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PUBLISHER SPEAKS

## A death knell for Indian books

SUDESH K VERMA

WHEN THE United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, the three leading countries publishing English books, do not allow parallel imports, what is the hurry for India to argue in its favour? There seems a lobby at work, or else she would not be contemplating one-way traffic when bilateralism is a key to international trade policy.

Publishers based in these countries will naturally be happy since they would get the vast Indian market without the pains of opening up their own markets to their books published in India. The foreign books published in India cost less than one tenth of the price in the US, the UK or Germany. The much hyped amendment to the Copyright Act (because of the film industry related provisions) has dangerous consequences for the book industry in India but there are few who are actually aware of these.

The bill has been considered in detail by the standing committee after it was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. The committee headed by senior parliamentarian Oscar Fernandes has recommended parallel importation. Now the same is likely to be taken up for consideration in this budget session of Parliament.

Parallel importation is nothing but violation of the territoriality of the copyright. If this is legalized, the industry will collapse even before it learns to crawl. As of today, the copyright owner sells rights to different publishers on the condition that the sale would be limited to the territories mentioned in the agreement. Indian publishers buy rights from foreign publishers on the same basis. None violates this arrangement.

If territoriality is violated there would be a free for all situation. For example, a foreign publisher can buy the rights of best selling Indian books and print the same in mass, say in China, and export the same for sale in India. What will happen to the Indian publisher who invested in the author? It would not be able to compete with its own product. In the long run, this would discourage the copyright owner from selling rights to foreign publishers which would in turn mean less exposure of Indian authors to the international markets.

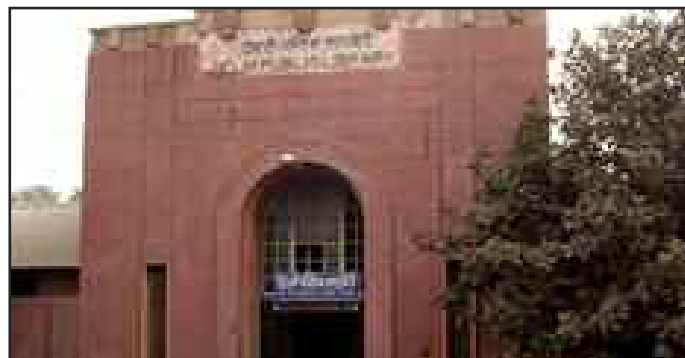
Sample this: A foreign publisher buys rights of an Indian title and prints it in bulk. It exhausts some stock that earns him profit in the international market and then dumps the books in the Indian market. Since it would be printed in bulk it would achieve economies of scale. The same books by Indian publisher would suffer since the cycle may be one year in mature market but three to five years in India.

The author who should have earned royalty from the sale of the books in India on the cover price would not do so if the books do not sell. He/She would earn only a marginal royalty on books published by a foreign publisher and brought to India cheap since the royalty is on net price and the net price may be much less. As of today, they can theoretically earn by selling rights to all countries individually without infringing on other territories.

That the buyer would benefit is a fiction. The buyer would eventually stop getting to read new authors since publishers would lose the incentive to invest in an author. The author and publisher market relationship would suffer immensely.

If the foreign publisher establishes an Indian author, it may have just a token Indian publishing and would publish the same through the international chain and then dump the books in India through the official route. The Indian subsidiary of the foreign publisher would end up distributing these titles rather than creating an independent publishing programme. The worst scenario in case of competition between a foreign publisher and its Indian subsidiary would be that those transacting in remainders sale will benefit the most. One must remember that books do not attract duty etc.

editorial



## DPL asks for earnest money, suppliers angry

Our Book Link Bureau

DELHI PUBLIC Library's decision seeking earnest security deposit of Rs 30,000 from book vendors has become controversial. Most publishers and their associations have come out openly against this. Vendors will select books on discount and the library will end up buying discounts rather than good books, Pustak Mahal MD Ashok Gupta said.

At a time when publishing industry has given representation to government against the policy of tendering, it is surprising that the DPL has come out with such a tender. "We never comply with the tender system. This has been unanimously decided by the GOC (Goods Office Committee) and by all our representatives," president of Federation of Indian Publishers Anand Bhusan said. "The Culture Ministry that governs DPL must intervene," he added.

Delhi State Publishers and Booksellers Association has already written to the DPL asking them to withdraw the tender and revert to the old practice. The letter has pointed out that the GOC norms have always opposed tendering of books and serials.

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## Why hurry on copyright law? 2m should be reciprocal: BJP

Upama Sinha

WILL THIS budget session of Parliament take up consideration and passing of the copyright amendment bill 2010? Although the standing committee of HRD has given its opinion enabling the government to take up a stand, there are various facets that need to be debated.

A number of parliamentarians, including the main Opposition, hold that there is a need to rethink since the proposed amendments have failed to satisfy the section it wishes to address. The standing Committee chairman, Oscar Fernandes, preferred not to commit either way. "We have done our work and now it is up to the minister to accept or reject or put it for discussion in the House," he said.



Oscar Fernandes

Expressing his reservations, BJP spokesperson Prakash Javadekar, who is also a member of the standing committee, said, "It has many faults and no stakeholders are happy. HRD committee has listened to all the stakeholders, their suggestions, details and recovery. It will be good, if their suggestions and claims are accepted." However, uncertain about the future events, he said, "I don't know whether our recommendations

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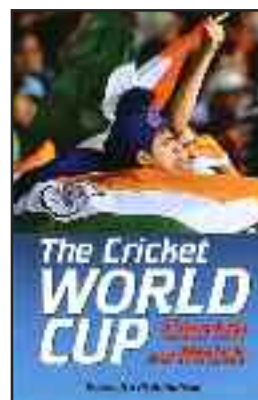
Prakash Javadekar

## Many shades of World Cup

Priya Srivastava

NEW books on cricket have flooded the market. While the ICC Cricket World Cup is likely to generate excitement of cricket watchers, these handy books are trying to entice them with statistics, analysis of strengths and weaknesses of Team India, various teams and the history of ICC world Cup.

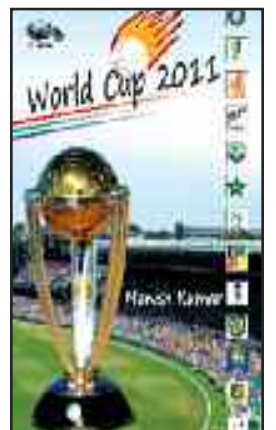
Publishers who have come out with books to catch on with the cricketing mood include Penguin, Rupa, Vikas, Vitasta and Harper Collins. Not to be left behind is Roli which has come out with a coffee table book on the same. Most of these World Cup related books have tried to relive the excitement of the 1983 Cup that India won. There is an attempt to create a hysteria around a likely Indian victory this time.



