



# IASLIC NEWSLETTER

Indian Association for Special  
Libraries and Information Centres



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## Quote of the Month

*"Books give a soul to the universe,  
wings to the mind, flight to the  
imagination, and life to everything."*

— Plato

## Appeal to Readers

News from different regions / states are solicited from IASLIC members for inclusion in the newsletter. Send such news to the Editor.

Email: [chatterjeeamitabha@yahoo.co.in](mailto:chatterjeeamitabha@yahoo.co.in)

## CONFERENCES / SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

### National

#### **INFLIBNET Training Programmes**

INFLIBNET Centre, Gandhinagar, will organize the following workshops/conferences/ training programmes during October - December 2020: Creation and Management of Digital Library using Open Source Software (October 5 - 10); National iETD-2020 Conference (October 1 - 21); SOUL 2.0 Installation and Operations (November 2 - 7); Advanced Training Programme on Shodhganga and Plagiarism Issues (November 25 - 27); Advanced Training Programme on Bibliometrics and Research Output Analysis (December 7 - 12); Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (December 14 - 19).

### International

#### **Conference on Information Management**

The 3rd International Conference on 'Information Management and Management Science' (IMMS 2020) will be held in London during August 7 - 9, 2020. For details visit: <http://www.imms.net/>

#### **Conference on Big Data**

The 4th International Conference on 'Big Data and Internet of Things' (BDIOT2020) will be held in Singapore during August 22 - 24, 2020. For details visit: <http://www.bdiot.org/>

#### **Conference on Knowledge Management**

The 2nd International Conference on 'Knowledge and Information Management' (ICKIM) will be held in Chengdu, China, during September 25 - 27, 2020. For details visit: <http://ickim.org/>

#### **Conference on Knowledge Discovery**

The 9th International Conference on 'Knowledge Discovery' (ICKD 2020) will be held in City University of Macau, China, during November 21 - 23, 2020. For details visit: <http://www.ickd.org/>

#### **Conference on Information and Society**

The 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Publishing Studies will be held at Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain, on July 2, 2021. The theme of the conference is 'Information, Medium & Society'. For details visit: <https://informationmediumsociety.com/2021-conference/call-for-papers>

#### **Conference on Innovation in Libraries**

The 6th Online International Conference on 'Digital Learning and Innovation in Libraries' (ICDLIL-2020) is being organized by Modern Rohini Education Society, New Delhi, in collaboration with Association of Indian Law Libraries, on August 16, 2020. For details visit: <https://icdlil2020.webs.com/>

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

### LU Library's Tagore Connection

Tagore Library at Lucknow University — one of the oldest central research libraries in the country — turned 79 recently. On the eve of its foundation day, *The Times of India* found out how the iconic building was named after polymath and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. According to documents, the foundation of the library was laid in 1937 and the facility that was inaugurated in 1941 was initially known as 'Lucknow University Library'. After Independence, however, the building took its name after Gurudev to celebrate his bond with the varsity. The first LU journal published in 1922 recorded Tagore's visit to the campus. It stated that on March 6 that year, he delivered a lecture on the vision of India's history at Bennett Hall (now Malaviya Hall). Not only did Tagore's lectures echo on the university campus, some of his famous plays were also staged by students. 'The Waterfall' (originally Muktheadhara), written in 1922 and widely acclaimed as one of Tagore's finest dramatic works, was staged by the English Department at Bennett Hall on January 25 that year. The symbolic play has been interpreted as his nationalist critique of colonial exploitation. Whenever the poet, musician and artist visited the LU campus, he stayed with English professor N K Siddhanta. He had a deep connect with Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (Economics). In fact, Mukerji penned a couple of books on him too. 'Tagore: A Study' and 'Sur-o-Sangeet', the latter in Bengali, shed spotlight on their correspondence on music and art. Tagore also shared a special bond with LU sociology professor Radhakamal Mukerjee. In November-December 1925, Tagore was on the campus to attend the All Indian Music Conference and listened to Pandit Srikrishna Narayan Ratanjankar, a distinguished scholar and teacher of Hindustani classical music who later served as the principal of Marris Music College (Now Bhatkhande Music Institute). The visit finds a mention in the thesis of Professor Nupur Sen of LU's education department. 'A critical study of Rabindranath Tagore's contributions to educational thoughts and practices' also mentions that he came to the campus yet again in February-March 1935 and delivered two lectures. The paper states that to perpetuate the memory of Tagore's visits to the campus, a special ceremony was organized to name the library after him. Deputy librarian Jyoti Mishra told *TOI* that the library actually opened in 1921, but was initially housed in the main Canning College building, which now houses the faculty of arts. As the library grew in size and turned home to rare tomes and manuscripts, the need for a separate building was felt. A new library project was chalked out and American landscape architect Walter Burley Griffin — known better for designing Australian capital Canberra — was hired for the job. The foundation stone was laid by then Chancellor Sir Harry Haig on March 4, 1937, and the new building was inaugurated on April 2, 1941, by the then Chancellor Governor Sir M Hallet. For original story visit: <https://timesofindia.>

[indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/at-79-lus-historic-tagore-library-celebrates-memories-of-the-bard/articleshowprint/74466499.cms](https://indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/at-79-lus-historic-tagore-library-celebrates-memories-of-the-bard/articleshowprint/74466499.cms)

### A-G opens own Digitized Library to Public

Attorney General (A-G) of India K K Venugopal has opened up the digitalized version of his antiquarian library for public viewing, right in time to help people constructively spend time during the long days of COVID-19 confinement, says a report by Krishnadas Rajagopal in *The Hindu*. The catalogue on the website — [kkvlibrary.com](http://kkvlibrary.com) — shows rare works dating back to the early 17th century, like the Arabian Nights, travelogues, and Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron*. The 1706 edition of the Arabian Nights introduces itself to the reader as a clutch of stories narrated by the “Sultanness of the Indies to divert the Sultan from the execution of a blood vow he had made to marry a lady every day and have her cut off next morning to avenge himself from the disloyalty of the first Sultanness.” Shri Venugopal told *The Hindu* that there was lot more work to be done. For him the collection has been a labour of love. “I have another 2,000 books which are all prior to 1900 and have not been digitalized. These are very interesting books on a wide variety of issues like slavery in Goa, etc. Presently, about 600-700 books have been digitalised,” Shri Venugopal said on the phone. The website provides a short history of how Shri Venugopal has an eye for the historic and the exotic, especially rare and old books. “The collection is a veritable treasure trove, with publications covering a wide range of topics, from religion, mythology and the Vedas, to Indian art and sculpture, historical battles, the British Empire in India and tales of travels across the world. The literature reveals fascinating and eye-opening facts and information, embellished with striking and eye-catching drawings and illustrations,” the website said. The venture to digitalize the books has come from his “desire to disseminate this wealth of information, for the benefit of those who share his interest in the mysteries and minutiae of the bygone eras.” The website is also an invitation to those who are, as yet, uninitiated, to explore the beauty, splendour and the stark realities of times past. For original report visit: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/attorney-general-kk-venugopal-digitalised-library-open-for-public-viewing/article31168559.ece> 4/6

### Doorstep Library in Lock-down

Amid the continuing lockdown that has confined life within the four walls, Mizoram's largest philanthropic organization found much relevance in the words of French poet and dramatist Victor Hugo: "It is from books that wise people derive consolation in the troubles of life." The Young Mizo Association (YMA) has come up with 'doorstep library' service to put an end to boredom, boost morale and promote the habit of reading, says a PTI story published in *The Times of India*. The 'Kawtkai Library' - offering books from a variety of genres in English and Mizo languages - was rolled out by the Ramhlun South branch of YMA on April 18. Ramhlun South is one of the biggest localities in Aizawl with at

least 1,500 houses. "The idea was conceived soon after the imposition of the lockdown... Our members are reaching out to people at their doorsteps with at least eight categories of books," said B Lalmalasawma, chairman of the library and documentation sub-committee. "The primary purpose was to encourage reading books and effective utilization of free time, apart from boosting the morale of people," he said, adding, "the idea also found resonance with YMA's theme of the year to promote reading and learning". Under this arrangement, a reader can borrow a maximum of four books free of cost for 10 days. Established in 1935, YMA is the largest philanthropic organization in Mizoram with around 4.5 lakh members. YMA Ramhlun South branch secretary Hrathmingthanga said pictures of books are shared on a WhatsApp group of the locality to enable people to make their selection. "We also collect the books from the readers' homes, and social distancing is strictly followed while distributing and collecting books," Hrathmingthanga said. He said the YMA branch was also planning to give away prizes to readers borrowing the most number of books. The Ramhlun branch of YMA started its own public library in 1985 and was recognised by the state government in 1991. The library had a collection of over 1,500 books, Hrathmingthanga said. With a literacy rate of 91.33 per cent, Mizoram is third in the country after Kerala and Lakshadweep, according to the 2011 Census. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/books/features/mizos-find-respite-from-lockdown-blues-in-doorstep-library-service/articleshow/75376137.cms>

