

Bengali lit festival to explore changing times

Jhimli Mukherjeepandey
@timesgroup.com

Debobrata Shome

Kolkata: The festival that exclusively celebrates Bengali literature, Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob which made its debut in 2015, began on Friday. While the three-day fest, supported by Patra Bharati was inaugurated by noted poet Shankha Ghosh, the keynote address on 'Bangla Sahityer Haal Haquiqat' was given by one of the best loved authors of Bengali literature Sanjib Chattopadhyay.

"I don't think there is any debate about Bengali literature losing its charm today. It has an eternal appeal and we have as many enthusiastic readers today as we had yesterday," Ghosh asserted.

Chattopadhyay, in his characteristic witty style summed up the trends and experimentation with language which is going on in Bengali literature today. "Language is completely different today and it's kind of universal, seamlessly moving from Bengali to Hindu, Urdu, English and back," he said.

Over the last two decades, the world around us has comp-



(L-R) Sanjib Chattopadhyay, Tridib Chattopadhyay, Shankha Ghosh and Imdadul Haque Milan light the lamp at the inauguration ceremony of the third edition of Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob at Apeejay House

letely changed and the Utsob is trying to reflect the change through the debate and discussion sessions. Thus, while senior Bengali authors — Shirs-hendu Mukhopadhyay, Prafula Roy and Samaresh Majumdar — will discuss 50 years of making literature, young authors will discuss why comics have graduated to the level of literature. Instant writing and publishing, which is popular on social networking sites, will be discussed by poet Srijato, Pracheta Gupta and Nachiketa.

"The Utsob has an interesting take on Bengali literature and captures the changing times well. There is a session on RJs and whether they are taking the language forward with the lingo they use on air," said Mukhopadhyay.

While the more serious sessions will revolve around fiction and non-fiction, drama and poetry, some are based on other genres of writing with good doses of detectives in Bengali literature, historical fiction writing, food and travel writing.