

Programme

New Delhi World Book Fair



THE FUTURE OF

BOOKS

An Indo-French exchange on the book industry

DELHI 14 - 15 January, 2026

14 January 2026

International Event's Corner - Hall 4:

12.00 PM - Official Opening Ceremony

Opening Remarks by **Dr Thierry Mathou**, Ambassador of France to India and **Shri Yuvraj Malik**, Director of the National Book Trust, India.

Launch of the special issue of *All About Book Publishing* dedicated to The Future of Books.

12:15 PM - Books as Public Good: Inside France's Public Policies

Keynote address by **Guillaume Husson**, President of French Booksellers' Association

An inside look at France's public policies for books and the role of cultural frameworks in supporting diversity, accessibility and long-term sustainability in the book ecosystem.

French Pavillon - Hall 4 :

2.30 PM: Across Languages and Cultures: Foreign Literature in the Indian Market **Riti Jagorie, Pranav Johri & Renuka Chatterjee** in conversation with **Sanchit Toor**

As translated literature finds gradual acceptance among readers in India, this session examines what enables certain foreign-language books, whether translated into English or Indian languages, to resonate with Indian readers. Who is the audience for translated literature in India today, and how is it shaped by its local context? The panel will also examine the role of critics, prizes, festivals, and booksellers in mediating these works for Indian audiences.

3.30 PM: Shelf Life: The Realities of Modern Bookselling

Leonard Fernandes, Raman Shestra & Subir Dey in conversation with **Swati Daftuar**

This panel brings together independent booksellers to share the realities of sustaining bookshops today — from navigating tight margins and complex supply chains to responding to changing reader habits in a digital-first world. Through candid conversation, the session will highlight the decisions, adaptations, and emotional labour involved in keeping physical spaces for books alive, and reflect on what continues to make independent bookstores vital cultural anchors in their communities.

4.50 PM: Selling Stories Twice: The New Economics of Book-to-Screen

Maÿlis Vautrin, Delphine Clot & Arcopol Chaudhuri in conversation with **Kulpreet Yadav**

This panel examines the changing power equations between publishing and film/streaming industries, and how adaptations influence readership, backlist sales, and the cultural afterlife of books. The panel will also consider how the rise of OTT platforms has altered what kinds of stories are adapted, and how publishers can think more strategically about screen rights in this evolving landscape, as it looks at adaptation as a creative, commercial, and rights-driven process shaped by publishers, authors, producers, screenwriters, and platforms.

5.50 PM : **Panel, Pages and Platforms: The Future of Comics**

Josselin Azorin-Lara, Jatin Varma & Tanvi Shivam in conversation with **Angshuman Chakraborty**

Comics, manga, graphic novels and webtoons are reshaping reading habits, expanding audiences, and emerging as powerful stories that travel across formats and platforms. As film, television, animation and games intersect and overlap more and more with the comics medium, how will this evolve and change comics themselves? This panel discusses the present and future of this still-niche format and its outside effect on culture and pop culture today.

15 January 2026

French Pavillon - Hall 4:

12.00 PM: **Independent Publishing as Practice: Risk, Innovation, Sustainability**

Gaëlle Bohé, Marie-Anne Lacoma & Arpita Das in conversation with **Aakriti Mandhwani**

Independent publishers are often at the forefront of experimentation -- championing new formats, emerging sub-genres, and untested voices. This session explores how the indies navigate the balance between creative risk and commercial sustainability, examining the ways in which distribution challenges, visibility constraints, and rising costs shape editorial decisions. The discussion will also highlight the adaptive strategies and innovative models that independent publishers are developing to sustain ambition and build resilient publishing practices.

