

# READING CORNER

HISTORY | LITERATURE | ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE | BIOGRAPHY | TRAVEL | WILDLIFE | RELIGION | SELF-HELP | FICTION | TRANSLATION | CINEMA | FOOD

13th April 2019

# 100

years of  
**Jallianwala Bagh  
Massacre**

Theodore Adorno, in his 1949 essay, “Cultural Criticism and Society”, said: “There can be no poetry after Auschwitz”. Perhaps in the Indian context, one could say that there cannot be any literatures after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. This anguish was reflected in the following letter of Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel laureate in Literature, relinquishing his knighthood in protest against the diabolical act of General Dyer.

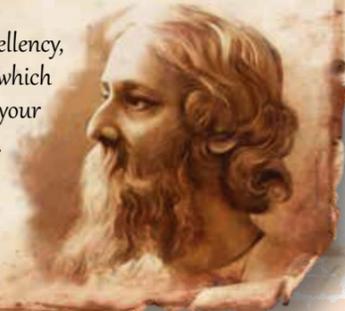
Calcutta [India]  
31 May 1919

Your Excellency,

The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India. The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised governments, barring some conspicuous exceptions, recent and remote. Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population, disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification. The accounts of the insults and sufferings by our brothers in Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers—possibly congratulating themselves for what they imagine as salutary lessons. This callousness has been praised by most of the Anglo-Indian papers, which have in some cases gone to the brutal length of making fun of our sufferings, without receiving the least check from the same authority—relentlessly careful in smothering every cry of pain and expression of judgement from the organs representing the sufferers. Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengeance is blinding the nobler vision of statesmanship in our Government, which could so easily afford to be magnanimous as befitting its physical strength and moral tradition, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen, who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings.

These are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask Your Excellency, with due reference and regret, to relieve me of my title of Knighthood, which I had the honour to accept from His Majesty the King at the hands of your predecessor, for whose nobleness of heart I still entertain great admiration.

Yours faithfully,  
Rabindranath Tagore



## #Authorspeaks



Rakshanda Jalil

*A writer, editor, translator, and activist, Rakshanda Jalil has provided yeomen's service to the cause of Urdu language and literature. On the occasion of the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, she has put together a volume highlighting India's creative response to the abominable action against humanity. Trisha De Niyogi talked to her about the motivation and efficacy of this project.*

## Words Vs Guns...

**Q** What are the memories of belonging? Is it important and instructive to remember holocausts like the partition and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre?

**A** Yes, it is very important to revisit times of great pain and suffering, and go back to old memories that have caused immense anguish. Would we do what was done at great human cost yet again? Did the pain, suffering, and sacrifice go to waste? Surely, it ought not to.

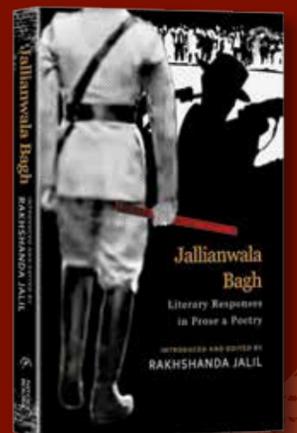
The intersection of history and literature allows us to revisit occasions of great historical import. In the past, I have looked at the literature that came out of the First War of Independence of 1857, the Indian participation in the First World War (1914-1918) and the literary responses to it, and the Partition of 1947. Each time, my attempt has been to evaluate how contemporary and later writers looked at these real-life incidents through the prism of literature. This volume is a continuation of that attempt.

**Q** You have done a wonderful job of compiling material written on Jallianwala Bagh massacre, both fiction and non-fiction written in various languages. In terms of literary values, how would you evaluate them?

**A** Let me infer to poetry to answer your question about 'literary values'. Once, poetry was considered the most suitable form for passing down history. Some of our greatest epics came to us in verse. There was a long lull when poetry was thought to be about the softer emotions of life. It took events of great magnitude, for instance, the Jallianwala Bagh incident, to release a burst of political consciousness. Poets writing in different bhashas felt no longer content to sing of the rose and the nightingale. This 'adventurism' required a new diction. For these 'new age' poets, language became a means, not an end to a creative exercise. Realism crept into the poetry of even those who shied away from labels, or chose not to belong to any school of thought. The poetry included in this book reflects those times and those literary values.

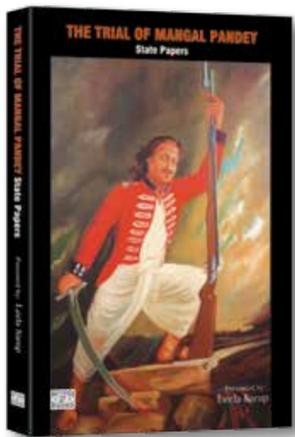
**Q** Sometimes some of our centenaries turn out to be celebrations irrespective of the fact that they are solemn moments for expiation and penance. How would you advise the governments to commemorate this painful event?

**A** My friend Ramu Gandhi, the philosopher, always used to say in the context of Partition that ownership is very important. Someone has to speak up and take responsibility. Until a collective *pind daan* takes place, the ghosts of Partition will continue to haunt us. I want to say the same about Jallianwala Bagh... Until full ownership of this terrible tragedy is taken, we will not find closure.



# 2 Before 1947

India has been home to diverse peoples, societies, cultures, and faiths. Its historical narrative has changed with a shift in every era, and every rule. We will take you through a time warp—from the day when the ships of the East India Company first arrived and marked the beginning of British rule in India, to present-day India, which is one of the largest democracies in the world. By the first half of the 19th century, the Company had brought major portions of India under its control. One hundred years after the Battle of Plassey, anger against the unjust and oppressive British Government took the form of a revolt that shook the very foundations of British rule in India. While British historians called it the Sepoy Mutiny, Indian historians named it the Revolt of 1857 or the First War of Indian Independence.

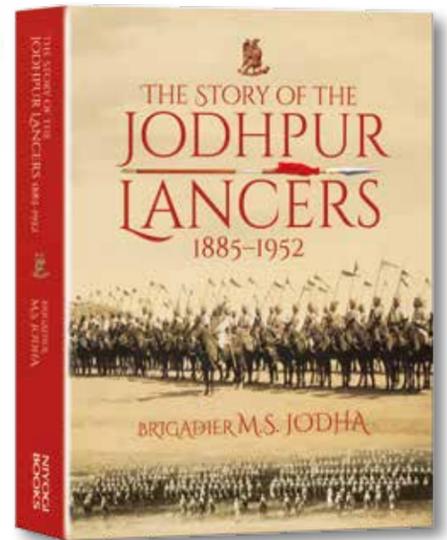


**The Trial of Mangal Pandey: State Papers** presents the official records of the trial of Mangal Pandey, hailed by some as the one who initiated India's First War of Independence in 1857, and dismissed by others as a disgruntled sepoy, who, under the influence of bhang, defied the writ of the British.

