

Launch of Krishna Bose's book, 'An Outsider in Politics'

New Delhi, 28 August 2008

The city was the venue of the well-attended release of Krishna Bose's memoirs, *An Outsider in Politics*, in which the writer gives a vivid account of her journey from the time she was a schoolgirl, witnessing some of the tragic scenes that accompanied Partition to her stint as chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.

An eminent writer and educationist, Krishna Bose taught for many years at City College, Kolkata, where she was the head of the English department and later the Principal. She has also been a Member of Parliament in three consecutive Lok Sabhas. In the 1998 and 1999 general elections she represented the Trinamool Congress and became a prominent party leader.

Former Prime Minister I K Gujral told the audience that Krishna Bose despite the title of her memoirs was never an outsider in politics and that her contribution to public life was remarkable. He also lauded the dedication and hard work put in by Krishna Bose and her husband also Netaji's nephew, the late Dr Sisir Bose in setting up the museum on Netaji and said it was a fantastic achievement.

In his welcome speech, Mr Tarun Das, Chief Mentor, Confederation of Indian Industry, said it was a special occasion for CII and the Aspen Institute of India along with Penguin Books India to be associated with the release of the book in the capital.

The book was released by the eminent film maker and member of the Rajya Sabha, Mr Shyam Benegal who said it was a great privilege for him to release the book. Commenting on the book he said "it was easy to read and unpretentious and read like the account of a kindly grandmother writing the story of her life for her children and grandchildren." A large part of the book, he said, was about her political life and about how she coped as she was thrust into politics, that too at the deep end.

In her reading from her memoirs, Krishna Bose recalled her thoughts during her train journey from Delhi to Kolkata, immediately after partition. She said "my heart was completely frozen by the sights of corpses strewn on the road, and on the sides of the rail tracks." She remembers thinking about the uncertain path which lay ahead both in her personal life and in that of the country. She however cautioned that the tragedy that we invited on ourselves then was still alive.

About her life as a parliamentarian, Krishna Bose said it taught her a lot and that by taking part in the country's democratic process she had learnt more about India.

While introducing the author, Ranjana Sen Gupta, Managing Editor, Penguin Books India, said that the memoirs "were an account of the literary and social life of Kolkata and gave a riveting account of her (Bose's) ringside view of Indian parliamentary politics and the forces shaping India's foreign policy at the turn of the new millennium."