

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival,
Kolkata's first literary festival announces its eighth edition with a
'Heritage Tour on the river Ganges'

Key highlights of AKLF 2017

- ✓ ***Conversations : Post-Truth, Inclusiveness, India's North East ; Protection of Child Rights ; Voices of Women***
- ✓ ***Celebrating Children & Youth: Announcing 2-day Oxford Junior Literary Festival and AKLF & Unicef collaboration for Unicef@70 global campaign***
- ✓ ***Celebrating Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize in Literature: Announcing Plug in - 3 evenings of music 7.30 PM onwards with Underground Authority, Ritornellos and other artists.***
- ✓ ***Book launches: ABCDesi by Priti Paul; Horse racing in India –a Royal Legacy by Lynn Deas.***
- ✓ ***Commemoration: Mahasweta Devi with a film screening, discussion & a dramatized reading of The Why Why Girl***
- ✓ ***Celebrating Poetry, Films & Photography: 3-day Poetry Café, Short Film Festival with ilead, Kolkata Photo Festival 2017***

Kolkata, 6th January, 2017: Apeejay Surrendra Group and Oxford Bookstores today announced the eighth edition of **Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival**, India's only literary festival created by a Bookstore and Kolkata's first literary festival.

Spotlighting Kolkata's unique cultural heritage of inclusiveness, the nearly 100 year old heritage Oxford Bookstore unveiled the programme of the festival to be hosted at St. Paul's Cathedral aboard a cruise on the banks of Ganga as **Ashok Saha** of **Bhromora** sang and performed traditional river songs of Bengal and heritage expert G.M. Kapur spoke about Kolkata's historical spirit of inclusiveness in creativity and culture.

Addressing the media, **Ms. Maina Bhagat & Ms Anjum Katyal, Directors, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival** said, *"The year that has gone by has wounded the psyche of people globally and its impact will be seen in literature across the next few years. AKLF's 2017 schedule is woven around starting conversations to make the world a more inclusive place. Our city is known for its inclusive culture and AKLF has since inception showcased its valuable tangible and intangible heritage. There is no heritage site more intrinsic to Kolkata than the river whose banks it stands on, perhaps the very reason for its existence as a city is this river. In 2017, at the eight edition of our festival, AKLF's agenda is to start conversations about inclusiveness as the only cure for frayed societies. "*

“AKLF 2017 programming spans the entire spectrum of inclusion, from women and children to the underprivileged, including our tribute to Mahasweta Devi who brought the most marginalized into the fold of literature. The era of Post Truth, where facts are fast losing out to rhetoric, the reality globally, is discussed by experts; as is the impact of different media on our reality today. Every evening for three days, AKLF will pay a tribute to Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan through poetry and contemporary music at Poetry Café’ and Plug In, hosted at our main venue - St. Paul’s Cathedral grounds - chosen for its welcoming, accessible and inclusive nature.

*“The partnerships we’ve forged, like with UNICEF, the new mini festivals we are hosting for children and young filmmakers, the thinkers, and writers we have invited to the AKLF platform to deliberate on a range of important issues, the books we have chosen to launch, are all part of a hope – a hope that AKLF contributes to inspiring a new generation of artists, musicians, writers, filmmakers and visual artists who will value the idea of inclusion and spotlight the racism, patriarchy, warmongering, social inequality, hypocrisy, and corruption, hurting people, especially children, across the world,” **the AKLF directors added.***

AKLF 2017 will be held at **St Paul’s Cathedral**, established in 1847 and **Oxford Bookstore**, established in 1919. The festival’s closing event will be hosted at **St John's Church**, built in 1787. The Festival conversations will also be hosted at **Royal Calcutta Turf Club, Tollygunge Club, the campus of iLead & Presidency University, Daga Nikunj and Harrington Street Arts Centre.**

Announcing AKLF agenda on a heritage tour on Ganga, **they said** is *“a call that will resonate across the four days of AKLF - it's time to open out our cities, our communities and our hearts, to make space for everyone to come in. It's time to bring help and hope to our children. It's time for each of us to highlight the urgent need for inclusiveness; and we urge everyone to make a start by joining the conversations at AKLF 2017. Our 2017 festival journey, starting today on the banks of the Ganga, will culminate at St. John's Church where we will end our festival with a candlelight vigil in solidarity with the ideal of an inclusive society.”*

