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New Delhi

'Festival of Festivals' add to the festivity of books at New Delhi World Book Fair

The New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF) 2024 witnessed a groundbreaking addition to its lineup of events: the Festival of Festivals (FoF). This innovative platform provided a stage for upcoming book festivals across India to showcase their works, fostering a vibrant exchange of ideas and perspectives within the literary community. Spearheaded by the National Book Trust, India (NBT), FoF heralded a new era in the culture of book festivals, uniting diverse literary and cultural voices under one roof.

The inaugural edition of Festival of Festivals at the New Delhi World book Fair, featured more than 100 speakers from renowned festivals such as Ahmedabad Lit Fest, Cine Durbar, Bharat Lit Fest, and Pragati E Vichar Lit Fest, The Great Indian Book Tour and Solh Talks reflecting the richness and diversity of India's literary landscape.

Dr. Chandra Prakash Dwivedi, Patron of Bharat Literature Festivals, lauded FoF as a commendable initiative to promote authors, books, and the reading culture in the country. He emphasized the shared ethos between NBT's motto, "एकः सूते सकलम्" (One thread strings all), and Bharat Literature Festival's philosophy, "आनो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः" (Let noble thoughts come from all directions), highlighting the synergies driving this collaboration. He further added that the overwhelming response received by Bharat Literature Festival at NDWBF2024 underscored the potential of FoF to serve as a catalyst for future literary engagements nationwide. " In this edition of FoF, Bharat Lit Festival hosted author Sharmistha Mukherjee, actress Adah Sharma, journalist Saurabh Dwivedi, and media baron Rajat Sharma among many literary stalwarts.

Mr. Kapil Gupta, Festival Organizer of PVLFF and Solh Talks, commended the collaborative spirit demonstrated by NBT-India in orchestrating FoF. He lauded the seamless engagement process and the meticulous execution of the event, which provided a robust platform for festival organizers like PVLFF and Solh Talks to connect with a broader audience.

"The inclusion of 'The Great Indian Book Tour' in FoF offered budding authors a prominent platform to interact with a wider audience and garner acceptance. This convergence not only elevated the stature of participating authors but also facilitated knowledge exchange and growth opportunities"- said Prashant Gupta, the man behind 'The Great Indian Book Tour' and Aspiring Authors' Alliance of India.

FoF's support extended beyond literature to encompass cultural entrepreneurship, exemplified by Cinedarbaar's long standing commitment to promoting arts and culture said SupriyaSuri, Founder of Cinedarbaar, while highlighting FoF's role in amplifying their vision and fostering collaborations across artistic domains.

Umashanker Yadav, founder-director of Ahmedabad Lit festival, highlighted how FoF provided a gateway to reach a larger audience, aligning with their vision of expanding outreach and inclusivity. Ahmedabad Lit Fest curated six engaging sessions within FoF, featuring accomplished authors and thought leaders. Mukul Kumar, poet and author, Sqn. Ldr. Toolika Rani, diplomat Abhay K., Kumud Verma, Senior litterateur Dr. Upendranath Raina, and popular literary agent and author Suhail Mathur.



Under the Festival of Festivals, organizers of New Delhi World Book Fair, National Book Trust India offers a stage to organize literary sessions along with branding opportunity and onsite logistics support.

"National Book Trust India, as the nodal body of the Government of India dedicated to promoting a rich reading culture, consistently champions initiatives that foster collaborative synergy in achieving our shared mission. The Festival of Festivals (FoF) stands as a testament to this commitment, serving as a cornerstone event in India's cultural calendar", stated Prof. Milind Marathe, Chairman, National Book Trust India.

Mr. Yuvraj Malik, Director of National Book Trust India, who conceptualized Festival of Festivals, elaborated - "By uniting diverse voices and celebrating the written word and artistic expression, FoF exemplifies our collective endeavor to cultivate a vibrant culture of reading and books. As FoF continues to grow and evolve, it reaffirms our dedication to nurturing a dynamic literary ecosystem and fostering a sense of unity within the literary community."

Under the banner of Festival of Festivals (FoF), a diverse array of speakers graced the stage, offering enriching perspectives and insights. Notable personalities from various fields shared their wisdom and experiences, contributing to the dynamic discourse of the event. SOLH Talks, an esteemed participant of FoF, hosted distinguished guests such as Colonel R. S. N. Singh, former R&AW chief, and author Kapil Kumar. Their contributions added a layer of expertise and insight, fostering meaningful dialogue and reflection.

Recitals and Reflections at the Lekhak Manch and International Pavilion

Hindi poetry enthusiasts congregated at the Lekhak Manch(Hall 2) for the session 'Kaaljayi Kaviaur Unka Kaavya', where the literary critic Dr. MadhavHada led an engaging discussion on timeless poets and their enduring works. He was joined by Dr. Pallav and Ms. Meera Johri, who heads the 108-year-old publishing house, Rajpal& Sons.

This was followed by a poetry recital organized by Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, which is dedicated to promoting literature in the diverse languages of India, under the Ministry of Culture. Dr. Divik Ramesh, an acclaimed author and educator, renowned for his literary contributions shared the stage with Ajay Sharma for 'Kavisandhi'.

