

Prabha

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle

प्रभा



January 2020 | Issue 10

Dive into the world of books on musicians as authors string melodies in words to bring their music to life

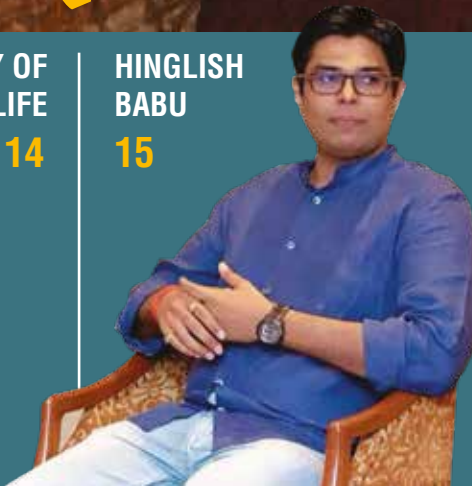
Music in Words

पंडित जसराज
कलम
कार्यक्रम में

INSIDE



POETRY OF
LIFE
14



HINGLISH
BABU
15



ROMANCE IS
WRITE
13

INSIDE



Prabha
खैतान

MITHILA
STORIES
18

GAMECHANGER
LAUNCH
20

WINNING
WOMAN
26

A ROOM WITH A
VIEW
34

CAUSE OF THE
MONTH
38

CELEBRATING
JAIPUR
40

CAMBODIA
CALLING
42

Music, Memories and More

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" — Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Spring has definitely arrived, bringing with it renewed zeal and spirit, and the Foundation has been taking advantage of the same. It has been our constant endeavour to feature new writers and showcase new genres and narratives. And like spring, our bouquet of literary events also embodied the new — both in terms of essence and faces.

Music was the flavour of the season. We have been privileged to host some of the greatest luminaries from the world of music. Their stories unveiled the ordinary behind the extraordinary legends of timeless melodies. Sessions featured maestros of classical music, stalwarts of the Bollywood music industry, music queens who broke all stereotypes and more. While their stories awed us, their words humbled us. Hope you enjoy reading the extraordinary tales of some of the best of music.

Alongside putting together our regular events, we are busy gearing up for the **Ehsaas** Conclave. The mantra of the Conclave is 'Learning, Linking and Leadership.' **Ehsaas Women** from all over India and abroad will be coming together at the conclave to bond over ideas and experiences.

We are also carrying some amazing articles from our patrons and team. Do keep enriching us with your words and thoughts. They make the newsletter a much awaited fixture. You can mail your articles and ideas to us at newsletter@pkfoundation.org.

To know more about what's happening at the Foundation or for future updates, do follow us on Twitter or Instagram. Keep reading!



MANISHA JAIN
Communications & Branding Chief,
Prabha Khaitan Foundation

SNAPSHOT OF THE MONTH



▲ Dr. Prabha Khaitan's sketch was displayed in the exhibition at the Literature Festival, Jaipur, along with other writers

► **Ehsaas Women** of Udaipur Mumal Bhandari, Kanika Agarwal, Riddhima Doshi, Swati Agarwal, Shubh Singhvi with Sundeeep Bhutoria and K. Mohanchandran at Taj Lake Palace in Udaipur



Happy Birthday

PRABHA WISHES **EHSAAS** WOMEN BORN IN FEBRUARY



Garima Mithal



Garima Tiwari



Riddhima Doshi



Aradhana Pradhan



Karuna Goenka



Kanak Rekha Chauhan



Surekha Prahlad

क्यों ज़रूरी हैं संगीतमयी जीवनियाँ

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything." — Plato

In the cover story of this edition, we have focused on authors who have delved into the life and world of some of the stalwarts of the Indian music scene. From throwback sessions with authors Namita Devidayal, Ina Puri and Yatindra Mishra, to January sessions with Sunita Budhiraja, who has written on Pandit Jasraj, and Vikas Kumar Jha, who has written on Usha Uthup, they give you a glimpse into people behind the magic of the music.

Writer, translator and filmmaker **Anu Singh Chaudhury**, who is a regular guest at the Foundation's sessions, has penned a special piece putting into words the importance of musical biographies.

जुलाई का महीना था और उस रोज़ मुसलसल बारिशें थमती ही न थीं। मुंबई की बारिश के बारे में मैं यँ भी एक ये बात ज़रूर पके तौर पर कही जा सकती है कि उनके आने की तारीख मौसम विभाग बेशक़ मुकर्रर कर देता हो,



जाने की तारीखों का पता नहीं होता। जब शहर पानी-पानी हो और निकलना मुश्किल तो दो ही साथी काम आते हैं — किताबें और संगीत। मेरे हाथ में उस वीकेंड जो किताब आई थी उसका साबका सीधे तौर पर संगीत से था। किताब थी यतीन्द्र मिश्र द्वारा सहेजी-संवारी-लिखी गई *अख्तरी: सोज और साज का अफसाना*। यतीन्द्र सोज और साज के अपने किस्म के इकलौते लेखक हैं जिनकी संगीत की संवेदनशील समझ और लेखनी की अद्भुत रवानगी उन विषयों और शख्सियतों को बेहद इंसानी और सरल बना देती है, जो आमतौर पर अकादमिक शोध के हिस्सा माने जाते हैं। *अख्तरी* भी ऐसी ही एक किताब थी जिसके लेखों ने यूँ बाँधा और डुबोया कि अगले दो-तीन दिन इंटरनेट पर उन गज़लों और गीतों को ढूँढ़-ढूँढ़कर सुनना लाजिमी हो गया जिन्हें मैंने कभी सुना ही नहीं था।

संगीतकारों की जीवनियाँ या आत्मकथाएँ यही करती हैं हमारे साथ। सुर के साधकों की निजी जिन्दगी और संघर्ष उनकी साधना को किस तरह प्रभावित करते हैं, उनके भीतर कौन-सा सोता बहता है जो संगीत के रूप में यूँ फूटता है कि सुधी श्रोताओं को बार-बार बहाता चला जाता है, एक कलाकार के बनने की प्रक्रिया क्या होती है — ये सारे तार जब जुड़ते हैं तब जाकर एक म्युजिकल बायोग्राफी बनती है। मुझे तो लगता है कि एक म्युजिकल बायोग्राफी लिखना कतई आसान काम नहीं। संगीत की समझ के साथ-साथ उस परिवेश की समझ, जिसमें एक कलाकार बनता-सँवरता है, सिर्फ और सिर्फ गानों की सूची से नहीं आ सकता। विकास कुमार झा लिखित *उल्लास की नाव* ऐसी ही एक किताब है जो सिर्फ उषा उथुप की जीवनी भर नहीं, हमारे देश के पॉप संगीत कल्चर का इतिहास भी है। कांजीवरम साडी, बड़ी-सी लाल बिंदी, भर हाथ चूड़ियाँ और बालों में गजरा लगाए बड़ी ठसक के साथ देश-विदेश के मंचों और स्टूडियोज को उल्लासित करनेवाली उषा उथुप की अपनी जिन्दगी की नाव संघर्ष, प्रहार और दुखों के किन हिचकोलों का सामना करती रही, ये सिर्फ और सिर्फ उनकी जीवनी से समझ में आता है।

ठीक इसी तरह नमिता देवीदयाल ने उस्ताद विलायत खान की शास्त्रीय संगीत को समर्पित अपनी किताब *द सिक्स्थ स्ट्रिंग ऑफ विलायत खान* में उस कलाकार की सितार के प्रति समर्पण को समझने की सफल कोशिश की है जिनकी उंगलियों में सितार को एक इंसानी आवाज़ में बदल देने का हुनर था। भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीत की दुनिया के कई ऐसे महान और नामचीन कलाकार हैं जिन्होंने अपने जीवनकाल में अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में ऐसे मुकाम हासिल किये जिसका दस्तावेजीकरण अगली पीढ़ी के संगीत साधकों और संगीतप्रेमी पाठकों के लिए बहुमूल्य थाती बन जाता है। नमिता देवीदयाल के लेखन में एक किस्म की संगीतमयी धारा के बहने की विनम्रता भी है, जो शायद गुरु-शिष्य परंपरा में रहकर संगीत सीखने के अपने निजी अनुभव से भी आता हो।

संगीतकारों की जीवनियाँ कितनी निजी हों, ये भी एक अहम सवाल है। लता मंगेशकर पर लिखी जीवनी *लता सुर-गाथा* के कुछ दिनों पहले यतीन्द्र मिश्र जी से एक निजी बातचीत में मैंने उनसे ये सवाल पूछा था। "निजता की एक गरिमा होती है। मेरा काम लता जी के करियर में गाए गए हजारों गीतों को समझना, उनकी बारीकियों को लिखना है", यतीन्द्र भाई का ये जवाब मेरे साथ टिका रह गया था। एक कलाकार को एक इंसान के तौर पर जानने की फुर्सत हो भी कैसे, और क्यों, जब उनकी साधना का अथाह सागर हमारे सामने उमड़ता-घुमड़ता हो! पंडित जसराज की अधिकृत जीवनी की लेखिका सुनीता बुद्धिराजा ने भी एक इंटरव्यू में ठीक यही बात कही थी। उनकी किताब किसी किस्म की सस्ती पब्लिसिटी की मोहताज नहीं है। निजता का उल्लंघन करती स्कैंडलभरी कहानियों की मियाद यूँ भी बहुत छोटी होती है।

संगीतकारों की जीवनियाँ और आत्मकथाएँ हमें थोड़ा सा संगीत के और करीब ले आती हैं, हमें थोड़ा-सा और बेहतर इंसान बनाती हैं, और थोड़ा सा ये भी जरूर याद दिलाती हैं कि संगीत सिर्फ मंच की चकाचौंध, तालियों की गड़गड़ाहट और मुरीदों की मोहब्बत ही नहीं है। कठिन साधना, अनुशासन, दैवीय हुनर और संवेदनशीलता भी है।

In the Abode of Music: An Evening With Pandit Jasraj



Pandit Jasraj

Mandarin, the banquet of Taj Bengal, became the heartland of melody in presence of Pandit Jasraj as he hooked the audience with anecdotes from his life and discussing his biography *Rasraj — Pandit Jasraj* at **Kalam** Kolkata. The virtuoso was in conversation with Sunita Budhiraja, his biographer. The welcome speech for the event was given by Arun Maheshwari of Vani Prakashan.