The first edition of **Oxford Junior Literary Festival (OJLF) a two day literary festival (15th and 16th Jan)** for young readers will involve children from Future Hope NGO and from several shelters outside Kolkata as its chief guests. OJLF will showcase **Fun with Chinese Opera** – a Chinese Opera mask making by Susanna Goho Quek - a writer, illustrator, artist, and an art curator ; **Monsters, Songsters and Much Such Madness** with Anushka Ravishankar, popular children’s writer ; **Unhappy Moon**, storytelling session about a playful moon by author Saraswathi Menon and illustrator Proiti Roy ; **A Tribute to Mahasweta Devi** - a dramatized reading of **The Why Why Girl** who never stops asking questions ; **In Our Own Voice** - a creative presentation by Future Hope students ; **In My Head**, the craft of the monologue ; **Starting Up: New Writers for Young Readers** with Arya Rajam and Shubhra Shah Agarwal where students interact with young writers and **Being the Change** Young writer-activist Yassmin Abdel-Magied and Youth ki Awaaz pioneer Anshul Tewari will discuss their challenges and dreams with students.

AKLF will introduce **Tiny Stories**, a global campaign by UNICEF@70 with Shashi Tharoor, author, United Nations peace-keeper, and human rights activist during OJLF with mid and senior school students penning their ‘tiny stories’ on the theme of a ‘A Better World for Every Child’ for the global campaign by UNICEF@70. *“UNICEF is very happy to be part of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, which is one of the most celebrated literary festivals in the country. We have collaborated with AKLF 2017, as part of the*

UNICEF@70 campaign. We believe that AKLF gives us a perfect opportunity to engage with the authors as well as the children for #TinyStories initiative. As part of the literary festival, we are organizing workshops with select authors and children to encourage them to write on "What I hope for every child"
Meital Rusdia, Chief, UNICEF West Bengal said at the occasion.

Priti Paul's **ABCDesi**, an unusual first book of English alphabets and Indian imagery will be released by veteran educationist Sister Cyril during OJLF with a specially curated interactive performance by well-known dancer Anita Ratnam. **ABCDesi Live!** will carry forward to day 2 of OJLF with **My ABC** an alphabet painting on the ABCDesi theme of local images with leading artist Wasim Kapoor.

AKLF 2017 will introduce for the first time, **Plug in**, as a **tribute to Nobel laureate Bob Dylan**, showcasing the best young musicians in Kolkata across genres. Held in the heart of the city at St Paul's Cathedral Grounds, the music festival will kick off in the evening after 7.30 pm on 15, 16, 17th Jan. The musicians and bands that will grace Plug in will be an eclectic mix of rock, rap, electronic, rhythm, instrumentals and harmony. They are **No Strings Attached** known for repertoire of music combines elements of American folk, jazz, country and blues music; **Underground Authority – countrywide** famous for their rap-rock outfit, entertaining and educating the masses about lives and struggles; **Ritornellos** identified for their rousing music and easy tunes; **Paloma & Adil** famous for their experimental, soothing electronic soundscapes and **Sambit** known for his fantastic solo act of rhythm and music. Plug in promises to be a stage like no other.

Especially curated for this edition of AKLF are edifying panel discussions and thought-provoking conversations. AKLF Inaugural session is **Black and White**, with Shashi Tharoor, author and social commentator, discussing the legacy of the Raj in continuation of his popular speech at the Oxford University that went viral recently followed by an interaction with UK publisher **Michael Dwyer**; **Post-Truth – a threat to liberal democracy?** Are we living in a time where fact is being ignored for emotional rhetoric? with Ananya Vajpeyi, Anubha Bhosle, and Ram Rahman; **Narichetna: Writing by and on Women** - across the country, how are women writing and being written of? with Malashri Lal, Esther Syiem, Supriya Chaudhuri, Sunaina Singh, Jerry Pinto. Moderated by Bharati Ray; **A Space for Us: The Last Girl in Literature.** Can the Last Girl speak? Who speaks for her? with Anita Nair, Baby Halder and Ruchira Gupta; **Whither Northeast? Points of View**, Questions of identity and progress with Prajwal Parajuly, Esther - Syiem, Reep Pandi Lepcha, Sreeradha Dutta; **The Superwoman Syndrome** How do popular narratives represent Women of Substance? with **Shobhaa De, Naina Lal Kidwai, Rupali Basu, Sudha Menon; From Olympus to Kailash** with Devdutt Pattanaik on Greek myths with an Indian twist and Arshia Sattar and **Love in a Time of Vitriol – Narratives of Inclusiveness** where **Nayantara Sahgal delivers the AKLF closing address, followed by Haji Syed Salman Chisty of Ajmer Sharif and statements by Ram Rahman, Kiran Nagarkar, Urvashi Butalia, Ananya Vajpeyi, Jerry Pinto and Sandip Roy.** The Festival closes with a mass candle light vigil, poetry and music in solidarity with the ideal of an inclusive society

