

NEW DELHI, February 5, 2012

Book on Bangladesh war released

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LAUNCH Palimpsest Publishers' "Freedom's Mother", released recently in Delhi, is about the price Bangladesh paid for freedom [image: AN EXPRESSION TO AGONY Author Anisul Hoque (third from right)]

AN EXPRESSION TO AGONY Author Anisul Hoque (third from right)

Palimpsest Publishers launched their first book "Freedom's Mother", the English translation of the best selling book "Maa" in Bangla by Anisul Hoque, Deputy Editor of Pratham Alo, a leading newspaper in Dhaka. The translation has been done by well known academic, Phalguni Ray. The book is a graphic reconstruction of the macabre genocide that took place in Bangladesh March 1971 and the subsequent guerrilla campaign against the occupation army. Here, the war is seen through the eyes of Safia Begum.

Once part of the Bombay elite, she walked out of her husband's home when he decided to marry a younger woman. Thus began her struggle to bring up her only child, all on her own. The book launch was followed by a panel discussion on 'Freedom: metaphor for a collective dream'. Speakers on the panel were former diplomat and army officer, Captain J. C. Sharma, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Tariq A. Karim and Editor-in-chief, The Pioneer, Chandan Mitra. The panel discussion was moderated by Karan Singh. Talking about the book, author said, "The story of Safia Begum is unique. It's a story of a mother and her son. The story is about how she stood up for her dignity, self respect and her right. I heard the story in one line so had to go through a lot of research work." Her added, "We were a small country. The war of 1971 showed us a direction. I, as a writer in Bangladesh, am always for democracy and secularism. I wrote in my language, tried to create my own identity and it's wonderful to be a writer in Bangladesh."

Karim, remarked, "It's not a novel, it is history full of facts. For Bangladesh it was an epic struggle. It is a story of many groups who suffered, lost their lives and dear ones. The story of one group has come out with the novel. While going through the book everything was so familiar, the names, places even the character. This story was to be expressed. This is the time when we need to remember what we went through." The original novel, "Maa" ran into 44 editions within three years of publication and sold over 100,000 copies.