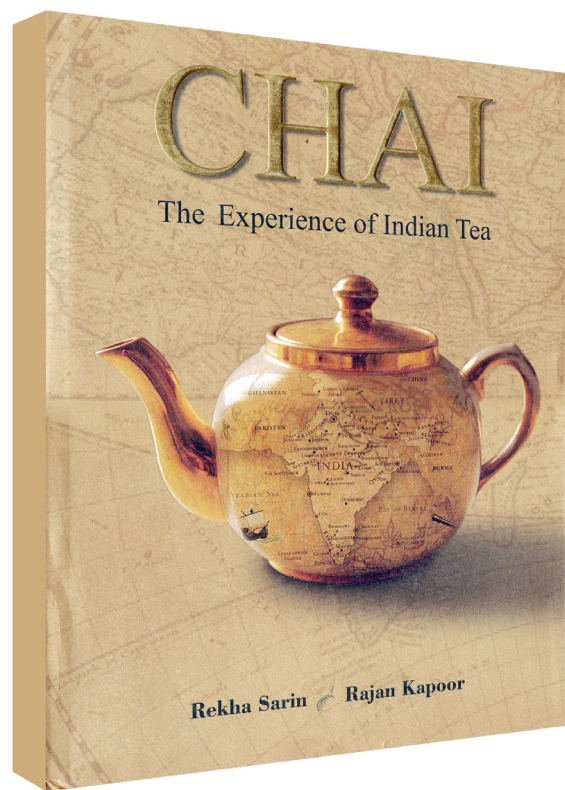


BOOK QUEST

A Bimonthly Newsletter published by Bhabani Books, Guwahati - 781 007, Assam, India ₹ 5/-



Chai : The Experience of Indian Tea

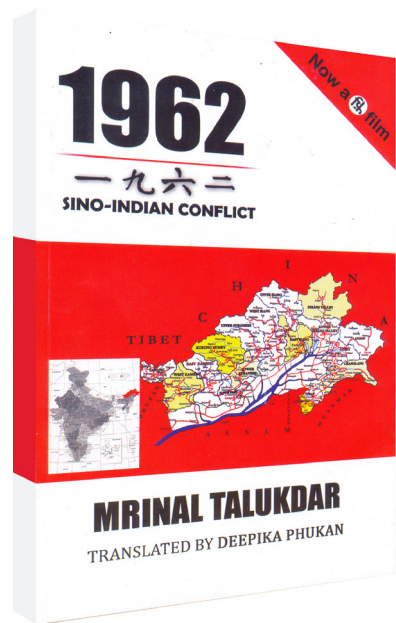


Rekha Sarin and Rajan Kapoor,
Niyogi Books, ₹ 1995

the fascinating world of tea gardens, the bountiful natural landscapes and regional nuances.

A true tea aficionado's delight and joy for the book lover! □

1962: Sino-Indian Conflict



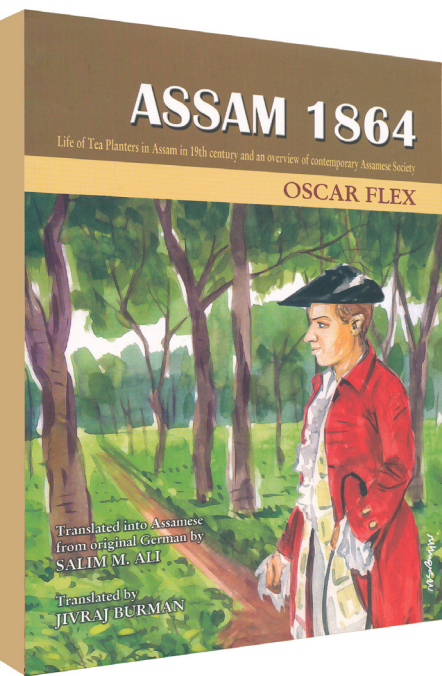
Mrinal Talukdar,
Translated by Deepika Phukan,
Kaziranga Books, ₹ 450

One of the most traumatic events of post-independent India is the Sino-Indian war of 1962. It shattered India's aspirations of emerging as a great Asian power, and also put paid to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's dream of establishing himself as a world leader.

The author in this book has attempted to analyse the possible reasons that led to the war between the two most populous nations of the world. He has clearly analysed that Nehru's Forward Policy was the trigger for the Chinese invasion.

It is a thrilling and untold story of the Indo-Chinese war fought in Arunachal Pradesh. □

Assam 1864, Oscar Flex

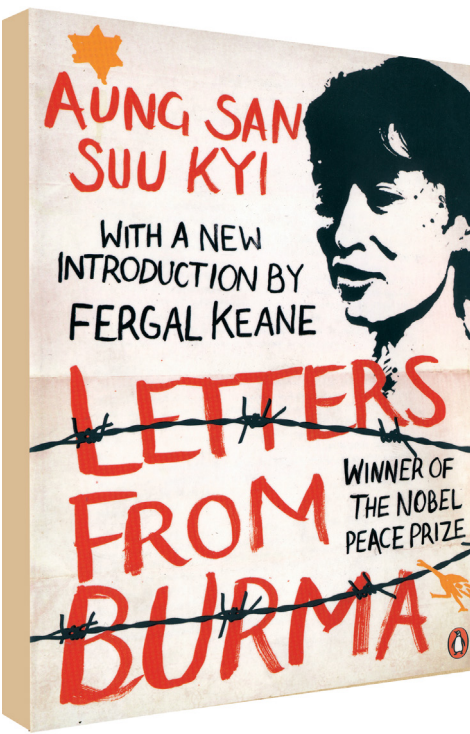


Translated by:
Jivraj Burman, G.L. Agarwalla,
₹ 500

for the historians and the social scientists, even as it could be enjoyed as a novel for the expertise Flex had as a story-teller. □

The discovery of tea in Assam during the British Raj made a great impact on the socio-economical, even cultural life of the Assamese. Although the tea planters were predominantly British, a few non-British had also worked in some tea estates across Assam. Oscar Flex, a German, was one of them. During his stay in Assam, he observed the Assamese life minutely and impartially and noted down his experiences, which he later included in a book published in Germany in 1873. This rare book, translated into Assamese and then into English and brought out since the original German edition was published 140 years ago, provides a virtual picture of life of the 19th century Assam. It could be a valuable reference book

Letters From Burma



Aung San Suu Kyi
Penguin Books, ₹ 399

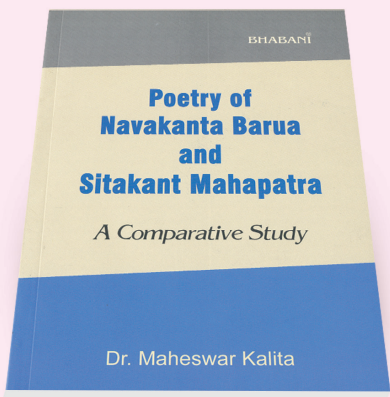
country's seasons and scenery, customs and festivities, that remain so close to her heart. □

In these unforgettable letters, Aung San Suu Kyi reaches out beyond Burma's borders to paint for her readers a vivid and poignant picture of her native land. Here she celebrates the courageous army officers, academics, actors and everyday people who have supported the National League for Democracy, often at great risk to their own lives. She reveals the impact of political decisions on the people of Burma, from the terrible cost to the children of imprisoned dissidents-allowed to see their parents for only fifteen minutes every fortnight- to the effect of inflation on the national diet and of state representation on traditions of hospitality. She also evokes the beauty of the

JUST PUBLISHED

Through this book, Dr Maheshwar Kalita marshals a whole range of facts from the history and politics of the period under consideration with a view to show their direct impact on the aesthetics of two modern Indian poets of two cognate languages: Assamese and Oriya. Both the writers, Navakanta Barua and Sitakant Mahapatra were stalwarts of the modern movement in Indian poetry. Dr Kalita's endeavour to compare the contributions of these epic personalities is relevant and laudable.

The book is a great pick for researchers atnd students keen to explore the domain of Indian English Poetry. □



Dr Maheshwar Kalita
Bhabani Books, ₹ 100

Guwahati Book Fair and Literary Festival 2014

The most vibrant Literary Festival in the Northeast Region was hosted at Guwahati organised by the Publication Board, Assam from 27th to 29th Dec, 2014. The festival was held at NEDFI House parallelly with the Guwahati Book Fair (25th to 5th January) at the AEI Field at Chandmari. The ten-day long Book Fair had publishers participating from different parts of the country from all big names of the publishing industry— Harper Collins, Oxford, Macmillan to new and upcoming ones endeavouring to establish a foothold in the market and attempting to register their brand name in the minds of the people.

In the recent years, the Northeast Region has witnessed a spurt growth in readership with young readers becoming motivated to read good literature.

The Guwahati Literary Festival (GLF), 2014 was organised modelled on the acclaimed Jaipur Literary Festival. Deliberations by writers, academics, artists, journalists from all across the nation filled the air of GLF with vitality and zeal. The audience too was keen for attending the different sessions which was spread across the three days. Some of the topics discussed during the session were 'Resisting Stereotypes : writing in Northeast', 'North-east India: on the map, off the mind', 'Myth, society and storytelling', 'women's narrations : the personal is political', 'Interrogating social reality through cartoons', 'Not lost in translations : building bridges', and so on.