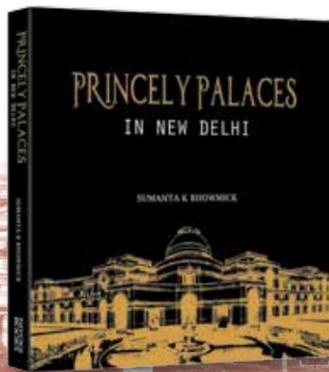
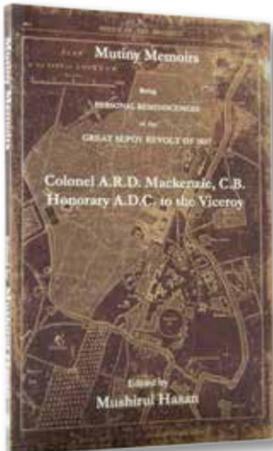
Moving ahead in the timeline of history, **The Story of the Jodhpur Lancers** presents a remarkable narrative of the warriors of this Indian princely state prior to, and during the two world wars, and of how the friendship between an Indian prince, Sir Pratap Singh, and British royalty contributed to the Allied War efforts.

'During the Great War, the Jodhpur Lancers covered themselves with glory more than once, but most famously at Haifa on 23rd September 1918, when they carried out what many describe as one of the last and finest successful cavalry charges ever made.'

—H.H. Gaj Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur



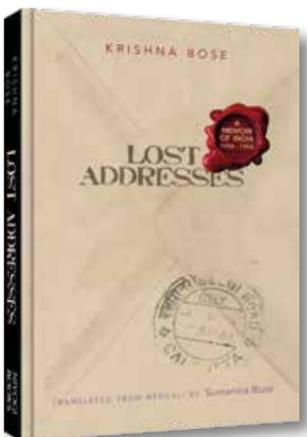
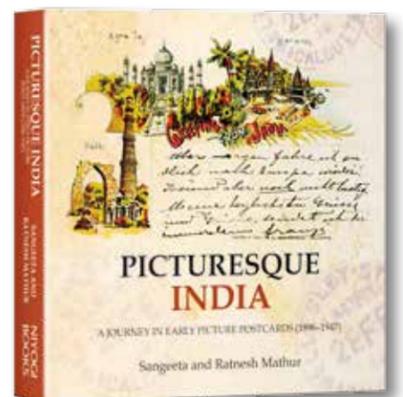
Colonel A.R.D. Mackenzie, an eyewitness of the 1857 'Revolt', wrote **Mutiny Memoirs** on the basis of 'contemporary documentary evidence' of the mutiny, which comprises the first part of the book. In the second part, historian Mushirul Hassan analyzes these representations, incorporating the insights of Jawaharlal Nehru, who contextualized 1857 in the light of the latter-day anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa.



As New Delhi became the 'new' Imperial capital, the princely states came up with elaborate palaces in the city. But what happened to them after the integration of the states with the Indian Republic? **Princely Palaces in New Delhi** delineates the stories of the royal structures that are an integral part of Delhi's urban topography.

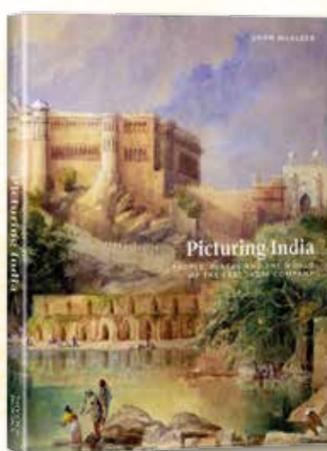
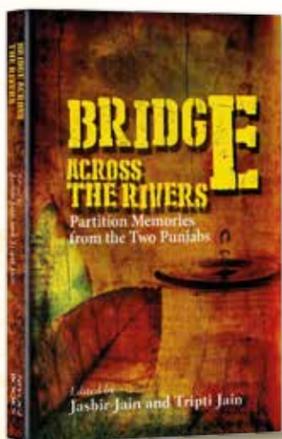


With the dawn of the 20th century came significant changes in the Indian landscape—formation of new cities, towns, and ports; and creation of cultural, educational, and trading centres; all increasingly well connected by an extensive rail network. The 550 postcards featured in **Picturesque India** visually document this growth.

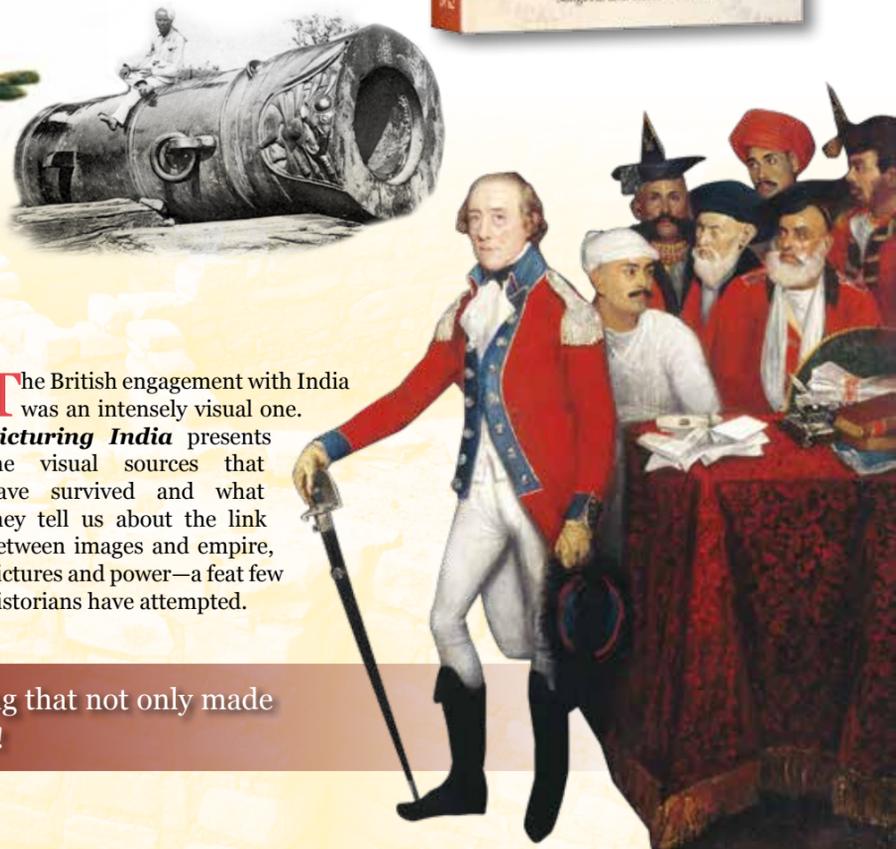


During the 1930s and 1940s, India and the world were in great ferment and transition. The book **Lost Addresses**, translated from Bengali, is an autobiography that presents the history of the time, when India transitioned from colonialism to sovereignty, through the eyes of first a little girl, then a teenager, and finally a young woman, Krishna Bose.

