

MAIL BAG

I am an ardent reader of your Newsletter. I would like to thank you for sending the Newsletter regularly. I also appreciate the article, published in excerpts column 'The Deadly Virus'.

Gaya

Ankita Priya

I received your Newsletter and came to know how tremendously spread is the Chinese book market (June 2005 issue). NBT's new publication of the month Swatantryotter Hindi Kahaniyan definitely proved the milestone of the Hindi literature, thanks to Kamleshwar.

I thank NBT and the staff for regular mailing of the Newsletter and providing all contemporary information.

Bhiwani

Nav Ratan

For quite some time we could not see anything on northeast in your Newsletter. Please give some information on what NBT has proposed to do in the region. Where and when next NBT book fair in the region will be held?

Jorhat

Dr. Rajib Barua

FORTHCOMING BOOK FAIRS
Puri Book Fair

29 October to 6 November 2005

National Book Fair, Thiruvananthapuram
5 to 13 November 2005

NBT Newsletter is the house magazine of the National Book Trust, India — an autonomous organisation of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Government of India.

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PAKISTAN LOOKS FOR HINDI PROFESSORS

Pakistan's Punjab University is all set to begin a Masters degree course in Hindi literature from this academic session onwards, as more and more people in the country want to learn India's national language.

Shabnam Riaz, the only lecturer in the University's Hindi department, said while previously it was only the older people who were interested in learning Hindi, now the youths were getting attracted to the language. "Biases are still there as people see Hindi as the language of the 'enemy'. But the bias was gradually reducing" she said. "Judges, journalists, government officials, teachers, youths and people from different walks of life are joining the department" she added.

The University has been trying to start the course since two years, but it could not do so due to lack of qualified staff. The University, with a total of 14 students enrolled in the Hindi Department, has a staff of only three.

Courtesy: *Times of India*

ADIEU!

Ms Sheila Ahuja retired from service of NBT on 30 June 2005. She had joined the Trust as Telephone Operator in 1967. Director Ms Nuzhat Hassan and other senior colleagues recalled her services to the Trust in her long career spanning almost four decades and wished her a happy post-retirement life.

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AWARD FOR NBT



National Book Trust, India was awarded with the trophy for the Best Book Stall in the exhibition, organised by Narayan Das Khatri Memorial Trust, Faridabad recently.

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INDIAN BOOKS EXHIBITED AT CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Another feather was added to the Trust's continuing endeavour to promote Indian books abroad, when a joint exhibit of Indian books was organised in the two countries of the Caribbean Islands, mainly Trinidad & Tobago (Port of Spain) and Guyana (Georgetown).

The Exhibition of Indian books at Port of Spain coincided with the celebration of the 160th Indian Arrival Day falling on 30 May 2005. The occasion evokes mixed feelings among the Caribbean Indians who migrated to this place almost 160 years ago from India with the first batch of immigrants landing there in 1845. A host of social and cultural events are organised to commemorate the landing of Indian indentured labour in this part of the world and the first ever exhibition of Indian books there was a part of their events. The exhibition of Indian books at Port of Spain was organised by the National Book Trust, India in collaboration with the Indian High Commission at Trinidad and Tobago. Incidentally, it was the first ever Exhibition of Indian books there.

The Exhibition was inaugurated by Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha. Dignitaries included Shri Virender



Shri Somnath Chatterjee and Shri Bipan Chandra

Gupta, Indian High Commissioner to Trinidad & Tobago, Shri C Rajasekhar, Counsellor, High Commission of India, Shri Krishnan Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Indian Affairs and Prof Bipan Chandra, Chairman, National Book Trust, India. On the occasion, the Trust's publications *The Press in India: An Overview* in English by G.S. Bhargava and *Women Who Dared, Women Pioneers in Indian Renaissance* and *Unforgettable Nehru* in Hindi were released. It was noted that the science publications of the NCERT and the publications of the Trust brought out under its *Popular Science* series drew much appreciation.

Mr Hinds said, "India and Guyana share an excellent relationship and over the years Guyana has benefited from a number of projects undertaken by the Indian government."

