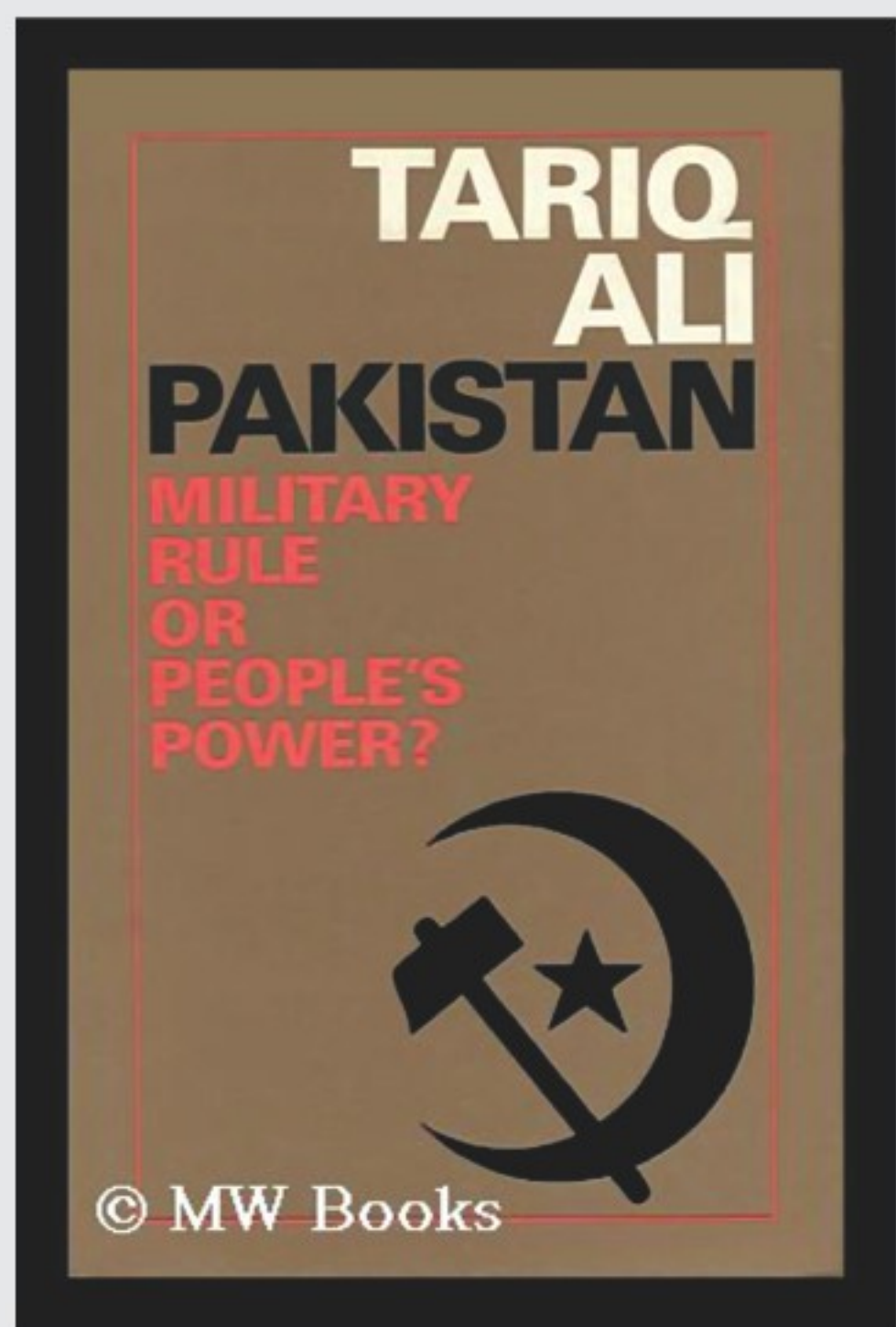
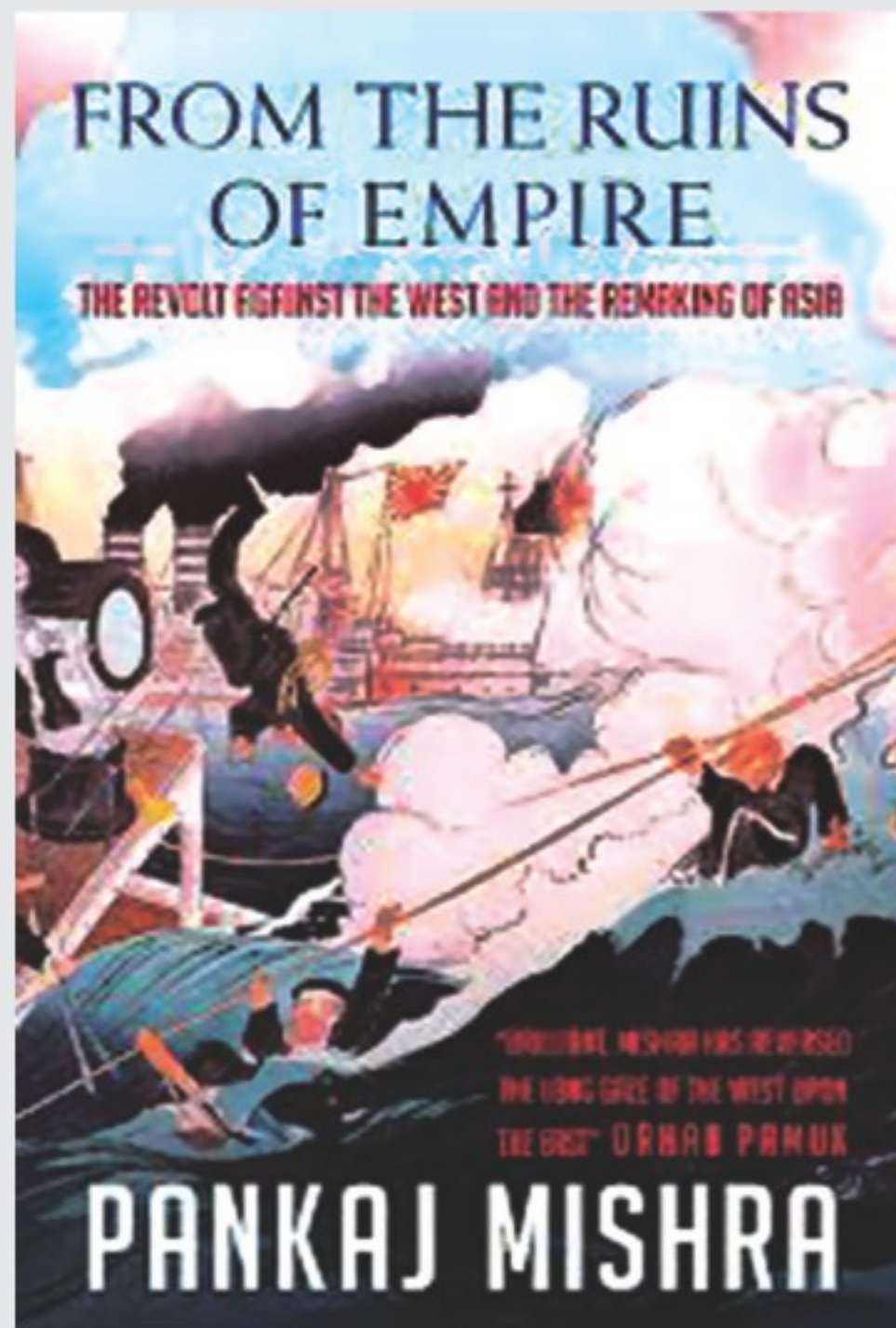


# Featured Books at Dhaka Hay 2013

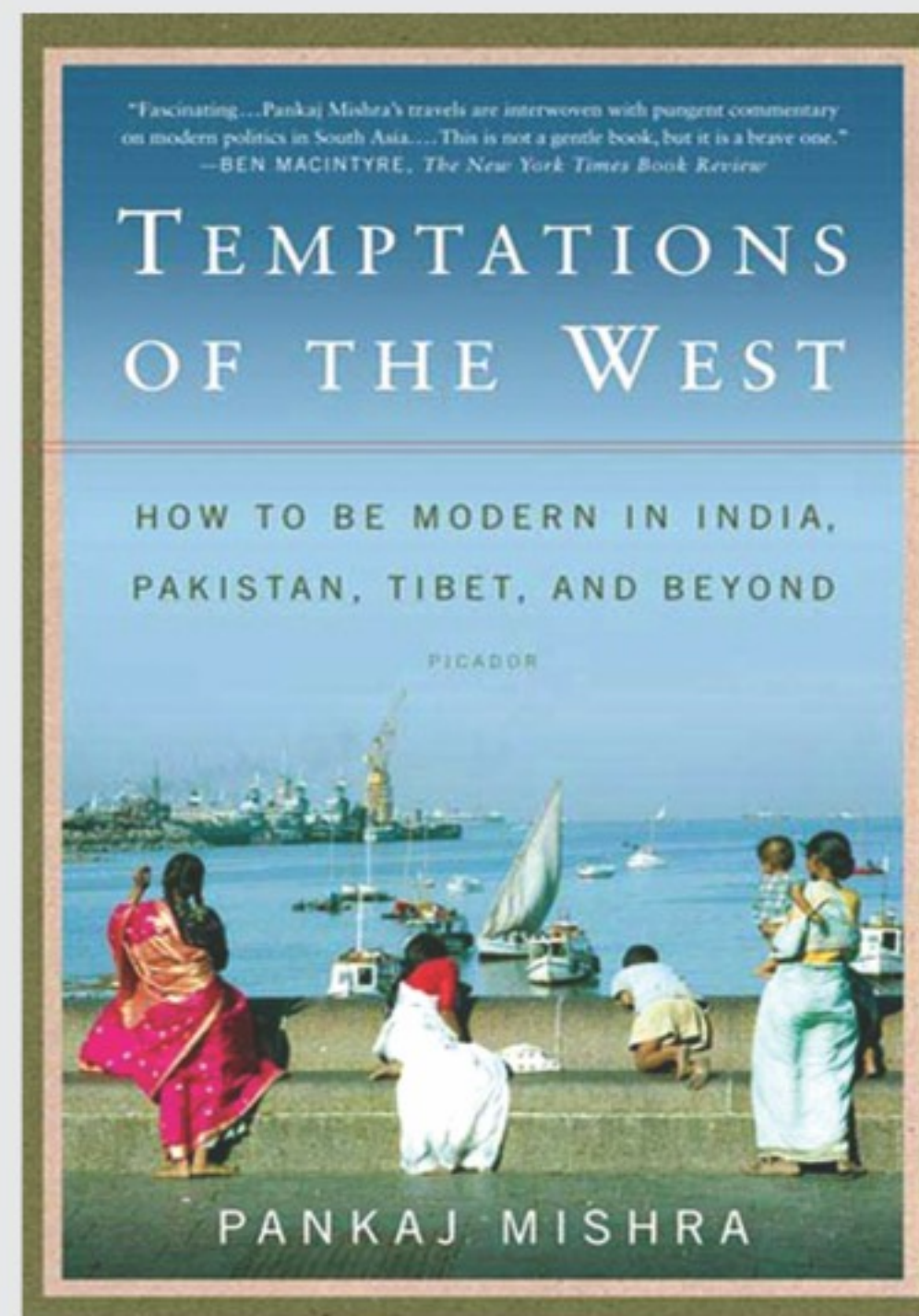
Dhaka Hay Fest 2013, like the previous year, will have quite a good number of featured books. The Star Books Review page provides readers with glimpses of a few of those books.



Few books on Pakistan are as valuable as this one by Tariq Ali. The book is focused on the turbulent politics of Pakistan since its formation in 1947. Tariq Ali shows that since partition West Pakistan has treated the East Pakistanis as subject peoples, similar in many ways to the way 19th century colonialist-imperialist powers treated people who were under their domination.



