

# Prabha

November 2019 | Issue 8

## प्रभा

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle



## A Meeting to Remember

Inside: 4-10

The Ehsaas Women of India attended a special meet-and-greet with **Smriti Irani**. We bring you moments from the evening.

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Prabha  
खैतान

## A Buzzing November full of treats

We are back with yet another captivating edition of the newsletter. The past month has been eventful in every sense of the word. The Foundation has curated and supported a kaleidoscope of events that ranged from literary sessions, theatre, debates, literary festivals and children's activities to celebrating cine successes and launches.

Ehsaas women from all over the country were part of an exclusive meet-and-greet with Union Cabinet Minister Smriti Irani in New Delhi, while in Kolkata we engaged in a war of words at the Calcutta Debating Circle's Annual Hindi Debate — Vaad Vivaad. The Foundation celebrated the silver innings of the Bengali movie *Mitin Mashi* and organised a special screening for *Ghawre Bairey Aaj*, yet another landmark cinema from movie maestro Aparna Sen.

The Foundation, in collaboration with Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival and Oxford Book Store, unveiled the long-list of the second edition Prabha Khaitan Women's Voice Award, an initiative to acknowledge women literary talent in the country.

We got involved with some theatre, too. Little did we know that a small piece of chalk could start such a roller coaster of activities till we witnessed the play *Chalk About* by the Scottish group Curious Seed during the Think Arts International Festival For Young Audience. The event was showcased by The Foundation under its vertical Education For All. We encouraged the young minds further with a sit-and-draw competition on Children's Day.

We are truly overwhelmed by all the appreciation that has been bestowed on the newsletter. What is even more encouraging is that participation of patrons has grown too. Do keep writing in. You can mail us at [newsletter@pkfoundation.org](mailto:newsletter@pkfoundation.org)



MANISHA JAIN  
Communications & Branding chief,  
Prabha Khaitan Foundation





## SNAPSHOT OF THE MONTH

Vikram Sampath with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His book, *Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past, 1883–1924*, was launched in multiple cities by Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

## SPOTTED

Ehsaas Women Swati Agarwal and Sangeeta Datta in Udaipur



## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

PRABHA DELVES INTO THE THRIVING LITERATURE FESTIVAL SCENE OF THE COUNTRY IN OUR NEXT ISSUE



## Happy Birthday

PRABHA WISHES **EHSAAS** WOMEN  
BORN IN DECEMBER



6th

Manisha Jain



7th

Babita Kathotia



21st

Anvi Thaker



22nd

Archana Dalmia



## Aid For Education

On October 1, the Russian Centre of Science and Culture (RCSC) in Chennai hosted the VIII All-Indian Conference of Russian Compatriots organised by the Indian Association of Russian Compatriots (IARC) with the support of the Russian Embassy in India and the Consulate General in Chennai.

During the event, textbooks were handed over to the RCSC Chennai Courses of Russian Language, with financial assistance from Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

The Foundation also contributed books to the University of Calcutta, which were handed over in November.

# A Special Meet-and-Greet with Smriti Irani Immerses the Audience in Self-Reflection



*A closed room  
A room full of women  
A room with few familiar faces  
A room full of aspirations and apprehensions  
A room with pin-drop silence.*

Smriti Irani



Little did I know this interaction will reveal a story of me, the story of my best friend, the story of my mother.

As we all went in for the interaction with the Union Cabinet Minister Smriti Irani in New Delhi, many of us still carried the image of her as ‘Tulsi’. Usually, the preconceived notions about every women’s group meet are selfies, gossip and comparisons. But this session was nothing like that. It enriched the spirits and left many like me in a ‘self-reflection’ mode.

We may all be born in different circumstances but we all grow up with the aim of reaching the stars. We can all decide on our friends but we have no control over our enemies. Every woman goes through stages of growth at different times. This doesn’t mean one person is better than the other or that one area of growth is stronger than the other. It just means we are different and we have to celebrate that.

The interactive session with Irani had something to offer to everybody. Even those who felt that it had no takeaway must have revisited their inner self before arriving at this conclusion.

The simplicity with which Irani shared her journey touched my heart. The daughter of a housekeeper who swept the carpets at Hotel Taj Mahal, New Delhi, didn’t know that she would one day visit the same place as a chief guest. Living and imbibing the words of her mother — “Whatever you do, give your best”, she started her journey at a young age. From reading the newspapers aloud to delivering dialogues on the silver screen to powerful speeches now, she has come a long way. Her journey reflects her passion for clear communication and attention to detail.

On being asked about people in her life, she was quick to answer, “I have a husband at home and one friend (Ekta) outside of home.” On being asked who was a tougher boss, Prime Minister Narendra Modi or she herself, she promptly pointed to herself as the ‘tougher boss’. This had a deeper message for me — we as human beings like to shift the ‘tough tag’ on others without looking at ourselves. This gives us room to cover our actions and benefit from not taking onus.

It seemed that transformation of roles in reel and real life did not dampen her spirits, rather it allowed her to prepare for the worst. The sheer joy she took in saying that she has never asked for frills and that

she has always pushed for work that needs to be done revealed her true nature of being a tough taskmaster and a go-getter.

Irani’s journey reinforced the fact that everyone starts somewhere, that no one is perfect and everyone is on their own journey. If you’re constantly comparing yourself with the next woman, you’ll never grow and become the beautiful soul you were meant to be. The poise, the conviction, the determination that enveloped her words left me inspired. Not a single statement of hers felt like criticism, self-defeat, compromise, self-pity, or a blame game.

Most of the things she shared resonated with most of us. Listening to her got me to think about why we had been taught to be competitive with one another. Maybe because there is such a scarcity of positions at the top. But it should be clear to us by now that mean strategies don’t work. The thing that works is raising each other up and channelling the power of collaboration. This is how we all can change the equation.

Alone we may have power but collectively we have impact.

As I was penning my thoughts down, I realised how conveniently I used the first name while referring to Irani because somewhere in the end it is the woman-to-woman connection that counted. Her story is my story. In simple language, she left a message “Don’t complain... just create”.

**Apra Kuchhal**



Anshu Mehra, Garima Mithal, Poonam Anand, Manjari Mishra and Dimple Trivedi



Vinti Kathuria, Shweta Bansal, Vinita Surana and Deepika Goyal



Ehsaas Women of India who attended the special meet-and-greet



Anant and Vandana Vijay



Anindita Chatterjee, Dimple Trivedi, Vedula Ramalakshmi and Esha Dutta

Vinod Pandey





Akanksha Arora presents a memento to Smriti Irani



Anantmla Potdar, Shazia Ilmi, Karuna Goenka and Huma Khalil Mirza

The Ehsaas women brought local handicrafts from their respective regions and presented it to Smriti Irani



Nidhi Garg (left) and Vedula Ramalakshmi present a memento to Smriti Irani



Sheetal Khanna presents a memento to Smriti Irani



Smriti Irani (centre) with (left to right) Priyanka Kothari, Parveen Tuli, Neeta Singh and Jyoti Kapoor



Priyanshi Patel presents a memento to Smriti Irani



The rapt audience at the meet-and-greet





Dimple Trivedi presents a memento to Smriti Irani



Poonam Anand (left) and Seema Singh with Smriti Irani



Aradhana Pradhan presents a memento to Smriti Irani



Aanchal Garcha (left) and Shrishti Trivedi with Smriti Irani



Preeti Mehta presents a memento to Smriti Irani



Neelam Muntashir presented a memento to Smriti Irani



(Left to right) Shubh Singhvi, Riddhima Doshi and Shradhaa Murdiaa present a memento to Smriti Irani (centre)



