



SAARC Cultural Centre NEWSLETTER

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Renuka Ekanayake appointed as the New Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre

Mrs. DKR Ekanayake is an eminent administrator with 34 years of experience in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. She joined the Sri Lanka Administrative Service in 1985 and first served as an Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Cooperative Development, Kalutara District and thereafter had successful stints as Assistant Commissioner (Western Province)- Department of Cooperative Development, Assistant Divisional Secretary (Moratuwa), Attached-Ministry of Public Administration, Assistant Commissioner, Head Office-Department of Cooperative Development, Assistant Divisional Secretary, Kalutara, Deputy Director

(Training & Research), Rural Development Training and Research Institute, Colombo, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Samurdhi, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and National Heritage, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Technology and Research, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services and Livestock Development-Food Security, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Economy, Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries, Aquatic Resources Development and Rural Economy.

She holds a BSc and MSc in Public Administration

from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura, MPhil Degree in Public Administration from the University of Malaysia and is presently reading for her PhD in Public Administration at the University of Malaysia. She also holds a Diploma in International Relations and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sociology from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura and a Diploma in Gender and Development from the University of Hamburg, Germany. She spearheaded over ten ministerial level research publications and reports on Poverty Alleviation, Gender Equality, Environment, Technology and Research, and Rural Economy.

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SAARC Exhibition of Paintings

10th to 13th of July 2018
Sri Lanka

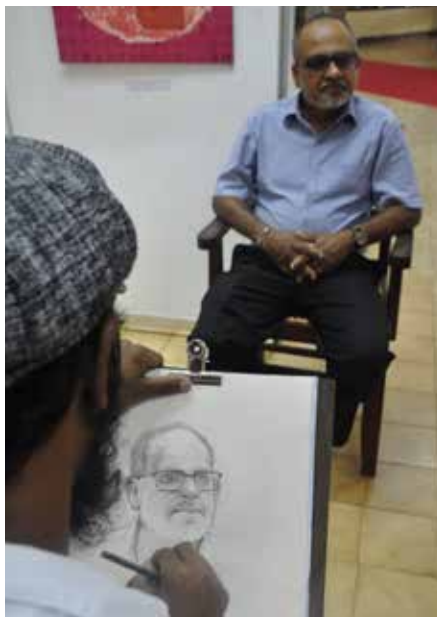
SAARC Exhibition of Paintings 2018 was organised from 10th to 13th July by the SAARC Cultural Centre in collaboration with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the Arts Council of Sri Lanka. The Exhibition of Paintings was held at the Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The Inauguration ceremony was held on 10th July at the library premises with the Guests of Honour accompanied by Sri Lankan traditional dancers and drummers to the Exhibition. Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura Prof. Sampath Amaratunge, Chairman of the Arts Council of Sri Lanka Prof. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella, Dr. Nayana Wijayasundara the Librarian of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Deans and Heads of Departments of the University and other distinguished invitees. Mr. Munir Ghiasy of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Mr. Intisar Ahmed Sulehry of the High Commission of Pakistan represented the SAARC Member States at the inauguration.

The Exhibition showcased new works of arts from the SAARC Artists Camp and Exhibition of Paintings, which took place in Nepal in 2017. The paintings displayed at the exhibition represented all eight SAARC Member States. The paintings provided an understanding

of the changing artistic styles and the creativeness of the artists of South Asia. The themes depicted included landscapes, abstracts, portraits, culture of South Asia, etc.

A workshop on art appreciation was also held in conjunction with the SAARC Exhibition of Paintings. Mr. Sisira Kumara from the Cultural Centre of the Sri Jayewardenepura University and Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe-Wijayasekara Deputy Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre conducted the workshop in the Library premises. University students and senior students of Ananda College Colombo attended the workshop. Among the themes and ideas discussed was the art of South Asia created by South Asian artists.

