



Takes more than just writing for books to turn bestseller: Sorabh Pant

NEW DELHI, JAN 10 P/-

There's more than just writing that goes into making any book a bestseller, believes popular comedian and author Sorabh Pant, who is out with his third novel, a science fiction and fantasy. Pant's latest novel 'Pawan? The Flying Accountant', is about a character who is an accountant by day and a demigod by night. But he rather care about the Goods and Service Tax (GST) than his superpowers? Even less so about life himself. Pant started off as an author with 'Wednesday Soul? The Afterlife with Sunglasses' in 2011 and followed with 'Under Delhi' in 2015. While the former was a pure fantasy, the latter had a more linear plot with a more realistic story about a girl fighting rapists in Delhi. Talking about his writing process, Pant said during his first book it struck to him as an author one doesn't realise that there is a certain 'marketing aspect' of any novel and back then (2011), he had no idea how to do it. "So that (marketing) is something that has definitely evolved, where I have understood that a book doesn't become a bestseller (on its own), you have to make it one, push it, especially if you are writing something which is unique from everything else," he told PTI.

'Pawan', he said, combines both the reality and fantasy elements of his previous books to create a character who is believable despite 'crazy amounts' of fantasy around him. "He (the main character) is a super human who is invincible but also mortal, and there are species of him who are assigned to protect India. The story combines fantasy, sci-fi, mythology and all this in the backdrop of a battle between India and China set in the Northeast," revealed Pant, who wrote for television before venturing into stand-up comedy. Pant also noted that there was very little work available in India in the fantasy and sci-fi genre. "If you think, only a few names, like Samit Basu, pop up. But there is a lot of mythological fantasy which is slightly different from what I am attempting to do." "The reason we have so less work in fantasy and sci-fi is that our mythology is so rich. There are so many stories from there to take and we are so fascinated by them because those stories are the archetype for so many others (new stories) that are being used in say, Bollywood," he said. The novel, he said, is targeted primarily at people in the 15-24 age group? the group that "consumes" his comedy -- but is pretty much for everyone. Published by Rupa, the 281 page-book is now available for Rs 295. (PTI)

David Krumholtz regrets working with Woody Allen

LOS ANGELES, JAN 10 P/-

Actor David Krumholtz has said he regrets working with director Woody Allen on his film 'Wonder Wheel'. Woody Allen has been accused of sexually abusing his daughter Dylan Farrow. Her brother Roman Farrow also filed a lawsuit against Harvey Weinstein's alleged sexual misconducts. "I deeply regret working with Woody Allen on Wonder Wheel. It's one of my most heartbreaking mistakes," Krumholtz tweeted. (PTI)

Amway celebrates Louis Braille Day in collaboration with RKMBBA



KOLKATA, JAN 10 P/- Amway India, the country's largest Direct Selling FMCG company celebrated 209th birth anniversary of Louis Braille with its 15 NGO partners for ninth consecutive year by organizing myriad initiatives. In Narendrapur, Amway organized a six-day workshop in collaboration with the Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy starting from 4th January 2018. The main highlight of the workshop was the creation of a magnificent piece of artwork on a huge canvas measuring 3.5 x 7.8 m by the visually impaired students. The artwork was based on the theme 'Kids Guerilla for Peace', which is a decade old initiative celebrated around the world to spread the message of peace and coexistence. The mural will be exhibited at Hiroshima, Japan on 8th August, 2018 on the occasion of Hiroshima Day. Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy is the only Blind School in the

world to be participating in this celebration of world peace with this artwork showcasing world peace and coexistence.

Asit Poddar, an acclaimed painter, flagged off the workshop while visually impaired students followed him by creating a huge mural using various tactile materials. The workshop also witnessed an active participation of Amway direct sellers and employees who whilst being blindfolded created different art forms on the canvas. The mural has been shared in the social media for creating awareness among people about the efficacy of visually impaired students. Chandra Chakraborty, Regional Manager, East, Amway India unveiled the Canvas in presence of dignitaries and students. Biswajit Ghosh (Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy), Swami Sarvapremnanda (Monk in charge, Ramkrishna Mission, Blind Boys Academy), Chandra Shekhar Acharya (Eminent

Artist), Asit Poddar (Eminent Artist) were also present on the occasion.

