SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE
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SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

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Editorial

The highlight of the quarter includes the SAARC Cultural Centre's successful completion of the fifth Governing Board Meeting adding more strength to the centre's activities by approving a million-dollar budget for the calendar year 2014. The Governing Board of the SAARC Cultural Centre, which includes representatives from all the SAARC Member States were unanimous about the quality and unsurpassed character of all its activities. Vibrant multiplicities of the South Asian culture bears testimony to the centre's diverse range of activities that takes place over the year. The Centre's new building complex in Nawimana, Matara which is nearing its completion, beyond doubt will establish the SAARC Cultural Centre's bearing as a vibrant Regional Centre of SAARC. The sprawling complex in Matara will be a regional asset in the circulation of cultural activities. We are yet to explore the uniqueness of regional diversity and some of the programmes in the forthcoming months include a Regional Conference on Archives, Photography Competition and Exhibition, SAARC Literary Festival on South Asian Novels, and South Asian Song Festival.

-Editor

News in Highlight...

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Achievements: Million Dollar Budget Approved for the SAARC Cultural Centre.

Senior officials representing Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka as the Members of the Fifth Governing Board of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka, which met on the Long Beach Hotel, Koggala on 9 and 10 September 2013, recognized the SAARC Cultural Centre as an institution capable of serving diverse cultural needs of the SAARC Member States. They reviewed the progress of the activities implemented so far by the Centre and proposed programmes for next year. Placing on record the Board's appreciation the SAARC Cultural Centre, the extensive number of activities, diversity and the high quality of all its programmes, the Board congratulated the Centre for its achievements and the strong committed contribution towards safeguarding and promoting diverse aspects of South Asian Culture.

The Annual Plan of activities and programmes for 2014 with a budget worth US $ 1 Million, proposed under the Five Year Programme (2012-16) of the SAARC Cultural Centre was approved by the Governing Board. Indicative Programmes of the Centre for 2014 include an array of events ranging from research programmes to cultural festivals. SAARC Cultural Centre will continue to work towards Development of Archaeology, Architecture and Museums, Development of Cultural Industries in South Asia, Promotion of Visual and Performing Arts in the SAARC Region, Development of Literature in the Region, Promotion of Cultural Festivals in the Region, Promotion of SAARC Culture Online, and Establishing Linkages between Culture and other Sectors. The Centre which also has a strong focus on research will organize a regional conference on Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development in South Asia, SAARC Research Forum and Review Meeting, Conference on Rethinking Oral Traditions as part of its Research Programme.

To provide further momentum to the significant achievements of the Cultural Centre, India offered to host a Meeting of the Cultural Ministries at the Viceregal Lodge in Shimla in January 2014.

The Members of the Governing Board also visited the new construction site of the SAARC Cultural Centre in Nawimana, Matara. The Board appreciated the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka for developing a prestigious institution of international class equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and time bound progress made in this regard. The cost of the building of the Institution is US $ 907 million.

The meeting was convened under Chairmanship of Mr. V. Sirinivas (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India). Mr. Bharat Mani Subedi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of Nepal was appointed as the new Chairperson of the Governing Board. Other distinguished members who represented their countries at the Governing Board Meeting were: Ms. Parag (Joint Secretary (Admin), Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh), Mr. Tshewang Gyelpo (Deputy Director General, Department of Culture, Bhutan), Mr. Muhammad Daud Ehtisham (Press Attaché, Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka), Mr. Wasantha Ekanayake (Secretary, Ministry of Culture and the Arts, Sri Lanka), and Ms. Damayanthi Rajapaksa (Director General (SAARC), Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka). Mr. Prasanna Gamage (Director (ESC), SAARC Secretariat) represented the Secretariat and Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre represented the Centre.

Achievements: SAARC Capacity Building Workshop on Management Systems of World Heritage Sites in South Asia Concludes Successfully

SAARC Workshop on world heritage sites in South Asia - Management Systems -

SAARC Cultural Centre is pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the SAARC Capacity Building Workshop on Management Systems of World Heritage Sites in South Asia. The Workshop which had lectures, discussions and case studies on existing management systems relating to the World Heritage Sites, was held from 26-31 August 2013 at the Islamabad Hotel, Islamabad, Pakistan. The workshop was attended by over 30 participants, all of whom were mid/senior level professionals from South Asian countries.

