



PRESS RELEASE

This year, the calendar of international exhibitions and fairs will be opened by Kolkata, an enormous city located in the Ganges Delta, often called the "cultural heart" of India. It's here that the 44th International Kolkata Book Fair will be taking place from the 29th of January to the 9th of February, with Russia as the "Theme Country", as Indians put it. In other words, Russian literature and culture will be the central theme of what is considered Asia's largest book fair.

Spread across a stadium-sized space, the fair consists of a number of small buildings, in which there will be exhibits by publishers from various countries. The Russian pavilion will be one of the largest, and will be decorated on the outside by teachers from the Moscow Polytechnic (The V.A. Favorsky Institute of Graphics and Book Art): Ekaterina Golovanova, Yelena Nabokova, Maria Kondratieva and Eugene Podkolziny, who will be trying to make the pavilion recognisable and bright, as well as fun and playful. Inside, a 300 metres sq. space will be filled with literary exhibits, including around 1000 books, a hall for presentations and conversations with authors with a large plasma screen, and separate exhibits by Indian publishers, who have published translations from Russian. Two large artistic exhibitions will draw visitors' attention to the illustrations of Alexander Melikhov for "A Voyage Beyond the Three Seas", Tver merchant Afanasy Nikitin's recounting of how he opened trade routes to India, and the best graphic work of the VKHUTEMAS, now the The Institute of Graphics and Art of the Book named after V. Favorsky. The movement of people through the pavilion has been designed to allow everyone to see as much as possible in their time at the Kolkata International Book Fair, which is one of the most well-visited in the world, with visitor numbers going into the millions. Of course, as long-time friends of India, the Russian pavilion will be a hard one for visitors to miss during their visit.

The fair's official opening ceremony will be conducted with the help of General Minister of the State of West Bengal **Mamata Banerjee**, Deputy Head of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communication **Vladimir Grigoriev**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for the Russian Federation in the Republic of India **Nikolai Kudashev**, Consul General for the Russian Federation in Kolkata **Aleksei Idamkin**, two-time "Big Book" award winner and one-time "Yasnaya Polyana" award-winner **Eugene Vodolazkin**, Director of the Institute of World Literature and Russian Academy of Sciences Associate **Vadim Polonsky**, and Executive Director of the Institute for Literary Translation **Eugene Reznichenko**. The Institute for Literary Translation in coordination with the commission of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communication are the organisers of the exhibits and general programme of the Russian pavilion.

READ RUSSIA

The Russian Pavilion has an absolutely packed programme. The stage will be full of writers, whose books have recently come out in translations into Hindi, Bengali and Marathi, — Eugene Vodolazkin, Andrei Gelasimov, Alisa Ganieva, Petr Aleshkovsky, critic Galina Yuzefovich, and children's authors Anna Goncharova and Natalya Volkova. All book presentations will be given with Indian translators from Russian, Russicists and Indian publishers.

Children's literature will be receiving some special attention. A detailed exhibit will offer children's books for all ages, published by Russian publishing houses. There will also be a couple of books discussed that have been brought out in Hindi and Bengali translation by publishers "Raduga" ("Rainbow") and "Progress" — a tribute to the history of long-lasting cultural links between the Soviet Union and India. Particular attention should be paid to the 37th International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY), which will be taking place in Moscow in September 2020, and the presentation of the First Moscow International Book Fair for Children's Books, which will be opening its doors in 2021. Anna Goncharova and Natalya Volkova will be leading masterclasses on their books with young readers.

The A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature will be responsible for presenting some of the most foundational and educational modern Russian literary criticism there is. In the fair's central conference hall, Russian Academy of Science Correspondent Vadim Polonsky will be reading his lecture "A thirst for Apocalyptic Whirlwinds and Creating a New World: Russian Literature of the 20th Century from the Silver Age to Soviet Aesthetics." In the Russian pavilion, there will be a comprehensive presentation of new literary publications from the A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature. Modern Russian literature will not be missing out on its fair share either. In Kolkata's largest bookshop, writer Eugene Vodolazkin will be reading his lecture "The modern Russian novel from the perspective of a writer and philologist", while Galina Yuzefovich will be discussing the most exciting new arrivals in the last year. The world of Russian literature will not be constricted to within the walls of the Russian pavilion: writers will be giving lectures at both the National Library of India and Amity University.

To celebrate 75 years of Victory in the Second World War, the publishing house "Book Russia" with the support of the Institute for Literary Translation have prepared an improved translation and republication of Mikhail Sholokhov's novel "They Fought for the Their Country", which will be presented alongside fragments from Sergei Bondarchuk's film of the same name.

Set up via the initiative of, and with the support of the Institute for Literary Translation, a number of roundtables will be dedicated to the problems of publication and the encouragement of translating Russian literature in India. Russian poetry, in translation into various Indian languages, will be read at a dedicated Russian poetry evening.

A demonstrative lesson of Russian for Beginners will be led by Elena Belikhina, teacher at the A.S. Pushkin Institute for the Russian Language. She will be working at the fair every day, showing visitors to the Russian pavilion how best to learn Russian online, including a number of the Institute's new techniques. Those who already speak Russian can test their knowledge at a special rehearsal of the Total Dictation, the text for which in 2020 will be one written by writer Andrei Gelasimov, who will read it personally.

The sciences will not be left untouched either. Olga Starykh, Director of the Training Centre for the Study of Rail Transport, will be giving a presentation of new publications by the Centre for Indian partners in the rail transport industry, discussing new high-speed railways in Russia.

The winners of the quiz, "What do we know about Russia?" will be given valuable literary prizes, and on the last day of the fair, there will be an award ceremony in the Russian Pavilion for the winners of the 4th international children's drawing competition, "Russia is my love".

At the end of the fair, an exhibit will be given in honour of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of India.