

NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

The last issue of the SAARC Cultural Centre's Newsletter for 2014 brings latest from the fourth quarter of 2014. The highlight of our activities during the period include; SAARC International Conference on Development of Museums in South Asia, SAARC Handicrafts Exhibition and SAARC Photographic Competition and Exhibition. Year 2014 was a milestone year both for SAARC and the SAARC Cultural Centre that witnessed the Eighteenth SAARC Summit in Kathmandu and the 3rd meeting of SAARC Ministers of Culture held in New Delhi from 24 September 2014 to 25 September 2014 where Culture was given special attention. SAARC Agenda for Culture which was comprehensively reviewed and augmented at the Third Meeting of the SAARC Culture Ministers held at New Delhi September 2014 made special reference to it in the Delhi Resolution stressing upon the continuous commitment of the SAARC leaders to implement the SAARC Agenda for Culture at the Eighteenth SAARC Summit in Kathmandu. The Centre's Calendar of Programmes for 2015 include the SAARC Artist Camp, SAARC Film Festival, Cultural Festivals, Seminars and Workshops. SAARC Cultural Centre wishes all its readers a Happy New Year and looks forward to a fruitful year ahead.

-Editor

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News in Highlight...

The 18th SAARC Summit

Kathmandu, Nepal
26-27 November 2014



In Focus: SAARC Leaders at the Eighteenth SAARC Summit (Kathmandu, Nepal, 26-27 November 2014) stress upon effective implementation of the SAARC Agenda for Culture

The 18th SAARC Summit was held at Kathmandu, Nepal from November 26 to November 27, 2014. The theme of the Summit was 'Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity.' It was attended by the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, the Presidents of the Afghanistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The 18th Summit marked the 30th Year of SAARC. At the conclusion of the Summit on 27 November 2014, the Kathmandu Declaration was adopted.

In the Kathmandu Declaration, SAARC leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of SAARC for ensuring the welfare and quality of life of the peoples of South Asia. The Declaration makes a special reference to Culture and stresses by reaffirming the continuous commitment of the SAARC leaders to implement the SAARC Agenda for Culture. It states:

"They directed to effectively implement the SAARC Agenda for Culture and agreed to take measures to preserve and restitute South Asian cultural property and create a SAARC heritage list together with the operational guidelines. They declared the year 2016 as the SAARC Year of Cultural Heritage and tasked the relevant bodies to develop an action plan for its success. They also agreed to develop a cultural trail linking major Buddhist historical sites in the region. The Leaders further agreed to facilitate access of persons visiting prominent and holy sites of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and all other major religions in South Asia."

It may be recalled that the SAARC Agenda for Culture was comprehensively reviewed and augmented at the Third Meeting of the SAARC Culture Ministers held at New Delhi September 2014.

The nineteenth SAARC Summit will be hosted by the Government of Pakistan in 2016.

In Focus: Third Meeting of SAARC Culture Ministers Meeting declares 2016-17 as the SAARC Year of Cultural Heritage

The 3rd meeting of SAARC Ministers of Culture was held in New Delhi from 24 September 2014 to 25 September 2014. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Minister of State for Culture Shripad Naik, Government of India. The Director, Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe, Dr. Sanjay Garg (Deputy Director Research), Ms. Soundarie David (Deputy Director, Programme) represented the SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka at the Meeting. The Delhi Resolution, a roadmap for cultural relations was adopted for

the period 2014-17 at the conclusion of the meeting.

Highlights of the Delhi Resolution include a number of proposals put forth by the SAARC Cultural Centre on the agenda of the meeting. The Delhi Resolution inter alia states:

- To declare 2016-17 as the SAARC Year of Cultural Heritage. For 2015-16, Bamiyan will be the SAARC cultural capital and the inauguration ceremony of Bamiyan as SAARC cultural capital will take place in April 2015.

- To formulate proposals for transnational nominations for the world heritage list and a regional list of heritage sites.

