



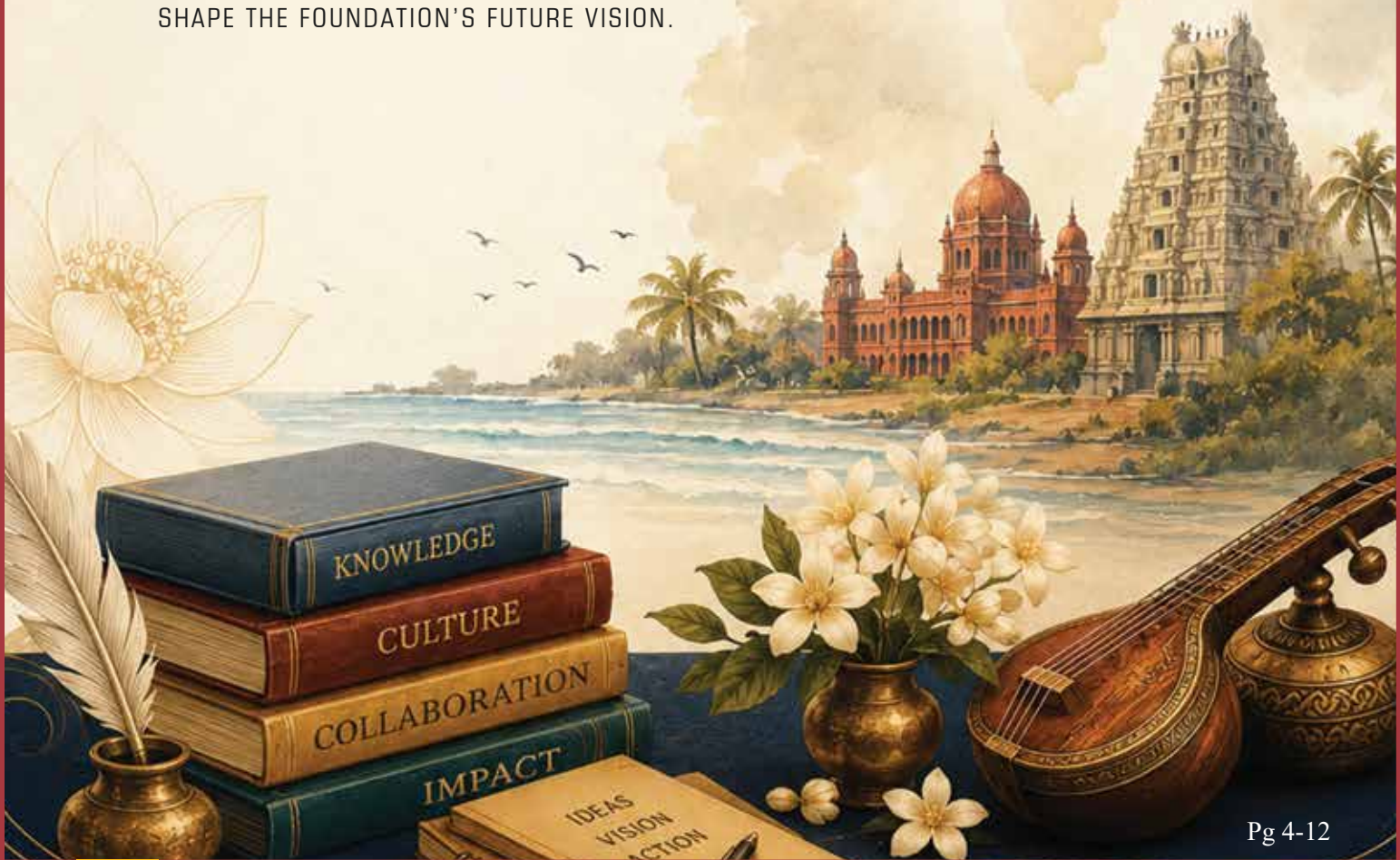
Prabha प्रभा

Q4 | 2024-25

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle

UNITED BY PURPOSE, INSPIRED BY CHANGE

A VIBRANT CONFLUENCE OF IDEAS, LEADERSHIP, CULTURE, AND COLLABORATION AS THE EHSAAS WOMEN AND CONVENORS OF THE PRABHA KHAITAN FOUNDATION CAME TOGETHER IN CHENNAI TO SHAPE THE FOUNDATION'S FUTURE VISION.



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MANISHA JAIN
Honorary COO,
Prabha Khaitan Foundation

As we present another edition of the Prabha Khaitan Foundation magazine, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride reflecting upon the journey, initiatives, and collective spirit that continue to define the Foundation's work across literature, arts, culture, education, and social engagement.

The cover story of this edition focuses on the South India Conference in Chennai — a meaningful gathering that brought together the Foundation's convenors and Ehsaas Women from multiple cities for two days of dialogue, brainstorming, collaboration, and shared vision. Beyond discussions and planning, the conference became a celebration of community, leadership, and cultural connection, beautifully culminating in a mesmerizing musical evening by renowned flautist Rakesh Chaurasia.

This issue also shines a light on the Foundation's vibrant ongoing initiatives through Muskaan, where storytelling sessions, puppetry workshops, music, mime, and interactive engagements continue to nurture creativity, confidence, and imagination among children. Equally enriching are the literary conversations, book discussions, cinematic screenings, and cultural programmes that reaffirm our belief in the transformative power of art and dialogue.

As always, this edition is also an archive of memories — from inspiring contemporary engagements to a heartfelt throwback that reminds us of the Foundation's enduring legacy and journey over the years.

Each event featured in these pages carries with it the spirit of the Foundation. We remain committed to creating meaningful spaces where conversations flourish, traditions are celebrated, and communities come together through shared experiences.

Our gratitude to Ms Madiha Saidi, our Ehsaas woman of Dubai for guiding us through this edition! I hope this edition resonates with our readers and continues to inspire deeper engagement with the arts, literature, and society.



Madiha Saidi
Ehsaas Woman of Dubai

It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of this special edition of the Prabha Khaitan Foundation magazine as its Guest Editor. Being associated with the Foundation as an *Ehsaas Woman* has always been a deeply enriching journey — one that transcends geographical boundaries and connects us through a shared commitment towards culture, creativity, literature, and meaningful social engagement.

This edition beautifully captures the vibrant spirit of the Foundation through a diverse range of initiatives and events that continue to inspire communities across cities and generations. At the heart of this issue is the South India Conference held in Chennai — a remarkable coming together of the Foundation’s convenors and Ehsaas Women from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Coimbatore, Chennai, and beyond. The conference stood as a celebration of collaboration, leadership, dialogue, and collective vision, while also reinforcing the warmth and sisterhood that define the Foundation.

The issue also highlights the wonderful work being carried out through *Muskaan*, the Foundation’s children development initiative, where storytelling, puppetry, music, and interactive learning experiences continue to nurture imagination and joy among young minds. Alongside these are engaging literary discussions, book launches, cultural gatherings, cinematic celebrations, and memorable artistic interactions that reflect the Foundation’s unwavering commitment to the arts.

A special highlight for me is the inclusion of a nostalgic throwback feature, reminding us of the Foundation’s inspiring journey and the many meaningful milestones that continue to shape its legacy.

I hope readers enjoy this edition as much as we enjoyed putting it together. May these pages inspire conversations, creativity, compassion, and a deeper appreciation for culture and community.

A Confluence of Vision, Leadership & Cultural Harmony

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised its South India Conference in Chennai, bringing together the dynamic **Ehsaas Women** from Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai, along with the Foundation's convenors from across the country. Conceived as a platform for collaboration, dialogue, and strategic planning, the two-day gathering beautifully reflected the spirit of unity, leadership, and cultural engagement that lies at the heart of the Foundation's vision.

The conference served as an important opportunity for the participating members to exchange ideas, discuss future initiatives, and collectively envision the Foundation's next phase of growth and outreach. Over the course of two packed days, the sessions witnessed meaningful discussions, brainstorming meetings, and insightful deliberations focused on strengthening existing programmes while exploring new avenues for impact across literature, arts, culture, and social initiatives.

Beyond formal discussions, the conference also created a valuable space for personal interaction, bonding, and shared learning among the participants. The gathering celebrated the strength of collective leadership and highlighted the vital role played by the Ehsaas Women in nurturing cultural and community engagement across different cities.

The first evening featured an elegant gala dinner exclusively for the women participants, offering a warm and relaxed atmosphere for interaction and camaraderie. Conversations flowed beyond conference rooms as members connected over shared experiences, aspirations, and memories, strengthening the sense of community within the Foundation.

The conference concluded on a memorable cultural note with a mesmerizing musical evening by renowned flautist Rakesh Chaurasia. Held in Chennai in the gracious presence of M. K. Narayanan, the performance drew music lovers and members of Chennai's cultural fraternity for an unforgettable evening celebrating Indian classical music. Rakesh Chaurasia's soulful bansuri recital created a deeply immersive experience, adding artistic richness and spiritual depth to the conference.

The South India Conference emerged as much more than a formal gathering—it became a celebration of shared purpose, meaningful collaboration, and the enduring cultural ethos of the Foundation. Through dialogue, connection, and artistic engagement, the conference reaffirmed the Foundation's commitment to creating impactful communities rooted in creativity, compassion, and collective growth.



An Evening of Warmth & Camaraderie

The first evening of the South India Conference hosted by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** was marked by an elegant gala dinner organised exclusively for the **Ehsaas Women** participating in the conference. The evening provided a relaxed and intimate setting for members from Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, and other cities to interact beyond formal meetings and discussions. Filled with laughter, conversations, and shared experiences, the gathering beautifully reflected the spirit of friendship, collaboration, and sisterhood that defines the Foundation's community. The dinner became a memorable celebration of togetherness, strengthening bonds among the women leading the Foundation's initiatives across regions.





Moments of Dialogue, Planning & Collaboration



The South India Conference witnessed two days of engaging discussions, brainstorming sessions, and collaborative meetings involving the Foundation's convenors and **Ehsaas Women** from multiple cities. These interactions focused on strengthening existing initiatives, exchanging ideas, and collectively shaping the future roadmap of the Foundation's cultural, literary, and social outreach programmes. The sessions reflected the **spirit of teamwork, leadership, and shared vision that continues** to drive the Foundation's activities across the country.



Hyderabad



Chennai



Coimbatore



Bengaluru



A Mesmerizing Musical Evening in Chennai

As part of the South India Conference, the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a soul-stirring musical evening in Chennai featuring internationally acclaimed flautist Rakesh Chaurasia. The event witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of music lovers, members of Chennai's cultural fraternity, and distinguished guests, including M. K. Narayanan.

Known for his exceptional command over the bansuri and his ability to blend technical brilliance with emotional depth, Rakesh Chaurasia delivered a captivating performance that left the audience spellbound. His soulful renditions beautifully captured the essence of Hindustani classical music, creating an atmosphere of serenity, devotion, and artistic immersion.

The evening served as a fitting cultural culmination to the two-day conference, reinforcing the Foundation's deep commitment to celebrating and preserving India's rich artistic heritage. Beyond being a musical performance, the event became a shared cultural experience that brought together people through the universal language of music.

The recital was received with immense appreciation and applause, making it one of the most memorable highlights of the conference and a true celebration of art, culture, and collective harmony.









A Soulful Celebration of Music, Wisdom & Devotion

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** celebrated Saraswati Puja with great reverence and cultural fervour, bringing together music lovers, patrons of the arts, and well-wishers for a serene and spiritually uplifting morning dedicated to *Maa Saraswati* — the Goddess of Music, Knowledge, Wisdom, and Creativity. Marking the arrival of Basant Panchami, the event beautifully reflected the spirit of renewal, artistic expression, and devotion associated with the spring season.

The programme commenced with a warm welcome address by Shefali Rawat Agarwal, Ehsaas Woman of Kolkata who highlighted the Foundation's long-standing commitment to celebrating India's artistic and cultural heritage. She spoke about the vision of **Prabha Khaitan and the Foundation's** continuous efforts to preserve and promote classical music, literature, and performing arts through meaningful cultural initiatives.

The morning was elevated by mesmerizing performances from two distinguished artists. Renowned flautist Rakesh Chaurasia captivated the audience with his soulful and meditative rendition on the bansuri. A Grammy-winning artist and eminent disciple of Hariprasad Chaurasia, his performance beautifully blended technical brilliance with emotional depth, leaving the audience spellbound.



The celebrations continued with an evocative vocal recital by Sukanya Karmakar, an accomplished singer and A-grade artist of All India Radio and Doordarshan. Her soulful presentation of devotional and semi-classical compositions added warmth and grace to the occasion.

The event beautifully embodied the spirit of Saraswati Puja — a harmonious confluence of devotion, music, creativity, and cultural heritage. Through such initiatives, the Foundation continues to nurture India's rich artistic traditions while creating meaningful cultural experiences that inspire and connect communities across generations.





Strengthening Bonds of Friendship Between India & Vietnam

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted a warm and meaningful luncheon in honour of a 20-member delegation from the Hanoi Vietnam India Friendship Association (HAVIFA) during their visit to Kolkata as part of a ten-day tour of India. The gathering also witnessed the presence of members of the Indo-Vietnam Solidarity Committee, creating an atmosphere of cultural exchange, goodwill, and mutual respect.

The interaction served as an important platform to celebrate the long-standing friendship and shared cultural ties between India and Vietnam. Members of the visiting delegation engaged in meaningful conversations with Indian counterparts, exchanging thoughts on culture, heritage, people-to-people connections, and future avenues of collaboration. The occasion reflected the spirit of solidarity and friendship that has continued to strengthen relations between the two nations over the years.

Hosted in a warm and welcoming environment, the luncheon provided an opportunity for deeper engagement and cross-cultural understanding. The event also paid tribute to the enduring legacy of those who worked tirelessly towards fostering Indo-Vietnam relations and strengthening bonds of international friendship.

Through such initiatives, the Foundation continues to encourage dialogue, cultural understanding, and meaningful global connections, reaffirming its commitment to promoting harmony and people-centric cultural exchange beyond borders.





Anurag Tripathi

Unveiling the Mind of Anurag Tripathi: A Journey of Thrills, Twists, and Ambition



Tusharika Singh

The Write Circle session organised in Jaipur by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** with author and former banker Anurag Tripathi and PR strategist Tusharika Singh provided an intriguing look into Tripathi's creative process and the themes explored in his works. Singh guided the conversation, delving into Tripathi's inspiring journey and the recurring themes of ambition, greed, and survival that dominate his storytelling. Mita Kapur from Siyahi commenced the event with a warm introduction.

Tripathi began by sharing the origins of his latest thriller book, revealing how a chance encounter in 2016 sparked the idea for the book. "I was on a flight to Goa, and there was this boy sitting next to me in his mid-20s. He stood out in the crowd," he recalled. The man was a compulsive gambler who, astonishingly, was on his sixteenth trip to Goa that year to gamble at the casinos.

Tripathi learned that the majority of casino-goers in Goa were not the glamorous, wealthy figures often portrayed in popular media, but farmers from northern India. These farmers had suddenly come into large sums of money after selling their land to developers, and their newfound wealth led to reckless spending, including frequent trips to the casinos.

"Everybody in the village was wearing a Rolex, there was a Pajero standing outside their house. Mud houses had broken down, and concrete structures had come up. They didn't have roads, but it didn't matter," Tripathi explained. He described how casino agents took advantage of this spending spree by luring the villagers to Goa with free trips and entertainment. "Suddenly, they were thrown into these casinos with belly dancers and booze flowing all the time. These poor farmers had no defence," he said, emphasizing how quickly the entire village became caught in the cycle of gambling.

Singh probed further into Tripathi's creative process, asking how he combines real-life inspiration with

imagination to craft such distinctive characters. Tripathi attributed much of his storytelling ability to his upbringing in a family of natural storytellers. "My father was the original storyteller in our house," he recalled fondly.

On the themes of money, ambition, and greed, Tripathi reflected on the psychological motivations behind human behavior. "Greed and money are very strong motivators," he said, acknowledging that societal norms often frame greed as immoral. "But the fact is, it's a part of our genes. Greed is essential for survival. It's something that we can't ignore."

When asked about how he balances the duo career which both are highly demanding, "I've stopped managing money for others, and I focus on writing now. I travel and do my research when necessary, and that balance is key to how I continue to write," he said, showcasing his deep commitment to his craft. D.P. Agarwal, honoured the speakers with handloom stoles. Mita Kapur concluded the session with her closing remarks.



Mita Kapur



Goutam Sen, Nirmal Sen

*This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Jaipur, and was in association with Siyahi, Spagia Foundation; Hospitality Partner, ITC Rajputana*



Anurag Tripathi and Kirti Kirdatt

Unveiling the Mind Behind the Pen: A Conversation with Anurag Tripathi

In a compelling and deeply insightful literary evening hosted by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, Kirti Kirdatt, **Ehsaas Woman** of Raipur, engaged in an evocative conversation in a session of **The Write Circle** with guest author Anurag Tripathi, whose latest book, *The Goa Gambit*, has captivated readers with its gripping narrative and unusual setting. The event wasn't merely about a book — it was an exploration of life choices, shifting identities, and the high-stakes gamble we all take in pursuit of meaning. The event commenced with a welcome address by Srishti Trivedi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Raipur.

Tripathi, a former investment banker turned full-time writer, offered a refreshingly candid reflection on his journey into authorship. "Job for me was a means to an end," he shared with charming honesty. "My wife, on the other hand, she's the kind of person who wants to change this world." That very difference in purpose eventually catalysed a bold relocation to Singapore, where his wife pursued a leadership role in HR, and Tripathi, unburdened by professional obligation, finally began to embrace the storyteller he had always been.

Discussing his debut novel, *Kalu*, Tripathi revealed his penchant for writing about what he didn't know — a nod to Dan Brown's advice that "if you want to write a novel, write it on a subject you know nothing about." Inspired by a real story of art fraud, Tripathi dove into the murky world of fake paintings and authentication scandals, eventually weaving a riveting tale around a forged Rabindranath Tagore painting.

However, it was *The Goa Gambit* that took centre stage that evening. Based on a real-life encounter with a compulsive gambler on a flight to Goa, the novel unearths a fascinating narrative about rural landowners who, after coming into sudden wealth, were lured into the glittering traps of Goa's casino culture. Tripathi remarked, "They had sacrificed all their lives, and suddenly they had money. Poor people don't know how to save, but spending comes naturally."

Speaking of characters, Tripathi confessed a special fondness for Jesha, the novel's protagonist. "He's so clever, I had to create a formidable antagonist to balance him out. That's how Pankaj Adhikari was born — a political force who could raise the stakes of the game exponentially."

On writer's block, Tripathi offered pragmatic wisdom. He toggles between projects, seeks solitude when needed, and warns against perfectionism: "There's no such thing as perfect prose. Don't get stuck in Chapter 7 forever. Finish your story."

Reflecting on how his background in investment banking supports his creative freedom today, Tripathi concluded in a Q&A session with the audience, "Because I don't need to sell books to pay bills, I can write purely for passion. My characters are gray, just like us. No one is born evil—it's the circumstances."

This masterclass in storytelling and self-awareness left the audience not just inspired but transformed. Tripathi reminded everyone that while storytelling may begin with words, its power lies in the truth we're willing to tell—first to ourselves, and then to the world. The vote of thanks was delivered by Kalpana Chaudhary, **Ehsaas Woman** of Raipur. Dr. Abhishek Sachdeva felicitated the author.



Srishti Trivedi



Kalpana Chaudhary

This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Raipur



Radhika Swarup

Radhika Swarup Reflects on Writing, Women, and Au- thenticity



Monica Bhagwagar

Nagpur recently witnessed an enriching and intellectual gathering at **The Write Circle**, an initiative by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. The session, led by Monica Bhagwagar, **Ehsaas Woman of Nagpur**, unfolded into a deeply engaging and insightful conversation with renowned author Radhika Swarup. The evening opened by Priyanka Kothari, **Ehsaas Woman** of Nagpur, offered an intimate peek into the life and work of Swarup, whose books have captivated readers with their rich storytelling and authentic portrayals of contemporary India.

In a candid exchange with Bhagwagar, Swarup recounted her transformative journey from a successful banking career to becoming a full-time writer. She shared, "Life was going well. I was a banker, making good money, and my career path was set. But one day, on my 26th birthday, I woke up in Frankfurt at a private equity conference and thought, 'This is not what I want to do at all with my life.'" Her words, which echoed a sense of longing and self-realization, struck a deep chord with the audience, resonating with anyone who has ever questioned their chosen path.

Swarup's decision to pursue writing, a field she had never formally trained for, marked a pivotal shift in her life. She added, "I don't know if it was a moment of weakness or strength, but I knew I needed to fulfill myself. And that led me to this path." This open reflection on following one's true calling made for a profound opening to a session that would continue to uncover layers of her personal and professional life.

When asked about how she writes such authentic and powerful female characters, Swarup was candid, "I don't think we'd ask a man that question, would we?" She reflected on how women's lives are often filled with complexity due to societal and biological expectations. "Women don't have linear paths. They are more complex because they are expected to adjust and adapt more in life," she shared. This view resonated deeply with the audience, particularly in a culture like India's, where the experiences

of women often carry layers of emotion and societal pressures.