The celebration of Braille Day also included an inter-school Braille Reading Writing competition at the premises of Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy. Three schools namely Light House for the Blind, Calcutta Blind School and Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy participated in the contest. Nikita Mardi from Light House for the Blind, Rajib Das from Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy and Milan Adhikari from Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy were declared 3rd, 2nd and the winner of the competition. Chandra Chakraborty, Regional Manager, East, Amway India said, "We have been working tirelessly towards the welfare of the visually impaired with a firm belief that education is the key to the future that create opportunities transcending

physical limitations. We hope that our support will inspire the students of Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy to excel in different aspects of life and showcase their talent in different forums." "I wholeheartedly thank Amway India for encouraging us to undertake this workshop where the employees and direct sellers participated enthusiastically with our students and teachers to create the mural. This engagement truly embodies the spirit of coexistence that ran as the leitmotif throughout our workshop," commented Biswajit Ghosh, Principal, Ramakrishna Mission, Louis Braille invented the Braille system to enable visually impaired people to read and write. World Braille Day is celebrated annually on January 4, the birthday of Louis Braille, to recognize his contributions in helping visually impaired people to remain part of mainstream society by reading and writing as a normal person. (EOIC)

CREATIVE WORLD

Play relives story of Naga Queen Ursula Bower

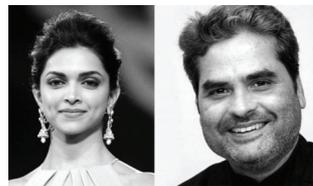
NEW DELHI, JAN 10 P/-

A play revisits the incredible story of anthropology enthusiast Ursula Graham Bower, who lived among the Zeme Nagas in the Northeast, stood with them against the Japanese forces during World War II and went on to attain a goddess-like status. 'Ursula: Queen of the Jungle' by Chris Eldon Lee saw a remarkable solo performance by Joanna Purslow, who played more than 10 characters including Bowers daughter Catriona Child and Naga revolutionary Rani Gaidinliu who took on the British. The 90-minute play was enacted in the national capital this Monday at the India Habitat Centre.

Bower, the aunt of veteran journalist Mark Tully, landed in Laisong village in Assam in 1939. A native Naga named Namkia went on to become her interpreter and guide. Namkia addresses Bower as Saipui or female warrior. She became the favourite of the villagers with her personality and also with her occasional doctor-like service. Thanks to her picnic basket of medicines.

When the Japanese forces advanced towards India in 1944, she led the Armys V Force, a group of scouts comprising local youths, and carried out ambushes. Bower also found her life partner during the turmoil. She married young British intelligence officer Lieutenant Colonel Tim Betts. After the war ended, she and her husband settled in Scotland. Bower died in 1988. According to Child, Lee made a remarkable effort to bring the story of her mother on stage. The play was first written for a Shrewsbury school. Purslow comes up with a spirited performance. At one moment, she is doing a Namkia, the next second she is an American journalist and the very next a British officer fighting against the Japanese. She says playing the part of Namkia was the toughest. The play was also staged at Laisong village in Dima Hasao district of Assam on December 30. (PTI)

Looking forward to work with Deepika: Vishal Bhardwaj



MUMBAI, JAN 10 P/- Filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj said he is looking forward to work with Deepika Padukone in his next directorial venture. The 'Haider' director has stepped in to direct Irrfan and Deepika in his next, which was earlier supposed to be helmed by Honey Trehan. Bhardwaj has stepped in the director's shoes following creative differences with Trehan. When asked about it, the director told reporters, "I had written the script a couple of years back, and now I am directing it, and I am totally looking forward to working with Deepika (Padukone). I have loved the work she has done, and she is so beautiful, the camera loves her."

Bhardwaj said he had previously worked with Irrfan in 'Maqbool' and cannot wait to work with him again. "With Irrfan (Khan), I am doing a full feature film after a very long time. After 'Maqbool', I have worked with him briefly in 'Saat Khoon Maar' and 'Haider'. So I am quite excited that I am getting to do a full film with Irrfan, where he is playing a protagonist," he added. He was speaking at an event, last night. (PTI)

Butterfly Parks to turn 'eco-monitors' in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 10 P/-

A string of butterfly parks, providing natural habitat for beautiful flying insects that is getting endangers, will soon play as 'eco-monitors' in Kerala, if everything goes as planned. The state-run Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) has drawn up an ambitious programme to create a number of butterfly gardens/parks in selected schools and other significant spots in the state. The proposed parks would be toxic-free spaces as no chemicals, pesticides or insecticides would be used as growth promoting agents of plants or to make the flowers

bloom. Only plants grown under bio-environments would be planted in the parks and no toxic substance would be used to attack butterflies, whose number had dwindled drastically in the southern state, a KFRI official said.