Rupa has brought out hardbound and paperback editions of the book that gives short biographies of the players who made the World Cup victory possible. Titled *The Devil's Pack: The men behind the '83 Victory*, this book has a foreword by Sachin Tendulkar. Balvinder Singh Sandhu, a prominent member of the 1983 squad in action has authored the book along with Austin Coutinho. It talks of how individual players behaved in trying circumstances in and outside the field. Besides the 14-member playing squad, it also includes PR Mingsingh, the manager of the Indian team.

Speaking about the knock of 175 not out against Zimbabwe when Indians were five wickets down on 17, the author recalls that the knock could not be recorded as the BBC was on strike that day.

Contd on page 7



**news in brief****Mayawati Govt against guides**

The Mayawati Government has warned that publishers who were asking students in Uttar Pradesh's state-run schools to purchase guides with prescribed books would be blacklisted. "If we get complaints that any publisher is asking students to purchase guides with prescribed books, we will take strict action against them. Such publishers will be blacklisted," state Secondary Education Minister Rangnath Mishra said while replying to a query during the question hour in the assembly. Denying claims that there was shortage of books for classes ninth and tenth, the Minister said directives had been issued to ensure that they are easily available to the students.

**Pages plans book mall**

After opening its third bookstore in Daryaganj, Pages Bookstore is now gearing to build a book mall in the vicinity for which its CEO Pranav Gupta claims to have already acquired an area of 20,000 sq ft.. The mall should be operative by the end of 2012, hoped Gupta. Care is being taken to have enough space for the parking, he said.

**D.Litt. on Khushwant**

Panjab University has decided to honour Khushwant Singh with a D.Litt. degree at a special function at his residence in New Delhi. The university's syndicate has made special arrangements to confer the degree on him owing to his poor health.

**CBSE reading list**

The book industry will soon have another outlet to sell its books. The Central Board of Secondary Education recently sent out a reading list for students of classes V to XII, prepared in consultation with the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC). This trend is going to continue, the idea is to inculcate the habit of reading among school children, said a highly-placed source in the CBSE. The new list sent for the schools by CBSE includes books by Indian authors in genres such as historical fiction, mystery, adventure, real-life stories, environment, adventure, sports, science fiction and plays.

**Publisher, Printer and Editor:**  
Renu Kaul Verma on behalf of  
Vitasta Publishing Private Limited  
2/15, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110 002.

**Executive Editor:** Sudesh K Verma

Printed at Vikas Computers and Printers,  
1/10753, Navin Shahadara, Delhi-32;

Email: [booklink@vitastapublishing.com](mailto:booklink@vitastapublishing.com);  
Ph: 011-2328-3024; Fax: 011-2326-3522

## Our story creates a stir

**I**N response to the story *Recession-hit DK Sells Space to Pages* in our February issue, DK Publishers has sent a legal notice of defamation against *Book Link*. This needs to be underlined that most people our correspondents spoke to after the legal notice did not find anything wrong with the story which came by way of general observations in the context of the recession hit publishing industry.

While we will handle legal notice legally, we think it is time for us to reiterate that we have no other agenda than betterment of the publishing industry and thereby the society since publishers do not consider books to be consumer goods. We did the DK

story with the best of intentions. It was at no point intended to be defamatory. Our reporters made umpteen attempts to meet the MD of DK but could not contact him for the official version. Even our editor tried to contact him but to no avail.

In this issue we decided to interview Mr Parmil Mittal to get his version but it was difficult to get through to him. If one genuinely felt aggrieved by a story or wished to contradict facts, one could always do so. A rejoinder is the best way to deny a story.

*Book Link* is a monthly newspaper registered with the RNI as such and seeks to make people aware about news, views and

reviews about the publishing industry. Such events as DK fall invariably within this realm.

We wish to highlight that those at the helm of *Book Link* have many years of experience of working with well-known national newspapers such as *The Times of India*, *The Statesman*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Indian Express*, and *The Business Standard*, and a couple of television news channels. They are fully aware of their responsibilities as journalists.

We seek cooperation from one and all in our humble endeavour to make this industry better and more transparent.

- Editor

## Kolkata book fair better than Delhi?

Kolkata like Delhi is a city of book lovers. However, in the eyes of a young school girl, the recently held Kolkata Book Fair scored over Delhi. We reproduce Khushboo Sinha's write-up that came to us, and best captures the mood

WHEN ONE compares Delhi Book Fair with that of Kolkata, one is bound to bow in awe to the enthusiasm of book lovers in Kolkata. People lined up to await their turn to enter the venue as the fair was being inaugurated.

The gates of the book fair opened and I was surprised to see the crowd. It was a sea of humanity compared to Delhi where people came in tickle.

The main gate was the replica of the famous India Gate. There were four main auditoriums with various book stalls. They were based on themes such as the Tagore hall, children pavilion, West Bengal pavilion, UBI auditorium etc.

The main attraction of the 35th international book fair was the United States of America pavilion which was symbolized by the White House.

Inaugurated by the Chief Minister, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, there was participation from almost all the Indian states.



A near stampede-like situation outside the book fair venue.

The enthusiasm of book lovers was contagious. In Delhi, only a few of my classmates could be spotted, but here the whole of my class visited. They just love

talking about, reading and sharing books. As is said books are our good friends, I am happy to see that Kolkata actually means it.

## letters to the editor

### Let MJ Akbar relocate to Pakistan

A perfect link for those wanting to know about the Indian publishing industry, books and authors. A great effort ever made for book lovers...I must say. Hats-off to all the people involved. Keep it up!

**Gaurav Pal Tomar**  
Student, Lucknow

Pleased to look at the PDFs of *Book Link*. It is so nice to see such endeavors. I particularly liked the updates on Khushwant Singh and Mulk Raj Anand. I, however, did not like "Shobha: India's Jackie Collins". I just cannot understand why we Indians have the habit of glorifying foreigners.

**Vikas Trivedi**  
Student, California

"WOW"...a very gud read...got to know so much about books....I am an avid book reader and as I am in Egypt I can't access good English book...but would download the

ebook versions of MJ Akbar "*Tinderbox*" & Khushwant Singh "*The Last Sunset*" which I saw in *Book Link*. Good Job done!

**Aniket Sen Gupta**  
Merchant, Ismailia, Egypt

The newspaper looks good...A very good read indeed.

**Minati Chaklanavis**  
Professor, Patna University

This is with reference to the cover story 'MJ's Tinderbox laments idea of Pakistan'. The idea of Pakistan was an anti-national idea. And it was followed by Jinnah and his followers.

The idea led to (so much of) blood-shed and now they again want to 'reunite' to subjugate the Hindus of this sub-continent. During 18th Century, Muslim scholars invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India. They wanted Abdali to teach Hindus, who had

become quite powerful at that time, a lesson. Accepting their invitation, he attacked India in 1757. The third battle of Panipat saw the massacre of over a lakh of Maratha soldiers who represented the nationalist forces. Today, MJ wants to invite the spineless intellectuals of Pakistan to invade India. He should rather relocate himself to Pakistan and contribute to its intellectual life. Pakistani singers who are coming in droves to sell their voices, do not have a market anywhere except in India.

