



Prabha प्रभा

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The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle

FUTURE of EDUCATION

IN THE AGE OF
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE

*Rethinking learning.
Empowering minds.
Enriching humanity.*

Pg-3-7

INSIDE

UNEARTHING
THE FORGOTTEN

8



INSIGHTS FROM A
VETERAN OBSERVER

17



COURAGE, LEGACY,
AND TRUTH

25



BATTLEFIELDS
AND BOOKSHELVES

27





Prabha
प्रभा

MANISHA JAIN

Honorary Chief Operating Officer
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EMBRACING CHANGE, PRESERVING CONNECTIONS

Every edition of this magazine is a reflection of the many conversations, journeys, and shared experiences that continue to shape the ever-evolving spirit of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. This issue, in particular, stands at the intersection of tradition and transformation — a space where literature, culture, diplomacy, cinema, music, and technology come together in meaningful dialogue.

Our cover story, “Future of Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence,” captures one of the most urgent and defining discussions of our times. Organised under the aegis of **Muskaan**, the seminar brought together thought leaders, educators, entrepreneurs, and policy voices to deliberate on the rapidly changing educational landscape. The conversations moved beyond fear and fascination around Artificial Intelligence to focus on responsibility, adaptability, and the human values that must remain central in the learning process. As technology transforms classrooms and careers alike, the Foundation believes that curiosity, creativity, empathy, and critical thinking will continue to define meaningful education.

Alongside this contemporary discourse, the issue also celebrates the timeless power of literature and the arts. From engaging Kitaab sessions to enriching editions of **The Write Circle** across cities, the Foundation continued to create spaces for thoughtful dialogue and storytelling.

This edition also revisits cinema and performance through **Chalchitra Rangmanch**’s special screening of *Parikrama* by and the celebration of Rabindranath Tagore’s *RaktaKarabi* on its centenary year.

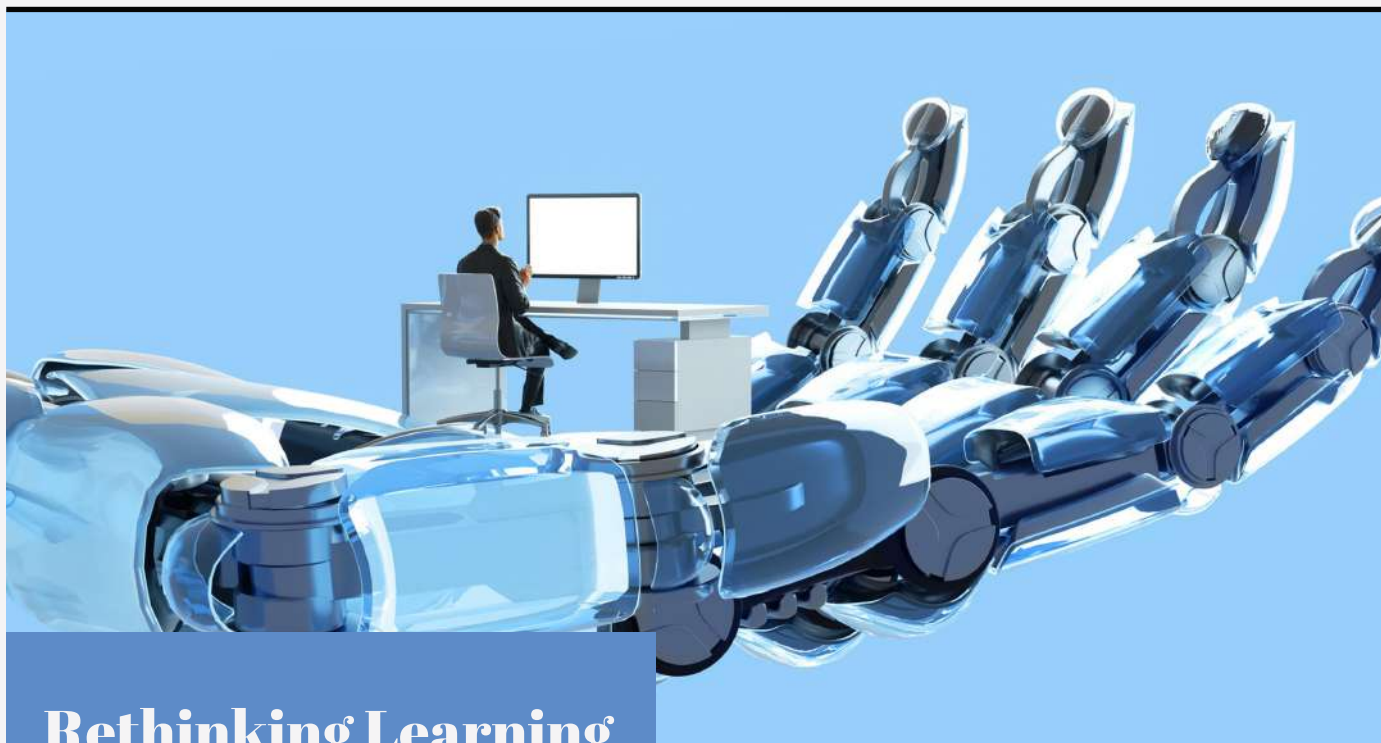
At its heart, the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** remains committed to nurturing dialogue across generations, disciplines, and geographies. Whether through literature, music, education, diplomacy, or social initiatives, our endeavour continues to be rooted in the belief that meaningful conversations have the power to transform communities and deepen human connections.

As you turn these pages, we invite you to pause, reflect, and engage with the many voices that make this issue vibrant and relevant. In a rapidly changing world, perhaps these shared stories and collective experiences remind us of what truly matters—humanity, imagination, and the courage to evolve

Manisha Jain

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of the Foundation or its members.

FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Rethinking Learning for a Rapidly Changing World

The question confronting educators today is no longer whether Artificial Intelligence will transform education, but how humanity will adapt to that transformation with wisdom, responsibility, and foresight. As classrooms across the world undergo rapid technological evolution, educational institutions, policymakers, and thought leaders are being compelled to rethink not only what students learn, but also how they learn, think, question, and engage with the world around them.

Against this backdrop, **Muskaan**, an initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, in collaboration with

Education for All Trust, WFUNA Foundation, and United Nations India, organised a landmark summit titled *Future of Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* at the ITC Royal Bengal. Bringing together educators, students, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and global representatives, the seminar emerged as a meaningful platform for dialogue around the opportunities, challenges, and ethical responsibilities associated with AI-driven education.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Sumitra Ray, who highlighted the importance of preparing young minds for a future where technology and human creativity must coexist harmoniously. She emphasized that education today must go beyond textbooks and examinations to cultivate adaptability, emotional intelligence, ethics, and critical thinking.



(L-R) Navjot Mallika Kaur, Darrin Farrant, Samyak Chakrabarty, Arjun Vaidya and Aniket Deb

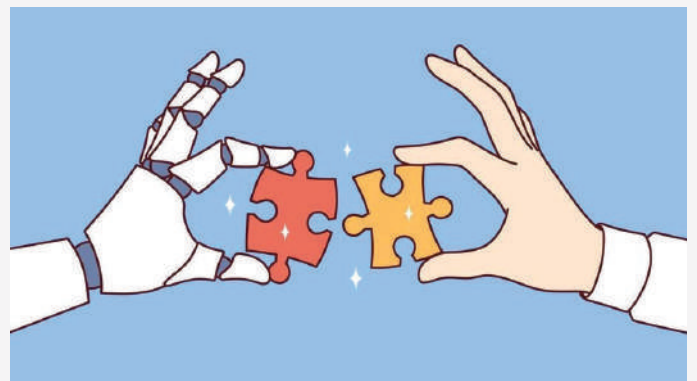
Setting the global context for the discussion, Darrin Farrant spoke about two major United Nations initiatives aimed at shaping international cooperation around Artificial Intelligence — the establishment of the UN Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and a broader global dialogue on AI governance. Stressing the importance of inclusive and ethical innovation, he remarked that India, home to one-sixth of humanity, would play a crucial role in shaping the future of AI governance and educational transformation. His address underscored the urgent need to approach AI not with fear, but with foresight, inclusivity, and responsibility.

One of the most engaging discussions of the summit revolved around the changing realities of classrooms across the globe. Navjot Mallika Kaur highlighted how nearly 2,000 schools in China have already integrated AI into their educational systems, making students future-ready from an early stage. She encouraged educators to stop viewing technology as a threat and instead embrace it as a tool capable of enhancing human capabilities. According to her, AI should be seen as an assistant rather than a replacement, empowering teachers and learners alike to unlock greater creativity and efficiency.

This perspective was echoed by Samyak Chakrabarty, who spoke passionately about Kolkata's intellectual and creative legacy. He noted that when combined with the computational power of AI, the city's culture of curiosity and fearless thinking could lead to extraordinary innovation and problem-solving capabilities.

While the transformative potential of AI remained a central theme, the speakers repeatedly returned to the importance of preserving the human element within education. Aniket Deb offered a compelling analogy, comparing AI to navigation tools like Google Maps — powerful and efficient, yet still dependent on human direction and judgment. He emphasised that while technology may reshape industries and professions, humanity has consistently adapted to change throughout history. New opportunities, he suggested, will continue to emerge alongside technological disruption.

Addressing students directly, Deb encouraged them to develop discernment and independent thinking. In a future flooded with information and AI-generated outputs, he argued, the ability to make thoughtful choices — about what to learn, how to think, and which tools to use — would become one of the most valuable human skills.





Students



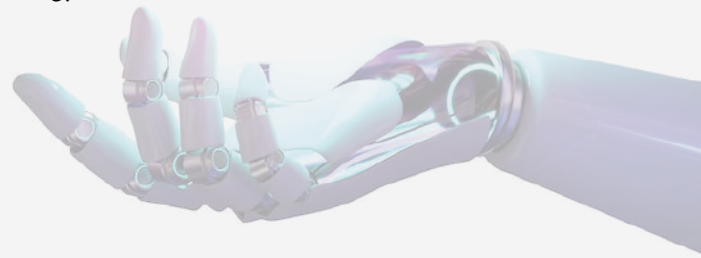
Teachers

Adding another layer to the discussion, Arjun Vaidya challenged conventional models of rote learning and memorisation. Reflecting on how access to information has radically changed in the digital era, he argued that education must shift its focus from remembering facts to understanding context, asking questions, and interpreting meaning. In an age where information is instantly accessible, he noted, curiosity, analytical thinking, and emotional intelligence matter more than ever before.

The summit concluded with a shared consensus that the future of education lies not in resisting Artificial Intelligence, but in learning how to integrate it ethically and meaningfully into the learning process. The role of educators, the panel agreed, must evolve from mere providers of information to mentors who guide students in critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and responsible technology use.

Students and teachers from institutions including Don Bosco School Park Circus, The BSS School, Loreto College, and St. Xavier's College Kolkata participated enthusiastically in the seminar, making the event an inspiring confluence of ideas, innovation, and intergenerational learning.

Through initiatives like **Muskaan**, the Foundation continues to foster meaningful conversations around education, creativity, culture, and the future of young minds in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven world.







Prem Prakash

Unearthing the Forgotten: Launch of 'History That India Ignored' in New Delhi

In a powerful tribute to India's forgotten past, *History That India Ignored*, authored by veteran journalist Prem Prakash, was launched in New Delhi under the **Kitaab** initiative by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. The evening was a dignified literary gathering, steeped in nostalgia, patriotism, and the urgency of reclaiming neglected narratives of Indian history.

The event was graced by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Honourable Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (with independent charge of the Departments of Science and Technology, and Earth Sciences), who unveiled the book as the Chief Guest. The author was joined by Gaurav Jain of Shree Cement Ltd., author and columnist Sanjeev Chopra, author and journalist Rasheed Kidwai, Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Honorary Convenor of Delhi NCR Affairs of the Foundation, and the dynamic **Ehsaas Women** of Delhi - Anantmala Potdar, Charu Chauhan, Dipali Bhasin, and Karuna Goenka.

The evening opened with a heartfelt welcome by Charu Chauhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi. In a thought-provoking dialogue, Prem Prakash was joined on stage by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Sanjeev Chopra, and Rasheed Kidwai. The conversation, rich with historical insights and firsthand anecdotes, examined the narratives that have long been left out of mainstream history. Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted how this 253-page book distinguishes itself from hundreds of works on Partition and Independence he has read, saying, "Most authors look at events through their own perspective, but here, the author brings evidence, chronology, and documents to the forefront."

