



In collaboration with



M P Government
Department of Culture

42 SESSIONS

24 SPEAKERS



6 COUNTRIES

AGES 4-14

WHERE BOOKS COME ALIVE



10-11 October 2026 | Bharat Bhavan | 11 am – 4.30 pm

Dear friend,

It is the thrill that makes us take the festival to cities away from home. The thrill of moving out of our comfort zone. The thrill of anticipation. The thrill of staking out a beautiful venue in a beautiful city.

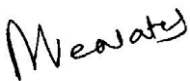
Bhopal is not new (we were here seven years ago) but it remains an adventure for us choosing between the many fantastic venues it is dotted with. Bharat Bhavan was Bookaroo's home in 2019 and it is home this time around too. Then, as today, the festival would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Department of Culture, MP Government

We have many people to thank for this. It was a pleasure meeting with Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, additional chief secretary, government of Madhya Pradesh. He immediately understood the ethos of Bookaroo and said yes to having the festival in Bharat Bhavan. Shri N.P. Namdeo, director, Directorate of Culture, government of Madhya Pradesh, made sure that it was a smooth ride. And, Shri Prem Shankar Shukla who threw open the doors of Bharat Bhavan for us.

Back in 2019, the people of Bhopal welcomed Bookaroo with a warmth that left lasting memories. We hope that it happens again. This year's programme has a line-up of speakers that promises to light up Bharat Bhavan.

On the other side, there is Alpenliebe JustJelly, which has stood steadfastly with the festival. We have new friends along with the old. PETA India joins Puffin and a host of embassies, arts councils, publishers who helped get this magnificent bunch of writers, illustrators and storytellers together.

We certainly hope that you will enjoy the sessions as much as we did putting them together.



Venkatesh



Swati



Kahani Tree

बीज का कमाल by Teji Grover

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 8-10

क्या होता है जब एक लड़का गलती से एक बीज निगल जाता है? क्या वह पेड़ में बदल जाता है या कुछ और... जानिये तेजी ग्रोवर से.

Supported by **Eklavya**

The Roar Within by Vranda Rathi

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 6-8

A mysterious newcomer, a stormy twist, and a journey into the unknown. Join little Leo as he discovers that the answers he is searching for may have been inside him all along. Will he find his true roar?

Kissa Ya Kahani? by Shiv Narayan Gaur

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 12-14

किस्सा क्या होता है और कहानी से कैसे अलग है? आइए, शिवनारायण जी के साथ किस्सों की दुनिया में झाँकें। बारह सौ की बाटी और अन्य किस्से से कुछ किस्से पढ़ें और मिलकर उन पर बातें करें।

Supported by **Eklavya**

PETA Point by Team PETA

Come, chat, share and discover little ways to be kind and compassionate to animals with the team from PETA.

Sponsored by **PETA India**

Raise Your Voice to the Skies! by Tansy Troy

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: ALL

Come meet the crew - a brave treeshrew, clever cat snake, fierce saltie croc, shy civet cat, lovestruck Nico P and lively long-tailed macaque! Sing, dance and march with us all the way to Sansad Bhavan!

Auditorium

Kungfu Aunty vs The Filth Empire by **Shweta Taneja**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 10–12

Ready for the Trash Battle? Join eco-warriors Kabir, Lila and their glitchy cleaning robot Kungfu Aunty as they take on despot Trash Rajah and his garbage monsters in a filthy fight to save Pretty City.

Let's Write a Play! by **Laremy Lee**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 12–14

What makes a scene come alive? Join playwright Laremy Lee, dream up characters, stir up some drama, write your own scene and bring it to life on stage!

Warli Whirl by **Mamta Nainy**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 8–10

Step into Jivya Soma Mashe's world of Warli through stories, games and art activities with Mamta. Look closely, think like an art detective and see how art can express your experiences and emotions.

Play with Praba by **Praba Ram**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 4–6

Get ready for an action-packed session full of playful animal moves, fun sounds, and lively imagination with Praba Ram. Can you hop, splash, stretch, wiggle, roar and jump?

Studio

The Four Corners of Growing Up by **Vinitha**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 12–14

What should one do when the Universe is conspiring against one? Find out with Vinitha in this game of four corners that closes with surprise takeaways - and hope.

The Curious Case of Tenduwadi Chawl by **Shabnam Minwalla**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 10–12

There's a mystery brewing at the chawl. A cricket match, the battle of the Bollywood heroes. And, of course, the Great Mill Strike of 1982. Vinod and Radha get ready to solve the mystery. Can they?

