



SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



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H.E. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of SAARC

New Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Assumes Duty

H.E. Md. Golam Sarwar, a Senior Diplomat from Bangladesh, joined the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal, as the fifteenth Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on 25th October 2023.

H.E. Sarwar obtained his Master of Commerce/Business from the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh and joined the Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs) in 1991 and has previously served as the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Malaysia, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Sultanate of

Oman, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Sweden with accreditation to Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland, Consul General of Bangladesh to Jeddah, etc. He also served as Director General, Director and Deputy Chief of Protocol, etc., at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangladesh. During his career spanning over 3 decades in foreign service, he represented Bangladesh in numerous Regional and International Organizations. SCC takes this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Sarwar on assuming duty as the Secretary General of SAARC and look forward to further enhance cooperation in the Region.

Editorial

The SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC) successfully organized diverse initiatives such as SAARC Talk Series, SAARC Special lectures, SAARC Film Days, SAARC Exhibition of Paintings, Governing Board Meeting, etc. These talks created meaningful dialogues and sharing of best practices in the SAARC Region on diverse topics from sustainable development to the use of space technology on cultural heritage. SCC also organized two SAARC Special lectures on hybrid mode. The SAARC Film Days showcased the rich cinematic talent and

creativity of South Asian movies. The SAARC Exhibition of Paintings displayed the artistic expression as a medium which transcends boundaries and create harmony. The curated artworks on display are a vibrant reflection of the artistic talent and creativity of the SAARC Region and it allowed the art enthusiasts to immerse themselves in the narratives encapsulated in each artwork. The momentum generated by these initiatives in the Region has reawakened the interest towards cultural activities of SCC. We are looking forward to 2024 with the belief that it will witness

further engagements, meaningful collaborations and constructive dialogues across various disciplines towards realizing the collective aspirations of the SAARC Member States to build a brighter, more interconnected future for South Asia. SCC remains committed to its vision and mission of promotion of peace, regional cooperation and understanding in the SAARC Region through initiatives which are impactful and inclusive.

-Editor

13th Governing Board Meeting of the SAARC Cultural Centre



The 13th Governing Board Meeting of the SCC was held at the Galle Face Hotel from 28th to 29th November 2023. This Meeting was held in hybrid mode with the Governing Board Members from Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participating physically in Colombo while Bhutan, India and Nepal participated virtually.

The Governing Board members were Mr. Md. Mizanur Rahman, (Chairperson) Joint Secretary (Administration), Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh, Ms. Tshering Choki, Senior Programme Officer, Ministry of Home Affairs, Bhutan, Mr. Yash Veer Singh, Director, International Cultural Relations,

Ministry of Culture, India, Mr. Shamun Hameed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Dhivehi Language, Culture and Heritage, Maldives, Dr. Suresh Suras Shrestha, Head of Division / Joint Secretary, Culture Division, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal, Ms. Humaira Ahmed, Secretary National Heritage



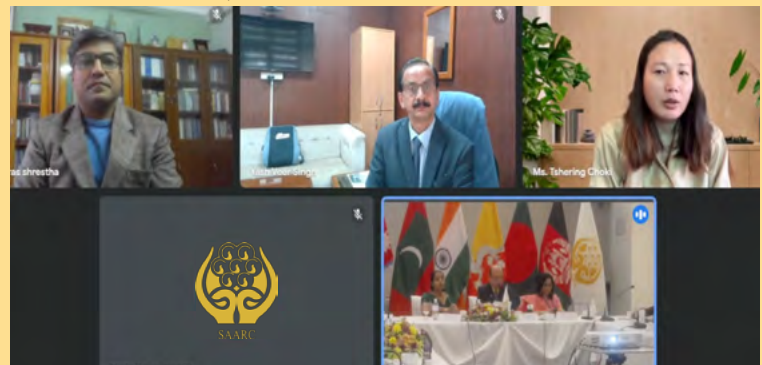
Director SCC presenting the memento to the Chairperson of the 13th Governing Board