With freedom in 1947, came into existence a truncated India. The division of the country divided not only territory, but everything that went with it—nation, homes, and families. The heartache and anguish of the divided families lay heavy on the joy of a much coveted freedom. **Bridge Across the Rivers** iterates the narrative of the Partition of Punjab, based on real-life accounts.



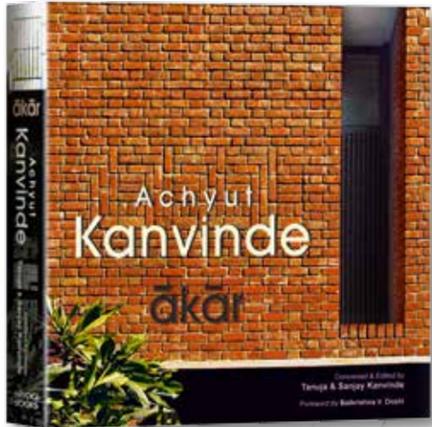
The British engagement with India was an intensely visual one. **Picturing India** presents the visual sources that have survived and what they tell us about the link between images and empire, pictures and power—a feat few historians have attempted.



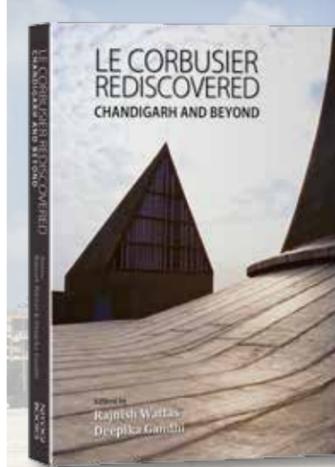
All these books offer you a chance to swim through time, to experience everything that not only made history, but also shaped the future of India. So, what are you waiting for? Dive in!

# 3 A New Nation

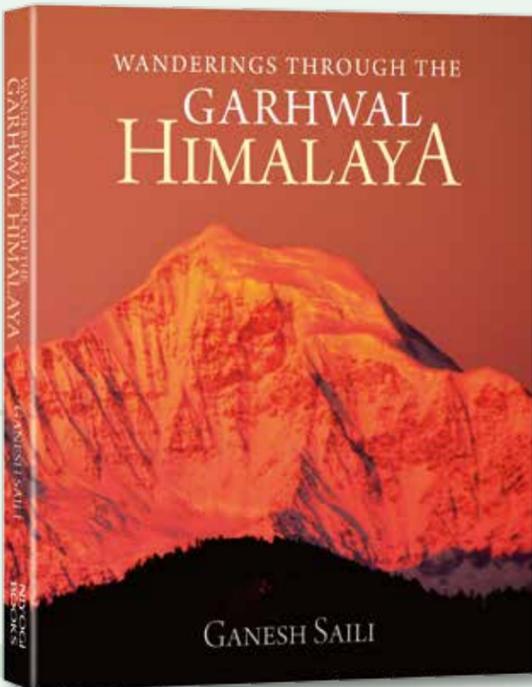
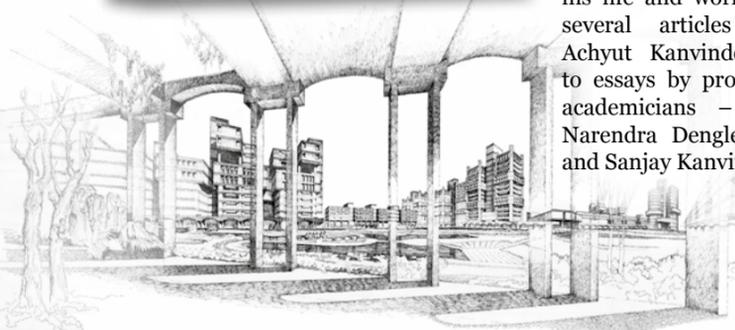
Being the seventh largest nation in the world, with a rich historic past and a vast geographical terrain, India hides away many jewels. The Group of Monuments at Hampi, in Karnataka, is one of the top tourists spots in the world. It has 56 musical pillars, which, when struck, each emits a unique musical tone. Such is the marvel of Indian architecture!



Did you know, one of the pioneers of modern architecture in India is Achyut Kanvinde? Celebrated as the father of campus planning in India, some of his better-known projects include IIT, Kanpur; Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai; and the ISKCON Temple in Delhi. Conceived and edited by Tanuja and Sanjay Kanvinde, and with a foreword by renowned architect Dr B.V. Joshi, **Achyut Kanvinde: Akar** presents a monograph on his life and works. It contains several articles written by Achyut Kanvinde in addition to essays by professionals and academicians – Ashok Lall, Narendra Dingle, Miki Desai, and Sanjay Kanvinde.

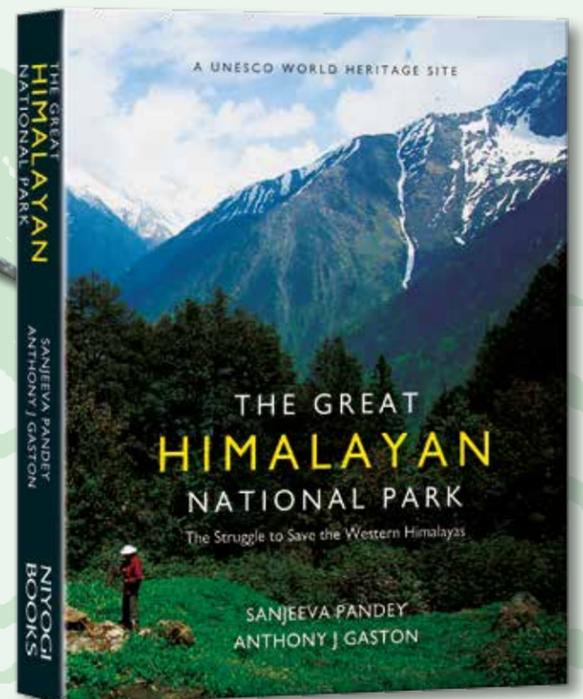


Recently, Chandigarh's Capitol Complex has attained the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was designed by Le Corbusier, a Swiss-French architect, designer, painter, urban planner, writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now called modern architecture. Against that backdrop, **Le Corbusier Rediscovered: Chandigarh and Beyond** commemorates the legendary architect, and his masterpiece in India, the city of Chandigarh, by featuring nearly 250 maps, images, and sketches by him.

