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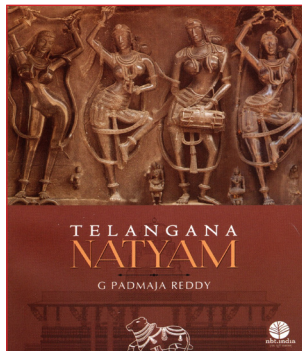
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PICK OF THE MONTH



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Education Minister Inaugurates NDWBF 2026

The New Delhi World Book Fair 2026 at the Bharat Mandapam was inaugurated on 10th January by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, who spoke on the occasion about the presence of more than 20 lakh readers, 1000+ publishers from 50



countries, and organisation of 600+ literary events indicating the reach of NDWBF. According to Shri Pradhan, it was not merely an exhibition of books for the “Indian market” but a live example of the country’s expansive and democratic tradition of dialogue.

India has emerged as the third largest centre of knowledge in the global publishing industry, which is reflected by the comprehensiveness, linguistic diversity and global relevance of its knowledge system, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said. Dwelling on the fair’s theme, ‘Indian Military History: Valour and Wisdom@75’, he said it celebrates “the ideals of courage and wisdom in nation-building.” He also drew attention to the

organisation of two special exhibitions; Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel@150 and Vande Mataram@150, while recalling the rendition of the national song by Pandit Omkarnath Thakur on All India Radio on the morning of August 15, 1947, as a proclamation of an independent nation.

Referring to the global stature of NDWBF, Prof Milind Sudhakar Marathe, Chairman, NBT, India, said that organisers of leading international book fairs such as Frankfurt, Bologna and Seoul look towards NDWBF as a major learning platform and participate in it to observe and understand its inclusive and reader-centric model.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister of Culture of Qatar, H. E. Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim AlThani, said Qatar's participation as the Guest of Honour country "reflects the depth of bilateral relations between our two countries. Our relationship is based on mutual respect and a belief in the role of culture and knowledge in strengthening bonds between people."

Describing NDWBF 2026 as "a global cultural event that celebrates the book as the memory of nations and a bridge for human dialogue," he said the presence of the Gulf State, "affirms the pivotal role of books in shaping consciousness and also building civilisations. It is a role the State of Qatar is committed to support through encouraging reading and investing in knowledge."

Addressing the gathering, Mr Ernest Urtasun, the Minister of Culture of Spain, the Focus country at NDWBF 2026, appreciated NBT's efforts at organising the fair at such a grand scale.

NDWBF 2026, he said, offers a valuable opportunity to promote Spanish writers in India and dwelt on the strong Indo-Spain literary ties citing the Spanish translations of Rabindranath Tagore undertaken by

the Spanish Nobel laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez and his wife, Zenobia Camprubí.

This was followed by Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launching the Spanish and nine Indian-language editions of *The Saga of Kudopali: The Unsung Heroes of 1857* and presenting them to the dignitaries on the dais.

The coming together of authors, publishers, and readers on a single platform serves as an excellent reflection of India's literary consciousness, the Union Education Minister said, emphasising the government's priority to make knowledge dissemination inclusive with the use of digital technology.

The Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya is an important initiative in this direction attempting to make education and knowledge accessible to one and all through the digital platform. With a repository of more than 6000

e-books in 22 Indian languages and English, in audio, visual and sign-language formats, Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya



is playing a significant role in bridging the digital divide, the Union Education Minister said.

Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, NBT, India described the organisation of the nine-day fair as "a synergetic act of great coordination, collaboration, and cooperation from many stakeholders." Presenting the vote of thanks, Shri Malik, said that publishing for NBT "is not an act of profit, it is an act of purpose. Every single book we release in the Book Fair is an act of nation-building." He also expressed special gratitude to Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan whose unstinting support enabled NBT to make entry to the fair first time, free-of-cost for general public.