Eminent personalities from the literary milieu like Mark Tully, Namita Gokhle, DN Bezbaruah, Jerry Pinto, Janice Pariat, Birendranath Dutta, Nagen Saikia were seen engaged in generating various thought-provoking suggestions and gave valuable insights to different issues.

We have seen people from far and wide thronging into events like JLF, Goa Literary Festival, Bangalore Literary Festival and the crowd multiplying each year.

This year the Guwahati Literary Festival too, has provided a platform to publishing houses, young budding writers and literary geniuses to come together and participate in the colourful event. Literary festivals have proved over the years to be cultural catalysts in disseminating the regional as well as National flavour to people coming from other regions, by showcasing their exploits and talent. Let's hope that the Guwahati Literary Festival in the coming years would attract more and more people and let Guwahati become the literary hub for litterateurs and writers who might want to pen down their stories by the mighty Brahmaputra in years to come ! □

Mistress of the Throne : The Mughal Intrigues

Mistress of the Throne : The Mughal Intrigues is set in the year 1631 and gives its readers an exclusive account of the life of young Jahanara, who finds herself crowned the Queen of India by her father, the Mughal King Shah Jahan. This happens when her mother, Mumtaz Mahal, who was the Queen of India, passes away. Instead of passing on this title to one of his many wives, he decides to break free from the conventional trend and pass it on to his young daughter instead. This seventeen-year-old queen, who looks like a mirror-image of her mother, must now bear the load of the entire kingdom on her young shoulders.

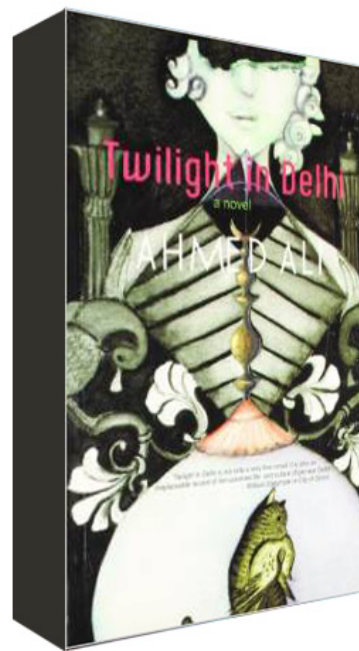
Jahanara has younger siblings who have varied temperaments. She must come to terms with the harsh fact that even though she has all the power and authority in her hands, she is forbidden to share that with any man. Even though her parents had a love story that was etched in time, young Jahanara must now accept that she is forbidden to marry, as per the law.

Set in a time that is often referred to as 'India's Golden Age', this enchanting account of the life of a young Muslim queen is unique and tells its readers a lot about lives in that era. □



Ruchir Gupta,
Sristi Publishers, ₹ 250

Twilight in Delhi



Ahmed Ali,
Rupa Publications, ₹ 295

Twilight in Delhi, published in 1940, was one of the first novels to call for the freedom of India from British rule. It delves into history, bringing the past alive, it is a moving portrayal of the slow and steady decay of an entire culture and way of life. E.M. Forster praised the book as "new and fascinating poetic and brutal, delightful and callous." This classic novel is a fine depiction of a changing India following colonialism.

First published by the Hogarth press in 1940, *Twilight in Delhi* was widely acclaimed by critics and hailed in India and all over the English speaking world, as a major literary event. It has been translated into French, Spanish, Italian and Urdu.

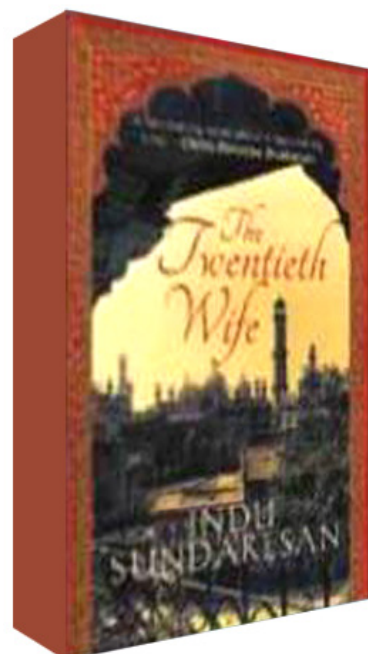
Regarded as one of remarkable modern Islamic literature, Ali Ahmed's *Twilight in Delhi* was first published in 1940, but was almost forgotten when most of the books' stock was destroyed in a fire, till it was resurrected again in 1964.. till then the book has gone ahead to claim many critical acclaims for the work that somewhat proves that it transcends the language in which it is written, in slowing down the reader's pace to narrate the minutest of rituals in Chandni Chowk of 1911, but not by superfluously romanticizing the olden days..the tone is definitely sad, un-hurried and almost poetic, and involved in introspection and sentiments..

Particularly engaging are the parts describing the marriage function in the Muslim families of yesteryears, and in describing the helpless weariness of characters in facing death and monotony of old age.

Sometimes, the story line becomes too thin to retain the full attention, and the pace too slow, then one can take refuge in the beautiful narrative style that is never too-direct, just like the gentle life of those years perhaps. □

The Twentieth Wife

Mehrunnisa - the Sun of Women - one of India's most legendary and controversial empresses ... a woman who overcame insurmountable obstacles through sheer brilliance and determination ... whose love shaped the course of the Mughal Empire. She is the twentieth wife. The daughter of refugees from Persia, growing up on the fringes of Emperor Akbar's opulent palace grounds, Mehrunnisa first encounters Prince Salim on his wedding day. Eight years old at the time, she decides that she too will one day become Salim's wife - unaware of the great price she and her family will pay for this dream. Skilfully blending the textures of history with the rich imaginings of a fairy tale, *The Twentieth Wife* sweeps readers up in the emotional pageant of Salim and Mehrunnisa's embattled love. From an ill-fated first marriage through motherhood and into a dangerous maze of power struggles and political machinations, Mehrunnisa searches for the true redemptive love she has never known. Mehrunnisa's and Salim's quest takes them, and the vast empire that hangs in the balance, to places they have never dreamed possible. □

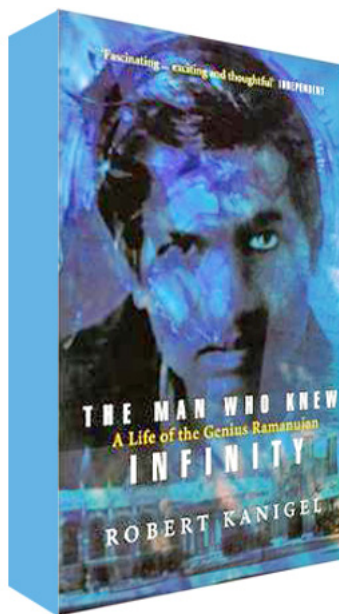


Indu Sundaresan,
Harper Collins, ₹ 399

The Man Who Knew Infinity : A Life of the Genius Ramanujan

In *The Man Who Knew Infinity: A Life of The Genius Ramanujan*, Robert Kanigel chronicles the life and times of Ramanujan and also paints the social backdrop on which the mathematician was raised and groomed. He describes the Indian education system, Ramanujan's orthodox family and his early marriage to a minor girl. Kanigel takes his readers through how, after writing to several mathematicians and repeated failed attempts to profess himself, Ramanujan was finally able to draw the attention of English mathematician G. H. Hardy. He landed a scholarship for continuing his research in pure mathematics. Hardy brought him to England where Ramanujan worked closely with other renowned Cambridge mathematicians.

Kanigel, in *The Man Who Knew Infinity: A Life of The Genius Ramanujan*, apprises us with conventions that guide Indian society. Ramanujan, unable to adhere to prevalent norms, was considered a social outcast. □



Robert Kanigel,
Abacus, ₹ 599

Iconic artist RK Laxman dies at the age of 94.

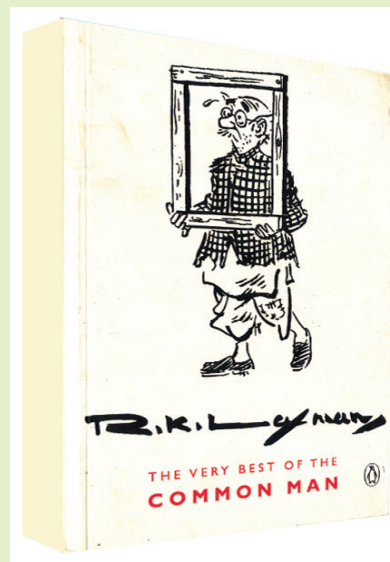
Noted artist, RK Laxman died in Pune on 26th January, 2015 after prolonged illness at the age of 94.

Capturing the entire gamut of idiosyncrasies of Indian politicians in an innocuous newspaper box with his cartoons, RK Laxman immortalized the passive, hapless common man with an uncanny perception and sarcasm in a daily commentary on his life that brought smiles to millions.