Swarup's works often portray these complexities through her female protagonists, who navigate internal and external struggles. She mentioned a particularly fascinating character in her latest book, "There's a woman with 28 dogs, who is universally hated



Priyanka Kothari

by her neighbours. It was intriguing to get into her head and explore why she feels isolated in her mission of animal welfare." This unique portrayal of a character, disliked yet deeply passionate, showcases the depth and nuance of her storytelling.

The conversation then turned to the broader themes in her writing, especially regarding empowerment, resilience, and agency. Radhika explained that, while her female characters often don't display these traits in the traditional sense, they still embody strength in their adaptability. "It's women who make the compromises, adapt, and thrive, even when the world shuts down around them," she said. Her words struck a chord with the audience, highlighting the quiet but powerful resilience women demonstrate daily.

A candid and thought-provoking Q&A session with the audience illuminated the layers of Swarup's storytelling, offering a glimpse into her world where life's messiness and beauty are captured with authenticity and depth. Priyanka Kothari, **Ehsaas Woman** of Nagpur delivered the formal closing address. Rahul Tajne from Radisson Blu Hotel felicitated the guest author with a token of appreciation.

This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Nagpur, and was in association with Hospitality Partner, Radisson Blu; and Print Media Partner, Lokmat



Damini Grover

Self-Love above all says Damini Grover



Ketki Bhatia

In an inspiring session of **The Write Circle** organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, on self-love and personal growth, multi-award-winning counselling psychologist, life coach, and mentor, Damini Grover sat down with Ketki Bhatia, **Ehsaas Woman** of Mumbai, to explore the often misunderstood concept of loving and understanding oneself. The discussion, both insightful and empowering, was a deep dive into how nurturing self-love is not just a luxury but a necessity for a fulfilling life. Karishma Mehta, **Ehsaas Woman** of Mumbai delivered the welcome address.

Grover began by addressing the common misconceptions surrounding the concept of self-love. To many, it might seem like a cliché, or something reserved for the fortunate few, but as Grover pointed out, “Self-love is your oxygen mask. If you don’t love yourself enough and take care of yourself, you will not be able to care for others or effectively pursue your goals in life.”

A significant part of the discussion focused on self-talk and its direct impact on self-love. Grover explained how our internal dialogue shapes our identity and reality. “The most problematic stories are the ones where we become the problem and take that to be the truth. This distorts the way we perceive ourselves and hyperfocuses on our flaws. Viewing yourself as a problem is disempowering.”

The conversation also touched on the significant role that external influences, particularly the words of others, play in shaping our self-image. Grover shared how children, as they grow, are heavily influenced by the adults around them, and their self-talk is shaped by the words they hear. “Children mirror the adults around them, and what we say to them becomes their internal dialogue.”

As adults, we continue to rely on this internalized speech to navigate the world. If we’ve internalized negative messages over time, these become the lens through which we view ourselves. Grover stressed the importance of paying attention to this speech and shared that “The way we are talking about ourselves is shaping our entire identity and emotional well-being.”

One of the most compelling parts of their conversation was the topic of labelling—a practice that, although common in everyday life, has significant consequences for mental health. Grover emphasized how deeply ingrained these labels are in society, often passed down through generations. “We’re so deeply conditioned for this; it’s almost ingrained, coming down from our parents to us and now, we label our children,” she explained.

This negative self-talk, especially when compounded over time, can prevent people from living authentically and embracing their worth. For Grover, the key is awareness, recognizing how labelling affects your inner world and understanding its power to shape your future.

In this enlightening conversation, Grover shared profound insights on how individuals can begin to truly love themselves by unlearning harmful beliefs, challenging negative self-talk, and embracing their inherent worth.

During the Q&A session, Grover concluded with an empowering message: “You are the hero of your story. Your value doesn’t depend on achievements, status, or validation. It comes from the simple fact that you exist.” Anvi Thaker, **Ehsaas Woman** of Mumbai gave the closing address. Karishma Mehta, **Ehsaas Woman** of Mumbai felicitated the author.



Anvi Thaker



Karishma Mehta

*This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Mumbai, and was in association with I’m Powered (Centre for Counselling and Well-Being); Hospitality Partner, Trident Hotel; and Print Hindi Media Partner, Lokmat*

Rajdeep Sardesai on India's Election Integrity and Media's Role



Dhanya Rajendran



Rajdeep Sardesai

In a candid conversation, **The Write Circle** organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, between journalist Dhanya Rajendran and senior journalist and author Rajdeep Sardesai, the political shifts in India during the 2024 elections were discussed in depth. Sardesai, a seasoned observer of Indian politics, shared his thoughts on the unexpected outcomes of these elections, providing a unique perspective on the factors that shaped the electoral results. The welcome address was delivered by Revathi Raju, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bengaluru.

Opening his thoughts on 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Sardesai noted that there was a general belief that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was on the brink of a historic victory "the election that surprised India." "There was a sense of almost euphoria on the side of BJP supporters and a sense of resignation among the opposition," Sardesai recalled. This optimism was particularly fueled by the grand inauguration of the Ram Mandir at the start of the year, which many BJP supporters viewed as a sign of inevitable triumph. For many, the election seemed like a done deal, with the BJP expected to break records and potentially win close to 400 seats. However, when the results were declared, Sardesai observed that there was widespread questioning of the predictions. "Did we grossly misread the election?" he wondered aloud, pointing to the surprises that unfolded across different states.

Sardesai continued, noting that the elections reflected the dynamic nature of Indian democracy. "Never underestimate the Indian voter," he asserted, acknowledging how the electorate defied expectations, not only surprising the ruling party but also the opposition. Despite the BJP's seeming invincibility, it was clear that the voters' preferences did not align with what many had predicted.

In the ongoing conversation, the issue of money power in Indian elections was discussed. Sardesai highlighted how money has distorted the political process, with some candidates spending up to 40-50 crores just to ensure victory. The author pointed that the Election Commission

for not ensuring a level playing field, stating, "They've surrendered their constitutional duty." Sardesai also warned that the dominance of money in politics prevents ethical candidates from participating, with real estate magnates dominating the field. "If Mahatma Gandhi fought an election today, he might lose his deposit," he concluded, emphasizing the dangers to democracy.

They discussed the growing unpredictability and issues in India's electoral process. Sardesai emphasized that elections have become increasingly difficult to predict, noting, "Indian elections are so competitive, how do I know how many Independents will get how much vote?"

Sardesai called for greater transparency in the electoral process to restore public trust in elections nationwide and said he hopes that the media and journalism in India would have a positive impact on people. In conclusion, Sardesai's reflections on the 2024 elections provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges and triumphs within India's political landscape, highlighting both the strength of the BJP as an electoral machine and the complex diversity of Indian voters. The vote of thanks was delivered by Lalita Goenka, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bengaluru. Anil Kathotia and Gurudas Shenoy felicitated the author and the conversationalist respectively.



Anil Kathotia, Lalita Goenka, Anindita Chatterjee, Revathi Raju

*This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Bengaluru*



Rajdeep Sardesai

Rajdeep Sardesai Unveils the Political Journey in a session of The Write Circle



Vaishali Joshi

The evening in Goa was filled with insightful conversations as part of **The Write Circle**, a unique initiative by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. Vaishali Joshi, the distinguished Ehsaas Woman of Goa, had the privilege of engaging in a fascinating conversation with the renowned journalist and author Rajdeep Sardesai. He shared his extraordinary journey from law to journalism, and his experiences in both print and television media. The event began with a welcome note by Gaurapriya Atul Pai Kane, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa.

Sardesai started by confessed that despite his formal education in law, his passion for current affairs led him to explore journalism. "If you fail in everything else in life, there is journalism," he quipped, revealing his lighthearted approach to his career shift. His early days at the Times of India were followed by a significant leap into television, where he gained widespread recognition during the boom of news channels in the 1990s. "We were at the right place at the right time," he remarked, reflecting on the early days of television news, where a limited number of channels made the audience more attentive.

His career took a major turn when he moved to New Delhi to take on political assignments, an experience that pushed him out of his comfort zone. "Coming from Mumbai, Hindi was a challenge," Sardesai shared candidly, emphasizing the effort he put into learning the language. Over the years, his command over Hindi helped him connect with a broader audience, making him a household name in India's political landscape.

Throughout the discussion, Sardesai's sharp wit, self-deprecating humour, and candidness brought the complexities of journalism and politics to life, offering a rare, unfiltered look into the world of media. His journey from a lawyer to a political journalist and author is a testament to the ever-evolving nature of his career—a career that continues to inspire and challenge both journalists and audiences alike.



Ranjit Phillipose

The conversation took an insightful turn as Vaishali Joshi brought up Sardesai's impressive body of work as an author. He humorously referred to his books as "a reflection of the political pulse of the nation," each one delving deep into the changing tides of Indian elections.

"The election that changed India was not just about numbers, it was about the shift in mindset," Sardesai explained, summarizing his book *The Election That Changed India*. His commentary on the political shifts of 2014, Modi's rise, and the subsequent elections have solidified him as one of India's foremost political analysts.

Through this engaging conversation, Rajdeep Sardesai showcased his evolution from a print journalist to a television stalwart and now a bestselling author. As the evening concluded, the audience with a Q&A session walked away with a deeper understanding of Indian politics, enriched by Sardesai's candid reflections and thought-provoking dialogue. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa, Shruti Juwarkar. The author was felicitated by Ranjit Phillipose from Taj Cidade de Goa Heritage.



Shruti Juwarkar



Gaurapriya Pai Kane

This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Goa, and was in association with Hospitality Partner, Taj Cidade de Goa Heritage; Print Media Partner, Lokmat



Puneet Sikka

From Page to Screen— Puneet Sikka's Journey of Storytelling and Self-Creation



Shruti Juwarkar

In a captivating and candid conversation at The Write Circle in Goa, organised by Prabha Khaitan Foundation, author Puneet Sikka shared an in-depth exploration of her life's experiences and reflections through her latest book with Shruti Juwarkar, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa. The discussion delved into her childhood, upbringing, artistic influences, and the pivotal moments that shaped her journey as a writer. The event commenced with a welcome address by Vaishali Joshi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa.

Sikka began by reminiscing about her childhood, particularly the influence of her father, who served in the Indian Navy. She spent her early years in Bombay and explained how the constant shifting of physical bases due to her father's job impacted her ability to form lasting friendships. She said, "One does not get the time to establish relationships beyond a certain point. It became a part of the way I was. I was constantly hopping from one place to another." Despite this, she acknowledged that her childhood was vibrant and filled with colour.

Reflecting on the lessons life had taught her, Sikka emphasized how childhood experiences shaped her current worldview. "I believe my upbringing—moving from one place to another, meeting different people—has contributed to who I am today. I am always adapting and multitasking," she said.

She reflected on how, in the beginning, she was less concerned with the potential reactions to her work. "I didn't think so much about what would happen or how people would react. There was a story to tell, and I just wanted to focus on that," she shared. She explained that her work isn't about science fiction or a fantasy universe; it's about real, relatable human experiences. "It's a slice of life, not about time and space; it's about the human experience," she elaborated.

Sikka acknowledged the complexities of addressing sensitive subjects but emphasized that as a writer, she felt compelled to bring real stories to the forefront. "We, as human beings,

have lived through many experiences, directly or indirectly, and I felt these stories needed to be told," she stated.

Another aspect Sikka explored was her practice of journaling, which she believes has been instrumental in her personal growth. She also shared a profound symbolic moment from her life: "There was a time when I had about ten journals, and I burned them all in a bonfire. The act wasn't about the journals themselves—it was about releasing what they contained," Sikka said.

Sikka explained how her time in the entertainment industry as an actor and writer shaped her understanding of the system. "I was one of those actors who auditioned every day, and over time, I learned how the system works. I knew how difficult it was to get a role that was meaningful, especially for women," she shared.

As the conversation neared conclusion, it shifted to her future plans during the Q&A session, Sikka revealed that while she is currently focused on her documentary work, she has multiple ideas in the works, including more fiction and non-fiction projects. "I have a few story ideas I've scribbled down, but they're on hold for now. I don't want to rush into them just yet. I want to enjoy this phase of discussing my current work," she shared. A formal vote of thanks was given by Gaurapriya Pai Kane, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa. Anju Timblo felicitated guest author Puneet Sikka.



Anju timblo



Vaishali Joshi and Gaurapriya Pai Kane

*This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Goa; Hospitality Partner, Taj Cidade de Goa; and Print Media Partner, Lokmat*



Kiran Manral

Creativity, Discipline, and the Woman's Journey with Kiran Manral



Nidhi Garg

The evening at Bhubaneswar was one that sparked both reflection and inspiration. The prestigious **The Write Circle** session, organized by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** brought together two dynamic personalities—acclaimed author Kiran Manral and Nidhi Garg, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bhubaneswar, who moderated the event. This literary gathering was not only a celebration of words but a deep dive into the minds of two remarkable women who have made significant contributions in their respective fields.

The evening began with an introductory note by Mr. Ashirbad Praharaj of Vivanta Bhubaneswar, followed by a gracious welcome address by Vedula Ramalakshmi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bhubaneswar.

The curtain opened with Dr. Garg asking Manral about her favourite role in life. Without hesitation, she replied, “Mother, because for the rest of the roles, you prepare in a certain way. But motherhood and parenthood, nobody teaches you. You just hit the ground running. You make mistakes, you go with your instincts, you’re always second-guessing yourselves.”

Manral’s thoughts on parenting were equally engaging. She spoke about her approach to raising her son, now 20, and how she championed unstructured playtime for him—a concept she feels is often overlooked by today’s parents. “We keep reinventing the wheel as far as parenting goes. Today’s young parents are so focused on over-scheduling their children that they forget the importance of letting them get bored, letting them explore, letting them be creative,” Manral remarked. She stressed the importance of allowing children to entertain themselves, even if it means being bored.

Manral shared candidly about her writing process, acknowledging the struggles of self-doubt and the importance of perseverance. “As a writer, you are constantly questioning your work, your voice, and your place in the

literary world. But you keep going because stories need to be told,” she said, leaving the audience with a sense of the courage it takes to follow one’s creative instincts. One of the evening’s central themes was the idea of “surrendering to the Muse.” The author began by debunking the romanticized notion that creativity can only flourish when inspiration strikes. “A lot of creativity gets a bad reputation because people believe you have to wait for inspiration to strike,” she remarked. “But as authors, we know that you cannot have the luxury of waiting for inspiration. You have to show up every day and do the work, even if the muse doesn’t appear.”

As the conversation turned towards modern challenges, Manral discussed the rise of artificial intelligence in creative fields. She acknowledged the inevitable impact of AI, but also stressed that it is not an existential threat to human creativity. “Is AI a threat or an ally? It depends on what you make of it,” she said. “We’ve had technological advancements before—photography, the printing press, computers—and they didn’t end creativity. AI is no different. It can be a tool if we use it right.”

As Manral concluded with a Q&A with the audience, it was clear that her journey as a writer is one of perseverance, self-discovery, and an unyielding belief in the transformative power of creativity. The closing address was delivered by Vedula Ramalakshmi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bhubaneswar.



Vedula Ramalakshmi



Ashirbad Praharaj

*This session of **The Write Circle** was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Bhubaneswar, and was in association with Hospitality and Venue Partner Vivanta Bhubaneswar; with the support of Shree Cement Limited.*



Anirban Bhattacharyya and Esha Dutta

Navigating Chaos and Creativity: Anirban Bhattacharyya's Personal and Professional Journey

At the recent **An Author's Afternoon** session, celebrated author and TEDx speaker, Anirban Bhattacharyya, engaged in a deeply insightful conversation with Esha Dutta, **Ehsaas woman** of Kolkata & Honorary Convenor of North-East Affairs at the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. The discussion delved into Bhattacharyya's personal struggles, professional milestones, and his nuanced understanding of societal issues. The event commenced with a heartfelt welcome note by Arnab Chatterjee from Taj Bengal.

Bhattacharyya began by reflecting on his personal life, drawing from his own chaotic upbringing. "For me, if there is no chaos, there's no change," he confessed, emphasizing how his turbulent childhood experiences shaped both his creative process and leadership philosophy.

A key revelation from Bhattacharyya was the profound impact of his parents' strained relationship, which left an indelible mark on his ability to navigate personal and professional conflicts. He shared, "Every story I've written has a piece of me in it," illustrating how his early experiences, such as his parents' constant fighting, directly influenced his creative expression.

Despite the challenges, Bhattacharyya thrived on chaos, believing it was essential for creativity. "Chaos gives creativity," he asserted, a sentiment that resonated throughout his discussion about leadership. He acknowledged the errors in his startup journey, noting, "Bad decisions make great stories," and added that, despite the setbacks, they were invaluable learning experiences that fuelled his growth.

The conversation also explored Bhattacharyya's upcoming book, *The Day I Got Lucky*, a leadership memoir that

highlights the importance of perseverance and the lessons gleaned from failure. He also spoke passionately about societal issues, including deeply ingrained prejudices and biases, and the need for movements to catalyse change. According to Bhattacharyya, "A movement is equal to community building, which leads to action." He emphasized the importance of education in transforming society, stressing that India's education system needs to evolve. "Application-based education is a must," he stated, calling for a shift from rote learning to a more practical, experiential approach.

Through his personal anecdotes, Bhattacharyya illustrated how life's struggles—both personal and societal—serve as fertile ground for creative expression and change. His call for action was clear: we must break out of comfort zones, confront biases, and create movements that demand societal transformation. The conversation was an inspiring reminder that out of chaos can come growth, and from growth, innovation and change.

In a candid and deeply reflective conversation, the speaker shared the ongoing struggles of navigating a complex, tumultuous relationship with his father, a cancer survivor and smoker. The speaker's narrative is filled with a mixture of vulnerability, introspection, and a longing for connection—qualities that resonate strongly with anyone who has experienced a fraught familial bond.

The speaker began by recounting the difficult decision of whether to intervene in his father's smoking habits, a decision weighed down by both love and frustration. He explained, "I will take care of you, but please take care of yourself too," illustrating his heartfelt plea for his father to prioritize his health. However, his father, in his defiance,

continues to smoke despite the speaker's concern.

The father-son relationship, however, is not merely one of conflict but also of complicated love. The speaker openly admits, "I don't respect him, but I love him." This dichotomy reflects the deep emotional complexity many people face in relationships with difficult parents. As he poignantly states, "It's been a very toxic relationship, but I'm letting him go."

The dialogue then diverged with Dutta questioning Bhattacharyya about a new workshop aimed at influencing parental behaviour. Bhattacharyya, clearly passionate about his initiative, responded, "We are working with Ashoka University and Adaba Fashion Retail to drive an assessment program, which will focus on key performance indicators (KPIs) between parents and children. We'll benchmark the outcomes and use these insights to bring about change—not just in parent-child interactions but within the education system itself. The idea is to drive behavioural changes through continuous engagement, using data to guide and refine our approach."



Anindita Chatterjee

Dutta commented, "Parenting is a thankless job, and raising children is perhaps one of the toughest jobs in the world." Bhattacharyya responded thoughtfully, "Yes, but true success is not about what you achieve—it's about the impact you create. I'm here because of my parents, yes, but also because I chose a path of love and responsibility. Success, for me, isn't about career or accolades. It's about having a high quotient of impact at the end of the day."



Arnab Chatterjee

At this point during the Q&A session, an audience member voiced her perspective, saying, "In our society, we're taught that parents are always right, that they know best. But we should acknowledge that parents are human, too. They make mistakes. Children should have a voice in the conversation. Parents need to listen." Bhattacharyya responded, agreeing with her viewpoint: "I believe in diversity and inclusion. Parenting is not a one-size-fits-all job. Parents and children must engage in conversations as equals, not as subordinates and superiors. The hierarchy should not stifle dialogue. It's about building a relationship of trust."

Dutta added, "That's the challenge, isn't it? Breaking down these hierarchical notions of authority that have been ingrained in society for generations. A parent should not just be a figure of authority but a partner in the growth of their child."

Bhattacharyya said, "Respect and trust are mutual. We cannot assume that because we're older, we know everything. We need to listen to our children more. Their world is different from ours, and if we're to be effective parents, we have to understand that." The evening concluded with an earnest vote of thanks delivered by Anindita Chatterjee, Executive Trustee of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, who invited Mousumi Ghosh to honour the author with a heritage giveaway.

*This session was organized in association
with Hospitality Partner, Taj Bengal*



Srinjoy Chowdhury



Arup Raha

A Night of Valor and Verity: War, Words, and Wisdom

In an evocative evening that fused journalism, literature, and military insight, celebrated journalist, author, and quizmaster Srinjoy Chowdhury held the rapt attention of a discerning Kolkata audience during **An Author's Afternoon** organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. In a stirring conversation with Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha (Retd.), Chowdhury revisited the haunting memories and harrowing truths from his time as a war correspondent during the Kargil conflict—reflections that form the soul of his long-acclaimed war chronicle, written twenty-five years ago.

The session commenced with a warm welcome note by Esha Dutta, Honorary Convenor of North-East Affairs, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, and the **Ehsaas Woman** of Kolkata.