The Exhibition was enjoyed by the students of the Sri Jayewardenepura University and schools of Colombo district. The viewers were provided a glimpse South Asian culture through art as well as an understanding of the activities of the SAARC Cultural Centre.



Editorial

The third and fourth quarters at the SAARC Cultural Centre was a period of transition and change. We said goodbye to our Director Mr. Wasanthe Kotuwella who served as the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre for 3 years on 31st August 2018 and we welcomed our new Director Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake on 3rd September 2018.

In order to appreciate and acknowledge the role played by the SAARC High Commissions and Embassies in Sri Lanka and to strengthen the Centre's ties with the representatives of the SAARC Member States, Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre paid a series of courtesy calls on the SAARC Ambassadors and High Commissioners in Colombo.

The SAARC Cultural Centre celebrated dance, paintings, literature, handicrafts, women's activities, films, non-violence, cultural trails, etc. The Centre worked diligently to produce books, newsletters and brochures of our events to share the knowledge and activities with the world. As we are saying goodbye to 2018, the SAARC Cultural Centre wishes all our friends, colleagues, participants, resource persons and the public a peaceful and prosperous 2019 and hope you will continue to give the encouragement and support given to us through the years.

- Editor



Preliminary meeting of Research Seminar

A Preliminary visit was made by the Deputy Director Research of the SAARC Cultural Centre to the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), the host institution for the SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails in New Delhi, India. The preliminary visit was made

at the invitation of the IGNCA to for preparatory meetings for the Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails. The initial meeting chaired by Prof. Molly Kaushal - Professor & Head of Janapada Sampada Division, IGNCA was attended by Dr. Ramakar Pant Assistant Professor, Janapada Sampada, IGNCA, Mr. Bisht - Deputy Finance Officer, IGNCA, Mr. B.B. Sharma - Deputy

Secretary Academics, IGNCA, Dr. Sapam Ranabir Singh - Research Officer, Janapada Sampada Division, IGNCA, Ms. Laxmi Rawat - Assistant,

the 14th September Mr. S.R. Patnaik, Under Secretary of the SAARC Division of the Ministry of External Affairs joined the meeting which was chaired by Prof. Molly Kaushal. Dr. Ramakar Pant, Mr. Bisht, Mr. Deepak Sharma, Mr. C.P. Singh, Dr. Sapam Ranabir Singh and Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte were present at this meeting.

A final meeting was held with Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi Member Secretary and the Head of IGNCA to finalize all details of the Research Seminar. Dr. Joshi, Mr. Patnaik and the staff of IGNCA committed themselves whole heartedly to ensure the success of the Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails.

Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts, at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, India 13th to 14th September 2018

Janapada Sampada Division, IGNCA, Ms. Ashi Parashar – Project Assistant, Janapada Sampada Division, IGNCA and Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director Research, SAARC Cultural Centre. During this meeting logistics and finances were discussed at length. The Seminar programme, participant details as well as identifying evaluators for the Research Grant was discussed. On



Progress Review Meeting Construction of the SAARC Cultural Centre in Nawimana, Matara

Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake visited the construction site of SAARC Cultural Centre at Nawimana, Matara to inspect the site, review the progress of construction and to understand issues and problems faced. She was accompanied by Ms. Yasoja Gunasekara Senior Director

General of the SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, Mr. Keerthi Gunathilake Administrative Officer of SCC, Mr. Kalum Bandara Finance Officer of SCC and Ms. Dilani Waldeniya Personal Assistant to the Director of SCC. Mr. Vijitha Nanda the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education & Culture



in Sri Lanka representing the Project Owner, the Government of Sri Lanka, Prof. S. Manawadu, Senior Professor of Architecture from the University of Moratuwa representing the Project Consultant, Lt. Col. P. N. Wijesooriya, representing the Project Contractor - the Sri Lankan Army were at hand to brief the current situation of the construction. Mr. Ajith Nihal, site Architect, Mr. Roshan Perera, Development Officer, Major Thameera and Mr. Chintaka of the Sri Lankan Army and Mr. Premakeerthi, Cultural Officer of the Matara Cultural Centre also participated in the meeting.