Quoting from the book, Dr. Singh read: "Till 1930, the demand of the Congress party was only for home rule under the status of a dominion of the British Empire."



Dr. Jitendra Singh



Rasheed Kidwai

He pointed out how this assertion challenges conventional narratives and may trigger quite a few heads. He drew a striking contrast between the Congress Party's position and Bhagat Singh's unwavering fight for complete independence, noting the lack of support Singh received from mainstream political entities.

Adding to the evening's depth, senior journalist and author Rasheed Kidwai offered a more personal lens into the author's character. "Prem ji is a wonderful person in more than one way," he began warmly. He praised the candidness of the narrative, noting, "Prem ji's book is very honest about his observations about politicians." What stood out most to Kidwai was the lack of bitterness in recounting even the most tragic or momentous events. "There is no trace of ill will or bitterness. That is something, friends, as a writer and a great writer, you must admire."



Sanjeev Chopra



Gaurav Jain



Anantmala Potdar, Karuna Goenka, Dipali Bhasin, Neelima Dalmia Adhar and Charu Chauhan

Sanjeev Chopra began by acknowledging how personal perspectives evolve over time, shaped by the materials available and the silences embedded in education. “There was a time when Dr. Ambedkar was not even included in the syllabi of Jawaharlal Nehru University. I read about him only after joining the civil services.” His remarks underscored the importance of books like Prem Prakash’s in restoring erased narratives and reshaping our understanding.

Reflecting on partition, Chopra emphasized its complexity. “The tragedy of Partition still baffles me,” he admitted, pointing out that in regions like Punjab and Bengal, where the Muslim League was weak, strong inter-community alliances existed. “How it unfolded the way it did, remains deeply unsettling,” he added, placing part of the responsibility on political missteps and the machinations of the British.

Dr. Singh didn’t shy away from critiquing the Partition either, calling it “a consequence of personal ambition of Jinnah and Nehru which facilitated Lord Mountbatten’s designs to leave behind a weakened India.” He cited lesser-known facts, like the early British plan of dividing India into Hindustan, Pakistan, and Princestan, and highlighted the underappreciated role of Sardar Patel in thwarting this design.

In his remarks, he referred to a statue of Dr. Ambedkar at the London School of Economics. “Ironically, it is in London where Ambedkar is honoured as a global economist, while here, he was historically sidelined. This is why books like these are essential to course-correct not only our understanding but our national memory,” he concluded.

Dr. Singh lamented how generations of Indians, especially the youth, remain unaware of their historical

legacy. “It pains me,” he said, “that our working middle class knows so little about our freedom movement.” Citing Prem Prakash’s references to lost artifacts like Shivaji’s sword and the hidden treasures at the Victoria & Albert Museum, he urged a national awakening.

Responding to a question posed by author Sanjeev Chopra, whether history can ever truly be “balanced,” Dr. Singh emphasized the role of political will in reshaping historical narratives. “We must liberate history from the preferences of the political dispensation of the day,” he said, adding that recent years have seen the beginning of that effort. He cited how figures like Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar are finally finding space in national discourse, thanks to writers like Prem Prakash.

Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Honorary Convenor of Delhi NCR Affairs of the Foundation, felicitated all dignitaries with hand-crafted Chikankari stoles. The event concluded with a warm and gracious vote of thanks by Charu Chauhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi.

*This session of **Kitaab** was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Delhi*



Echoes of Wisdom: Pavan K. Varma on India's Timeless Thought and Urgent Reforms

In an evening steeped in intellectual splendour and cultural gravitas, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Kitaab** initiative, in collaboration with Taj City Centre Patna and Navras School of Performing Arts, unveiled *Echoes of Eternity: A Journey Through Indian Thought from the Rigveda to the Present* by acclaimed author and diplomat Pavan K. Varma in conversation Radhika Pradhan.

The distinguished gathering was graced by Shri Arif Mohammad Khan, Hon'ble Governor of Bihar, as Chief Guest, and Anant Vijay as Guest of Honour. Also present were Dr. Ajit Pradhan, Siddharth Jain, General Manager, Taj City Centre Patna. The evening commenced with a warm and gracious welcome from Anvita Pradhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Patna.

The formal launch was marked by a ceremonial unveiling of the book. Shri Arif Mohammad Khan's keynote address set the tone for the evening. "Our civilisation's greatest strength lies in its continuity; an unbroken stream of ideas that have adapted yet never lost their essence."

Author Pavan K. Varma then took to the stage, offering an intimate glimpse into the labour of love that *Echoes of Eternity* represents. "This book is an attempt to trace the philosophical DNA of India; to understand what has shaped our collective consciousness over millennia." Guest of Honour Anant Vijay followed with a concise yet engaging reflection, lauding the author's ability to render complex ideas into prose that is both accessible and profound.

Shifting to the subject of his work, Varma reflected on a literary journey spanning decades: "It has been my lifelong quest, since my first book, a biography of Mirabai — to a range of books, now my 26th, in the midst of a busy diplomatic and political career, to try and better understand the soul of India's culture beyond conventional categories."



Pavan K. Varma



Radhika Pradhan

From humour, he moved to the heart of his purpose: the need to recognise the originality, antiquity, continuity, and refinement of Indian thought. He lamented the drift caused by colonial legacy: "Colonialism succeeds not because of its physical subjugation; it succeeds because it colonises your mind and takes you away from your own knowledge about how rich a legacy you are heir to." That says something about how far we have drifted."

Describing *Echoes of Eternity* as a "primer," Varma explained that the book offers curated excerpts from the most important texts over 3,000–4,000 years, from the Rigveda to Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam — including what he called "foundational periods" and the "middle ages." His philosophical selections for the modern era were telling: "My choice has been J. Krishnamurti and Osho, whom I commend for their original thinking — although Osho is a controversial figure otherwise."



Anvita Pradhan



Anant Vijay

Arif Mohammad Khan, the Hon'ble Governor of Bihar spoke on the book and shared his insights. "When I speak of religion, I do not mean rituals, customs, or rigid dogmas, but the recognition of our own limitations and the understanding that sovereignty does not belong to us. We are merely instruments. This is the universal vision — a worldview that transcends narrow definitions," he shared.

Radhika Pradhan set the stage with an acknowledgment of Varma's formidable oeuvre, remarking on his ability to explore "India's cultural, political and intellectual landscape with depth and clarity." Her first question was as provocative as it was pertinent: How does one navigate the challenges of over-glorifying the pre-colonial past while tracing Indian thought in a post-colonial context?

Varma's reply was characteristically incisive. "There is a natural tendency of post-colonized cultures to go to two extremes. One is cultural amnesia... the other is cultural over-glorification without the knowledge to back it." He described colonial amnesia as a deliberate strategy of the colonizer — designed to detach the ruled from the strengths of their own heritage — while over-glorification risked descending into what he wryly termed "the Dinanath Batra school of history," replete with fanciful claims about ancient aeroplanes and IVF. His counsel was for a *modus vivendi*, a middle path that resurrects the past with scholarship rather than chauvinism.

When Pradhan moved the discussion to religion — specifically Hinduism's politicization, Varma did not mince words. "Religion as an overt feature is overwhelmingly more successfully its spiritual underpinning," he observed. Spirituality, he reminded the audience, "by definition unites," while politicized religion "inevitably divides." Quoting the Vedic wisdom, "The truth is one, wise people call it by different names," he invoked the ancient ideal of universalism and inclusivity, underscoring how far contemporary discourse has strayed from such magnanimity.

The conversation deepened when Pradhan turned to historical reformers like B.R. Ambedkar and the contentious legacies of caste oppression, sati, and widow remarriage. How, she asked, could one celebrate India's cerebral history while acknowledging the oppressive systems embedded within it?

Varma's response was part history lesson, part moral challenge. Citing his own book *The Great Hindu Civilization*, he drew an unexpected parallel between Mahatma Gandhi and Vinayak Savarkar, two figures rarely bracketed together, whom he described as "the most relentless crusaders for reform within Hinduism." He reminded the audience that caste and gender-based discrimination were not immutable features of Indian society; they "crept in" over time, often around the first century CE, through the machinations of vested interests.

As one observer whispered during the Q&A, "This is the sort of conversation you wish would never end." In its entirety, the launch of *Echoes of Eternity* in Patna was more than just a book event; it was a reaffirmation of the intellectual inheritance that continues to define and enrich the Indian mind. Anvita Pradhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Patna returned to the stage to deliver a heartfelt vote of thanks. Siddharth Jain, General Manager of Taj City Centre Patna, felicitated author Pavan K. Varma, Chief Guest Shri Arif Mohammad Khan, and Guest of Honour Anant Vijay.

This session of Kitaab was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Patna, and was in association with Navras School of Performing Arts and Westland Books; Hospitality Partner, Taj City Centre, Patna; and Print Hindi Media Partner, Dainik Jagran



Arif Khan felicitated by Siddharth Jain

Reframing Wellness: A Perspicacious Evening at the Launch of *The Weight Loss Revolution*

An invigorating evening unfolded in Delhi with the launch of *The Weight Loss Revolution* by Ambrish Mithal and co-author Shivam Vij, under the **Kitaab** initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. The proceedings commenced with a poised welcome by Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Honorary Convenor of Delhi NCR Affairs of the Foundation and **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi, who introduced an eminent gathering including Chief Guest Jitendra Singh, Sharmila Tagore, Shobhana Bhartia, and conversationalist Vir Sanghvi.

In her address, Shobhana Bhartia described it as “a book that captures the most significant health shifts of our time,” further noting it as “an easy explainer not like a medical journal but something that we can read and understand.” Her articulation, both lucid and contemplative, underscored Mithal’s “rare blend of scientific expertise, and deep compassion.”

In a measured yet engaging address, Jitendra Singh reflected noting that the subject has “seen a sudden awakening about issues related to obesity and metabolic disorders.” He underscored the urgency of combating misinformation, advocating for “scientifically authenticated information amidst proliferating, and often misleading, diet narratives.”

In a candid and engaging address, Sharmila Tagore observed that “there is so much information and yet so much misinformation,” and praised the book for its ability to “cut through the noise and clarify facts.” She critiqued society’s preoccupation with appearance, noting how weight loss has “become a greeting,” while asserting that “obesity is a serious health issue requiring a medical, not merely aesthetic, lens.”

The evening’s most intellectually arresting segment unfolded in a riveting exchange between Ambrish Mithal, Shivam Vij, and Vir Sanghvi, a dialogue

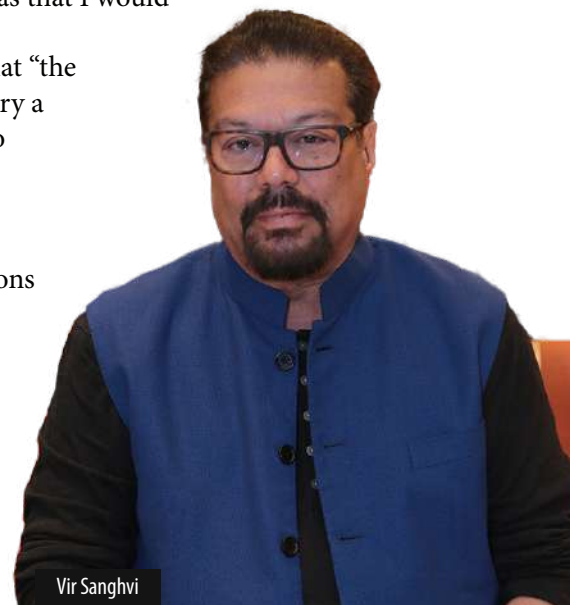


distinguished by its rare synthesis of scientific rigour and conversational lucidity.

Opening with characteristic candour, Sanghvi framed the discourse with incisive wit, observing the polarised narratives surrounding weight-loss drugs: “the truth as usual lies somewhere in between the science is very strong but it’s not a panacea for everything.”

Dr. Mithal, in turn, articulated the scientific substratum with admirable clarity, explaining, “when we talk of obesity we are talking of excess fat; this method involves the use of a hormone GLP-1,” further noting how it “goes to the brain and controls our satiety.” His exposition, at once precise and patient, demystified the mechanism of these drugs while resisting oversimplification. Particularly striking was his assertion that such treatments could enable weight loss of “15%, 20% or even more,” signalling a paradigm shift in metabolic medicine.