Among the foreign dignitaries present on the dais were the Ambassador of Qatar to India, H.E. Mohammed Hassan Jabir-Al-Jabir and the Spanish Director General of Books, Comics and Reading, Ms Maria José Gálvez. Also gracing the occasion were the Managing Director of India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) Dr Neeraj Kharwal, and its Executive Director, Shri Premjit Lal, and Shri Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Union Ministry of Education.



Celebrating Indian Military History @75: Valour and Wisdom

The New Delhi World Book Fair, a cherished tradition for readers across the country, returned in 2026 with a powerful and evocative theme, “Indian Military History: Valour and Wisdom @75.” The theme went beyond the tales of battles and bravery to celebrate India’s military legacy through institutional memory, leadership, strategic thinking, and the wisdom gained over decades of service to the Nation. Designed as a 360-degree experience, the theme pavilion in Hall 5 of Bharat Mandapam included a collective exhibit of 500+ books, curated posters, documentaries, and installations. Its key attractions were the replicas of the Arjun Tank, INS Vikrant and LCA Tejas, and tributes to twenty-one Param Vir Chakra awardees.



As India enters the eightieth year of Independence, the theme was meant to encourage reflection on the Armed Forces as enduring institutions of the republic

and how India’s military history is more than a record of wars. It reflected a long tradition of service, discipline, and sound

judgement shaped by civilisational values and constitutional responsibility. From early and colonial traditions to post-Independence



wars, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, and recent counter insurgency combat such as Operation Sindoor, this legacy demonstrates both operational strength and institutional maturity.

One of the major highlights of the theme pavilion was the opportunity to listen hair-raising accounts of courage and valour from brave soldiers like Lt Gen (retd) KJS Dhillon, author of the widely read and acclaimed book *Kitne Ghazi Aaye, Kitne Ghazi Gaye*, an account of counter-terrorism

operations in Kashmir that has resonated deeply with readers for its authenticity and ground-level insight.

Other prominent speakers who enlightened the visitors were former Army Chief Gen (retd) VK Singh, Lt Gen (retd) Satish Dua, Air Marshal (retd) Vikram Singh, Lt Cmd (retd) Neeraj Vashisth, etc. on topics ranging from Operation Sindoor, last year to the Indian army's role in the 1971 Indo-Pak war that led to the formation of Bangladesh.

Designed by the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, the pavilion presents a holistic view of India's military journey and the invaluable sacrifices and contributions made by its soldiers in securing the frontiers of our Nation.

Celebrating the theme of the book fair, the National Book Trust also published a special catalogue reflecting the collective exhibit of books at the pavilion. It featured the finest literature on the thematic subject from every nook and corner of the country.

The theme catalogue was a carefully structured scholarly effort. It brought together important works across the main genres of military history, biography, autobiography, memoirs, and strategy, and defence studies. These works address campaigns, leadership,

organisational evolution, and strategic thought across the three forces, bringing coherence and perspective to the subject.

The selected works prioritised experience and rigorous research, helping readers develop a balanced understanding of military institutions and their role in democratic society.

Some of the prominent authors whose works featured in the catalogue are Lt Gen (retd) Satish

Dua, Lt Gen (retd) Satish Nambiar, Maj Gen (retd) Ian Cardozo, Maj Gen (retd) Arjun Muthanna, Air Mshl (retd) Jagjeet Singh, Col (retd) Ajay K Raina, Jaishree Laxmikant, Swapnil Pandey, among others.

The theme catalogue was a tribute to the gallant tales of the Indian Armed Forces and was presented as a resource for thoughtful engagement with India's military heritage, defined by professionalism, responsibility, valour, and wisdom.

The Navy Chief visited NDWBF 2026 on Day 7 of the Fair for releasing two books on the Indian Navy, *Forged by the Sea:*



The Indian Navy Story and *Echoes of Courage*. Felicitating the CNS on the occasion, Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director NBT, thanked the Indian Navy for providing NBT the opportunity to collaborate, observing that there could be no better occasion to release these works when the fair's theme is 'Indian Military History: Valour and Wisdom@75.' The release function included a thrilling presentation on the various operations of the Indian Navy. CNS also visited the Theme Pavilion and appreciated the various exhibits on display.

