

AUTHOR SPEAK



Jhelum Biswas Bose

Jhelum Bose's brand-new book 'Phool Proof' is not just about the healing properties of flowers but also a compelling personal tale...

BINDU GOPAL RAO

On a busy Saturday evening, I made my way to Foxtrot - House of SubCulture, the newest cultural venue in Bengaluru for Jhelum Bose's debut book 'Phool Proof' along with a 'Flower Therapy' workshop. An ex-beauty editor at Harper's Bazaar and brand head for a beauty giant Bose has always been a dreamer and observer. After she took a career break, she looked up to flowers for healing and solace from her chronic breathing problem. Over the year she learnt the art of respecting and recognising the soft energies with the help of Bach flower healing therapy and aro-

mathepy. She tells us more in this exclusive conversation.

Excerpts from an interview

What inspired you to write on an unusual topic?

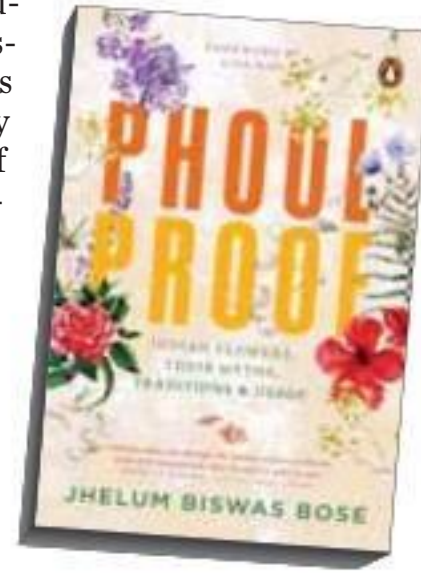
Last year in May, it all started with a casual conversation with Gurveen Chadha from Penguin Random House. We discussed writing a book on beauty and healing. I thought over several themes and finally realised that in all the healing therapies that I follow, the underlying thread is of flowers - Bach Flower Remedies, Indian Flower Essences, Floral Essential Oils, Chakra Healing. Chakras are often symbolised as lotus flowers, so that is when I decided to write a book on flowers and their significance in our daily lives.

How did flowers help you overcome your chronic breathing issues?

Bach flower remedies played a major role in healing my asthma. I realised that my ailment had an emotional root. I was not happy doing the work that I was doing, though there was nothing to not like about it. It is just that I felt it was not my calling. Bach flower therapy helped me identify my issue and the remedies helped me make my decision to leave the job. Slowly with the help of yoga and aromatherapy, I was

able to overcome my illness.

Bach flower remedies help heal emotions. The founder of this system of healing, Dr Edward Bach believed that all ailments have an emotional root. When you address the emotion the physical manifestation also gets removed. Aromatherapy works through the smell of the oils as well as application. For instance, lavender oil can heal cuts, burns, bruises and can also relieve menstrual aches when applied on the stomach.



'Phool Proof' is all about growing and learning in the mysteries of the floral family. Please tell us how you decoded some of these mysteries?

Flowers are very generous and welcoming, literally when you stop and smell them, give them attention, they open up their world for you.

What kind of research went into the book?

My research involved discussing in-depth about various flowers with experts around the world, learning about the Ayurveda traditions and under-

standing the cross-cultural values and myths about flowers and their healing process.

How has the initial response to the book been?

The initial response has been good. I have had several readers message saying that they will keep going back to the book and believe that the book is going to be a companion of sorts.

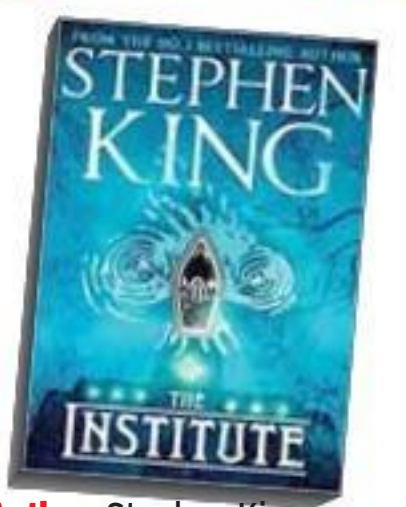
What kind of challenges did you face when writing the book?

The most challenging part when writing this book was battling my depression and anxiety. I embraced the situation and turned the poison into medicine. The book was more like a healing process in itself that helped me emerge from the darkest phases of life.