The visitors were shown the 12-acre site and construction progress was discussed at the meeting held after the site visit. A presentation was made highlighting all details of the construction, the biodiversity of the site, ensuring minimum impact to the environment throughout the construction and post construction phases, indigenous construction methods used such as clay bricks to enhance cooling effect, etc. The three main areas of construction – the main building with the auditorium,

art gallery and exhibition area, cinema hall with 160 seats, library, administrative offices, car park, etc., the second area with the training centre with lecture halls and studios, etc., and the third area consisting of the living quarters with the eight chalets – one each for the Member States, the six hostels and quarters for the staff and the different phases of construction was introduced. Lt. Col. P.N. Wijesooriya further highlighted all the environmentally friendly aspects such as rain water harvesting, protecting the existing plants and trees of the site and methods used to reduce the energy consumption, etc. The issues discussed included the delays in construction and coordination problems.





Director SAARC Cultural Centre pays courtesy calls on High Commissions and Embassies of the SAARC Member States in Sri Lanka

Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC) paid a series of courtesy calls on the Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the SAARC Member States in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Ekanayake visited Mr. Munir Ghaisy the Charge d'affaires of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Sri Lanka and later, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Sri Lanka H.E. Mr. M. Ashraf Haidari. She also paid courtesy calls on H.E. Mr. Riaz Hamidullah the High Commissioner for Bangladesh in Sri Lanka, Mr Abbas Esufally Honorary Consul of Bhutan in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Waheed, Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of the Maldives in Sri Lanka, H.E. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal Ambassador of Nepal in Sri Lanka and H.E. Dr. Sahid Ahmad Hashmet High Commissioner of Pakistan in Sri Lanka.

Mrs. Ekanayake discussed the Objectives of the SAARC Cultural Centre to promote Regional Unity

through cultural activities, to contribute towards the preservation, conservation and protection of the South Asia's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, etc. The Ambassadors, High Commissioners and the Honorary Consul pledged their support to all activities of the SAARC Cultural Centre. The proposed calendar of activities for 2019 was also discussed with the respective Ambassadors and High Commissioners who expressed their willingness to support and ensure the success of the activities proposed for all SAARC Member States.

The Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the Member States also proposed collaborative programmes in a large scale such as South Asian Cultural Expo, Cultural Biennale, etc., combining many different cultural activities in one festival to promote sustainable economic development through tourism. The Centre hopes incorporate these proposals in the future activities.





Tenth Governing Board Meeting of the SAARC Cultural Centre

SAARC Cultural Centre hosted the Tenth Meeting of its Governing Board from 30th to 31st October 2018 at the Mount Lavinia Hotel, Sri Lanka. Ms. Anoja Guruge (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, Government of Sri Lanka) convened the meeting as the Chairperson of the SAARC Cultural Centre Governing Board with Ms. Varuni Muthukumarana (Director, Education, Security and Culture) representing the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu and Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre at the head table. The distinguished members who represented the SAARC Member States at the Governing Board Meeting were: Mr. Mohammad Shafiq Ahmadzai (Executive Secretary to the Minister of Information and Culture, Government of Afghanistan), Mr. Abdul Mannan Illias (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Government

of Bangladesh), Mrs. Rajashree Behera (Director, Indian Cultural Centre, High Commission of India for Sri Lanka), Hon Ms. Mariyam Azra Ahmed (State Minister of Education, Maldives), Ms. Dhana Kumari Joshi (Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Nepal in Sri Lanka), Mr. Intisar Ahmad Sulehry (Press Attaché, Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka) and Ms. Thiloma Abayajeewa (Acting Deputy Director, South Asia and SAARC Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka).

Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre presented to the Board the progress of the activities implemented in the year 2018 by the Centre and the proposed programmes for 2019. Indicative Programmes of the Centre for 2019 included an array of events ranging from research programmes to cultural festivals and the Centre will continue to work towards the promotion of visual and performing arts,

tangible and intangible culture and research on culture. The Governing Board Members discussed the Indicative Programmes for 2019 and details of Events for each Member State was deliberated at length and changes were made as suggested. The detailed budgets for each programme was scrutinised closely by the Governing Board Members.

After reviewing the progress of work, the Governing Board unanimously approved the Programmes for 2019. The Governing Board Members congratulated the Centre for its achievements and its contributions towards safeguarding and promoting diverse aspects of South Asian Culture and assured their support to the future activities of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails

SAARC Research Seminar on “Hindu Cultural Trails: Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods & Goddesses, Pilgrims & Prayers, Temples & Texts” was successfully completed in partnership with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi from 8th to 10th October 2018, with the participation of academics, researchers and officials from the Member States. The SAARC Research Seminar on Hindu Cultural Trails was the second Seminar in the series of “South Asian Cultural Trails”, envisaged as a forum of discussion for academics and policy makers to identify and develop the cultural, social, economic, religious, connections of the Region.



The Seminar was attended by 23 official nominees from SAARC Member States of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and 25 other participants. Dr. Karan Singh, Member of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, erudite scholar, writer and researcher was the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the Inauguration. Mr. Kinga Singye, Second Secretary of the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in India, Ms. Fozia Manzoor, Political Counsellor of the Pakistan High Commission in India and Her Excellency the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India, Mrs. Chitranganee Wagiswara represented the Member States at the Inauguration.

The Research Seminar commenced with a panel discussion on Hindu Cultural Trails chaired by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi the Member Secretary of IGNCA with the participation of administrators and academics representing the Member States of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The panelists were Mr. Ashim Kumar Dey (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Bangladesh), Ms. Tshering Choki (Archivist, Department of Culture, Bhutan), Dr. B.R. Mani (Director General, National Museum, India), Mr. Tassadaque Hussain (Deputy Director National Archives, India), Shri. Shrivatsa Goswami (Renowned Scholar and Head Priest of Radharamana Temple Vrindavan, India), Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal (Assistant Professor, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan) and Mr. R. Kargen (Assistant Director, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka).

A total number of 44 papers were presented within 10 academic sessions on diverse themes such as Intangible Heritage and Pilgrimages, Archaeology & Tourism, Archaeology & Architecture, Pilgrimages, Temples, Traditions & Pilgrimages, Geography, Governance, Education and Healing, Gods, Goddesses and Pilgrimages,

etc., at the Seminar. Each session was followed by a question and answer session which enabled the participants to share their ideas and gain new knowledge about the advanced research of the Region in both tangible and intangible Hindu Cultural Heritage. This Research Seminar also provided an opportunity to establish linkages between researchers and enable the policy makers to have an understanding on available research to be utilized for sustainable tourism. The Research Seminar was concluded on 9th October 2018 with the distribution of certificates for the paper presenters.

On 10th October 2018, the participants were taken on a Cultural Tour to sacred area of Vrindavan near Mathura and they visited Radhamadha Jaipur Temple and Govind Dev Temple. The Cultural Tour enabled the participants to interact with each other in a relaxed atmosphere.



SAARC Research Grants on Hindu Cultural Trails 2018



Celebration of a Timeless Tradition – Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers, Temples and Texts

SAARC Cultural Centre as part of its research project for 2018 invited proposals for research on various aspects of Hindu Cultural Trails in South Asia to provide an opportunity for the Researchers of the Member States to explore new research areas and sites along the Hindu Cultural Trails. The Research Grants will encourage new research in the field of Hindu Cultural Trails and provide additional evidence to connect the routes where ideas, information and knowledge travelled in all directions.