Shri Avinash Gupta, Indian High Commissioner, hoped that such exhibitions would help the people of Guyana understand the rich cultural heritage that India has from which they themselves draw sustenance. Shri Gupta also apprised the audience about the role and significance of NBT as a pioneer book publishing and book promoting institution in India. On this occasion, Prof Bipan Chandra, Chairman, NBT, stated that ties

between the two countries dates back to the time when they were both struggling for independence from colonial rule. He appreciated the efforts of the people of Guyana in trying to create a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society like India.

The Exhibition at Georgetown was well organised and a large number of visitors, including children from many schools visited and browsed through the books displayed.

Keeping in view the interest generated by Indian books, the Trust explored the possibility of liasoning with booksellers here for regular sale of NBT books.

—Syed Haider Rizvi



Visitors at the Fair

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SPELLING BEE IN ASAMIYA

The first ever Spelling Bee contest in Asamiya was inaugurated at Jorhat on 2 July 2005. Organised by National Book Trust, India in collaboration with *Mouchaq*, Assam's highest circulated children's magazine, the contest, besides Jorhat, will be held at nine other districts of Assam.

Spelling Bee, is essentially a competition in spelling in Asamiya for children of class five to seven studying in Asamiya medium schools. The event with a workshop approach is seen as an attempt to make the process of learning language interesting and entertaining among children.

Discussing the programme at the inauguration, Dr. Tamuly, Editor, *Mouchaq*, took the audience through a brief history of the popular American Spelling Bee in English; how the phrase 'Spelling Bee' came into being in 1870, how the event climbed the ladder of popularity with a modest beginning of only 9 participants in 1925, how the event resulted in 1200000 new words in English dictionary, and finally how children of Indian origin have been dominating the American Spelling Bee for quite some time, the latest being its 74th version's topper Anurag Kashyap who has now become a household name even in India. Dr Tamuly expressed hope that this noble venture of NBT and *Mouchaq* would go a long way in the development of Asamiya language and a healthy reading habit among the children studying in vernacular medium schools.

Inaugurating the programme, Prof. Imran Shah, renowned litterateur, touched upon several issues confronting readers,



Prof. Imran Shah lighting the lamp

writers and linguists alike. He said that the best way to learn right spelling is serious reading of famous writers known for their purity of language. Once reading starts, a good reader, after some time, reads only words. Thereafter, the spelling makes a permanent impression in his or her mind. Giving some comic examples of wrong pronunciation creating unpleasant situation, he said that right pronunciation leads to right spelling. The general tendency among children to simplify tough pronunciation should be checked at any cost by teachers and parents. Expressing concern over the unending debate on what should be the criterion for the spelling of transliterated words borrowed from foreign languages, he said that for the sake of present and future health of our language we all need to follow a uniform pattern.

Presiding over the function Dr P.G. Rao, Director, Regional Research Laboratory, Jorhat, thanked NBT and *Mouchaq* for this noble venture especially at a time when the onslaught of electronic media resulted in a decline of reading habit among the children.

He also said that this type of contest would pave the way for scientific settlement of disputes pertaining to language.

Earlier, speaking at the function, Shri M.R. Mahapatra, Editor, NCCL, drew the attention of the audience to a questionnaire distributed among children. While requesting the children to fill up the questionnaire carefully, Shri Mahapatra said that the object of the questionnaire was to undertake a survey of reading habit prevalent among children. The questionnaire was specially developed by NCCL and *Mouchaq*.

How does the contest work

- All participating students were asked to register their names. Thereafter a ticket was assigned to each one of them. The ticket numbers were picked up in a random manner so that no two students of the same school/institution can sit together.
- There were altogether 9 rounds in the competition. In the first round, the children were asked to write some common words. In the second round, a popular Asamiya song of Dr Bhupen Hazarika was played accompanied by a choreographed performance by a Bharata Natyam dancer. The performance was repeated but this time with some missing words. The children were asked to identify the missing words from the posture of the dancer and write those with proper spelling.
- The third round was a story-telling round. Reputed story teller Smt Taruna Thakur narrated a story entitled 'How Did Sea-water Become Salty?' The children were



Dr. P.G. Rao addressing the gathering



A view of the participants

NBT PUBLICATIONS OF THE MONTH

Nehru Bal Pustakalaya

Playing Together (English tr), Bindu Agarwal, ISBN 81-237-4445-5, Rs. 17

My Life: The Tale of a Butterfly (Marathi tr), Anjan Sarkar, ISBN 81-237-4435-8, Rs 25

