



The Federation of
Publishers' & Booksellers' Associations in India

FPBAI Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 4 & 5

APRIL-MAY, 2024

Books are important for the mind, heart
and soul...

EDITORIAL

NBT & FPBAI: Two Trains but One Destination



'Days are like trains – they will just zoom by.' You can be zapped seeing them pass or you can jump on one of them and enjoy the journey. The common destination of National Book Trust, India (NBT) and The Federation of Publishers & Booksellers Association in India (FPBAI) is the fantastic paradise of books.

NBT is an autonomous body under the Department of Higher Education, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, It was founded by India's first prime minister, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1957, with the objective of encouraging the production of good literature in English, Hindi and other Indian languages. Nehru had envisioned that NBT would be a bureaucracy-free structure that would publish low-cost books.

Similarly, The Federation of Publishers & Booksellers Association in India (FPBAI), an apex body of publishers, was founded to ensure the development of publishing in English, Hindi and all Indian languages. It provides a forum for various segments of the book industry in the country to discuss their problems at national and international levels and looks after the interests of its members.

At the time of Independence, publishing and bookselling industry was confronted with complex problems typical of any developing industry. Some far-sighted and public-spirited individuals in the book industry like Mr. Sital H. Primlani felt the need of an

umbrella organization. The publishers and booksellers conference held in Delhi in January 1953 paved the way for the setting up of The Federation of Publishers & Booksellers Association in India (FPBAI) in 1955.

The progress of NBT's activities, ever since its inception, remained slow till Mr. Yuvraj Malik took over its reins as its Director. By using his soldierly acumen, Mr. Malik has doubled its spirits, which can be seen everywhere. With the view to get professional support from professional bodies like FPBAI, Mr. Malik allowed us a stall of 3m x 3m size on complimentary basis during New Delhi World Book Fair 2024 (NDWBF 2024), which was held at New Delhi, between 10 and 18 February 2024. We have requested NBT to give us the same facility for the forthcoming NDWBF 2025.

The NDWBF is being held for the past 51 years and is a major calendar event in the publishing world. NDWBF 2025 is scheduled to be held from 1 to 9 February 2025 in the newly-constructed halls 1-5, at the Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The NBT has recently developed a National Action Plan for Readership Development Among the Youth (NAPRDY) with a vision to make all youth in the age group of 15-25 active readers by 2025.

I wish the NBT all the success and assure them that the FPBAI shall extend total support to them to make NAPRDY a big success.

With Regards,
For FPBAI


S.K. Ghai
President

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Wholesaler

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Library Supplier & Subscription Agent

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Publisher & Wholesaler

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Library Supplier

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Business Interests

Publisher

CONVERSION RATES EFFECTIVE May 01, 2024

(The rates are suggestive and not mandatory)

(NEW RATES MARKED WITH ASTERISK):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Australian Dollar | @ Rs. 56.70* |
| 2. Canadian Dollar | @ Rs. 63.70* |
| 3. British Pound Sterling | @ Rs. 108.90* |
| 4. Japanese Yen per 100 | @ Rs. 56.70* |
| 5. Singapore Dollar | @ Rs. 64.20* |
| 6. Swedish Kroner/ Norwegian Kroner | @ Rs. 08.00* |
| 7. Swiss Franc | @ Rs. 95.80* |
| 8. U.S. Dollar | @ Rs. 86.80* |
| 9. Euro | @ Rs. 93.40* |

CONVERSION RATES EFFECTIVE April 01, 2024

(The rates are suggestive and not mandatory)

(NEW RATES MARKED WITH ASTERISK):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Australian Dollar | @ Rs. 56.90* |
| 2. Canadian Dollar | @ Rs. 64.00* |
| 3. British Pound Sterling | @ Rs. 110.10* |
| 4. Japanese Yen per 100 | @ Rs. 58.00 |
| 5. Singapore Dollar | @ Rs. 64.70* |
| 6. Swedish Kroner/ Norwegian Kroner | @ Rs. 08.20 |
| 7. Swiss Franc | @ Rs. 97.70* |
| 8. U.S. Dollar | @ Rs. 86.30 |
| 9. Euro | @ Rs. 94.30* |

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Publisher & Wholesaler

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Publisher

M.G. ARORA: MESSENGER OF LEGAL KNOWLEDGE

True icons are larger than life – unforgettable, with an elegance that’s mesmerizingly timeless. Madan Gopal Arora (MGA) was a larger-than-life personality who left for the heavenly abode on 4 April 2024, after a long service to the legal fraternity, including judges, lawyers, law professors and law students, by getting their hunger for legal knowledge satiated through a regular supply of law books.

MGA was born on 8 March 1933 in an agriculturist family of a remote village that is now in Pakistan. He faced agonies and ecstasies in his life but despite all the odds, he always defeated the odd and ugly situations coming his way. MGA was studying in Class 8 when the partition of India took place. His entire family moved to a refugee camp in Pakistan, where all residents got meals mixed with sand which resulted in the family getting sick. His grandfather died in the camp followed, within a span of six months, by his father and sister, who passed away after migration to India.