A panel of academics for the Hindu Cultural Trails Research Grant Selection Committee was nominated by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. The Research Grant Selection Committee comprised of Prof. K.N. Dixit, Former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. B.M. Pande formerly of the Archaeological Survey of India and Prof. Molly Kaushal, Head of the Janapada Sampada Division of IGNCA. The Committee reviewed 22 Research Proposals received by the SAARC Cultural Centre and selected 8 Research Proposals for the SAARC Research Grant 2018.

The Recipients of the SAARC Research Grant for Further Research on Hindu Cultural Trails are as follows:

1. Mr. Ketab Khan Faizi, Senior Researcher, Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan, on "*Archaeological Sites of Hindu Shahi Period in Afghanistan*".
2. Mr. Sangay Dendup, Deputy Chief Programme Officer, Commission for Religious Organization of Bhutan, Department of Culture, Bhutan on "*Hinduism in Modern Bhutan*".
3. Mr. Ahanthem Homen Singh, Assistant Professor (Ad hoc), Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, Arts Faculty, University of Delhi, India on "*Hindu Temple Culture of Manipur: Towards Mapping, Conservation and Promotion*".
4. Ms. Ayswaria Wariar, Independent Artist of Mohiniyattam, India on "*A Study of Ritualistic Traditions and Sculptures Specific to Dance and Music in Ancient South Kerala Temples*".
5. Ms. Jyotsna Krishnan Avanoor, Research Scholar, Kerala Kalamandalam Deemed University for Art and Culture, Kerala, India on "*Sociology of Gender: A Study with reference to Gender Identity in Koodiyattam*".
6. Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal, Assistant Professor, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan on "*Hindu Temples and Rituals in Rawalpindi, Pakistan*".
7. Dr. Kiran Shahid Siddiqui, Assistant Professor, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan on "*Endangered Hindu Temples of District Chakwal, Punjab, Pakistan*".
8. Ms. W.R.J. Vasana Premachandra, Archaeological Research Officer, Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka, Ms. P.M.R. Priyadarshani, Archaeological Research Officer, Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka and Mr. M.V.G.K. Asanga, Archaeological Research Officer, Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka on "*Study of the Space Spreading Architectural Features and Chronology of the Hindu Temples in the Mullaitivu District, Northern Province, Sri Lanka*".

The SAARC Cultural Centre congratulates the recipients of the Research Grant and hope their research will bring forth new findings on Hindu Cultural Trails.



SAARC Non-Violence Day Art Competition



To mark the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October which is also observed as SAARC Non-Violence Day, the SAARC Cultural Centre organized an art competition among school children in Sri Lanka.

This Art Competition was aimed at creating awareness on the need to revive and inspire peace, tolerance, non-discrimination, co-existence, non-violence and respect for each other in our societies.

The paintings were submitted by two age groups: 10 years to 13 (Junior Category) and 11 years to 18 (Senior Category) and were based on two quotations of Mahatma Gandhi highlighting his principles of non-violence viz;

"The good man is the friend of all living things" - Junior Category and

"What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another" - Senior Category

There was an overwhelming response to the call for entries and over 500 entries from schools from all over Sri Lanka were

received. The winning paintings were selected by a panel of judges from the University of Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. The judges were Dr. Priyantha Udagedara, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Visual Arts and the Head, Department of Textile and Wearable Arts, Mr. Dumith Kulasekara, Head of the Department of Painting and Mr. Jagath Ravindra, Head of the Department of Multi-Disciplinary Design.

The Award Ceremony of the Art Competition was held in conjunction with the 34th SAARC Charter Day celebrations on 8th December at the JAIC Hilton Colombo Residencies. Cash Prizes were awarded for the first, second and third places in both categories. In addition, 17 certificates of Honourable Mention were awarded in both categories. The winners received their certificates and cash prizes from the Chief Guest Mrs. Darshana Senanayake, Secretary, Ministry of Cultural, Internal Affairs and Regional Development, Sri Lanka and from the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

SAARC Non-Violence Day Art Competition Winners

Junior Category (10 to 13 years)

First Place

D.A. Pubudu Madusanka (12 years) of President's College, Sri Jayawardhanapura, Kotte.



