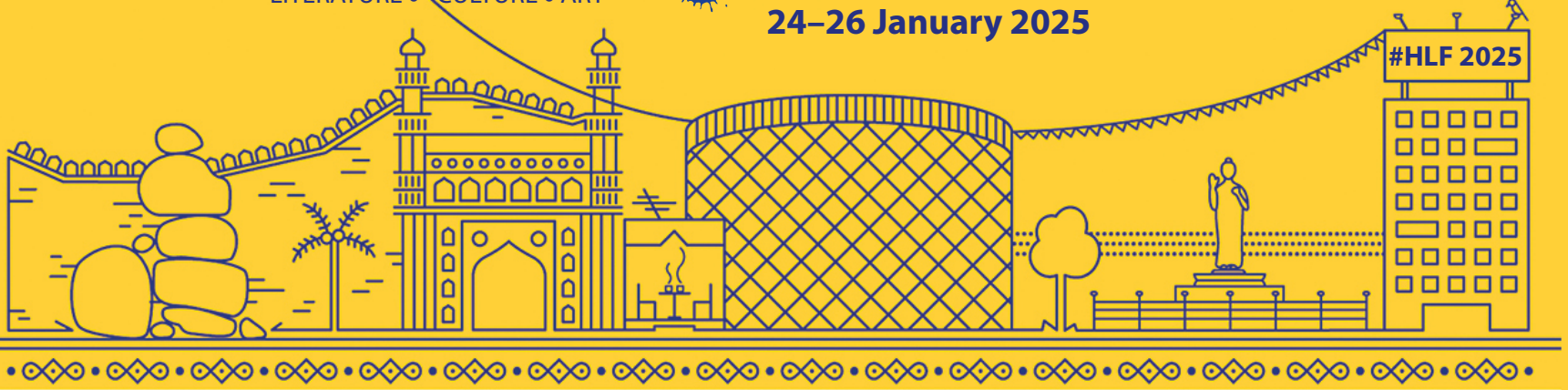




LITERATURE • CULTURE • ART

HYDERABAD LITERARY FESTIVAL

24-26 January 2025



Sattva Knowledge City

www.hydlitfest.org

youtube.com/c/hlf-india

Dr.Reddy's



INDIAN IMMUNOLOGICALS LIMITED



CONTENTS

About HLF	3	Literary Stream	40
Profiles	5-31	Meet My Book	40
Climate Conversations	32	Moving Images Talkies	40
Cultural Events	36	Nanha Nukkad	41
Exhibitions	37	Science and the City	42
Indigenous and Endangered Languages	38	Stage Talks	43
Interludes	39	Storytelling	46
Kaavya Dhaara	39	Workshops	46
		Youngistaan Nukkad	47



Orient BlackSwan

Patrons



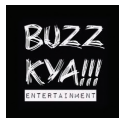
Partners



Principal Partner

Guest Nation Partner

Venue Partners



The Bookpoint (India) Pvt Ltd

Digital Media Partner

Event Managed by

Festival Bookshop



Orient BlackSwan



Festival Publication Partner

Food Partner

Hospitality Partners

Infra Partners



Last Mile Connectivity Venue Partner



Logistics Partner



Mobility Partner



Student Outreach Partner

Supporting Partners

Platinum Donor

Gold Sponsors

Supported by



Sponsors



Donors

KAVITHA BUGGANA
HARI BUGGANA



VAGISH DIXIT

Supporters



Lufthansa





About Hyderabad Literary Festival

Hyderabad Literary Festival (HLF) is a prestigious international event held every year over the last weekend of January. Started in 2010, the multi-genre, multidiscipline, and multilingual festival features more than 200 speakers each year. These include authors, artistes, academics, independent scholars, and public intellectuals from India and abroad. The festival attracts a large and discerning audience of 75,000-80,000 and receives excellent print, electronic, and social media coverage. The programme of the three-day event comprises conversations with authors, readings, panel discussions, exhibitions, screenings, workshops, and cultural programmes—making it a Festival for All. (More about the festival at hydlitfest.org).

Consistently rated among the top five in the over 100 literary festivals in India, HLF has several unique features. At every edition of the festival, one foreign country is invited to showcase its literature, art, and culture. Germany, France, Ireland, Poland, Singapore, the Philippines, Spain, China, Australia, the UK, and Norway have been the 'Guest Nations' so far and Lithuania is the guest nation at HLF 2025. Each edition of HLF also pays special attention to one Indian language and Telugu, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Gujarati, Malayalam, Punjabi, Konkani, and Odia have been the 'Indian Languages in Focus' so far. Sindhi is the Indian language in focus at HLF 2025.

At the 14th edition of the festival (26–28 Jan 2024), three new streams—Indigenous and Endangered Languages, Climate Conversations, and Science and the City—were added to the existing 12 and they received an overwhelming response. These are continued and strengthened at HLF 2025.

HLF does not charge any entry or registration fee, and all events—literary sessions, cultural programmes, workshops, and exhibitions—are free and open to all. The festival also provides an excellent opportunity for a large number of young people to involve themselves as volunteers and gain hands-on experience in organizing an international event of such magnitude. Register for free at hydlitfest.org/register.

The 15th edition of HLF is scheduled for 24–26 Jan 2025, and as always has a stellar list of speakers. The venues of HLF 2025 are the **Sattva Knowledge City**, and **T-Hub**, HITEC City, Hyderabad.

HLF

**14 editions | 200+ speakers | 15 streams | 75,000–80,000 visitors
(each edition) (2024)**

FESTIVAL DIRECTORS



AMITA DESAI

Founder Director of Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad, Amita Desai is an alumna of the University of Hamburg, Germany. She has been representing the City State of Hamburg since 2012 as well as serving as the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana since 2022. Known for her dynamism and professionalism, she has made a substantial contribution to the cultural landscape of Hyderabad in the last two decades. She has initiated, nurtured, and supported the Hyderabad Western Music Foundation, the DocuCircle of Hyderabad, Women's March, Emerging Palette in the visual arts, Photography events, and Hyderabad International Jazz Festival, among others.



KINNERA MURTHY

B Kinnera Murthy is a Strategy Consultant, Director on Corporate Boards and Academic Governing Councils, National Council Member of Professional Organisations, Founder of a Woman Support NGO, etc., since her superannuation from the Administrative Staff College of India in 2012, where she held the posts of Dean and Professor, Strategic Management. She is also associated with Moving Images Talkies and Apna Watan.



T VIJAY KUMAR

T Vijay Kumar currently teaches literatures in English at BITS Pilani, Hyderabad. Formerly, he was Professor and Head, Department of English, and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Osmania University, Hyderabad. His publications include critical studies: *Indian Languages in the Diaspora* (2021), *English and Other International Languages* (2018), and translations from Telugu: *The Liberation of Sita* (2016, 2018) by Volga and *Kanyasulkam* (2002) by Gurajada Venkata Appa Rao. He is TEDx speaker and a Founder Editor of Muse India, the literary ejournal.

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

CHAIR

Jayesh Ranjan, IAS

Special Chief Secretary, ITE & C and Industries & Commerce Departments, Government of Telangana.

MEMBERS

Anuradha Gunupati | Bashir Babu Khan | Dr. C. Rammanohar Reddy
G. V. Prasad | M. A. Faiz Khan | Masiuddin Ahmed
Nandini Rao | Veenakamlapally Rani | Dr. Y. V. Reddy

CORE GROUP

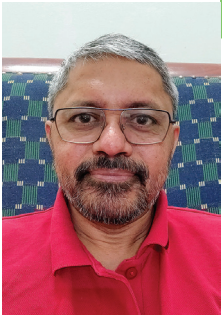
Dr. A. Giridhar Rao | Dr. Durgadas Kasbekar | G. Shankar Narayan
Lakshmi Shankar | Sadhana Ramchander | Shreyas Sridharan | Shriya Gupta
Dr. Somdatta Karak | Dr. Sunita Reddy | Suroor Alikhan | Tejah Balantrapu
Dr. Uma Damodar Sridhar | Dr. Urvi Desai | Dr. Usha Raman

WORKING GROUP

E. Sandeep | Nikhil Nalla | Nooriya Vahanvaty
Padma P. V. L. | Y. Laasya Reddy (Festival Coordinator)

CORE GROUP

A. GIRIDHAR RAO



A. Giridhar Rao is interested in questions of linguistic justice. What are just and equitable language policies for a multilingual country like India? How can our schools use India's astonishing linguistic diversity more effectively? At Azim Premji University, his courses on language and literature pedagogy ask these questions. He blogs in English on these questions at bolii.blogspot.com. Questions of communicative justice drew

Giridhar to the planned language Esperanto. He has translated the writings of Gandhi, Manto, and Faiz into Esperanto. He is a member of the Academy of Esperanto. He blogs in Esperanto at lingvovivo.blogspot.com.

DURGADAS P. KASBEKAR



Durgadas P. Kasbekar did genetics research with fungi for 28 years, first as a scientist in CCMB, and then as Haldane Chair in CDFD. Since retiring in 2017, he has written about genetics research, and research ethics, in *thehindu.com*, *science.thewire.in*, and *livelaw.in*. Before joining CCMB in 1989, he completed school in St. Columba's, New Delhi (1972), college in BITS, Pilani (1978), a doctorate in SUNY, Stony Brook (1983), and a post-doctorate in Albert Einstein College of Medicine (1989).

G. SHANKAR NARAYAN

G. Shankar Narayan is an architect with a practice in Hyderabad for the past 37 years with projects of diverse nature. He is a visiting faculty at several Schools of Architecture and is actively involved in urban issues. He frequently writes in the media, makes presentations, and campaigns for better public design.



LAKSHMI SHANKAR



Lakshmi Shankar is a mother, musician, teacher, performer, poet, writer, and baker. *Under the Poetree* is a collection of songs that she wrote while teaching in a Waldorf school as she noticed that children did not relate to the poems in the books which were mostly about snowflakes and spring. The audio e-book of the poems in English, Hindi, and Tamil about nature, festivals, and seasons, encourages parents to sing along with their children. She bakes under her brand 'Chakkibakes' using millets and jaggery. She is currently working on her novel which is a memoir of food and

memories, exploring stories and recipes.

SADHANA RAMACHANDER



Sadhana Ramachander works at her consultancy in Hyderabad, editing and designing publications. She is the author of *Autorickshaw blues and other colours* (2004) and *Just look up...to see the magic in the trees around you* (2014). She is passionate about nature and works to spread the love of nature among people.

SHREYAS SRIDHARAN

Shreyas Sridharan is the founder of EkoGalaxy, a platform for climate education and engagement. He has lived and worked in four cities across India and speaks twice as many languages. He is a first-gen entrepreneur with a decade of experience in solar thermal technology. His prior experience, as a biotechnologist, was in process filtration with the pharma and biotech industry. He is loved for his sense of humour and tenacious enthusiasm to address the climate crisis. He enjoys cooking, gaming, podcasts, and martial arts.



SHRIYA GUPTA

Shriya Gupta is the founder of The NRB, a creative house based out of Hyderabad working towards building an ecosystem of art and artists for eight years. She has also curated every edition of Youngistaan Nukkad since its inception in HLF. She is a published poet and writer and has had three of her short stories published in anthologies from Hyderabad and Delhi. She represented The NRB in the Y20 summit held in Telangana under the G20 summit.



SOMDATTA KARAK



Somdatta Karak is a science communicator. She works to make science available to young people by creating engaging content and appropriate platforms. She leads science communication and public outreach at CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. She co-leads Superheroes against Superbugs, an educational and public engagement initiative on antimicrobial resistance, a global health crisis. She also co-leads SciCity-Hyderabad, an initiative to bring science to the cultural conversations of Hyderabad. Her primary training is in life sciences with a PhD in Sensory and Motor Neuroscience, and she is an ex-Teach for India fellow.

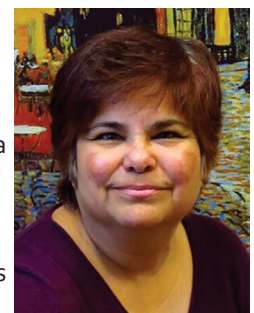
SUNITA REDDY



discussion and debate involving intellectuals from across the globe.

Sunita Reddy has over two decades of experience teaching English at the undergraduate level. Her career is interspersed with foundational roles at non-profits in Hyderabad and elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh. Being an avid reader and actively engaged in social justice causes, she has used her journalistic credentials to interview luminaries from all walks of life for state and local television channels. She is also on the advisory board of Manthan, an organization that promotes high-quality

SUROOR ALIKHAN



Suroor Alikhan has worked in communications—including as editor, and website and social media manager—at the United Nations in Geneva and other international organizations for over three decades. She is now retired and runs a book blog called 'Talking About Books'. She also reviews travel books by women for the website 'Women on the Road'.

TEJAH BALANTRAPU

Tejah Balantrapu is a member of the Nature Lovers of Hyderabad, a tree and nature appreciation community. He is part of the Hyderabad Literary Festival and is the Associate Director of Science, Health Data, and Storytelling at the L V Prasad Eye Institute.

UMA DAMODAR SRIDHAR

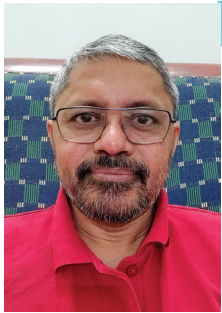
Uma Damodar Sridhar is currently Head, Department of French and Francophone Studies at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad and teaches French language, linguistics, teaching methodology, and translation. She worked at the Alliance Française of Hyderabad as a teacher and translator (1988-2000) and as the in-charge of the translation bureau and deputy director (2005-2009). She has published articles and translations in national and international journals and is a co-translator of an anthology of poems *Butterfly Caresses* (2015). She has been associated with the Hyderabad Literary Festival since 2012.

**URVI DESAI**

Urvi Desai has lived and worked in Bombay, Geneva, Berlin, Montreal, and Hyderabad. She is a co-founder of EkoGalaxy, a platform for climate education and engagement. She has a PhD in medical history and is a Cundill Fellow from McGill University, Montreal, where she also taught as a lecturer. She studied at IHEID, Geneva, and the Hertie School of Governance, Berlin. Outside of research and work, she enjoys reading, running, singing, gardening, astronomy, and stand-up comedy.

**USHA RAMAN**

Usha Raman teaches and researches media at the University of Hyderabad. In addition to her academic pursuits, she follows and writes about podcasts, and publishes Teacher Plus, a monthly magazine for schoolteachers.



A. GIRIDHAR RAO

A. Giridhar Rao teaches courses on language and literature in education, English language pedagogy in multilingual India, children’s literature, Esperanto and linguistic democracy, and science fiction at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. He publishes on these themes in English and Esperanto. He

has translated into Esperanto M. K. Gandhi’s *Autobiography* (2024) and some of the writings of Saadat Hasan Manto and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. He is a Member of Akademio de Esperanto. Giridhar blogs in English on *Bolii* (bolii.blogspot.com), and in Esperanto on *Lingvokaj vivo* (lingvovivo.blogspot.com).

AARTI PHATARPHEKAR



Aarti Phatarphekar has been running a theatre outfit for children for over a dozen years. Besides conducting workshops, she teaches drama in schools and produces large-scale musicals like *Peter Pan*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, and *Sound of Music* with children. She has been a part of the Dramatic Circle Hyderabad and has performed several times with the Secunderabad Club Dramatic Society. She is an animal activist and works closely with street dogs in her community. She is an active member of the YWCA and Bring a Smile Foundation, NGOs that work to uplift the less fortunate among us.

ABHIJIT SENGUPTA

Abhijit Sengupta is a sports journalist who worked with *The Hindu* for over three decades. In his career, he covered international and national competitions in various sports such as cricket, football, hockey, boxing, track and field, badminton, volleyball, tennis, and other games. He is also an author and now writes as a freelancer in *Siasat.com*.



ABHISHEKA KRISHNAGOPAL

Abhisheka Krishnagopal is an artist, ecologist, and educator. With an educational background in Fine Arts, Ecology & Environment, and social sciences, she is building nature stewardship through art and science education. She has worked for more than a decade with leading conservation NGOs in India, and has experience in urban wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, wildlife research, nature education, and communication.



Currently working with the Nature Conservation Foundation, she is also associated with grassroots collectives working on the interface of ecology, sustainable agriculture, and alternative learning.



ADITYA TIWARI

Aditya Tiwari is a poet, writer, and activist. He has led a life that has hopped around the world—from India to America to Britain—through a hyphenated career spanning journalism, podcasting, activism, and literature. His debut poetry collection *April is Lush* earned international recognition from the Lambda Literary Foundation (2019). He was the host of the BBC’s Voices podcast

on mens mental health and worked as a producer at BBC Cambridge. His work has appeared in *The Telegraph*, *PinkNews*, *BBC*, *Vice*, *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, and elsewhere. *Over the Rainbow: India’s Queer Heroes* (2023) is his latest publication.

ADITYA UNDRU

Aditya Undru is a Science Writer at CSIR-CCMB. He is a neuroscientist and bioinformatician by training and a writer, poet, storyteller, singer, translator, cyclist, and amateur historian by passion. He writes in English, Telugu, and Hindi. He has published several short stories and one book of poems in Hindi. He has also been instrumental in conducting various workshops and writing sessions as one of the organisers at Write Club Hyderabad.



afshan d’souza-lodhi

afshan d’souza-lodhi was born in Dubai and forged in Manchester. She is a writer of scripts and poetry. Her work has been performed and translated into numerous languages across the world. Her debut poetry collection *[re:desire]* (2020) was longlisted for the Jhalak Prize. She is currently a BAFTA BFI Flare mentee. She received The National Theatre’s Peter Shaffer award and was also on the Warner Bros Discovery Writers Access programme. A TV pilot she wrote called ‘Chop Chop’, was selected for the #Muslim List (The Black List). Last year, she was the first writer-in-residence for Bluebird Pictures.



AHTUSHI DESHPANDE

Ahtushi Deshpande is a travel journalist and one of India’s top 80 photographers, recognised by the India Photo Archive Foundation in 2022. Her recent book, *Speaking Stones: Rock Art of Ladakh* (2024), was a finalist for the 2024 Banff International Mountain Book Award. Her work has appeared in *National Geographic Traveller*, *GEO*, *Marie Claire*, and *Outlook Traveller*. Her travelogue, *To the Land of Snow* is part of high school curricula. She has curated three solo exhibitions: ‘Therefore I Climb’ (2006), ‘The Colour of My Cancer’ (2016), and ‘Speaking Stones’, recently showcased at the Médiathèque Edmond Rostand in Paris.



AJAY KUMAR

Ajay Kumar is a student and writer. He is the author of the chapbook *balancing acts* (2023) and his poems have appeared in *The Bombay Literary Magazine*, *Rattle*, *The Bombay Review*, *Usawa*, and *The Yearbook of Indian Poetry in English*, among others. He received the Srinivas Rayaprol Poetry Prize for 2024 and was longlisted for the Toto Funds the Arts Creative Writing Award in 2023.

AJIT KUMAR PANIGRAHI

Ajit Kumar Panigrahi is a singer and song writer associated with popular people’s movements in Orissa. He is part of Samadhwani, a progressive cultural group, and sings in his native language Sambalpuri. His song ‘Paen Paban Jharan Dangar’ and album *Paen Talar Jue* (Fire under Water) became wildly popular in 2007 during a mass movement to assert primary rights of farmers over the waters of Hirakud Dam. As part of Relaa Collective, he has travelled to several states to share his songs and voice his concerns among other diverse audiences.





AJIT MOHANTY

Ajit Mohanty is a former Professor at JNU and ICSSR National Fellow with over 50 years of work in mother tongue-based education for tribal children in India and South Asia. He has also served as a Fulbright Professor at Columbia University and a visiting faculty worldwide. His books include *The Multilingual Reality* (2019) and *Bhāsā Kathā, Bhāsā Byathā* (2019/2024). In addition to academic

publications, he writes essays, short stories, and columns in Odia. Promotion of education in the mother tongue has been his lifetime ideological focus, research, dedication, and ambition, and the Odia language, his love.

ALINA SEN

Alina Sen is a communications professional and dedicated outreach member at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). She spearheads the publishing and outreach of CEEW's ground-breaking research on solutions to pressing global and local challenges. From publishing peer-reviewed policy briefs to their creative outreach and dissemination via cartoons, songs, influencer collaborations, and pop culture storytelling, she strives to build a community of champions who believe in mainstreaming sustainability and are willing to lead by example. She has contributed to impactful organisations such as the Naandi Foundation, *The Times of India*, Johns Hopkins University, and Oxfam's Centre for Development Communication.



AKHIL KATYAL

Akhil Katyal is a writer, translator, and scholar. He has published four books of poems: *The Last Time I Saw You: Poems* (2024), *Like Blood on the Bitten Tongue: Delhi Poems* (2020), *How Many Countries Does the Indus Cross* (2018), and *Night Charge Extra* (2015), and he co-edited *The World that Belongs to Us: An Anthology of Queer Poetry from South Asia* (2020). He is an Associate Professor of Literature at BITS Law School in Mumbai.



ALUVALA SAITEJA GUPTA



Aluvala Saiteja Gupta is a trailblazer and the youngest editor to make a mark in mainstream Telugu cinema. With films like *Gamble Monster* and *The Birthday Boy* to his credit, he has excelled as a main editor, VFX artist, VFX compositor, and VFX supervisor. A prolific filmmaker in the horror

genre, his short film won 23 national and international awards, making him one of the most promising directors of his generation. The film was also nominated for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award and was released on YouTube. He has ventured into documentary filmmaking with an award-winning project.



AMAL ALLANA

Amal Allana is a theatre director of over 60 stage productions, including *Nati Binodini*, *Begum Barve*, *King Lear*, *Khamosh! Adalat Jaari Hai!* and *Aadhe Adhure*. She made the television series *Raj Se Swaraj* and *Mullah Nasruddin*, among others. She was the chairperson of National School of Drama, New Delhi and is currently the Director of Art Heritage Gallery, New Delhi, and a Trustee of Alkazi Foundation for the Arts. She received

national and international awards including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Direction. Her latest publication *Ebrahim Alkazi: Holding Time Captive* (2024) is a biography of her father.

AMALENDU JYOTISHI

Amalendu Jyotishi is a professor at the School of Development, Azim Premji University. An economist by training, he ventured into writing poems in his younger days. He writes in Odia, Hindi, and English—more often in English than the other two languages. His poems have been published in Odia and English magazines and dailies including the *Madras Courier*, *Deccan Herald*, and *The Critical Mirror*.



AMIT GOSWAMY

Amit Goswamy is a wildlife filmmaker and a trained wildlife biologist from Wildlife Institute of India. He joined the Border Security Force as Assistant Commandant and served in diverse areas of operations from border management to anti-Naxal operations. After retiring from the armed forces in 2018, he has been working on a series related to human-wildlife interactions in India. His work is featured on TV and in-flight entertainment in some airlines. He posts his work on Wildlife Moments IndiaYT.



AMITA DESAI



Amita Desai is an alumna of the University of Hamburg, Germany. Founder Director of Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad, she has been representing the City State of Hamburg since 2012 and also serving as the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana since 2022. She has initiated, nurtured, and supported Hyderabad Western Music Foundation, DocuCircle of Hyderabad, Women's March, Emerging Palette in the visual arts, photography events, and Hyderabad International Jazz Festival, among others. She is a director of Hyderabad Literary Festival.



AMOL PALEKAR

Amol Palekar is an actor, director, and producer of films, plays and television series in Hindi and Marathi. His most successful Hindi films include *Rajnigandha* (1974), *Chitchor* (1976), *Chhoti si Baat* (1976), *Gharaonda* (1977), *Gol Maal* (1979), and *Rang Birangi* (1983). His iconic plays include *Chup! Court Shaant Hai!*, *Pagla Ghoda*, *Hayavadana*, *Suno Janmejay*, *Julus and Gochi*. He has directed award-winning, internationally acclaimed movies like *Kairee* (1999), *Ankahee* (1985), *Bangarwadi* (1995), *Daayra* (1996), and *Paheli* (2005), which was India's official entry to the Oscar Award in 2006. He also directed television serials like 'Kachchi Dhoop', 'Mrignayani', and 'Krishnkali'. In 2000, he decided to return to painting.