Vij’s reflections introduced a compelling personal dimension, confessing, “my greed in doing the book was that I would learn a lot,” while acknowledging that “the experience can vary a lot from person to person.” The conversation also engaged critically with misconceptions during the Q&A sessions. When Sanghvi quipped, “you can live on



ice cream and still lose weight,” Rich in insight and intellectual vitality, the dialogue transcended mere exposition, emerging instead as a deeply reflective inquiry into the intersections of science, society, and human behaviour.

Chief Guest Jitendra Singh was felicitated by Atul Bhalla, Vice President – Operations, ITC Hotels (North & West Region). Ambrish Mithal was honoured by Ina Puri, **Ehsaas Woman** of Gurugram, while Sharmila Tagore and Shobhana Bhartia were felicitated by Bharti Madhok and Charu Chauhan respectively. Vir Sanghvi and Shivam Vij were felicitated by Dipali Bhasin, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi and Karuna Goenka, **Ehsaas Woman** of Gurugram; marking a graceful culmination of honours. The programme came to a fitting close with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Ina Puri, **Ehsaas Woman** of Gurugram.

*This session of **Kitaab** was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Delhi*



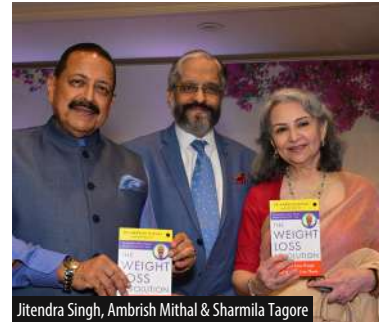
Jitendra Singh and Atul Bhalla



Charu Chauhan and Shobhana Bhartia



Bharti Madhok with Deepak Madhok



Jitendra Singh, Ambrish Mithal & Sharmila Tagore



Neelima Dalmia Adhar



Ina Puri



Dipali Bhasin



Karuna Goenka



Indrani Bagchi

Diplomacy, Dialogue, and the Dance of Nations



Ambassador Josel F. Ignacio

In an engaging conversation hosted by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** under the **Tête-à-tea** initiative, Ambassador Josel F. Ignacio, the Philippines' envoy to India, offered a candid and deeply insightful reflection on the evolving dynamics between India and the Philippines. Speaking with seasoned journalist and foreign policy commentator Indrani Bagchi, the Ambassador outlined shared values, strategic convergences, and personal history. Dr. Charu Chauhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi, delivered the welcome address.

The dialogue began on a personal note, with Bagchi recalling her long-standing engagement with international relations. "I have done this for the last 100 years," she quipped, setting a tone of warmth and familiarity.

"I arrived here a year and a half ago," said Ignacio, who previously served as the Consul General in Shanghai. "I'm here in India on the unexpected appointment of my president, and I've always said since I landed, it's a good time to be in India."

He praised India's current trajectory as the fourth-largest economy and emphasized how this rise coincides with a meaningful elevation in the Philippines-India relationship, especially under India's Act East policy. "Our relationship is on an unprecedented upswing," he observed. "But there's still a lot of getting to know you that needs to be done."

Turning to business ties, Ambassador Ignacio acknowledged progress: bilateral trade has now reached \$3.5 billion, a milestone, but still modest compared to ASEAN peers. He stressed the need to expand the trade

basket and enhance complementarities. Efforts are underway to pursue a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with India, complementary to the existing India-ASEAN FTA.

Bagchi steered the conversation forward: "If China invades parts of Southeast Asia, particularly Taiwan, what are you going to do?" Ignacio, measured but firm, said: "We are treaty allies with the US. There's an obligation to come to each other's aid. That's all I can say."

The session ended with a heartfelt reflection through Q&A session. "I feel fortunate to be in India at this moment in history. Both our countries have finally met eyes, and I hope, by the end of my term, I can say this entire posting has been the core memory of my diplomatic career."

The evening concluded with a thoughtful vote of thanks by Rachna Seth, celebrating the spirit of cross-cultural dialogue.

Guests were presented with handcrafted tribal bamboo masks felicitated by Neelima Dalmia Adhar, the Foundation's Honorary Convenor of Delhi NCR Affairs, and Anantmala Potdar, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi.

This session of Tête-à-Tea was presented by Smartworks, and was in association with Hospitality Partner, The Connaught, New Delhi - IHCL SeleQtions



Charu Chauhan



Rachna Seth



Neelima Dalmia Adhar, Indrani Bagchi, Ambassador Josel F. Ignacio and Anantmala Potdar



Ambassador Omar Castañeda Solares

IN CONVERSATION ACROSS CONTINENTS: AN AFTERNOON OF DIPLOMACY AND DIALOGUE

same human yearning to understand our place in the universe.”



Apra Kuchhal

He spoke of the Mayans’ advanced understanding of astronomy: “We could predict eclipses centuries in advance; and when I visit Indian temples, I find the same reverence for celestial rhythms.” Kuchhal recalled a 2005 meeting between Rigoberta Menchú and Hindu leaders in Guatemala, saying, “That meeting reaffirmed the shared values of protecting nature, respecting the balance of life, and healing through traditional knowledge.” The Ambassador added: “Colonial history separated us from our own ancient wisdom; but dialogues like these help us reconnect and recognise that our heritage is not just the past; it’s a guide for the future.”

Ambassador Solares shared recent developments: “In 2023, we signed an MoU for conserving tigers in India and jaguars in Guatemala – two magnificent big cats that symbolise the spirit of our lands.” He also highlighted Guatemala’s role in the 10th India–Latin America & Caribbean Conclave, saying, “Trade and diplomacy are important, but cultural connection is what keeps partnerships alive.”

Concluding with a Q&A session with the audience, the Ambassador remarked, “India is not just a partner; it is a friend. We may be continents apart, but in values, we are neighbours.” The event was a warm celebration of shared heritage, mutual respect, and cultural harmony. Dipali Bhasin, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi felicitated Ambassador Solares. The afternoon drew to a close with a gracious and heartfelt vote of thanks by Rachna Seth.

In an afternoon marked by warmth, wisdom, and cultural camaraderie, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted its prestigious **Tête-à-Tea** session in Delhi with Omar Castañeda Solares, Ambassador of Guatemala to India. The conversation, moderated by Apra Kuchhal, Honorary Convenor of Rajasthan & Central India Affairs of the Foundation, traversed shared histories, vibrant traditions, women’s empowerment, and the deepening ties between the two nations. The event began with a gracious welcome by **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi, Dipali Bhasin.

Tracing the diplomatic journey, Ambassador Solares highlighted that bilateral relations between India and Guatemala began on May 16, 1972, maturing significantly with the establishment of resident embassies.

The discussion turned toward women’s empowerment. Ambassador Solares remarked, “Since the time of the Mayans, women have been builders of our nation, not just in homes but in governance, in agriculture, in culture.”

Marking 53 years of diplomatic ties, Ambassador Solares said, “From our first exchanges in 1972 to the opening of embassies in both countries, the path has been one of friendship, cooperation, and culture.” He reflected on shared commitments in global forums and peacekeeping missions, and highlighted an MoU to conserve tigers in India and jaguars in Guatemala.

Drawing fascinating comparisons, Ambassador Solares noted: “Despite being 16,000 kilometres away from India, there are many points of interconnection between the Mayan civilization and Hinduism.” He compared the Meenakshi Temple in Tamil Nadu to the Great Jaguar Pyramid in Tikal: “Both structures are not just monuments; they are cosmic maps; they speak of the



Dipali Bhasin



Rachna Seth

*This session of **Tête-à-Tea** was presented by Smartworks, and was in association with Hospitality Partner, The Connaught, New Delhi
- IHCL SeleQtions*

BRIDGING MILLENNIA: GREEK FOOTPRINTS ON INDIAN SOIL

An atmosphere of timeless elegance and intellectual curiosity marked **Tête-à-Tea Delhi**, where the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted an engaging conversation with Aliko Koutsomitopoulou, Ambassador of Greece to India, in dialogue with Pooja Marwah, **Ehsaas Woman** of Dehradun.



Pooja Poddar Marwah



Ambassador Aliko Koutsomitopoulou

“The seeds of inquiry were planted long ago,” Koutsomitopoulou observed, “and we continue harvesting that wisdom together.” Marwah closed the conversation on a thoughtful note: “As ambassadors of culture, our task is not only to safeguard heritage but to keep these dialogues alive—through books, travel, music, and conversation.”

What set this session apart was not merely the historical sweep of the subject but the intimacy with which it was presented. One participant remarked afterwards, “It was like stepping into a time machine where Greek voices of the past were speaking directly to India’s present.”

From the outset, Ambassador Koutsomitopoulou spoke with gentle authority, weaving anecdotes of ancient Greek explorers, like Nicolaus of Damascus and Megasthenes, who found themselves enthralled by the subcontinent’s vast panoramas and spiritual traditions. “They marvelled at our rivers, our philosophies, and our cosmologies,” she reflected, inviting the audience to reimagine these encounters as the earliest bridges between two great civilizations.

Pooja Marwah steered the dialogue with both insight and warmth. She asked what contemporary threads still link the worlds of Plato’s Hellas and India. The ambassador smiled thoughtfully: “In our shared pursuit of knowledge, in the dialogues between our sages; the Greek philosophers and the Indian sages; there is a resonance that still hums today.”

The conversation deepened with references to Patrons of learning; Emperor Ashoka translating Greek philosophical ideals into compassionate governance, and later, the Hellenistic influence on Nalanda’s fields of study.



Neelima Dalmia Adhar



Charu Chauhan

The dialogue also touched upon modern parallels. Ambassador Koutsomitopoulou spoke of young scholars traveling between Athens and Delhi today, carrying forward the tradition of intellectual exchange. “Every student who crosses borders to learn carries the spirit of those first travellers,” she said.

To culminate the afternoon, the host offered a gracious vote of thanks, honouring both the Ambassador’s graceful erudition and Marwah’s thoughtful moderation. As a final gesture, an exquisite Dokra miniature was presented to Ambassador Koutsomitopoulou by Neelima Dalmia Adhar. The vote of thanks was delivered by Charu Chauhan, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi. It was not merely a dialogue — but a delicate intercontinental embrace across time and terrain.

This session of Tête-à-Tea was presented by Smartworks, and was in association with Hospitality Partner, The Connaught, New Delhi - IHCL SeleQtions



A JOURNEY THROUGH INDIAN POLITICS: INSIGHTS FROM A VETERAN OBSERVER

Prabha Khaitan Foundation hosted an engaging **Tête-à-Tea** session in Jaipur, where political analyst and author Rasheed Kidwai brought to life the hidden corridors of power with his untold stories, candid anecdotes, and quirky insights into the political landscape. The evening commenced with a warm welcome by Deependra Rana, General Manager of ITC Rajputana Jaipur.

Steering the conversation with wit and precision under the topic of discussion “Secrets from the Corridors of Power: Shadows, Stories and Statesmen”; Apra Kuchhal, Honorary Convenor for Rajasthan & Central India Affairs of the Foundation and **Ehsaas Woman** of Jaipur, asked incisive questions.

In a recent conversation, the eminent observer of Indian politics shared candid reflections on the storytelling, intrigue, and complexity that define the country’s political landscape. Highlighting some of the best storytellers among Indian politicians, he remarked, “Digvijay Singh has an uncanny ability to weave politics into a narrative that captivates everyone in the room. Arun Jaitley, on the other hand, was a master orator whose speeches often felt like finely crafted stories.”

The conversation explored his recent book, *Missing From The House: Muslim Women in the Lok Sabha*, which examines the representation of Muslim women in the Lok Sabha since independence. He observed, “Only 18 Muslim women have made it to the Lok Sabha, and most of them come from political families. The real challenge is breaking away from dynastic politics.”

The dialogue also touched on extraordinary personalities blending politics with mysticism and charisma. Recalling Chandra Swami, he said, “He had a charisma that

transcended politics; people followed him as much for his personality as for his ideology.”

He pointed out that India has six national political parties, yet most citizens can name only two. “We have hundreds of registered parties; many functioning as fronts for money laundering. None of them have formal audits or salary structures,” he remarked. “A political leader’s post is not even a paid job. Then where does all the money come from?”



Personal stories of politicians, such as Sushil Kumar Shinde’s rise from humble beginnings to Union Home Minister, revealed remarkable dedication. On Rajiv Gandhi, he noted, “Rajiv was naturally talented, but he was thrown into leadership without a rehearsal. His journey shows the weight of inherited responsibility.” The discussion also touched upon actors-turned-politicians, including Sunil Dutt and Dev Anand, whose commitment to public service complemented their artistic careers.

