

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival presents a special conversation with Kenize Mourad, French – Turkish Writer

Kolkata 13th January, 2013: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013 hosted on its closing day a morning rendezvous with renowned French – Turkish writer Kenize Mourad in conversation with Fabrice Etienne, Consul General of France in Kolkata and Hari Vasudevan, Senior History Professor, Calcutta University on her personal life experiences and anecdotes during her journalistic days across Europe and Asia.

Hosted with the French Embassy, Alliance Francaise du Bengale, and Institut Francaise in association with Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata, the event presented to the audience French writer, Kenize Mourad who with an Indian –Turkish origin has a fascinating tale of her own to tell. Her life interspersed with experiences during her childhood, her career as a journalist covering wars in countries like Bangladesh and Middle East, her travelogues and writings created an interesting tête-à-tête on countries, religions and multi-cultures.

About Kenize Mourad:

The French writer **Kenize Mourad** grew up in Paris as an orphan in Catholic care. It was not until almost reaching adulthood that she discovered her sad and romantic family history. She was the product of one of an exiled Turkish Princess's unhappy marriage to an Indian Rajah. This new knowledge inspired her with an interest in those parts of the world that were in her blood, if not in her up-bringing, and at 20, she converted to Islam after studying the Sufi poets. After some travel in South Asia and the Middle East, she became a correspondent for the French magazine *Nouvel Observateur*, covering Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1971. She also covered the Bangladesh war, the conflict in Lebanon, including the three-month siege of Bayreuth, and she spent a year in Iran covering the Iranian revolution.

Mourad found an international audience when she returned to her family history and published the best-selling **De La Part de la Princesse Morte** (*Regards from a Dead Princess*), a book that retold the story of her mother and father. Since then, she has continued working in journalism, and has published **La Jardin de Badalpur**, a novel, and in 2003 **Le Parfum de Notre Terre** (*Our Sacred land*), in which she presents both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict through interviews with, and photographs of, local people there. Her most recent book, published in France in 2010 and just coming out in English this year, is **Dans la Ville d'Or et d'Argent** (*In the City of Gold and Silver*). This is a historical novel set in 19th Century Awadh, and the city of Lucknow, and tells the true story of Begum Hazrat Mahal and her stand against the British colonizer's attempt to seize the territory that her husband had ruled.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:

A Community initiative by the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the annual literary festival hosted since 2010 in Kolkata is the first international literary festival in Kolkata, a city celebrated for its intellectual depth and cultural heritage. An array of special curated discussions, performances and some of the finest literary events are scheduled for the fourth edition from 9th- 13th January, 2013. A noteworthy

literary and cultural representation from across India and overseas will be seen at the Festival, amongst the finest minds from India and overseas. Prominent personalities attending will be Ramachandra Guha, William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhuri, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia, Shobhaa De and Tishani Doshi and several others. Events are scheduled at significant cultural and heritage venues across Kolkata like National Library, St John's Church, banks of Hooghly, Lascar Monument, and at India's finest and most loved 92 year old iconic bookstore- Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata. Amongst the many highlights is Festival's collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize to recognize and encourage new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

For event videos & pictures Log On to <http://www.aklf.in/>

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