

A part of the *Bonjour India* festival, residence of French Ambassador opens up to host the Marguerite Duras play in Delhi

FRANCE OPENS GATES TO INDIA



JHINUK SEN

NEW DELHI: Described as, 'A theatrical journey through Marguerite Duras approach to love and desire,' French play, created in English *Gates to India*, had its world premier at the residence of the French Ambassador on 9

March. The text of the play is based on *India Song* and *The Vice-Consul* written by Marguerite Duras and directed by Eric Vigner. The cast comprised of Nandita Das (playing the role of Anne-Marie Stretter), Suhaas Ahuja (The Vice-Consul), Subodh Mas-kara (Ambassador/Club Sec-



retary), Jim Sarbh (Charles Rossett) and Neeraj Kabi (Peter Morgan).

For the first time on the eve of celebrating the centenary of Duras' birth, the India dreamt in *The Vice-Consul* and the *India Song* by the author of *Hiroshima mon amor* meets the reality of India. Duras is one of the most important French authors of the 20th century.

The play revolves around the story of a love lived in an India of the 1930's, fixed in the climax of passion. As the scenes unfold in dialogues intertwined with the suffocating heat of India, the travels and the travails of

the Vice-Consul who on an assuming sultry evening in the then Calcutta, screams out his love for Anne Marie Stretter.

Nandita Das as Annie Marie Stretter is the ultimate Durassian heroine who travels through the writer's body of work and Suhaas Ahuja as the Vice-Consul captures the imagination of the audience with his stoic resilience that crumbles in to a haunting and troubled expression of love.

The play will be travelling to Mumbai and Kolkata as well and to give *Gates to India* the right feel, specific venues have been selected

for both the cities. While in Mumbai, the Prithvi Theatre and the NCPA will host the play; Kolkata will have the tale unfold in the courtyard of Tagore House.

The Delhi chapter had the site-specific piece unfold in the Residence of the French Ambassador on a perfect Saturday evening. Starting off in the interiors, the story and the play travels to the garden where the climactic end braces the characters.

The play is on from the 9 to the 13 at the Residence of the French Ambassador, 7 pm onwards. Entry is by invitation only, so make sure you bag one.