2.30 PM: **Beyond the Printed Page: Publishing in a Digital-First World**

Yogesh Dashrath & Karthika VK in conversation with **Manjula Narayan**

As reading expands beyond paper, publishing is being reshaped by formats that privilege listening, swiping, and serial consumption. This panel examines the real economics of digital publishing in India: the costs of production across languages, viable pricing and subscription models, royalty structures, and the challenges of discoverability in crowded digital marketplaces. It also considers how emerging technologies, including AI, may influence workflows, translation, narration, illustration, and rights management, thereby raising urgent questions about labour, authorship, and long-term sustainability.

3.30 PM: **From Reviews to Rewards: How Books Gain Visibility Today**

Violaine Faucon, Aatrayee Ghosh, Manasi Subramaniam & Jean-Paul Hirsch in conversation with **Somak Ghosal**

As traditional book coverage shrinks and new forms of attention emerge, how do books find readers today? This session examines the evolving media ecosystem — from reviews and festivals to social media, platforms, and literary prizes — and asks how visibility is created and sustained. Do prizes still drive sales and readership, or are they now just one of many competing signals?

Biographies of the panelists



For the past fifteen years, **Guillaume Husson** has served as the Director of the *Syndicat de la Librairie Française* (SLF), the union representing France's independent booksellers—the country's primary network for book sales. Under his leadership, the SLF has brought together 750 members, ranging from small independent bookshops to bookstore chains, collectively accounting for over 80% of employment and turnover in the sector. He serves as a key public voice for independent booksellers, maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders across the book ecosystem both in France and at the European level.



Riti Jagoorie is a major figure in the Indian publishing landscape, recently reaching a historic career milestone. Having been with Hachette India since its founding in 2008, she was officially named the Managing Director in June 2025, succeeding the retiring Thomas Abraham. This appointment makes her the first woman to lead one of India's major multinational publishing houses. Previously serving as Vice President of Product and Marketing, she is credited with spearheading successful campaigns for bestsellers like Indra Nooyi's *My Life in Full* and *The Silent Patient*.



Pranav Johri is the fourth generation publisher of one of India's oldest and largest publishing houses, Rajpal and Sons. The house founded in 1912 in Lahore by his grandfather Shri Rajpal Malhotra, a former journalist turned publisher, became known through the publication, *Wisdom of the Vedas* (1920) considered by Oxford University as the definitive text of Indian philosophy. It became the first book published in India to be used as a textbook at Oxford University. Pranav is himself a great reader and lover of French literature, which he publishes in Indian languages.



Renuka Chatterjee started out as a journalist with the Times of India in the late '80s, and helped launch *The Saturday Times*, the country's first colour weekend supplement. She switched tracks to enter publishing in 1992 as Associate Editor with Penguin Books, and publishing has been her home ever since. After Penguin, she has been editor-in-chief of HarperCollins India and subsequently, Roli Books and Westland Ltd. In 2013 she started her own literary agency, *The Boxwallah*, for promoting quality fiction and non-fiction. She is currently Vice-President, Publishing, with Speaking Tiger Publishing.



Sanchit Toor is a multilingual researcher-translator and the Head of Projects at the Ashoka Centre for Translation. His interests range from early modern literature to modern literary and cultural publics, especially the movement of languages, ideas, texts, and lives. Formerly a Young India Fellow and a Sahapedia-UNESCO Fellow, Sanchit has degrees in literature, liberal arts, and neuroscience. He has also been a Visiting Faculty of Haryanvi and Brajbhasha languages at Ashoka University and has edited the multilingual volume, *Kabir: Walking with the Word* (AfterWord, 2024).



Leonard Fernandes moved from enterprise software into the world of books in 2006, beginning with DogearsEtc, an early peer-to-peer bookselling platform. He soon co-founded CinnamonTeal Publishing, bringing retail self-publishing to India and earning the British Council Creative Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2010. He later co-created Publishing Next and its Industry Awards, now key fixtures in India's publishing landscape. His passion for bookselling led to *The Dogears Bookshop* (2016) in Goa and, more recently, the Goa Book Fair (2023). A founding member of the Independent Bookshops Association of India, he also mentors new publishing professionals through various teaching roles.