Rasipuram Krisnaswamy Laxman was born in Mysore on October 24, 1921. Son of a school teacher, he was one of the seven siblings that included his elder brother eminent novelist RK Narayan. With a penchant for drawing since his school days, Laxman was engrossed by illustrations. Even in a space of couple of inches, he could use his masterful strokes to expose the hypocrisy of Politics, leaving many of the politicians red faced. □



RK Laxman

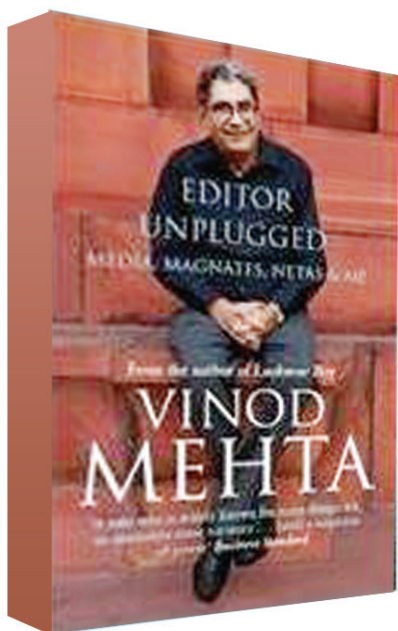


RK Laxman,
Penguin Books ₹ 250

The Very Best of the Common Man

This book is a special collection featuring the hundred most memorable Common Man cartoons of all time and is a tribute to India's best-loved cartoonist and one of the most striking voices commenting on Indian sociopolitical life.

Editor Unplugged : Media, Magnates, Netas and Me



Vinod Mehta,
Penguin Viking, ₹ 599

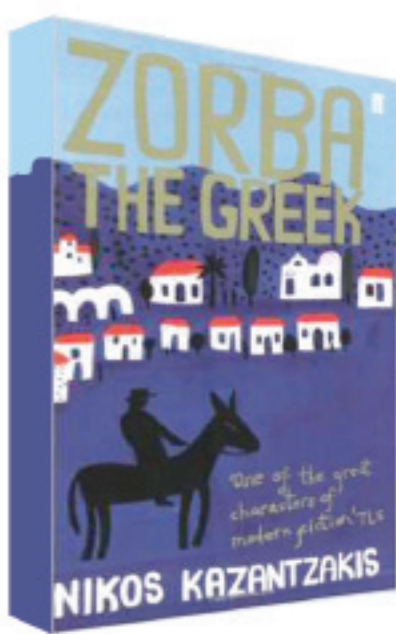
Vinod Mehta's new book takes forward the story of Lucknow Boy, recounting his experiences in the corridors of power in Delhi. His views on Narendra Modi, Arvind Kejriwal and the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, and his decoding of coalition politics and the significant changes ushered in by the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, are expressed with his characteristic sharp insights, wit and wisdom. So too are his analyses of the sweeping changes taking place in the print and TV media, and his pen portraits of personalities such as Ratan Tata, Nira Radia, Khushwant Singh, Sachin Tendulkar and Arundhati Roy. Other chapters examine the lack of humour in our political life, the changing aspirations of the Indian middle class, and the mistakes and regrets of his life. Peppered with anecdotes

and gossip, every page of this honest, lively and irreverent book is both illuminating and entertaining. □

Zorba the Greek

Zorba The Greek, written by Nikos Kazantzakis, is a surreal and philosophical tale about a young English writer's experiences when he meets Alexis Zorba.

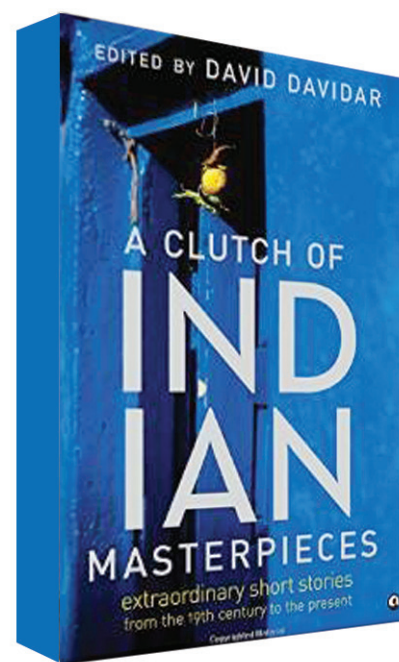
Set in pre-World War I times, *Zorba The Greek* follows the life of a young English novelist, who is on a journey to Crete in order to collect an inheritance. Though he initially travels there in a maudlin temper, with an aim to grab the money and get out, he has a chance encounter with the indefatigable and spirited Alexis Zorba. Alexis is a man with a zest for life, an aggressive appetite, a taste for the beauty hidden in the most mundane things, and a magnanimous spirit. Despite initially being at odds, since they are completely different individuals in every regard, Zorba slowly wins over the protagonist, with his profound philosophy, that stems from his experiences with his many lovers, his family (which he loves passionately), and his involvement in fighting the Balkan Wars. □



Nikos Kazantzakis,
Faber, ₹ 599

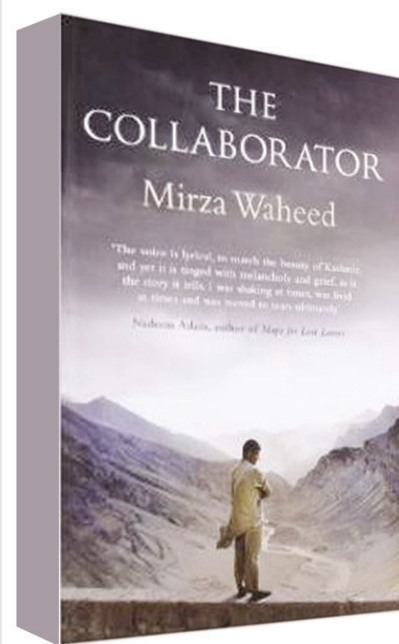
A Clutch of Indian Masterpieces: Extraordinary Short Stories from the 19th Century to the Present

The stories in this collection will make you see the world differently as the greatest stories always do. The thirty-nine short stories in this book will blow you away. Starting with a ghoststory by Rabindranath Tagore, India's most famous writer and ending with a fable by Kanishk Tharoor, a writer who has come of age in the twenty first century, these literary masterpieces showcase the extraordinary range and diversity of our story telling tradition. The first recognizably modern Indian short stories were written in Bengal (by Tagore and others) in the second half of the nineteenth century writers from other regions were quick to follow suit, often using the form to protest colonial oppression and the various ills afflicting rural and urban India. Over the next century and a half, some of the finest writers the world has seen produced outstanding fiction in every conceivable genre. Many of these stories find a place in this volume, as does work by emerging talent that has never been published in book form before. Here you will find stories of classical realism, ones rooted in folklore and myth, tales of fantasy, humour, horror, crime and romance, stories set in villages, small towns, cities and the moon. They will entertain you and shock you, they will lighten your mood and cast you down, they will move you and they will make you reflect on life's big and little questions. Most of all, they will make you see the world differently as the greatest stories always do. □



David Davidar,
Aleph Book company, ₹ 695

The families in the village begin to think it's time to flee, to search for a place of greater safety. But the headman will not allow his family to leave. And, whilst the headman watches his dreams give way beneath the growing violence, his son, under the brutal, drunken gaze of the Indian army captain, is seemingly forced to collaborate and go into the valley to count the corpses, fearing, each day, that he will discover one of his friends lying amongst the dead. *The Collaborator* is a stunningly humane work of storytelling with a poignant and unpredictable hero at its heart. In one of the most shocking and brilliantly compelling novels of recent times Mirza Waheed lights our way into the heart of a war that is all too real. □

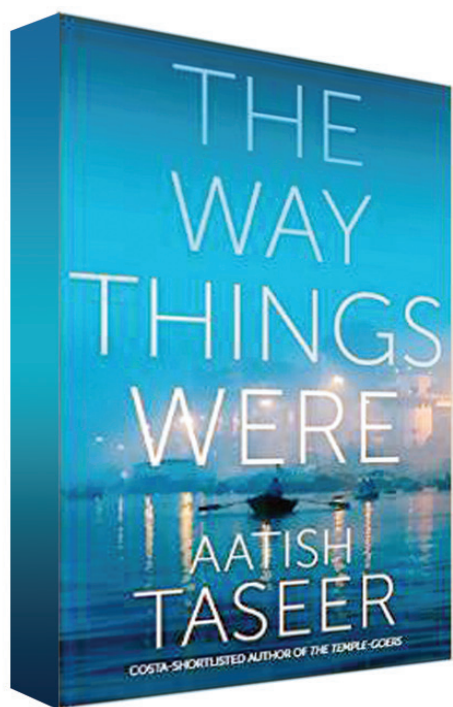


Mirza Waheed,
Viking, ₹ 499

The Collaborator

It is Kashmir in the early 1990s and war has finally reached the isolated village of Nowgam close to the Pakistan border. Indian soldiers appear as if from nowhere to hunt for militants on the run. Four teenage boys, who used to spend their afternoons playing cricket, or singing Bollywood ballads down by the river, have disappeared one by one, to cross into Pakistan and join the movement against the Indian army. Only one of their friends, the son of the headman, is left behind.

