

WEEKEND THINK FEAST

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NOVEMBER 27, 2016

Ruskin Bonds with the best

City can't have enough of this wizard with the pen

Indira have
es: Guha



“Our political freedom is qualified, it is not complete

RAMACHANDRA GUHA
HISTORIAN

peace they can be stigmatized. Most recently this gau rakshak nonsense...”

“But our political freedom is qualified, it is not complete,” Guha said, adding that social freedom is constrained by caste prejudice even today. As far as cultural freedom goes, when it comes to writers and artists, “India is much less free than a proper democracy should be,” he said. Guha ruled out the possibility of India being ruled by a dictator. “Indira Gandhi tried...” he said.

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set India more firmly on the road to development, he said “countries which inherit effective states that can deliver on the basics like health, education and infrastructure do better.”

“The big difference between India and China is that China was able to deliver essential services early on

TEAM TOI

Unlike his books, Ruskin Bond has never been easy to find. He is not on social media, and from his hilly retreat in Landour, puts pen to paper and creates magic with words delighting the young and old. In a digital era when visibility, both virtual and social, is seen as an elementary requirement, he still revels in obscurity and a refreshing old-worldliness. To him, nothing is as fruitful as writing on paper.

And through the power of his pen, he has for decades remained the toast of booklovers. On Saturday, as a celebration of his life as an author and the wonderful person he is, Bond was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Times Lit Fest. From the moment he set foot at the venue, there was no doubt who the Bond was. From children reading their first story books to bestselling authors almost half his age, they swarmed around him like little fanboys. He obliged everyone with photographs, selfies and a smile for as long as he could till his manager intervened and called a time out.

“I am a compulsive writer,” he said when he finally got a chance to speak. “Even as a kid, I used to keep a notebook and just jot down ideas in it. I don’t write for an age group because I’m just a story-teller. I write a story, not



Lapping up their ‘fanboy’ moment

Dragged out of the signing corner for five minutes to release the “Write India” book, **Ruskin Bond** promised the teary-eyed kids that he was coming right back to them. When he entered the hall, there were wolf whistles and **Ravi Subramanian**, **Ashwin Sanghi** and **Ravinder Singh** asked for a selfie. Ravi even told the audience, “sorry guys, our fanboy moment”.

thinking if it’s for a child or an adult,” he added.

And his subjects are in the everyday, in people. “I take walks and dig around for stories. People have stories,” he said. His days start early with a cup of tea, some writing, followed by a long walk in the woods. “Early morning is the best time to write, there is nobody banging at your door. After that I go for a walk, take naps, before and after lunch and another one to recover from the last two,” he joked.

His memories of boyhood are the most cherished, and his writing is perhaps most enjoyed because he has managed to preserve his boyish mischievous-

ness. Asked about his worst interview, he said, “It was in my headmaster’s room in school. Once a teacher had called me a doodhwaala, and I called her a doodhwaali in return, and it ended in a punishment.”

Times Lit Fest Delhi, presented by Rajnigandha Silver Pearls and powered by knowledge partner Manav Rachna International University on Nov 26-27 at India Habitat Centre. All sessions are open to the public and entry is free. For full schedule see toi.in/TLFD

Photos by Anindya Chattopadhyay, Piyaal Bhattacharjee, Indranil Das, Sanjeev Rastogi



LITLITE

Karnik: ‘Jugaad’ isn’t innovation

The practice of jugaad can hardly be considered innovation, technocrat and