(Left to right) Kulsum Malik, Sunita Shekhawat and Apra Kuchhal present a memento to Smriti Irani



## Glimpses from the Dinner That Followed at India International Centre



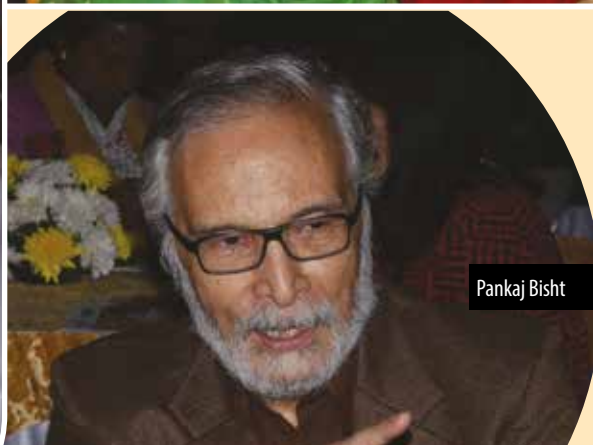
Nomaan Shauq



Vandana, Anant Vijay, Pratyaksha, Vandana Rag, Geeta Shree and Mamta Kalia



Salim Salem



Pankaj Bisht



Vedula Ramalakshmi and Aradhana Pradhan



Bhagwandas Morwal





Roopa Ganguly



Nita Khanna and Sunita Kohli



Vijai Trivedi and Sandeep Bhushan



Richa Bafna and Sundeep Bhutoria



Parvesh Khanna



Apra Kuchhal



Neelima Chauhan, Pratyaksha and Mamta Kalra



## “The Future of Hindi Literature Lies in the Hands of the Youth” — Padmesh Gupta

**D**r. Padmesh Gupta was introduced as a treasure trove of Hindi literature by **Ehsaas** Woman of Udaipur Swati Agarwal for **Kalam**, Udaipur. Not surprising, given his list of accomplishments. The founder-president of the UK Hindi Samiti, Gupta has published and edited Hindi magazines *Purvai* in the UK for 18 years and *Pravasi Today* for eight years. He has been the convener of four international Hindi conferences and 20 international poetry symposiums. Gupta is currently the managing director of Oxford Business College, Oxford.

In conversation with Kanishka Talesara, Gupta spoke about how the future of literature lies in the hands of the youth and how, if nurtured properly, will definitely flourish.

It was while he was in France that Gupta realised that



Shraddhaa Murdia, Riddhima Doshi, Swati Agarwal, Padmesh Gupta, Shubh Singhvi and Kanika Agarwal

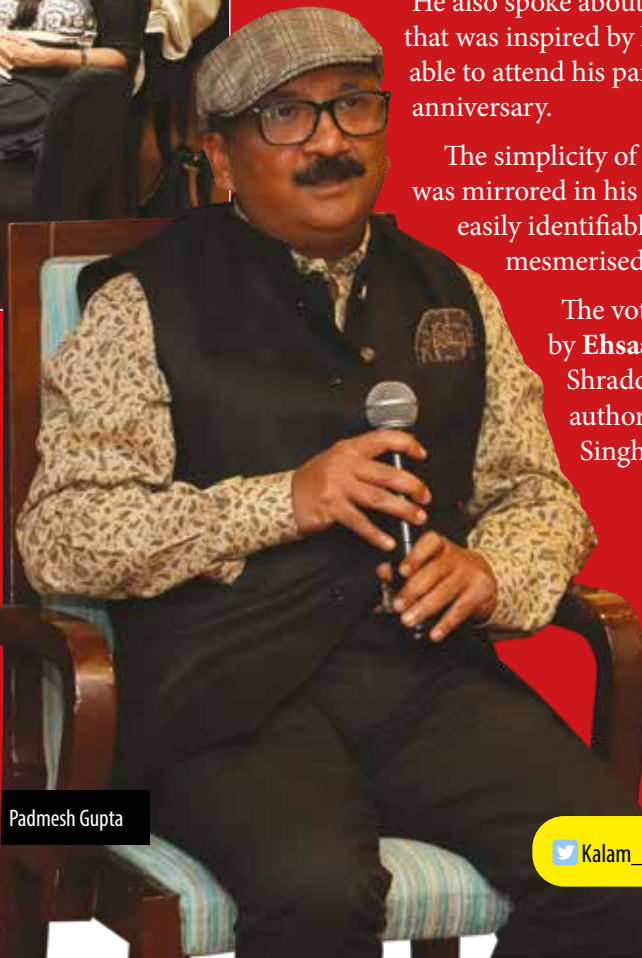
*Purvai*, the Hindi magazine he started in London, Gupta said, was aimed not just at showcasing writers but encouraging and inspiring people to nurture the language across both the countries.

He also spoke about his book *Pravasi Putra* that was inspired by his regret of not being able to attend his parents' 50th wedding anniversary.

The simplicity of his words and thoughts was mirrored in his poetry and made it easily identifiable and left the audience mesmerised.

The vote of thanks was given by **Ehsaas** Woman of Udaipur Shraddhaa Murdia, while the author was felicitated by Shubh Singhvi.

though people were really interested in Hindi language and culture, there was very little opportunity to associate with the language in any manner. It was with this intention — to connect the youth and the Indian community settled abroad — that he formed the Hindi Samiti. The group was an instant success. The author said that he realised that in order to influence and motivate children it was important to reach out and connect parents on a common platform first.



Padmesh Gupta

*Kalam Udaipur is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Radisson Blu Udaipur and Ehsaas Women of Udaipur*



## “Disability is an Integral Part of Every Life” — Lalit Kumar’s Tale of Hope, Courage and Perseverance

Author and blogger Lalit Kumar’s session at **Kalam**, Bhubaneswar was a humbling experience for the audience. **Ehsaas** Woman of Bhubaneswar, Vedula Ramalakshmi, welcomed the author to share anecdotes from his book *Vitamin Zindagi* and his life’s journey. The conversation was steered ably by poet Ritu Mahipal.

owing to his disability and wished that teachers would practise more empathy and guide others like him.

His book weaves together the stories of his struggles, his hurdles, his success, his motivation and his vision. *Vitamin Zindagi* is like that pill which instils in you that extra dose of hope, faith, courage and hard work.

According to Kumar, literature that does not influence or leave a mark is best not indulged in, as it is a universal medium that should be able to communicate with lives most effectively.

**Ehsaas** Woman of Bhubaneswar Nidhi Garg rendered the vote of thanks at the end of the session. Laxman Lal Mahipal was invited to felicitate Kumar while Ritu Mahipal was presented with a memento by Paresh Patnaik.



Laxman Lal Mahipal felicitated Lalit Kumar

Kumar spoke about the important role his family had played in defining his life and appealed to parents of children with physical disabilities to help instil courage and confidence in them. He said that it is important for people to change their mindset towards physical disabilities and urged that disability of any form should be treated with respect and not pity.

