READING CORNER

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



Festivals and Books

here is a nip in the air. Autumn is a season of transition from the summer to the winter, when the temperature comes down, daylight becomes shorter in duration and trees shed their leaves. In Western countries, it is also referred to as 'fall' because of the falling of the leaves from the deciduous trees, a phenomenon that turns the huge natural panorama into an ochre hue.

Autumn is the season of harvesting. Harvesting suggests maturity. Hence, in English poetry, autumn is often associated with melancholia. The possibilities of summer are gone, and the chill of winter is on the horizon. The sky turns grey, the amount of usable daylight drops rapidly, and many people turn inward, both physically and mentally. Examples may be found in Irish poet WB Yeats' poem, 'The Wild Swans at Coole', where the maturing season that the poet observes symbolically represents his own ageing self. Like the natural world he observes, he has also reached his prime and now must look forward to the inevitability of old age and death. French poet Paul Verlaine's 'Autumn Song' (Chanson de' automne) is likewise characterised by strong, painful feelings of sorrow. John Keats' 'Ode to Autumn' echoes this sense of melancholic reflection as well, though it does not fail to emphasise the lush abundance of the season. However, in Indian literature, autumn is often celebrated, though not with as much gusto as the spring or monsoon. Rabindranath Tagore composed a number of songs invoking autumn, the most popular being 'Sharata tapaney prabhata swapaney ki jani mon ki je chay' Tagore even wrote a full-fledged play called Sharodotsav (Autumn Festival) which was staged in Santiniketan. Introducing the chorus of the young boys, the play is full of mirth and gaiety.

Autumn is also the season of festivals. In the Western world, autumn is associated with Halloween (influenced by Samhain, a Celtic autumn festival) and with it a widespread marketing campaign that promotes it. The television, film, book, costume, home decoration and confectionery industries use this time of the year to promote products closely associated with such a holiday.

In India, the same phenomenon is observed during the autumn festivals of Durga Puja, Dussehra and Diwali. However, in Indian mythology, autumn is considered to be the preferred season for the goddess of learning, Saraswati, who is also known by the name of 'goddess of autumn' (Sharada). Somehow, reading and books are closely associated with autumn festivals. I mentioned the promotion of books during Halloween along with other consumer goods. Similarly, in Bengali, there is the interesting phenomenon of Puja specials (*Pujabarshiki*) published by all major newspaper and magazine houses. This also applies to the Diwali specials in Odisha, Delhi and the Southern states. Some of the major literary books are first published in these Puja specials and later brought out in book form. Many significant writers today produce one novel per year and that is usually earmarked for the Puja specials.

Many like me would usually want to avoid the hullabaloo of the Puja pandals and curl up with a book in the sofa during the holidays. It works for me in the sense that I read through all the major Bengali Pujabarshikis such as Desh, Anandabazar Patrika, Aajkaal, Pratidin and so on, novels, essays, short stories, poetry, and gather a fair idea of which way Bengali literature is heading this year. Side by side, I also catch up with pending reading projects, all self-assigned. Thus, the festival season of autumn and the reading of books are inseparable in my psyche.

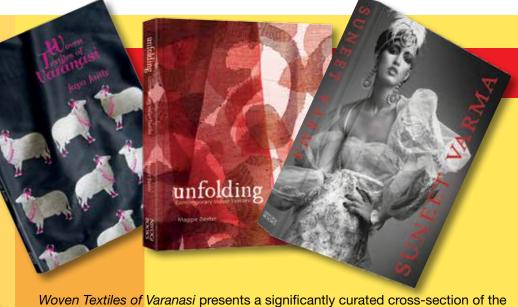
Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee

Celebrations Fun and Festivities

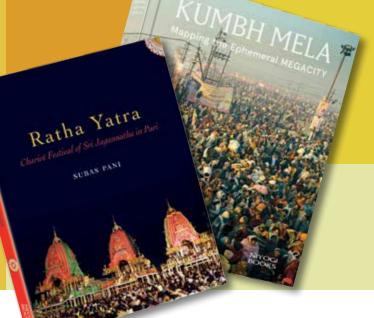
It is the season of spreading cheer and goodwill. Food, fashion and spiritual journeys ... here are books that celebrate life and living



The festive days are for binging as everyone tends to associate food with fun. Rajasthan on a Platter: Healthy, Tasty, Easy, offers a unique variety of traditional and tasty but simple homemade recipes. Flavours of Avadh: Journey from the Royal Banquet to the Corner Kitchen presents an exclusive regional food history celebrated over centuries. And then there is Cheat It All for those unwilling to give up on their amazingly delicious favourites yet conscious enough to watch calories.