The Home Minister of India, Shri Amit Shah also graced the New Delhi World Book Fair with his presence on 17th January. He visited the Theme Pavilion in Hall 5, and appreciated the meticulously created exhibits.



CEOSpeak: Strategic Dialogue to Strengthen the Publishing Ecosystem

CEOSpeak held on 11th January in Hotel Ashok, New Delhi, as a part of NDWBF 2026 was centred on the theme ‘Decoding the Future of Publishing.’ It emerged as a significant forum for strategic dialogue that brought together policymakers, publishers, and industry leaders from India and abroad, reinforcing the institutional and industry linkages that underpin the publishing ecosystem.

Prof Milind Sudhakar Marathe, Chairman, NBT, India set the tone for reflective engagement at the inaugural session describing CEOSpeak as a structured platform, distinct from the commercial activity of book fairs, that enables senior leaders to deliberate on long-term challenges, systemic shifts, and policy directions.

He highlighted the scale of Indian publishing—over 12 lakh jobs, 9000 publishers, and 21,000 retailers—and pointed to the transformative impact of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and machine learning. While print continues to dominate output, he noted the steady rise of digital and audio formats, alongside challenges related to cost, royalty structures, self-publishing, intellectual property, and sustainability.

Delivering the keynote address, Shri Anandrao V. Patil, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education, emphasised the growing importance of structured policy-industry engagement. He positioned CEOSpeak as a vital complement to NDWBF’s role as a global hub for ideas, rights exchange, and cultural diplomacy.

Highlighting India’s multilingual and diverse reading landscape, Shri Patil underscored that print remains foundational, particularly in education, even as platforms such as the National Digital Library of India (NDLI), DIKSHA, and e-Pathshala expand access. Technology must enhance creativity and inclusion, not replace them, he cautioned while advocating balanced approaches to copyright, sustainability, and support for small and medium publishers.

Ms María Gil Burman, Director, Instituto Cervantes, New Delhi, highlighted Spain’s participation as Focus Country at NDWBF within the framework of the Spain India dual year. She outlined initiatives promoting Spanish literature, linguistic diversity, and translation, alongside poetry readings, children’s programmes, and institutional collaboration. These efforts, she noted, strengthened cultural diplomacy and sustained literary exchange between the two countries.

From Qatar, Ms Asma Al-Kuwari, Director, Nabja Publishing House, traced the evolution of the Gulf nation’s publishing sector from state-led cultural patronage to a knowledge-driven industry.



She highlighted the growth in children’s publishing, the emergence of specialised publishers, and the use of digital, audio, and AI-driven processes to build a mature publishing ecosystem.

Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, NBT, outlined India’s forward-looking vision for reading and publishing. He highlighted initiatives such as the Pune Book Festival, Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya, translation grants, and India’s expanding presence through our country’s pavilions at different global book fairs, underscoring NBT’s commitment to strengthening access, diversity, and international engagement in publishing.

The session was followed by a panel discussion, moderated by Mr Pranav Gupta, bringing together voices from Japan, Israel, Spain, Qatar, and India. Panellists examined the impact of artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and evolving reader behaviour, while reaffirming the publisher’s enduring role as curator, rights-holder, and cultural custodian. The exchange captured the central spirit of CEO Speak bridging policy, practice, and perspective to collectively reflect on how national priorities and global collaboration can shape the future of publishing.



Two Glorious Days of NDRT

The 13th edition of the New Delhi Rights Table (NDRT), a significant B2B component of the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026, began on 12th January at an energetic note garnering over 85 stakeholders from more than 20 countries for the two-day event facilitating global publishing collaboration.

With over 700 meetings already scheduled between rights holders, publishers, translators, and literary professionals, the New Delhi Rights Table, organised by the National Book Trust, emerged as a dynamic platform for business-to-business engagement and cross-cultural exchange.

