

In conditions of wide disparities

Philip Kotler zeroes in on an exciting part of the globe

DU E to advancements in many technologies such as air travel, television and the Internet, the boundaries of time and space have collapsed and the world has become smaller. It is as easy, today, to place a phone call to a climber abreast Mount Everest as to zoom in on the details of one's own home via satellite images. Amidst this abundance of possibilities, lie the challenges and complexities created by the rapid rates and ranges of change in the economic, social, political and technological spheres.

Particularly challenging are market conditions created by technological innovations that reshape industry and competitive boundaries as well as the conditions created by social and economic forces that reshape customer aspirations and habits. Even the best of firms have to continuously assess the environment and adjust their strategies and tactics to remain competitive in the marketplace.

Globalization has added to the complexities. While markets have expanded mobile handset from Motorola or Nokia has demand in the US as well as in China each market is likely to be at a different stage of development, governed by various sets of institutional and cultural rules and practices. Competition exists not only between multinational companies

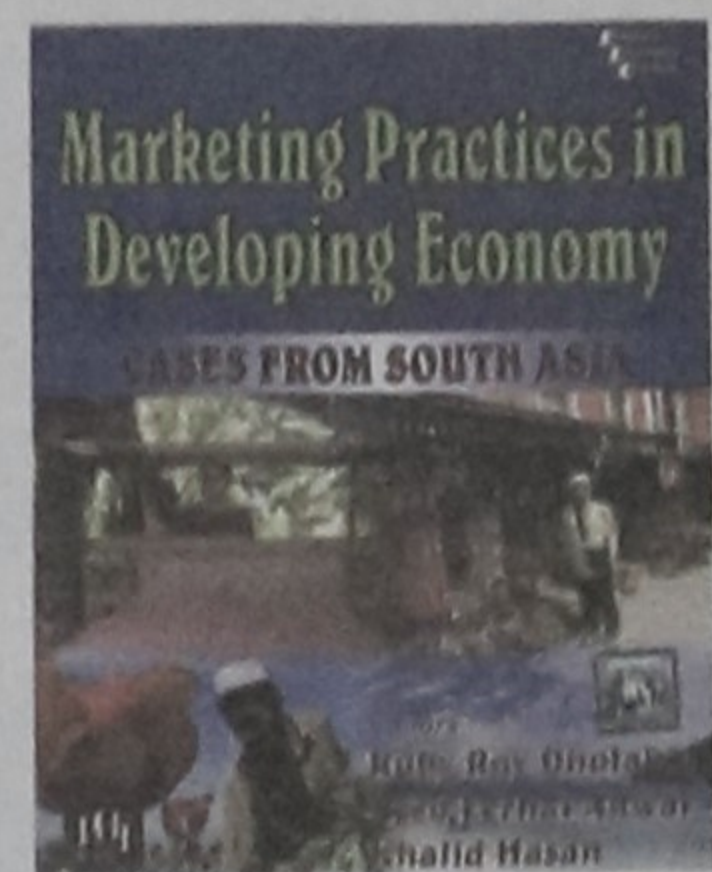
such as Procter and Gamble and Unilever fighting for market shares in India but also between local and multinational firms. Furthermore, many new multinational firms are being created as firms in countries such as Brazil and South Korea expand their operations overseas.

In this context, marketing orientation and market-driven strategies have become keys to success. A clear understanding of markets, customers and competitors form the basis for developing such strategies. Firms that have adopted a marketing orientation emphasize the customer and focus on identifying and delivering superior customer value. This is neither an easy task nor a task that is done once and then forgotten. It demands constant vigilance and assessment; it requires an organization and a culture that supports commitment to creating superior value. It is built and sustained by ethical behaviours.

Marketing history in the US indicates that not all firms and organizations adopt this orientation at the same time or with the same degree of success. We have learned much about these specific situations through case studies and through analyses of these case studies, we have learned how to recommend strategic alternatives for different firms as well as for different market conditions. We have learned that while there are

general principles, there are no universal theories that can be uniformly applied to every situation.