Swami and his Friends (Bangla rp), R.K. Narayan, Rs 35

The Stowaway (Bangla rp), Melanie Sequiera, Rs. 15



Young India Library

The Unforgettable Nehru (Hindi tr), P.D. Tandon, ISBN 81-237-4456-0, Rs. 85

Indian Society (English rp), S.C. Dube, ISBN 81-237-1031-3, Rs. 45

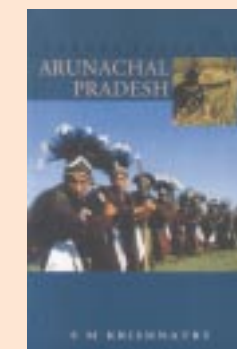
Popular Science
About Time (English rp), Bal Phondke, ISBN 81-237-4103-0, Rs. 70

Samudra Vigyan (Hindi rp), A.N.P. Umar Kutty, ISBN 81-237-0671-5, Rs. 50

Manorog: Galat Dharnayen Aur Sahee Pehlu (Hindi rp), M.S. Bhatia, ISBN 81-237-4373-4, Rs. 80

Ayurveda Unravelled (Hindi rp), S.

Border Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh, S.M. Krishnatry, ISBN 81-237-4460-9, Rs 80.00



The book provides an incisive account of the first unarmed expedition of north-eastern frontiers of India along Tibet undertaken in 1956. The tribes such as Tagins, Apatanis and Maras living in frontier areas of Arunachal Pradesh which formed the itinerary of the expedition, were believed to be quite hostile and all attempts by the British Indian troops to enter their villages were foiled. Hence their lifestyle, folklore and socio-economic conditions remained unexplored until this unarmed expedition led by the author and his wife Geeta Krishnatry whose diary forms the mainstay of the narration.

Dahanukar & U. Thatte, ISBN 81-237-2852-2, Rs. 35

Everyday Mathematics (Hindi rp), R.M. Bhagwat, ISBN 81-237-2552-3, Rs. 30

Energy (Hindi rp), A.K. Bakshi, ISBN 81-237-2205-2, Rs. 35

Challenge of AIDS (Hindi rp), Khurshid M. Pavri, ISBN 81-237-2350-4, Rs. 45

Joy of Making Indian Toys (Hindi rp), Sudarshan Khanna, ISBN 81-237-3125-6, Rs. 40

We Breathe and Drink Poison (Hindi rp), N. Manivasakam, ISBN 81-237-2346-6, Rs. 45

Water: The Matrix of Life (Hindi rp), K.K. Mishra, ISBN 81-237-3583-9, Rs. 30

Riddles in Tea Cup (Hindi rp), Partho Ghose and Dipankar Home, ISBN 81-237-1343-6, Rs. 35

Ways of Weather (English rev.), P.A. Menon, ISBN 81-237-4453-6, Rs. 50

General
The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates Between Gandhi and Tagore (English rp), S a b y a s a c h i



Traditional Indian Theatre: Multiple Streams, Kapila Vatsyayan, ISBN 81-237-4461-7, Rs. 140.00

The book is a pioneering study of some forms of Indian performing arts which are neither "folk" nor "classical" in the conventional sense of the terms, but belong to a twilight region combining elements of both. Though often widely divergent in character and expression, they nevertheless present an organic cohesiveness and a world-view which, typically as well as traditionally, are Indian. It is this unity of experience which adds a special quality to the present work.

The contents include description and analysis of a variety of forms such as yaksagana, Bhagavatamela, Chau, Nautanki, Ramalila and many others, and cover the whole of India, from Kerala to Uttar Pradesh, from Gujarat to Assam. While presenting them in a desired perspective, the author has not only used evidence from archaeological, textual and oral sources;

Bhattacharya, ISBN 81-237-2202-8, Rs. 55

Toto Chan (Marathi rp), Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, ISBN 81-237-2495-0, Rs 45

Swami Vivekanand (Hindi rp), Narendra Kohli, ISBN 81-237-4341-6, Rs. 95

Sukarat Ka Muqadama Aur Unki Mrityu (Hindi rp), Plato, ISBN 81-237-2934-0, Rs. 40