The session concluded with a touch of rapid-fire fun, keeping the audience both informed and entertained. The session wrapped up with a traditional memento presented to Kidwai by the Foundation’s associate, Pramod Sharma, leaving the audience with lasting impressions and an enriched understanding of political narratives and power dynamics.

*This session of **Tête-à-Tea** was in association with
Hospitality Partner, ITC Rajputana*



Sanjeev Paliwal

Preeti Agat

पीढ़ियाँ पढ़ना सिखा रही हैं : संजीव पालीवाल

हमारे यहाँ नॉवेल्स में कंटेपरी हिस्ट्री पर लेखन नहीं होता

“नई पीढ़ियाँ पढ़ना सिखा रही हैं” - यह कहना है संवेदनशील लेखक और पत्रकार संजीव पालीवाल का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा आयोजित अहमदाबाद के कलम सत्र को संबोधित कर रहे थे। पालीवाल जी के साथ हुए भावनात्मक संवाद में उन्होंने अनेक ऐसी बातें और घटनाएँ साझा कीं, जिन्होंने दर्शकों के हृदय को छू लिया।

संजीव जी ने बताया कि कैसे बचपन में राजन-इकबाल, राम-रहीम, ओमप्रकाश शर्मा, शिवानी आदि को पढ़ते हुए उनका साहित्यिक संस्कार बना। आज उनकी बेटी जो पढ़ती है, वही वे पढ़ते हैं। “अब मेरी बेटी मुझे किताबें सुझाती है, मैं पढ़ता हूँ। उसने मुझे ‘द हाउस मेड’ नाम की किताब भेजी है-अब वही मेरी अगली रीडिंग है।”

कलम अहमदाबाद के इस बौद्धिक सत्र की शुरुआत अहमदाबाद की अहसास वूमेन शनील पारेख के आत्मीय स्वागत-संबोधन से हुई। उन्होंने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के कार्यों का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि “फाउंडेशन द्वारा आयोजित प्रत्येक कार्यक्रम न केवल सफलता की कसौटी पर खरे उतरते हैं, बल्कि अपनी सार्थकता से भी नई ऊँचाइयाँ प्राप्त कर रहे हैं। साहित्यिक मंच पर उसका योगदान उसे विशिष्ट पहचान दिला चुका है। यह फाउंडेशन कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति और महिला सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्र में लंबे समय से सक्रिय है। भारत ही नहीं, दुनिया भर में यह भारतीय संस्कृति और साहित्य का ब्रांड एंबेसडर बन चुका है।”

फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियाँ भारत सहित 55 से अधिक शहरों में विस्तार पा चुकी हैं और यह यात्रा निरंतर प्रगति की ओर अग्रसर है। हम ‘कलम’ के साथ-साथ ‘किताब’, ‘लफ़्ज़’, ‘एक मुलाकात’, ‘द राइट सर्कल’, ‘सुर और साज’ तथा ‘आखर’ जैसे साहित्यिक, सांस्कृतिक और संवादपरक कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन करते आ रहे हैं।

शनील पारेख ने कलम अहमदाबाद सत्र के विशिष्ट अतिथि संजीव पालीवाल का परिचय देते हुए कहा कि, “पत्रकारिता जगत के एक चमकते सितारे के रूप में संजीव जी ने अपनी विशिष्ट पहचान बनाई है।” हिंदी पत्रकारिता में 35 वर्षों से अधिक का अनुभव रखने वाले पालीवाल जी वर्तमान में प्रबंध संपादक (इंटरनेशनल) तथा ‘साहित्य तक’ के प्रमुख पद पर कार्यरत हैं। एक कुशल पत्रकार होने के साथ-साथ वे प्रभावशाली वक्ता और

“हर दौर कुछ अच्छाइयाँ और कुछ बुराइयाँ लेकर आता है।
इस दौर में लोग खामोश ज्यादा हैं,
वे चुपचाप काम करना पसंद करते हैं।”

लोकप्रिय लेखक भी हैं। उन्होंने तीन क्राइम थ्रिलर उपन्यास - मुंबई नाइट्स, नैना और पिशाच - तथा एक प्रेमकथा ये इश्क नहीं आसान की रचना की है।

शनील पारेख ने संवादकर्ता प्रीति अज्ञात का परिचय देते हुए बताया कि वे एक प्रतिभाशाली लेखिका और कवयित्री हैं। उनके विशिष्ट संवाद और विचारोत्तेजक प्रश्नों ने इस सत्र को अत्यंत स्मरणीय बना दिया।

संजीव पालीवाल ने कहा, “हमारे यहाँ उपन्यासों में समकालीन इतिहास पर लेखन नहीं के बराबर होता है। हिंदी में विशेष रूप से इसका अभाव दिखाई देता है। हिंदी साहित्य में अब भी यह अपेक्षा की जाती है कि लेखक केवल दबे-कुचले और वंचित समाज की ही बात करें। परंतु मैं वही लिखता हूँ, जो मैं देखता हूँ और जो मुझे भीतर तक प्रभावित करता है।”

उन्होंने पत्रकारिता जीवन के अनुभव साझा करते हुए कहा, “फिल्मों में जो न्यूज़ रूम दिखाया जाता है, वह वास्तविकता से बिल्कुल अलग होता है। क्रिएटिव लिबर्टी के नाम पर आप कुछ भी नहीं दिखा सकते। मैं पिछले 30 वर्षों से न्यूज़ रूम को जी रहा हूँ। उसकी साँसों को जानता हूँ, उसकी धड़कनों को समझता हूँ। न्यूज़ रूम कहानियों का हब है-उन कहानियों को सामने लाना ही मेरा काम है।” संजीव जी ने अपनी चारों पुस्तकों पर खुलकर चर्चा की - पात्रों, संवादों, प्रस्तुति और शीर्षकों के संदर्भ में विस्तारपूर्वक विचार रखे। संजीव पालीवाल के काव्यपाठ ने श्रोताओं को भावविभोर कर दिया।

कार्यक्रम के अंत में नताशा पारेख ने सभी अतिथियों का धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया। इसके बाद अहमदाबाद की ‘अहसास वूमेन’ की प्रियांशी पटेल एवं शनील पारेख ने संजीव पालीवाल और प्रीति अज्ञात को कांथा दुपट्टा ओढ़ाकर सम्मानित किया। साथ ही, उपस्थित लोगों ने लेखक की हस्ताक्षरित पुस्तक प्राप्त कर इस अवसर को यादगार बना लिया।

इस आयोजन को सफल बनाने में अहसास वूमेन अहमदाबाद के साथ-साथ सक्रिय सहयोग रहा कर्मा फाउंडेशन तथा हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर - द हाउस ऑफ़ एम.जी का।



Shanel Parekh



Natasha Parekh



Vandana Mukesh and Surbhi Dhupar

जीवन का सौंदर्य वहीं है जहाँ हम रुक कर उसे देख सकें डॉ. वंदना मुकेश

साहित्य केवल शब्दों का खेल नहीं, वह समाज का दर्पण और मार्गदर्शक होता है ...

"मुझे जीवन में सब कुछ सुंदर दिखता है, और मैं चाहती हूँ कि जो सुंदरता मुझे दिखती है, वह सभी को दिखाई दे।" उक्त बातें संवेदनशील लेखिका डॉ. वंदना मुकेश ने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा इंदौर में आयोजित 'कलम' सत्र को संबोधित करते हुए कहीं। इस अवसर पर उनके साथ संवाद किया अहसास वूमेन इंदौर की प्रतिनिधि सुरभि दुपार ने। यह सत्र भावनात्मक अनुभवों, प्रेरक विचारों और साहित्यिक अभिव्यक्तियों से परिपूर्ण रहा। कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत अहसास वूमेन, उन्नति सिंह के स्वागत भाषण से हुई। उन्होंने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के उद्देश्यों और योगदान के बारे में बताया कि 'कलम' के अतिरिक्त, 'किताब', 'लफ़्ज़', 'एक मुलाकात', 'द राइट सर्कल', 'सुर और साज', तथा 'आखर' जैसे मंचों के माध्यम से यह फाउंडेशन भारतीय भाषाओं, साहित्य, संगीत, नृत्य और किस्सागोई को प्रोत्साहित करता है।

अतिथि लेखिका डॉ. वंदना मुकेश का परिचय देते हुए उन्नति सिंह ने बताया कि उनका जन्म 12 अक्टूबर 1968 को भोपाल में हुआ और उन्होंने हिंदी साहित्य में पीएच.डी. की उपाधि प्राप्त की। 2002 से वे इंग्लैंड में रहकर हिंदी भाषा के प्रचार-प्रसार में सक्रिय हैं। डॉ. वंदना की रचनाएँ अनेक पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं, और उनका ललित निबंध संग्रह 'आधी रात का चिंतन' सहित कई कहानी, काव्य और शोध कृतियाँ प्रकाशित हैं। वे यूके में बच्चों को निःशुल्क हिंदी पढ़ाती हैं और लंबे समय से साहित्यिक व सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों से जुड़ी हैं।

सबसे पहले डॉ. वंदना मुकेश ने डॉ. प्रभा खेतान के कार्यों के प्रति अपनी श्रद्धा व्यक्त करते हुए कहा कि वे बहुमुखी प्रतिभा की धनी थीं और उन्होंने अपने कार्यों से अनेक मिसालें स्थापित कीं। लेखिका ने आगे कहा कि हर व्यक्ती बहुआयामी होता है; आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि उसका यह व्यक्तित्व समाज के लिए किस प्रकार उपयोगी सिद्ध हो। हमारे आसपास का हर व्यक्ति प्रेरणा का स्रोत हो सकता है, बस हमें उसके सकारात्मक पक्ष को देखने की दृष्टि विकसित करनी चाहिए।

लेखिका डॉ. वंदना मुकेश ने अपने बचपन की स्मृतियाँ साझा करते हुए बताया कि उनकी माँ तीज, दीपावली और करवाचौथ पर लोककथाएँ सुनाया करती थीं, पिता रानी लक्ष्मीबाई और सरोजिनी नायडू जैसी प्रेरक कहानियाँ सुनाते थे तथा शरदचंद्र चट्टोपाध्याय, रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर और बंकिमचंद्र चट्टोपाध्याय का साहित्य पढ़ाते थे। उनके दादाजी नियमित रूप से रामचरित का पाठ करते थे, जिससे उनमें अच्छे पात्रों के प्रति रुचि विकसित हुई।

डॉ. वंदना मुकेश ने परिवार, परंपरा और साहित्य पर अपने विचार रखते हुए कहा कि परिवार, जो भारत में एक प्रमुख सामाजिक संस्था के रूप में विकसित हुआ, उसका महत्व यहाँ सर्वाधिक रहा है। परंतु वर्तमान समय में परिस्थितियाँ बदल रही हैं और परिवार संयुक्त संरचना से एकल (न्यूक्लियर) परिवार की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं।

“

"जब हम त्योहार मनाते हैं, तो केवल रीति-रिवाज नहीं निभाते, बल्कि अपने भीतर की संवेदना, आस्था और पहचान को भी महसूस करते हैं।"

”

उन्होंने कहा कि भौतिकवादी जीवनशैली और समयाभाव के कारण हम बच्चों को पर्याप्त समय नहीं दे पा रहे हैं, जबकि जीवन का सबसे मूल्यवान समय वही होता है जब बच्चे साथ होते हैं। परिवार जीवन की मूलभूत इकाई है, जो हमें संस्कार, सुरक्षा और संबल प्रदान करता है, और आज के समय में बच्चों के लिए माता-पिता का सान्निध्य ही एक महत्वपूर्ण आवश्यकता बन गया है।

उन्होंने आगे कहा कि हमारे आसपास की हर वस्तु केवल वस्तु नहीं, बल्कि सौंदर्य और अनुभव का हिस्सा है, और प्रकृति व त्योहार हमें संस्कृति, संवेदना और पहचान से जोड़ते हैं। भाषा, चाहे जैसे भी विकसित हो, उसके साथ सांस्कृतिक मूल्य भी जुड़े होते हैं। साहित्य केवल शब्दों का खेल नहीं, वह समाज का दर्पण और मार्गदर्शक होता है। साहित्यकारों और कलाकारों की यह जिम्मेदारी है कि वे समाज के लिए एक आदर्श प्रस्तुत करें।

कार्यक्रम के समापन पर इंदौर की अहसास वूमेन सुचित्रा साजिद धनानी ने सभी अतिथियों का धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया। इस अवसर पर विशिष्ट अतिथि डॉ. वंदना मुकेश को शेरटन ग्रैंड पैलेस इंदौर की सीमा ताज द्वारा स्मृति चिन्ह भेंट कर सम्मानित किया गया। साथ ही, लेखक की हस्ताक्षरित पुस्तक प्राप्त कर इस क्षण को यादगार बनाया गया।



Suchitra Sajid Dhanani, Seema Taz and Unnati Singh

इस आयोजन को सफल बनाने में अहसास वूमेन इंदौर के साथ ही सक्रिय सहयोग रहा हिंदी प्रिंट मीडिया पार्टनर नई दुनिया तथा हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर - शेरटन ग्रैंड पैलेस इंदौर का।

Fusion, Footsteps, and Stories at Belfast Mela



In association with ArtsEkta and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** was honoured to facilitate the participation of acclaimed author Sanjukta Dasgupta and Kathak artist Shinjini Kulkarni, **Ehsaas Woman** of Gurugram, at the annual Belfast Mela.