### Free Access to e-Books in Lock-down

The Hidco-run New Town Library, in Kolkata, has opened up its digital section for free download of e-books in English and Bengali to help beat lockdown blue, says a report by Snehal Sengupta in *The Telegraph*. Booklovers could log onto [www.newtownlibrary.in](http://www.newtownlibrary.in) and click on "Free E-Books", said an official of the Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation. On offer are the complete collection of Tintin, Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Narayan Debnath's *Batul the Great* and *Handa Bhoda*, among other titles. The New Town Library, which has a tie-up with the National Digital Library, is located on the second and third floors of Nazrul Tirtha. Spread over 6,000sq ft. The library had an online section as well, the official said. An annual membership at the library costs Rs 1,000. But the online collection of around 1,000 titles in Bengali and English can be accessed for free during the lockdown. "Most people are cooped up in their houses. So we thought of giving free access to the online section as reading can be therapeutic," said Debashis Sen, Hidco chairman. Apart from its own e-book collection, the library authorities have also put together a page on several free websites that offer access to e-books. "The idea was to make as many books as possible available to people on a single platform," said Sen. For original report visit: [\[lockdown-new-town-library-opens-up-ebooks/cid/1762989?ref=topic-stories\]\(https://www.telegraphindia.com/calcutta/coronavirus-lockdown-new-town-library-opens-up-ebooks/cid/1762989?ref=topic-stories\)](https://www.telegraphindia.com/calcutta/coronavirus-</a></p>
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### Library App soon for Kerala Book Lovers

The corona virus prevention lockdown did not spare libraries too. But book lovers and regular visitors to libraries in Kerala need not be worried. The State Library Council is planning to deliver books at households to survive the lockdown period and also is developing an app for the purpose, says a report in English edition of *Mathrubhumi*. State level office-bearers of the Council K V Kunjikkannan and P Appukuttan informed that people alienated at households could spend time by reading. They added that the books would be distributed strictly following the guidelines of health department so that virus transmission would not occur. All 6500 libraries under the Council will be part of the corona virus resistant task force. The committee convener will supervise registration of libraries and young volunteers to the task force and will initiate sending of the names and details to the taluk council. Earlier, the Library Council members had come forward to offer help during both flood havocs that devastated the states. Construction of two houses initiated by the Council is progressing in Malappuram. For original report visit: <https://english.mathrubhumi.com/books/books-news/library-council-to-start-home-delivery-of-books-app-to-be-launched-1.4652399>

### Lockdown prompts Book Swapping

The closure of parks, playgrounds and libraries during lockdown has resulted in many elderly citizens and children being driven to their wits' end to keep themselves occupied while forced to remain indoors. The closure of libraries has certainly left the elderly a miffed lot. Being deprived of access to libraries has prompted many in Mangaluru to return to the time-tested system of swapping books with neighbours and friends, says a *The Times of India* report. Even at 93, Erya Sulochana N Rai's voracious appetite for books is not easily sated. A frequent visitor to her neighbourhood library in Mangaluru since 1955, the unprecedented situation has pushed her into nigh unbearable boredom. However, a saviour arrived in the form of her neighbour Preeti D, a homemaker, who having read through the books in her mother's possession, decided to swap what she had with the ones Sulochana Rai did. "I borrow around eight books once a week. This was the first time in my life where I was deprived of anything to read, and I was very fortunate that Preeti took notice of my problems. Her mother and I share a passion for Kannada novels, and when Preeti suggested that the two of us swap books, I was delighted," Sulochana told *TOI*. Preeti's mother, a septuagenarian, was faced with a similar dilemma when the lockdown put an end to her regular visits to the government library. Her daughter's suggestion has now put a new set of books for her to devour, and Preeti is busy expanding this network so that more people can spend the lockdown more meaningfully. Since they are not very well acquainted with technology, accessing and reading eBooks is not a feasible

option for senior citizens. Archana Shivashankar, a bank employee and her 70-year-old mother Jayanthi, a retired government servant, are among those who have benefited from the book-swapping exercise in Mangaluru. Archana said that she is hoping to get in touch with more people, and get her hands on as many books with the lockdown being extended. Ashok B, a retired Reserve Bank of India employee in Bengaluru, is among those not very comfortable with eBooks, and is eagerly awaiting the lifting of the lockdown so he can visit the neighbourhood library and pick up a hardcopy. Deputy Director of City Central Library, Mangaluru, Raghavendra KV said that, on average, around 80 senior citizens visited the library every day prior to the lockdown. "The government will take a call on reopening libraries," said Raghavendra, adding that the Department of Public Libraries had uploaded eBooks on the eSarvajanikaGranthalaya app. "Citizens can also access the eBooks on [www.Karnatakadigitalpubliclibrary.org](http://www.Karnatakadigitalpubliclibrary.org)," he said. Sumangala, who works at Babygudda Government Library in Mangaluru, admitted that senior citizens were among the most frequent visitors to the library. "Most of them prefer to read Kannada novels," she said. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/with-libraries-closed-elderly-opt-for-book-swapping/articleshow/print/75562769.cms>