Woven Textiles of Varanasi presents a significantly curated cross-section of the textile treasures offered by the city; Unfolding: Contemporary Indian Textiles examines the richness and diversity of textile craft traditions; while Suneet Varma celebrates the work of this pioneering Indian designer with a trove of iconic images by some of India's leading photographers.



Ratha Yatra: Chariot
Festival of Sri
Jagannatha in Puri
brings alive the
ancient annual festival,
one of the grandest
spectacles on earth.
The largest religious
celebration on earth
and the biggest public
gathering in the world
is revealed in Kumbh
Mela: Mapping the
Ephemeral Megacity.

This radical book challenges arms and armour orthodoxy and is essential reading for scholars, collectors and dealers interested in India and its wider culture. It reclaims the Hindu contribution to the military culture of the Mughal period. The Rajputs were very closely aligned to the Mughals from the reign of Akbar in the sixteenth century but they retained their own distinctive values; in the military sphere, their preferences were extremely conservative. A Rajput warrior's sword was his most valued possession, guardian of his honour and his women, the means to fame and spiritual release.

RAJPUT ARMS & ARMOUR THE RATHORES & THEIR ARMOURY AT JODHPUR FORT Robert Elgood He has studied Islamic History at SOAS, and has a doctorate in Indian Anthropology from Oxford University. His previous book Arms & Armour: At the

Jaipur court was also published by Niyogi Books.

MARPAN Living Hinduism

RELIGION

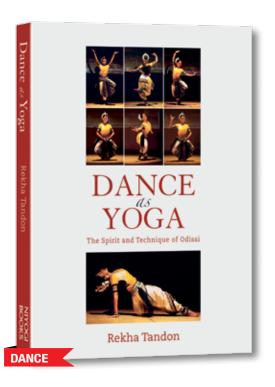
Living

Hinduism

Scriptures

Philosophy

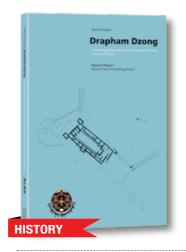
Practices



ance as Yoga addresses the background, technique and embodiment of the Odissi dance form. It describes Odissi's mechanism for creating, dispersing and expressing energy, as well as some early experiments in choreography. It is meant for both performers and audiences to better appreciate the reasons for the restraints inherent in this dance form and, by doing so, have an informed appreciation of innovation that builds on traditional strengths.

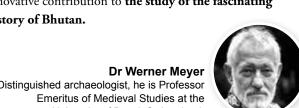
Rekha Tandon A choreographer and researcher in Odissi, she is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Danceroutes.





This pioneering work presents the results of the first archaeological project ever undertaken in Bhutan: the excavation of Drapham Dzong, a fortress in the Choekhor Valley (Bumthang). As the final report of the project, which ran from 2008 through 2010, it is a significant and innovative contribution to the study of the fascinating history of Bhutan.

Distinguished archaeologist, he is Professor University of Basel, Switzerland.



book that draws on the unrivalled riches of the British Library—both visual and textual—to weave together the story of individual images, their creators, and the people and events they depict. And, in doing so, it presents a detailed picture of the East India Company and its complex relationship with India, its people and cultures.

John McAleer

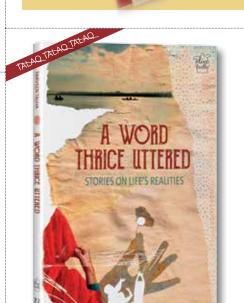
He is Lecturer in History at the University of Southampton and was previously Curator of Imperial and Maritime History at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



HimalayA **TRAVEL**

delightful collection of introspective essays on the Garhwal Himalaya and life around it. The author draws from his memories of being brought up in the mountains, pictures that linger like a waft of sweet perfume on a breezy afternoon. He writes 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 mountain life. This book is a gripping study of an incredible part of the Himalaya.