The two-nation theory proved more injurious to Hindus than the Muslims, for whom Pakistan and Bangladesh are their fixed accounts whereas India is their joint account which they can loot whenever they want to. MJ is more concerned with their well-being than the well-being of the real sufferers of Partition (Hindus).

**Amrit Lal Rawal**  
Associate Professor, DU

# A rare treat for comics lovers

INDIA'S FIRST comic conference opened to a huge crowd at capital's food and crafts bazaar Dilli Haat recently. Workshops, ranging from fun stuff to academics, were conducted by various artists to bridge the gap between readers and writers for creating new projects in the comic world. "It is a great platform for publishers to experience the growing demand in the comic industry and graphic arts in India also to interact and reach out to die hard comics enthusiasts," said Karan Vir Arora CEO Vimanika Comics.

## Uncle Pai dies

ANANT PAI, lovingly known as Uncle Pai by his fans died of a heart attack recently. He was 81. An Indian educationalist and creator of famous Indian comics, such as the *Amar Chitra Katha* Series and *Tinkle*.



With array of choices available at stalls like *Buzzinga.com* and *Happily Unmarried*, visitors seemed confused what to buy and what to leave. An excited Rahul Sharma said, "The 3D posters, comics, mugs, toys, action figures, key holders and bags available here are all just too good. I wish I could buy all."

The fancy dress competition saw a huge number of visitors dress up in the attire of their favourite comic characters. Apart from Spiderman, Harry Potter, Superman, characters like Jafar (magician from Arabian Nights), Joker (Batman), Wonder Girl and Scarecrow were also the show stealers.

**Book Link Desk**

# Long night of literature

SASA STANISIC, writer, playwright and travel journalist by profession was born in Bosnia in 1978. The 29-year old writer was just 14 when the Bosnian war broke out in 1992. Having witnessed the tumultuous era, he wrote a novel about a young soldier's flight into Germany during the war. Named *How the Soldier Repairs the Gramophone* became a huge success and was nominated for the German Book Prize in 2006.

Stanisic was in the capital recently to participate in an event The Long Night of Literature along with a few others.

The event, second in the series of literary encounters on contemporary writings in German, was jointly hosted by the Austrian Cultural Forum, the German Book Office, Goethe-Institut / Max Muller Bhavan and Pro Helvetia in collaboration with Religare Art Gallery. Moderated by actor and poet Danish Husain, this event of prose and poetry included several conversations and readings from books by Austrian, German and Swiss authors and brought together the literati of the city.

**Book Link Desk**



Sasa Stanisic



# Kala ghoda rides again

After nearly blowing out like a candle in the wind, the Kala Ghoda Festival came back this year with a bigger bang than ever. The residents of the area who had objected to the din and crowds generated by the four-day festival relented. Retracting their decision, they let free a festival that continues to epitomize the famous *Mumbaiyya* spirit.

No festival captures the essence of the city that never sleeps, like this one. While a kaleidoscope of color and activity envelopes the entire area, the traditional arts, crafts, artisans, performers and the legacy of our cultural heritage gets a huge shot in the arm. The most heartening egalitarian touch to the festival is visible in its literary section. Though younger than its fellow festivals in the country, the Kala Ghoda Literary Festival disarms the visitor with its original and unorthodox approach towards writers and writing, in general. The same warmth and welcome is extended to wannabe writers, new authors, established ones, critically acclaimed names and popular icons. Unlike other festivals, it does not genuflect before internationally acclaimed authors or zero in merely on well-known writers, authors with good PR skills or media biggies to form a tight incestuous clique that repeats itself year after year. Instead, it taps and harvests the power of big names in literature and fuels it into promoting obscure writers hovering nervously on the periphery of the literary scenario.



Chetan Baghat at the festival.

Many new authors have been charmed to be included into this circle of love and many unsure performers have got their first shot at public reading on the dais of the David Sassoon Library. It is not uncommon to see Gregory Roberts sipping *adrak chai* in the company of light technicians or Indra Sinha amble in with the help of his trademark walking stick, take a seat in the audience and courteously wait for the previous programme to



Kala Ghoda festival includes traditional arts, crafts, artisans, performers besides literary events.

end before taking his turn at the mike. The workshops likewise, see poets and writers like Samit Basu and Sampurna Chatterjee carve out time year after year and conduct workshops in an effort to guide and mould fresh minds. It is a well known fact that some of these workshops students have gone on carve formidable niches in the world of words. One of the greatest tragedies in our country is that the most meaningful voices are rarely heard above the cacophony of the inane; poets continue to remain a marginalized lot. This year Pritish Nandy changed all that by having a grand reading of Kamala Das's poems. The Kala Ghoda festival continues to actively support poetry and the venue has seen the likes of C.P Surendran, Eunice D'souza, Arundhati Subramaniam and Jeet Thayil not merely read out their poems but also hold the audience spellbound with charged performances.

While Delhi may be the hub of publishing, Mumbai continues to be defined by its streets. Street food, street culture, street lingo, street people and street activities essentially fuel its literature. Ask Gregory Roberts, Anjali Joseph, Vikram Chandra or any other Mumbai author. While other places may host other grander festivals, artistes, writers and book lovers will break a limb trying to be there for the Kala Ghoda festival. And while other songs may be sung in other places, the anthem of this city will always be- *Jai Ho!*

(Kankana Basu is an author of *Vinegar Sunday* and *Cappuccino Dusk*)

# Delhi Public Library invites suppliers' wrath

**Contd from page 1**

The current practice allows publishers to directly submit books to DPL that buys multiple copies. The new system will create a third party whose convenience will decide the quality of books that should go to the library. The third party supply is a grey area since it depends on the relation between publishers and vendors, said Piyush, MD of Prabhat Prakashan. What is the workability of this model is also not known, he added.

Most associations believe that besides these, the policy is eventually likely to ease out smaller vendors since selection is not guaranteed. If all the libraries start asking for such money, the industry would find it difficult to operate.

Deputy General of DPL Anjana Chattopadhyaya justified the decision saying that most libraries take the security deposit. When asked to name such libraries she said "you should know". "If one cannot even pay this much how can they be relied upon to supply books worth crore," she asked. The fact that these vendors get books from publishers on credit and their credibility is a fact that needs to be understood by those outside the trade.

The reality is that there are very few libraries that ask for security deposit from vendors. In the government, there is almost none. The DPL runs on government money and gives membership to people in as low as Rs 2. This is also not clear if this vendor security is one time or for two or three years.

What prompted the library to ask for this security is not known.