As the need to become market-oriented becomes more intense in



Marketing Practices in Developing Economy
Cases from South Asia
Ed. Ruby Roy, others
Prentice Hall India

other parts of the world, we will similarly see an increase in the types and number of organizations that will attempt to adopt the marketing approach. In such situations, we will need cases that describe problems and challenges faced by organizations and firms in different markets. We have made

much progress in the development of cases from various parts of the world which have been integrated into textbooks and academic curriculums.

In this context, I am happy to see this book of cases which provides a South Asia perspective and includes cases from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. All these countries, some large and some much smaller, form the subcontinent of South Asia, and comprise one of the largest population centres in the world. India is the largest country in this region with a population over 1 billion people, and home to many global companies such as Infosys and Tata. Bangladesh, home to over 144 million people, is smaller in comparison, but yet the sheer size of this market has attracted the attention of many global MNCs such as Unilever and British American Tobacco. Conditions of wide disparities characterize each of these countries, but there also exist myriads of organizations in the private and public sector, large and small which face issues that could benefit from a marketing approach.

I was approached by my former student Ruby Roy to write a Foreword. She spent her sabbatical year in Bangladesh and teamed up with Professor Syed Ferhat Anwar of IBA, Dhaka University and Dr. Khalid Hasan of Nielsen Bangladesh (formerly ACNielsen)

to create this book. As editors, they have attempted to put together cases that encompass a variety of problems encountered by a variety of organizations. They have solicited contributions from several scholars who have experience teaching and consulting in these countries. The cases cover a wide range - from agriculture to manufactured products - from micro level decisions to macro oriented ones. The situations described, while specific to South Asia, are applicable to other countries in similar stages of development. An understanding of these cases should deepen our knowledge not only of the environment existing in South Asian countries but also the market conditions existing outside the advanced western-type economies.

I would expect this type of cases to be beneficial to a whole host of people interested in marketing, particularly marketing in developing countries. In addition to use of cases in traditional classroom settings for full time students, the cases can be used during training of private company executives as well as policy makers in government and international organizations.

I want to congratulate the team for producing this important collection of cases.

Dr. Philip Kotler teaches at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA.

A man much missed in the land

Mohsena Reza Shopna excerpts from a work on a murdered politician

THE cover shows the editor of 'Mridubhashan', his smile displaying all the attributes awarded to him by Bengalis. Reviewing this compilation I felt much as an interviewer does, and so goes the style of this review.

K.M. Sobhan mourns the assassination of a successful diplomat, ex-finance minister, economist and columnist of reputation and a highly placed officer at the UN.

He was a man of sharp intellect, great capacity for absorption of details, a laidback style, which was compensated by his organized thoughts and by his commitment to excellence. A.M.A. Muhi.

Kibria severed ties with Pakistan for the Bangladesh cause in 1971. There was humility matched by an equal degree of bluntness. He did not suffer sycophants and had an abundance of self-esteem. His death leaves us a whole lot poorer than we can imagine. Syed Badrul Ahsan

His life was a most distinguished one. He stood first in 1954 in C.S.S examinations and joined the foreign office. Trained at Boston's School of Law and Diplomacy he condemned use of black money and muscle power in politics. Prof. Kabir Chowdhury

He contained, remarkably, unemployment and inflation, the two hydra-headed monsters -- Dr. S.A. Samad.

He was an institution, not a mere diplomat. After successfully piloting the adoption of International Mother Language Day resolution at the UNESCO he personally complimented me. --- Muazem Ali

To Kibria, 'efficiency' itself was a kind of 'loyalty' which a purely 'political eye' may not be able to discern. Md. Farashuddin

As a student he served a short prison term for association with the Language Movement. Taught Economics at DU. ---Dr. Mashur Rahman

Only the perpetrators of this dastardly act can gloat over the atrocious event. Their professionalism will be a cause of envy of the scriptwriters of Mafia films. --- Abdul Hye

He heard from others rather than unilaterally delivering his opinions. He carried the typical trait of Manmohan Singh. He never bent to donors. ---Abdul Bayes.