ANAND KUMAR, K.

Anand Kumar, K., a PhD in Microbiology, has over 32 years of experience in the vaccine/biotech industry. He worked abroad for companies such as Pfizer Global Manufacturing (Australia) and Schering Plough (New Zealand). Currently, he is the Managing Director at Indian Immunologicals Ltd., one of the largest producers of vaccines in Asia. Several important human and animal vaccines were developed under his leadership and he also established Pristine Biologicals in New Zealand to help India secure a key raw material used in vaccine manufacturing. He is a member of several committees in India and has many awards, papers, and patents to his credit.



ANHAD KASHYAP



Anhad Kashyap is a voracious reader with a quirky sense of humour. He is passionate about all things maths and science. He wants to grow up to be a scientist, inventor, mathematician, author, pianist, and stand-up comedian—depending on the day of the week! However, on all days of the week, he is certain that he will live in a gigantic lab in Antarctica.



ANINDITA MAJUMDAR

Anindita Majumdar is an Associate Professor at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad. She has been researching commercial surrogacy, kinship, and infertility since 2010. Her ethnographic research-based book *Transnational Commercial Surrogacy and the (Un)Making of Kin in India* (2017) was shortlisted for the Bloomsbury LSE Social Anthropology Monograph Award 2016. She contributed to the *Oxford India Short Introductions Series on Surrogacy* (2019), is on the international advisory board of the journal *Medicine, Anthropology, Theory*, and is an external member of Center for Reproductive Health (CORTH), University of Sussex. In 2023, she was Social Sciences and Public Policy Global Visiting Fellow at King's College London.

ANITA NAIR

Anita Nair is one of India's best-known authors whose oeuvre ranges from literary fiction to noir to poetry, children's literature to translation. Her books have been translated into thirty-two world languages and have been adapted for audio, stage and screen. She has received several prizes and honours including the Sahitya Akademi Award, the Crossword Prize, and the National Film Award. 'Anita's Attic', the creative writing mentorship programme she founded, has mentored over 125 writers. She is also a High-Profile Supporter of the UNHCR. Her latest novel *Hot Stage* (2024) is the third in the Borei Gowda noir series.



ANJALI LAL GUPTA

Anjali Lal Gupta teaches journalism at Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad. She was a journalist for over 16 years in television, digital media, and development communications. At *CNBC-TV18*, New Delhi, she held various positions from correspondent to features producer in a tenure spanning over six years. As web editor and images manager for the international development agency Action Aid, she researched, wrote, and edited features for their website and publications. She also contributed regularly to newspapers and magazines, including *Tehelka*, *The Hindu*, and *The Times of India*.



ANJU KHEMANI



Anju Khemani founded the Drama Association of the Deaf (DAD) in 2013 after a theatre course at the National School of Drama and extensive work with the Deaf community. DAD is a collective that aims to build a new form of theatrical expression by introducing Deaf culture to the creative world of drama. She has worked towards educating, supporting, and leading people and organisations to build a creative and communicative world of change in education, women empowerment, disability, theatre, corporates, media, and NGO sectors. Her work synthesises sensitising organisations and communities towards inclusion, developing content for training, and capacity building of trainers and young adults with disabilities.



ANJU MAKHIJA

Anju Makhija is a Sahitya Akademi Award-winning poet, playwright, and translator. She has published poetry volumes *View from the Web* (1995), *Pickling Season* (2012), *Changing, Unchanging: New and Selected Poems* (1995–2023); a collection of plays *Mumbai Traps* (2022); and co-translated *Freedom and Fissures* (1998), *Seeking the Beloved: The Mystical Verse of Shah Abdul Latif* (2005). She has won several awards including the Sahitya Akademi English Translation Prize, The All India Poetry Competition, the BBC World Regional Poetry Prize, and the Charles Wallace Trust Fellowship. She was on the Sahitya Akademi's English Advisory Board and is the co-founder of the Pondicherry/Auroville Poetry Festival.

ANU PANDE

Anu Pande teaches courses on literature and cultural history in the Department of Germanic Studies at English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. She has a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and takes an active interest in Gender Studies, discourses of violence, representations of disease and death in literature, and Human-Animal Studies. In her research, she explores processes of othering across a broad spectrum, ranging from political belief to gender identity and species belonging. She is also an experienced literary translator and co-founder of the Indian Animal Studies Collective.



ANUJA CHANDRAMOULI

Anuja Chandramouli is a bestselling author and new-age Indian Classicist. She has published 14 books across mythology, historical fiction, and fantasy genres. Her debut novel *Arjuna: Saga of a Pandava Warrior-Prince* was among Amazon India's top five in 2012. Her *Mohini: The Enchantress* was awarded the Times of India Auther Award in 2021. She is a trained Bharatanatyam dancer, TEDx speaker, storyteller, content creator, and columnist for *The New Indian Express*.



ANUSHA RAO

Anusha Rao is a scholar of Sanskrit and religion who likes writing new things about very old things. She is pursuing a PhD at the University of Toronto, and writes a column in the *Deccan Herald* presenting witty Sanskrit-flavoured takes on contemporary issues. She has coedited and translated *How to Love in Sanskrit: Poems* (2014) with Suhas Mahesh.

**ANUSHA VELUSWAMY**

Anusha Veluswamy is an architect, educator, and award-winning author with a master's degree in architecture. She has been honoured with the Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship & Bronze Award (2018) and the Woman Lit of the Year Award (2021, 2024). As the founder of The Little Dipper Publishing, she champions culturally rooted and representative children's literature. Her books

Where is Mr. Thookam? (2022) and *Maari: A Gift from the Skies* (2022) have earned multiple nominations and awards, including the AGLF Book Prize 2023, for their rich storytelling and cultural essence.

ANUSHEELA CHATTERJEE

Anusheela Chatterjee is a science writer who leads the science communication and public outreach programme at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Hyderabad. She focuses on engaging ways to communicate basic science research to multiple target audiences, including school and college students. She has been

exploring the intersection of art, science, and culture to initiate conversations on basic sciences, especially reaching out to individuals who may not have a primed interest in science. Such initiatives include popular science cafes, art-science linkages, and science theatre. She has a Master's degree in Biology from TIFR, Mumbai.

APARAJITH RAMNATH

Aparajith Ramnath is a historian of science, technology, business, and an Associate Professor at Ahmedabad University. His publications include *Engineering a Nation* (2024) and *The Birth of an Indian Profession* (2017). He has also written for *Scroll*, *The Wire*, *The Hindu*, and *FiftyTwo.in*. He was trained as an electrical engineer at BITS Pilani, and as a historian of science and technology at Oxford University and Imperial College, London. He has been an International Scholar of the Society for the History of Technology, a Charles Wallace India Trust grant awardee, a Sangam House writing fellow, and a recipient of the Young Historian of Science Award (2018).

**APARNA RAYAPROL**

Aparna Rayaprol is Professor of Sociology at University of Hyderabad. Her areas of academic interest include gender studies, migration and diaspora, and urban sociology. She is the author of *Negotiating Identities: Women in the Indian Diaspora* (1997). She has held several administrative positions, was with the Study in India Program (SIP) at University of Hyderabad since its inception in 1998, and has been closely involved with the internationalisation of the university. Her PhD was from the University of Pittsburgh, USA and she did postdoctoral work at Princeton University at the Center for the Study of American Religion in 1998–99.

**APPUPEN**

Appupen has been one of India's leading voices in comics since the publication of his first book *Moonward* (2009). He is the creator of the mythical world of Halahala. He was artist-in-residence at Angoulême in 2021. He is the co-creator of *Dream Machine:*

AI and the Real World (2024) with Laurent Daudet, a physics professor in Paris and Co-CEO and Co-Founder of LightOn, a start-up at the forefront of 'large language models', the new generation of AI.

AQUIN MATHEWS

Aquin Mathews is a photographer and curator. He established the *Indian Photo Festival* and served as its Artistic Director since its inception in 2015. He has judged numerous photography competitions, including Portrait of Humanity by the *British Journal of Photography* and Print Swap by *Feature Shoot Magazine*, and curated photography exhibitions in India, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Georgia. He is an advisor

to the Auckland Festival of Photography, a nominator for the Prix Pictet, and the author of the book *Here & There*, which champions the use of smartphones to capture compelling stories. Currently, he is the director of Hyderabad Centre for Photography.

ARATHI MENON

Arathi Menon has been a writer and editor for over two decades. She has been an integral part of the editorial teams at prominent publications such as *India Water Portal*, *Deccan Herald*, and *The Week*. Currently, as Senior Staff Writer at *Mongabay India*, she writes on a broad spectrum of topics, including climate change, indigenous knowledge, mental health, and wildlife conflicts and research.

**ARCHANA SATWALEKAR**

Archana Satwalekar has been a practising gynaecologist for the last 20 years. She believes in customising patient care tailored to their needs. She finds that despite living in times where information is in surplus on any topic, the ignorance and myths surrounding women's health are widespread among urban, educated women, and her practice focuses on addressing these issues.

**ARKASUBHRA GHOSH**

Arkasubhra Ghosh is Chief Scientist, Molecular Signalling and Gene Therapy, and Director, GROW Research Laboratory at Narayana Nethralaya Eye Hospital, Bengaluru. The GROW research laboratory was established in 2013 with the goal of performing patient-directed, discovery research for application in future diagnostics,

drug repurposing and novel therapies. The laboratory focuses on understanding the genetic and molecular signalling mechanisms driving pathogenesis of ocular disorders and cancers.



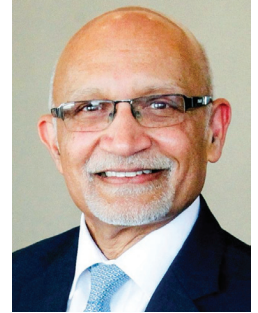
ARNAV MATURI

Arnav Maturi is a law student, who is trying to balance the rigorous life of university with the finer things in life. When not attempting to memorise legal jargon or rehearse lines, he can usually be

found with his nose buried in a book, pretending it is 'research'. His hobbies include pretending that he is a good actor and excessive laziness.

ARUN M. KUMAR

Arun M. Kumar is a business leader, diplomat, and author with extensive global experience in many fields: consulting and professional services, high technology, entrepreneurship, venture capital, and public service. Currently a managing partner at Celesta Capital, a deep-tech venture fund, he was formerly Chairman and CEO of KPMG India. He served in President Obama's Administration as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets. In his book, *The Global Trade Paradigm* (2023) he highlights the evolution and imperatives of global value chains—and attendant geopolitics. He is the author of two books of poetry, *Mantram Beach* (2020) and *Plain Truths* (2010).



ARUNA ROY

Aruna Roy is an Indian socio-political activist, and co-founder of MKSS, Rajasthan, which spearheaded the campaign for the Right to Information Act and was an integral part of the Right to Employment and Food campaigns which resulted in powerful national legislations, enabling millions to access basic needs. She is also the President of National Federation of Indian Women. She was a Professor of Practice at McGill and Central European Universities and spent a sabbatical at Brown University. She is the author of *The RTI Story* (2018), and the memoir *The Personal Is Political* (2024), and co-editor of *We the People* (2020).



ARUNDHATHI SUBRAMANIAM

Arundhathi Subramaniam is a leading Indian poet and author of fourteen books including an anthology of female mystic poetry, *Wild Women* (2024), and the prose work, *Women Who Wear Only Themselves* (2023). Shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize for Poetry 2015, she won several honours for poetry including Sahitya Akademi

Award (2020), Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia Award, the inaugural Khushwant Singh Poetry Prize, Il Ceppo Prize in Italy, Raza Award, Mystic Kalinga Award, the Charles Wallace and Homi Bhabha fellowships, among others. She is an active curator, performing arts critic, and poetry editor of the India domain of Poetry International Web.



ARVIND SHARMA

Arvind Sharma is in the paper trade and was the President of FPTA-India. His interest in the Hindi language took root in Indore, where he regularly participated in debates, kavi-sammelans, and plays. After moving to Hyderabad,

he continued his passion for Hindi literature. His storytelling on platforms like Lamakaan and All India Radio was well appreciated.

ASAD R. RAHMANI

Asad R. Rahmani, is a former Director of Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Scientific Consultant to The Corbett Foundation and Hem Chandra Mahindra Trust. He has written 26 books, nearly 160 peer-reviewed scientific papers, 90 book reviews, nearly 75 editorials, and more than 350 popular articles on nature conservation. He was Global Council member of BirdLife International, UK (2006–2013), and Chairman, BirdLife Asia Council (2006–2013). He was Executive Editor of Journal of BNHS, and the editor of *Hornbill*, *Mistnet*, and *Buceros*, popular magazines of BNHS. His main interest is in grassland and wetland birds, and highlighting the plight of lesser-known species and habitats.



ASHISH SANKRITYAYAN

Ashish Sankrityayan is an exponent of the Dhrupad genre of Indian classical music and a writer on music history and musicology. He has given concerts and courses on Dhrupad in many countries and has extensively researched and documented the Dhrupad genre over several decades through articles, a book, and a documentary film.



ASIF QURESHI

Asif Qureshi is a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering and head of the Department of Climate Change at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad. He received a D.Sc. in environmental science from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zürich, and a B.Tech. from IIT Kanpur. His research group's core interest is in environmental health. They employ collaborative approaches and seek to better understand the cycling of chemicals in the environment and biotic exposure.



AVINASH VISVANATHAN

Avinash Visvanathan is the General Secretary of Friends of Snakes Society, Hyderabad, where he has dedicated over two decades to wildlife conservation and research. An expert member of the Telangana State Board for Wildlife, his research focuses on herpetofauna, particularly snake ecology and taxonomy, with several published papers in peer-reviewed journals. A passionate educator and conservationist, he has taught herpetology at Forest College and Research Institute and continues to lead various wildlife conservation initiatives. His contributions to snake rescue, rehabilitation, and public education have been instrumental in mitigating human-wildlife conflict in urban areas and promoting wildlife conservation awareness in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

**AYESHA MINHAZ**

Ayesha Minhaz is a journalist with over 10 years of experience writing on politics, policies, and development issues. She is currently a special correspondent for *Frontline* magazine and covers Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. She is

an alumna of SOAS, University of London, and the Asian College of Journalism. She is also a Chevening Scholar.

B. P. ACHARYA

B. P. Acharya, a retired IAS officer, was the Special Chief Secretary to the government of Telangana and played an instrumental role in facilitating many world-class industrial clusters in Telangana and AP, such as the Genome Valley, Financial District, Mindspace, Knowledge City, and Sri City. He has been pursuing his childhood hobby of cartooning, emulating legends like RK Laxman, Mario, and Kutty and publishing a regular column titled 'Obtuse Angle'. The book *Obtuse Angle* is a collection of his black and white cartoons, from his initial days as a probationer in Mussoorie and captures the travails of a civil servant's journey.

**B. S. PRAKASH**

B. S. Prakash is a retired banker who is interested in reading both for himself and to others. He has been with The Little Theatre Hyderabad for more years than he cares to remember or, in fact, can remember! He also dabbles in amateur theatre.

**BARKHA PATEL**

Barkha Patel is a kathak dancer, choreographer, educator, and the Artistic Director of the NYC-based Barkha Dance Company (BDC). She is a student of Guru Rachna Sarang of Lucknow and Jaipur Gharana and continues to be mentored by Guru Pandit Rajendra Gangani, Swati Sinha, and Dheerendra Tiwari. She has performed at dance festivals in India (Chidambaram Dance Festival, Modhera Festival) and the US (Dance Theatre Harlem (NYC), Harlem Stage (NYC),



Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out (MA), Joyce Theatre (NYC) and Little Island (NYC), 92Y (NYC), and Chelsea Factory (NYC). She received the 2023 Juried Bessie Award and the Princess Grace Award Dance 2024.

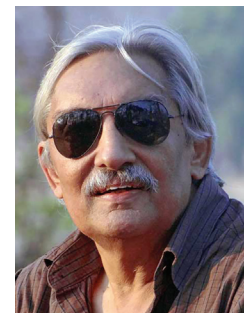
**BIJAL VACHHARAJANI**

Bijal Vachharajani, when not reading a children's book, is writing or editing one. She's the author of multiple planet-friendly books including *A Cloud Called Bhura* (2019), *Savi and the Memory Keeper* (2021) – both of which won the AutHer Award,

and *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic* (2023), which won the Kalinga Award. One of India's first climate fiction writers for children, she's now a climate worrier.

BITTU SAHGAL

Bittu Sahgal, the Editor of *Sanctuary Asia* and the Founder of the Sanctuary Nature Foundation and the one million-strong Kids for Tigers programme, is one of India's strongest and most eloquent voices for nature preservation, climate change mitigation, and wildlife conservation. He has made it his life's mission to direct world leaders away from short-term development objectives that could compromise the ability of the nation to sustain its population of 1.3 billion people in the decades ahead. He believes that India's ecological foundation is the bedrock of the nation's economic progress and that climate change poses the greatest ever threat to the stability of the Indian nation.

**BRIKESH SINGH**

Brikesh Singh is the Chief of Engagement & Communication at Asar. With nearly two decades of expertise in environmental advocacy, citizen engagement, and effective communication, he played a prominent role in championing environmental causes, particularly in addressing air pollution and climate concerns in India. He initiated and has been leading the Clean Air Collective, an air quality network of over 150 organisations that fosters a collaborative approach to tackling air pollution, since 2017. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, he was honoured in 2022 with the prestigious Climate Breakthrough Award, the first Indian to receive this distinction.

**C. RAMMANOHAR REDDY**

C. Rammanohar Reddy is the Founder-Editor of *The India Forum*. He was earlier Editor of *Economic and Political Weekly*, Mumbai. He has been in the media since 1988 first with *Deccan Herald* and then *The Hindu*. He has co-edited (with M. V. Ramana) *Prisoners of the Nuclear Dream* (2004)

and authored *Demonetisation and Black Money* (2017).

**C. YAMINI KRISHNA**

C. Yamini Krishna works on film, urban, and Deccan histories. Recipient of many research awards and grants, she has contributed to several print and digital publications. She has coedited the book *Claims on the City: Situated Narratives of the Urban* (2024) and is the author of the forthcoming *Film City Urbanism in India:*

Hyderabad from Princely City to Global City. She is a founding member of the Khidki Collective, curator of the Zor project digital archive, and co-curator of the exhibition 'Chitramahal: Princely Encounters with Photography and Film' (2024). Her film *Ilm Ka Shehar* (2024) examines the 19th-century idea of knowledge.

DEEPANWITA CHATTOPADHYAY

Deepanwita Chattopadhyay developed India's first Life Sciences Research Park in Hyderabad and has supported 1800+ innovators and startups. She joined IKP as its CEO (2001), took over as Chair (2015), retired as CEO (2024), and is currently its non-executive Chairman and MD. She is also the Chair and Co-Founder of Support Elders Pvt. Ltd, an organisation that works on holistic at-home elder care. She received the Golden Jubilee Biotech Park Lifetime Achievement Award 2023, was recognised as one of the top 10 Champions of the Indian Incubation Ecosystem (2022), received the FICCI FLO Influential Women Award (2021), and the 'Top Women Achievers of the Year 2017 in Asia' by *Asia One Magazine*.



DEEPIKA MAHIDHARA

Deepika Mahidhara is a learning and development consultant and a communications professional. She coaches individuals on life skills, personal leadership, and public speaking, and facilitates workshops for adults on a variety of soft skills, behavioural skills and leadership skills. She is also a professional MC, talk show host, content writer, and actor. She takes a keen interest in theatre, and music and is a novice motorcyclist.



DHANALAKOTA RAKESH & DHANALAKOTA VINAY KUMAR



Dhanalakota Rakesh and **Dhanalakota Vinay Kumar** are Nakashi artists, carrying forward a rich legacy of Cheriya scroll painting—a traditional handicraft that has been preserved in their family for at least 15 generations. Hailing from Cheriya village, about 90 km from Hyderabad, they are among the few remaining families dedicated to keeping this centuries-old art form alive.



DIANA MICKEVIČIENĖ

Diana Mickevičienė is the Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the Republic of India. She is a career diplomat with over 30 years of experience and was the Ambassador of Lithuania to China (2020–2022). She has a BA in philosophy, an MA in history of culture and social anthropology and a diploma in international relations, and taught South Asian history at Vilnius University. She has published extensively on classical Indian dance and India-Lithuania historical relations, and a book *All of My Indias* (2011). She is fluent in English, French, and Russian, and is familiar with Hindi, Spanish, Mandarin, and Sanskrit.

DILNAZ BAIG

Dilnaz Baig studied at Mahboobia Girls School and Women's College, Koti. While living in Mumbai (1987–1995) she became a life member of the Mahila Dakshita Samiti and worked in the Dharavi slums under the aegis of the Concern India Federation to bridge the Hindu-Muslim divide. After returning to Hyderabad, she played an instrumental role in establishing the Hyderabad chapter of Sham-e-Ghazal and the NGO Apna Watan. She also started Dastarkhan-e-Naaz, curated dinners and lunches in typical Hyderabadi ambience, and has curated Hyderabad Food Festivals for Grand Hyatt Kochi, Hyatt Place Hyderabad, Marriott Bombay, Lake Palace Udaipur, and Land's End Bombay.



DINESH C. SHARMA

Dinesh C. Sharma is an award-winning journalist and author with nearly 40 years of experience of reporting on issues related to science, technology, innovation, medicine, and the environment for national and international media outlets. Among his books are *The Outsourcer: The Story of India's IT Revolution* (2015) and *Indian Innovation, Not Jugaad: 100 Ideas That Transformed India* (2022). *Beyond Biryani: The Making of a Globalised Hyderabad* (2024) is his latest publication.



ECHO HAN AND DEEPTI CHADDA



Star Papaya was founded by **Echo Han** and **Deepti Chadda**, long-time friends and mothers who are passionate about safeguarding the limitless imagination of our children in a world filled with noise and distraction. Echo, originally from Taiwan, has worked in education institutions and technology companies in China, London, and Singapore for the last 20 years. Deepti is an entrepreneur with professional experience across Asia and Europe with an MBA from INSEAD, and loves creative pursuits and keeping fit.

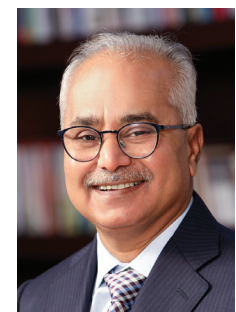


EGLĖ LIPEIKAITĖ

Eglė Lipeikaitė is a master of watercolour and a teacher from Lithuania. She graduated from the Academy of Arts in Vilnius in 1994 and has been participating in international watercolour exhibitions worldwide since 2002. In 2014, she became a finalist in the World Watercolor Competition. In 2009, she founded a private watercolour studio where she teaches children and adults various watercolour techniques. Water themes make up a major part of her work, and she is sometimes called the Water Master. She sees universal creative ideas in water. When she paints, she feels like conducting an orchestra, with the music coming from the watercolour.

G. V. PRASAD

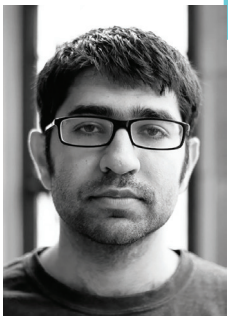
G. V. Prasad is a graduate of Purdue University in industrial administration and has an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. A part of Dr Reddy's group since 1986, he has turned the group into a trusted global pharma player. He is a photography enthusiast and a birdwatcher and chairs the board of trustees of Wildlife Trust of India and is involved with the NGOs Aakar Asha Trust and World Wildlife Fund. He is a Board Member of Indian School of Business, Ashoka University, and the Institute of Public Health Sciences. He has been the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Belgium in Hyderabad since April 2019.



GANESH BAGLER

Ganesh Bagler as a teenager aspired to be an astronomer. Trained in physics, computer science, and computational biology, he has had an adventurous journey from astronomy to gastronomy becoming known for his pioneering research in 'Computational Gastronomy.' By building keystone data repositories, algorithms, and applications, his lab has established the foundations of this emerging data science that blends food with artificial intelligence. Innovative research from his lab has contributed to this niche dealing with food, flavours, nutrition, health, and sustainability. He has an audacious dream of transforming the food landscape by making food computable.





