

Oxford Bookstore opens entries for Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize 2022

25th October 2021, Kolkata: The Oxford Bookstore today announced the seventh edition of Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize with honoured jury members Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Shobhaa De, Kunal Basu, Priti Paul and Dr. Alka Pande.

Instituted in March 2015 by Oxford Bookstore, the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize year after year has gained traction as the most prestigious award in the book cover design industry. It is a first of its kind award for brilliance in book design, an endeavour by the iconic bookstore to recognize and encourage the extraordinary work of illustrators, designers and publishers across India. The prize appreciates the importance of the balance of graphics and narrative, particularly in our increasingly visual age, believing that a book cover interprets and illustrates the ensuing text in crucial ways that contribute to its ultimate success.

The seventh edition jury for Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize comprises of prominent author, Indian columnist and novelist, **Shobhaa De**, well known Indian politician, writer and Member of Parliament, **Shashi Tharoor**, renowned author, **Kunal Basu**, Director, Apeejay Surrendra Group and the creative force behind Oxford Bookstores, **Priti Paul** and author, academician and well know museum curator **Dr. Alka Pande**. The jury members are all pre-eminent in their particular fields and share a love and commitment to books and reading. The varied interests of these eminent jurors will help create a rich and diverse perspective for the selection.

Announcing the seventh edition of the Prize Jury Member and Director Apeejay Surrendra Group, Priti Paul said *“Now in its 7th year, the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize - and its eminent Jury members - appreciate more than ever before, that the fine art of book cover design is a tricky one to master. In contemporary publishing, the cover is subjected to the same intense scrutiny as any consumer product. It must satisfy the demands of publisher, author and designer – not to mention the book buyer, a tall order, indeed.*

In today’s fast evolving world, designers and illustrators play a vital role in helping a book become emblematic and create recall. Additionally, now more than ever before, they face the challenge of creating covers for a virtual world of readers, as well as for readers who frequent brick and mortar bookstores, two different disciplines. This is a growing area of artistic endeavour, and one which will play a vital role in the success of books now and into the future We at Oxford Bookstores, have, over the years, been pushing our boundaries to encourage excellence in book cover design, and the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize is, we believe a significant step in that direction.”

Chair of Jury , Dr. Alka Pande said *“The Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize is a stellar initiative created by a unique Book Store. The Prize is a significant tool in enriching the creative process of making a book. Book cover designers are artists who create an alter world of expressions and interpretations in the form of book jackets. Book covers are now defining books, making them tangible on the shelves. They give a visual narrative of what transpires inside. Awards such as the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize inspire so many to be more and do more.”*

Under the guidance of Ms. Priti Paul, Director, Apeejay Surrendra Group, Oxford Bookstores has been pushing all boundaries to encourage the publishing industry and celebrate the business of books. Standout cover design is an

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integral part of the success of a book, designers and illustrators play a pivotal role in helping a book become emblematic and create recall.

Every year the Oxford Bookstore announces the award's shortlisted and winner at Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival and Jaipur BookMark of Jaipur Literature Festival respectively.

Covers of titles by designers of Indian origin and published between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 are invited to apply for the seventh edition of Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize. **Entries are welcome till 15th November 2021.**

In its first year, Bena Sareen, was awarded the prize for the book, "Talking of Justice" by late author, Leila Seth, published by Aleph. The following year designer Pinaki De was declared winner for the book "Kalkatta" authored by Kunal Basu, published by Picador India. The third Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize was awarded to Maithili Doshi Aphale for the book "Himalaya" authored by Ruskin Bond and Namita Gokhale, published by Speaking Tiger. In the fourth year the prize was awarded to Bonita Vaz Shimray for the book "Remnants of a Separation" by Aanchal Malhotra published by HarperCollins. The fifth edition prize was handed over to Sneha Pamneja for "Tiffin", published by Roli Books. Graphic Designer Gunjan Ahlawat was awarded the prestigious award in the sixth edition for the book "Gun Island" by Amitav Ghosh, published by Hamish Hamilton, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

ABOUT OXFORD BOOKSTORE

Established in 1921, Oxford Bookstore is the best equipped 'base-camp' for journeys of the mind offering its patrons the widest range of outstanding titles and consistently courteous and informed service for close to a century. Today, with stores in major metros, India's first of its kind tea boutique, Cha Bar, India's only bookstore to curate multiple literary festivals like Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsav and Hindi Sahitya Utsav, Oxford Bookstore offers booklovers access to the very best in publishing enhanced by a variety of events that heralds books, visual & performing arts and celebrate scripts. Oxford Bookstore measures its success by the smiles on millions of happy readers that the brand has served over the last nearly 100 years. There are a few treats as sumptuous as a visit to Oxford Bookstore in India. Each time you walk into our iconic store in Kolkata where the brand started in 1921, its old world charm leaves you enchanted and desiring for more. Our fleet of 'happy to help' knowledgeable booksellers and conversant hosts work round the clock to bring to our vendees world class reading experience. Be it through our books or our fine teas we abide by the brand's motto – Much more than a bookstore – at every Bookstore.

