

'Exodus: Asia, Africa, Europe' brings the story of Indian migrants to the stage

Anusha Singh

'Exodus: Asia, Africa, Europe' is a compelling narrative that draws inspiration from the real-life experiences of Indian migrants who resettled in Uganda only to be forcibly expelled by Idi Amin in 1972, eventually finding refuge in England.



through oral history interviews of numerous people who had made this journey.

"These personal stories were so powerful that they had to be told in a creative way and hence the idea of incorporating these testimonies in a play came to life. It is inspired by real-life journey of people

across the oceans - their regrets, tears, joys and aspirations", she said.

Lata and her team met more than 50 people who were part of the exodus and decided to create the upcoming production as a retelling of their stories through a fictional. She explains that "there is a general amnesia in the school curriculum where this history is hardly told. Hence, we decided to create this production to retell their stories through a fictional play."

She feels that the representation of South Asian diaspora is not adequate in terms of the story-telling in theatre plays and stories like the 'Exodus' help wider communities understand the hardships of the diaspora.

Funded by Arts Council England with Mukul Ahmed at the helm, the play is written by Raminder Kaur while oral historian, Rolf Killius has helped make it an authentic experience. The play will take the stage on 18th June at Rich Mix.

At its heart of the play, lies the captivating tale of Jiji and her daughter Reema, as they navigate their lives in the United Kingdom, haunted by the absence of Jiji's husband who vanished in Uganda amidst the chaos. The mystery surrounding his fate leaves Jiji clinging onto hope, uncertain whether he is still alive. While Jiji reminisces about her profound journey from India to the shores of Africa, the story delves into the lives of Jiji and Reema during the 1970s in the UK, exploring the challenges and triumphs they encounter along the way.

In a conversation with Asian Voice, producer Lata Desai shared that the inspiration and the idea behind bringing this story of the Exodus to the stage was a heritage project called 'Gujarati Yatra - Journey of a people'. Desai worked on this project with oral historian Rolf Killius and the project explored the journey of the Gujarati diaspora from India to Africa and then Britain

Tharoor siblings to share an intimate account of their beloved mother at Bradford Literature Festival

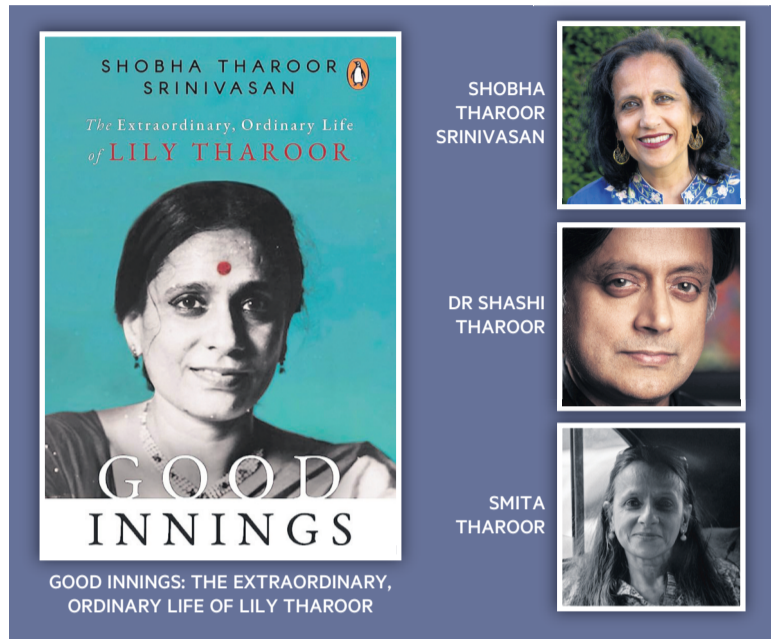
The Bradford Literature Festival (BLF) is a yearly celebration and ongoing cultural outreach initiative that brings together a rich tapestry of literature, music, theatre, cultural dialogues, lectures, and family-oriented activities. The 2023 edition of the festival is set to take place from 23rd June to 2nd July.

The festival is bringing the Tharoor siblings-Shobha, Smita and Shashi together to share an intimate account of their beloved mother and iron-willed woman, Lily Tharoor. The siblings will discuss their mother's life story chronicled in the book 'Good Innings: The Extraordinary, Ordinary Life of Lily Tharoor' by Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan.

Lily Tharoor was driven by her fierce independence and ambition and consistently urged her children to embrace unconventional thinking. According to Lily, the only foundation strong enough to rely on is the one that you create through your own endeavours. Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan beautifully blends personal reflections, valuable life lessons, and profound philosophical insights in her book.

Apart from the 'Good Innings' event, Syima Aslam, Director and Founder of the Bradford Literature Festival expressed her opinion on the inclusion of the South Asian diaspora in the festival to Asian Voice. "Quite simply, arts, culture and literature have the power to change lives. And everyone should have access to that, including those in the South Asian community", she said.

"What makes our programme and audiences "diverse", is the fact that we programme for our primary audience: the people of Bradford. Bradford has a long history of migration, from the Irish and Jewish German, to South Asian and



Syrian. There are over 150 languages spoken here."

She also discussed the showcase of the rich and varied culture of the South Asian diaspora at the festival including- " Navin Kundra and the 515 Crew's live concert celebrating the golden era of Bollywood cinema and a conversation with Vasay Chaudhry, one of Pakistan's best-loved and most well-known public figures in screen and media."

"Our aim isn't to merely list identities and devise a range of events for each. Our offering is designed to widen interests and stimulate conversation and curiosity", she said.



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