Pandit Jasraj, who has been part of sessions organised by the Foundation in multiple cities, regaled the Kolkata audience with tales of his early performing days, bashfully confessing about being a fan of Begum Akhtar, his musical journey that was lit up with the memories of Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan, his tutelage under his brother Pandit Maniram, and the words of appreciation he received from Pandit Omkarnath Thakur himself. He spoke of his connection with the city of Kolkata when as a newly-wedded young man, he had come to the city in 1949 with his bride Madhura Shantaram. He spoke of a city where people would sit for hours at end, sipping chai in the streetside



Vijay Burman

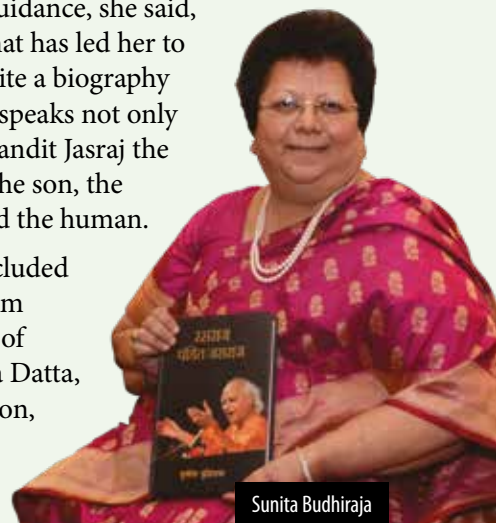


Arun Maheshwari

tea stalls for only an *anna*, just to listen to good music. He fondly remembered his days of performing *Mata Kalika*

with his brother Pandit Maniram on the tabla in the premises of the Kalighat temple and the camaraderie he shared with Pandit Vijay Barman and his wife Shimati Ravi Prabha, whom he would lovingly call 'Bebe'.
At Pandit Jasraj's bidding, Budhiraja read some extracts of the book that narrates the childhood of Pandit Jasraj. Talking about her seven-year-long literary journey to bring this biography into reality, she spoke about how the maestro and his wife were generous enough to share the stories of their lives and instilling upon her the correct usage of the appropriate titular etiquette for each performer. It was their guidance, she said, that has led her to write a biography that speaks not only about Pandit Jasraj the virtuoso but also Jasraj the son, the brother, the husband and the human.

The evening was concluded with a vote of thanks from Vikram Newar, director of Taaza Tv, while Sangeeta Datta, **Ehsaas** Woman of London, felicitated Pandit Jasraj and Sunita Budhiraja with Shola handicrafts.



Sunita Budhiraja



Sangeeta Datta



Esha Dutta

Kalam Kolkata is held in association with Taaza Tv and Ehsaas Women of Kolkata.

Story of an Evergreen Songstress

From singing jazz in a saree and bindi at a club in Bombay to getting a passionate audience jiving to 'Daaaaaaaarrrrring', Usha Uthup has been the voice of generations for almost five decades. And after two decades of hounding the evergreen songstress, author-journalist Vikas Kumar Jha achieved his fan moment when Usha Uthup, or Didi, as she is fondly known as in Kolkata, agreed to have her biography scribed by him. And thus was born *Ullas Ki Nao*, the biography of the matriarch of Indian Pop, a book that shows her in multiple facets — as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and as a friend.

The author and his muse were in conversation at **Kalam** Kolkata with **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, Nilisha Agarwal. The duo and their moderator were welcomed by a speech from Taaza Tv director Vikram Newar.

At the event, Jha, who apart from being a journalist is an accomplished poet and playwright of two famous Maithili plays, revealed how the three most admirable traits of the songstress — her promptness, her dedication to give her best to any task, and most of all, her magnanimity of letting things go without holding a grudge — were perhaps inculcated into his personality as he went about writing her biography.



Usha Uthup



Vikas Kumar Jha



Vikram Newar



Nilisha Agarwal

Moreover, Usha Uthup herself was bursting with praises for her biographer, and holds it dear to heart that he chose to write her biography in Hindi, an act which she hopes would break away the linguistic boundaries set upon regional artists who sing in English and convey the message that her inspiration has always been her audience.

The thanksgiving note for the closing ceremony was given by Esha Dutta, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata. Sangeeta Datta, **Ehsaas** Woman of London, felicitated Jha and Uthup.

Kalam Kolkata is held in association with Taaza Tv and Ehsaas Women of Kolkata.

Melody Stringed in Words



Namita Devidayal and Priti Patel

The beauty of art is that it can present itself in many a facet — be it in the form of words or in the melody produced from the vibrating strings of an instrument. The two came together to tell the story of sitar maestro Vilayat Khan in the unauthorised biography *The Sixth String of Vilayat Khan*, penned by Kolkata-born journalist and author, Namita Devidayal.

Prabha Khaitan Foundation had hosted the author at two sessions — **An Author's Afternoon** at Kolkata and **The Write Circle** at Ahmedabad in the past year. The book itself has been given a human touch, where the author, through many observations, has succeeded in humanising the late maestro through his many interests, be it cooking or driving sports cars. The book also accounts the collaborations between Vilayat Khan and his brother Imrat Khan's *Sur Bahar* that would enchant many an audience. The session at Kolkata was

a confluence of music and lyrics where a minute-long masterpiece of Vilayat Khan was played, enthraling the audience, and the author hooked her listeners as she read out excerpts from the biography, chronicling the deep admiration the virtuoso held for the Hindu goddess Parvati. In **The Write Circle** session at Ahmedabad, the author was in conversation with scientist Shankar Jha talking about literature, science, spirituality and music.

The Sixth String of Vilayat Khan was launched at the Royal Opera House in Mumbai, along with a performance by the late maestro's son, Hidayat Khan. It is the third book by Devidayal, who has previously published critically acclaimed works like *The Music Room* (winner of the 2008 Vodafone Crossword Popular Book Award) and *Aftertaste*.

Music and the Man



Ina Puri

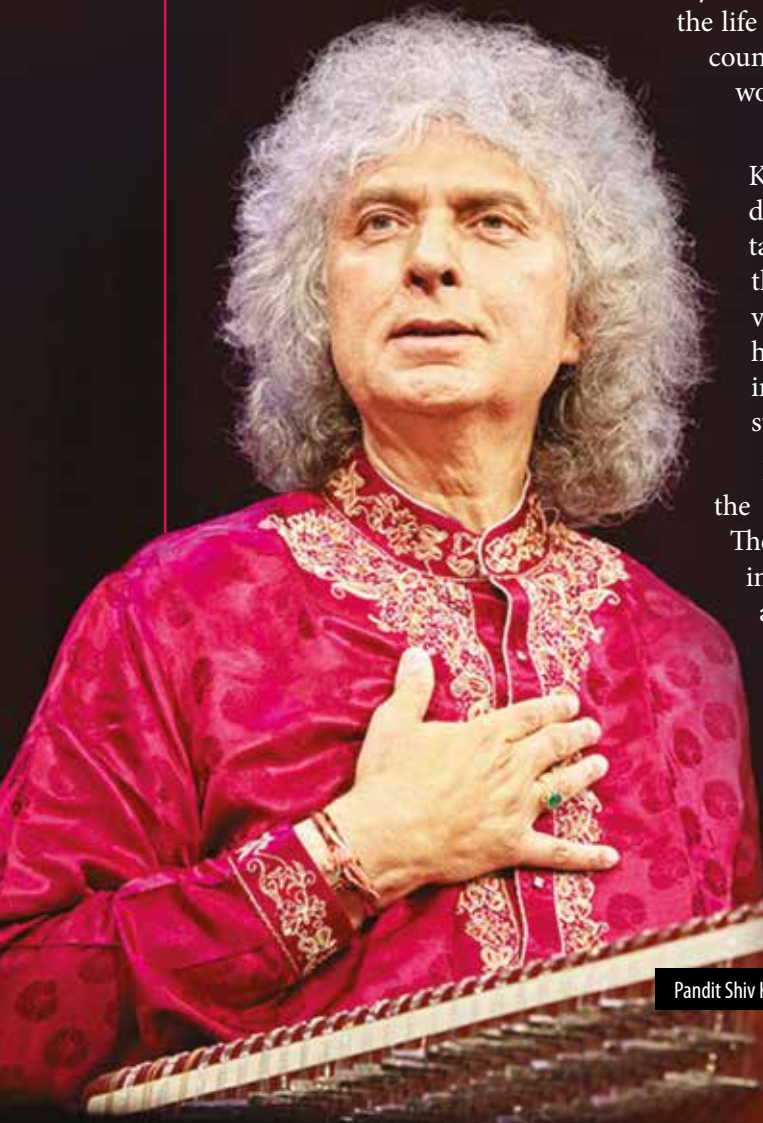
The Write Circle in Jaipur a few years back had hosted *santoor* maestro, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, and the editor of his biography, Ina Puri. The book, *Shiv Kumar Sharma: The Man & His Music*, takes the reader on a journey that goes back in time to when Sharma first started out as a child learning the rudiments of Indian classical music under the guidance of his guru and father, Uma Dutt Sharma.

The story, told through fascinating text and rare photographs, traces the life of a young boy who dared to dream that he would be counted among the greatest musicians of the country, who would one day receive the Padma Vibhushan.