"I'm grateful to a lot of people, particularly those in Kargil who helped me," Chowdhury began with humility, recounting his initial assignment: armed with ₹12,000 and a notebook, hurled into the warzone on barely a day's notice. "I took terrible risks at that time," he admitted candidly, later discovering that he had earned the nickname 'M Max' for his daring pursuits.

Reading gripping excerpts from his book, he painted scenes of desolate Drass— "a town that died," skeletal structures crumbling in the shadows of Tiger Hill. His narration of gunfire, flapping tarpaulins, panicked mules, and the "Liquid Fire" of BOFORS artillery was vivid and cinematic, yet chillingly real. "This was war in close-up," he said, voice heavy with emotion, "and in the excitement, we forgot the cruelty."

The highlight of his reading was the heroic account of Yogendra Singh Yadav, then just 19, battling on ice-clad cliffs, wounded in multiple places, yet fighting on with almost superhuman resolve. "A boy with a wispy moustache and a severe crew cut would become Superman," Chowd

hury said, his voice reverent. The audience was visibly moved.

Air Chief Marshal Raha offered a complementary perspective—strategic, philosophical, and deeply personal. He praised Chowdhury's "razor-sharp observation" and "aggressive journalistic tenacity," comparing him to a "professional assassin with a dagger"—a remark that drew laughter, but also admiration.

Speaking of the war itself, Raha did not shy away from criticism. "There were flaws—intelligence failures, lapses in strategic foresight. But the courage shown by our soldiers and airmen was unmatched." His remarks were punctuated with reflections on his time in the Indian Air Force and technical insights into the aerial dimensions of the conflict.

The conversation revolved around Chowdhury's deeply personal and vivid experiences during the Kargil War, where he reported from the frontlines amid shellfire and bitter cold. Air Chief Marshal Raha, a statesman-soldier, provided powerful military insights, recounting stories of bravery, sacrifice, and leadership that shaped India's victory.

"One night we took Tiger Hill... what we see in Bollywood or Hollywood films doesn't begin to capture the fear, the uncertainty," recalled Chowdhury, evoking both the rawness and resilience of the war front. His account of being bracketed by shellfire—one falling just ahead, another behind—was met with awe. "That next one would've landed on my head... I just ran," he said, adding with quiet reflection, "I'm here... that's the big thing."

Air Chief Marshal Raha commended the courage of India's young officers who led the charge in Kargil: "Most of them are no more... they became war heroes, PVCs, MVCs... they inspired ferocious attacks that retook every post." His

tone carried deep reverence, especially when highlighting the staggering sacrifice—nearly 500 soldiers and officers, disproportionately young leaders, fell in battle.

Chowdhury’s anecdotes from the warfront—whether being escorted down a treacherous slope by jawans or talking to wounded soldiers who would later return to command—showed both the horror and the humanity of combat. One poignant remark from a jawan lingered in memory: “You didn’t have to come here, you didn’t get paid extra, no helmet, no insurance... but you still came.”

The discussion also took a strategic turn, with Raha detailing the Galwan clash, contrasting the high morale and leadership of the Indian Army with the command-driven, politically monitored structure of the PLA. “They have no initiative. No morale. No fighting spirit like ours,” he stated.

The session concluded with reflections on leadership —both tactical and moral during a segment of Q&A session with the audience. Esha Dutta delivered the closing address. Arvind Agarwal felicitated author Srinjoy Chowdhury and conversationalist Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha with exquisite Dokra artifacts.



Esha Dutta



Felicitations



Audience

This session was organized in association with Hospitality Partner, Taj Bengal



Srinjoy Chowdhury and Sena Latif

A Deep Dive into Romania-India Relations

In a remarkable **Tête-à-Tea** session in Delhi, Sena Latif, the Ambassador of Romania to India, shared an insightful conversation with Srinjoy Chowdhury, delving into the deep roots of India and Romania's diplomatic ties, and their perspectives on a range of international issues. This conversation was not only enlightening but also brought to the forefront the lasting connections that have shaped the diplomatic relations between the two countries in the topic of discussion, "Romania's contribution to the European cultural scene and India's role as a cultural powerhouse in South Asia." Rachna Seth delivered the opening remarks.

One of the most captivating moments of the session was when Ambassador Latif spoke about the remarkable memento that symbolized the enduring relationship between Romania and India—a piece of paper that had survived for more than five decades. With a smile, he shared that it was the first page of a newspaper from 1969, a year that, for many, marked historical significance. "The first page of a newspaper from 1969," she remarked, "which has been with me for so many years, tells a captivating story. It reads, 'India, Romania hold the same views on major issues.' That, in itself, was quite a beginning, wasn't it?"

As the conversation continued, Latif and Chowdhury explored Romania's evolving relationship with India. Ambassador Latif discussed Romania's perspectives on international issues and how the values that were shared back in 1969 have continued to form the foundation of diplomatic dialogue in modern times. Despite the changing geopolitical landscape, the Ambassador emphasized the consistent alignment of India and Romania on key issues such as peace, security, and global cooperation.

Latif's words were filled with optimism for the future, underscoring the potential for increased cooperation between the two countries. The Ambassador made it clear that Romania considers India not just a partner, but a friend whose growing influence in the global arena presents unique opportunities for bilateral and multilateral engagement.

The dialogue began with a touching tribute to a celebrated figure from Romanian history, a well-known footballer, whose achievements in the 1960s brought pride to Romania. "I was in high school when he was the most famous," Latif recalled with nostalgia, referencing the iconic Romanian footballer. "What's interesting," she continued, "is that her son is following her footsteps. Romania's football team has recently qualified again after years of being away from the top, and her son Yanis is shaping the future with her training school for young talent."

In conclusion, the Tête-à-Tea with Ambassador Sena Latif provided an intimate and engaging glimpse into the cultural and diplomatic ties that bind Romania and India. As the session concluded, Latif's optimism for the future of both countries and their enduring friendship was a reminder of the power of cross-cultural collaboration and shared history. Rachna Seth delivered the closing remarks, while S. Venkat Narayan felicitated the esteemed guests with handloom scarves.

This session of Tête-à-tea was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Delhi, and was in association with Sai Shinjini Academy of Fine Arts & Culture; Hospitality Partner, The Connaught, IHCL SeleQtions



Rishita Saha and Suparna Deb

An Evening of Stories, Literature & Melody

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised an enriching literary and cultural session in Kolkata under its multilingual initiative **Aakhar**, dedicated to promoting and preserving regional and rural languages. The evening featured noted writer and storyteller Suparna Deb along with young singer Rishita Saha.

Known for her unique and offbeat storytelling style, Suparna Deb shared experiences from her literary journey and spoke about some of her widely appreciated works including Shahzadir Golpo, Dilli Dastan, Jonaki Mela, and Bag O Bahar. The interaction offered audiences a glimpse into contemporary Bengali storytelling and literary expression. Adding warmth and vibrancy to the session, Rishita Saha captivated attendees with her melodious presence and musical flair. The evening witnessed enthusiastic participation from literature and music lovers, making it a memorable celebration of Bengali language, creativity, and artistic dialogue.



Soumitra Mitra



Audience

Exploring Literary Journeys & Creative Inspirations



Sudip Bhattacharjee and Bhaswar Chattopadhyay

The **Aakhar** Kolkata session organised by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** brought together readers, literature enthusiasts, and admirers for an engaging conversation featuring actor-turned-writer Bhaswar Chattopadhyay and writer-publisher Sudip Bhattacharjee. The session evolved into a fascinating exploration of the personal journeys, inspirations, and creative processes of both authors.

Bhaswar Chattopadhyay spoke extensively about his deep connection with Kashmir, sharing how its people, culture, and history inspired celebrated literary works such as *Maharani Didda* and *Rajeshwari Kota*. Through insightful interaction, Sudip Bhattacharjee reflected on his transformation from a radio anchor and interior designer into a successful writer and publisher. He also discussed his popular *Boltuda Samagra* and *Luchi Parota* series.

The discussion offered audiences a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of Bengali literature and contemporary storytelling. The lively interaction between the speakers and audience created a warm and intellectually stimulating atmosphere, encouraging meaningful conversations around writing, creativity, and cultural narratives. The session ultimately emerged as a vibrant celebration of Bengali literary expression and artistic thought.

*This session of **Aakhar** was organized with the support of Purba Paschim*



Soumitra Mitra



Saiful Islam



Arun Mukhopadhyay and Suman Mukhopadhyay

The **Aakhar** Kolkata, an initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** to promote regional languages and cultural dialogue, featured an insightful discussion with two distinguished personalities from Bengal's artistic world — veteran playwright and actor Arun Mukhopadhyay and acclaimed filmmaker and theatre director Suman Mukhopadhyay.

Arun Mukhopadhyay shared reflections from his remarkable journey in Bengali theatre and his long-standing association with the renowned theatre group Chetna. He spoke about landmark productions such as Jagannath, Nirnoy, and Marich Sambad, which continue to hold an important place in Bengali theatre history. Suman Mukhopadhyay discussed his acclaimed films including Herbert, Kangal Malsat, Shesher Kobita, and Mahanagar@Kolkata, while also reflecting on his notable theatrical productions and adaptations. The session offered audiences a meaningful dialogue on literature, theatre, cinema, and Bengal's enduring cultural legacy.



Soumitra Mitra



Audience

*This session of **Aakhar** was organized with the support of Purba Paschim*



Apra Kuchhal, Lokesh Kumar Singh Sahil, Aadil Raza Mansoori, Kulsum Malik

मैं सरस्वती का पुजारी हूँ : आदिल रज़ा मंसूरी

- जो लोग मुशायरे को कमतर मानते हैं, वे मुशायरे में शामिल होकर उसे सुधारने की कोशिश नहीं करते

हि "मैं सरस्वती का पुजारी हूँ, उसी की वजह से लक्ष्मी मेरे पास है," यह कहना है युवा शायर आदिल रज़ा मंसूरी का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से रेखा फाउंडेशन के सहयोग से आयोजित लफ़्ज़ जयपुर कार्यक्रम में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता के रूप में बोल रहे थे। कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत फाउंडेशन की मानद संयोजिका (राजस्थान और मध्य भारत) अपरा कुच्छल ने अपने मधुर शब्दों से की। उन्होंने फाउंडेशन की विभिन्न गतिविधियों के बारे में जानकारी दी और बताया कि लफ़्ज़ का आयोजन फाउंडेशन की 'अपनी भाषा, अपने लोग' पहल का हिस्सा है।

लफ़्ज़, प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन का एक अनूठा प्रयास है, जो हिंदी, अरबी और फारसी भाषाओं को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए उन भाषाओं में लिखने वाले लेखकों और कवियों के साथ यह कार्यक्रम आयोजित करता है। फाउंडेशन एक सशक्त मंच के रूप में भाषा के प्रसार और प्रचार का कार्य कर रहा है, और इसमें रेखा फाउंडेशन और आईटीसी राजपुताना का सहयोग मिला है।

आईटीसी राजपुताना की सलोनी ने गर्मजोशी से सभी का स्वागत किया और प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के प्रति अपना सौहार्द व्यक्त किया। कार्यक्रम का संचालन करते हुए अपरा कुच्छल ने शायर आदिल रज़ा मंसूरी का परिचय दिया। आदिल रज़ा मंसूरी, जो 15 अगस्त 1978 को मेरठ, उत्तर प्रदेश में जन्मे, एक प्रसिद्ध उर्दू शायर, लेखक, संपादक और प्रबंधन विशेषज्ञ हैं। उन्होंने प्रबंधन में पोस्टग्रेजुएट डिग्री हासिल की है और वर्तमान में वे कोर ग्रुप ऑफ कंपनियों के ग्रुप चीफ एक्जीक्यूटिव ऑफिसर और ऑपरेशंस डायरेक्टर के रूप में कार्यरत हैं। उनकी संपादित काव्य संकलन 'खिड़की में ख़ाब' को युवा उर्दू शायरों का एक महत्वपूर्ण संग्रह माना जाता है, वहीं उनका कविता संग्रह 'सन्नाटे की परछाईयाँ' भारत और विदेशों में व्यापक प्रशंसा प्राप्त कर चुका है। वे 'इस्तिफ़सार' नामक तिमाही उर्दू पत्रिका के संपादक भी हैं। मंसूरी को कई पुरस्कार मिल चुके हैं, जिनमें अख़्तर शीरानी पुरस्कार (2022), पत्रिका समादक सम्मान (2018), और मानस मराल सम्मान (2015) शामिल हैं।

अपरा कुच्छल ने वार्ताकार लोकेश कुमार सिंह 'साहिल' का भी परिचय दिया और बताया कि वे एक उम्दा और लोकप्रिय शायर हैं, जो 25 संगठनों से जुड़े हुए हैं और अब तक दो हजार से अधिक कवि-सम्मेलनों और मुशायरों में भाग ले चुके हैं। उनकी गज़लों का एक संग्रह "दरिया में मंझधार बहुत है" शीर्षक से प्रकाशित हुआ था। हाल ही में उनकी 101 गज़लों का एक नया संग्रह "टुक" प्रकाशित हुआ है।

लफ़्ज़ के मंच से लोकेश कुमार सिंह ने शायर से आज के समय और साहित्य से जुड़े कई महत्वपूर्ण सवाल पूछे, जिनका शायर ने पूरी शिद्दत से उत्तर दिया। शायर ने कहा कि मैं खुद के लिए लिखता हूँ। किसी को खुश करने के लिए। मुशायरे पर अपनी राय व्यक्त करते

“

"मुशायरा बुनियादी तौर पर एक परफॉर्मेंस है, लेकिन किताब परफॉर्मेंस नहीं है।"

”



Saloni

हुए कहा कि जो लोग मुशायरे को कमतर मानते हैं, वे मुशायरे में शामिल होकर उसे सुधारने की कोशिश नहीं करते। पहले का जमाना और था, लोग सुनने आते थे, लेकिन अब समय बदल चुका है। मुशायरे में शायरों को वह सुनाना पड़ता है जो मौजूद लोग सुनना चाहते हैं, और अक्सर शायरी के बजाय बात चुटकलों तक पहुंच जाती है।

उन्होंने आगे कहा, "मुशायरा बुनियादी तौर पर एक परफॉर्मेंस है, लेकिन किताब परफॉर्मेंस नहीं है। जब आप किताब में परफॉर्मेंस दिखाते हैं, तो उसकी गहराई खो देते हैं। जिस तरह से आप शायर को रिजेक्ट करते हैं, उसी तरह किताब भी अपने पाठक को रिजेक्ट करती है, क्योंकि किताब आपसे वह डेडिकेशन और तबज्जो मांगती है, जो आपके पास नहीं होती।" शायर आदिल ने यह भी कहा कि आलोचकों को अपनी विचारधारा के चश्मे से बाहर आकर आलोचना करनी चाहिए। कई बार आलोचकों की वजह से साहित्यकार हतोत्साहित हो जाते हैं। इस अवसर पर शायर ने अपनी कई नज़्में सुनाकर दर्शकों को मुग्ध कर दिया, और प्रश्नोत्तर सत्र में श्रोताओं के सवालों के जवाब भी दिए।

अंत में, शायर आदिल रज़ा मंसूरी को सम्मानित किया जयपुर की अहसास वूमन की कुलसुम मलिक ने और वार्ताकार लोकेश कुमार सिंह 'साहिल' को प्रमोद शर्मा, एसोसिएट, ग्रास रूट मीडिया ने उत्तरीय ओढ़ाकर सम्मान प्रदान किया।

लफ़्ज़ का आयोजन अहसास वूमन जयपुर की सहभागिता और रेखा फाउंडेशन व हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर आईटीसी राजपुताना के सहयोग से सफलतापूर्वक आयोजित हुआ।



Manoj Rajan Tripathi & Shashank Jain

हम सबके अन्दर ग्रे छुपा होता है - मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी

-आज के बच्चों को कुछ भी बताना है तो
उनके अनुसार ही बताना पड़ेगा

हम सबके अन्दर ग्रे छुपा होता है। यह कहना है लेखक, पत्रकार मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी का। वे हाल ही में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से मेरठ में आयोजित कलम सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने कहानी की पृष्ठभूमि, चरित्र व राजनीति माहौल आदि के बारे में खुलकर बातें कीं।

कलम के इस सत्र का आगाज अंशू मेहरा प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन, मेरठ की अहसास वूमेन ने किया। उन्होंने इस विशेष आयोजन कलम मेरठ में आए सभी का हार्दिक स्वागत किया। उन्होंने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के कार्यों के बारे में बताते हुए कहा कि फाउंडेशन साहित्य के क्षेत्र में अपनी अग्रणी भूमिका निभा रही है। यह फाउंडेशन न केवल कला, साहित्य और संस्कृति के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय रूप से कार्य कर रही है, बल्कि महिला सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्र में भी समर्पित रूप से प्रयासरत है। फाउंडेशन भारतीय साहित्य और संस्कृति को विश्व स्तर पर प्रतिष्ठित करने के लिए निरंतर कार्य कर रही है।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन ने अपनी पहचान भारतीय साहित्य और संस्कृति के ब्रांड एंबेसडर के रूप में बना चुकी है और इसके कार्यक्रम तथा गतिविधियाँ न केवल भारत में, बल्कि दुनिया के 55 से अधिक शहरों में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कर चुकी हैं।

कलम के इस संवाद सत्र में लेखक त्रिपाठीजी के साथ बातचीत के क्रम को आगे बढ़ाया शशांक जैन ने, जो कि एक प्रतिष्ठित समाजसेवी हैं और मेरठ में चौथी पीढ़ी के निवासी हैं। वे 85 साल पुरानी फैमिली एंटरप्राइज, सारू स्मेल्टिंग प्राइवेट लिमिटेड की टीम का नेतृत्व कर रहे हैं, जो क्रिटिकल मेटल्स स्पेस में विशिष्ट उत्पादों के लिए जानी जाती है। शशांक जैन को पर्यावरण और दर्शनशास्त्र जैसे क्षेत्रों में गहरी रुचि है।

शशांक जैन ने लेखक मनोज राजन से उनके उपन्यास की कथा, चरित्रों के नाम और परिस्थिति पर ढेर सारे प्रश्न किए। एक पत्रकार की निगाह से लेखक कैसे देखता है, इस बारे में मनोज ने बेबाकी से अपनी बातें कही। उन्होंने अपने पात्रों, कथाओं के परिप्रेक्ष्य कहा कि किस तरह से एक चरित्र जीवन से होते हुए उपन्यास या कहानी का पात्र बन जाता है। किस तरह से एक परिवेश तैयार होता है, किस तरह से लेखक उसे पन्नों पर उतारता है। इन सभी बिंदुओं पर उन्होंने बातें कीं।



Garima Mithal



Anshu Mehra

“

“हमें अपने अन्दर का सोडियम ठीक रखना
है तो हमें नमक चाहिए और वह नमक ही है ग्रे...”

”

चरित्रों के बारे में कहा कि हर चरित्र, हर कैरेक्टर के दो रंग होते हैं एक काला और दूसरा सफेद। जब ये दोनों रंग पास आते हैं, आपस मिलते हैं, तो एक नया रंग उत्पन्न होता है, जो है ग्रे। यह ग्रे रंग हर इंसान के भीतर छुपा होता है। हमें क्या छिपाना है, क्या करना है, बच्चों से क्या छिपाना है। यह सारी चीजें हमारे भीतर छिपे हुए इस "ग्रे" पहलू से जुड़ी होती हैं। यानि थ्रिल के नाम पर, सेक्स के नाम पर, भाषा कैरेक्टर के नाम पर हम सबको वह ग्रे चाहिए होता है। यह ग्रे हम सब में नमक के रूप में रहता है। हकीकत है कि हमें अपने अन्दर का सोडियम ठीक रखना है तो हमें नमक चाहिए और वह नमक ही है ग्रे...

