

## Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival to host fifth edition from 8th-13th January 2014

### Top 5 reasons for you to look forward to AKLF 2014

1. Tribute to '125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad' – inaugural speech by iconic actor Aamir Khan
2. Book launches by – Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Farrukh Dhondy, Bina Ramani
3. Farrukh Dhondy and Mark Tully in conversation for the first time on the British Raj
4. Host of authors from the European continent in discussion on modern European literature
5. Granta magazine(UK) to present some of the best young British novelists

**Kolkata, 17th December, 2013:** Apeejay Surrendra Group and Oxford Bookstores today announced the fifth edition of the **Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, 2014** (AKLF 2014) to be hosted in Kolkata from **8th -13th January 2014**. The literary forum, the first of its kind to be created by a bookstore, is extended over a period of six days this year. Among other themes, AKLF 2014 will pay tribute to India's first education minister, writer and scholar **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on his 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary** and focus on values and literary concerns dear to his heart. The festival motif this year highlights the 'white lotus', representing knowledge and enlightenment, and the 'fish' which is identified with the city and its bond with the festival. The festival's integral concept underlines the city's culture and tradition with heritage sites playing a key role. Some of the festival sites for this edition are Victoria Memorial, Town Hall, St. John's Anglican Church, and Tollygunge Club. Significantly gaining global acceptance, the festival over the years has seen increased participation from authors and personalities from different parts of the world and continues to expand its footprint, with participants from Europe – France, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland and the UK. Other writers reflect cultures like Egypt, China, Ghana and neighbours Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. Aamir Khan, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Farrukh Dhondy, Mrinal Pande, Mark Tully, Bachi Karkaria, Anita Nair, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Amit Chaudhuri, Shankar, Syeda Hameed, Bina Ramani, Romesh Gunasekera are a few of the eminent personalities who will be part of the fifth edition of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2014.

**Ms. Priti Paul, Director Apeejay Surrendra Group** said "The Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival has pitch forked many new ideas and concerns into the spotlight, supported talented new writers, expanded its reach to new audiences, brought many different voices onto the same platform, made them all heard and brought vigor and debate about ideas and the written word. I am delighted to see AKLF evolve to take a greater national character in just four years. We have great and discerning partners onboard, events held in public and heritage spaces with open access to people from all walks of life and interests, a treasure in store for 6 days in January 2014.

I was the first person to step forward to sponsor the Jaipur Literature Festival under the umbrella of the Jaipur Varasat Foundation. The first cheque was written by the Apeejay Surrendra Group. I felt that it was a great idea with my interests in books, literature and music and become a platform where every ardent booklover and literati would enjoy going from all walks of life. Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival was conceptualized and initiated by me in

2009. In 2010 Apeejay Surrendra Group was celebrating its 100 years of existence and also Kolkata being the city of my birth and where I grew up reading great books and visiting bookshops, I thought that the timing was perfect to give a special gift to the city, a celebration on art, culture, literature and music –so AKLF was born. Since in the end, we are all very much a bit from where we come from I felt it was important to give back in my humble way to the city that had nurtured my interests. I also felt that Kolkata was losing its literary edge. Working with books, writers and publishers for so many years, I felt that even though the greatest creative and intellectual minds of India were coming from the city – the rest of India was bypassing Bengal. This hurt my pride greatly. My dear uncle Mr. Jit Paul sadly passed away and I have always understood his love for Kolkata hence AKLF was also a tribute in his memory.

2014, the fifth edition of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, is a very special milestone and an enduring effort towards ensuring that the cultural and intellectual vibrancy of the City of Books evolves and grows from strength to strength. I invite all to partake in the shared celebration.”

Present for the announcement were **Dr. Sreeradha Dutta**, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), **Dr. Jayanta Sengupta**, Secretary & Curator, Victoria Memorial Hall, and **Mr. G. M. Kapur**, Convener, INTACH, for West Bengal and Calcutta Regional Chapter. **Ms. Maina Bhagat** and **Ms. Anjum Katyal** – Festival Directors – set the theme for the year, providing the first glimpse of the upcoming festival. AKLF 2014 promises to be an exciting journey with celebration of diverse themes across books, films, painting, poetry, dance, music, fashion and food this year. The fifth edition of AKLF 2014 is in association with The Times of India publication.

