

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival to host seventh edition from 14th-17th January 2016

Key highlights of AKLF 2016

1. All-India premiere of Aparna Sen's '*Saari Raat*' based on playwright Badal Sircar's eponymous play and the Centerpiece film of the New York Indian Film Festival
2. Book launches by – Ben Okri, Lord Meghnad Desai, Christine Manfield, Vir Sanghvi, Bharati Pradhan, Meera Syal and more
3. Commemoration of the 125th anniversary of Dame Agatha Christie, Queen of Crime Fiction, with the launch of "A is for Arsenic: the Poisons of Agatha Christie" by Kathryn Harkup
4. A host of literary initiatives viz. Poetry Café with city poets, singer-songwriters and performance poets, motivational session by Jeronino Almeida, special segment – 'Romancing young Readers' with young writers like Anuja Chauhan, Durjoy Datta and Ravinder Singh, literary heritage photowalks, blogger sessions, children's, high school and college campus litfest and more
5. Session with international panel of crime writers discussing what's common across borders; session on current affairs

Kolkata, 27th November, 2015: Apeejay Surrendra Group and Oxford Bookstores today announced the seventh edition of the **Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, 2016** (AKLF 2016) to be hosted in Kolkata from **14th -17th January 2016**. The literary forum is the first of its kind to be created by a bookstore. With its seventh edition AKLF 2016 has built on several unique concepts with a fresh approach. Continuing to celebrate the city's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites the festival aims to rediscover the quaint and hidden charms of the city through heritage walks. Some of the sites hand-picked for this edition are Nandan, Town Hall steps, The Indian Museum, Presidency University, Tollygunge Club and Victoria Memorial.

Among other themes, AKLF 2016 will be commemorating the '**125th anniversary of Dame Agatha Christie, Queen of Crime Fiction**', with the launch of "**A for Arsenic: the Poisons of Agatha Christie**" by **Kathryn Harkup** in association with UK's leading Crime Writing Festival, Bloody Scotland! Other broad themes running through the festival reflect current concerns such as diversity, gender equality, continuities across borders and youth engagement.

Providing the first glimpse of the upcoming festival, Award winning filmmaker, screenwriter and actor **Aparna Sen**, spoke about her association with the festival this year and announced the all-India premiere of her film '*Saari Raat*' based on playwright Badal Sircar's eponymous play as the inaugural event. Also present for the occasion were AKLF partners such as **Stephane Amalir**, Director, Alliance Francaise, **Anuradha Lohia**, VC Presidency University, **Devi Kar**, Director, Modern High School for Girls, **Jayanta Sengupta**, Curator, Victoria Memorial Hall and Director, Indian Museum, along with other valued partners, associates and friends of AKLF, who also shared their thoughts and their association with the festival. **Ms. Maina Bhagat** and **Ms. Anjum Katyal** – Festival Directors – set the theme for the year, sharing the schedules, highlights and announcing the much anticipated line up of authors and participants this year. AKLF 2016 promises to be an exciting journey with a celebration of diverse themes across books, theatre, the arts and cinema.

The forthcoming 7th edition of AKLF is poised to scale new heights, with an outstanding and meticulously curated programme, bringing the world and the nation to Kolkata. AKLF 2016 has participation from Australia, Israel, Scotland, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal as well as England, France, Germany, Pakistan, Bhutan and others. Some of the prominent personalities who will be part of the literary extravaganza are **Ben Okri, Lord Meghnad Desai, Christine Manfield, Barkha Dutt, Vir Sanghvi, Bharati Pradhan, Meera Syal, Shatrughan Sinha, Shobhaa De** and more.