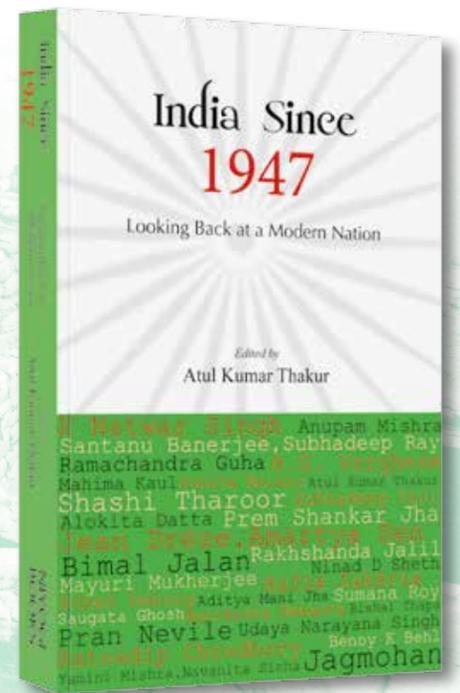
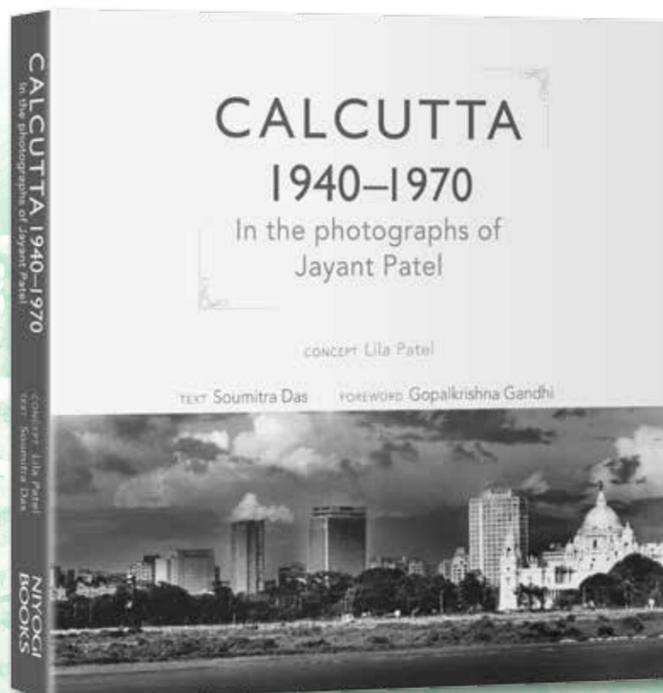
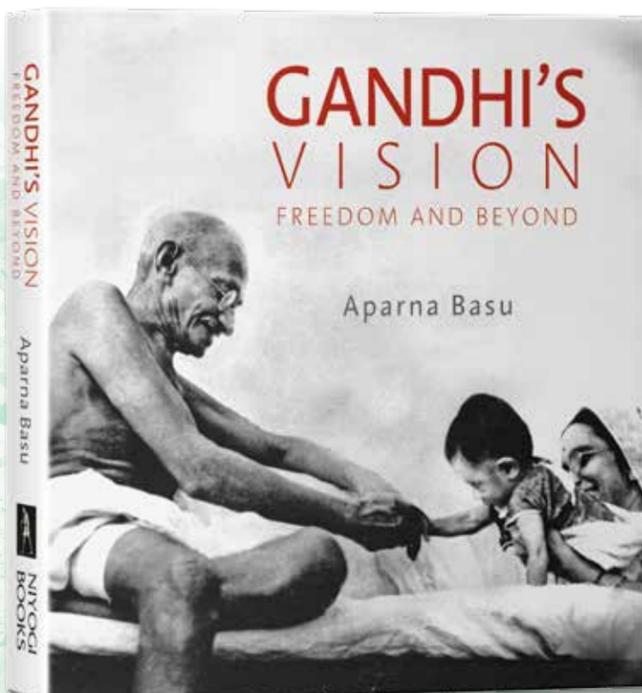


With growing ecological concerns worldwide, The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, one of the world's great biological realms has come to attain the World Heritage status too. The book, **The Great Himalayan National Park**, by Sanjeeva Pandey and Anthony Gaston, is intended both as a history and an ecological overview of the park, as well as a plea for continuing the fight to protect the ecology of the greatest mountains on earth.

To get a little more introspective on the lofty Himalayas, **Wanderings Through the Garhwal Himalaya** will offer you a delightful collection of essays on the Garhwal Himalaya, and life around it. Ganesh Saili has written of his many journeys through these valleys wrapped in the mist: travelogues that evoke details of natural history interwoven into the delicate social fabric of the mountains.



Sometimes, while moving ahead with the times, we forget where we came from, how 'today' came to be. Celebrating 71 years of Indian independence, **Gandhi's Vision: Freedom and Beyond** chronicles the principal events leading to India's freedom under Gandhi's leadership, and his vision of a free India. Offering a nostalgic flashback, **Calcutta 1940-1970: In the photographs of Jayant Patel** features an exquisite collection of a by-gone era of Calcutta in all its resplendence—a glimpse of the political life before and after the Partition. And **India Since 1947: Looking Back at a Modern Nation** offers a collection of thirty essays penned by India's leading scholars and insightful young writers, whose names feature on the cover—a collection every discerning reader will love to own.



# 4 In Transition

From the last century to the current, the world has witnessed an epic cultural transition, along with social, political, economic, and technological changes. LGBTQ communities have boldened their voice globally; women have called out their offenders from various industries (#MeToo); artificial intelligence is being feared for a possible world domination; and 3D printers will soon be able to build anything we can dream of.

Documenting such changes in the forum of culture in South Asia, *Socioliterary Cultures in South Asia* by Professor Anisur Rahman presents seventeen studies on authors, texts, and issues under three different sections that represent different secular traditions, imaginative landscapes, and realistic configurations. Joginder Paul's stories in *Land Lust* offer poignant glimpses of the unequal multiracial relations in colonial Kenya. Translated from the original Urdu, they evoke insightful moments of compassion from within the harsh xenophobic environs. The writer deftly and gently asserts the dignity of the black people by including their voice and predicament in these stories.

Understanding the fundamentals that have given birth to multiplicity across various segments of society and culture is imperative in the present day.