The Way Things Were



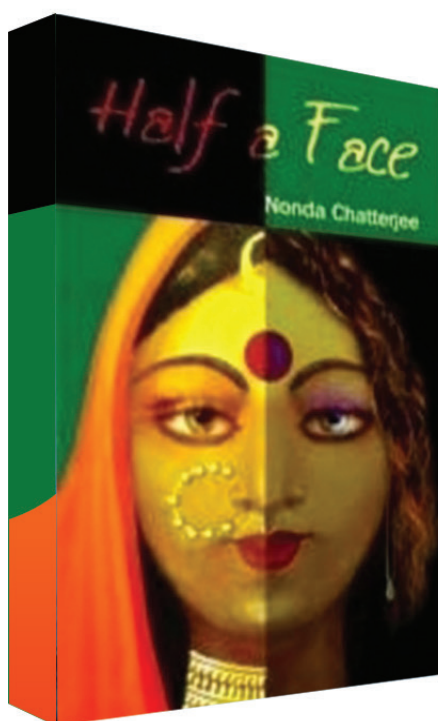
Aatish Taseer,
Picador India, ₹ 699

When Skanda's father Toby dies, estranged from Skanda's mother and from the India he once loved, it falls to Skanda to return his body to his birthplace. This is a journey that takes him halfway around the world and deep into the story of three generations of his family, whose fractures, frailties and toxic legacies he has always sought to elude. Both an intimate portrait of a marriage and its aftershocks and a panoramic vision of India in transition, *The Way Things Were* is a magisterial novel about the pressures of history upon the present moment. Set at flashpoints in 1975, 1984, 1992 and in modern Delhi, it has the epic reach and thrilling ambition and the

potential to become a classic of its time. □

Half a Face

The imprints of her ancestors' feet that were displayed, amongst other memorabilia, on the walls of her house had always intrigued Priti, for to her they were malevolent. As she grew up, she almost obsessively questioned the mystery that lay behind the absence of the footprint of her great grandmother, the enigmatic Gauri, whose name was a taboo in the family and any questions asked pertaining to her life, considered blasphemous. Her grandfather was aware of this and on his deathbed, he bequeathed a key to her to unravel the truth lost in the dark shades of feudal Bengal. Brilliantly structured, the book has been aesthetically crafted, with its narrative moving on a parallel course between the past and the present, between rural Bengal and modern Kolkata, between hard-core realism and lyrical emotion. Steeped in local colour, the two voices quite distinct yet gradually merging in Priti's consciousness, create a mystery that proceeds at breakneck speed, compels the reader's total attention but never loses sight of the feminist issues at stake. □



Nonda Chatterjee,
Niyogi Books, ₹ 295

Crumpled Voices



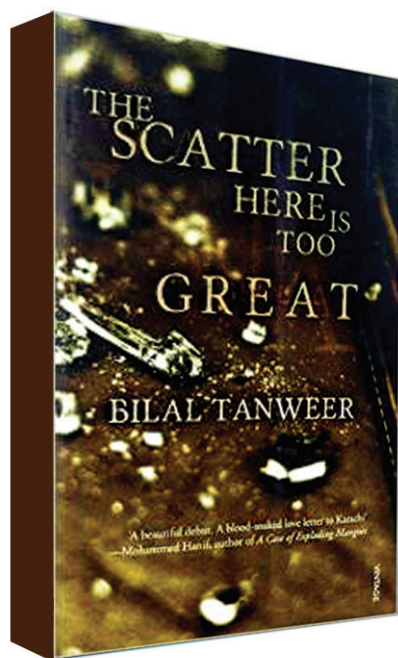
Pulkit Gupta,
Gargi Publishers, ₹ 129

within us, engulfing us in its shadow. Through each of the story in this book, we have tried to highlight one such aspect of horrifying crimes. □

Crumpled Voices - Shades of Suffering is an anthology based on social issues. A common thread of the prevailing societal evils and injustice binds them together. We have tried to weave stories ranging from rape to acid attack and domestic violence to honor killing in this anthology. All of us have witnessed such incidents in our day to day life, our near and dear ones might have experienced them closely too. We have almost grown up among them, felt them following us. We constantly live in fear of the unknown, fear of being the victim to any of the criminal activities multiplying around us. These days when no place is safe, including the web, our voices need to be heard. Protest must begin from somewhere, and we have used our pen which is mightier than the sword to express our anguish. An echo of many unimaginable atrocities lurks

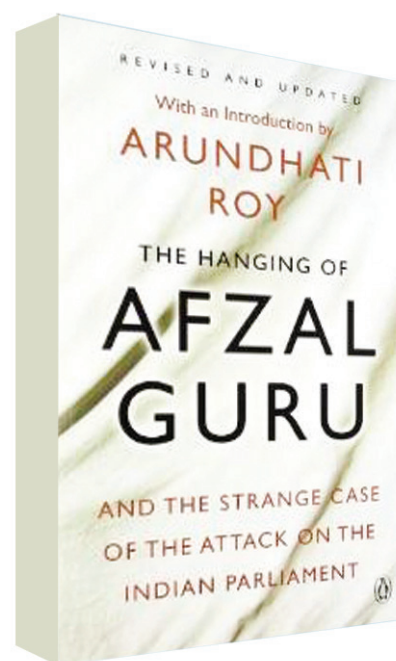
The Scatter Here is Too Great

The Scatter Here Is Too Great heralds a major new voice from Pakistan with a stunning debut-a novel told in a rich variety of distinctive voices that converge at a single horrific event a bomb blast at a station in the heart of the city. Comrade Sukhansaz, an old communist poet, is harassed on a bus full of college students minutes before the blast. His son, a wealthy middle-aged businessman, yearns for his own estranged child. A young man, Sadeq, has a dead-end job snatching cars from people who have defaulted on their bank loans, while his girlfriend spins tales for her young brother to conceal her own heartbreak. An ambulance driver picking up the bodies after the blast has a shocking encounter with two strange-looking men whom nobody else seems to notice. And in the midst of it all, a solitary writer, tormented with grief for his dead father and his decimated city, struggles to find words. Elegantly weaving together a striking portrait of a city and its people, *The Scatter here is too Great* is a love story written to Karachi-as vibrant and varied in its characters, passions, and idiosyncrasies as the city itself. □



Bilal Tanweer,
Random House India ₹ 350

The Hanging of Afzal Guru and the Strange Case of the Attack on the Indian Parliament

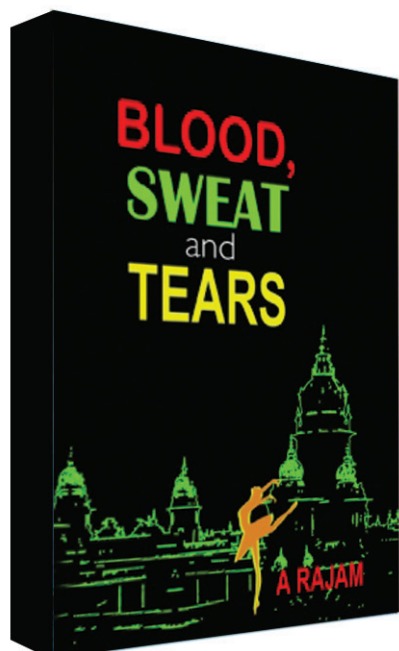


Arundhati Roy,
Penguin India, ₹ 295

hardly a single piece of evidence that stands up to scrutiny and emphasize the urgent need for an impartial, transparent inquiry into the Parliament attack and its aftermath. □

On 13 December 2001, the Indian Parliament was attacked by a few heavily armed men. Eleven years later, we still do not know who was behind the attack, nor the identity of the attackers. Both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India have noted that the police violated legal safeguards, fabricated evidence and extracted false confessions. Yet, on 9 February 2013, one man, Mohammad Afzal Guru, was hanged to 'satisfy' the 'collective conscience' of society. This updated reader brings together essays by lawyers, academics, journalists and writers who have looked closely at the available facts and who have raised serious questions about the investigations and the trial. This new version examines the implications of Mohammad Afzal Guru's hanging and what it says about the Indian government's relationship with Kashmir. The writers show how there is