- To promote SAARC culture online by launching a dedicated SAARC website on culture, with emphasis on digitization of rare manuscripts, rare books and other articles of intangible cultural value.

- To strengthen cultural institutions in the SAARC region, promote cultural festivals showcasing themes that are unique to the



region within SAARC member states, and enable meaningful exchange programmes for artists, performers, writers and scholars.

- To establish a SAARC Cultural Heritage Committee (SHC) and build cultural institutions, which, in turn, will bolster efforts in preservation, maintenance, as well as digital mapping of historic sites in member countries, and simultaneously develop inventories of cultural assets in museums and other repositories of the region and apply best practices and standards therein.

- To promote the literatures produced in the local languages of the regions, and make them available to readers across the world through translations, not only into English, but also through direct translation from one SAARC language to another, and also to provide financial support to writers to work on creative projects, collaborate with other writers and provide them increased exposure to other cultures.
- To accord the highest priority to the preservation of folklores and other oral traditions that embody local narratives and local cultures, both in order to facilitate a better

understanding of our shared past in this age of global cultural memes, and to envision the cultural future of the region anew.

- To promote visual and performing arts from the SAARC region in other parts of the world to mirror the vast riches – both cultural and geographic – that adorn these lands, as part of a sustained campaign of cultural diplomacy to attract tourists to these places and stimulate SAARC tourism.

The fourth SAARC Culture Ministers meeting will be hosted by the Government of Bangladesh.

In Focus: Thirtieth SAARC Charter Day

The 30th SAARC Charter Day was celebrated on 8th December 2014 at the Colombo Arcade Independence Square. The Guest of Honor, Mr. Nihal Rodrigo, the former Secretary General of SAARC graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Mr. Nihal Rodrigo in his address emphasized the role of SAARC in overall development of the region and shared some thoughts on the importance of the celebration of the occasion. Among the other distinguished guest were the Ambassadors and Diplomats of the SAARC Member States and Observer Countries, Academics, Government Officials including Secretaries of Ministries, and renowned Artists. The Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe briefed the august diplomatic corps and other luminaries on the developments of the SAARC Cultural Centre. The messages of the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Honorable Foreign Minister Mr. G.L. Peiris and H. E. Secretary General of SAARC Secretariat Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa were read out.

A cultural programme of traditional dances was performed followed by formal dinner.

The guests were also shown the photographs on display, selected from the Photography Competition 2014 organized by the SAARC Cultural Centre.



Achievements: SAARC International Conference on Development of Museums in South Asia

SAARC Cultural Centre is pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the SAARC International Conference on Development of Museums in South Asia: 'Curating Culture for Present and Future' in Colombo, Sri Lanka. and its associated activity, a Poster Session on latest research on the South Asian Museums.

The Conference, which included country reports, paper reading sessions, a poster session on latest research on the South Asian Museums and two round table discussions, was organized by the SAARC Cultural Centre from 23-25 October 2014 at the Department of National Museums, No. 854, Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka. It was attended by over 50 participants, from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The Conference was convened with a view to providing a platform to the key stakeholders in the field of museums in the region to assess their preparedness, share their challenges and problems, showcase their achievements, voice their concerns and learn from the experts for effectively managing their existing and future collections over the long-term.



Inaugural Session

The conference was inaugurated by Hon. Dr. Jagath Balasuriya, Minister of National Heritage, Government of Sri Lanka. The Welcome Address was delivered by Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe, Director, SAARC Cultural Centre; Dr. Nanda Wickramasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of National Heritage, Sri Lanka delivered the Keynote Address while Ms. Apsara Karunaratne, Research Assistant, SAARC Cultural Centre proposed the Vote of Thanks.