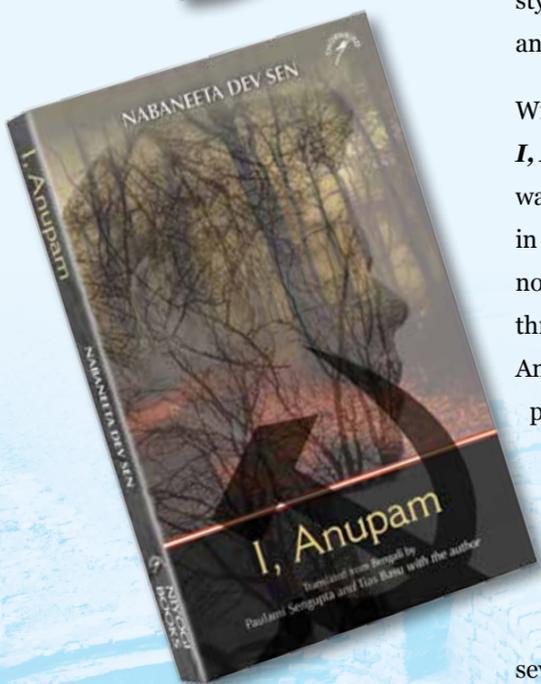
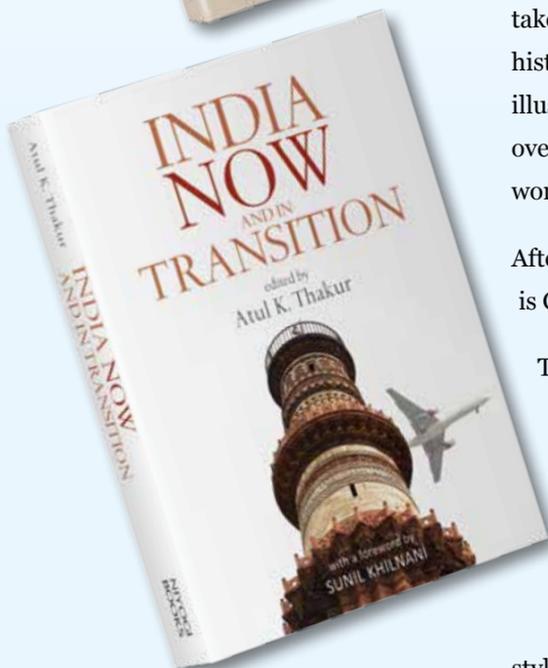
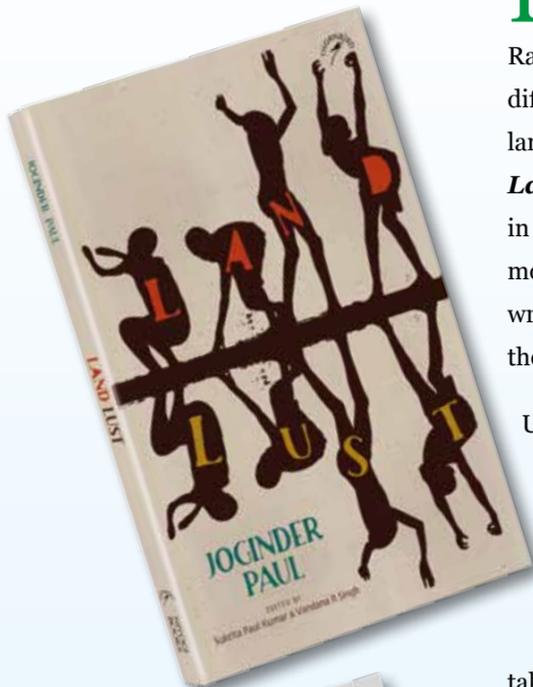
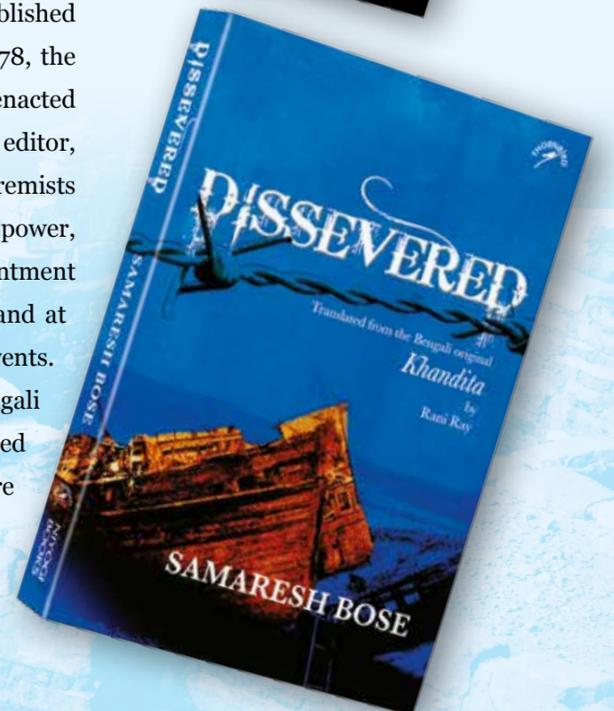
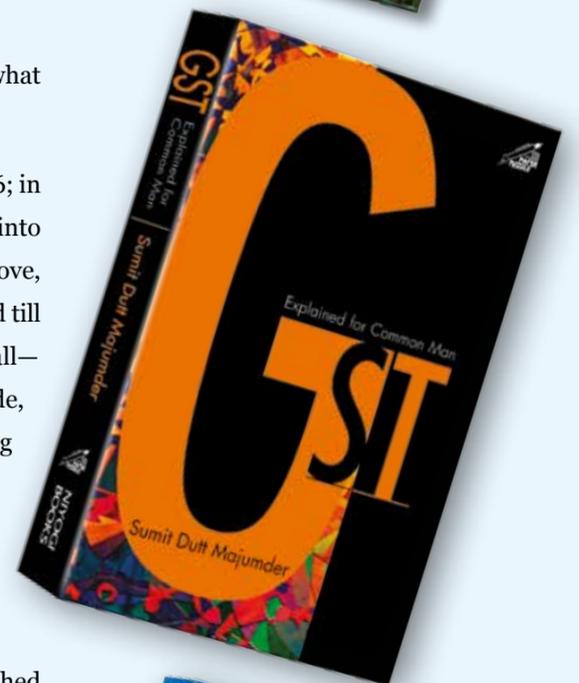
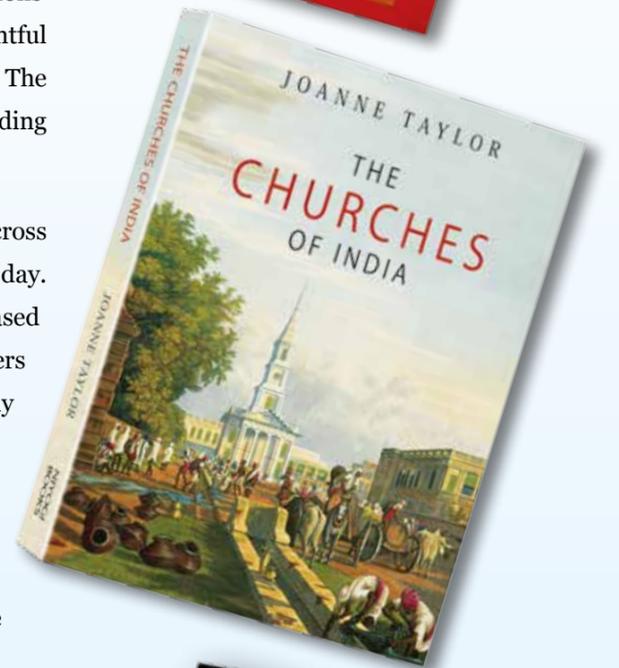
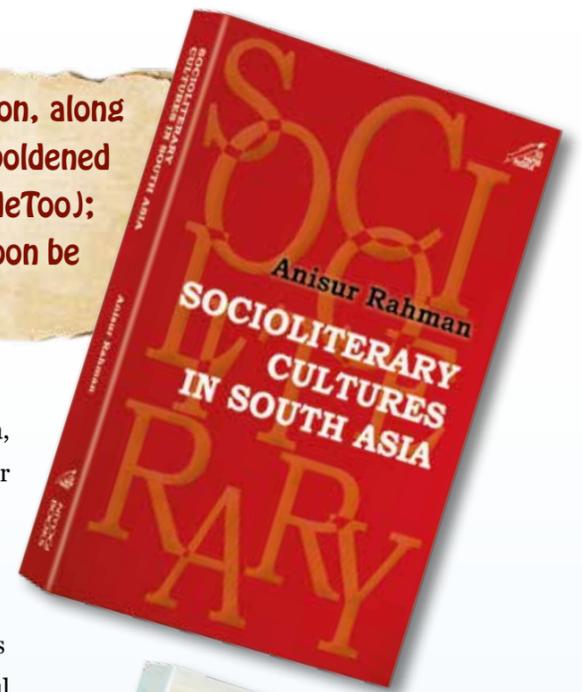
*India Now and in Transition* is an enquiry into possible futures, based on current happenings. Featuring contributions from leading thinkers and scholars in diverse fields, each essay in this volume critically analyses a major theme of India's present. *The Churches of India* takes the reader on a fascinating journey through India to discover the history and architecture of the country's Christian churches, with fine illustrations and an informative, easy-to-read text. Complemented by over 300 photographs, this absorbing book is the most comprehensive work on India's churches to date.