#### **Residence tuned to Library in Lockdown**

As lockdown-2 continued, people remained locked in the house and offices remained closed. Staying at home, people passed their time by pursuing their skills and hobbies. For the benefit of the villagers, Mukteshwar Prasad Singh, a former head of Mansahi Nawada of Mushahari block, about 15 km from the district headquarters of Muzaffarpur in Bihar, turned his house into a library at this time, says a story by Somnath Satyom available on [www.livehindustan.com](http://www.livehindustan.com) website. He prepared a booklet covering news published in newspapers during last twenty years and made it available to the people. He also collected 2000 articles published in newspapers during the first 15 days of lockdown. Singh said that apart from newspapers, more than one thousand books written by Indian and foreign writers were also available in the library, which included Hind Swaraj, books written by three women friends of Gandhiji and books written by Vinova Bhave, Pandit Nehru, Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia, Atal Bihar Vajpayee, VP Singh, and Chandrasekhar. Singh said that his father was also fond of reading newspapers and he helped him in saving the newspapers from his childhood. Filing of newspapers had slowed down due to his busy schedule, but it now gained momentum due to lockdown, he added. Singh recalled that when he was a student of class VII, he once went to the residence of former Chief Minister Dr. Jagannath Mishra in Patna with his uncle. There four to five youths were busy cutting the newspaper reports. When Jagannath Mishra came there, the youths handed over the newspaper cuttings to him. He asked them to keep the cuttings in the library. When asked, he said that the cuttings could prove

helpful in future. Since then he started collecting newspapers. For original story visit: <https://www.livehindustan.com/bihar/muzaffarpur/story-hindustan-special-library-saved-twenty-years-newspaper-in-lockdown-3163026.html>

#### **Call to British Children to write Mini Books**

Two hundred years ago, the Brontë children (English writers Charlotte, Emily and Anne) stitched together brown paper sugar packets, strips of wallpaper and old writing paper to create postage stamp-sized books for their toy soldiers to read. Today the British Library is calling on the nation's children to follow in their footsteps and write their own small books, which will form part of an online "National Library of Miniature Books for the toy world", says a report in *The Guardian*. Inspired by the library's collection of "miniature gems", which ranges from the 600 miniature volumes in Queen Mary's dolls' house to publisher John Marshall's matchbox-sized Infant's Library, the project is backed by authors and illustrators, including Axel Scheffler and Jacqueline Wilson, each of whom has created their own book for the library. In a series of videos of the authors reading their miniature books, Wilson shares hers about a rabbit called Radish that lives on her desk, while Scheffler's tells a squirrel called Fipsy who is adjusting to life in lockdown. The Gruffalo illustrator also reveals that he often makes tiny dummy books when working, showing a miniature edition of 'The Snail and the Whale' as well as a tiny copy of 'The Gruffalo' he made for his daughter's dolls' house. Other contributors to the British Library's new project include Katherine Rundell and Philip Ardagh. The latter's book, about a boy called Tim Little who has very little time to get to the library, includes a stamped British Library "Miniature Book Loans" form in the front cover. "They've all told me they loved making the books," said the library's Anna Lobbenberg. She said that the tiny books created by the Brontës "provided a kind of literary workshop for the children, allowing them to experiment with different genres and styles and thus to evolve their own extraordinary writing style", while the "playful approach to scale" of Marshall's miniature books from 1800 "allowed his young readers to expand into responsible, wise teachers", taking charge by explaining the world to their toys. "Being able to hold and manipulate tiny versions of ordinary objects is both powerful and delightful for children, helping them to take on new responsibilities and personas," she said, adding that the library hoped the project would help young readers gain confidence by playing the part of authors, illustrators, bookbinders and librarians. For full report visit: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/may/12/british-library-asks-nations-children-to-write-miniature-books-in-lockdown>

