

## **‘What Kind of Asian was Gandhi?’**

**Kolkata, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2013:** The National Library, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), with the support of INTACH presented a talk on *What Kind of Asian was Gandhi?* by eminent historian and author Ramachandra Guha, on the occasion of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013. The thought-provoking and scholarly lecture delivered by Guha was based on his extensive historical research on Mahatma Gandhi’s life in South Africa, the core theme of his forthcoming book. He explored Gandhi’s role in the context of Asia and the east as opposed to the west.

It was a unique and memorable experience for the audience to observe and listen to the prolific author engage in an animated discussion with Professor Swapan Chakravorty, Director General of the National Library of India. Held on the steps of the National Library, against its magnificent illuminated façade, the setting added a palpable sense of occasion, bringing history alive to a Kolkata audience, both informed and appreciative.

Part of one of AKLF 2013’s key themes of ‘The Asian Neighbourhood’, the interaction was one of its most significant 2013 events. Guha, a distinguished historian and celebrated academician spoke about the role played by Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of Indian nationalism, in Asian politics at large.

### **About Ramachandra Guha**

Ramachandra Guha is a historian, author and columnist based in Bangalore. Best described as a multi-faceted personality, he writes on cricket, history, environment and politics. Ramachandra Guha is the author of the internationally acclaimed India ‘After Gandhi’. His other books include *Makers of Modern India*, *A Corner of a Foreign Field* and *Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin, His Tribals and India*. . He has taught at the London School of Economics, Yale, Stanford, and The Indian Institute of Science. He also writes columns for well-known Indian newspapers. His latest book, *Patriots and Partisans*, is a wonderfully readable collection of essays on a wide range of topics.

### **About Swapan Chakravorty**

Swapan Chakravorty is Director General of the National Library of India, Kolkata, and Secretary and Curator of Victoria Memorial Hall. He is also professor (on lien), Department of English, Jadavpur University. He is internationally acknowledged as an authority on Renaissance drama and the history of the book. He writes in English and Bengali, and his edited book *Mudraner sanskriti o bangla boi* won the Narsingh Das Award of Delhi University. He is contributory editor of *The Collected Plays of Thomas Middleton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) which won the Distinguished Scholarly Edition Award of the Modern Language Association of America and the Elizabeth Dietz Memorial Award of Rice University. His latest publication is the edited book *Rabindranath: silparup, paathrup, grantharup* (Kolkata: Ababhaas).

### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:**

A Community initiative by the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the annual literary festival hosted since 2010 in Kolkata is the first international literary festival in Kolkata, a city celebrated for its intellectual depth and cultural heritage. An array of special curated discussions, performances and some of the finest literary events are scheduled for the fourth edition from 9th- 13th January, 2013. A noteworthy literary and cultural representation from across India and overseas will be seen at the Festival, amongst the finest minds from India and overseas. Prominent personalities attending will be Ramachandra Guha, William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhuri, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia, Shobhaa De and Tishani Doshi and several others. Events are scheduled at significant cultural and heritage venues across Kolkata like National Library, St John's Church, banks of Hooghly, Lascar Monument, and at India's finest and most loved 92 year old iconic bookstore- Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata. Amongst the many highlights is Festival's collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize to recognize and encourage new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

**For event videos & pictures Log On to <http://www.aklf.in/>**

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