Academic Sessions



A total of twenty research papers were presented in seven academic sessions. The sessions were as follows:

- Introductory Session (1 Session),
- Country Reports (2 Sessions),
- Museum Management and Learning (1 Session),
- Museum Management and Modern Technology (1 Session),
- New Trends in Museum Management (1 Session), and
- Strengthening Culture through Museums: The Role of Smaller Museums (1 Session)

Round Table



Two Round Table sessions on 'Social and Intellectual Engagement through Museums' and 'Role of Communication, Cooperation and Collaboration in Museum Management' were held and were led by Prof. Anura Manatunga (University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka) and Prof. P.B. Mandawala (University of Sri Jayawardhanapura, Sri Lanka) respectively.

The Plenary Session



At the conclusion of the Academic Sessions, a Plenary Session was held on 25 October 2014 as a closed-door event with the participation of all Resource Persons and Chairpersons of the Academic Sessions. It was chaired by Dr.



Sanjay Garg (Deputy Director-Research, SAARC Cultural Centre and Convener of the Conference). The Plenary Committee perused all the Feedback forms received from the participants of the Conference and summarised the main suggestions emerging out of the deliberations and prepared a document laying out a road-map in the form of recommendations for the SAARC Member States. The recommendations will be forwarded to all SAARC Member States.

Valedictory Session



The Valedictory Session of the conference was held on 25 October 2014 at the auditorium, Department of National Museums, Sri Lanka and was attended by the participants of the conference. Dr.

Edwin Ariyadasa, a veteran journalist and media commentator in Sri Lanka, graced the occasion as Chief Guest and distributed certificates and mementos to all participants and Special Invitees of the Conference.



Post-Conference Tour

A full day post-conference tour was organized for the participants of the conference to sacred city of Anuradhapura on 25 October 2014.

Anuradhapura was the first capital of Sri Lanka during the Anuradhapura kingdom that lasted for nearly 1,500 years starting from 4th century BCE. Today, Anuradhapura is one of the most sacred cities of worship for Buddhists and one of the best archaeological sites in the country and is the site for the Eight Holy Places famously known as Atamasthana. It has been listed in the UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites.



Achievements: SAARC Handicrafts Exhibition – 20 to 24 November 2014, Kathmandu in Nepal



SAARC Handicrafts Exhibition was Inaugurated on 20 November 2014 at Bhrikuti Mandap in Kathmandu . It was a side event of the SAARC Summit along with the 12th Trade Fair of Nepal. His Excellency Mr. Mahesh Basnet, the Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Industry inaugurated the Exhibition as the Guest of Honor. The officials from the Federation of Handicrafts Association of Nepal (FHAN), Mr. Hem Ratna Shakya and the Director of SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. G. L.W. Samarasinghe welcomed the guests and addressed the participants and the invited guests. A total of 57 participated at the Handicrafts Exhibition from the Member States.



There were about 200 other stalls for the 12th Trade Fair of Nepal from other countries and Nepali traders at the Exhibitions. A Design Workshop was held on 22 November 2014 at the Nepal Tourism Board, Bhrikuti Mandap attended by other invited guests and handicraft artisans. The Resource persons, Mr. Chandra Shekhar Shaha from Bangladesh, Mr. Lam Kezang from Bhutan, and Mr. B.B Paul from India spoke on the handicrafts and designs. Mr. Raj Kumar Shakya, a well-known artist and sculptor and Mr. Bikash Ratna Shakya, former President of FHAB and one of the organizers from Nepal and Dr. Buddhi Keerthisena, Chairman, National Craft Council, Sri Lanka spoke at the workshop.

The interactive session was interesting as lots of questions were asked and issues raised regarding the challenges facing the handicrafts industry in the onslaught of modernization.

The review meeting for the Cultural Mapping of the Handicrafts Industries took place on 23 November 2014. It was decided that the next review meeting may be held in June 2015 in Colombo with the plan to get inputs from the invited Resource Persons and to come up with a source book on handicraft and weaving.