India—The Land and the People

Temples of North India (English rp), Krishna Deva, ISBN 81-237-1970-1, Rs. 40

Public Administration (Oriya tr), Padma Ramachandran, Rs. 80

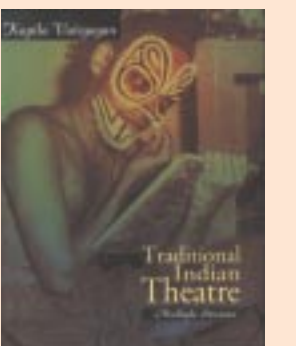
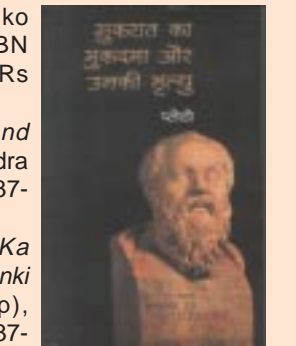
National Biography

Dr. Rajendra Prasad: An Autobiography (Hindi rp), ISBN 81-237-0884-X, Rs. 135

Classical Literature
Kamleshwar Kee Shreshtha Kahaniyan (Hindi rp), ISBN 81-237-4365-3, Rs. 95

whatever she says is also the result of a knowledge and comprehension which can be expected only from an artist. An 'Afterword' by the author for the present edition has been added.

Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, a classical dancer in her own right, is also one of the eminent theoretical exponents of Indian forms. She has been engaged in a systematic study of the performing arts for twenty-five years and among her widely acclaimed publications are Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts and Traditions of Indian Folk Dance. She is a Fellow of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and a recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fellowship.



NEWSPAPER: 400 YEARS YOUNG

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter,” said Thomas Jefferson in 1787.

The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) has accepted evidence produced by one of the world’s leading printing museums that 2005 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of the first newspaper in print. Scholars have generally put the date at 1609, the year of the first preserved editions.

The Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, Germany, which houses the world’s first printing press, has told WAN that the ‘birth certificate’ of the newspaper, ‘Relation’, was unearthed in the town archives of Strasbourg, now in France but at the time a part of the so-called ‘Deutsches Reich’.

“The evidence is compelling and I think we can all say Happy - 400th - Birthday this year to the print newspaper!”, said Timothy Balding, the WAN Director General. “Our Executive Committee has examined all the facts and has been persuaded that the story stands up”.

Martin Welke, founder of the German Newspaper Museum, who is also the ‘father’ of the discovery together with Professor Jean Pierre Kintz, a Strasbourg historian, told WAN that the publisher of ‘Relation’ was a certain Johann Carolus, who earned his living at the turn of the 17th century by producing hand-written newsletters, sold to rich subscribers at very high prices, reproducing news sent to him by a network of paid correspondents.

“In 1604, he bought a complete printing shop from the widow of a famous printer,” said Dr Welke. “In the summer of 1605 he switched to printing his ... newspapers, because it took him ‘too much time copying by hand’. Carolus also calculated that he

The Paris-based WAN represents 18,000 newspapers; its membership includes 72 national newspaper associations, individual newspaper executives in 102 countries, 10 news agencies and ten regional and world-wide press groups.

WAN’s annual survey of world press trends published at the Seoul congress also showed that:

- global newspaper sales hit a new daily high of 395 million in 2004
- the five largest markets are China, with 93.5 million copies sold daily; India (78.8 million); Japan (70.4 million); the United States (48.3 million); and Germany (22.1 million)
- the audience for newspaper websites grew 32% last year, and 350% over five years from a very low base
- 2004 saw the best advertising



Carolus' petition to the city council

could earn a lot more money “by printing a higher circulation for a lower price”.

In October that year, Carolus wrote a petition to the Strasbourg city council asking for “protection against reprints by other printers”. And the rest is history...

“Copyright problems already!”, said Mr Balding. “And strategic considerations about pricing policy and circulation!”

“Today, more than a billion people a day, across the planet, read a daily newspaper in print - a figure, not incidentally, that has risen nearly five per cent in the last five years”, added Mr Balding. “So, we’re not only 400 years old - or rather young - but we are globally enjoying great health and can presumably look forward to the next century or so, at least, with optimism”.

The Gutenberg Museum will celebrate the 400th anniversary with a big exhibition in July retracing the evolution of newspapers over their entire history.

performance in four years, with a revenue increase of 5.3%

- Now there are 6,580 daily newspapers worldwide, with a combined circulation of 395 million.