At the International Pavilion, The Iran Book and Literature organized an interactive session on the 'Commonalities of Persian Poetry in Iran and India.' Mr. Qorban Valeiee Mohammadabadi, Head of Department, Zanjan University, and contemporary poets including Mr. Zoheir Tavakoli and Ms. Naghmeh Mostashar Nezamit shared the panel. The session was moderated by Dr. Ali Akbar Shah, Department of Persian, University of Delhi who along with other panelists stressed Iran and India's intrinsic historical and cultural ties. "*The Persian language has evolved from being a court language in the Delhi Sultanate to being recognized as an ancient classical language under the National Education Policy 2020.*" The love for poetry and literature trespasses most nationalistic boundaries as both the Iranian and Indian population immerse themselves in the ghazals of Amir Khusrow and Mirza Ghalib.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exhibit

The International Pavilion (Hall 4), NDBWF 2024's Guest of Honour country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers a captivating 360-degree visual experience. It serves as a symbol of the mutual dedication of Saudi Arabia and India towards advancing technology and fostering a shared commitment to technological progress while instilling pride in the heritage and



culture. The impressive exhibit includes prominent literary works, historical artifacts, and a slice of life, depicted through artifacts and activities like calligraphy by artists. The display has emerged as a hotspot for visitors.

Children's Pavilion

"I drew Amma because she is my superhero", a little girl explained cheerfully, in the 'Let's Draw a Superhero' workshop by National Centre of Children Literature in collaboration with Cartoon Network. NCCL organizes hundreds of interactive sessions around the year with an objective to promote the culture of reading among children by making it joyful and engaging. In another session, Vinita Zutshi, creator and writer of Carefree Parenting, held an engaging storytelling workshop for children. Additionally, NBT-India organized a Young Editors' Workshop, and Renova International Publications held a drawing workshop catering specifically to children with special needs.

Theme Pavilion

Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, arranged an Interactive Multimedia presentation on "The Gita Govinda," a 12th-century Sanskrit poem by Shri Jayadeva at the Theme Pavilion. The presentation artfully depicted three phases of Radha and Krishna' story – their meeting (Milan) , Separation (Virah), and reunion (Punar Milan) , using various Indian dance forms such as Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, and Manipuri. Beyond dance, the narrative unfolded through music and paintings, connecting literature with art to engage and captivate young minds. The session integrated interpretation, evaluation, and explanation of the poetic text through visual mediums, creating a compelling example of technology uniting diverse elements of India. The session, led by Prof. Pratapanand Jha, Director of CIL, Dr. Priyanka Mishra, Director Administration of IGNCA.

At the Authors' Corner, Day 6 began with the unveiling of the Book '*Rise to Influence*' by Mr. Sachin Jain, who underscored the significance of networking and continuous skill development to adapt to changing times. This was followed by a session organized by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India on the Book "Career Calling." In addition to discussing career paths in medicine, Civil Services, and CUET, one of the panelists, Dr. Nimish Kapoor of Vigyan Prasar highlighted the importance of showcasing indigenous technologies being developed in India.

Cultural Events

The amphitheater at NDWBF 2024 comes alive every night with diverse musical and cultural journeys. On Day 6, Shadaj Band took to the stage to perform an unique rendition of classical poetry and modern music fused with elements of Indian classical. Against the night sky, Himalayan Beats features Faisal Ashoor Khan mesmerizing the audience with Ladakhi melodies through fusion rhythms.

A literary paradise for every book enthusiast -

Adjacent to the bustling Authors' Corner, stands Leftworld, a bastion of curated collections and progressive, thought-provoking literature on Casteism, Women's Studies, and Marxist philosophy. Highbrow Scribes Publications proudly offers a platform to authors with backgrounds in the Armed Forces with their unique narratives about patriotism. Three decades ago, Dr. Hem Bhatnagar, an award-winning children's author from Hem Aunty Publications, participated in the book with only three titles to her name. Today, her stall boasts a diverse array of illustrated children's books, upcycled learning toys, and handwritten journals covering topics ranging from mythology to weddings. Together, these

stalls epitomize the diverse range, latitude, and inclusivity of the book fair, offering something to enthrall every literary palette.

Integration of Art with Technology -

The New Delhi World Book Fair 2024 exemplifies this integration of technology with beautifully depicted contemporary arts. At the entrance gates, the ticketing process has been streamlined, allowing visitors to effortlessly purchase tickets by scanning a QR code. Then, upon entering, visitors are greeted by artwork where women from different parts of India are depicted as ambassadors of multilingual India with a QR code offering a welcoming message in 22 Indian languages. Further, near Authors' Corner, in Hall 5, strategically placed LED screens outside and inside publishing houses and other exhibitors showcase recommended literary works and feature interviews, seamlessly incorporating technology with literature.

Dignitaries

Some of the dignitaries and luminaries who visited the fair on day 6 ,included Mr. Gulab Kothari, Smt. Shobha Singh and Shri. Amitava Das and former Union Minister Shri Vijay Goyal, in addition to Ms. Karine Pansa, President, International Publishers' Association. At the Authors' Corner, Shri Hans Raj Hans, esteemed Member of Lok Sabha also launched his book, 'Modi The Man, The Vision, The Transformation'.

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