The Handicraft Expo concluded with the distribution of certificates by His Excellency Mr. Sunil Bahadur Thapa, Honorable Minister of Commerce & Supplies, Government of Nepal on November 24, 2014. The highlight of the concluding event was the Fashion Show and dinner at the Hotel Radisson. Along with the well-known models and ramp walkers of the Fashion Show, the handicraftsmen also participated to show the SAARC solidarity.

A field trip to ACP (Association of Crafts Producers) at Kupondole in Kathmandu was organized on 25 November 2014. They were also taken to their showroom at Dhukti. Lunch was organized at the ACP by the organizers. The visit was



interesting as many got the chance to learn about the crafts making, the pottery works, glass blowing works and how they make decorative items by blowing gas at the borosilicate glass and then putting into the annealing kiln for maturing to make many decorative gift items.



Achievements: SAARC Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance – 26 to 28 September 2014, New Delhi

SAARC Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance took to the stage from 26-28 September 2014 at the Megdoot Theatre in New Delhi, India with 113 performers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The Festival illuminated the stage with traditional dance items including Attan dance - Afghanistan, Bottle Dance - Bangladesh, Kandyan "Wes" Dancing - Sri Lanka, Jhumar Dance - Pakistan, Joenparlegso Zhabdro - Bhutan, Kathakali - India, Bhairab Kali Dance - Nepal, Boduberu - Maldives, Manjushree Dance- Nepal, Pung Cholom - India, Merak & Saktenpai Zhabdro (Ae Mo Chog Lay) - Bhutan, Kandyan Dance - Sri Lanka, Hunting Dance - Bangladesh

Here is a picturesque presentation of the Festival.



Achievements: SAARC Photography Competition and Exhibition 2014

The Second SAARC Photography Competition and exhibition organized by the SAARC Cultural Centre for the year 2014 was held in December with the participation of Six SAARC Member States.

The SAARC Cultural Centre received 208 photographs by 45 photographers and a total of 20 photographs were selected by the panel of judges. The adjudicators included well-known experts in the field of photography;

1. Mr. Sebastian Posingis from Germany
2. Ms. Olivia Bonal Sansoni from England, and
3. Mr. Dominic Sansoni from Sri Lanka

3 winners were selected while 2 were selected as Highly Commended and 15 photographs were selected for Honorable Mentions.

The 3 winners are from Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

Highly Commended



1st Place – "Honey Collecters"
by Muhammad Mustafiqur Rahman, Bangladesh



2nd Place – "Clouds of Devotees"
by Narayan Maharjan , Nepal



3rd Place – "Golden Ganga"
by Anilrisal Singh, India



The selected photographs were displayed for the public and invited dignitaries on the 8 December 2014 at the venue for the reception for SAARC Charter Day.

3 winners were given cash prizes of US \$ 300, \$ 250, \$200 and certificates while certificates of participation were awarded to the Highly Commended photos and the Honorable Mentions.

Achievements: SAARC Research Grants 2014-15

SAARC Cultural Centre, as part of its mandate in promoting cultural diversity in South Asia and part of its research project for 2014-15 invited proposals for research on various aspects of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Sustainable Development in South Asia. The theme and sub-themes for Research Grants under this Research Project were finalized at the SAARC Regional Conference on 'Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Sustainable Development (CHTSD) in South Asia' (Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: 28-29 April 2014). The research will give an opportunity for the Member States to conduct an in-depth study on linkages between their Cultural Heritage and Tourism and identify and utilize the productive components of the research for Sustainable Development for the benefit of their people.

The objectives of the research programme are to: discuss the country situation (of the SAARC Member States) related to Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development; identify various challenges faced by the Cultural Heritage sites in South Asia due to pressure of Tourism; study the best practices for harnessing the tourism potential of the Cultural Heritage sites in South Asia and their Sustainable Development; select research topics and questions related to Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development (CHTSD) in South Asia that need further investigation; and research approaches and methods for further research in Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development (CHTSD) in South Asia.