उपन्यास में पात्रों और परिवेश के कथा के आधार पर गालियाँ लिखनी पड़ी। मुझे खुशी है कि लोगों ने बड़ी सहजता से लिया है। यहां तक कि मेरी बेटी ने भी इसे नैचुरल पुस्तक कहा। दो सौ महिलाओं ने पुस्तक की समीक्षा लिखी और सभी ने उसे प्रासंगिक ही बताया।

लेखक की नजर में संत तुलसीदास एक महान रचनाकार हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि मुगलकाल में देश की स्थिति को देखते हुए बनारस के घाट पर बैठे एक संत ने ऐसे पात्रों के साथ ऐसी कथा की रचना की, जो समस्त हिन्दुओं का आधार बन गई। वे संत थे गोस्वामी तुलसीदास। कलम के इस अद्वितीय आयोजन के अंत में गरिमा मिथल, मेरठ की अहसास वूमेन ने सभी के प्रति धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया। साथ ही इस कार्यक्रम की सफलता में योगदान देने वाले सभी के प्रति अपना आभार भी व्यक्त किया। लेखक मनोज राजन और शशांक जैन को तमिलनाडु की पारंपरिक पोन्डाई दुपट्टा ओढ़ाकर राजेंद्र अग्रवाल ने सम्मानित किया। अंत में, उपस्थित सभी दर्शकों ने लेखक की पुस्तक "कसारी-मसारी" की प्रति पर हस्ताक्षर करके इस क्षण को स्मृतिमय बनाया।

कार्यक्रम को सफल बनाने में, मेरठ की अहसास वूमेन, हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर क्रिस्टल पैलेस और हिंदी प्रिंट मीडिया पार्टनर 'दैनिक जागरण' का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा।

महिला को वरदान प्राप्त है कि वह किसी कृति को जन्म दे सकती है : मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी

- कलम सत्र में मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी का जीवन
और लेखन पर रोचक संवाद



Manoj Rajan Tripathi



Shradha Ahuja Ramani

मेरी मां मुझे बताती थीं कि तुम मेरे झोला (गर्भ) में नौ महीने तक थे, तो मुझे लगता था कि यह एक अद्भुत वरदान है जो केवल महिलाओं को ही प्राप्त है वह किसी कृति को जन्म दे सकती है। और मैं वहीं से पैदा हुआ। जो एक महिला सह सकती है, वह कोई और नहीं सह सकता। यह कहना है लेखक, पत्रकार, और गायक मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से अहमदाबाद में आयोजित 'कलम' सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने अपने जीवन से जुड़े विभिन्न घटनाक्रमों को बड़े ही रोचक तरीके से साझा किया।

कलम सत्र की शुरुआत अहमदाबाद की अहसास वूमेन शनील पारेख के उर्जा से भरपूर स्वागत भाषण से हुई। उन्होंने साहित्य के क्षेत्र में अग्रणी भूमिका निभा रही प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के कार्यों के बारे में संक्षेप में जानकारी दी। उन्होंने गतिविधियों की जानकारी देते हुए बताया कि फाउंडेशन कला, साहित्य और संस्कृति के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय रूप से कार्य कर रही है, साथ ही महिला सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्र में भी समर्पित रूप से प्रयासरत है। प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन अपनी पहचान भारतीय साहित्य और संस्कृति के ब्रांड एंबेसडर के रूप में बना चुकी है, और इसके कार्यक्रम और गतिविधियाँ न केवल भारत में, बल्कि दुनिया के 55 से अधिक शहरों में आयोजित हो चुकी हैं। 'कलम' के अलावा 'किताब', 'लफ़्ज़', 'एक मुलाकात', 'द राइट सर्कल', 'सुर और साज', और 'आखर' जैसे समृद्ध कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से यह फाउंडेशन समाज के विभिन्न पहलुओं को छूने का कार्य कर रहा है।

कार्यक्रम में लेखक, पत्रकार, और साहित्यकार मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी का परिचय उपस्थित दर्शकों से करवाया। शनील पारेख ने बताया कि मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी लगभग तीस वर्षों से पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय हैं। उनकी यात्रा दैनिक जागरण से शुरू होकर हिंदुस्तान टाइम्स ग्रुप, न्यूज 18 नेटवर्क, जी न्यूज इंडिया, और ईटीवी जैसे बड़े मीडिया हाउस तक पहुंची है। इसके अलावा, वे प्रसिद्ध फिल्म 'अतिथि तुम कब जाओगे- पार्ट 2 (गेस्ट इन लंदन)' के डायलॉग राइटर भी रहे हैं, जी टीवी के सिंगिंग रियलिटी शो 'स्वर्ण स्वर भारत' के क्रिएटिव लीड रहे वे पत्रकारिता में पुरस्कृत हो चुके हैं साथ ही गायन में भी अपनी पहचान बना चुके हैं। उनका दूसरा उपन्यास 'कसारी मसारी' साहित्य जगत में एक और महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है।

कलम के इस सत्र में लेखक के संवाद किया वार्ताकार श्रद्धा आहुजा रामानी ने। वे अहमदाबाद बुक क्लब की अध्यक्ष हैं। श्रद्धा को सर्वश्रेष्ठ लेखक, उषा उद्गम पर्व पुरस्कार, और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय महिला उपलब्धि पुरस्कार सहित कई प्रतिष्ठित पुरस्कार मिल चुके हैं। उनकी कई किताबें हिंदी और अंग्रेजी दोनों भाषाओं में प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं।

“

“ मैं वह पेड़ हूँ, जिसमें पत्ता उगे तो तेज पत्ता, जिसकी छाल निकले तो दालचीनी और जिसका फल निकले तो जायफल हो। मैं ऐसा ही बनना चाहता हूँ। ”

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मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी ने निर्भया कांड और कानपुर में तेजाब फेंकने की घटनाओं से गहरे आहत होने की बात कही। उन्होंने कहा, “98 प्रतिशत बहन-बेटियाँ छेड़छाड़ का शिकार होती हैं। वे चाहे जैसे भी कपड़े पहनें, लेकिन 95 प्रतिशत पुरुष ऐसे हैं जो स्त्री को कपड़ों में भी बिना कपड़ों के देख सकते हैं।”

मनोज राजन ने कहा, “आप बनारस के शमशान भी जाएंगे, तो वहां मृत्यु का उत्सव मनाया जाता है। मेरी अब इच्छा है कि उस बनारस में मेरा अंतिम संस्कार हो और जब मेरी अस्थियां गंगा में प्रवाहित हो रही हों, तब बाबा महादेव काशी विश्वनाथ मुझसे पूछें कि क्या करना है, आप कहां जाओगे। तो मैं कहूंगा, 'मुझे ऐसे ही बहने दो, एक दिन फिर क्रिकेट खेलना, फिर गाना गाना, फिर इंजीनियर बनाना, फिर पत्रकार बनाना, फिर लेखक बनाना।' ताकि मुझे लगे कि मैं वह पेड़ हूँ, जिसमें पत्ता उगे तो तेज पत्ता, जिसकी छाल निकले तो दालचीनी और जिसका फल निकले तो जायफल हो। मैं ऐसा ही बनना चाहता हूँ।”

कलम के इस अद्वितीय आयोजन के अंत में प्रकाश पुरोहित, सीएसआर प्रमुख, कर्मा फाउंडेशन ने सभी के प्रति आभार जताया। साथ ही, इस कार्यक्रम की सफलता में योगदान देने वाले सभी के प्रति आभार भी व्यक्त किया। अहमदाबाद की अहसास वूमेन प्रियांशी पटेल ने लेखक मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी को और अहमदाबाद की अहसास वूमेन शनील पारेख ने वार्ताकार को जयपुर की कठपुतली स्मृति चिन्ह के रूप में भेंट की। अंत में, उपस्थित सभी दर्शकों ने लेखक की पुस्तक “कसारी-मसारी” की प्रति पर हस्ताक्षर करके इस क्षण को यादगार बनाया।



Priyanshi Patel



Shaneel Parekh

कार्यक्रम को सफल बनाने में अहमदाबाद की अहसास वूमेन, कर्मा फाउंडेशन, और हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर द हाउस ऑफ एम.जी. का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा।



Manoj Rajan Tripathi

कलम हमेशा ही मेरे हाथों में थी और स्याही खून में दौड़ती रही : मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी

मैं बनारस पर, शिव पर लिखना चाहता हूँ...



Sujata Sabnis

मैं ने क्रिकेट खेला, गाना गाया फिर लेखन क्षेत्र में आकर रम गया। अलमारी पुरस्कारों और शिल्ड से भरी थी। यह सब कुछ मैं अपने पिता को खुश करने के लिए करता रहा। मेरे दादाजी और दादीजी दोनों ही स्वतंत्रता संग्रामी थे, जिन्होंने अंग्रेजों पर बम भी फेंके थे। उन्हें लिखने की आदत थी। मुझे लगता है लेखन ही मेरी नियति थी। कलम हमेशा ही मेरे हाथों में थी और स्याही खून में दौड़ती रही। यह कहना है मशहूर पत्रकार और लेखक मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी का। वे हाल ही में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से पुणे में आयोजित 'कलम' सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने कहानी की पृष्ठभूमि, चरित्र और राजनीतिक माहौल आदि के बारे में खुलकर बातें कीं।

कलम के इस सत्र का आगाज 'ओ होटल' के अमित वर्मा ने किया। उन्होंने इस विशेष आयोजन कलम में आए सभी का हार्दिक स्वागत किया। उन्होंने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के कार्यों के बारे में बताते हुए कहा कि फाउंडेशन साहित्य के क्षेत्र में अपनी अग्रणी भूमिका निभा रही है। यह फाउंडेशन न केवल कला, साहित्य और संस्कृति के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय रूप से कार्य कर रही है, बल्कि महिला सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्र में भी समर्पित रूप से प्रयासरत है। फाउंडेशन भारतीय साहित्य और संस्कृति को विश्व स्तर पर प्रतिष्ठित करने के लिए निरंतर कार्य कर रही है।

उन्होंने अतिथि लेखक पत्रकार, साहित्यकार मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी का परिचय मौजूद दर्शकों से करवाया। उन्होंने बताया कि मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी लगभग तीस वर्षों से पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय हैं और अपनी लेखनी और कार्यों के लिए विशेष पहचान बना चुके हैं। उनकी यात्रा दैनिक जागरण से शुरू होकर हिंदुस्तान टाइम्स ग्रुप, न्यूज 18 नेटवर्क, जी न्यूज इंडिया, और ईटीवी जैसे बड़े मीडिया हाउस तक पहुंची है। इसके अलावा, वे प्रसिद्ध फिल्म 'अतिथि तुम कब जाओगे - पार्ट 2' (गेस्ट इन लंदन) के डायलॉग राइटर भी रहे हैं, और जी टीवी के सिंगिंग रियलिटी शो 'स्वर्ण स्वर भारत' के क्रियेटिव लीड रहे हैं। उन्होंने न केवल पत्रकारिता में पुरस्कार जीते हैं, बल्कि गायन में भी अपनी पहचान बनाई है। उनका दूसरा उपन्यास 'कसारी मसारी' साहित्य जगत में एक और महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है।

कलम के इस संवाद सत्र में लेखक त्रिपाठीजी के साथ बातचीत के क्रम को आगे पुणे की अहसास वूमेन सुजाता सबनीस ने। उन्होंने जीवन के उतार-चढ़ाव और लेखन के साथ ही आगामी योजनाओं पर कई प्रश्न लेखक से किए। मनोज राजन ने बताया, "मैं हमेशा ही पंख फैलाकर उड़ना चाहता था, ढांचे को तोड़कर निकल जाना चाहता था, इसलिए मैंने बहुत कुछ किया। इसके लिए मुझे अफसोस नहीं है।" उन्होंने कहा, "इस दुनिया में, इस देश में इंस्टेंट जस्टिस कुछ नहीं हो सकता, न्याय हमेशा कानून के माध्यम से ही होना चाहिए, चाहे जो कोई भी हो।"

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"इस दुनिया में, इस देश में इंस्टेंट जस्टिस कुछ नहीं हो सकता, न्याय हमेशा कानून के माध्यम से ही होना चाहिए, चाहे जो कोई भी हो।" - मनोज राजन त्रिपाठी

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मुगलकाल के समय धर्म परिवर्तन तेजी से हो रहा था। देश की स्थिति को देखते हुए बनारस के घाट पर बैठे एक संत ने ऐसे पात्रों के साथ ऐसी कथा बुनी जो समस्त हिंदुओं का आधार बन गई। वे लेखक थे गोस्वामी तुलसीदास। तुलसीदास ने राम के रूप में मजबूत पात्र खड़ा किया। कहानी इसलिए लिखी थी ताकि हिंदू अपनी आस्था पर खड़ा हो सकें, और वह पुस्तक थी रामचरितमानस।

"मैं आने वाले समय में बनारस पर और महादेव पर लिखना चाहता हूँ, क्योंकि काशी वह शहर है जो शंकर जी के त्रिशूल पर टिकी है। मान्यता है कि बनारस की गंगा में रोज बाबा विश्वनाथ जाकर नहाते हैं, फिर मणिकर्णिका घाट आते हैं और वहां पर चिता की भस्म को अपने पूरे शरीर पर लगाते हैं। उस विश्वनाथ पर कुछ लिखना चाहता हूँ, उस गंगा पर लिखना चाहता हूँ जो पूरे देश में सीधी बहती है पर बनारस में उल्टी बहती है।"

उन्होंने दर्शकों की फरमाइश पर हिंदी फिल्मी गीत सुनाए। मौजूद सभी दर्शकों ने इस सत्र का लुफ्त उठाया। कलम के इस अद्वितीय आयोजन के अंत में 'ओ होटल' के अमित वर्मा ने सभी के प्रति आभार ज्ञापित किया। साथ ही इस कार्यक्रम की सफलता में योगदान देने वाले सभी के प्रति धन्यवाद व्यक्त किया। लेखक मनोज राजन और सुजाता सबनीस को पुणे की अहसास वूमेन नीलम सिओलकर ने दुपट्टा ओढ़ाकर सम्मान व्यक्त किया। अंत में, उपस्थित सभी दर्शकों ने लेखक की पुस्तक 'कसारी-मसारी' की प्रति पर हस्ताक्षर करके इस क्षण को स्मृतिमय बनाया।



Neelam Seolekar



Amit Verma

कार्यक्रम को सफल बनाने में पुणे की अहसास वूमेन, हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर 'ओ होटल' और प्रिंट मीडिया पार्टनर 'लोकमत' का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा।



A Tribute to Courage, Compassion & the Spirit of Possibility

As part of its enduring commitment to meaningful cultural and humanitarian initiatives, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation organised the launch of Passport from Polio, a powerful video by Gautam Lewis, at Taj Bengal in Kolkata. The video was formally released by acclaimed filmmaker Sandip Ray in the presence of distinguished guests, members of the cultural fraternity, and well-wishers.

The launch was followed by the photographic exhibition Memories of Mother Teresa, supported by the Foundation and showcased at Gaganendra Pradarshashala. The exhibition featured deeply moving photographs documenting the extraordinary humanitarian work of Mother Teresa and the lives of people affected by disability, poverty, and social exclusion. Through his lens, Gautam Lewis beautifully narrated stories of resilience, dignity, and hope.

Born in Kolkata and affected by polio at a young age, Gautam was abandoned as a child before finding shelter at Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. He was later adopted by Dr. Patricia Lewis and went on to study in London, eventually becoming one of the world's first disabled commercial pilots. He later founded Freedom in the Air, an initiative dedicated to training people with disabilities to become pilots.

The event stood as an inspiring celebration of human resilience, compassion, and the transformative power of opportunity, while also highlighting Gautam Lewis's remarkable journey from adversity to achievement and social impact.



पीकेएफ ने लेखक और पाठकों के बीच एक पुल का काम किया है : संजीव पालीवाला

ये बड़ा दुर्भाग्य है इस देश का, जिसके दम पर हम कमाते,
खाते हैं उसी भाषा को नहीं जानते।



Kanak Rekha Chauhan & Sanjeev Paliwal

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन ने लेखक और पाठकों के बीच एक पुल का काम किया है। जिस तरह से पीकेएफ लेखकों को पाठकों से जोड़ता है, शायद हिंदुस्तान को इसी की जरूरत थी, और प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन ने यह काम किया है, जिसकी जितनी भी तारीफ की जाए, कम है। यह कहना है पत्रकार और लेखक संजीव पालीवाला का। वे हाल ही में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से लखनऊ में आयोजित कलम सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने अपने उपन्यासों और पत्रकारिता के साथ-साथ समाज से जुड़ी बातें साझा कीं कि कैसे उन्होंने लिखना शुरू किया और किस प्रकार से उन्होंने अपने अंदर के लेखक को तैयार किया।

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत लखनऊ की अहसास वूमेन दीपा मिश्रा के मोहक स्वागत भाषण से हुई। इस मौके पर उन्होंने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के कार्यों और गतिविधियों के बारे में जानकारी साझा की। उन्होंने संस्था के बारे में बताया कि फाउंडेशन की स्थापना 1980 के दशक में प्रतिष्ठित भारतीय साहित्यकार, उद्यमी, परोपकारी और नारीवादी डॉ. प्रभा खेतान ने की थी, जो साहित्य के विविध आयामों का विस्तार और विकास करने के उद्देश्य से स्थापित की गई थी। वर्तमान में यह संगठन भारत और दुनिया भर के 55 से अधिक शहरों में कला, संस्कृति, शिक्षा, वन्यजीव संरक्षण और साहित्य प्रचार के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय है।

उन्होंने कलम के इस सत्र में अतिथि लेखक संजीव पालीवाला का परिचय देते हुए बताया कि वे पत्रकारिता जगत की जानीमानी हस्ती हैं। वे पिछले 35 वर्षों से हिंदी पत्रकारिता के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय हैं और उन्होंने दैनिक जागरण, अमर उजाला और आज जैसे प्रमुख समाचार पत्रों के साथ-साथ दूरदर्शन, बीआईटीवी और आईबीएन 7/ न्यूज18 जैसे प्रमुख समाचार चैनलों में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया है। वर्तमान में, वे आजतक में प्रबंध संपादक - इंटरनेशनल और साहित्य तक के पद पर कार्यरत हैं। उन्होंने 'मुंबई नाइट्स', 'नैना', 'पिशाच' जैसे क्राइम थ्रिलर और एक रोमांटिक उपन्यास 'ये इश्क नहीं आसान' लिखा है।

कलम सत्र में, लेखक के साथ बातचीत की अहसास वूमेन लखनऊ की कनक रेखा चौहान ने। जो कि मेटाफोर - द लखनऊ लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल और कानपुर लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल की संस्थापक निदेशक हैं। इसके साथ ही, वे लखनऊ एक्सप्रेसप्रेशंस सोसाइटी की उपाध्यक्ष भी हैं। "इस देश में कंटेम्परी फिक्शन की बहुत कमी है। मैंने उसे पूरा करने की कोशिश की है। आप अखबार उठा लीजिए, क्राइम भरा होता है। आप कोई भी पेपर उठा लीजिए, चाहे हिंदी का हो या इंग्लिश का, इस देश में क्राइम की कोई कमी नहीं है। हमारे समाचार पत्र पाठकों की क्राइम पढ़ने की जो भूख है, उसे शांत कर देते हैं।

मुंबई के अंदर बड़ी संख्या में ऐसे लोग हैं जिनको हिंदी पढ़नी नहीं आती। वे रोमन में लिखकर हिंदी पढ़ते हैं। ये बड़ा दुर्भाग्य है इस देश का, जिसके दम पर हम कमाते-खाते हैं, उसी

“

- हमारे समाचार पत्र पाठकों की क्राइम पढ़ने की जो भूख है, उसे शांत कर देते हैं

”

भाषा को नहीं जानते। इस वजह से हिंदी किताबों पर वेब सीरीज नहीं बनती, उसकी यही एक बड़ी वजह है। ऐसा दुर्भाग्य तब टूटेगा जब भाषा के प्रति सभी अपनी निष्ठा दिखाएं। सिर्फ कुछ लोगों की कोशिश से नहीं होगा। जैसे क्राइम फिक्शन राइटिंग, हम जैसे कुछ के लिखने से नहीं होगा, बल्कि 100, 200, 500 लोग जब तक नहीं लिखेंगे, एक मूवमेंट नहीं होगा, तब तक कुछ नहीं होगा। ”

संजीव पालीवाला ने मीडिया के बदलते स्वरूप पर कहा कि मीडिया हमेशा अपनी जिम्मेदारी निभाता है। अगर मीडिया अपनी जिम्मेदारी नहीं निभाता, तो आपको खबर ही नहीं मिल पाती।

कार्यक्रम में मौजूद दर्शकों ने भी पत्रकार और लेखक से कई प्रश्न पूछे। कलम के इस अद्वितीय आयोजन के अंत में लखनऊ की अहसास वूमेन डिंपल त्रिवेदी ने सभी के सहयोग के प्रति अपनी कृतज्ञता व्यक्त की। लेखक को ताज महल लखनऊ से अल्पना सिंह ने जयपुर की कठपुतली स्मृति स्वरूप भेंट की।

अंत में, उपस्थित सभी दर्शकों ने लेखक की पुस्तक "मुंबई नाइट्स" की प्रति पर हस्ताक्षर करके इस क्षण को यादगार बनाया।



Deepa Mishra



Dimple Trivedi

कार्यक्रम को सफल बनाने में लखनऊ की अहसास वूमेन के साथ ही बी.पी. हलवासिया फाउंडेशन, हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर ताज महल लखनऊ, हिंदी प्रिंट मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा।



Rama Pandey and Divya Prakash Dubey

हिन्दी एक नदी की तरह है : दिव्य प्रकाश दुबे

नई और पुरानी हिन्दी में कोई अंतर नहीं है

हिन्दी एक नदी की तरह है, सदैव गतिमान। यदि शुद्ध करने की कोशिश की गई तो वह तालाब बन जाएगी। नई और पुरानी हिन्दी में कोई अंतर नहीं है। हिंदी बस हमारी बेचैनी का नारा था, यह कहना है लेखक दिव्य प्रकाश दुबे का। वे हाल ही में **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** की ओर से जयपुर में आयोजित **कलम** सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने हिन्दी भाषा व साहित्य को लोगों तक पहुंचाने के लिए मार्केटिंग दक्षता के इस्तेमाल की जरूरत पर भी प्रकाश डाला।