**Ms. Maina Bhagat, Director, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival** – said, “This year we aim to make the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, 2014 a significant platform to revive the importance of education which is crucial for the growth of new literature and creating a future generation of authors, with the 125<sup>th</sup> birth centenary of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad as the core theme.”

**Ms. Anjum Katyal, Director, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival**, said on the occasion, “With our carefully curated and thought provoking programmes we wish to reflect the true essence of our city’s diverse sense of culture, ideas and artistic expression. We yet again welcome the city’s book lovers who have supported Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival over the years.”

Continuing with tradition, the inaugural event of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2014 will be hosted in the grandeur of the Victoria Memorial, commencing with a tribute to ‘**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on his 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary**’ by Indian icon Aamir Khan, highlighting the ideals and values of the national leader and scholar. Renowned Sarod maestro **Ustad Amjad Ali Khan** will launch his book ‘My Father, Our Fraternity: The Story of Haafiz Ali Khan & My World.’ For the first time in the city, British author and playwright **Farrukh Dhondy** and former BBC journalist and author Sir **Mark Tully** will be seen in conversation on the subject ‘The Raj Revisited’ – a fitting subject considering how European influences played a part in the development of the city’s character. A morning session at St. John’s Anglican Church will witness a series of readings and discussions on European Literature today and modern works in various European languages. The festival this year will also celebrate art in different forms – dance, poetry, music, fashion – with events representing personalities like danseuse **Tulsi Badrinath**, artist **Salima Hashmi**, fashion designers **Bina Ramani** and **Kallol Dutta**. Apart from book launches by **Anita Nair**, **Rana Dasgupta**, **Shamsur Rahman Faruqi**, **Mani Shankar Mukherjee**, **Omair Ahmed**, **Prajwal Parajuly** and others, there will be discussions on myriad subjects like new age writing across genres, women’s empowerment, literary identity etc by international and national authors and personalities. There will also be a special session with a block of

commonwealth writers. Also for the first time, AKLF 2014 has associated with **The Granta Magazine** and British Council to present some of the best young British novelists at the festival. The six 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.

#### **About Oxford Bookstores:**

Established in 1919 Oxford Bookstore is the best equipped 'base-camp' for journeys of the mind offering its customers the widest range of outstanding titles and consistently courteous and informed service for close to a century. Today, with more than 30 stores in India, India's first dedicated Children's bookstore, Oxford Junior, India's first of its kind tea boutique, Cha Bar, India's only literary festival created by a bookstore, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, Oxford Bookstore offers booklovers access to the very best in publishing enhanced by a variety of events which salute books, visual & performing arts and celebrate the word. Oxford Bookstore measures its success by the smiles on millions of happy customers that the brand has served over the last 9 decades. There are a few treats as sumptuous as a visit to Oxford Bookstore in India. Each time you walk into our iconic store in Calcutta where the brand started in 1919, its charm leaves you wanting for more. Our fleet of 200 happy to help expert booksellers and informed hosts work day and night to bring to customers world class reading experience be it through our books or our fine teas and live by the brand's motto - Much more than a bookstore – at every Bookstore, be it Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Goa. In December 2012 Oxford Bookstore took a chapter from its growth story in India by launching, Katakali, its first overseas bookstore in the luxurious Taj Palace Hotel at the foothills of the Atlas Mountains in the exclusive palm-filled oasis of the Palmeraie, Marakkech. In April 2013, with the opening of its most architecturally crafted retail store in a stunning new destination in Delhi's historic centre, Connaught Place, Oxford Bookstore carved out yet another incredible space for quiet browsing, reading and contemplation. Its growth story continues...For more information, please also log on to:[www.oxfordbookstore.com](http://www.oxfordbookstore.com)

#### **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 Clusters, Logistics & Knowledge Parks. 2010 was the Group's centenary year. For more Information, please visit [www.apeejaygroup.com](http://www.apeejaygroup.com).

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