Ina Puri drew upon her own association with Shiv Kumar Sharma and engaged him in an animated dialogue that touched upon his life and music. She talked to him about the highs and lows of his career and the deep faith that always guided him. In his soft, lyrical voice, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma recollected tales from his 60-year-long musical journey. He talked about his initial days in Jammu, his struggle in Mumbai and his stint with Hindi cinema as a music director.

Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma has single-handedly made the *santoor* a popular instrument in India and abroad. The journey, however, was far from easy. He shared an incident from his life, "In 1960, I was offered a job as a music producer in Radio Jammu, which my father wanted me to take up as a financial security. But I could never imagine myself doing a nine-to-five job, even though it was connected with music. I wanted to experiment as a freelance musician and landed at Mumbai's crowded Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus.

I took a *tonga* and made my way to the Kashmir Hotel, since that was the only one I could afford. Had I not taken that decision, I don't know what would have happened to me."



Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma

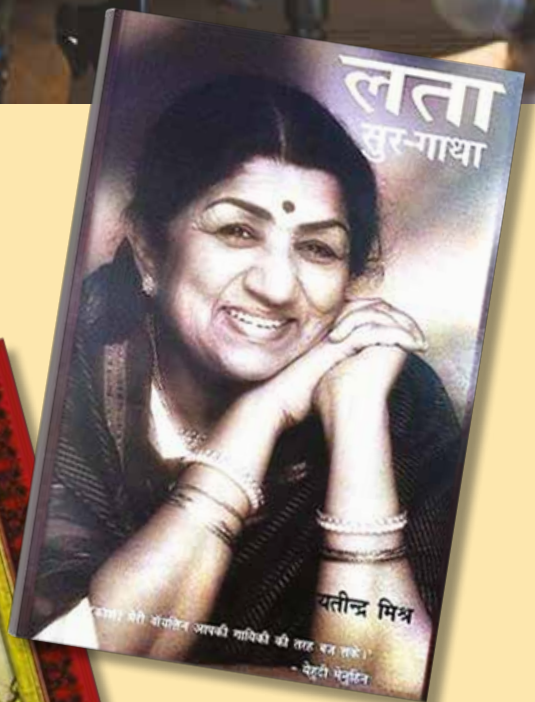
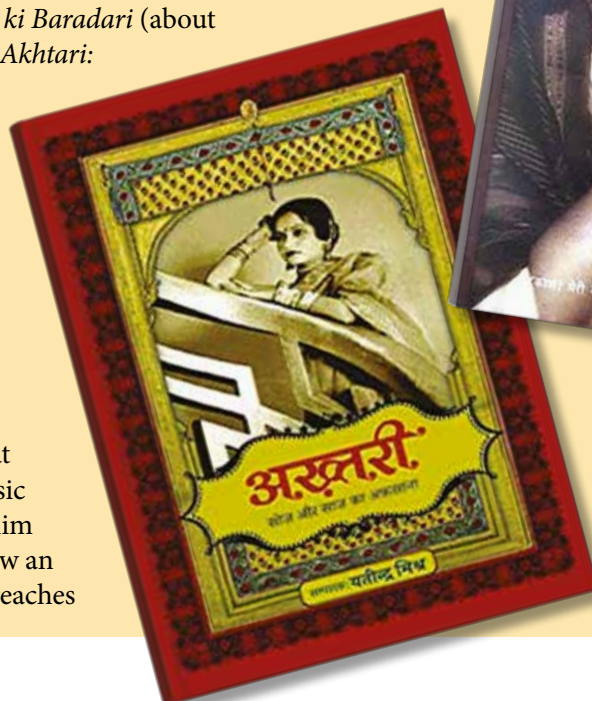
A Century of Song



Yatindra Mishra

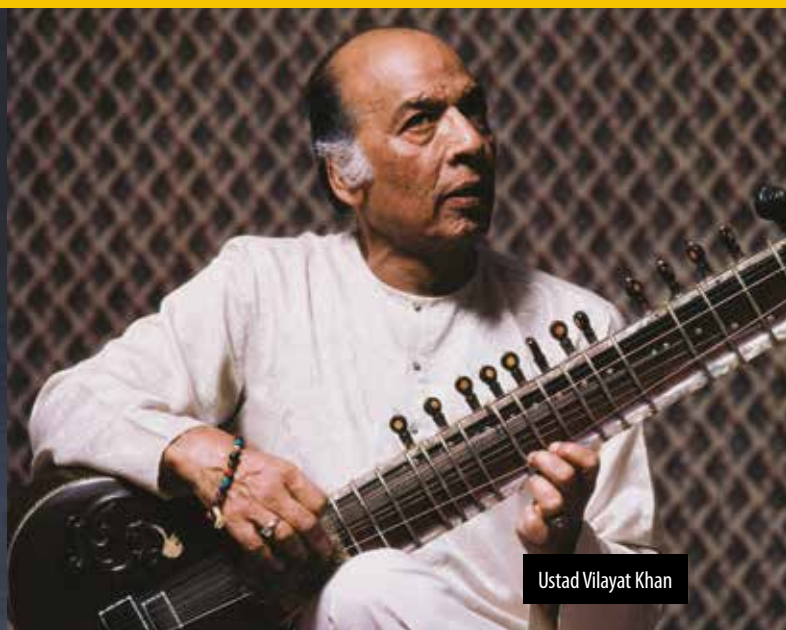
Writer-poet Yatindra Mishra is known for his biographies and novels about celebrated Indian musicians. He has authored books like *Girija: A Journey Through Thumri* (about the life and works of *thumri* singer Girija Devi), *Lata: Sur Gatha* (on Lata Mangeshkar, for which he won the Swarna Kamal Award at the 64th National Film Awards in 2017), *Sur ki Baradari* (about *shehnai* maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan), *Akhtari: Soz Aur Saaz Ka Afsana* (about the Queen of Ghazals, Begum Akhtar) and *Humsafar*, which traces one hundred years of music in Hindi cinema.

Mishra has attended many boutique literary events in multiple cities over the years. At the **Kalam** sessions, Mishra spoke about how he chose to write about the creative arts and artists despite his background in microbiology. He said that his family had given him his love for music and literature, and this made it easy for him to start writing about it. He described how an author stays immersed in ideas until he reaches





Lata Mangeshkar



Ustad Vilayat Khan

Sourendro Mullick, Yatindra Mishra and Soumyojit Das
at An Author's Afternoon session in Kolkata

a destination from where the vast horizon of his writing begins to emerge.

He also revealed that he was planning to write a book about Oscar-winning Indian filmmaker, lyricist and poet, Gulzar.

In a conversation with musician duo Soumyojit Das and Sourendro Mullick during **An Author's Afternoon** in Kolkata, the writer spoke about one of his favourite topics, the evolution of language and music in Bollywood. When Soumyojit told him of the change in the language of Bollywood over the last century, and that today a Bollywood song would sound like an American song which means it has become global, Mishra argued the point by saying that Bollywood got foreign acclaim even

in its earlier days.

He quoted instances such as Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* winning an award at Cannes, the *Apu Trilogy* establishing Satyajit Ray worldwide and Lata Mangeshkar singing for the first time at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1974. Mishra also explained why there is a global perception of Bollywood today, "At present we have become very technical, our technology has advanced and we are living in an era of information technology and everything seems to have come to our neighbourhood from around the world. Today people talk about Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Katrina Kaif. In the early '60s, people used to talk about Madhubala. If Madhubala or K. L. Saigal were alive, they would have become global."

Writing and the Water Crisis

In order to recover from the water crisis, everyone will have to come forward together," said author Ratneshwar Singh at the **Kalam** Nagpur event held at Radisson Blu Hotel. He was in conversation with **Ehsaas** Woman of Nagpur, Jyoti Kapoor, about the processes of researching and writing, the real dangers of environmental crisis and his future plans.

He said that, for him, writing is an out-of-body experience and an intensely meditative process. He performed penance in the jungle where he achieved spiritual enlightenment and awakening. He described how he had to go through seven levels of research for his latest novel *Ek Ladki Paani Paani*. Singh read a vast amount of literature, from the *Puranas* to Stephen Hawking's writings. He also visited several girls' hostels across Delhi to gather information on the hostel life and culture.

He educated the audience on the importance of water management and warned that in around 15 years, we will be heading towards extreme water scarcity. He stated that



Jyoti Kapoor



Ratneshwar Singh



Priyanka Kothari



Monica Bhagwagar



Parveen Tuli



Manoj Bali



Rajesh Sonkusare

we are as unprepared for this coming period as India was during the Maharashtra Drought in 1972 that affected 2.5 crore people.

The conversation ended with an interactive and informative question-and-answer session with the audience, during which the author talked about his plans for his next novel. He wants to base it on the concept of 'Panchtatva' and the 32,000-year-old world it comes from. The novel will embody the culture, dialect, food and life of that time.

Kalam Nagpur is held in association with Lokmat, Radisson Blu Hotel Nagpur and Ehsaas Women of Nagpur.



Women and the Earth



Anushakti Singh

If a book can transcend time then it is meaningful," said writer Ratneshwar Singh while discussing his recent book *Ek Ladki Paani Paani* at the **Kalam** Gurugram. During the conversation with Anushakti Singh, he said that the research work for writing this book began in 2004. Since then, he started collecting books written about rivers and water. But the scientific and factual knowledge of water was not enough to write a novel. For this, he read many books on scriptures and chemistry.

The novel imagines a future in which the water crisis looms large, something that is not entirely impossible with the fast depleting resources today. He related the many experiences he had during his research period for the book. He elaborated on the writing process and the importance of living among people that you write about. He said that the novel *Ek Ladki Paani Paani* came out of 14 years of research.

He explained his reason for making the main character of the novel a Scheduled-Caste girl. The deep connection that these communities have with nature and the earth make them the perfect choice for a novel like this. Singh also said that for hundreds of years of tradition, women have given beautiful colours to this world. Women started creation and they can save this world from being destroyed. Thus, when he made up his mind to write a novel about water, he wanted a female protagonist.

