



South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Editorial

The SAARC Cultural Centre is pleased to place its new-look quarterly Newsletter in the hands of its discerning readers. The First quarter of 2012 has been a busy period for the SAARC Cultural Centre with many activities lined up in our schedule. A motley of events comprising dance, cinema, research, and lectures kept the Centre busy and vibrant.

This issue of the Newsletter underscores the successful completion of its second research conference on 'Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation; Diasporic Cultures of South Asia'. The Year started with yet another vibrant cultural activity, the SAARC Cultural Festival featuring dance troupes from five SAARC Countries of the region and was a memorable event for the artists, guests, and the public who had the rare opportunity to witness traditional dance items from the region. As we enter into the second year of our Newsletter SAARC Cultural Centre would like to thank all the Member States for their cooperation in organizing various activities of the Centre.

- Editor

About the Centre: New Initiatives

- SAARC Cultural Centre Celebrates the International Women's Day 2012 2
- SAARC Foundation Day Lecture 2
- SAARC Film Day Series 3
- SAARC Translation Programme 3

Achievements

- SAARC Cultural Festival 4
- SAARC Regional Conference on Diasporic Cultures of South Asia 4
- Research Project on Diminishing Cultures of South Asia-Research Review Committee Meeting 7

Visitors to the Centre

7

Up-coming Programmes

- SAARC Film Day 7
- SAARC Film Festival 8
- SAARC Artist Camp 8

Announcements

- Research Grants 2012-13 Call for proposals-'Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th - 20th Centuries' 8
- SAARC International Seminar on 'Archaeology of Buddhism: Recent Discoveries in South Asia' 10
- SAARC Collections of Contemporary Short Stories and Poems 2012 11

New Publications

11

Vacancies

12

News in Highlight...



Women's Day

2



Foundation Day

2



SAARC Cultural Festival

4



Diasporic Cultures of South Asia

4

8
March

SAARC Cultural Centre Celebrates the International Women's Day 2012



The SAARC Cultural Centre celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March 2012 by organizing a panel discussion on "Cultural Identity and Contribution of Women in South Asia". This event was organized in close collaboration with the Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka. The panel discussion featured well-known Sri Lankan women achievers in arts and culture.

The speakers included:

- Ms. Somalatha Subasinghe, well-known cinematographer, actress and playwright,
- Ms. Upeka Chitrasena, a leading exponent on Kandyan dance,
- Ms. Iromi Wijewardena, a renowned painter, also one of the participants at the SAARC Artist Camp (Colombo, 2011),
- Ms. Meneka Fonseka Sahabandu, famous singer and pianist, and
- Ms. Dharshi Keerthisena, a pioneering textile designer specializing in Sri Lankan Batik.

The well-attended panel discussion was yet another initiative of the SAARC Cultural Centre to promote culture through internationally recognized thematic days.

27
March

SAARC Foundation Day Lecture

The SAARC Cultural Centre commemorated its Foundation day, which falls on 25 March, by organizing a special lecture on 27 March 2012. Ambassador Nihal Rodrigo, former Secretary General of SAARC, delivered the lecture on "Progress of SAARC in the Current Global Context." Held in the auditorium of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies, Colombo, this lecture focused on some important issues faced by the SAARC. Ambassador Nihal Rodrigo is a retired member of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service, and has served as Foreign Secretary, Secretary General of SAARC, and Ambassador to China, Ambassador to Sri Lanka's Permanent Missions to the UN in New York, Geneva, and Vienna.

