**Guwahati Lit Fest completes its second day**

**Guwahati, 28 Dec:** Guwahati Literary Festival on its second day at NEDFI House began today with two parallel sessions at 09:45 am.

In the first session, Sir William Mark Tully, former Bureau Chief, BBC, Delhi in conversation with John Elliott, former Financial Times journalist discussed the failure of India in reforming the society and economy. Mark Tully wondered if India could live with the general attitude of ‘Chalta hai’ and ‘Jugaar’ and if it is a cause of the threatened implosion. John Elliott in response to that said, ’I find it surprising how the society accepts all the facts, no matter whatever is wrong’. He said, ’Everything is fixed in India and what the country needs is top level leadership’. Mark Tully spoke of the extensive feat of the Election Commission in India in conducting large scale elections but with a very little advancement in the administrative reforms since the British left. The parallel session on ‘The poetic gaze’ was chaired by Hirendra Nath Dutta and co-chaired by Robin Ngangom in conversation with seven poets of the region.

The second session at 10:30 am on ‘Women’s narratives: The personal is poilitical’, conducted by Urvashi Butalia in conversation with Arupa Patangia Kalita and Nandana Dutta. They discussed if women writers in India suffered from a secondary position. In the discussion Arupa Kalita enlightened the audience on the three centuries-old history of women writers in Assam. She said, ‘We suffer from a different reality in contrast to the mainland. Women in Assam share personal as well as universal stories through their writings which are multi-dimensional in form.

Two parallel sessions was conducted in the third session. The first was EP Unny in conversation with Salam Khan, Pankaj Thapa and Champak Borbora on ‘Interrogating social reality through cartoons’. EP Unny mentioned, ’Most of the Indian Cartoons are largely political’. In addition to that, Salam Khan said, ‘Cartoons represent the reality in synchronization to the thoughts of the people and in present times Bijli, Paani aur sadak has replaced the previous context Roti, Kapda aur Makaan’. Pankaj Thapa added, ’One way to keep a student awake in class is humour’. Champak Borbora on the other hand said, ‘A cartoonist must be a very cautious person and the portrayal of cartoons should be rational, not biased’.

The other panel by Nagen Saikia in conversation with Apurba Sarma and Sabita Goswami on the topic ’Weaving memories: Writing, remembering’ discussed various journalistic approaches. Nagen Saikia said, ‘A journalist or author should use his pen to awaken the society’. Apurba Sarma added, ’An author has an abundance of creative imagination’ and Sabita Goswami shared, ‘Journalistic reporting should be positive not only negative’.

The fourth, post-lunch session included two panels, one moderated by eminent publisher Manas Pratim Saikia on ‘Publishing the new dynamics: Seeking voices’. Panelist Aditi Maheshwari mentioned, ‘Books published in India do not get proper recognition overseas’. The other panel moderated by Anuradha Sarma Pujaree, eminent writer and journalist, included panelists Ratna Bharali Talukdar , Banti Senchoa, Sanjeev Pol Deka, Apu Varadwaj and Pranjal Sarma Basistha on ‘The world of short fiction’. It expressed views about the environment of our village in today’s Global village and how short fiction reflects this.

Three parallel sessions was conducted in the fifth session: the first was on ‘Changing social and cultural trends in China with focus on writing’, chaired by Puspesh Pant and speaker Alka Acharya. Dr Acharya discussed the changes and socio-political influences on Chinese literature. The second was a ‘Conversation of a poet with self: Ode to Amrita Pritam’ chaired by Arupa Patangia. The conversation was held by Nirupama Dutt.

The third panel of the fifth session on ‘Art of the Novel Today’ was a talk by Jerry Pinto that was chaired by Dr Dhrubajyoti Bora. Jerry Pinto discussed the blurring of categories in writing today. He pointed out the way in which newsmen use the term ‘stories’ for news articles. He said that most of the writing writers do refers to themselves and arise out of their compulsions and interests.

The concluding segment of the day had three panels: ‘Northeast: Beyond conflict’ moderated by Sanjoy Hazarika with panelists Rahul Bhattacharya, Aruni Kashyap, Uddipana Goswami, Kaushik Deka and Mrinal Talukdar. It reflected that there can be no literature beyond conflict and it is unfair to expect writers from the Northeast to do so.

Dulal Roy in conversation with Sukracharya Rabha and Saponjyoti Thakur on ‘Playwrights at work’ discussed in the second panel whether the objective of drama is to reflect the events in contemporary society. The final panel was a talk by Rakshanda Jalil on ‘Progressive Trends in Urdu Literature’ chaired by Puspesh Pant.