GAUTAM BHATIA

Gautam Bhatia is a speculative fiction writer, reviewer, and editor. His most recent novel is *The Sentence* (2024). He is also the author of the SF duology, *The Wall* (2020) and *The Horizon* (2021), both of which were longlisted for *Locus Magazine's* book of the year award. He is the co-ordinating editor of *Strange Horizons*, a weekly online magazine of science fiction and fantasy, which won the Hugo Award in 2024.

GOGU SHYAMALA

Gogu Shyamala is a well-known Telugu language writer and poet whose critically acclaimed works—*Nene Balaanni*, a biography of T.N. Sadalakshmi, the first Dalit woman legislator from Hyderabad, and *Nallapoddu: Dalitha Sthreela Sahithyam 1921–2002* (Black Dawn: Dalit Women's Writings)—are widely known. English readers know her through the Navayana book, *Father Maybe an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket but...* (2012). Two of her stories have been translated into English, Hindi and Urdu as part of the Different Tales Series published by Anveshi Hyderabad and Ekalavya Publishers.



GUNDA CHANDRAKANTH

Gunda Chandrakanth retired as a Yōga Teacher from the Hyderabad Public School, Begumpet (Hyderabad). He learnt Yōga and participated in Prāṇāyāma research under the guidance of Sri Ramananda Yogi, and continued his Yōga studies under the supervision of Sri. Dharendra Brahmachari at the Vishwayatan Yōgashram Katra (Jammu & Kashmir). He established the 'Chetana' Centre for Yōga and Health Education, where he conducts classes for both practitioners and teachers. A widely travelled teacher, many of his students have set up Yōga centres around the world imparting Yōga education to the new generation.



HARIHARAN KRISHNAN



Hariharan Krishnan graduated in Direction from the Film and Television Institute of India (1976) and has made nine feature films and over 350 short and documentary films. His films have won national awards and been selected at international festivals. As a writer-critic, he has contributed to several books and journals on media and cinema. *Kamal Haasan: A Cinematic Journey* (2024) is his latest publication.



HARINI RAO

Harini Rao is a noted Hindustani classical vocalist. She has been training for over 23 years and has sung more than 500 concerts in India and abroad. She is also a playback singer, actor, voice artist, and educator. She has earned many awards and recognitions for her music and work over the last 10 years of her musical career.

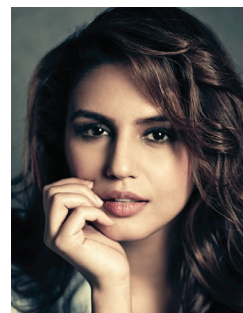
HARSH MANDER

Harsh Mander is a writer, columnist, researcher, Chairperson, Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi, and visiting faculty at IIM Ahmedabad; Vrije University, Amsterdam; Heidelberg University; and FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg. His 25 books include *Burning Pyres, Mass Graves and a State That Failed its People: India's Covid Tragedy* (2023), *Partitions of the Heart: Unmaking the Idea of India* (2018), *Looking Away: Inequality, Prejudice and Indifference in New India* (2015), *Ash in the Belly: India's Unfinished Battle against Hunger* (2012). He was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of York, the inaugural Human Rights Award by the FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg University, and was shortlisted for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022.



HARSHA DURUGADDA

Harsha Durugadda is a sculptor and won The Arts Family Emerging Artist Award (2023) for South Asia and the Rio Tinto Sculpture Award (2017) at Sculpture by the Sea, Australia. He was part of a Sotheby's New York contemporary auction (2021), invited to present on Ancient Buddhist Sculpture at the British Museum, London (2014), and received the Andrew Stretton Memorial invitation (2016). His sculptures have been exhibited at Nord Art in Germany, Emergent Art Space in the United States, London, and Sculpture by the Sea in Australia. His artworks are part of major public and private collections including Busselton Jetty (Australia), Bangalore Airport, and RMZ Foundation.



HUMA QURESHI

Huma Qureshi epitomises the outsider who has triumphed in the glittering world of Bollywood. Her journey from the by-lanes of Delhi to the grandeur of the Indian film industry is nothing short of inspiring. Effortlessly transcending mediums and platforms, she has meticulously charted her career path, acting in Hindi, pan-India, international films, and shows on streaming platforms. In 2022, she started her own production house. With *Zeba: An Accidental Superhero* (2023) she debuts as an author.



ILEANA CITARISTI

Ileana Citaristi, an Italian-born scholar and dancer, holds a PhD in Philosophy. After a career in the European theatre, she immersed herself in Indian culture, residing in Odisha since 1979. She is a renowned Odissi dancer, trained under Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, and also mastered Chhau dance under Guru Hari Nayak. She is celebrated for her innovative choreography in both styles. She actively imparts her knowledge, guiding students at her institution, Art Vision, in Bhubaneswar. Her contributions to Indian dance have been recognised globally through performances at major festivals.

INDUMATHI MARIAPPAN

Indumathi Mariappan is a Research Scientist at the Center for Ocular Regeneration and Sudhakar and Sreekanth Ravi Stem Cell Biology Laboratory, LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad. Her lab is involved in basic and translational research towards addressing the problems of retinal and corneal diseases using different sources of adult and pluripotent stem cells. Her group is currently exploring the applications of patient-specific induced pluripotent stem cells (hiPSCs) and genome editing technology for disease modelling studies and developing regenerative therapies for inherited eye diseases.



ISHIKA RAMAKRISHNA

Ishika Ramakrishna is a Doctoral Fellow at Centre for Wildlife Studies and an alumnus of National Centre for Biological Sciences. Her academic and applied interests lie in an interdisciplinary space across ethnoprimateology, social sciences, ethology, and science communication. She is currently studying the fascinating relationships between indigenous communities and other primates in India. She is a part of collaborative groups like Café Oikos, Association of Indian Primatologists, Queer Wildlifers Circle, CEASE, and the Student Conference on Conservation Science, Bengaluru. She also hosts a podcast, 'The Thing About Wildlife', and has authored three nature-themed children's books.



J. S. R. PRASAD



J. S. R. Prasad is a Sanskrit scholar and a professor at the Department of Sanskrit Studies, University of Hyderabad. He specialises in Indian logic through a traditional learning system. His current research focuses on Indian psychology and research methodology, drawing rich insights

from Ayurvedic texts. He has presented over 60 research papers at national and international conferences and published 45 peer-reviewed articles. He is on the editorial boards of prestigious research journals and has a profound interest in the poetry of Shankara and Kalidasa.

JAIDEEP UNUDURTI



Jaideep Unudurti writes on travel and popular culture and reviews books for *The Hindu*. He co-wrote the script of *Shadmayudh*, a film on the history of chess which was awarded a development grant from the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris. His *Hyderabad: A Graphic Novel* (2013) led to 'Every City is a Story'—a city-centric graphic storytelling

initiative encompassing various cities in India. His graphic novel *Die Unterirdischen Städte* (2020), with artist Fabian Stoltz, set in an underworld beneath the battlefields of World War I, grew out of a cross-cultural collaboration supported by the City Senate of Hamburg and Goethe-Zentrum, Hyderabad.

JAMEELA NISHAT



Jameela Nishat is a significant feminist poet writing in Urdu. She edited an anthology on Deccan women poets called *Inkeshaf* (2000). Her poems were translated into English and published by Sahitya Akademi in 2008. She has four poetry collections, including *Butterfly Caresses* (2015). She received the Devi Award for 'bringing poetry to life', Adhikara

Bhasha Sangham Award for promoting the Dakhni language and literature at the grassroots level (2007), and the Ladli Award for Best Radio Play (2012). Her work on gender and social justice issues among communities in the old city of Hyderabad has been widely recognised.

JANAKI LENIN

Janaki Lenin writes about wildlife and conservation, and the intermingling of human and animal destinies. She was a columnist for *The Hindu* and is the author of the two-volume *My Husband and Other Animals* (2024) and *Every Creature Has a Story* (2020), and co-author of *Snakes, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll: My Early Years* (2024) with Romulus Whitaker.



JAROSLAVAS MELNIKAS



Jaroslavas Melnikas (Jaroslav Melnik) is a Lithuanian sci-fi and surrealist writer of Ukrainian descent. His books have been translated into English, French, German, and other languages. He is a graduate from Lviv University and a postgraduate from Maxim Gorky Literature Institute, Moscow. His books received many prestigious nominations and awards: BBC Book of the Year, Book of the Year in France, and the finalist of the European award 'Utopiales'. *The Last Day* (2018) was shortlisted in the UK for the International Rubery Book Award. He received the Lithuanian Government Prize in 2020 for his contribution to Lithuanian literature and its promotion in the world.

JAY KRISHNAN



Jay Krishnan is a serial entrepreneur with a background in hardware platforms, networking and IoT. He has a background in venture, entrepreneurship, engineering, product management, and strategy and traversed six cities across India, the US, and Canada in his career. He was the CEO of The Accelerator Centre, Canada, and

the founding CEO of T-Hub, Hyderabad. His venture experience ranges from SRI Capital and Mantra Capital and his angel investments from EdTech to Web3. His professional career spanned Brookoutrout-Cantata, Juniper Networks, and Cisco Systems. His book *Unfinished Business* (2024) is a collection of 12 short stories.

JHILAM CHATTARAJ



Jhilam Chattaraj is an academic, critic, and poet. Her books include *Sudeep Sen: Reading, Writing, Teaching* (2025), *Noise Cancellation* (2021), *Corporate Fiction: Popular Culture and The New Writers* (2018), and *When Lovers Leave and Poetry Stays* (2018). Her works have been published in *Ecocene*, *Mekong Review*, *New Contrast Magazine*, *One Art*, *Calyx*, *Ariel*, *Room*, *Colorado Review*, *World Literature Today* and *Asian Cha*, among others. She received the CTI Excellence Award in 'Literature and Soft Skills Development' (2019) from Department of Language and Culture, Government of Telangana, and was nominated for Nina Riggs Poetry Award (2023). She teaches at RBVRR Women's College, Hyderabad.

JITENDRA VASAVA

Jitendra Vasava is a poet who writes in Dehwali Bhili language. He is the founder and president of Adivasi Sahitya Akademi, based in Mahupada village, Narmada district, Gujarat. He has published six books on tribal oral literature and a chapbook of poetry, *Asabhya Ghoshit Mahuva* (2023). He edited *Geet Kavita* (2019), *Adivasi Sahitya Movement of Gujarat* (2019). His doctoral research focused on the cultural and mythological aspects of the oral folk tales of the Bhils of Narmada district. He is currently doing post-doctoral research at IIT, Gandhinagar on the cultural and linguistic study of the environmental knowledge systems of the Bhil.



**K. S. NAIR**

K. S. Nair has authored three books and over a hundred articles on Indian military history in Indian, American, British, and Japanese publications. His books include *Ganesh's Flyboys* (2012), on the IAF in the Congo in the 1960s; *The Forgotten Few* (2019), on the Indian Air Force in World War II; and *December in Dacca* (2022), on the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. He is a

graduate of IIT Delhi and IIM Bangalore and has served at levels up to Vice President, CEO, and Director at multinational and boutique firms, in the areas of consulting, investment, and development.

KALADAS DEHARIA

Kaladas Deharia is a singer, poet, and cultural activist. In 1992 he left his government job to join Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha, the labour movement of martyr Shankar Guha Niyogi. He formed Chhattisgarhi Lok Kala Manch and has been instrumental in forming Relaa Collective, bringing together several cultural groups and individuals from different parts of India. In 2009 he was recognized by the Chhattisgarh government for his cultural work in opposition to alcohol addiction.

**KALPANA KANNABIRAN**

Kalpana Kannabiran is a sociologist and non-fiction writer. Formerly a teacher and academic administrator in higher education, she has been a rights educator and campaigner. She has published widely on the need for constitutional sensibilities in everyday life and sociality, the sociology of gender and human rights, and law and literature.

**KAMAAN SINGH DHAMI**

Kamaan Singh Dhami is a singer and songwriter. His song 'American War Paar Da', set to the tune of the popular Sinhalese song 'Surangani', has become associated with anti-war action in India. He drew inspiration from Narmada Bachao Andolan and since the late 1990s has been penning songs on topics ranging from the WTO to the pollution in the Vishabhavati river. He has been part of Relaa

Collective since 2016 and has written songs to be performed with fellow members.

KANCHAN BHATTACHARYA

Kanchan Bhattacharya is a retired army officer and veteran of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. A former professor of electronics, he has published seven books—sonnets, haiku, haibun, blank verse, short stories, and runaway humour, with subdued erotic passages, and masked violent content. His

work has been anthologised in India and abroad.

KANCHANA K. V.

Kanchana K. V. brings over 18 years of experience in entrepreneurship, innovation, business development, project, financial and operations management. As the CEO of the Network of Indian Cultural Enterprises (NICEorg), she leads the organisation's mission to create an ecosystem to help enterprises build cultural businesses in F&B, fashion, home decor, experiential tourism, and health and wellness sectors. By enabling an ecosystem to catalyse cultural entrepreneurship through market-side interventions, partners, funding, policy advocacy, and research, the organisation aims to create and nurture valuable and profitable Indian cultural brands across the globe and shape Brand India.

**KARTHIKEYAN VASUDEVAN**

Karthikeyan Vasudevan is Chief Scientist at the Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species, a lab of CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology. His research focussed on reptiles and amphibians, revealed previously undocumented biodiversity, and identified key factors that regulate reptile and amphibian communities in tropical forests and human-modified habitats. It has contributed data for conservation planning and the implementation of species recovery plans. His work on the disease ecology of a pandemic in amphibians that caused extinctions has highlighted the role of sub-clinical infections on their population. His work on toxinology of viper and krait venoms in India focuses on improving snake envenomation outcomes.

**KAVIYAGA**

Kaviyaga is the author of *Walking in Clouds: A Journey to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar* (2018), and her writing has appeared in *The Hindu*, *Outlook Traveller*, *One Story*, *Swamp Pink* (CrazyHorse), and other fora. A 2023 Yaddo

Fellow, she won second place in the 2021 Calvino Prize and attended the Iowa Writers' Workshop Summer Session in 2022. In previous avatars, she was a software engineer and development economist.

**KAVITA VEMURI**

Kavita Vemuri is a neuroscience researcher and faculty at IIITH. Her interest spans understanding human behaviour in everyday interactions, the complex construct of empathy and sexual objectification, the functional brain and the clinical conditions arising from environmental pollution, with the study of the human brain, being connecting thread across the domains.

Her special and long-term interest is understanding brain atrophy attributed to air/water/soil/food.

KHADEER BABU

Khadeer Babu is a well-known Telugu language writer, editor, anthologist and scriptwriter. His early collections of childhood stories—*Dargamitta Kathalu* and *Poleramma Banda Kathalu* continue to enthral readers. The stories 'Head Curry' and 'Three-fourths', 'Half Price' and 'Bajji Bajji' have been translated into English, Hindi, and Urdu as part of the Different Tales Series published by Anveshi Hyderabad and Ekalavya Publishers.



KINNERA MURTHY B

Kinnera Murthy B is a strategy consultant, director on corporate boards and academic governing councils, national council member of professional organisations, and founder of a women-support NGO, among others. She superannuated, from the Administrative Staff College of India, where she held the posts of dean and professor of strategic management. She is also associated with Moving Images and Apna Watan. She is a director of Hyderabad Literary Festival.



LALTU

Laltu is a poet and author writing in Hindi. A recipient of Siya Sahachari Samman of Sahitya Garima Puraskar, Hyderabad, he has published a dozen anthologies of poetry and two short story collections. He has participated in HLF frequently.



LATHA SASHI



Latha Sashi is a consultant Nutritionist at the Fernandez Hospital in Hyderabad. Her speciality is pregnancy and post-natal nutrition, maternal and paediatric nutrition, customised medical nutrition therapy packages for the overweight and with obesity, gestational diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, infertility, hormone imbalance and menopause. She is a

recipient of the Outstanding Young Scientist Award by Nutrition Society of India.

LAVANYA KARTHIK

Lavanya Karthik is the award-winning author and illustrator of over 35 books for children of all ages. She has a background in environmental design and planning and loves writing about the natural world around her. Her books have travelled the world and been translated into many languages, including Mandarin, Tibetan and Braille. She writes, draws, and dreams of a greener, cleaner world.

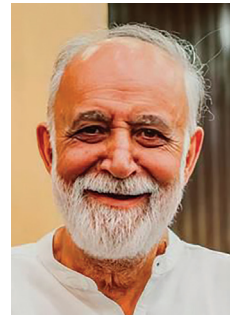


LAVANYA SURESH

Lavanya Suresh is an Associate Professor at BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad campus. After her PhD in Political Science (from ISEC Bangalore), she joined the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Hyderabad as an Assistant Professor. She was awarded the visiting research scholar fellowship under the Graduate Development Program of the Watson Institute of International Studies at Brown University, USA. Her work focuses on the political ecology of commons in India, with a broader interest in decentralisation and public administration. Besides publications in leading social science journals, she co-authored *Decentralised Democracy: Gandhi's Vision and Indian Reality* (2017). She is PI and Co-PI in several funded projects.



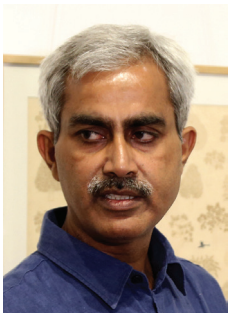
M. K. RAINA



M. K. Raina is a well-known actor, filmmaker, and academic. He has acted in more than 150 plays, directed over 160 theatre productions, and is a major contributor to Indian New Wave cinema. He is instrumental in reviving 'Bhand Pather', the traditional folk theatre of Kashmir, and received several honours

including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the B. V. Karanth Lifetime Achievement Award. He has been a fellow at Stanford University, and a Scholar-in-Residence at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. *Before I Forget: A Memoir* (2024) chronicles his life, career, and activism against the backdrop of major social and political changes in India.

MADAN MEENA



Madan Meena is a practising visual artist and a researcher working extensively with rural, nomadic, and tribal communities. He has designed two important exhibitions in western Rajasthan based on brooms and pottery. He is the recipient of various fellowships to work on the oral traditions of Rajasthan, among which Tejaji Ballad is a major one documented

in more than one dozen languages. He has been involved in the revival of various craft traditions among Indigenous communities. Presently, he is the honorary director of the Adivasi Academy in Gujarat.

MAHENDRA KUMAR MISHRA

Mahendra Kumar Mishra is a noted folklorist. He is the author, most recently, of *Erai, Erai—Multilingual Education in Tribal Schools of India: Voices from Below* (2023). His work on using folklore in school curricula in a multilingual education framework in Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan has been widely recognised. In 2023, UNESCO conferred on him the International Mother Language Award. He is currently a National Advisor, Multilingual Education, with the Language and Learning Foundation.



MALINI GOPALAKRISHNAN

Malini Gopalakrishnan has a master's degree in biotechnology and currently edits medical textbooks for a publishing firm in Hyderabad. She has authored poems and articles for digital and print publications.



MANJARI KATJU

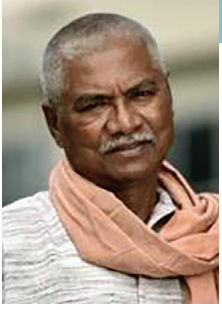
Manjari Katju is a professor of political science at University of Hyderabad. Her book, *Electoral Practice and the Election Commission of India* was published in 2023. She also researches and writes on issues of religious nationalism and democracy.



MANJARI KAUL

Manjari Kaul is a queer feminist performer, director and theatre facilitator. She is a graduate (2015) of the Duende School of Ensemble Physical Theatre and holds a Master's degree (2010) from The School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is a recipient of Frankfurt MOVES!, Think Arts 2022, and Genderalities 2.0 Grants. She works extensively with children, creating work for and with young people in the theatre. She is dedicated to exploring the incongruous, disruptive and off-key in theatre and live performance, seeking possibilities for intersections and solidarities. Her area of investigation in performance-making is anti-oppressive, experimental and movement-based work.





MANORANJAN BYAPARI

Manoranjan Byapari writes in Bengali. He taught himself to read and write at the age of 24 while in prison. He worked as a rickshaw puller, sweeper, porter, and cook. In 2018, the English translation of his memoir *Ittibrite Chandal Jibon (Interrogating My Chandal Life)* won the Hindu Prize for non-fiction. In 2019, he was awarded the

Gateway Lit Fest Writer of the Year Prize. In 2022, he received the Shakti Bhatt Prize and the English translation of his novel *Chhera Chhera Jibon (Imaan)* was longlisted for the JCB Prize. In 2021, he became a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

MARIYAM ALAVI

Mariyam Alavi is an award-winning Indian journalist with a passion for uncovering the truth. She has worked with prominent media outlets such as *Hindustan Times*, and *NDTV*, reporting extensively on the Indian economy, politics, human rights, and the COVID-19 pandemic. She has also contributed to the 2024 Indian General Elections coverage of international media organisations like TRT World and RTÉ. She is also one of the co-authors of *Love Jihad and Other Fictions: Simple Facts to Counter Viral Falsehoods (2024)*, a book that looked at some of the most prevalent divisive theories in the country.



MARIA GORETTI

Maria Goretti studied economics and fashion design. She was a dancer and model for Coca-Cola, Liril, Close-up, and Volkswagen Beetle among many others. She was a VJ for MTV, hosted the MTV Video Music Awards (2000), anchored the ICC Champions Trophy (2002), and the Cricket World Cup (2003), did the weekly news and entertainment show for *Times Now*, and anchored food shows for NDTV. She has also acted in the film *Raghu Romeo (2004)* and, completed the Cordon Bleu certificate course (2011) in food and baking at the Tante Marie School of Cookery, UK. She writes a food blog that has recipes, slice-of-life stories, and poetry.



MEDHA KOHLI



Medha Kohli is a development sector professional, working in the space of social impact and social behaviour change communication. She has over five years of experience in project management and programme design in the education, media, and development sectors. She is passionate about community-driven projects and the environment

and is currently supporting local community efforts for Kapra Lake restoration in Sainikpuri, Hyderabad. She is an endometriosis survivor and has been a vocal advocate of creating awareness about this chronic condition and the lack of proper care for it.



MEENAKSHI AHAMED

Meenakshi Ahamed is a freelance journalist and has written on American foreign policy for publications such as *Foreign Policy*, *The Asian Age*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* and *Seminar*. She was the London correspondent for NDTV from 1989–1996. She holds a post-graduate degree from the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, in development economics and public health. While her first

book, *A Matter of Trust (2021)* was on India-US relations, her latest book *Indian Genius (2024)* is about 'The Meteoric Rise of Indians in America'.

MEENAKSHI J

Meenakshi J. is an independent journalist, and an alumna of East-West Center, Hawaii. She writes and reports on community health, people, climate change, solutions, food science and travel. Her work appears in *The New York Times*, *Nature Medicine*, *National Geographic*, *The British Medical Journal*, *Smithsonian*, *Hakai Magazine*, *BBC*, *The Guardian*, *Nikkei Asia*, among others.



MENKA SHIVDASANI

Menka Shivdasani is an award-winning poet, editor, and translator. She is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *The Seven Queens: Sindhi Folktales Retold in English Verse (2024)*; co-translator of *Freedom and Fissures*, an anthology of Sindhi Partition poetry (1998); editor of a SPARROW anthology of women's writing (2014); and editor of *The Big Bridge Book of Contemporary Indian Poetry (2024)*. She co-founded Poetry Circle in Bombay in 1986 and has organised poetry festivals for the global movement 100 Thousand Poets for Change since 2011. She is the Co-Chair of Asia Pacific Writers and Translators (APWT).



MERAJ FAHEEM



Meraj Faheem is a serial entrepreneur, an engineer by education, and a law student. He built India's first coding bootcamp—The Hacking School and India's first student-focused startup incubator—EdVenture Park and Code for India Foundation that delivers India's first government-accredited Web2 & Web3 programmes. He is an Innovation

Fellow with the Government of Telangana and is the CEO, Telangana Innovation Cell. During his stint as an entrepreneur and startup professional, he mentored and enabled many social startups to the market stage across sectors: assistive technology, mental health, science and technology, and sustainability.