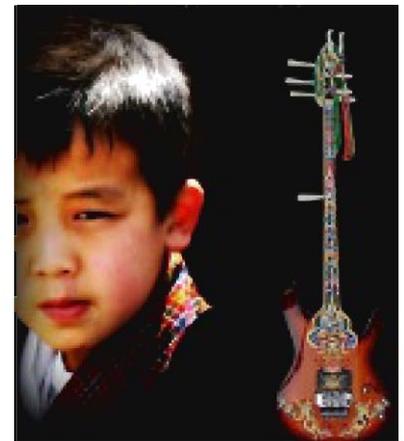
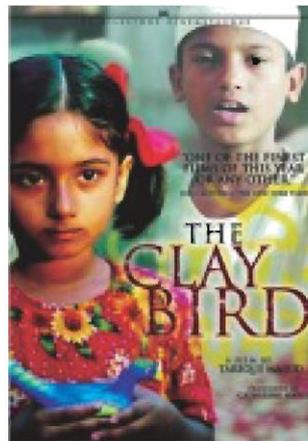
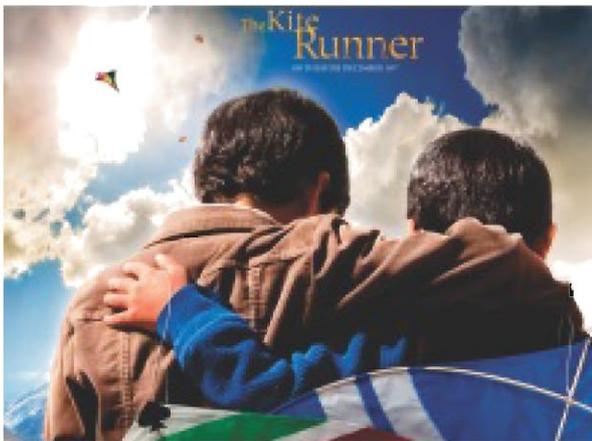
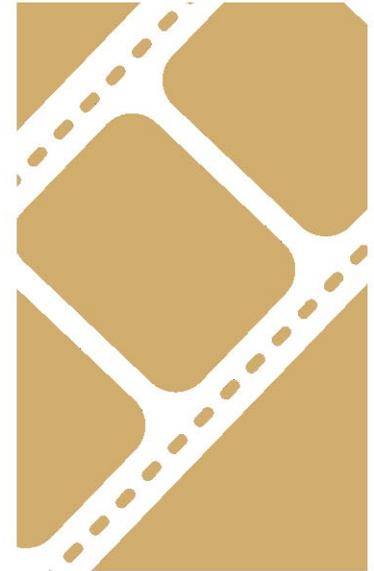


SAARC Film Day Series

With a view to promoting the South Asian Regional Cinema, the SAARC Cultural Centre has launched a programme for monthly screening of a film from the Member States. Organized in collaboration with the National Film Cooperation of Sri Lanka, and the Missions of the Member States located in Sri Lanka, the SAARC Film Day showcases both feature films and documentaries from the Member States for the benefit of the general public. It seeks to promote young Film Directors, artists and writers of Member States.

The following films were screened during the first quarter of 2012

- Afghanistan:** The Kite Runner, Directed by Marc Forster (23 January)
Bangladesh: Mater Moyna (The Clay Bird), Directed by Tareque Masud (23 February)
Bhutan: Song of the Wind, Directed by Palden Dorji and Phuntsok Rabten (23 March)



SAARC Translation Programme

The South Asian region boasts of rich literary tradition since ancient times. However, a majority of these literary masterpieces remained confined within the language and the script barriers. In 2012, the SAARC Cultural Centre proposes to launch a programme for translation of classical literature of South Asia to English as well as other national languages of the Member States. The proposed Translation Programme will ensure that such literary works of classical importance are made available to a wider readership within the region and also to the outside world. It would thus create a cultural resource pool which will facilitate the transmission of ideas and knowledge across the societies.

In the first phase of this programme, literary masterpiece(s) from the principal languages of the Member States would be translated into English, which, in turn, will serve as bridge for their translations into other national languages of the Member States.