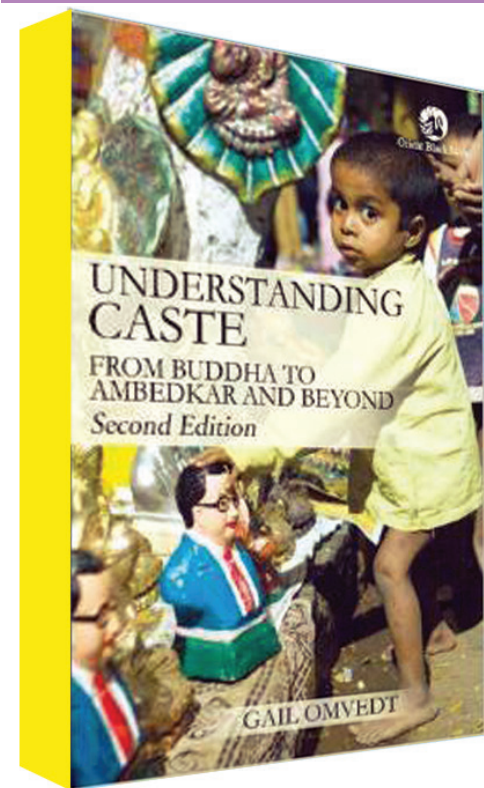
Blood, Sweat and Tears



A Rajam,
Niyogi Books, ₹ 295

Blood, Sweat and Tears is a novel guaranteed to appeal romantic readers, irrespective of their age or the generation or era they belong to. It is the story of Zaria, a child born to an Indian father and a Russian mother. After enjoying a pampered childhood in Madras, she, along with her mother, is tragically tossed by the vagaries of fate to a faraway Russia to Moscow, where survival is a struggle against poverty and heartache. Her ballet classes are the only light in this dark tunnel for young Zaria and as she grows older, ballet becomes her prime passion and intense ambition of being a successful ballerina her prime focus of life. But in the brutally competitive dance world will she make it? And if she does will she survive the competitive challenges? And most importantly find the love she yearns to? Read on to find about Zaria's life and all its ups and downs. □

Understanding Caste : From Buddha to Ambedkar and Beyond



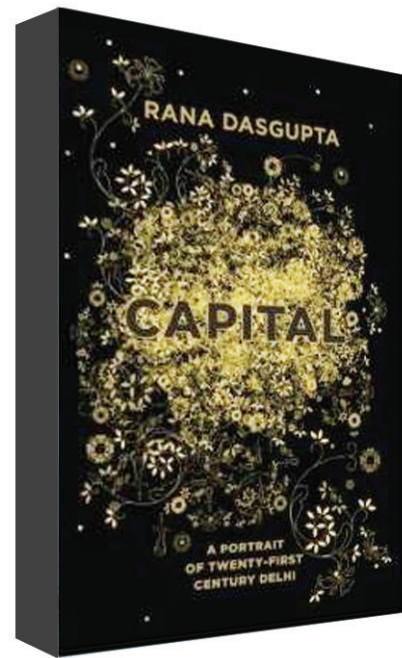
Gail Omvedt,
Orient Blackswan, ₹ 250

Understanding Caste approaches the historical issue of caste and anti-caste movements from a position of insightful inquiry and rigorous scholarship. Critiquing the sensibility which equates Indian tradition with Hinduism, and Hinduism with Brahmanism which considers the Vedas as the foundational texts of Indian culture and discovers within the Aryan heritage the essence of Indian civilisation it shows how even secular minds remain imprisoned within the Brahmanical vision. And so it looks at the alternative traditions nurtured within dalit movements, which have questioned this way of looking at Indian society and history. Written in a lucid and readable style, the author elucidates how dalit politics and the

dalit vision require going beyond even the term dalit and how it has contributed to being symbolic of the most oppressed and exploited sections within the graded hierarchies of caste.

Alongside the ascendance of Hinduism, the book traces the invasive trends of resistance and revolt in the tenets of Buddhism and radical bhakti, in the anti-patriarchal stands of early feminists, in the pervasive radicalism of the dalit activists from Phule and Periyar, Ramabai and Tarabai, to Kabir, Tukaram and Ambedkar, even for that matter Buddha himself. This book brings to the reader the failures and triumphs of the many efforts that have aimed to dissolve the oppressive facets of Hinduism and its caste ideology, and continue to organise in newer ways for 'another' possible world where equality and human freedom reign supreme. It also makes visible the logic of dalit politics and the rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party, as a major alternative to the rise of Hindutva. This important and essential reading will be an invaluable primer on the subject to students of dalit and caste studies and politics. This revised edition has a new and comprehensive Index. □

Capital : A Portrait of Twenty - First Century Delhi

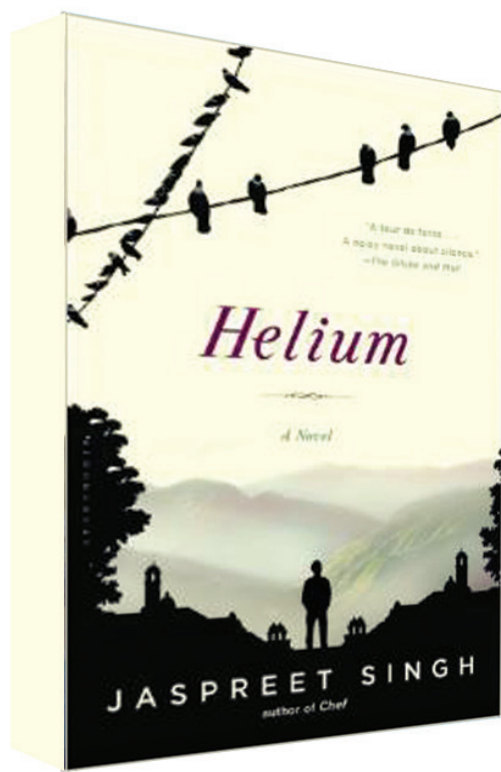


Rana Dasgupta,
Fourth Estate, ₹ 799

The boom following the opening up of India's economy in the early 1990s plunged its capital city into a tumult of destruction and creation, slums and markets were bulldozed or burnt down and shopping malls and apartment blocks erupted from the ruins or upon agricultural land taken over in the interests of business and modernization. Immense fortunes were made and in the glassy stores lining the new highways, customers paid for global luxury with bags of cash. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of people from the rural hinterland streamed into the newly formed 'National Capital Region' looking for work, which they often found constructing, cleaning or guarding the homes of the increasingly affluent middle class. The

transformation of the city was stern, abrupt and unequal and it gave rise to new and bewildering feelings. Delhi brimmed with ambition and rage. Bizarre crimes stole the headlines. In his first work of non-fiction, Rana Dasgupta shows us this new Delhi through the eyes of its people. With the lyricism and empathy of a novelist, he takes us through a series of encounters with billionaires and bureaucrats, drug dealers and metal traders, slum dwellers and psychoanalysts which plunge us into the city's intoxicating and sometimes terrifying, story of capitalist transformation. □

Helium



Jaspreet Singh,
Bloomsbury Publishing India, ₹ 499

Helium is a tale that explores the horrific aftermath of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and an individual's obsession with a past that simply refuses to vanish. Soon after the assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 by her Sikh bodyguard, violent communalists seeking for retribution throng the streets. It is at such an unfortunate time that Raj, the protagonist, along with his classmates and professor travel back from a field trip to Delhi.

Thirsting for blood, the rioters in Delhi notice the turbaned Sikh professor amidst the students. The drunk antagonists immediately surround the professor, and despite the best attempts of his students to save him, burn the turbaned Sikh by dousing him in gasoline. This incident becomes a major source of trauma for Raj who immediately leaves for America, and doesn't come back to India even for his mother's funeral.

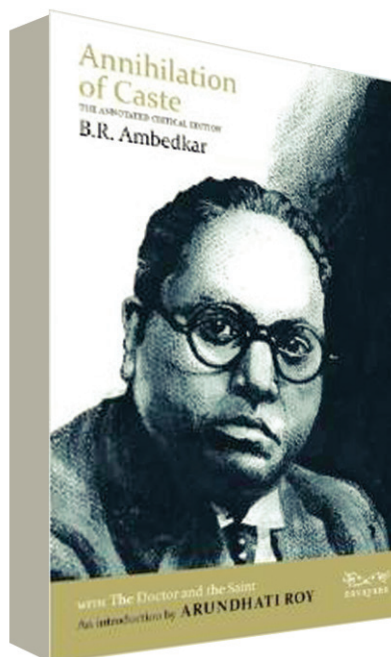
However, as the years pass, the power of past traumas still seems fresh and harrowing in the protagonist's mind. Raj then decides the only way to get over his past is to face it, and thus, decides to head back to India. The metaphorical title of this book, *Helium*, refers to the monatomic, inert gas present everywhere in the world. This is similar to the dilemma of the protagonist whose past is simply all around him, refusing to vanish.

Written by author, Jaspreet Singh, this book explores an individual's journey to redeem himself from his past. Over the course of the book, readers are also reintroduced to Nelly, the Sikh professor's widow whose destiny had taken an unexpected turn. □

Annihilation of Caste : The Annotated Critical Edition

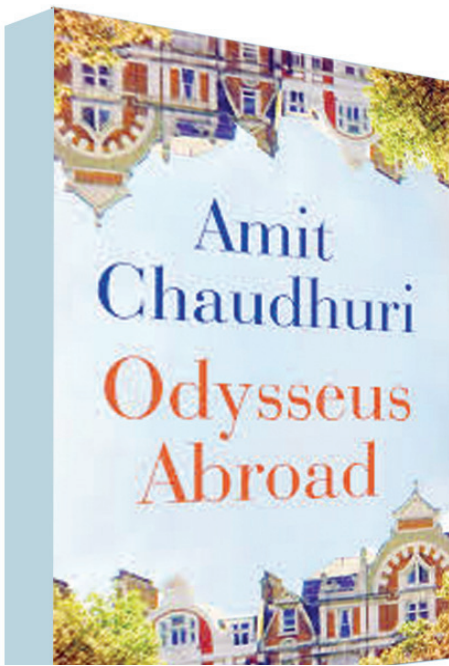
Annihilation of Caste: The Annotated Critical Edition is an audacious denunciation of Hinduism and its caste system. In 1936, a Hindu reformist group invited Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to deliver its annual lecture. When it read an advance copy of the text of the speech, the group found the contents "unbearable" and rescinded its invitation. Ambedkar published the text on his own. It offers a scholarly critique of the Vedas and shastras-scriptures the Hindus regard as sacred, scriptures that sanction the worlds most hierarchical and iniquitous social system. The worlds best known Hindu, Mahatma Gandhi, responded to the provocation. The hatchet was never buried.

