

Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 2

Event: Launch of '*India Shastra*' by Shashi Tharoor with Krishna Bose as the Guest of Honour followed by a panel discussion on '*India Shastra : Points of View*'

Kolkata, 15th January, 2015: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 hosted the grand launch of *India Shastra* written by renowned author and parliamentarian **Shashi Tharoor**. The book was released by **Krishna Bose**, distinguished educationist and social worker who graced the occasion as Guest of Honour.

India Shastra is a collection of 100 articles and essays, some longish, some rather short, that seek to convey a portrait of contemporary India from the perspective of late 2014. With *India Shastra* the author has concluded a de facto trilogy of works attempting to explore what makes India what it is today. Taken together the eight sections, in which this volume is segregated, do not pretend to amount to a comprehensive portrait of India. Rather, they reflect Dr. Tharoor's preoccupations relating to India over the past seven years, which happen to coincide with his own homecoming after more than three decades abroad, first as a student and then as a career official of the United Nations.

The launch was followed by an intriguing discussion with **Krishna Bose** and **Sandip Roy**, Senior Editor, Firstpost.com bringing about insights into Indian society, economics and politics. With the obvious élan of Shashi Tharoor and his lucid, brilliantly argued, balanced and illuminating writing, the audience was fascinated by the session wishing to understand today's India.

About Shashi Tharoor: Author, politician, and former international civil servant, Shashi Tharoor straddles several worlds of experience. Currently a second-term Lok Sabha MP representing the Thiruvananthapuram constituency and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, he has previously served as Minister of State for Human Resource Development and Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India. During his nearly three-decade long prior career at the United Nations, he served as a peacekeeper, refugee worker, and administrator at the highest levels, serving as Under-Secretary General during Kofi Annan's leadership of the organisation. Dr. Tharoor is also an award-winning author of works of both fiction as well as non-fiction, with his fifteenth book due for release in December 2014. He is also a recipient of several awards that include a Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, India's highest honour for overseas nationals. In 2012 the King of Spain awarded him the Encomienda de la Real Order Espanola de Carlos III. Among numerous other awards are one for "New Age Politician of the Year" from NDTV, the Hakim Khan Sur Award for National Integration, and the Priyadarshini Award for Excellence in Diplomacy.

About the Panelists:

Krishna Bose: Krishna Bose is an Indian political, educator and social worker and was a member of parliament. Krishna taught for 40 years at the City College, Kolkata, where she was head of the Department of English and served as the Principal of the college for eight years.

Sandip Roy: Sandip Roy is a senior editor with Firstpost.com, one of India's leading news portals. Don't Let Him Know (Bloomsbury) is his first novel. He is also a commentator for National Public Radio in the US and hosts a weekly audio postcard on public radio KALW 91.7 FM in San Francisco. His work has appeared in various anthologies including Storywallah! and Out: Stories from the New Queer India and he has won awards for his journalism. He currently lives in Kolkata.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF):

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata's pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grows out of the bookstore's year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the six years since Kolkata saw her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a now 94-year-old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favors depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January. In 2015 AKLF explores literature as part of our tangible and intangible heritage, a theme that runs through several sessions of the festival. AKLF focusses on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. Prominent personalities attending will be Hanif Kureishi, Naseeruddin Shah, Charles Allen, John Elliott, Mohammed Hanif, Leila Seth, Michael Buckley, Upamanyu Chatterjee, David Davidar, Shekhar Gupta, Shashi Tharoor, Asish Nandy, Ramachandra Guha, Kishwar Desai, Nabaneeta Dev Sen amongst several others. There are some firsts in AKLF 2015. A heritage literary walk, a literary 'adda', a Young Adult litfest for high school students, a bloggers' meet, a children's bookfest crammed with activities, even a standup comic for the college crowd and a leadership training session for young teens on importance of character, karma and individual social responsibility™. Add to that our signature heritage site evenings at The Indian Museum, National Library, Victoria Memorial, Lascar War Memorial, indepth discussions, top of the line authors, thinkers and performers, and you have a literary experience not to be missed. And all absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

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