17 - 19
February

SAARC Cultural Festival



The cities of Colombo and Galle came alive with a vibrant display of music, dance and food from across the SAARC region when the SAARC Cultural Centre organized a Cultural Festival to celebrate the diversity of culture, ethnicities and peoples of the SAARC Region. This was truly a colourful event with dancers and singers from the region participating at the event. Invitees and spectators to the Cultural Festival witnessed a colourful opening parade by the participants from Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. This was followed by performances by all participating Member States on the stage. Performances were held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) on 17 and 18 February 2012. A highlight of these performances was a unique fusion dance choreographed by one of Sri Lanka's leading dancers, Mr. Ravibandu Vidyapathy. On 19 February, on third and the final day, the participants were taken to Galle, where the ambiance of the splendid Galle Courtyard indeed added to the breath-taking performances by all artists from the participating Member States, enjoyed by a large gathering of local and foreign tourists. The Cultural Festival was an attempt to create a platform to experience culture, traditions, life and people, and to promote cultural cooperation and development.

15-18
March

SAARC Regional Conference on Diasporic Cultures of South Asia concludes successfully

SAARC Cultural Centre is pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the SAARC Regional Conference on 'Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries'. Set in the idyllic sprawling mansion (walauwa) Tamarind Hill Hotel, the academic sessions of the SAARC Regional Conference on Diasporic Cultures of South Asia were held from the 15 - 18 March 2012 in the historic city of Galle.

The Conference is the first part of a Research project on 'Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries', taken up by the SAARC Cultural Centre for the year 2012-13. It was a brainstorming session to discuss key issues, deliberate moot research questions and to identify themes and sub-themes of diasporic cultures of South Asia that merit independent and in-depth research.



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Over 40 participants, who are experts in the field, participated in the Conference which includes delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

The Objectives of the Conference were to:

- Identify the diasporic cultures in and of the Region;
- Discuss the country situation (of the SAARC Member States) related to diasporic cultures,
- Identify research topics and questions related to diasporic cultures in the region that need further investigation; and
- Recognize research approaches and methods for further research in diasporic cultures in the region.

The Conference addressed issues within three broad themes, viz.:

- Circulation of South Asian Peoples and Commodities;
- Circulation of Ideas and Cultural Expressions; and
- Monetary and Trade Networks.

The following Papers were presented at the conference:

1. Diasporic Culture of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries-Prof. K.N.O. Dharmadasa, Editor in Chief, Sinhala Encyclopaedia Office, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka.
2. Diasporic Impact on South Asian Cultures During 18th to 20th Centuries-Prof. Karunamaya Goswami, Principal, Cambrian College, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
3. Circulation of South Asian Peoples and Commodities : An Overview-Mr. Shah Muhammad Ikhtiar Jahan Kabir, Research Fellow, Palli Karma - Sahayak Foundation (PKSK), Bangladesh.
4. Afghan Diaspora-Mr. Ahmad Samim Ahmadi and Mr. Mohmad Umar Marufi Kaleem, Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations, Afghanistan.
5. The Changing Pattern of Pakhtun Culture under the Influence of Diaspora-Prof. Syed Minhaj ul-Hassan, Scholar, Quaid-i Azam Chair in Pakistan Studies, Department of Government and International Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong.
6. The Maldivian Cultural Evolution from 18th to 20th Century-Ms. Asiyath Mohamed, Project Officer, Department of Heritage, Republic of Maldives and Ali Waheed, Director, Department of Heritage, Republic of Maldives.
7. Circulation of Ideas and Cultural Expressions vis-à-vis the Sri Lankan and Nepali Diasporas in Singapore-Ms. Hema Kriuppalini, Research Associate, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), Singapore.
8. Overview of Bhutanese Diasporic Communities and their Cultures-Mr. Harka B. Gurung, Director, National Library and Archives, Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Bhutan and Ms. Tshering Choki, Assistant Archivist, National Library and Archives, Department of Culture, Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs, Bhutan.
9. Diasporic Culture of Bangladesh - 18th to 20th Centuries-Prof. Sharifuddin Ahmed, Professor of History, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.
10. Diasporic Cultures of South Asia: Bangladesh Perspective-Mr. Shamsuzzaman Khan, Director General, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
11. Assessing South Asian Internal Diaspora in the Twentieth Century: Identifying Transnationalism, Cultural Exchange and Newer Cultural Hubs in India-Dr. Waseem Raja, Asst. Professor in History, Centre for Advance Studies, in Medieval History, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P., India.