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत राजस्थान एवं मध्य भारत मामलों की मानद संयोजक अपरा कुच्छल के मनमोहक स्वागत भाषण से हुई। इस मौके पर उन्होंने **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** के कार्यों और गतिविधियों के बारे में जानकारी साझा की। **कलम, प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** का एक अनूठा प्रयास है। हिंदी भाषा को प्रोत्साहित करने और बढ़ावा देने के लिए **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** का आयोजन जयपुर या राजस्थान में ही नहीं, बल्कि भारत सहित विश्व के कई स्थानों पर भी इसके कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए जाते हैं।

उन्होंने अतिथि लेखक दिव्य प्रकाश दुबे का परिचय देते हुए बताया कि उनकी अब तक सात बेस्टसेलर किताबें हैं, जिनमें नियम और शर्तें लागू, मसाला चाय, मुसाफिर कैफ़े, अक्टूबर जंक्शन, इन्वन्तूली, आको बाको और 'यार पापा' हैं। 'स्टोरीबाजी' नाम से कहानियां सुनाते हैं। पिया मिलन चौक, दिल लोकल और दो दुनी प्यार जैसे मशहूर शो प्रस्तुत कर चुके हैं। मणिरत्नम जी की फिल्म पॉनियन सेल्वन के दोनों भागों के साथ ही इम्तियाज अली द्वारा बनाई गई वेब सीरीज डॉक्टर अरोरा के डायलॉग लिख चुके हैं।

कलम के इस सत्र में लेखक के साथ दिलचस्प संवाद किया जयपुर की ही बेटी रमा पांडे ने। उनका परिचय देते हुए कुच्छल ने बताया कि वे देश में ही नहीं, बल्कि विदेश में भी काफी लोकप्रिय रही हैं। दूरदर्शन और बीबीसी लंदन की जानी-मानी कलाकार, चर्चित फिल्म निर्देशिका और सशक्त लेखिका हैं। सात साल तक अंतरराष्ट्रीय मीडिया में सफल कार्य करने के बाद रमाजी स्वदेश लौटीं और तब से आज तक फिल्म और टेलीविजन के लिए प्रोडक्शन और निर्देशन का कार्य कर रही हैं। निर्देशन के लिए इनकी प्रोडक्शन कंपनी मोंटाज फिल्मस को राजा राम मोहन राय और कलाश्री अवार्ड मिल चुके हैं।



Apra Kuchhal



Deependra Rana

“
- दुनिया का कोई भी लेखक इतना बड़ा नहीं है जो
क्लेम करें कि मैं भाषा बनाता हूं. - दिव्य प्रकाश दुबे
”

लेखक दिव्य प्रकाश ने रमा जी के प्रश्नों का जवाब देते हुए कहा कि नई हिन्दी और पुरानी हिंदी में कोई फर्क नहीं है। समय के साथ भाषा में थोड़ा बदलाव आवश्यक है। जैसे आज के समय में दिमाग की बैटरी चार्ज करना है या फिर दिमाग का दही जैसे मुहावरे आ गए हैं। जिने हमें स्वीकारना होगा। हम जिनके लिए लिख रहे हैं, उनकी समझ से परे वाली भाषा लिखेंगे, तो स्वाभाविक है कि उन्हें लगेगा कि यह बात उनके लिए नहीं है।

हम आज के यूथ को किताबों से जोड़ रहे हैं, इसलिए उनके भावों और उनकी भाषा में, उनकी घटनाओं के माध्यम से ही जोड़ सकते हैं। आज की पीढ़ी को हिंदी पढ़ानी है, तो मार्केटिंग का तरीका बदलना होगा। सभी लोग अलग तरीके की हिंदी लिख रहे हैं। हमें लगा कि अगर हमें अपनी बात बतानी है, तो हमें अपने तरीके को बदलना पड़ेगा।

लेखक ने इस बात पर क्षोभ जताया कि लेखन को आज भी लोग दूसरी नजर से देखते हैं। कोई लेखक ही हो सकता है, इस बात को अब भले ही थोड़ा-बहुत मानने लगे हैं। मैं इसे भद्दा मजाक मानता हूं कि जो पिछले 50 साल से चल रहा है, वह है "अच्छा-अच्छा, आप लिखते हैं, लेकिन आप करते क्या हैं?" इस सवाल को मैं हमेशा के लिए मिटाना चाहता हूं।

दिव्य प्रकाश ने भाषा के महत्व पर जोर देते हुए कहा कि "मैं इतना बड़ा नहीं हूं और मुझे लगता है इस दुनिया का कोई भी लेखक इतना बड़ा नहीं है जो क्लेम करें कि मैं भाषा बनाता हूं। हम लोग बहुत छोटे हैं, भाषा हमें बना सकती है, हम भाषा बना नहीं सकते।

इस अवसर पर उन्होंने अपने साहित्य जगत के किस्से भी साझा किए। **कलम** के इस अद्वितीय आयोजन के अंत में राजस्थान और मध्य भारत मामलों की मानद संयोजक अपरा कुच्छल ने सभी के प्रति अपनी कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करते हुए सभी को धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया। लेखक और वार्ताकार को आईटीसी राजपूताना के महाप्रबंधक दीपेंद्र राणा ने दुपट्टा ओढ़कर सम्मानित किया। अंत में, उपस्थित सभी दर्शकों ने लेखक की पुस्तक 'यार पापा' की प्रति पर हस्ताक्षर करके इस क्षण को यादगार बनाया।

कार्यक्रम को सफल बनाने में जयपुर की **अहसास वूमेन** के साथ ही वी केयर और **हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर आईटीसी राजपूताना** का विशेष सहयोग रहा।



Tasneem Khan and Vinita Badmera

"लेखकों को जेंडर में विभाजित नहीं किया जा सकता"

तसनीम खान

- सेल्फ रिस्पेक्ट के साथ जीना चाहिए,
चाहे वह औरत हो या पुरुष"

हर व्यक्ति को अपने आत्मविश्वास और स्वाभिमान के साथ जीना चाहिए, चाहे वह महिला हो या पुरुष। यह कहना है युवा लेखिका तसनीम खान का। वे हाल ही में अजमेर में आयोजित प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के कलम सत्र को संबोधित कर रही थीं। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने साहित्य, लेखन अनुभव और जीवन जीने के तरीकों पर बेझिझक और प्रभावशाली ढंग से अपने विचार व्यक्त किए।

कलम सत्र की शुरुआत प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की अहसास वूमेन अजमेर की सदस्य खुशी अग्रवाल के स्वागत भाषण से हुई। इस मौके पर उन्होंने फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों के बारे में बताया कि कलम, प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन का एक अनूठा प्रयास है, जिसका उद्देश्य हिंदी भाषा को प्रोत्साहित करना और साहित्यिक संवाद को बढ़ावा देना है। यह कार्यक्रम भारत सहित विश्व के कई स्थानों पर आयोजित किए जाते हैं। फाउंडेशन लंबे समय से भाषा, कला और संस्कृति को केंद्र में रखते हुए विभिन्न आयोजनों का संचालन करता आ रहा है।

खुशी अग्रवाल ने अतिथि लेखिका का परिचय देते हुए बताया कि उनके पहले उपन्यास 'ऐ मेरे रहनुमा' को भारतीय ज्ञानपीठ द्वारा अनुशंसित किया गया था। उनका उपन्यास 'हमनवाई न थी' प्रेम और अलगाव की भावनाओं पर आधारित है। उनकी चर्चित लघु कहानी मेरे हिस्से की चांदनी को ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस की पुस्तक The Silence That Speaks में प्रकाशित किया गया था। तसनीम खान को चंदबरदाई युवा सम्मान (2019), शाकुंतलम पुरस्कार, लाडली मीडिया पुरस्कार (2021 एवं 2024) और हिंदी प्रचार सभा महिला लेखन पुरस्कार सहित कई अन्य सम्मानों से नवाजा जा चुका है।

कलम सत्र को रोचक और प्रवाहमय बनाने के लिए लेखिका विनीता बाड़मेरा ने तसनीम खान से संवाद किया। विनीता जी स्वयं एक लेखिका हैं और राजस्थान साहित्य अकादमी के सहयोग से उनका पहला कहानी संग्रह 'एक बार आखिरी बार' प्रकाशित हो चुका है।

लेखिका तसनीम खान ने बताया कि बचपन से ही घर में पढ़ने का माहौल था। उपन्यासों के प्रति विशेष आकर्षण रहा, इसलिए लेखन की शुरुआत भी उपन्यास से ही हुई। पत्रकार बनने का सपना था, और पत्रकारिता करते हुए जीवन के अनेक किरदारों से सामना हुआ। कई बार लगा कि सिर्फ रिपोर्टिंग से उनके साथ न्याय नहीं हो पा रहा, इसलिए लेखन की बेचैनी और

लेखन आपको भूत, वर्तमान और भविष्य से जोड़ता है,
और यही उसकी सबसे बड़ी शक्ति है।

बढ़ गई। उन्होंने बताया कि पत्रकारिता का फलक व्यापक होता है, जिसे कविता या कहानी में समेटना कठिन था, इसलिए उन्होंने उपन्यास को माध्यम चुना। उनका मानना है कि लेखक को जेंडर में बाँटा नहीं जा सकता। एक सच्चा लेखक किसी भी चरित्र के भीतर प्रवेश कर सकता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि कविता लिखने के लिए मन में रोमानी भाव होना जरूरी है, और शायद पत्रकारिता की व्यवहारिकता के कारण वे उस ओर नहीं जा सकीं। उनके प्रिय लेखक शरतचंद्र, प्रेमचंद और रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर हैं, जिन्होंने स्त्री पात्रों को गहराई से उकेरा।

तसनीम जी ने कहा कि साहित्य केवल शब्दों का संसार नहीं, बल्कि वह आपकी सोच, संवेदना और समयबोध को भी प्रभावित करता है। लेखन आपको भूत, वर्तमान और भविष्य से जोड़ता है, और यही उसकी सबसे बड़ी शक्ति है।

वे कहती हैं कि सेल्फ रेस्पेक्ट प्रेम से पहले और प्रेम के बाद भी सबसे जरूरी होती है। जिंदगी में ऐसे क्षण आते हैं जब नैतिकता-अनैतिकता के भेद धुंधले हो जाते हैं, लेकिन आत्मसम्मान नहीं खोना चाहिए।

इस अवसर पर लेखिका ने अपने लेखन अनुभव और आने वाले उपन्यास के विषय में भी विचार साझा किए। सत्र में उपस्थित जागरूक श्रोताओं ने उनसे कई प्रश्न पूछे, जिनका उन्होंने सहजता और उत्साह के साथ उत्तर दिया।

कलम के इस विशिष्ट आयोजन के समापन पर अहसास वूमेन अजमेर की प्रतिनिधि खुशी अग्रवाल ने सभी का आभार व्यक्त करते हुए अपनी कृतज्ञता प्रकट की। कार्यक्रम में लेखिका तसनीम खान को वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार रास बिहारी गौड़ एवं विनीता बाड़मेरा को लेखक गोपाल माथुर ने सम्मानित करते हुए स्मृतिचिह्न प्रदान किए।

कार्यक्रम के अंत में उपस्थित सभी साहित्यप्रेमियों ने लेखिका की पुस्तक पर हस्ताक्षर कराकर इस क्षण को यादगार बना दिया। कार्यक्रम की सफलता में अहसास वूमेन अजमेर के साथ वी केयर संस्था का भी महत्वपूर्ण सहयोग रहा।



Khushi Agarwal



Gopal Mathur



Ras Bihari Gaur

पटना के 40 वें बुक फेयर में प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की सक्रिय भागीदारी

बिहार का प्रतिष्ठित सीआरडी पटना पुस्तक मेला, जो 40 वर्षों से हर साल आयोजित होता है, इस बार गांधी मैदान में 6 से 17 दिसंबर 2024 तक बड़े धूमधाम से आयोजित हुआ। इस मौके पर प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन ने 'कलम' का विशेष कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया, जिसमें साहित्य, परिवेश और आज की जरूरतों पर अहम चर्चा हुई। फाउंडेशन का 'कलम' मंच विशेष रूप से 'अपनी भाषा, अपने लोग' के विचार को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए जाना जाता है। इस मंच पर सम्मानित और चर्चित लेखकों तथा कलाकारों को आमंत्रित किया जाता है, ताकि वे अपने पाठकों और प्रशंसकों से सीधे जुड़ सकें और उन्हें अपने अनुभवों से अवगत करवा सकें।

'कलम' के एक सत्र में वरिष्ठ पत्रकार और स्तम्भ लेखक सुधीश पचौरी ने युवा आलोचक मयंक के साथ विविध विषयों पर संवाद किया। वहीं दूसरे सत्र में पाटलिपुत्र विश्वविद्यालय के हिंदी विभाग के प्रोफेसर कुमार वरुण ने प्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार और कथाकार सच्चिदानंद जोशी से साहित्य और संस्कृति पर सारगर्भित चर्चा की। यह कार्यक्रम न केवल मीडिया लिटरेसी, बल्कि भारतीय संस्कृति के महत्व को समझाने में भी अहम साबित हुआ। पेश है 'कलम' के सत्रों की संक्षिप्त जानकारी।

शब्द के अर्थ अनंत हैं, शब्द तरल है - सुधीश पचौरी

शब्द के अर्थ अनंत हैं, शब्द तरल हैं, यह कहना है वरिष्ठ पत्रकार सुधीश पचौरी का। वे पटना के गांधी मैदान में आयोजित सीआरडी 40 वें पुस्तक मेला में श्रीकृष्णापुरी मुख्य मंच पर प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। कलम के इस सत्र में देश के प्रसिद्ध पत्रकार सुधीश पचौरी से विभिन्न विषयों पर युवा आलोचक मयंक ने संवाद किया।

सुधीश पचौरी ने बेबाक अंदाज में सारे प्रश्नों के जवाब दिए। सुधीश पचौरी ने तात्कालिक स्थिति और लेखन के परिप्रेक्ष्य पर अपनी बेबाक बातें रखीं। उन्होंने कहा कि शब्द के अर्थ अनंत हैं, शब्द तरल हैं। टेक्स्ट के भीतर जो लिखा है, उसमें दमन है, कितने शब्द दबा दिए गए, हटाए गए शब्दों में ही अर्थ हैं। ध्वनि शास्त्र के हिसाब से अर्थ तीन स्तरों पर होते हैं अर्थ दबा हुआ है, व्यंजित है, पहचानने के लिए 10 स्टेप्स हैं। तुलसीदास महान इसलिए हैं कि वे परमकवि की तरह अनंत अर्थ रखते हैं। वे मास्टर क्राफ्ट्समैन हैं जिन्होंने राम को ईश्वर के रूप में लीला करने को रचा। सुधीश पचौरी ने कहा कि अस्मिता विमर्श सब के सब अलोकतांत्रिक हैं। उत्तर आधुनिकता पूंजी का खेल है। कट-कॉपी के दौर में मौलिकता का घोर अभाव हो गया है।

युवा आलोचक मयंक ने सुधीश पचौरी से उनकी लिखी "हिन्दी साहित्य के 75 वर्ष" और "नेहरू युग से मोदी युग तक" पुस्तकों पर भी सवाल किए। यह सत्र काफी रोचक रहा, जिसका लुप्त वहां बैठे दर्शकों ने उठाया।

मीडिया में सत्य और असत्य की भावना को जनमानस समझने लगा है : सच्चिदानंद जोशी

पटना के गांधी मैदान में आयोजित 40वें CRD पटना पुस्तक मेले के तीसरे दिन मेले के कृष्णापुरी मंच पर प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा कलम : अपनी भाषा, अपने लोग' कार्यक्रम में मीडिया लिटरेसी और भारतीय संस्कृति पर चर्चा का आयोजन किया गया। इस कार्यक्रम में पाटलिपुत्र विश्वविद्यालय के हिंदी विभाग के प्रोफेसर कुमार वरुण ने प्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार और कथाकार सच्चिदानंद जोशी से सारगर्भित चर्चा की।

पत्रकारिता आसान है या लेखन कठिन, इस सवाल पर साहित्यकार सच्चिदानंद जोशी ने कहा कि बिहार में पुस्तकों के प्रति उत्साह देखकर उन्हें बहुत अच्छा लग रहा है। उन्होंने बताया कि पत्रकारिता के मूल सिद्धांतों में छेड़छाड़ करना ठीक नहीं है, लेकिन आज ऐसा हो रहा है। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि लेखन में रचनात्मकता दिखती है।

कुमार वरुण द्वारा मीडिया लिटरेसी के सवाल पर सच्चिदानंद जोशी ने कहा कि मीडिया लिटरेसी बाहर की परंपरा है, इसलिए हमें इस पर बात नहीं करनी चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा, "मीडिया में सत्य और असत्य की भावना को भारत का जनमानस समझने लगा है। मीडिया आज भय की भावना को जनमानस पर थोपना चाहता है।" इस सत्र में कई महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दों पर चर्चा हुई। जिसका लाभ वहां बैठे दर्शकों ने उठाया।



An Enthralling Salsa Workshop Filled with Rhythm & Joy



The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its **Muskaan** initiative, recently organised an energetic and engaging online salsa workshop for children, led by renowned dance educationist and entrepreneur Hitesh H. Teckchandani, fondly known as “Salsawala.” The lively session introduced participants to the vibrant world of salsa, encouraging them to explore rhythm, movement, and self-expression in a joyful and interactive environment.

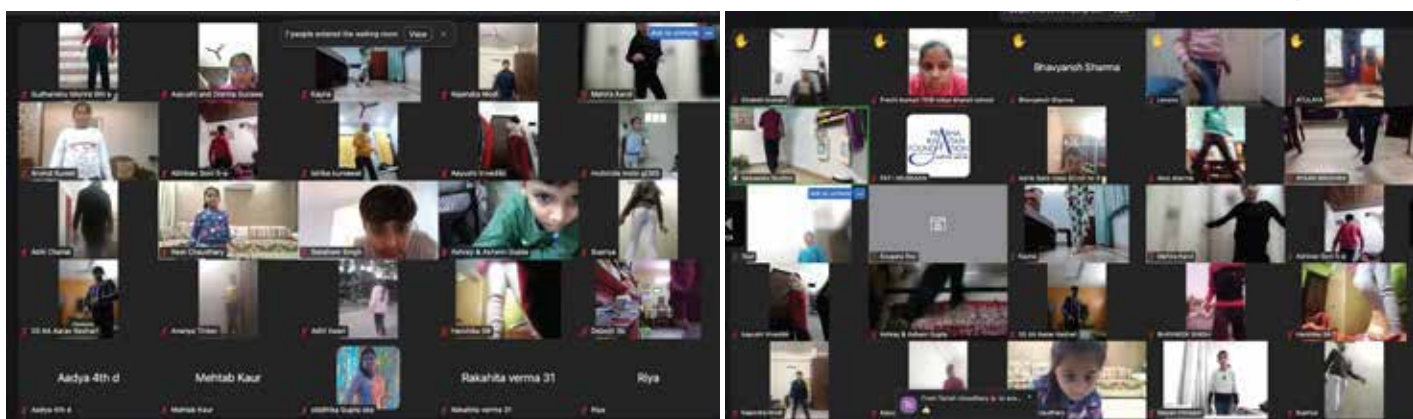
The workshop commenced with a warm introduction by Sumitra Ray, Student Programmes Advisor of the Foundation who welcomed Hitesh Teckchandani and set the tone for an inspiring and fun-filled experience. The children were instantly captivated by his enthusiasm, charisma, and dynamic teaching style. Through easy-to-follow dance steps and engaging interaction, the participants enthusiastically immersed themselves in the energetic beats of salsa, thoroughly enjoying every moment of the session.

With a career spanning over two decades, Hitesh Teckchandani has established himself as a respected

Dance Educationist, Organiser, Facilitator, Entrepreneur, and mentor in the field of dance. Guided by his philosophy of “Never Stop Learning,” he has inspired students across Asia and Europe through his innovative approach to dance education. Specialising in Afro-Latin dance forms, Hitesh has taught and performed internationally for over fifteen years. His extensive training at the University of Surrey, UK, along with collaborations with prestigious organisations such as the Royal Academy of Dance, English National Ballet, and the Akram Khan Dance Company, has shaped his versatile artistic journey.

Beyond learning a new dance form, the workshop encouraged children to build confidence, creativity, and spontaneity through movement and music. The session beautifully reflected the spirit of Muskaan, which continues to nurture young talent and provide meaningful creative exposure to children. By bringing accomplished professionals from diverse artistic fields to its programmes, the initiative reaffirms its commitment to inspiring young minds and encouraging holistic growth through the arts.

*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*





A Delightful Puppet & Storytelling Experience for Young Minds



The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its **Muskaan** initiative, organised an engaging storytelling and puppetry session in collaboration with The HDFC School Gurgaon for students of Grades II to V. Designed to create joyful and meaningful learning experiences, the session beautifully blended storytelling, creativity, and interactive learning, leaving the young audience thoroughly captivated.