Kumar also recounted the partiality of his teachers



Vedula Ramalakshmi and Nidhi Garg with Lalit Kumar



Paresh Patnaik presented a memento to Ritu Mahipal

*Kalam Bhubaneswar is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Mayfair Hotels & Resorts and Ehsaas Women of Bhubaneswar*



## Geetanjali Shree Advocates the Importance of Hindi Language at Kalam Delhi



Geetanjali Shree

Hindi novelist and short-story writer Geetanjali Shree spoke with passion about the Hindi language at **Kalam**, Delhi where she was in conversation with Archana Dalmia.

Shree spoke about how her recent novel, *Ret Samadhi*, is an attempt at a portrayal of a family in the midst of a dramatic crisis. It traces the journey of an old, ordinary woman who isolates and alienates herself after the death of her husband but learns to move on and find joy again after interventions by her family. She begins a new chapter of her life with fresh vigour and renewed enthusiasm, making some new friends along the way. The story even travels from India all the way to Pakistan!

Geetanjali was unhappy that people think Hindi is only spoken by people who don't know English. But she believes that despite the beating it has taken, Hindi is still standing strong and continuing to persevere. Not only are famous authors opting to write in Hindi, but English-language books and novels are also being translated into Hindi.

Geetanjali admitted that despite studying in English-medium institutions, she opted to write in Hindi because of her love for the language and the pride she felt in writing in this language. She claimed that Hindi will continue to survive, thrive and bring people closer by bridging the gap between the old and the new.

*Kalam Delhi is presented in association  
with Dainik Jagran, Dinesh Nandini  
Ramkrishna Dalmia Foundation and Ehsaas  
Women of Delhi*



Archana Dalmia



Neelima Dalmia Adhar



# Myths and Mysteries with Christopher C. Doyle

Christopher C. Doyle opened up a world of fantasy and mythology for the young guests in the audience at the 74th session of **An Author's Afternoon**, as he traced his journey as a writer.

In conversation with Anjum Katyal, Doyle spoke about his *Mahabharata Quest* series, his Quest Club initiative and balancing a demanding corporate job and writing. Tracing his evolution as a writer, Doyle shared that he had his three-year-old daughter, for whom he made up bedtime stories, to thank for the beginning of the journey. "I combined mythology,

dreamt of seeing my books in the bookstores."

Dealing with Indian mythology is no easy task, said Doyle, who took the help of two seasoned scholars with doctorates in Sanskrit to get all the facts right. With a research team to help him, he started visiting places that find a mention in his books. "I always wondered if there was a link between scientific facts and mythology. That's where my quest started. I visited and explored those places that I mentioned in my book," said the author.

Doyle also spoke about the Quest Club, an initiative started by him in 2015, which is like a virtual club where like-minded readers come together to interact with the author and among themselves about the book, his research and the subject of myths.



Christopher C. Doyle and Anjum Katyal

history and science, which intrigued my daughter, and that's when I came up with my first book," said Doyle.

As he evolved as a writer, Doyle began to delve into mystery, fantasy and mythology. Combined with his unique narrative style, his stories clicked with the readers, but not before scores of his manuscripts were rejected by publishers.

"I was insanely ambitious. I didn't just want to be a bestselling author but an internationally bestselling author. I

It was a lovely afternoon. It was great to be introduced to a wonderful audience. Anjum was awesome, bringing out interesting nuggets to keep the audience engaged. I enjoyed the conversation and the interaction and look forward to more sessions in other cities. PKF is doing a brilliant job of promoting the arts. Please keep up the good work."



Christopher C. Doyle





Bharati Ray

The discussion then veered into how different civilisations, separated in time and geography, have had a commonality of thoughts, myths and folklores.

The author also shared about his writing process and how he balances it with his corporate job. "I don't have a writing routine. My most productive bouts have been while I was on international flights, in cars. I write overnight; it's all about when I want to prioritise writing," he said.

Some among the young enthusiastic audience raised pertinent thought-provoking questions about our past civilisations, which the author agreed were not easy to answer.



Poonam Anand, Meena Singh, Christopher C. Doyle, Seema Singh and Rashmi Sharma

Anjum Katyal



*An Author's Afternoon is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Taj Bengal, Kolkata*



Kangan Bhalla and Esha Dutta

Manish Gupta



**Poonam Anand:** "It was a very compact session. The way the author narrated his feelings was full of emotions. I felt very motivated by the author."



**Meena Singh:** "I enjoyed this evening. It was very compact and well organised. I have come from Ranchi and for me, it was very a exciting and enriching experience."



## Love and Environment Take Centre Stage in Raipur

Young people will relate to the book because in our hearts, we are all rebels before we start to conform,” said author Manjul Bajaj about her latest novel *In Search of Heer*, during the fourth session of **The Write Circle**, a bouquet event of the Prabha Khaitan Foundation, in Raipur. Bajaj, who has written five other well-received books including two for children, is also an environmentalist and poet.

*In Search of Heer* is a modern version of the much-loved folklore *Heer Ranjha*. “I believe Heer was the first feminist, she was the first one to speak up about equality,” said Bajaj, who was in conversation with Reshalika Dawar.

Bajaj spoke about her fascination with love and all of its forms, be it romantic or parental or for that matter, even the love we must feel towards our environment. No wonder her latest book has perspectives from animals that are a part of the daily life of the protagonists in the novel. A true romantic, she said, “Love fascinates me; we waste so much time fighting when all we need is love and peace, so why not write about love?”

Bajaj said she has always had two conflicting impulses — one to continue her work in the field of rural development and the other to write. She worked under Dr Kurien in Anand, Gujarat, but her work in rural development took a back seat as writing took over. Speaking about current environmental issues, she said that her work is not a closed chapter and she is keen on taking it up again.

**Ehsaas** Woman of Raipur Meena Sapre presented a memento to Bajaj while Palash Khandelwal, the director of Aarambh School, presented a memento to Reshalika Dawar.