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12. **Cultural Interactions and Space: Diasporic Communities in Sri Lanka from 18th to 20th Centuries**-Dr. Nirmal Ranjith Dewasiri and Dr. Janaki Jayawardena, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.
13. **Transformation of Cultural Identity of Indian Tamils, The Special Reference to the Tea Workers in the Southern Provinces of Sri Lanka**-Dr. A.S. Chandrabose, Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka.
14. **Dress Code of the Indian Plantation Labourers in Sri Lanka**-Ms. Ramesha Dulani Jayaneththi, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
15. **Circulation of Cultural Expressions from the 18th to 20th Century European Diaspora on Sri Lankan Buddhist Art**-Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Independent Scholar, Sri Lanka.
16. **Circulation of Ideas Helps Circulation of Culture**-Mr. Muhammad Daud Etisham, Press Attaché, High Commission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Sri Lanka.
17. **Diaspora Cultures and Inter State Relations**-Ambassador Sumith Nakandala, Director General, Economic Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka.
18. **The Cultural Continuum of Indian Diaspora: Issues and Experiences**-Dr. Amit Kumar Mishra, Assistant Professor, Centre for Study of Indian Diaspora, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, India.
19. **Intellectuality, Sharing Expressions and Kandyan Dance**-Mr. Sudesh Mantillake, Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
20. **Cultural Diversity and the Rise of National Cultures in South Asia**-Prof. S.T. Hettige, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.
21. **Indian Tamil Diasporic Culture in Sri Lanka: Manika Vinayakar Kovil as a Centre for Cultural Circulation**-Mr. Sanmugeswaran Pathmanesan, Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka.

Research Themes

The Plenary Committee of the Conference headed by Prof. K.D. Paranavitana finalized research topics for the proposed research project of the SAARC Cultural Centre:

Field Visit

The participants of the Conference were taken to a field visit to Katharagama. A visit to Kiri Vehera, Katharagama Devalaya, and Katharagama Museum and Information Centre was made and the participants were able to watch a documentary on the history and the rituals performed at Katharagama through the years.



Research Project on Diminishing Cultures of South Asia (2011-12) Research Review Committee Meeting Concludes Successfully



As part of the Research Project on 'Diminishing Cultures of South Asia', the SAARC Cultural Centre had awarded eight research projects for 2011-12 which commenced in November 2011. As per the terms and conditions of the grants, all projects are subjected to a mid-term review in which the research fellows are required to present their progress of their reports before a panel of experts.

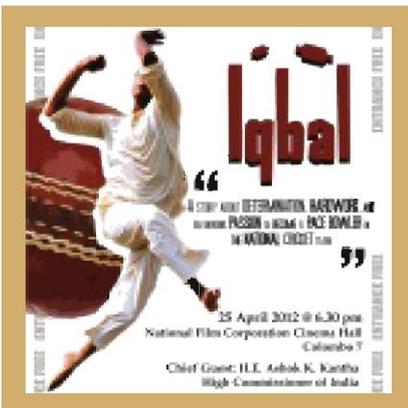
A meeting of the Research Review Committee was held on 27-28 March 2012

at Hotel Renuka, Colombo. The objective of the meeting was to review the progress of the researches and to provide necessary feedback on these projects.

Six Research Fellows, three each from India and Sri Lanka respectively, presented their progress reports at the meeting and were reviewed by the Research Review Committee.

Visitors to the Centre

A high profile delegation from the SAARC Development Fund Secretariat led by Mr. Karma, The Chief Executive Officer, visited the SAARC Cultural Centre on 23 March 2012. The delegates expressed interest in collaborating with the SAARC Cultural Centre pertaining to areas of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe, the Director, SAARC Cultural Centre and the members of the professional staff. The SAARC Cultural Centre being the youngest of the eleven SAARC Regional Centres established under the SAARC Charter looks forward to continuous support and future cooperation with the SAARC Development Fund.