The session was conducted by renowned storyteller and puppeteer Shreedevi Sunil, founder of Talking Turtles Storytellers. Through lively puppet performances, expressive narration, and impressive voice modulation, she transported the children into a magical world filled with imagination, humour, and wonder. The vibrant characters and engaging twists in the stories kept the students curious and excited throughout the session, eagerly waiting to discover what happened next.

Beyond entertainment, the storytelling session also focused on encouraging active listening, enhancing language skills, and nurturing creativity among the children. The stories subtly conveyed important values such as teamwork, kindness, empathy, and problem-solving, making learning both enjoyable and meaningful. The quirky and comical characters had the students laughing wholeheartedly, creating a memorable and immersive experience for all.

The session reflected Muskaan's continued commitment to fostering creativity and holistic learning among children through innovative and artistic experiences. By introducing students to interactive storytelling and puppetry, the initiative continues to inspire curiosity, imagination, and a lifelong love for stories and learning.

*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*



A Celebration of Warmth, Joy & Togetherness



The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its **Muskaan** initiative, in collaboration with Education For All Trust and Taj Bengal, recently organised a heartwarming celebration for underprivileged children in Kolkata. The event, hosted at the iconic Taj Bengal, was filled with warmth, laughter, and festive cheer, creating unforgettable memories for the young attendees.

The celebration was graced by K. Mohanchandran, who personally interacted with the children and distributed winter essentials along with cakes, bringing smiles and happiness to their faces. The thoughtful gesture reflected the spirit of compassion and care that formed the essence of the event.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, the children were treated to a lavish and delicious meal, which they

thoroughly enjoyed. The joyous environment, combined with thoughtful gifts and warm hospitality, made the occasion truly special and memorable for every child present. Laughter, excitement, and gratitude filled the venue as the children experienced an afternoon of celebration, affection, and togetherness.

The initiative beautifully reflected Muskaan's ongoing commitment to supporting and uplifting children from underprivileged backgrounds through meaningful experiences that nurture happiness, dignity, and belonging. By creating opportunities for celebration and care, the initiative continues to touch young lives and spread positivity within the community. The event stood as a reminder of the power of kindness and collective efforts in bringing hope and joy to children in need.

*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*



Muskaan Spreads Festive Cheer to Underprivileged and Special Children

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its **Muskaan** initiative, organised a heartwarming festive outreach programme for underprivileged children from the Kalighat red-light area and special children from Prayas. Reflecting the true spirit of compassion, care, and togetherness, the initiative aimed to bring warmth, joy, and celebration into the lives of children during the festive season.

As part of the programme, Muskaan distributed winter essentials, food, and gifts to the children, ensuring they experienced not only physical comfort during the colder months but also emotional warmth and happiness. The event created an atmosphere filled with laughter, excitement, and genuine joy as the children enthusiastically received the thoughtfully arranged gifts and participated in the celebrations.

More than the distribution of essentials, the initiative focused on fostering a sense of inclusion, dignity, and

belonging among the children. Through meaningful interaction and shared moments of celebration, the event sought to make every child feel valued, appreciated, and cared for. The smiles on their faces stood as a powerful reminder of how small gestures of kindness can create lasting impact and hope.

The initiative beautifully reflected Muskaan's continued commitment to supporting and uplifting young lives through compassion-driven programmes and meaningful community engagement. By reaching out to children from vulnerable backgrounds and creating joyful experiences for them, Muskaan continues to spread positivity, empathy, and the message that every child deserves love, care, and the opportunity to celebrate with dignity and happiness.

*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*



Bringing Stories to Life Through Puppetry & Imagination

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its **Muskaan** initiative, recently organised a series of engaging storytelling and puppetry sessions across prominent schools in Kolkata, creating joyful and enriching experiences for young learners. Conducted by renowned storyteller and puppeteer Shreedevi Sunil, the sessions were hosted at Garden High School, Sushila Birla Girls' School, Mahadevi Birla Shishu Vihar, and Mahadevi Birla World Academy.

Through expressive storytelling, vibrant puppets, and engaging voice modulation, the sessions transported students into imaginative worlds filled with wonder, humour, and meaningful life lessons. Students from Upper KG to Class V enthusiastically participated in the interactive performances, responding to questions, mimicking sounds, and eagerly following the twists and turns of each story. The colourful puppets and lively characters created an immersive atmosphere that kept the children captivated throughout.

Each storytelling session was thoughtfully designed to encourage creativity, imagination, active listening, and

emotional learning among children. Along with entertaining the young audience, the stories subtly conveyed important values such as kindness, teamwork, empathy, confidence, and problem-solving. The interactive nature of the performances helped students connect deeply with the narratives while making learning enjoyable and memorable.

The initiative beautifully highlighted the importance of storytelling and puppetry as powerful educational and cultural tools that nurture young minds beyond conventional classroom learning. The enthusiastic response from students and schools reflected the impact of these immersive experiences in fostering curiosity and joyful learning.

Through Muskaan, the Foundation continues to create meaningful opportunities for children to engage with arts, culture, and creative expression, while ensuring that traditional storytelling and puppetry remain accessible, relevant, and inspiring for future generations.

*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*







Inspiring Change Through the Art of Mime

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation, through its Muskaan initiative, organised an impactful mime performance by renowned mime artist Kunal Motling for students of Modern High School for Girls and Don Bosco School in Kolkata. Titled *The Change Begins With You*, the performance delivered a meaningful and inspiring message about the power of individual action and social responsibility.

Through the expressive and powerful medium of mime, Kunal Motling captivated the students with relatable situations and thought-provoking storytelling. Without



the use of words, he successfully conveyed how small and conscious actions in everyday life can contribute towards creating a positive impact on society. His expressive gestures, emotional depth, and engaging stage presence kept the young audience deeply involved throughout the performance.

The session encouraged students to reflect on their own role in building a more compassionate, responsible, and aware society. Beyond entertainment, the performance served as an important lesson in empathy, mindfulness, and community participation. The students responded enthusiastically, appreciating the unique ability of mime to communicate emotions and ideas beyond language barriers.

The event beautifully highlighted the importance of performing arts as a tool for education and social awareness. As the performance concluded with resounding applause, it was evident that the session had left a lasting impression on the students, inspiring them to believe that even the smallest actions can bring about meaningful change.



*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*

Celebrating Young Voices & Cross-Cultural Creativity

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, through its **Muskaan** initiative, in association with Sampad Arts, celebrated the launch of “I Have a Dream” at Modern High School for Girls, Kolkata. The literary compilation brought together 100 writings from India and 100 from Birmingham, UK, beautifully reflecting the creativity, imagination, and diverse perspectives of young authors from both countries.

The event commenced with the soulful Prabha Khaitan Foundation Anthem, setting an inspiring tone for the celebration. Sumitra Ray welcomed the gathering and spoke about the Foundation’s commitment to nurturing young talent and encouraging meaningful cross-cultural literary exchange.

Adding an international dimension to the programme, Piali Ray delivered a thoughtful address on the theme “I Have a Dream,” encouraging students to believe in their aspirations and express themselves fearlessly through

writing and creativity. Damayanti Mukherjee also addressed the audience, highlighting the transformative power of literature and storytelling in shaping young minds.

The event featured reflections by judges Kasturi Ganguly and Sadeqa Rahman, who praised the originality, depth, and imagination displayed in the submissions. One of the most memorable moments of the programme was the Author Recognition ceremony, where each young contributor was invited on stage to receive a copy of the book along with a certificate of appreciation.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Mansi Kamdar Shah. More than a book launch, I Have a Dream emerged as a celebration of creativity, dreams, and the power of literature to connect cultures and inspire young minds across borders.

*This session of **Muskaan** was jointly organized with Education for All Trust*





Reforming Hinduism: Manu S. Pillai's Exploration of Colonial Critique and Modern Identity

The **Kitaab** organised by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, proved to be a captivating evening, with Dr. Shashi Tharoor gracing the occasion as the esteemed Chief Guest. The event celebrated the release of Manu S. Pillai's *Gods, Guns, and Missionaries*, his sixth book. This was followed by a stimulating and thought-provoking discussion between Dr. Tharoor, Pillai, and the author, columnist, and moderator Ira Mukhoty, who facilitated an enriching dialogue on the themes explored in the book. The conversation delved into complex themes surrounding colonialism, religious transformation, and the interplay between missionaries and Indian society.

The event was inaugurated with a formal welcome speech by Dipali Bhasin, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi. Neelima Dalmia Adhar, the Honorary Convenor of Delhi NCR Affairs of the Foundation & **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi, presented the Foundation and warmly greeted the guests and audience at the book launch.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor unveiled the book during the book launch ceremony alongside Dipali Bhasin; Karuna Goenka, Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Manu S. Pillai and Ira Mukhoty.

Dr. Tharoor began by speaking about Pillai. He fondly recalled how Pillai's presence in his office during two separate stints proved invaluable, even stepping in during a crisis to "rescue" Tharoor when a colleague was unable to work. With great affection, he spoke about Pillai's contributions, stating, "He's been very close to me—someone I have an enormous amount of fondness and regard for."

Tharoor was particularly moved by Pillai's exploration of

Hinduism's evolution, especially the rise of Hindu nationalism and Hindutva. He noted that the book sheds light on how colonialism shaped modern Hindu identity, with Pillai's research offering a nuanced and rigorous examination of the subject. "It's a truly investigative journey," Tharoor stated, "charting the course of Hinduism from the arrival of the Portuguese to the inception of Hindutva."

Mukhoty kickstarted the conversation and probed the author on why the book took so long to publish. Pillai shared insights into his extensive research and personal journey behind the ambitious project. He spoke with remarkable candour about his writing process and the challenges of engaging with contentious themes, emphasizing the need for rigorous footnotes due to the "over-sensitive" climate in which we live. "I thought it made sense to have solid footnotes so that even if I'm sued, I have something to hold up," Pillai humorously remarked.

Pillai also shared an insightful reflection on the evolution of Hinduism. He emphasized that Hinduism, like the temple itself, is not a monolithic tradition, but rather a "composite of many traditions." He vividly illustrated this with examples from the Skanda Purana, a text that, according to him, serves as a "scrap heap" for myths that didn't quite fit into the broader Brahmanical tradition. "Anything they don't like, they attribute it to the Kaliyuga," Pillai said, referring to how various versions of Hinduism have adapted over centuries.

The conversation turned to his early academic pursuits, where Pillai confessed that his initial ideas about Hindu nationalism were still "raw" when he wrote his Master's dissertation on the subject at the age of 21. He credited this

early exposure as the seed for his book on Hinduism's intersection with colonialism, nationalism, and religious identity. "The idea for this book really picked up in 2011, but it took me over a decade to complete it," he shared.

The interaction between Hinduism and Christianity in India often took the form of intellectual debates. "Hindus frequently responded to missionary claims with reasoned counterarguments. For instance, when missionaries insisted that the Bible was God's universal word, Hindus retorted that if it was meant for everyone, why hadn't God directly given it to them? 'God has created different paths for different people,' they argued, invoking a worldview where each religion served a particular cultural and geographical context," added Pillai.

Pillai also noted the shifting dynamics between British colonialism and missionary work. Initially, the British were reluctant to engage with religion. "Initially, British officials wanted nothing to do with religion," Pillai explained, referencing the period when the East India Company focused purely on trade. However, by 1813, after the rise of Evangelical Christianity in Europe and increased pressure from the British public, the British government finally allowed missionaries to enter India. Despite this shift, the missionary presence was met with increasing resistance from local communities, with Hindus and Muslims alike engaging in debates to challenge Christian teachings.



Pillai's narrative underscores the tensions of this period—both religious and political—as India grappled with the encroachment of foreign ideologies and the evolving role of colonial powers in shaping religious dynamics. His insights provide a nuanced understanding of how these complex historical forces converged during the colonial era.

Further delving into the complexity of this period, Pillai discussed how these reformers were often regarded as "missionaries in brown skin." The comparison with missionaries was not lost on critics of the time, who accused figures like Roy and Ambedkar of mimicking the missionary agenda but without endorsing conversion. Pillai reflected, "Indians were using both Western criticism as well as Western studies on Hinduism to their own advantage to reinvent, reframe, and come up with a new way of defining Hinduism for the modern age."

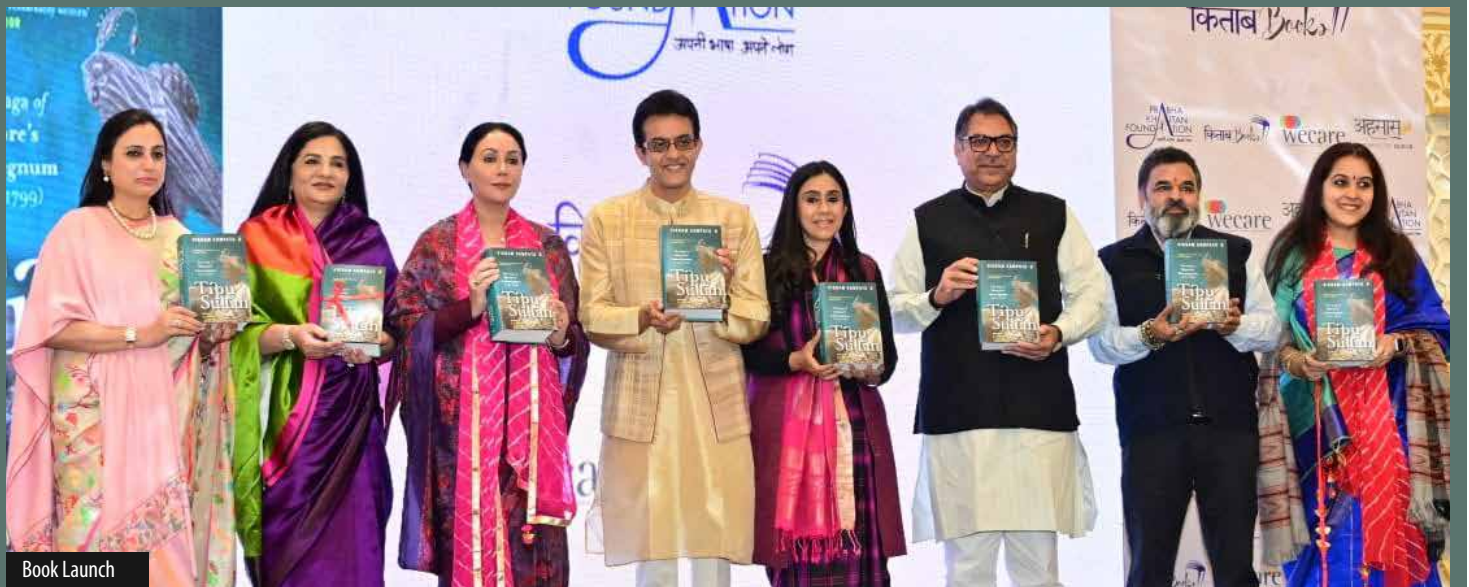
The conversation took an interesting turn when Pillai was asked about the intersection of religion and technology in the 21st century. Reflecting on how modern Hindu identity has evolved in the digital age, he explained, "Just as Hinduism had to come to terms with race consciousness and colonialism in the 19th century, today it must adapt to cyberspace and AI."

Pillai noted how, much like the 19th-century debates, contemporary discussions on Hinduism increasingly incorporate both technological adjustments and historical grievances, blending past and present in ways that continue to shape the modern narrative.

As the discussion drew to a close, the Q&A session with the audience brimmed with reflections on Pillai's exploration of the past, which revealed the fascinating dynamic between colonialism, reform, and the formation of modern Hindu identities. His insights offer a deep understanding of how historical figures shaped religious thought, both in their time and in the context of an evolving modern world. Dipali Bhasin, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi, delivered the closing remarks for the evening.

Neelima Dalmia Adhar and Karuna Goenka had the honour of felicitating the Chief Guest for the evening, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, author Manu S. Pillai, and conversationalist Ira Mukhoty with silk stoles.

This session of Kitaab was organised with the support of the Ehsaas Women of Delhi,



Vikram Sampath on the Intersection of History, Education, and Nation Building

Jaipur recently witnessed an enriching cultural and intellectual event with the launch of Vikram Sampath's new book, "Tipu Sultan: The Saga Of Mysore's Interregnum (1760-1799)". The event, organized by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** brought together notable personalities from the world of politics, literature, and social work to celebrate this remarkable historical work.

The evening commenced with a gracious welcome note by Apra Kuchhal, Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan & Central India Affairs of Prabha Khaitan Foundation. Apra Kuchhal warmly greeted the distinguished guests, setting the tone for an evening of celebration of history, literature, and learning. Vinnie Kakkar, National Advisor of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, then took the stage to deliver the introductory note and formally introduced the Foundation.

Dr. Vikram Sampath's book was launched by Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari; State Incharge, BJP Haryana, Dr. Satish Poonia; **Ehsaas Woman** of Jaipur, Sunita Shekhawat; Spiritual Mentor Dr. Vikas Sharma; National Advisor of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, Vinnie Kakkar; Chairperson of We Care and Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan & Central India for **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, Apra Kuchhal; and author, Lipika Bhushan.

Dr. Sampath, whose journey with the life of Tipu Sultan began over 15 years ago, spoke candidly about the emotional connection he had developed with the Sultan's story. He humorously confessed to having hated history in school, but an early exposure to the popular TV series *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* piqued his interest in the ruler and his legacy. He shared how the series' portrayal of Tipu Sultan and his family disturbed him so much that it sparked a lifelong curiosity to uncover the truth behind the man and

his kingdom. What began as a childlike curiosity evolved into a family project, later becoming a significant scholarly pursuit.

The discussion shifted to the military and strategic failures of Tipu Sultan, emphasizing how his father's empire was built on blood and manipulation, whereas Tipu squandered it due to arrogance and poor decisions. The four Anglo-Mysore Wars, while showing initial victories, ended in Tipu's downfall. Sampath explained how Tipu's reliance on French support and his alignment with the larger Islamic world for military purposes complicates his legacy as a "freedom fighter."

He explained, "Tipu Sultan's alignment with the French and his use of Islam as a political tool have to be understood in the larger context of his reign. He wasn't simply a freedom fighter, as many claim." In the captivating discussion with Bhushan, Sampath spoke candidly about the Sultan's letters, his controversial beliefs, and the chilling visions that guided his decisions.

Interestingly, Dr. Sampath also reveals that Tipu Sultan was a vivid dreamer. "Apparently, he was a very, very vivid dreamer. Every night he had a lot of dreams and every morning, when he woke up, he would spend about two hours in his toilet recounting all his dreams and writing them down before he forgot them," Sampath explains. These dreams were not mere random fragments; they were violent and filled with divine visions urging Tipu to carry out ruthless acts.

One such dream, as Dr. Sampath recounts, is particularly telling. "In one dream, there is a pot with Shaligram stones that Hindus worship. In the dream, these stones change into badams, and Tipu wakes up interpreting it as Allah's command to convert all Hindus to Islam," Sampath elaborates.

To gain a deeper understanding of Tipu's state of mind, Sampath even had these dreams psychoanalyzed. The results were troubling. "The psychiatrist was a little taken aback, saying that Tipu was consumed by a lot of hatred, consumed by toxicity, and that's what he spread out to all these communities," Sampath notes. This observation ties into the atrocities committed by Tipu Sultan, particularly in the regions like Kerala's northern Malabar, where communities such as the Ners and Theya faced immense suffering under his rule.

In support of his claims, Sampath points to multiple contemporary records from the time. "These are not just my opinions. Tipu's own court historians, the British, even his French allies are all talking about the same things," he says. The consistency of accounts from various sources, including the primary sources, strengthens the authenticity of the claims.

Yet, Sampath warns against romanticizing Tipu's crimes, stating, "If crimes are a virtue and you have to exaggerate your crimes to be shown as a great leader, that itself underlines a very, very difficult legacy."

When the conversation shifted to Tipu Sultan's death, Dr. Sampath refuted the popular narrative about his demise. Many have claimed that Tipu was killed by a Gha Chieftain, a story heavily circulated in Karnataka's political discourse. Sampath clarified, "There were no Gha Chieftains who killed Tipu Sultan. That was unfortunately the handiwork of Dr. Pun's party... it was fabricated for political purposes." According to Sampath, this fabricated narrative has been used to gain votes, and while it might be appealing to politicians, historians must remain objective and rely on credible sources.

Sampath recounted how the Sultan's final moments unfolded, "A huge volley comes, and his mare is killed, causing him to tumble over into a heap of dead bodies." In an almost surreal twist, British soldiers initially failed to recognize Tipu Sultan. As one soldier noticed the Sultan's ornate belt, he struck Tipu to seize it. When Tipu fought back, a British soldier shot him in the temple, ending his life.

The aftermath of Tipu Sultan's death was chaotic. "By sunset, the fortress of Srirangapatna had become a scene from Hell," Sampath remarked, describing the devastation. Eyewitnesses, including British soldiers like Allan Beatson and David Beard, wrote about the terrifying scene. "They were scared to even touch him because they weren't sure if he would spring back to life and strike at them," Sampath noted. Ultimately, Tipu's body was found among the dead, with his hand still clutching his sword.

