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PICK OF THE MONTH



The Asthete

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NBT Celebrates 60th Foundation Day

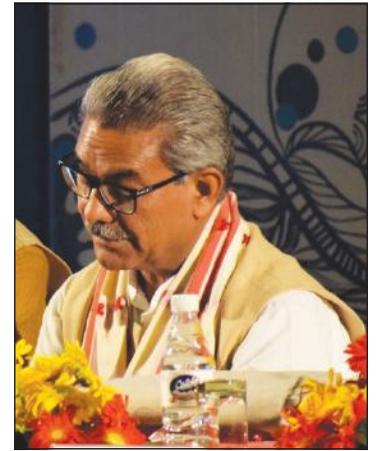
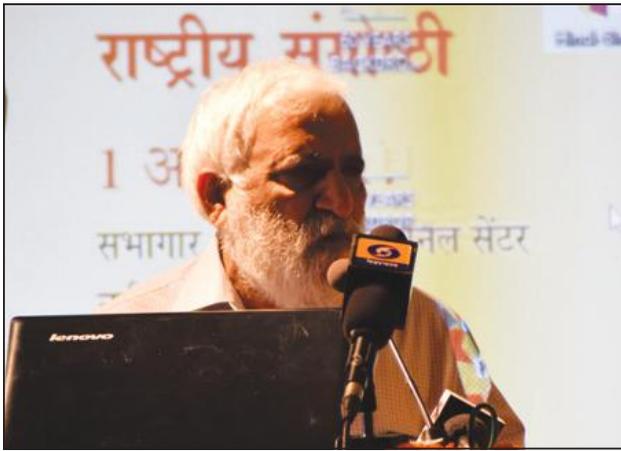


“The world of books is wonderful. They have their own fragrance and reading them gives us joy,” said Shri Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Human Resource Development in his video address at the inauguration of 2-day National Seminar on ‘Bhartiya Sahitya Mein Rashtriyata Ka Bodh’ (Nationalism and Indian Literature) held at IIC, New Delhi from 1 to 2 August 2017. The seminar was organised by the National

Book Trust, India to mark its 60 years of foundation.

Emphasising on the fact that even though digitisation is taking place in the world, the love for books has not diminished. Every year 70,000 books are published, of which 20,000 books are in English. India is the third largest publisher in the world. He added that the format of reading may be different -ebooks, audio books or printed books, the reading habit





has not diminished. He further said that these formats complement each other.

Recalling his days when he was studying in college, Shri Javadekar said that whenever he wished to read a book, he had to search the book in libraries. But now, times have changed. We now have National Digital Library from where readers can access 60,000 books. He further said with the advancement in technology, one can keep several books at one place in the form of ebooks. For those who cannot find time to read books, audio books are helpful as they can listen to it while travelling.

He added that the population is increasing, so is the buying capacity of people. Now a large number of people can be seen buying or browsing through books at book fairs. He said that with new developments, the challenges too have changed and we should take these changes as an opportunity to develop reading habit across the country. Shri Javadekar urged National Book Trust, India to create an action plan, a strategy and a vision to create a new world.

Dr Krishna Gopal, renowned scholar, thinker and writer, who was the chief speaker on the occasion, said that literature is incomplete if it does not create a sense of nationalism. He further said that since Vedic times, nationalism and mankind are an integral part of Indian literature. He said that the works of writers like Valmiki, Ved Vyas and Kalidas mention Bharat as a national entity.

Talking about the unity in diversity of India, Shri Krishna Gopal said that though



we have different languages and culture, the sense of nationalism remains the same in literature. He further said that the concept of nationalism is not new, it was present in Indian literature since ancient times. Even though the foreign invaders were victorious, they were defeated by the philosophic tradition of Indian litterateurs. He talked about Bhakti movement during which litterateurs who were also philosophers played a major role in uniting and awakening the people of India and creating national consciousness about India as a nation. Later in the 19th century, many writers like Rajaram Mohun Roy, Bankim Chandra, Bhartendu, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Maithlisharan Gupt wrote in a new perspective and presented nationalism in a different manner.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Kuldip Chand Agnihotri, Vice Chancellor, Central University, Himachal Pradesh, the special guest on the occasion, said that nationalism can only be felt, it cannot be seen. He was of the view that a "nation without nationalism" is incomplete. Quoting Guru Nanak Dev, he said that he travelled across India and was able to spread his message of oneness even though

he did not know the languages spoken in those areas.