The festival will commemorate late writer and activist **Mahasweta Devi** with a documentary film screening **Talking Writing: Four Conversations with Mahasweta Devi** directed by Pushan Kripalani followed by a discussion with her contemporary, the leading author **Nabaneeta Dev Sen**, literary critic and academic **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak**, and Publisher Naveen Kishore

Poetry Café, in tribute to Bob Dylan, will be held across 3 days at St. Paul Cathedral Grounds. Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival is the only festival that gives such a special space to Poetry as a genre to be

celebrated. It is an event for poets, by poet, of poets. The café concept makes the ambience informal and encourages face to face interactions with established and aspiring poets. The first day will see **Bashabi Fraser**, well-known UK based poet and translator, Introduced by Sanjeev Chopra; **Neal Hall**, USA poet of international acclaim, introduced by Debasish Lahiri. The second day Poetry Cafe will host Italian poet **Alessandro Lutman**, introduced by Ashoke Viswanathan and **City Poets Read With Anjana Basu, Avik Chanda, Ananya Chatterjee and Debasish Lahiri** and the third day will be a **Open Mic**, coordinated by **Aditya Sengupta and Kheya** and **Anita Nair**, Introduced by Joie Bose and **Jerry Pinto**, introduced by Arthur Cardozo.

AKLF will announce the Shortlist of the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize at an event in St.Paul's Cathedral grounds with a presentation by Aishee on the Bengali tradition of book cover design, followed by a discussion on 'What Works' with Jury members, Alka Pande and Aman Nath in the presence of Urvashi Butalia, Jon Lang and Marcos Giralt Torrente. The session will be moderated by Nandita Palchoudhuri.

The four day long, multi-faceted Festival has several stimulating components like release of Lynn Deas's book **Horse racing in India – A Royal Legacy** by Chief Guest Naresh Kumar, iconic sports personality at the Royal Calcutta Turf Club encompassing a discussion between veteran sports journalist Kishore Bhimani and well-known jockey Robin Corner.

Some of the prominent personalities who will be part of AKLF 2017 are **Shashi Tharoor, Raj Kamal Jha, Amit Chaudhuri, Alka Pande, Shobhaa De, Anita Nair, Arshia Sattar, Devdutt Pattanaik, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Jerry Pinto, Kiran Nagarkar, Kunal Basu, Naina Lal Kidwai, Q, Saikat Majumdar, Michael Dwyer, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Nayantara Sahgal, Ritu Menon, Urvashi Butalia** and more

Notes to Editors

AKLF 2017 Partners and Associations:

The AKLF 2017 edition has forged several new, prestigious associations, to add to its impressive repertoire of collaborations since the first edition in 2010. We are proud to have as our partners major national and international institutions and corporates such as the Australian Council for the Arts, Alliance Française, Australian High Commission, Instituto Cervantes, Consulate General of Italy, MAKAIAS, Presidency University, Future Hope, UNICEF, The Teacher's Centre, Jaipur Literary Festival, Sahitya Akademi, Development Corporation Limited (DCL), Vivada Cruises, FACES, Open Doors, The Creative Arts, Zoomcar, Art Rickshaw, Times Fibrefill, Aishee, Sienna and several others. A wide cross section of publishers like Niyogi Books, Future, Oxford University Press, Tulika, Duckbill, NBDS The Book Council are also partnering with us. Venue partners include Tollygunge Club, iLead, Harrington Street Art Centre, Alka Jalan Foundation and Royal Calcutta Turf Club. We welcome 93.5 Red FM as our radio partner, Vistara as aviation partner, Typhoo as beverage partner, Kenilworth as hospitality partner, Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals as wellness partner. AKLF is very proud of these associations and hopes to keep growing year on year.

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 stores in major metros, 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 nearly 100 years. There are a few treats as sumptuous as a visit to Oxford Bookstore in India. Each time you walk into our iconic store in Kolkata where the brand started in 1919, its charm leaves you wanting for more. Our fleet of 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. For more information, please also log on to: 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 Cluster, Logistics & Knowledge Parks. 2010 was the Group's centenary year. For more Information, please visit www.apeejaygroup.com

For more information, please contact:

Ms Renu Kakkar, E: rkakkar@apeejaygroup.com,

M: +91 9330992015, T: 033 4403 5637

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