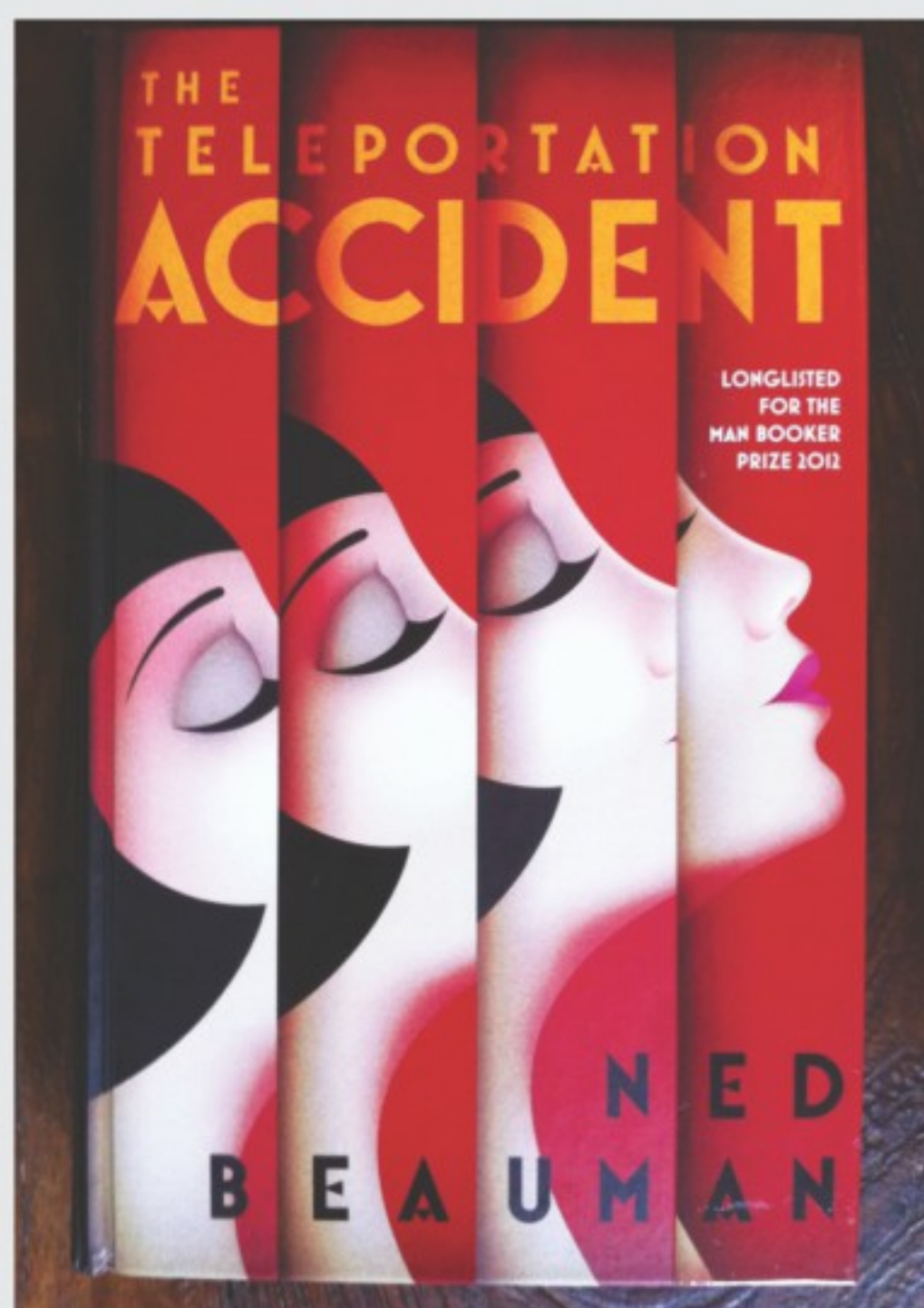
Pankaj Mishra has written a historical novel about Asia's intellectuals. The range of the history in the book is vast and extends to intellectuals from numerous countries. The book begins as Japan defeats the Russian Navy in 1905; Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mustafa Kamal and Sun Yat-sen read the news with pleasure and envision similar triumphs in their own countries.