#### **Teacher builds Home Library**

It is said that the most beautiful moment of your life is when you meet a scholar. But when it became difficult to meet any scholar in lock down, a primary teacher of Ramia Behar in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh started spending his time with

books written by scholars, says a story available on [www.livehindustan.com](http://www.livehindustan.com) website. The teacher Tarakeshwar Rai, posted in the primary school of Belapurwa village in Ramia Behar block, is a person associated with the world of books, who started buying books for study while working in a private company in Delhi. The collection of books increased with his urge to study more and more. Meanwhile, Tarkeshwar Rai was posted as a teacher in Ramia Behar and he shifted his library from Delhi to Ramia Behar. Presently, there are more than 500 books in his library. As he reads a book, he posts its review on his Facebook wall. Tarakeshwar Rai said that he had kept some books in his school's book bank for the children to read. Books are issued to school children according to their level and interest. When the children return the books to the book bank, they are asked questions on the contents of the book which they have to answer. Rai said that after seeing one of his posts on Facebook, a book lover from Gujarat had donated some books for the children. He said that local people and his colleagues often borrowed books from his library. Many of them, after seeing the poor physical condition of the books, returned the books after getting them bound. Rai said that when the Internet was having sway everywhere, the passion for books and building a library gave a pleasant feeling. A large number of people were also getting attracted to books from Facebook reviews, he added. For original report visit: <https://www.livehindustan.com/uttar-pradesh/lakhimpur-khiri/story-primary-teacher-built-library-at-home-made-strength-of-reading-habit-3174460.html>

### Roadside Library hailed by Netizens

A mini roadside library in Mizoram's capital Aizawl has gone viral on social media, according to an IANS report published in *The Indian Express*. The post was shared by an IFS officer Parveen Kaswan with the caption: "Now this is what every city must copy. #Mizoram's capital #Aizawl has a couple of these tiny roadside libraries. Libraries are the best investment for nation building. Northeast is showing the way." This roadside library encourages reading habits and helps in building community by providing access to exchange free books. The new initiative received appreciation by social media users, with Twitter users flooding the micro-blogging website with their reactions. "Beautiful isn't it?! A few years ago, citizens in Dimapur pulled in resources to open the first public library! I still visit children libraries and get books. I missed out on so many amazing books as a child, now I balance my life with books meant for kids from 4 years till 100!," a Twitterati said. "Indeed, very amazing initiative. Now, I don't want to wait to visit Aizawl as soon as possible," another Twitter user said. For original report visit: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/feb/24/aizawls-free-roadside-library-impresses-netizens-2107878.html>

### CU Digital Collection in Public Domain

In what can be seen as a sign of the times to come, when social distancing may just become the new norm, the University of

Calcutta has placed the entire digital collection of its library online so that physical visits are no longer necessitated and the world at large benefits from it, says a report by Biswanath Ghosh in *The Hindu*. The decision of the University, set up in 1857, has placed in public domain countless articles, journals and dissertations, including issues of *The Calcutta Review* dating back to 1844 and Tagore Law Lectures dating back to 1870. Now anybody, anywhere in the world, can access them any time. "We are living through a time of great uncertainty, owing to the global coronavirus pandemic. To cope with regulations of social distancing and lockdown, our teachers have initiated online teaching. They have also been regularly uploading study materials on the university website. In this spirit of online education, the university has also decided to open up free access to its digital collections. These would be accessible through the university library website, [www.culibrary.ac.in](http://www.culibrary.ac.in)," Vice-Chancellor Sonali Chakravarti Banerjee said in a circular. "There are two major reasons underlying our decision. The first is our responsibility to our students and our faculty, whose education and research have been obstructed by the prohibition on physical access to the library collections. The second is our responsibility, as a public institution, to the citizenry as well as the world at large," Ms. Chakravarti Banerjee said. For full report visit: <https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/calcutta-universitys-digital-collection-goes-online/article31521828.ece>

### Mobile Library in Forest Area

R Subramaniyan, a tribesman of Vazhachal, in Kerala, has been completely taken in by the literary prowess of *Vakkukal*, written by young Malayalam writer E Santhoshkumar, according to a story by K S Sudhi published in *The Hindu*. And it is helping him beat the lockdown blues. On his return from work, Shri Subramaniyan, president of the Vana Samrakshana Samity, the eco-protection council, picks up reading from where he left off the previous day. Back home, his 13-year-old son, Nithin, occasionally bursts into laughter reading *Theevandi Phalithangal*, a collection of jokes. The COVID-19 lockdown has not killed the appetite of the father-son duo for letters, thanks to Akshara Vandi, the library on wheels launched at the Vazhachal Forest Division recently. In one week, the mobile library had completed one round of visit to the 11 tribal hamlets of the Vazhachal area, 78 km from Kochi, and distributed around 750 books. The second round of visit was due in a few days when the readers would be able to exchange the books. The library boasts of a collection of over 3,000 books, said S V Vinod, Divisional Forest Officer, Vazhachal. Shri Subramaniyan was a regular visitor to the library Aksharashree, managed by the department for the population, before the lockdown. While the elders prefer to read novels and short stories, the youth pick up guides and books that help them crack competitive exams, said P Ajikumar, Forest Range Officer, Chappa, who was part of the team that went for the distribution of books. The distribution of books is relatively easy in some hamlets that are lying adjacent to each other. In some cases, the vehicle has to tread through the tough forest terrain to reach the readers. It is a long and tedious travel to some colonies which