Prof Milind Sudhakar Marathe, Chairman, NBT, in his welcome note, underlined NDRT's mission to strengthen publisher's networks, support business development, and promote structured rights transfer across regions and languages.

He appreciated the presence of Ms Claudia Kaiser, Vice President, Business Development, Frankfurt Book Fair and described Frankfurt as a global pioneer in professional rights exchange and B2B publishing, whose model serves as an important reference for the NDRT.

In her keynote, Ms Kaiser applauded India's rich publishing legacy, recalling New Delhi as the first Asian Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1986, and again after twenty years in

2006. She highlighted ongoing collaborations through their international offices and praised the NDRT for providing a vibrant platform for global knowledge and literature exchange.

The NDRT allows participants to reserve their own tables, arrange independent meetings, and showcase publications and ideas. Promoting Indian books in English, Hindi, and regional languages, the platform fosters rights exchanges, translations, and co-publication opportunities.

Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, NBT, summarised the discussions, stressing that



rights exchange thrives on collaboration, quality content, and global visibility. He underlined the transformative power of translation in projecting India's soft power in the era of Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning, with academic publishing comprising nearly 70 percent of the market and trade publishing around 35 to 40 percent.

Continuing for with an equally robust second-day on 13th January, the NDRT grew from a marketplace of books and rights into a full-fledged celebration of ideas, culture, and collaboration, propelling Indian publishing into the global spotlight and reaffirming the enduring power of literature as a messenger of knowledge, dialogue, and peace.

The day reaffirmed the platform's growing stature as an international rights marketplace, recording 700+ productive B2B meetings which translated into active negotiations on rights exchange, translation fellowships, and strategic collaborations. Participating publishers and literary agencies consistently underlined the value of NDRT's expanding global reach. Shri Pradeep Gamage, CEO of Goodreads Lanka Solutions, attending the two-day programme for the fourth consecutive year, observed a marked increase in international presence,



particularly from Japan and prominent global publishing networks. He highlighted India's position as a key regional market and expressed interest in future collaborations with the National Book Trust (NBT), India.

Indian publishers shared this confidence. Shri Yassir Arafat of Magic Moon Publishers, Delhi, participating for the second time, appreciated the timely communication, and productive international enquiries facilitated by the National Book Trust team. The publisher also noted increasing engagement with Arabic, Turkish, and Spanish markets, supported by NBT-led fellowship initiatives, which continue to strengthen its global outlook.

Literary agencies and publishers from Chile, Turkey, Sri Lanka,

and West Asia complimented the professional arrangements, linguistic diversity, and institutional support. Representatives from LPA agency, Hib Hawks, PickleYolk Books, IBMC Lanka, Dar Roza Publishing, and Nar Publishing referred to focused business interactions, growing publisher interest, and the constructive role of the National Book Trust Financial Assistance Programme (NBT-FAP).

Shri Kumar Vikram, Chief Editor and Joint Director, NBT, delivered the vote of thanks, highlighting the role of the Financial Assistance Programme for translations in bringing Indian literature to the world stage. He thanked speakers, participants, and organisers for their meticulous efforts in making the Rights Table a success.

Reading India Samvaad 2026

Readings India Samvaad 2026 took place as part of the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026 on 15th and 16th January to convene a national dialogue aimed at strengthening India's reading ecosystem and reimagining libraries as inclusive, future-ready centres of knowledge. Conceived and hosted by the National Book Trust (NBT), India, under the Ministry of Education, the two-day leadership dialogue welcomed Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, as the Chief Guest, who lent his guidance for shaping the national reading agenda.

The Samvaad provided a platform for policymakers, educators, librarians, and civil society stakeholders to deliberate on the future of reading in India, placing it at the centre of the nation's knowledge and learning agenda. It explored the role of reading in fostering foundational skills, critical thinking, cultural literacy, creativity, and lifelong learning, while positioning libraries not only as repositories of knowledge but as active, inclusive spaces that support both classrooms and communities.