Chairperson of the 13th Governing Board & Director, ESC

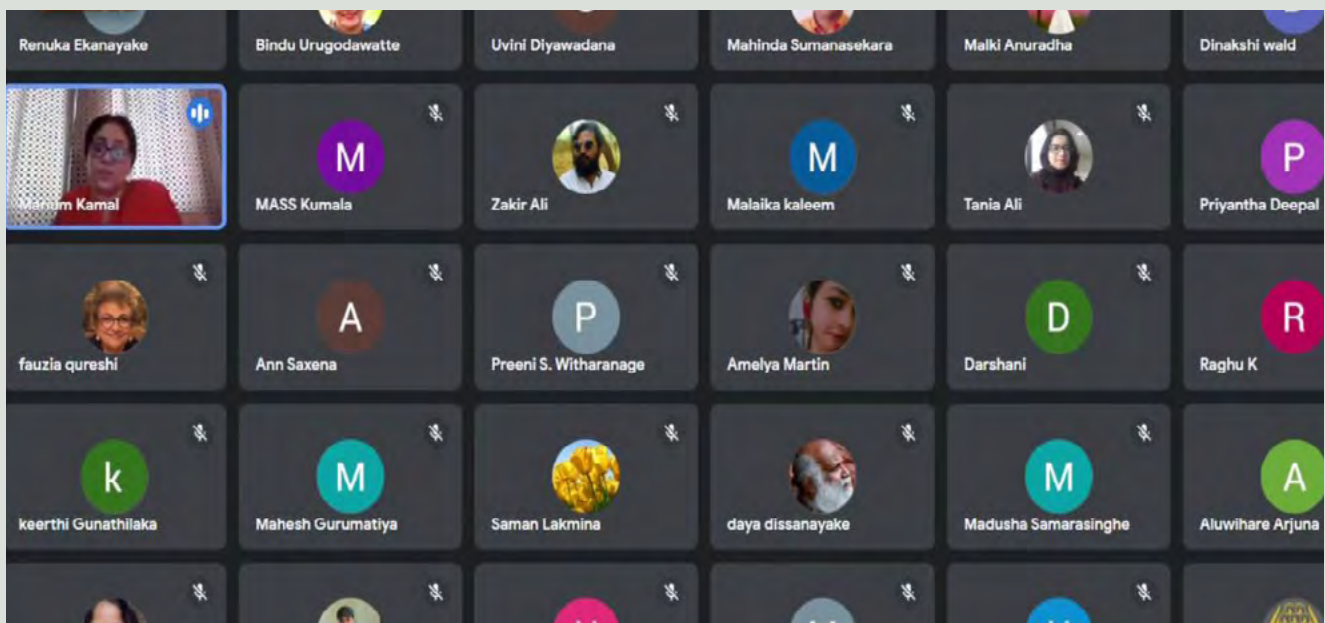
& Culture Division, Pakistan, Mr. Somarathne Vidanapathirana, Secretary, Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka. The ex-officio Members of the Governing Board were Ms. Irosha Cooray, Director –Education, Security & Culture of the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal representing the SAARC Secretariat, Ms. T.P. Dharmasena, Director

General, the SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka representing the host Member State and Ms. Renuka Ekanayake Director SCC representing the Centre. The activities and programmes suggested by the SCC was discussed at length by the Governing Board Members and the Board unanimously approved the programmes and activities for 2024.



Virtual Governing Board Members from Nepal, India, Bhutan and the head table of the meeting

SAARC Talk Series 2023



The SAARC Talk Series 2023 in virtual mode featured eminent speakers who shared their insights, displaying the diversity and richness of the South Asian Region. These speakers contributed towards the dissemination of knowledge of the SAARC Region. These talks were followed by a Question & Answer session with interesting inputs, comments

and questions from the participants who joined online across the SAARC Region. The diverse range of topics covered and the insights shared by the speakers underscored the multifaceted nature of the challenges and opportunities within the SAARC Region, highlighting the importance of sustained dialogue and cooperation for collective progress.

