

World Book Fair pays homage to Bhupen Hazarika, Indira Goswami



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Two of the greatest cultural titans of Assam were remembered in the same venue, on Monday. The biennial New Delhi World Book Fair saw the release of two new books on the life and times of Bhupen Hazarika and Indira Goswami (popularly known as Mamoni Raisom Goswami; whose demise last year resulted in intense outpouring of grief not only in Assam but across the subcontinent. The event, with massive participation from book lovers and the Assamese community of Delhi is being deemed as a success.

After the demise of the two legends, many writers, scholars and journalists came up with works intended as a critical appraisals of their works. However, very little work was done in English, and probably that made Spectrum Publications to come up with the idea of two new books by people who personally knew Hazarika and Goswami and who are well-known faces in the literary and cultural sphere of Assam. The conference room of Hall No 6 of World Book Fair where the book-launching took place, was the culmination point of that aspiring venture.

Bhupen Da: The Bard of Brahmaputra, launched as a hardcover edition for now with a paperback edition coming soon, is a project successfully completed within just a month. The book was launched by Shanta Sharabjit Singh, Vice Chairman of Sangeet Natak Academy, an institution having fond memories of Hazarika, with the maestro being a past chairman. Sing recollected the memories of her association with Hazarika and said that the sheer gathering at his funeral is indeed a reflection of the sheer genius he was. The author duo, Hazarika's close associate Kamal Katakya and Devajit Bhuyan dedicated their joint venture to all the fans of the legend. Kamal Katakya being a close acquaintance of Hazarika, was moved to a large extent during the course of the event and said that it is nearly impossible to confine Hazarika to the bounds of a single book.

On the other hand, Indira Goswami: Pain and Passion, an anthology having contributions from literary giants like UR Anantha Murthy and Amitav Ghosh was released by Dr Mukunda Kam Sharma, President of Assam Association. Uddipana Goswami, literary editor of Seven Sisters' Post has edited the compilation. Dr Sharma provided a brief sketch of the life and achievements of Mamoni Raisom Goswami in his speech, saying that she was not just a novelist, but also an academician, a person with a sense of social awareness and was quite considerate regarding the Assamese students residing in Delhi. "It is a token of gratitude for Mamoni Baideu on my behalf", said editor Uddipana Goswami, who was personally quite close to the litterateur.

The new releases are expected to receive positive responses not only in Delhi but also in the home state and abroad. The books, rich with an insider's perspective are expected to be successful in capturing the imagination of people. The event ended on a jubilant note with Kamal Katakya strumming the chords of Sagar Sangamot and Manuhe Manuhor Babe on his guitar with everyone lending their vocals, providing a perfect homage to the legacy of the maestro.

Report By:**Bikram Bora, New Delhi**

editor

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