MICHELLE CAHILL

Michelle Cahill is an Indian-Australian writer of fiction and poetry. She was awarded the KWS Hilary Mantel International Short Story Prize and the NSW Premier's Literary Award for New Writing for the short story collection *Letter to Pessoa (2016)*. Her debut novel *Daisy & Woolf (2022/2024)* gives voice and story

to an Anglo-Indian character in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway (1925)*. She has been awarded fellowships at Sangam House, Sanskriti Kendra, Hawthornden Castle, and a Hedberg Residency at the University of Tasmania, as well as grants from the Australia Council, the Copyright Agency, and the Australian Society of Authors.

MOHAMED SHAFEEQ KARINKURAYIL

Mohamed Shafeeq Karinkurayil is an Associate Professor at the Manipal Centre for Humanities, Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Karnataka. He is the author of *The Gulf Migrant Archives in Kerala: Reading Borders and Belonging (2024)*. He received his PhD in Cultural Studies from English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, and taught at Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad. His works have appeared in *Himal Southasian*, *New Lines Magazine*, *The Hindu*, *Jadaliyya*, *The Wire*, *Scroll*, among others.



MOHANA KRISHNA INDRAGANTI

Mohana Krishna Indraganti is a prominent Telugu film director. His debut film *Grahanam* (2005) fetched him eleven awards including the National Film Award for Best First Film of a Director, the Nandi Award for Best First Film of a Director, and the Gollapudi Srinivas Award for Best First Film of a Director. The film was also showcased in the Indian panorama section of the 2005 International Film Festival of India. Since then, he has made several successful films and is currently making his twelfth film titled *Sarangapaani Jaathakam* (Sarangapaani's Horoscope). He holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from York University.



MOHAR BASU



Mohar Basu is the Chief Correspondent (Entertainment) at *Mid-Day*. She worked as a film critic at *Koimoi.com* and reviewed movies for *The Times of India*. Her stories include in-depth coverage of censorship in films and OTT platforms, the 2016 ban on Pakistani actors in India and their return in 2020, and the systemic culture of sexual harassment in Bollywood. Her reporting has contributed to industry changes, such as the creation of safe spaces at casting agencies and talent-management companies. In 2024, she was recognized in the Indian Achiever's Club's '40 under 40' list. *Shah Rukh Khan: Legend, Icon, Star* (2024) is her latest publication.

MOUPIA BASU



Moupia Basu studied at the University of Delhi and worked as a journalist with some of the leading publications in the country. She is the author of *Khoka* (2015), *The Queen's Last Salute* (2019), and *Anarkali and Salim: A Retelling of Mughal-e-Azam* (2020). *Bhagwati* (2024) is a retelling of the Mohammad Quli-Bhagmati love story.

NANDA KISHORE KANNURI

Nanda Kishore Kannuri is an Associate Professor at the Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad. He has about 25 years of work experience in the social development sector and academia. Before joining University of Hyderabad, he was Professor of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the Indian Institute of Public Health, Hyderabad. His areas of interest include medical anthropology, mental health and well-being, marginality, multispecies ethnography, One Health, and sustainability.



NANDITA BHAVNANI

Nandita Bhavnani has an MA in anthropology. She is also a qualified chartered accountant with a law degree. She has been engaged in extensive research on Sindhi culture and history since 1997. She has conducted interviews of Partition survivors in India, Pakistan, and the UAE. She has also travelled widely across Sindh. She is the author of *Sindhnamah* (2018), *The Making of Exile: Sindhi Hindus and the Partition of India* (2014), and *I Will & I Can: The Story of Jai Hind College* (2011).



NANDITA VENKATESAN



Nandita Venkatesan is a journalist, public health professional, and public speaker. Her work in antimicrobial resistance is widely recognized and *Time* magazine listed her among 100 emerging global leaders working to make life-saving tuberculosis drugs cheaper. She battled two rounds of tuberculosis and lost hearing due to the side effects of a TB-related injection. She led high-level advocacy and community engagement initiatives to raise awareness about tackling infectious diseases and was invited to address the United Nations General Assembly and other prestigious forums including the Union World Conference on Lung Health. She is a member of WHO's civil society task force on TB and *The Lancet* Commission on TB.

NAVANITA LAHIRI



Navanita Lahiri is a happily retired lecturer of English. She has a PhD in Culture Studies, taught both undergraduate and postgraduate students, and worked in HR and as a corporate trainer. She also co-founded a business consultancy company.

She is currently associated with a welfare society in the Sunderbans dedicated to education. Theatre, travelling, music, reading, and cooking excite her.

NAYANTARA NANDA KUMAR

Nayantara Nanda Kumar is a dance activist who has performed at fundraisers for diverse causes in diverse places: For Nonviolent Peace Force (Santa Cruz), Asha for Education (Berkeley), Medical College in Tibet (Richmond), Chaparral House for the Aged (Berkeley), Tamil Refugee (South Bay), Society to Save Rocks, the Vegan Festival, and for Prajwala and the US Consulate against human trafficking. After 14 years of experience in environmental engineering in the US, she founded Our Sacred Space, Secunderabad, in 2012 to lend support to individuals and communities in sustainable practices in diverse fields, nurturing creative expression, wellness, and environmental consciousness.



NEELESH MISRA

Neelesh Misra is an award-winning journalist; author of five books, including *The Absent State* (2010, with Rahul Pandita), *173 Hours in Captivity* (2000), and *End of the Line* (2001); lyricist of immensely popular songs like 'Jaadu hai nasha hai' (*Jism*, 2003) and 'Kya mujhe pyaar hai' (*Woh Lamhe*, 2006); and co-writer (with Kabir Khan) of the screenplay of *Ek Tha Tiger* (2012). His radio show, 'Yadoon ka Idiotbox' revived the art of oral storytelling. He also hosted 'The Neelesh Misra Show', started India's first rural newspaper, *Gaon Connection* (in 2012) and has been hosting 'The Slow Interview with Neelesh Misra' (since 2018).



NEERA DEHARIA



Neera Deharia is associated with Mahila Mukti Morcha in Bhilai. She advocates women taking centre stage in the struggles for the rights of communities and assert their own rights in the family as well as work spaces. In 2014, the workers of ACC Cement went on a 24-hour strike against the Cement Wage Board. Through songs she helped the women workers stay united during the strike. She has been singing with Relaa Collective since its inception in 2015, and often addresses women workers with the song 'Utho meri behna' (Rise, My Sister).

**NEHA KHAITAN**

Neha Khaitan is a Bharatanatyam artist, illustrator, and children's author. She conducted storytelling sessions at prestigious events like the Kalaghoda Arts Festival and for schools and NGOs. She has written and illustrated a series of math-based activity books for children, the first volume of which

is forthcoming. Before she forayed into the world of arts, she worked in the information technology industry for about a decade. Currently, she also works with branding and communications projects. She founded 'A Flower Child', a platform that engages in visual arts, children's books, and storytelling.

NIRUJ MOHAN RAMANUJAM

Niruj Mohan Ramanujam heads the Science Communication, Public Outreach, and Education (SCOPE) Section at Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru. He was a radio astronomer at the South African Radio Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town and National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA-TIFR), Pune. After his PhD from Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Leiden University, The Netherlands and IAP in France. He is the former chairperson of the Public Outreach and Education Committee of Astronomical Society of India and the Outreach Committee of African Astronomical Society. He is on the National Astronomy Education Coordinator team and is a National Outreach Coordinator.

**NISHANTH INJAM**

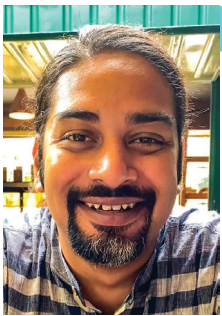
Nishanth Injam is the author of the story collection *The Best Possible Experience* (2023), which was named a New York Times Editors' choice pick and longlisted for the PEN/Faulkner award. His writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Zoetrope: All-Story*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *ZYZZYVA*, *The Georgia Review*, *Best Debut Short Stories 2021*, and *The Best American Magazine Writing 2022*.

**OMKAR BHATKAR**

Omkar Bhatkar has been teaching and involved in theatre-making, poetry, and cinema for a decade. He writes and directs plays, and makes independent feature films and documentaries. Many of his over 20 plays were performed at art and theatre festivals. In collaboration with Alliance Française de Bombay, he has directed several contemporary French plays in English. His plays *Blue Storm* and *Raindrops on My Window* were selected for the World Asia Playwrights Theatre Festival in South Korea in 2021 and 2024 respectively. He is the artistic director of Metamorphosis Theatre and Films and was curator at St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts.



He is the artistic director of Metamorphosis Theatre and Films and was curator at St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts.

**P. V. AKHIL JAIKISHAN**

P. V. Akhil Jaikishan is an architect and interior designer. He is passionate about creating innovative, sustainable spaces that enhance human experiences. Outside of work, he loves being out in nature, enjoys singing and playing music, has a keen interest

and experience in theatre production and enjoys reading. He also enjoys motorcycle rides, travelling and uncovering new experiences along the way.

PADMA RAMESH

Padma Ramesh is a journalist, educator, and trainer by profession and a film enthusiast. In a career spanning over two decades, she has seamlessly navigated diverse realms—media, corporate training, teaching, and managing CSR initiatives—but writing and a deep-rooted connection with cinema remained unwavering constants. Her work in merging a Liberal Arts education with filmmaking remains one of her most remarkable achievements, contributing significantly to the vision of Annapurna College of Film & Media, where she served as Dean until recently and continues to offer her expertise as a consultant.

**PANKAJ SEKHSARIA**

Pankaj Sekhsaria is a long-time member of the environmental group Kalpavriksh and currently Associate Professor, Centre for Technology Alternatives for Rural Areas (CTARA), IIT Bombay. His research interests lie at the intersection of science, environment, society, and technology. He has written extensively on issues of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – his books include his debut novel *The Last Wave* (2014), a collection of journalism *Islands in Flux – the Andaman and Nicobar Story* (2024), a children's book *Waiting for Turtles* (2021) (also in Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu), and most recently *The Great Nicobar Betrayal* (2024).

**PARIMALA KULKARNI**

Parimala Kulkarni teaches in the Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad. She is Professor and currently Chairperson, Board of Studies. Her area of research is Women's Writing. Her other research interests include Indian



Literatures, Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, and English Language Pedagogy in India. She received the UGC-Research Award 2014–2016.

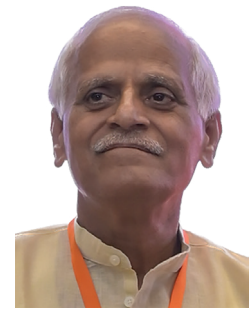
**PARVATI GUPTA**

Parvati Gupta graduated with a BA in Education Honours, completed Montessori diploma and a diploma in Jolly Phonics. She has taught in schools in Calcutta, Singapore, and Hyderabad as an Early Years educator. She

conducts Phonics, English, and specific reading sessions for children who find reading difficult.

POGULA GANESHAM

Pogula Ganesham, a distinguished former officer of the Indian Army, holds engineering and MBA degrees, and expertise in Armoured Fighting Vehicles. He was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal in 2005 for his distinguished service in the army. Post-retirement, he founded 'Palle Srujana' in 2005 to promote grassroots creativity and traditional knowledge through quarterly Chinna Shodha Yatras and grassroots innovation initiatives. Through Palle Srujana he has supported over 500 innovators, facilitated numerous recognitions including President's Awards and international honours, and has developed a model for 'Grassroots Entrepreneurship', contributing to a turnover of Rs 18 crores from 2018–2023. His work has impacted over 10 lakh families.



PRAVEEN KANDREGULA

Praveen Kandregula is writer and director of the critically acclaimed Telugu film, *Cinema Bandi* (2021). He studied Engineering at GITAM University in Visakhapatnam and studied cinematography at Whistling Woods International. His favourites are Mani Ratnam and Stanley Kubrick. He has directed several ad and short films. After a brief stint as a cinematographer, he is currently developing his second feature film *Paradha*, a female-oriented drama film starring Anupama Parameswaran, Darshana Rajendran, and Sangeetha Krish.



PRAVEEN PRANAV



Praveen Pranav has over 25 years of experience in the field of Information Technology. Currently, he serves as a Senior Director at Microsoft. He has a keen interest in Hindi literature and has published six books, including two poetry collections. He is one of the founding members of the Hyderabad-based organisation 'K se Kavita' dedicated to Hindi/Urdu poetry.



PREETI GILL

Preeti Gill is an independent literary agent, commissioning editor, and rights director. She has written extensively on issues of conflict and women in Northeast India. She is the editor of *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast* (2010), *Bearing Witness: A Report on the Impact of Conflict on Women in Nagaland and Assam* (2011), *She Stoops to Kill* (2019), and co-editor of *Insider/Outsider: Belonging and Unbelonging in India's Northeast* (2018), and *But I Am One of You: Northeast India and the Struggle to Belong* (2024). Her documentary *Rambuai: Mizoram's 'Trouble' Years* (co-produced with Sanjoy Hazarika) was released in September 2016.

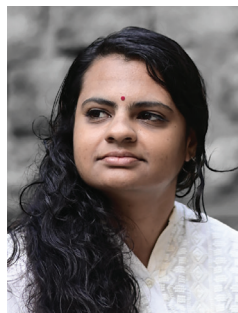
PRIYA MALIK

Priya Malik is an award-winning spoken word poet, storyteller, and actor. She writes and performs in English, Hindi, and Urdu. Her work revolves around love and relationships and has been featured at prestigious events like Kommune, UnErase Poetry, Spill Poetry, Tape a Tale, Jashn-e-Rekhta, Sahitya Aaj Tak, Times Literature Festival, and Colomboscope. She has been featured in magazines such as *Grazia*, *Femina*, and *Cosmopolitan* and was on the cover of *Cosmopolitan India*. Her viral poem 'Main 2019 main 1999 dhoond rahi hoon' took us back to the 90s. Her solo show *Ishq hai* is a unique amalgamation of music and poetry. Her two poetry collections are forthcoming.



PRIYADARSHINI PANCHAPAKESAN

Priyadarshini Panchapakesan is a children's author, teacher, and storyteller. Her books, *The Myth of the Wild Gaur* (2023) and *The Guardians of the Forest* (2023) blend adventure with environmental themes, inspiring young readers to care for their homes. Her books celebrate the Western Ghats while addressing the challenges of deforestation, climate change, and tourism. She is an experienced educator who conducts storytelling and creative writing workshops, including for underprivileged children, promoting both empathy and environmental awareness.



PRIYANKA AELAY

Priyanka Aelay is a contemporary visual artist with a PhD in film studies and the visual arts.



PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA

Priyanka Srivastava is the principal investigator at the Perception and Cognition (PAC) Lab at IIIT Hyderabad. Her team investigates the determinants of human perception and thinking ability and uses emerging technologies like VR/AR, to understand how our brain is wired. Her current work at IIIT Hyderabad is breaking the glass ceiling in gender typecasting and depression. An early interest in human behaviour led her to study cognitive mechanisms, using virtual reality to screen and diagnose mental health issues in youth, linguistic geographies and vulnerable demographics.

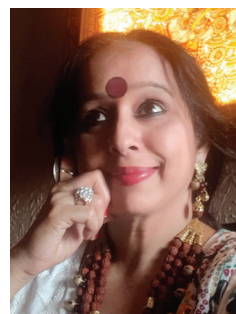
PULAGAM CHINNARAYANA

Pulagam Chinnarayana has 25 years of experience in film journalism and authored 11 books on films which fetched him three prestigious AP State Government Nandi Awards. As a lyricist, dialogue writer, and screenwriter, he has worked on popular Telugu films like *Yashoda*, *Paisa Vasool* and others. Additionally, he has been a PRO in the Telugu film industry for almost 500 films in a career spanning 24+ years.



PUNEET SIKKA

Puneet Sikka is an actor and media professional who has worked in theatre, TV, and digital commercials, short films, and a feature film. An alumna of Lady Shri Ram College and Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication, she started a platform called Arteree for independent artists from all specialities to showcase their talent and connect with other artists and organisations in the industry. She is also Founder-Director of Indic Quotient Media Foundation, a section-8 company that aims to illuminate Vedic culture and history via its documentary series on temples of India. *Take No. 2020* (2024) is her debut novel.



RADHA KUMAR

Radha Kumar is an Associate professor in the Department of Ancient Indian, History, Culture and Archaeology at St Xavier's College Mumbai. She has a Master's degree in Sitar and Bharatanatyam and a PhD in Buddhism. She integrates her study of ancient India and the performing arts. She is a member of academic boards, publishes papers and delivers lectures on Ancient Indian history and performing arts. Currently, she is a faculty coordinator for creating content and delivering courses on Indian Knowledge Systems.



RADHA YAMINI

Radha Yamini is a self-taught multidisciplinary artist and the founder of RadArt. She creates fun, quirky, and sustainable utility items that add a dash of art to your daily grind. She teaches students of all ages at Masterclass Art Academy and co-runs the academy with her father.

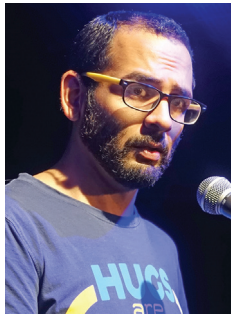
RADHIKA JHA

Radhika Jha is the internationally bestselling author of *Smell: A Novel* (199), *Lanterns On Their Horns* (2009) and *My Beautiful Shadow* (2014). The story 'Sleepers' from her short story collection *The Elephant and The Maruti* (2003) appeared in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine. She studied at Amherst College, University of Chicago, and University of Paris (V) and lives in Italy/New York. Her latest novel, *Hidden Forest* (2024) is about identity and what it means to belong.



RAGHAV MANDAVA

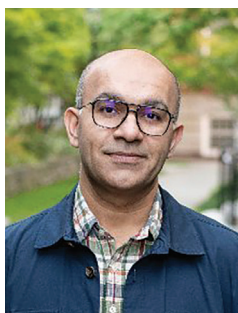
Raghav Mandava started telling jokes in 2009 when what a stand-up comedy show was had to be explained to audiences. Since then, he has become one of the most versatile performers in the Indian industry, and takes pride in being able to do 'any kind of show.' He also enjoys gardening and fantasises about being a beekeeper. At a young age, he realised his fondness for animals and nature. Through real-life experiences, he knows that snakes are better pets than monkeys. He identifies himself as a nature lover but not an environmentalist.



RAGINI SIRUGURI



Ragini Siruguri is a book designer and researcher. Her work integrates design, photography, and writing, and is guided by a belief that any form of design is inseparable from its cultural, historical, and political context. She has worked with visual arts publisher Tara Books for over seven years. She holds an MA by Research in Typography and Graphic Communication from University of Reading, UK, supported by Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation.



RAHUL BHATIA

Rahul Bhatia is an award-winning writer and journalist. He has published in *The New Yorker*, *Guardian Long Reads*, and *Caravan* among others. He is a Harvard Radcliffe Institute fellow (2022-23) and a winner of the True Story Award (2024). He mentors writers and journalists as part of the 'South Asia Speaks' collective, and was a co-founder of Peepli Project, a journalism non-profit. A former advertising art director, he graduated in communication design from Pratt Institute, New York. *The New India: The Unmaking of the World's Largest Democracy* (2024) is his latest publication.

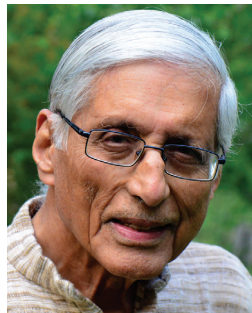
RAJDEEP SARDESAI

Rajdeep Sardesai is an award-winning journalist, author, and TV news presenter. Currently the consulting editor and lead news anchor of the India Today Group, he was the founder-editor of the *IBN 18* network and the managing editor of *NDTV 24x7* and *NDTV India*. In his over three-decade career, he has won more than fifty awards for journalistic excellence. His previous books on the Indian elections, *2019: How Modi Won India* (2019) and *2014: The Election That Changed India* (2014), have been national bestsellers. *2024: The Election That Surprised India* (2024) is his latest publication. He is also the author of *Democracy's XI: The Great Indian Cricket Story* (2017).



RAJMOHAN GANDHI

Rajmohan Gandhi is a historian, biographer, journalist, and former member of the Rajya Sabha. He wants to advance understanding, friendship, trust, equality, and mutual respect among the peoples and nations of our world. He also wishes to defend democratic rights. On 2 October 2024, he started, with the help of a few friends, a tiny new website, 'We Are One Humanity'. From the 1990s, he taught history and politics at universities in India and the U.S., mostly at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His *Fraternity: Constitutional Norm and Human Need* (2024) is part of the 'Ideas of the Indian Constitution' series.



RAJSHREE DUGAR



Rajshree Dugar has a PhD in Hindi and taught at St. Francis, Villa Marie, and St. Anns Colleges. She published a book of poems *Jugalbandi*, and several short stories in the Hindi newspaper *Vaarta* and other Hindi magazines. She is a regular speaker on All India Radio and presented a paper 'Take Charge of your Life' on emotional health at the National Women Science Conference (a Government of India initiative). A certified art therapist, she regularly conducts art therapy workshops. She is a passionate theatre artist and a freelance Hindi language trainer.

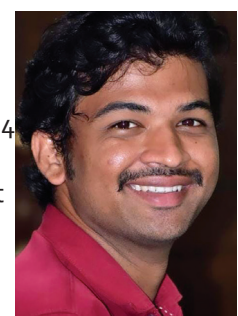


RAMA BIJAPURKAR

Rama Bijapurkar is a sought-after business advisor, passionate 'people' researcher, and prominent independent director on India Inc.'s boards. She has been a visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) for over two decades, and a dominant voice in the media on business and policy issues. Her widely acclaimed books on the Indian consumer market include *We Are Like That Only: Understanding the Logic of Consumer India* (2007), *Customer in the Boardroom?: Crafting Customer-Based Business Strategy* (2012), and *A Never-Before World: Tracking the Evolution of Consumer India* (2013). *Lilliput Land: How Small is Driving India's Mega Consumption Story* (2024) is her latest publication.

RAMESH KARTHIK

Ramesh Karthik won the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar in Telugu in 2024 for his short story collection *Dhavlo*. He is the first tribal and at 26, the youngest Telugu author to receive this honour. He has published three books in Telugu *Balder Bandi* (2018), *Dhavlo* (2021), and *Kesula* (2021), and a poetry collection in English, *Chakmak* (2023). A translation of his short story 'The Story of Birth' was published in *Exchanges: Journal of Literary Translation*, University of Iowa. He received Kalahansa Kavitha Puraskaram, Tribal Young Achievers Award, Banjara Youth Icon Award, Ravi Sastri Katha Puraskaram, among others.





RANJAN A RANGANATHAN

Ranjan A. Ranganathan has been associated with The Little Theatre Hyderabad almost since its formation in the 1990s. An architect and a passionate theatre actor/director, he is an integral part of the Dramatic Circle of Hyderabad (DCH) since 1990, acted in many theatre productions, toured

England and Scotland with a group based in Harrow, London, and directed seven plays for Secunderabad Club Dramatic Society.

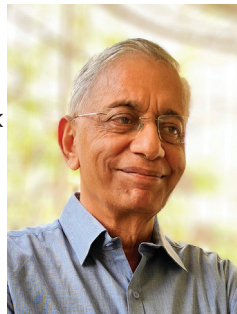
RATNA RAO SHEKAR

Ratna Rao Shekar is a writer and journalist who has written for several Indian magazines. She is the founding editor of the city magazine, *Wow Hyderabad*, author of several coffee table books, a travelogue *Journey Without a Map*, a book on the contemporary artist, Laxma Goud, and a short story collection *Purple Lotus and Other Stories* (2011). Her first full-length novel *Listen the House* (2024), about two girls growing up in Hyderabad, evokes a city that no longer exists. She is involved with the art and culture scene of Hyderabad.



RAVI MENON

Ravi Menon served as General Manager (Training) at the Union Bank of India. He has been a leadership training executive for various corporations and banks. He has published articles in *The Hindu*, *New Indian Express*, and *The Wire*.