The workshop was convened with a view to promote conservation and management of World Heritage Sites in South Asia through capacity building amongst professionals involved in Heritage Sites Management and to transmit them to future generations in accordance with the Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention.

Inaugural Session

The workshop was inaugurated by Mr. Muhammad Bilal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Government of Pakistan. The Welcome Address was delivered by Mr. G. L. W. Samarasinghe, Director, SAARC Cultural Centre. Dr. Fazal Dad Kakar, Director General, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Government of Pakistan delivered the Keynote Address while Ms. Nirekha De Silva, Research Officer, SAARC Cultural Centre proposed the Vote of Thanks.

Academic Sessions

A total of six Academic Sessions were conducted for the purpose of sharing of practical knowledge along the following themes:

Country Presentations,

Management Requirements of the World Heritage Sites,

World Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development, and

Management Effectiveness

The sessions included lectures, presentations, group discussions, group work and critical feedback sessions.

Round Table

Three Round Tables on 'Acceptable Management System of World Heritage Sites in South Asia', 'Management Plan for the World Heritage Sites' and 'Effective Methods for Improving Management Systems' were held and were led by Mr. Muhammad Habibullah Khan Kattak (Pakistan), Mr. Jayatissa Herath (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Mahmood Akhtar Cheema (Pakistan) respectively.

Field Trip

A Field Trip to the World Heritage Site of Taxila Valley was organized on 28 August 2013.

Taxila is an important archaeological site in Rawalpindi, (Punjab) Pakistan that was in ancient times positioned at the crossroads of three great trade routes from Eastern India, Western Asia and Central Asia. It was an early centre of learning dating back to the 5th century BCE. The site is home to numerous ancient Buddhist monuments.

The Plenary Session

At the conclusion of the Academic Sessions, a Plenary Session was held on 31 August 2013 as a closed door event with the participation of all Resource Persons and Chair Persons of the Academic Sessions. It was chaired by Dr. Fazal Dad Kakar. The Plenary Committee summarized 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. Recommendations covered a wide array of areas including administration, legal, research, capacity building, finance and technology which would be sent to the Member States for guidance and implementation.

Valedictory Session

The Valedictory Session of the workshop was held at the picturesque location of Hotel Monal at the Margalla hills, Islamabad. Mr. Muhammad Azam, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Government of Pakistan, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and distributed certificates and mementos to all participants of the workshop. The event was also attended by other dignitaries and distinguished invitees from Pakistan.

Achievements: SAARC Research Grants 2013-14

SAARC Cultural Centre, as part of its mandate in promoting cultural diversity in South Asia and part of its research project for 2013-14 invited proposals for research for on various aspects of the Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE) of South Asia. The research will give an opportunity for the Member States to conduct an in-depth study on their rich intangible cultural heritage of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions and identify and utilize the productive components of the research for the benefit of their people.

The objectives of the Research project are to identify and document various forms of TK and TCE of South Asia; to study and analyse all forces (colonial influence, industrialization, globalization) that have impacted on traditional knowledge; to discuss and debate the productive characteristics of TK and TCE; and to present innovative measures of safeguarding TK and TCE.

A Meeting of the Research Grants Committee (RGC) of the SAARC Cultural Centre was held on Tuesday 17 September 2013 and the Committee reviewed the 66 proposals received

After reviewing all proposals in depth, the Research Grants Committee approved 8 proposals (Bangladesh 1, Bhutan 1, India 2, Nepal 1, Pakistan 1 and Sri Lanka 1), short listed 6 (Bangladesh 1, Bhutan 1, India 1, Pakistan 1 and Sri Lanka 2), and rejected the rest.

Bangladesh

Dr. Mokammal H. Bhuiyan

Traditional Earth Architecture of Belabo in Bangladesh

Bhutan

Mr. Yonten Dargye

The Death ritual of Lhob Community and the Challenge of Modernization

India

Dr. Anand Singh

Buddhist Traditional Ethics: A Source of Sustainable Biodiversity (Examining Cases Among Buddhist Communities of Nepal and Leh-ladakh and North East Region of India)

Mr. Hitender Kumar

System of Water Works and Tradition of Building Construction in India: A Case Study of Medieval Punjab (12th to 17th Century)

Nepal

&

Dr. Prem Kumar Khatry Dr. Hari Prasad Shrestha

The Sacred Complex of Halesi: A Hindu, Buddhist and Kirata Spiritual Interface

Pakistan

Dr. Abdul Samad

Tracing the Missing Links of Kalash Culture through Documentation of Intangible Cultural Assets (Chitral, Pakistan)