Ganesh Saili When not teaching photography, he treks the high mountains, capturing, in words and images, the magic of the Himalaya.



PARVEEN TALHA

is often described as a way of life, which gently nudges its followers—through its scriptures, mythologies, rituals and practices—to question deeply, live fully, and grow wholesomely in compassion and universal acceptance. Hinduism believes whatever inspires one to stay truly unselfish, be it a vocation, an ideology, or a faith, can lead one towards greater self-realisation and ultimate freedom. This book encapsulates this essence of Hinduism in a language that can be understood and appreciated by all, especially the younger generation, who need to know and understand what

Tinduism is neither an organised

it means to be a Hindu, in an age of strident opinions and changing values.

Samarpan

He is a monk, writer, teacher with several well-known publications to his name. His next book World of Religion is to be published by us.

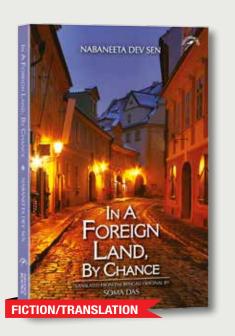
collection of short stories portraying the diverse realities of life through the protagonists children, women, men, animals, even some supernatural beings. Readers meet fascinating women confronted with irresponsible men and downright evil ones, too. But nothing stops these women from taking the first step to a leap into liberation and self-empowerment. While Ratan's story is one of irreparable damage to a child's psyche, through callous handling, spilling onto his adult life, Ram Khilawan's is a contrast where familial love inspires a child to put aside his trauma and attain the impossible.

Parveen Talha

Former Indian civil servant, reported to be the first muslim woman to serve in any class I civil service in India. She has been honoured with the Padma Shri in the year 2014. Fida-E-Lucknow was her first book.



3 | **NEW RELEASES**



pipasha Choudhury, writer and poet in the English language, living in London for some years, is in Czechoslovakia, as part of a writer's group. This visit is set to change her in more ways than one. Looking for answers outside, she is about to discover a valuable part of herself to pave a new destiny—in a foreign land, by chance.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen One of the prominent Bengali litterateurs of our times with more than 80 books to her name. She has received several awards including the Padma Shri.



works into English.



Caakshi uses the Puranas and the Vedanta as well as Gandhian concepts to discuss the meaning of truth and its distortions through greed, sexuality and desire. The characters are confronted by difficult decisions and revelations, which cause them to look inward and attempt an appraisal of their lives and values. This powerful novel questions what it means to be a witness in a courtroom, before the gods, to the lives of others, or, finally, to one's self.



SL Bhyrappa The Kannada novelist is one of India's foremost writers. His novels have been translated into almost all Indian languages. He retired as a Professor of Philosophy from Mysore University.



TRANSLATOR

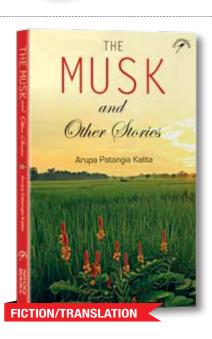
LV Shanthakumari

Her poems, articles and critical essays have been published in Kannada and English magazines and journals. She has translated award-winning books to and from Kannada including Bhyrappa's Mandra (published by Niyogi Books).

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AAKS

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n eclectic mix of short stories and a novella That sheds light on some of the **burning** issues that reverberate through the Assam Valley. Set against the breathtaking scenery of Assam, with its lush green fields, meandering rivers and mighty mountains, the book pushes the reader to reflect upon the current political situation of Assam.

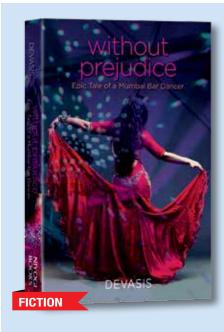
FICTION/TRANSLATION



The Heroine

BHYRAPPA

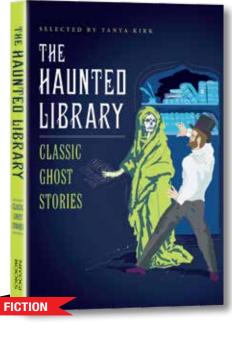
LV Shanthakumari



novel on the life sketch of a fictional Mumbai bar dancer, the book delves deep into the roots of the evolution of these dancers. It highlights how the sudden decision to close the dance bars ran the danger and risk of depriving a section of the populace of a dignified way of earning their living. The book provides an insight into the whole Mumbai dance bar scene and social injustices, reflecting on the general apathy of the government to provide solutions.