...was one of the staunchest voices for secularism and against extremism, terrorism, increasing use of religion in our politics and an early voice against Taliban penetration into our politics. --- Moazzem Hossain

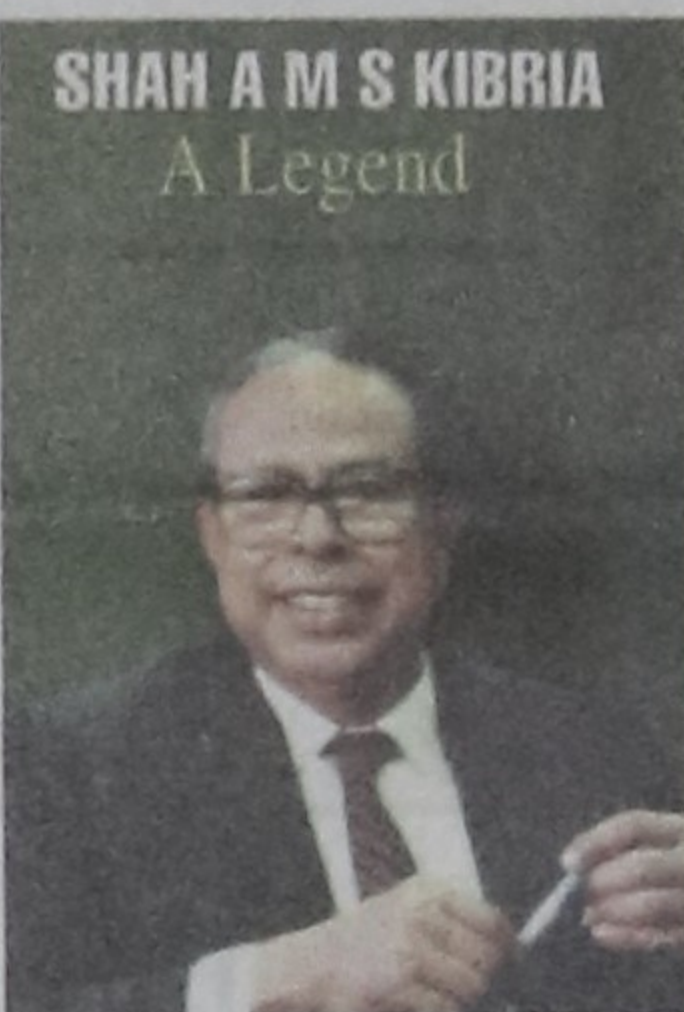
These incidents will turn out to be latitudes if the 'unknown assailants' remain 'unidentified' - a challenge the govt. faces. --- Moazzem Hossain

Four others including his nephew Shah Monjurul Huda died. Kibria was angered by some pieces in the Financial Express, as he did not like criticism from media, and made it known to Moazzem Hossain and Devapriya Bhattacharya.

Syed Kamaluddin.

He was simple; he did not pay any heed to Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury's warning of his life's risk. --- Shahjahan Mia

Our soil did not give birth to too many of Kibria's breed in talent, in



SHAH A.M.S. KIBRIA
A Legend
Edit Mohammad Shahjahan

conviction of virtues that form the cornerstone of any modern state. ---Dr. Moazzem Hossain

Kibria felt hurt at our image as a 'bottomless basket'. So, he worked tirelessly to convert it into a food self-sufficient state. --- Dr. Moazzem Hossain.

The two legs of one of the finest polished gentleman were thrown out of his abdomen, receiving splinter injury on head and chest and probably died on the way

because of profuse bleeding. Dr. Ajoy Roy

His efforts for the eradication of poverty brought results - helped flow money to the lowest rung and benefited millions of widows, elderly people and flood victims. Dr. Shabbir Ahmed.

A coincidence that a man whose heart would melt at the agonies of the have-nots was born on May 1 --- the day which symbolizes inspiration of the toiling masses. SHAMS means sun and KIBRIA means greathad all the qualities of head and heart. Fazlul Quader Quadri

Politicians as a class are a much maligned entity but Kibria never practised corruption or nepotism Arshad Uz Zaman

Justice delayed is justice denied. Time has come for the government to bring the criminals to justice Md Zahir

We were extremely close...His joining the Awami League was a historical accident --- Rezaul Karim.

Though teamwork, he secured the seat of Security Council... he was instrumental in opening the Bangladesh residing embassy in Bhutan, and the embryo of SAARC was formed. --- Barrister Harun ur Rashid.

As High Commissioner in Australia he was complimented 'Thorough Professional' ---Ziaus Shams Chowdhury.