RAVI P. PADI

Ravi P. Padi, a senior civil servant and IRTS officer with South Central Railway, is a passionate freelance writer known for his deep understanding of storytelling and cinematic nuances. He has contributed extensively to Telugu newspapers with insightful articles on Indian cinema, music, and cultural heritage.



REKHA REDDY

Rekha Reddy, Sub-Grandmaster of Ohara Ikebana, has been teaching, and holding workshops and demonstrations for 30 years. She is President, Ikebana International Rangareddy (P) Chapter #270, has done Ikebana demonstrations the world over and received the 'Japan Foreign Minister's Commendation Award'. Her exhibitions have themes like 'Tokonoma', 'Ikebana and Literature'

and her children's workshops have been on 'Recycle' and 'Books'. She has authored *Petals and Palette* (2010)—a juxtaposition of Ikebana with M. F. Husain's paintings, coordinated 'Blooms & Looms' on Ikebana and Saris, 'Mishrana' on Ikebana and Indian recipes, and presented an online series 'Lockebana: Ikebana for lockdown times'. She freelances articles on flower arrangement, gardening, travel, and nutrition.

RISHIRAJ KULKARNI

Rishiraj Kulkarni is an independent artist. Beginning with the tabla in 2005, he received incalculable guidance from Ustad Zakir Hussain and Pandit Yogesh Samsi. An alumnus of A. R. Rahman's KM Music Conservatory, and Middlesex University in London, he bonded with instruments such as the handpan, Rav Vast, Maschine, marimba, xylophone, and vibraphone. Since 2012 he has performed with artists from various art forms such as illustrators, painters, thespians, poets, singers, ballet dancers, western classical orchestras, and Indian musicians, performing across Europe and India.



RITA KOTHARI

Rita Kothari is a multilingual scholar and translator. She is Professor of English and Co-director of the Ashoka Centre for Translation at Ashoka University. Her ethnographic research on marginal communities—through religion, caste, occupation, and gender—focuses on narratives of identity, raising questions of both linguistic and cultural translation. She has translated extensively from Gujarati and Sindhi into English and occasionally vice versa. The edited volume, *A Multilingual Nation* (2017) and the monographs, *The Burden of Refuge* (2009) and *Uneasy Translations* (2022) are among her notable works.



ROHIT NAAG

Rohit Naag has an MBA from Insead and a Master's Degree from Duke University and worked in the US, Europe, and Asia. After returning to India, he discovered the wealth of Indian crafts but also noticed that artisanal products available in the market often failed to showcase the rich history of these heritage crafts

and were not in sync with contemporary sensibilities. He founded Nolwa to bridge the gap and make heritage crafts relevant in contemporary contexts through unique design interventions.



ROMULUS EARL WHITAKER III

Romulus Earl Whitaker III is unquestionably one of India's best-known figures in wildlife conservation. He is famous for establishing the Madras Snake Park, the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, the Andaman and Nicobar Environmental Team, and for his work conserving India's rainforests—the habitat of many endangered species.

Internationally, he has received the Rolex Award for Enterprise and the Whitley Award for contribution to nature conservation. In 2018, he was awarded the Padma Shri. He has co-authored *Snakes of India: The Field Guide* (2004) with Ashok Captain and *Snakes, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll: My Early Years* (2024) with Janaki Lenin.

RUBY ISLAM

Ruby Islam is the Head Chef at Manam Chocolate, a pioneering Indian craft chocolate brand. A certified Level 1, 2, and 3 Chocolate Taster by the International Institute of Chocolate and Cacao Tasting (IICCT, USA), she led Manam Chocolate to garner international acclaim and awards. The brand secured 17 awards at the 2023 Academy of Chocolate Awards, UK and was included in *Time's* prestigious list of the 'World's Greatest Places – 2024'. Earlier she worked with ITC Hotels, contributing to the launch of Fabelle, a luxury chocolate brand, and revamping Nutmeg, the hotel chain's patisserie.





RUTHVIKA RAO

Ruthvika Rao was born in Warangal and grew up in Hyderabad. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a Truman Capote Fellow and recipient of the Henfield Prize in fiction. She has taught creative writing at

University of Toronto and University of Iowa. *The Fertile Earth* (2024), her debut novel, is a finalist for the Center for Fiction's First Novel prize.

SAAZ AGGARWAL

Saaz Aggarwal is a writer, artist, and independent researcher. She taught mathematics at Ruparel College and was a features editor at *Times of India*, Mumbai. She wrote poetry and columns for national print media (1993–2010)—mostly humour, parody and nonsense, with a long stretch on books for *Sunday Mid-day*. She started writing books in 2006 and has published biographies, corporate histories, and family chronicles. Her books on Sindh are in the libraries of global universities and have featured in litfests and conferences in India, Pakistan, and the UK. Her paintings and mixed-media collections are held by collectors worldwide and corporate offices in India.



SAGARIKA MELKOTE

Sagarika Melkote is an engineer by qualification and profession but prefers the company of books and dogs now! She's a recreational marathon runner, an avid bird watcher and a wildlife enthusiast. She is also addicted to travelling and is a Scrabble maniac.



SAI KUMAR

Sai Kumar is a professional drum circle facilitator who has a PhD in musicology. He focuses on healing the mind and body with music. He found Djembe to be a wonderful instrument that connects people through rhythm and joy and is ideal for stress management. The Djembe Circle aims to promote the magic of music to people of all ages. The Djembe Circle is known for drum circles conducted in India and the UK, and its sessions are known for stress management, building an opportunity to explore creativity and self-expression through music.

SAMEERA MARUVADA



Sameera Maruvada is an Instagram cartoonist who goes by the Insta handle, 'Salt and Sambar.' Her art also works as social commentary and her visual storytelling has many fans. She is also an entrepreneur.

SAMRAT CHOUDHURY

Samrat Choudhury is an author, commissioning editor, and former editor of dailies in India's major metropolises, Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. His works include *The Braided River* (2021), *The Urban Jungle* (2011), and *Northeast India: A Political History* (2023). He has co-edited with Preeti Gill *Insider/ Outsider: Belonging and Unbelonging in India's Northeast* (2018), and *But I Am One of You: Northeast India and the Struggle to Belong* (2024). Some of his essays and short stories have been translated into German, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese.



SANDHYA GOKHALE

Sandhya Gokhale bridges law, art, and activism. Her professional journey as a civil rights advocate in the USA was complemented by her enduring passions for Indian classical music and creative writing. She has authored eight acclaimed feature film scripts of varied themes and with powerful women-centric narratives. *Paheli* (The Riddle), based on Vijaydan ji Detha's epic story *Duvidha*, was chosen as the Indian official entry to the Oscar Awards in 2006. Directing *Bhinna Shadja* (Note Extraordinaire), a documentary celebrating Padma Vibhushan Kishori Amonkar's legacy, remains her most cherished and significant accomplishment. She and her husband Amol Palekar share a commitment to social responsibility striving for a better world through collective action.



SANIDHYA VERMA



Sanidhya Verma, a 9-year-old fourth grader, has published three books of fiction—*Sam's Dino World the Dino Factia* (2023), *My Underwater Adventure* (2024), *A Day with Dinosaurs* (2024). He won the Young Author Award from Opus Coliseum group for *Sam's Dino World*, and an entry in the International Book of Records for the subsequent two books.



SAPNA DESAI

Sapna Desai holds a PhD in epidemiology and population health from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and an MS from Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. She is a Senior Fellow at Population Council Institute, New Delhi. Her public health research and practice, over twenty years, has focussed on women's health and well-being; community-based interventions; and health systems on the path to universal health coverage. She is the Principal Investigator for 'SAHELI', the Study and Action on Hysterectomy: Evidence on women's health through the Life Course in India.

SARAH HYDER IQBAL

Sarah Hyder Iqbal is an independent researcher, practitioner, and trainer with a PhD in Biochemistry from University of Oxford and postdoctoral research at Scripps Research Institute, USA. She champions creative and participatory approaches to connect science with society, co-founded Superheroes Against Superbugs to tackle Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and developed and contributed to innovative projects like Planet DIVOC-91, The Explorer Series, Arting Health for Impact, and the India Science Festival. Her research focuses on science communication and promoting fair, meaningful knowledge exchange between researchers and communities. She led innovative programmes blending science, policy, arts, and community action to address societal challenges through collective problem-solving.



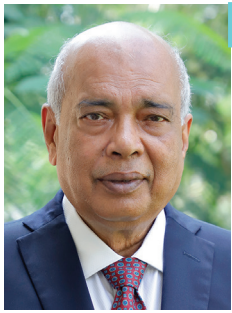
SARALA MAHIDHARA



Sarala Mahidhara, an alumna of University of Hyderabad, retired as Head of the Department of Languages, Bhavan's Vivekananda College, Sainikpuri. She taught English language, literature, soft skills, business communication

to undergraduate and graduate students. Deeply interested in theatre, films, and culture, she has staged numerous plays for the public with her students. She has been associated with the Little Theatre, Hyderabad, since its inception.

SATYA MOHANTY



Satya Mohanty is a poet, playwright, novelist, and public communicator. A former Union Secretary of Education and Secretary General of the National Human Rights Commission, he regularly contributes to a wide range of national newspapers. He was an Edward S. Mason Fellow at Harvard University and a visiting scholar in the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Post-retirement, he taught Economics as an Adjunct Professor at Jamia Milia Islamia and Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi. *Unpolitically Correct: The Politics and Economics of Governance* (2024) is his latest publication.

SAVIE KARNEL



Savie Karnel is the author of the popular and critically acclaimed children's book *The Nameless God* (2021) which was shortlisted the same year for the Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize. It was the only children's book shortlisted for the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival's 'Words to Screen Options Market' in 2023. Before transitioning to children's writing, she was a journalist for *The New Indian Express*, *Mid-Day*, and *Talk Magazine* in Bangalore.

SEEMA AZHARUDDIN

Seema Azharuddin is a distinguished Leadership Communication Expert, published writer, producer and actor in international classic theatre and film, President of Safe Water NGO, TED Speaker, and a prominent advocate for social change. She has been the spokesperson for the Indian diaspora in President Joe Biden's Presidency. With over 30 years of experience, she integrates leadership communication, advocacy, and the performing arts in her work. As the President of Safe Water NGO, she has advanced global access to clean water, positively impacting over 1 million people. Her coaching methodology prioritises self-awareness, authenticity, empathy, and storytelling to cultivate effective leadership.



SEETHA RATNAKAR



Seetha Ratnakar is an independent filmmaker who started her media career with *Doordarshan*. In 1985, her programme 'Rasavrishti' featuring Chitra Visveswaran was the official Indian entry for the Golden Prague Festival, Czech Republic. Her thematic presentation 'Endenrum Podhigai' was nominated for a *Doordarshan* National award in 2010. Her documentary, *Cosmic Connection* won the Gold Remi Award at the WorldFest International Film Festival, Houston, in 2014. During the pandemic, she scripted and directed a short film *Pillow Talk*. Her documentary *Asamana Anasuya* (2023) is a tribute to the musical legacy of her mother Vinjamuri Anasuya Devi and her contribution to Telugu folk music.

SEJAL MEHTA



Sejal Mehta has been a writer, editor, and part of the core teams that started and helmed *Lonely Planet Magazine India*, *National Geographic Traveller India*, *Nature in Focus*, *Saevus Wildlife*, and *The Habitats Trust*. She also worked with JPMorgan Editorial, *Femina*, and *Marine Life of Mumbai*. She writes for *Scroll*, *Mongabay*, *The Indian Express*, *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, *BBC Top Gear*, and *BBC Knowledge*, among

others. Her publications include children's books, a feminist anthology, and the award-winning book on coastal animals, *Superpowers on the Shore* (2022). 'Snaggletooth', a line of nature-inspired merchandise launched by her illustrates positive associations between humans and animals.

SESHA SINDHU RAO



Seshu Sindhu Rao started her career as an assistant director over a decade ago and is now a director, writer, and producer. She explores diverse genres and pushes the boundaries in her pursuit to tell compelling stories and make impactful films. She is the writer-director of *Choosi Choodangaane* (2020) and is currently working on her next film *Kanyasulkam*.

SHABANA AZMI

Shabana Azmi debuted in *Ankur* (1974) and has starred in over 140 Hindi films and 12 international productions, becoming the only Indian actor to win five National Awards for Best Actress. She also won six Filmfare and several international awards including at the Los Angeles Film Festival, Chicago Film Festival, North Korea International Film Festival, and Toronto Reel World International Film Festival. Her repertoire—from *Ankur* to *Rocky aur Rani ki Prem Kahani* and from Mira Nair's *Fire* to Steven Spielberg's *Halo*—is a testament to her talent and versatility. A Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awardee, she has received many other national and international honours.





SHABNAM VIRMANI

Shabnam Virmani's engagement with the philosophy of Kabir and other mystic and Sufi poets since 2002 has resulted in a series of performances, award-winning films, books, urban festivals, rural yatras, a digital archive (Ajab Shahar), and a school programme (Shabad Shaala). Her film *Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein* won the Special Jury Prize at the National Film Awards 2011. She has published two books

I Saw Myself: Journeys with Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (2019) and *Burn Down Your House: Provocations from Kabir* (2024). The Kabir Project was given the Sadbhavana Award in 2016 by Shri Morari Bapu and Vishwagram Trust, Gujarat, for contributing to inter-faith understanding.

SHAJI VIKRAMAN



Shaji Vikraman is a journalist with more than three decades of experience. He has served as National Editor of *The Economic Times* and Resident Editor of *The Indian Express* in Mumbai. He also had a stint with the *Hindu Business Line* and reported and wrote on fiscal and monetary policies and the financial markets while based in New Delhi and Mumbai.

SHANKAR MELKOTE

Shankar Melkote, founder of The Little Theatre, Hyderabad, loves books. He does theatre, feature films, and dramatised readings and has retired after long stints in industry and business organisations.



SHEENA PATEL

Sheena Patel is a writer and assistant director for the film and TV industry. She is part of the '4 Brown Girls Who Write' collective and her debut novel *I'm a Fan* (2022) won a British Book Award in the Discover category, has been longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction, shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize and is a finalist for the *LA Times* Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction.



SHIV BANSAL

Shiv Bansal is a writer by profession and a storyteller at heart. He enjoys travelling and exploring, as he believes there's a story to unearth wherever we go. He has worked as a content writer and scriptwriter and has also written for short films, advertisements, and social media copy. He also runs

OctaVibe Entertainment, a company dedicated to organising a diverse range of events for various occasions. Additionally, he has been instrumental in conducting various workshops and writing sessions as one of the organisers at Write Club Hyderabad.

SHOBHA THAROOR SRINIVASAN

Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan is the author of a dozen works of fiction and nonfiction. She also records voice work for documentaries, educational programmes, journalistic initiatives, and audio books, and won the 68th National Film Awards, India for Best Narration (2022). Her writing has been widely anthologized and excerpted for school curricula and one of her stories was dramatically performed by Silicon Valley Shakespeare, California. She has been featured on radio and TV, profiled in magazines, and is a frequent guest at literary festivals. She is also a former non-profit development professional who spent two decades as an advocate and fundraiser for persons with disabilities



SHRIKANT R. BHARADWAJ

Shrikant R. Bharadwaj is Scientist & Network Associate Director, Brien Holden Institute of Optometry and Vision Sciences, LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad. He runs the Visual Optics research laboratory at LVPEI with the overall agenda of understanding how the eye's optics influence spatial and depth vision. He uses a combination of experimental, behavioural and computational techniques to address this research agenda.



SIDDHARTH



Siddharth is an actor, producer, screenwriter, and playback singer. An MBA from SP Jain Institute of Management, he started his journey in cinema as an Associate Director to the legendary Mani Ratnam. He has been a lead actor for over two decades and has had industry-defining successes in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema. *Chithha* (2023), produced under his Etaki Entertainment banner, was a box-office success and has won many prestigious Best Picture and Best Actor awards. He will be seen in two Tamil films in 2025 and is currently filming for a Tamil film and a new Hindi web series for Netflix.



SITA REDDY

Sita Reddy is a writer, scholar, and curator. She was a Visiting professor at University of Hyderabad and a fellow at the Smithsonian and Sangam House. Her recent non-fiction writing is on the fate of botanical art in global archives through her favourite writing form: the essay. In 2025, her pioneering MARG volume of essays, *Weight of a Petal: Ars Botanica* (that first

launched at HLF!) will be republished in book format in collaboration with Kew Publishing.

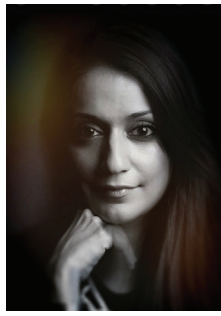
SOMDATTA KARAK

Somdatta Karak is a life scientist turned science communicator. Her work focuses on making complex and abstract sciences accessible to the general public, especially the younger audience. She co-leads Superheroes Against Superbugs, an educational and public engagement initiative on antimicrobial resistance in India, and SciCity Hyderabad, a forum to bring science to cultural conversations of the city.



SONAM KALRA

Sonam Kalra is a musician with a message. A celebrated, award-winning singer and composer, she has performed in 30 countries and shared the stage with legends like Sir Bob Geldof and Abida Parveen. A member of Grammy Recording Academy, she has received numerous accolades, including Femina 'Woman of Worth' Award, Indian Express Devi Award, FICCIYFLO 'Young Women Achiever' award, Global WIN Award, and Naushad Samman. She leverages her voice to raise awareness about human rights, child abuse, women's rights, animal rights, and education. Her philanthropic efforts have also supported cancer charities and children's education initiatives.



SONAM SAMAT



Sonam Samat completed her undergraduate degree at BITS Pilani and moved to the US to pursue her PhD in Behavioural Sciences. She then worked in California as a UX Researcher at Meta and Google. After spending 13 years in the US, she returned to Hyderabad in 2024 to start her own company—Flavour Lab—on a mission to teach school-aged children how to cook delicious, nutritious, and sustainable foods, through games, activities, and hands-on cooking classes.



SONI WADHWA

Soni Wadhwa currently teaches Literature Studies at SRM University, Andhra Pradesh. Her digital archive of Sindhi books, PG Sindhi Library, is dedicated to Sindhi literature published in India. Her project on Sindhi libraries

in India is funded by IIT Indore. She has also received a grant from George Mason University for her research on post-Partition Sindhi literature in India.

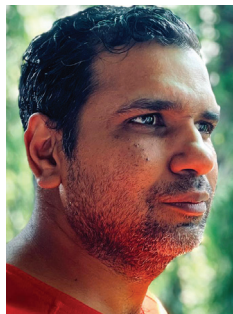
SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN

Soumya Swaminathan, a paediatrician and global expert in tuberculosis and HIV research, served as WHO's Chief Scientist (2019–2022) and as Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) (2015–2017). Currently, she is the Chairperson at M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), and Principal Advisor to the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), Government of India. She received her academic training in India, UK, and USA, and has published over 480 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. Her current focus is on addressing the health impacts of climate change, especially on women and children. *At The Wheel of Research* (2024) is her biography.



SREENIVAS MANGIPUDI

Sreenivas Mangipudi held senior business roles, inspiring teams to action (and occasionally untangling the chaos they created). Along the way, he discovered his love for communication extended to the four-legged kind. He has trained his German Shepherd to excel in Protection Sports Association trials (no small feat, as dogs have their own opinions) and raised a Rottweiler who did therapy work at Tihar's Juvenile Home. His passion lies in building connections—whether with humans, canines, or anyone who enjoys stories about both.



SREENIVASAN JAIN



Sreenivasan Jain is an award-winning broadcast journalist, columnist and author. In a career spanning three decades, he has investigated political corruption and reported on wars, insurgencies, majoritarianism, and democratic struggles. Award highlights include the Journalist of the Year at the Ramnath Goenka Awards and at the Red Ink Awards, the World Media Summit Awards in Beijing, and the World Silver Medal at the New York Festivals for his report on farm suicides in one of India's wealthiest states. He is the co-author of *Love Jihad and Other Fictions: Simple Truths to Counter Viral Falsehoods* (2024).

SRINIVAS REDDY

Srinivas Reddy is a scholar, translator, and classical sitarist. His publications include *Raya: Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara* (2020), *Kalidasa's Meghadutam: The Cloud Message* (2017), *Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitram: The Dancer and the King* (2014), *Krishnadevaraya's Amuktamalyada: The Giver of the Worn Garland* (2010). *Illuminating Worlds: An Anthology of Classical Indian Literature* (2024) is his latest publication. He is currently on a Fulbright-Nehru fellowship at IIT Gandhinagar.

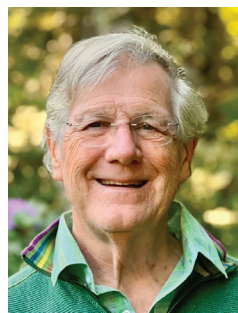


SRIDALA SWAMI

Sridala Swami is the author of three collections of poetry, including the *Run for the Shadows* (2021, reprinted 2022). She has served on the Jury of the Montreal International Poetry Prize (2019) and the Rayaprol Poetry Prize (2023).

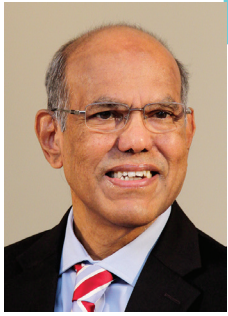
STAR PAPAYA

Star Papaya was founded by Echo Han and Deepti Chadda, long-time friends and mothers who are passionate about safeguarding the limitless imagination of our children in a world filled with noise and distraction. Echo, originally from Taiwan, has worked in education institutions and technology companies in China, London, and Singapore for the last 20 years. Deepti is an entrepreneur with professional experience across Asia and Europe with an MBA from INSEAD, and loves creative pursuits and keeping fit.



STEPHEN P. HUYLER

Stephen P. Huyler is an art historian, cultural anthropologist, photographer, and author. His life has been dedicated to exploring, surveying, preserving, and celebrating India's rich artistic and cultural heritage. For 50 years, he has travelled through Indian villages for an average of four months each year, and his seven books, including *Transformed by India: A Life* (2024), invoke an India rarely seen by outsiders and unknown to many Indians today. He has been a Consultant/ Guest Curator for more than 25 major museum exhibitions of Indian art, with solo exhibitions at the Smithsonian, the Asian Art Museum (San Francisco), and the Kodak Center for Creative Imaging.



SUBBARAO DUVVURI

Subbarao Duvvuri was Governor of Reserve Bank of India (2008–13), Finance Secretary to the Government of India (2007–08), and Secretary to Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (2005–07). Since 2013, he has been a Visiting Fellow at National University of Singapore and University of Pennsylvania. He is currently Visiting Faculty at Yale School of Management. His publications include *Who Moved My Interest Rate?* (2016), best known for the way it explains the policy dilemmas confronting an emerging economy's central bank in a globalised world, and *Just a Mercenary? Notes from My Life and Career* (2024).

SUBBA RAO M. GAVARAVARAPU

Subba Rao M. Gavaravarapu is a scientist at the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad and heads the Nutrition Information, Communication and Health Education unit. He teaches nutrition communication and sits on expert committees of regulatory bodies like Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), and the Bureau of Indian Standards. He has a PhD in Health Communication from University of Hyderabad. He is Principal Investigator for NIN's Nutritional Atlas of India.



SUBHADRA ANAND

Subhadra Anand was born in Hyderabad (Sindh), educated in Delhi, worked as a lecturer and college principal in Mumbai, and was CEO of Save the Children India. Her *National Integration of Sindhis* (1995) continues to be a seminal reference book and her novel *Tryst With Koki* (2023) traces a 'post-partition journey of survival, sustenance and strength'. Her vision for a cultural centre for Sindhis in India was realized with 'Jhulelal Tirthdham', a cultural complex in Narayan Sarovar in Kutch, at the mouth of the Arabian Sea that will soon house a museum and an amphitheatre alongside the magnificent Jhulelal temple.