This extensively annotated edition of *Annihilation of Caste* is introduced by Arundhati Roy. Her introduction, *The Doctor and the Saint*, looks at the ways in which caste plays out in modern India and how the conflict between Ambedkar and Gandhi continues to resonate into the present day. It takes us to the beginning of Gandhi's political career in South Africa, where his views on race, caste and imperialism were shaped. It tracks Ambedkar's emergence as a major political figure in the national movement and shows how his scholarship and intelligence illuminated a political struggle beset by sectarianism and obscurantism. Roy breathes new life into Ambedkar's anticaste utopia and says that without a Dalit revolution, there cannot be any other in India. □



B.R. Ambedkar,
Navayana ₹ 525

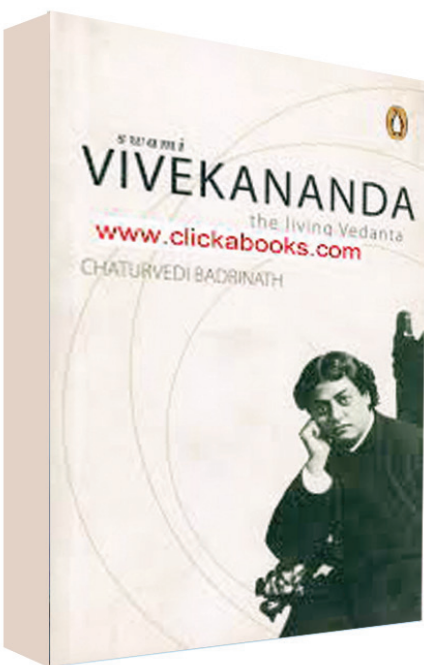
Odysseus Abroad



Amit Chaudhuri,
Hamish Hamilton ₹ 100

He saw his uncle once or twice a week. They got on each other's nerves, but had grown fond of the frisson. He was Ananda's sole friend in London - and Ananda his. 'Friend' was right; because his uncle was capable of being neither uncle, nor father, nor brother. Ananda's uncle, Rangamama, is an eccentric bachelor who has taken early retirement and lives off his pension in a squalid bedsit in Belsize Park. His habits are angular - he rarely bathes and devours paranormal stories - and his personality combative. Ananda, by contrast, is fragile, nervous and romantic. Uncle and nephew circle around their past, walk the streets of London and find in each other, an unspoken solace. A retelling of the story of *Odysseus and Telemachus*, *Odysseus Abroad* is a novel about a young man and an old man, about friendship, loneliness and love. Written in a voice at once tender and ribald, wry and unsentimental, this is Amit Chaudhuri's most extraordinary novel yet. □

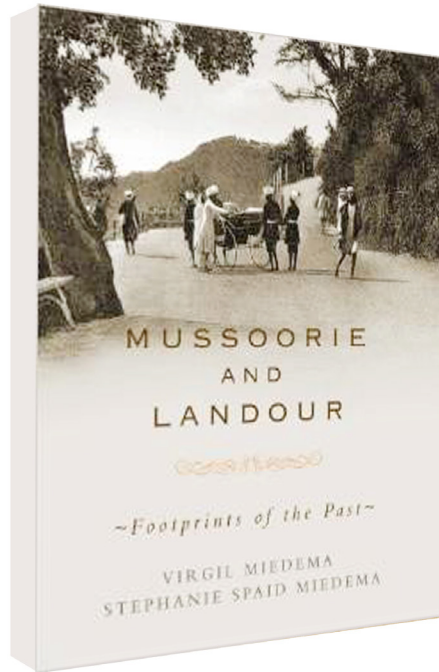
Swami Vivekananda : The Living Vedanta



Chaturvedi Badrinath,
Penguin Books Ltd., ₹ 399

You don't simply read a man like Vivekananda. In reading him, you meet him. And if you don't meet him and feel him contemporaneously, you can understand little of the meaning of what he is saying. In the course of a short life of thirty-nine years, Swami Vivekananda came to be regarded as the patriot-saint of modern India. Despite all that has been written about his life and his epoch-making address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893, Swami Vivekananda remains a paradox: much is known about him, but very little is understood about the man and his relevance to our own troubled times. In *Swami Vivekananda: The Living Vedanta*, Chaturvedi Badrinath looks behind the iconic facade, seeking to liberate Vivekananda from the confines of the worship room. He examines the various facets of a man who was as much at ease with philosophical discourse as he was with cooking; whose childlike love for ice cream went hand in hand with his stature as a prophet. The author also throws light on the various relationships that shaped Swamiji's philosophy of Vedanta and formed the core of his teaching with his spiritual guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, his mother Bhubaneswari Devi, and his many followers in the West, mostly women, who became central to his life and work. Well researched and brimming with a wealth of detail, *Swami Vivekananda: The Living Vedanta* offers an unforgettable insight into the life and times of this renaissance figure one, who was the very embodiment of the Vedanta that he preached. □

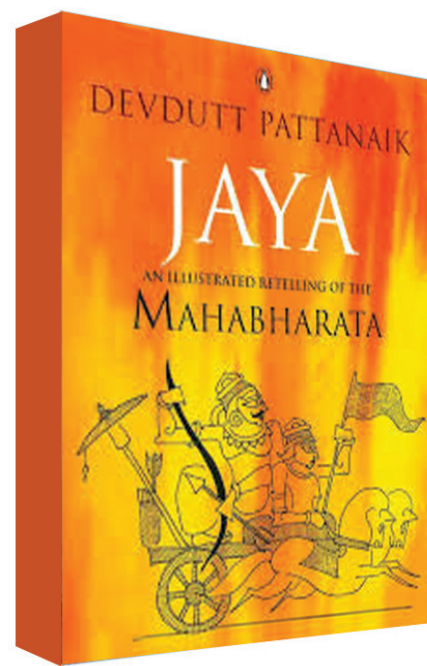
Mussoorie and Landour : Footprints of the Past



Rupa Publications ₹ 500

The twin hill stations of Mussoorie and Landour were established by the British in the early nineteenth century as a respite from the heat and dust of the Indian summer on the plains. Even today, these places continue to attract visitors by the hordes, thanks to their salubrious climate and leisurely way of life. While Mussoorie is more 'touristy' and bustling, Landour is a quiet getaway for those looking for a break from city life. Much has changed over the years, but both these towns still retain an old-world charm, adding to their appeal. This book takes the reader on a journey through the history of these towns, from the late eighteenth century - when Frederick Young, the founder of Mussoorie and Landour Cantonment, was born in Ireland - up to India's Independence. With beautiful photographs, evocative illustrations and fascinating snippets of local lore, Mussoorie and Landour brings alive the stories behind these charming hill stations like no other. □

Jaya : An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata



Devdutt Patnaik,
Penguin Books, ₹ 499

High above the sky stands Swarga, paradise, abode of the gods. Still above is Vaikuntha, heaven, abode of God. The doorkeepers of Vaikuntha are the twins, Jaya and Vijaya, both whose names mean victory. One keeps you in Swarga; the other raises you into Vaikuntha. In Vaikuntha there is bliss forever, in Swarga there is pleasure for only as long as you deserve. What is the difference between Jaya and Vijaya? Solve this puzzle and you will solve the mystery of the Mahabharata. In this enthralling retelling of India's greatest epic, *The Mahabharata*, originally known as *Jaya*, Devdutt Pattanaik seamlessly weaves into a single narrative plots from the Sanskrit classic as well as its many folk and regional variants, including the Pandavani of Chattisgarh, Gondhal of Maharashtra, Terukkuttu of Tamil Nadu, and Yakshagana of Karnataka. Richly illustrated with over 250 line drawings by the author, the 108 chapters abound with little-known details such as the names of the hundred Kauravas, the worship of Draupadi as a goddess in Tamil Nadu, the stories of Astika, Madhavi, Jaimini, Aravan and Barbareek, the Mahabharata version of the Shakuntalam and the Ramayana, and the dating of the war based on astronomical data.

