

Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 2

Event: Panel discussion on 'In Search of the Indian Masterpiece' followed by the book launch of '*A Clutch of Indian Masterpieces*' edited by David Davidar

Kolkata, 14th January, 2015: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 hosted a panel discussion on '*In Search of the Indian Masterpiece*'. The prominent panel comprised of **Shashi Tharoor**, award-winning writer and parliamentarian, **Upamanyu Chatterjee**, author-bureaucrat, **Kanishk Tharoor**, and **David Davidar**, popular novelist and publisher.

The engaging dialogue was followed by the launch of '*A Clutch of Indian Masterpieces*' edited by David Davidar. His latest anthology has 39 short stories from across Indian fiction carefully selected by the author. From Khushwant Singh, Munshi Premchand, Chughtai and Vaikom Muhammed Basheer and Ruskin Bond to new voices like Shahnaz Bashir and Kanishk Tharoor, the volume covers a spectrum of Indian fiction. This session was mainly focused on fiction, in different languages (translated) that makes up the wealth of multilingual and multicultural heritage.

About David Davidar: is an Indian novelist and publisher. He is the author of three published novels, *The House of Blue Mangoes* (2002), *The Solitude of Emperors* (2007) and *Ithaca* (2011). In parallel to his writing career, Davidar has been a publisher for a quarter century. He is the co-founder of Aleph Book Company, a literary publishing firm based in New Delhi. Davidar was a columnist for the Hindu newspaper in the 1990s. He has also written numerous articles and book reviews for newspapers and magazines in India, the UK and the US.

About the Panelists:

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.

Upamanyu Chatterjee: Upamanyu Chatterjee, author and bureaucrat, joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1983. His published works include short stories and the novels *English*,

August: An Indian Story (1988), The Last Burden (1993), The Mammaries of the Welfare State (2000), which won the Sahitya Akademi Award for writing in English, Weight Loss (2006) and Way to Go (2011). In 2008, he was awarded the Order of Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government for his contribution to literature. His latest novel is titled Fairy Tales at Fifty.

Kanishk Tharoor: Kanishk Tharoor is the author of Swimmer Among the Stars: Stories (Aleph, 2015), a forthcoming collection of short stories. His journalism, criticism, and short stories have appeared in international and Indian publications; his short fiction was nominated for a National Magazine Award in the United States. He studied at Yale, where he graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with BAs in History and Literature; at Columbia, where he was a FLAS fellow in Persian and South Asian studies; and at New York University, where he had a fellowship in the Creative Writing Program. He lives in New York City.

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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For media related information, please contact: Perfect Relations

Priyanka 9830615322|Sramana 9836496930