Up-coming Programme: SAARC Film Day

The fourth SAARC Film Day will be held on 25 April 2012 at the National Film Corporation Cinema Hall, Colombo. Organised under the distinguished patronage of H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, the High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka, and in close collaboration with the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo, it will feature a renowned Hindi film "Iqbal" (Directed by Nagesh Kukunoor). The film portrays the story of a young boy whose determination, hard work, and an unending passion to become a pace bowler in the National Cricket team.

Up-coming Programme: SAARC Film Festival - 2012

The SAARC Film Festival which is now an annual event, will once again screen some of the best feature and documentary films from the region from the 16-20 May 2012. The Best Feature and Documentary Film award will also be made at the Festival by a panel of International Adjudicators. The Film Festival is a much awaited event in the SAARC Cultural Centre Calendar.

Please visit our Website for more information.



Up-coming Programme: SAARC Artist Camp

The SAARC Artists Camp 2012, originally scheduled to be held in April 2012, has now been rescheduled in June 2012. Following the success of the First SAARC Artist Camp, (Colombo, 2011), this year too, the Artist Camp will invite artists from the South Asian region to work on site, as well as display some of their best paintings in an exhibition to be mounted on this occasion. The participating Member States are Afghanistan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Exhibition of their paintings will be at the J.D.A Perera Gallery from the 8th - 10th of June 2012.

The theme for the camp for 2012 is "Nature and Art at its Best". An event not to be missed.

Visit our website for more information

Announcement: Research Grants 2012 - 13

Call for Research Proposals - Diasporic Cultures of South Asia During 18th to 20th Centuries

SAARC Cultural Centre, as part of its mandate in promoting cultural diversity in South Asia and part of its research project for 2012-13 is pleased to invite proposals for research for on various aspects of the Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries. The research will give an opportunity for the Member States to conduct an in-depth study on their diasporic cultures and identify and utilize the productive components of the research for the benefit of their people.

The identified research themes were an outcome of the SAARC Regional Conference on Diasporic Cultures.



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RESEARCH THEMES

Theme: South Asian Diaspora during 18th to 20th Centuries

Sub Themes:

1. Relationship between diasporic and host cultures – Causes, processes, effects and symbiosis of 'Being and Becoming':
How diasporic communities influence the culture of the host and how host culture influences the diasporic cultures
2. Diaspora and the Homeland: Image and Reality in Cultural Context
3. Representations of the South Asian Diaspora (visual, textual, performing and in Cyberspace)
4. South Asian Diaspora and its Historical Dynamics: Analysis of 'Continuity and Shift/Change' in following domains of Diasporic lives:
 - Religious Practices
 - Culinary cultures (Cuisine, Food habits and Diet etc.)
 - Generational perspective
 - Costumes and attires
 - Language
5. South Asian Women in Diaspora
6. Socio-Cultural Diversity in South Asian Diaspora
7. Colonization and the making of South Asian Diaspora: Country Studies
8. Intra-Community relationship in South Asian Diaspora beyond the South Asian region
9. Monetary and Trade practices of South Asian Diaspora: A historical analyses
10. Cultural impact of the Circular migration in South Asia
11. Cultural Implications of Education Overseas for South Asian Diaspora
12. Cultural context of Nationalism in South Asian Diaspora
13. Material culture of diasporic communities of South Asia
14. Sports as a carrier of diasporic culture in South Asia
15. Cultural Transformations in South Asian Diaspora as an impact of Globalisation

Applicants are requested to submit a detailed research proposals on any of the themes given above. SAARC Cultural Centre will be selecting up-to **Eight** proposals for the purpose of research grants.

All the research grants will be subject to a mid-term review and the continuation of the project will be subject to the approval of the Progress Report by the SAARC Cultural Centre. At the end of the research project each researcher will be required to submit a publishable draft of the report. The research project are to be completed in eleven months, by 30 June 2013. Each selected researcher will be granted US \$ 3000 for the research.