With clarity and simplicity, the tales in this elegant volume reveal the eternal relevance of the Mahabharata, the complex and disturbing meditation on the human condition that has shaped Indian thought for over 3000 years. □

Challenge and Strategy

Challenge and Strategy is a book authored by Rajiv Sikri. The book is about India's political relations and affairs with foreign countries. It is a must have for people who are studying international relations and who wish to gain knowledge about the political and economic status of the country. It gives a broad understanding about India's foreign policy. It's a wonderful package to develop a broad perspective about India's relations with other nations. Recommended

for UPSC! Do not miss this one! Must read for persons who want to know background of India's relation with other nations. This book does not stop with that but goes way beyond in critically analysing foreign policies present now and the author put forths so many of his genuine views to improve the foreign policies towards various parts of the world. □

Rajiv Sikri,
Sage Publications, ₹ 425



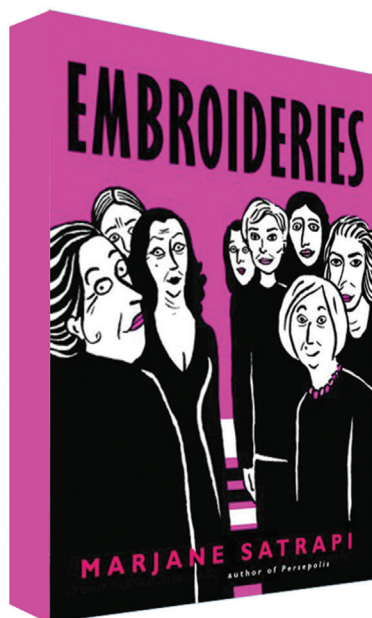
Graphic Novel : A popular genre of Literary writing

Bondita Baruah

Through its unique ability of combining narrative, pictures as well as poetry, graphic novels in an entertaining manner present a linear narrative.
“Graphic novels are literature that is actually in a cinematic format”

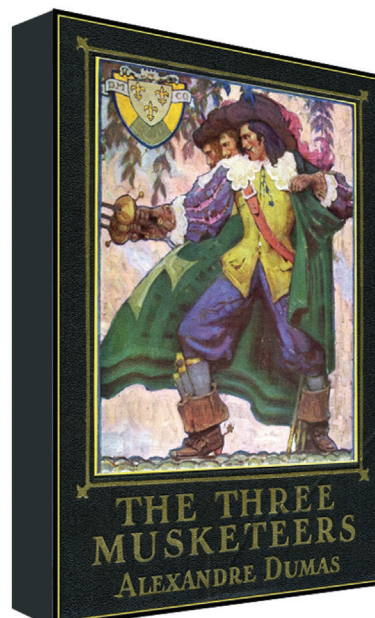
As the cave paintings of ancient times or the richly borne tapestries and manuscripts with illustrations in the middle ages tell a tale, so do the graphic novels, of and on also called “long comic books”. Graphic novels are usually fictional works that are written in a form that adheres to comic books. Like comic books these novels contain graphic illustrations in a page, divided into sections. The sections are usually carried forward in a sequence, to narrate a story from beginning to the end. Sometimes these stories are divided into parts, which may extend to more than one book. As a term, ‘graphic novel’ was first used in the year 1964 although earlier in the 1940s, longer novels like *The Three Musketeers* and such others were compiled in the form of comics. Because graphic novels contained illustrations as well as the written text, therefore, a large part of such long novels were abridged. This was done chiefly to cater to the interests of the younger generation. The simplified version of novels in their graphic form gained fame and popularity among the young. In 1978, with the coming of Will Eisner’s *A Contract with God*, the graphic novel gained immense popularity and its growth in readership continued from the 1980s and 90s to the present day. In the twenty-first century, graphic novels have been set as a separate genre in book stores and gradually they have come to be accepted in libraries, by educators, as a important branch of literature.

Graphic novels serve as good means of educating children and instilling in them moral values. They also form good sources of catering lessons regarding national and regional history, geography, politics and of the world around. These novels can therefore be written in the genre of fiction, non-fiction, adventure, fantasy, anthologized material, history and the like. Colours play a significant role



in graphic novels. In some stories only one or two colours are used, while others use myriad colours throughout the text. There are still others where colours are used to depict a shift in situation, mood or circumstance.

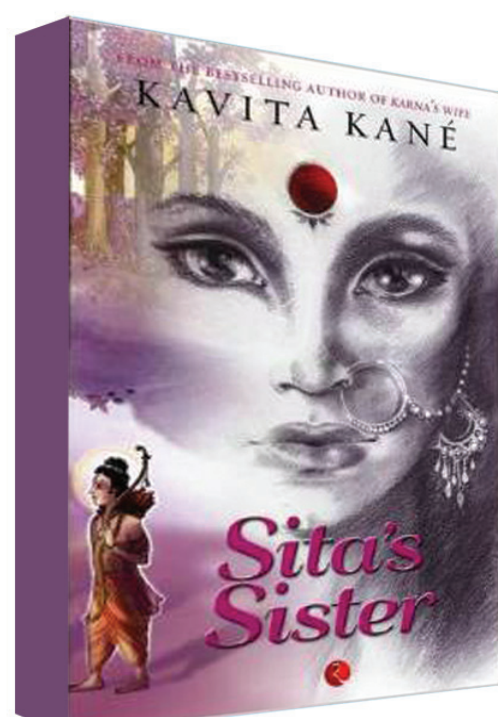
Today graphic novels are written to cater to all sections of readers, young as well as old. They have come to be divided to various genres, some of which include, manga, non-fiction, perzines or personal narratives, and the super-hero story, to name a few. The Manga is the Japanese word for “comic” and are Japanese comics developed in the late 19th century. By the 20th and 21st centuries, this form which is read by young and old alike, has penetrated boundaries and has circulated throughout the international market. The non-fiction graphic novels are those that deal with real facts and historical events—with or without humour. Graphic novels with personal narratives are chiefly autobiographical in nature. The super-hero stories usually take up episodes from a hero’s life and transform them to tales. Satire is another area where the graphic novel has excelled. Some



noteworthy graphic novels include, Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* which won the Pulitzer Prize, *Girl Genius*, Volume 8, 9, 10 by Kaja and Phil Foglio, *Digger* by Ursula Vernon, *Saga*, Volume One by Brian K Vaughan, *Neonomicon* by Alan Moore and Jacen Burrows and Caitlin R Kiernan’s *Alabaster: Wolves*, to name only a few.

Through its unique ability of combining narrative, pictures as well as poetry, graphic novels in an entertaining manner present a linear narrative. “Graphic novels are literature that is actually in a cinematic format”. While going from one image to the next the reader can analyse the story-line through the sequence of pictures which provide minute details on ‘facial and bodily expressions’, on the background and from the meaning that such a pictorial composition brings forth. For students who are reluctant or have some difficulty in reading traditional texts, graphic novels are a good motivational source and help boost their reading skills through the world of words and pictures, which in turn bring into play their own imagination. Besides students and young readers, these novels also cater to an advanced group of readers with their complex and well devised plot construction, narrative structure and the concerned issue upon which the novel is composed. Because these novels cater to all sections of readers, their coverage and popularity has increased in the present day. Reviews of graphic novels in magazines and newspapers have also contributed to providing a platform for awareness about them. The community called Get Graphic: The World in Words and Pictures was initially started as a project to acquaint parents, teachers, librarians and young people to the exciting world of graphic novels. Get Graphic still continues to provide its services of imparting knowledge about graphic novels and the role they can play in spreading literacy. □

Sita's Sister

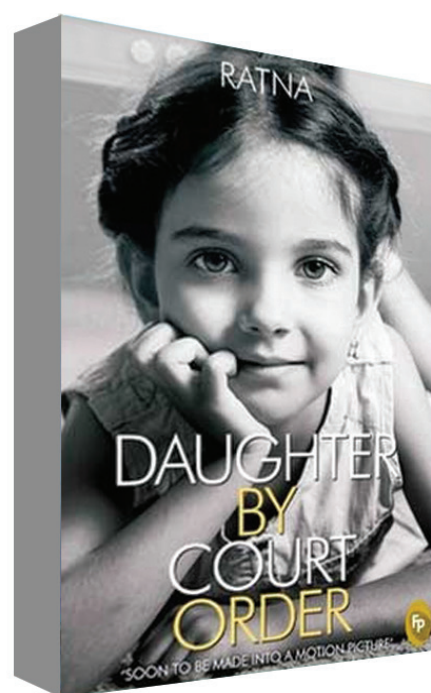


Kavita Kane,
Rupa Publications, ₹ 251

Kavita Kane wonderfully explores the side of Urmila in the Ramayana. She takes the story to a different dimension and explores each character and his or her intention, bit by bit, keeping Urmila at the core of all things. As Sita prepares to go into exile, her younger sisters stay back at the doomed palace of Ayodhya, their smiles, hope and joy wiped away in a single stroke. And through the tears and the tragedy one woman of immense strength and conviction stands apart Urmila, whose husband, Lakshman, has chosen to accompany his brother Ram to the forest rather than stay with

his bride. She could have insisted on joining Lakshman, as did Sita with Ram. But she did not. Why did she agree to be left behind in the palace, waiting for her husband for fourteen painfully long years? □

Daughter By Court Order



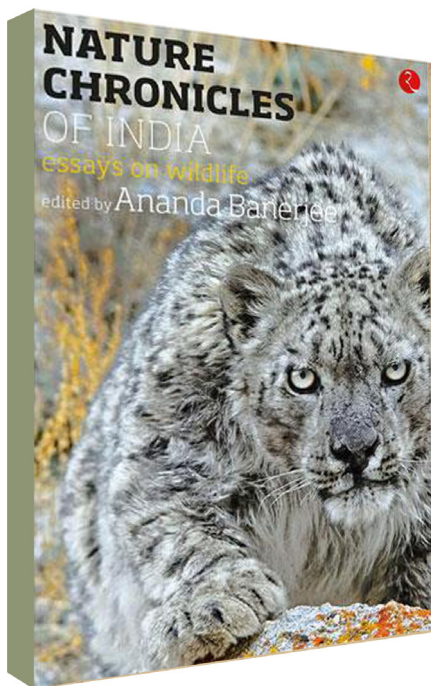
Ratna Vira,
Fingerprint Publications ₹ 295

A seemingly innocent remark over an innocuous cup of tea. Aranya discovers that her family has been fighting a decade-long legal battle over her grandfather’s expansive estate, all the while not only keeping her in the dark, but also keeping her very existence out of the court’s knowledge!