The NI-India Creative Showcase featured an enriching literary session led by Sanjukta Dasgupta and chaired by Satish Kumar, with insightful contributions from Irish literature specialist Siobhra Aiken and Belfast writer Alicia McAuley. The discussion explored the literary and cultural connections between India and Ireland, from Yeats to Tagore, reflecting on identity, language, and postcolonial expression.

A major highlight of the festival was *Tāla*, a mesmerising performance by Shinjini Kulkarni at the Lyric Theatre Belfast, performed to a sold-out audience. Blending the grace of Indian classical dance with electrifying percussion and Irish collaborations, the performance celebrated the power of artistic exchange and cultural fusion.





Saptarshi Mallick

REDISCOVERING LADY ABULABUSH: CONVERSATIONS ON LEGACY, LETTERS, AND LIBERATION



Kaberi Chatterjee

Kolkata, the eternal custodian of literature and culture, witnessed an enriching evening at **An Author's Afternoon**, which was organised by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in association with Taj Bengal. The session featured acclaimed author Saptarshi Mallick in a stimulating conversation with academic Kaberi Chatterjee, drawing a discerning audience of the city's literary connoisseurs.

The event began with a warm welcome by Shefali Rawat Agarwal, **Ehsaas Woman** of Kolkata, and unfolded into an engaging dialogue filled with reflections, insights, and wit.

Kaberi Chatterjee opened the dialogue with a sharp observation that set the tone for the discussion. "So many people are so famous, and women of the 19th century too, but Abulabush has been denied her place. What drew your attention to Lady Abulabush?" she asked. Mallick's response was as layered as his research. Tracing his journey from a PhD on Baptist missionaries to his postdoctoral fellowship in Austria, he shared how a serendipitous discovery of travel manuscripts led him to Abulabush.

Mallick then drew attention to Abulabush's profound devotion to her husband, scientist J.C. Bose, quoting from her letters: "That day I wondered what good deed I had done as a woman to deserve such a position. India, in our current poverty, has felicitated a great son, that is J.C. Bose, and I would like to know what righteous deed on my part has made me become his wife." Yet, he pointed out, her writings went far beyond marital devotion. Her travelogues, he argued, served as "contact zones" that captured cultural synthesis, pragmatism, and humanism—rejecting colonial stereotypes while simultaneously critiquing British exploitation.

The conversation then moved to her remarkable correspondence with Rabindranath Tagore. Mallick recalled a letter where Tagore pleaded with her: "It will be much better if you can successfully discontinue addressing me as reverend. Rather you can address me as a 'dear poet' when you write to me."

Chatterjee highlighted Abulabush's progressive voice: "She said women should be educated not because they will make good mothers or good wives, but because they have a mind and that mind needs to be fulfilled." The audience could not miss the echo of Mary Wollstonecraft, and yet here was an Indian woman, writing from within the crucible of 19th-century Bengal, articulating a similar feminist conviction.

Travel, for Lady Abulabush, was both adventure and cultural critique. In Japan she marvelled at women's autonomy: "It is her own choice, not society, whether she will meet and greet her husband's friend." In America, she admired domestic equality, noting that boys and girls should share responsibilities in cooking, cleaning, and family care. Mallick observed: "This is something which she emphasized; that in India education should be patterned so that boys and girls share responsibilities equally."

Yet her worldview bore its contradictions. Her writings on Lucknow mourned British lives lost in 1857, with no mention of Indian casualties. "That is a little bit objectionable," Mallick admitted, pointing to the complex colonial entanglements of her time. Still, elsewhere her sharp critiques of imperial condescension surfaced.

Recounting a dinner conversation, she overheard an Englishman scoff: "Can Indians ever pursue scientific discovery? Impossible." To which the chemist Ramsey retorted: "Please stop, you are totally ignorant."

For centuries the Indians with their devotion have been..." Such anecdotes underscored her position as a witness to both prejudice and defence.

The conversation closed on a reflective note, with Mallick emphasising that Abulabush's writings embodied a cosmopolitan vision rooted in empathy.

The session concluded with a warm vote of thanks by Esha Dutta, Honorary Convenor of North-East Affairs of the Foundation and **Ehsaas Woman** of Kolkata. She also felicitated both the author and the conversationalist with exquisite Dokra handicrafts.



*This session of **An Author's Afternoon** was organized in association with Hospitality Partner, Taj Bengal*



Shefali Rawat



Book Signing



Esha Dutta

IMAGINATION, INTRIGUE, & LIFE LESSONS



Novoneel Chakraborty



Parveen Tuli

Nagpur witnessed a captivating evening of literature and conversation at **The Write Circle**, an initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, where acclaimed author Novoneel Chakraborty engaged in an insightful dialogue with Parveen Tuli, **Ehsaas Woman** of Nagpur. Jyoti Kapoor, **Ehsaas Woman** of Nagpur, delivered a warm welcome address to kickstart the evening. The discussion offered a fascinating glimpse into Chakraborty's creative journey; his inspirations, writing process, and the emotions that shape his stories.

Novoneel Chakraborty began by tracing his journey as a writer; from the hesitant beginnings of a young storyteller to becoming one of India's most-read contemporary authors. "Writing was never a career plan," he confessed. "It started as a way to make sense of the chaos inside me."

Parveen Tuli steered the conversation toward the emotional depth in his books and the recurring theme of flawed characters. "I don't write heroes or villains," Chakraborty explained. "I write about people who are capable of both kindness and cruelty. That's what makes them real."

One of the evening's most poignant moments came when he opened up about his personal battle with depression. "There was a time I couldn't write, couldn't think, couldn't feel," he said softly. "But words became my therapy. They reminded me that darkness is not permanent — it just teaches you how much light you can hold." His openness was met with silent admiration from the audience.

On being asked about his fascination with psychological thrillers, Chakraborty offered an insightful response: "Thrillers allow me to play with the human mind. The scariest mysteries are not out there; they're inside us."



Jyoti Kapoor

The discussion also ventured into the world of social media, where Chakraborty enjoys immense popularity among young readers. "Social media is a double-edged sword," he acknowledged. "It connects you instantly, but it also creates noise. As a writer, you have to protect your inner silence."



Monica Bhagwagar

Audience questions brought further insights — "I don't wait for inspiration; I wait for honesty"; to how he balances darkness and light in his narratives. "There's no story without both," he mused. "You need a shadow to appreciate the sun."

In his closing remark, Chakraborty summed up the essence of the evening: "Stories don't change the world, but they change people; and people change the world." It concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Monica Bhagwagar, **Ehsaas Woman** of Nagpur. Niharika from Radisson Blu Hotel felicitated the guest author, adding a gracious touch to the evening.

*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 Hotel, Nagpur; and Print Media Partner, Lokmat*

OF TRUTH, TENACITY & THE MEDIA MIRROR



Jyotsna Mohan

An enriching evening unfolded in Goa as celebrated journalist and author Jyotsna Mohan took centre stage under the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** prestigious initiative, **The Write Circle**.

The author was in conversation with Shruti Juwarkar, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa. Through an engaging exchange, the two women delved deep into themes drawn from Mohan's body of work, most notably her widely acclaimed books that probe the complexities of modern India, including *Stoned*, *Shamed*, *Depressed*.

The conversation was a compelling look at India's rapidly shifting moral and digital landscape. As a former journalist and a columnist with a sharp, observant pen, Mohan offered layered insights into the silent anxieties of a generation caught in the grip of hyper-connectivity, competitive pressures, and societal expectations.

The conversation also turned towards the ethical responsibilities of journalists in a post-truth era. Jyotsna remarked, "We are chroniclers of time, not creators of chaos. The job is not to sensationalise, but to illuminate." She recalled an incident when she gently confronted a friend about their son vaping, she was met with outright denial. "So I asked the boy, casually, 'How's the vaping going?' He was mid-sip of Coke. The drink splattered. That reaction said it all."

But Jyotsna's voice remained empathetic. "This book is not here to run parents down. I don't want to teach you how to parent your child. I only want to show that this is happening. And denying it, especially in India, is harmful. Our children are not behind the West anymore. They are on par."



Shruti Juwarkar

Shruti brought up Jyotsna's podcast, *Table Talks with Jo*. What began as an Instagram Live during COVID, to connect audiences with credible doctors, evolved into a rich archive of inspiring stories. "It took a life of its own," Jyotsna smiled. "I focus on issues close to my heart — mental health, disability, activism — and above all, I let the guest speak. No yelling, no drama. Just meaningful conversation."



Gaurapriya Atul Pai Kane

The conversation then turned intimate as Jyotsna reflected on her powerful lineage. "While I may be the first woman journalist in four generations, it was my grandfather who truly inspired me — not my father, and he admits that freely." Her father, a seasoned editor, co-authored her earlier book *Pratap*. "He taught me how to see journalism all over again — with depth, integrity, and courage."



Vaishali Joshi

Together, they chronicled a legacy rooted in India's freedom struggle. Her family's newspaper, launched in Lahore in 1919, was shut down by the British the day after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. "My grandfather was imprisoned with Bhagat Singh. That's the kind of legacy I was born into."

Several questions during the Q&A session reflected concern about the challenges facing India's youth today—cyberbullying, peer pressure, parental denial, and systemic neglect—all themes that Mohan handles with nuance and courage in her writing.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa, Gaurapriya Atul Pai Kane. The author was felicitated by Neeta Bird to honour her contributions.

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

AN EVENING OF COURAGE, LEGACY, AND TRUTH WITH JYOTSNA MOHAN



Jyotsna Mohan



Chander Mohan

The Write Circle session in Bhubaneswar by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** was a tapestry of history, journalism, and personal legacy, woven together in a deeply evocative conversation between acclaimed journalist and author Jyotsna Mohan and her father celebrated editor Chander Mohan.

The event opened with Nidhi Garg, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bhubaneswar, extending a warm and gracious welcome, setting the tone for what would become a powerful exchange. Ashirbad Praharaj, General Manager of Vivanta Bhubaneswar shared his delight in hosting such an intellectually stimulating gathering.

Speaking about the book's origins, Chander Mohan revealed that the project was born out of Jyotsna's insistence: "She's the motivator. She's the one who said we must write this. My initial reaction was, there's no point writing something nobody's going to read; but she has been proven right." Jyotsna, in turn, spoke with heartfelt conviction about why she believed this history mattered: "I have been privileged to be born into a family where history unfolded within its four walls; not everyone has that privilege."

The family's legacy stretches back to 1919, when Jyotsna's grandfather, founder of the family newspaper, declared: "As editors, we are not vendors of news; we have to stand for truth." This defiance came at a cost, repeated fines, censorship, and imprisonment of every male member of the family; yet the newspaper never ceased publication. It survived because of the loyalty of its staff and the support of the public.

The conversation soon turned to Chander Mohan's father, a contemporary and comrade of Bhagat Singh, who was in Lahore Central Jail on the day the revolutionary was executed. Chander Mohan read from his father's own account: "Just before 7 p.m., Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar were brought out and taken towards the gallows, shouting 'Inquilab Zindabad' with

such force that the entire jail echoed the cry. That night, no one ate, and no one slept."

Jyotsna noted: "Our attempt was never to sensationalise or to take away from any other tragedy, only to show that the story begins much before what anyone knows." One of the evening's most thought-provoking moments came when Chander Mohan addressed a controversial chapter in the book, Gandhi's role, or lack thereof, in attempting to save Bhagat Singh and his comrades from execution: "Gandhiji and Bhagat Singh fought for the same cause but with different methods. My question is: what could be more violent than hanging three young men? Why did Gandhiji not oppose it with all his might?"