MGA and his ailing mother shifted to Ambala Cantonment where he started studying in a high school. After matriculation, MGA applied for admission in a college but due to his association with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), he was denied admission. He started teaching some primary students to make a living. In his spare time, he worked as a part-time trainee on a lathe machine in a factory manufacturing scientific instruments. At the age of 15, he was arrested in Ambala Cantonment for being a member of RSS, which was banned by the Government of India. But he was released since he was a minor.

To avoid further complications, he moved to Allahabad in 1951 and became a salesman with the Central Law Agency. As a part of his job, he toured several states and realised the value of books as people showed extraordinary respect to him for being a messenger of knowledge. He attended RSS shakhas regularly and could not devote much time to his job. In 1956, he left his job and moved to Delhi, starting his own business from his house with only ₹100. He rented a bicycle and visited lawyers and law courts to sell books which he took from publishers on short term credit. In 1960, he started a bookshop opposite Tis Hazari Courts in Gokhle Market. This was a big step in his life, from where he never looked back.

MGA was a man of conscience. Once, in 1953, he was travelling on a train in Odisha. When the ticket collector came to check, most passengers did not have tickets and paid a bribe. MGA was perhaps the only passenger in the compartment with a ticket. The ticket collector looked at him as if he had committed some wrong.

The incident troubled him and that night itself he wrote a postcard narrating the incident to the Railway Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. One fine morning a police officer came to his house and escorted him to the minister who introduced him to all senior railway officers and read out his postcard about the state of affairs in the railways.

As a bookseller, MGA came in close contact with judges, scholars and senior advocates. Once K.R. Naraynan, the President of India, asked him for a book which was out of print. MGA procured the book from the UK publishers.



MGA set up the Universal group and the doyen of law books nurtured it for 75 years. He believed the bookshop was a temple, the customer the deity and he was the priest, to serve and worship. He was a brilliant academician, humble, polite, soft spoken, gentle, friendly and generous. He provided great comfort to judges, lawyers and academics to author creative, innovative and ingenious books. He generated a large author bank. Happily, his sons Pradeep, Sanjeev and Manish, have inherited these laudable traits and continue his legacy.

Under MGA's stewardship Universal Book Traders in Delhi grew from a modest beginning to a leading store of legal literature. The bookstore was a sanctuary for legal professionals, students, and academics alike, seeking both contemporary and classic legal texts. In 1995, MGA started Universal Law Publishing Company to provide accessible, comprehensive, and affordable legal literature.

MGA's autobiography, Messenger of Legal Knowledge, encapsulates his interactions with legal luminaries like Justice Krishna Iyer and Nani Palkhivala, young scholars, and

students, offering insights into the minds that have shaped Indian law and its interpretation. His dedication to the legal profession was recognized and honoured by the community he served. However, his humility remained intact, and he considered his contributions as a mere duty towards the society and the nation. MGA's story provides hope and inspiration to aspiring entrepreneurs in India, demonstrating that integrity, hard work, and vision can overcome any adversity. His life reminds us that while law is a profession, its true essence lies in serving the public good, a principle that he embodied through his work. His legacy is a beacon of light that will continue to guide and inspire, ensuring that his contributions to the world of legal knowledge and publishing are remembered and cherished for generations to come.

From the interview held in 2009 in Face to Face with Indian Publishing Professionals.



Pradeep Arora, Shri M.G. Arora, Manish Arora and Sanjeev Arora

MILESTONE FOR THE TAMIL PUBLISHING INDUSTRY



Olivannan Gopalakrishnan

Madras Varsity awards first Ph.D. in publishing

The Tamil publishing industry reached a significant milestone on March 21, 2024, as the University of Madras awarded its first Ph.D. in the field of publishing.

Olivannan Gopalakrishnan from Emerald Publishers did his research focusing on the impact of social media marketing on the Tamil publishing industry.

He successfully completed this pioneering study and was awarded the Ph.D. by the university.

It is generally felt that one of the setbacks to the publishing industry in India is the lack of academic research, partly due to the absence of institutes or universities offering publishing as part of their curriculum. University of Madras has set an example with this study of Olivannan.

DC Correspondent, Chennai

23rd APRIL – THE WORLD BOOK AND COPYRIGHT DAY

Storytelling is an incredibly effective tool when it comes to educating younger generations.

—UNESCO

The World Book and Copyright Day is also known as the World Book Day. The theme of 2024 is **“Read Your Way”**. It is celebrated every year on 23 April to highlight the importance of reading books. The day is also dedicated to paying respect to renowned authors, including William Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la

Vega, who died on this day. The day is celebrated by UNESCO and other related organisations across the world to honour authors and books, and to promote the habit of reading.

The city of **Strasbourg**, with its rich history and cultural heritage, has been recognised as UNESCO's World Book Capital for 2024.