

BOOKS ▶

How the Deal Was Won

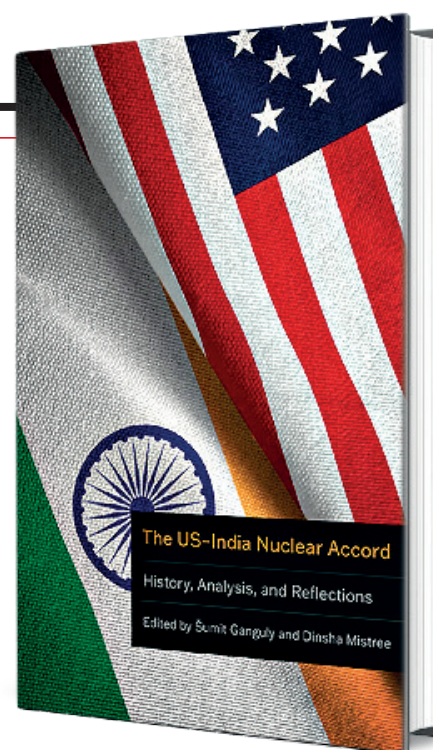
Key insiders share their insights on the diplomatic breakthrough of the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008

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"Why don't we have a better relationship with India?" This was the simple question George W. Bush, then campaigning for his first term as US President, put to Condoleezza Rice. Rice explained that India's pursuit of nuclear weapons and

refusal to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was the elephant in the room. Bush looked her in the eye and repeated his query. Years later, that blunt question would see Rice, as Bush's National Security Advisor, play a key role in pushing through the landmark US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement in 2008. The deal would fundamentally alter the bilateral relationship: from estranged democracies to strategic partners.

In this illuminating compendium



The US-India Nuclear Accord: History, Analysis, and Reflections
 Edited by Sumit Ganguly and Dinsha Mistree
 STANFORD UNIV. PRESS
 \$80; 296 pages

put together by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and edited by nuclear scholars Sumit Ganguly and Dinsha Mistree, Rice and a host of other key interlocutors, both American and Indian, share insights on how they had to break many taboos, including removing the massive sanctions and prohibitions imposed by earlier US presidents that had made India a nuclear pariah. US president Bill Clinton had tightened the noose in 1998 after India conducted five nuclear weapons tests to add to the first in 1974.

In her preface to the book, Rice reveals how Bush regarded India as a mature democracy and, unlike Clinton, thought it high time to discard

America's adversarial approach. The Bush administration, in its second term, worked hard to bring India on par in terms of privileges with other nuclear weapons states, including allowing it to import hitherto banned nuclear material and equipment.

In doing so, the deal became the crowning foreign policy achievement of both Bush and PM Dr Manmohan Singh.

The value of the book lies in bringing together principal interlocutors from both sides to share first-hand accounts of the tough negotiations preceding the deal that had on occasions needed Bush and Manmohan Singh to expend enormous political capital to bring it to fruition. Former foreign secretary Shyam Saran, former

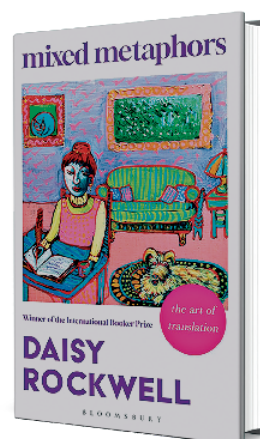
Atomic Energy Commission chairman Anil Kakodkar, disarmament expert Rakesh Sood, national security advisors M.K. Narayanan and Shivshankar Menon provide fascinating perspectives on India's approach.