Audience engagement was lively, with questions ranging from the challenges of interviewing high-profile figures to the ethical dilemmas faced in investigative journalism.

The evening concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks from Vedula Ramalakshmi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Bhubaneswar. Jyotsna Mohan was felicitated by Rajesh Kumar Jha and Chander Mohan by Amit Gupta, Operations Manager at Vivanta Bhubaneswar, each receiving vibrant leheriya dupattas.

*This session of **The Write Circle** was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of Bhubaneswar; and Hospitality Partner, Vivanta Bhubaneswar*



Nidhi Garg



Ashirbad Praharaj



Vedula Ramalakshmi



Vishwas Patil

SHIVAJI: THE WARRIOR, THE VISIONARY, THE HUMANIST VISHWAS PATIL REVIVES SHIVAJI'S LEGACY

In an intellectually charged **The Write Circle** session held in Lucknow organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, acclaimed author Vishwas Patil engaged in an absorbing conversation with Dr. A.P. Maheshwari, delving deep into history, literature, and the multifaceted legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

With over 38 awards to his name and a literary career marked by profound historical narratives, Patil drew from his extensive research to bring the past alive for the rapt audience. Deepa Mishra, **Ehsaas Woman** of Lucknow set the tone for the session with a gracious welcome address.

The conversation began with Patil recounting the journey of his monumental novel *Panipat*, published when he was just 28. Initially celebrated in Maharashtra, *Panipat* later garnered a pan-India readership after being translated into Hindi under the encouragement of P.V. Narasimha Rao, long before he became Prime Minister.

Maheshwari then steered the dialogue toward Shivaji Maharaj, focusing on the strategic genius of a warrior-king who defied colossal odds. "Think of an era with Aurangzeb in the north and the Adil Shahi Sultanate in the south. Shivaji, with fewer than a lakh soldiers, stood against the Mughal empire, whose forces exceeded ten lakhs."

Patil elaborated on Shivaji's brilliance: "Shivaji was a virtuous man of outstanding character. His governance was rooted in 'desh and dharma.' He adopted guerrilla warfare, a legacy from his father, Shahaji Raje, who was also a Sanskrit scholar and a master strategist."

The discussion also explored Shivaji's moral compass. Even in warfare, he upheld ethics. "He once spared a general because his ancestors had helped Shivaji's father," Patil shared. "He believed that running a kingdom is different from looting the people."



A.P. Maheshwari

Maheshwari praised the depth of Patil's research, noting, "He even deciphered ancient dialects and letters, making his work stand apart. His portrayal of Shivaji is not just historical but deeply human." The session touched upon Shivaji's unparalleled ability to recognize talent in the most unassuming individuals—from dancers and fishermen to milkmaids and warriors. Patil concluded, "Shivaji had the rare gift of discerning the fragrance of a flower even before it bloomed."

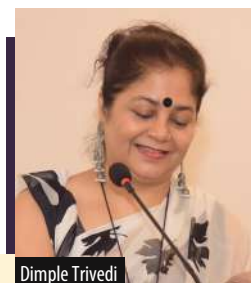
In one particularly riveting tale, Patil described how Shivaji outwitted enemies with psychological warfare and disguise: "He posed his cousin as himself on the battlefield while he had secretly travelled to Karnataka. His enemies were praying, stunned – 'How many Shivajis are there in this land?'"

The audience left not just enlightened, but deeply moved through their session of Q&A with the author. It wasn't merely a historical discussion, it was a revival of national memory. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dimple Trivedi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Lucknow. The author and conversationalist were felicitated by Madhuri Halwasiya, Honorary Convenor of Awadh Affairs of the Foundation and **Ehsaas Woman** of Lucknow.

*This session of **The Write Circle** was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Lucknow, and was in association with B.P. Halwasiya Foundation; Hospitality Partner, Taj Mahal, Lucknow; and Print Hindi Media Partner, Dainik Jagran*



Deepa Mishra



Dimple Trivedi



Vishwas Patil

BETWEEN BATTLEFIELDS AND BOOKSHELVES: A LITERARY EVENING WITH VISHWAS PATIL



Geeta Malhotra

The literary air in Kanpur crackled with energy as celebrated author Vishwas Patil took centre stage at **The Write Circle** in a deeply engaging conversation with **Ehsaas Woman of Kanpur**, Geeta Malhotra. Organised by the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, this session offered not only a glimpse into Patil's literary work but also an intimate reflection on his life, from a modest village upbringing to becoming an award-winning writer and IAS officer. The engaging evening began with a warm welcome by **Ehsaas Woman of Kanpur**, Aarti Gupta.

"I think 30 years back I had been here for the first time," Patil began. Recalling the city's connections to pivotal moments in Indian history, like the trial of S.N. Subbarao and the echoes of the 1857 uprising. "Another memory is that our Nana Saheb Peshwa was banished by the Britishers directly from Pune to Bithoor and Kanpur," he said warmly.

Patil's literary journey, however, began long before acclaim or awards. He recounted his early days in a village with a population of barely 1600, where his classroom consisted of just six or seven boys. "My father was a freedom fighter. I took my lessons in a tiny Maruti temple and I got the knowledge of the soil, the rains, the crops, valuable things I used later in writing."

Patil's dual career, as a bureaucrat and an author, imbued his novels with lived realities. "When I was an IAS officer, I had the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life," he noted. "My novel *Janmat*, for instance, was influenced by redevelopment issues and the displacement of slum dwellers. During weekends, I would disappear and return on Monday with 50 to 60 pages written. I avoided the bureaucratic cocktail nights," he added with a touch of dry humour, "because I believe the bureaucrat exhausts his intelligence there only."

His research, especially for historical novels, is rigorous. "At the time of Panipat, I lived in Haryana for three months. I

used to visit the Yamuna bank daily, imagining how the Maratha armies must have walked that path." Patil has physically climbed over 270 forts across the Sahyadri ranges to bring historical realism to life. "Shivaji and Sambhaji are my passion, my madness."

Discussing his latest book, *The Wild War Front*, Patil described it as more than just a war novel. "It is about identity, history, and the emotional turmoil of soldiers. The characters often call to me; I merely follow." He recalled a chilling moment when a village officer showed him claw marks on a shepherd's back, evidence of a tiger-attack the man had endured in desperation to fetch dowry money. "That scar told an entire novel," Patil said.

When asked about the most special moment of his literary career, he humbly replied, "The most special moment is yet to come." Yet, he did share his joy at receiving the Sahitya Akademi Award at just 32—a rare feat.

Patil's passion for regional literature was palpable. Addressing young writers, he stressed, "Writing needs great devotion. You will have to lose your comfort, your family, maybe even your marriage. Only passion can lead you through."



Aarti Gupta

The session was a resounding success, reflecting Patil's magnetic storytelling and his ability to blend historical depth with social commentary during the Q&A. **Ehsaas Woman of Kanpur**, Aarti Gupta, delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks. Author Vishwas Patil was felicitated by Archana Khaitan with handcrafted terracotta artefacts from Central India, in a gesture to honour him.

This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Kanpur, and was in association with B.P. Halwasiya Foundation; Hospitality Partner, The Landmark Towers; and Print Hindi Media Partner, Dainik Jagran

STORIES, LANDSCAPES, AND THE ART OF REFLECTION



Stephen Alter



Shruti Juwarkar

An evening steeped in literary charm unfolded in Goa at **The Write Circle**, an initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, where celebrated author Stephen Alter engaged in an illuminating conversation with Shruti Juwarkar, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa. The dialogue offered profound insights into Alter's creative journey, his reflections on nature, travel, and the human spirit. The session commenced with a warm welcoming note by Vaishali Joshi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa.

As the conversation unfolded, Alter reflected on his early life in Mussoorie, where his surroundings became the first and most enduring source of inspiration. "The mountains have a language of their own," he said, "and growing up among them taught me to listen before I spoke, to observe before I wrote."

Discussing his acclaimed memoir *Becoming a Mountain*, Alter described it as a journey of healing and rediscovery after surviving a traumatic attack. "That book," he admitted, "was not planned; it emerged from pain, but it gave me peace." He spoke about how nature became both sanctuary and teacher, restoring a sense of balance through its indifference and continuity.

The dialogue, guided by Shruti Juwarkar, delved into the evolution of Alter's writing and his ability to weave fiction and fact seamlessly. Whether chronicling Himalayan landscapes or exploring myth through modern eyes, his prose bears a clarity that is both poetic and precise. "I don't believe in separating imagination from truth," Alter remarked. "In the best stories, both coexist. Sometimes fiction reveals more truth than fact ever can."

Shruti invited him to speak about *Birdwatching: A Novel*,

a book that blends espionage, love, and the quiet art of observation. Alter shared the intriguing thought process behind its creation; how the act of birdwatching mirrored the way a writer must engage with life. "You wait, you watch, and if you're lucky, you see something extraordinary; but most of the time, you learn from the waiting."

Alter observed that while environmental consciousness has increased, genuine engagement with the natural world remains rare. "We tend to think of nature as something outside us," he said. "But we are part of it; and our stories should remind us of that interdependence." His call for empathy towards all forms of life extended beyond ecology, touching a moral and philosophical chord.

Shruti steered the conversation towards the theme of belonging and identity. Having spent much of his life in India yet often viewed through the lens of his American heritage, he spoke with gentle humour about the question of 'home'. "Home is not a piece of land or a passport," he said. "It is where your stories take root."



Vaishali Joshi

The conversation concluded with questions from an engaged audience; on writing discipline, literary influences, and the delicate balance between creativity and solitude. Alter advised aspiring writers to read widely, write consistently, and remain curious.

As the evening concluded, Vaishali Joshi, **Ehsaas Woman** of Goa, offered a gracious vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the author, the conversationalist, and all partners for making the evening a resounding success. Eva Kapoor felicitated the author, acknowledging his remarkable literary contributions.

*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; and Print Media Partner, Lokmat*

OF POLITICS, PRESS, AND THE PULSE OF DEMOCRACY

Ajmer witnessed an intellectually charged evening at **The Write Circle**, an initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, where words, wit, and wisdom came together in perfect harmony. The session featured eminent journalist and author Rasheed Kidwai in conversation with Dr. Pamela F. Erickson, exploring the fascinating intersections of literature, politics, and society. The evening began with a gracious welcome address by Ujjwal Mukherjee.

Rasheed Kidwai, a seasoned journalist and political chronicler, began the conversation by tracing his journey; from his early years at the historic Anglo-Arabic School in Delhi to his foray into journalism. Reflecting on the school's legacy, founded in 1696 and later revived under the vision of Dr. Zakir Hussain and Maulana Azad, he noted how India's educational institutions have long shaped the country's intellectual ethos.

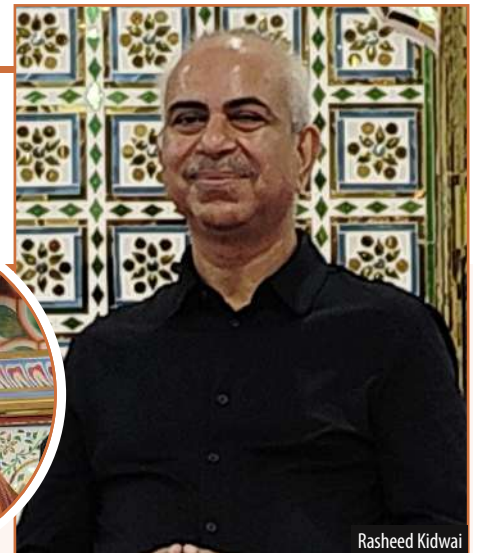
Recalling a humorous encounter in England where someone labelled him a mere "pen pusher," he remarked that journalism, much like teaching or hospitality, is a profession driven more by passion than prestige. "It is not something one chooses; it chooses you," he said.

The conversation soon turned to the shifting landscape of journalism. Kidwai reflected on how the role of the media has transformed in the digital age. "Earlier, the purpose of journalism was to inform, educate, and entertain," he observed. "Now, with mobile phones and social media, people already know what is happening; the journalist's role is to explain why it's happening." He lamented that, while the speed of information has increased, the depth of understanding has often diminished.

On the question of media bias, Kidwai offered a pragmatic view: "Media is not a change agent; it merely reflects the mood of society. If people believe something, the media amplifies it." He spoke candidly about the rise of "WhatsApp University," a term he used to describe the spread of misinformation that thrives because it aligns with people's preconceived beliefs.