DPL insiders are tight lipped? Is it easier to talk to smaller number of vendors and manage things better? Since there are few instances where DPL asks for books, only in popular category, mostly it happens when vendors take these for selection. The selection percentage is very low and the rate of rejection is high. Individual publishers and distributors still go since there are chances of selection of multiple copies.

A leading publisher and distributor that specializes in library supplies was particularly charged up. How can a tender say that the DG has the right to accept or reject any or all the EOLs without assigning any reason whatsoever,

the owner of the company said. To ask for security and tender is a wrong way, said Diamond Pocket Books MD Narendra Kumar.

President of Federation of Book Publishers Association of India (FBPAI) Kailash Balani said: "Why are they doing so? What has happened to them? Books are not considered to be consumer goods, but right now these are being treated so. We are opposing it. Let us see what happens?"

Earlier, teachers used to visit publishers and select books for libraries, Indiana Publisher's MD SC Sethi said. Now that practice has given way to vendor selection. This has made everything uncertain, he added.

(With inputs from Maharishi Kant Singh and Priya Srivastava)

# Secular Pak: Where Jinnah went wrong

Sudesh K Verma

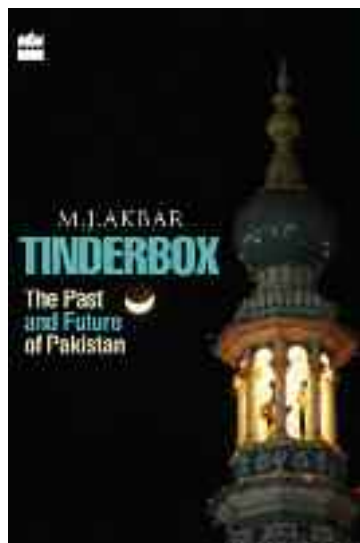
**T**inderbox best sums up the situation of Pakistan today. The society is so volatile that a minor spark can lead to a catastrophic conflagration. MJ Akbar falls short of terming Pakistan a failed state and gives credit to the army for keeping the state as it is today.

The chapter, The Siege Within, paints a grim situation where the state is threatened by Talibans in the North, internal violence in the name of preparation for Jihad throughout the country and the likely problems in Baluchistan. It is estimated that at least a million Pakistani children from the lower rung of society were studying in over 20,000 madrasas. They were sustained by the belief that faith made them invincible.

Then he pops up the obvious question: "For six decades, power in Pakistan has seen-sawed between military dictatorship and the civilian rule. What happens when both the army and political parties lose their credibility? Will it be the turn, then, of Zia's 'lower rungs'?" (referring to the madrasa children).

He argues that the challenge from Taliban and others is not irreversible but for this Pakistan must return to the precept and advise of the father of the nation, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and decisively reject the man who became the godfather, Maulana Maududi. "If Pakistan does not find modernity, it will sink into medievalism," he asserts.

There can be no dispute with Akbar in his analysis except where he makes extra effort to paint Jinnah as secular and even goes to the extent of at times undermining the credibility of Mahatma Gandhi who used religion to mobilize masses and galvanize India against the British. A secular Jinnah who kept on arguing against a separate Pakistan became its biggest votary when he realized the Congress was not ready to yield to the demands of the Muslim League in 1930 which included among others the creation of three new Muslim majority provinces—Sind, Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province.



## Tinderbox: The Past and Future of Pakistan

M J Akbar

Pages: 360 | Price: ₹ 499

Publisher: Harper Collins India

Akbar blames the influence of the Hindu lobby for the rejection, but history would have judged the Congress differently if they had accepted it. For Jinnah, who left political scene and shifted to London to return in 1935, it was a matter of who would govern. For Gandhi, it was a matter of unity among Muslims and Hindus. Jinnah appeared to be a man in a hurry and he did not fight enough to put the Congress on the mat. Becoming one with Islamists who thought Islamic culture would be threatened under Hindu rule was nothing but an act of communalism.

Sensing opportunity for political gains and giving a go by to conviction is the biggest act of communalism Jinnah can be charged with. On the contrary, the religious Gandhi used religion to unite people during Khilafat movement. But Gandhi and the Congress refused to accept that Jinnah or the Muslim league was speaking for the entire Muslim community. This was proved correct when millions of Muslims refused to cross over to Jinnah's Pakistan and stayed in India. And the religious and fearless Gandhi

gave his life fighting the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity.

History may not be as much interested in biography of Jinnah as in the role he played during Partition. When he proclaimed that Hindus and Muslims were one nation and championed Muslim representation within the territorial boundary of united India, what prompted him to champion Partition and accept it too? How could Jinnah imagine that a country founded on religious line would become secular? How juvenile for a matured man of 60 plus, if he did so! When he could not argue with Congress leaders who were as secular as him, how could he argue with Islamists in Pakistan who were keen to throw him out since the new nation had created hope of a Islamic resurgence and a new order based on Sharia?

**The book gives a brilliant peep into those wanting to know how Pakistan drifted away from Jinnah's proclaimed desire to turn Pakistan into a secular nation with a Muslim majority. One can argue like Akbar that Jinnah did not live long enough (died 11 September 1948) to champion the cause of secularism in Pakistan. But one cannot forget that unlike India, Pakistan failed to have constitutional provisions for secular foundation. In Pakistan, faith became the basis of nationalism. Jinnah's rhetoric after he became the Prime Minister or tokenism such as asking a Hindu poet to write Pakistan's fist national anthem could not be substitute for institutionalization of secularism.**

Blaming Maulana Maududi is not enough. Such a trend was there, as Akbar rightly notes, ever since the collapse of Muslim rule. The formative ideology was given by Shah

Waliullah when the Mughal rule was coming to an end. He advocated and Akbar quotes: "Indian Muslims had to be purged of Hindu influences in order to recover their pristine, and consequently victorious self, for contact with the infidel undermined the faith."

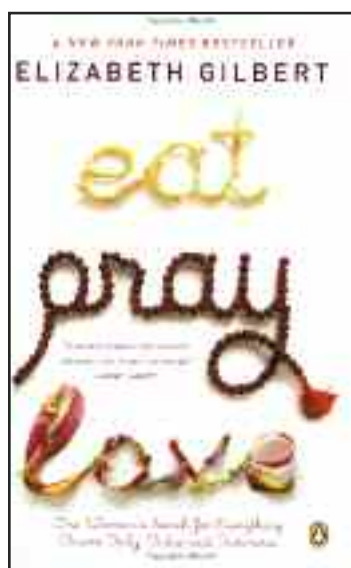
Waliullah urged Muslims to stress differences with Hindus by promoting visible attributes. This might be beard and stylized moustache, or ankle length namaz convenient pyjamas. "He told Muslims to live at such a distance from Hindus that they would not be able to see the light of the fires in the Hindu homes" (p 51). The natural corollary of distrust was a separate Muslim space, a step forward to a Muslim homeland. Some *Sunni* Pakistani scholars have described Shah Waliullah as the father of Muslim modernism. But Jinnah gave the same logic when he spoke of Muslims being the ruling class and the need for the British to return power from whom they had taken—Muslims.