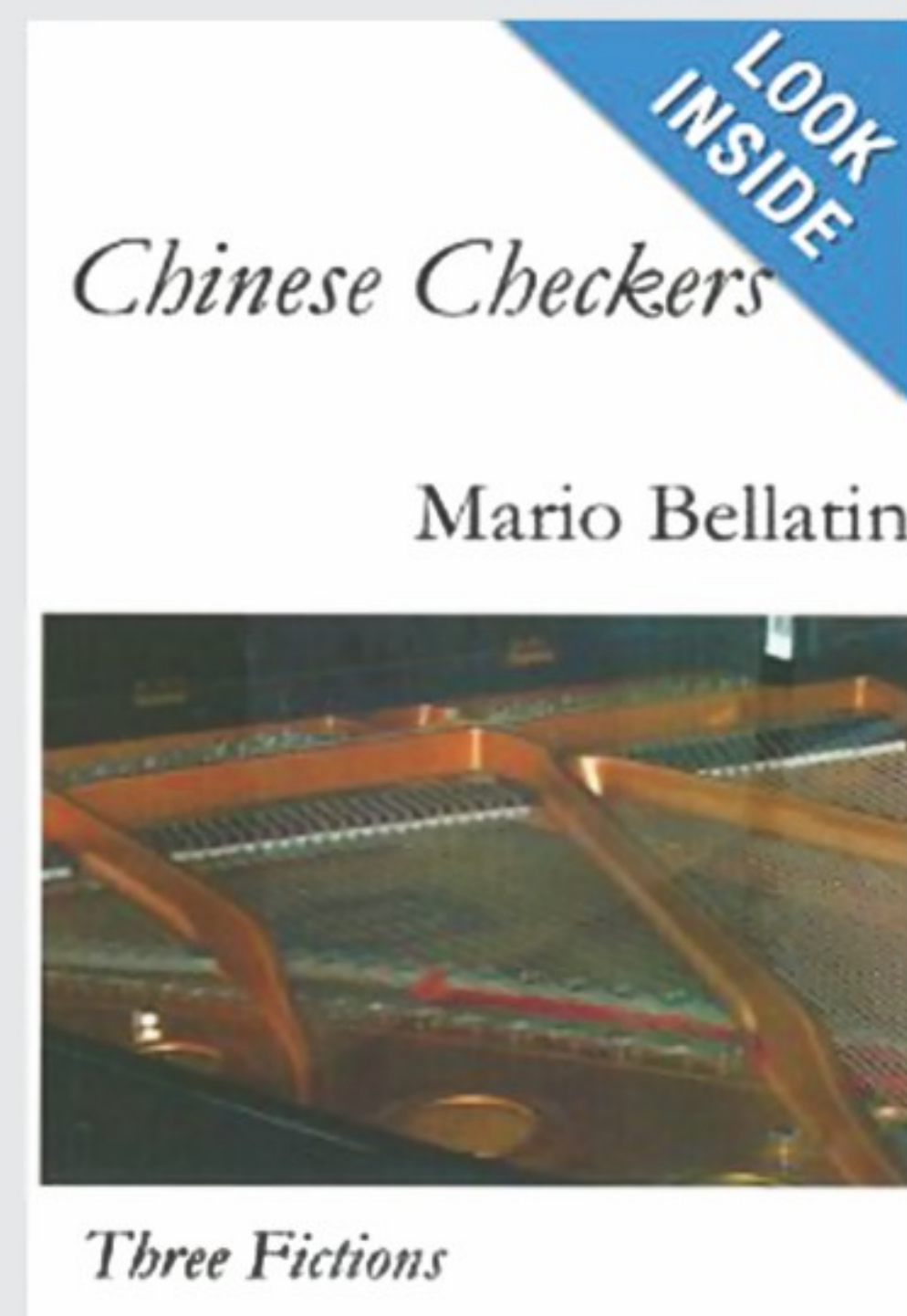
In this book Pankaj Mishra shows that countries like India and China have come a long way from just emulating Western powers. They are on their way to becoming super powers themselves but would they have been able to do this without following in the West's footsteps? In becoming more 'modern' these countries may have taken a few steps backwards by adopting some of the West's most unattractive qualities.



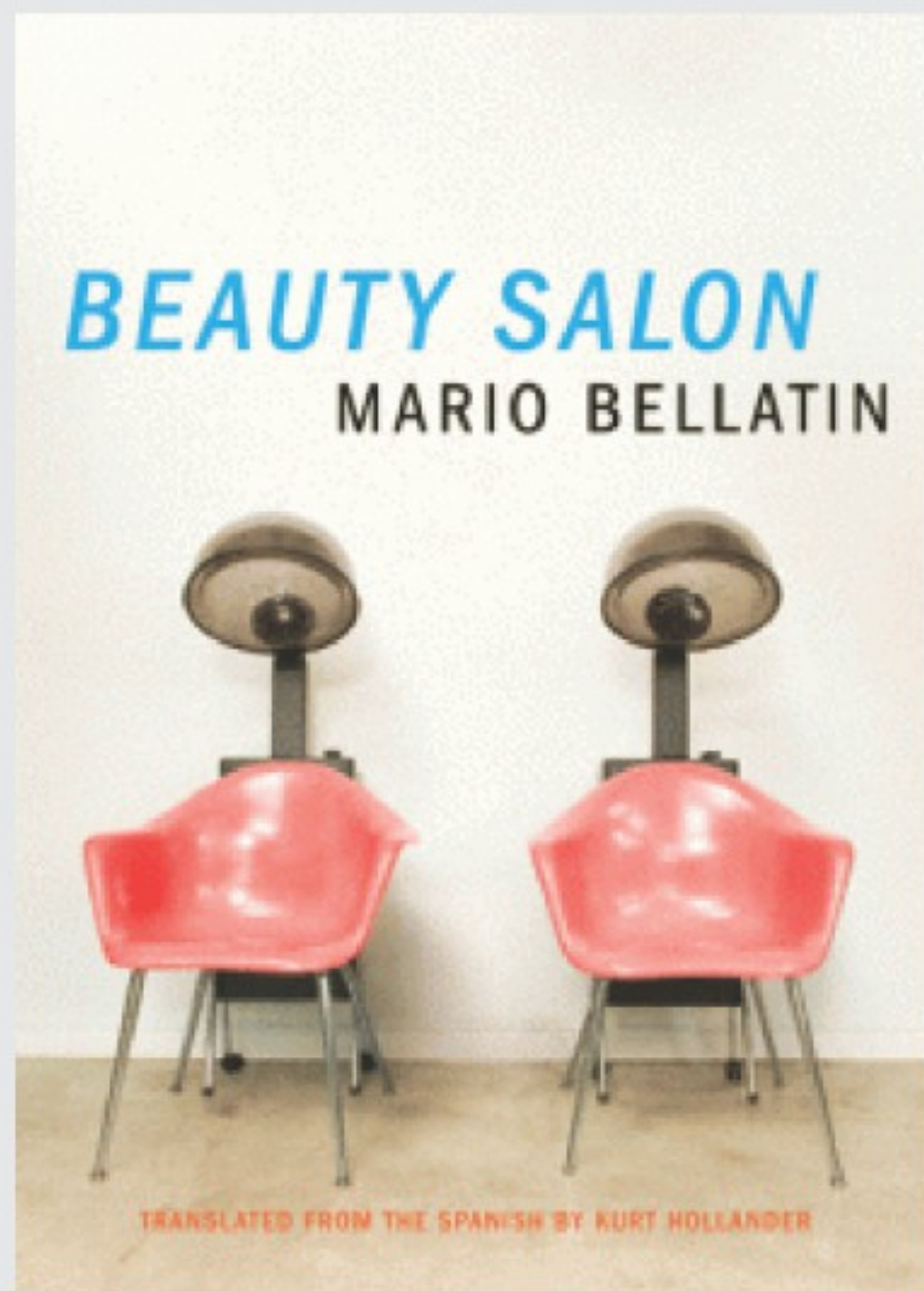
**Boxer Beetle** By Ned Beaman  
Kevin Broom is a collector of Nazi memorabilia and suffers from a disease that makes him smell like rotting fish. Certain events lead to him finding a letter relating to the fate of a late homosexual Nazi who became obsessed with a gay boxer. The novel is filled with murders, mystery and even parody.



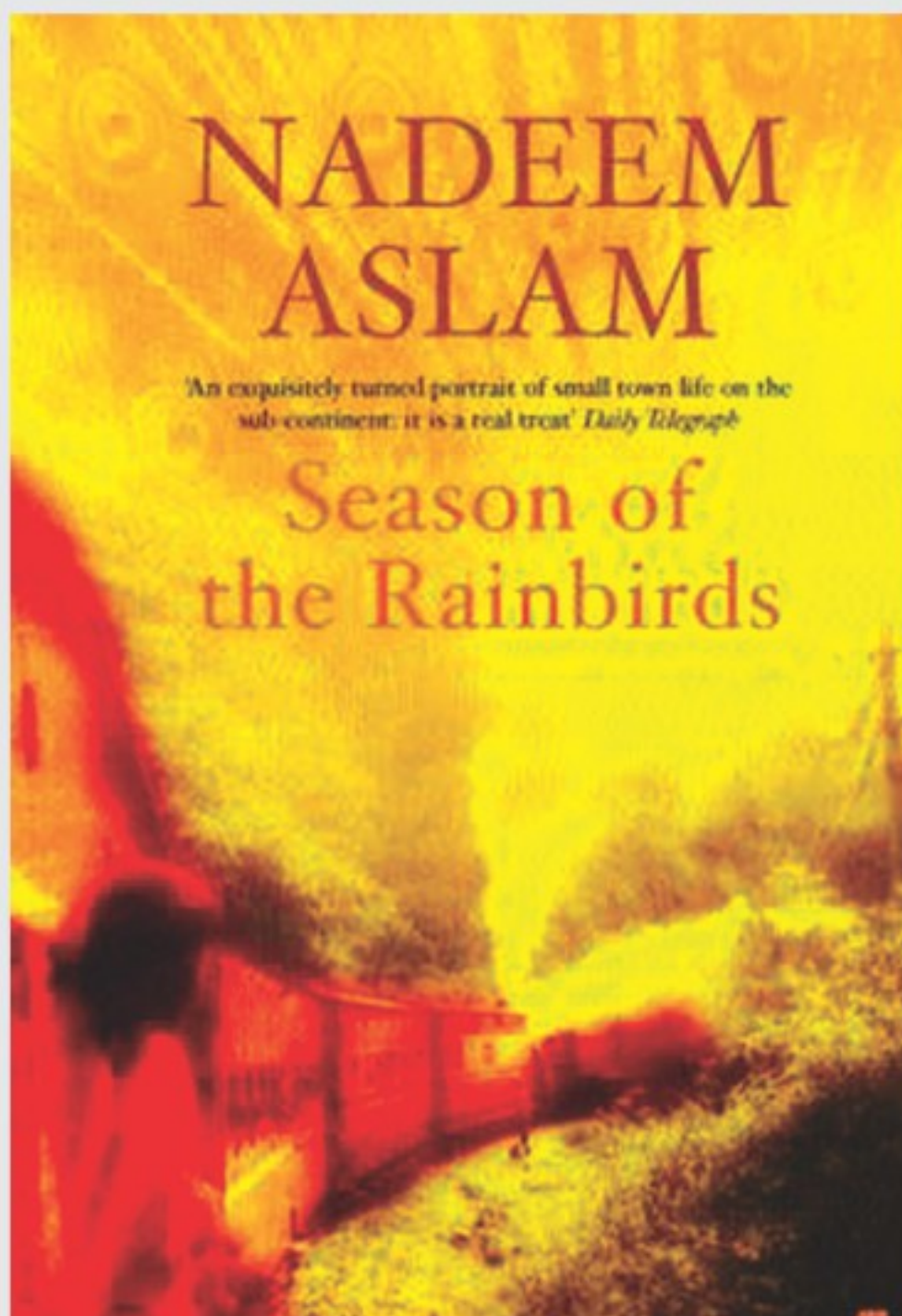
**The Teleportation Accident: A Novel** by Ned Beaman  
This is a historical story told with the help of a theatre stage designer called Egon Loeser. His hero Adriano Lavicini is the inventor of a miraculous 'Teleportation device' used for the transport of actors from one scene to another. All is well until one day the device mal-functions and kills many people.