The pollution of the environment could be assessed according to the presence of butterflies, which come and thrive at the proposed parks. A discussion is going on with the Department of Education and Kerala Tourism to set up such a string of parks, KFRI Director, S Pradeep Kumar said. "We have

already set up 40 such parks in selected schools in Thrissur district. Discussions are going on now to create similar parks in more educational institutions across the state," he told PTI. The objective of setting up butterfly parks was not only to provide a natural environment for the beautiful flying insects but also to use as 'environment-monitors', he said. "We can measure the pollution level of the area based on the presence of butterflies there. The larger presence of butterflies, one of the most delicate creatures of the nature, will indicate the health of the environment one is living in," he said. The KFRI recently set

up a similar a butterfly park in the premises of Kanakakunnu Palace in the heart of the city as part of the ongoing 'Vasantholsavam' the annual flower show. "Talks are going on with the Tourism Department to sign a MoU to make this park a permanent facility. This also is an experiment to know whether butterflies will thrive in the heart of the bustling city," he said. At present, KFRI has three butterfly gardens - one in its main campus at Peechi, another in the campus of the Teak Museum in Nilambur and also at the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation in Kalpetta in Wayanad district. (PTI)

Meet the artist who 'nails' & frames his artworks

NEW DELHI, JAN 10 P/-

Dusted in muted blues, yellows and pinks, the staccato, precise lines on canvas can be mistaken for wood carving from a distance, but Shekhar Joshi uses neither a chisel nor a brush. The Uttarakhand-based artist uses his own nails as a tool for his art, including portraits of legends, architectural wonders like the Qutub Minar and more abstract portrayals such as 'Mother and child in space' and 'Blue love and anger'. "I have devoted myself to this nail art and been doing this for the last 25 years or so. I wanted to create a unique visual vocabulary on the canvas, so I chose this form of expression," said the 56-year-old. The Almorah-born artist, who also paints and sketches in the conventional style, said he has now nearly abandoned the brush for his nails. "Eighty-five per cent of my work is now nail art, but I also paint in oil and acrylic. I now want to fully devote myself to this crazy art form." Joshi, a professor of visual art in the Nainital-based Kumaun University, has travelled to various parts of the world and 'nailed', as he puts it, foreign landscapes and landmarks. "Among Indian monuments, I have done Red Fort and Qutub Minar, and in Canada I sat in front of the iconic CN Tower to capture it in this style. In 1992, I visited Seoul as part of a global fellowship of the Korea



Foundation, and adapted the art form of that country into my own later," Joshi told PTI. A collection of 56 of his works made in the last two years are on display as part of a solo exhibition at Delhi's All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. The exhibition ends tomorrow.

"The theme for the exhibition is 'see our motherland' and I have tried to span the prehistoric to the contemporary era. So viewers can see the nail art version of the iconic dancing girl of Harappa, sunrise landscape, Kashi Nath shrine scenery, as also abstract themes and human emotions such as love and anger," he said. Explaining the painstaking process behind his artworks, Joshi said he uses a "small padding coin" held near his nails, first creating an embossed surface, and then filling it with colours, all natural. On an

average, each canvas takes about two to three hours of concentrated work. His works appear like bas-relief art with his signature 'Shekhar' seemingly scratched on the surface. The artist has also authored several books, including 'Tribal Arts', 'Art and Craft of Uttarakhand' and 'Art and Communication'. He gifted the late president A P J Abdul Kalam a nail portrait and has also done a similar portrait of Mahatma Gandhi. "I now want to do a series on monuments and heritage buildings of India, old landmarks like colonial-era stations and schools, colleges and hospitals, architectural wonders, iconic worship places and famed institutions," he said. Asked how much he feels he has accomplished as a practitioner of this unique art, he said with a smile, "I have just scratched the surface. (PTI)

Classical concerts still a huge crowd-puller: Amjad Ali Khan

KOLKATA, JAN 10 P/-

Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan has said music shows on TV can never take away the charm of live concerts. People should listen to all kinds of music? be it rock, pop or ghazals, the legendary musician asserted. "Despite multiple music shows on TV, one still comes across a packed auditorium at a classical concert. This is a healthy sign. People should make it a point to listen to different genres," the legendary musician told PTI on Tuesday on the sidelines of the Behala Classical Festival in Kolkata. For any kind of music, the base remains the seven notes (saat sur). These notes can connect people across the world, he said. Asked if he has witnessed any change in the audience profile at his concerts over the past few decades, he said, "Yes, there has been (a change



in profile) and it is a very natural phenomenon." Recalling his first performance in the city in 1959 at the prestigious Dover Lane Music Conference, the eminent sarod artist said, "Those who love classical music always attend such concerts, 50 years back and now." Khan, who received the Lifetime award 'Sarvotam Samman' at the Behala Classical festival, said he was happy to learn that this year, the fest has been dedicated to Pandit Ravi Shankar. He also expressed regret for not being able to take part in this year's the Dover Lane Music Conference this year, later this month, as I will be away in America during that time," he said. (PTI)