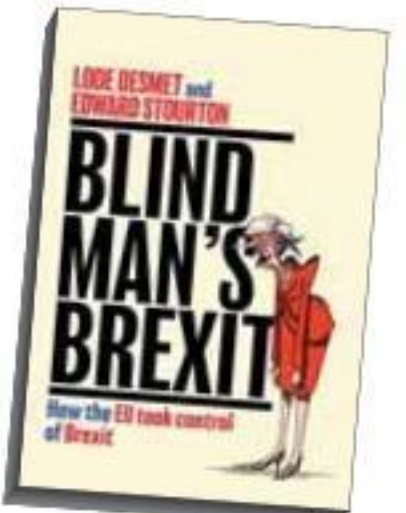
What are your future plans?

I am toying with a couple of ideas. I have both fiction and non-fiction in mind. I would love to explore and dabble with poems.

BOOKSHELF



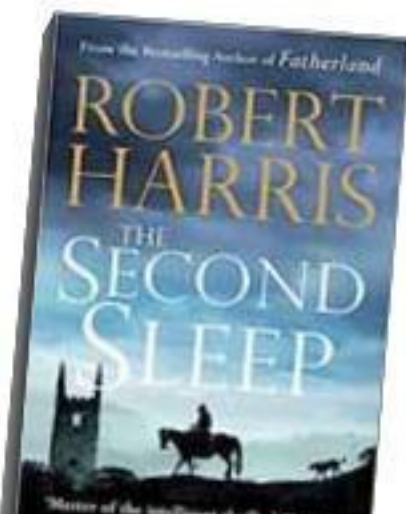
Author: Stephen King
Genre: Crime, Thriller and Mystery
Publisher: Hachette
Price: ₹799



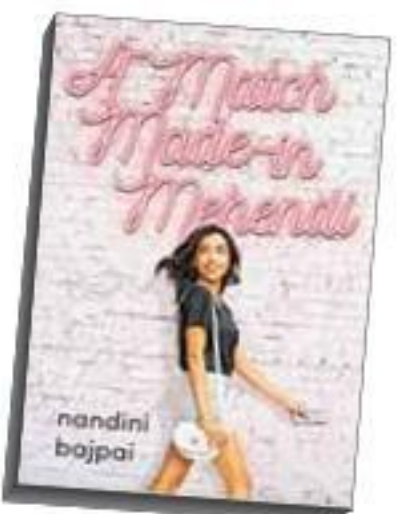
Author: Edward Stourton and Luke Desmet
Genre: Politics
Publisher: Simon & Schuster
Price: ₹799



Author: Naresh Chandra Saxena
Genre: Public Administration
Publisher: SAGE
Price: ₹595



Author: Robert Harris
Genre: Crime, Thriller and Mystery
Publisher: Hutchinson
Price: ₹599



Author: Nandini Bajpai
Genre: Romance
Publisher: Hachette
Price: ₹399

The Muslim factor in India

Maidul Islam in his book points out that in current political discourse, the 'Muslim question' in India is not articulated in terms of demands for equity...

K NARESH KUMAR

The Indian Muslim has been an eternal subject of coverage in the country's English and regional media, for all kinds of reasons. Constituting around 14 per cent of the population and noted for a geographical presence all across the nation, the Muslim society has had to withstand constant spotlight on itself. That it is a significant entity in the Indian way of life added more pressure on its followers for sure.

Books have often been written on them over the past decades from both academic and socio-political perspectives, focusing on their religious identity and also their economic status, which has not been too impressive. One such attempt, 'Indian Muslim(s) after Liberalization' authored by Maidul Islam, a political science faculty at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata takes a scholarly look at the community's lives and times.

Islam reveals that this book 'is a modest attempt to contribute to an issue that has generated a negative prejudice in the minds of many in an age where Islamophobia, communal prejudice, and contempt for progressive global politics has become the dominant global fashion.'

The author points out that 'in current political discourse, the 'Muslim question' in India is not articulated in terms of demands for equity. Instead, the political leadership camouflages real issues of backwardness, prejudice and social exclusion with the rhetoric of identity and security. Historically informed, empirically grounded and with robust analytical rigour, the book tries to explore connections between multiple forms of Muslim



marginalization, the socio-economic realities facing the community, and the formation of modern Muslim identity in the country'.

Split into four chapters, with a prologue and an epilogue to go along, the book is an ambitious attempt yet, like many academic presentations, is bogged down by too many citations and trivia to go along here and there.

The endeavour seems to mostly focus on the sad state of affairs, the community is faced with including that of in Hindi cinema, where the Muslim heroes enjoyed immunity from communal bias for many decades. Islam says that there are limits to the secular themes found in Bollywood and how the dangerous stereotypes of Muslims as gangsters and terrorists continue to prevail in Bollywood scripts from the 1990s, despite the fact that several superstars of Hindi cinema openly identify themselves as Muslims.