Raman Shresta is a bookseller, publisher, inn-keeper and events curator at Rachna Books, Gangtok. Started by his family in 1979, he grew Rachna Books into a space for creativity and literary culture in Sikkim. Under Raman's watch, Rachna Books has been an integral part of modern Sikkim's cultural identity particularly for the youth.



Subir Dey serves as the Curator-at-Large for Kunzum Bookstores in Delhi-NCR, where he is credited with transforming the traditional retail space into a vibrant literary hub. Working closely with founder Ajay Jain, Dey oversees the meticulous curation of titles across genres—specializing in rare editions, graphic novels, and classics—to move away from "algorithm-based" selling. Beyond curation, he is a key organizer of Kunzum's high-profile literary events and also manages the Kunzum Book Clubs. His work focuses on "evangelizing a return to reading" by creating a culture of deep engagement between authors and bibliophiles.



Swati Daftuar is an independent journalist, editor, and literary consultant. She is Consulting Editor at Speaking Tiger, commissioning fiction, translations, and idea-driven non-fiction. Previously, she served as Executive Editor at HarperCollins India and Deputy Editor at *The Hindu*, and she founded Delhi's community-led Annual Book & Bake Sale. She also hosts *The Bookshop Inc.* Book Clubs and writes on books and culture for *Scroll* and *The Hindu*. Her first novel is set to be published by HarperCollins India in 2026.



Mäylis Vauterin and **Delphine Clot** are the co-founders of Matriochkas, a Paris-based creative bureau bridging the worlds of books and films. Drawing on Vauterin's extensive experience in publishing and film rights at leading houses such as Éditions Stock, Grasset, and Viviane Hamy, and Clot's two decades in the film industry at MK2 Group, Celluloid Dreams, and UBBA, the duo combines their expertise to bring powerful stories from page to screen. Together, they support authors, agents, and producers in transforming literary works into impactful audiovisual creations.



Arcopol Chaudhuri is a Rights & Media Executive Editor at HarperCollins Publishers India. He is a publishing professional with over thirteen years of experience, eleven of which are at HarperCollins India. His core areas of work are book-to-screen adaptations, audio publishing, and foreign rights sales. Prior to joining HarperCollins, Arcopol was a Commissioning Editor at FINGERPRINT! Publishing.



Kulpreet Yadav, a graduate of the Naval Officers' Academy, served in the Indian Coast Guard for two decades, during which he successfully commanded three ships. Retiring as a Commandant in 2014, he transitioned into writing, authoring numerous books across diverse genres, including military history, espionage, and true crime. His military history books, *The Battle of Rezang La* (Penguin, 2021) and *The Battle of Haji Pir* (Penguin, 2024), have garnered widespread recognition. Beyond writing, Kulpreet is also an actor, filmmaker, and entrepreneur.



to bring powerful, socially engaged French-speaking stories to audiences worldwide.

Josselin Azorin-Lara is an author, screenwriter and webtoon producer. Based in India from 2013 to 2020, he co-founded a comic book studio called MINTE, employing local artists and produced a few successes including the top seller series “Frigiel” (Soleil Editions). In 2020, Josselin was one of the first French webtoon authors published by Naver France, with his series Samourawaii. A member of the ADAGP comic book commission, he contributed to the recognition of digital private copying rights for webtoon authors. From 2022 to 2025, Josselin joined Ankama Group to set up the production of webtoons. In 2025, he founded Akogée Studio, an independent webtoon production and transmedia IP development company whose goal is



Jatin Varma is a leading voice in India's pop culture space, an entrepreneur, creator-economy mentor and architect of India's fandom ecosystem. He founded Comic Con India and led its evolution from a comics convention into India's largest pop-culture experiential platform spanning comics, gaming, cosplay and storytelling. Beyond events, he invests his time and vision into mentoring storytellers, building creative infrastructure and enabling platforms where fan-driven narratives can flourish. In 2025, he transitioned into an advisory role at Comic Con India to focus on scaling impact across the culture-economy.



