

Brutally frank in his opinion, Gen JFR Jacob spares no one — neither his colleagues, nor his superiors in the Army — in this remarkable book, writes VED MARWAH



**AN ODYSSEY IN WAR AND PEACE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**  
Lt Gen JFR Jacob  
Roli, ₹350

characters with whom he interacted makes a good read. It shows his ability to judge people. But taking this knack to suggest what appears as simplistic solutions to complex problems like Left-wing extremism is going too far. The Army might have made decisive contribution, as claimed by him, in controlling the outbreak of Naxalism in West Bengal in the late 1960s, but today it is a much more difficult and complicated problem. In fact, the induction of Army into Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand where I have served and toured extensively could complicate and aggravate things further. Induction of the Army into these areas must be considered only as a last resort.

The solution lies in strengthening the police and the intelligence agencies working in these areas, and training and equipping them to fight these extremists. But more importantly, there is need to develop an integrated strategy, taking into consideration all aspects of the problem — economic, social and political. Delivery of socio-economic justice to the poor, and not the use of brute force, is the key to tackling this growing menace.

The author has vast military experience that stood him in good stead in planning sound strategies to win battles, but when he discusses non-military issues, he tends to jump to conclusions rather hastily. His experience in the civil administration is limited and may not be a sound basis for formulating policies and strategies.

The reviewer, a retired IPS officer, is former Governor of Jharkhand, Mizoram and Manipur

# Arms and the man

There are not many people like Gen JFR Jacob in today's world. He is an extraordinary person. Not many would think of writing a book at the age of 88. Brutally frank in his opinion, he has spared no one — neither his colleagues, nor his superiors — in this book.

The author is, more than anything else, a good human being. His holding of many top positions in the Army, besides being the Governor of Goa and Punjab, has not made him arrogant and opinionated, though his latest book may give a few readers that impression. I

have known him for many years since his days as Army commander. He is a warm person and I have no doubt that his controversial opinions about important persons are given without any malice. Also, these opinions cannot be ignored as they have been made about persons who have played vital roles in events like the 1962 India-China war and the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war.

There are not many Army officers in India today who have served in so many war theatres. Gen Jacob was personally involved in some of the major pre- and post-Independence military operations and his

criticism or praise is based on his long experience in various parts of the world during World War II and later in the Northeast, Jammu & Kashmir and in West Bengal against the Naxals. But the most fascinating part of the book is his account of the 1971 India-Pakistan war in which he played a key role as one of the top Army generals.

Gen Jacob has made a few uncomplimentary remarks about his then seniors, the Eastern Army Commander, Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Arora, and the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Sam Manekshaw. He has also some harsh things to say about

Lt Gen BM Kaul, who was the favourite of then Defence Minister VK Krishna Menon. His conduct of the 1962 operation against the Chinese in the Northeast which cost India so much humiliation is too well-known to reiterate, but the fact that he was a scheming Army officer who knew how to ingratiate himself with political masters makes an interesting read. Our political rulers should learn a thing or two from this bitter experience. Personal and party loyalty should not be allowed to supercede national interest. Inexperienced and incompetent civil and military offi-

cers can play havoc with the system with disastrous consequences.

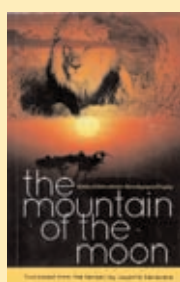
Unfortunately, our political masters continue to fall for flattery, false sense of loyalty and manipulations of unscrupulous men and women to appoint them to key posts. Maybe during the 26/11 assault in Mumbai, the tragic human loss could have been mitigated and India's humiliation on TV screens all over the world avoided had more experienced and competent officers been in command of Mumbai Police in 2008! We are sadly familiar with the goings-on in the civil administra-

tion, but that such things are happening even in the Army come as a shock. "Fixing officers" because of personal reasons doesn't appear to be an uncommon practice, as revealed in the book.

