NBT Focuses on Indian Diaspora Writing at London Book Fair

In the just concluded London Book Fair (14-16 March 2017), besides putting up a Collective Exhibit of Books from India, the National Book Trust, India organised a meet of the Indian Diaspora Writers to elicit their views on projecting the work of Indian Diaspora Writers of UK in India. Chaired by NBT Chairman, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, more than 15 Indian writers settled in various parts of UK, participated in the discussion. Shri Sharma dwelt at length about NBT’s book publishing and book promotion programmes, and its endeavour to engage with the Indian Diaspora writers.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri A Rajan, Minister, (Co-ordination), Indian High Commission, UK, gave a brief overview about the composition of Indian Diaspora Community in UK. He stated that, while it constitutes only 1% of population of UK, its contribution to GDP of UK is more than 3%.

The writers present on the occasion, welcomed the initiative of NBT in organising the Meet, terming it “an unprecedented exercise”. Some of them discussed their on-going projects with NBT, while also suggesting books on themes like travelogues, books for children, Indian flora and fauna, and anthologies of short stories and poetry written by Indian Diaspora writers. The writers who attended the meeting included Shri Tajendra...
Sharma, Ms. Aruna Sabharwal, Ms. Shikha Varshney, Ms. Indu Berot, and Ms. Geeta Sharma (London), Shri Mohan Rana (Bath), Smt. Vandana Sharma and Shri Mukesh Sharma (Birmingham), Jaya Verma and Dr. Mahipal Verma (Nottingham), Divya Mathur (Hertfordshire), Gurcharan Singh (Loughborough), Kadambari Mehra (Surrey), and Shri Suresh Chandra Shukla, who came from Oslo, Norway. Besides the authors, Shri K S Rao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, Shri Rajinder Chaudhry, Director, Publication Division, Shri Tarun Kumar, Hindi Officer, Indian High Commission, and officers from NBT also participated in the discussions.

Earlier, speaking at the inaugural of the Spotlight on India event of London Book Fair, Shri Y K Sinha, Honourable High Commissioner of India to UK, underlined the vast significance of Indian publishing and culture, and various programmes being organised under the India-UK Year of Culture being celebrated in 2017. He hoped that with the participation of nearly 75 exhibitors at London Book Fair and numerous publishing professionals from India, a new era of further co-operation between India and UK publishers would begin.

Later during a call on the Honourable High Commissioner by the Chairman, NBT, possibilities of institutionalising the projection of Indian Diaspora Writing from UK in India were discussed to which the Honourable High Commissioner promised to extend full co-operation.

The London Book Fair is the global marketplace for rights negotiation and the sale and distribution of content across print, audio, TV, film and digital channels.

National Book Trust, India participated with a Collective Exhibit of 200 titles in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati representing the works of nearly 50 Indian publishers. NBT’s presentation was part of the “Spotlight on India” focus at London Book Fair, which was co-ordinated by CAPEXIL with NBT, PD, Sahitya Akademi, and other private publishers. The 3-member Delegation led by NBT Chairman, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, comprised of Shri Kumar Vikram, Editor, and Ms. Kanchan Wanchoo Sharma, Assistant Director (Exhibition).

Mobile Book Exhibitions

In its endeavour to promote books and reading habits among people and to make quality books accessible to public at large in remote, rural and difficult areas, National Book Trust, India operates an innovative scheme of exhibition of books through mobile vans.

On the occasion of National Book Festival being celebrated throughout the country, National Book Trust India organized mobile book exhibitions (Pustak Parikrama) in rural parts of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh from 16 to 28 March 2017. These mobile exhibitions moved across Kapurthala, Faridkot, Moga and Muktsar districts in Punjab; and Jhansi, Mahoba, Banda and Hamirpur districts in Uttar Pradesh. The exhibition vans visited rural areas, schools, colleges, major bus stands, city markets, Panchayat samitis and Aanganwadi of these districts. Special 10 per cent discount was given on purchase of NBT publications. A large number of book lovers of all age groups visited these exhibitions of select NBT publications in Hindi, English and Punjabi languages and availed special discount on books.
Bodo Literary Festival

National Book Trust, India in collaboration with Bodo Writers’ Academy organised 2-days special programme during Bodo Literary Festival held at Chirang, Bodoland, Assam from 19 to 20 March 2017.