Ms. Maina Bhagat, Director, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival said, *'It is truly gratifying to witness the trajectory of AKLF's growth - in scope, content and presence - since its modest beginning in 2010. We believe that the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival is truly a Window to the World of Ideas and Creativity. New vistas shall open, bringing vigor, debate, new voices and concerns to Kolkata's informed audiences at AKLF 2016, come January.'*

Ms. Anjum Katyal, Director, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, said on the occasion, *"With the 7th edition of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival we have tried to curate events that explore the literary spirit in innovative ways. New innovations this time include poetry café, blogging contests, film screenings, campus sessions, and heritage photowalks. We hope everyone involved with the world of books – readers, authors and publishers - will enjoy AKLF."*

Eminent Poet and Novelist Ben Okri shared his excitement to be part of AKLF 2016 through a statement, *"It is with great pleasure that I am coming to the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival. As you all know, I feel India to be a kind of home for me. It is a mysterious feeling and I have felt it since the first day I visited many years ago. This is my first time at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, and I am looking forward to the sharing of ideas and to the customary warmth with which India receives its visitors. I shall be talking about my new novel, 'The Age of Magic', will be sharing some thoughts on the mystery of storytelling, and will be reading from my poetry. I am looking forward to our literary and spiritual encounters."*

The inaugural event of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 for the first time will be hosted at Nandan, commencing with the all-India premiere Aparna Sen's **'Saari Raat'** based on playwright Badal Sircar's eponymous play and recently the centerpiece of the New York Indian Film Festival, followed by the launch of the book **Badal Sircar: Towards a Theatre of Conscience**. The festival will also commemorate **'125th anniversary of Dame Agatha Christie, Queen of Crime Fiction'**, with the launch of **"A for Arsenic: the Poisons of Agatha Christie"** by Kathryn Harkup. The sessions at AKLF 2016 this year include participation by award winning authors, Man Booker Prize winner **Ben Okri** who will launch his new novel **Age of Magic**, a story of a group of world-weary travellers who discover the meaning of life on a journey to a mysterious Swiss mountain. Apart from book launches by **Lord Meghnad Desai, Christine Manfield, Barkha Dutt, Vir Sanghvi, Bharati Pradhan, Meera Syal** and others, there will be discussions on myriad subjects like current affairs by **Vir Sanghvi, Salil Tripathi** and **Saba Naqvi**, motivation and leadership sessions, blogging contests, literary adda, heritage walk, poetry café, especially curated events for children and author breakfast meetings adding a fresh elements to the festival. There will also be a special session with a group of crime writers. The festival will also focus on young writers and new voices in an attempt to build an audience for books and reading. There will also be sessions dedicated to cross border discussion with **Reema Abbasi** on her book **'Temples of Pakistan'**. The four day long, multi-faceted event has several stimulating components designed to give visitors and the audience an enriching experience, with a great blend of literature, culture, art and heritage.

AKLF 2016 Partners and Associations:

The AKLF 2016 edition has forged several new, prestigious associations, following its impressive collaborations in first year in 2010. We are proud to welcome on board, major national and international institutions such as the Australian High Commission , Bloody Scotland, British Council, Calcutta Debating Circle, Crime Writers Festival , Embassy of Israel in India, Alliance Française, FACES, Open Doors, FREED, The Creative Arts, Poetry Paradigm and several others. A wide cross section of publishers, which include Penguin, Random House India, Harper Collins. Bloomsbury Publishing, Niyogi Publishers, Routledge, Aleph, Rupa and others will showcase their authors at AKLF 2016. Partners include The Indian Museum, Victoria Memorial, Tollygunge Club, Max Muller Bhavan - Goethe Institute, The Park, Presidency University campus and Modern High School. We welcome 91.9 friends FM as our radio partner, The Times of India as our Print Media Partner, Selvel as our Outdoor Partner AKLF is very proud of these associations and will keep growing year on year.

About Oxford Bookstores:

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About Apeejay Surrendra Group

Established in 1910, Apeejay Surrendra Group employs over 43000 people in rapidly expanding operations in Tea, Hospitality, Shipping, Real Estate & Retail and has diversified into new business initiatives, Marine Cluster, Logistics & Knowledge Parks. 2010 was the Group's centenary year. For more Information, please visit www.apeejaygroup.com

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