Sri Lanka

Ms. Jaysasuriya Arachchillage Prasansha Kumari

A Study of Modern Trends in Traditional Farming Methods of Paddy Cultivation (With reference to Kurunegala District)

Archt. Nishan Dhammika Navaratne

Tradtional Architecture of Sri Lanka: The Study of Interrelationships among Thermal Mass, Building Geometry and Enclosure for the Purpose of Carbon Neutralization

Achievements: Contemporary Short Stories of the SAARC Region - 2012 and Poems from the SAARC Region - 2012 launched

Two annual anthologies of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Contemporary Short Stories of the SAARC Region, 2012 and Poems from the SAARC Region 2012 were launched on 16 September on the sidelines of the Colombo International Book Fair, 2013 under the patronage of the Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. S. Amarasekara. Other special invitees who graced the occasion were; Mr. M. Ramachandran, the Director, Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo, and Mr. Vijitha Yapa, Chairman and Managing Diirector, Vijitha Yapa Book Shop.

In his welcome address, the Director, SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka, Mr. G.L.W .Samarasinghe mentioned that selection of short stories and poems has been a daunting task given the diverse linguistic landscape of the South Asian region. The works selected however are best representative of all the SAARC Member States; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Mr. M. Ramachandran, Director, Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo in his address mentioned that the works fittingly capture the rich lingo-cultural diversity of South Asian neighbors

The role played by Vijitha Yapa Publishers in bringing out the two Anthologies is commendable and the limited canvass available for the South Asian literati for apt exposition of their thoughts led the Vijitha Yapa Publishers to come forward to be the joint-publishers of the anthologies for the second consecutive year. Vijitha Yapa Publications hope to see more and more works of Sinhala and Tamil translations on the ensuing anthologies.

The Chief Guest Mr. S. Amarasinghe, in his address mentioned that South Asia has a literary tradition that resembles so well and that they are hardly distinguishable. He thanked the SAARC Cultural Centre and Vijitha Yapa Publishers for their joint effort at a time when the cost of printing has dwindled and as a result has become a challenging task.

The two anthologies are available for sale at Vijitha Yapa bookshops. http://www.vijithayapa.com/

Achievements: SAARC Exhibition and Design Workshop on "Handicrafts in the SAARC Region"

The SAARC Cultural Centre, with the objective of identifying and protecting the fading traditional art of crafts, with specific focus on the handicraft sector of the SAARC Member States organized an Expo/Shop on Handicrafts in the SAARC Region. The Programme which was titled the 'SAARC Handicraft Village' was held from 22 – 27 September 2012 at the National Art Gallery Plaza, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Artisans from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Sri Lanka participated at this exhibition, where handicraft products from the region were on display and for sale at the Exhibition. The Exhibition was held for a total of 6 days. The Closing Ceremony was held at the Auditorium of Shilpakala Academy graced by Dr. Gowher Rizvi. Hon'ble Advisor to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on International Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The objectives of the event was to execute and display the skills of the artisans, as well as bring them to one platform for interaction, and help them find new markets and new market trends.

There were four main components to the programme:

1) SAARC Exhibition on Handicrafts in the SAARC Region
2) Design Workshop
3) Buyers/Sellers Meet
4) Review Meeting on the SAARC Map of Cultural Industries

The Inauguration of the Exhibition took place on the 22nd of September 2013 and was graced by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister H.E. Abul Kalam Azad, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and other high officials at the auditorium of the National Art Gallery, under a very distinguished gathering. The Chief Guest welcoming all the delegates to the country, spoke of the rich tradition of handicrafts in the region, and congratulated the SAARC Cultural Centre for this initiative.

The Design Workshop on the theme of new trends and marketability of products was organized on the 2nd and 3rd days of the entire programme.

Review Meeting on the SAARC Map of Cultural Industries- Based on the first meeting held in Delhi, to collect data on Cultural Industries, a review meeting was held on the status of the project, and to identify resource persons to collect required data, scope and methodology of the project.

Announcement: SAARC International Conference on Development of Archives In South Asia The Future of Archives and Archives of the Future

INTRODUCTION

In most of the South Asian Archives, there is, at present, a general lack of appreciation or incapacity to accept archives in non-traditional formats, especially digital, and also film and sound. Most of these repositories also lack the competency and skills to take proper care of such formats, even if they take them in. Yet developing the digital capacity of archives lies at the core of the strategic planning for the future.