What Does it Take to be a Story-teller? by **Narayan Devanathan**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 10–12

What else - apart from imagination - do you need to be able to find a story, find the words to tell it and become good at it? There is something unique in each of us that helps us do that. Come, find out.

The Postman who Forgot by **Aftab Yusuf Shaikh**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 10–12

Can a child be a postman? And, by the way, how difficult a task is it? Perhaps, it's time to know how heavy some seemingly easy tasks can be.

Workshop

Limited to 50

Bow-Bow-Wow! by **Chandrima Chatterjee**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 6–8

Leap into the world of Indian dogs with Chandrima! Meet our local doggos, discover their origins, what they eat and how they love to play. Then design your very own cool dog collar from scratch!

The Magic of Words by **Betina Birkjær**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 8–10

Words are magical. But what happens when words begin to disappear? Discover with Betina how words played a role in writing this special story about memory, dementia and the bond between grandparent and grandchild.

Supported by the **Danish Cultural Institute**

Travelling Theatre Book by **Carolina Celas**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 6–8

A big creature, a teacup, a grumpy elephant, and a suspicious bush meet inside a book.

What are they plotting? Create your own characters and bring them to life in a three-dimensional world!

Supported by **Camoës – Portuguese Cultural Centre in Delhi**

Flap and Flutter by **Chandrima Chatterjee**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 4–6

Bold, beautiful, bright - a butterfly is all these things and more. What happens when you see a butterfly? Does your heart soar and flutter? Come make your very own fluttering butterflies with Chandrima.

Doodle Wall

Limited to 50

When Stones Tell Stories by **Poorti Bapat**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 8–10

Travel back in time with Poorti to uncover a tall tale hidden in the ancient cave paintings of Bhimbetka. Imagine life as an early human and draw your way into that world.

Supported by **Roro Books**

Who Is That in the Mirror? by **Mark Janssen**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 10–12

Look closely. What strange, wonderful creature might be looking back at you? Let author-illustrator Mark Janssen help you make something wonderfully weird.

Supported by **Adidev Press**

Who's Up in the Mango Tree? by **Alankrita Amaya**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 4–6

There's always room for one more friend in Chulbuli's mango tree! Join Alankrita to discover curious creatures and unexpected friendships. Help bring a mango tree to life with creatures from your own imagination.

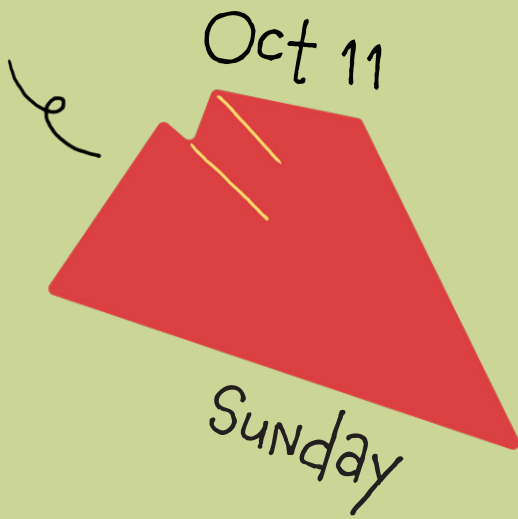
Supported by **Adidev Press**

Birds That Don't Exist, Yet by **Roshni Vyam**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 8–10

Imagine a bird with roots instead of feet, feathers made of stories, or wings that remember places. Create your own impossible bird and let it reveal something unexpected about you and your world.



kahani Tree

दोस्त खरगोश
by **Atul Wadhvani**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: ALL

कभी कभी उदासी में सिर्फ एक सुननेवाला चाहिए।
ना सलाह, ना सुलह सिर्फ सुनना। क्या आप मिलना
चाहेगे ऐसे दोस्त से?

Supported by **Eklavya**

**The Peppercorn Who Forgot
His Name and...**
by **Narayan Devanathan**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 8-10

There once was a detective
Whose nose was certainly not defective.
He could smell fishy business from a mile
And solve mysteries with a smile.
What was his name? Where did he live?

A Recipe for Wonder
by **Vranda Rathi**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 4-6

What if the secret ingredient wasn't in
the kitchen at all? Step into a story where
curiosity leads to unexpected discoveries and
coming together makes great things happen!

PETA Point by **Team PETA**

Come, chat, share and discover little ways to
be kind and compassionate to animals with
the team from PETA.