INTRODUCING THE JURY PANEL

Shobhaa De is an Author, Indian columnist and novelist. De is best known for her depiction of socialites and sex in her works of fiction, for which she has come to be known as the "Jackie Collins of India". She began a career in journalism in 1970, during the course of which she founded and edited three magazines—*Stardust*, *Society*, and *Celebrity*. *Stardust* magazine, published by Mumbai-based Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., was started by Nari Hira in 1971 and became popular under the editorship of Shobhaa De. In the 1980s, she contributed to the Sunday magazine section of *The Times of India*. At present, she is a freelance writer and columnist for several newspapers and magazines.

Shobhaa De runs four weekly columns in mainstream newspapers, including *The Times of India* and *Asian Age*. She has been the writer of several popular soaps on television, including India's second daily serial, *Swabhimaan* (first is *Shanti*). De writes Detour, a fortnightly column for The Week. She is the brand ambassador of Dehradun Literature Festival.

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Shashi Tharoor is an Indian politician, writer and a former career international diplomat who currently serves as Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, since 2009. Mr Tharoor heads as Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and All India Professionals Congress. During the Congress-led UPA Government rule (2004-2014), he served as Minister of State for External Affairs (2009–2010) and Minister of Human Resource Development (2012–2014). Tharoor is an acclaimed writer, having authored 18 bestselling works of fiction and non-fiction since 1981, which revolves on rich India history, myriad culture, film, politics, society, foreign policy, and multifarious themes. He has also authored innumerable columns and articles in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *TIME*, *Newsweek*, and *The Times of India*. was an esteemed contributing editor for *Newsweek International* for two years. From 2010 to 2012, he wrote a column in *The Asian Age*, *Deccan Chronicle* and in *Mail Today* until his appointment as Minister, in 2012. Shashi Tharoor also writes an internationally syndicated monthly column for *Project Syndicate*. His contribution to the literary world is immeasurable.

Kunal Basu is a famed Indian author of English fiction who has written five novels – *The Opium Clerk* (2001), *The Miniaturist* (2003), *Racists* (2006), *The Yellow Emperor's Cure* (2011) *Kalkatta* (2015) and *Sarojini's Mother* (2020). The title story of his only collection of short stories, *The Japanese Wife* (2008), was adapted into a film by the Indian filmmaker Aparna Sen. Basu has also written four Bengali novels – *Rabi-Shankar* (2016), *Bairer Dorja* (2017), *Tejoswini O Shabnam* (2018) and *Angel* (2020).

Priti Paul is the Director, Apeejay Surrendra Group. Educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University and Architectural Association School of Architecture, UK, Royal Institute of British Architects, Priti Paul has been at the forefront of taking over the business of the century-old Apeejay Surrendra Group since 1990. Since then, she has spearheaded the real estate division of the Group which included expansion of the Oxford Bookstore in India and abroad. Ms Paul launched India's first gallery on new media art – Apeejay Media Gallery and set up the London Office of Apeejay Shipping Limited. She is also the ingenious strength behind the iconic Oxford Bookstore, the best equipped bivouac for journeys of the mind established in 1921. She has made Oxford into India's favourite bookstore, taking the brand to unprecedented heights across India. The Apeejay Anand Children's Library run for the benefit of street children was a manifestation of Ms Paul's advocacy on education for economically disadvantaged children.

Dr. Alka Pande is an art historian who taught Indian Arts and Aesthetics at Punjab University for more than ten years. Her major fields of interest are gender identity and sexuality, and traditional arts. Dr. Pande has been passionately involved with the world of art for more than three decades. She has been responsible for curating several significant and perceptive exhibitions in India and abroad. Dr. Pande is the artistic director of photography biennale Habitat Photosphere, a photography award instituted by India Habitat Centre. Her curatorial projects include the exhibitions, *The Tree from the Seed* at the Henie-Onstad Art Centre, Oslo; *India Awakens Under the Banyan Tree* at the Essl Museum, Vienna; and *The Kama Sutra: Spirituality and Eroticism in Indian Art* at the Pinacothèque, Paris, to name a few. Dr Pande was closely involved with South Central Zone Cultural Centre's unique initiative project titled *Documentation of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Resources*. In the capacity of a curator, Dr Pande held an exhibition titled *Tat Tvam Asi (That Thou Art)* at IGNCA to showcase traditional arts, creative photographs, video installations which were produced during a month-long art camp at the Simhastha Kumbh, Ujjain (2016). Dr Pande is responsible for setting-up museums: Bihar Museum, Divine Gesture, Udaipur City Palace, Kanha Museum, Singinawa. She has extensively written and edited books on Indian aesthetics, culture and photography.

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