Shri Rabi Sankar Bogoyari, Director, Education, Bodoland inaugurated the programme. Shri Maheswar Basumatary, Executive Member, Bodoland was the chief guest on the occasion. The other speakers who spoke on the occasion included Shri Rajendra Nath Boro, President, Dularai Bodo Samaj, Shri Mangal Singh Hazowary, Sahitya Akademy awardee among others. Earlier, Shri Jaypal Singh Brahma, Inspector of Schools, welcomed the gathering.

During the programme, two workshops for children on creative writing and drawing were organized in which Shri Rakhao Basumatary, renowned Bodo writer and Shri Maneswar Brahma as well as Shri Dhansingh Basumatary and Shri Utpal Talukdar, well-known illustrators interacted with the children. They introduced various aspects of story writing and drawing to the children to enhance their creative skills. They also encouraged them to write stories and draw paintings. The children from various schools of the region participated in these workshops.

Besides, Women Poets’ Meet, Bodo Fiction Writer’s Meet and workshop on Bodo Folk Tales were also organized. In these programmes well-known writers and young writers from various parts of the state participated. During these sessions, the writers discussed about Bodo literature and need to preserve and promote the language through books and reading culture.

The programme was coordinated by Shri Amir Jilani, Librarian, NCCL, NBT India.

Training Course in Book Publishing

A week-long training course in book publishing was organized at the UGC Human Resource Development Centre, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi, from 15 to 22 February 2017.

Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT inaugurated the programme. He said that books are a man’s best friends as they develop moral values in human beings. Talking about the book publishing course, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma said that this course would help participants understand the different aspects of the publishing and start their career in the industry. He also spoke of the various activities undertaken by the Trust to promote books in different Indian languages.

Prof. Girish Chandra Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, Benaras Hindu University presided over the function. He said that books play an important role in developing creativity. He added that NBT is playing a significant role among the students and youth to increase the habit of reading across the nation by organizing several book related programmes. He was of the view that a programme on creative writing may also be initiated.

Prof. S N Upadhyay was the special guest on the occasion. He said that NBT may try to include words that are introduced from time to time in Indian languages. The other speakers on the occasion were Dr V K Singh and Dr Sanjay Singh Tiwari.

Eighty participants from different parts of the state attended the programme. During the programme, leading industry experts gave insight into the various aspects of book publishing like editing, copyright, production and marketing.

Shri Narendra Kumar, Training Officer, NBT India, coordinated the event.
India China Translation Programme


While welcoming the guests, Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT said that India and China have a long tradition of exchanging ideas which is still continuing. She observed that this translation programme would be a step forward towards strong cultural ties between two countries. She hoped that this workshop would address all the challenges that the translators are facing to accomplish the task.

Mr MLK Raja, Officer on Special Duty (Public Diplomacy), XPD Division, Ministry of External Affairs was also present on the occasion. He said that the Ministry of External Affairs gives utmost importance to this project so as to enhance cultural relations with China. He added that the translation of select Chinese works into Hindi is just a beginning as language is a carrier of cultural wealth. Appreciating the efforts being put up by NBT to execute the programme, Mr Raja hoped that the quality product would come out in stipulated time.

The workshop was chaired by Prof. B R Deepak, Centre for Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies (CCSEAS) JNU. In his introductory remarks, he said that the relationship between India and China has a long way and finds mention in Chinese as well as Indian classics. However, works of great Chinese philosopher Confucius have not been rendered into Hindi though they have been translated into other foreign languages like Latin. He observed that over 600 million people speak Hindi in India and it is necessary to translate Chinese into Hindi to create an awareness of Chinese literature among general readers, which in turn would foster understanding between the two people. He remarked that this is for the first time that the Chinese classics are being translated into Hindi. He apprised that translated and Hindi typed manuscripts of four of the works have been submitted to the NBT. These are: Four Confucian Classics (The Analects, Mencius, Great Learning, and the Mean), Looks Beautiful, Camel Xiangzi and To Live, the peer reviewing of the same has been under the proceedings, and soon would be ready for editing and publication.