Citation - *"The painting is an outstanding example of extreme consistency and expressiveness. Composition created in the painting strengthens its dramaturgy. Skilful use of colour is a testimony to the visual sensitivity of the message of the painting. It is an excellent example of the use of composition, colour and expression."*

Second Place

A.M. Amra (11 years) of Badulla Tamil Girls' Maha Vidyalayam, Badulla.



Citation – “The Painting is a playful precision of childhood dreams, underpinned by shining good humour, with each character of the composition painstakingly coloured with brilliant bright colour pallet. Skills of craftsmanship and creation of positive expression throughout the painting is outstanding.”

Third Place

Sandali Adithya Samasundara (10 years) of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy.



Citation - “While using bright colour pallet and figurative composition in a wonderful way to

paint a sensitive event, the brilliant use of iconography helps to realise the artist's vision of supportive and caring world. Every single motif has its own recognisable story.”

Senior Category

(14 to 18 years)

First Place

K. Vidura Nishan (17 years) of Bamunugama Maha Vidyalaya, Horapavita, Matara.



Citation - “The painting is an outstanding example of creative expression. Composition is created with an understanding of contemporary issues. Skillful use of limited colour pallet is a testimony to the visual sensitivity of the message of the painting. It is an excellent example of innovative thinking.”

Second Place

A.M. Aaisha (17 years) of Badulla Tamil Girls' Maha Vidyalayam, Badulla.

Citation - “The Painting is a direct precision of social issues. The dramatic composition addresses the sensitive, social problem in an artistic manner, mixing the real and the surreal with a lot of ironic motifs. Skills of craftsmanship and creation of positive expression throughout the painting is outstanding.”



Third Place

Shanthoshika Sangilignanam (16 years) Rambaikulam Girls' Maha Vidyalayam National School, Vavuniya.



Citation – “Using a limited colour pallet and a figurative composition with a landscape in the background the painting conveys a sensitive truth. The motifs possess a strong cultural identity, combining reality and fictional styles. The painting is a good example of the use of composition, colour and expression.”



SAARC Cultural Centre celebrates the 34th SAARC CHARTER DAY



SAARC Cultural Centre organized a reception at the Hilton Colombo Residencies, Sri Lanka on 8th December 2018, to celebrate the 34th Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The Charter establishing the Association was signed on 8th December 1985 by the SAARC Heads of State or Government during their first-ever Summit meeting in Dhaka. The main objectives of the reception were to increase awareness and to renew the commitment of Governments to the SAARC process.

Mrs. Darshana Senanayake, Secretary to the Ministry of Culture graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Amongst the distinguished invitees were H.E. Mr. M. Ashraf Haidari, the Ambassador of Afghanistan in Sri Lanka, Mr. Niteen Subhash Yeola, First Secretary (PIC & Consular) of the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka, H.E. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal, Ambassador of Nepal in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Waheed, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of the Maldives, Ms. Yasoja Gunasekara, Director

General (SAARC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, Mr. Nihal Rodrigo former Secretary General of SAARC (1999 – 2002) and Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe, Founder Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

The Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre in her welcome remarks highlighted that “SAARC endeavours for culture of peace, cooperation, and partnership for the collective benefit of the people of South Asia and to harness sustainable partnerships of mutual benefit”. The message of the Secretary General of SAARC H. E. Amjad Hussain B Sial was read by Ms. Kishani Jayasinghe Wijayasekara, Deputy Director Programmes of the SAARC Cultural Centre. The message of the H.E. Maithripala Sirisena President of Sri Lanka was read by Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director Research.