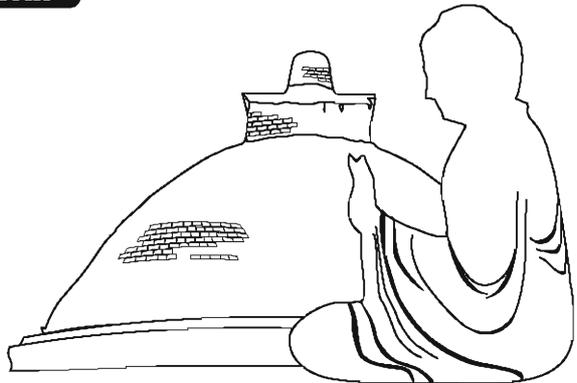
Last date for submitting applications **30 June 2012**

For further details, please visit our Website.

Announcement: SAARC International Seminar

SAARC International Seminar on ARCHAEOLOGY OF BUDDHISM

Recent Discoveries in South Asia



SAARC International Conference on 'Archaeology of Buddhism: Recent Discoveries in South Asia' would focus on Buddhist sites and remains that have been worked up during the last six decades or so. The proposed conference will greatly facilitate advanced research in the archaeology of the region by the comparison of data from various parts of the Subcontinent.

The Conference is conceived as a platform to assess the present state of the Buddhist archaeological sites and remains in the South Asian region and also draw a road-map for their conservation and management so as to secure them for future generations.

The Conference will be held at International Buddhist Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka from 22 to 24 August 2012. It will include Paper Reading Sessions, Poster Session, Photographic Exhibition, Book Fair, Screening of Documentaries/ Films and a Post-Conference Tour to Anuradhapura on 25 August 2012.

Participation at the Conference

The last date for sending the nominations/ registration forms is **10 June 2012**.

As part of the seminar a number of associated activities have been planned to mark this occasion, which include:

1. Photographic Exhibition

An Exhibition of photographs of Buddhist Art (artefacts - sculptures in stone, metal, etc.), Archaeology and Architecture in South Asia will be mounted at the Conference venue

2. Book Exhibition-cum-sale

A Special Exhibition-cum-Sale of books related to the broad theme of the Conference would also be organised at the Conference venue, where leading publishers from the region will be invited to display their publications.

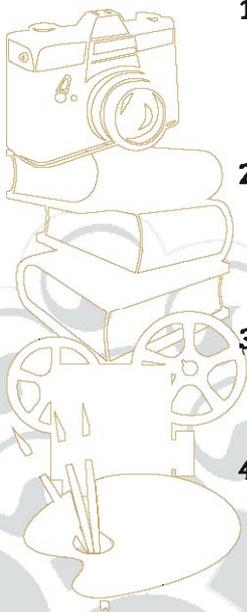
3. Screening of Documentary Films

Screening of a series of documentaries related to the theme of the Conference is being planned as a run-up to the Conference.

4. Exhibition of Paintings by Contemporary Artists

A painting exhibition titled "The Lord Buddha through Contemporary Eyes" will be organized from 21 - 26 August 2012. Contemporary artists residing in Sri Lanka are invited to submit entries.

For more details visit- www.saarcculture.org



Announcement: SAARC Collections of Contemporary Short Stories and Poems 2012

The SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo has launched a programme to publish two collections of Poems and Short Stories annually, to open avenues for international exposure to writers in Member States. All Member States are requested to send a minimum of five short stories and poems on any theme, in original language with an English translation to represent the Country, as per the following guidelines.

Short Stories and Poems Submissions

Only English translations of Short Stories will be accepted for publication. Poems will be published in both original and the English language.