Smt Mridula Sinha, noted author and Governor of Goa, who presided over the function, said that a book is like a tree which plays a role of a son, a friend and a teacher(Guru). She further added that nationalism is like a spark which lightens up when the right time comes.

Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, and Dr. Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT also spoke on the occasion.

On this occasion, some of the NBT's recent publications namely *Physics in Ancient India*, authored by Shankar Nene & N G Dongre; *Mahajeevan: Shyama Prasad Mukherjee* authored by Ananthbandhu Chatterjee; *Bharat Ki Maulik Ekta*, authored by Vasudev Sharan Aggrawal; *Bihar Indradhanushiye Lok Rang*, authored by Mridula Sinha; and *Bharat Rashtra Aur Uski Shiksha Padhati*, authored by Neerja Madhav were also released.

The inauguration was followed by sessions on nationalism in literature, challenges in children's writing, and nationalism and identity. Eminent writers and scholars including Dr Sonal Mansingh, Shri Prem Shankar Tripathi, Dr Avnijesh Awasthi, Dr Kshama Sharma, Dr Darshan Singh Ashat among others presented their views.

The august gathering included well-known authors, scholars and publishers like Shri Kamal Kishore Goenka, Nand Kishore pande, Anamika, Alok Mehta, Manohar Puri, Yatindra Mishra, Suresh Rituparn among others.

NBT Foundation Day Lecture

“I was fascinated by the role the books played in the making of India. A Nation can come into being only when books are written,” said Prof. Makarand R Paranjape while delivering the sixth NBT Foundation Day Lecture on ‘Books and Reading in Today’s India.’ The function was organized on 1 August 2017 at Multipurpose Hall, India International Centre, New Delhi.

Citing one of the early novels in Malayalam, *Indulekha* as a national allegory in which the character of the novel, Madhavan who is in love with Indulekha travels across India, Prof. Paranjape said that in a way the novel creates a larger consciousness of a nation.

Talking about women, in context of reading, Prof. Paranjape observed that women played a larger role in creating a consciousness for reading even before independence. He said that in the 19th century only 0.02 per cent women were literate, and mostly limited to writing their names. He referred to Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade’s wife Ramabai who was not educated but developed her interest in reading when her father sent a letter to her brother asking him to bring the things that she had asked for in her prayers. Ramabai was amazed to see how a piece of paper with a few words written on it fulfilled her desire. This enthused her to take up reading.

Sharing his journey of how he developed habit of reading and fascination for books, he said that he was introduced to the world of books through the personal library of his father and grandfather. His mother was a voracious reader and he used to bring books for her from a lending library. His elder brother was another influence and he read whatever his brother read.

“The romance of books, is how you pick up books,” said Prof. Paranjape while describing his passion for books and his search for his favourite books. He said that he used to visit the Sunday market at Daryaganj where he could buy books at a good discount. “Slowly, I had a respectable collection of books. I found different ways to find books,” said Prof. Paranjape.



“I will not say, I am a collector of books but an owner of a few books,” added Prof. Paranjape. He lamented the fact that these days very few people have libraries at their homes.

Referring to *The Battle of the Books* by Jonathan Swift, one of the greatest satirists of the English language, Prof. Paranjape said that Swift in his book talks about a huge war going on between ancients and moderns. Great arrogance of moderns have changed things.” Referring to the burning of libraries like the Library of Alexandria and Nalanda, Prof. Paranjape said as much as there is progress, there is also a certain decivilization.

While talking about the reading habit amongst people, Prof. Paranjape said that people are no longer interested in reading. According to him, reading is an antisocial activity. He added that book is so antisocial that you even forget to eat or sleep. He felt that people who love books

are learning machines.

Earlier, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT welcomed the guests. He said that with the support of authors and readers, NBT has been carrying forward its publishing programme to promote culture of reading. He said that NBT has 300 bestseller books in different languages. He added that mobile vans are playing a significant role in making books accessible to readers in remote areas.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT, said that “I was nine years old when my elder sister died. During that time books were my only companion giving me solace and comfort. Books told me, do not worry, I am with you. From that time, whenever I am in distress, I hold the hands of books.” She added that books connect the reader with the world and we become a part of a wider universe. “I am one of the readers who survive because of books,” she said.

Makarand R. Paranjape, Professor of English at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, earned his Masters and Doctorate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA). A well-known poet, short story writer and novelist, Prof. Paranjape’s publications include *Cultural Politics in Modern India: Postcolonial Prospects*, *Colourful Cosmopolitanism*, *Global Proximities*, *The Death and Afterlife of Mahatma Gandhi*, and *Making India: Colonialism, National Culture, and the Afterlife of Indian English Authority*.