Sponsored by **PETA India**

What If You Stopped Being You?
by **Tansy Troy**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: ALL

A 'hangry' lion makes a silly wish and
suddenly, he's not quite himself! Can the
Dandy Lion find his way back to who he
really is? Come join this roarsome tale
and cook up some jungle fun!

Auditorium

Can You Write What You Can't See? by Laremy Lee

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 10–12

Poetry helps give a voice to all those thoughts and feelings hiding inside. Bring the invisible to life and turn what you can't see into a poem with a little help from poet Laremy Lee!

Once Upon a Ghazal by Aftab Yusuf Shaikh

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 12–14

If Mirza Ghalib and Shakespeare ever collaborated on a poem, it would surely be an English ghazal. Or will it? Find out with Aftab.

Poop, Poop by Shweta Taneja

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 8–10

Can poop be a home, a weapon, a meal, and even a way to save our planet? Join Shweta in this strange, smelly, scientific session on wild animal scat to know how.

Within and Without The Lines by Vinitha

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 8–10

Bombay based, Bikhaji accomplished the historical task of hosting India's national flag at an international forum. Know more about the courageous Madam Cama and how she created the icon. Make one of yours.

Studio

Be an Animal Superhero by Meenakshi Narang

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 8–10

What secrets would animals share if they could talk? Discover ocean singers, clever creatures and incredible animal adventurers. And find out how you can be a superhero for animals!

Supported by PETA India

Secrets of the Swamps by Praba Ram

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 10–12

Step into the mysterious, wild world of the Sundarbans! Dive into an engaging session about nature's hidden wonders, birdlife, and captivating tales from Praba Ram's middle-grade novel, *Down by the Mangroves*.

Wishing Trouble by Shabnam Minwalla

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 6–8

Kanmani really, really wants a pink dress. But first, she has to deal with unhelpful adults, wrong phone numbers and frock wearing comen. Join Shabnam to cheer Kanmani on to make her wish come true.

Can You Hear the Jungle? by Rohit Kokil

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 10–12

Close your eyes and listen! Birds call while animals roar, rustle and chirp. Through sounds, pictures, poems and playful listening games, discover how much a jungle can tell us without saying a word.

Supported by Eklavya

Workshop

Limited to 50

Collecting Words by **Betina Birkjær**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 6–8

What happens when words slip away and we can't quite remember them? Come explore a story about words, memories and a special grandparent. Then make your very own treasure chest of words to keep safe!

Supported by the **Danish Cultural Institute**

Battle of Boasts by **Mamta Nainy**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 6–8

Can your grandparent race the wind? Outwit tigers? Leap off buildings? Dream up the tallest, funniest, most impossible tale about them with colours, imagination and one spectacular drawing!

What's Nature Hiding? by **Roshni Vyam**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 10–12

Look closer! There are many things hidden in nature. Gather leaves, flowers, seeds, roots, bark, and other botanical wonders. Press, imprint, shape, and invent a little wild world of your own.

Dance Like No One's Watching! by **Aarti Khatwani Bhatia**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 4–6

Step into Radha's world of rhythm! Come listen to her story with Aarti. Clap, tap and groove along. Then make something special to take home!

Supported by **Harper Collins**

Doodle Wall

Limited to 50

Which Animal Are You? by **Carolina Celas**

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

AGES: 8–10

What animal lives inside you? Is it a bold tiger, a curious fox, a calm turtle, or a playful otter? Let's explore emotions and imagination through an animal character.

Supported by **Camoës – Portuguese Cultural Centre in Delhi**

Yes Squish, No Squish: My Safe Bubble by **Chandrima Chatterjee**

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

AGES: 4–6

Not all hugs and squishes feel good. Draw your safe bubble with Chandrima and discover what feels good, what doesn't and who belongs inside your bubble.

Peculiar and Picturesque by **Mark Janssen**

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM

AGES: 8–10

Use your imagination and draw something the world has never seen before! Mark will guide you in your masterpiece in weirdness.
Supported by **Adidev Press**