Kalam Gurugram is held in association with Dainik Jagran, Andaz Delhi Aerocity, Vani Foundation and Ehsaas Women of NCR.



Bhagwandas Morwal



Shweta Aggarwal



Irshad Kamil On Life Lessons and Poetry



Irshad Kamil

You should always draw inspiration from within yourself," said writer and lyricist, Irshad Kamil, at the **Kalam** Hyderabad session held at the ITC Kohenur hotel. It was an evening of poetry, humour and literature as Kamil treated the audience to snippets of his *shayari* and songs as he spoke about his literary journey. He was in conversation with **Ehsaas**

Woman of Hyderabad, Vinita Surana.

Kamil inspired the audience with his words of

wisdom. He said that one must always compete with oneself, so that they can strive to be better and better each day. He believes that every person lives two lives. A person's second life begins when they realise that they have only one life.

Kamil's message for new writers was that it takes a lot of reading to do a little bit of good writing and that they must never compromise on reality in their writing. Talking about his own literary journey, Kamil said that it began when he used to listen to music on the radio and write a few lines in his diary, despite not knowing the meaning of some of the words. He admitted that he still prefers the relationship of pen and paper over writing on a cellphone or a computer.

In answer to questions from the audience, Kamil said that, whether it was film or an independent writing, it was essential to stay true to yourself. He also spoke about how he wrote Hindi in Devanagari which led to it gaining priority over the Roman script in Mumbai. The conversation was followed by a book signing session.



Vinita Surana



Tejinder Singh



Abhinav Singh



Kalam Hyderabad is held in association with ITC Kohenur and Ehsaas Women of Hyderabad.



Changing the Way Hindi Literature is Read and Heard

In early January, **Kalam** Mumbai hosted the man who is credited as the first person to write in 'Hinglish' — author, poet and screenplay writer Divya Prakash Dubey, who was in conversation with Karishma Mehta at ITC Grand Central.

With a bureaucrat as a father, much of Dubey's childhood was spent shifting from place to place and experiencing various cities. The audience was captivated by the easy manner in which Dubey weaved the events from his childhood into a tale. He described how despite belonging to a high profile bureaucratic background, he was never allowed to flaunt or misuse the perks that came with the territory, which explains his humble and unpretentious disposition. He shared his experience of arriving in Lucknow from a small-town background and spoke about how he was sometimes at a disadvantage. He spiced up the conversation with tales of his failed romance, the charm of blank calls and stories of being rejected 40 times by various publishing houses.

His books, *Musafir Café* and *October Junction*, have appealed to a cross-section of age groups due to his simple yet profound approach. He disclosed that the protagonist in *Musafir Café* reflects all that Dubey himself desired to do or be, but never had the courage to pursue. The café represents the utopia that everyone wants to experience at some point or the other.

Finally, Dubey spoke about his new style of storytelling called *StoryBaazi*, which has appealed to the masses because of its free-flowing intimate style and language. He said that this style is meant to change the very way we listen to and understand Hindi stories. The author was felicitated by **Ehsaas Women** Ketki Bhatia and Anvi Thaker.

Kalam Mumbai is held in association with ITC Grand Central, Lokmat and Ehsaas Women of Mumbai.

 @Kalam_West

 @WestKalam



Writing for Pleasure

The fifth edition of Prabha Khaitan Foundation's **The Write Circle** Raipur was made memorable with the soulful words of author Sundari Venkatraman when she said, "I don't write to preach, I write to please," at the Hyatt Hotel, Raipur.

The event began with an introductory speech from **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur, Kalpana Chaudhary, with Harkaran Singh, General Manager, Hyatt, Raipur delivering the welcome address. The author was in conversation with **Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur, Aanchal Garcha.

At the session, Venkatraman urged the parents to encourage the habit of reading in their children from a young age. She is a firm believer of knowledge gained through fiction rather than just in the boundaries of a classroom. Talking about her novel *The Runaway Bridegroom*, she stepped down memory lane and spoke about her literary journey that began at the age of 40. Despite roadblocks

like rejections, dismissal of her writing and writer's blocks along the way, the author continues to pen her stories for her ever-growing audience, nationally and internationally. From a voracious reader to a popular writer of fiction, the wordsmith continues her literary voyage passionately.

Venkatraman was presented a memento by Shradha Thaiwat, IAS Chhattisgarh on behalf of the **Ehsaas** Women of Raipur.

The Write Circle Raipur is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Hyatt Raipur and Ehsaas Women of Raipur.



Sundari Venkatraman



Shrishti Trivedi

Kalpana
Chaudhary

Kirti Kirdatt

Aanchal Garcha



Harkaran Singh

Gaurav Girija
Shukla

In the Heart of Romance

When you keep writing, it keeps flowing", author Sundari Venkatraman quoted the words of Anjum Rajamauli, as she went down memory lane to trace her literary career at **The Write Circle** Jaipur. The event, a celebration of the timelessness of romance and love in an age of Tinder and Bumble, was held at the ITC Rajputana.

The session began with an introductory address by Mita Kapoor, CEO of Siyahi, where she noted upon how romance can still bring a smile in an otherwise grim Indian reality. Venkatraman began her journey into the world of books as a voracious reader, a blogger, then a self-published writer, and now a published author of over 40 books with an ever-growing fan following internationally in the UK, Canada and Australia.

In conversation with Urvi Bhuwania, the author discussed how the perceptions of Indian society always duel with the ideas of romance. The interactions of two lovers take a backseat in the face of dramatic upheavals in a potboiler family drama, relegating romance from the



Neeru Saluja



Mita Kapoor

limelight. A forever fan of the Bollywood classic *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and the *Harry Potter* franchise, the author talked about her undying faith in romance and magic.



Urvi Bhuwania

Venkatraman is an example of how it is never too late to chase one's dreams. She began her literary career at the age of 40, writing her first novel in a span of 35 days and now has sold over 1.5 lakh copies of her novels around the world. Truth be told, neither a rejection letter nor the blatant dismissal of another towards her writing can stop Venkatraman from scribbling her tales that keep romance alive in an otherwise dreary world.

The Write Circle Jaipur is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with ITC Rajputana, Siyahi, Spagia Foundation and Ehsaas Women of Jaipur.



Tales from Mithila



Shivshankar Srinivas

The life of our society is our culture and we should write the story of this life," said Maithili litterateur Shivshankar Srinivas in the BIA auditorium at the **Aakhar** event in Patna. Srinivas was in conversation with well-known writer and critic Ashok.

Culture is a very broad term. Explained in simple terms, it is related to our lifestyle. During the session, Srinivas elaborated



Ashok



Aradhana Pradhan

not only on his literary journey but also on the changes in Maithili literature through the years and the evolution of civilization and culture that happened alongside.

He explained how song was central to life in Mithila and the surrounding areas where people used to sing songs while going about their daily routine. Thus, by watching people sing in the villages, Srinivas was inspired to start writing songs and poetry. In 1971, a story by Ashok, a fellow writer and storyteller, was published in *Mithila-Mihir*, which influenced Srinivas greatly. After this, his eagerness to write stories increased.

Srinivas highlighted the importance of anecdotes, pointing out that in Maithili literature many stories are anecdotal. He regards the 1960s as the era in which

Maithili fiction began to deepen. The stories became contemporary. Srinivas said, "More than stories one must read life." He emphasised the need to bring real life into the narrative. He suggested that new storytellers should focus more on the story than on the environment.

Aakhar Patna is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Masi Inc.

@aakhar_east

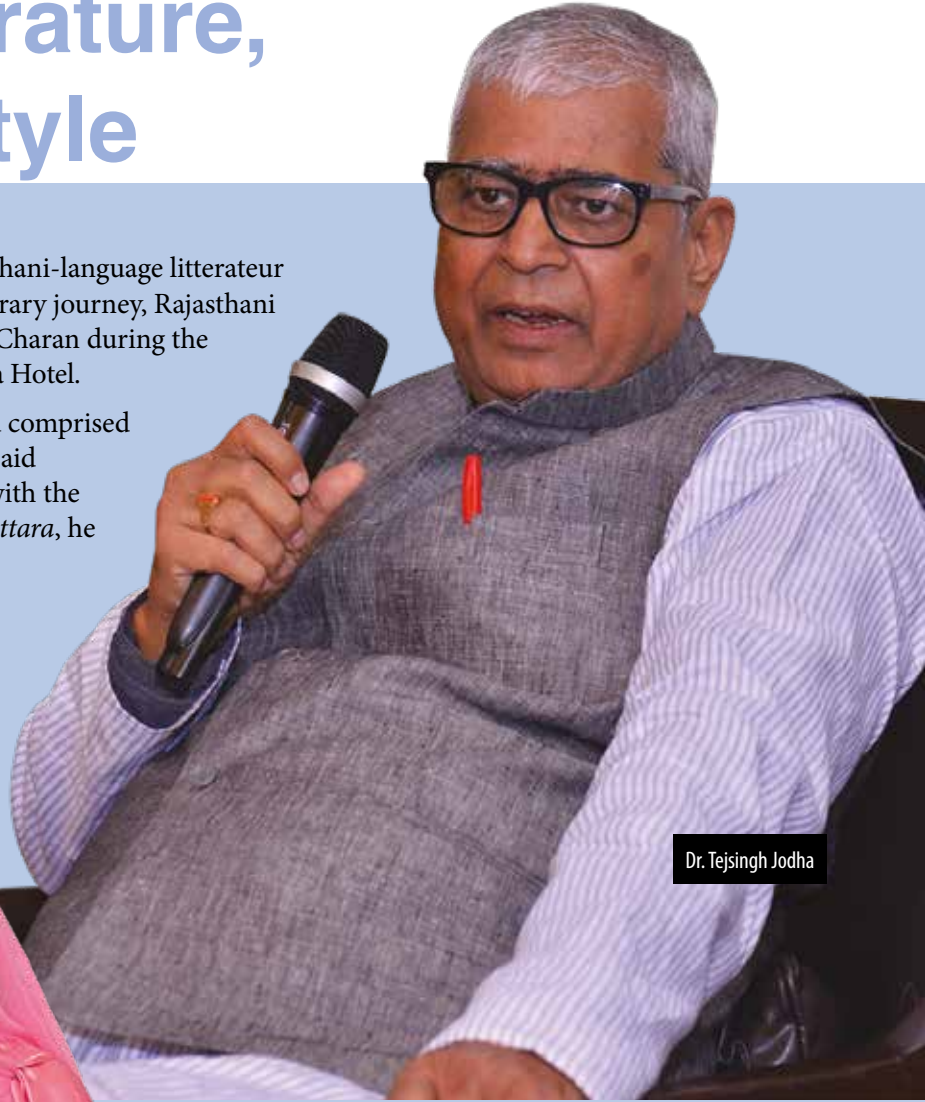


Love for Literature, Rajasthani-style

No writer writes to get an award," said Rajasthani-language litterateur Dr. Tej Singh Jodha, as he discussed his literary journey, Rajasthani poetry and writing in general with Dr. Gajadan Charan during the Aakhar Jaipur session held at the ITC Rajputana Hotel.