SAARC Talk Series 2023



SPEAKER:
IYAZ J. NASEEM
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER
DIVEHI LANGUAGE ACADEMY
MALDIVES



Etymological Connection of Maldivian Languages to other Indian Languages

Mr. Iyaz J. Naseem (Maldives)

The third session of the SAARC Talk Series was held on Tuesday, 18th July 2023 with Mr. Iyaz J. Naseem, an Executive Board Member of the National Language Academy of Maldives, delivering his lecture on the topic *Etymological Connection*

of Maldivian Languages to other Indian Languages. He discussed the etymological links between Divehi and other Indian languages, shed light on the historical interactions that influenced its vocabulary and phonological

characteristics. Through an analysis of shared lexicon and phonetic similarities, Mr Naseem explained the linguistic heritage that binds the Maldivian language with its South Asian neighbours.



SPEAKER:
DR. SHAFI NOOR ISLAM
SENIOR ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
UNIVERSITI BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



The Prospects and Challenges of the Sundarbans Natural Heritage Sites in Bangladesh

Dr. Shafi Noor Islam (Bangladesh)

The fourth session of the SAARC Talk Series held on 16th August 2023. Dr. Shafi Noor Islam, a Senior Assistant Professor of the Department of Geographical and Environmental Studies of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam, in Brunei delivered

a lecture on, *The Prospects and Challenges of the Sundarbans Natural Heritage Sites in Bangladesh*. Dr. Islam highlighted Sundarbans' significant ecology, its role as a habitat for various endangered species and shed light on the impacts of climate change on Sundarbans. He pointed out

how climate change and unplanned resource management created challenges for the heritage sites. He outlined the initiatives led by governmental, non-governmental and community-based organizations on conservation.



SPEAKER:
DR. MARIUM KAMAL
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
CENTRE FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB
LAHORE, PAKISTAN



Political Philosophy of Arthashastra

Dr. Mariam Kamal (Pakistan)

The fifth session of the SAARC Talk Series was held on 26th September 2023. Dr. Mariam Kamal, Assistant Professor at the Centre for South Asian Studies of the University of the Punjab Lahore, Pakistan delivered a lecture on *Political Philosophy of Arthashastra*. Dr. Kamal shared her insights on Kautilya's massive contribution to

the science of politics, statecraft and discussed the ancient political thought and philosophy with the existing political structure and alliances. Dr. Kamal emphasized that Kautilya's indigenous knowledge and the realistic wisdom can also be analysed through global politics. This lecture led to a better understanding and

awareness of the importance of ancient texts and how the concepts of rationality, reason, economy, alliances, and empowerment of women mentioned in the ancient text are still relevant and Arthashastra's political philosophy can help us to navigate the complexities of the modern world.



SAARC Talk Series 2023



SPEAKER:

MR. DORJI
PROJECT MANAGER
RIGSUM GOENPA RESTORATION PROJECT
UNDER TRASHIYANGTSE DISTRICT
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND DZONGKHA DEVELOPMENT
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, BHUTAN



Sustainable Preservation of Architectural Heritage in Bhutan: Case Study of Wangdue Phodrang Dzong Reconstruction Project - Mr Dorji (Bhutan)

The sixth session of the SAARC Talk Series was held on 24th October 2023. Mr Dorji, Project Manager of Goenpa Restoration Project of Trashiyangtse District, Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Bhutan spoke on *Sustainable Preservation of Architectural Heritage in Bhutan:*

Case Study of Wangdue Phodrang Dzong Reconstruction Project. He discussed the Phodrang Dzong, a historic Bhutanese fortress that was ravaged by a fire in 2012 and explained how the vision of the project extended beyond mere restoration, emphasizing the preservation of historical, cultural and environmental sustainability.

The use of intangible heritage of traditional construction techniques upheld the authenticity and the legacy of Bhutanese architectural heritage. The local craftsmen who preserved traditional skills used this project to revive and train another generation of traditional architectural craftsmen in both tangible and intangible heritage.



SPEAKER:

Ms. KAMALIKA BOSE
URBAN CONSERVATIONIST
FOUNDER-PRINCIPAL
HERITAGE SYNERGIES INDIA



Building Regional Cooperation Through Shared Cultural Heritage of Kolkata and Dhaka **Ms. Kamalika Bose (India)**

The seventh session of the SAARC Talk Series was held on 24th November 2023. Ms. Kamalika Bose, Urban Conservationist and Founder-Principal of Heritage Synergies in India, spoke on *Building Regional Cooperation*

Through Shared Cultural Heritage of Kolkata and Dhaka. She focused on two of the most important riverine cities Kolkata and Dhaka and how they shared significant cultural and architectural heritage that is a strong conduit for building

Regional Cooperation. This talk explored the historical, cultural, and architectural “sharedness” between Kolkata and Dhaka- as a tool to enable dialogue.



