



# SAARC Cultural Centre NEWSLETTER

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## The Eighth SAARC Film Festival

The SAARC Film Festival was held for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year at the National Film Corporation Cinema Hall in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The Film Festival screened a total of 26 films, which included 14 Feature Films, 8 Short Films and 4 Master Films from the Member States of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The inauguration ceremony of the Eighth SAARC Film Festival was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May amidst many

distinguished guests including Mr. Munir Ghiasy Charge d' Affaires of Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Riaz Hamidullah, High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Ms. Rajashree Behera, the Director of the Indian Cultural Centre, Mr. Hussain Mazin, Second Secretary of Embassy of Maldives, Ms. Dhana Kumari Joshi, First Secretary of the Embassy of Nepal, Mr. Intisar Ahmad Sulehry, Press Attache of High Commission of Pakistan, Ms. Yasoja Gunasekara, Senior Director General of the SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, Mr.

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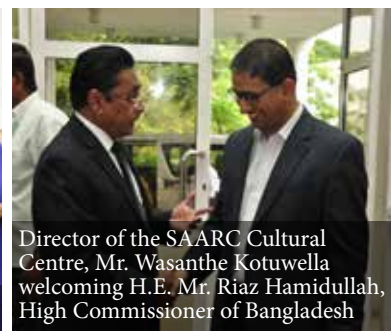




Distinguished invitees lighting the ceremonial lamp



A moment of lighters among the distinguished invitees



Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella welcoming H.E. Mr. Riaz Hamidullah, High Commissioner of Bangladesh



Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella addressing the gathering

Sitendra Senaratna, Chairman of the National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka, Kalakeerthi Dr. Edwin Ariyadasa, Mr. Lionel Fernando former Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Ms. Heshani Bogollagama Chairperson of the National Crafts Council of Sri Lanka, Prof. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi former Vice Chancellor of the University of Visual and Performing Arts, Mr. Sarath Kongahage, Chairman of Sri Lanka Foundation, the Jury Members of the SAARC Film Festival Ms. Han Sunhee of South Korea, Mr. Amable R. Aguiluz of

Philippines and Mr. Christophe Henri of France and members of film teams from Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka as well as many film enthusiasts were present.

The august gathering was welcomed by the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella and Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara introduced the SAARC Film Festival. The Master Film from Sri Lanka "Aganthukaya" (Visitor) was screened to a packed audience of cinema lovers.



Dignitaries at the inauguration



Jury Member



Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara, Deputy Director SCC, addressing the gathering



Senior Prof. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi with Kala Keerthi Dr. Edwin Ariyadasa at the inauguration



Members of the Diplomatic Corp



Film Directors from the Member States



A section of the film enthusiasts in the audience



Mr. Dhanushka Gunathilake introducing the Master Film



Dignitaries and film enthusiasts



# Masterclass – The Role of a Producer and Co-Production in South Asia

The Masterclass was held on 25th May 2018 at the Sri Lanka Media Training Institute of Sri Lanka. The Film Masterclass was organised for the Film Makers from the SAARC Member States, the Jury Members of the SAARC Film Festival and the Film Makers of Sri Lanka to have a discussion regarding “The Role of a Producer and Co-Production in South Asia”. A brain-child of Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, this provided an opportunity for film makers of the Region and the Jury

Members to forge relationships and future partnerships in the Film Industry. This workshop has become an eagerly anticipated event by the young Sri Lankan film makers, specially students involved in the film industry.