SUBHASH GHAI

Subhash Ghai is a renowned film writer, director, and producer. He is the chairman and managing director of Mukta Arts, the production company he set up in 1982. In his four-decade career, he has directed and produced several blockbuster films including *Kalicharan* (1976), *Karz* (1980), *Vidhaata* (1982), *Hero* (1983), *Meri Jung* (1985), *Karma* (1986), *Ram Laxhan* (1989), *Saudagar* (1991), *Khal Nayak* (1993), *Pardes* (1997), *Taal* (1999), and *Yaadein* (2001). He is the founder-chairman of Whistling Woods International, India's premier film, communications and creative arts institute, which was started in 2006. *Karma's Child* (2024) is the memoir of 'Indian Cinema's Ultimate Showman'.



SUBHATUL MARJAN

Subhatul Marjan is an English language consultant and trainer, and poet. Her verse explores themes of feminism, self-realisation, and defiance.



SUCHITRA SHENOY

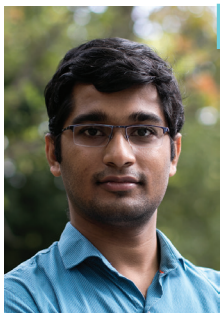
Suchitra Shenoy is a non-fiction writer. Her publications include *Mindful Parenting* (2016) and the co-authored *Infinite Vision* (2011) on the Aravind eye-care system. Both books made Amazon's top lists. *Infinite Vision* was a finalist for the George Terry Award in the US and translated into Japanese, Portuguese, and Tamil. Her third book is forthcoming. She holds degrees from Brandeis University and London School of Economics.



She also teaches in the Buddhist tradition.

SUHAS MAHESH

Suhas Mahesh is a scholar of Sanskrit and Prakrit with a terrible weakness for good verse, rare manuscripts, and arcane grammar. He is a materials physicist with a PhD from University of Oxford where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He has co-edited and translated *How to Love in Sanskrit: Poems* (2014) with Anusha Rao.



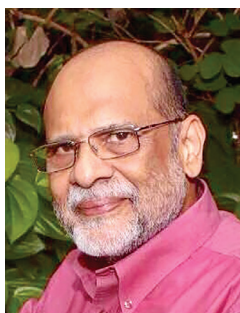
SUJOY SARKAR

Sujoy Sarkar is currently working at Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru. Since March 2016, he has also been Officer-in-charge for the 'Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages' (SPPEL) at CIIL. His MPhil was on 'Medium of Instruction in Primary Education for the Toto Tribe'. His doctoral dissertation was titled 'Linguistic Human Rights and Language Discrimination: A Critical Study of Language in Education Policy for Tribal Education in India'.



SULTAN AHMED ISMAIL

Sultan Ahmed Ismail, presently a Member of the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu, was the Head of the Departments of Zoology and Biotechnology at The New College, Chennai. He has done extensive research on ecology and environment, earthworms and organic inputs, and has been associated with several institutions, farmers, and self-help groups. Recognised as one of the 'TOP 10' people of Tamil Nadu for 2013 by *Ananda Vikatan*, he has been a member and chairman of several national and international committees including the Scientific Review Committee, Initiative for Research and Innovation in Science (IRIS) and Technical Steering Committee, Dezhou Dr Fa Earthworm Standardization Research Centre, China.



SUMANA KASTURI



Sumana Kasturi is a writer and educator specialising in feminist media studies and children's communication. Her work has appeared in *The Wire*, *India Forum* and other academic and popular publications. She is the author of *Gender, Citizenship, and Identity: Writing the Everyday* (2019) and co-editor of *Childscape, Mediascape: Children and Media in India* (2023).



SUMANASPATI

Sumanaspati has been a radio broadcaster, writer, promoter of serious documentary cinema, photographer, and now a farmer. During the last decade and more, he has spent much of his professional and personal life in Adilabad, documenting and showcasing in

various formats, the Adivasi and folk cultures of north Telangana from Adilabad to Mancheriyal. He has so far held two exhibitions of his photographs.

SUNITA REDDY

Sunita Reddy has over two decades of experience teaching English at the undergraduate level. Her career is interspersed with foundational roles at non-profits in Hyderabad and elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh. Being an avid reader and actively engaged in social justice causes, she has used her journalistic credentials to interview luminaries from all walks of life for state and local television channels. She is also on the advisory board of Manthan, an organisation that promotes high-quality discussion and debate involving intellectuals from across the globe.



SUNITHA KRISHNAN

Sunita Krishnan is an activist, author, and film producer. She founded Prajwala—Asia’s largest institution combating sex trafficking and sex crime—in 1996 at Hyderabad and has assisted in the rescue of nearly 29,000 young girls and women across 12 countries and prevented nearly 16,000 children from being inducted into prostitution. She was awarded the Padma Shri (2016) and was recognized as one of the 150 ‘Fearless Women in the World’ by *Newsweek*. *I Am What I Am* (2024) is the memoir of this relentless crusader for the rights of sex crime and trafficking victims.



SUSHEEL GAJWANI



Susheel Gajwani is an author and filmmaker. His fourteenth feature film, *Aakhree Train—The Last Train* (2023) in Sindhi has been loved by audiences all over India and abroad. He has created *Roots—The Time Travellers*, a Musical Stage Show, based on Partition Poetry in Sindhi and performed in English, Sindhi, Hindi, Punjabi, and Marathi. He was a Doordarshan Producer, Founder-Vice-President of Money Satellite Television Channel, and a recipient of the Rotary Foundation Technical Fellowship to study American Media at New York University. A postgraduate in English and human resources, he writes books and newspaper articles and conducts training workshops on life skills.

SUSHMITA BANERJI



Sushmita Banerji is an Assistant Professor of Humanities at IIIT Hyderabad. She teaches courses on cinema, literature, and gender among others. Her primary work is on the cinema of Ritwik Ghatak and the cinema of the Partition of India. She is interested in critical theories of film and literature,

partition and trauma studies, Indian popular cinema, new technologies, and visual cultures outside of cinema.

SWATHI KANTAMANI

Swathi Kantamani heads Natco Trust (the CSR arm of Natco Pharma Limited) which runs numerous education and health projects across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. She has a Master’s degree in English Literature from University of Oxford, and a Masters in Philosophy from University of Hyderabad. Before transitioning to the field of CSR, she was in publishing, serving as an editor for books on social sciences and children’s literature.



SYED BASHAAR

Syed Bashaar is known for his animated videos ranging from *Harry Potter* to *The Avengers*. He has also been doing stand-up comedy for the last three years. Despite being described as ‘light-hearted’ and ‘humorous’, his books draw on deeper social questions and his stories feel as real as the morning newspaper.



TANMAY MAHESHWARI



Tanmay Maheshwari is an avid singer and songwriter who has been performing on stage since he was 16. Two of his singles, ‘Chal Chalein’ and ‘Kafraana’, have been released on all streaming platforms, and a collaborative project with UnErase Poetry featuring his original ‘Fikar’ has crossed over a million views. He has performed live sets in several cities in India. He has shared the stage with indie artists like Ankur Tewari, Akanksha Seti, Ramil Ganjoo, Akash Chopra, and others. He is now an integral part of Priya Malik’s show *Ishq Hai*.

TANVEER ALAM



Tanveer Alam is trained in kathak with Sudeshna Maulik and guru Sandhya Desai. He is a 2019 graduate of Western contemporary dance from the Dance Arts Institute of Canada (DAI). He presented his work as a performer, choreographer, and curator at several prestigious events in India, Canada, and the US, among others. In the 2023–24 season,

he choreographed *Moving* for the second-year students of DAI, performed solo at Vilaya Festival (Pittsburgh), The New York Kathak Festival (New York), and Navatman Black Box Baithak (New York). He was a commissioned choreographer for the Sampradaya Dance Creation’s 35th anniversary work, ‘Salaam Rahman’, featuring A. R. Rahman’s music.

TEJ

Tej is a screenwriter and aspiring director with a deep love for storytelling. By day, he works as an Operations Manager at Amazon India, and by night, he dives into the world of films. With experience in feature films, ad films, and short films, he is gearing up to pursue his creative dreams full-time. A binge-watcher with no language barriers, he enjoys listening to podcasts and stories. In his free time, he loves dancing, travelling, and exploring new places. An active member of Write Club Hyderabad’s organising team, he conducts writing sessions and workshops.



TEJAH BALANTRAPU

Tejah Balantrapu is a member of Nature Lovers of Hyderabad, a tree and nature appreciation community. He is part of the Hyderabad Literary Festival and is Associate Director of Science, Health Data, and Storytelling at LV Prasad Eye Institute.

UMA DAMODAR SRIDHAR

Uma Damodar Sridhar is currently Head, Department of French and Francophone Studies at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad and teaches French language, linguistics, teaching methodology, and translation. She worked at the Alliance Française of Hyderabad as a teacher and translator (1988–2000) and as the in-charge of the translation bureau and deputy director (2005–2009). She has published articles and translations in national and international journals and is a co-translator of an anthology of poems *Butterfly Caresses* (2015). She has been associated with Hyderabad Literary Festival since 2012.

**UNNATI VED**

Unnati Ved is the founder of Eager Readers, which has reading and activity clubs, writing clubs, drama clubs, and current affairs clubs for ages 5 to 16 years. She has completed her Trinity DIP TESOL, a Level 7 certification in ELT, and an LTCL and an ATCL in Communication Skills and Speech and Drama from Trinity College London. She is part of the academic support team of Trinity College London India. An international conference speaker and a self-confessed bibliophile, she started a book club for adults called 'The Lit People'.

**USHA RAMAN**

Usha Raman teaches media studies at University of Hyderabad. Her writing, which spans the academic and popular, has appeared in *The Hindu*, *Caravan*, *The Wire*, and *Scroll*, among others. Recent co-edited books include *Feminist Futures of Work* (2023), *Childscape, Media Scape: Children and Media in India* (2023),

and *Digital Expressions of the Self(ie): The Social Life of Selfies in India* (2024). She edits a magazine for schoolteachers, *Teacher Plus*. She has published a collection of poetry, *All the Spaces in Between* (2009), and her debut novel, *Polite Conversations* was published in 2024.

V. RAMASWAMY

V. Ramaswamy has translated the works of Manoranjan Byapari, Subimal Mishra, and Shahidul Zaheer. His translation of Manoranjan Byapari's novel, *The Nemesis* (2023), was shortlisted for the JCB Prize for literature.

VAIBHAV KUMAR MODI

Vaibhav Kumar Modi's passion for building inclusive communities fuels his diverse endeavours. He is a think entrepreneur, kathak dancer, LGBTQIA+ advocate, actor, and visionary behind India's premier experience curation house, Dark Vibe Society (DVS) as Founder-Director.

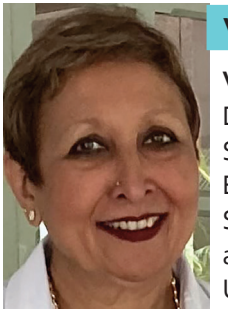
**VAMSHI BHASHAM**

Vamshi Bhasham is a creative professional at Lollypop Design Studio, who blends UX design with photography, filmmaking, and storytelling. Since 2017, he has collaborated with production houses like Icllickyou and 9th Ray Studios, crafting impactful projects such as 'Women Empowerment with BNI' and 'A Day at a Bazaar'. His initiative, 'Unusual Vision 365', showcases macro photography's beauty, while his podcast, 'Draw With Us', fosters creative discussions through live drawing. As an organiser of the 24-Hour Project, he raises awareness about social causes and teaches photography through NGOs like Aikarth and 6to16.

**VARDHINI AMIN**

Vardhini Amin is a leading lifestyle and portrait photographer with over a decade of experience, capturing stories through her lens. However, her true calling lies in storytelling. With her debut book, *The Forestborns*

(2024), she attempts to connect readers to nature through enchanting fantasy worlds.

VAYU NAIDU

Vayu Naidu is a performance storyteller, founder Artistic Director & Storyteller of the 'Vayu Naidu Intercultural Storytelling Theatre Company Ltd.', Chair of the Black British Theatre Archives, and Professor of Practice at SOAS in the School of Arts. She has a PhD in the Epic and Oral traditions of Ramayana and Mahabharata from University of Leeds. Her writing—short stories, novels, children's books, radio plays—draws on the oral traditions

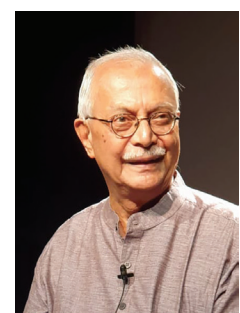
of storytelling. Her novels include *Sita's Ascent* (2013, nominated for the Commonwealth Book Award), *The Sari of Surya Vilas* (2017), and *The Living Legend: Ramayana Tales from Far and Near* (2024).

VIJAY KUMART

Vijay Kumar T. currently teaches literatures in English at BITS Pilani, Hyderabad. His publications include critical studies and translations from Telugu. He is a TEDx speaker and a Founder Editor of *Muse India: the literary ejournal*. He is a founder-director of the Hyderabad Literary Festival.

**VIJAY PADAKI**

Vijay Padaki is a Theatre Educator based in Bangalore. He has worn several hats for most of his life with equal facility. Among them, two stand out. He has been active in the theatre for over sixty years. He has been a management professional for over forty-five years and received the ASSITEJ International's Lifetime Achievement Award in May 2024.





VIJAY RAMAN

Vijay Raman IPS, author of *Did I Really Do All This? Memoirs of a Gentleman Cop Who Dared to be Different* (2024), recorded his unique and varied experiences in Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, SPG, BSF, CRPF, and ITBP. In his 35-year career, he has handled the Security for four Prime Ministers, led anti-dacoity operations in Chambal, anti-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir, anti-Naxalite operations, and investigated the Vyapam scam. He has won several honours including the President's Police Medal for gallantry, the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Services, and the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service.

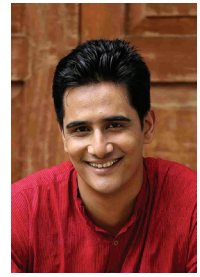
VIJAYA KRISHNAPPA

Vijaya Krishnappa is the co-founder of KOSHA.ai, a deep-tech startup working on traceability and supply chain management in crafts and textile sectors. He holds a management degree from XLRI, Jamshedpur and has over 16 years of experience in the fashion sector and management consulting. Before starting KOSHA.ai, he advised several Indian and foreign corporates on business strategy and planning, market assessment, and market entry strategy. He also advised government organisations and industry bodies on policy, implementation, and impact assessment. He has conducted workshops/guest lectures organised by IIM Bangalore (NSRCEL), Deshpande Start-ups, Radboud University (Netherlands), TEXPROCIL, CCAMP, Jain University, AICTE, among others, on entrepreneurship and technology.



VIKAS PRAKASH JOSHI

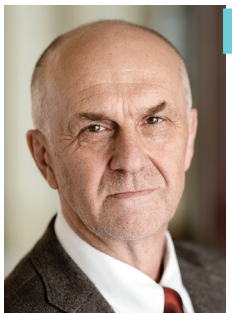
Vikas Prakash Joshi is a writer by nature, not compulsion, ambition, or choice. He is an award-winning and internationally published author, with his first book *My Name is Cinnamon* (2022) being translated into six major languages. Since childhood, his favourite sentences have been 'Come, hear my story' and 'Come, tell me a story'. Reading books from different countries as a child inspired him to create characters who looked more like him.



VINOD PAVARALA



Vinod Pavarala is Senior Professor of Communication and UNESCO Chair on Community Media at University of Hyderabad. His research and teaching have been in the areas of communication for social change, community media, and media and democracy. His two-decades-long work on community radio has been able to make the case for a pluralistic media landscape in which unheard voices could find a space, something that is essential for any democratic society. He has been a visiting fellow at several institutions, including Princeton University, Duke University, Loughborough University, University of Queensland, and Ashoka University.

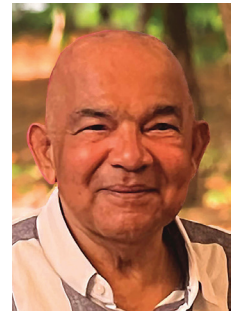


VYTIS VIDŪNAS

Vytis Vidūnas is a lecturer in Sanskrit at Vilnius University, Lithuania. He studied classical philology at Vilnius University and Sanskrit the Vedic Language and Ancient Indian Literature at the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. In 1993, he co-founded the Center of Oriental Studies at Vilnius University thus reviving Sanskrit studies at the University and in Lithuania in general. He also founded Hindi Studies and Indian Studies at Vilnius University, started a public initiative 'Sanskrit of the Rivers', and published *Sanskrit-Lithuanian Etymological Dictionary* (2016). In 2023, he was nominated for the Lithuanian-Indian Forum award 'For the Merit to the Friendship between Lithuania and India'.

YAGA VENUGOPAL REDDY

Yaga Venugopal Reddy, economist, bureaucrat, central banker, and author, was Governor of Reserve Bank of India from 2003–2008 and chaired the Fourteenth Finance Commission of India. An officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), 1964 batch, he also was an Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund. His long academic career spans teaching and research, focusing on economic policy, central banking, and public finance. In 2010, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan. He is known for his commitment to pro-poor public policy and financial inclusion, inducing market efficiencies, and innovations in payment systems.



YUNUS LASANIA

Yunus Lasania is a journalist with over a decade experience in reporting. He is associated with *The News Minute* and also writes for other news organisations. He has previously worked for *Mint (Hindustan Times)*, *The Hindu*, *The New Indian Express*, and *Siasat.com*. He also runs the Instagram page 'The Hyderabad History Project', and is also the host of 'Beyond Charminar', a podcast series on the history of Hyderabad, focusing on lesser-known aspects of his city.



YUVAN AVES



Yuvan Aves is a multi-award-winning writer, naturalist, and ecological activist. His recent book *Intertidal: A Coast and Marsh Diary* (2023) won the Mumbai LitFest Book of the Year 2024 (Non-Fiction) award. He is an active part of community movements against industrial violence in South India and is the Founder of Palluyir Trust for Nature Education and Research.

CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS

Venue: Octave 3, Sattva Knowledge City

Curated by EkoGalaxy
Dr. Urvi Desai and Shreyas Sridharan

HLF 2025 is here and how! The stream '**Climate Conversations**'—curated by EkoGalaxy founders, Shreyas Sridharan and Dr. Urvi Desai—bring in the field of environmental conservation, wildlife, the climate and all things fantastic from the natural world to the Festival. Don't miss this!

Green Festival – HLF has always been a green festival. For years now, it has sought to be plastic-free, reuse decor and infra, serve guests water in glass bottles, and encourage all attendees to use public transport, bring their own bottles, and more.

Curated by EkoGalaxy – The stream Climate Conversations is put together by EkoGalaxy—a platform for climate education and engagement. They represent the UNESCO Greening Education Partnership in India. They partner with schools and colleges across India and Europe.

Critical Conversations – This stream adds an important and necessary layer to the city's Festival—it mainstreams critical conversations about climate, the environment and our natural world. The environmental crises surrounds us—this makes such nuanced and intelligent conversations all the more important.

Diverse Themes and Formats of Engagement – Climate Conversations brings some of the most interesting and accomplished people in the field together—for panel discussions, workshops, exhibitions, stage talks, standup comedy, music, and more. The diverse themes of this stream reflect the wide experience of speakers—such as biodiversity, climate education visibilising the natural world, policy perspectives, re-imagining ourselves vis-à-vis the natural world, the many expressions of nature, and more!

Fantastic Speakers – The speakers of the stream include the most fantastic people in the field, such as the country's leading conservationists, writers, academics, poets, policymakers, filmmakers, photojournalists, artists, industry experts, researchers, musicians, and more. Some of our esteemed speakers are Bittu Sahgal, Romulus Whitaker, Janaki Lenin, Dr. Asad Rahmani, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Dr. Anindita Majumdar, Dr. Sultan Ismail, Bijal Vachharajani, Yuvan Aves, and so many more.

Incredible Collaborations – EkoGalaxy for Climate Conversations is thrilled to be collaborating with some of the most fantastic organisations and institutes doing remarkable work in the field, such as IIT-H, Mongabay, Indian Pitta, Sanctuary Asia, CEEW and more—to bring the very best sessions to HLF 2025. Unmissable!

The incredible line-up of speakers includes:

Ahtushi Deshpande	Alina Sen	Anindita Majumdar
Arathi Menon	Asad Rahmani	Asif Qureshi
Bijal Vachharajani	Bittu Sahgal	Brikesh Singh
Janaki Lenin	Lavanya Suresh	Pankaj Sekhsaria
Priyadarshini Panchapakesan	Raghav Mandava	Rishiraj Kulkarni
Romulus Whitaker	Sejal Mehta	Soumya Swaminathan
Sultan Ahmed Ismail	Tejah Balantrapu	Usha Raman
Yuvan Aves		

Friday 24 January 2025

11.00 – 11.50 am

WATERWORLD(S): CELEBRATING RIVER ECOSYSTEMS

Speaker(s): **Anindita Majumdar** and **Asif Qureshi**

Session Type: Workshop

Collabs: IIT-H

Welcome to our changing waterworld(s)! In the midst of a climate crisis, we must remember that our waters are also fast losing the battle to live and thrive. Riverine worlds in India are now increasingly under threat, and

we are fast facing the possibility of being swallowed by the seas and oceans; or becoming vast deserts. Yet, our rivers have traditionally been havens of people, animals and ecological wonderment. In contemporary rural and agrarian India, rivers retain their civilizational ethos, as repositories of human settlements and bountiful life. It is this imagination of the river that we would like to invoke through an art engagement by asking: what makes a river ecosystem? How can we reimagine our relationships with our rivers?

12.00 – 12.50 pm

T20: TWENTY TRAITS OF A TEACHER

Speaker(s): **Sultan Ismail**

Session Type: Workshop

Collabs: -

Education should be aimed towards the Joy of Learning, and in a certain way satisfy the needs of future generations. What becomes relevant to the learner is a balance between what the teacher thinks is important and what interests the learner. Good pedagogy enhances a child's capacity to learn. The role of a teacher needs to be viewed in this new perspective from 'completing a syllabus' to a 'knowledge transfer facilitator', to change from 'fact-based teaching' to 'complex problem solving'. To 'A' teacher a class may be a challenge but to 'THE' teacher every class is a dream, and for this as a teacher for five decades, I experienced 20 traits that are essentially required for a teacher, which would be deliberated.

2.00 – 2.50 pm

SUPERHEROES, SHAPESHIFTERS, INVISIBILITY CLOAKS AND US: WRITING ABOUT OUR WILD BACKYARDS

Speaker(s): **Sejal Mehta**

Session Type: Workshop

Collabs: -

This talk aims to ask us to engage with the wildlife around us. It will take you through wildlife around us by looking at the superpowers that wild creatures have. Meet shape-shifting octopuses at Juhu's crowded beaches, ninja cone snails shooting venomous harpoons at rocky tidepools, regenerating worms and sea sponges, animals having their own invisibility cloaks, midwife fruit bats outside our windows and so on. Characters from The Avengers, Harry Potter, and even films make appearances. Our urban spaces are teeming with wild creatures with superpowers. And the best bit: you don't need a ticket to a national park to meet them.

3.00 – 3.50 pm

JOURNEYING WITH INDIA AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Speaker(s): **Asad Rahmani** and **Bittu Sahgal**

Session Type: Conversation

Collabs: Indian Pitta, Juggernaut, Sanctuary Asia

This is a conversation between Giants in the field of Indian biodiversity and conservation. It explores their own journeys and stories behind the scenes—the struggles, challenges, and joys—of India and her exquisite, fragile, and beautiful Natural World. Unmissable.

Saturday 25 January 2025

11.00 – 11.50 pm

TELLING BETTER STORIES: FOR NATURE AND OURSELVES

Speaker(s): **Bittu Sahgal**

Moderator: **Bijal Vachharajani**

Session Type: Conversation

Collabs: Sanctuary Asia

In this session, the incredible Bijal Vachharajani is in discussion with the inimitable Bittu Sahgal. They discuss how we must try to tell better stories about the natural world—for the sake of the environment, ourselves, and our children. Tied into the way we approach our biosphere and all living beings around us, are the stories we decided to tell, or not, to believe, or not. Each brings their rich experience – don't miss this conversation

12.00 – 12.50 pm**POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND THE PLANET**Speaker(s): **Pankaj Sekhsaria, Soumya Swaminathan, Sultan Ismail**Moderator: **Lavanya Suresh**

Session Type: Panel Discussion

Collabs: MSSRF

The well-being of the planet (and all of us) lies at the intersection of science, health, storytelling, research, and critical analysis. Within this, what is the role of policy and institutions towards solving some of our world's biggest challenges? Our fantastic experts, with decades of experience behind them, tell us more.