Mr. Liu Hang, Vice Chairman, Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, Beijing; Mr. Teng Zhenwei, Director, Humanities and Social Sciences Branch, Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, Beijing and Prof. Jiang Jingkui, Director of Center for South Asian Studies, Peking University, Chinese Side Editor in Chief of the Project, Beijing represented China at the workshop.

Talking about the need to translate the Hindi literature into Chinese, Mr. Liu Hang said that China has a very long tradition of translating Indian works into Chinese. However, Chinese people are not very much familiar with the Indian culture, therefore the Chinese government undertook the project to translate Indian literature in 2015 when an MoU was signed between India and China. He informed that they have published translation of Sur Sagar in three volumes in 2016.

Prof. Jiang Jingkui, also spoke on the occasion. He said that the translation project between two countries is very important. Experts are working hard to bring out the best. He remarked that through such meetings they would like to extend cooperation to NBT.

The workshop was attended by the translators who have been assigned the work of translation of select Chinese works into Hindi including Prof. N M Pankaj, Acting Vice Chancellor, Nalanda University; Ms Dayawanti, Assistant Professor, CCSEAS, JNU; Ms Tanvi Negi, Assistant Professor, Doon University; Mr Kaushal Kishore, Assistant Professor, CCSEAS, JNU; Ms Arpana Raj, Assistant Professor, Central University of Jharkhand; Mr Sandeep Biswas, Assistant Professor, Central University of Jharkhand; Mr Irfan Ahmed, Assistant Professor, Sikkim University, Sikkim; and Mr Swami Kundan Kishore, Assistant Professor, Gujarat Central University.

The workshop was divided into two sessions including ‘Translation of Chinese Classics’ and ‘Translation of Modern Chinese Literature.’ In these sessions, the participants discussed about the challenges being faced by them while translating the Chinese works into Hindi as well as the status of their work.

It was suggested that an expert/working group may be constituted which may meet frequently to review the progress of translations as well as to clarify various issues that may arise from time to time.
The National Book Trust, India (NBT) has now gone online to provide accessibility to applicants to file RTI applications online through the national RTI portal https://rtionline.gov.in. In an event organized at its premises in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi on 22 March 2017, to create understanding of the online RTI portal among the NBT employees, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT said that for the benefit of the citizens of India and to redress public grievances, Right to Information (RTI) facility was initiated by the Government of India. Shri Sharma hoped that the online portal would help NBT to forward information to the applicants across the country who wish to gather information regarding the activities of the Trust.

Shri Ashish Agnihotri, RTI Monitoring Unit, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), gave a presentation on the online portal of RTI. He said that as part of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision for digitization in India, the RTI facility has been made online and DoPT is making efforts to connect all the public authorities with the online portal.

He added that this user friendly portal would make the process of RTI applications easy for the applicants as well as the public authorities. He also talked about the drawbacks of conventional method of processing the RTI which is time consuming and also complex. He further said that this environment friendly portal has many advantages including processing the payment of RTI fees, easy record maintenance, effective control and management among others.

About the RTI Portal

Any Indian citizen can now get their desired information related to functioning and activities of NBT by filing their application through online RTI portal on the URL https://rtionline.gov.in, which is the national portal to file RTI applications/first appeals online along with payment gateway. Payment can be made through internet banking of SBI & its associate banks, debit/credit cards of Master/Visa and RuPay cards.

The World Book and Copyright Day

The World Book and Copyright Day is marked annually on 23 April, a symbolic date for World Literature. It was celebrated for the first time on 23 April 1995, at Paris, when UNESCO decided to mark 23 April as World Book and Copyright Day and for paying worldwide tribute to authors and books, as well as to encourage everyone (particularly the young) to discover the pleasure of reading to gain a renewed respect for the irreplaceable contributions of those who have furthered the social and cultural progress of humanity.

On this day in 1611, Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega died. It is also the date of birth or death of other prominent authors such as Maurice Druon, Haldor K. Laxness, Vladimir Nabokov, Josep Pla and Manuel Mejía Vallejo. The connection between 23 April and books was first made in 1923 by booksellers in Spain as a way to honour the author Miguel de Cervantes, who died on that day.

