



SAHITYA AKADEMI FELLOWSHIP FOR DR NAMVAR SINGH

The 85th meeting of General Council of Sahitya Akademi recommended Dr Namvar Singh be conferred with the Akademi Fellowship, the Akademi's highest honour. The date of conferment of Fellowship will be announced soon.

Born on 1st May 1927 in Varanasi, Dr Namvar Singh is the most distinguished Hindi critic and scholar. In his long and illustrious career, Dr Namvar Singh has a large body works spanning several genres and most notable of his works are Doosri Parampara ki Khoj, Bakalam Khud, Chhayavad and Kavita ke Naye Pratimaan. He retired from Jawaharlal Nehru University and is the editor of Aalochana, a literary journal devoted to modern criticism. Many of his works have appeared in different literary journals / magazines.



TODAY'S EVENTS

FACE TO FACE
(Interviews with select 2016 Sahitya Akademi Award Winners)

Meghdoot Auditorium III, 10.00 a.m.

PURVOTTARI
(North-East and Northern Writers' Meet)

Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, 10.30 a.m.

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON
Folklore: Tellings and Retellings
Sahitya Akademi Auditorium, 11.00 a.m.

Cultural PROGRAMME
BAUL SONGS
By Raja Hassan
Meghdoot Theatre I, 6.00 p.m.

YUVA SAHITI : THE NEW HARVEST

Sahitya Akademi's annual Festival of Letters continued for the third day at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns in New Delhi on February 23, 2017. The first programme for the day was 'Yuva Sahiti: The New Harvest', a programme devoted to young writing of different languages across India.

In the inaugural session Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the dignitaries and participant young writers. He talked about the value of young people for any society and their role in the development of the society.



B. Jayamohan, eminent Tamil writer in his inaugural address dwelt at length on the characteristics of modern and ancient writings. He said that modern literature is rescuing literature from the clutches of religions or religious writings. He recommended young writers to read ancient literature to know what was written 100 years back by our great writers to understand their worldview.

Goreti Venkanna was the Guest of Honour. He is a household name in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. He rendered two folk songs, one of which was titled 'Gypsy'. His voice culture and

performance mesmerised the audience. In the inaugural session Avinuo Kire (English), Pratishta Pandya (Gujarati), Nishant (Hindi), B. Raghunandan (Kannada), Sampreetha Kesavan (Malayalam) and Moien Shadab (Urdu) recited their poems in their native languages and Hindi/English translations.

For the first time an interaction session was arranged with senior eminent writer Manoj Das. He shared his literary journey with the young writers and they asked variety of questions on the present literary scenario. He suggested that young writers should take special care while re-writing mythological stories or re-defining or restructuring mythological characters.

In the second session a lively discussion held on the topic 'Writing: Passion or Profession'. Eminent Bengali writer Antara Dev Sen chaired this session and Bipasha Borah (Assamese), Devdan Chaudhuri (English) and S.





Rajamanickam (Tamil) shared their views on the topic. A lively question-answer session followed. The session was concluded with a note that writing is more a passion than profession.

The fourth session was devoted to short stories. Brajendra Tripathi chaired this session and Sayantani Putaunda (Bengali), Pargat Singh Satauj (Punjabi), Poodoori Raji Reddy (Telugu) and Koimal Dayalani (Sindhi) presented their stories.

The last session of the programme was devoted to poetry. It was chaired by Bodhisatva. Kewal Kumar Kewal (Dogri), Muzaffar Hussain Dilbir (Kashmiri), Eknath Gaunkar (Konkani), Chandan Kumar Jha (Maithili), Sushil Kumar Shinde (Marathi), Budhichandra Heinamba (Manipuri), Amar Baniya Lahoro (Nepali), Ipshita Sarangi (Odia), Raju Ram Bijarniyan (Rajasthani), and Maheswar Soren (Santali) presented their poems in their language and Hindi/English translations.



Writers' Meet



Sahitya Akademi organized a 'Writers' Meet' featuring Sahitya Akademi Awards 2016 Winners at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on 23 February 2017. The event was presided by Dr Chandrashekhar Kambar, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi. The Award winner present talked about their lives, works, the process of creative writing, etc.

Assamese - Sri Jnan Pujari, Award-winner for his collection of poetry *Meghamalar Bhraman*, talked about the creative process of writing poetry and recited some of his poems.