For the US, apart from Rice, two distinguished former US ambassadors, David Mulford and Ken Juster, and Jonah Blank, a former aide to then senator Joe Biden, reveal the energy-sapping battles the Bush administration fought to get the Congressional approval necessary to close the deal. With the Modi government removing the last impediment to US-India civil nuclear cooperation by passing the Shanti (Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India) Act 2025, India has finally fulfilled its part of the bargain. Though it took a decade and a half, better late than never. ■

—Raj Chengappa

THE LISTICLE

Recent book releases that should be on your reading list



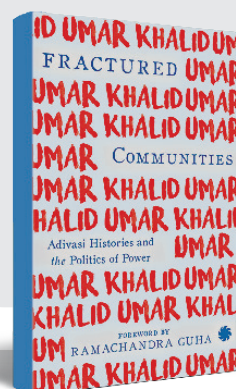
MIXED METAPHORS: THE ART OF TRANSLATION
 By Daisy Rockwell
 BLOOMSBURY INDIA
 ₹499; 184 pages

A WORLD OF WORDS

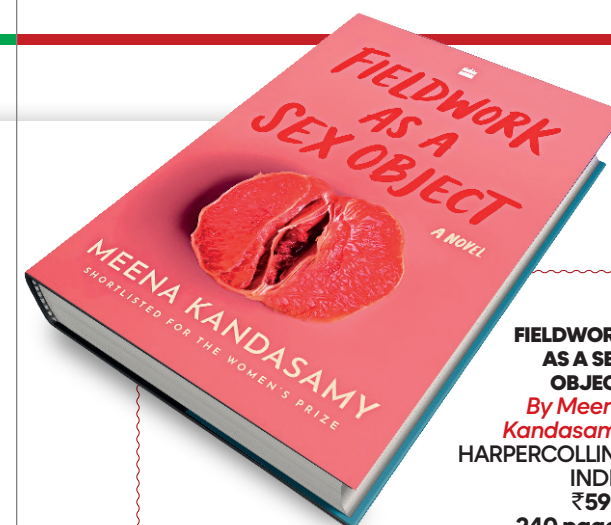
Mixed Metaphors is a whimsical book by the translator who introduced the Hindi-language writer Geetanjali Shree to the English-speaking world. Daisy Rockwell is also an artist—she has peppered the book with her illustrations. The volume has three sections, the first being the self-explanatory 'Twenty-Two Metaphors for Translations'. Part II—'Five Hair-Raising Copyright Tales'—is tragicomic memoir, while the last—'Conjugations'—is decidedly personal.

TRIBAL AFFAIRS

The PhD thesis of the country's most famous detainee, Umar Khalid, has finally been published in book form. Focusing on Adivasi society in the Singhbhum region (in southern Jharkhand) during British rule, the book's long 'Introduction' offers contemporary context to the historical material.



FRACTURED COMMUNITIES: ADIVASI HISTORIES AND THE POLITICS OF POWER
 By Umar Khalid
 JUGGERNAUT
 ₹499; 400 pages



FIELDWORK AS A SEX OBJECT
 By Meena Kandasamy
 HARPERCOLLINS INDIA
 ₹599; 240 pages

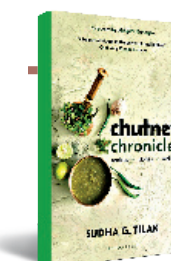
Sex, Lies and Video Fakes

Meena Kandasamy's tantalisingly titled novel explores several seminal issues through the story of Amrita Chaturvedi, a Delhiite based in London, whose life falls apart when a deepfake pornographic video featuring her goes viral.

CALL OF THE WILD

As India's High Commissioner to Namibia, Ambassador Prashant Agrawal played a pivotal role in the negotiations to reintroduce the cheetah to India. This is the groundbreaking behind-the-scenes story.

BRINGING THE CHEETAH BACK TO INDIA
 By Prashant Agrawal
 HACHETTE INDIA
 ₹599; 224 pages



CHUTNEY CHRONICLES: RECIPES, STORIES, WELLNESS
 By Sudha G. Tilak
 BLOOMSBURY INDIA
 ₹499; 224 pages

TANGY TALES

Sudha G. Tilak is a blue-blooded chutney-phile, truly passionate about this quintessentially Indian condiment. A notebook with 30 chutney recipes written in Tamil, a gift from her mother a decade ago, served as the springboard for this lovingly researched book that provides history, mystery and much context besides eminently practical recipes.