are located in the interior areas. Some hamlets are located nearly 60 km away from Vazhachal, a popular ecotourism destination, said Shri Vinod. For original report visit: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/library-on-wheels-keeps-the-spirit-of-reading-alive/article31400531.ece>

### Library for Neo-literates

Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority has set up a library and study centre at 'Aksharam', the headquarters of Literacy Mission at Pettah, says a *The Times of India* report. It is the first library set up by the Literacy Mission for candidates registered in its equivalency programme and their instructors. Education minister C Raveendranath officially inaugurated the library recently. It functions on the first floor of the main building of the office. "The library is another achievement for the Literacy Mission, which has received accolades from across the world for its initiatives," said Raveendranath. As many as 9,525 books were collected for the library. Novels, children's books, and works on alternative education, science, mathematics etc. have been arranged at the library. Literacy Mission director P S Sreekala said that more books would be bought for the library in coming days. The library is also open for other students and general public. A reading space has been arranged at the library and books cannot be taken home. For full report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/now-a-library-for-the-neo-literates/articleshowprint/74325908.cm>

### e-Library Service through Smart City App

In addition to civic conveniences, the Smart City app has been designed to gift knowledge to residents young and old, says a *The Times of India* report from Lucknow. While the e-library section of the app hosts a number of books on various topics for children and teenagers, it also has study materials for CBSE students of Classes X to XII. A National Geography window for youngsters further comprises wildlife quiz and trivia, among other things. For those with a knack for current affairs, the app has a 'Press Reader' section for daily news, besides access to magazines on sports, lifestyle, automobile, aviation, food, fashion and a lot more. According to Lucknow Municipal Corporation officials, the civic body will upload different genre of tomes, including novels by famous authors, to attract bookworms. "We are in contact with a private firm for uploading novels and storybooks. The service will be provided on the app very soon," said Smart City project general manager Fareed Zaidi. The app is available on both Android and iOS platforms. It offers services such as information on public toilets, food joints, parking lots and community halls. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/smart-app-makes-room-for-e-library/articleshowprint/74619973.cms>

### Library at Thiruvananthapuram Technopark

A reading space for book worms among the techies will soon become a reality at Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram. Prathidhwani, a socio-cultural organization of techies, has proposed to start a branch of State Central Library at the IT hub. Prathidhwani has launched a survey to understand the needs of

the readers. The plan is to start a library along the lines of the one functioning at Infopark in Kochi. Dipin Varghese, who was among the people behind the initiative at Infopark and now works at Technopark, said that a meeting was held with Technopark officials and State Central Library authorities and they received positive response from them. "A library in Technopark has been a long-time demand. We had sent a request in this regard to the higher education department and the State Central Library. The library at Kochi was started in association with Ernakulam Public Library a few years ago. The library is open on one day each week. People can select their books of choice online and a library staff brings the books to Infopark. Here, we have planned a library with all infrastructure facilities," said Dipin. For full report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/soon-a-library-for-bookworms-at-technopark/articleshowprint/74308865.cms>