A Meeting of the Research Grants Committee (RGC) of the SAARC Cultural Centre was held on Friday 10 September 2014 at SAARC Cultural Centre and the Committee reviewed 18 proposals received through official channel as well as those submitted directly to the Centre in response to the Web announcement and emails to academic institutions. After a thorough examination of the proposals, the Research Grants Committee approved 5 proposals (Bangladesh-1, Bhutan-1, India-2, and Sri Lanka-1).

Approved Research Proposals



Dr. Mokammal H. Bhuiyan

Bangladesh

Challenge of Engaging Village Community in Managing Heritage Site 'Salban Vihara' at Mainamati, Bangladesh



Ms. Tshering Choki

Bhutan

Community Engagement in the Preservation and Management of Chorten (Stupas) Vandalism in Bhutan



Dr. Neekee Chaturvedi

India

Engaging the Bishnoi Community for Cultural Tourism in Rajasthan



Dr. Nikhil Joshi

India

Community Participation for the Sustainable Management of the Cultural Heritage in South Asia: A Case Study of the Mahabodhi Temple Complex (A UNESCO WHS) in Bodhgaya, India



Mr. W.H.M.S. Samaratunga

Sri Lanka

Promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism in Rural Communities as a Tool of Poverty Alleviation: With Special reference to Northern Province of Sri Lanka



Dr. C. Bogahawatte

Sri Lanka

Promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism in Rural Communities as a Tool of Poverty Alleviation: With Special reference to Northern Province of Sri Lanka

Announcements: SAARC Cultural Centre Programmes for 2015

Programmes to be implemented in 2015 will focus on:

- **Establishing Linkages between Culture and Other Sectors-** As part of promoting cultural cooperation, the SAARC Cultural Centre will celebrate SAARC Non-Violence Day and SAARC Charter Day. The Centre also proposes to designate a city amongst the SAARC Member Countries as the 'SAARC Cultural Capital' for a year during which it will organise a series of year-long cultural events with a national but with an overall South Asian dimension. Bamiyan, Afghanistan was chosen as the Cultural Capital for 2015. A city of Bangladesh will be declared as the 'SAARC Cultural Capital' for 2016.
 - **Promoting SAARC Culture Online-** The SAARC Cultural Centre has an active website, a SAARC Cultural Portal and an active facebook social media page. Through such online connections, the SAARC Cultural Centre will connect with the rest of the world, as well as link with other organisations to promote their programmes on virtual media. Furthermore, the Centre is in the process of developing a Resource Network on SAARC Culture (RNSC) and an online Resource Centre to reflect and promote the essence of cultural heritage of the SAARC Member States.
 - **Promoting Cultural Festivals in the Region-** For 2015, the SAARC Cultural Centre proposes to have a Cultural Festival on Folk Music featuring folk musicians from the entire region.
 - **Developing Archaeology, Architecture and Archives-** The SAARC Cultural Centre will organise a capacity-building workshop on World Heritage Sites in South Asia in Bangladesh for six days.
 - **Developing Cultural Industries-** In 2012, the SAARC Cultural Centre focused on Traditional Handloom, with an Exhibition and Design Workshop, titled 'The Wheel of Life' in Delhi. In 2013, the Centre organised a similar programme modeled on the earlier one, but with a focus on Handicrafts in Dhaka.
- In 2014, the Centre held a handicraft exhibition and workshop in Nepal. In 2015, it will have a Handicraft Village in Pakistan, once again promoting handicrafts in the region, but with more emphasis on handicrafts made out of wood, metal, clay, glass and stone.
- **Developing Literature in South Asia-** The SAARC Cultural Centre will continue its Translation Programme i.e. a programme for the translation of classical literature of South Asia into English as well as other national languages of the Member States. Furthermore, two anthologies on Poems and Contemporary Short Stories in the Region for 2014 will be launched in 2015. The Centre will also organise a Literary Festival in New Delhi, India in collaboration with the FOSWAL, India.
 - **Promoting Visual and Performing Arts in the SAARC Region-** The SAARC Film Festival, Workshop on Issues related to the Film Industry, SAARC Film Day, Artist Camp and Exhibition of Paintings and Photographic Competition and Exhibition will be held in 2015.
 - **Research Programme-** Research Project on Cultural Dynamics for National Harmony and Reconciliation in South Asia will be implemented in 2015.
 - **SAARC Publication Programme-** At the conclusion of all workshops, seminars, symposiums and conferences conducted by the SAARC Cultural Centre, monographs will be published using deliberations for reference for scholars and others, in addition to publishing online. Newsletters, brochures and other promotional material will be published/ printed on a regular basis. In addition, *SAARC Art*, a magazine to promote artistic expression in the region too will be published.