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



Manjul Bajaj (left) in conversation with Reshalika Dawar



Ruby Dutta and Nivedita Rathod interact with the author



Meena Sapre presented a memento to Bajaj



Palash Khandelwal felicitated Reshalika Dawar



Harkaran Singh

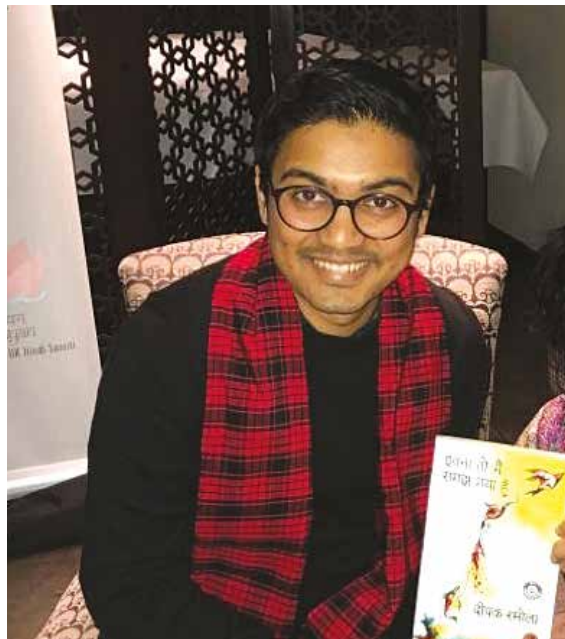


Shrishti Trivedi, Kalpana Chaudhary, Aanchal Garcha and Kirti Kirdatt



Gaurav Girija Shukla

# Of Poetry and Wisdom — Deepak Ramola Speaks on His Journey



Deepak Ramola



The audience at Kalam London

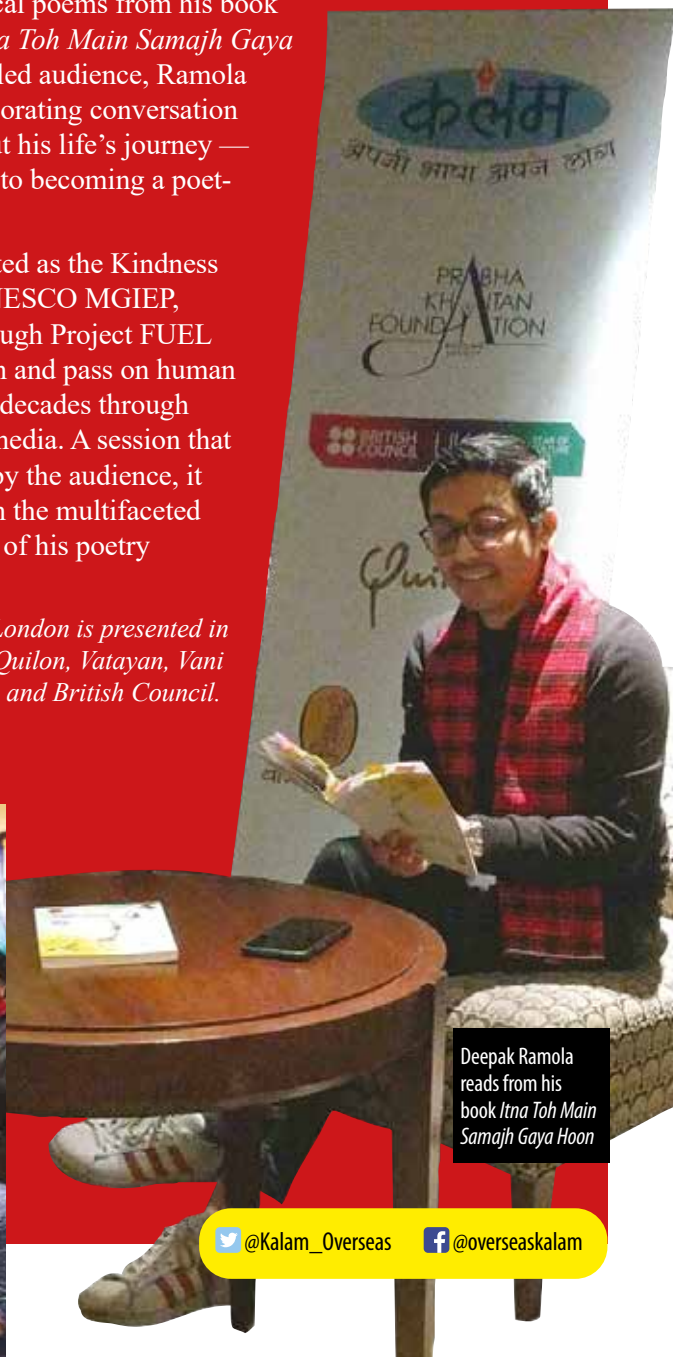
Deepak Ramola with the audience

Poetry is like our shadow that's always with us...we never feel alone if we have poetry with us," said Deepak Ramola in conversation with journalist Shikha Varshney, rousing the audience with his soul-stirring words at **Kalam** London at the Quilon, London. A versatile wordsmith, Deepak Ramola is a poet, lyricist, actor, teacher and motivational speaker who is the founder and artistic director of Project FUEL (Forward the Understanding of Every Life Lesson), a two-time TED Talk speaker and the UN Action Plan Executor for SDG4.

Reciting his lyrical poems from his book of Hindi poetry, *Itna Toh Main Samajh Gaya Hoon*, to an enthralled audience, Ramola engaged in an invigorating conversation with Varshney about his life's journey — from his childhood to becoming a poet-philosopher today.

Recently appointed as the Kindness Ambassador by UNESCO MGIEP, Ramola strives through Project FUEL to document, design and pass on human wisdom of the past decades through education, art and media. A session that was well-received by the audience, it came to an end with the multifaceted poet signing copies of his poetry collection.

*Kalam London is presented in association with Quilon, Vatayan, Vani Foundation and British Council.*

Deepak Ramola reads from his book *Itna Toh Main Samajh Gaya Hoon*



# Anu Singh Choudhary Speaks the Hard Truth at Kalam Nagpur

Noted film producer and writer Anu Singh Choudhary sat down for a conversation with Ehsaas Woman of Nagpur Priyanka Kothari at Kalam, Nagpur, where she shared her writing journey, personal experiences and philosophies.

A humble and understated person, she addressed every question and topic intelligently and effortlessly as the discussion turned to issues of societal stigmas, the #MeToo movement, gender bias, stereotyping and preserving language and literature.

Choudhary's first book *Neela Scarf*, a collection of short stories, found its place in the bestselling list. "Mamma Ki Diary is a record of social and family experiences while *Neela Scarf* has stories for girls in



Monica Bhagwagar, Jyoti Kapoor, Anu Singh Choudhary, Parveen Tuli, Priyanka Kothari and Neeta Singh



Priyanka Kothari

the neighbourhood. *Bhali Ladkiyan*, *Buri Ladkiyan* (her latest novel) presents a trove of experiences I had when I went to Delhi for my education," said Choudhary. The book explores the journey of a young girl who moves to Delhi and falls in love with the city.

Choudhary spoke about the importance of literature as a mirror of the times and emphasised the vigilant honesty of writers while recording events. She also iterated the significance of translating regional literature into Hindi and called for a renewed emphasis on literary translations.

The question-answer session with the audience was a very engaging exchange of ideas and opinions.

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



Vikas Pal



Anu Singh Choudhary

## Hrishikesh Sulabh on Love that Connects Generations

Playwright, novelist, short-story writer and theatre critic, Hrishikesh Sulabh wears many hats. In a conversation with Pankaj Mitra at the 11th edition of **Kalam** in Ranchi, he spoke about his debut novel *Agnileek*, theatre and the different nuances of writing plays and short stories.

Sulabh said that each new story he pens gives him the sensation of writing his first story. According to him, writing should be a spontaneous affair and is an immensely exhilarating feeling. "Literature makes people imaginative," said the author.

He spoke about how theatre in small towns is more evolved and can be compared with the work being done in big cities. The intensity of the



Rashmi Sharma delivered the vote of thanks



Hrishikesh Sulabh (right) in conversation with Pankaj Mitra

performers, according to Sulabh, is enhanced by the dedication and unpolluted sincerity to the craft.

Sulabh feels that modern-day directors distort the essence of a good story quite often for commercial advantages and hence lose out on a strong storyline. He further deliberated that Hindi as a language is so vibrant that it cannot be bound by any political or physical boundaries. The work that the youth is doing in the sphere of literature was commended by the author and he appealed to the readers to acknowledge the freshness of their approach. The author enchanted the audience by reading out from his book, which is the story of four generations of women in a village and the love that binds them.

The session was concluded with a thank-you note by Rashmi Sharma.