As far as tackling the main issue goes, the blurb points out that the book proposes working towards a radical democratic deepening in India. Given that, the liberal, secular space as envisioned by the left-of-centre supporters in India is rapidly shrinking and shifting to a rabid exhibitionism of communal identity, the Muslim factor would be of continuing interest, off and on, for the power holders, but not vital or critical enough to initiate critical changes in their livelihoods, all that soon.



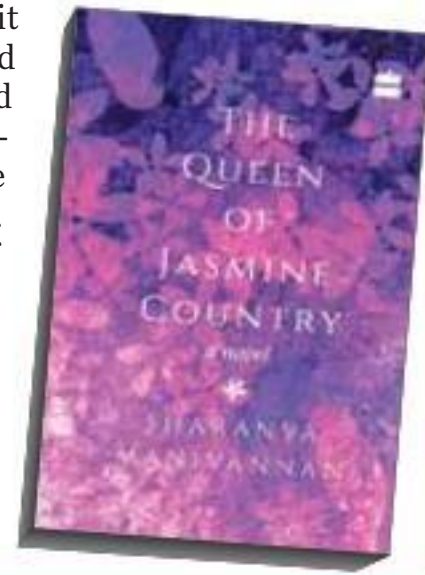
Maidul Islam; Oxford University Press; ₹995



Sharanya Manivannan

Sharanya makes to JCB longlist

Sharanya Manivannan's first novel 'The Queen of Jasmine Country' has been longlisted for the JCB Prize. Sharanya is the author of the short-story collection 'The High Priestess Never Marries', which won the 2015-16 South Asia Laadli Media and Advertising Award for Gender Sensitivity (Best Book - Fiction) and was shortlisted for the TATA Lit Live! First Book Award (Fiction) and longlisted for the Atta Galatta - Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize. She is also the author of two books of poetry, 'Witchcraft' and 'The Altar of the Only World', and a picture book for children, 'The Ammuchi Puchi'.



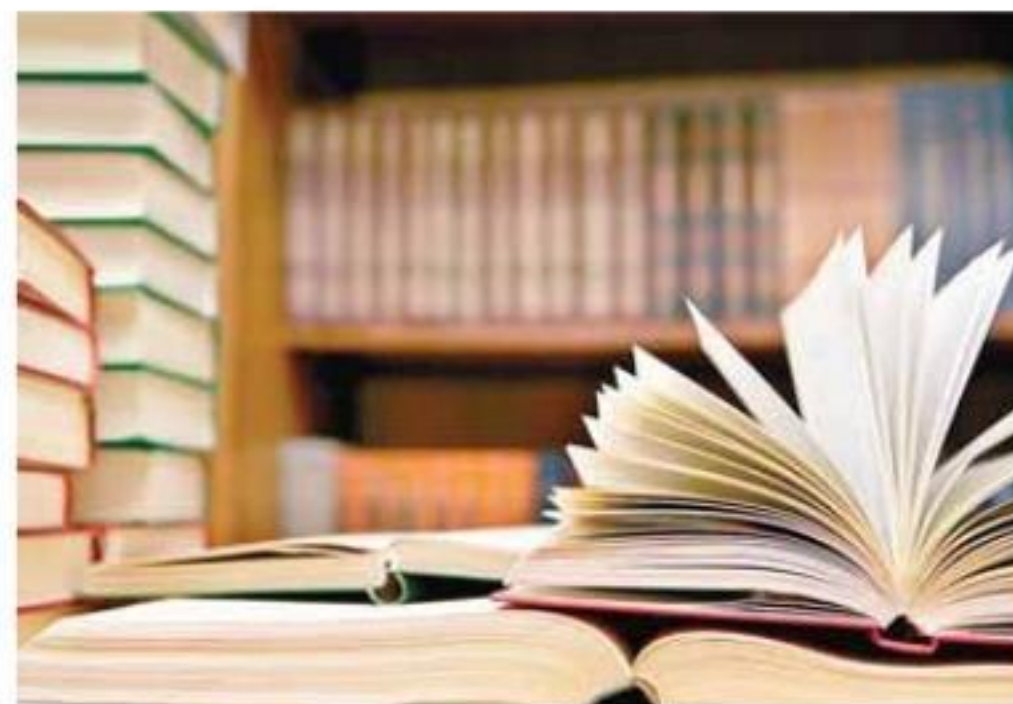
Platform for budding writers

NEWSMAKERS

10 shortlisted writers to attend JLF's Jaipur Bookmark in Jan

A total of 10 shortlisted writers will be invited to attend the Jaipur BookMark (JBM) January 22 to 25, that runs parallel to the JLF to "not just to undergo mentorship but also individually pitch their work to national and international experts from the industry, with a chance to even sign a book deal," the organisers said.