Reza Kibria lowered his late father for 'dust unto dust' on 29th January. The speaker who personifies neutrality was absent though he had made much ado about conducting Namaz e Janaza on the steps of South Plaza of the Jatiya

Sangsad and came to know of his death through newspaper! - M Shafiuallah

A greater political alliance beyond the existing ideological and political divide is needed that will make terrorists think twice before they engage in criminality. ---Khairul Chowdhury.

His write-ups were constructive rather than overstating...make him appear to me an unfathomably consummate thinker...nothing will happen to the killers and his case will also go to the cold storage. ---Bahazad Ahmed.

Kibria's liberal views of the statecraft, social structure and welfare of the people, regardless of religion and sect made him the target! Md. Azadullah Khan

Those who destroyed him cannot destroy his contributions and memory.

Turning a blind eye is also a culpability in another form History will judge one day! Nasreen Karim

.....during a silent protest demonstration, protestors came to me 'they did not just kill your father, they killed us'. My family are asking for an independent international investigation team they must be brought to justice--- Nazli Kibria

My khalu was a father figure in our extended family, always immaculately dressed. He was about to give his country gift of diplomacy and ethics in politics. Sayeema Sadeghi.

Mohsena Reza Shopna is a writer and past president, Inner Wheel Club of Dhaka North.

The strength of one's faith

Nausheen Rahman happily reads all about a return of belief

A gripping, emotionally charged account of one man's unbearable bereavement, *The Shack* makes readers (believers and non-believers) look at, rather into, their own deprivations, as well as their relationships with their creator.

This is the story of Mackenzie Allen Phillips' overwhelming guilt compounded with his impotent anger at the injustice dealt out by destiny.

WM Paul Young, a theologian, ghostwrites this story for Mack, his friend, who wanted him to write a narrative through which he could express to his wife and kids "not only the depth of his love, but also to help them understand what had been going on in his inside world. You know that place: where there is just you alone and maybe God, if you believe in him. Of course, God might be there even if you don't believe in him."

Paul Young tells us in his foreword that what we are about to read is something he and Mack had struggled with for many months to put into words, that "It's a little, well.....no, it is a lot on the fantastic side".

Mack, an average guy, a responsible, loving husband and father, is suddenly hurled into the depths of despair when he loses a child, his youngest, six-year-old Missy. She has been kidnapped and apparently savagely killed. A terrible predicament, what he terms "The Great Sadness"

descends upon him; his whole world is shattered.

This deeply moving, soul-stirring story is about the loss of faith and its reinstatement. Much of the book's contents will read like a man's imagination working overtime, but it is the strength of one's faith that helps to make even the most incredible things seem real.

While on a camping holiday with his children, Mack faces, and averts, a serious crisis when he saves his son from drowning. Unfortunately, another menace is lurking, waiting to wreak havoc. Missy disappears. After a frantic, desperate search, the police come to the conclusion that she has fallen prey to the insane "Little Ladykiller." She is his fifth victim, and just as in the case of the four little girls before her, her body is not found.

When Mack first realizes that his daughter might be dead, he feels "a million years old, almost wishing he could somehow turn himself into a big, unfeeling rock".

Missy's death has an overpowering effect also on her sister, Kate (who thinks the death was in some way due to her carelessness and that her parents hold her responsible). She builds a "fortress around her heart"; "it was as if something had died inside her, and now was slowly infecting her from the inside, spilling out occasionally in bitter words or emotionless silence".

Mack's wife, Nan, stands

steadily beside him and tries to reassure him that none of it was his fault. Mack distances himself from God; to him, nothing justifies the cruelty of what has happened. He does, gradually, succeed somewhat in putting his family's needs before his consuming sorrow.

It's been a while. I've missed you.

I'll be at the shack next week-end if you want to get together.