Renu Upadhyay felicitated Hrishikesh Sulabh

*Kalam Ranchi is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Dainik Jagran, Navras School of Performing Arts and Ehsaas Women of Ranchi*



## Breaking Borders — in Conversation with Geetanjali Shree



Geetanjali Shree (right) in conversation with Dimple Trivedi

The Kalam session with Hindi novelist Geetanjali Shree in Lucknow was a unique opportunity to understand the richness and vast potential of the Hindi language and the process of writing.

Shree, who was in conversation with Dimple Trivedi, Ehsaas Woman of Lucknow, began the session by reading an excerpt from her novel *Ret Samadhi*. The everyday story of an old woman living in a joint family, longing to



Ashish Kumar



Kanak Rekha Chauhan

break free of the borders she is bound by and reinvent herself, was vividly brought to life for the audience.

The reading was followed by an interaction with the author who fielded questions with panache. She spoke about how she finds inspiration in everyday ordinary incidents that reveal greater issues in society and how she discovers fresh metaphors in the process of writing. She explained how she came up with the title of the book and

the role that fellow writer Krishna Sobti, to whom the book is dedicated, played during the time that the story was being penned.

She spoke extensively about the concept of 'borders', their nature and their presence in society. Shree said, "Every woman creates and breaks her own borders herself," stressing that women must learn to break free of the conventional image that they have been bound into and learn to recreate their borders and redefine their roles and personalities for themselves.

*Kalam Lucknow is presented in association with Dainik Jagran, Hyatt Lucknow, Lucknow Expressions and Ehsaas Women of Lucknow*

## Professor Shehpar Rasool Shares His Love for Urdu at Lafz, Jaipur



Shehpar Rasool (right) in conversation with Farooq Engineer

Professor Shehpar Rasool was the guest at the **Lafz** session at Jaipur where he was in conversation with Farooq Engineer about the future of Urdu.

**Lafz**, a Prabha Khaitan Foundation initiative to promote Urdu, Arabic and Persian languages, was the perfect platform for a passionate discussion about Rasool's personal journey into the world of Urdu literature. Apra Kuchhal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Jaipur,

he would listen to stories in Urdu. He spoke about his great-grandfather, a Sufi poet, and how Urdu literature has been in his family for generations.

"I started writing stories in Hindi. But *shayeri* has been passed on in my family for generations. My great-grandfather was a well-known Sufi and his ghazals were sung both in India and Pakistan. I grew up in that environment. I don't even remember now when I



Pramod Sharma presented a memento to Rasool



Vishal Gupta



Sudhir Mathur delivered the vote of thanks



Apra Kuchhal

made the opening remarks while Vishal Gupta, General Manager of the Hilton Hotel, delivered the welcome address.

Rasool confessed that his introduction to Urdu literature happened in his grandmother's home where

changed direction from Hindi to Urdu," said Rasool, who, along with being an expert in the Urdu language, is also a professor at Jamia Millia Islamia University.

He rued the fact that even though there is no shortage of people writing in Urdu, people who read it are dwindling with the passage of time.

Rasool charmed the audience by reciting his ghazals and compositions. Sudhir Mathur delivered the vote of thanks and Pramod Sharma of Grassroot Media Foundation presented the speakers with mementos.



*Lafz Jaipur is presented in association with Hilton Jaipur, Rekhta, Sudhir Mathur Sansthan and Ehsaas Women of Jaipur*



# Celebrating Mitin Mashi's Silver Screen Success



The Mitin Mashi team cuts a cake to mark the occasion

A special get-together to celebrate a special *mashi* brought Tollywood's finest out to Hyatt Regency, Kolkata on a crisp November afternoon. The lunch, hosted by Prabha Khaitan Foundation, raised a toast to the success of *Mitin Mashi*, directed by Arindam Sil and starring Koel Mallick as the titular character (created by Suchitra Bhattacharya). The Puja blockbuster depicts the adventures of a homemaker-turned-detective who is appointed by a Parsi couple to investigate their eight-year-old son's kidnapping.

The director, who also decided upon the menu, said, "*Mitin Mashi* is very Bengali in its flavour, so the spread includes authentic Bengali food — *aloo posto*, *kancha lonkha bata murgi*, *shorshe machh*, *chhanar dalna*, *phulkopir torkari* and *shukto*, just to name a few."



Sujas Nameth, Amit Paul, Kumar Shobhan

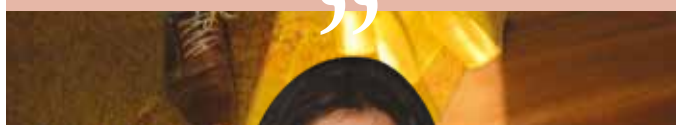


Abir Chatterjee and Koel Mallick



I am so happy that the audience appreciated the film. *Mitin Mashi* is a representation of women's empowerment and it is really heartwarming that people accepted me in this character wholeheartedly. The best part of the film is that they could relate to me — they felt Mitin Mashi was one of them, who balances her personal and professional life with equal élan.

— Koel Mallick



June

Shukla Sil and Arindam Sil



The success of the film marks an important chapter in Bengali cinema. It proves that the audience is ready to support well-made films with great content. It makes me really proud to see that the film, which is about women's empowerment, has resonated with so many people. When your child does well in exams, as a parent, you feel on top of the world. For a director, it is the same feeling. I am happy that the film is still running in the theatres.

— Arindam Sil



Sukanya and Koyel Das



# Celebrating a Modern Take on a Literary Classic

A galaxy of stars attended a special screening of Aparna Sen's *Ghawre Bairey Aaj* — a modern take on the Rabindranath Tagore classic tale starring Jisshu Sengupta, Anirban Bhattacharya and Tuhina Das — organised by **Chalchitra** (a vertical of the Prabha Khaitan Foundation) at Inox, Quest Mall.



Sundeep Bhuturia,  
Shabana Azmi and  
Aparna Sen

“My film has its origins in the Tagore novel rather than Satyajit Ray's 1984 film, even though I have set it in present-day India

— Aparna Sen

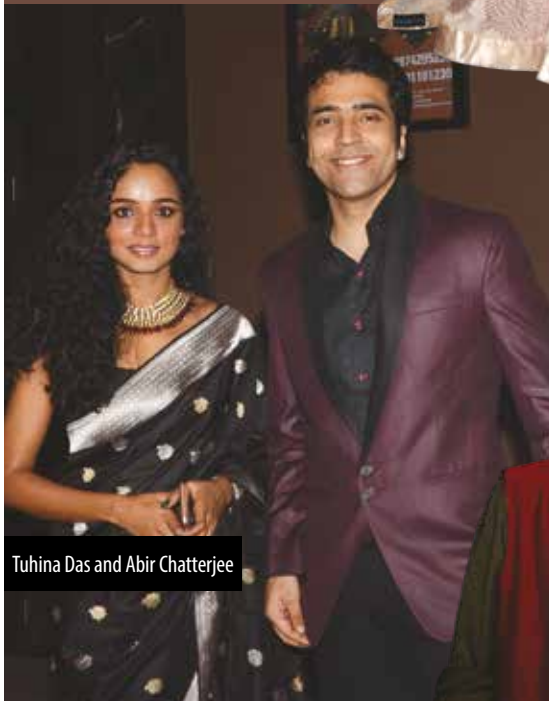
Sreeja Sen and Arjun  
Chakrabarty



Tanusree Shankar

Paoli Dam

Kalyan Ray



Tuhina Das and Abir Chatterjee



Rwitobroto and Shantilal  
Mukherjee



Anirban Bhattacharya



## Tidbits from a celebratory dinner hosted by The Foundation after the screening at The Conclave.



Sreenanda Shankar, Anirban Bhattacharya, Aparna Sen, Shabana Azmi and Tuhina Das



Sujoy Prasad Chatterjee and Chaitali Dasgupta



Rupam Islam with wife Rupsha



Piya Chakraborty



Sudiptaa Chakraborty



Bidipta Chakraborty



Esha Dutta



## Vir Sanghvi on Those Who Changed the Rules of the Game



Vir Sanghvi (left) and Sumit Das Gupta

The audience at Hyatt Regency, Kolkata, was treated to a charged conversation at the launch of Vir Sanghvi's latest book *The Gamechangers* for a very special **Kitaab** session.