Tanvi Shivam is a visual communication specialist and creative professional who has made a distinct mark in the Indian publishing industry through her expertise in marketing design and brand identity. She currently serves as the Marketing Designer at Simon & Schuster India, where she is responsible for crafting the visual language of book campaigns, digital assets, and promotional materials for some of the country's biggest bestsellers. Her work focuses on the intersection of storytelling and design, ensuring that literary works resonate with modern audiences across social media and retail platforms.



Angshuman Chakraborty spent two decades in international education publishing, with roles starting spanning editorial, systems and data, operations, and product and portfolio management, and managing an editorial-centred business unit. In 2024, he quit his job as Director of Publishing to pursue his dream of reading, talking about, and publishing comics in India. Angshuman has been reading comics since he could read, and has so many loves that, in 2018, he started For the Love of Comics on YouTube to wax lyrical about everything that captures his heart. He has a couple of degrees in Literature and Creative Writing somewhere, buried under piles of comics.



Gaëlle Bohé is the Director of Fontaine O Livres, a Paris-based organization supporting independent publishers. A former journalist specializing in sustainability and a literary programmer for the Paris Book Festival (*Festival du Livre de Paris*) and the Reading Nights (*Les Nuits de la Lecture*), she created The Book Fresk (*La Fresque du Livre*), a workshop on the environmental challenges of publishing, and founded the Prix Hors Concours, a literary award for independent publishers that recently launched its international edition.



Marie-Anne Lacombe began her career in publishing as a publicist in the editorial group Editis. She then moved to independent publishing houses, where she gained experience and learned a wide range of skills, from business relations with booksellers and marketing to partnerships to festival and publication strategy. She started at Editions Les Allusifs, a publishing house based in Montreal. She then spent eight years in business development and promotion at Editions Gallmeister, followed by seven years at La Manufacture de livres. In 2020, the publisher Juliette Ponce offered to join forces and create a new publishing house: Editions Dalva. They work together and promote women writers since then.



Arpita Das is Founder-Publisher of the independent publishing house Yoda Press and Editor of the South Asia list at Melbourne University Publishing. She is also Associate Professor of Writing at Ashoka University. Das writes a regular column on Indian publishing for the New York-based Publishing Perspectives



Aakriti Mandhwani is associate professor of English in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi NCR, India. She is the author of *Everyday Reading: Middlebrow Magazines and Book Publishing in Post-Independence India* (UMass Press, 2024); *Everyday Reading: Hindi Middlebrow and the North Indian Middle Class* (Speaking Tiger, 2024). She is co-editor (with Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay and Anwesa Maity) of *Indian Genre Fiction: Pasts and Future Histories* (Routledge, 2018).



Yogesh Dashrath is a book lover and the current Publishing Manager for Storyside India, a pioneering independent publisher 100% dedicated to audiobooks founded in 2002 and proudly part of the Storytel Group. An IIM-Lucknow graduate, he has over 20 years of experience, including roles at HCL Technologies and ING Bank in Europe. A dedicated bibliophile, he successfully pitched and launched Storytel's audiobook concept in the Indian market.



Karthika V.K. is a powerhouse in Indian publishing, widely regarded as one of the most influential editors and publishers in the country. Since 2016, she has served as the Publisher at Westland Books, where she navigated the house through its major transition from Amazon ownership to its current home at Pratilipi. Over her three-decade career, which includes transformative stints at Penguin Books and HarperCollins India, she has been instrumental in discovering and championing literary icons like Aravind Adiga and Amish Tripathi. In 2025, she continues to lead Westland's diverse imprints focusing on bold political non-fiction and high-quality translations. Her reputation is built on her "author-first" approach and her unique ability to balance commercial blockbusters with rigorous, award-winning literary works