SPEAKER:

ENG. (DR.) SANATH PANAWENNAGE
DIRECTOR GENERAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
ARTHUR C CLARKE INSTITUTE FOR MODERN TECHNOLOGIES
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA



Preserving South Asia's Cultural Heritage: 'Space' as a Decisive Enabler **Eng. (Dr.) Sanath Panawennage (Sri Lanka)**

Eng. (Dr.) Sanath Panawennage, Director General & Chief Executive Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies Colombo, Sri Lanka delivered the eighth session of the SAARC Talk Series on 6th December 2023. His lecture *Preserving South Asia's Cultural Heritage: 'Space' as a Decisive Enabler* highlighted

the importance of space-based tools, including satellite-based earth observation, geospatial information systems and global navigation satellite systems in the conservation and management of cultural sites. The lecture elaborated on the use of the latest space technology like LiDAR, virtual reality (VR) and augmented

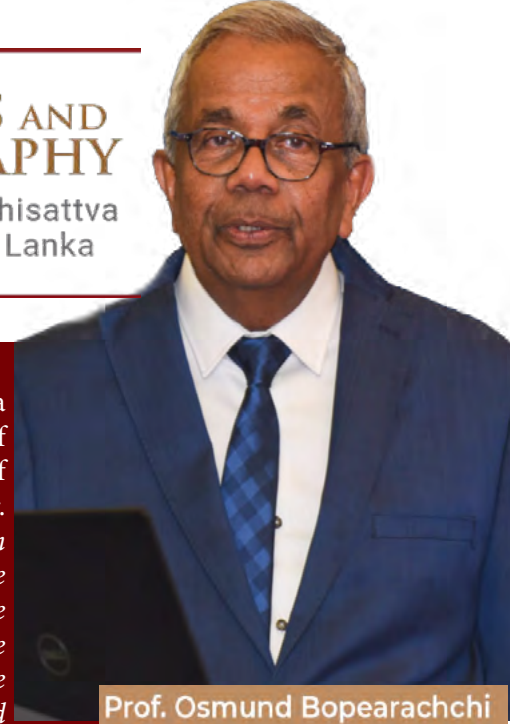
reality (AR) tools that can create immersive experiences, allowing people to explore historical sites and learn about their cultural significance. His presentation illuminated the pivotal role that these space technology applications could play in preservation and management efforts.

SAARC Special Lectures



CONTRADICTIONS IN THE TEXTS AND CONFUSIONS IN THE ICONOGRAPHY

Revisiting the theme of the Great Departure of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha in the Ancient Buddhist Art of India and Sri Lanka



Prof. Osmund Boppearachchi

SAARC Cultural Centre in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka organized a lecture in hybrid mode delivered by Professor Osmund Boppearachchi, Emeritus Director of Research of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS) of the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Paris, France on 28th July 2023 at the Faculty of Social Sciences Auditorium, University of Kelaniya.

The session commenced with welcome remarks by the Director, SCC, Ms. Renuka

Ekanayake. Prof Anura Manatunga, Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya introduced the speaker. The lecture *Contradictions in the Texts and Confusions in the Iconography: Revisiting the Theme of the Great Departure of the Bodhisattva Siddhārtha in the Ancient Buddhist art of India and Sri Lanka* critically examined the important events related to the life stories of Gautama Buddha and how they are not homogeneously represented in ancient schools of art in South and Southeast Asia, in large part owing to contradictory versions found in Sanskrit and Pali texts. This lecture highlighted

the native artistic traditions of India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia with special reference to how the textual narratives that inspired these images created confusion not only among the artists who executed them in ancient times but also among the art historians who interpreted them in modern times.