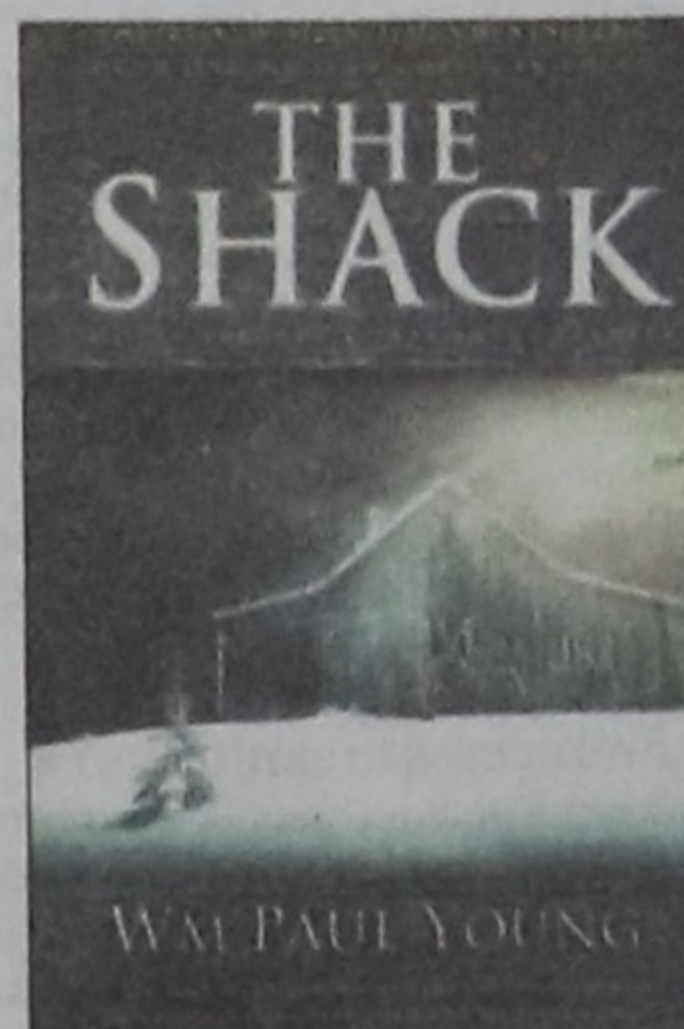
Papa

The mention of the "shack" - where they had found evidence of Missy's murder, causes Mack to undergo a number of emotions all negative. "Papa" is what Nan loves to call God with whom she's always felt very close.

Despite not knowing what to make of the note, Mack does set off for the shack without telling Nan, and feeling totally unsure of what awaits him. Mack's journeying up to the shack and his feelings on reaching the place where he had to confront such suffering, seem to tear his soul apart.

What ensues in the shack, who he meets there, how he spends two days (or so he thinks) there, the places he sees, the experiences he has, will appear even more fanciful, and certainly not as effective, if related by anyone else. It should suffice to say that he meets three characters, who turn out to be Papa (that is, God), Jesus, and Saraya (the holy spirit).

It is the persona of each character that impels us to continue reading. We are taken into a realm so beautifully described that we happily go through a "willing suspension of disbelief". We find things hard to believe, we want to believe, and often end up believing. We see how, bit by bit, Mack's wounds hurt less and less, and how his wonder grows and



The Shack
WM Paul Young
Hodder

Four years after the dreadful tragedy, Mack receives a note in the mailbox. The envelope has only his first name typed on the outside; there is no stamp, postmark or return address. The note simply says: Mackenzie,

grows.

The Shack looks at individual faith, not at religion as an institution. It ponders over the doubts and questions surrounding the creator's existence and His benevolence and mercy. It is about divine connection, about the purging of the soul, about a healing, about a renewed faith in God; it is about forgiveness and the relief forgiving others brings.

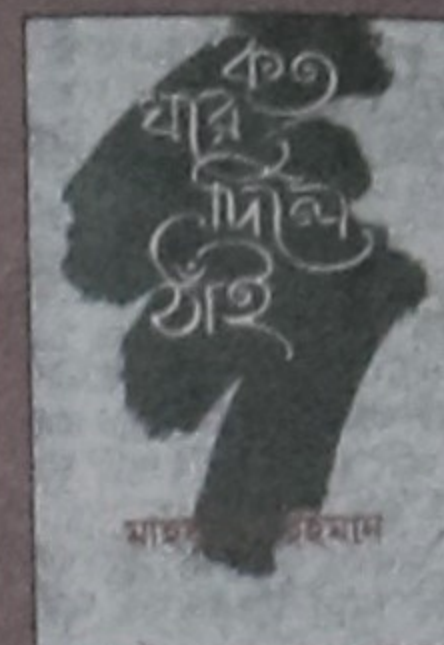
At one point, Jesus tells Mack, "As well-intentioned as it might be, you know that religious machinery can chew up people! An awful lot of what is done in my name has nothing to do with me and is often, even if unintentionally, very contrary to my purposes".