Author, columnist, talk show host and member of the Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), Sanghvi was described quite aptly as "the game

Nandan Nilekani, who introduced the controversial Aadhar card, Asma Khan, who runs an Indian eatery in London, and celebrity chef Gaggan Anand are some of the people covered in the book, along with Karan Johar, Sameer Sain, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Shashi Tharoor and Arnab Goswami.

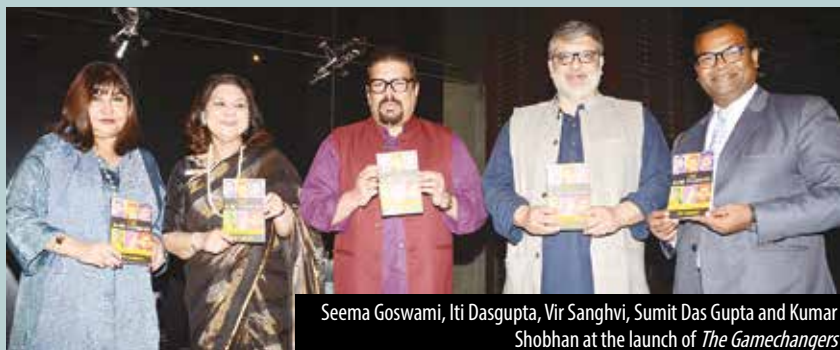
Sanghvi spoke about how the future of India lies



Malika Varma



Gouri Basu



Seema Goswami, Iti Dasgupta, Vir Sanghvi, Sumit Das Gupta and Kumar Shobhan at the launch of *The Gamechangers*

changer in Indian journalism" by Sumit Das Gupta, former deputy editor of *The Telegraph* and founder-director of Allcap Communications.

The event was introduced by **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, Malika Varma, and Iti Dasgupta, president of the Ladies Study Group, delivered the welcome note.

In his conversation with Das Gupta, Sanghvi explained that the 10 people featured in the book were selected based on their contribution towards transforming India and revolutionising their respective spheres. Most of them are stories of middle-class people who had the vision to follow their dreams and turn them into big-time success.

with the youth who are much more international in their outlook, more globally connected and with access to more information. But he was quick to point out the contribution of women in the context of putting the nation on a global map. "Women are India's untapped wealth," said Sanghvi.

The book was launched by Seema Goswami, Iti Dasgupta, Kumar Shobhan, Sumit Das Gupta and Sanghvi. The author was felicitated by Gouri Basu, director, Eastern Zonal Culture Centre and **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata.

*Kitaab Kolkata is presented by Shree Cement Ltd, in association with Hyatt Regency Kolkata, Indian Chamber of Commerce and Ladies Study Group*

# Where the Voice is Without Fear



Maina Bhagat



Anjum Katyal



Aatreyee Ghosh



Anita Agnihotri



Imogen Butler-Cole



Leena Kejriwal



Manisha Jain

Prabha Khaitan Foundation, in association with Oxford Bookstore, announced the longlist for the second edition of the Prabha Khaitan Woman's Voice Award on November 15, 2019. The shortlist for the same shall be announced on December 16, 2019, while the winner will be declared at the 11th edition of the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2020, after a meticulous selection by a jury that includes Saikat Majumdar

and 'Identity and Survival, Women Write Resistance'.

The award is a step forward in acknowledging biographies and memoirs — real-life stories told through the talented penmanship of upcoming women writers — that document tales of resilience and survival against domestic violence, rape, acid attacks and caste discrimination, while also celebrating spiritual liberation.



Aatreyee Ghosh, Anita Agnihotri, Anjum Katyal, Imogen Butler-Cole and Leena Kejriwal

(writer, academician), Arshia Sattar (writer), Anita Agnihotri (writer, civil servant) and Anjum Katyal (writer, editor, translator and co-director, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival).

Manisha Jain, chief, branding and communications, Prabha Khaitan Foundation, introduced the prestigious award to the audience at the event which also organised panel discussions that had speakers like Anita Agnihotri, Leena Kejriwal, Imogen Butler-Cole and Anjum Katyal.

The event was an ode to the indomitable human spirit, lauding the spirit of womanhood through panel discussions like 'Look Who's Talking!'

The nine books of the longlist include—*Searching for Home* by Simran Chawla, *No Nation for Women* by Priyanka Dubey, *Coming Out as Dalit* by Yashica Dutt, *Good Talk* by Mira Jacob, *Ants Among Elephants* by Sujata Gidla, *Born With Wings* by Daisy Khan, *The Shooting Star* by Shivya Nath, *Being Reshma* by Reshma Qureshi and Tania Singh and *Not Quite Not White* by Sharmila Sen.

*The Women's Voice Awards is presented by Prabha Khaitan Foundation in association with Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata*



# COLOUR of Imagination

Prabha Khaitan Foundation collaborated with the Oxford Bookstore under the vertical, Education for All, to host a sit-and-draw competition for kids on the occasion of Children's Day in Kolkata.