As events in later years unfolded despite religious leaders such as Waliullah, Muslims were not completely awed by them. They accepted Gandhi as their leader. What actions of two hundred years could not do was done in 25 years, from the Khilafat movement to Partition. The factors were political and leaders of that time should be faulted for having failed to keep the communities united. The promise of a separate homeland for followers of Islam was too tempting an offer to be rejected. The book fails to document this in detail.

The book is significant from an Indian point of view since it helps analyze the conflict Pakistan is facing today. Who will win in the conflict is a difficult question but it helps to understand the trends in Pakistan's polity, society and religion. An average Indian has a lot of stake in democratization and modernization of Pakistan and hence a must read.

MJ is brilliant in analyzing the factors that led to Hindus and Muslims to drift apart. One gets a glimpse of the reasons of the differences. But at times he makes small incidents appear to be representing a trend. But the narrative is racy and quite readable.

## A travelogue of spiritual seeking



### Eat Pray Love

Elizabeth Gilbert

Pages: 352 | Price: ₹ 350

Publisher: Penguin

Upama Sinha

THE BOOK which garnered rave reviews, was rated the worst when adapted into a film (source RollinStone.com). *Eat pray love* is a spiritual memoir which revolves around the experiences of its author Elizabeth Gilbert, who has already proved her acumen with her short-stories, fiction and nonfiction.

The book is creatively constructed in three parts, each consisting of 36 short segments, matching the 108 beads of the traditional Indian prayer necklace and is author's endeavour to heal herself of the trauma she underwent in her personal life. She herself is her subject and her experience of pain is her content. *Eat Pray Love* could be read as a travelogue. However, what separates it from most others is the intensity with which readers become engrossed in the author's emotional expedition. This travelogue of spiritual seeking narrates her quest to find peace, happiness and identity that takes her to Italy, India and Indonesia.

After enduring the ordeal of a divorce, a capricious rebound romance which also ends in heartbreak and a stint of depression, the protagonist of the book (author), at 34, decides to leave the life she has known behind and travels to rediscover herself. She spends four months in Italy, befriends localities and learns the

'pleasure of doing nothing', falls in love with the language and devours pizzas and ice-creams. She explores cities and hunts not for art and monuments but for the best place to eat. Eventually, she succeeds in gaining her lost radiance and health back and gets over her chronic depression. In India, she stays in the ashram of a *Guru* and tries to perfect her experience of God through meditation. Meditation helps her fight her ever wandering thoughts and physical discomfort. She meets people, who guide her to self-discovery. Finally, a transformed, lighter and an enlightened Liz leaves for Bali, Indonesia to learn the art of balance. Her friendship with a medicine man Ketut, and Wayan - the lady with ancient wisdom and bohemian talent helps her to be more stable.

The book is captivating, heartwarming, heart-breaking, and hilarious. Her wry humor and witticism permeates in every situation. Written in casual tone, the book is fun and comfortable to read. Though woman-centric, the book has already carved a niche among billions of readers and has inspired many to reignite the flame of passion to live.

*Eat Pray love* is a compulsive read for everyone who is in the path of self-discovery or who simply wants to walk away from the troubles of life. The free-flowing narrative will compel you to gorge on food and to meditate to live life full.

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# ‘Leaders live in hearts not schemes’

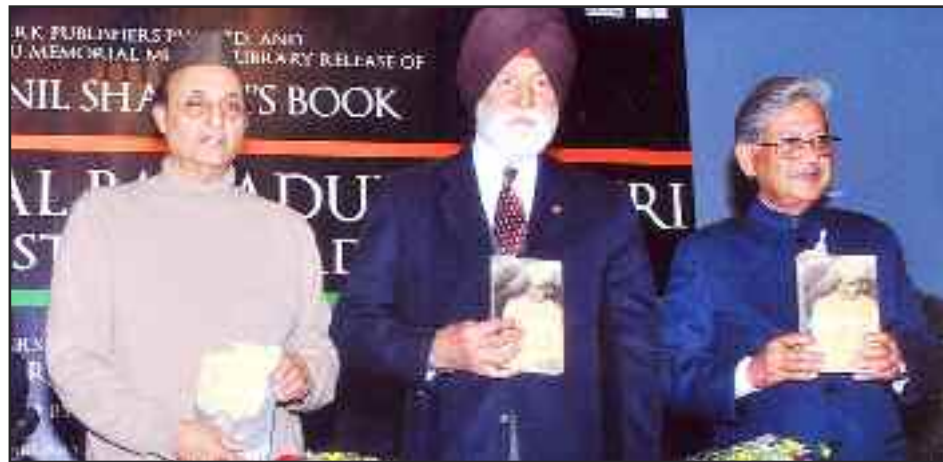
Lal Bahadur Shastri's greatest ability was to remain calm under trying circumstances. Sunil Shastri describes the late Prime Minister's decision to attack Pakistan in 1965: "I was playing cricket at home when I heard news about a bomb on our radio. I rushed to my father's room and was reassured that all will be taken care of. Later, I peeped through the keyhole of his study and saw him talking to the three chiefs of staff." Here follows an excerpt of the interview he gave to Maharishi Kant Singh after the launch of his book *Lal Bahadur Shastri: Past Forward*.

## What motivated you to write this book?

My wife would often ask me about my Babuji's personality. Every part of the country I visited, people came to me and showed their interest in knowing about the simple lifestyle of Babuji. I thought that whatever I knew as a son about him should be known to the entire nation. This inspired me to pen down my memoirs related to him, which I narrated in Hindi in the book *Lal Bahadur Shastri Mere Babuji* which was released informally by my mother Lalita Shastri at Babuji's Samadhi in 1990. Later, many people asked me to write about him in English.

## How do you think this book will impact the younger generation?

The motive behind the book is to let the youth know that there existed a man who practised high ideals of simple living and high thinking. Today's generation is moving away from moral values and their responsibilities towards the nation. There is a need to educate them on the qualities our great leaders possessed. This book about Babuji's life



will encourage the youth to follow his example and attempt a clean-up campaign that would include politicians and bureaucrats.

**What made Lal Bahadur Shastri different from other Indian leaders?**  
His honesty, simplicity, devotion, loyalty, transparency, his common man's approach, his heart to heart contact with masses and, of course, his slogan *Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*.

**What better way to know Lal Bahadur Shastri than through the experience of his son Sunil Shastri who has penned a book on his late father, *Lal Bahadur Shastri: Past Forward*. This book has innumerable anecdotes depicting the second Prime Minister as a person who loved simplicity and could go to any extent to uphold moral values so essential for a leader. The book was released by Dr Karan Singh and Air Marshal (retd) Arjan Singh, the hero of the 1965 war.**

will encourage the youth to follow his example and attempt a clean-up campaign that would include politicians and bureaucrats.