The Chief Guest Mrs. Darshana Senanayake in her address appreciated the role of SAARC in overall development of the Region and also commended the programmes and activities of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo in promoting the distinct culture of South Asia. Mr. Nihal Rodrigo addressed the gathering on the importance of SAARC for the Region. The programme also included a dance performance by the Sri Lanka State Dance troupe and concluded with the Vote of Thanks by Dr. Soumya Chavan, Culture Specialist of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

SAARC CULTURAL FESTIVAL ON TRADITIONAL DANCE 2018 – NEPAL



SAARC Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance 2018 was held from 11th to 14th December 2018 in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in Nepal. This was a celebration of friendship and cross-cultural understanding. The festival celebrated the shared culture of traditional dance in the SAARC Region. The SAARC Member States of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka nominated official dance troupes to participate in this Programme, and display their dance heritage during the course of the festivities.

The Inaugural Ceremony was held at the Performance Theatre of the Nepal Academy Kamaladi in Kathmandu on 11th December 2018 with Hon. Rabindra Prasad Adhikari, the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in Nepal as the Chief Guest. The inauguration was also graced by H.E. Ms. Mashfee Binte Shams the Ambassador of

Bangladesh in Nepal and H.E. Ms. Swarna Perera, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Nepal, along with several other dignitaries and officials.

The Inauguration Ceremony commenced with a special “SAARC Dance” presented by the dancers of the host Member State of Nepal where eight male and eight female dancers dressed in the styles of the eight SAARC Member States and carrying the national flags of each country presented a unique dance uniting the SAARC Member States. This was followed by the address of the Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake and the address of the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Hon. Rabindra Prasad Adhikari. The inaugural festivities concluded with a traditional dance item by each participating Member State.

The Closing Ceremony of the SAARC Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance was held on 14th December 2018 at the Yellow Pagoda Hotel in

Jamal, Kathmandu. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Mr. Krishna Prasad Devkota Secretary to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in Nepal. The other distinguished invitees were H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, the Secretary General of SAARC, H.E. Ms. Swarna Perera Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Nepal, Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake, Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Ms. Varuni Muthukumarana, Director Education, Security and Culture from the SAARC Secretariat, Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nepal, Mr. Bharat Mani Subedi, the Joint Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in Nepal and Ms. Mangala Pradhan, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Aviation of Nepal. The certificates of participation were handed to all participants of the Cultural Festival on Traditional Dance by H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial.





SAARC ARTISTS CAMP 2018

SAARC Artists Camp and Exhibition of Paintings organized by the SAARC Cultural Centre for the eighth consecutive year was held from 4th to 6th December 2018 at the Jetwing Lagoon Hotel, Negombo, Sri Lanka. Twenty-two Artists from the Member States of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka participated in the Artists Camp. The themes for the Artist Camp were “South Asian Splendour” and “Vibrant Tranquillity”. The main objective of the Artist Camp was to bridge the cultural gap between the South Asian artists in order to promote cultural connectivity in the South Asian Region.

The Inauguration Ceremony was held on the 4th December 2018 at the Conference Hall of the Jetwing Lagoon Hotel, Negombo. Among the distinguished invitees were Ms. Dhana Kumari Joshi, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Nepalese Embassy in Sri Lanka, Mr. Intisar Ahmad Sulehry, Press Attaché of the Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka, Ms. Thiloma Abayajeewa, Acting Deputy Director of the South Asia and SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, Dr. Priyantha Udagedara, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Visual Arts and Head of the Department of Textile and Wearable Arts, University





of Visual and Performing Arts in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC welcomed the distinguished guests and the artists and reiterated the importance of art in uniting people. She further stated that the Artists Camp 2018 will encourage new cultural ties and promote Regional unity through cultural understanding and intercultural dialogue.

The Artists Camp commenced with the drawing of a collage by the distinguished invitees and the artists representing the Member States. Drawing inspiration from the scenic Negombo lagoon view, artists were given an opportunity to paint over a period of two-days on site and their works completed during the camp, a total of 44 paintings, were displayed at the Exhibition of Paintings held on 6th December 2018, at the hotel's lobby. The Programme concluded with the closing ceremony where the artists were awarded a Certificate of Participation and a token of appreciation by the Director, SAARC Cultural Centre.



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