Shillong Book Fair 2015

National Book Trust, India in association with the District Administration, Shillong; Directorate of Art and Culture, Govt. of Meghalaya and St. Edmund’s College, Shillong organized the Shillong Book Fair at the State Central Library, Shillong from 8 to 16 June 2015.

Inaugurating the Book Fair, Shri V. Shanmuganathan, Hon’ble Governor of Meghalaya said, “Reading of books gives a direction to your life and also a perspective about life”. Emphasizing on the importance of reading biographies, he said, “When you start reading biographies of famous people that you haven’t seen, you come to understand many good things about them”.

Lauding the efforts by NBT in organizing book fairs across the length and breadth of the country, the Hon’ble Governor said, “Promotion of books and the habit of reading is the purpose of this book fair”. The Governor referred to the books on the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda. “The incidents in the biographies of these great people taught us that truth triumphs and strength is elite, and weakness is death. Be bold and courageous!” he added.

Interacting with children and youth present in the audience, the Hon’ble Governor posed two questions for them, and said that the ones who had the correct answer should meet him after the function. True to his words, he met all children and distributed books and bouquets to those who gave him the correct answer.
Speaking on the occasion, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT welcomed the guests and the audience, and exhorted children and youth to read books, and visit the fair in large numbers.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Shri Sanjay Goyal, Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya; Ms. Matseiwdor War Nongbri, Director, Directorate of Art and Culture, Govt. of Meghalaya; and Dr. Sylvanus Lamare, Principal, St. Edmund’s College, Shillong.

Later, the students of State Institute of Arts & Culture, Shillong presented a folk song at the function, wearing traditional Khasi, Garo and Jaintia dresses.

Various programmes were held during the Fair, which included debate and drawing competitions for children, besides panel discussions and multi-lingual poetry readings, where twelve women poets rendered their poems in English, Hindi, Khasi, Jaintia, Asamiya, Bangla, Nepali and Marathi.

Over 43 exhibitors from Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal and Delhi participated in the Fair. It was well-attended by a number of school students, teachers, librarians, parents, booklovers as well as by print and visual media.

Mrs. Kanchan W. Sharma, Assistant Director, NBT coordinated the Fair.

China will be the Guest of Honour Country in the next edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair to be held from 9 to 17 January 2016 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

During the visit of the Mr. Xi Jinping, Chinese President in India, a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect was signed between Dr. M.A. Sikandar, Director, National Book Trust, India and Mr. Cai Fuchao, Chief Administrator, State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT) of the People’s Republic of China in the presence of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, and the Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping at the Hyderabad House, New Delhi on 18 September 2014.

China is the largest publisher of books, the second largest producer of electronic publications, and, in terms of total output value, the third largest printer in the world. In 1950, there were 211 publishing houses in China and 12,153 kinds of books with total print run of 275 million volumes per year. There are now 560 publishers, mostly publishing companies, in China, not including those specializing in publishing for national minorities and visually impaired people. Moreover, there are more than 10,000 periodical publishers, mostly publishing companies, in China.

According to a Study on the System of Development Index in a Well-off Society by the China Institute of publishing science, the value of the Chinese industry will reach RMB800 billion by the year 2020, accounting to 1.9-2.0% of GDP, printing 8.198 billion volumes per year.

Currently, the Chinese industry is being influenced by the digital technology at large scale. The Chinese publishing market consists of printed, online and mobile phone publications. The Chinese industry is becoming increasingly international and the copyright trade is developing rapidly. The industry is making remarkable achievements in copyright business and co-publication. It not only actively introduces excellent books from abroad but also successfully releases many publications about ancient Chinese civilization and contemporary Chinese culture.

Over 200 publishers are expected to participate in the New Delhi World Book Fair. Besides, a delegation of writers and scholars are expected to take part in discussions, round tables and other literary programmes with their Indian counterparts. Chinese publishers will also take part in New Delhi Rights Table to be held from 11 to 12 January 2016.

It is hoped that the strong presence of the Chinese publishers in the New Delhi World Book Fair will increase the exchange of culture and literature and strengthen mutual cooperation between the two countries.

Chinese Print Publishing
- 7.9 billion books published in 2013
- 440,000 titles, 12% increase from 2012
- Science & Education books increase by 26,000 titles
- Children’s titles increase by 40.4%
Dr. Rita Chowdhury Joins as Director NBT

Dr. Rita Chowdhury (b. 1960) has joined as Director of the National Book Trust, India. She takes over from Dr M A Sikandar, following his repatriation to the University of Delhi on completion of his deputation.