With the twin objectives of a) ensuring optimal utilization of the new conservation tools for preservation of the existing archival collections for future generations and that of the computer technology for their best academic exploitation for future research, and, b) reviewing the existing archives management system and assessing their preparedness for meeting the challenges of the archives of the future – the SAARC Cultural Centre, in collaboration with the Department of National Archives, Sri Lanka, would organize the SAARC International Conference on Development of Archives in South Asia, entitled, 'The Future of Archives and Archives of the Future' in Colombo (Sri Lanka).

THEMES FOR THE CONFERENCE

- Future of the Conventional Archives (including paper, film and sound) in Digital Age
- Managing Digital Records: Rhetoric vis-à-vis Practice
- Digital Preservation of Conventional Archives: Democratising and Privileging
- Digital Archives: Data Preservation vis-à-vis Data Retention
- Access to Archives in Information Age: Risks and Responsibilities, User Management, and Right to Privacy
- Electronic Records and the Legal Framework: Authenticity and Admissibility.

AN EXHIBITION OF HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AND ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS

As an associated activity of this Conference, an Exhibition of digital prints of historical documents and photographs of archival value in South Asia will be mounted at the Conference venue. The proposed Exhibition will showcase selections form the historical documents and photographs of archival value that are the best examples of the documentary heritage of the Member States.

VENUE

The Conference will be held from 3 - 5 December 2013 at the National Archives, No. 7, Philip Gunawardena Mawatha, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

POST-CONFERENCE TOUR

A full day Post-Conference tour will be organized to the World Heritage City of Galle on 6 December 2013, for the participants of the Conference.

For registration - The registration form can be downloaded from the website of the SAARC Cultural Centre – www.saarcculture.org).

Announcements:

SAARC Photographic Competition and Exhibition

Announcements:

SAARC Literary Festival 2013

In recent years, the literateurs of South Asia have been making world headlines for their excellent and ward-winning contributions in different literary genres, not only in their native languages but also in English and other languages. While recognizing their contributions the SAARC Cultural Centre would organize a 3-day Literary Festival in Bhutan (18 - 20 December 2013), with special focus on South Asian Novel. For this purpose partnership with organizers of the leading literary festival and other collaborative partners in the region would be solicited. Await more details on our website.

Announcements:

SAARC Charter Day

Best Speech on the "Vision of SAARC - The Way Forward" - in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Toast Masters Association, the Centre will organize a competition to select the best public speaker with leadership skills to deliver a speech at the SAARC Charter Day Celebrations on the identified theme. - "Vision of SAARC - The Way Forward" This would be the ideal opportunity to create awareness among young adults on the objectives of the SAARC. Await more details on our web.

Announcements:

SAARC Wall Calendar 2014

As part of the SAARC Cultural Centre's outreach and propagation of cultural practices of the South Asia, the Centre publishes and distributes wall calendars on a chosen theme. The theme for the SAARC pictorial calendar 2014 will be Historical Sites and Natural Landscapes of South Asia and will portray a notable range of pictures from South Asia.

Announcements: SAARC Collections of Contemporary Short Stories and Poems 2013

South Asian Countries are very rich in poetry and other art forms, although they are not widespread outside the region. The SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo has launched a programme to promote South Asian Literature. A Collection of Poems and Short Stories featuring contemporary poets and writers in the SAARC Region will be published annually, by the SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo in partnership with leading publishers in the field to open avenues for international exposure to poets and short story writers in Member States. All Member States are requested to send poems on any theme, in original language with an English translation to represent the Country.