Gen Jacob decided to enter politics after his unhappy experience in the commercial world. He joined the BJP and was appointed the Governor of Goa after the party came to power at the Centre. But here again he did not take leave of his principles and integrity to oblige his political benefactors, and was promptly told to "get lost". His brief description of various political

## NEW ARRIVALS

The *Mountain of the Moon* is the English translation of one of the finest Bengali adventure novels — *Chander Pahar* — written by Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay in the 1930s. Set in 1909-10, this is the story of a young Bengali man and his cravings for a life full of adventure that brings him to the Dark Continent — Africa.



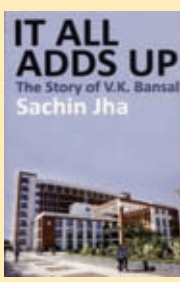
**THE MOUNTAIN OF THE MOON**  
B Bandyopadhyay  
Rupa, ₹195



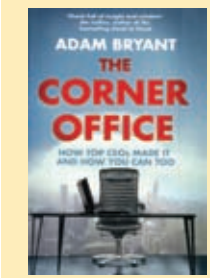
**THE WINNING WAY**  
Anita Bhogle and Harsha Bhogle  
Westland, ₹200

What do sporting champions do? What makes winning teams? Who is a good leader? Why do only some teams keep winning, while others win only for a while and then lose? Sports commentator Harsha Bhogle and advertising and communication consultant Anita Bhogle dig into examples from sports to see how they can benefit managers.

Each year 'Bansal Classes' puts more students into the IITs than any other. Bansal Classes is the brainchild of VK Bansal, who began his career as a tutor teaching a single student. Lucidly written, *It All Adds Up* narrates a remarkable tale; not just of individual success, but of the rise of small towns as the new centres of business and money.



**IT ALL ADDS UP: THE STORY OF V.K. BANSAL**  
Sachin Jha  
Penguin, ₹299



**THE CORNER OFFICE**  
Adam Bryant  
Harper Press, ₹399

What does it take to succeed in business? Adam Bryant of *The New York Times* sat down with more than 75 CEOs and asked them how they do their jobs and the most important lessons they learned as they rose through the ranks. *The Corner Office* draws together lessons, memorable stories and eye-opening insights from the world's top CEOs.

# Handbook for lawyers

The book is an unusual autobiography by an unusual legal luminary, says RAJESH SINGH



In many ways, this book is a moral handbook for lawyers, and especially for those who have been so mesmerised by the smell of lucre that they have forgotten there is ethics even in this profession. At 85, the author is still active at the Kerala High Court, and has some quaint but strong opinions, many of which if acted upon can make today's lawyers stand out in the crowd. But that is easily said than done, as it is a formidable task for anyone to walk the path he suggests. Since only the completely committed can do so, there will always be only a few like him. And that is what makes VR Venkatakrishnan special.

*Living with Laws* is an unusual autobiography by an unusual legal luminary. The author does not consume pages talking about his life, his struggles, his love and courtroom victories and defeats. There is none of the attempt to present an exaggerated self-image. The author refrains from passing value judgements on his peers. If he has succeeded in saying much without engaging in such time-tested methods in the book, it

is because he has allowed his heart to speak out. Through those sentiments, we come to understand Venkatakrishnan as a human being and as a professional. Although his tone is stentorian at times, the author is by and large soft in showcasing his opinion.

Referring to the case in which a sting operator by a television channel revealed unethical doings of senior advocates, the author remarks, "These lawyers, who are so successful, set a very wrong example to the younger generation who are willing to do anything to be in the limelight." It is his belief that proper upbringing and education at home and school with emphasis on values would go a long way in correcting such anomalies.