The selection panel will include publishers, literary agents and writers, amongst others. Literature festivals, that capture the interest of millions today, have not remained isolated from



providing a space to new writings. In January 2017, JBM launched the 'First Book Club', a mentorship programme for first-time writers, which was repositioned as the 'iWrite' mentorship initiative to include all aspiring authors with unpublished manuscripts sitting

in their heads or on their computers. It is a platform for storytellers, poets and literary enthusiasts to tell their stories and be mentored by experts in the field if shortlisted.

The iWrite shortlist will be announced on December 15 on the JBM website.

FROM THE BOOK

It's the nuances of desire that hold the truth of who we are at our rawest moments. I set out to register the heat and sting of female want so that men and other women might more easily comprehend before they condemn. Because it's the quotidian moments of our lives that will go on forever, that will tell us who we were, who our neighbors and our mothers were, when we were too diligent in thinking they were nothing like us. This is the story of three women."

- 'Three Women' by Lisa Taddeo



Lisa Taddeo

Jas Kohli's latest book showcases the fun side of hospital life, where a surgeon's routine is akin to driving in a Formula One race every day...

Our present-day fast-paced life is fraught with stress and anxiety. It seems that modern man has forgotten to laugh spontaneously. Hence, every morning, he participates in laugher clubs and struggles to exude forced and artificial guffaws. But while reading Jas Kohli's novel 'Lights! Scalpel! Romance', gales of laughter burst through the hearts of the readers, the way sounding cataracts flow through the Rocky Mountains.

The medical profession as the backdrop in this consummately created work of healthy humour offers the reader a glimpse of what transpires behind the scenes in a doctor's professional and personal life.

The author takes the reader on a virtual tour of Nirog Hospital in Delhi, along with Nipun, the intern. As he embarks on his journey of MS (surgery), under the tutelage of a skilful and renowned surgeon, Dr Ujjwal, Nipun is exposed to the diverse facets of the profession. Though during the years of his MBBS, his life

Bonanza of laughter!

REVIEW

is quite carefree, replete with fun and frolic, certain turns of events bring a complete metamorphosis in his personality. Life becomes arduous for this trainee doctor. Dr Ujjwal is a hard taskmaster, the practical lessons which he imparts to this budding surgeon are crucial in shaping him up.

As Nishtha, a beauty with brains and loads of attitude steps in the corridors of Nirog Hospital, romance adds charm to Nipun's erstwhile gruelling and mundane routine. The readers will bump into a mélange of well-delineated characters which contribute significantly into the making of its well-knit plot. With Dr Ujjwal, Nishtha, Dr Anuroop aka Candy, the story unfolds with rib-tickling humorous incidents.

The addition of new junior doctors, Dr Ridhi and the insecure, Dr Mayur, in the second year bring some interesting twists. The petite, Dr Ridhi casts spell on Nipun's heart, yet their relationship dangles in uncertainties. The author nowhere has gone overboard with the romance element of the book, keeping it realistic and gripping with a puckish humorous touch.

The author also deliberates on the junior-senior relationship of the medical profession

in a manner which endears the readers. Although there are traces of superiority, domination and at times mild exploitation, mutual respect, understanding and protection also exist in the equation between the seniors and the interns. The incident where Dr Ujjwal, addresses Nipun with a prefix 'Dr' in front of his relative to boost up his esteem, is a fine example of such a subtle revelation of care and respect.

Even though Nipun dons the mantle of the chief protagonist, Dr Ujjwal captures the hearts of the readers. His life undergoes a major transition when he comes across Ananya, stunning beauty and a strong-headed woman. Will Ananya be able to trust Dr Ujjwal, after digging into the history of his romantic escapades and flings? Will life give another opportunity to this dashing doctor with a golden heart?

Author's experiences in the medical profession equip him with an edge and enable him to depict the multiple challenges (big and small), a doctor has to confront the way the

patients react at the sight of the needle or their fears about the surgery have been written convincingly well. The book presents an idea to the reader about how the doctors endeavour to heal; not only with medicines but with their words and presence of mind.

The medical terminology which we come across in the narration can be a tad alien to a non-medico reader, but it doesn't hinder the comprehension. The plot is weaved intelligently and cannily around the day to day incidents taking place in the hospitals. Leavened with hilarious humour the book is abuzz with philosophical overtones as well. However, it is not preachy about the profession, still, it leaves the reader with a thought that a doctor's life isn't mere glamour; as it ostensibly appears to be. In a nutshell, it is an unputdownable work laced with the dosage of chuckle-some fun.

-Prof Shiv Sethi



Jas Kohli; Rupa Publications India; ₹242