Devasis Communicator. Corporate Reputation Advisor and Brand Strategist. This is his first book.



nly one small book, yet it is evil itself. That one book seizes a man by the throat and strangles him to death ... Dire warnings transmitted through the pages of an old Bible; a schoolboy imprisoned by a mysterious bookseller; libraries that hide unspeakable secrets; books that control or even possess their readers. The Haunted Library is a new collection of classic ghost stories from the golden age of the genre in the early twentieth century. Each of these stories reveals the arcane secrets and dark psychic traces to be found in occult books, shadowy libraries and other treasure troves of hidden knowledge. This book includes works by major figures such as MR James alongside writers such as Elizabeth Bowen.

> Tanya Kirk She is the Lead Curator of Printed Heritage Collections 1601-1900 at the British Library, and was the co-curator of the major exhibition. Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination (2014-15).

ach story in this collection delves into the depths of the human psyche, revealing the hidden strengths ordinary people find within themselves when faced with extraordinary circumstances.

Portraying courage, vulnerability and humanity in its many dimensions, these stories remind us of the richness of our regional literature.



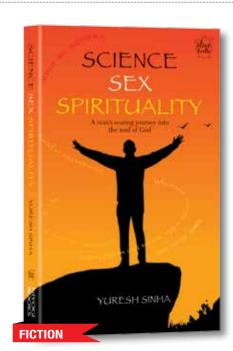
D Jayakanthan He was considered one of the most progressive writers of his time and has written short stories, novels and autobiographies, as well as made two films.



TRANSLATOR

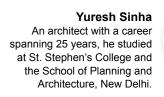
Deepalakshmi J

A business writer with many years of experience in technical, marketing and corporate communication, this is her first published book of translations.



ow well does science explain the mysteries of our universe? Why is sex important in people's lives? What role can spirituality play in helping us find ourselves? Saagar seeks the answers to these essential questions and transforms himself from a precocious adolescent to a successful inventor, on a mind-altering voyage of self-discovery ... The world is transitory. It is the nature of this world—what comes must go, and one who is born must also die. In all this transition, only the soul remains pristine, untouched by birth, death or the living experience.

FICTION/TRANSLATION





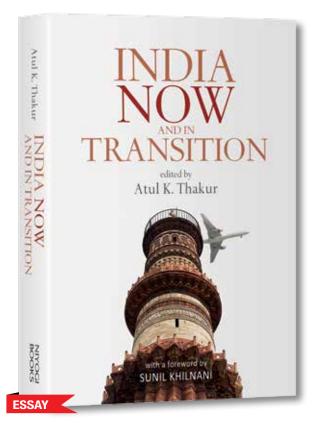


The gods decide to appoint a consultancy firm on earth to understand the radically changed human mind and make strategic course correction. Among the recommendations of the consultants is the appointment of a CEO in heaven who attempts to replicate earthly systems in the new ecosystem. The disaster that follows leads to god having to go to hell to persuade the devil to desist from using unfair trade practices while targeting human souls. The dialogue between god and the devil explores the meaning of life, the conflict of good versus evil, creation versus evolution, and god as creator versus the creation of god.







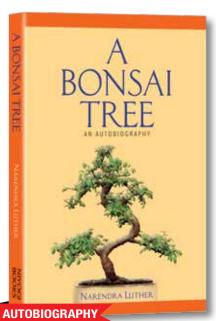


his book is an enquiry into possible futures, based on current happenings. Featuring contributions from leading thinkers and scholars in diverse fields, each essay critically analyses a major theme of India's present, to propose the likely way ahead. Covering politics and governance, economics and development, security and foreign policy, society and culture, and language and literature, it shows that, while beset with both internal and external challenges on many fronts, India is not waiting for its moment, it is making its moment happen.

Atul K Thakur He is a public policy professional, management consultant, journalist, and writer who specialises in the interface of politics and economics. He has previously edited India since 1947: Looking back a modern nation,

is a significant book on modern India.