Continental breakdowns:

- South America, up 6.3%.
- Africa, up 6%.
- Asia, up 4.1%.
- North America, down 0.2%.
- Europe, down 1.4%.
- Asian growth is off a huge base. South America and Africa off much smaller foundations. In Japan, 64% of the people buy a newspaper daily. In the USA, it’s only 23%.
- Newspapers in Asia emphasise news. The volume of news exceeds the volume of advertising. In many U.S. newspapers, the reverse is true.

THE INDIAN SCENE

- The total number of registered newspapers, as on 31 March 2004: 58,469
- The number of new newspapers registered during 2003-2004: 2689
- Percentage of growth of registered publications over the previous year: 4.82%
- The number of newspapers reported published (submitted Annual Statement): 5,591
- The total circulation of newspapers: 13,30,87,588
- The largest number of newspapers & periodicals registered in any Indian language: Hindi (23,169)
- The largest number of newspapers & periodicals reported published (submitted Annual Statement) in any Indian language: Hindi (2,787)
- The second largest number of newspapers & periodicals registered in any language: English (8,492)
- The second largest number of newspapers & periodicals reported published (submitted Annual Statement in any language: English (579)
- The State with the largest number of registered newspapers: Uttar Pradesh (9,492)
- The State reported to be publishing (submitted Annual Statement) the largest number of newspapers: Uttar Pradesh (1,272)
- The State with the second largest number of registered newspapers: Delhi (7,872)
- The State reported to be publishing (submitted Annual Statement) the second largest number of newspapers: Delhi (700)
- The largest circulated Daily: *The Hindustan Times*, English, Delhi [Printed from 8 centres] (10,49,310 copies)
- The Second largest circulated Daily: *The Times of India*, English, Delhi [Printed from 2 centres] (10,32,537 copies)
- The third largest circulated Daily: *The Hindu*, English, Chennai [Printed from 11 centres] (9,80,232 copies)
- The largest circulated multi-edition Daily: *The Times of India*, (5 editions), English (17,29,520 copies)
- The second largest circulated multi-edition Daily: *Dainik Jagran* (10 editions), Hindi (17,04,291 copies)
- The largest circulated periodical: *Malayala Manorma*, (Weekly) Malayalam, Kottayam (10,36,340)

Source: RNI

FIJI: A CENTURY OLD BOND

The Trust is bringing out a title *On the Other Side of Midnight: A Fijian Journey* by Brij Lal. Herein we reproduce an excerpt from the chapter ‘Roots and Routes’.

– Editor

My direct link with Fiji begins in 1908. That was the year my grandfather went to Fiji as a *gimitiya*. Aja (grandfather) was lucky in on respect: he arrived Fiji when the worst abuses of *gimit* were over. The heart-rending infant mortality rates of the 1890s, the excessive over-tasking, the physical violence on the sugar plantations, an uncertain life, the raw edges of extreme vulnerability were turning into a thing of past by then. In 1907, there were 30,920 Indian living in Fiji, of whom only 11,689 were under indenture. The freed population-*Khula*-was cultivating 17,204 acres of land on their own, 5,586 devoted to cane and 9,347 planted with rice. Gradually, sugar cane cultivation would become the principal occupation of the Indian population. By 1911, of the 40,286 Indians, 27 per cent had been born in the colony, the Fiji-born proportion of the population increasing with time, until, by 1946, they became outright majority of the population, spawning the threat of ‘Indian domination’ that would bedevil the country’s complex political negotiations as it lurched in the 1960s towards independence that came in 1970.

As young children, we heard stories about indenture from Aja and other grizzled, dhoti-wearing *gimitiyas*-the hard work at the first light of dawn, about overseers good and bad, the fraught family life in the overcrowded estate lines, the cultural

confusions and transgressions that pervaded plantation life, the peculiar ways in which they attempted to make sense of their predicament. I heard these stories long before I read book about the indenture experience at university. These books, most famously Hugh Tinker’s *A New System of Slavery*, captured our imagination...