Mr. Danushka Gunathilake, consultant of the SAARC Film Festival 2018, moderated the Masterclass with our able Jury Members. Ms. Han Sunhee, Professor and Dean of the International Film Business Academy of the Busan Asian Film



Mr. Dhanushka Gunathilake Consultant of the SAARC Film Festival introducing the Masterclass with Ms. Han Sunhee, Mr. Amable R. Aguiluz & Mr. Christophe Henri



Participants at the Masterclass

## Editorial

The second quarter of the SAARC Cultural Centre was a busy period with the SAARC Film Festival held in Sri Lanka, Inauguration of Thimphu as the SAARC Culture Capital in Bhutan and the SAARC Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop in Bhutan. The participation of Member States in these activities was a source of strength for the SAARC Cultural Centre. The colourful inauguration ceremonies with dignitaries and luminaries of the host Member State adding glamour and elegance to these events. Each of these events highlighted culture in different aspects with the SAARC Film Festival portraying the modern visual culture, the SAARC Culture Capital demonstrating the traditional culture of Bhutan and the SAARC Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop exemplifying the handicrafts of the Region and the blending of tradition with modernity. These events reflected the richness and the diversity of the cultures of South Asia while underlining the similarities of our cultures. The activities brought knowledge and entertainment to all participants and enjoyed by all, epitomising the crucial role of culture in bringing the peoples of South Asia closer as stated in the SAARC Agenda for Culture.

The SAARC Cultural Centre is looking forward to organizing many such activities during the next quarter which includes the SAARC Exhibition of Paintings to be held in Sri Lanka and the SAARC Archaeology and Heritage Management Training Workshop to be held in Kabul, Afghanistan. The support of the Member States in participating at these events is greatly appreciated by all of us at the SAARC Cultural Centre.

- Editors





School in South Korea, Mr. Amable Tikoy Aguiluz an award-winning film director, producer, screen writer and cinematographer and Founder of the Cinemania International Film Festival in Manila from the Philippines and Mr. Christophe Henri an actor, director and line producer with experience in feature films, tele sitcoms, documentaries in the US, Europe, Africa and Asia from France.

Ms. Han Sunhee discussed activities, training and opportunities provided by the Busan Asian Film School and her experience as a producer. Mr. Amable Tikoy Aguiluz shared

his views on main key factors of Film industry including the role of a producer and how to reflect the essence of culture with impartiality and judgement. Mr. Christophe Henri elucidated on the story of the film which is the essence of the film, emphasising that it should be a good story with good content to give a worthy message to society and be able to captivate the audience. This was followed by an invigorating question and answer session with participants. Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara concluded the session with the value of entertainment and visual culture to the society.



Mr. Amable Tikoy Aguiluz Jury Member



Ms. Han Sunhee Jury Member



Mr. Christophe Henri Jury Member



Dr. Soumya Chavan (SCC)



Mr. Tauquir Ahmed Director (Bangladesh)



Mr. Dhanushka Gunathilake



Audience of the Masterclass



Film makers of Sri Lanka taking part in the Masterclass



Mr. Akram Khan Director (Bangladesh)





# SAARC Film Festival Awards Ceremony



Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre addressing the audience



Mr. Dhanushka Gunathilake, Mr. Ashley Ratnavibhushana and Mr. & Mrs. M.D. Mahindapala



Jury Members Mr. Christophe Henri, Ms. Sunhee and Mr. Amable Tikoy Aguiluz



Dr. Edwin Ariyadasa with Mr. Mahinda Sumanasekara of the SAARC Cultural Centre

8th SAARC Film Festival concluded with the Awards Ceremony held at the National Film Corporation Cinema Hall in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 27th May 2018. Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella, the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre warmly welcomed the Chief Guest Hon. Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe Minister of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs, Guests of Honour representing the Member States, luminaries in the Film industry and Film enthusiasts.

Mr. Munir Ghiasy of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Sri Lanka, Ms. Rajashree Behera of the Indian Cultural Centre representing the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mohamed Faris Thaha the Executive Coordinator and Head of the National Centre for the Arts in Maldives, Ms. Fathimath Rifau of the Embassy of Maldives in Sri Lanka and Mr. Intisar Ahmad Sulehry of the Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka and Ms. Yasoja Gunasekara Senior Director General of the SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka represented