Dr. Jodha's first book was written in 1970 and comprised verses in memory of his grandfather. Dr. Jodha said that Rajasthani poems have a deep connection with the Revolt of 1857. While reading from *Swatantrayottara*, he mentioned that it is based on freedom fighters.

Dr. Jodha is known for his use of free verse in his work. Talking about his literary journey, Dr. Jodha said that his grandfather and father were school teachers. His father used to write poems for the cultural programmes in the school. This proved to be Dr. Jodha's first childhood inspiration. He also spoke about his admiration for the work of Harivansh Rai Bachchan, whose poems he used to narrate.



Dr. Tejsingh Jodha



Saroj Bithu



Dr. Gajadan Charan



Pramod Sharma

He was extremely passionate about the need for the Rajasthani language, with its different dialects, to be recognised and kept alive. He explained how Rajasthan was divided into princely states before Independence, something that became the cause for the lack of awareness about the language that continues even today. He expressed the need for political parties to come forward and help in the preservation of the language. The author also treated the audience by reading some of his poetry.

Aakhar Jaipur is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with ITC Rajputana and Grassroot Media Foundation

The Game-changer at Kitaab Jaipur

Vir Sanghvi, one of the best-known faces in Indian journalism, launched his new book, *The Gamechangers: Transforming India*, at Kitaab Jaipur at the Rambagh Palace with an engaging conversation with Apra Kuchhal, who read out excerpts from his book at the launch.

The book chronicles the success stories of ten eminent personalities in their respective fields, including Shashi Tharoor, Asma Khan, Karan Johar, Nandan Nilekani, Sameer Sain, Vijay Sekhar Sharma and Arnab Goswami, to name a few.

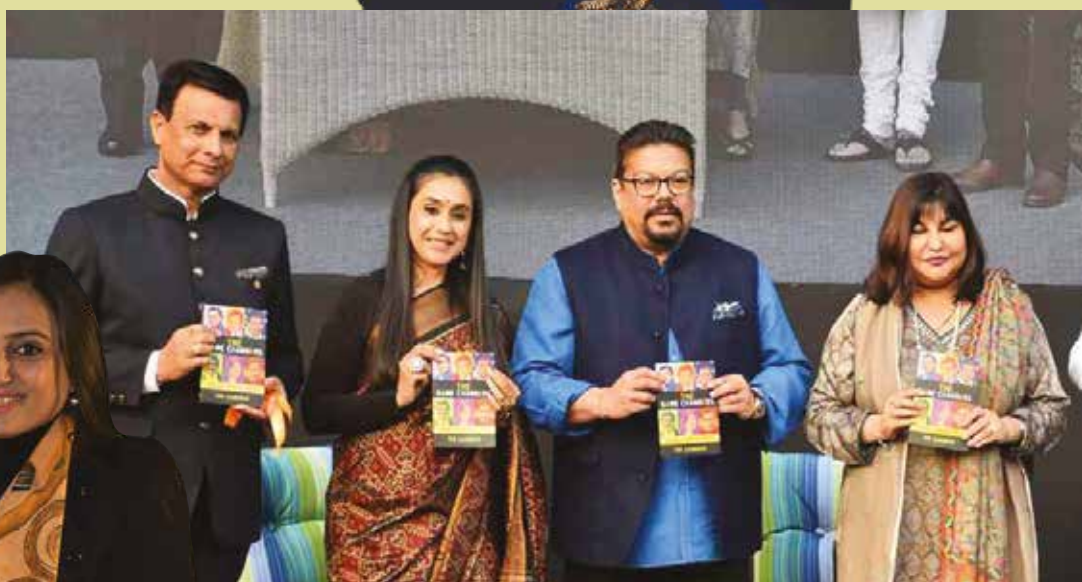
"I think India has changed and the change is irreversible. People from middle-class families are creating success stories and the existing business class is not necessarily dominant now. This book is based on those people and the impact they have made," said Sanghvi, who has penned many books, including *Men of Steel*, *Rude Food*, *Madhavrao Scindia* and *A Life and Mandate: Will of the People*. Indeed, as the title of the book suggests, *The Gamechangers* explores the multiple dimensions of a dynamic country in transformation.

Sanghvi became the youngest editor in the history of Indian journalism when he was appointed to that post in the *Bombay* magazine at the young age of 22 and has left an imprint on various spheres of journalism, including print, television, books and new media.

The Gamechangers: Transforming India was released by Sudhir Mathur, Seema Goswami and Taj Rambagh Palace General Manager Ashok Rathore.



Vir Sanghvi



Ashoke Rathore, Apra Kuchhal, Vir Sanghvi, Seema Goswami



Vinnie Kakkar

The Kitaab Jaipur Book Launch was presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with We Care, Raghu Sinha Mala Mathur Charity Trust and Rambagh Palace

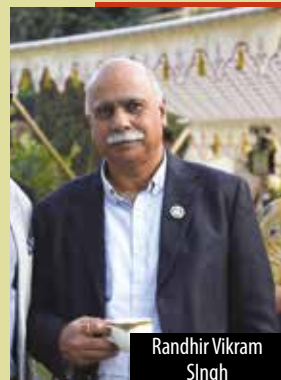
**Guests at the Kitaab book launch mingle
over high tea at the Rambagh Palace**



Raj Bansal



Rohit Kamra



Randhir Vikram
Singh



Deepa Mathur



Neeru Saluja, Nirmala
and Ruchi Durlabhji



Nisha Singh and
Sunita Shekhawat



Nisha Singh, Seema Goswami, Sudhir Mathur,
Devraj Singh and Hemant Ambwani



Minal Jain



Minul Roy



Narendra Singh, Khalid Khan, Gyula Jakabffy

City of Stories

The second edition of *Arth — A Culture Fest*, held at Raajkutir, Swabhumi, saw two special sessions of **Kalam**. The fest is an attempt to rediscover, reconnect with and revisit India through art, culture, literature, politics and society.



On **Day Two**, the Foundation hosted *India: Land of Stories and Story Tellers*, with Kunal Basu, Suman Ghosh and Sharmistha Gooptu. The panel was moderated by Ujjwal Chowdhury. The speakers shared how they were inspired by the several nuances that lie under the veil of metropolitan culture. During the lively conversation, Gooptu brought up the issue of how much creative liberty a filmmaker should exercise when creating a period drama. Basu spoke about his encounter with filmmaker Aparna Sen, when his book, *The Japanese Wife*, inspired her to create a movie, and he shared how he had originally been compelled to write the book by a real-life instance.



Sujoy Prasad Chatterjee, Supriya Newar,
Bickram Ghosh, Pradeep Sarkar and Kunal Basu

On **Day One** the Foundation hosted a panel discussion on *The City as a Muse: Kolkata in Popular Culture*, with Kunal Basu, Bickram Ghosh, Pradeep Sarkar and Supriya Newar. The session was moderated by Sujoy Prasad Chatterjee. The panellists talked about their personal perceptions of the Kolkata. Ghosh recited his poem, *Roots*, and said "I have tried to leave Calcutta four times. But there's something about Calcutta." Newar's take on the city: "It's not love at first sight, you have to let it grow."



Ujjwal Chowdhury, Suman Ghosh,
Sharmistha Gooptu and Kunal Basu

Cultural Bonds

Across the Seas

The beginning of the decade saw the Prabha Khaitan Foundation entering into another collaboration. The Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding with Sampad South Asian Arts & Heritage, UK, which will allow them to host various literary, cultural and social activities jointly in Birmingham and the Midland regions. The association will not only promote Indian talents and artists but will also pave the way for cultural exchange ventures between the two nations.

Sampad South Asian Arts & Heritage, based out of Birmingham, UK, is currently in its 30th year of operations. Sampad connects people



Piali Ray and Anindita Chatterjee



Anindita Chatterjee, Debanjan Chakrabarti, Piali Ray, Tanusree Shankar, Esha Dutta and Sangeeta Datta

and communities with South Asian and British Asian arts and heritage.

"I am delighted that the agreement is happening here. The British Council has partnered with both these arts institutions in the past and we look forward to the programmes they will hold in the UK and India, further strengthening the contemporary cultural links between India and Britain," said Debanjan Chakrabarti, Director, British Council, East and Northeast India.

"It is a pleasure to start a new chapter in Birmingham, UK, with Sampad. We will work out the initiatives and activities and work together to promote art, culture and literature in the days ahead," said Anindita Chatterjee, Executive Trustee, Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

Piali Ray, Director of Sampad, were the signatories stated, "All our hearts and roots are here in Kolkata. The culture that has come out of here continues to grow and this is what makes my organisation Sampad richer."