Sampath's discussion also extended to his personal initiative—the Foundation for Indian Cultural Research (FCR), which aims to foster new talent in the field of Indian history. "Instead of complaining all the time, be the change that you want to see," he said, referring to the foundation's mission to nurture young historians and create a platform for alternative scholarship. One of the foundation's initiatives, the Sir Jadunath Sarkar Fellowship for Indian History, supports promising scholars in conducting primary research. This fellowship is just one example of Sampath's dedication to ensuring that the history of India is studied and interpreted with rigor and accuracy.

The audience was clearly moved by Dr. Sampath's talk, and a few students took the opportunity to ask thought-provoking questions during the Q&A session. One young student from Delhi Public School, Jaipur, inquired about the Franco-Myuran relationship, particularly the influence of French social and cultural norms on the Mayan people. Sampath's response was thoughtful, highlighting Tipu Sultan's engagement with France during his reign. He explained how Tipu Sultan, who sought French support against the British, was deeply inspired by the French Revolution and even founded a Jacobin club in his kingdom. "So much so that they sang the French national anthem," he added, reflecting on Tipu's adoption of French revolutionary ideals in his own governance. The vote of thanks was delivered by Pramod Sharma, Grassroot Media Foundation. The event was graced by the felicitations of esteemed guests, starting with Sunita Shekhawat, **Ehsaas Woman** of Jaipur who felicitated Satish Poonia, State Incharge of BJP Haryana and former State President of BJP Rajasthan. Dr. Poonia, a key political figure, shared his views on the historical context and political legacy discussed in the book.

Deependra Rana, General Manager of ITC Rajputana, had the honour of felicitating Vikas Sharma, a spiritual mentor, for his contributions to community building and leadership. Lipika Bhushan, the author and a key figure in the event, was also felicitated by Vinnie Kakkar and Deependra Rana for her insightful contributions to the literary world.



This session of Kitaab was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Jaipur, and was in association with WeCare.



Book Launch

The 2024 Election: Insights into India's Political Turmoil and Triumphs

In a thought-provoking evening at the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** Kitaab session in Kolkata, senior journalist and author Rajdeep Sardesai launched his latest book, *2024: The Election That Surprised India*. The event saw a host of distinguished guests, including Fuad Halim, a medical practitioner, social scientist, and political activist; Indranil Ray, Cluster GM Operations & GM at Taj City Centre; Shradha Murarka, Chairperson of FICCI FLO Kolkata; and several prominent figures from the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** and FICCI FLO Kolkata, including Manisha Jain, Honorary Chief Operating Officer, Prabha Khaitan Foundation; Esha Dutta, Honorary Convenor of North-East Affairs of the Foundation and Ehsaas Woman of Kolkata; Gouri Basu, Ehsaas Woman of Kolkata; and Neha Saraf, member of FICCI FLO Kolkata.

The evening kicked off with a warm introduction by Esha Dutta, who introduced the esteemed personalities in the room, setting the stage for the conversation that would follow. Shradha Murarka, Chairperson of FICCI FLO Kolkata, also shared her thoughts, offering valuable insights into the organization's vision.

The highlight of the evening was a captivating conversation between the author, Rajdeep Sardesai, and Fuad Halim who delved into the complexities and unexpected turns of India's 2024 elections, providing a thought-provoking analysis of the country's political landscape.

The evening was marked by a riveting conversation between Sardesai and Dr. Halim, who explored the dramatic events leading up to India's 2024 elections. Sardesai's book, which delves into the political, social, and medical landscapes of the past five years, was described by Halim as "courageous, incisive, and insightful." He commended the author for

providing a concrete narrative of the tumultuous years leading up to the elections. "This book is essential," Halim noted, "as a document for future generations to understand the intricate developments of the past five years, especially during the pandemic."

In his trademark style, Sardesai presented his argument with clarity, asserting that the country's political leadership ignored vital medical advice, which led to the rapid spread of the virus. "Faith had overtaken reason," he remarked, underscoring the irony of leaders encouraging large gatherings during a global health crisis. His powerful narrative continued with a comparison to the Jamat event in Delhi during the first wave, where Muslims were demonised, yet no such critique was directed at the Kumbh Mela.

The conversation then turned to the political ramifications of these decisions. Sardesai pointed to the shift in the political landscape, highlighting how politicians, especially those in power, often fail to acknowledge their mistakes. "We need truth-telling," he said, "If we are to understand the mistakes made during the pandemic, we must first acknowledge them." His call for accountability resonated with the audience, as he voiced the collective frustration of citizens who had witnessed the government's reluctance to admit its failings.

The discussion also illuminated the deeper issues within the political system. Sardesai lamented the lack of ideological clarity among political parties, particularly in Maharashtra, where defections have become a regular feature. "We've moved from retail defections to wholesale defections," he quipped, alluding to the unprincipled shifting of allegiance by politicians for personal gains. Sardesai's criticism of the political landscape was sharp: "Where is the ideological

mooring? Politics today has become about power, not principle.”

Despite the cynicism surrounding politics, Sardesai emphasised the importance of dialogue. He advocated for a return to the art of consensus-building, stressing that India’s diversity requires inclusive conversations that involve all stakeholders, particularly farmers. “We need dialogue, not just from the top down but from the grassroots up,” he stated passionately, underlining that no one should be excluded from discussions that shape the future of the nation.

The event was a blend of intellectual engagement and sharp political commentary, with Sardesai sharing his reflections on the state of Indian politics over the past 15 years. His narrative was both an analysis of the past and a plea for a more transparent and accountable future. He concluded the conversation by pointing to the importance of truth and dialogue in resolving the nation’s complex challenges. “We must listen to people, not just talk at them,” he said, a call to politicians to embrace humility and accountability.

Sardesai did not shy away from examining his own profession’s complexities. “I am as guilty as anyone else,” he admitted, acknowledging the compromises journalists make to maintain their careers. However, his sorrow was palpable when he recounted the tragic death of a young journalist in Bastar, who was murdered for exposing corruption in road contracts. “We won’t even hold a candlelight march for him,” Sardesai lamented, pointing to the disconnect between urban elites and the struggles faced by journalists in rural India.

This raw honesty continued as he reflected on the power dynamics between the media and the state. He recounted the 2009 incident when Prannoy Roy, the renowned founder of NDTV, was detained at Mumbai airport under dubious circumstances, his family’s trip ruined by an arbitrary Lookout Circular. Sardesai sharply criticised the state for using its instruments to silence media voices. “It’s not about just being trolled on social media,” he said, drawing a stark comparison with the fate of journalists like Mukesh Chandra, who was killed while trying to expose corruption. “The pressure we face is nothing compared to what others face,” Sardesai remarked, underscoring the perilous environment in which investigative journalism now operates.

The conversation seamlessly transitioned to the topic of communal violence and political inaction, notably the ongoing crisis in Manipur. Sardesai’s voice grew more impassioned as he recounted the tragic story of a Manipur MLA who was nearly murdered simply for belonging to the ‘wrong’ ethnic group. He was forced to flee to Delhi for his

life, a victim of a state that failed to protect him. Sardesai’s frustration was palpable: “The state has failed its citizens. For 18 months, the people of Manipur have lived in refugee camps, and no one has cared. Not a single protest has shaken the conscience of the nation.” The silence from the government, according to Sardesai, reflects a deeper issue — the unwillingness to confront uncomfortable truths, particularly when they challenge the ruling establishment.

In the midst of these grave concerns, Sardesai’s remarks on India’s press freedom were a sobering reminder of how far the country has come. “India is not China. We are not Pakistan,” he stated, yet pointed out that the inability to criticise the government without facing retribution is a troubling sign. The legacy of India’s democracy, Sardesai argued, lies in its ability to tolerate dissent. “Criticising someone doesn’t make them your enemy. It’s essential to accept different viewpoints if we are to preserve the essence of democracy.”

The discussion culminated in a call for courage, not only from journalists but from every citizen who values the truth. Sardesai acknowledged that it requires great fortitude to speak out against the powers that be, especially when the truth is uncomfortable. “We must call out what is wrong, even if it comes at great personal cost,” he urged. His closing remarks were a powerful testimony to the role of media in a democratic society: “The media’s role is not to be pliable, but to stand as the fourth pillar of democracy, speaking truth to power regardless of the consequences.”

As the evening concluded, the audience, was left to reflect on the profound themes that Sardesai and Dr. Halim had unearthed. The conversation, both poignant and electrifying, reaffirmed the need for a free, fearless press and the courage to uphold democratic values in the face of adversity. Sardesai’s words were not merely observations; they were a clarion call for those who believe in the power of truth and justice.

The evening also witnessed an elegant felicitation of the guests of honour. Indranil Ray graciously felicitated Rajdeep Sardesai and Fuad Halim. A heartfelt thank you was extended by Shradha Murarka to all who helped make the event a grand success.

This session of Kitaab was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Kolkata, in association with FICCI FLO Kolkata; Hospitality Partner, Taj City Centre New Town, Kolkata



Swati Agarwal, Shradha Murdia, Ila Arun, Bhanu Bharti, Anjula Bedi and Riddhima Doshi

"डिप्रेशन शब्द मेरी ज़िंदगी में रहा ही नहीं" इला अरुण

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के 'किताब' उपक्रम के अंतर्गत "परदे के पीछे" पुस्तक का भव्य लोकार्पण समारोह

"हमने जीवन में कई उतार-चढ़ाव देखे, परंतु 'डिप्रेशन' शब्द मेरी ज़िंदगी में रहा ही नहीं" — यह कहना है अभिनेत्री, लेखिका और गायिका इला अरुण का। वे राजस्थान के उदयपुर स्थित रैडिसन ब्लू में आयोजित प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के 'किताब' उपक्रम के अंतर्गत "परदे के पीछे" पुस्तक के भव्य लोकार्पण समारोह को संबोधित कर रही थीं।

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत उदयपुर की अहसास वूमन, स्वाति अग्रवाल के स्वागत भाषण से हुई। उन्होंने लेखिका द्वय का स्वागत करते हुए कहा — "राजस्थान की एक बेटी, जिसके कंठ में रेगिस्तान के लोक स्वर गूंजते हैं; जिनके गीतों में हवाओं की सरसराहट, चुंघरुओं की छनक, रागों की मिठास और परंपरा की गहराई समाई है। वह मिट्टी की महक को स्वर देती है। वह एक अभिनेत्री हैं, एक गायिका हैं, एक किस्सागो हैं — हर किरदार में देवत्व भर देने वाली कलाकार हैं।" ऐसी विलक्षण प्रतिभा की धनी इला अरुण का उन्होंने आत्मीय स्वागत किया।

साथ ही उन्होंने पुस्तक की सह-लेखिका अंजुला बेदी के बारे में कहा — उन्होंने पुस्तक के पृष्ठों में जीवन फूँका है, शब्दों को भावनाओं की शक्ति दी है और विचारों को स्पर्श करने वाली अभिव्यक्तियों में बदला है।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से इन दोनों विशिष्ट व्यक्तित्वों के साथ ही कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित अतिथियों और दर्शकों का भी हार्दिक स्वागत किया गया।

"यह विचार बहुत समय से मन में चल रहा था। कहानियाँ तो बहुत हैं... मैंने ज़िंदगी में कई किरदार निभाए—बेटी, माँ, नानी, वेश्या, चोली पहनकर गाने वाली, गांधारी, गांधीजी के आंदोलन में हिस्सा लेने वाली। इतने किरदारों के बीच खुद को ढूँढ़ पाना कठिन रहा कि मैं कौन हूँ?"

इला अरुण ने पुस्तक की चर्चा करते हुए बताया कि पुस्तक अंग्रेज़ी में है, लेकिन उसका शीर्षक हिंदी में है। यह आत्मकथा है। उन्होंने अपने अनुभव को वेदव्यास और गणेश जी की कथा से जोड़ते हुए कहा: "मैं वेदव्यास हूँ और अंजुलाजी गणेश।" यह आत्मकथा एक संवाद की तरह लिखी गई है—जिसे पढ़ने पर ऐसा महसूस होता है मानो लेखक आपसे बातें कर रहे हों। अंजुला बेदी ने लेखन में जो संवेदनशीलता दिखाई है, उसकी वे सराहना

“

"नाटक और गाना-बजाना, ढाल में नमक की तरह हो शौक के लिए, ज़िंदगी नहीं बननी चाहिए।"

”

करती हैं। वे कहती हैं, "यह किताब सिर्फ मेरे जीवन की कहानी नहीं, एक याला है जो हर स्त्री से जुड़ती है। और अंजुला जी ने उसमें भावों को बहुत खूबसूरती से उभारा है।"

दोनों लेखिकाओं ने पुस्तक के अंशों के माध्यम से कई सारी यादों को दर्शकों के सामने प्रस्तुत किया। अंजुला बेदी ने कई प्रश्न किए, जिनके उत्तर में इला अरुण ने अपने जीवन के तहखानों में रखी यादों के बॉक्स से एक-एक लड़ियाँ निकालकर दर्शकों के सामने रखीं। लेखन के अनुभव को सह-लेखिका अंजुला ने भी साझा किया। यह संवाद काफी रोचक रहा।

"मेरी ज़िंदगी की सबसे खूबसूरत यादों में से एक है — जयपुर। राजस्थान की राजधानी और मेरा शहर। एक साधारण मध्यमवर्गीय परिवार, जिसमें बहुत कुछ ख़ास नहीं था, लेकिन बहुत कुछ सिखाने वाला ज़रूर था। हमारी माँ... उन्होंने हमें सिर्फ पाला नहीं, बल्कि ज़िंदगी को जीना सिखाया। वो कहती थीं, "आवेश में कभी विवेक मत खोना।" यह एक वाक्य मेरे जीवन का सिद्धांत बन गया। माँ कहा करती थीं, "नाटक और गाना-बजाना, ढाल में नमक की तरह हो — शौक के लिए, ज़िंदगी नहीं बननी चाहिए।" पर देखिए, वही मेरा पेशा बन गया। लेकिन माँ ने हमेशा सीमाएँ नहीं खींचीं, बल्कि हमें आज़ादी भी दी — संगीत सिखाया, सितार बजाना सिखाया, थिएटर की इजाज़त दी।

मुझे याद है, एक बार हम भारत भवन में टेक्निकल रिहर्सल कर रहे थे, थोड़ी देर हो गई। घर पहुँची तो माँ छत पर टहल रही थीं। दरवाज़ा खोलते ही बोलीं — "जहाँ से आई हो, वहीं चली जाओ।" बहुत गुस्से में थीं। बाद में सोचती हूँ, अगर माँ की बात नहीं मानी होती, तो शायद आज किसी और मोड़ पर होती।

हमारा वो थिएटर ग्रुप, जहाँ सब लड़कियाँ थीं — वो समय कोई छोटा आंदोलन नहीं था। जयपुर जैसे शहर में लड़कियाँ स्टेज पर आ रही थीं, पर कोई नहीं

पूछता था, कोई नहीं रोकता था। ये अपने-आप में एक क्रांति थी — बिना किसी नारे के, बिना झंडा उठाए।

मुझे लगता है, स्त्री स्वतंत्रता के असली नायक वही लोग होते हैं, जो "नज़ीर पेश करते हैं, नारा नहीं लगाते"। उन्होंने काम करके दिखाया — चुपचाप, धैर्य से। फ्रीडम कोई स्लोगन से नहीं आती — वो आती है काम से, उदाहरण से। और यही मेरी माँ थीं। मेरी सबसे बड़ी प्रेरणा।

वे कहती हैं, "डिप्रेशन शब्द मेरी ज़िंदगी में रहा ही नहीं।" संघर्ष, असफलता और सफलता — सब कुछ को उन्होंने सहज भाव से स्वीकार किया। आज की पीढ़ी की बातें, जैसे "Give me space", उन्हें अजीब लगती हैं। हम तो दो कमरों में 12 लोग रहते थे, फिर भी कोई डिप्रेशन नहीं था।

किताब के पहले अध्याय "कर्टन" से कुछ अंश पढ़कर सुनाया। यह शीर्षक मंच और फ़िल्म — दोनों की दुनिया से आया है। नेशनल स्कूल ऑफ़ ड्रामा में, जब मैं एक शॉर्ट टर्म कोर्स कर रही थी, उस दौरान ग्रुप के एक सज्जन ने अचानक मुझसे कहा — 'तुम स्टेज पर ही अपनी आखिरी साँस लोगी।'

तब मैं नहीं जानती थी कि यह मशहूर निर्देशक ऋत्विक् घटक थे। एक नवोदित कलाकार के रूप में उस समय मैं थोड़ा चौंक गई थी। लेकिन वर्षों बाद जब मैं उनकी उस बात को याद करती हूँ, तो कृतज्ञता से भर जाती हूँ। उनकी दृष्टि अद्भुत थी।

वक्त बीतने के साथ, थिएटर के पीछे इंतज़ार करते हुए, हम सभी कलाकारों को बहुत कुछ सोचने का समय मिलता था। हम में से ज़्यादातर कलाकारों ने अपने जीवन का अधिकांश भाग थिएटर के 'वेटिंग एरिया' में ही गुज़ारा है। मुझे याद है, जब मैं पहली बार मंच पर उतरी थी, तो वह अनुभव मेरे लिए बहुत ख़ास था। अब जब मैं इस पुस्तक को लिख रही हूँ, तो यह साधारण जीवन की घटनाओं को एक अलग ही रंग और यादों में बदल रहा है — जैसे यह सिर्फ मेरी नहीं, बल्कि मेरे दोस्तों और उन पात्रों की भी कहानी बन गई हो, जो मेरे जीवन का हिस्सा रहे हैं।

मंच मेरे लिए एक प्रतीक है — जहाँ हम सब अपने-अपने किरदार निभाते हैं। लेकिन जीवन में भी तो हर कोई कोई-न-कोई भूमिका निभा रहा है, है ना? ऋत्विक् दा कहते थे कि हमें अपने चेहरे से 'मुखौटा' उतारकर खुद को देखना चाहिए — चाहे हम जीवन में जो भी किरदार निभा रहे हों। हम सभी एक बड़े पारिवारिक नाटक का हिस्सा हैं। इसमें कुछ किरदार अब इस दुनिया में नहीं रहे।

हम सब मास्क पहनते हैं। पर किसी-न-किसी मोड़ पर, हमें वह मुखौटा उतारना ही पड़ता है — और खुद को देखना होता है, चाहे जीवन में हमारा कोई भी किरदार क्यों न हो। हम सभी, इस बड़ी सी 'जीवन रंगमंच' में, किसी-न-किसी भूमिका में प्रवेश और निकास कर रहे हैं।

एक मज़ेदार बात — मेरा सबसे प्रसिद्ध गाना "चोली के पीछे क्या है" इस गाने ने बड़ी चर्चा बटोरी। लोग आलोचना भी करते थे, और आनंद बक्शी जी का जवाब तो और शानदार था: "चोली में दिल है मेरा!" और उषा उत्थुप जी ने भी बढ़िया बात कही: "चोली में लाइनर है मेरी!"

इन सब अनुभवों ने सिखाया कि औरत को शर्मिंदा करने वाली चीज़ें वो नहीं हैं जो वह पहनती है या गाती है, बल्कि वह मानसिकता है जो स्त्री के अस्तित्व को कम कर आँकती है।

"चोली के पीछे" जैसे गीतों को लेकर विवाद ज़रूर उठे, पर उसमें कहीं भी वलैरिटी नहीं थी, और पूरी टीम — सरोज खान की कोरियोग्राफी से लेकर माधुरी दीक्षित के प्रदर्शन तक — ने संवेदनशीलता और गरिमा बनाए रखी।

यह गीत भले विवादास्पद हुआ, लेकिन मेरे लिए यह एक वरदान बनकर आया। मेरी माँ ने मुझे सिखाया था कि ऐसा कोई काम न करना जिससे लोग उल्टा-सीधा बोलें। लेकिन मैंने महसूस किया कि फ़िल्म इंडस्ट्री में कभी-कभी वही काम आपको पहचान दिलाता है। मैंने यह भी कहा कि कभी-कभी विवाद भी लोकप्रियता का हिस्सा होता है।

हर सुबह मैं अपने घर की छोटी-सी बालकनी में टहलती हूँ। वहाँ सामने की तारों पर बैठे कबूतरों को निहारते हुए, कभी-कभी सोचती हूँ कि क्या वे भी मेरी ही तरह जीवन की रोमांटिकता के बारे में सोच रहे होते हैं?