## What made Lal Bahadur Shastri different from other Indian leaders?

His honesty, simplicity, devotion, loyalty, transparency, his common man's approach, his heart to heart contact with masses and, of course, his slogan *Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*.

## Do you not think he was not given a fair deal by the successive governments. They did not promote his ideals the way they should have?

The promotion is done not only through advertisements or by launching schemes in the name of a leader. It is also through the place one makes in the hearts of people. When I went to Kerala, people there kissed

my hand, in Bengal they hugged me, in Orissa they touched the sand where I was standing. All these showed their love for Babuji. Schemes after the names of leaders are short-lived but the slogan *Jai Jawan Jai Kisan* will remain for ever. Everybody knows that he was the man behind *Harit Kranti* and *Shwet Kranti*.

## Do Indian leaders today possess the qualities that Lal Bahadur Shastri had?

Trustworthiness that comes from credibility and reliability is the only wealth of any leader and my Babuji was endowed with this in abundance. That is why he was able to resolve problems with determination. But unfortunately, today's leaders possess neither credibility nor reliability. They lack fundamental values that make a good leader.

## Your book is replete with anecdotes about the late Prime Minister. Which one do you remember the most?

Babuji used to visit army hospitals in Delhi to see the jawans injured in the 1965 war. I was with him in one such visit. He would go from one bed to another and touch the forehead of the injured soldiers. We came to a bed of Major Bhupendra Singh that was completely covered by a mosquito net. His body had got mutilated due to shell injury. Babuji slowly removed the net and kept his hand on his forehead. The Major's eyes filled with tears. Babuji said: You are a brave Major of Indian army, I don't want to see tears in your eyes. The Major replied: Sir, I am proud to be a Major of the Indian army. The tears are not because I fear death. These are because the Prime Minister of my country is standing before me and I cannot stand up and salute him. I could see tears in Babuji's eyes.

# Debutante novelist already a heartthrob



Ravinder Singh at the launch of the audio version of his book *I Too Had a Love Story*

## How was the journey of penning your own story?

Certainly the process was very agonizing. However, it was something I wanted to go through. While writing the novel, I got another

chance to relive those moments. I used to close my eyes and capture everything, all the intricate details: her dresses, her words and the happiness. Remembering those moments in the light of the aftermath was painful and I often ended in tears.

**Ravinder Singh tried a novel medium to reach out to his fans. Joining hands with booksTalk, he launched the audio version of his book *I Too Had a Love Story* last month. Even though the concept of audiobooks is relatively new in India, the author feels it is a great medium to catch up on reading especially with our lives getting busier with each day. Excerpts of the interview he gave to Upama Sinha.**

er chance to relive those moments. I used to close my eyes and capture everything, all the intricate details: her dresses, her words and the happiness. Remembering those moments in the light of the aftermath was painful and I often ended in tears.

## What prompted you to write the novel?

Her loss had a terrible impact on me. I wanted to have a reason to survive. My ego didn't allow me to accept that something so horrible had happened to me. I was unable to come to terms with the fact that my love story had a sad ending. I wanted it to be different. However, I was the one who survived and who could give our story a special end. Thus, I started with the novel. Even when I will be gone tomorrow, our story will remain.

## Was finding a publisher any difficult?

It took me six months to find a publisher. I had no idea where to start and how to start. I sent the manuscript to almost every publisher. And I got no response from them, apart from rejection. I was disappointed and dejected. However, as the old adage says, where there is a will, there is a way. I got

attached to an editing team through internet who aided me to polish the story. They forwarded my manuscript to Shristi publishers from where I got a prompt response.

## Did you expect such a huge response which your novel received?

Not at all. But a week after its release, a girl called me. She was sobbing. She told me that she had been trying to contact me through my facebook address. When she got no response, she found my number through my office. That was the start. I was flooded with phone calls, letters and mails. I created a gmail account for my fans. In the first week, I got around 20 mails, and till now, I have received more than 20,000 mails.

## Is there any plan for the adaptation of your novel into movie?

I am open to any good idea. If I find a decent team with calibre, I would love to make a movie out of it. However, the idea is not to generate money but to take the story to as many people as possible.

## You have recently launched *I Too Had a Love Story* in audio format. How did it

## happen? What was the motive behind it?

I knew about audio books because this technology is quite famous in the West. But I never thought this will come to India one day. I got a call from my publishers that booksTalk wanted my book in audio format and here I was. I believe, people can listen to audio all the time, while driving or walking or doing anything.

## Are you writing another book? Tell us something about it?

I am writing my second book which is a sequel of the first. I have lifted some of the characters from the first novel. But this is not my story, unlike the first one.

## We heard that working 9-5 is your hobby and writing is your profession. Can you illustrate it please?

Well, I try to balance both, but I take writing more seriously. I think about it all the time. I review my stories many times. The task of interacting with media, socializing, publicity of the book, responding to people's queries etc sometimes becomes very daunting. Writing, in fact, consumes most of my time and attention.

# Jaipur Literary festival: Need to make it inclusive

If you think I am a soiled-kurta-clad, beedi-smoking glum publisher in his 60s who hardly ventures out of his dark den full of books, let me confess it's neither. I am fortunately a part of a rare tribe – a young first generation independent publishing entrepreneur – and considering I have survived for almost a decade now, there is a bright chance that I will be able to recount romantic stories to my grandchildren about venturing into a zone that sane men and women mostly avoided like hot fire. And you thought that dynasties meant business only in Indian politics...



Shobit Arya

Come a new year and if you are a publisher in the 21st century version of the city of Shahjahanabad all you hear as parting phrases are 'See you in Jaipur then' or 'I know you will be busy with Jaipur' or

the like. Let me reiterate I have never been to the Jaipur lit fest (JLF) and have never had a strong desire to. I find the experience of reading an evocative book more intimate than watching an author perform on a stage and going and shaking hands with him. But I urge you to not get swayed by my opinion. My track record in such things is pathetic.

However, JLF is a great concept for Indian literature, and everyone associated with it should be commended – the festival directors Namita Gokhale and William Dalrymple, Teamwork Productions and the sponsors DSC.

Their efforts have gone a long way in making books and authors fashionable. However, there is a genuine need to make the festival more inclusive.

Recently, one of the JLF directors is quoted as having announced that the onus of contacting them and participating in the festival is on independent publishers and authors.

**I would like to humbly submit that actually, the onus of being accessible and welcoming lies with the powerful and it will only be a positive reflection on JLF's strength and self-confidence if they were to reach out to the larger Indian publishing world.**

Let's begin with what matters most– the authors. JLF needs to provide a platform to fresh voices and a select number of the deserving and new authors could be made part of some of the panel discussions. It

could invite requests on its website with transparent parameters thrown in. Even take informal interviews if you have to!