Politics and the Writer



Anish Ankur



Anant Vijay



Tripurari Sharan

Anvita Pradhan

I write about the politics of culture," said Anant Vijay, associate editor of *Dainik Jagran*, during his conversation with cultural activist Anish Ankur at the **Kalam** Patna session held at Hotel Chanakya.

Anant's book *Marxvad Ka Ardhsatya* was published at a time when the Left parties had suffered a defeat in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Anant believes that there have almost been no books written about social issues for a very long time and that the intellectuals in society have stopped raising their voices.

He stated that the credibility of literary awards has been lost for many years and described how the culture of literature is influenced by politics. He stressed the need for authors to have their own views and to research the topics they choose to write about.

He also explained how religion should be understood: "Those who believe that religion is opium forget that religion also teaches people to live in dignity." He talked about his experience with Marxist ideology and how those associated with it have never written from the Indian viewpoint. He concluded by saying that for him, the Indian constitution is above any religious book.

Kalam Patna is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Dainik Jagran, Hotel Chanakya and Navras School of Performing Arts

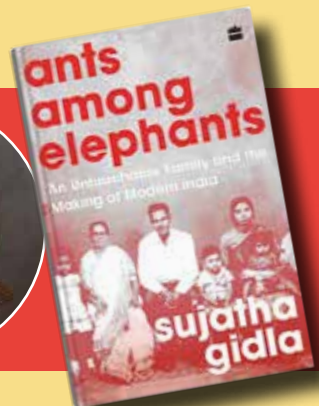
The Untethered Woman's Voice

The winner of the Prabha Khaitan Woman's Voice Award (PKWVA) 2020, *Ants Among Elephants* by Sujata Gidla, was announced at the 11th edition of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) at Allen Park, Kolkata. It was done after meticulous inspection of the literary works of the shortlisted nominees by a jury including Saikat Majumdar (writer, academician), Arshia Sattar (writer), Anita Agnihotri (writer, civil servant) and Anjum Katyal (writer, editor, translator and co-director, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival).

Prabha Khaitan Woman's Voice Award strives to highlight literary works of excellence by women writers. This year's focus was on biographies and memoirs by women that document tales of survival against domestic violence, rape, acid attacks, caste discrimination and other social evils, while celebrating the spirit of liberty and courage. Manisha Jain, the Branding and Communication Chief of Prabha Khaitan Foundation, gave the



Sujata Gidla



welcome address, elaborating on how the Foundation has taken up multiple projects to promote women empowerment.

The task of choosing the winner began in November 2019, when the longlist was announced at the Oxford Bookstore. The shortlist, which included *Good Talk* by Mira Jacob, *No Nation for Women* by Priyanka Dubey, *Ants Among Elephants* by Sujata Gidla, *Born With Wings* by Daisy Khan, *The Shooting Star* by Shiviya Nath and *Not Quite Not White* by Sharmila was announced in December 2019.

Manisha Jain



Anita Agnihotri and Shobhaa De

Shobhaa De, the chief guest for the event, announced Gidla as the winner of this year's award. The winning author was awarded a cheque of Rs 1 lakh as prize money. Talking about how awards acknowledging women in literature is the call of the hour, De talked about her experiences as a writer and her hopes on how the woman's voice in literature would redefine the century.

Ants Among Elephants is a poignant tale that documents the many struggles faced by the country's untouchables or Dalits as they battle for the preservation of their identities against social ostracism, poverty and discrimination. It succeeds in drawing attention to an enormous sphere of socio-cultural atrocities that are prevalent to this day.



Saikat Majumdar, Anjum Katyal and Shrutapa Paul

Celebrating the Woman's Voice



Friso Maecker and
Oindrilla Dutt



Maina Bhagat and Anjum Katyal



Shobhaa De



Bulbul Sharma and Vivaan Shah



Vikas Kumar Jha



Fabrice Plançon

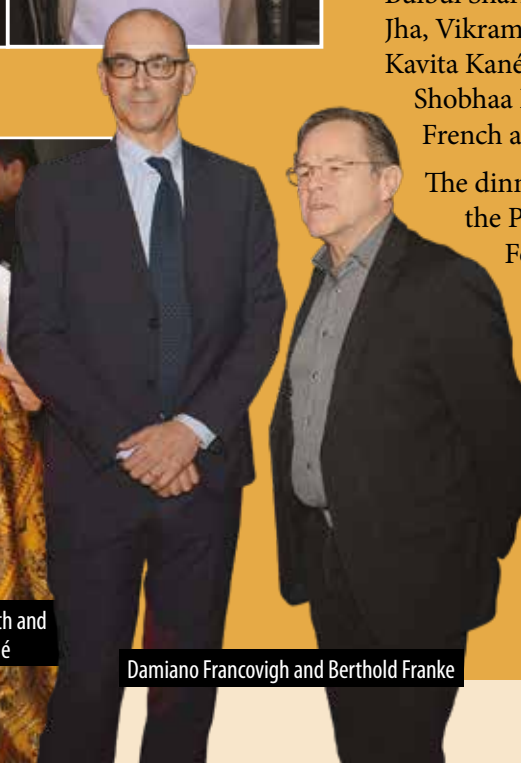
The announceent and presentation of the second Prabha Khaitan Woman's Voice Award (PKWVA) at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2020, was followed by a celebratory dinner with the authors from the AKLF, held at Hyatt Regency Kolkata. It saw many well-known faces in attendance, including diplomats Fabrice Plançon, Damiano Francovich, Friso Maecker, Berthold Franke and Vincenza Bufalo, authors Bulbul Sharma, Vikas Kumar Jha, Vikram Sampath and Kavita Kané, guest of honour Shobhaa De, and many French authors.

The dinner, hosted by the Prabha Khaitan Foundation, was a grand affair celebrating the collaboration between the Foundation and the AKLF and the power of women's writing.



Vincenza Bufalo

Vikram Sampath and
Kavita Kané



Damiano Francovich and Berthold Franke

A New Beginning

Prabha Khaitan Foundation celebrated the launch of its activities in Ahmedabad with a special celebratory dinner



Priyanshi Patel



Aditya Sevak



Nirav Shah



Shruti Kushwah, Geetika Saluja



Abhay Mangal



Pooja Dalal Dholakiya, Aashita Patel



Rajiv Dave



Shaneel Parekh, Neena Singh, Khurshid Razvi, Nisha Chandra, Chaula Doshi



Nimesh Vaghela, Mrugesh Mehta



Avani Desai, Niharika Shah, Anar Mehta

Partnership for Progress



Prabha Khaitan Foundation forged yet another landmark association with their collaboration with Karma Foundation, Ahmedabad.

As per the memorandum of understanding signed between Prabha Khaitan Foundation and Karma Foundation, both organisations will jointly host various socio-cultural activities, literary, cultural and performing arts in Ahmedabad. The aim is to uphold the rich heritage of Ahmedabad at the national and global arena.

Karma Foundation, represented by Priyanshi Patel, caters to community-focused events and projects covering literature, raising awareness about social issues, helping and supporting the underprivileged people and senior citizens. The welfare of youth is an important area for the Karma Foundation, which also works towards empowering young people with learning tools and life skills.

Cross Cultural Bonding Over Literature

Prabha Khaitan Foundation hosted a lunch at The Conclave for a team of delegates from Vietnam, including writers and poets who were visiting Kolkata to attend the Kolkata International Book Fair on the invitation of the Indo-Vietnam Solidarity Committee



Pravamayee Samantaray, Linh Nga Nie Kdam, Cathy Tongper, Vu Thi Minh Ngugyet, Shaneel Parekh, Di Li, Geetesh Sharma, Ha Van The, Nguyen The Duc, Arvind Kor



Di Li, Vu Thi Minh Nguget, Linh Nga Nie Kdam, Ha Van The, Nguyen The Duc, Pawan Jha

Eat, Pray, Love

Garima Mithal

Garima Mithal believes that her life is summed up with the quote, "A strong woman makes her own world." A successful entrepreneur, she established the most successful chain of cafes and bakeries in Meerut, The Cake Factory, with around 45 employees, including women. A spirited lady with a zest for life, she has won many hearts with her gastronomical delights over the years, and has been nominated for the HT Woman of Year award in 2016. Her association with Prabha Khaitan Foundation has been a blessing that has made our Meerut sessions (which are hosted by her) beloved to the bookworms of the city. A wife, a mother, a businesswoman — Mithal takes up each new role with a joyous disposition unique to her personality.

Anshu Mehra

A freelance dietician by profession, Anshu Mehra's story begins in Bengal, where she was born, then in Bihar, where she grew up, and then places her in Delhi, where she did her graduation and post-graduation in Dietetics Public Health and Nutrition. She shifted to Meerut after her marriage. Besides her principal vocation as a dietician, she is also a guest lecturer in colleges where she discusses nutrition and other related subjects. An avid lover of nature and animals, she dearly wishes to engage herself in rescuing strays and working for animals. A deeply spiritual personality, she practices reiki and energy circles.

Her motto of giving back to the society is realised through her tireless efforts in her NGO Gyanoday, which works for the upliftment and education of underprivileged children. Her association with the Foundation is only a year old, but filled with the thriving potential of meeting new people and reading new books, something which she looks forward to.

The Confluence of Cultures

The ambience in La Cucina in Hyatt Regency resonated with deep-seated camaraderie between the two countries of Poland and India as the guests for **Ek Mulakat** Kolkata listened keenly to the youngest foreign diplomat in India, Polish Ambassador Adam Burakowski.

The *mulakat* was borne into reality in memorium of the barbaric Auschwitz Holocaust, 75 years since the



Priyanka Kothari



Kumar Shobhan



Tiphaine Mayran


Jayabrato
Chatterjee

tragic incident. The ambassador was in conversation with director-editor-novelist and corporate communications expert Jayabrata Chatterjee.