Makarand was the Inaugural DAAD Global South Visiting Fellow and Erich Auerbach Visiting Professor in World Literature, University of Tuebingen, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Inaugural ICCR Chair in Indian Studies, South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore, CAPES Visiting Professor, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Shivdasani Visiting Fellow, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, University of Oxford.

Makarand is also a columnist for *Swarajya*, *DNA* and *Mail Today*.

National Book Promotion Policy

Government of India is working on finalizing a National Book Promotion Policy, which will take care of providing a policy direction to the whole spectrum of book publication, writing and distribution in order to promote a culture of reading in the society, said Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey, Hon'ble Minister of State of Human Resource Development, Government of India. He was speaking at the closing ceremony of the two-day National Seminar, organized by the National Book Trust, India to coincide with the 60 Years Programmes of the Trust. Dr. Pandey emphasized on the significant role being played by National Book Trust, India in creating a culture of reading and re-affirmed the commitment of the Government of India to support its endeavors to meet its avowed objectives.



Maithlisharan Gupt among others also portray nationalism. He added that the importance of printed books will not diminish.

Shri Rangahari, well-known author and thinker, was the chief speaker on the

occasion. He said that nationalism was an important component of Indian literature since Vedic times. A number of words related to nation like *Rashtra*, *Rashtriyata*, were used in ancient texts. Referring to *Vishnu Puran*, he said that it describes



In his observations on the theme of the seminar, Dr. Pandey said, "Nationalism is an integral part of Indian literature." In his address, Dr Pandey said that geographically India is surrounded by sea from three sides and its boundaries are open. We have been attacked several times by foreign invaders since ancient times and for about 200 years we were ruled by the British, even then we were able to preserve our culture and literature. He added that we are moving ahead in empowering India because of wisdom provided by our ancient texts and sense of nationalism in our literature.

He said that *Kumarsambhav* authored by Kalidas creates a sense of nationalism. Besides, the writings of modern writers like Subhadra Kumari Chauhan,



India situated at the north of sea and south of the mountains. A widely read scholar and polyglot, Shri Rangahari also quoted from literatures of various languages where the concept of nationalism is well delineated.

In his presidential remarks, Shri Narendra Kohli, eminent writer, emphasized on the role of intellectuals in the making of a nation like the rishis of ancient India who played a major role in the conception of India as a nation.

On this occasion NBT's recent publications in Hindi titled *Aapki Sehat*, authored by Dr Vijay Mittal and *Dr Shyama Prasad: Ek Shikshak*, authored by Ms Namrata Sharma were also released.

Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, and Dr. Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT also spoke on the occasion.

Sessions During the National Seminar



The first session of the seminar 'Sahitya Mein Swadesh Bhav' highlighted on the nationalism in Indian literature. The speakers on the occasion were Shri Prem Shankar Tripathi, Shri Agni Shekhar and Dr Avnijesh Awasthi. The session was presided over by Dr Sonal Mansingh. Referring to the Indian literature since ancient times, the speakers were of the view that nationalism found mention in our literature in one way or the other. In fact, nationalism was represented in a very unique manner, wherein the whole universe was considered as one family. The foreign invaders like Greeks were also influenced by the Indian literature.

The second session of the seminar was on the topic 'Bal Mann: Lekhan ki Chunauiyan'. The speakers on the occasion were Shri Prakash Manu, Dr Kshama Sharma and Dr Darshan Singh Aashat. The session was presided over by Shri Krishna Kumar Assthana. The children's writers are facing several challenges to draw children towards reading, echoed the speakers at the session. They were of the view that information technology is influencing children a lot as they are more keen on playing video games and spending their time on the Internet. In the process, they are drifting away from their innate nature. They felt that it is necessary to



bring children back to books to connect them with our culture and tradition.

'Asmita Ke Prashan Aur Rashtriyata' was the theme of the third session of the seminar. Shri Liladhar Jagudi and Shri Ravi Tekchandani were the speakers on the occasion. Shri Daya Shankar Sinha presided over the session. In the session, the speakers observed that the definition of the words 'nation' and 'nationalism' needs revision. Their definition as mentioned

in earlier literatures were according to the social conditions of that time. Now, with the changing times, the socio-economic conditions are also changing, therefore, the definition should also be changed accordingly.