And now let's talk about what matters even more - the books. Ten best representative books from trade publishers could be invited on a complimentary basis to be delivered straight to the venue.

The books can be sold during the last two days. Visitors would be able to get a real and comprehensive flavour of Indian literature and JLF would be able to make the process a self-sustaining one. I would even suggest that like this year's focus was 'bhasha' literature, the 2012's could well be the Indies – the independent publishers and authors.

I would be immediately writing to the directors of JLF to facilitate the participation of our authors. Who knows I may be sharing my thoughts with you the same time next year. Till that time, keep reading.

*(Shobit Arya is publisher of Wisdom Tree. Source: IANS)*

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M N Patel

Many book lovers have testified to this and its owner Manhar N Patel is proud that those who could not find the books elsewhere discovered the same here. "A person has to just tell me his or her inter-

ests and I can come up with all the references," he said while pointing out that he had helped a number of research scholars to look for relevant books. Such a feat was not possible if he did not have his heart in the trade. He proudly says that he set up the store since this was his interest. And he does not regret not keeping other books that could fetch him more money.

The books are costly but his clientele too is select. Many foreigners who visit Ahmedabad do not miss Art Book Center if they wish to see collection of books on Indian art and heritage, Patel says. The best thing is a visit to the bookstore does not demand purchase. One can stay there for long browsing through the books without being disturbed.

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# Three novelists and their tales of urban struggle

**Tanaya Dutta Gupta**

IT IS not often that three first-time authors get a chance to discuss their books in context to each other. Yet, the efforts of their publisher and a few book lovers gave Amit Shankar, author of *Flight of the Hilsa*, Vikram Batra, author of *Perfekt Anger* and Veena, author of *Beyond the Dunes*, the platform to do so recently.

Drawing parallels between the three books was Anu Kapur, author, and Associate Professor at Delhi School of Economics. Keeping the differences of plot and writing style aside, she cited the commonality of human struggles that the three writers explored and goaded them into revealing their own fights as writers.

Dr. Vikram Batra conveyed that his book was a semi-autobiographical account of a person and his struggles, which like the 'k' in *Perfekt Anger* were far from being 'perfect'. The graphics on the book's cover page also received much comments and appreciations. Amit Shankar explained the significance of the title of his book, *Flight of the Hilsa*, building an analogical comparison with the behaviour of the hilsa fish.



Anu Kapoor moderating the conversation as authors (from left) Veena, Vikram Batra and Amit Shankar look on.

The discussion revealed some interesting facets, like how the author's love for music has been showcased through his central character in the book. Some interesting questions followed from the audience, ranging from the cover arts to the reason behind

naming the work *Flight of the Hilsa* instead of 'Return of the Hilsa', a characteristic behaviour of the fish used in the book as a metaphor.

Finally Veena, the author of *Beyond the Dunes* talked about expressing in ink, the

emotional journey of a family living in Dubai, capturing their fears, trauma, pain... and a life torn apart. Her anthropomorphic personification of the city of Dubai as 'man', 'woman' and 'child' provided much food for thought to the discussion. The diverse styles and lenses adopted by each of the three authors could also be grasped from a quick reading of their chapter headings. Narration of selected excerpts from the books added to the magic of the evening.

It was revealed that both Amit Shankar and Vikram Batra will be coming out with their next titles in the near future.

For Veena, the event in Delhi was preceded by a launch in Cochin at Reliance TimeOut on February 3.

Veteran journalist and author Leela Menon, who presided over the event, said, "As a reporter one goes to courts and witnesses and reports on many things. In Veena's case, her experiences and encounters as a reporter have stayed on in her heart and she has brought them to life with her unique use of words. She has delved into the human rights issues that plague the Gulf states and given an insider's view of the court scenario there."

# A trip to cultural Thanjavur

A CULTURAL history written by Pradeep Chakravarthy with photographs by Vikram Sathanathan was launched by Niyogi Books at an impressive function at India Habitat Centre recently.

Covering the cultural contributions of Thanjavur from the period of Cholas to date, the book tries to take the reader to the long trip to Thanjavur temples, the palaces, the paintings, the cuisines, the weapons of war, and the literary genres such as *abhyudayamus*, the *prabandhams* and the *kuravanjis*.

Talking about his journey into writing the coffee-table, the author nearly transpired all those present to the lanes and bylanes of

the ancient Thanjavur.

The book was released by Geeta Chandran, noted Bharatanatyam exponent. She appreciated the efforts of the author, photographer and the publisher in producing a cultural history of the city so important from a historical point of view.

Also present on the dais were former Dr. Abid Hussain (former Member Planning Commission) and Prof. Mushir-ul-Hasan (director general, the National Archives)

The 220 pages book with 174 photographs and five maps magnificently trace the cultural history of Thanjavur that has never been documented earlier.

**Book Link Correspondent**



(From left): Pradeep Chakravarthy, Prof Mushir-ul-Hasan, Geeta Chandran, Dr Abid Hussain and Vikram Sath Yanathan.

# Publishers woo readers with new books on cricket

**Contd from page 1**

Brilliant narrative that tries to capture the best moments of the Indian cricket. The hardbound edition costs Rs 295 and the soft-bound Rs 195.

Rupa has come out with two more books on cricket *Who-Zatt* and *The Cricket World Cup: Cherish and Relish*. The former is written jointly by Gautam Bhimani (commentator and presenter at ESPN Star Sports) and media professional Navneet Prabhu. This book has questions and answers on the World Cup history It has been priced at Rs 95. Similarly priced is the other book that contains history of the World Cup till 2007. Rupa MD Kapish Mehra is already enthused by the response said it was a challenge to bring event-related books knowing fully well that the books may lose sales post world cup. The response so far has been far better than we thought, he said.

*All You Wanted to Know About the World Cup* has been released by Puffin, an imprint of Penguin India. It is



multi-focussed and tries to capture one day international, T20, entertainment in cricket, cricketing rivalries, Gods of cricket and India at the World Cup in snippets. It also has a chapter on World Cup sponsors and cricket commentaries. It may be useful for anyone wanting to know one day cricket in a short time. It has been priced at Rs 199. Publisher Udyan Mitra said that the books were aimed at readers who had cricket in their minds. "However, reading is not a priority of cricket fans so we have not published too many books on the cup. Also the print run is not terribly ambitious and the response so far has been quite good," he said.

