas. Amused writers audience the speakers with their minds blown away. At the commencement of the event Arpana asked Jharna Rahman to sing a song. Jharna recited some of her poems and sang. Listening to her tune, Madhumati, eminent poet from Temilnadu couldn't hold her tears. Her harmonious tune had everyone emotional, including another distinguished poet from Kerala Ms. Sigma Sathish who joined the event. I felt like we were able to cross the barriers of language as people coming from all different places, speaking many different languages have filled their hearts with joy.

Next morning writers presented their papers and had lunch together. Again lively conversations took place in various subjects of interest. When the announcer of the program revealed that the whole ceremony was organized solely by financing provided by Arpana, I was filled with emotion. I tried to imagine how deep her love is for literature, culture, and art ! Arpana was humble and covered her face; I saw tears rolling down. Ajeet jee was sitting next to her, silent; the life blood of this institution and now her daughter is going to continue her great work.

It got emotional again when it was time to say good bye. Everyone hugged Ajeet jee and Arpana, and could not hold their tears. These were the tears of love and joy, and bonding. This is the place for us to come together and unite.

I met two Tamil writers here. They came from Jafna in Sri Lanka. One was S. Padmanathan and the other K Shriganeshan. Padmanathan gave me his book of Tamil Stories, translated in English. I told him that I wouldn't have met you if I hadn't come here. He smiled at me. Then I told him this is why Ajeet jee is so precious to us. She always brings us together. He told me that he came here for the first time and they were not encouraged to come to these events. Nobody even ever told them to participate in these events. He told me he was very happy to be there and that Ajeet Jee is such a great person. I said to him 'hail to Ajeet jee' for bringing us together.

**Selina Hossain, Bangladesh**



Prof. Ashis Nandy  
India



Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi  
India



H.E. Mr. M.R.K. Lenagala  
Sri Lanka



Ms. Kunzang Choden  
Bhutan



Mr. Daya Dissanayake  
Sri Lanka



Dr. Shahzad Qaiser  
Pakistan



Mr. Arif Farhad  
Pakistan



Ms. Anamika  
India



Dr. Megharaj Adhikari  
Nepal



Dr. K. Shriganeshan  
Sri Lanka



Ms. Sabita Gautam Dahal  
Nepal



Mr. K.V. Dominic  
India



Mr. Sheikh Rabiul Haque  
Bangladesh



Ms. Chador Wangmo  
Bhutan



Prof. Raamaa Chandramouli  
India



Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal  
Nepal



Dr. Rubana Huq  
Bangladesh



Dr. A.M. Gondane  
India



Dr. Arundhati Subramaniam  
India



Dr. Gopal Parajuli  
Nepal



Dr. Ahmad Salim  
Pakistan



Dr. Bal Bhandari  
Bhutan



Dr. Varsha Das  
India



Mr. Sunil Govinnage  
Sri Lanka



Mr. Ashraf Jewel  
Bangladesh



Ms. Tanni Bose  
Bhutan



Mr. Nadeem Abbas Shah  
Pakistan



Ms. Jasjit Mansingh  
India



Mr. Anwar Wafa Samandar  
Afghanistan



Ms. Pushpa Misra  
India





Mr. Padam Talwar  
India



Ms. Selina Hossain  
Bangladesh



Mr. Kinga Singye  
Bhutan



Ms. Kamala Wijeratne  
Sri Lanka



Mr. Pran Nevile  
India



Dr. Binod Khaitan  
India



Prof. Keshab Sigdel  
Nepal



Dr. Sadia Dehlvi  
India



Mr. Mahboob Sadiq  
Bangladesh



Mr. Nikhil Anand Giri  
India



Dr. Savita Singh  
India



Mr. Nisar A. Chaudhary  
Pakistan



Ms. Sigma Sathish  
India



Ms. Madhumitha  
India



Mr. Rajendra Milan  
India





Prof. Abhi Subedi  
Nepal



Mr. Jayant Prasad  
India



Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra  
India



Dr. M. Jamil Qalander  
Pakistan



Ms. Nazi Karim  
Afghanistan



Dr. Sanjeev Uprey  
Nepal



Dr. Tarannum Riyaz  
India



Prof. Makarand Paranjape  
India



Mr. Bob D'Costa  
India



Dr. Yashodhara Mishra  
India



Prof. S. Pathmanathan  
Sri Lanka



Mr. Ahmad Mostofa Kamal  
Bangladesh



Mr. Ahmad Farid Sultani  
Afghanistan



Ms. Nandini Sahu  
India



Dr. Indra Babbellapati  
India



Mr. Jayanta Mahapatra  
India



Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan  
India



Mr. M.L. Lahoty  
India



Mr. Sudeep Sen  
India



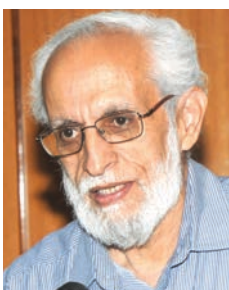
Dr. Syeda Aireen Jaman  
Bangladesh



Mr. M. Mansoor Nassimi  
Afghanistan



Ms. Nahid Qaiser  
Bangladesh



Dr. Alok Bhalla  
India



Mr. Utsav Khatiwara  
Bhutan



Dr. Shashi Goyal  
India



Mr. Deo Prakash Choudhary  
India



Mr. Perugu Ramakrishna  
India



Dr. Bimal Guha  
Bangladesh



Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar  
India



Mr. Sushil Sarit  
India





Prof. Mohammad Nurul Huda  
Bangladesh



Dr. K. S. Rao  
India



Ms. Farheen Chaudhry  
Pakistan



Mr. Leeladhar Mandloi  
India



Ms. Jharna Rahman  
Bangladesh



Dr. Anand Kumar  
India



Mr. Suneet Chopra  
India



Ms. Leila Seth  
India



Dr. Praneeth Abhayasundere  
Sri Lanka



Writers and Poets from SAARC countries at Academy's Folk Art Museum