Manjula Narayan is a distinguished journalist and the National Books Editor at the *Hindustan Times*, where she has spent over a decade shaping the literary discourse in India. She is the host of the popular weekly podcast *Books and Authors*, where she has interviewed hundreds of global and Indian writers, including Nobel laureates like Amartya Sen. In late 2025, she curated her highly anticipated "Top 10 Reads of the Year," highlighting a surge in memoirs and works exploring the intersection of caste and the Indian internet. Beyond her editorial work, she is a frequent jury member for prestigious awards like the Crossword Book Awards and a regular speaker



Violaine Faucon has been working in publishing since 2005, first in the editorial department before specializing in the acquisition and licensing of French and international fiction rights at Éditions de l'Olivier. In 2018 she founded the French Literary Agency Trames with three partners. As publishing specialists with different backgrounds and experiences, they wanted to bring together, within a single structure, complementary activities to provide close support for contemporary literary creation. They represent French authors in literature, children books and essays, and we work with French publishing houses, French Festivals and Literary Prizes



Aatreyee Ghosh is a dynamic figure in the Indian literary and arts management space, recognized for her work in literary festival curation and book marketing. Since 2022, she has served as the Marketing and Publicity Manager at Westland Books, where she plays a key role in launching diverse titles under imprints like Context and Tranquebar. Previously, she was the Creative Manager at Apeejay Oxford Bookstores, where she curated high-profile cultural events and served as the Festival Manager for the Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob. In 2022, she was selected as a fellow for the British Council's International Publishing Fellowship. Her expertise lies in bridging the gap between authors and readers through innovative experiential marketing and large-scale literary programming.



Manasi Subramaniam is a publishing leader and cultural strategist working across literature, international rights and cultural policy. Until December 2025, she was Editor-in-Chief and Vice-President at Penguin Random House India, where she led the literary publishing programme and built a globally influential catalogue of writers from South Asia. Over the course of her tenure, books she published won the Booker Prize, International Booker Prize, Pulitzer Prize and JCB Prize, among others. Her editorial work is known for combining literary ambition with political acuity, particularly in contexts shaped by censorship, dissent and democratic pressure. Her work now sits at the intersection of publishing, cultural diplomacy and international advocacy, with a focus on translation, cross-border exchanges and freedom of expression.



Over the past 27 years, **Jean-Paul Hirsch** has been working at the Paris-based P.O.L., a publishing house known for its high standards of literature, which is part of the Gallimard publishing group. He is in charge of relations with bookstores and distributors as commercial director and with journalists as press-attaché. He is also in charge of e-publications and P.O.L.'s presence on social media. P.O.L publishes 50 books per year, mostly French literature (Marie Darieussecq, Emmanuel Carrère, Marguerite Duras), as well as a number of translated books and books on cinema.



About the French Institute in India

The French Institute in India (Institut Français en Inde) is the educational, scientific, and cultural department of the Embassy of France in India. It facilitates academic and scientific exchanges between higher institutes of learning and research, enables student mobility, and promotes the French language as well as artistic and cultural dialogue. Cooperation between India and France takes place through several sectors: Arts and Culture, Books and Ideas, French Language and Education, Study in France programme, Academic Partnerships, Science and Technology, as well as Innovation and Multimedia.

About France Livre

France Livre is a non-profit association supported by the French Ministry of Culture, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and 350 member publishing houses. Its mission is to strengthen the international reach of French publishing by supporting export development, rights sales and acquisitions, and global professional partnerships.

France Livre promotes French publishing worldwide by showcasing it at major book fairs, analysing global markets, and connecting international industry professionals through seminars, fellowships, and B2B exchanges. They also promote French titles through the platform booksfromfrance.com.

About Publishing Next

Established in 2011, Publishing Next is an independent forum dedicated to the Indian book trade. It champions bibliodiversity and regional languages through strategic conferences, industry awards, and mentorship initiatives. The organization fosters innovation and global partnerships by connecting diverse professionals through expert-led workshops and B2B networking. Since 2014, it has hosted the Publishing Next Industry Awards, India's premier honors recognizing innovation and leadership across the sector.