Vitasta has come out with a book titled *World Cup 2011*. It is the only book that does not have any player on the cover but the coveted cup against the backdrop of a green cricket ground. It has a venue map that makes it distinct. It contains chapters on history of the World Cup, the 14 teams and their strengths and weak-

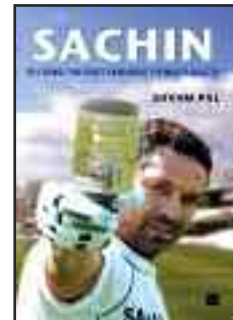


nesses and India's chances. It makes an interesting reading about the pluses and minuses of the Indian cricket. It talks about umpires and venues and their analysis. It also has a chapter on funny shots with MS Dhoni's helicopter shot in the beginning of the chapter. This handy book in the form of a guide has come out well. But in giving the results of the warm-up matches, it has lost out on time.

Author Manish Kumar is an avid cricketer, a cricket fan and a journalist. The price is Rs 199.

Vitasta CEO Santosh Verma is undeterred by the delay. He said the orders have already been booked. We are undersupplying the market in the hope of reducing the quantum of return. Ours is the only book that can be called a comprehensive book on 2011 World Cup, he claimed.

Harper Collins' book *Sachin: 501 Things you Didn't know About the Master Blaster* tries to catch on with Sachin fever this World Cup. One, that he is on the top of



his form and second, this is likely to be his last World Cup appearance. If there was ever a quiz on Sachin and there definitely be one soon, this book will come in very handy. Author Suvam Pal is a Mumbai-based sports journalist.



A biography on the living legend is the latest from Vikas Publishing. Named *Sach* the book is authentic since Sachin Tendulkar has said this to be his story and expressed happiness. It takes readers through Sachin's journey of life. The author touches on the forbidden ground - the controversy of life, the author steps boldly on what has been 'forbidden' ground till now - the controversy regarding Greg Chappell.

The most well-known face of the Indian women's cricket, Anjum Chopra, along with Sunil Kalra have come out with an illustrated book *Women's Cricket World: A Journey from 1745-2013*. Published by Indian Sports Books, it has more than 200 pictures and is priced at Rs 2,499.

**8 | in the news**

# Amendment will affect book industry adversely

**Contd from page 1**

will be accepted, unless new bill comes we won't be able to comment."

"The basic point is the interest of our authors and the Indian publishing industry. It would be unjustified and unethical to succumb to the pressure of international business interests and lobbyists. Indian publishing industry and authors should get the level playing field enjoyed by their foreign counterparts", Amitabh Sinha, head of the BJP intellectual cell and a member of the party's national executive, said. Why should we show our haste, he asked.

While there is awareness about how the bill could impact the film industry (the main reason for the amendment) not much has been spoken about its adverse fallout on the book industry. Experts in the publishing industry have slammed the original bill as well as recommendations of the parliamentary standing committee as something that would give a lethal blow to Indian publishers, authors and booklovers.

Some well-known authors, including Gurcharan Das, Jaishree Mista and William Dalrymple, publishing houses and associations have already launched a signature campaign to oppose the proposed amendment. A strong voice on this was heard at the recently held Jaipur literary festival.

Such an amendment is bad in law and should not be incorporated, Association of Publishing Industry (API) said.

"The amendment should mean a win-win-win situation wherein publishers,

authors and customers emerge as beneficiaries. But it will do exactly the opposite and everyone potentially loses out," opines Anand Bhushan of FIP."

"The amendment threatens to dismantle the very fabric of Indian writing in English. The act is capable of setting India back a hundred years," Thomas Abraham, MD of Hachette forecasted.

"I am sure they have relevance in other applicable areas. I know for a fact that many performing artists are happy with some of the proposals but many proposed amendments (2m) don't make sense to publishing," MD & CEO of Sage Publication, Vivek Mehra opined.

The Copyright (amendment) Bill, 2010 proposes to amend Section 2(m) of the Copyright Act, 1957 by inserting a Proviso stating that 'a copy of a work published in any country outside India with the permission of the author of the work and imported from that country into India shall not be deemed to be an infringing copy'.



**Thomas Abraham**



**Chiki Sarkar**

Editor-in-chief of Random House Chiki Sarkar explains: "2m allows the import of all editions of books into the country, making India an open market. This means that the Indian edition of a book will cease to exist as it will no longer be the only edition available in India. This means that many authors, particularly those who are also published internationally,

**Those countries that allow parallel importation are basically trading hubs with no substantial domestic publishing that can be damaged.**

will simply be distributed into the country but not published. An author won't just lose out on being published properly but will also receive less income since royalties on books published in India are much higher than the royalties on high discounted imported copies which are on net receipts."

Legal opinion seems to believe the same. "The proposed amendment appears not to have been carefully considered," advocate Nandita Saikia said. "If this amendment is passed, it would adversely affect all the stakeholders in the publishing industry whether they are authors, readers or publish-

ers," she added.

While major developed countries do not allow parallel importation, there are some that do allow such as Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong. These countries "are basically trading hubs with no substantial domestic publishing that can be damaged by parallel importation. More importantly, there are no low priced edition programmes in these countries, unlike India which allow consumers to access low-priced content", explained Saikia.

Many publishers argue that India is already the lowest priced market in the world. The amendment would rather shrink Indian publishing industry and replace the bookstores with big international bestsellers eventually leading to an increase in the price of books once the competing Indian publishers are out.

Divya Dubey, author and publisher of Gyaana Books explained, "if we legalize this import, the foreign edition will soon lower their prices to kill the Indian original edition of the same book. With no territorial protection, it will be the death of the every Indian edition". Her blog is making best attempts to educate people on the adverse impact of parallel importation.



**Divya Dubey**

(with inputs from **Maharishi Kant Singh**)



Youth icon Alka Lamba, releasing *World Cup 2011, A Complete Guide*. Also seen in the picture are author Manish Kumar (Left) and Publisher Sudesh Verma.

## Hardships inspired him

Known for his depiction of the hardships of the working class, his intricate plots, and his sense of humour, Charles Dickens novels captured the common man with whom readers could easily relate.

Charles Dickens was 12 when his family moved to London, faced with financial disaster. His father was arrested and the whole family except Charles joined him in the prison. The emotional mark became his source of creative energy and he produced masterpieces such as *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*.

In 1832, he became a successful shorthand reporter of parliamentary debates in the House of Commons, and began working as a reporter for a newspaper. In 1834, he adopted a pseudonym 'Boz' and the first series of

### Remembrance



**Charles Dickens**  
(7 February 1812)

sketches by Boz was published in 1836, and the same year Dickens was hired to write short texts to accompany a series of humour sporting illustrations by Robert Seymour, a popular artist. Seymour committed suicide after the second number. Dickens altered the initial conception of *The Pickwick Papers*, which became a novel illustrated by Hablot K Browne. *The Pickwick Papers* became an enormous hit.

After the success of *Pickwick*, Dickens embarked on a full-time career as a novelist, producing work of increasing complexity at an incredible rate, although he continued as well his journalistic and editorial activities. His famous works include *Oliver Twist*, *Dombey and Son*, *Little Dorrit* and *Hard Times*.

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