शायद इसी सोच ने मुझे इस किताब को लिखने के लिए प्रेरित किया। यह कहानी सिर्फ एक संस्मरण नहीं, बल्कि मेरे जुनून और जीवन की स्मृतियों की बुनावट है। यह किताब सिर्फ मेरे जीवन की कहानी नहीं, एक यात्रा है जो हर स्त्री से जुड़ती है। और अंजुला जी ने उसमें भावों को बहुत खूबसूरती से उकेरा है।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के 'किताब' उपक्रम के अंतर्गत "परदे के पीछे" पुस्तक का लोकार्पण थिएटर की दुनिया के जाने-माने व्यक्तित्व श्री भानु भारती के कर-कमलों द्वारा संपन्न हुआ।

भानुजी ने दोनों लेखिकाओं को आशीर्वाद देते हुए कहा, "जब मैं राष्ट्रीय नाट्य विद्यालय के प्रथम वर्ष में था, तब जयपुर में पहला नाटक किया था — उस नाटक में इला जी मुख्य भूमिका में थीं और अंजुला जी उनकी सास बनी थीं। उस दिन से आज तक दोनों कलाकारों की यात्रा अविस्मरणीय रही है। इला जी केवल एक अदाकारा नहीं, एक अद्भुत मित्र भी हैं, और अंजुला जी एक अत्यंत आत्मीय रचनाकार। मुझे विशेष रूप से इस पुस्तक के विमोचन का निमंत्रण पाकर गर्व हुआ। यह एक ऐसा क्षण है, जिसे मैं सहेज कर रखूँगा।"

मनमोहक और भव्य आयोजन के समापन पर **अहसास वूमेन** ऋद्धिमा दोशी ने सभी अतिथियों, दर्शकों और आयोजकों के प्रति हार्दिक धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।



इस अवसर पर **अहसास वूमेन** श्रद्धा मुर्दिया ने अतिथियों का सम्मान किया। यह आयोजन **अहसास वूमेन** उदयपुर के सहयोग तथा हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर रैडिसन ब्लू, उदयपुर के सहयोग से संपन्न हुआ।



Bhaavna Arora, Ram Chander Tiwari and Srinjoy Chowdhury

A Stirring Evening of Patriotism, Literature, and National Reflection

In an evening that seamlessly blended literary finesse with the spirit of national pride, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation, under its esteemed Kitaab initiative, hosted the grand launch of *Nagrota Under Siege*, the latest book by acclaimed author Bhaavna Arora. Held in Kolkata, the event was a profound tribute to the bravery of Indian soldiers and the power of storytelling in capturing the soul of a nation.

The launch was graced by the presence of the Chief Guest, Lt. Gen. Ram Chander Tiwari, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, whose insights added gravitas to the evening. He was joined on stage by an impressive line-up of dignitaries, including Srinjoy Chowdhury—veteran journalist, author and quizmaster, Esha Dutta, Honorary Convenor of North-East Affairs of Prabha Khaitan Foundation & Ehsaas Woman of Kolkata, Shefali Agarwal, Ehsaas Woman of Kolkata, and Anindita Chatterjee, Executive Trustee of Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

The event began with Shefali Agarwal delivering a warm and gracious welcome, highlighting the Foundation's dedication to nurturing literary culture and honouring voices that matter.

The highlight of the evening was the absorbing conversation between Bhaavna Arora and Srinjoy Chowdhury, where themes of war, duty, and patriotism were explored with depth and sensitivity. The discussion drew the audience into the lesser-known realities of military life, painting a vivid picture of the human spirit amidst adversity.

The launch of *Nagrota Under Siege* was not just a literary event—it was an homage to the silent strength of soldiers, the responsibility of writers, and the enduring relevance of

stories that speak truth to power. Chief Guest, Lt. Gen. Ram Chander Tiwari, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM shared a few words with the audience, encouraged and complemented Arora's work.

Chowdhury, visibly moved by the book, remarked, "This is such an exceedingly overwhelming book. I was so impressed. Each casualty is a tragedy, and this story reminded me of Cornelius Ryan's *The Longest Day*. While the scale may be different, the human cost and storytelling are on par."

In a particularly evocative passage discussed during the conversation, Arora writes of a young mother trapped during a terror siege. "She had to keep her baby quiet so the terrorists wouldn't discover them. And when rescue came, she was told to take only her essentials. She picked up her child... and her mother's scarf. That was her whole world," Arora narrated, her voice heavy with emotion.

The discussion also ventured into the challenges of publishing and sustaining such deeply researched military literature. Arora confessed that her debut book faced multiple rejections. "They told me: 'There's no market for military fiction.' My father said, 'Write a love story. People read those.' But this is a love story, a love story with the nation."

When asked about the time it took to write *Nagrota Under Siege*, Arora revealed it took her five years. "The research was extensive. The Indian Army is clear—if they can share something, they will; if not, they say it's classified. But the Jammu & Kashmir Police? That takes more patience. They must see your intent. You don't push them—you earn their trust."

One of the evening's most resonant moments was when a professor from the audience proposed including Nagrota Under Siege in university curricula. "This is a genre every nation-builder must read," she said, drawing applause. Chowdhury echoed the sentiment, "It should be taught—because it's not just about war. It's about life, loss, and resilience."

On the topic of adaptations, an independent filmmaker enquired about film rights. Arora smiled, "A book is a writer's baby. If I hand it over, it must be to someone who respects it. Who doesn't dilute the essence. But yes, I've been told it reads like a screenplay—and maybe, one day, we'll see it on screen."

Arora's purpose with Nagrota Under Siege was neither to pander to trends nor to seek fame. The book, based on the harrowing 2016 terrorist attack in the Nagrota cantonment, is the product of five years of dogged research and emotional immersion. Arora made her intent crystal clear: "This book is not a work of fiction but a story based on successive research... This piece of work is not solely for entertainment but to sensitise my readers to the sacrifices our Armed Forces make." Her words were more than an author's note—they were a pledge.

The conversation turned to the unsung heroes of the operation—soldiers like Linda and L, both non-officers but lion-hearted men whose actions altered the course of that dark day. "They were both abs," Arora noted, "They had an enormous presence in the operation." She spoke with admiration of L, who returned to the site, escorted her through the events, and has since become an inspirational figure in Punjab, motivating youth to serve the nation.

There were chuckles too, as Arora recalled how a neighbour's young daughter became the book's unofficial ambassador before it even went to print. "She marketed my book before it was published," Arora laughed, her affection for the child clear.

What makes Nagrota Under Siege exceptional, aside from its powerful storytelling, is the depth of research behind it. Arora spared no effort—tracking bullet-riddled walls, conducting interviews with Para commandos, and visiting the incident site three times. "I wanted to know where these people served," she explained. "I made video calls asking if it was this house or that house. Linda was with me, showing me bullet marks on the gate still there."

Her investigative efforts extended beyond the battlefield. Arora interviewed officers from the National Investigation Agency and even travelled to Punjab's high-security prisons

to speak with the four local accomplices arrested in connection with the attack. "I don't have a godfather anywhere," she said candidly. "But still I got in touch... I wanted to bring out this story."

Her interactions with these accused were surreal. "They actually thought I had come from Human Rights," she chuckled, half in disbelief. Her openness and gentle demeanour, paradoxically, became a tool for truth.

Srinjoy Chowdhury, visibly moved, posed one of the evening's more contemplative questions: "Why were you so angry with the Jaish-e-Mohammed?" he asked. Her reply was firm, layered with emotion: "They claimed seven lives. It was almost a hostage-like situation. People are traumatised, this is illegal." Her voice, though steady, carried an under-current of deep, righteous fury.

The evening closed with a Q&A session ending up not with applause alone, but with reflection. "Very inspiring," someone in the audience remarked. "To see a young person like you put in so much passion." Arora demurred at the term "young", but her humility only added to the evening's grace.

The launch of Nagrota Under Siege was not just an ode to the fallen. It was a call to arms for memory, justice, and national conscience. Through candid dialogues and unwavering resolve, Bhaavna Arora has offered India more than a book—she has offered a mirror. And in that mirror, perhaps, lies the truest face of patriotism.

As a thoughtful gesture steeped in tradition and elegance, Esha Dutta, Honorary Convenor of North-East Affairs of Prabha Khaitan Foundation felicitated the guests with exquisite Lucknow Chikankari dupattas. Her heartfelt vote of thanks later in the evening beautifully encapsulated the spirit of the gathering.



Esha Dutta



Shefali Agarwal

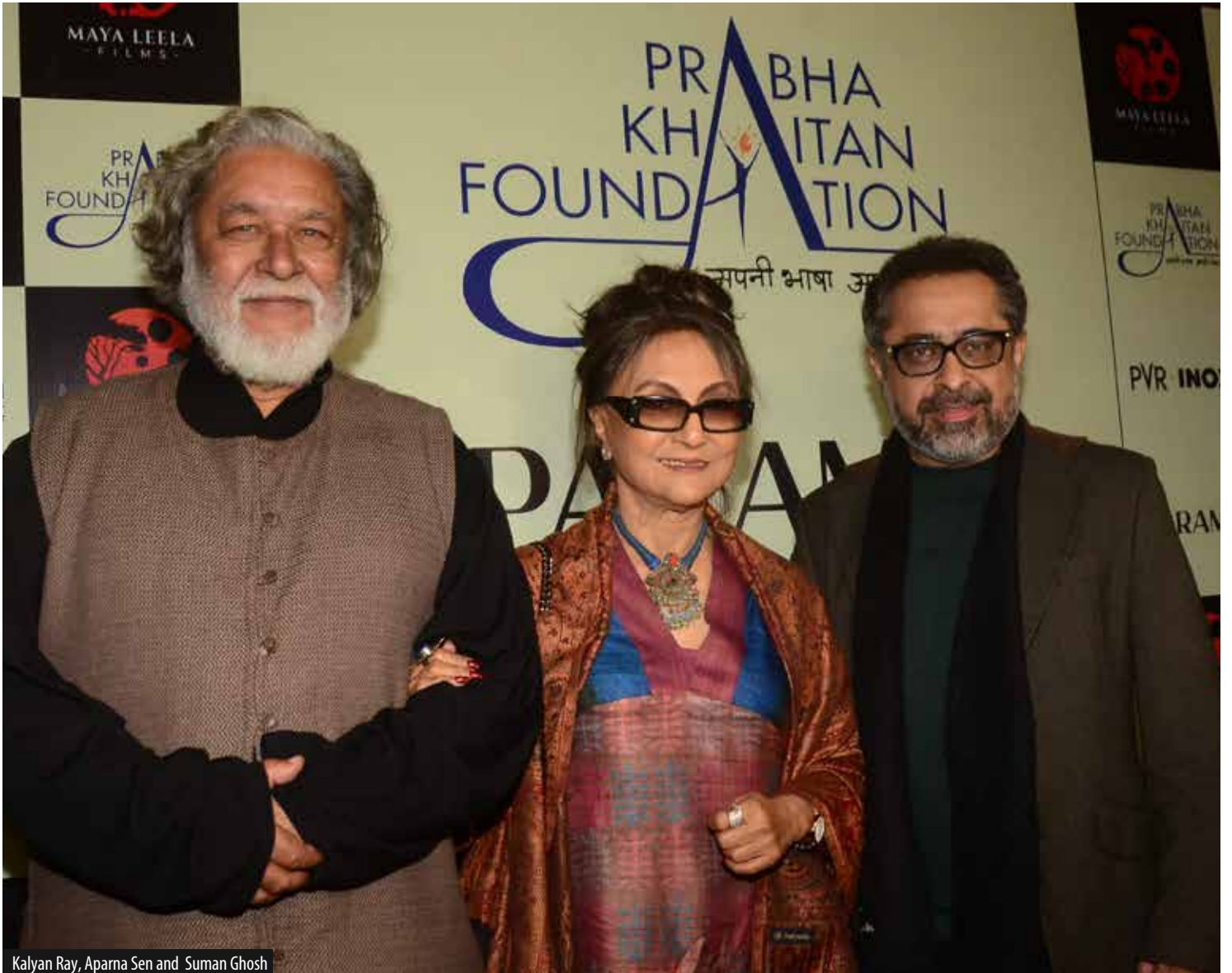
This session of Kitaab was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Kolkata

Celebrating Cinema & the Legacy of Aparna Sen

Under the aegis of Chalchitra Rangmanch, its cinematic initiative dedicated to celebrating meaningful cinema and cultural dialogue, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation recently organised a special screening of the acclaimed documentary *Parama: A Journey with Aparna Sen* directed by Suman Ghosh. The event witnessed an overwhelming response and was attended by several eminent personalities from the Bengali film fraternity, making it a memorable evening celebrating the life and cinematic journey of legendary filmmaker and actor Aparna Sen.

The documentary offers an intimate and insightful look into Aparna Sen's remarkable contribution to Indian cinema, tracing her journey as an actor, filmmaker, and cultural icon. Through conversations, archival moments, and revisits to locations associated with her iconic films, the documentary beautifully captures her artistic evolution and enduring influence on parallel cinema and storytelling.

The screening created a vibrant atmosphere of appreciation and nostalgia, bringing together members of Kolkata's artistic and cinematic community for an evening of reflection and celebration. The initiative reaffirmed Chalchitra Rangmanch's commitment to creating meaningful platforms that honour cinematic excellence, encourage cultural conversations, and celebrate the rich legacy of Indian and Bengali cinema.



Kalyan Ray, Aparna Sen and Suman Ghosh



Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury and Indrani Mukerjee



Kaushik Ganguly and Churni Ganguly



Sohag Sen and Esha Dutta



Tanushree Sankar



Parambrata Chattopadhyay



Indranil Sengupta



Rituparna Sengupta



Kaushik Basu



Rajatava Dutta



Subodh Sarkar

Honouring Four Legends of Indian Theatre Through Dialogue & Reflection

Under the aegis of Chalchitra Rangmanch, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation organised a two-day National Seminar in New Delhi celebrating the lives and contributions of four iconic figures of Indian theatre — Ebrahim Alkazi, Habib Tanvir, Badal Sircar, and Tapas Sen — on the occasion of their centenary year. Held at the Sahitya Akademi Auditorium, the seminar brought together eminent theatre practitioners, scholars, directors, and cultural enthusiasts from across the country.

The event served as a meaningful platform to revisit and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of these stalwarts who transformed the landscape of Indian theatre through innovation, experimentation, and artistic excellence. Through a series of insightful sessions and discussions, speakers reflected upon the enduring influence of their work on contemporary theatre practices and cultural discourse.

The seminar featured distinguished speakers including Mahmood Farooqui, Brahma Prakash, MK Raina, Amitabh Srivastava, Gautam Bhattacharya, Amal Allana, and Anuradha Kapur, among others. Their reflections offered audiences deeper insights into the creative philosophies, artistic journeys, and lasting legacies of these legendary figures.

The initiative beautifully reaffirmed Chalchitra Rangmanch's commitment to preserving and promoting India's rich theatrical and cultural heritage. By creating spaces for intellectual exchange and artistic appreciation, the Foundation continues to celebrate the visionaries whose contributions have shaped generations of performers, writers, directors, and audiences across the country.





Snehanshu Mukherjee



Amal Allana, MK Raina and Anuradha Kapur



Amitabh Srivastava and Dipali Bhasin



Dipali Bhasin and MK Raina



Neelima Dalmia Adhar



Srinjoy Chowdhury



Rachna Seth

Celebrating Knowledge, Camaraderie & Intellectual Spirit

The tenth edition of the quiz organised jointly by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** and the Foreign Correspondents' Club concluded on a high note, bringing together journalists, diplomats, and professionals from diverse fields for an evening of knowledge, interaction, and spirited competition. Hosted by noted journalist and quizmaster Srinjoy Chowdhury, the event witnessed enthusiastic participation and an exciting display of wit and intellect.

Eight teams competed fiercely across multiple engaging rounds, making the contest both entertaining and intellectually stimulating. Team Uranus, comprising Kunal Malhotra, Rathindra Basu, and Praveen Dass, emerged as the winners, while Team Mars, represented by Shubham Jha, Arnub Joshi, and Ankur Agraj, secured the second position. Samar Roy won the Audience Prize, adding to the excitement of the evening.

The event was further elevated by the gracious presence of Didier Vanderhasselt and Aliki Koutsomitopoulou. The quiz celebrated the joy of learning, healthy competition, and meaningful community engagement, reaffirming the importance of intellectual exchange in today's interconnected world.



Team Mars



Team Uranus



An Evening of Knowledge, Wit & Meaningful Exchange

The ninth edition of the quiz jointly organised by the Prabha Khaitan Foundation and the Foreign Correspondents' Club witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of journalists, diplomats, and professionals from diverse fields for an engaging evening of knowledge and intellectual camaraderie. Hosted by noted journalist and quizmaster Srinjoy Chowdhury, the event celebrated curiosity, teamwork, and the spirit of healthy competition.

Eight teams participated in the lively contest, showcasing remarkable wit, awareness, and quick thinking across multiple rounds. Team Mars, comprising Baiswata Jewa, Kavin Aadithyan, and Kaushik Chatterjee, emerged victorious and secured the first prize. Team Venus, represented by Prashant Sinha, Nishad Keelath, and Raja Sri Charan, claimed the second position, while Shome Basu won the Audience Prize.

The event was further honoured by the gracious presence of Marje Luup and Sujeet Kumar, adding prestige and significance to the occasion.

The quiz successfully fostered meaningful interaction and knowledge-sharing among participants, reinforcing the importance of intellectual engagement and community connections in today's increasingly interconnected world.



National Girl Child Day: Empower Her, Empower the Nation



On National Girl Child Day, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation reaffirms its dedication to the empowerment, education, and protection of the girl child — the cornerstone of an equitable and progressive society. This day serves as a reminder of both the achievements made and the challenges that continue to hinder the growth and freedom of young girls in India.

Despite remarkable progress, many girls still face

barriers in education, health, and opportunity due to deep-rooted social norms and gender inequality. The Foundation believes that investing in girls is not merely a social obligation but a transformative strategy for national development. When girls are educated, supported, and given equal opportunities, entire communities flourish.

Through its various initiatives in education, health, and skill development, the Prabha Khaitan

Foundation continues to champion the rights of the girl child, striving to create a world where every girl can dream fearlessly and achieve freely

National Girl Child Day is

“

**When you educate a girl, you
educate a nation.**

— African Proverb

”

not just a celebration—it is a call to action to break stereotypes, nurture aspirations, and ensure that every girl in India grows up in an environment of dignity, equality, and opportunity.



ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

International Mother Language Day: Celebrating the Voices That Shape Us



Language is more than a means of communication — it is the vessel of culture, identity, and belonging. On International Mother Language Day, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation celebrates the linguistic diversity that defines humanity and strengthens the bonds within communities.

India, with its mosaic of languages and dialects, stands as a testament to this richness. Every mother tongue carries within it a legacy of stories, traditions,

and worldviews that deserve preservation and pride. Yet, globalization and modernization threaten the survival of many indigenous languages, eroding unique cultural heritages.

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation advocates for promoting multilingual education, encouraging cultural exchange, and preserving native languages as living treasures. When we nurture our mother tongues, we safeguard not just words, but entire histories, emotions, and ways of thinking.

On this day, let us celebrate linguistic diversity and renew our commitment to protecting the languages that shape our identities — for in every language lies the heart of a people.

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.

— Nelson Mandela



International Women's Day: Celebrating Strength, Inspiring Change



On International Women's Day, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation salutes the strength, resilience, and achievements of women across the world — women who break barriers, lead change, and inspire generations. This day is both a celebration of progress and a reminder of the collective work still needed to achieve gender equality in every sphere of life.

From boardrooms to classrooms, from fields to laboratories, women continue to redefine

possibilities. Yet, systemic challenges, unequal opportunities, and social biases persist, reminding us that empowerment must go beyond words—it must translate into tangible action, respect, and representation.

For decades, the Prabha Khaitan Foundation has been at the forefront of women's empowerment, creating opportunities through education, skill development, entrepreneurship, and cultural platforms that amplify women's voices.

On this International Women's Day, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to equality and inclusivity. Let us celebrate the power of women — as nurturers, leaders, creators, and changemakers — and continue building a world where every woman's potential can shine without restraint.

There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish.

— Michelle Obama





A Symphony of New Beginnings

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation proudly presents an inspiring composition by Grammy Award Winner, Ricky Kej, where a grand orchestra intertwines with Indian percussion and melodies to create a seamless East-meets-West fusion. Rich in energy and emotion, the piece blends global musical traditions into a soundscape that feels both timeless and uplifting.

Through soaring orchestration and vibrant rhythmic textures, Ricky Kej crafts a composition that symbolizes fresh beginnings, renewed hope, and harmony across cultures. It is a celebration of unity through music — an inspiring reminder that diverse traditions can come together to create something truly universal and enduring.





Melodies in Conversation

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation presents a captivating composition by Grammy Award Winner, Ricky Kej, where the soulful bansuri meets the powerful resonance of electric guitars. Bringing together two distinct musical worlds, the piece unfolds like a graceful conversation marked by rhythm, melody, and mutual respect.

Gentle yet commanding, reflective yet dynamic, this fusion composition beautifully balances tradition and modernity. Through this harmonious interplay of sounds, Ricky Kej creates a musical experience that celebrates diversity, dialogue, and the timeless ability of music to unite contrasting energies into one seamless expression.





A Celebration of Rhythm and Uninhibited Joy

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation presents an electrifying composition by Grammy Award Winner, Ricky Kej, inspired by the vibrant Tapanguchi style of music from South India. Bursting with energy and infectious rhythm, this short yet dynamic piece invites listeners to let go of their inhibitions and surrender to the spirit of celebration.

With beats that steadily intensify into a thrilling crescendo, the composition captures the exhilaration of movement, music, and uninhibited expression. Through this lively musical journey, Ricky Kej pays tribute to the rich rhythmic traditions of South India, creating an experience that is both exhilarating and deeply rooted in cultural vibrancy.



Prabha
ପ୍ରଭା

अपनी भाषा अपने लोग

Handscripted by Paresh Maity