Their rendition of *gimit* was reinforced for me by the centenary celebrations of 1979 marking the arrival of Indian people in Fiji. The overall tone was understandably grim. Until then, the word *gimit* had not been a part of the general vocabulary of the Indo-Fijian community. For most people, the word was synonymous with shame and slavery, associated with a past best left to the fading pages of history. The word acquired a new vitality during the celebrations as people used to pry open a past about which much was quietly assumed but little actually known. But that past was viewed through the lens of a troubled present in which Indo-Fijians were increasingly being marginalised from the mainstream of public life through the vagaries of racial politics. Hindsight was used to hound history. And so, a complex and contested history was pressed into the service of an ideology designed to portray Indians as victims of history, without voice, without agency. The ‘whips-and-chains’ story is still a dominant part of the public discourse and understanding of *gimit* even though the new indenture historiography casts serious doubts about its explanatory value.

There is of course undeniable truth in the indenture-as-slavery thesis. Many *gimitiyas* were broken by work, claimed by

disease or wrecked by human violence and greed. Suffering and pain were an integral part of indenture. All this is abundantly clear from the historical record. But it is not the whole story. It cannot be. It is possible to acknowledge hardship while granting *gimitiyas* agency as a people who had a hand in shaping their destiny.

A central plank of the slavery thesis is that deception and fraudulence played a key role in the recruitment process. Migration was not an integral part of Indian society or psyche, the argument went, and no one in their right minds would therefore ever contemplate leaving their home for places unknown or unheard of. The Indian peasant was a landlubber, bound to the soil by strict codes of ritually-authorized behaviour and not an intrepid explorer of unknown, pollution-threatening worlds. But that’s not how things actually were, for throughout history, Indian peasants had moved about in search of better opportunities and to escape the depredations of landlords. In the 19th century, rural India was in the throes of profound change caused by the introduction of new notions of private ownership of property, increasing fragmentation of land holdings, deepening indebtedness among the peasantry, the effects of natural calamities. The places in eastern Uttar Pradesh, which furnished 45,000 of Fiji’s 60,000 migrants-the remainder came from south India after 1903 when sources in the North had begun to dry up-were particularly adversely affected. As employment opportunities diminished there, people went elsewhere in search of a better life. It was the natural thing to do.

BOOKS RECEIVED

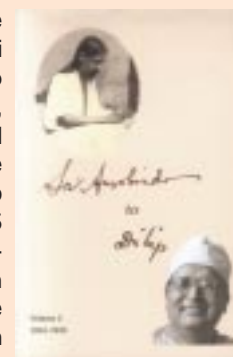
Black Shield, G.S.K. Mohaan Rao, Nova Publishing House, G-13, Shree Parshwa Ind. Estate, V.P. Road, Dombivli (East) - 421201; Rs. 280



An exciting story of an international team escorted by an Indian commando, braving a mafia, where action rapidly moves from US to India, China, Tibet and Indonesia for resolving the mystery.

Sri Aurobindo to Dilip, Vol. 2, Sujata Nahar & Shankar Bandyopadhyay (eds.), Hari Krishna Mandir Trust, Pune, Rs. 200 This is the second of four volumes of

correspondence between Sri Aurobindo and Dilip Kumar Roy, singer, musician, poet and writer. This volume scans only two years—1934-1935 as the correspondence between the Master and the disciple grew in volume, frequency and depth during this period.

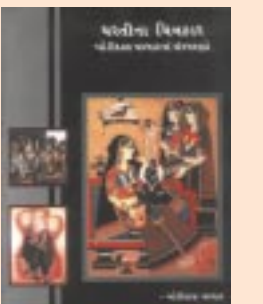


Mother or The New Species, Vol. II, Sat Prem, Mira Aditi Centre, 62 Sriranga, 2nd Main, 1st Cross, T.K. Layout, Saraswatipuram, Mysore - 570009, Rs. 180 A book on The Mother, disciple of Sri

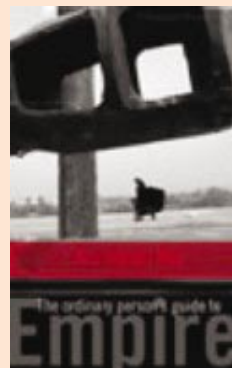
Aurobindo, by the author who was born in Paris and later came to India to discover Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

Dhartina Chitrakar (Gujarati), Kholidas Parmar, Gurjar Agencies, Gandhi Marg, Ahmedabad-380001; Rs. 300.