The 43-year-old diplomat regaled the audience with tales of his college days when he backpacked across India around two decades ago, at a time when the country was bubbling with adventures and was affordable for a 20-year-old college student. He spoke of how he loved walking through the streets of India, soaking in the country's rich cultural heritage. Indian paintings attracted him a lot, as did Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, a literary work he described as having a universal appeal. Speaking on Indo-Polish ties, the ambassador spoke at length regarding the role of Maharaja Jam Saheb Digvijay Sinhji Jadeja in coming forward to help Polish refugees in their time of grave misery.

Bengali culture, according to Burawkowski, is very similar to Polish culture. They both bear the remnants of human animosity, natural calamities and foreign invasion.



Adam Burakowski

Ashok Jaiswal

And yet, both Bengal and Poland have risen above their times of crisis. The ambassador reinstated that the Jewish community is gradually reviving, just as Bengal did after the severe ramifications of the 1943 Famine and World War II. And for either culture, art in the form of music and cinema played a key role during the period of recuperation.



Gouri Basu

He pointed out how Polish locations were popular for Bollywood films such as *Fanaa* and *Kick*. He took pride in sharing that Arthur Żurawski, a Polish cinematographer, is now a popular name in the Hindi film industry, having worked on films like *Sultan*. He also disclosed that he has watched around 400 Bollywood films and that Amitabh Bachchan films of the 1970s remain his favourite. His personal favourite is *Amar Akbar Anthony*. The ambassador signed off the session with Tagore's *Ekla Cholo Re*, charming the audience.

Burakowski was felicitated by Ashok Jaiswal while the thanksgiving note was given by **Ehsaas** Woman Gouri Basu.

Ek Mulakat Kolkata is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Hyatt Regency Kolkata and Ehsaas Women of Kolkata.

ITC Mughal: Celebrating Heritage, Art and Culture

Nestled amidst the now-urban heart of Agra, the ITC Mughal stands proud as proof of the breathtaking royal Mughal splendour. Combining luscious gardens with the signature *darbari* open spaces of Mughal opulence, it is the worthy victor of the first Aga Khan Award for Architectural Excellence, making it the only winner in India till date.

Lush with the medieval charm of the city, it covers 23 acres of greenery that integrates both outer and inner spaces through landscaping and water bodies. The garden courts, named after Emperor Akbar's three wives, form regal passages connecting the *Durbar* lobby with the hotel rooms across three bridges. Resonating with the imperial tastes of many a great Mughal emperor, including Babur's love for gardens, Humayun's fine aesthetics in architecture and Akbar's cosmopolitanism through *durbars* and *maikhanas*, ITC Mughal strives to be the legacy of India's golden age of art.

With 233 rooms and suites, the Mughal Chambers and the Mughal Rooms, ITC Mughal promises its guests an unforgettable taste of royalty. Be it the Royal Mughal suites or the Grand Presidential suites, namely the Raja Man Singh suite and the Tan Sen suite, named after Akbar's illustrious adviser and his favourite singer respectively, the guests are promised an experience of a lifetime. And of course, talking about the Mughal taste shall never be complete without its culinary zest. Be it the Taj Bano with its sophisticated fine dining or the Peshawari with the rustic flavours of North-West Frontier cuisine, ITC Mughal celebrates the art of cooking.

For Prabha Khaitan Foundation, ITC Mughal holds a special place in our hearts as we get to call it our home for two of our significant sessions through the year — **Kalam** and **The Write Circle**. It is our pride to celebrate literature and the impact of the spoken word at ITC Mughal, a place that commemorates the grand heritage of the Mughal era in India.



General Manager Rajat Sethi



Akbar Mahal, the Lobby



Taj Bano, The Buffet Restaurant



Kaya Kalp, Lap Pool

Room With a View of All Things Lit



Room No. 111 in the front lawn of Diggi Palace during the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) in January, saw many known faces drop in for a quick chat. We bring you glimpses from the chit-chat with Prabha Khaitan Foundation.



Ann Cleeves



Saurabh Kakkar, Vinnie Kakkar



L.P. Pant



Kunal Basu



Anamika



Jagdeep Singh



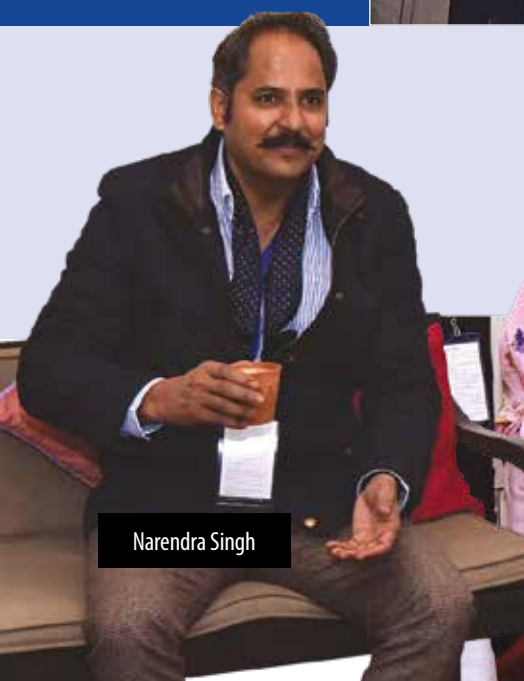
Malashri



Mohini Kent Noon



Esha Chatterjee



Narendra Singh



Rukshmani Kumari, Arvind Mayaram



Jayshree Periwal



Vani Tripathi Tikoo



Pramod Sharma



Shweta Aggarwal



Ashok Agarwal



Ritu



C. P. Dewal and Sudhir Mathur



Rajdeep Sardesai



Richa Shukla



Navin Choudhary



Preeti Gill



Ratna



Siddharth Sethia



Shashi Tharoor



Nand Bhardwaj



S N Agarwal

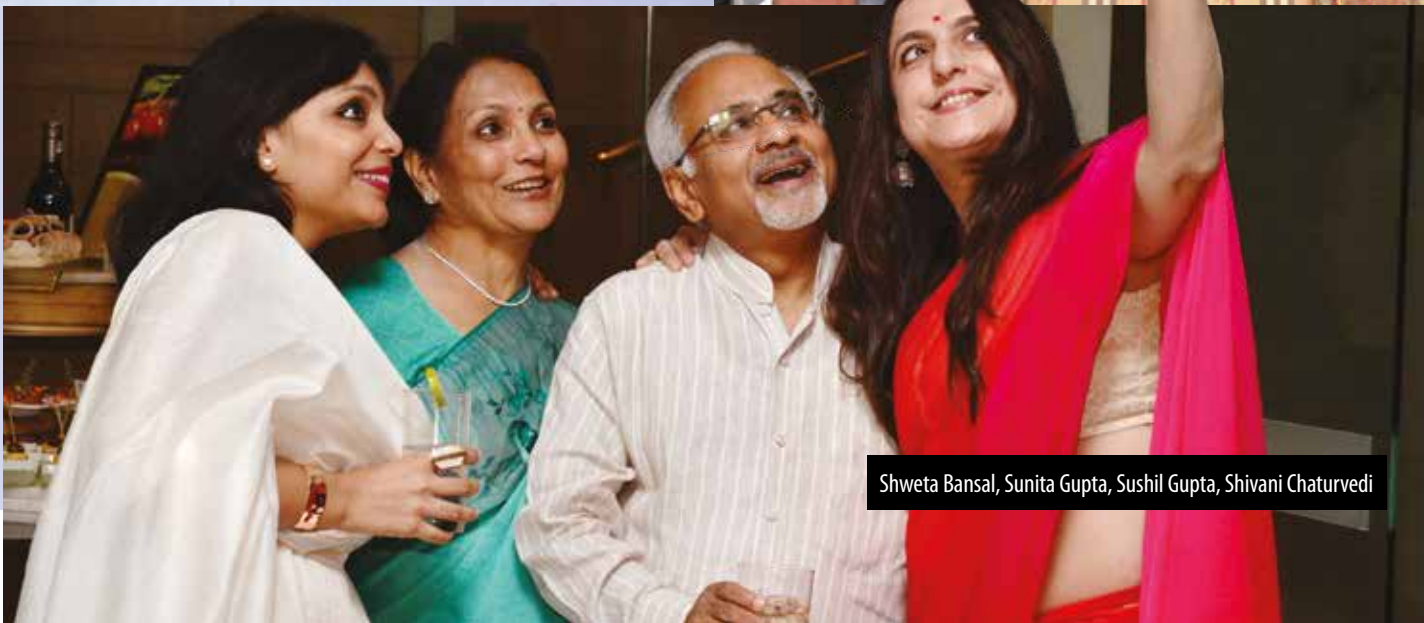


Sanjeev Paliwal



Anant Vijay

Special Moments From the Agra Launch of Prabha Khaitan Foundation





Pradumna Chaturvedi, Ranjini Chaturvedi, Sumita Chhibba

Ashutosh Chhibba and Pradeep Kapoor



Manish Bansal and Gulab Ladhani



Kunal Kuchhal, Apra Kuchhal and Hari Bansal



The Problem of Child Labour in India

In a country as diverse in her ambience as India, it is often a common sight to see the sightless eyes of a child of perhaps 8 or 10, scrupulously washing steel utensils by the streetside water pump. Such is its banal commonality that we, the citizens, have become normalised to its existence. And yet, every June 12, the world comes together with a mission to make itself a more nurturing home for our future generation, as it celebrates World Day Against Child Labour.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour in the following terms: "Child labour is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school or obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work".

The 2011 national census of India showed a decrease by 20% in child labour since the previous census in 2001, and yet, there are 10.13 million child labourers in the country between the ages of 5-14 years and 22.87 million adolescents between 15-18 years. By statistical ratio, 1 in every 11 children is a child labourer, while out of the ILO-calculated global 152 million working children, 23.8 million are found here in India. The top five states that form the largest markets for child labour are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (as per data given out by Save the

Children NGO), while NCT Delhi is responsible for a share of 1 million child labour alone. Furthermore, a recent analysis by CRY (Child Rights and You) in India shows an overall decrease of only 2.2% in the last decade.