Submission Guidelines

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 poem/Short Story)
3. Title and the poem (in native language and the edited version of the English translation)
4. Translator's name, to be published
5. Editor's name, affiliation and brief bibliographical entry
6. Software to open the text in native language

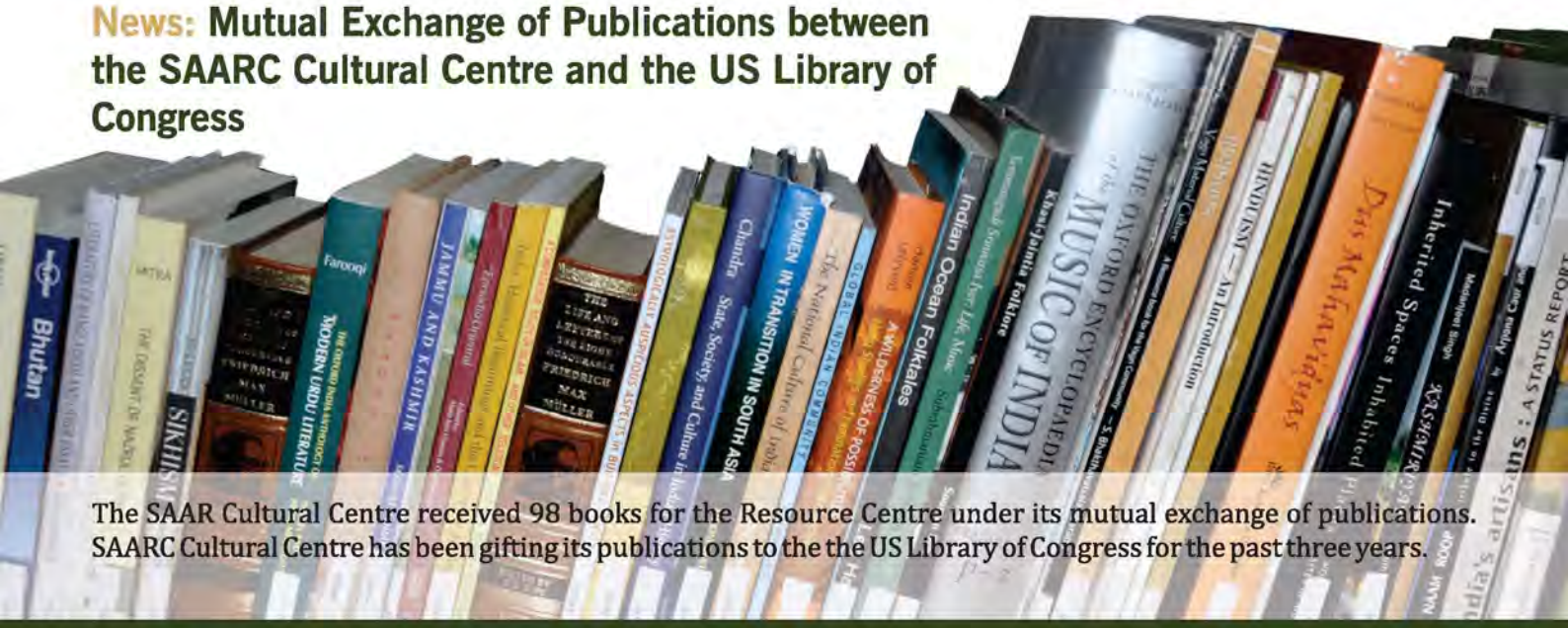
The short stories/poems should be sent to the SAARC Cultural Centre, 224, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka (or emailed to sccpublications@gmail.com)

All short stories/poems should be submitted as a hard copy and an electronic format. The electronic document could be e-mailed or sent via a CD. The document should be saved in Microsoft word, Rich Text Format.

News: SAARC Cultural Centre and the National Book Trust, India agree to cooperate mutually

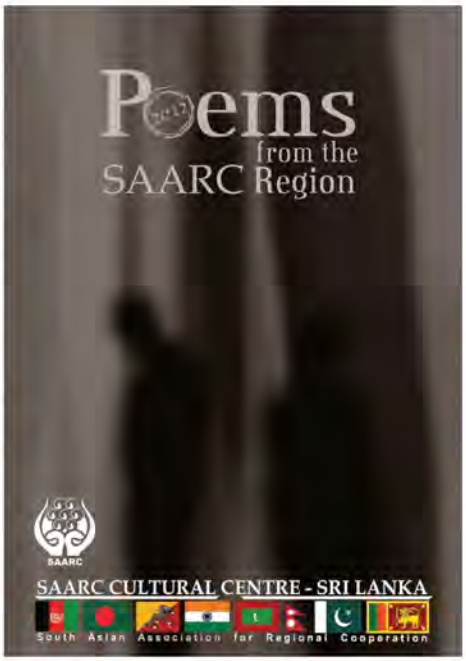
The Director, National Book Trust, India (NBT) met with the Director, SAARC Cultural Centre on 20 September 2013. NBT is an apex body established by the Government of India to develop reading habits and creation of book culture in the India, and is actively engaged in production and promotion of quality books for the masses. The SCC and the NBT agreed to cooperate mutually, to promote the literature of the South Asian region through joint publications, translations, jointly organizing and active participating in the Book Promotion events, such as the Book Fairs, Workshops, Literary Festivals, etc., exchange of publications. The SAARC Cultural Centre also seek active partnership in the first SAARC Literary Festival, to be organized by the Centre.