Born at Nampong in Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, Dr Rita Chowdhury holds master's degree in Political Science as well as Asamiya, followed by LLB. She got her Ph.D. from Guwahati University. Before joining the Trust, she was an Associate Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, Cotton College, Guwahati.

A prominent Asamiya novelist, poet and activist, Dr Chowdhury’s oeuvre include Makam, a poignant portrayal of Assamese Indian community of Chinese origin; Deo Lankhui, a novel of epic proportion on the glorious Tiwa Kingdom of Assam; and Ei Xomoy Xei Xomoy, a fictionalized account of the societal and political changes brought in by historic Assam Agitation against illegal immigration from Bangladesh to Assam.


Farewell to Dr M.A. Sikandar

A warm farewell to Dr M.A. Sikandar was given on 20 July 2015, following his repatriation to the University of Delhi on completion of his deputation. Dr M.A. Sikandar joined as Director, NBT India in the year 2011.

Humble and down-to-earth, Dr Sikandar’s infectious enthusiasm and a dynamic approach to work ethics, endeared him not only to the staff of NBT but also to the publishing fraternity at large. Under his leadership he initiated some new programmes at the Trust including opening of Book Promotion Centres (BPC) across the country, Financial Assistance Programme (FAP) for foreign publishers as an incentive to promote Indian books abroad. NBT has opened BPCs in Chennai, Agartala, Guwahati, Cuttack, Hyderabad, Patna and Kochi. A number of renowned Indian authors have been translated into various foreign languages under the FAP programme.

His innovative outreach programmes include literary events in tribal areas of Indian hinterlands, thereby reaching books to these very remote areas. His contribution to the promotion of books includes organizing book fairs in the farthest parts of the country like Leh, Kargil and various places in Northeast.

It was during his tenure that the biennial New Delhi World Book Fair turned a new chapter as the successful annual NDWBF, with many exciting events. It enabled special interactive spaces for authors, brought together the heads of publishing companies at CEOSpeak and also created unique business ambience for publishers at New Delhi Rights Table.

We at NBT wish him success in all his future endeavours.
**Book Review**

The Internet has become the byword acquiring the status of verb and noun in the English lexicon. There are several books about the Internet. Each one of them focuses on a specific aspect of the field or the innovations which have made the Internet possible (for example, Walter Isaacson’s book ‘The Innovators’). This book is different, and in a sense unique as it fulfills a felt need for a book which presents the complex technology that drives the Internet in simple language.

The book deserves credit for its completeness based on the author’s own research into available materials across the globe. It has come out at the right time when the World Wide Web has completed 25 years and the Internet is poised for a big leap forward. Also, the first Web Observatory in Asia has just been set up in Bengaluru to observe the web universe and make sense of the emerging Age of Big Data.

For the first time in history, an electronic net of connectivity unites the world with instant access and communication of text, voice, images, and sound and music. The search engines and social media have become integrated with the daily lives of millions: Google with two million search requests every minute; YouTube with 4 billion clips a day uploaded; Facebook with more than a billion users worldwide and Twitter with 230 million worldwide sending out over one lakh tweets a minute globally. The Internet of things, where virtually every object can be a computer, is set to drive global connectivity in the near future and that would add enormously to the data stored, posing new challenges in analysing the information.

India has the second largest user base for the Internet after China, with more than 270 million and counting by the hour. What is remarkable is the fast growth from only 20 million in 2005. A growing young generation of Internet users needs an easily accessible and balanced introduction to it, as well as its benefits and pitfalls. The book under review is designed to be of use not only to general readers but to professionals as well, with reviews of the latest trends in technology in this field.

The author, with his four decades of experience in popular science writing, is eminently qualified to undertake the challenging task. The title of the book aptly describes the current status of the Internet. The Internet Revolution is far from over; in fact, it is evolving. The book traces the origin of the Internet and points out how innovations in integrated circuits, computing, software and networking, resulted in the emergence of the free and open Web, led by its founder Tim-Berners Lee. Citing the contributions of engineers and scientists of many nations, the book points out that no single country can claim monopoly in its regulation.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is its portraits of the pioneers of the Internet, including several Indians – Ayyadurai (e-mail), Sabeer Bhatia (Hotmail), Vinod Dham (Pentium III), Amit Singhal (Google’s Page Ranking) and Sundar Pichai (Chrome). The changing ecosystem of the Internet is brought out in the light of the emerging cloud computing, smartphones and open software. The book outlines the growth of India’s IT industry, and the challenges faced by its pioneers in computing and IT ventures. The author highlights the key role of software, where India, with its young and intelligent human resources, is a leading player in the world. A separate section (Part IV, Trends in India) with quotes from A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and the Google’s Eric Schmidt should enthuse the Indian youth to take up challenges to make the Internet beneficial to the large underserved Indian population.

