

Sahitya Akademi fest to host tribal writers, trans poets

New Delhi: A six-day Festival of Letters will see the first-time participation of 43 female tribal writers and 15 transgender poets. Organised by the National Academy of Letters, Sahitya Akademi, it will kick off next week in Delhi.

Scheduled to take place from January 28 to February 2, the week-long festival will have over 250 regional, national and international writers, poets, critics, and translators, Sahitya Akademi Secretary K. Sreenivasa Rao told reporters on Thursday.

Apart from other literary programmes, a two-day Women Tribal Writers' Meet, where 43 eminent female tribal writers and poets representing 36 tribal languages will take part, and a Transgender Poets' Meet of 15 trans poets, will feature in the festival.

The latter will be inaugurated by Manabi Bandopadhyay, academic and the first trans principal

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of Kolkata's Krishnagar Women's College.

Sahitya Akademi annual awards, announced in December 2018, will be presented to 24 winners on the festival's second day. Of these 24 winning works, seven are poetry collections, six short story collections, six novels, four works of criticism and one essay collection.

During the festival, the Bhasha Samaman awards will also be conferred on eight scholars making outstanding contributions to the field of classical and medieval literature or enrichment of unrecognised languages and oral traditions of India.

As per Sreenivasa Rao, a special Gandhi corner will mark the 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi, and will feature over 700 books written on and by the mass leader. An assorted exhibition will showcase the Akademi's previous year's activities, achievements and highlights.

The exhibition is to be inaugurated by former Rajya Sabha member and scholar Mrinal Miri.

Gandhi, who features abundantly in many cultural programmes across India, will be the focus of another event at the festival -- a three-day national seminar on Gandhi and Indian Literature. It will have over 50

Gandhian scholars speaking on various themes related to 'Bapu'.

Armoogum Parsuramen, former Minister of Education in Mauritius and a Gandhian scholar, will also feature in the seminar, Sreenivasa Rao said.

The Samvatsar lecture will be delivered by writer and former Sahitya Akademi fellow Gopi Chand Narang, who will talk about "Faiz Ahmed Faiz: Thought Structure, Evolutionary Love and Aesthetic Sensibility".

Other highlights of the festival will include a panel discussion on the present scenario of Indian playwriting, and cultural performances by classical dancer Sonal Mansingh and violinist Sunita Bhuyan.

The festival's entry is free for the public. Its schedule is available on the website of the Sahitya Akademi.

