

DAY 2
AT THE LITFEST

FIRST SESSIONS

Stein
10:30-11:30
► **Speaking Tree: An Incredible Yatra - From Riches To Even More Riches**
Om Swami talks to Narayani Ganesh

Rajinigandha Hub
11:00-12:00
► **Talk: The Paradoxical Prime Minister**
Shashi Tharoor on his latest book

Silk Cotton Lawn
11:15-12:15
► **Leading the Way: The Responsibility of Being a Writer**
Ziya Us Salam, Radha Kumar, Udayan Mukherjee and Rajiv Dogra in conversation with Deepa Narayan

Core 6A
11:30-12:00
► **Book Reading: Women Militants of India**
Rashmi Sakseena reads out from her book 'She Goes to War'

GAIL Silver Oak
11:00-11:45
► **Stories from History: Extraordinary Tales About Ancient Indians** by Archana and Shruti Garodia

Plaza Steps
10:30-11:00
► **How To Meditate** by Yogacharya Surakshit Goswami

For the full schedule, log on to TOI.in/timeslitfestDelhi

SHORT STORIES

Guess who Tharoor's book buddy is

While talking about reading habits among politicians, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said at the litfest he has hardly ever discussed books or writers with his political contemporaries. But he added, "Rahul (Gandhi) is the only other politician I have discussed books with and that too mostly non-fiction."



When **Jairam Ramesh** discussed his book on PN Haksar, Indira Gandhi's trusted bureaucrat, at the Times Litfest Delhi on Saturday, he also spoke about the loyalty civil servants have towards politicians and the way it has changed now from those times. "Haksar was Indira Gandhi's ideological compass during 1971-76. Yet, when Sanjay Gandhi started Maruti, he told Indira a PM's son should not do it and that too staying in the Prime Minister's residence. I don't know if there is anybody who can say this to PM Modi today," Ramesh said.

When Benazir silenced Karan Thapar

In 1977, a strange bit of news made headlines in a small paper in Cambridge. Karan Thapar denied being romantically involved with Benazir Bhutto. Back then, both were in university in the UK, Thapar at Cambridge and Bhutto at Oxford. They'd both been in London for a debate, and Bhutto dropped him off at the train station in her car. He had another anecdote about her, which he shared at the litfest. When she once came to Cambridge and spoke on the topic 'This House Will Have Sex Before Marriage', the then 20-year-old Thapar asked her, "Madam, would you propose to practise what you preach?" As the audience burst into laughter, Thapar thought he'd been very clever, but Bhutto did one better. "Certainly, sir, but not with you," she responded.

Visit timesofindia.indiatimes.com for more reports on the Times Litfest Delhi. For videos of sessions, visit [facebook.com/TimesLitFestDelhi](https://www.facebook.com/TimesLitFestDelhi)

It's December, everyone's thinking 2019

Both Ruling Party And Opposition Claim To Have The Edge In Perception Battle As The Country Counts Down To Lok Sabha Polls

It's election season and a mild winter afternoon in a setting where people were talking literature and life wasn't going to deter politicians and political commentators from indulging in some friendly fire. Before the big guns boom for the mother of all electoral battles — the 2019 Lok Sabha polls — which party or leader is winning the perception battle? And are we looking at a coalition? There was, palpably, no single answer when the questions were thrown to a panel that comprised Union minister Kiren Rijju, MP Subramanian Swamy, Congress' Abhishek Manu Singhvi, political commentator and analyst Mishra and CPM's Mohan Salim at the Times Litfest

Delhi on Saturday. But the debate, anchored by Times Now's Rahul Shivshankar, provided a preview of the bruising battle that lies ahead.

It was Baru who set the stage — "BJP with a cow and janet" is how he described Congress as well as opposition parties like BJD, CPM, SP, BSP and TMC, calling the bloc a "coalition of desperation". "Even till now, there's no common minimum programme put forward by this coalition... the only common point is to remove (Narendra) Modi," he said.

Baru, candid about the lack of credentials of both BJP and the opposition in terms of India's economic well-being, was scathing about despotic leaders with low tolerance for freedom of expression, asking the audience, "Who do you choose, it's one despot or the other?" In answer, Swamy quipped, "My despot is better than yours," lighting the mood even as Singhvi, Mishra and Salim justified the creation of a "like-minded coalition", like the coming together of opposition leaders at a farmers' rally in Delhi on Friday. Singhvi said opposition unity had BJP "terrified". "It's a question of vote share versus seats. In the last Lok Sabha election, the third-largest party with vote share was BSP, which had zero seats. BJP has been winning with decreased vote share, and this is why a united opposition terrifies BJP," insisted Singhvi.