Vacancies

SAARC Cultural Centre calls for Application for the Following Posts.

- Deputy Director (Research)
- Research Officer
- Personal Secretary to the Director
- Senior Finance Officer

Further details are available at www.saarcculture.org



Announcements: UNESCO Launches Design Competition for Bamiyan Cultural Centre in Afghanistan

UNESCO and the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan, with the generous financial support of the Republic of Korea, are implementing a project to build the Bamiyan Cultural Centre. The Centre will be located near the boundary of the World Heritage property, the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley. The purpose of the project is to promote heritage safe-guarding and cross-cultural awareness, and thereby contribute to the broader aims of reconciliation, peace-building and economic development in the country.

Towards this end, UNESCO is administering an international design competition to select a winning design entry for the Bamiyan Cultural Centre. The international Design Competition for this project started November 15, 2014 and ends on January 22, 2015. It will draw submissions from a wide range of individual architects, engineers and students from around the world.

It may also be added that, the SAARC Cultural Centre has declared the historic city of Bamiyan as the First SAARC CULTURAL CAPITAL for 2015. Towards this end, a series of year-long cultural events with a national but with an overall South Asian

dimension will be organized at Bamiyan to celebrate its status as the First SAARC CULTURAL CAPITAL for the whole of South Asian region.

Organizers: UNESCO Afghanistan, in coordination with The Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan.

Last Date for Accepting Submissions:
22 January, 2015

Awards: One winning entry will be given 25,000.00 (USD) and four runner-ups 8,000.00 (USD)

For more information visit the competition website at -
<http://bamiyanculturalcentre.org>

Announcements: Call for Contributions for SAARC Culture, Vol. 6: 2015

SAARC Culture is an annual research journal of the SAARC Cultural Centre Colombo, which seeks to provide a platform to the academics, practitioners and policy makers of culture in the region to present their research findings and to debate on issues of mutual and common interest. The journal is widely disseminated as an online publication and also as hard copy to project cultural richness and cultural diversity of the SAARC Region.

The first two issues of the journal were thematic in nature, viz.:

- Vol. 1: 2010: 'Rituals, Ethics and Societal Stability in the SAARC Region', and
- Vol. 2: 2011: 'Diminishing Cultures in the SAARC Region'.

From the third issue onwards, The SAARC Culture focuses on various aspects and dimensions of cultures of the South Asian Region. The previous issues of the journal can be viewed online at <http://saarcculture.org>



Submissions

Research articles and book reviews are invited for the next issue of the SAARC Culture (Vol. 6: 2015). Please refer to the Guidelines for Contributors.