The fourth session of the seminar 'Janjatiye Sahitya: Paridhi Se Kendra Ki Aur' focused on the tribal literature of India. The session was presided over by Prof. Nand Kishore Pande, Director, Kendriya Hindi Sansthan.

The other speakers on the occasion were: Prof. T V Kattimani, Vice chancellor, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Janjatiye Vishvidhyalaya; Shri Ashok Bhagat and Shri Rudra Narayan Panigrahi. During the discussion, the speakers accepted the fact that the tribal literature is coming out of its boundaries and is now becoming a part of the mainstream. The tribal literature is now getting more attention and people are getting acquainted with the literature. They also expressed their concern over the fact that some of the tribal languages are on the verge of extinction.

The fifth session 'Lok Sahitya Mein Bharat' reflected upon the folk literature of India. The speakers on the occasion were Shri Yatindra Mishra, Shriram Parihar and Ms Malini Awasthi. The session was presided over by Dr Devendra Deepak. Sharing their views on the folk literature of





India, they observed that the folk literature and culture of India has been preserved because of oral tradition of India. The folk songs, the folk stales have now merged with the mainstream. They remarked that different culture, rituals, traditions of different regions of India together form one India.

“Women writers have played a significant role in the awakening of India,” observed the speakers at the sixth session



on ‘Rashtriya Jagran Aur Mahila Lekhan’ of the seminar. The speakers on the occasion included well-known writers – Dr Neerja Madhav, Dr Reeta Shukl, Dr Advaita Kala and Ms Malti Joshi. They said that women writers like Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Mahadevi Verma through their writings on nationalism tried to awaken the people of India. They also talked about the role of women in preserving the literature and culture of India through oral folk tradition.

“Har Haath Ek Kitab”

“It gives me immense pleasure to inform you that National Book Trust, India is completing 60 years of its formation. It will continue to work towards promotion of book culture with more vigour,” said Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT while announcing the new initiatives being taken by the Trust on completion of its 60 years at a Press Conference held at Constitution Club, New Delhi on 27 July 2017.

Attended by a cross section of media, the conference was organized to create an awareness among the general public on various activities and programmes of NBT towards promotion of books and foster the culture of reading. In his address, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma outlined some of the new initiatives that NBT proposes to undertake towards the culture of books and reading. New initiatives include National Panchayat Book Fair, Festival of Reading for Kids and Yound Adults,



National Sanskrit Book Fair, Promotion of Indian Diaspora Writings, Digital Publishing Workshops among others.

In her brief address, Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT said that in these 60 years NBT has contributed to the society. Aware of the rapid changes both

socially and technologically, she said that we are adapting with changes and trying to explore innovative ideas to inculcate reading habit and to create a knowledgeable society. Dr Chowdhury hoped that media would continue to support NBT to carry forward its mission.

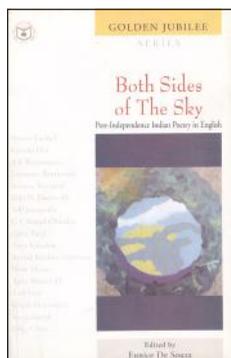
Obituary

Eunice De Souza

Dr Eunice De Souza, noted poet, critic and teacher passed away in Mumbai on 29 July 2017. She was born on 1 August 1940 in Pune, Maharashtra into a Goan Catholic family. She obtained Master's degree in English literature from the Marquette University in Wisconsin and PhD from Mumbai University. She was head of the English department at St. Xavier's College



in Mumbai, until her retirement in 2000. Her first collection of poems, *Fix* was published in 1979. Her second poetry collection *Women in Dutch Painting* was published in 1988, followed by *Ways of Belonging* in 1990 and *Selected and New Poems* in 1994. She also wrote two works of fiction, *Dangerlok* (2001) and *Dev &*



Simran: A Novel (2003), besides editing anthologies such as *Nine Indian Women Poets: An Anthology* (2001) and *These My Words: The Penguin Book of Indian Poetry* (2012). Her last collection of poetry, *Learn from the Almond Leaf* was published in 2016. Her anthology *Both Sides of the Sky* was published by the National Book Trust, India under its Golden Jubilee Anthology series.