Dr. Pamela F. Erickson



Rasheed Kidwai

Discussing Indian politics, Kidwai drew on his vast experience as a political journalist to analyse the evolving nature of democracy and opposition. He reminded the audience that India recognised its first Leader of the Opposition only in 1969; nearly two decades after the first general election. The lack of an institutionalised opposition, he noted, continues to affect the strength of parliamentary democracy. Yet, he was quick to point out the resilience of Indian democracy, which has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to correct itself through the ballot.



Devendra Ratnawat

Touching upon the growing trend of equating government criticism with anti-national sentiment, he drew a firm distinction: "The government of the day is not the same as the nation. The Indian state is non-negotiable, but governments are transient."



Ujjwal Mukherjee

The dialogue also touched upon Kidwai's extensive body of work; including *Sonia: A Biography*, *24 Akbar Road*, and *Ballot: Ten Episodes That Have Shaped India's Democracy*; each offering an insider's view of the country's political evolution. Dr. Erickson lauded his ability to blend meticulous research with engaging storytelling, making political history both accessible and riveting.

Ujjwal Mukherjee offered a warm vote of thanks to conclude the session. Devendra Ratnawat, General Manager, Hotel Pratap Mahal, felicitated both the guest and the conversationalist with a memento, marking a fitting close to a memorable evening of ideas and dialogue.

This session of The Write Circle was organized with the support of Ehsaas Women of Ajmer and was in association with WeCare; and Hospitality Partner, Pratap Mahal, Ajmer - IHCL SeleQtions



CINEMATIC JOURNEYS AND UNTOLD TALES



Gurugram played host to a captivating evening of cinema, conversation, and creative reflection at **The Write Circle**, an initiative of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**. The session featured acclaimed filmmaker Rahul Rawail in conversation with Vinti Kathuria, **Ehsaas Woman** of Agra, the filmmaker shared fascinating anecdotes from his decades in the industry; from his directorial journey and collaborations with legendary actors to his keen observations on the evolution of Indian filmmaking.

The evening commenced with a gracious welcome address by Ashwni Kumar Goela, Vice President – Operations, Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel & Area General Manager, who set the tone for an evening dedicated to the art of storytelling.

Rawail began with a candid revelation; filmmaking was never his first love. “I wanted to be a nuclear physicist,” he recalled with a smile. But destiny intervened when his friend Rishi Kapoor invited him to the sets of *Mera Naam Joker*. The young Rawail, fascinated by Raj Kapoor’s command over a unit of 5,000 people, was mesmerized. “He was like the conductor of a symphony,” he said, “and that was the day I forgot about nuclear physics.”

His recent book, *Raj Kapoor: The Master at Work*, explores the filmmaker’s craft, discipline, and vision—areas long overshadowed by focus on his personal life. Rawail shared that Krishna Kapoor urged him to document this creative process, convinced he alone truly understood the man behind the lens. “If you don’t do it, his craft will be lost forever,” she told him.

Rawail revisited the controversy surrounding his film *Love Story* (1981), which was released without his directorial credit. “It’s the only film in the world with no director’s name,” he said ruefully, adding that the incident left him

disillusioned for two years; until veteran actor Dharmendra offered him another chance, leading to the making of *Betaab*.

As he spoke about *Betaab*, Rawail’s pride was palpable when he mentioned that the film’s shooting location in Kashmir is now famously known as Betaab Valley. “To have a place named after your film is deeply emotional,” he shared.

As the conversation drew to a close, Rawail spoke of Raj Kapoor with deep reverence: “He had a 360-degree understanding of cinema; from photography to sound to music. He could play any instrument without training. Working with him was a masterclass every single day.” He concluded with one of Kapoor’s lifelong lessons: “If you ever have a question, ask it. If you don’t, one day you’ll regret not knowing the answer.”

Evocative, nostalgic, and deeply insightful, the session offered audiences a rare glimpse into the world behind the camera; one shaped by creativity. Karuna Goenka, **Ehsaas Woman** of Delhi, felicitated Rahul Rawail with an exquisite Dhokra handicraft from Eastern India.

*This session of **The Write Circle** was organized with the support of **Ehsaas Women** of India; Hospitality Partner, Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Delhi Airport; and Print Hindi Media Partner, Dainik Jagran*



CELEBRATING CINEMA THROUGH PAR / KRAMA

Under the aegis of **Chalchitra Rangmanch**, the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** hosted a special screening of the much-acclaimed film *Parikrama*, directed by celebrated filmmaker Goutam Ghose. The event brought together members of Kolkata's vibrant artistic and cinematic fraternity for an evening dedicated to meaningful cinema, creative exchange, and cultural celebration.

The screening witnessed the gracious presence of Goutam Ghose along with actor Chitrangda Singh, one of the lead actors of the film, who shared insightful reflections on the making of *Parikrama*, its creative journey, and the deeper emotions and narratives explored through the film. Their interaction with the audience added warmth and depth to the evening, offering attendees a closer glimpse into the artistic process behind the cinematic work.

Held at INOX South City, Kolkata, the event witnessed the presence of over 200 guests and several distinguished personalities from the Bengali film and music industry. Among those in attendance were acclaimed filmmaker Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury and Indrani Mukherjee, renowned actors Rituparna Sengupta, Paoli Dam, and Parijat Chaudhuri, singer Lagnajita Chakraborty, and noted filmmakers Amalesh Dasgupta and Raja Ghosh, among others. Their presence transformed the evening into a vibrant confluence of creative minds and artistic dialogue.

The screening beautifully reflected the vision of **Chalchitra Rangmanch**, an initiative dedicated to promoting meaningful cinema and fostering conversations around the arts. Over the years, the initiative has emerged as an important platform connecting filmmakers, actors, artists, and audiences through thoughtfully curated cinematic experiences.

Through such events, the Foundation continues to strengthen its commitment to nurturing art, literature, cinema, and cultural consciousness, while creating spaces that celebrate creativity, dialogue, and the transformative power of storytelling.



Goutam Ghose



Chitrangda Singh



Parijat Chaudhuri



Rituparna Sengupta



Raja Ghosh



Neelanjana Ghose & Ishaan Ghose



Paoli Dam



Barun Chanda (with his wife)



Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury



Amalesh Dasgupta



Lagnajita Chakraborty



Chaity Ghoshal



Celebrating the Timeless Legacy of “*Raktakarabi*”

The **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, in collaboration with the Sahitya Akademi, organised a special commemorative programme celebrating the centenary of *Raktakarabi* by Rabindranath Tagore. Held in Kolkata under the Foundation’s continued commitment to preserving and promoting India’s literary and cultural heritage, the evening brought together literature lovers, theatre enthusiasts, scholars, and admirers of Tagore’s timeless works.

The programme featured an insightful conceptualisation and recitation by eminent theatre critic and scholar Samik Bandyopadhyay, who beautifully explored the layered symbolism, philosophical depth, and enduring relevance of *Raktakarabi*. Through evocative narration supported by visual slides, the audience was taken on an immersive journey into Tagore’s iconic play, which continues to resonate for its powerful reflections on freedom, humanity, and resistance against oppression.

Adding a deeply musical dimension to the evening, acclaimed vocalist Rajashree Bhattacharya presented soulful renditions of songs from *Raktakarabi*. The musical performances beautifully complemented the recitations, creating an atmosphere rich in emotion, nostalgia, and artistic reflection.

The event emerged as a meaningful tribute to Tagore’s literary genius and the continuing relevance of his works in contemporary times. By blending literature, music, theatre, and visual interpretation, the programme offered audiences a unique and enriching cultural experience. Through such thoughtfully curated initiatives, the Foundation continues to create platforms that celebrate India’s literary heritage while fostering deeper engagement with the arts across generations.



Rajashree Bhattacharya

Samik Bandyopadhyay



ZENITH UNVEILED: A CANDID CONVERSATION ON MASTERING AI IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In a thought-provoking book discussion in Jaipur organized by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, tech entrepreneur and author Ajay Data delved into his latest book, *ZENITH: Mastering AI for Everyday Life and Work*. In conversation with Aashima Choudhary, he reflected on how artificial intelligence is transforming not just industries, but also personal habits, creativity, and even the way we ask questions.

Ajay began with a humble admission, “I became an accidental author.” He recounted how a casual podcast clip about prompt engineering went viral, drawing millions of views and messages from curious minds seeking clarity on Artificial Intelligence, or AI. That response, he said, propelled him to write a book, despite having no prior experience.

The discussion took a philosophical turn when Choudhary asked if AI is feeding our obsession with the end result and whether it is “killing search engines.” Data’s response was nuanced: “AI is not at all killing search engines. It leverages them in the background to draw conclusions.” He elaborated how AI saves time by synthesizing information, while traditional search engines merely list links. “We all want to save time. We don’t want to apply too much mind in searching, rather in applying the result.”

A pioneering figure in India’s digital evolution and the force behind innovations like the first-ever email address in a non-Latin script, Data brought to the fore the core mission of his book: to demystify Artificial Intelligence and make it accessible to the average person. In an age where AI often feels distant or overwhelming, *ZENITH* aims to be a practical guide, bridging the knowledge gap between cutting-edge technology and day-to-day utility.

In the conversation, Data emphasized how AI is no longer a domain reserved for coders or scientists. “It’s in

the apps we use, the decisions we make, the content we consume,” he noted. He urged the audience to engage with AI not as a threat but as a tool—one that, when used wisely, can amplify productivity, streamline personal tasks, and unlock creative potential.

Aashima Choudhary drew attention to the book’s clarity and simplicity. She praised the way *ZENITH* combines technical understanding with real-life scenarios—whether it’s using AI to manage time, analyze data, write smarter, or even improve wellness. “The book is not just informative; it’s empowering,” she said.

Addressing concerns around ethics and responsibility, the author shared, “I am a big proponent of ethical practices. In fact, I wrote to the Honourable Prime Minister two years ago, suggesting a committee for responsible AI.” His foresight was validated by the government’s recent allocation of ₹1 lakh crore for AI research and development.

Audience members raised thoughtful questions ranging from the implications of AI on job markets to how startups can leverage AI for scale without heavy investment. The author answered with grounded optimism. “The democratization of AI tools today means even small players can innovate powerfully. But it begins with awareness.”

The event concluded with a strong call to action: embrace AI, don’t fear it. Ajay Data’s *ZENITH* stands as both a guidebook and a manifesto for this new era, one where technology and humanity must evolve together. The session closed with optimism about the future of human-AI collaboration. As Data noted, “AI is a powerful assistant – but it is our clarity, our curiosity, that drives its true potential.”

This session of Sahyog was organized in association with Spark PR



Ajay Singha, Doorva Devarshi, Tusharika Singh and Jagdeep Singh

Exploring Resilience Through Literature & Conversation

Under the **Sahyog** initiative, the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, organised an engaging literary discussion in Jaipur centred around the book *The Fantastic Affair of Despair* by Doorva Devarshi. The author was in conversation with Tusharika Singh, creating an insightful and thought-provoking exchange on literature, emotions, creativity, and the complexities of modern life.

The session explored the deeper themes of the book, including vulnerability, resilience, mental landscapes, and the many ways in which individuals process despair and rediscover hope. During the conversation, Doorva Devarshi candidly reflected on her writing journey, the emotional undercurrents that inspired the book, and how storytelling often becomes a means of understanding oneself and the world around us. Tusharika Singh steered the discussion with sensitivity and insight, encouraging nuanced reflections on personal experiences, human relationships, and the role of imagination in navigating emotional struggles.

The interactive session resonated deeply with the audience, many of whom connected with the honesty and emotional depth of the conversation. Attendees actively participated in the discussion, making the evening both intellectually stimulating and emotionally engaging.



Sudhir Kasliwal, Meeta Singh, Ashok Singh



Tusharika Singh and Neeru Saluja

The event beautifully reflected the spirit of **Sahyog**, an initiative dedicated to fostering meaningful collaborations and cultural dialogue through literature and the arts. By bringing together writers, readers, and creative thinkers, the Foundation continues to create spaces that celebrate contemporary voices, encourage introspection, and nurture a deeper appreciation for literature and storytelling.