SAARC Special Lectures



A section of the audience



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SAARC Cultural Centre delivering the welcome address



Prof. Anura Manatunge, University of Kelaniya introducing the speaker



Deputy Director-Research, SAARC Cultural Centre, Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori delivering the Vote of Thanks

Eminent academics from South Asia Prof. Anand Singh from Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Dr. Sushmita Basu Majumdar of Calcutta University etc., joined virtually. The session concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director - Research, SCC. This occasion was graced by Dr Senarath Dissanayaka, former Director-General of the Department of Archaeology in

Sri Lanka, Chair/Senior Prof. Prishantha Gunawardhana, Prof. Anura Manatunga, Dr Sriyani Hathurusinghe, Dr. Chandima Bogahawatte of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Kelaniya, Prof. Nadeesha Gunawardhana & Dr Dammika Manatunga, of the Department of History, etc., and other academic staff members and students of the Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya.



Prof. Osmund Bopearachchi with the Staff Members of the SAARC Cultural centre and the University of Kelaniya



SAARC Special Lectures



World heritage sites of South Asia

WORLD HERITAGE SITES & UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SCC in collaboration with the National Library of Sri Lanka organized a lecture by Dr. Anamika Biswas, Consultant, Sustainable Heritage Development and Guest Professor of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Delhi on 25th October 2023 at the Auditorium of the National Library of Sri Lanka on hybrid mode.

Dr. Biswas delivered her lecture on “*World Heritage Sites and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*”. In her presentation, Dr. Biswas delved into the synergy between World Heritage Sites and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She emphasized the urgency of safeguarding the heritage sites, which represent our shared heritage,



Dr. Anamika Biswas

from various threats such as climate change, urbanization, and conflict. The importance of combining the conservation of world heritage sites

with Sustainable Development Goals which would enhance and uplift the local communities was highlighted with examples.



Dr. Anamika Biswas with the Representatives of SAARC Cultural Centre, National Library of Sri Lanka and the SAARC Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka.



SAARC Special Lectures



Dr. Biswas with the other guests in the audience

The initiatives shared addressed climate change, sustainable tourism, eco-tourism, bio-diversity conservation and community empowerment, etc., issues within and around these sites. The success stories shared by Dr. Biswas provided creative ideas and methods which can be used in the SAARC Region. Vote of Thanks was delivered by

the Deputy Director-Research, Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori of SCC. Prof. Nanda Dharmaratne, Chairman, National Library and Documentation Services Board, Prof. Ankuran Dutta, Director, SVCC, representing the High Commissioner of India, Mr. Adeel Sattar, Press, Cultural & Education Attache, High Commission of Pakistan, Ms. Diana Perera,

Assistant Director, SAARC of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka, Mr. Ni Lisheng, Deputy Director, Chinese Cultural Centre and other distinguished guests physically attended this lecture while there were many international participants who joined virtually.



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SAARC Cultural Centre handing a token of appreciation to Dr. Anamika Biswas



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC delivering the welcome address



Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director-Research of SCC delivering the Vote of Thanks



Ms. Padma Bandaranayake Director of the National Library of Sri Lanka, addressing the gathering



Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director-Programmes of SCC introducing the speaker

SAARC Film Days 2023

The SCC resumed the SAARC Film Days to share movies submitted to the SAARC Film Festival through the years which are in our repository. These movies reflect the changing themes, the passing of time, the development of new techniques, new developments from the international arena embraced, etc., and portray a changing cultural dynamic of the

South Asian Region specifically in using the medium of film to reveal the themes once which were taboo in the society. The SAARC Film Days are eagerly anticipated by the Sri Lankan enthusiasts. The SCC will screen films from each Member State in alphabetical order as per SAARC practice and the next film to be screened during the first quarter of 2024 will be from India.

The SAARC Film Day for the third quarter in 2023 screened the award-winning movie from Bangladesh “Haldaa” on 25th August 2023 in collaboration with the National Film Corporation (NFC) of Sri Lanka at the Tharanganie Cinema Hall of NFC.

