

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS AND COMMUNICATION SECTION

H.E. Mr Alexandre Ziegler, Ambassador of France to India launched Ms Priti Paul's unique primer *ABC Desi* on Friday, 18th August 2017

New Delhi, 19th August 2017

H.E. Mr Alexandre Ziegler, Ambassador of France to India, is pleased to present *ABC Desi*, an alphabet primer with a distinct Indian flavor, conceived by Ms Priti Paul, who wears the many hats of entrepreneur, bookstore owner, writer, architect, and designer.

Drawing on Ms. Paul's years of research, experience of readings to her own children and her rooted Indian values, ***ABC Desi* is an unusual alphabet book: it is a revival of the almost lost Indian craft of billboard painting.** In this art form deeply connected with popular Indian culture, billboard artists skillfully recreate scenes, objects and portraiture from photographs and magazines, bringing the magic of Bollywood to the masses on the street. *ABC Desi* is an attempt to create curiosity and appreciation for this unique art form in both children and adults across the globe.

H.E. Mr Alexandre Ziegler, Ambassador of France to India, released *ABC Desi* in the presence of its author, Priti Paul on 18th of August at his residence.

On this occasion, accomplished Indian classical and contemporary dancer Anita Ratnam presented a special dance recital interpreting the book.

Ms Priti Paul is a longstanding friend of France, being involved since many years and on many levels with France and French culture. In the field of books, **Ms. Paul's own company, Oxford Bookstore in Delhi and Calcutta, were the first branches to open French Book Corners to the readership** Ms. Paul also supports many cooperation projects between India and France, driven by a very intense sense of the importance of culture and education.

India and France are both highly concerned by children's rights, including the right to better education, and believe it goes hand in hand with innovation and creativity – two keywords of Bonjour India, the Indo-French platform to be launched this November all across the country. **Thus, during the event, the book will be on sale, with Tara, a Delhi-based NGO dedicated to children's welfare, sharing the benefits.**

Warmly commending the book, Ambassador Alexandre Ziegler said, *"Ms. Priti Paul often inscribes Indo-French partnership at the core of many of her initiatives and action. It is thus a great pleasure and honour for me to release this book, which, being an inspired learning tool for children, embodies*

the importance of literacy for the youngest. The captivating artwork makes it a draw for both children and adults.”

Talking about the launch, Ms. Priti Paul said, “I am truly honoured to have my book *ABC Desi* launched by H.E. Mr. Alexandre Ziegler. *ABC Desi* has emerged from my deep love for India, its incredible art forms and of course my love for children. *ABC Desi* is my endeavor to conceptualize and give form to an alphabet book with a difference - one where English alphabets and Indian imagery converge.”

NOTE TO EDITORS



ABC Desi

ABC Desi, a typical ABC book is given a charming new life through the revival of the almost lost Indian craft of billboard painting, an art form that was, until recently, deeply connected with popular Indian culture, but now battles extinction with the onslaught of new media technologies. Today, as we revel in a uniquely “Make in India” moment, *ABC Desi* is a perfect English alphabet book to teach little Indian children the English alphabet using a uniquely Indian vocabulary and set of images and style of rendering. Created from Priti’s many years of research, experience of reading to her three boys and her rooted Indian values, *ABC Desi* a whimsical yet precious object for the lover of all things Indian and beautiful. The imperfection and flawed beauty of hand painted creations juxtaposed with bold typography and clean contemporary layouts, makes *ABC Desi* a unique learning tool for children.

Priti Paul

Educated at the prestigious 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 post her father’s assassination in 1990. Since then, she has spearheaded the real estate division of the Group which included expanding the business of the Oxford Bookstore in India and abroad, launched India’s first gallery on new media art – Apeejay Media Gallery, conceptualized, designed and launched a range of projects in India and abroad and set up the London Office of Apeejay Shipping Limited.

Priti Paul is also the creative force behind the iconic Oxford Bookstore, the best equipped 'base-camp' for journeys of the mind established in 1919. In 1995, on the Heritage store's platinum anniversary, the iconic store was refashioned as Oxford Bookstore - Gallery. Since then, she has made Oxford into India’s favourite bookstore, taking the Brand to unprecedented heights and across India.

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