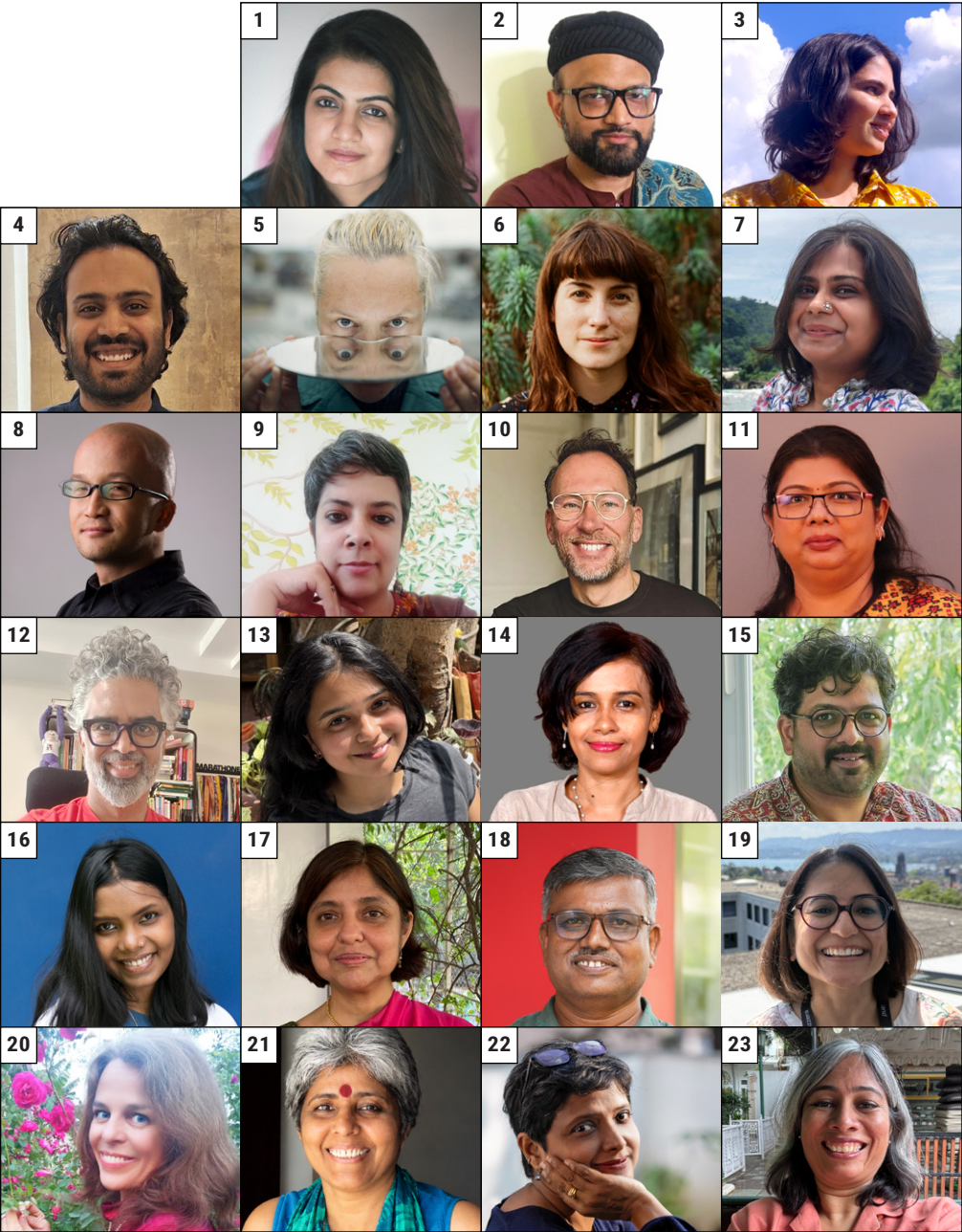
The Mango Tree Club by **Alankrita Amaya**

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

AGES: 6–8

Can you make friends in a mango tree? Join Alankrita as she takes you into Chulbuli's world where friendships blossom and imagination grows wild! Dream up your own cool creatures to make this tree come alive!

Face-to-face



Face-to-Face

- 1

Aarti Khatwani Bhatia • AHMEDABAD

Aarti is a day-dreamer who sees stories all around her. Routine life bores her and alternate realities fuel her imagination as she goes from Monday through Sunday, weaving tales to tell.
- 2

Aftab Yusuf Shaikh • KARIMNAGAR

Aftab started poetry when he was eight and has now spun novels and books for children. History excites him and he believes the most interesting thing in the world is its people.
- 3

Alankrita Amaya • BENGALURU

Alankrita is an award-winning children's book writer and illustrator who creates whimsical worlds from her cosy Bangalore home studio, where she lives with her husband and cat. Her stories celebrate the magic hidden in everyday life.
- 4

Atul Wadhvani • BHOPAL

Atul is a truly curious soul. During his time off from what he loves doing the most - daydreaming, he is busy editing and translating texts, watching films and learning about the world around.
- 5