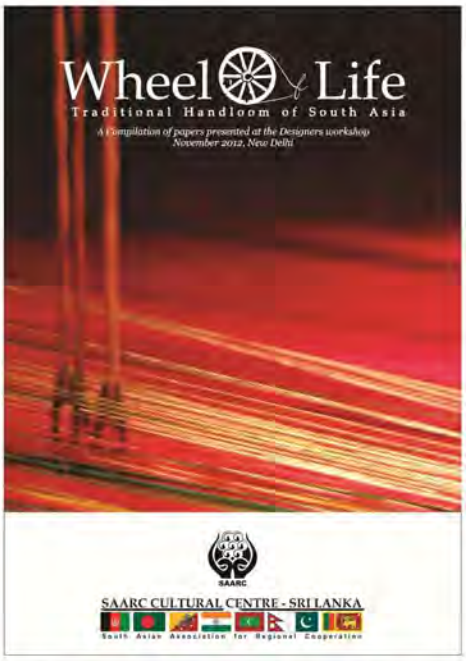
News: Mutual Exchange of Publications between the SAARC Cultural Centre and the US Library of Congress



The SAAR Cultural Centre received 98 books for the Resource Centre under its mutual exchange of publications. SAARC Cultural Centre has been gifting its publications to the the US Library of Congress for the past three years.

New Publications





Contemporary Short Stories of the SAARC Region 2012- This volume brings 44 contemporary short stories from South Asia and is the second in the series of its annual anthologies of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

Poems from the SAARC Region-2012- is second in the series of anthologies of poetry published by the SAARC Cultural Centre and comprises 107 poetic compositions from SAARC Member States.

Wheel of Life: Traditional Handloom of South Asia- is a compilation of papers presented at the Designers workshop held in Delhi, 2012. This compilation of papers is an attempt to disseminate information on the handloom industry, new techniques and problems it faces in maintaining identity and authenticity in the era of new Technology.

Forthcoming Publications

SAARC Culture Volume 4- is the Annual Journal of the SAARC Cultural Centre and contains 11 articles on various aspects on South Asian culture.

Circulation of Cultures and Culture of Circulation: Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during 18th to 20th Centuries – is a Monograph on Diasporic Cultures in South Asia. The papers included in this volume were presented at the SAARC Regional Conference on 'Diasporic Cultures of South Asia during eighteenth to twentieth centuries' organized by the SAARC Cultural Centre from 15-17 March 2012 at Galle (Sri Lanka). The Conference 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. This book serves only as a prelude to many independent and in-depth studies such as: South Asian women in diaspora, intra-community relationship of the South Asian diaspora beyond the South Asian region, cultural implications of education overseas for the South Asian diaspora, sports (especially cricket) as carrier of diasporic culture in South Asia, to name a few, which may be taken up by the competent researchers to foster a greater cultural cohesion between the diasporic communities of South Asia and their hosts countries as well as diasporic communities of other countries residing in South Asia.

Archaeology of Buddhism: Recent Discoveries in South Asia-includes 40 papers under seven themes; Country Reports on Recent Discoveries, Revisiting Stupa, Buddhist Archaeology and Society, Archaeology of Buddhist Monasteries, Mapping Buddhist Archaeological Sites, Buddhist Archaeology, Art and Architecture, and Cultural Geography of the Buddhist Archaeological Sites. The monograph is co-published by the SAARC Cultural Centre and Manohar Publishers, India.

Culture Quote

"Little sons all,
who conjure the spring
that wipe weariness
from tired limb,
know this:
when I see you
that labor is pleasure
nothing else;
I cannot leave,
before I craft
that world
I've made and shaped
over twenty five hundred years."

Mahagamasekara (1929-1976)
Sri Lankan Poet, Lyricist, Writer, Novelist, Painter, & Movie Maker

(Translated from Sinhala by Malinda Seneviratne)

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