Judge Sudipta Kundu



# Young People Chalk About Self

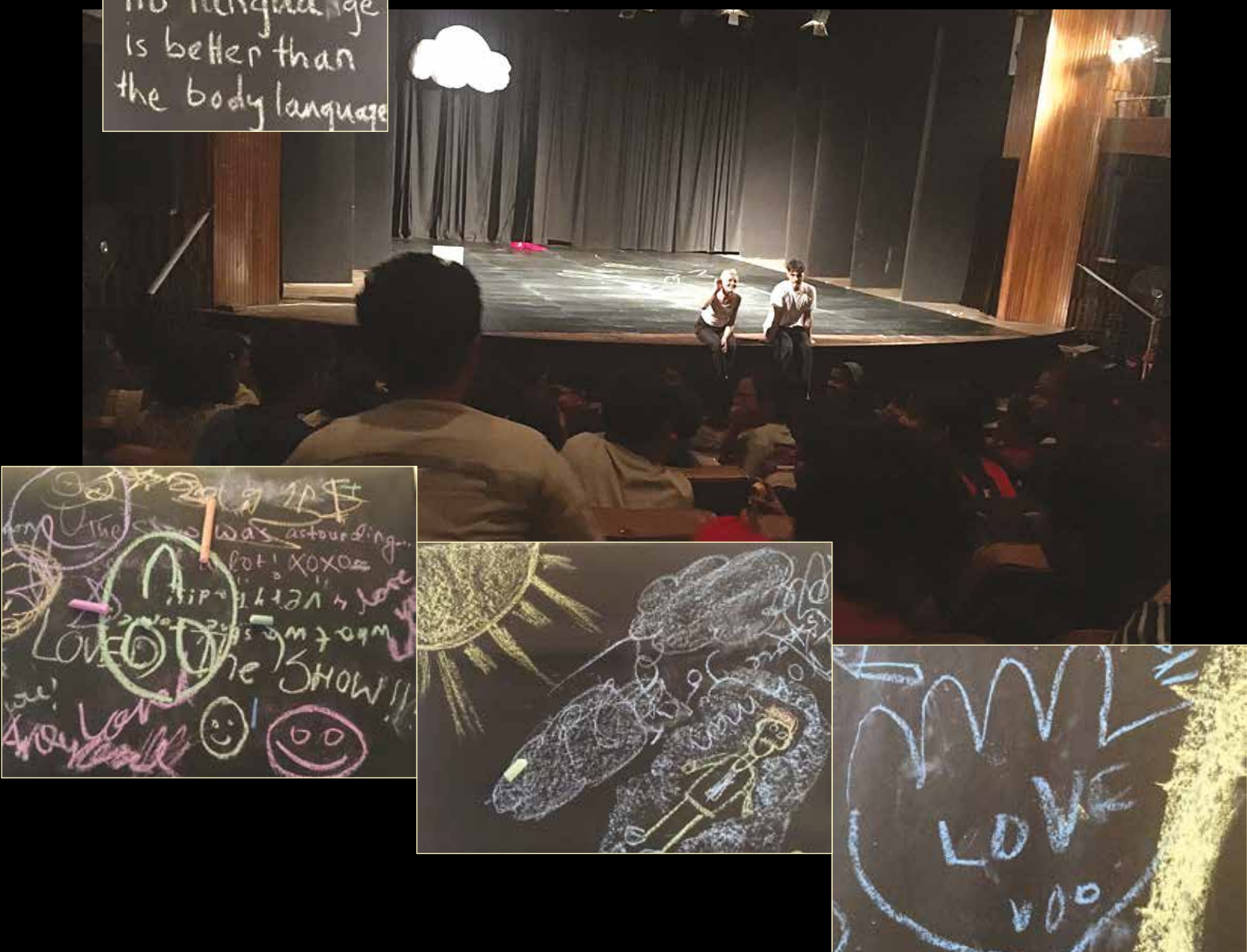
It was  
perfect and oddly  
satisfying.

Loved your  
expressions  
no language  
is better than  
the body language

Who knew you could say so much with chalk? As a part of the Think Arts International Festival For Young Audiences, Prabha Khaitan Foundation, under the Education for All vertical, hosted a two-day show of the play *Chalk About* by Curious Seed, Scotland, at Gyan Manch.

Created for young audiences aged 8 and above, *Chalk About* is a playful, funny and moving look at how we perceive ourselves and others featuring dance, chalk and chat. The artists turned the stage into a huge chalkboard and explored the nature of identity.

The show got tremendous response from the young audience as they poured out their experience, very fittingly, through chalk messages.





# A War of Words Over Technology

Technology was the bone of contention at the Annual Hindi Debate Competition held by the Calcutta Debating Circle (CDC) in the lawns of Bengal Rowing Club. The slight chill in the air in the club lawns, heralding the onset of winter, was a perfect setting for the intense exchange of opinions that followed.

The topic of the debate, which was partnered by **Kalam**, Kolkata, was “Technology *ne kiya sanskaron ka naash*.”

Speaking for the motion was Sanjay Jha, National Spokesperson of the Congress (INC); Nivedita Jha, journalist and vice president, SAWM India; Ashwani Kumar, professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences; and Satish Chandra Singh, former executive director, Life Insurance Corporation of India. Speaking against the motion were Dinesh Kumar Srivastava, director, Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre; IPS officer Mrityunjay Kumar



Mrityunjay Kumar Singh

Sanjay Jha

Ashwani Kumar

Singh; Prakash Uday, folk specialist; and Avinash Das, filmmaker. The debate was moderated by entrepreneur and CDC member Swati Gautam.

While the team proposing the motion expressed that easy access to social media has mutilated our youth's cultural and social biddings, those opposing the motion debated that one's cultural and social disposition cannot be determined by his or her exposure to social media and technology. Technology, they argued, has paved the way for the country's global presence and in the process, broadened horizons.

The speakers for the motion declared that technology has weakened human connection. WhatsApp and other social media platforms have taken over the space

of personal interaction and therefore created a void in human relations. Further, they stated that global warming is a curse of technology too. In reply to this, speakers against the motion urged the audience and those proposing the motion to consider technology as a blessing that has saved trees from being cut because of connecting through email or social media. They argued

## For

**Sanjay Jha** (National Spokesperson of the Congress)

**Nivedita Jha** (journalist and vice president, SAWM India)

**Ashwani Kumar** (professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences)

**Satish Chandra Singh** (former executive director, LIC of India)

## Against

**Dinesh Kumar Srivastava** (director, Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre)

**Mrityunjay Kumar Singh** (IPS officer)

**Prakash Uday** (folk specialist)

**Avinash Das** (filmmaker)

that we are surrounded by the gifts of modern technology such as mobile phones, televisions, computers, laptops, microwaves, which are nowadays more of a necessity than a luxury. And when our lives are so dependent on these, how can technology be called a curse? Especially since technology is at the forefront of the fight against global warming and the betterment of human life.

The outcome of the debate was decided by a show of hands and the house voted to defeat the motion.

*Vaad Vivaad is presented by the Calcutta Debating Circle, in association with Kalam and The Bengal Rowing Club*



The speakers at Vaad Vivaad and moderator Swati Gautam



# Real Men Don't Rape



**Ehsaas Woman Swati Agarwal** writes about the need to make the country safer for women, and the role we have in changing the way women are treated and in raising men right.

**H**ow many more Priyankas and Nirbhayas before this barbarism stops? Have we, as a society, become so dehumanised? This savagery and gruesomeness need to stop and we need to be a part of the task force to make the country a safer haven for our daughters, sisters and mothers.

Patriarchy has been prevalent for centuries; hence it has conditioned men to believe in and exercise their superiority. The objectification of women is rampant in the media, entertainment and the ever-growing consumer culture. We have songs comparing women to '*tandoori murgi*', '*coca-cola*' and '*gud ki dali*', enticing men to devour them. It's a celebration of their power and control that nullify the existence of the female body, mind and soul. Our ethos and values are smeared by the age-old practices of the caste system, which need to be abolished. Men from higher castes are provided blanket impunity if they rape women from lower castes.

Our boys need to be saved from being dehumanised

and raised right. The concept of consent and taking 'no' for an answer respectfully needs to be drilled into them from a young age. Violent, uncontrolled, towering fury needs to be curbed and looked down upon.

This deep-rooted problem is in the treatment of women like commodities, who quietly suffer from barbaric acts. As a society we suppress sexuality, which leads to savagery and violence. Speaking openly about emotional suppression and sexual repression are taboos and stigmas that we need to eliminate from our moral systems.

Along with stringent policing, round-the-clock surveillance, making public spaces safer, being intolerant of and meting out the strictest punishment towards the culprits, we need to make our homes and workplaces safe with both genders enjoying equal rights. Our social and ethical fabric needs empathy and education. It's not just punishment but prevention that will keep misogyny at bay.