2.00 – 2.50 pm**ECO-TALES ACROSS BORDERS**Speaker(s): **Priyadarshini Panchapakesan**

Session Type: Workshop

Collabs: -

'Eco-Tales Across Borders' is an interactive storytelling and creative writing workshop led by Priyadarshini Panchapakesan, author of the eco-fiction novella 'The Myth of the Wild Gaur'. This 45-minute session will combine visual storytelling and hands-on activities to encourage environmental awareness. Participants will start by illustrating their imagined version of the wild gaur, inspired by her book set in the Western Ghats. In the second half, Priyadarshini will guide them to explore and write about environmental issues specific to Hyderabad, encouraging thoughtful reflection through poems, descriptive pieces, or short paragraphs. The workshop aims to inspire participants to engage with local environmental issues and conservation efforts meaningfully.

3.00 – 3.50 pm**CLIMATE EXPRESSIONS: FORGING UNIQUE CONNECTIONS WITH NATURE**Speaker(s): **Ahtushi Deshpande, Rishiraj Kulkarni, Sejal Mehta**Moderator: **Bijal Vachharajani**

Session Type: Panel Discussion

Collabs: -

Eminent biologist E. O. Wilson's 'biophilia hypothesis' suggests—that humankind has an innate affinity for the natural world—and that the human attraction to nature is genetically hardwired within us. It is in our primal biology to have a sense of wonder, awe, and a sense of belonging to a larger community of nature. For our own well-being, it is fundamental to develop a harmonious relationship between ourselves and the biosphere—and evolutionary psychology argues for greater syncretism between human cultures and the natural world—in simple words, the importance of time spent in contact with nature is critical for us. This may be done in surprising and inspired ways. Our incredible speakers take us through their own unique journeys, via music, photography and art, strengthening their connections with the natural world. Don't miss this!

Sunday 26 January 2025**11.00 – 11.50 am****CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE BATTLE FOR IMAGINATION**Speaker(s): **Arathi Menon, Bijal Vachharajani, Yuvan Aves**Moderator: **Usha Raman**

Session Type: Panel Discussion

Collabs: Mongabay

Every crisis is, at its heart, a storytelling crisis. In the case of the health of the planet, too, we are limited by the stories we tell (or do not tell). Our incredible speakers explore the roles of awe, wonder and hope, while also reckoning with ecological grief and dread in discussions of the climate crisis. Don't miss this!

12.00 – 12.50 pm

EXTRAORDINARY STORIES OF THE NATURAL WORLD

Speaker(s): **Janaki Lenin and Romulus Whitaker**

Moderator: **Tejah Balantrapu**

Session Type: Conversation

Collabs: -

This is a conversation between Giants in the field of Indian biodiversity and conservation. It explores their journeys with fantastic creatures and reptiles (and maybe some people too!) and all the amazing stories from behind the scenes. In other words, join us to listen to their incredible adventures with the natural world. Absolutely unmissable!

2.00 – 2.50 pm

VISIBILISING THE LIVING WORLD

Speaker(s): **Yuvan Aves**

Session Type: Stage-Talk

Collabs: -

Our existence is made possible by the labour and lives of other beings. This talk will explore how we could practice observing and acknowledging their presence and work around us. Through stories of the smallest beings and excerpts from the book *Intertidal*, the speaker will invite people into an attention-practice which sees ourselves as relations to all the abounding life around.

3.00 – 3.50 pm

COMIC RELIEF FOR A WARMING WORLD

Speaker(s): **Brikesh Singh, Raghav Mandava**

Moderator: **Alina Sen**

Session Type: Panel Discussion

Collabs: CEEW, Asar

At the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2025, on the sidelines of the three-day *What On Earth!*[®] cartoon exhibition, EkoGalaxy, CEEW, and Asar, as part of the 'Climate Conversations' sessions, will prove to you that humour might just save the day for climate by taking the science, data and tech from conference tables to more coffee tables! Whether it's cartoons exposing our fossil-fueled blunders or stand-up acts turning smog into laughable moments, humour makes the heavy stuff a little lighter and a lot more shareable. Come for the conversation, stay for some disruptive ideas and funny anecdotes, and leave with a fresh perspective (and maybe a few laughs about your carbon footprint).

CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS EXHIBITION

What on Earth!

Collab: CEEW

Does climate change conjure images of gloom and looming doom for you? Here's a bit of wit and humour to change that picture! The *What On Earth!*[®] cartoon series by CEEW, one of Asia's top climate think tanks, brings sustainability and climate conversation to life with some humour. From decoding urban climate resilience to sustainable living to unpacking the geopolitics of climate change, these cartoons have sparked conversations everywhere—college campuses, G20 and COP meetings, the New York Climate Week. And now, this much-travelled series comes to the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2025, thanks to a special CEEW–EkoGalaxy collaboration!

Over three days, dive into the series' most impactful cartoons that frame points and counterpoints on climate challenges and solutions. Whether you chuckle at their wit or reflect on their depth, this exhibition will make you think, smile, and act.

Oh, and did we mention? Every visitor to the exhibition gets a quirky keepsake to remember the day and the planet forever after! So come for the cartoons, stay for the inspiration, and leave with a smile and fresh ideas to pit your wits against climate to make a change!

CULTURAL EVENTS

The culture stream at HLF 2025 includes performances, theatre, music, and dance that will have a wide appeal.

Venues: **The IIL Launch Pad, T-Hub, and Sattva Knowledge City**

URMILA

by **Adishakti**

Date: Friday, 24 January 2025

Time: 7.20 – 8.30 pm

Venue: **The IIL Launch Pad, T-Hub**

‘Urmila’ is a thought-provoking play that delves into the complex ethical and gender-related issues woven into the fabric of society throughout history. Set in the ancient land of Ayodhya, the play centres on the character of Urmila from the Ramayana, a woman whose life is dramatically altered by a seemingly innocuous command from her husband, Lakshmana: ‘Sleep, my sleep’. This deceptively simple directive raises profound questions about autonomy, consent, and the price individuals, especially women, have paid for their obedience throughout time. The play explores the power dynamics inherent in the relationship between Urmila and Lakshmana, raising questions about consent, agency, and approval. Urmila’s journey represents a broader commentary on the struggles faced by individuals in different time periods and perhaps even in the future. ‘Urmila’ offers a compelling exploration of these themes in the context of ancient stories, making them relevant and thought-provoking for contemporary audiences.

THE DJEMBE CIRCLE

by **Sai Kumar**

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 1.00 – 1.30 pm

Venue: **Sattva Knowledge City**

Discover the joy of drumming together! Feel the rhythm, and connect with your community. Instruments will be provided at the venue; no experience is required.

ADVAITA

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 7.20 – 8.30 pm

Venue: **The IIL Launch Pad, T-Hub**

A kaleidoscope of melodies, rhythms, and moods, Advaita draws from diverse influences ranging from Indian Classical to ambient rock, jazz, and electronic music. The band is credited with creating a new contemporary Indian sound, hailed by audiences as well as critics as original and progressive.

Advaita is an Indian fusion band formed in 2004. They released their first album *Grounded in Space* in 2009, the second *The Silent Sea* in 2012, and *Drops of Earth* a compilation album in 2013. In 2011, they were featured on the Indian leg of the MTV show *Coke Studio*. They were one of four bands from India, selected by John Leckie, to record two songs with him for a compilation released by the British Council. *The Silent Sea* won the GIMA (Global Indian Music Awards) 2012 award for best rock album and also received a nomination for the best fusion album. Advaita were voted the best fusion band by Palm Expo 2011. *Rolling Stone India* featured ‘Mofunk’ (from *The Silent Sea*) based on a Carnatic devotional poem by South Indian poet Muthuswami Diksithar in its 2014 listing of ‘25 Greatest Indian Rock Songs of the last 25 Years’.

खोया मै . . .

by **Rishiraj Kulkarni**

Sunday, 26 January 2025

Time: 8.00 – 9.00 am

Venue: **Sattva Knowledge City**

Rishiraj Kulkarni has delved into amalgamating sounds of his handmade musical instruments such as the Handpan, Rav Vast, Tabla along with intricate sounds from nature, using the Maschine. He has two albums

Home and The Woods, and after tours across India, Europe, the UK, he comes to Hyderabad, to share his journey and his relationship with his instruments.

खोया मैं . . . India Tour, dedicated to Ustad Zakir Hussain, is a journey across India. Rishiraj and his team drive across the country carrying their equipment for the concert, performing in cities, and stopping by remote villages to offer their music to the rural population for free, while being aware of the ecological impact they are creating along this journey.

ISHQ HAI, ISH QHAI, ISH QHAI

by Priya Malik

Date: Sunday, 26 January 2025

Time: 5.15 – 6.15 pm

Venue: **Dr Reddy's Atrium, Sattva Knowledge City**

Have you ever experienced the art of poetry, storytelling, and music stir your soul? If not, then here's your chance to experience it from India's leading award-winning poet Priya Malik, the poet who took us to 1999, explained the difference between Pyaar and Ishq and made 'adrakwaali chai' an emotion—whose warmth we've all felt.

'Ishq hai, Ishq hai, Ishq hai' is her solo poetry show that will make you feel things you've never felt before, the show will make you laugh and cry and sing along. She will be accompanied by Tanmay Maheshwari whose soul-stirring voice will be music to your ears.

EXHIBITIONS

HLF promotes artistic expression through paintings, sketches, sculptures, or any other form of visual art. It facilitates an open and interactive dialogue between artists and audiences.

This year's exhibits include:

TRAVELLING PLANTS

Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad

Rashmimala, Waylon D'Souza, Wendy Therméa, Karolina Grzywnowicz

Travelling Plants has been curated and commissioned by Max Mueller Bhavan Chennai. The project commenced with a residency at Institut Français de Pondichéry (IFP) where the artists explored the Herbarium, and were presented with a diverse programme of workshops, field trips, a series of lectures and presentations from experts, and the opportunity to interact with in-house researchers, scientists, and technicians connected with Social Sciences, Ecology, Indology and Geomatics. Reflecting synergies from their shared experiences at the residency, the exhibition brings together four artists. Their works are responses in both traditional and contemporary contexts.

FESTIVAL OF DEMOCRACY

The Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad: Democracy in Germany and India was constituted after a long struggle over many years. This exhibition explores the women who participated in the laying of the new nations—Germany's Mothers of Basic Law and India's Women Architects of the Constitution.

WHAT ON EARTH!®

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW): Does climate change conjure images of gloom and looming doom for you? Here's a bit of wit and humour to change that picture! This cartoon series by CEEW, brings sustainability and climate conversation to life with some humour.

ROCKS MATTER

The Society to Save Rocks: This exhibition showcases rock conservation through numerous mediums. Immersive activities include painting tattoos, painting bookmarks and postcards, an online rock quiz, rock puzzles, workshops on making digital rock posters and rock origami, and a treasure hunt.

HERE & THERE - THROUGH THE LENS OF A PHONE

Aquin Mathews: In this exhibition, the viewer is invited to step into a world seemingly familiar, yet offers new perspectives through the simplicity of a mobile phone camera. It reminds us that we do not need the latest technology to capture the world's wonders. We only need to pause, look closely, and open our hearts to what is already before us.

VILNIUS HISTORICAL PHOTOS

Embassy of Lithuania in New Delhi: Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, recently celebrated its 700th birthday. The historical photographs for this exhibition were prepared by the National Museum of Lithuania which has an impressive collection of images of Vilnius. This collection was adapted for Indian viewers by the Embassy of Lithuania in New Delhi and the inimitable Museo Camera at Gurgaon.

WATER MUSIC

Egle Lipeikaite: The exhibition will showcase paintings of water, which is the main theme in my painting. They depict cold reflections of the sky, the warm body of the earth, and the colours of the depths of the water, all merging in a rhythm of wind and light into cohesive, living images. The exhibition will also present several watercolours featuring motifs of the Lithuanian countryside and nature, created in different seasons

OBTUSE ANGLE: A COLLECTION OF CARTOONS

B P Acharya is a retired IAS officer who was Special Chief Secretary in Telangana. He has been pursuing his childhood hobby of cartooning and has been publishing regular column entitled "Obtuse Angle". This exhibition offers a collection of cartoons from his days as a probationer at LBS National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie to the travails of his journey as a civil servant and to his superannuation in 2020. Many of his cartoons were published in the IAS bulletin of AP, Money Life (Mumbai), the Pioneer, Hans India, Political and Business Daily, the Aware Consumer and online portals of Indian masterminds (New Delhi) and Indicanews (San Francisco, USA).

MAPPING THREADS

Harsha Durugadda: This exhibition by students of three colleges in Hyderabad showcases a rich tapestry of student voices from across India from Arunachal Pradesh to Kerala. Each student brings a unique perspective, intersecting the personal and political to address themes of cultural preservation, identity, and resistance. This collective effort reflects the diversity and shared experiences that shape our lives. In the exhibition, students confront superstition, personal pain, and political dominance fostering a spirit of resistance. It resembles the unravelling of the threads of one's clothing to examine its composition—a form of introspection and self-assertion. As an annexe to the student exhibition, "Possible Futures," a Hyderabad-based action group interested in performance art, presents performance artworks by six artists.

CROSSOVER TIME: ADIVASI LIFE IN ADILABAD

Sumanaspati Reddy: Development, access to new goods and technologies, and a pervasive digital age are all transforming the lives of the Adivasi communities of Adilabad, and their landscape extremely rapidly. With about 20 photographs, the exhibition will attempt to present some colourful as well as disturbing aspects of the problematic but inevitable interaction between an invasive progressive world and a highly structured ancient tribal culture. The photos will be accompanied by contextual notes.

INDIGENOUS AND ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

The stream, "Indigenous and Endangered Languages" (IEL), inaugurated in 2024, is now in its second year. IEL is in alignment with the United Nations which has declared 2022–2032 "International Decade of Indigenous Languages". Optimistic estimates suggest that at least 50 per cent of today's spoken languages will be extinct or seriously endangered by 2100. Most of these are Indigenous languages.

Several Indigenous poets, storytellers, writers, artists, folklorists, and researchers are participating this year. Children's stories, songs of resistance, a photo exhibition on Gondi life and art, and panel discussions by experts—this promises to be a vibrant stream! Come and celebrate India's well-known linguistic diversity! Prominent participants in the stream include:

Prof. Ajit Mohanty, Linguist and activist for Mother-Tongue education

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra, Educationist and folklorist of languages of Odisha and Chhattisgarh

Dr. Madan Meena, Director, Adivasi Academy, Gujarat, and visual artist and researcher

Dr. Sujoy Sarkar, Coordinator, Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL), Government of India

The Relaa Collective, which will perform in Chhattisgarhi, Hindustani and English

Mr. Sumanaspati Reddy, photographer and filmmaker

Dr. Pankaj Sekhsaria, Environmentalist and writer, Kalpavriksh

INTERLUDES

Venue: The Marvel, 5th Floor, T-Hub

Interludes are a smooth transition from the day-long intense discussions into enjoyable evenings of cultural programmes.

This year's Interludes include the following performances:

IBAADAT: EXPLORING COMMUNAL HARMONY AND GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH KATHAK

Barkha Patel and **Tanveer Alam** with **Vaibhav Kumar Modi**

Date: Friday, 24 January 2025

Time: 6.10 – 7.10 pm

Ibaadat: Exploring Communal Harmony and Gender Equality through Kathak.

Ibaadat, a new duet presentation by Barkha Patel (US) and Tanveer Alam (Canada), delves into the profound ideas of connection, adherence, and submission through the expressive language of Kathak. Ibaadat brings together our shared diasporic experiences as Kathak dancers, examining how we honour and adhere to our distinct lineages/training within the Kathak form while developing collaborative methodologies informed by our individual perspectives on technique and aesthetics.

Although Kathak unites us, our tutelage has been in different gharanas (schools of thought) within the form, reflecting both divergence and connection in our practices. With a commitment to our respective lineages, we seek to uncover new meanings of companionship—not by isolating ourselves within specific interpretations of the form, but by fostering a kinship that enriches and expands our collaborative potential. This work deeply engages with the materiality of our form, intentionally avoiding Eurocentric contemporary aesthetics and modalities.

Our collaboration represents a convergence of shared ground and diverse perspectives in aesthetics, training, and outlook. While our contexts differ and we embrace these differences, mutual respect and openness form the foundation of our work. Through this work, we affirm that Kathak is not a singular thing—multiple approaches exist within the form.

YEH TO GHAR HAI PREM KA

Shabnam Virmani and **Shreeparna Mitra**

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 6.10 – 7.10 pm

What house of love arises from the ashes of the house Kabir urges us to burn down? Shabnam Virmani sings to life the age-old and yet-so-fresh poems of Kabir, searing words that burst with beauty even as they shake us awake. She will be accompanied by Shreeparna Mitra.

KAAVYA DHAARA

Voice and Verse, from Everywhere to Here

Kaavya Dhaara, the poetry stream at HLF, will host 18 poets across 9 sessions over the three days of the 2025 edition. Poetry in Sindhi, the language in focus, as well as Urdu, Sanskrit, Hindi, Telugu, Odia, English, and Dehwali Bhili; a special reading celebrating the late poet Keki Daruwala, conversations around the craft of writing and sacred verse—there's a lot to look forward to at this year's Kaavya Dhaara.

Combining readings in multiple languages with thematic conversations, Kaavya Dhaara will feature a range of voices and perspectives. Highlights this year include the following:

Two Sindhi poets, **Anju Makhija** and **Menka Shivdasani**, will present from recent work and speak about language, identity, and the connection built through verse.

Arundhathi Subramaniam will be in conversation about her new anthology of women Bhakti poets, *Wild Women*, with Hyderabad poet **Sridala Swami**.

A discussion on Sanskrit poetry in contemporary translation will feature **Anusha Rao** and **Suhas Mahesh**, the curator-editors of the intriguingly titled *How to Love in Sanskrit* and **Srinivas Reddy**, Sanskrit scholar and translator.

Queer writing will be the focus of a conversation between UK-based writer **afshan de souza-lodhi** and **Aditya Tiwari**, whose new book celebrates heroes of the LGBTQI+ movement.

The life and work of the late poet Keki Daruwala will be celebrated in a presentation by The Little Theatre, along with readings by some of the attending poets.

Lyricist-journalist-screenwriter **Neelesh Misra** will talk about his book of poems मैं अक्सर सोचता हूँ.

Two reading sessions will feature poetry in multiple languages, as well as work in the many tongues of the city, with well-known local poets **Jameela Nishat**, **Laltu**, and **Ramesh Karthik**, among others.

As in previous years, the Srinivas Rayaprol Poetry Prize will be conferred in a special session on Day 2 of the festival, with readings by the winner **Ajay Kumar** and jury member **Menka Shivdasani**.

And as always, there will be book signings and plenty of conversation between sessions.

LITERARY STREAM

Spread across two venues, the lit stream features five plenaries, 26 parallel sessions, and a valedictory. The panel discussions and conversations with authors explore a wide range of topics across diverse genres.

- The plenary sessions feature **Shabana Azmi** in conversation with **Amita Desai**, **Amol Palekar** and **Sandhya Gokhale** in conversation with **Mohana Krishna Indraganti**, **Aruna Roy** in conversation with **C. Rammanohar Reddy**, **Rajdeep Sardesai** in conversation with **Sunita Reddy**, and **Siddharth** in conversation with **Vidya Rao**.
- The valedictory session will feature **Harsh Mander** and **Rajmohan Gandhi** in conversation with **Kalpana Kannabiran**.
- Prominent speakers in the parallel sessions include **Rita Kothari**, **Sunitha Krishnan**, **B P Acharya**, **Huma Qureshi**, **Sreenivasan Jain**, **Manoranjan Byapari**, **Anita Nair**, **Shobha Tharoor**, **Srinivasan**, **Anuja Chandramouli**, **D Subba Rao**, **M K Raina**, and **Rahul Bhatia**.

Check the schedule for the session details.

MEET MY BOOK

Meet My Book is a stream where both established as well as debut authors release their recently published books and introduce them to the audience in an informal setting. Over a dozen books will be released at HLF 2025. The authors include well-known economists, poets, artists, academics, and 10-year-olds.

MOVING IMAGES TALKIES

Venue: The Pinnacle, 7th Floor, T-Hub

Moving Images Talkies at the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2025 celebrates diverse cinematic voices, bringing narratives that explore cultural identity, history, environmentalism, and human connection. Featuring filmmakers from across India and the globe, this edition's selection promises a rich blend of visual storytelling.

Highlights:

ASAMANA ANASUYA

A biographical documentary of a legendary and gifted singer-composer, who left an indelible stamp on the Telugu music industry. She excelled in classical music but chose to compose a folk genre.

AAKHREEN TRAIN: THE LAST TRAIN

A poignant Sindhi feature film by Susheel Gajwani, based on Shri Thakur Chawla's platonic love story, delving into the trauma of Partition and the indomitable human spirit.

THE LAST DAY

A Lithuanian film by Klaudija Matvejevaitė, based on Jaroslavas Melnikas's short story 'The Book of Destinies'. It is an introspective dive into existentialism and human fate.

ILM KA SHEHAR

A captivating essay film exploring Hyderabad's 19th-century intellectual culture juxtaposed against its modern transformation into a 'Knowledge City'. Directed by SSAF-AAA Research Grant recipient, the film features the work of Dr. Syed Mohiuddin Qadri Zor.

SUSMAN

A tribute to the legendary Shyam Benegal, and his deep empathy for grassroots people. It also marks Shabana Azmi's 50 years of cinema and is underlined by the narrative in Dakhni and rooted in Pochampally. This 1987 classic sheds light on the struggles of rural handloom weavers amidst rapid industrialization.

YOU AM I

A thought-provoking Lithuanian film by Kristijonas Vildziunas, chronicles a man's search for solace in the woods, leading to unexpected love and conflict.

CHITTHA

Directed by S.U. Arun Kumar, this emotional Tamil drama explores the devastating ripple effects of a missing child on a family. Seeing this film will enable a better understanding of Siddharth's interaction the next day in the plenary session in the Literature Stream.

WILD VIETNAM

The Story of Environmental Impact of the Vietnam War—Wildlife biologists Amit Goswamy and Chetan Rao document Vietnam's hidden ecological scars from the war, offering a unique perspective on conservation in Southeast Asia.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, INCLUSION

A trio of Indian films made by young filmmakers, promoting accessibility in storytelling. Short, impactful films.

TEERTHAM 108: NAIMISHARANYA: THE TIMELESS TEMPLE TOWN

Directed by Puneet Sikka. This documentary combines stunning AI-generated graphics with captivating music, bringing the mystical aura of Naimisharanya to life like never before.

The audience will have the unique opportunity to interact with filmmakers in post-screening discussions.

NANHA NUKKAD

Like every year, Nanha Nukkad at HLF 2025 has an exciting line-up of fun-filled activities for children. From interactive storytelling sessions, poetry writing workshops, children's spy stories and activity-based book readings. Today, when children are increasingly getting addicted to blue screens, we endeavour to bring them into the wonderful world of reading and embark on an adventure of stories filled with mystery and magic. Here is a brief round-up of the exciting events:

- An enchanting storytelling session for tiny tots by **Star Papaya** where a whole lot of figurines' play mats' and props will be used to bring beloved tales to children.
- Eat the Rainbow—a storytelling and cooking workshop where children learn the importance of eating fruits and vegetables by making a physical rainbow with them and then turning them into a yummy smoothie.
- A reading and poetry writing workshop with the renowned children's writer **Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan** who will be reading from her latest book, *It's Time to Rhyme* and will inspire them to write a few lines on their own.
- A thrilling and mystery-filled story session with **Savie Kernel** who will read from her book, *Laxmi Panda: The Story of Netaji's Youngest Spy* and engage the children in an exciting spy game.
- Unlock the magical world of stories with **Parvati Gupta** from The Story Quilt as she unravels stories and helps children weave their own with paper and colours.
- Join **Vikas Prakash Joshi** as he reads from his book *My Name is Cinnamon* which has been translated into several Indian languages and then intrigues the children with a quiz and prompts them to write their own story.