Though it is a matter of satisfaction that India has the second largest number of Internet users in the world, next only to China, it would be a great challenge to take the Internet to nearly a billion people in India, currently not within its reach. It would be an equally big challenge to promote the use of the Internet not only for sports and entertainment, but for broadening the knowledge base of our students as well as for good governance. The author proudly recalls how Indian computer engineers and scientists successfully faced the international climate of denial of advanced super computer technology and turned a deficit into an asset for the nation.

The book demystifies the basic technologies that drive the Internet in non-technical terms and points out how several key innovations morphed in a short time from being stray curiosities to game changers that connected the world and impacted on nearly all sections of society.

The book is dedicated to ‘all those who love freedom on the Internet’. It is timely as we are in an age of mass surveillance by the state in many countries. The author rightly points out that the term ‘Internets’ in plural is an oxymoron, as there can only be one Internet universally accepted as a free platform for exchange of views, news, entertainment and business, as the pioneers intended it to be. Accordingly, the book points out the danger to an open and free Internet posed by several countries. In India too it makes out a case for the removal of outmoded legal
provisions in the Information Act. The author can derive satisfaction for taking up causes, not so popular when it comes to freedom on the Internet, as his frank plea to review the IT Act (pp. 243–244) has been vindicated by the Supreme Court’s landmark judgement striking down Section 66A.

Megacorporate control of the Internet is analysed in the context of the proliferation of proprietary apps (applications) that have grown from 500 in the early version of the Apple phone to over 1.5 million in today’s smartphones and its impact on the relevance of the open and free Web, advocated by the founders. The technological foundations of the Web are examined in terms of the Hypertext Markup Language-5 (HTML-5), which is now formally notified as the language of the Web. The book makes an extensive description of the social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo and YouTube and the search engine, Google, tracing their impressive growth and impact on human intercommunication, while pointing out the potential for their intrusion into the privacy of the users. The author has brought out the implications of the interplay between technology and social forces covering the issues of privacy, the Internet addictive syndrome, as well as the impact on commerce, printed word and the mass media.

The author has also turned the spotlight on the emerging Internet in terms of the Age of Big Data. He has indicated the fascinating advances being made in storing data on an unprecedented scale and the vast potential of new knowledge that can flow from using mega data.

The book is lucid, comprehensive and interestingly written, and structured in a reader-friendly way with a rich Glossary, Index and pleasing colour images of the pioneers. And the style is lively without any unexplained technical terms. What I like most are the Box Items, 53 in all, each one of them giving in-depth information in a succinct manner.

It is hoped that the author would give a more detailed account of the progress made by Indian IT industry in the later editions of the book. One wishes the publisher had used better quality paper for a book of this nature. It is also hoped that the National Book Trust (NBT) will bring an e-Book version of this important work and publish it in Hindi and other languages.

The author and NBT have done a commendable service to the younger generation. I would urge educational authorities to make the book accessible to a wide section of the student community, so that our younger generation is better informed and inspired by the pioneers of the Internet and utilize it constructively.

S. SAMPATHKUMAR
Tata Consultancy Services Ltd

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Graphic Novels

The term ‘Graphic Novel’ became popular within the comics community after the publication of the Will Eisner’s A Contract with God, and Other Tenement Stories in 1978 and became popular amongst booklovers in the late 1980’s with the publication of three works – Frank Miller’s The Dark Night Returns, Alan Moore’s Watchmen and the Pulitzer Prize winning Maus by Art Spiegelman.

Over the period of time, graphic novels have gained recognition not only among the book publishing community but also booklovers across the world. In India, it is an emerging genre. As per the National Youth Readership Survey (2010) got conducted by NBT through NCAER, 7.5% youth readers in the age-group of 15-35 showed preference for this genre. Considering that many publishers are taking initiatives to bring out graphic novels, the genre seems to have caught the imagination of the youth readers. It needs to be mentioned that 11.5% showed preference for mythology, 17.5% comics, 18.5% Fantasy, and 16.3% for Thrillers—the areas which can be creatively covered through the medium of graphic novels.