Even more alarming than the statistical figures are the causes behind the sheer ubiquity of child labour in India. The largest percentage is found in the farming sectors where children under 14 years are being employed regularly. However, with the onset of widespread industrialisation and urbanisation, there has been a noticeable shift of increasing child labour into non-farming sectors like cotton factories, glass, brass, matchbox, lock-making, bidi-making and firework factories, silk manufacture, carpet weaving, domestic labour and mining and diamond industries. More petrifying is the harsh reality that child labour is the consequence of unbridled poverty and debt-bonded or forced labour, that often takes the young population into unethical sectors like underage prostitution and drug trafficking.

It is not that there is a lack of laws and their implementation in the world's largest democracy, with persecutions against child labour showing a steep rise across the states in the last five years. The Child Labour Prohibition Act 1986 bans the employment of children below the age of 14 in many professions, the Right to Education Act 2009 ensures all children between 6-14 years have the right to free and compulsory education and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 defines a 'child' as being below 18 years of age. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour and Employment functions to provide a range of policies

ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

concerning child labour in India while several NGOs like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, ChildFund, CARE India, Talaash Association, CRY, Global March Against Child Labour, GoodWeave, RIDE India, CHILDLINE India Foundation and UNICEF India work tirelessly to eradicate child labour in the country.

True, it is a sombre reality that concerns one and all; yet, there is always hope. Spreading awareness among the citizens is the first step to eradicate this gruesome phenomenon, and every small step forward counts, so that one day, every child shall get the opportunity to pick up a pen, and not a sickle, to write their own futures.

Celebrating the Pink City



India is laden with rich cultural heritage that is as dynamic as its geography and its people, whether it is in literature, art, sculpture, food or clothing.

Prabha Khaitan Foundation has always promoted local food and handicrafts at their events, and this time, we are celebrating the Pink City in all her colourful grandeur. Jaipur has always been special to us as it has been the home to many of our events.

The specialities of events at Jaipur includes Pyaaz Kachori, Ras Malai and Blue Pottery. One of the most popular streetside snacks of Rajasthan, Pyaaz Kachori is also popular in the neighboring states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, and also in Pakistan. Believed to have originated in Jodhpur, this delightfully crunchy ball that bursts with vibrant flavours comes with a filling of dal, spicy fried onions and stuffed potato while its outer crust is made from plain or whole wheat flour. Often served as a local snack, these savoury Kachoris are paired with a combination of *imli* (tamarind) or *saunth* chutney. When stuffed with *mewa*, *khoya* and dry fruits and dipped in sugar syrup, the savoury Kachori



transforms into a dessert. A beloved dish, it is often served at the Foundation's Jaipur sessions, beside a steaming cup of tea.

Regal and aesthetic, the eye-catching cobalt blue shades upon the white glaze of the background is what sets the signature undertones for the blue pottery of Jaipur. Blue Pottery was first developed by Mongol artisans who combined Chinese glazing with Persian art. With cultural contact between civilisations, the technique travelled east into India

through Turkey in the 14th century. After it floundered during the colonial regime, it was revived through the patronage of famous personalities like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Gayatri Devi who supported muralist-painter Kripal Singh Shekhawat.



Ras Malai

Depicting natural motifs like flowers, birds and animals, the palette itself is restricted to shades of blue, derived from chemicals of cobalt oxide and green from copper oxide. Sometimes, yellows and browns are included; however, no clay is used. The potter's dough is prepared from quartz stone powder, powdered glass, *multani mitti* (Fuller's earth), borax, gum and water. The ingredients have been replaced by porcelain in modern times. Thriving both nationally and internationally, blue pottery has harmonised its art into several mediums like urns, jars, trinkets, decorative boxes, doorknobs, rings, cups and saucers. The Foundation was proud to showcase the craft by presenting our guest speakers with blue pottery mementos.

A delicacy from the eastern side of the country, the Ras Malai is thought to have originated in West Bengal. However, this delicious dessert has integrated itself into Rajasthani cuisine over the years and is often found as a common sugary delight in several Marwari weddings. The mild sweetness, coupled with the light flavours, is



Blue Pottery



tinged with saffron, making it all the more tempting. *Ras* means sweetened syrup and *Malai* means cream. Spongy *chhana* balls are soaked in thickened milk syrup and then sprinkled with rose water and saffron. Angoori Ras Malai, a modern variation of the original classic, is made by shaping the *chhana* balls like grapes. A culinary pride of the Foundation's Jaipur literary sessions, it is served to all our guests, harbinging the confluence of two cultures — Jaipur and Kolkata.

DISCOVERING CAMBODIA

Ehsaas Woman of Amritsar Praneet Bubber writes about how history blends into the modern-day life of Cambodia



"When Angkorian society began, Paris and London were not much more than elaborate villages. Europe was crawling with barbarians, and here were the Khmer, engineering sophisticated irrigation systems and constructing the biggest temple in the world." — Kim Fay

Last year, I had the chance to visit Cambodia. Siem Reap is lazy, nostalgic, quaint and charming. It is all about sunrises and sunsets. Wake up at dawn to head to the Angkor Wat complex and wander around the ancient ruins, marvelling at how every photo you take is perfectly framed. Golden light falls spectacularly over the massive, welcoming stone faces of the 12th-century Bayon Temple. It is most well known as the gateway to Angkor Wat and the rest of the temples in this incredible, ancient complex. When we visited though,

ANGKOR WAT

Angkor Wat sits within the ancient Khmer city of Angkor Thom — which served as the capital of the Khmer empire for many hundreds of years and in translation means "Great City". The city is believed to have supported a population of 1,50,000 citizens. The largest religious building in the world, it is the sheer scale that takes you by surprise



Standing at a height of 200 metres from the ground to the highest peak, Angkor Wat is the architectural culmination of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. As you reach the temple, its complexity becomes more evident with magnificent towers and archways located around the winding paths that take you through the complex. The temple offers the most stunning examples of relief work. The entire *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are depicted along the gallery walls. A climb to the summit offers stunning views over the city and its waterways



KBAL SPEAN

Kbal Spean, is one of the earliest Hindu pilgrimage sites in Cambodia. It is a refreshing 2km up-hill trek through dense tropical jungle. What awaits you is the "River of 1000 Lingas" with its amazing stone carvings of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in the form of *lingas* carved into the river bed



TA PROHM

Famous for its role as a location for the shooting of the *Tomb Raider* films, this temple is known for the way trees have grown through its stonework over the ages



BAYON TEMPLE

The Bayon Temple is in the exact center of the ancient city of Angkor Thom. This 12th century masterpiece is a study in grandeur and well known for its 54 towers with enigmatic faces representing the 54 provinces of the Great Khmer Empire



NIGHT MARKET

Siem Reap's night market is a treat for the adventurous food-lover



Cambodia is a country where art is still very much a part of their cultural DNA and you can see it in everything, from the floral bands to the plating of food

we found out that there is so much more than this. In Siem Reap, you might try the one or two high-end restaurants (I would recommend Malis and Cuisine Wat Damnak) but what you will most remember is the traditional, tender Fish Amok and street food at the delightful night market.

In terms of cultural/architectural explorations, our trip also included visits to the temples of the Angkor Thom Complex — from Ta Prohm and its strange familiarity with the *Tomb Raider* films, to the Bayon Temple with its smiling faces. It's impossible to visit Siem Reap and miss these places. We enjoyed a sunrise over Angkor Wat itself and climbed the steep steps all the way to the top for the amazing views.

Aside from stories of the ancient world, Siem Reap abounds with the horrors of the Khmer Rouge. Wat Thmei stands as a memorial to this tragic event in human history.

Siem Reap is without a doubt one of the most exciting cities in South East Asia and we can't wait to go back.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Guest	Event
Aparna Jain	An Author's Afternoon Kolkata
Anshu Harsh	Kalam Raipur, Bilaspur
Sanjeev Paliwal	Kalam Faridabad
Nishant Jain	Kalam Meerut
Sunita Budhiraja & Pandit Jasraj	Kalam Jaipur, Kolkata
Shashi Tharoor	Kitaab Book Launch Kolkata
Geetanjali Shree	Kalam Nagpur
Ramakanth Rath	Aakhar Bhubaneswar
Amanthi Harris	The Write Circle Delhi
Dr. Sonal Mansingh	Unveiling of book rack in Jodhpur & Kolkata
Prakash Uday	Aakhar Patna
Prabhat Ranjan	Kalam Ranchi
Anamika	Kalam Patna
Lalit Kumar	Kalam Udaipur
Vishwas Patil	The Write Circle Bengaluru
Hrishikesh Sulabh	Kalam Lucknow
Jerome Armstrong	An Author's Afternoon Kolkata
Sundari Venkatraman	The Write Circle Ahmedabad
Kunal Basu	Kitaab Book Launch Kolkata
Desraj Kali	Aakhar Amritsar
Education For All & Spagia Foundation - Training Programme	Jaipur
Education For All & Bharat Relief Society Programme	Kolkata



Aparna Jain



Anshu Harsh



Sanjeev Paliwal



Nishant Jain



Sunita Budhiraja



Pandit Jasraj



Shashi Tharoor



Geetanjali Shree



Ramakanth Rath



Amanthi Harris



Dr. Sonal Mansingh



Prakash Uday



Prabhat Ranjan



Anamika



Lalit Kumar



Sundari Venkatraman



Kunal Basu



Desraj Kali



Vishwas Patil



Hrishikesh Sulabh



Jerome Armstrong

REACH US AT

Address: 1A Camac Court, 25B Camac Street, Kolkata - 700 016, West Bengal, India

The digital version of the newsletter is available at pkfoundation.org/newsletter

✉ newsletter@pkfoundation.org 📱 @FoundationPK 📺 @PrabhaKhaitanFoundation 📺 @prabhakhaitanfoundation

For private circulation only