After demonetization hit the streets of India, there came GST. But then, what is GST? How is it applied?

The system was introduced in Australia in 2000; in New Zealand in 1986; in Canada, in the year 1991; in Singapore, in 1994; and in Malaysia, it came into effect in 2015. The implementation of GST in India was a historical move, as it marked a significant indirect tax reform in the country. Updated till August 2018, *GST Explained for Common Man* does explain it all—the concepts of supply, Input Tax Credit, IGST for inter-state trade, Business Processes, and more. Narrated simply, often in a story-telling style, it is also a guide for beginners among consultants, GST officers, and students.

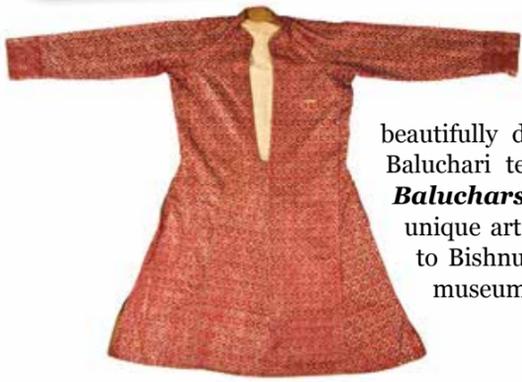
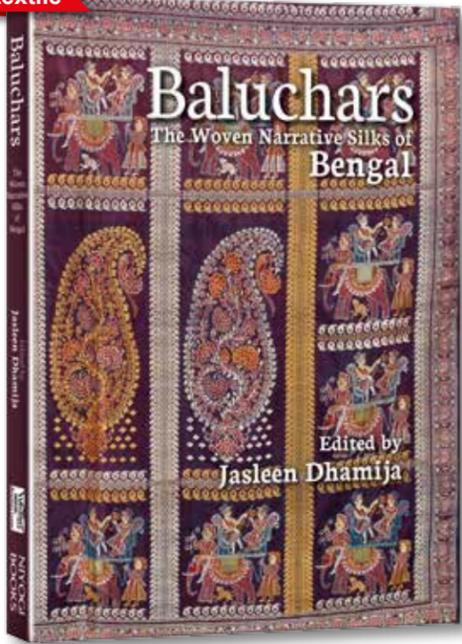
With global changes in the fore, facts and fiction come together in *I, Anupam*, translated from Nabaneeta Dev Sen's *Ami Anupam*, which was the first novel on the Naxal Movement in West Bengal. First published in the *Sharadiya Ananda Bazaar* in 1976, and then as a book in 1978, the novel deals with the conflict between integrity and expediency, enacted through the life of a renowned political commentator and newspaper editor, Anupam. Essentially a peace-loving person, he loves many of the extremists personally, and provides aid to young Naxalite revolutionaries with his power, position, and advice. His journey takes us through the tides of contentment and melancholy, at times chiding him for his prejudiced views, and at the very end, evoking a deep sense of sorrow at the turn of events.

*Dissevered*, the English translation of Samareesh Bose's Bengali novel *Khandita* comes out at a time when we have just completed seventy years of Independence. The birth pangs of Independence are described by him through the eyes of three young Bengali friends who experienced the midwifery of Partition that tore apart our subcontinent in 1947.



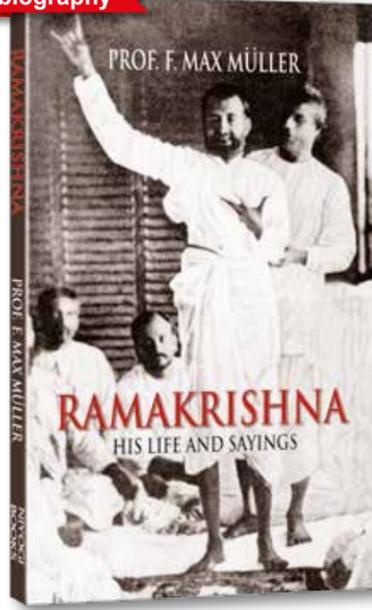
# 5 New Releases

textile



The transition from nawabi to colonial rule in Bengal has been beautifully documented in the weaves of the Baluchari textiles of Bengal, especially saris. **Baluchars**, richly illustrated, traces how this unique art form travelled from Murshidabad to Bishnupur, to Benares (in India), and to museums all around the world.

biography



Inspired by the philosophy of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, philologist and Orientalist Friedrich Max Müller delved deep into the essence of the language of his sayings, and applied it to his 'science of religion'. **Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings** is one of the early documentations by a Western scholar of this saint's life and teachings as were collected by his followers after his death.

fiction



Narrated from the perspective of an innocent rural youth, Asim Mukhopadhyay's **Half Man** is set in the heart of the Naxalite Movement in Bengal. A hard-hitting and brutally honest narrative, it also focuses on the repression of the displaced people in MP and Maharashtra during the Namada Bachao Andolan in Gujarat.