Bengali - Dr Nrisinha Prasad Bhaduri, Award-winner for his collections of essays, *Mahabharater Astadashi*, in his speech talked about the Epic Mahabharata, the female protagonists and the lessons to be learnt by all from the Epic.

Bodo - Smt. Anjalee Basumatary, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner for her collection of poetry, *Ang Mabwrwi Dong Dswng*, said, "I get encouraged to create poetry by the urge of my soul. The urge comes from natural beauty, various issues, and happenings in of real life. Poetry leads me to a different world. I pass through my difficult journey of life with the help of poetry..."

Gujarati - Sri Kamal Vora, Award-winner for his collection of poetry, *Anekek*, said, "I do not write poetry to explore my 'inner self,' but to seek confrontation with poetry truths. Such confrontations compel me to gather the fragments of my being; make me whole and place me before pure poetry."

Hindi - Smt. Nasera Sharma, Sahitya Akademi Award-winner for her novel, *Parijata*, began her speech with a sentence "Kabhi Jannat To Kabhi Dojakh" which is the gist of her writing career. She further said that her novel *Parijata*, is one of the parts of the tree which was aroused from the "Sagar Manthan" of which one branch was roped by Krishna in "Kanchan Van", which is still available in Barabanki, UP.

Kannada - Sri Bolwar Mahamad Kunhi, Sahitya Akademi Award Winner for *Swatantryada Ota*, a Kannada novel, thanked the Akademi for the Award and talked about his early life, influences on his writings and the process of creative writing.





Kashmiri - Dr. Aziz Hajini, Award-winner for his collection of critical essay, *Aan-e-Khane*, in his speech quoted Ghalib, "DekhnaTaqreer Ki Lazat Ki Jo us neiKaha/ Mene Yun Jana Ki ye be Merydil men hai". He further said, "In my opinion the good critic is one who helps a reader appreciate a creative piece. His basic job is to vouch for the possibilities hidden in the word order and imagination of a piece of literature. Reader-oriented and reader-friendly literary criticism is the best in my opinion."

Konkani - Edwin J.F. D'Souza, Award-winner for his novel, *Kallem Bhangaar*, in his speech said, "*Kallem Bhangaar* means Black Gold a synonym for crude oil from which various petroleum distillates are derived and in turn which fuel the entire world." He further said, "This novel does not essentially relate to a process of fractional distillation of the Black Gold but covers much more."

Maithili - Sri Shyam Darihare, Award-winner for his collection of short stories, *Barki Kaki at Hotmail Dot Com*, in his speech shared his personal experiences which developed him to be a poet and short story writer. He further said that all credit goes to his father who played a major role in shaping him as a short story writer.

Malayalam - Sri Prabha Varma, Award-winner for his novel, *Shyama Madhavam*, in speech said, "Writers write. Is it for the recognition which may or may not be conferred on them by those who are in power? No, not at all! Even if no one is there to recognise, writers will write. Was it for laurels that Valmiki wrote? Did Vyasa expect any award when he penned The Mahabharata? No. Writers write. They have no option but to write."

Manipuri - Sri Moirangthem Rajen, Award-winner for his collection of short stories, *Cheptharaba Ishingpun*, in his paper shared his views about Manipuri literary tradition and his journey (which is endless) as a creative writer.

Marathi - Sri Aasaram Marotrao Lomte, Award-winner for his short story collection, *Aalok*, in his speech said, "I think, the writers have been burdened with more responsibilities in these times. I think, this is the need of the hour to write something to make people restless, uneasy and to melt down their self-centred compassion. There may be abundance of products for "healthy" life in the market but the writer must not write to upset / cause harm to health."

Nepali - Ms Gita Upadhyaya, Award-winner for her novel, *Janmabhumi Mero Swadesh*, in her speech described her awarded work thus, "The novel *Janmabhumi Mero Swadesh* is based on the life of Chhabilal Upadhyay and the freedom movement of our country. It is a story about how the people of a tiny helmet in North-Eastern part of our country participated in the struggle for Independence."

Odia - Smt. Paramita Satpathy, Award-winner for her collection, *Prapti*, in her speech said, "As a human being, as a woman, I do feel inhibited on many occasions. But, writing has been an arena for me, where I feel absolutely free and I take refuge in it..."