A cesspool of emotions, half-truths, betrayals, and the unspooling of long buried dirty family secrets threaten to overpower Aranya and disrupt what modicum of peace and balance she has in her life as a single mother of two children. At the centre of this storm is the one woman who, ever since the day Aranya was born, has had nothing but curses and abuses for her; who has deliberately kept her name out of the court; who has wished her dead for every day of her life; who refuses to now remember her birth.

The woman who is her mother. Her own mother. This is the story of a woman fighting against power, money, deceit, and treachery for her right to be recognised as a daughter. A daughter by court order . . . The book is a slow read. Every character takes its own good to time to build up and the author has done a commendable job in doing so. Trying to reach the untouched territories, this debut work of fiction is arguably a commendable work of fiction. □

Nature Chronicles of India : Essays on Wildlife



Ananda Banerjee,
Rupa Publications India ₹ 195

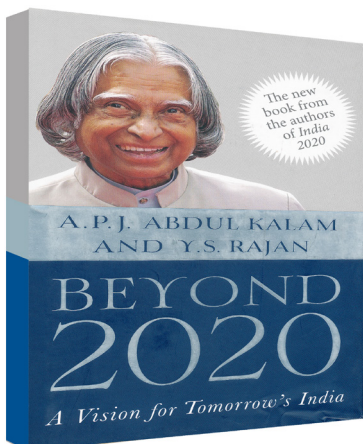
A range of stories from the heart of action where communities get involved in wildlife conservation, up-close with elusive and endangered species such as the Asiatic wild dog and the snow leopard. The incredibly diverse forests and jungles of India have, for centuries, been a source of fascination, curiosity and awe. And over the years, naturalists, biologists, hunters and gamekeepers - Hugh Allen, E. P. Sanderson, Edward Lockwood, Rauf Ali, Kartik Shankar, among others-have striven to evoke the sense of wonder they felt, in their works.

Nature Chronicles of India, a compilation of essays on the natural wealth of the country, is divided into two distinct sections. In the first are field narratives by some of the finest biologists, naturalists, filmmakers and journalists working in India at the moment. Essays in this section include Lunch with the Snow Leopard, in which conservation biologist Yash Veer Bhatnagar describes a magical encounter with the Grey ghost and Are Warblers Less Important Than Tigers?, a well-argued piece by reconciliation ecologist Madhusudan Katti in support of viewing conservation as a holistic exercise rather than as one privileging a particular species over the other.

The second section features essays and stories penned by officers of the Raj posted in different parts of British India. An excerpt from Hugh Allens 'The Lonely Tiger' tells the story of a tiger distraught about having lost his family to poachers and The Sal Forests, by the author and hunter Captain James Forsyth, describes his exciting adventures in the region, dodging poisoned arrows, stalking red deer and camping on the hunting ranges of the tiger.

Insightful, comprehensive and informative, this book will excite everyone interested in the natural world. □

Beyond 2020 : A Vision for Tomorrow's India

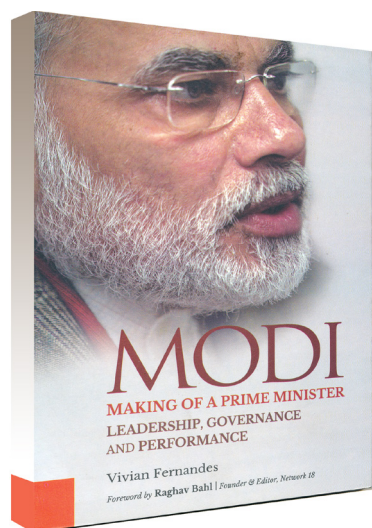


A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and
Y.S. Rajan, Penguin Viking ₹ 399

This book discusses the possible ways for India to become a globally competitive land with an economically developed status, and for us to reach the next stage of prosperity, where we will be counted along with the eight developed countries of the world. According to the authors a renewed policy focus is now needed for agriculture, manufacturing, education, health care and infrastructure. Alongside, national security and the knowledge economy are some of the vital areas need to be built as we look *beyond 2020*.

Beyond 2020 is a book every Indian must read! □

Modi : Making of a Prime Minister : Leadership, Governance and Performance



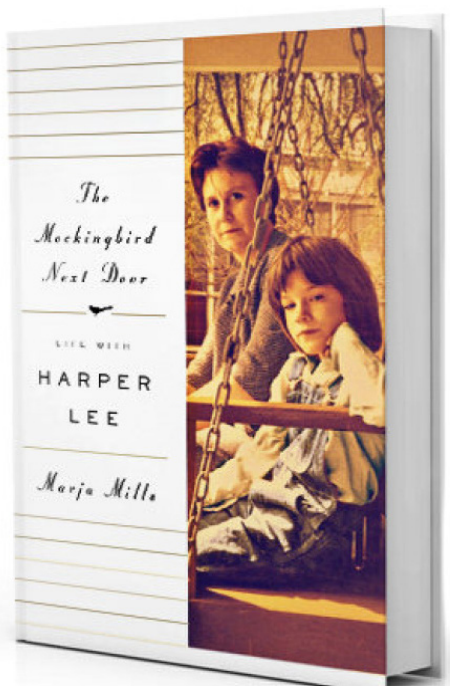
Vivian Fernandes,
Orient Publishing ₹ 250

The people of India have decisively voted to give Narendra Modi the job he coveted. He has a free hand to unite Indians in a joint endeavour for national greatness and forge a social compact based on citizenship and not on identity. This book is a non-judgmental look at Modi from the viewpoint of the liberal Indian. It examines his economic stewardship of Gujarat and philosophy of governance. Modi has an opportunity to create economic conditions for people to pursue dignified livelihoods rather than depend on the state for jobs and doles. Hopefully Modi will take everybody along and also reshape the BJP as a liberal, right-of-centre party. □

The Mockingbird Next Door : Life with Harper Lee

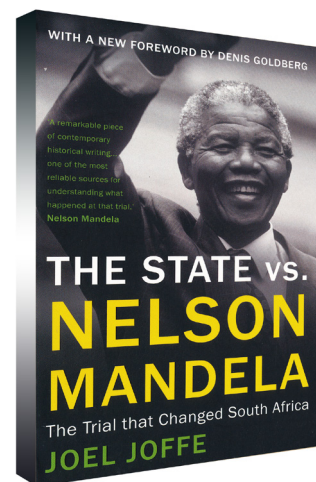
The Mockingbird Next Door is about Mills' life and her journey with the book and the sisters. It is about compassion, love, friendship and perhaps puts an end to all the speculation on Ms. Lee's life. The book is an easy read and yet there are so many profound and relevant questions it raises: What is the nature of privacy in today's world? What does it take to hold on to what you have? Most avid readers would love to know the reason why Harper Lee did not write a second book and this book delves into it with great detail and empathy for the writer.

The Mockingbird Next Door speaks of an era gone by and of the times we live in. It is a read which you will not forget and it will most certainly make you want to reread *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Marja Mills leaves you stunned with her eye for detail and interactions with the Lee sisters. I am in awe of this book. Do read it. You will not regret it. □



Marja Mills,
Penguin Books ₹ 1845

The State vs Nelson Mandela : The Trial that Changed South Africa



Joel Joffe
Penguin Books ₹ 450

This book by Joel Joffe takes the reader into the courtroom intrigues and drama. It is a story told with simplicity and eloquence, stripped of the legal jargon that often mystifies the reader. It is all the more powerful as a contemporary document for the insight it offers into implications of the trial. It is this kind of contemporary writing that becomes crucial for subsequent analyses and on-going reconstructions of the past into the present. □

Theatres of India : A Concise Companion



Joel Joffe
Penguin Books ₹ 450

Theatres of India is an accessible and authoritative guide to Indian theatre across its history of over 2000 years. Bringing together the work of distinguished theatre professionals and scholars, this volume taps into various sources of documentation and knowledge to shed light on both urban and rural modes of performance across India, historically and geographically. Divided into two parts, this book discusses theatres of India's linguistic and cultural regions on the one hand, and deals with specific forms, genres and traditions as varied as street theatre. The volume includes more than 80 photographs and line drawings that effectively showcase the 'visual-ness' of India's theatrical forms. Essential reading for theatre professionals and students, and researchers and teachers of performance studies, the book will also interest general readers having a penchant for theatres. □

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