

Reading: A refuge for everyone



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Ranjan K Baruah 23 April 2022 22180 views

Books have been our friends for years. We are aware that readers are always leaders as they inspire others and lead others in different fields. Books have long embodied the human capacity to conjure up worlds, both real and imagined, giving voice to the diversity of human experience. Books are the storehouse of knowledge and documented experiences which enable us to learn and move ahead in life. Books have been a source of hope and it enhances dialogue amongst people.

Like reading and other activities related to books, storytelling is an incredibly effective tool when it comes to educating younger generations. There is no doubt that books are vital vehicles to access, transmit and promote education, science, culture, and information worldwide. To promote reading and encourage copyright, 23rd April is observed as World Book and Copyright Day (WBCD). At WBCD, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) calls on its partners to share the message that books are a force to address contemporary challenges, to understand political and economic realities, and to combat inequalities and misinformation. In 2022, the Mexican city of Guadalajara is taking up the mantle of World Book Capital, with a year-long programme that focuses on the role of books and reading in triggering social change, combating violence, and building a culture of peace.

23rd April marks the departure of three great authors of universal literature, Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and this is also the reason to observe the day. The day is a celebration to promote the enjoyment of books and reading. Each year, on April 23, celebrations take place all over the world to recognize the scope of books - a link between the past and the future, a bridge between generations and across cultures.

Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO in her message on the occasion said that “at a time when digital technology is changing the face of the publishing industry, we advocate for the fair remuneration of authors and the protection of cultural diversity. We support the work of publishers through undertakings such as partnerships with the International Authors Forum, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and the International Publishers Association.” On World Book and Copyright Day, she called upon all of UNESCO’s partners to share the message that books are a force to address contemporary challenges, to understand political and economic realities, and to combat inequalities and misinformation.

By championing books and copyright, UNESCO stands up for creativity, diversity and equal access to knowledge, with the work across the board – from the Creative Cities of Literature network to promoting literacy and mobile learning and advancing Open Access to scientific knowledge and educational resources. WBCD has become a platform to rally together millions of people all around the world. We should not forget that books have the ability to entertain and to teach. Books are a means of accessing the deepest places in our minds.

Let us also observe the day and promote reading culture amongst people. We have challenges as digital materials are more available than printed books. One may read from the hard copy of the soft version but it is important that we read and spread the knowledge for a sustainable tomorrow.

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BY RANJAN K BARUAH

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