## TECHNOLOGY NEWS

### Facebook unveils Video Calling Platform

Facebook unveiled the Messenger Rooms, a video calling platform, to take on other platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, etc. But now we hear that the social media giant is planning to bring Messenger Rooms to WhatsApp Web. This could prove to be a huge threat to the widely used video-calling platform, Zoom, says a post by Ankita Chakravarti on [www.indiatoday.in](http://www.indiatoday.in) website. Earlier, a report revealed that WhatsApp was working on adding the Messenger Room option in the chat share sheet. As per *WABetaInfo*, the Android beta update showed traces of Messenger Rooms being integrated to WhatsApp, but now the messaging app is working to add Messenger Rooms Shortcut in the 2.2019.6 Web update. In the screenshot shared by *WABetaInfo*, you can easily spot a Messenger Rooms icon in the chat share sheet, right below the Contacts option. If you click on the Messenger Rooms icon on the screen, WhatsApp will ask you if you want to proceed to Messenger to create a room. Once the Room is created on Messenger, the user can send the link to other users to connect. For the unversed, Messenger Rooms is a video calling platform by Facebook which allows users to host group video calls for upto 50 participants. Even if you don't have a Facebook account, you can still join a Messenger Rooms call just by clicking on the link provided by the host. Looking at the proliferation of video calling platforms due to the coronavirus, many tech giants have come up with their own video calling platforms. Google just made the premium Meet, available for free for users with Gmail accounts, and added a host of new features to Google Duo. All this while, Zoom has claimed the top spot despite the security flaws but now there are good alternatives to the app. For instance, Facebook's Messenger Rooms will be much easier to use and it doesn't even require a user to have a Facebook account. This would allow as much as 50 participants to join a call at a time and you wouldn't even have to pay any money to avail the feature. Earlier, WhatsApp increased the group video call limit from four to eight, making it much easier for its users

to socialize during the lockdown. The feature is now officially available to both the iOS and Android users. To get the new feature, the users are required to update their app to the latest version of WhatsApp available on PlayStore and AppStore. For original post visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/news/story/facebook-now-plans-to-bring-messenger-rooms-to-whatsapp-web-should-zoom-be-worried-1676623-2020-05-11>

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Hidden Universe Discovered!

A time for virtual cuddle-ups. The lockdown has opened up a whole new universe of reading resources, audio stories, author podcasts and more, especially for children, says Shweta Sharana in a feature story published in *The Deccan Herald*. “When I was a child, summer holidays were all about reading, visiting bookstores and borrowing books from the library”, she recalls. “Now that I have a daughter of my own, I have transferred my love of books to her and we buy books almost every fortnight. Or at least we used to. When the lockdown took effect in India, we started looking for other ways to get access to reading materials. Book publishers, sellers and libraries from India and the rest of the world have risen to the occasion magnificently by offering various reading resources for free online. Suddenly, my daughter and I discovered a hidden universe out there. Nothing comes close to the thrill of holding a book and reading it, but we did love what we found on the Internet”, she observes.

Children's writer Philip Pullman once said: “Children need art and stories and poems and music as much as they need love and food and fresh air and play.” This especially holds true now as children are part of a world that they simply don't understand anymore. According to Sharana, one of her and her daughter's favourite resources is StoryWeaver, Pratham Books' free digital reading portal. StoryWeaver features innumerable illustrated stories for children, all presented beautifully on the screen and yes, all for free! Children and parents will find that the StoryWeaver reading experience comes the closest to the real thing — swiping the picture book with a swipe, or going back to the earlier page with a click, because your child loves a particular illustration and wants to see it again! Apart from picture books that are presented beautifully for your child's online reading pleasure, StoryWeaver also offers read-along books, bilingual resources, folktales, myths, schools stories and so much more. Do not miss their STEM stories. There are several captivating and wonderful stories built around technology, engineering and math for both primary and advanced readers. StoryWeaver's bilingual resources are simply marvellous and you will find stories in Kannada, Hindi, Marathi and many other languages as well as stories with different reading levels.

One of India's oldest and most-beloved publishing houses, Tulika Books, offers a complete list of its books available online as well as on apps. We particularly love how Tulika has adapted its book 'Let's Catch the Rain' into a fun 'rain game' to

teach children about water conservation. Another Indian publisher of children's books, Karadi Tales, offers 'Katha with Karadi', a vibrant source of stories, free picture books, audio books, bilingual books and activity books. One of our favourite books from Karadi Tales, 'Sadiq Wants to Stitch' by Mamta Nainy, even has a delightful colouring activity accompanying the book.

Chitra Soundar's Farmer Falgu series is my daughter's favourite and we were delighted to see that there is a new Farmer Falgu book on offer — Farmer Falgu Stays at Home!, says Sharana. You can also read Farmer Falgu Goes to the Kumbh Mela on the Katha with Karadi website. The website features stories narrated by Vidya Balan, Usha Uthup and Nandita Das.

If you are looking for books by authors from other countries, you will love Story Line Online, which you can access at <https://www.storylineonline.net/library/>. You have actors and artistes read out books as famous as 'A Bad Case of Stripes' and 'Thank You Mr. Faulkner'. Worldreader is an app that has books from around the world. You will especially like their curated collections — women in tech, moral stories, inspiring poems and much more. You can track your reading level progress and set reading goals with this app. You will also find interesting Young Adult books here.