# AIDS

# AWARENESS

Prabha Khaitan Foundation takes up the cause of educating people about AIDS on the occasion of World AIDS Day



As we progress toward higher zeniths of modernity and development in all spheres, life itself has been jeopardised time and again by the epidemical onset of several fatal diseases, including cancer, diabetes and AIDS. On the occasion of December 1, which is observed as World AIDS Day, we want to highlight the work done by RAYS: Aasha Ki Ek Kiran — an organisation established and run by the family of our convenor of activities in Rajasthan & Central India, Apra Kuchhal — in spreading awareness about the disease and caring for HIV-positive children.

Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by the presence of the HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) that chronically cripples the body's immune system, making it susceptible to multiple pathological conditions. It is either transmitted sexually or through contact with infected blood from needles and from the mother to the child during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. In this context, India has an estimated 1,45,000 children of less than 15 years of age who are infected by HIV/AIDS and about 22,000 new infections occur every year. Children account for 7% of

ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

all the new HIV infections.

Founded in 2010, jointly by Mrs. Rashmi Kuchhal & Capt. Gurindar Virk, RAYS strives to strike at the heart of the numerous social prejudices which are often perpetuated through preconceived notions and misinformation that discriminate against HIV-positive individuals in the society. A Jaipur-based NGO with two separate homes for around 50 abandoned or orphaned boys and girls, RAYS is run by President Rashmi Kuchhal, Secretary Gurinder Virk and joint-secretary Apra Kuchhal, along with multiple loving caretakers who are also HIV-positive. RAYS works to provide a multifaceted education to the affected children in order to increase their

cognitive skills via workshops and exercises of visual and performing arts. The organisation collaborates with the Ultimate Golf Foundation to instil the spirit of sportsmanship and confidence among the affected children, while an association with Film Bug and a corresponding filmmaking course have led to the screening of two films made by the children of RAYS at the India Alive Short Film Festival. It is the ardent hope of the organisation that through their work in spreading awareness and knowledge regarding AIDS, they shall be able to witness the growth of an all-inclusive society that does not disregard HIV-positive individuals, especially the children, and instead takes care of them.



Anvita Pradhan,  
**Ehsaas** Woman  
of Patna, on Her  
Enriching Journey  
in the Cultural and  
Literary World

Anvita Pradhan, a postgraduate in plant Genetics from Pune University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is the executive director of Jeevak Heart Hospital, Patna.

One of the founder members of the Navras School of Performing Arts in Patna, Anvita is passionate about books, gardening and travelling.

Under the aegis of Navras School of Performing Arts (NSPA) Anvita has worked to promote, propagate and preserve Hindustani classical music, dance, literature and various other performing arts. Over the last 10 years she has been instrumental in organising 78 cultural and literary events including Patna Literature Festival and, most recently, the first Festival of Literature on Music.

“With both NSPA and Prabha Khaitan Foundation, I have had the opportunity to use my organisational skills to be of service to society,” said Anvita.

Anvita has been associated with Prabha Khaitan Foundation since June 2015 and has organised 46 **Kalam** events and three **Write Circle** events in Patna and 12 **Kalam** events in Ranchi.

“It has been an enriching journey of almost four years. I cherish the opportunity the Foundation has given me where I get to meet authors from all over the country and provide a platform for them to speak about their literary journey. They take us beyond our small world and into someone else’s real or imaginary world and in the process helps us learn from their experiences and views,” said Anvita.



The Nordic country of Finland, an exotic destination in northern Europe, is perfect for nature lovers. Every season here offers different experiences and activities for visitors to enjoy. But one of the wonders that one cannot afford to miss is the Northern Lights.

Ivalo, a small village just outside of Saariselkä, has a tour where you can go hunting for the Aurora Borealis. The tour is led by a Northern Lights expert who takes you around and makes you partake in the best sports while teaching you ways to capture this natural wonder.

Historically, the Finnish people believed that the Northern Lights were caused by the Firefox, a creature who ran so quickly across the snow that his paws kicked up sparks into the night sky. Another Northern Lights lore in Finland says that the Aurora Borealis was the spouts sprayed into the night sky by whales. In reality, the Northern Lights are caused by the sun. When solar flare particles are emitted by the sun and strike atoms in the earth's atmosphere, these atoms light up, producing the beautiful colours we see in the Aurora Borealis. As you can only see them in the northern hemisphere and they dance like the wind across the sky, the name makes perfect sense.

## Chasing the Northern Lights

An Ehsaas Woman shares her experience of nature's special light show in Finland

While walking towards the cave, I noticed that the hills to my right were glowing and soon the sky was lit with a band of colours from one side to the other. At first, we could not believe our eyes but as we stood there, we watched the lights intensify. The universe had prepared a special show to shower its blessings on us. The lights



Northern Lights can be seen when the sky is dark and clear. Experiencing this majestic phenomenon is breathtaking. Like many hopefuls, we spent hours standing in the cold just waiting for the opportunity to capture the Northern Lights. Chasing the phenomenon can be frustrating when the chill of the wind enters your body.

Initially, a glimpse of colours in the sky peeping through the clouds was the only view that we could capture. As our eyes started to adjust to the dark night, we were amazed to see the stars in the sky. Believing that this was probably the best we would see, we decided to turn back towards the fire lit in the nearby tent cave because we could not bear the chill any longer.



seemed to dance in swirls of green and purple and the sky was covered in various shades of the colours. They even coloured the mountain peaks and lakes that were covered with snow.

I focussed on capturing the show with my eyes because I think no camera can ever capture this natural phenomenon. Soon, the lights began to fade and the show was over. We headed back to our tent, energised after what we had seen. It was an amazing experience to stand in the snow in -10°C and watch the wonders of nature. This wonderful experience will remain engraved deep inside my heart and soul.

**Shweta Aggarwal**  
Ehsaas Woman of Faridabad



# IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Guest	Event
Sharbari Zohra Ahmed	The Write Circle Bengaluru, An Author's Afternoon
Jitendra Narayan Dash (Dash Benhur)	Aakhar Bhubaneswar
Vikram Sampath	The Write Circle Pune
Lalit Kumar	Kalam Chandigarh
Himanshu Bajpai	Kalam Meerut, Faridabad
Reshma Qureshi	The Write Circle Jodhpur
Neelima Chauhan	Kalam Nagpur
Jonathan Gil Harris	The Write Circle Patna
Kishan Lal Verma	Aakhar Jaipur
Shashank Bhartiya	Kalam Jaipur, Ajmer
Manoj Muntashir	Kalam Bilaspur, Raipur
Surjit Patar	Aakhar Amritsar
Deepak Ramola	Kalam Amritsar
Vijayshree Tanveer	Kalam Agra
Gulabo Sapera	Sur Aur Saaz
Kalam Special	Kanpur, Lucknow, Ahmedabad



Neelima Chauhan



Deepak Ramola



Gulabo Sapera



Himanshu Bajpai



Jitendra Narayan Dash  
(Dash Benhur)



Jonathan Gil Harris



Kishan Lal Verma



Lalit Kumar



Reshma Qureshi



Sharbari Zohra Ahmed



Shashank Bhartiya



Surjit Patar



Vijayshree Tanveer



Vikram Sampath



Manoj Muntashir

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