Kholidas Parmar is a well known artist of contemporary Gujarat. In this autobiography he looks back at his life, his times, his influences and his works. Profusely illustrated with paintings and drawings, the book is a good read.



An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire, Arundhati Roy, Viking, Rs. 395



The testament is there in the very beginning: "For reasons I do not fully understand, fiction dances out of me. Non-fiction is wrenched out by the aching, broken world I wake up to every morning." It was a word-shifting performance in

Indian novel when *The God of Small Things* danced out of Arundhati Roy. It was sometime ago, long before 9/11 and Afghanistan, before war and imperial immorality, before Osama, Islam's Che, had his Tora Bora moment, before the legend of Saddam the Magnificent ended up in a spider hole, it was before the Evil Emperor of Washington began extending his domain. It was before history, and Roy on the riverbank was in conversation with memory. "The aching, broken world" intervened to take her away from the Meenachal, and brought her face to face with power and its dehumanising synonyms. For, "my writing is not really about nations and histories, it's about power. About the paranoia and ruthlessness of power. About the physics of power". About writer as conscience keeper.

Or even the writer as a street fighter, a narrative stretching from Malraux to Sartre

Honorary Tiger: The Life of Billy Arjan Singh, Duff Hart-Davis, Roli Books, Rs. 350

Tiger, Stephen Mills, BBC Books, £10



At a moment when the tiger is in great peril and a depression engulfs the conservation community, it is a delight to read two books of exceptional quality that inspire. The first, *Honorary Tiger*, takes a fascinating look at the life of Billy Arjan

Singh, who is now 88 years old and still fighting for the rights of the tigers of Dudhwa. Written by Duff Hart-Davis, it takes you through Billy's early life—his first tiger shot at the age of 14, his amazing interactions with Jim Corbett and, of course, his experiences of World War II. The book then opens into a story of post-independence

to Bernard Henri-Lévy. Exhibitionism of dissent? It is always a bit like that when art aspires to change society. Take a return trip to Prague 1989 and you'll see how romantic liberation looks in the glow of the Magic Lantern. It was the name of the theatre from where began the velvet revolution, the moral rejoinder to communism—what Vaclav Havel calls the power of the powerless. Or, reread the back pages of Latin American literature or watch again the masters of East European cinema and you will see arguments with power that vindicate Jorge Luis Borges: censorship is the mother of metaphor. So there is a tradition to endorse Roy. Still, does Roy have the words to enrich the tradition?

Well, she liberally used words like holocaust, fascism and genocide—words weighed down by too much history. In India—a nation afflicted by bomb, dams, Modi and globalisation—the first casualty of left-liberal angst is language. Roy, the Aishwarya Rai of Indian dissent, borrows liberally from the glossary of the worst yesterday to make our day darker. Post-Pokhran, it was the end of imagination, a travesty of Adorno's "there is no poetry after Auschwitz". Roy has the text but India, despite nuclear temptation and "Hindu fascism", is the wrong context. The algebra of Infinite Justice, her last collection of pamphlets, was a celebration of that misplaced text. Now we are with the second instalment, and the poetic shrill has not diminished, though there are incidental beauties like "flags are bits of coloured cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap

people's minds and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead".

Otherwise, Roy's case against the variations of Empire is a familiar territory: Noam Chomsky Zindabad. She loves antiquity and collects icons and gets disillusioned the moment she steps out of the museum-rich with items like Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, the mythical Muhammad Ali and the lonely Chomsky into the moral indignities of the imperium. They are the Great Betrayal, today's black leaders like Colin Powell and Condi Rice, party to the perfidies of George W. Bush. Anti-Americanism, the religion of the left-liberal evangelists, could not have been wordier, but Roy's alternative is not as clear as her demonology. 9/11 was an incident, and an inevitable one. She doesn't say so, still you get the feeling. The US reaction, the war on terror, is a war on humanity, imperial transgression of the worst kind. The logical extension of such an argument is: the world could have afforded to live with Saddam and the absence of two towers in Manhattan.

Roy needs an Empire, a cause to play out her angst. She constructs one, more forbidding than the real one. Freedom owes a great deal to the missile-borne morality of the Emperor. To see the first notation of the power of the powerless, look elsewhere, in the war-scarred 21st century, in Baghdad or Beirut, so remote from this guide book of the lost cause.

