

"Lucknow in letters: endeavours, achievements, and tragedies" (1 hour 15 minutes)

is a multilingual (Urdu, English and Hindi) reading of personal letters written to/from Lucknow along with some contemporary newspaper reports and essays that provide glimpses of the lived experience of the city since the 'ghadar' of 1857 to present times. Accompanied by images of original manuscripts, letters, buildings, and the people who wrote them, the event has been conceived of as a labour of love for the city and its syncretic culture. The letters have been sourced from family archives and published material recording memories of everyday life in the city as well as events in history and interesting intersections of the personal and the political.

A contemporary Urdu newspaper account of the beginnings of the revolt of 1857 in the cantonments of Lucknow , letters written by British officers and their visitors to the city in the late 19th and early 20th century....letters recording the sacrifices made in the struggle for independence....letters about memories of separation and longing of families torn apart by the Partition....of the determined struggle by the oppressed and marginalized groups as they struggled to lead a life of dignity in an independent India....letters about everyday life....of childhood pranks, marriage proposals and food....these letters weave a tapestry of what it meant to live in the city and how those who wrote these letters interpreted and narrativised what they experienced of life in the city.

Saman Habib and Sanjay Muttoo read out these letters and the performance is an hour and a quarter long.