National Book Trust, India has ventured into the genre of graphic novels to meet the reading needs of the young readers. NBT brought out its first graphic novel Sriratna & Kim Suro: The Legend of an Indian Princess in Korea in 2013 on the occasion of India’s presentation as the Guest of Honour Country at Seoul International Book Fair.

To take this further, NBT has mooted an idea to publish a series of graphic novels based on the folk/heroic/legendary characters of the North-east of India. A discussion on graphic novels was organized at NBT premises to give shape to the project. Authors, illustrators and scholars from North-east participated in the programme. They discussed at length about the scope of using folklore of North-East for graphic novels, the various dimensions and aspects related to folktales of North-East, representing culture and tradition in graphic novels, danger of being lost in translation, needs of the readers and North-East and cautions to be taken while representing issues related to North-East.

NBT Financial Assistance Programme for Translations

National Book Trust, India has set up a NBT Financial Assistance Programme (NBT FAP), a dedicated Rights Programme that pursues translation of Indian books into foreign languages. Under this initiative, The Trust provides financial assistance to foreign publishers who are interested in translating Indian works.

The programme covers the broad categories of fiction, non-fiction, science and technology and books for children except dictionaries, magazines, journals, textbooks for schools/colleges and professional courses like medicine, engineering, science & technology, business administration.

Under this programme, the regional language publications not available in English translations are also considered for foreign languages. In such cases, if a direct translator for the target language is not found, the Trust facilitates its translation into English.

Since its inception, the book The Missing Queen, authored by Samhita Arni has been translated into Italian; Collection of Ambai’s Short Stories into French; and the two NBT titles My Little India, authored by Manoj Das and Looking Back: India in Twentieth Century, edited by N N Vohra and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, have been translated into the Korean language.

As a part of this programme, the Trust organizes a Rights Table Forum for publishers during the New Delhi World Book Fair. The first Rights Table was organized during New Delhi World Book Fair in 2013. The last Rights Table was participated by over 100 publishers from India and abroad. A two day event, the Rights Table brings together publishers, rights-agents and editors from India and abroad to network and explore business opportunities together. Organised as B2B match making sessions, it enables the participants to book their own Rights Table, meet and present their products and ideas.

In the next edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair, the New Delhi Rights Table will be organized from 11 to 12 January 2016. The publishers, who wish to participate in the upcoming Rights Table, may visit the website: http://www.newdelhiworldbookfair.gov.in for detailed information.

Books Received

Protection of Children on Internet; Karnika Seth; Universal Law Publishing Co., A-73/1, G.T. Karnal Road Industrial Area, Delhi-110033; 978-93-5035-556-5; Rs. 250

Authors by an acclaimed cyber law expert and educationist, this is a simple guide book that aims to provide useful information and tips to parents and children, educators, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, legislators and others on how to safeguard children on the internet and combat online child abuse. While drawing examples from other countries such as US and Europe including UK to combat online child abuse, the author has made some pertinent recommendations on various techno-legal and social measures that can be adopted for safeguarding children on internet. Written in a simple manner with easy glossary of important cyber terms for readers who may not be familiar with technical jargon of cyberspace, the book will be very useful for everyone interested in the subject.

Anger in Contemporary Indian English Poetry; Dr Vijay Vishal; Vivek Publishing House, Dhamani Market, Chaura Rasta, Jaipur; 978-93-83127-04-7; Rs 800

A critical study of three noted living poets of the post-Emergency era. Though they live far apart from each other, one in the east (R.K. Singh), another in the west (I.K. Sharma), and the last in the south (P. Raja), they hit the common target choosing the weapons of their choice. The author demonstrates various manifestations of ‘anger’ in the poetry of this trio from the body of their texts. He also culls out ‘anger’ and its variables in the poetry of rich galaxy of poets, both men and women, in the domain of Indian English poetry and this study has gained an extra layer of history through poetry.
Excerpts

The word yoga evokes some very contrasting and apparently irreconcilable images. The commonest of these is that of some techniques such as asanas, pranayamas and meditation. The other image is that of yogis who have renounced life, are on a spiritual quest, and spend long years on the mountains or in a cave in search of the Divine. These days it is also quite trendy to describe yoga as a way of life. Each of these images has a grain of truth, and it is not as difficult to reconcile them as it looks. Let us see how we can reconcile techniques, renunciation, the Divine, and a way of life.