Punjabi - Dr.Swarajbir Singh, Award-winner for his play, *Massia Di Raat*, in his speech said, "My experience shows that one of the demands which hang heavily on the head of the author is to unshackle the language from the ideology and it is a formidable task. It is not an easy one..."

Rajasthani - Sri Bulaki Sharma, Award-winner for his collection of short stories, *Murdjat Ar Dujee Kahaniyan* discussed one of the stories from his award-winning collection, *Murdjat* presenting a realistic picture of the status of women in a patriarchal society and their travails and woes.

Santali - Sri Gobind Chandra Majhi, Award-winner for his collection of poems, *Nalha*, in his speech talked about the about Santal life and characteristics of poetic forms in Santal poetry

Tamil - Sri Vannadasan (S. Kalyansundaram), Award-winner for his collection of short stories, *Oru Siru Isai*, in his speech said, "I believe the small things are the bigger things. Just because of the existence of these small people with their small things, they make this bigger universe bright and beautiful. When there could be a 'God of small things', there would always be a 'man of small things'."

Telugu - Dr.Papineni Siva Sankar, Award-winner for his collection of poems, *Rajanigandha*, in his speech said, "No writer can change the system of society even with all of his writings." He concluded his speech with reciting a few lines from the *Rajanigandha*, which is one of the poems of his award-winning work.

Urdu - Dr. Nizam Siddiqui, award-winner for his collection of essays, *Mabad-e-Jadidiyat Se Naye Ahed Ki Takhliqiyat Tak*, in his speech informed that the content of the awarded book ranges from the post modernism to new age creativity. He further said, "This book merges the talents of the circumspect but absorbed creative author, the avid lifelong scholar and the discerning and the fertile idea man in the higher literary criticism."





SAMVATSAR LECTURE BY RAMACHANDRA GUHA

ON THE CRAFT OF HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

Sahitya Akademi's annual Samvatsar Lecture for the year 2017 was delivered by Dr Ramachandra Guha, eminent scholar and historian at the Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on the evening of February 23, 2017. Samvatsar Lecture is an annual lecture delivered by a distinguished writer and a creative thinker who has a thorough understanding of Indian literature. These lectures may reflect a deep concern for values and should open up new vistas of thinking regarding a literary movement, a current literary trend, some original thinking about a great writer or a great classic or a new path in literary criticism or literary creation.

Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, welcomed the guest speaker and introduced him to audience. Dr Ramachandra Guha spoke about why Indians, especially Indian historians shy away from writing a historical biography and also about the art of writing a biography.



Brief excerpts from his lecture: "Historical Biography is that part of history more allied to literature than any other parts of history. History oscillates between social sciences and literature. Why do historians stay away from biographies? First is the burden of religious inheritance. Religions such as Hinduism are inimical to writing a biography due to its inherent belief system based on karma and rebirth. The second reason is scholarly inheritance, especially Marxism since Marxism diminishes the importance of the individual. The third reason is history's tilt towards social sciences though history began as a branch of literature. The fourth reason is Indians' indifference to record keeping. The archives in the country, central and state, are in complete disarray. The fifth reason why Indians are diffident on writing biographies is the fear of giving offense to eminent individual. The sixth reason is biography is a challenging literary form. The seventh reason is writing of biography requires writers and scholars to suppress their own egos and write about another writer with equally a big ego. These are the reasons why historical biography never took off in a big way in India. The following are four central tenets of writing a biography: a) the secondary characters are critical to the story b) the biographer must look for sources emanating from places other than the central character c) the biographer should not anticipate and d) the biographer should not be deterred even if there exists already a comprehensive biography."

Dr Guha described how the Verrier Elwin's life and works transformed him and his critical outlook. He illustrated the challenges of writing a biography through his attempts to write a biography of Verrier Elwin. He observed that while historical biography is an underdeveloped field and challenging, young scholars should tell their stories since historical biography in India is on the rise and in the coming years we are likely to see more number of historical biographies. A brief interactive session took place after the lecture and Dr K. Sreenivasarao thanked Dr Ramachandra Guha for accepting Akademi's invitation and delivering a fabulous lecture.

Lai-Haraoba, Mao and Kabui Dance by Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy



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