



Dr. Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee

Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee, grand daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, is the Vice Chairperson of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti and Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust. In her sensitive address she talked about the people of all these countries, who love one another and welcome each other with open arms. In

Sri Lanka she found that there is no violence that is so much talked about, there is no hatred or enmity in Pakistan for Indians, and no barriers in the hearts of the people of Bangladesh.

She talked about the binding force that Ahimsa had become all over the world, giving the example of Egypt where a people's war had been won through a completely non-violent agitation.

However, she deplored the fact that even within the SAARC countries, with their common social

heritage, the medium for communication still remains English, which is a colonial legacy. English as a language is very confusing because you say one thing and mean another.

She said that her coming here and speaking from this platform, was a homage to the creative forces that have kept the glow of



Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar

love alive in all of us.

Mani Shankar Aiyar, a diplomat turned politician, who has been a Minister of Panchayati Raj and has been conferred the “Outstanding Parliamentarian Award,” spoke against the colonial rule over almost all the SAARC countries, which left the legacy of western ideas which are devoid of sensitivity and compassion.

He also pointed out the positive facts of the colonial rule, that we have discovered ourselves through the colonial writers and missionaries.

The west discovered our culture and civilization and appreciated it. It was then that it became an accepted fact that the end never justifies the means. One cannot lie, cheat, kill, murder to serve a right cause. The means to reach that cause also has to be justifiable.

He appreciated the fact that in the last century there has been a surge of growth in literature. This surge has helped to formulate the identity of our writings. From catering to colonial rulers we have developed an independent Asian Thought Process. We have learnt to love our diversity and in this he defined an Indian. An Indian, he said, is the one who accepts anyone saying he is an Indian, is really an Indian.

SAARC LITERARY AWARDS

The morning session ended with honouring of the major writers of the SAARC countries for their contribution to literature. The awards were presented by Sardani Gursharan Kaur. The awardees were introduced by Ajeet Cour.

- **SAARC Lifetime Literary Achievement Award** was given to eminent Urdu fiction writer from India- **Joginder Paul**
- **SAARC Lifetime Peace Achievement Award** was conferred on **Nihal Rodrigo** of Sri Lanka

SAARC Literary Awards were awarded to :

- **Partaw Naderi**, Afghanistan
- **Ibrahim Waheed**, Maldives
- **Syed Akhtar Hussain Akhtar**, Pakistan (posthumously, because he expired a few days before the Festival).
- **Mohammad Zareen Anzor**, Afghanistan

SAARC Young Poets Awards were awarded to :

- **Rubana Huq**, Bangladesh
- **Manu Manjil**, Nepal

After the Awards Ceremony, one poet from each of the eight countries read out a poem. This was to underline and to register the presence of each country, and its literary contribution to the combined Literary Heritage and Tradition of SAARC.



Dr. Joginder Paul receiving the SAARC LIFETIME LITERARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD from the Chief Guest, Sardarni Gursharan Kaur.



Dr. Nihal Rodrigo, Advisor to the President of Sri Lanka and a great diplomat, receiving the SAARC LIFETIME PEACE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, from Sardarni Gursharan Kaur, while Ajeet Cour presents him the Memento.



Mr. Ibrahim Waheed, eminent poet from Maldives, receiving the SAARC LITERARY AWARD and Citation, from Sardarni Gursharan Kaur. Ajeet Cour and Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar share the happy moments.



Mr. Partaw Naderi from Afghanistan receiving the SAARC LITERARY AWARD from Sardarni Gursharan Kaur, while Ajeet Cour presents him the Memento. Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar shares the happy moments.



Mr. Zareen Anzor, from Afghanistan, receiving the SAARC LITERARY AWARD : the Citation and the Memento, from Sardarni Gursharan Kaur. Ajeet Cour and Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar share the happy moments.



Dr. Rubana Huq, eminent young poet from Bangladesh, receiving the SAARC YOUNG POETS' AWARD from Sardarni Gursharan Kaur. Ajeet Cour and Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar share the happy moments.



Mr. Manu Manjil, eminent young poet from Nepal, receiving the SAARC YOUNG POETS' AWARD from Sardarni Gursharan Kaur.



In the Audience from left : Mr. Pavan Kapoor, Joint Secretary, SAARC Division, Ministry of External Affairs, H.E. Dr. Nangyalai Tarzi, Ambassador of Afghanistan in India, H.E. Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India.

Partaw Naderi of Afghanistan, **Rubana Huq** of Bangladesh, **Tshering Dorji** of Bhutan, **Shahryar** of India, **Ibrahim Waheed** of Maldives, **Abhi Subedi** of Nepal, **Premi Amarsinghe** of Sri Lanka and **Neelam Bashir Ahmad** of Pakistan respectively, read out their poems.

Ibrahim Waheed from Maldives, before reading out his poem, talked about his first hand encounter with war in Beirut while studying there in the University of America. He was a witness to the civil war that the country of Lebanon was going through. He spoke about how he had formed a band with other students and that had opened the doors of poetry for him. Then he read out his poem “Pacifier” with its first two lines as

When your third world brother is crying for peace
Love thy neighbour is all you preach

In the rounding up of the short poetry session **Dr. Alok Bhalla** pointed out that



Prof. Akhtarul Wasey

most of the contemporary poetry coming out from this region was “Poetry of Protest,” emphasising how deeply writers and poets felt for humanity, and that this concern broke all man-made borders.

In her intervention Ajeet Cour emphasized the importance of Track II Initiatives, like the SAARC Writers Conference. She said that the basic honesty and integrity and sensitivity of writers made them popular and

trustworthy in the eyes of the people.

The Vote of Thanks was presented by **Professor Akhtarul Wasey**, who began his speech with an Urdu couplet:

Let politicians do what they will,
My message is of love wherever it reaches

He said that women are the worst effected in any war or strife, thus it is natural that women should be the torch-bearers of peace. He complimented Ajeet Cour, saying that she had in any and every moment of differences with the neighbouring countries, lighted a lamp of peace. He said he would always pray for her long life.

He ended with a couplet by the famous poet Sardar Jafri:

Let us pray that the dew continues to fall forever,
Let this earth yearn for blood forever !