“Haldaa” received Best Feature Film, Best Editor, Best Cinematography and Best Original Score at the 8th SAARC Film Festival in 2018. The High Commissioner of Bangladesh H.E. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam

graced this occasion as the Chief Guest. The Director, SCC made the welcome address and Ms. Anoma Rajakaruna a well-known film-maker and film festival curator introduced the film.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director Programmes, SCC and Mr. Harishnath Nadarajah, Programme Assistant, SCC compered this event. Mr. Tauquir Ahmed Director of the movie “Haldaa” joined virtually to discuss the film with film enthusiasts.



Screening of “Haldaa” from Bangladesh

Audience



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director SCC presenting a memento to the High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Sri Lanka, H.E. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam.

SAARC Film Days



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SAARC Cultural Centre



H.E. Tareq Md Ariful Islam High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka



Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director, Programmes, SAARC Cultural Centre



Ms. Anoma Rajakaruna



H.E. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka with Madam Aliya

Highlights of the SAARC Film Day - Haldaa



Prof. Ankuran Dutta, Director, SVCC



Dr. B. M. Goodarzi, Director, Iranian Cultural Centre in Sri Lanka



Mr. Deepal Chandraratne, Chairman, National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SAARC Cultural Centre.

Lighting of the traditional Oil Lamp.

Audience



SAARC Film Days



WIND OF KARMA

A FILM FROM BHUTAN



Film enthusiasts at the Registration Desk



Mr. Abbas Esufally, Hon. Consul of Bhutan with Madam Esufally



Mr. Esala Weerakoon, former Secretary General of SAARC



Distinguished audience

During the last quarter of 2023 the movie “The Wind of Karma” directed by Karma Lhatrul Dorji of Bhutan was screened on 21st November 2023 in collaboration with the National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka. This movie was selected for its portrayal of the traditional culture of Bhutan, both tangible and intangible cultural heritage and the natural beauty of the landscape of Bhutan. Mr. Abbas Esufally the Honorary Consul of Bhutan in Sri Lanka was the Chief Guest at this event and H.E. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka, Mr. Esala Weerakoon former Secretary General of the SAARC Secretariat

and Senior Additional Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka, Dr. Bahman Mozzami Goodarzi Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Sri Lanka, Mr. Lisheng Ni Deputy Director of the Chinese Cultural Centre in Sri Lanka, Ms. Diana Perera Assistant Director of SAARC Division, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc., also graced this occasion. The welcome speech was delivered by Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC and the Deputy Director Programmes Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte introduced the movie and delivered the vote of thanks. This event was compered by Mr. Harishnath Nadaraja, Programme Assistant, SCC.



Ms. Renuka, Director, SCC, Ekanayake delivering the welcome address



Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director Programmes introducing the film



Audience



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC and Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte , Deputy Director-Programmes handing a token of appreciation to the Chief Guest Honorary Consul of Bhutan Mr. Abbas Esufally



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC welcoming H.E Tariq Md. Ariefl Islam, High Commisioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka

SAARC Exhibition of Paintings

The SAARC Exhibition of Paintings was organized by SCC in Collaboration with the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka (RASSL), the oldest academic society in Sri Lanka which was established in 1845. The exhibition was held at the Gallery of Royal Asiatic Society located within the premises of the Mahaweli Centre in Colombo. The exhibition was held from 7th to 10th November 2023 and was opened to the public. The exhibition themed “Captivating Canvasses of the Vibrant Colours of Culture” is the first exhibition to be held at the Royal Asiatic Society Gallery. Paintings from all Member States were displayed, depicting various aspects of culture which were highlighted

through the depiction of women, water and water-related industries, folk art on canvas, and tangible heritage through the depiction of architecture and spirituality of the Region. The exhibition was ceremoniously inaugurated on 7th November 2023 with the Director of the SCC Ms. Renuka Ekanayake delivering the welcome address. Dr. Malini Dias President of the RASSL made her remarks regarding this auspicious collaboration and the importance of culture. Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte Deputy Director Programmes at SCC delivered the vote of thanks. The RASSL also organised a special exhibition of their rare books for perusal by the distinguished guests.