—S. Prasannarajan

Courtesy: *India Today*, June 27, 2005

India and how, over the past 50 years, one man has fought to protect a piece of tiger turf along the border of India and Nepal.

The description of the 1960s and '70s is especially interesting as Billy worked closely with Indira Gandhi to strengthen the cause of the tiger. This is essential reading for our present political leadership. It is about how a prime minister took time off and supported an individual and his cause—whether it was in declaring Dudhwa a national park and a Project Tiger reserve or helping Billy by reintroducing leopards and a tigress into the wild. At the same time, *Honorary Tiger* is also the story of the amazing battle that Billy launched to keep Dudhwa and its tigers alive. It was not easy. For most of the time the Forest Department and the bureaucracy were against him. False cases and harassment were part of what Billy gathered in his struggle. It is an amazing example for the younger generation to learn what it means to confront the system and fight with the courage of your convictions....

The second book, by Stephen Mills, is

about wild tigers through the eyes of some of the experts on the subject. He journeys into the writings of many across Asia and leaves the reader with enough facts about the tiger and includes in the book some excellent pictures. The concluding chapters of the book look at the problems—poaching, illegal trade and the growing conflict between local people and wildlife.



...I think one of the issues that Mills touches on is vital in future endeavours. Tigers are finding themselves in islands. Their behaviour could be changing and we must find new and different ways to manage isolated habitats. ...

Tiger provides valuable information without too much judgement. In today's predicament it can only add to our wider understanding of an animal in great peril.

—Valmik Thapar

Courtesy: *India Today*, June 27 2005

BOOK EXHIBITION IN CHANDIGARH



Ms. Nuzhat Hassan, Shri Ankur Gupta and Shri Anand Sharma

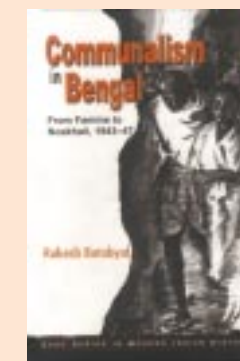
NBT organised a Book Exhibition at Central State Library in Chandigarh from 20 to 26 June 2005. The exhibition was inaugurated by Ankur Gupta, Director, Haryana State Project Officer. Speaking on the occasion, NBT Director Nuzhat Hassan said, "We want to promote book reading and book culture among all age groups. We endeavour to provide right kind of books

with excellent quality to reinforce reading habits among children."

Anand Sharma, Director, Primary Education, K.C. Ramola, Director, Central State Library and S.H.M. Rizvi, Manager (Sales & Marketing), NBT were also present on the occasion. More than seven hundred titles in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu were on display in the Exhibition.

NEW ARRIVALS

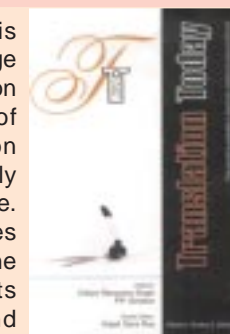
Communalism in Bengal: From Famine to Noakhali, 1943-47, Rakesh Batabyal, Sage Publications, B-42 Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi; ISBN 81-7829-471-0; Rs. 750



The book explores the ascent and trajectory of communal ideology in pre-Partition Bengal—from the famine of 1943 to the Noakhali riots of 1946-47. The first major work to analyse communalism as an ideology located in a concrete historical plane, this

book argues that the period after 1943 witnessed a clash between nationalism and communalism, where communal ideologies embarked on a new phase, determined to replace nationalism. Presenting fresh perspective on the reasons behind the Noakhali riots with the help of new sources, the book also analyses Gandhi's visit to Noakhali, presenting him as resolute and prepared to embark on an ideological fight against communalism.

Translation Today, Vol. 1, No. 2, October 2004; Central Institute of Indian Languages, Manasagangotri, Mysore - 570006; ISBN 0972-8740; Subscription (per issue) Rs. 100.



The journal is impelled by an urge to further writing on translation and of actual translation which are distinctly above the mediocre. Translation Studies (TS) as a discipline has spread its tentacles far and wide, encompassing anything from human ontology to the machine although at the same time scholars have averred that the legitimacy of TS as an academic discipline is open to question. Primarily because TS has no theoretical questions of its own and even if it does, one takes recourse to other fields of enquiry for their answers. This issue focuses primarily on translation as it interfaces with post-colonialism.

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