This year, the city of Conakry, the capital of Guinea (West Africa) has been designated as the ‘World Book Capital’ in recognition of its programme to promote reading among young people and underprivileged sections of the population. Athens has been named as UNESCO World Book Capital for 2018. The city of Athens was chosen for the quality of its activities, supported by the entire book industry. The proposed programme includes meetings with writers, translators and illustrators, concerts, thematic exhibitions, poetry readings and workshops for publishing professionals.

Celebrating World Book and Copyright Day 2017, the United Nations seeks to increase awareness on literacy programs worldwide. And in addition, the UN intends to promote careers in book shops, schools, libraries and publishing so that men, women, and children all have access to the written word.

Irina Bokova, the Director General of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said, “Books help weave humanity together as a single family, holding a past in common, a history and heritage, to craft a destiny that is shared, where all voices are heard in the great chorus of human aspiration.”

One can get involved in celebrating the world book day by buying / reading / presenting books. Special programmes can be conducted by schools, NGO’s, publishers, book shops, media, government bodies and others.
Ms Manju Bora, the national award-winning film director and writer from Assam spoke about her latest movie Joymati, at the Theme Pavilion at the New Delhi World Book Fair. In a conversation with Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT India, she shared with the audience, her life and works.

Her creativity in making movies is inspired by her experiences from her childhood days which was spent in a small village near Jorhat, Assam. After standard six, she moved to Shillong and then Guwahati for higher studies and thus her journey took a different path that made her become who she is today. According to her, “no one can create movies without experiences particularly those of childhood”. As a passionate lover of reading, she started off by writing short stories. It was her husband who encouraged her to make movies. Her first foray into filmmaking was a serial she made for a Bombay filmmaker. She made ten movies out of which the latest one is an animated movie. Even though the story is already on board, it might take 3-4 months or a year to materialize due to monetary constraints, but the story needs to grow from within, she added.

Discussing her film Joymati, Manju Borah said the film set in 17 century Assam, is based on the tragic life of Joymati Konwari, a medieval Ahom princess who sacrificed her life. Based on an intensive research, Borah says, she has tried to portray Joymati as a courageous woman with socio-political foresight.

Ms Asha Parekh who gave a round of hits all through the 60s and 70s and some of the most memorable films was at the Fair. She was in conversation with Khaled Mohammed, celebrated film critic-turned-film maker and the author of her biography, “The Hit Girl”, at the Theme Pavilion. This was also her first public appearance in a book fair. Sharing the many events in her life as an actor, Ms Asha said that she did not wish to be an actor but destiny made her work in movies. She added that Aasmaan was her first movie in which she worked as a child artist. She also talked about the film directors and the actors with whom she worked in her movies. On the occasion, two books of Khaled Mohammed were also released.

The New Delhi Rights Table has become an important event at the New Delhi World Book Fair providing a platform for Indian and foreign publishers to network and do business. The Rights Table is an ideal place for international publishers to buy exciting writings from Indian languages as well as to sell their content to Indian publishers.

This Edition of the New Delhi Rights Table was organised on the sidelines of the Fair from 9-10 January 2017 by NBT India, in which about 50 participants from India and other countries participated.

“I am happy to be a part of New Delhi Rights Table. It has provided me an opportunity to meet Indian publishers at one place, otherwise one needs to move from one stall to another at the Fair to meet publishers. The New Delhi Rights Table provides a good ambience to communicate with other publishers comfortably,” said Mr Murori Kiunga, Managing Director, Queenex Publishers Ltd, a publishing house from Nairobi, Kenya.

Prof. Anand Bhatt, who is a regular participant at the Rights Table, buys a lot of content from publishers. For Prof. Bhatt, New Delhi Rights Table is the only platform where he gets to meet other publishers.

Now in its fifth year, the New Delhi Rights Table has grown in stature as one of the best platform to conduct rights business, particularly for books from India and south Asia.
As she stood with the Tricolor fluttering, she felt a deep sense of humility and reverence. It was 1:07 pm on May 23, 1984 and Bachendri Pal stood on the highest point on earth, the Mount Everest, becoming the first Indian woman to achieve the feat.

