



## India's first Bengali Literary festival "Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob" commences

**Kolkata, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2015:** Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob (ABSU), India's first Bengali Literary Festival was inaugurated today at the 96 year old heritage Oxford Bookstore Park Street in the distinguished presence of eminent authors **Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Samaresh Mazumdar, Sankha Ghosh**, renowned novelist and editor **Imdadul Haq Milon** from **Bangladesh** and Honourable Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata **Janab Zokey Ahad**. The Guests opened the Utsob with a rousing discussion on whether the language of Bengali Literature was changing across the border and the differences between epar and opar literary expression & writings - *Epar Bangla Opar Bangla. Sahityer Bhasa Ki Bodle Jacche*.

Oxford Bookstore buzzed with traditional Bengali adda seeing intellectual exchange and heated discussions with the session *Pathaker Jonne Likhi, Na Moner Tagidey Likhi* with renowned authors **Anish Deb, Pracheta Gupta, Bani Basu, Ullas Mallick** and **Dipanwita Roy** debating the inspiration of the author's writings. Novelists and authors like **Swapnomoy Chakraborty, Ranjan Bandopadhyay, Tilottama Mazumdar** and **Kaberi Roychowdhury** pondered over whether literature has to be controversial to be popular in the next session *Bitorko Na Holey Sahitya Jonopriyo Hoena!* taking the audience through how Bangla Literature had evolved over centuries.

The provocative *Barshik Pujor Phosol! Ete Ki Sahitya Samriddha Hoye?* Or do the Novels, stories and poems published every year during the festive season contribute to enriching Bengali Literature session had famous authors like **Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay, Sanjib Chattopadhyay, Smaranjit Chakraborty, Nabakumar Basu** and **Binod Ghosal**, speak their mind on the sensitive topic.

The important role that Kobita has played in Bangla literature got the attention it deserved with the superb platform provided by the session - *Kobitar Kothokotha* - where prominent poets **Subodh Sarkar, Binayak Bandopadhyay, Srijato, Pinaki Thakur, Shyamalkanti Das** and **Bithi Chattopadhyay** stepped the ongoing debate of the morning several notches up. The discussion was followed by a session that effectively mapped the impact of Bangla literature on films *Cinemas Sahitya Na Sahityer Cinema?* asking which adaptation is better, Books to Movies or Vice Versa. Award winning Directors like **Goutam Ghosh, Aniruddha Roychowdhury (Tony), Suman Mukhopadhyay** and **Mainak Bhoumik**, participated with veteran actor **Barun Chanda** perfectly compering. The one day literary event culminated with an electrifying session on music and



modern poetry throwing up the question on whether it was lyrics that make a song or the composition, with popular Bengali signers like **Nachiketa, Surajit and Kalikaprasad** performing and participating in the session *Sarthak Adhunik Gaan Sarthak Kobita!*.

Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob was organized on October 10<sup>th</sup> in Oxford Bookstore Park Street in association with Patra Bharati Group of Publications. *“A void has been filled by Kolkata’s oldest bookstore, Oxford Bookstore with the organization of the Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob in association with Patra Bharati today. Kolkata being the hub of Bengali Literature has never recognized its own regional literature truly and there has not been a prominent platform to showcase the works of the eminent authors, poets and celebrities. We have changed all that today,”* a delighted **Tridib Kumar Chattopadhyay**, Managing Director of Patra Bharti said.

The Utsob broke new grounds with newer concepts and fresh ideas to engage everyone and there were many firsts not seen before in any literary festival of the country. The Utsob was beamed live worldwide on youtube with live blogging in both bangla and English from the venue. A group of around 25 photographers who had been touring College Street since early morning for the **Heritage Walk** documenting and photographing important landmarks – an author’s residence, a legendary bookseller on the famed street and printing press where Bengal’s best sellers are printed - joined the event mid-day.

*“Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob has honored the rich tradition of the Bangla language and reached out the voices at the Festival to a much wider audience. The careful curation that has brought out the voices heard today on so many aspects of Bengali literature will not only provide a direction to aspiring writers but attract the youth towards our wonderful Language and Literature. We are extremely grateful to all the eminent personalities from both sides of the border, poets, musicians, film directors who have joined us today and created this gift for the city of books which we love. I am looking forward to original content created under the roof of our buzzing heritage bookstore to be available for worldwide audience reference soon.”* **Swagat Sengupta**, the Utsob director said.

### **About Patra Bharati**

Patra Bharati started its journey back in the year 1968, with the very reputed juvenile magazine, Kishore Bharati. In 1981 Patra Bharati entered the world of book publishing. It mainly concentrated on Children and Juvenile Literature. With the start of a millennium, Patra Bharati stepped up and started publishing of all Literature across all genres and age groups. The lines of



restrictions were removed and a new age publication house that focused on varied forms of Literature was born. Patra Bharati has to its credit Novels, Essays, Compilations, Graphic Novels, Comics, Stories, Non Fiction, Prose and so on. Many titles have received Awards and Accolades and are best sellers in today's time. Very recently Patra Bharati has also entered into English Publication, under the name BEE Books which has started gaining popularity with some of its titles.

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