



## Press Note:

### Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 5

**Event:** Panel discussion on ‘Has India kept her tryst with destiny?’  
To commemorate the ‘125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

**Kolkata, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2015:** The Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 closing ceremony held at the National Library was dedicated to India’s first Prime Minister, national leader and one of the architects of modern India - Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The ceremony was graced by the presence of **Shri K.N. Tripathi, Hon’ble Governor of West Bengal**, as the Chief Guest.

A fitting tribute to Panditji life and literary works, a distinguished panel comprising Indian political psychologist, social theorist, and critic **Ashis Nandy**, social anthropologist **Shiv Viswanathan**, and noted lecturer **Srinath Raghavan** debated whether India has kept her tryst with destiny?’ The panel discussion brought to the fore the thought that – every year when one comes across stories of freedom struggle accompanied by the rustic charm of vintage photographs on the historic day of independence, it also evokes the question whether 15th August 1947 was the end of India’s tryst and whether the nation indeed awakened to life and freedom or if the struggle still continues.

Held on the steps of the National Library against its magnificent illuminated façade, the setting added a palpable sense of occasion, bringing history alive to a Kolkata audience, both informed and appreciative.

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) has a tradition of paying tribute to great minds, writers and litterateurs of our country. Rabindranath Tagore, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Saadat Hasan Manto, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad are some of the figures whose memory has been honoured by AKLF in the past. The panel discussion - ‘Has India kept her tryst with destiny?’ to the five day Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival closed its 2015 edition with, was a befitting tribute to the 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The event was presented with the National Library and Oxford University Press.

### **About the Panelists:**

**Ashis Nandy:** Ashis Nandy is an Indian political psychologist, social theorist, and critic. A trained clinical psychologist, Nandy has provided theoretical critiques of European colonialism, development, modernity, secularism, Hindutwa, science, technology, nuclearism, cosmopolitanism, and utopia. He has also offered alternative conceptions relating to cosmopolitanism and critical traditionalism. In addition to the above, Nandy has offered an original historical profile of India's commercial cinema as well as critiques of state and violence. He is Senior Honorary Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) apart from being the Chairperson of the Committee for Cultural Choices and Global Futures in New Delhi. Nandy received the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize in 2007. In 2008 he appeared on the list of the Top 100 Public Intellectuals Poll of the Foreign Policy magazine, published by The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

**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.

**Shiv Visvanathan:** A social anthropologist with a Ph.D. from Delhi University, Shiv Visvanathan taught at the Delhi School of Economics, was senior fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, and Professor at the DAIICT, Gandhinagar. He is the author of Organising for Science, A Carnival for Science and co-editor of Foul Play: Chronicles of corruption 1947-1997 with Harsh Sethi. He is a familiar presence on TV channels as an expert commentator.

**Srinath Raghavan:** Srinath Raghavan is Senior Fellow at Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He is also Lecturer in Defence Studies at King's College London. He has been associated with King's College's e-learning programme, War in the Modern World, and was a Visiting Lecturer at Royal Air Force College, Cranwell. He took his MA and PhD in War Studies from King's College London. Prior to joining academia, he spent six years as an infantry officer in the Indian army. Srinath's research interests are in the international politics of South Asia, India's foreign and defence policies since 1947, civil-military relations, Indian military history, and strategic theory. His book War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years was published in early 2010. He is now writing an international history of the India-Pakistan war of 1971 and the creation of Bangladesh.

### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF 2015):**

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 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 focuses 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 lit fest for high school students, a bloggers' meet, a children's book fest 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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