the Member States at this occasion. Mr. Sitendra Senaratne Chairman of the National Film Corporation, Ms. Uma Rajamantri Chairperson of the Selacine Television Institute, Mr. M.D. Mahindapala renowned Cinematographer and Film Educator, Mr. Ashley Ratnavibhushana well-known film critic and film society activist, Mr. Dhanushka Gunathilake consultant of the SAARC Film Festival, Jury Members of the SAARC Film Festival Ms. Han Sunhee, Mr. Amable Tikoy Aguiluz, Mr. Christophe Henri, Mr. Tauquir (Director of Haldaa) Ahmed, Mr. Morshedul Islam (Director of Akhi and Her Friends), Mr. Akram Khan (Director of Khacha) from Bangladesh, Mr. Manouj Kadaamh (Director of Kshitij) from India, Ms. Fathimath Nahula (Director of 4426), Mr. Ali Shamin (Director of Status), Ms. Mariyam Azza (Actress of 4426 and Hadhu) from Maldives, Mr. Malaka Devapriya (Director of Bahuchithawadiya) and Mr. Prasanna Jayakody (Director of 28) from Sri Lanka represented the cast and crew of the films from the SAARC Member States.



Mr. Munir Ghiasy Charge d' Affaires of Afghanistan, Ms. Rajashree Behera the Director of the Indian Cultural Centre, Mr. Intisar Ahmad Sulehry Press Attache of High Commission of Pakistan, Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte Deputy Director SCC and Dr. Soumya Chavan Culture Specialist Programmes SCC





**The SAARC Film Award Winners are as follows:**

Best Feature Film – **Halda** (Bangladesh) – Tauquir Ahmed Director

Best Director – **Prasanna Jayakody** (Sri Lanka) for **28 (Twenty-Eight)**

Best Actor – **Mahendra Perera** (Sri Lanka) for **28 (Twenty-Eight)**

Best Actress – **Vaishnavi Tangde** (India) for **Kshitij (The Horizon)**

Best Short Film – **Gi** (India) (Director **Kunjila Mascillamani**)

Best Screenplay – **Prashant Pandey & Shreya Dev Verma** (India) for **Poorna**

Best Cinematographer – **Enamul Haque Sohel** (Bangladesh) for **Halda**

Best Editing – **Amit Debnath** (Bangladesh) for **Halda**

Best Sound Design – **Sasika Ruwan Marasinghe** (Sri Lanka) for **Bahuchithawadiya (The Undecided)**

Best Original Score – **Tauquir Ahmed, Pinto Ghosh, Sanzida Mahmood Nandita** (Bangladesh) for **Halda**

Special Jury Award – **Malaka Devapriya** (Sri Lanka) for **Bahuchithawadiya (The Undecided)**

Special Jury Award – **Manouj Kadaamh** (India) for **Kshitij (The Horizon)**

This gala event concluded with the screening of the Best Feature Film of the Eighth SAARC Film Festival Halda.



Jury Members Mr. Christophe Henri, Ms. Sunhee and Mr. Amable Tikoy Aguiluz



Mr. Thilina Perera accepting the award on behalf of Sasika Ruwan



Mr. Manouj Kadaamh receiving the Special Jury Award from Mr. Sitendra Senaratne



Ms. Rajashree Behera receiving the Award for Best Screenplay on behalf of Prashant Pandey and Shreya Dev Verma from Mr. Ashley Ratnavibhushana



Mr. Malaka Devapriya receiving the Special Jury Award from Mr. Sitendra Senaratne



Mr. Prasanna Jayakody Director of 28 (Twenty-Eight) receiving the Award for Best Director from Hon. Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakse



Mr. Tauquir Ahmed receiving the Award for Best Editing on behalf of Mr. Amit Debnath from Mr. M.D. Mahindapala