*This session of **Sahyog** was organized in association with Spark PR*



Yoga for Health, Harmony, and Humanity

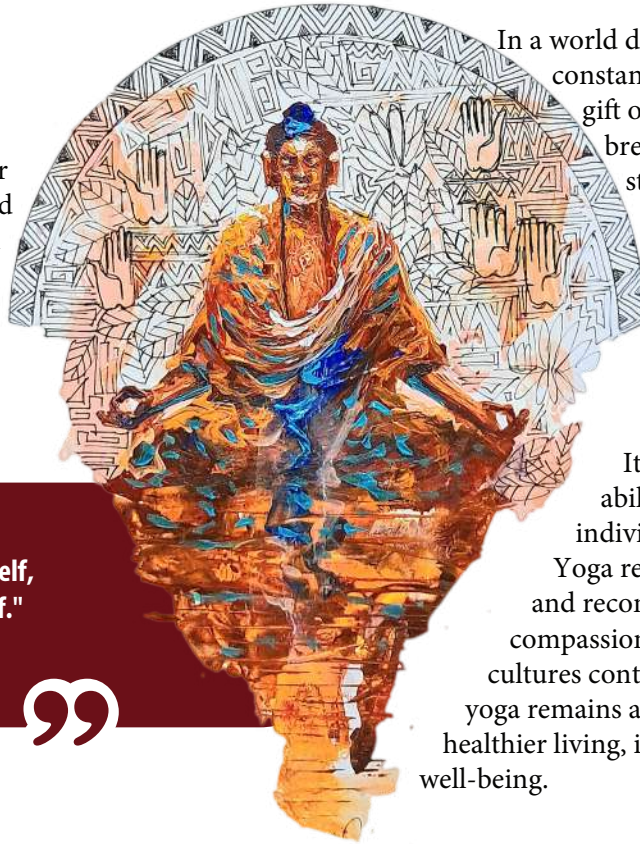
Observed across the world, International Yoga Day celebrates an ancient Indian tradition that continues to offer meaning in modern life. Rooted in India's spiritual and cultural heritage, yoga has evolved beyond borders into a universal practice that nurtures balance, awareness, and well-being.

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"Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self."

— Bhagavad Gita

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In a world defined by speed, stress, and constant distraction, yoga offers the rare gift of stillness. Through movement, breath, and meditation, it strengthens not only the body but also the mind and spirit. More than a form of exercise, yoga encourages mindfulness, emotional resilience, and a deeper connection with oneself and the world.

Its enduring relevance lies in its ability to create harmony — within individuals, communities, and nature.

Yoga reminds us to slow down, reflect, and reconnect with values of peace, compassion, and balance. As people across cultures continue to embrace its teachings, yoga remains a timeless pathway toward healthier living, inner calm, and collective well-being.

Protecting the Earth, Preserving Our Future

World Nature Conservation Day is a reminder that the future of humanity is inseparable from the future of the planet. Nature sustains every aspect of life — from the air we breathe and the water we consume to the ecosystems that maintain balance across the Earth.

Today, environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and the rapid loss of biodiversity continue to threaten this fragile equilibrium. Forests are disappearing, natural resources are depleting, and ecosystems are under increasing strain, making conservation not a choice, but a necessity.



Protecting the environment requires collective responsibility and conscious action. Small yet meaningful choices — reducing waste, conserving water, minimising plastic use, and supporting sustainable practices — can together create lasting impact. World Nature Conservation Day calls upon individuals and communities alike to rethink their relationship with the environment and embrace a future rooted in responsibility, balance, and care.

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"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it."

— Robert Swan

Weaving India's Heritage with Pride

National Handloom Day celebrates the richness of India's weaving traditions and the artisans who have preserved them across generations. Every handwoven textile carries within it a story of heritage, craftsmanship, and cultural identity.

Across the country, diverse weaving styles and techniques reflect India's extraordinary cultural landscape — from the elegance of Banarasi silk and Kanjeevaram to the intricate artistry of Jamdani and Bandhani. These textiles are not merely fabrics, but living expressions of history, community, and skill.

Beyond their artistic value, handlooms sustain millions of livelihoods, particularly within rural communities and among women artisans. At a time when fast fashion dominates global markets, handloom traditions stand as symbols of sustainability, authenticity, and mindful craftsmanship. Supporting handloom means preserving India's cultural heritage, empowering artisans, and ensuring that these timeless traditions continue to thrive for generations to come.



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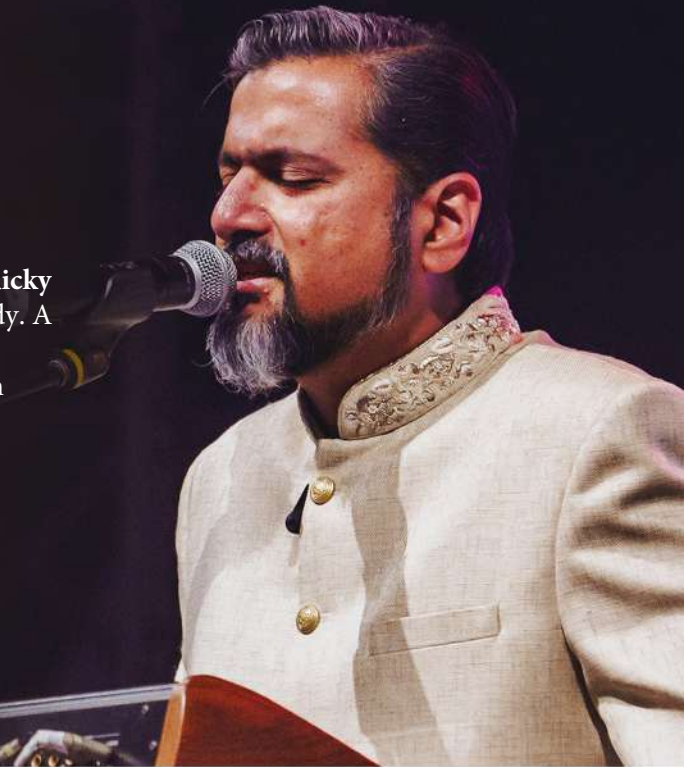
"The soul of India lives in its villages."

— Mahatma Gandhi

ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

MUSIC OF THE MONTH

Where music intertwines with emotion, nature, and introspection, **Ricky Kej** continues to create compositions that resonate far beyond melody. A three-time Grammy Award winner and longtime well-wisher of the **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, Kej enriches this monthly feature with compositions inspired by themes of environmental consciousness, spirituality, human connection, and other facets of the human experience.



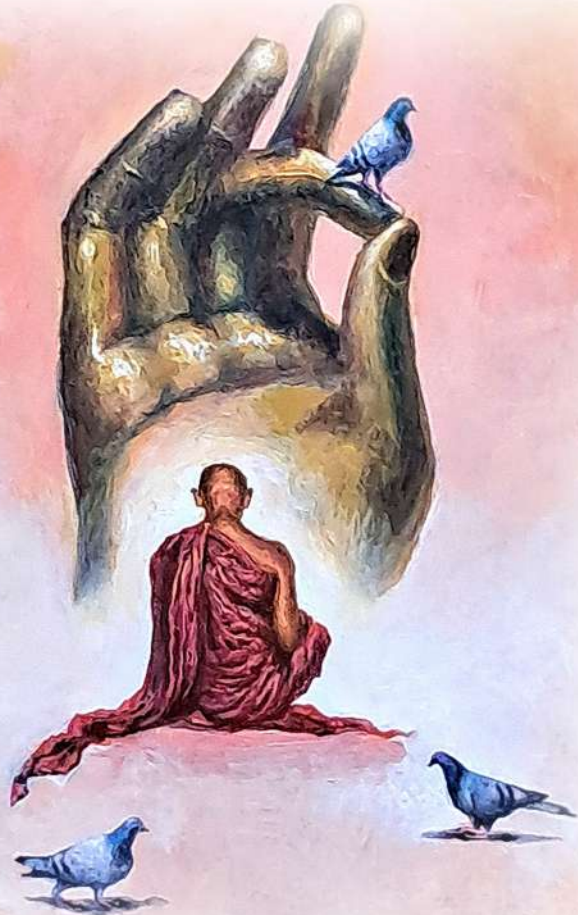
A Musical Ode to the Wonders of Nature

Ricky Kej's composition for June is a heartfelt ode to the beauty and balance of the natural world. Through uplifting melodies and immersive harmonies, the piece captures the splendour of forests, rivers, mountains, skies, and the countless ecosystems that sustain life on Earth.

More than a celebration of nature's grandeur, the composition also serves as a gentle reminder of humanity's deep connection with the environment. The music encourages listeners to pause, reflect, and rediscover a sense of awe and gratitude for the world around them, while inspiring a renewed responsibility toward protecting and preserving the planet for future generations.



ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**



A Prayer for Hope and Strength

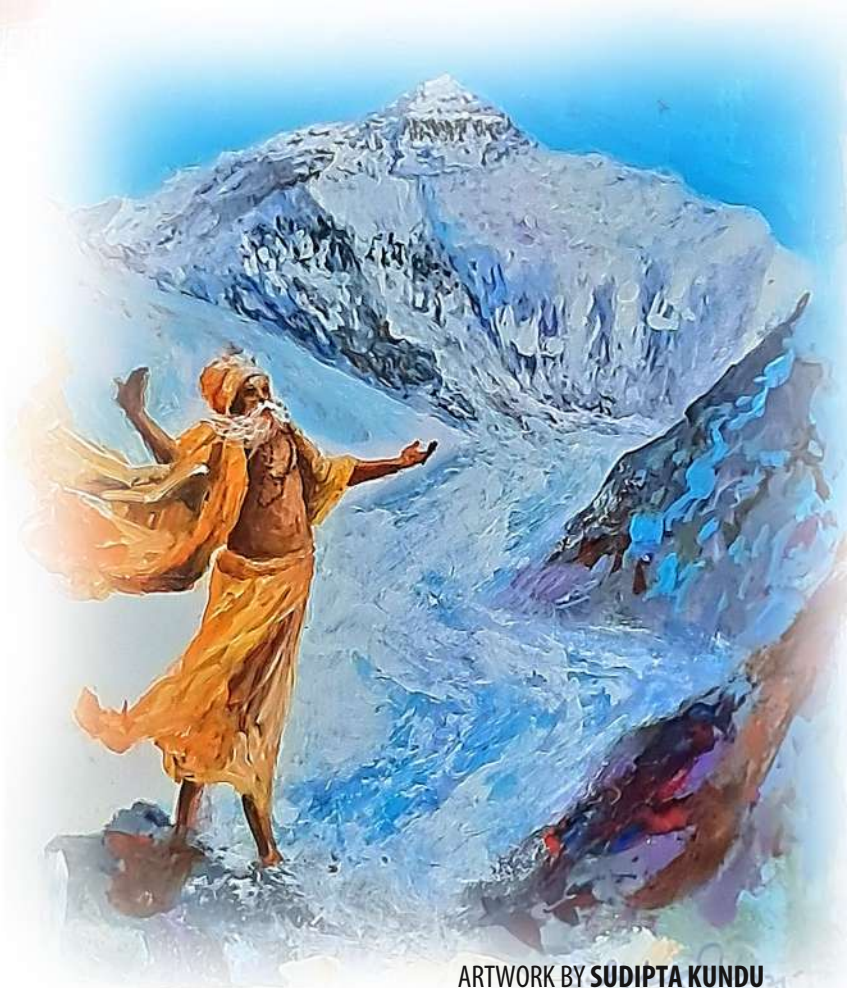
The composition presented for July draws inspiration from the quiet power of prayer and the enduring strength of hope. Gentle melodies and soulful harmonies come together to create a meditative soundscape that speaks to resilience, faith, and emotional healing.

In moments of uncertainty, hope often becomes the guiding force that helps individuals overcome challenges and find strength within themselves. Through this evocative musical composition, **Ricky Kej** beautifully captures the idea that even a simple prayer can offer comfort, restore optimism, and unite hearts in peace and compassion.

A Musical Tribute to the Himalayas and the River Ganga

For August, **Ricky Kej** presents a moving musical tribute to the majestic Himalayas — the sacred birthplace of the River Ganga. Through soaring melodies and serene orchestration, the composition reflects the timeless beauty, spirituality, and life-giving essence of these ancient mountains.

The piece celebrates not only the grandeur of the Himalayas but also the profound relationship between humanity and nature. Listeners are invited on a meditative journey through tranquil landscapes, flowing rivers, and cultural traditions that have inspired generations. At its heart, the composition stands as both a celebration of nature's magnificence and a reminder of the need to preserve the ecosystems and heritage that continue to sustain life and inspire humanity.



ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**