She had nearly lost her life in an avalanche at Camp 3 (23,000 ft), but her self-belief and courage gave her the strength to face all odds and eventually, balancing herself on the knife’s edge like ridge, she stepped on the Summit.

It was for this moment that she had struggled so much and now that she was here, all she felt was reverence. She then sank to her knees and kissed Sagarmatha’s crown. She then proceeded to recite a short prayer from memory, placed an idol of Durga Mata, the Goddess of strength and courage, along with her copy of Hanuman Chalisa wrapped in red cloth and buried them in the snow. Her thoughts then went to her parents and the faith they had placed in her, enabling her to achieve her dreams. She congratulated Ang Dorjee (the Sherpa Sirdar) and two other members Sonam Palzor and Lahtoo Dorjee on the Summit.

She glanced at the beautiful white peaks all around. From the Summit it was thousands of meters of near vertical drop on all sides. Everest’s massif includes its satellite peaks Lhotse, 8,516 m; Nuptse, 7,855 m; and Changtse, 7,580 m; which seemed dwarfed in comparison. As souvenirs, she collected a few stones from a bare patch near the peak and prepared for the descent.

India’s fourth expedition to Mt. Everest included its satellite peaks Lhotse, 8,516 m; Nuptse, 7,855 m; and Changtse, 7,580 m; which seemed dwarfed in comparison. As souvenirs, she collected a few stones from a bare patch near the peak and prepared for the descent.

My Life My Horizon
Nitu
978-81-237-7998-0; Rs 110

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978-81-237-7998-0; Rs 110

she remembers going on a picnic with a few friends, reaching the snowline at 3,500 m and getting stranded as it had become dark. They had to survive the night without food and shelter, eating snow when thirsty and then witnessing friends being very sick during descent, which she now knows was due to lack of oxygen. The rugged mountain life made them natural adventurers. However, she also remembers that trek as having ignited a spark inside her. “I had tasted the excitement of climbing the mountains and nothing could hold me back now,” she says.

College seemed a distant dream but Bachendri had a guardian angel. Her Principal intervened and wrote to her parents urging them to allow her to study. Above all, Bachendri wanted to be independent. She saw education as the way out so she enrolled. “The family’s resistance to education continued. It made no difference to my resolve. Nothing and no one was going to deter me,” sure was she of her decisions. She did her Graduation in Science/Biology.

Her love for the mountains, now buried deep within her, made her opt for Sanskrit as her major subject. “Kalidasa calls them (Himalayas) the measuring stick of the Earth,” she smiles. She achieved what she had set out to do and became the first woman from her village to be a graduate. Completing a post-graduation and adding a B.Ed. to it seemed the logical thing to do.

Being educated but unemployed, she took up the Basic Mountaineering Course at the advice of the Vice Principal of the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering in Uttarkashi, an Institute just 15 km away from her village in Nakuri. This intervention was of some divine power as it was to shape her life. She shared with her parents her desire to become a professional mountaineer. The family was ‘devastated’, as for them, her professional mountaineer. The family was ‘devastated’, as for them, her professional mountaineer. She later went on to become the first woman mountaineer from her village in Nakuri, Uttarakhand, and was today the success story of a nation.
NBT Books on Women

April 11 is National Safe Motherhood Day and April 24 is Women’s Political Empowerment Day. Given below are some of the books on women and empowerment.

Women in Indian Society
Neera Desai & Usha Thakkar
ISBN 978-81-237-3677-8; Rs 80

Self-care for Women
Parul R Sheth
ISBN 81-237-2804-2; Rs 100

Bride at Ten, Mother at Fifteen
Sethy Ramaswamy
6261-6; Rs 90

Your Food and You
KT Achaya
ISBN 978-81-237-1033-4; Rs 70

Women Farmers of India
Maithreyi Krishnaraj & Aruna Kanchi
ISBN 978-81-237-5319-5; Rs 60

Women Pioneers in India’s Renaissance
Sushila Nayar & Kamla Mankekar (Eds.)
ISBN 81-237-3766-1; Rs 115

Women Who Dared
Ritu Menon (Ed.)
ISBN 978-81-237-3856-7; Rs 135

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