Prof. Ankuran Dutta of SVCC with Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director SCC admiring the paintings



Honorary Consul of Bhutan, Mr. Abbas Esufally



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC



President, RASSL, Dr. Malini Dias



H.E. Ho Thi Thanh Truc
Ambassador of Vietnam to Sri Lanka



Director, SCC, Ms. Renuka Ekanayake presenting a SCC publication to the President, RASSL, Dr. Malini Dias

Captivating Canvasses of the Vibrant Colours of Culture

This occasion was graced by H.E. Ho Thi Thanh Truc Ambassador of Vietnam to Sri Lanka, Prof. Ankuran Dutta Director of the Swamy Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) representing the H.E. the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Mr. Abbas Esufally the Honorary

Consul of Bhutan in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mohammed Reyad Hossain Counsellor & Head of Chancery of the Bangladesh High Commission in Sri Lanka, Ms. Aishath Nihad Third Secretary of the Maldivian High Commission in Sri Lanka



Architect Mr. Ashley De Vos, Hony. immediate Past President RASSL



Mr. Mohammed Reyad Hossain Counsellor & Head of Chancery of the Bangladesh High Commission in Sri Lanka



Ms. Iromie Wijewardena a well-known painter of Sri Lanka



Emeritus Prof. Nimal De Silva Hony. Librarian of RASSL

Mrs. D.P. Dharmasena Director General for SAARC of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka and Mr. Seyed Mostafa Hashem Third Secretary of the Embassy of Iran in Sri Lanka. The inauguration was also graced by Deshamanya, Vidyajothi, Jathika Uruma Prasada Pranama Architect Mr. Ashley De Vos – Hony. Immediate Past President of the RASSL, Architect Ms. Shereen Amendra–Hony. Vice President of the RASSL, Deshamanya, Vidyajothi Emeritus Prof. Nimal De Silva – Hony.

Librarian of RASSL, Dr. Mallika Karunaratne–Hony. Joint Secretary of the RASSL, Dr. Susantha Goonetilake – Hony. Past President of the RASSL, Mr Denis Fernando – Director Mahaweli Centre, Mr. Prasanna Ratnayake –Additional Director General, Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka, Prof. Gamini Adhikari– Director, Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, renowned artists from Sri Lanka Ms. Iromie Wijewardena and Mr. S.H. Sarath.



Bhutanese students in Sri Lanka at the Registration Desk



Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director SCC delivering the welcome address



Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director - Programmes, SCC delivering the vote of thanks



Distinguished guests appraising the rarebooks of RASSL



SAARC Cultural Centre Team

SAARC Cultural Centre Celebrates the 39th SAARC Charter Day



The Heads of Governments and States of South Asia endorsed the SAARC Charter on 8th December 1985 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, establishing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Subsequently, each year, the SAARC entities celebrates Charter Day to commemorate the pillars of friendship, trust and understanding, to promote the welfare of the people of South Asia through economic growth, social progress and cultural development.



Director, SAARC Cultural Centre, Ms. Renuka Ekanayake delivering the Welcome Address



Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director-Research reading the felicitation message of His Excellency Secretary General of SAARC



Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director-Programmes reading the felicitation message of His Excellency the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic Sri Lanka

Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC made the welcome address and reiterated the advantages of the Regional Cooperation. The messages by the Secretary General of SAARC H.E. Md. Golam Sarwar and Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Prime Minister of Democratic, Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka were read by Dr. Bina Gandhi

Deori, Deputy Director-Research, SCC. Messages by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka, Hon. M.U.M. Ali Sabry were read by Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte, Deputy Director-Programmes. A short video clip highlighting

the activities of the SAARC Cultural Centre was also shared in remembrance of work carried out by the SAARC Cultural Centre. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks being delivered by the Deputy Director -Programmes.

Courtesy calls



Representatives of the SAARC Women's Association in Sri Lanka with the Director, SCC, Ms. Renuka Ekanayake.

Representing the SAARC Women's Association of Sri Lanka, President of the SAARC Women's Association Ms. Nimmi Thambiayah, the Country Coordinator, Mrs Eesha Speldewinde accompanied by the members of the association paid a courtesy visit to Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, the Director of SCC on 4th September 2023.



Director, SCC and the Deputy Director-Programmes with the Honorary Consul of Bhutan in Sri Lanka

Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Director, SCC accompanied by Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte Deputy Director-Programmes paid a courtesy call on Mr. Abbas Esufally Honorary Consul of Bhutan in Sri Lanka at his office on 30th October 2023.



