

A calendar dedicated to revolutionary writers, artists

A calendar dedicated to revolutionary writers and artists was unveiled by prominent progressive Punjabi poet Gurcharan Rampuri at his home in Coquitlam near Vancouver, earlier this month.

The year 2012 calendar, dedicated to Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz whose birth centenary was celebrated across the world last year, bears the dates of birth and death anniversaries of renowned leftist writers and artists from India and Pakistan. The calendar was jointly issued by the Committee of Progressive Pakistani Canadians (CPPC) and the UBC Asian Studies Department and co-sponsored by the Indo-Canadian Workers' Association (ICWA), besides Radio India.

Rampuri is a veteran poet who was physically attacked for criticising religious extremism within the Sikh community during the early 1980s. He currently remains homebound because of his ill health, which is why the unveiling ceremony took place at his residence. Those in attendance were the CPPC leaders Saif Khalid and Hamid and ICWA leader Kulwant Dhesi. Among others present on the occasion were local Punjabi writers and scholars, including Manga Bassi, Mohinder Soomal, Nadeem Parmar, Dr Raghbir Singh Sirjana, Mohan Gill, Jarnail Sekha and Harpreet Sekha.

The calendar bears the dates of birth and death anniversaries of the scholars who passed away last year. They include playwright Gursharan Bhaaji and painter MF Husain. Other important dates marked on the calendar include the day when revolutionary poet Pash was assassinated by the pro-Khalistan terrorists. The 25th anniversary of his martyrdom falls next year. Likewise, the death anniversaries of revolutionary poet Jaimal Padha and playwright Safdar Hashmi are also marked on the calendar. While Padha was assassinated by religious extremists, Hashmi died after being beaten by political goons.