HUMOUR LIVES: Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Subramanian Swamy at the Times Litfest on Saturday

Asked whether BJP's fight

against corruption had been dented because of the Rafale controversy, Singhvi and Salim both cited the lack of answers from the government. "During the UP election, Modi kept talking asking, 'kya achhe din aaye?' But in Rajasthan and other states, he hasn't even once spoken on it. It speaks volumes," Swamy saw the situation

When you want to cure yourself, you need an injection — that is what demonetisation was — KIREN RIJJU, JUNIOR MINISTER (HOME)



very differently. He said BJP workers and the RSS cadre were enthused due to two primary factors — it was happy about the work done by the party on Hindutva and its uncompromising stand on corruption. Speaking on BJP's chances, Rijju said, "We are very clear what we had promised under the leadership of Narendra Modi, we have delivered." Touching on demonetisation, Rijju added, "When you want to cure yourself, you need an injection — that is what demonetisation was. India was ailing from the ills of Congress and an injection was needed."

Times Litfest Delhi, presented by Rajinigandha, is being held on Dec 1 & 2, 11am onwards, at India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road. Entry is free. To register, give a missed call on 88001-4444. Details on TOI.in/timeslitfestDelhi

Why women and men see sex, love differently

In a world that is grappling with the key question: What women want — so much so we have movies trying to find an answer, ponderous tomes written on the topic and now a popular diva answering it in a radio show — maybe it's time to go back to the drawing board. As suggested in a free-wheeling and fun session with the world's leading body language and relationship expert couple, **Barbara and Allan Pease**.

The Peases, who run a successful media business that spans television, books and seminars on all things relationship, pointed out the "difference" between men and women. With bestselling books like 'Why Men Don't Have A Clue And Women Always Need More Shoes' and more recently 'Why Men Want Sex And Women Need Love' — they could have some answers. And the crowd was there for that.

The panelists spoke about the battle of the sexes and whether men are capable of love. Barbara categorically stated: "No one wins the battle of the sexes. We don't want anyone to win it. Any person in

a relationship is trying to be a winner, I tell them they are the loser because they made the other person feel like a loser."

Allan said in a relationship, people often confuse equality with difference. "Equality is a political concept but we deal with difference, which is a science concept. This is leading to a younger generation that is not only finding it difficult to form a relationship, but also holding it together."

Years of research into how the male-female brain works has convinced the Peases that there are fundamental reasons why women and men are wired differently, and especially when it comes to sex and love. "Men get to love in a totally different way than women do. For women, sex and love go together. And one equals the other. For men, sex can be just sex and that's why we can sleep with women we hate!" said Allan. In short, he explains, "Women want to have lots of sex with the man they love. Men want to have lots of sex. Full stop!"

His thrillers' secret code: A boring life!

Ashwin Sanghi is not currently sniffing around for conspiracy theories in Delhi. He is, in fact, working on a novel set in the country's south. "Why do people like me write thrillers? It's because we lead utterly boring lives!" he joked.

Very often, you don't go looking for a story, it's the story that finds you — ASHWIN SANGHI, NOVELIST

The Mumbai-based author proved to be an engaging company as he opened up about the processes of writing page-turners. "Growing up, my mother would say I'm a bloody good liar! And we storytellers are liars — we spin yarns," he confessed. It was his maternal uncle who encouraged a love of books in the young Ashwin, for his was a family that wasn't much into reading. "In his lifetime he sent me around 400 books. I was brought up in the Bania/Marwari tradition

where book-keeping is more important than book-reading. And that, if you have to read at all, you should read the balance sheet!"

Sanghi's success story began with 'The Rozabal Line' which, like many bestselling debuts, endured a long gestation period. "It was rejected because I was a lousy writer! It was utterly disjointed, going through six rewrites."

That first foray into fiction came after a visit to the Roza Bal in Srinagar whose backstory obsessed him — to such an extent that his wife was left exasperated. "She told me: 'You're an utter bore — only if I go and lie in the tomb would you give me attention!'" But she did see the genesis of a great story. That first book was published in 2008, launching Sanghi on a successful career.

The tragedy of being an Indian comic novelist

New Delhi: "We shouldn't think of films, series and novels as unfriendly mediums but rather focus on our skills of telling a good story," said Sarath Banerjee, the author of 'Corridor: A graphic novel', during a discussion on comic books and graphic novels.

As the panelists — including Arjun Gaiand, a graphic novelist who has interned with Marvel Comics, and Arunava Sinha, a literary translator — spoke about Banerjee being tagged as the first graphic novelist in India, he urged the audience to believe that the medium has always existed in Indian culture in the stories we tell each other. There's a strong fan base for comic books in India but the question is whether Indians like to read comics by Indian authors. "People are reading comic books these days, but I think they're not into Indian mythology but prefer something like Marvel comics, and we, as Indian authors, are at a precarious position in the realm of comic culture."