29 APRIL  
**WORLD**  
*Dance Day*

## स्वतंत्रता के बाद भारतीय शास्त्रीय नृत्य रूपों की कला यात्रा

29 अप्रैल को 'अंतरराष्ट्रीय नृत्य दिवस' के अवसर पर हम पाठकों के लिए यह विशिष्ट किताब लेकर आ रहे हैं। इसमें शास्त्रीय नृत्य की कई दशकों की यात्रा का विस्तार से वर्णन है।

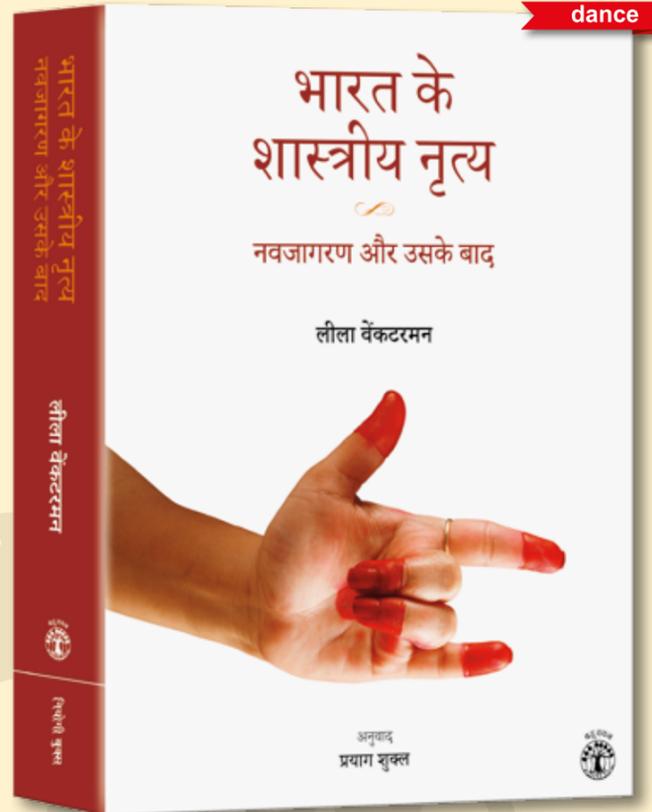
ब्रिटिश साम्राज्य के अंतिम कुछ वर्षों और उसके बाद, मंदिरों और दरबारों से शास्त्रीय नृत्य रूपों का एक नया रूपांतरण घटित हुआ, जिसमें स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन की भी एक विशिष्ट भूमिका थी। अन्य सभी क्षेत्रों की तरह नृत्य-रूपों में भी अपनी एक स्वतंत्र राष्ट्रीय पहचान की व्यापक मुहिम चल रही थी और अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंच पर इसे स्थापित करने की आकांक्षा बलवती हो रही थी। आलम यह था कि नृत्य-रूपों की धरोहर संभालने वाले पेशेवर परिवारों को कहीं पीछे धकेल दिया गया और वे गुमनामी का जीवन जीने को बाध्य हो गए। ऐसे में शास्त्रीय नृत्य रूपों के पुनराविष्कार के लिए समाज के अलग-अलग वर्गों से कलाप्रेमी आगे आए। इस प्रकार देश के विविध प्रदेशों व अंचलों के शास्त्रीय नृत्य रूप एक नई ताजगी, ऊर्जा और नई संभावना के साथ फलने-फूलने लगे।

अतः इस परिप्रेक्ष्य में देखें, तो स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के सत्तर वर्षों की इस अवधि में भारतीय शास्त्रीय नृत्य रूपों की प्रस्तुतियों में एक मूलभूत परिवर्तन हुआ, किंतु परिवर्तन की यह प्रक्रिया रुकी नहीं है, पीढ़ी-दर-पीढ़ी इसमें कुछ जुड़ता ही जा रहा है। हमारे शास्त्रीय नृत्यकार और संगीतकार इस समृद्ध परंपरा को अपने-अपने ढंग से पुनर्जीवित करते ही जा रहे हैं।

शास्त्रीय नृत्य रूपों की परंपराओं, उसके इतिहास एवं पुनर्जीवन की चुनौतियों को प्रख्यात नृत्य समीक्षक लीला वेंकटरमन ने अपनी पुस्तक "भारत के शास्त्रीय नृत्य : नवजागरण और उसके बाद" में विस्तार से व्यक्त किया है। इसमें भरतनाट्यम, कथक, कुचिपुड़ी, कथकली, मणिपुरी, मोहिनीअट्टम, ओडिसी और सत्रिय नृत्य विधाओं का सघन और सम्यक परिचय प्रस्तुत किया है। साथ ही, समकालीन नृत्य के विभिन्न पहलुओं को भी बहुत अच्छी तरह से उजागर किया गया है।

पुस्तक में अनेक पहलुओं के साथ-साथ शास्त्रीय नृत्य के भविष्य पर भी प्रकाश डाला गया है कि पारंपरिक गुरुओं के न रहने के बाद शास्त्रीय नृत्य की दुनिया में एक खालीपन महसूस किया जा रहा है। ये गुरु इस बात के लिए कृतसंकल्प थे कि नृत्यों की पहचान एक सीमा तक ही बदलनी चाहिए। अब, जबकि वे मौजूद नहीं हैं, भविष्य कुछ अनिश्चित- सा हो गया है। एक युग बीत चुका है। अब इसमें संदेह है कि बाला सरस्वती, गुरु केलुचरण महापात्र और शंभू महाराज सरीखे कलाकारों को हम पा सकेंगे! भाग्यवश बिरजू महाराज जैसे नृत्य पुरुष हमारे बीच में हैं, जिनसे अनेकों लगनशील युवा प्रशिक्षण पा रहे हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त कुछ अन्य प्रतिभाशाली कलाकार हैं, जो इस परंपरा को आगे ले जाने के लिए वचनबद्ध हैं। नृत्य का भविष्य इन्हीं सीखने और सिखाने वालों पर टिका है।

dance

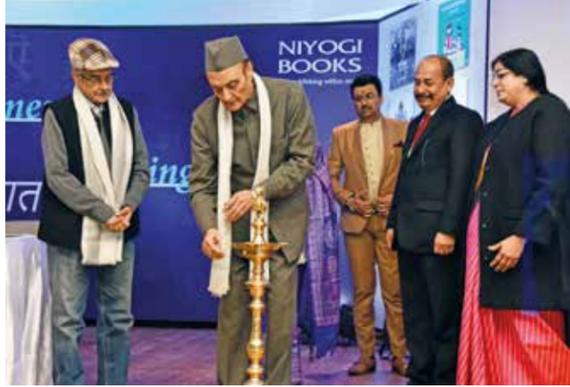


# 6 Events

## Bahuvachan – Our New Hindi Imprint



L-R: Bikash De Niyogi, Karan Singh, Salma Hussain and Prayag Shukla at the launch of 'Bahuvachan', our Hindi imprint in IIC, New Delhi