The author informs us in his After Words that Mack's story has changed him significantly, and that Mack, himself, is transformed and now "loves larger than most, is quick to forgive, and even quicker to ask for forgiveness". Mack also succeeds in convincing Kate that she is not at all to blame for what had happened to Missy.

Whether we believe or not, it does us good to know of others who believe so deeply and wholeheartedly. It takes us pretty close to believing that "God's in his heaven, and all's right with the world".

Nausheen Rahman is a teacher and literary critic.

AT A GLANCE



Koto Ghore Dile Thaan
Mahfuzur Rahman
Adom Publication
Tel: 9347577, 8313019

These are part two of the memoirs of the writer. As a former United Nations official, apart from his experience of teaching, he is uniquely positioned to reflect on various episodes of history he has seen in his lifetime. And with it come tales of the places he has been to across the globe. Should be a good read.

Historicizing 1971 Genocide
State versus Person
Imtiaz Ahmed
The University Press Limited
Tel: 9565441, 9565444

This promises to be one more rich addition to the history of the War of Liberation. Imtiaz Ahmed's preoccupation with Bangladesh's history, especially in relation to the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistan army and the on-going demand for the trial of war criminals, gives the book a sense of urgency. You will not be disappointed by the work.



Choloner Itihash
Jiboner Kichhu Shomoy Kichhu Kotha
1983-1990
Moudud Ahmed
The University Press Limited
Tel: 9565441, 9565444

Moudud Ahmed has been around in Bangladesh's politics for as long as anyone can remember. He has been part of nearly every political party which has mattered in Bangladesh. You could say he is a survivor; or a skillful operator. Whatever. But here is a work which should throw new light on him. It is for you to judge the man again.

Constitutional History of Bangladesh
Dr. Belal Hossain Joy
Bangladesh Law Book Company
Tel: 7115486, 0192026715

The author has spent long years in the United Kingdom. These days, as a practising lawyer in Bangladesh, he has ample opportunities of studying the socio-political scene in the country. This work is a fruit of hard labour and Joy should be thanked for enlightening readers on the laws the constitution has always spoken of.



Magic realism at work

Tanveerul Haque is bowled over by a story

LIFE OF PI by Yann Martel won the Man Booker Prize in 2002. It became a literary blockbuster success which soared on to bestseller lists after it was published in the United States in 2002 and sold more than 185,000 copies in hardcover. In paperback it sold nearly two million copies. It won the Man Booker Prize, Britain's most prestigious literary award, in November of that year.

Bizarre and astonishing storytelling. At times you don't know whether to put down the book in absolute disgust or to go on reading, hoping to be rewarded with something more plausible. One has to suspend disbelief to be able to complete reading the book. Surreal, phantasmagoric, an affront to your intelligence yet spellbinding. A difficult book to review or to explain, even to describe but an experience quite out of the ordinary, nevertheless.

Macabre, zany, hilarious. Made me retch and almost throw up a number of times.

Life of Pi is an implausible story of a 16-year-old boy Molitor Piscine Patel, who is shipwrecked in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on his family's migratory trip out of Pondicherry, India, to Toronto, Canada.

His name, a tongue twister in itself, is truncated to the more manageable but mathematically enigmatic Pi. Reminds me of Philip Pirrip being reduced to Pip in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

Pi's father runs the Pondicherry Zoo with its menagerie of typical zoo inmates where Pi and his brother are having a quite typical and enjoyable upbringing. Financial misfortunes lead to the closing down of the Zoo when Pi's father decides to give away the animals to various zoos around the globe and to migrate with his wife and two sons to Toronto, Canada.

In fortuitous circumstances Pi's family and some of the Zoo animals being sent off to other destinations board the *Tsimtsum*, a Japanese owned rust bucket, on their ill-fated journey.