Dignitaries & film enthusiasts at the Award Ceremony





# Inauguration of the SAARC Culture Capital 2018 in Thimphu, Bhutan

The SAARC Culture Capital 2018 was ceremoniously inaugurated on 31st of May in Thimphu, Bhutan. The venue was the Clock Tower at the city centre of Thimphu. The area around the Clock Tower was surrounded with buildings of historical and cultural importance and easily accessible to the public to join the events. The Chief Guest for the inauguration of the SAARC Culture Capital was H.E. Tashi Dorji, the Chairperson of the National Council of Bhutan. The dignitaries who graced this occasion include H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, the Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. M.H.M.N Bandara Director Education, Culture and Security and Mr. Sangye Chewang Director Environment, Natural Disaster and Biotechnology of the SAARC Secretariat, Dr. Sunil Motiwal, Chief Executive Officer of the SAARC Development Fund in Bhutan, Mr. Pranav Khullar Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Culture in India, Mr. S.R. Patnaik Under Secretary (SAARC) of the Ministry of External Affairs in India, Ms.

Alka Sharma Under Secretary of the Ministry of Culture in India, Mr. Sonam Tshong, Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bhutan, Mr. Sonam Topgay, Secretary to the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Mr. Karma Weezir Director General of Department of Culture in Bhutan, Directors of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs in Bhutan, Ms. Tshering Choki, Archivist of the National Library and Archives of Bhutan and the coordinator of the SAARC Culture Capital in Thimphu, Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre and Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara Deputy Director Programmes, Mr. Keerti



H.E. Secretary General of SAARC, Principal of RAPA, CEO of the SAARC Development Fund and the Director of the SCC.



Director SCC greeting Hon. Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs



Dr. Sunil Motiwal CEO of SAARC Development Fund, Director of SCC, Mr Wasantha Kotuwella, Director SAARC Secretariat, Mr M H M N Bandara, H.E. Secretary General SAARC Mr Amjad Hussain B. Sial





Chief Guest of the opening ceremony. The Honorable Chairperson of the National Council of Bhutan, Tashi Dorji.



Director SAARC Cultural Centre, making his address



Director General of Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Mr Karma Weezir making the welcome address

Gunathilake Administrative Officer and Mr. Mahinda Sumanasekara Documentation Officer of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

The Director General of the Department of Culture, Mr. Karma Weezir warmly welcomed all dignitaries and visitors to the inauguration. Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre addressed gathering and handed over the Certificate of Declaration to Mr. Karma Weezir the Director General of the Department of Culture of the Host Member State of Bhutan, officially declaring the City of Thimphu the SAARC Cultural Capital for the year 2018. H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial the Secretary General of SAARC addressed the gathering, noting the importance of this occasion to the world of culture and most importantly for furthering the vision of SAARC culture. This was followed by a programme of traditional music and dance, with a special theme song written for the SAARC Culture Capital by the Royal Academy of Performing Arts in Bhutan. As a special request by H.E. the Secretary General of SAARC, Ms.

Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara, Deputy Director Programmes of the SAARC Cultural Centre and renowned international operatic soprano performed at this event. The festivities continued throughout the day with musical and dance performances with fellowship and comradery among the participants and the audiences.

The Inauguration celebrations extended to 1st June 2018 with a large number of activities taking place at the Clock Tower area of the City Centre of Thimphu. A large number of spectators and the public visiting the City Centre enjoyed the different activities. The Chief Guest for the Second day of celebrations was Hon. Lyonpo Damcho Dorji Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan. The dignitaries gathered included H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial the Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. M.H.M.N Bandara Director Education, Culture and Security of the SAARC Secretariat, Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Mr. Pranav Khullar the Joint Secretary from Ministry of Culture in India, Mr. S.R. Patnaik



Traditional dance from Bhutan by artists from RAPA





Team of traditional musicians from the Royal Academy Performing Arts (RAPA) performing at the opening ceremony



Dignitaries & Special invitees

Under Secretary of the SAARC Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Ms. Alka Sharma Under Secretary of the Ministry of Culture in India, Mr. Karma Weezir the Director General of the Department of Culture of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs of Bhutan, Mr. Kunzang Thinley the Principal of the Royal Academy of Performing Arts of Bhutan.