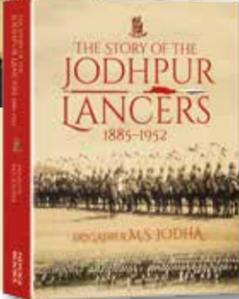


Karan Singh lighting the auspicious lamp at the launch of our imprint 'Bahuvachan' on 9 January 2019

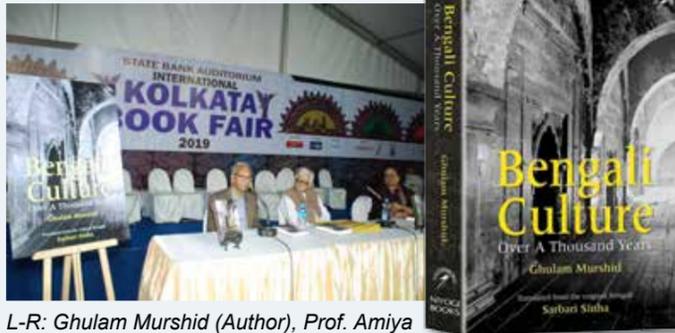
## The Story of the Jodhpur Lancers (1885-1952)



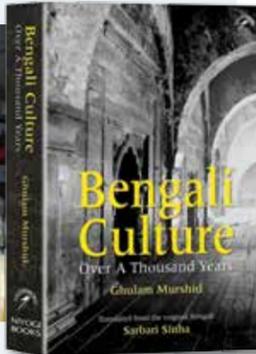
L-R: Reema Hooja, Brigadier M S Jodha (author) and Trisha De Niyogi at the launch in Jaipur Literary Festival 2019



## Bengali Culture: Over A Thousand Years



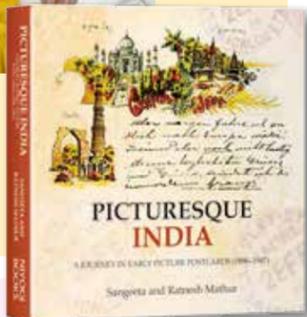
L-R: Ghulam Murshid (Author), Prof. Amiya Dev and Sharbari Sinha at the book launch in International Kolkata Book Fair 2019



## Picturesque India: A Journey in Early Picture Postcards (1896-1947)



L-R: Ratnesh Mathur (Author), Mrs Hovorka, HE Milan Hovorka, Sangeeta Mathur (Author), Dr Malavika Karlekar, Nirupama Kotru at the launch in the Embassy of the Czech Republic, New Delhi



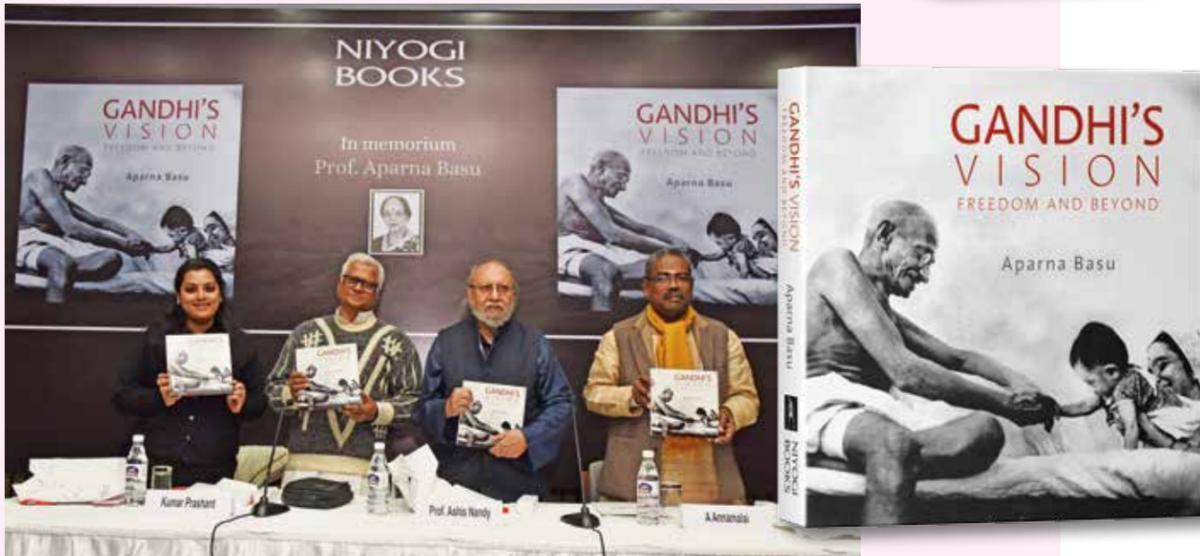
## GST: Explained For Common Man



L-R: Devendra Nagvenkar, Sumit Dutt Majumder (Author), Prof. Achin Chakraborty and Rudra Chatterjee at the launch in International Kolkata Book Fair 2019



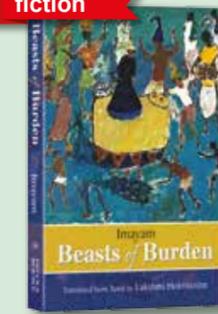
## Gandhi's Vision: Freedom and Beyond



L-R: Trisha De Niyogi, Kumar Prashant, Prof. Ashis Nandy and A. Annamalai at the book launch in IIC, New Delhi

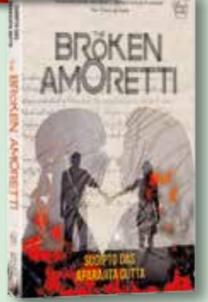
## FORTHCOMING

fiction



Dalit literary writing in Tamil translated into English, **Beasts of Burden** is a story of decline and change located in the early 1970s, seen through the eyes of Arokkyam, a washerwoman who serves a Dalit community.

fiction



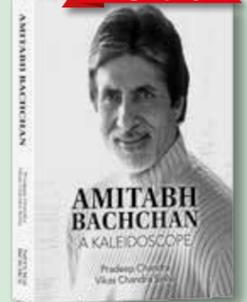
Saoili and Parush, the protagonists of **The Broken Amoretti**, must decipher a cryptic poem to unearth the dark secrets of people living in Prembajar, where love takes new forms and gives new meanings to life.

fiction



Captive of his pay package, EMI, and social status, Sanjay is unable to follow his passion, until one day, when up against the roar of a tiger in Naxal-affected Chhattisgarh, he finally decides to take a leap of faith. Heartwarming, witty, and honest, **Second Wind** is the story of the dreamer within each of us.

biography



Presenting the many facets of Bachchan—the actor, the family man, the businessman, the politician, and the activist—along with a collection of rare photographs, paintings, sketches, and movie stills, **Amitabh Bachchan: A Kaleidoscope** is a must-read for every Big B fan.

dance



**Kathak: The Dance of Storytellers** explores the principles of Kathak, its origin, development, and techniques, through the lens of theory and application. A rare resource, the text is a comprehensive read for dancers, teachers, and Kathak lovers.

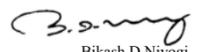
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