

# India booked!

On International Literacy Day, a city-based NGO will initiate a simultaneous nation-wide book reading effort

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**T**oday as shadows dance and fingers talk, rosy-cheeked children in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh and wide-eyed tots from Odisha and elsewhere will be engrossed in an initiative that brings together 250 storytellers, who'll bring alive the characters in *Susheela's Kolams*, the book chosen for an ambitious nation-wide one-day-one-book campaign.

To keep its date with the International Literacy Day, Pratham Books, an NGO in the space of literacy, is attempting to bring together children from across the country in a unique book reading endeavour. Says Suzanne Singh, manag-

A book for every child



ing trustee, "We have a mission to see a book in every child's hand. This endeavour is just one step in this direction."

In Ulsoor, well-known magicians Prahalad Acharya and Nakul Shenoy will weave their magic through a medley of shadow puppetry as they take their eager wards through the twists and turns in the book. Excited to be in this literacy fray is city blogger Arthi Anand, who has planned a few add-on activities along with the book reading at Anand Vidalya in Vivek Nagar. "We have a mixed age group that will attend this session. We'll have rangoli and drawing competitions for our young audience."

And in Raichur, children from as many as 50 villages will be able to listen

in on the story, thanks to the commando-style operation of Bheemasen A Kulkarni that saw him mobilizing volunteers to farm out to these remote destinations. As 250 volunteers spread out to cover every single state in the country and as over 70,000 kids in an effort to give the habit of reading, there is also a hope that today's effort will also find a mention in the book of records.

Says chairperson, Rohini Nilekani, "Millions of children don't have access to simple, joyful story books that can engage and inform them. We believe that the world of books provides joy, and so we must all put our collective strength to spread this joy to every child."

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