Betina Birkjaer • DENMARK

Betina loves words - beautiful words, tiny words, OUTSTANDING words, FUNNY words, soft words. She also loves her cat Coco. Both the word cat and the cat.
- 6

Carolina Celas • PORTUGAL

Carolina loves turning everyday spaces into playful, dreamlike worlds. Her illustrations mix nature, humour and little surprises, making the ordinary feel extraordinary.
- 7

Chandrima Chatterjee • DELHI

Author-illustrator Chandrima's sketchbook is filled with warm fuzzy worlds full of cats and dogs, but sadly none live with her. When she's not daydreaming, she's happily munching, reading, movie-marathoning, and generally spreading mischief wherever she goes.
- 8

Laremy Lee • SINGAPORE

Laremy writes in different genres – plays, poetry and prose. His works have been published and staged, as well as produced and studied in schools. Excerpts can be found at laremy.sg
- 9

Mamta Nainy • DELHI

Mamta, an award-winning children's author of over 30 books, loves travelling but is too lazy to do it, so she mostly makes do with reading. Her favourite place is right in the middle of a book.
- 10

Mark Janssen • THE NETHERLANDS

Author and illustrator Janssen studied at the Art Academy in Maastricht. His picture books have been translated into more than 20 languages, Hindi being the latest one.
- 11

Meenakshi Narang • MUMBAI

Meenakshi is an animal lover, storyteller and kindness champion. At PETA India, she helps children discover the wonderful world of animals and become kinder, more caring humans.

- 12 Narayan Devanathan • GURUGRAM**
Look there, in the sky! You see that bright red kite? With two big bespectacled eyes and a long green plaited tail? That's Narayan, waving at you, seeing the world and enjoying all its shenanigans.
- 13 Poorti Bapat • BHOPAL**
Poorti grew up in Bhopal and studied at NID Andhra Pradesh. Her work is fuelled by imagery, storytelling and quiet observation - often shaped between sips of chai and wandering daydreams.
- 14 Praba Ram • CHENNAI**
Praba loves nature and champions reading and writing workshops for young minds. When not guiding high schoolers through test prep and essay coaching, she's dreaming up tales about warm bowls of thukpa, sweet mangoes and wild mangroves!
- 15 Rohit Kokil • BELGAUM**
An avid bird enthusiast, Rohit is a designer and paper-craft explorer. He loves observing birds, discovering their sounds and turning curiosity into creative ideas.
- 16 Roshni Vyam • BHOPAL**
A contemporary artist rooted in the living knowledge systems of the Pardhan Gond community, Roshni turns stories, forests, birds, roots and people into art! She researches Indigenous oral histories and changing ways of remembering.
- 17 Shabnam Minwalla • MUMBAI**
Shabnam is a Mumbaiholic, an ardent saree shopper, and a murder-mystery buff. She loves plot twists, leering ghosts and happy endings and has written a stack of popular books for children and young adults.
- 18 Shiv Narayan Gaur • BHOPAL**
Award-winning author Shiv Narayan writes non-fiction and contributes articles to various publications. He has a special fondness for stories and anecdotes which he loves telling and listening to. He has been working with Eklavya Foundation, Bhopal.
- 19 Shweta Taneja • BENGALURU**
Poop, ghosts, and robots fighting garbage monsters. Shweta Taneja writes hilarious science that wins awards and makes children beg for more.
- 20 Tansy Troy • BHOPAL**
If you're seeking Tansy, try searching the highest Himalayas or diving deep into truly wild forest. There, you will find her conversing in multispecies, scribing the stories of every creature with a tale to tell.
- 21 Teji Grover • BHOPAL**
Poet, fiction writer, translator and painter, Teji is one of the most important voices in contemporary Hindi poetry. A much-awarded writer and translator, her work has been translated into Polish and Swedish.
- 22 Vinitha • MUMBAI**
Author of over 30 children's books, Vinitha's stories have made it to textbooks, healed therapists and won a few awards. She still prefers to talk to people in her head. Only now she flits between them and brain fog.
- 23 Vranda Rathi • AHMEDABAD**
Storytelling for Vranda is pure mischief with a purpose. She acts, giggles, squeaks, and roars with her puppets. Creativity is her blood, storytelling is her soul and imagination is her permanent address.

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* Some sessions may be filmed or photographed. Please let a volunteer or a member of our staff at the venue know if you do not wish to be included.
* While the Festival and Venue Management will take every care to ensure a safe experience, parents/guardians/carers are responsible for their children at all times.