Authors are requested to send their short stories/ Poems through the relevant Ministry (Ministry of External Affairs/ Foreign Affairs) of their own

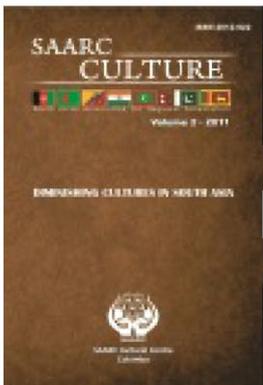
Country, to the SAARC Cultural Centre.(e-mail-sccpublications@gmail.com)

The following information should be submitted with each short story or poem,

1. Author's/ poet's name, affiliation, postal address, e-mail address, phone numbers
2. Brief biographical entry of the author, not exceeding 100 words (This will be published with the short story/poem)
3. Title and the poem (in native language and the edited version of the English translation)
4. Translator's name, to be published
5. Software to open the text in native language (for poems)

Deadline for Submission is 30th June 2012.

New Publications (forthcoming)



SAARC Culture 2011 (Volume 2) - is the annual research journal of the SAARC Cultural Centre. The SAARC Culture Volume 2 (2011) includes 10 research papers on Diminishing Cultures of South Asia. The Journal is available as hard as well as soft copy formats.

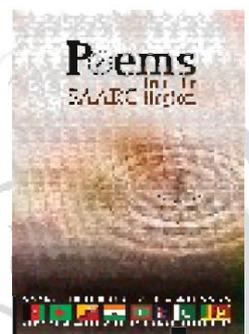
SAARC Film Festival, 2012 - is an information brochure brought out on the occasion of the SAARC Film Festival 2012 contains details about the Films and Documentaries nominated to be screened for the SAARC Film Festival 2012.



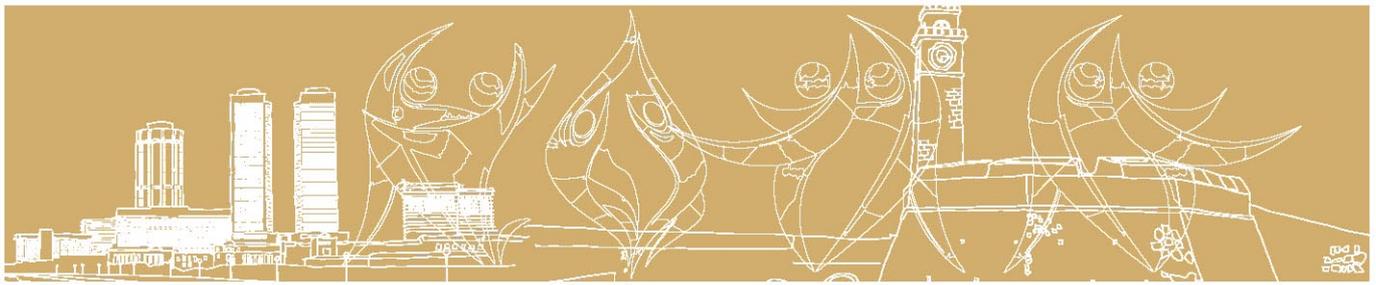
SAARC Collection of Contemporary Short Stories, 2011 - comprises English translations of Contemporary Short Stories from the South Asian region. The collection brings together the contributions of the eminent as well as budding writers on varied themes that reflect subtle nuances of contemporary socio-cultural phenomena of the region. This publication seeks to offer its readers a novel experience of exploring short stories of the region and also to promote the hall mark of South Asian Short Stories.



SAARC Collection of Contemporary Poems, 2011 - is a collection of poems featuring contemporary poets from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The themes of poems are varied and are influenced by the contemporary realities and sentiments of the South Asian



society. The collection seeks to identify South Asian poetry as a distinct genre of contemporary literature.



Vacancies

SAARC Cultural Centre invites applications for the following posts:

- Post of Computer Operations Officer
- Post of Admin Assistant
- Post of Receptionist

Please visit our website - <http://www.sarcculture.org> regularly for updates on vacancies

Culture Quote



“ I believe that every generation has faced its great challenges as far back as we can find the history for. And every generation – has ultimately realized, often too late – that humanity faces its darkest moments when we forsake the very characteristic that make us truly extraordinary living beings – our human Conscience – our values. ”

His Majesty Jigme Khesar Wangchuk, the King of Bhutan



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