An accident which remains an enigma causes the swift break-up and sinking of the *Tsimtsum*, leaving Pi, a Royal Bengal tiger, an orangutan, a zebra and a hyena the only survivors on board a lifeboat.

The story is a wonderful rollercoaster ride that can only be born of the mind of a hallucinatory writer. Philosophical, poignant, comic, uproariously hilarious at times it keeps the reader's attention riveted.

Magic realism in the narration of the improbable, hypothetical and fantastic story keeps the reader spellbound.

Life of Pi has become a hugely celebrated novel the world over, a book that has appealed to readers of all ages and will almost certainly continue to do so for decades to come. A resplendent new hardback edition with 40 images by Tomislav

Tojanac was published in September 2007. This has helped reinforce its status as a modern classic and drawn further readers into Pi's remarkable story, "a story that will make you believe in God."

While saying what constitutes a literary novel is hard enough, identifying what makes one a big popular hit is even harder.

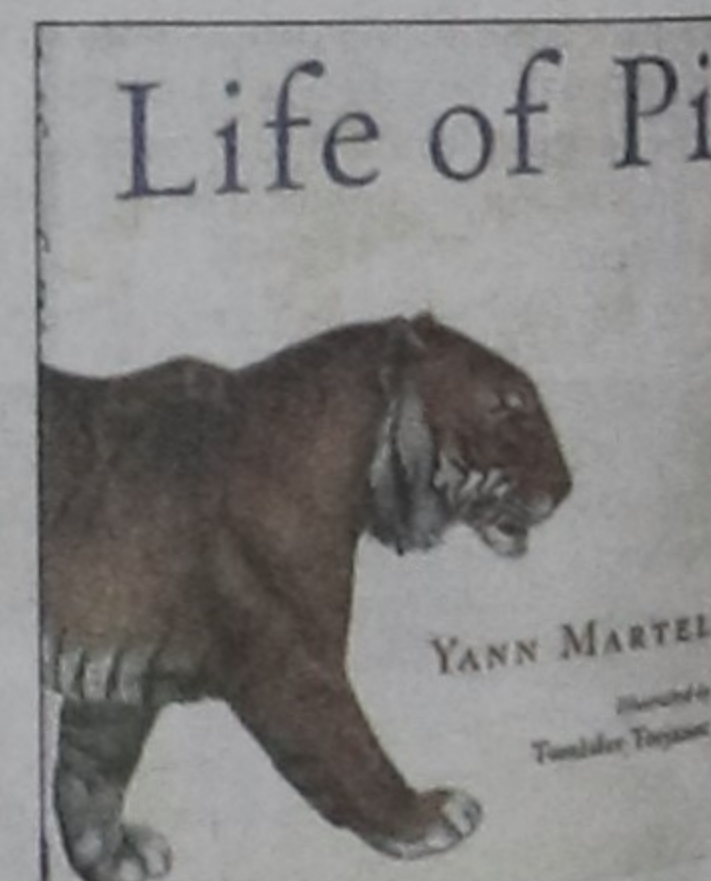
The book raises questions in the reader's mind (certainly in mine) as to what caused it to be a runaway best seller as also why it won such a prestigious literary award.

What does it take to write a Booker-winning novel?

Martyn Goff, who ran the award for 35 years, says the key is literary tourism - taking the reader somewhere they are not familiar with. "Yes, there should be a strong plot. But also there should be a description of something that most of us don't know anything about - Rushdie with India as it was, that sort of thing. People are very taken with that."

"The working definition of literary fiction is fiction that is not just concerned with story, but with how it's told as well," says American-born writer Tracy Chevalier, author of *Girl With A Pearl Earring*.

Novelists and publishers fanta-



Life of Pi
Yann Martel
Harcourt Books

sise about international success to match Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, Sebastian Faulks' *Birdsong* or Louis De Bernieres' *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*.

Seven years after publishing *Life of Pi* Yann Martel has sold a manuscript for his follow-up for around \$3 million. Martel's third novel, as yet untitled, is to be published in the United States sometime next year. Like *Life of Pi*, the new book is an allegory this time about the Holocaust involving animals. It relates the story of an encounter between a famous writer and a taxidermist who is writing a play that features dialogue between a donkey and a monkey, both imprinted on a shirt.

Hmmm. Now, does that sound interesting?

Yawn.

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