

Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 4

Event: Panel discussion on 'Border Crossings: Across the Language Divide'

Kolkata, 17th January, 2015: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 hosted a panel discussion on '*Border Crossings: Across the Language Divide*' at the scenic Western Quadrangle inside the heritage premises of Victoria Memorial with authors representing their Country's culture and literary journey namely **Florence Noiville** from France, **K. Anis Ahmed** from Bangladesh and **Mohammed Hanif** from Pakistan.

The session was moderated by **Razi Ahmed**, Director, Lahore Literary Festival. Eminent writer **Nabaneeta Dev Sen** presided over the discussion as the Guest of Honour. The discussion was mainly focused on the richness of language, translation and the social and cultural connections across borders.

About the Panelists:

Florence Noiville

Florence Noiville, a French author and journalist, is a long time staff writer for Le Monde and editor of foreign fiction for Le Monde des Livres. She has done numerous interviews and profiles including Saul Bellow, Imre Kertész, John le Carré, Mario Vargas Llosa, Herta Müller. From 2007 to 2010, she also hosted a literary show on French television. While working for Le Monde, Florence Noiville also began writing. She started with children's books and then published a biography of the Nobel Prize-winning American author Isaac Bashevis Singer, which received a 2004 Biography Award. Later, she published *The Gift*, her first novel. In 2009, Florence Noiville wrote a half-essay, half-personal narrative short text about capitalism and its excesses, called "I Went to Business School and I apologize". Noiville's books are translated into 12 languages.

K. Anis Ahmed

K. Anis Ahmed is a Bangladeshi writer and publisher of the English-language daily newspaper Dhaka Tribune and the literary journal Bengal Lights. Ahmed is the author of two books: a short story collection called *Good Night, Mr. Kissinger* and a novel, *The World in My Hands*. He has been called one of the most significant voices in Bangladesh today. Ahmed is part of a new generation of writers who use English "to connect to the larger corpus of world literature", and as a "rejection of the insularity of contemporary Bangla-language literature".

Mohammed Hanif

Mohammed Hanif is a Pakistani writer and journalist. His first novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) was shortlisted for the 2008 Guardian First Book Award and longlisted for the 2008 Man Booker Prize. It won the 2009 Commonwealth Book Prize in the Best First Book category and the

2008 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize. Hanif has also written for the stage and screen, including a feature film, *The Long Night* (2002), a BBC radio play, *What Now, Now That We Are Dead?*, and the stage play *The Dictator's Wife* (2008). His second novel, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, published in 2011, was shortlisted for the Wellcome Trust Book Prize (2012), and the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature (2013).

Razi Ahmed

Razi Ahmed is the founding director of the annual, not-for-profit Lahore Literary Festival (LLF), the first such public initiative in Lahore, Pakistan. He has organised two successive editions of the festival since its debut in 2013. His full-time responsibilities are at Associated Group where he serves as a director in its LPG business, and sits on the boards of *Newsweek Pakistan* and Zohra and Z.Z.Ahmed Foundation. He led AG's initiatives in public education at Government College, Forman Christian College, and Care Schools. Ahmed has also written for publications in Pakistan and abroad on politics and culture.

About the Guest of Honour:

Nabaneeta Dev Sen

Nabaneeta Dev Sen was born in 1938 in Calcutta into a family of well-known poets -- her father was Narendra Dev and her mother was Radharani Devi. Her name was chosen for her by Rabindranath Tagore himself. Nabaneeta Dev Sen is one of the most versatile Bengali female writers of India today. Her spontaneity, unique style of expression, vast and varied experience of life is evident in her poems, short stories, novels, features, and essays. She was a professor of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University in Calcutta. She is the founder and president of West Bengal Women Writers' Association. Her first collection of poems *Pratham Pratyay* was published in 1959. She now has many books to her credit in a variety of genres: short stories, essays, travelogues, poetry, fiction, children's literature, verse-plays, humour. Even her most scholarly essays are remarkable for the charming prose and sense of humour.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF):

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata's pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grows out of the bookstore's year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the six years since Kolkata saw her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a now 94-year-old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favors depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January. In 2015 AKLF explores literature as part of our tangible and intangible heritage, a theme that runs through several sessions of the festival. AKLF focusses on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. Prominent personalities attending will be Hanif Kureishi, Naseeruddin Shah, Charles Allen, John Elliott, Mohammed Hanif, Leila Seth, Michael Buckley, Upamanyu Chatterjee, David Davidar, Shekhar Gupta, Shashi Tharoor, Asish Nandy, Ramachandra Guha,

Kishwar Desai, Muzzafar and Meera Ali, Nabaneeta Dev Sen amongst several others. There are some firsts in AKLF 2015. A heritage literary walk, a literary 'adda', a Young Adult litfest for high school students, a bloggers' meet, a children's bookfest crammed with activities, even a standup comic for the college crowd and a leadership training session for young teens on importance of character, karma and individual social responsibility™. Add to that our signature heritage site evenings at The Indian Museum, National Library, Victoria Memorial, Lascar War Memorial, indepth discussions, top of the line authors, thinkers and performers, and you have a literary experience not to be missed. And all absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

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