

Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 3

Event: Launch of ‘Anticipating India: The Best of National Interest’, a ringside view of contemporary Indian history by Shekhar Gupta, and a discussion with Sugata Bose

Kolkata, 16th January, 2015: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 saw the launch of senior and well known journalist **Shekhar Gupta’s** , ‘*Anticipating India: The Best of National Interest*’, a ringside view of contemporary Indian history, followed by a discussion with **Sugata Bose**, Gardiner Professor of History at Harvard University.

A riveting first draft of modern Indian history, the book interprets everything from the successes and failings of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh to the ascent of Rahul Gandhi, Narendra Modi and Arvind Kejriwal, from the forces that have deepened Indian federalism and constitutionalism to the public mood that keeps a check on excesses in the use of political power. Each chapter in the book, in its questioning of power, its use and abuse, carries within it ideas of India that challenge conventional wisdom, shatter stereotypes and, in the end, question our long-held assumptions of who we are as a nation and a people.

About the Panelists:

Shekhar Gupta: Shekhar Gupta is a famous Indian journalist who is currently vice-chairman of the India Today Group. Until June 2014, he served 19 years as editor-in-chief of the Indian Express. Gupta writes a weekly column called "National Interest" for India Today magazine. His "National Interest" columns for the Indian Express were collected in his 2014 book Anticipating India. He also hosts an interview-based television show Walk the Talk on NDTV 24x7. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Indian government in 2009. Shekhar has received assorted awards: the 1985 Inlaks award for young journalist of the year, G K Reddy Award for Journalism, the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Memorial Award for National Integration. He was awarded a Padma Bhushan by the Govt of India in 2009. Under his leadership, The Indian Express won the Vienna-based International Press Institute’s Award for Outstanding Journalism in the Public Interest thrice- the first time for its coverage of the Gujarat riots of 2002, the second time for uncovering the Bihar flood relief scam in 2005 and the third time for its sustained investigation into the Malegaon and Modasa blasts of 2008 and the alleged role of Hindu extremists and organisations.

Sugata Bose: Sugata Bose is a historian, author and Gardiner Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs at Harvard University. He has published extensively, including a major biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who was his grand-uncle. He is joint editor, with Dr Sisir Kumar Bose, of the Collected Works of Netaji published by the Netaji Research Bureau. He has translated into English all the songs Tagore composed on his overseas voyages and recorded them on four CDs titled Visva Yatri Rabindranath. Bose's many books include Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital, Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy (with Ayesha Jalal) and A Hundred Horizons: the Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire.

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, in depth 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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