Last date for submission

30 June 2015

For more details sccpublications@gmail.com

Culture Quote



“

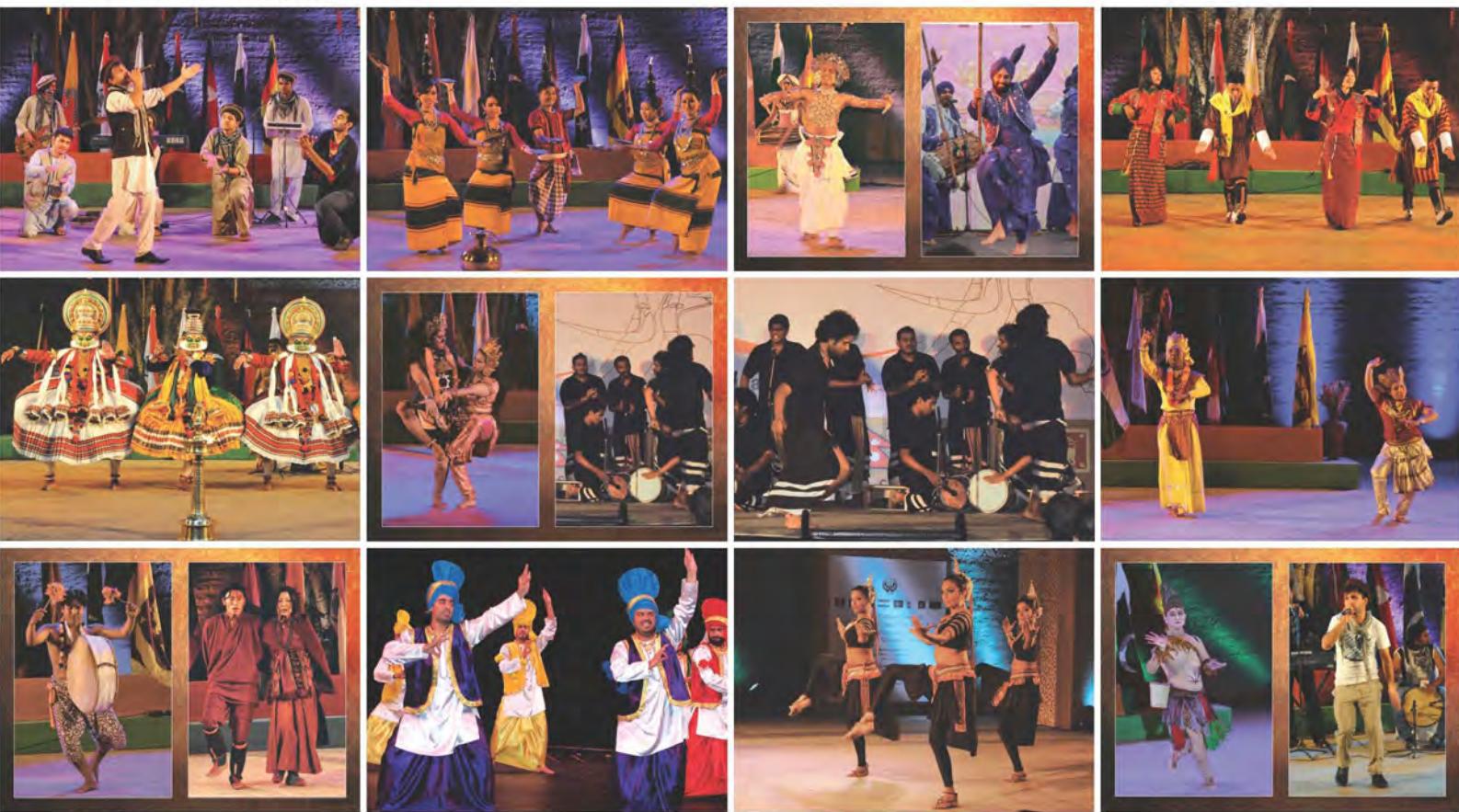
Everything in the universe is within you. Ask all from yourself.

”

Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

13th-century Persian, poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic, (1207 – 17 December 1273)

SAARC Calendar 2015



JANUARY 2015						
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FEBRUARY 2015						
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MARCH 2015						
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APRIL 2015						
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MAY 2015						
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JUNE 2015						
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AUGUST 2015						
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OCTOBER 2015						
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NOVEMBER 2015						
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DECEMBER 2015						
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