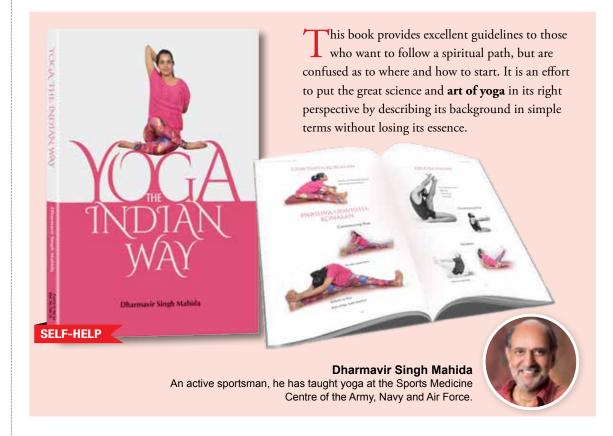


This is the story of one of the millions of families whose lives were shattered by the Partition—also called Independence of India—in 1947. It continues as a narrative of India through the prism of one life. Post-Partition hardship and singular effort launches the author on a coveted career. Hilarious snippets of a young bumbling couple keep you glued to the book. The scenario then changes to an epic private battle with the 'bottled devil'. The author tells his own gripping story with his trademark wit, optimism and unusual candour. Looking back, he finds a pattern emerging out of a chequered life, bringing him to questions of destiny.

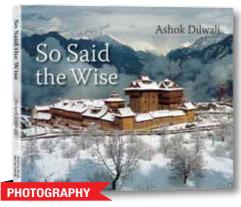
Narendra Luther

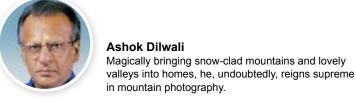
A former civil servant, he has won several awards for his books and is an eminent authority on the history and culture of Hyderabad. His previous title Legendnotes of Hyderabad is another bestseller.





collection of inspirational **Athoughts** from some of India's greatest minds, combined with stunning photographs. The visionaries included in this book come from different walks of life and, by virtue of their scholarship and erudition, have left indelible impressions on our country and indeed on the world. The visuals offer a striking complement to these timeless words of wisdom.

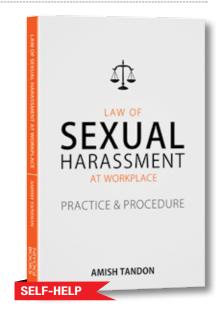




exual harassment is a synonym for 'gender discrimination' or 'gender inequality' and is an antithesis of gender equality. Focusing primarily on the commercial angle to the issue, this book attempts to holistically analyse the Indian law on sexual **harassment** at the workplace by resorting to a point-by-point examination of all its components. It covers all relevant judgements passed by the Indian courts from 1997 (when this subject entered the country's legal domain) until June 2017. This work will serve the needs of lawyers, law students, organisations, NGOs as well as all those interested in gaining insights into this law.



Amish Tandon A corporate commercial attorney with extensive experience in litigation and corporate advisory.



FICTION/TRANSLATION <

sensitive portrayal of the trauma the A Joshi family undergoes while carrying on with the mundane task of day-to-day living, burying deep the memories of an irreplaceable loss. Running alongside is the life of their neighbours and good friends who battle the empty nest syndrome only to discover greater heights of callousness and selfishness in their son and the unexpected graciousness of a total stranger. A gripping tale of everyday and notso-everyday happenings.

Intizar Husain One of the greatest Urdu writers of his generation and the recipient of many literary awards.

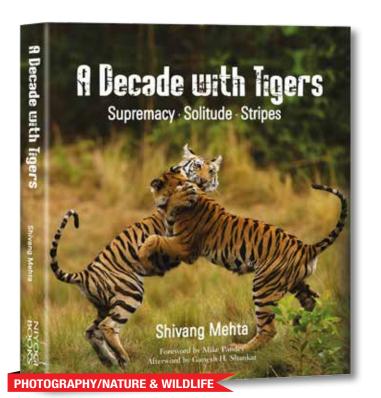


TRANSLATORS

Nishat Zaidi Professor, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.







photographer's take on the dramatic rise in the popularity Anof tigers in the past decade, this is a unique tribute to the tigers who have played a vital role as 'brand ambassadors' of Indian wildlife. The volume chronicles legendary tiger mothers and male tigers of the past decade, as well as their tales of survival, complemented by exquisite images by the author, who has spent thousands of hours on the field.