Deputy Director-Research, SCC, Cultural Counsellor, Iran Cultural Centre and the Director, SCC

Dr B. Moazami Goodarzi, Cultural Counsellor, Iran Cultural Centre, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Sri Lanka paid a courtesy visit to the Director, SCC on 13th December 2023. Activities of the both cultural centres were discussed during this visit.

Events Attended



Director, SCC delivered the Keynote Address

Ms. Renuka Ekanayake delivered the keynote address at the commemorative dinner to celebrate the 77th Indian Independence Day on 23rd September 2023 at the Taj Samudra organized by the Sri Lanka India Society of Colombo. In her speech, Director highlighted the historical links between Sri Lanka and India, elucidated on the cultural links that strengthened the ties between the two countries. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena was the Chief Guest of the event. Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori of SCC also attended this event.



Gandhi Jayanti 2023 at Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC)

The Director and Deputy Director-Research of SCC attended the Mahatma Gandhi Oration at Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre on the occasion of Gandhi commemoration on 2nd October 2023. The keynote speech was delivered by Prof. Don McAviney on *Relevance of Gandhian Principles in Social and Corporate Life*.

Events Attended



77th Independence Day of India

Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director-Research, SCC attended the 77th Independence Day of India at the India House on 15th August 2023 in Sri Lanka.



Partition Horrors Remembrance Day

Ms. Renuka Ekanayake Director, SCC and Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director-Research attended the inauguration of the exhibition of *Partition Horrors Remembrance Day* at the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in Colombo.



Indian Alumni Art Exhibition

Ms. Renuka Ekanayake, Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Ms. Bindu Urugodawatte and Mr. Mahinda Sumanasekara of SCC

participated at the inauguration of the *Chitrakleha* Exhibition, the first ever Indian Alumni Art Exhibition at JDA Perera Gallery of the University of Visual and



Screening of "GANDHI" in Celebration of the Independence Day of India

The SVCC, Colombo screened the cinematic masterpiece "Gandhi" directed by Sir Richard Attenborough at the Tharanaganie Theatre of the National Film corporation of Sri Lanka to celebrate the 77th Independence Day of India. Ms. Renuka Ekanayake Director and Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori Deputy Director -Research represented the SCC at this event.



Ayurveda Day

Ms. Renuka Ekanayake and Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, of SCC attended the inaugural session of the Ayurveda Day on 10th November 2023 at Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo in collaboration with Department of Ayurveda, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine, and Siddha Medicine of Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Performing Arts on 10th October 2023. The exhibition featured the artworks of 7 legendary masters & 26 contemporary artists from Sri Lanka who studied in India.



JANUARY

PROF. SWADHIN SEN

Department of Archaeology
Jahangirnagar University
Dhaka, Bangladesh

*Breaking the Spatiotemporal Boundaries of
Continuity and Change: Thinking About
Archaeology of Bangladesh*



FEBRUARY

DR. SHRIKANT GANVIR

Assistant Professor
Department of AIHC & Archaeology
Deccan College PGRI
Deemed to be University
Pune, India

*Sacred Landscape of the Buddhist Monastic Sites
of North-eastern Andhra Pradesh, India*

MARCH

MR. SAMTEN YESHI

Researcher
Leiden University
Institute for Area Studies
Netherlands

To be announced



SAARC Cultural Centre
No. 224, Baudhaloka Mawatha
Colombo 7
Sri Lanka
Tel : +94 11 2584451
Fax : +94 11 2584452
Email : scc@saarcculture.org
Web : www.saarcculture.org

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Contributors

Mr. Mahinda Sumanasekara, Documentation Officer

Layout and Design

Ms. Uvini Diyawadana, Computer Operator
Mr. Harishnath Nadarajah, Programme-Assistant

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SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka



SAARC

SAARC Cultural Centre
No. 224, Bauddhaloka
Mawatha, Colombo 7,
Sri Lanka
Tel : +94 11 2584451
Fax : +94 11 2584452
Email : scc@saarcculture.org
Web : www.saarcculture.org

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