Hon. Lyonpo Damcho Dorji Minister of Foreign Affairs of

Bhutan addressed the gathering and Mr. Pranav Khullar addressed the audience, reiterating the importance of culture and strengthening cultural bonds across the South Asian Region and stated that India was looking forward to hosting the SAARC Culture Capital next year. This was followed by presentation of the Certificates of Participation to all members of the cultural activities who performed and participated during the SAARC Culture Capital Inauguration celebrations.

The inauguration ceremony concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara, Deputy Director Programmes of the SAARC Cultural Centre.



Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara Deputy Director Programmes performing at the celebration



Address by the H E the Secretary General of SAARC, Mr Amjad Hussain B. Sial



Address by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture of India, Mr Pranav Khullar



Address by the Chief Guest of the second day of the official proceedings of the SAARC Culture Capital by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Bhutan, Hon. Lyonpo Damcho Dorji



Vote of thanks on behalf of the SCC by the Deputy Director of Programmes, Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe - Wijayasekara



Presentation of participation certificates (Nepal) by Hon. Lyonpo Damcho Dorji with H E Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, the Secretary General of SAARC and Director General of Home & Cultural Affairs in Bhutan Mr Karma Weezir



Ms. Tshering Choki, Archivist, Dept. of Culture, Bhutan and coordinator of the SAARC Culture Capital



Official dignitaries and participants at the ceremony





# SAARC Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop 2018, Thimphu, Bhutan

The SAARC Handicrafts Exhibition and Workshop 2018 was held from 31st of May 2018 to 1st June 2018 in front of iconic clock tower in the city centre of Thimphu in Bhutan. This was inaugurated in conjunction with the SAARC Culture Capital. The SAARC Cultural Centre received nominations from the SAARC

Member States of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The inauguration commenced with the SAARC Parade of participating delegates for the workshop from the SAARC Member States. This was followed by the traditional Mar-chang Ceremony, a traditional

ceremony conducted in order to evoke blessings and ensure auspicious beginnings of special events.

The handicraft stalls were presented around the Thimphu City Centre Clock Tower amidst the celebrations of the SAARC Culture Capital. The SAARC Handicrafts



Dignitaries watching the handicrafts being made



Chairperson of the National Council of Bhutan, Tashi Dorji with the Craftsmen



Tashi Dorji, Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bhutan, H E Secretary General of SAARC and Mr. M.H.M.N. Bandara



Tashi Dorji with the Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre





Exhibition and Workshop 2018 continued simultaneously with the festivities of the SAARC Cultural Capital 2018. There were interesting and unique displays of culture and heritage in the form of handicraft from the participating Member States of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The handicrafts included traditional handlooms, sculpture, handwoven fabric and clothing items made out of handwoven fabric, traditional sarees and other handicraft

items. The Handicraft Workshop was carried out simultaneously with the exhibition. Visitors had the opportunity to witness the wonderful and clever technical aspects of handicrafts from the South Asian Region and the participants had the opportunity to learn about these diverse forms of artistry from each other. The Artisans enjoyed being a part of the unique, picturesque and beautiful cultural heritage of Bhutan and also had the unique opportunity to experience, learn and share a

cultural understanding, technical workings and imbibe a vast amount of cultural spirit from their fellow artisans of handicraft.



Traditional Handicrafts Stalls from Member States



# Announcements

## SAARC Archaeology and Heritage Management Training Workshop

SAARC Archaeology and Heritage Management Training Workshop to be held from 26th to 28th August 2018 in Kabul, Afghanistan

## SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails

To be held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi from 8th to 10th October 2018

## SAARC Research Grant on Hindu Cultural Trails

Deadline for submission of Research Proposals is 31st August 2018

## SAARC Artist Camp and Exhibition

Venue and Dates to be announced

## SAARC Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance

SAARC Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance to be held in Nepal (Dates to be announced)

## SAARC Sculpture Symposium

Dates to be announced

## SAARC Non-Violence Day Art Competition

details to be announced



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