Also showcased is the singular diversity of Indian wildlife through spectacular images of the myriad species that share their home with tigers, photographed in terrains ranging from montane forests to the plains of Central India. The book delves into the changing landscape of tiger photography in India. It contains expert opinions by leading nature photographers on the need for creativity and innovation in the photography and portrayal of India's magnificent national animal.

> **Shivang Mehta** An avid traveller and nature photographer,



he has conducted more than 200 field wildlife photography workshops and is currently an official trainer for Canon India.

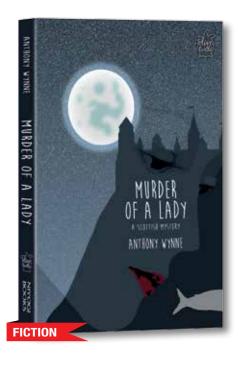
ublished in 1865, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's first Bengali novel, *Durgeshnandini*, revolutionised Bengali prose writing. Many consider it to be the first modern novel in an Indian language. It is set in the sixteenth century during the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar, when the Mughal army was fighting the Pathans for control over territories in eastern India. Many characters in the book—Mughals, Rajputs and Pathans—are historical figures. With this as the backdrop, the author skillfully sets up a romance between a young Rajput commander of the Mughal army and the daughter of a minor ruler. Prevailing social norms barred love across caste and religion. Bankim Chandra seems to question this in an indirect way. The novel ran into 13 editions during Bankim Chandra's lifetime and was translated into several languages.

TRANSLATOR

Sunanda Krishnamurty

A literary translator who has earned a name by translating the stories and novels of Rabindranath Tagore and Saratchandra Chattopadhyay.

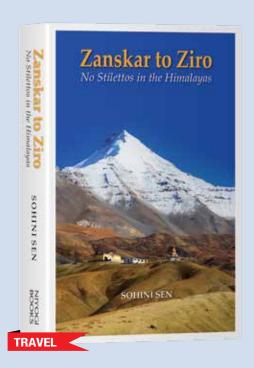




uchlan Castle is a gloomy, forbidding place in the Scottish Highlands. Late one night, the body of Mary Gregor, sister of the laird of Duchlan, is found in the castle. She has been stabbed to death in her bedroom, but the room is locked from within and the windows are barred. The only tiny clue to the culprit is a silver fish's scale, left on the floor next to Mary's body. Inspector Dundas is dispatched to Duchlan to investigate the case. Anthony Wynne wrote some of the **best locked-room mysteries** from the golden age of British crime fiction. This cunningly plotted novel has not been reprinted since 1931, and is long overdue for rediscovery.

Anthony Wynne

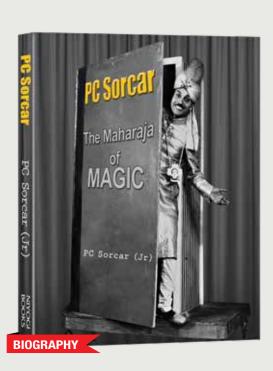
A pseudonym of Robert McNair-Wilson (1882-1963), who wrote 27 detective novels featuring Eustace Hailey, a physician and amateur sleuth. He also published on economics and history, notably a biography of Napoleon.



travelogue about two women's decade-long love affair Awith the Himalayas. Their 10,000-kilometre trail stretched from the remote Zanskar Valley in Ladakh through Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Nepal, Sikkim, Bengal and Bhutan to Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh. This book emerges as an infusion of luxuriant landscapes and rich history, a successful evocation of a sense of place. It is further enriched by echoes and allusions from all that the author and her co-traveller have read, as well as high-quality visuals. It is the 'female gaze' that sets this book apart, since it narrates how women cope with 'being woman' amid a rugged terrain.

Sohini Sen Once a successful journalist with The Telegraph, she is now a full-time travel writer and photographer. Her books include Ladakh: A Photo Travelogue, a tale told through highresolution colour photographs laid out in a comic-strip format.





This book is a pictorial account of the metamorphosis of PC Sorkar into the Maharaja of Magic from very humble beginnings. Written by his son, who was once his apprentice and now carrying on the proud tradition, this is a deeply personal view of the life and times of a towering figure. Photographs culled from various sources throw light on the magician as well as the man behind the scenes. Rare posters, newspaper articles, cartoons, family photos, private papers, facsimiles of honours and awards add to the richness of the work.