A DAY OF LIT, WIT & LAUGHTER



SO IT BEGINS: Former President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurates the Times Litfest Delhi, sponsored by Rajinigandha, with DS Group director Puesh Kumar at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi on Saturday

Bestselling novelist Ashwin Sanghi and Anuja Chauhan at the session titled 'Conspiracy Theorist: Rethinking India's Past'

Many brought their own books and took back another at this book exchange programme

The sessions were greeted with packed houses

Vandana Bist during the 'Tell A Story, Paint A Picture' workshop at the litfest

Photos: Neeraj Paul, Anindya Chattopadhyay, Piyal Bhattacharjee, Indranil Das, Prem Bisht & Tarun Rawat

'Eat local, give farmers their due'

Nutritionist **Rujuta Diwekar** did not have her audience running on the treadmill at the Times Litfest Delhi — her simple advice, "Throw away your weighing scales and banish TV from bedrooms." She said one should focus on metabolic health. "It implies we are waking up fresh, sleeping better, have high levels of energy throughout the day. Another parameter is to be sensitive to hunger and satiety signals."

Exercise compliance is paramount, according to Diwekar. "Work out regularly and don't reduce food to protein, carbohydrates and fats. The more we look at food through this narrow window, the food industry will get more profit but it will be terrible for your waistline," she said. Referring to the farmers' rally in Delhi, she added, "People like us are responsible for this mess because we are not eating local, seasonal and what belongs to our food heritage. Our grandmothers looked at food through a multidisciplinary point and not from a reductionist view. Nutrition science at the highest level states that they have goofed up by looking at food like carbs, proteins and fat. Consequently, every new diet theory is proved wrong in two to five years."

"Our children don't eat guavas or sweet potatoes. But they won't bat an eyelid before picking a juice tetra pack or eating a bag full of air/chips. Eat more food which is straight from the farm." Diwekar suggested consuming Kaanji made from black carrot that helps with our deficiency of B12. B12 is a co-factor in assimilating iron.

'Having put my characters through hell, I had to go there myself'

In the 'Nordic Noir' session, on day one of the Times Litfest Delhi, Icelandic author Hallgrímur Helgason spoke of the trauma of rape, which he experienced as a student in Germany. "Having put my fictional characters through hell, I had to go there myself," he revealed. "My fiction helped me when I was writing about myself."



SCANDINAVIAN FLAVOUR: Kjell Ola Dahl (left) and Hallgrímur Helgason with Kiran Manral at the Nordic Noir session

made me depressed, and I ended up in therapy. "Then I came to India, and it felt as if a huge weight had lifted." Scandinavia is known for its egalitarianism and neither Helgason nor Kjell Ola Dahl have shied away from writing about women characters. "When I'm writing about my female protagonists, I do a lot of research on and try to keep it realistic," said Norwegian Dahl. For policing, he reminds, is a very "masculine" profession. "It's a stretch when you're writing about things you don't know of, but that's a writer's job," explained

Helgason. Yet so convincing was this Icelandic's portrayal of an old lady ('Woman at 1,000 Degrees', based on a real person) that a woman entered a bookshop in Germany and asked for another work by 'Frau Helgason!' So, what is it about Nordic Noir that has left people the world over in its grip? "They are good stories, good crime fiction," said Dahl. "And there's a loyalty to how people function in society — it's about common people." And Iceland, says Helgason, is surfing on the Nordic Noir wave. "We only have one homicide every year, so Icelandic crime fiction is very heroic!" he added, in jest. "Because when you live in a country where death is invisible, you're drawn to reading and writing about it."

Why children need to cultivate the reading habit

Moderator **Jaya Bhattacharjee**, while setting the tone of the session on making reading a habit among children, introduced four speakers to the audience, where kids too were in attendance. Educator **Sonya Philip** was of the opinion that any good educator should know how to inculcate this habit and it was key to the education of children. The session was presented by Room to Read. Philip said storytelling is also important as it helps in improving vocabulary. The others who spoke at the session were Shailendra Sharma and Saktibrata Sen.

Crimefighters who write on crime

Whether it's grisly tales of crime from the UK or the badlands of Bihar, the long arm of the law speaks none. That's what the novels penned by **Clare Mackintosh**, author of several whodunnits, highlight. As do real life incidents that Amit Lodha, currently posted with the BSF, has written in a book on his experiences as a police officer in Bihar. At the Times Litfest on Saturday, the session, 'Cop Tales: Inside a Criminal's Mind', provided an insight into how a cop's mind works, whether that's after spending 12 years in the British police force, like Mackintosh, or serving in the IPS for 14 years, like Lodha. As Mackintosh said, while her stories are fictional, the inspiration comes from real life.



For Lodha, writing the book Bihar Diaries came easy since he just dipped into his case files. Lodha said he had never thought of writing fiction as his own life experiences had been so fascinating. From the petty criminal "Horlicks" he once arrested to nabbing other dreaded gangsters, he had a non-fiction repertoire that provided enough fodder for the book.