Over the two days of the programme, a series of panel discussions and dialogues took place focused on themes such as transitioning from textbooks to a reading culture through redesigned classrooms,



expanding digital access via the Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya, and strengthening libraries through public-private partnerships.

The inaugural day of Reading India Samvaad was centred around the foundations of reading, school ecosystems, and evolving pedagogies, as also the integration of libraries and storytelling into classroom practice, and the role of educators as reading champions. These discussions were meant to identify practical models that can transform classrooms into vibrant, reading-rich environments and contribute to the formulation of a Roadmap 2026–27 for schools and educational institutions.

Day two of the programme addressed digital innovation, artificial

intelligence, partnerships, and system-level acceleration, exploring strategies to scale reading initiatives, ensure digital inclusion, strengthen SCERT and Samagra Shiksha reading programmes, and leverage public-private partnerships for library and digital infrastructure. The sessions examined innovative technology pathways to support a national reading culture and develop a National Reading Roadmap.

Aligned with the National Education Policy 2020 and the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047, Reading India Samvaad 2026 sought to generate collaborative commitments and actionable strategies to advance reading as a national priority, laying the foundation for an inclusive and knowledge-driven future. Hence, the Samvaad aimed to facilitate the formation of a National Reading Working Group to guide and co-ordinate efforts in advancing a culture of reading across the country.

“We need to basically become a society that is strategic,” Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education and

Literacy, Union Ministry of Education, said at the inaugural session of the two-day leadership dialogue on shaping the national reading agenda.

“We need to start thinking about things that matter to us and have a long-term vision that thinks 20 years ahead... 50 years ahead... This is the kind of strategy we must evolve among our culture,” Shri Kumar Vikram, Chief Editor and Joint

Director, NBT, India said, explaining that this could only happen if we started reading, thinking and discussing what will affect us in 20 years. London got its metro in 1866, while Delhi got it in 2004. It is not because of money but because they had the foresight to think strategically, said Shri Kumar, pointing toward the need to have an ecosystem that not only has books on strategic thinking but also readers with an interest in it.

In his opening remarks, Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director of NBT, India said the book fair is not an act of profit but “Purpose of life that we are trying to give our children; our society; our foundational learning.” Underlining the importance of having our own books, Shri Malik said if we didn’t have our books, anyone can change our thoughts, our culture. The history of India cannot be said in just 280 words, it requires thousands of words, he asserted. “NBT is willing to take up the responsibility of bridging the gap and providing such content in various

RNI-39456/82
Date of Publication: 01/02/2026
Total number of pages: 8



languages,” he said.

In the context of strengthening the reading ecosystem in India, Shri Rajshikhar Joshi, Vice Chairman of SETU Aayog, Government of Uttarakhand stressed upon the need for transforming libraries from silent rooms to living ecosystems and making them technologically driven in order to keep them relevant for the younger generation. Shri Joshi advocated for a pragmatic approach to enhancing the reading culture among children, underlining the need to combine reading and technology by analysing their reading content and reading practices.

Also present on the occasion was Smt Archana Sharma Awasthi, Additional Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, who called upon children to take up reading as a habit. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri Kumar Vikram, expressing gratitude to the distinguished officials for their guidance in organising the programme.

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NBT Newsletter is the in house magazine of the National Book Trust, India — an autonomous organisation of the Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, Government of India.

The views expressed in the signed articles do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Trust.

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Readers are requested to write to the editor expressing their views about the NEWSLETTER.

Printed and published by Anuj Kumar Bharti on behalf of National Book Trust, India and printed at First Impression Corporate Services Private Limited, E-114, Sector-63, Noida-201301, Uttar Pradesh and published at National Book Trust, India, 5 Institutional Area, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070.

Typeset and designed by First Impression, Noida

If undelivered please return to:
National Book Trust, India, 5 Institutional Area, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110 070