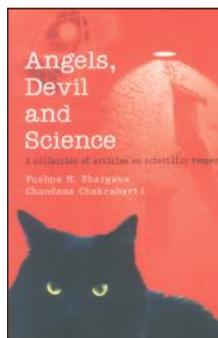
Pushpa Mitra Bhargava

Dr Pushpa Mitra Bhargava, well-known scientist passed away on 1 August 2017 after a prolonged illness. He was born in Ajmer, Rajasthan on 22 February 1928. He studied at Theosophical College,



Lucknow and Queen's College, Varanasi and completed his BSc in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. He obtained his MSc in organic chemistry in 1946. He received his PhD in synthetic organic chemistry from the Lucknow University. Dr Bhargava went to the US in 1953 and worked as a project associate at a laboratory for cancer research. He played an active

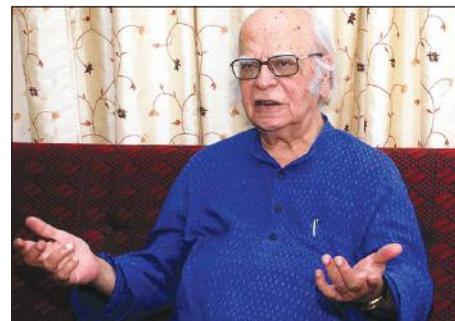
part in the discovery of 5-fluorouracil, an anticancer drug. He worked at different research institutions in the UK and France. He served as vice chairman of National Knowledge Commission



constituted in 2005. Besides, served as a member in the National Security Advisory Board and was a nominee of the Supreme Court of India on the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee of the Union government. Dr Bhargava is recipient of over 100 national and international honours and awards, including the Padma Bhushan in 1986 and the Legion d'Honneur in 1998 of France. Dr Bhargava's pioneering vision and efforts led to the founding of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in 1977. He authored and co-authored several books including *Proteins of Seminal Plasma*, *The Saga of Indian Science since Independence: In a Nutshell*, *The Two Faces of Beauty: Science and Art* among others. His book *Angels, Devil, and Science: A Collection of Articles on Scientific Temper*, co-authored with Chandana Chakrabarti was published by NBT in 2007.

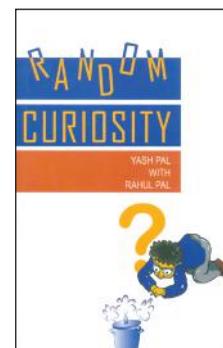
Yash Pal

Noted scientist, academician and science communicator, Prof. Yash Pal passed away on 24 July 2017. Born in 1926 in the Jhang district in present day Pakistan, Professor Yash Pal graduated from Punjab University with a degree in Physics in 1949. He earned PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1958 with a specialisation in high-energy physics, astrophysics, communication, science policy and space technology. He was Professor, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai; Director, Space Applications, Centre, Ahmedabad (1973-81); Chief Consultant, Planning Commission (1983-84); Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (1984-86) and Chairman, University Grants Commission (1986-91), New Delhi. He also served as president of the Indian Physics Association among several other key positions. He also served



as the Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi from 2007 to 2012.

He was recipient of several awards including Padma Bhushan in 1976; Indira Gandhi Prize for Popularization of Science in 2000; Meghnad Saha Medal in 2006; and India's second highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, in 2013. Prof. Yash Pal was closely associated with NBT in several advisory capacities, his book *Random Curiosity*, (co-authored with Dr Rahul Pal) was published by NBT.



New Initiatives from NBT

National Panchayat Book Fair

Designed for rural readers to involve local Panchayati Raj institutions for promoting a culture of reading.

Jamboree: Festival of Reading for Kids and Young Adults

To promote interaction among conventional and digital content creators, publishers, young readers, authors, parents, teachers, artists and illustrators for children books.

National Sanskrit Book Fair

To showcase books and publications in Sanskrit as well as on Sanskrit written in other languages.

Promotion of Indian Diaspora Writing

Publishing select books and anthologies of Indian diaspora, settled all over the world, in a phased manner.

Publishing Courses for Girl Students

Special training courses in publishing for girl students for a career in publishing field.

Digital Publishing Workshops

Workshops for Indian language authors, publishers and other publishing professionals in association with premier government institutions, C-DAC, and other major IT companies.

Books for Children with Special Needs

To bring out quality publications in braille, tactile, audio / digital formats for readers with special needs.

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Forthcoming Book Fairs

Sirsa Book Fair, Haryana	September 2017
Varanasi Book Fair, Uttar Pradesh	September 2017
Agra Book Fair, Uttar Pradesh	October 2017
Children's Book Festival, Pune	October 2017

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Ernakulam, Kochi

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