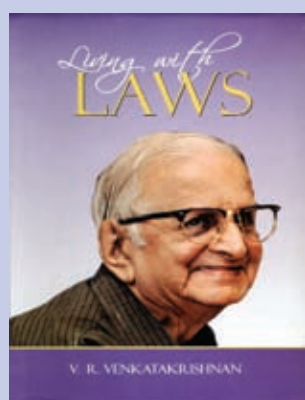
Venkatakrishnan is one lawyer who does not hesitate to discourage citizens from turning into litigants, even when they come to him with lucrative briefs. He admits that in his younger days, he gleefully took on cases without considering the possibility of out-of-court settlements, but later in his life he realised the troubles

The author expresses dismay over the continuing backlog of pending cases and strongly asserts that the lack of credible data on the matter and the inadequate court administration machinery are key contributors to the state of affairs. He believes that the Government should be spending much more to provide speedy justice. In the context, he provides an interesting calculation to justify the demand. According to him, the Government spends an average of ₹1,940 per case disposed. With the court fees realised being generally higher than that amount, the author remarks, "Who knows the Governments may be making a profit out of this whole business called judicial services!"

Venkatakrishnan spends some time in detailing the conduct and selection of judges, especially in the lower judiciary, which has been in the news for a range of irregularities. In the chapter, 'Justice, Jurisprudence and their Guardians', he deals with several contentious issues — from the quality of judges to the delays in justice. He mentions the sad example of the Supreme Court judge, Justice HR Khanna, who was the lone dissenting and courageous voice in the *Emergency case*. When superseded, he quit in disgust. Earlier, he had built a reputation for himself in the *Kesavananda Bharati case*. He is no more. The author asks: "Have we built a statue for Justice HR Khanna?"

The author calls himself a product of the old school, and thus claims he is unable to unconditionally endorse many of today's fads, such as the public interest litigations (PILs). But he is quick to admit that PILs have become necessary in several cases, although they cannot be considered the end-all of justice. But, for an old-timer, he has strong progressive views on the issue of mercy-killing (euthanasia). He says, "Mercy killing should be encouraged. Because when you look at the suffering, you'll be convinced that they'd be better off dead... I am ashamed to say this, but certain hospitals in India are increasingly trying to turn their intensive care units into just money-making business units."

Read this book. It's for lawyers and the layman alike.



**LIVING WITH LAWS**  
VR Venkatakrishnan  
Lone Tree; price not stated

litigants go through when they contest cases in the court.

"It dawned on me that the sensible choice would be not to encourage unnecessary litigation. It is better to always settle that fight," Venkatakrishnan writes. This is not the sort of advise lawyers normally offer.



# Doyen of Urdu poem

MADAN LALL MANCHANDA

In his introductory note to the book, *Mirza Farhatullah Baig*, the author points out that the Mirza occupied a distinguished position as a humour writer among his illustrious contemporaries — Rashid Sadiqui, Pitras Bukhari, Kanhaiya Lal Kapoor, Shaukat Thanvi and Azeem Beg Chughtai.

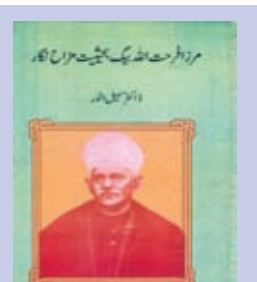
The book has three sections: The first is about the Mirza's life story, his place of birth, upbringing, education, employment, marriage and even progeny. The second part of the book focusses on the art of humour. As for the third, it assesses the Mirza's art.

Mirza Baig's leading position among the literary stalwarts of the first half of the 20th century owes it to his mentor, Maulvi Nazeer Ahmed, who gave Urdu its first famous novel, *Ruya-e-Sadiqa*.

Baig, however, wasn't a full-time Urdu writer; he taught at a high school and worked as a Sessions Judge and later became the Registrar of the Hyderabad High Court.

Such was his love for Urdu poetry that he wrote *Delhi Ki Aakhri Shama* to lighten the last lamp of Urdu poetry and to honour and immortalise the Urdu poets of the last days of the Mughal empire.

The book is worth a read, particularly for those who love Urdu and its literature.



**MIRZA FARHATULLAH BAIG**  
Mohammed Sohail Anwar  
Kitabi Duniya, ₹100