Techniques
The simplest way of looking at yoga is as a process of self-improvement, a process that affects both the body and the mind. In other words, as a result of practicing yoga a person becomes physically more fit, emotionally more stable and intellectually more agile. Further, in yoga, the process of improvement is carried to its logical conclusions. Improvement is not as simple a word as it looks. After some improvement has been achieved, one finds that there is scope for further improvement. Since there is always room for improvement, the process of self-improvement can become a life-long journey. If a journey is long, one way to make it easier is to move faster by using the best available technology. For example, for travelling a short distance, we may walk; for a longer distance, we may use a train; and for going to the other side of the globe, we have to use an aeroplane. Since self-improvement is a long journey, for improving the body-mind complex, yoga uses the best available technology. Over thousands of years, yoga has worked out techniques such as asanas (postures), pranayamas (breathing disciplines) and meditation, which do far better than simply jogging, cycling or swimming. Techniques are the most visible part of yoga, but these techniques are not enough to stay physically and mentally fit. Eating the right kinds of food in just the right quantity, not putting into the body any substance which might harm the body, and adequate sleep, are also necessary for staying healthy, and are a part of what is called ‘physical culture’ in yoga.

Renunciation
When a journey is long, another strategy we employ is to choose a route that has the minimum number of traffic lights, the maximum number of flyovers, and the least possibility of a traffic jam. In the long journey called yoga, such a route lies through renunciation. Worldly life involves so many temptations, distractions, obligations, responsibilities and conflicts that it slows down the process of self-improvement. One way out of all these problems is to renounce worldly life. If we renounce worldly life, all the problems associated with the world disappear automatically — na hoga baans, na bajegi baansuri (if there is no hollow piece of wood available, it is impossible to play on the flute). But the path of total physical renunciation is a path that suits only a select few. For the rest of us, detachment (inner renunciation) is all that is feasible, and is in fact necessary on the path of yoga. However, now it is easy to see why great yogis choose a secluded spot, away from the rough and tumble of the world, for their exploration of the mysteries of existence.

The Divine
Even a long journey should at least have some goal. The goal of self-improvement would be a point beyond which no further improvement is possible. The point beyond which no further improvement is possible is the point of perfection. Thus the goal of yoga is self-perfection. However, man (and woman) is, by definition, imperfect; only the Divine is perfect. Therefore, the goal of yoga is to achieve identity, or union, with the Divine. In terms of Vedanta, the philosophy underlying yoga, man is a manifestation of the Divine. Hence, the union is a self-discovery. Becoming conscious of the Divine within the individual, as well as in all creation, is the goal of yoga. Yoga (yuj, union) literally means union. The union it implies is becoming one with what we truly are at the deepest level. In short, the Divine is the goal of yoga, which is the same as saying that perfection is the goal of yoga. However, moving from the point where we are now towards perfection is also called yoga. Thus, yoga is both the journey as well as the goal; both the process as well as the product.

The Divine enters yoga not only as the goal, but also as an indispensable aid. In a long and difficult journey, and yoga is a journey that is both long and difficult, we also look for guidance, protection, and help from someone who is more knowledgeable and more powerful. In yoga, the Divine is the power whose Grace is indispensable for making any significant progress. The Divine needs instruments to act, and our guru can be that instrument. Thus the Divine is our beacon light on the journey called yoga, and His force may work through the guru.

One might add that it is still possible to practice yoga without believing in the Divine. An atheist can look upon yoga as the product. The Divine needs instruments to act, and our guru can be that instrument. Thus the Divine is our beacon light on the journey called yoga, and His force may work through the guru. However, he may get impatient or anxious, because he will not have available neither the solace nor the certitude that comes from believing in the Divine’s Grace; he is on his own in the long journey.
Workshop on Yoga

For the well-being of the NBT staff, a week-long workshop on Yoga was organized at the NBT Conference Room, from 20 to 24 July 2015.

While inaugurating the workshop, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT, said, “Yoga is helpful in changing the lifestyle of a person. It not only helps in improving physical health but also brings mental peace.” He urged the people present on the occasion to make Yoga a part of life.

During the workshop, the employees were given basic information on Yoga and its benefits. The staff also learnt various asanas and pranayams that can be practiced easily on regular basis.

The workshop was conducted by the experts from the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.