- An exciting storytelling sessions with **Lavanya Karthik** as she takes the children through the exciting journey of a seed.
- Reading and storytelling with **Abhisheka Krishnagopal** as she reads from her book, *Ila, my wild mongoose friend* and talks about the animals we encounter in cities and how we can care for them.
- A performative storytelling by Little Dipper where **Anusha Veluswamy** will take the children through her book, *Where is Mr. Thookam* and engage them in a colouring activity.

Come join us on an exhilarating journey of stories, poetry, and a whole lot of fun at NanhaNukkad @ HLF 2025!

SCIENCE AND THE CITY

This is HLF's 15th edition and the second year with a dedicated stream that brings together science and culture. Over three days, the sessions will build on the theme of a city of science and technology. Does the city effectively utilize the fruits of its investments in science? How does it foster building a culture of science and technology that generates knowledge and empowers us to participate in it as citizens? What role does Hyderabad's culture play in enabling such an environment? And most importantly, in today's age who are the innovators whose work impacts and inspires us? Pause, think, and interrogate the pursuit of science in the city of Hyderabad.

Some highlights:

Soumya Swaminathan, former Chief Scientist at WHO and **Nandita Venkatesan**, journalist and antimicrobial resistance survivor, will be in conversation with **Sarah Hyder Iqbal**, co-founder of Superheroes against Superbugs on antimicrobial resistance and how fighting this public health crisis requires people to come together and create their own solutions.

Gautam Bhatia, constitutional lawyer and science fiction writer, and **Appupen**, graphic artist, will discuss the role of Science Fiction in imagining the world, in a conversation with **Jaideep Unudurti**, who writes on popular culture and reviews books for leading publications including *The Hindu*.

Ganesh Bagler, Professor and computational gastronomist at the Infosys Centre for Artificial Intelligence, IIT Delhi and **Ruby Islam**, chocolatier at Hyderabad's very own Manam Chocolate will take us through the future of food with **Meenakshi J**, a freelance Science and Food journalist.

Subba Rao M.Gavaravarapu, Scientist and Head of Nutrition information at the NIN and the author of the Nutritional Atlas of India; with **Latha Sashi**, Chief Nutritionist & Head, Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics at the Fernandez Hospital will discuss the nutritional status of India and help sift through the nutritional misinformation with **Meenakshi J**.

Indumathi Mariappan, stem cell scientist at the L.V. Prasad Eye Institute and **Arkasubhra Ghosh**, clinician scientist at the Narayana Nethralaya Eye Hospital will talk about the way ahead in gene therapies and India's role in this exciting sector.

Dinesh Sharma, journalist and author of *Beyond Biryani – The Making of a Globalised Hyderabad* and **Aparajith Ramnath**, author of *Engineering a Nation: A Biography of Sri M Visvesvaraya* will be in conversation with **Usha Raman**, Professor at the University of Hyderabad, on what makes the cities that build technology.

G. V. Prasad, co-chairperson and Managing Director, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and **Anand Kumar**, Managing Director, Indian Immunologicals Ltd will take us through the legacy of pharmaceutical industry in Hyderabad and what it takes to build enterprises from science ideas with **Deepanwita Chattopadhyay**, Chairperson and CEO, IKP Knowledge Park.

Pankaj Sekhsaria, author of 'First Steps: Citizen Science in Ecology in India' and curator of 'The Great Nicobar Betrayal'; **Niruj Mohan**, Head of the Science Communication, Public Outreach, and Education at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics; will talk to **Anusheela Chatterjee**, science writer and science communication lead at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research-Hyderabad.

Priyanka Srivastava, cognitive scientist at IIT-H and **Shrikant Bharadwaj**, vision scientist at LVPEI will interpret art by **Priyanka Aelay** and **Sameera Madhuravada** aka *salt and sambar*. Together, they will bring their scientific and artistic perspectives to interpret art and its affect.

STAGE TALKS

Venue: The Marvel, 5th Floor, T-Hub

Stage Talks seamlessly merge the verbal and the visual, description and demonstration, explanation and enactment.

POORAB MAT JAIYO: SONGS OF MIGRATION AND EXILE FROM THE THUMRI REPERTOIRE

Vidya Rao accompanied by Shanti Bhushan Jha and Rahul Deshpande

Date: Friday 24 January 2025

Time: 12.00 – 12.50 pm

Partition and the migration from one's home to an unknown space is an aspect of Sindhi experience. This presentation will focus on this sense of separation and exile felt at being uprooted from one's home, and having to find another space one might call home. This will be done through an examination and a rendering in music of some of the songs from the thumri repertoire which deals with just such a theme. The songs focus on the tragedy of forced migration from one's home and the sense of separation and loss expressed as birha. The songs also deal with that other fraught separation, specific to women at marriage—the 'exile' from the parental home to the home of the husband and his kin.

BOOK DESIGN AND TYPOGRAPHY IN CONTEMPORARY TELUGU PUBLISHING

Ragini Siruguri

Date: Friday, 24 January 2025

Time: 2.00 – 2.50 pm

This talk explores the world of book design and typography in printed Telugu books. Beginning with a brief history of the Telugu script in print form, it will trace its evolution through various type technologies, including metal type, phototypesetting, and digital typography. The discussion will highlight the unique challenges faced by publishers, editors, and designers today when working with Telugu digital typefaces. Through insightful case studies from local publishers, discover how economic and technological hurdles often overshadow artistic choices in layout and typesetting for Telugu books. Join this session to explore how typography shapes the reading experience, and why Telugu—a historically underrepresented script in the development of type technology—demands a specialised approach to book design and typography.

SAMVAAD... A SYNERGY BETWEEN THE PEN, THE BRUSH, AND THE DEPICTION

Radha Kumar

Date: Friday, 24 January 2025

Time: 3.00 – 3.50 pm

Is there a common thread that connects the pen, the brush, and expressions through dance? Are they all converging in a beautiful fabric to create a common story? Dr. Radha Kumar will unravel these beautiful layers that evoke sublime thoughts in the listener. The session will explore the importance of Brahmaviharas of Buddhist ethics in the Jataka tales, thus demonstrating the link between literature and the paintings of Ajanta. She will also connect the Rasa in the depictions using techniques from the Natya Shastra.

ODISSI AND THE GEETA GOVINDA DR ILEANA CITARISTI AND NAYANTHARA NANDA KUMAR

Data: Friday, 24 Januyary 2005

Time: 4:00 – 4:50 pm

The book attempts to trace an overview of the different components that define the cultural landscape of the state of Odisha in relation to its history, religious cults, art and literature and to link the development of the various aspects to the role played over the centuries by the Geeta Govinda poem in its different manifestations.

The book is authored by Dr. Ileana Citaristi, Odissi and Chhau dancer, guru and choreographer based in Bhubaneswar.

The presentation of the book will be accompanied by a practical dance demonstration by the author in conversation with Nayanthara Nanda Kumar

BURN DOWN YOUR HOUSE!

Shabnam Virmani and Arundhati Subramaniam

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 11.00 – 11.50 am

Bringing forth a set of arresting provocations from Kabir in her new book, Shabnam Virmani invites us to pause and be provoked. In conversation with Arundhati Subramaniam, she will share some of Kabir's poetic images that speak powerfully to our inner and outer worlds, along with a few songs.

SPEAKING STONES: ANCIENT ECHOES FROM LADAKH

Ahtushi Deshpande

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 12.00 – 12.50 pm

In the remote desert of Ladakh, ancient artists carved stunning rock art into boulders and cliff faces, creating a vivid record of their beliefs, culture, and way of life. These intricate stone engravings, made without any tools other than stone ones, remain a largely untold story of the past. In this illustrated talk, travel journalist and photographer Ahtushi shares her decade-long journey documenting Ladakh's rock art. Through high-resolution images and an engaging narrative, she unveils the deep connections between Ladakh's art and neighbouring cultures. Her work explores the stylistic nuances, historical links, and the role of geography in shaping these expressions. The presentation offers a rare glimpse into a forgotten world, bridging gaps left by sparse historical records. With 18 visits to the region, her photographs capture the harsh beauty of the desert and the enduring legacy of its ancient people—an invitation to explore the past through the timeless art they left behind.

LIVING WITH IKEBANA

Rekha Reddy

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 2.00 – 2.50 pm

Ikebana is the traditional Japanese art form of flower arrangement. The talk will unfold the philosophy behind Ikebana, its connect to India, its principles and how it has evolved over the centuries. Its modern aspect and how it can be used to suit modern times and homes will be shown at a live demonstration. The audience will be introduced to books of Ikebana juxtaposed with other art forms and Indian culture that have been published.

CRY FOR THE BELOVED

Omkar Bhatkar and Anju Makhija

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 3.00 – 3.50 pm

Known as one of the greatest Sufi works in history, Shah Abdul Latif's *Shah Jo Risalo* is a prayer, a cry for the beloved. Shah Abdul Latif of Bhitai lived during the 16th century and wrote Sindhi poems ingrained in mysticism. Latif's poetry is deeply rooted in the human experience of searching for the self – a self that is one with the nirankaar, the omnipresent, centered within yet diffuse as attar. The first-ever translation of the Risalo in India from Sindhi to English by Anju Makhija and Hari Dilgir (Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Prize for Translation 2011) is now brought to the stage in an immersive poetic performance by Metamorphosis Theatre and Films. 'Cry for the Beloved' is a sufi poetic presentation blending movement, music, animation and storytelling with selected verse from the *Shah Jo Risalo* of Shah Abdul Latif.

ECHOES OF RESISTANCE

Relaa Collective

Date: Saturday, 25 January 2025

Time: 4.00 – 4.50 pm

Relaa's 'Echoes of Resistance' showcases how songs and storytelling serve as powerful tools for resilience and activism.

Live Performance: Protest songs, poetry, and cultural expressions addressing local and global issues of oppression, violence, and community annihilation. We invite the audience to join in with our notes of dissent,

and energise each other with messages of hope and solidarity. In a celebration of diversity, our performance will feature songs not just in several different languages, but accents and registers that fall outside the mainstream.

Interactive session: Exploring the intersection of art and activism and the audience's thoughts on co-creating resistance art. Aligning with HLF's commitment to diversity and creativity, Relaa's participation demonstrates how culture can address pressing social and environmental challenges. Witness the transformative power of voices united in resistance.

FIREFLY WOMEN

Manjari Kaul and Deepika Chauhan

Date: Sunday, 26 January 2025

Time: 11.00 – 11.50 am

Firefly Women is an interactive Physical Theatre piece. It explores ideas of Feminist utopia(s) against the backdrop of letters written from jail by three Indian women incarcerated under a draconian law and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's story 'Sultana's Dream'. In their letters to their friends, lovers and comrades, the women write about their memories of cold winter nights at protest sites, learning lessons on resilience from their fellow inmates, the numbing monotony of prison life, keeping hope alive and the need to keep the work for a Feminist revolution going, even as they are incarcerated. The piece contains excerpts from Begum Rokeya's 'Sultana's Dream' and elements of audience interaction that invite the audience to participate in the making of a world free of oppression. The piece attempts to find inroads into solidarity, collective dreaming, resilience and hope in these dark times.

A PEACEFUL MOVEMENT – A DANCE THEATRE DIALOGUE

Nayanthara Nanda Kumar

Date: Sunday, 26 January 2025

Time: 12.00 – 12.50 pm

A production highlighting the preservation of natural heritage through dance, theatre, and multimedia. We look at issues confronting the city of Hyderabad, to catalyze solutions. How do we protect our natural heritage? We begin with an informed analysis of the issues at stake. With joyful activism, congruent with the spirit of Hyderabad we explore solutions. Through movement, dance, and image we convey the narrative. Do we preserve our natural heritage? The rocks of Hyderabad have stood for 2.5 billion years—a protective mantle to the earth, a witness to history, a refuge for the humans seeking the divine, a sanctuary for diverse life forms, harbouring fragile ecosystems. Rocks play a vital role in the story of our survival. We need them. These ideas are portrayed through movement, word, and image. Will we allow them to stand or will we mutilate them?

POETS OF HYDERABADI INQUILAB

Music by **Harini Rao**, storytelling by **Yunus Lasania**

Date: Sunday, 26 January 2025

Time: 2.00 – 2.50 pm

Hyderabad has been home to several poets who worked and wrote for social justice. We have been heavily inspired by their revolutionary work on the ground and in their art.

This work will be presented in a storytelling format interspersed with a performance of select poems set to tune. We'll be including and reflecting upon the important milestones of the poets' lives and presenting known and rare poems by them.

Poets in focus—Mah Laqa Bai Chanda and Makhdoom Mohiuddin.

INDIAN CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF MAXIMALISM VS MINIMALISM

Rohit Naag, Maria Goretti and Sonam Kalra

In conversation with **Manish Saxena**

Date: Sunday, 26 January 2025

Time: 3.00 – 3.50 pm

Minimalism and maximalism are contrasting styles that found in many aspects of culture, including art, design, and branding. With this demonstration, we bring the relevance of Indian culture through its art and craft in the context of Maximalism vs Minimalism.

STORYTELLING

Stories do not only transport listeners to new worlds. They also instruct and lead them to reflect on and engage with the world around them in meaningful ways. The **Storytelling Stream** at HLF 2025 offers multilingual narratives and performances that will appeal to all ages and tastes, drawing the listener into historical or contemporary themes, or personal experiences. The **Hyderabad Stories** segment continues this year, reflecting the rich cultural and historical ethos of a city that is home to a tapestry of communities.

Highlights:

- **Neelesh Misra**, India's 'leading and most loved storyteller,' journalist, author, radio storyteller, scriptwriter and lyricist will engage and entertain with his stories on all aspects of life, love, and governance!
- The enchantment of listening to stories is an act of interactive imagination. **Vayu Naidu** brings stories from the Ramayana in her session **The Enticement of Epic Tales: Storytelling Oral and Written**, with readings from *The Living Legend*, and shares the process of writing myth and fiction.
- Readings from selected stories translated from the two languages in focus this year, Lithuanian and Sindhi, into English, by the popular Hyderabad-based **Little Theatre** group, with the stalwarts of the Hyderabad theatre scene, **Shankar Melkote**, **Prakash Burra** and others.
- Theatre group **Abhivyakti**, with Dr. Rajshree Duggar, Arvind Sharma and others bring to life 'Usne Kaha Tha', the very famous story by Chandradhar Sharma Guleri, about sacrifice, memory, and love.
- Classical and contemporary dancer **Neha Khaitan** performs Sustainability Story, dwelling on the effects of collective and individual behaviours on the ecosystem. She will be accompanied by Sai Kolanka on the violin and Srikant on the Mridungam.
- And last but not the least, well-known Hyderabadis by birth or by adoption will keep the audiences enthralled with stories highlighting the multicultural and globalised history of Hyderabad.
- **Dilnaz Baig**, curator of food festivals, founder of Dastarkhan-e-naaz and secretary of Shaam-e-ghazal presents **Slice of Life**. She will talk of the everyday as well as the gourmet dishes that make up quintessential Hyderabad cuisine, as well as little known facts of Hyderabad culture.
- **Yunus Lasaniya** (Hyderabad-based journalist associated with *The News Minute*, and previously, *Mint*, *The Hindu* and *Siasat*) narrates **These Walls have Tales!** focussing on the stories behind some of the architectural structures of the city, the idea being that the history of a city is made up of stories as well as facts, and that both can be part of it.

So, come and be regaled by the myriad themes, languages, and performances awaiting you at the Storytelling stream of HLF 2025!

WORKSHOPS

Workshops at the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2025 celebrate the intersection of art, culture, science, and storytelling through engaging, hands-on sessions. This year's line-up promises a vibrant mix of creativity, inclusivity, and exploration, offering participants unique opportunities to learn, reflect, and connect.

Here's a glimpse of what's in store:

- **Decoding Dogs:** Facilitated by **Sreenivas Mangipudi**, this workshop explores the fascinating interplay of human-canine communication, diving into psychology, body language, and trust-building through training. It's a journey into the storytelling bond between two species.
- **Indian Sign Language Workshop:** **Anju Khemani**, from the Drama Association of the Deaf (DAD), along with other Deaf Actors, Rohit, Jupiter, and Mohit, will introduce participants to the basics of Indian Sign Language (ISL), alongside insights into deaf culture and disability. This workshop debunks myths, fosters empathy, and highlights the power of communication across diverse communities.
- **Read Food Labels:** Nutritionist **Sonam Samat** empowers participants to make informed food choices by decoding food labels and spotting marketing gimmicks. The session concludes with a creative culinary activity where participants craft a healthy snack.

- **Watercolour Workshop with Egle Lipeikaite:** Lithuanian artist Egle Lipeikaite shares her signature water-pouring technique to create captivating water landscapes. Participants will be exploring themes of rhythm, light, and nature.
- **Cheriyal Painting:** Step into the world of Telangana's traditional Cheriyal scroll art. Learn the techniques and stories behind this unique art form, once used as a medium of storytelling, and create a vibrant piece using natural colours.
- **Connecting with ET & Expression.** Led by **Seema Azharuddin**, this workshop transforms literature into live art. Inspired by the Nobel Prize-winning *The Vegetarian*, participants will explore emotional depth through scriptwriting and live enactments.
- **Regional Language Haiku Workshop: Aditya Undru and Shiv Bansal** guide participants in writing Haikus in Hindi and Telugu, celebrating linguistic diversity and the beauty of minimalist expression.
- **Stories Make the Best Language Teachers: Unnati Ved's** workshop for parents explores the magic of reading to foster language skills in children. From book recommendations to creative activities, it offers practical ways to make reading fun and educational.
- **Science Fiction Writing Workshop: Aditya Undru and Tej** combine scientific principles with creative writing to inspire participants to craft imaginative and scientifically grounded narratives.

With an array of topics ranging from art and science to inclusivity and culture, the workshops at HLF 2025 promise transformative learning experiences. Dive in, and let your curiosity guide you!

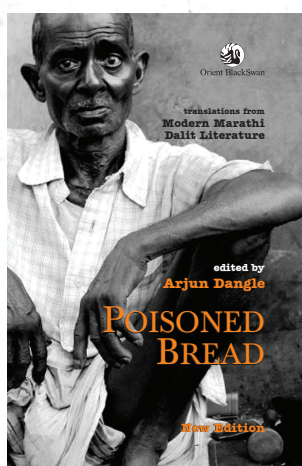
YOUNGISTAAN NUKKAD

This edition of The NRB's Youngistaan Nukkad at Hyderabad Literary Festival is a vibrant initiative that brings together art, live music, and poetry to create a dynamic platform for self-expression and community engagement. Focused on empowering youth and fostering creativity, Youngistaan Nukkad stands for celebrating the dreams, passion, aspirations, stories and voices of the youth. Through live music performances, poetic recitals, open mics and art displays, Youngistaan Nukkad encourages dialogue on social issues, celebrates diverse talents, and promotes cultural exchange. This initiative not only nurtures young artists but also connects them with their communities, making art and expression accessible to all while inspiring positive social change.

Some highlights:

- The Real Talk: 'Broken but beautiful', a conversation on women's bodies with **Priya Malik**.
- Musical Storytelling: 'Ilaa of Paithan' is a story on gender equality narrated live with musical compositions.
- The Author's Spotlight: A session with the author of *A Game of Two Halves*, **Rishav Ray** from Kolkata, a book that revisits the glorious days of 11 clubs that made Indian football invaluable.
- Workshops: YN includes a cosplay workshop where you learn to design to help you bring your favourite characters to life.
- Mann ki Mehfil: This year we have a conversation with **Neelesh Misra** on 'The beauty of slowing down' wherein we speak about slowing down, recharge, and live with greater clarity and intention.
- The Film Lab: A panel discussion on 'Everyone is a filmmaker at heart' with **Praveen Kandregula**, director of Cinemabandi and Paradha alongside **Vamsi Bhasham**, an aspiring filmmaker and moderated by Shriya Gupta!
- Daastan-e-dil: This session is all about bringing music and poetry coming together to create the perfect aura of blissfulness.
- Open Mic: Our OG segment of open mic will be back this year too on all three days, be ready to take the mic and showcase your talent.
- Indie Hour: This session will bring young musicians from Hyderabad performing their original music for the first time at HLF!

- Revive and Remix Box: A dedicated upcycle box for people to donate their old clothes, books, and old bottles for upcycling.
- Flea Market: An arena dedicated to young and small businesses from Hyderabad in the field of art, photography, thrifting etc!
- Meet the creator: Audience can interact, engage and learn from Creators like comic creators, content creators, podcasters etc
- Some other highlights include - photo booth, indie booth, street gallery, upcycling sessions, flash mob, reel booth etc!

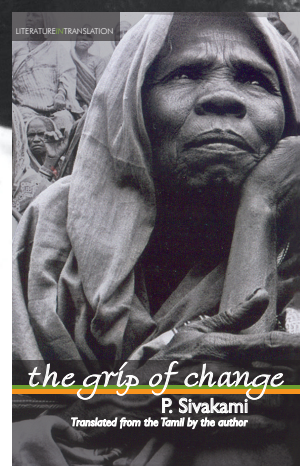


9788125037545

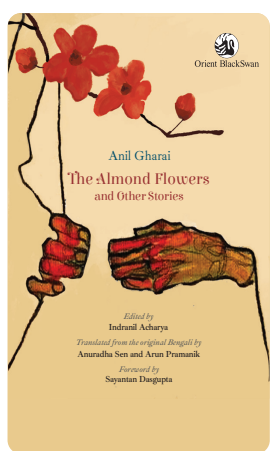
**Groundbreaking
writings about
caste and
society, available
now in English
translation.**



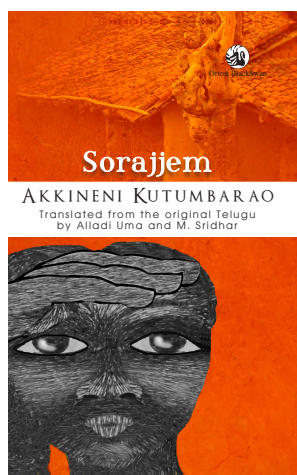
Orient BlackSwan



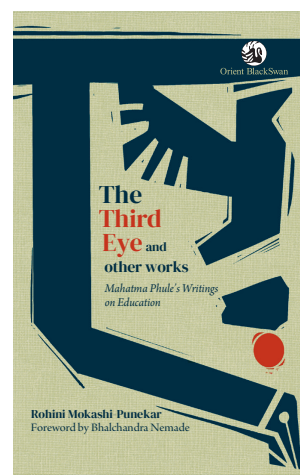
9788125030201



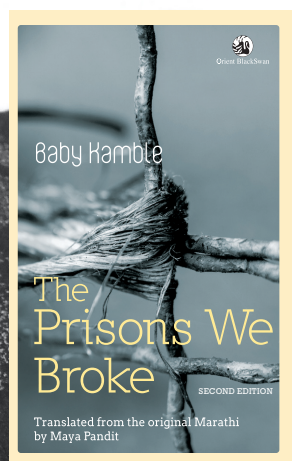
9789354423178



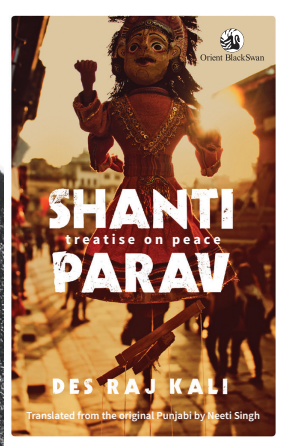
9788125062936



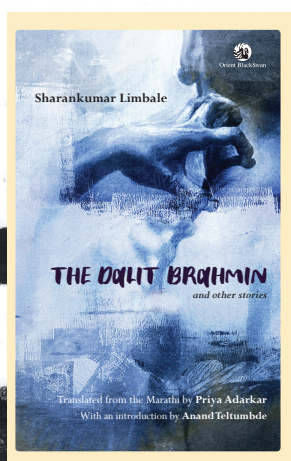
9789354423802



9789352873708



9789352879281



9789352872947

www.orientblackswan.com

@OrientBlackSwan