Epic! is a favourite app among many parents. It is subscription-based, but you can sign up for a free one-month trial. From the 'I Can Read!' series and the Curious George books to comic books and phenomenal children's magazines like Stone Soup, their collection is huge. There are also some superb non-fiction books to dig into. The 'Read to Me' feature reads aloud and highlights every word in the book as it is being narrated. This is a great way for children to learn how to read, improve their vocabulary and learn how to use the language.

Google's BOLO app has Indian stories for primary school children. You can track your reading progress and children will have a lot of fun learning a new language in an engaging manner. Katha India, a non-profit organization that works on education and literacy, publishes many children's picture books. Katha's app, KathaKhazana, offers games, stories, animation and narration in different Indian languages, on topics as diverse as equality, diversity and inclusion. One of our favourite Katha book 'Abba's Day', is about a stay-at-home dad and it is available in Hindi on this app! The FunDooDa Books app has Indian folk tales, stories in Indian languages and activity books. GetLitt is another great app that curates children's literature from India. It is a subscription based app, but you will find all your favourite Indian authors and publishers here.

Podcasts and audiobooks are also great ways to connect with stories and literature. HeyCloudy is an app that offers audio stories for children. Audio stories include folk tales, stories from mythology, fairy tales and stories for preschoolers. Circle Round is a podcast that curates folk tales from around the world, all narrated by celebrities.

Geeta Dharmarajan, a writer, educator and the Director of Katha Books, wishes that children and parents share these resources freely with other families. She says, “If you can share it with

somebody who doesn't have access to these books, then it truly becomes a sharing of quality." She also believes that parents are the best resources and should share stories from their childhood. "I think storytelling is a very natural talent that we all have," she says. "If you just let yourself go and are not self-conscious, you can tell a story. Technology is for now, but when sharing happens, it is for life. This is the best investment you can make for your child", she adds.

Is not Sharana's story a revealing one?

[*Note: This interesting feature story was published in The Deccan Herald. It is certainly informative and revealing one for the parents who had to face difficulty in meeting the demands of their children during the lockdown. As the story can be of help to them in non-lockdown period as well, it is being reproduced here with due acknowledgement to the authoress and the newspaper concerned. For original story visit: <https://www.deccanherald.com/sunday-herald/sunday-herald-books/a-time-for-virtual-cuddle-ups-837919.html>]*

## PERSONALIA

**Smt. Suchismita Majumder**, Librarian, Sir Gurudas Mahavidyalaya, Kolkata, has been awarded Ph D degree in Library and Information Science by University of Calcutta for her thesis 'Assessing Paper Quality in Terms of Preservation in Libraries'. Dr. Majumder pursued her research work under joint supervision of Prof. Swapna Banerjee, Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calcutta, and Prof. Sampa Chakrabarti, Professor, Department of Applied Chemistry, University of Calcutta.

## OBITUARY

**Dr. Bimal Chattopadhyay**, President, Bengal Library Association (BLA), Kolkata, passed away on May 9, 2020, after a brief illness. Born in 1942 at Faridpur, now in Bangladesh, Dr. Chattopadhyay, obtained his MA degree in Modern History; Diploma in Librarianship and Ph D degree in the field Bengali folk songs and folk culture, from University of Calcutta. He served as Librarian of All India Radio, Kolkata, for a long time. He also served as transmission executive and Programme Executive of AIR for some time. At BLA, he served as joint secretary, editor of its monthly organ *Granthagar*, vice-president and lastly as its president (since 2017). He also served as Assistant Secretary of Bangio Sahitya Parishad and was also associated with various other social and cultural organizations, including Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan. He compiled a guidebook of audition in AIR and Doordarshan and subject index to *Calcutta Review*; edited several Bengali periodicals and also authored several books. He was an approved translator of National Book Trust and approved lyricist of AIR and Doordarshan. He was a life member of IASLIC and served as Election Officer of IASLIC during last triennial election (2020-2022) of the association. IASLIC deeply mourns his death.

**Prof. B V Rajashekhar**, former Professor, Department of Library & Information Science, Karnataka University, Dharwad, passed away on May 18, 2020. He was 78, and is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter. Prof. Rajashekhar held an M Sc Degree in Geology and a master's degree in Library Science. He began his career as an Assistant Librarian at Shivaji University, Kolhapur, where he also had teaching assignments. In 1972, he joined the Department of Library and Information Science, Karnataka University, Dharwad, and served there in different capacities till his retirement in 2003. Prof. Rajashekhar was a passionate teacher and was very popular among the students because of his lively teaching style. IASLIC deeply mourns his death.

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