PC Sorkar (Jr)

Author of close to 20 books on magic, he has an MSc degree in Applied Psychology and has completed his PhD from Calcutta University. He is the creator of around three dozen illusions that are now regularly performed by magicians across the globe.

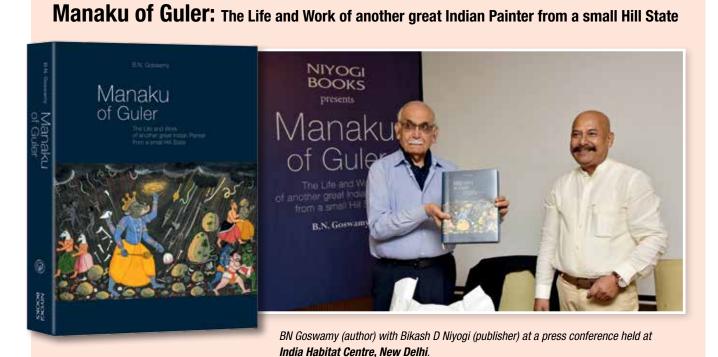


CLIPPINGS

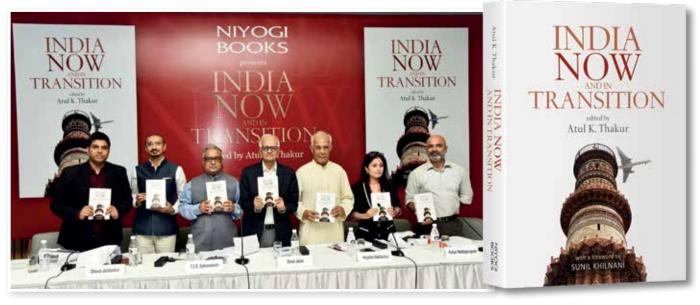
Without Prejudice: Epic Tale of a Mumbai Bar Dancer







India Now and in Transition



The book was launched by Bimal Jalan. Former Governor, Reserve Bank of India, at India International Centre, New Delhi. L to R: Atul K Thakur (author), with other dignitaries Dhruva Jaishankar, TSR Subramanian, Bimal Jalan, Wajahat Habibullah, Pallavi Rebbapragada, Omair Ahmad



Niyogi Books is, once again, participating in the Frankfurt Book Fair (Stand No. A 125, Hall No. 6.0) where we will showcase our vast and varied titles.

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AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



Saakshi by SL Bhyrappa and If You Can Walk, You Can Dance by Marion Molteno have featured in the long list (Best Fiction, English) for the Atta Galatta, Bangalore Lit Fest Book Prize 2017. The winners will be awarded in a special ceremony to be held at the Bangalore Literature Festival 2017, on 28 and 29 October.

Imprints of Culture: Block Printed Textiles of India by Eiluned Edwards, has been nominated for the Textile Society of America's 2015 RL Shep Award. The purpose of this award is to encourage the study and understanding of textile traditions by recognising and rewarding exceptional scholarship.

Cheat it All by Vedant Bahri and Belief by Mrinalini Mitra have made it to the long list of the Young Author Awards, Dubai. In addition, Mrinalini has received the Davis Peace Award in the USA. It is a \$10,000 grant, which she plans to use for the implementation of her project, 'Savera'.

During which Indian festival was the performing arts tradition of songs, narration, recital and dialogue described by UNESCO as part of the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' in 2008?

The festival of Durga Puja celebrates the victory of the Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura. She is, therefore, known as Mahishasura Mardini. According to legend, which Indian city gets its name from this version of Durga?

The day of which Hindu festival is also celebrated by Sikhs as Bandi Chhor Divas (the day that Guru Hargobind freed himself from imprisonment by Jehangir) and by Jains as the day Lord Mahavira attained nirvana?

Which mythological character was considered so pious and worthy that Indra became jealous of him and, when he asked a boon from Lord Brahma, Indra requested Goddess Saraswati to tie his tongue so that instead of asking for Indraasana (seat of Indra), he asked for Nidraasana (bed for sleeping)?

Answers will be featured in the next issue of Reading Corner. The winners will be declared on 31 December.