This book by Mario Bellatin has two stories. The first story is about a gynecologist who accidentally kills his own son. The second story is about a childhood adventure of the gynecologist's patient's son. No direct relationship is given between the two stories but various interconnections may be inferred by the readers.



**Beauty Salon**, originally written in Spanish by Mario Bellatin, is a book about a homosexual beautician who turns his salon into a shelter for dying men. These men, along with the beautician, have a mysterious terminal plague (similar to AIDS) which has caused society to shun them.



**Season of the Rainbirds** By Nadeem Aslam  
A murder of a corrupt and influential judge occurs in a small village in Pakistan and a sack of letters presumed to be lost in a train crash nineteen years ago mysteriously appears, pointing towards the same village evoking several questions. What are the connections between these letters and the judge's murder? Why does so many powerful people do not want these letters to be found? The death starts a series of dramatic events involving the life of several characters of the novel – the judge's family, a Muslim deputy commissioner insolently involved with a Christian woman, a fundamentalist priest distressed with the lapses of the locals for luxuries, a feudal and pitiless property owner and a rebellious journalist reporting on the delivery of the mail packet. The story unfolds to its climax when the journalist disappears and the whole country lurches between fear and anxiety following an assassination attempt on the president. Based on the monsoon season of the 1980s, Season of the Rainbirds is a deep exploration of the apprehension between the Islamic viewpoint of life and the secular world. From the author of Maps for Lost Lovers, long-listed for the Man Booker Prize, Season of the Rainbirds is an exquisite fictional debut novel plotted against the ominous backdrop of religious tensions, assassinations, changing regimes and civil wars.

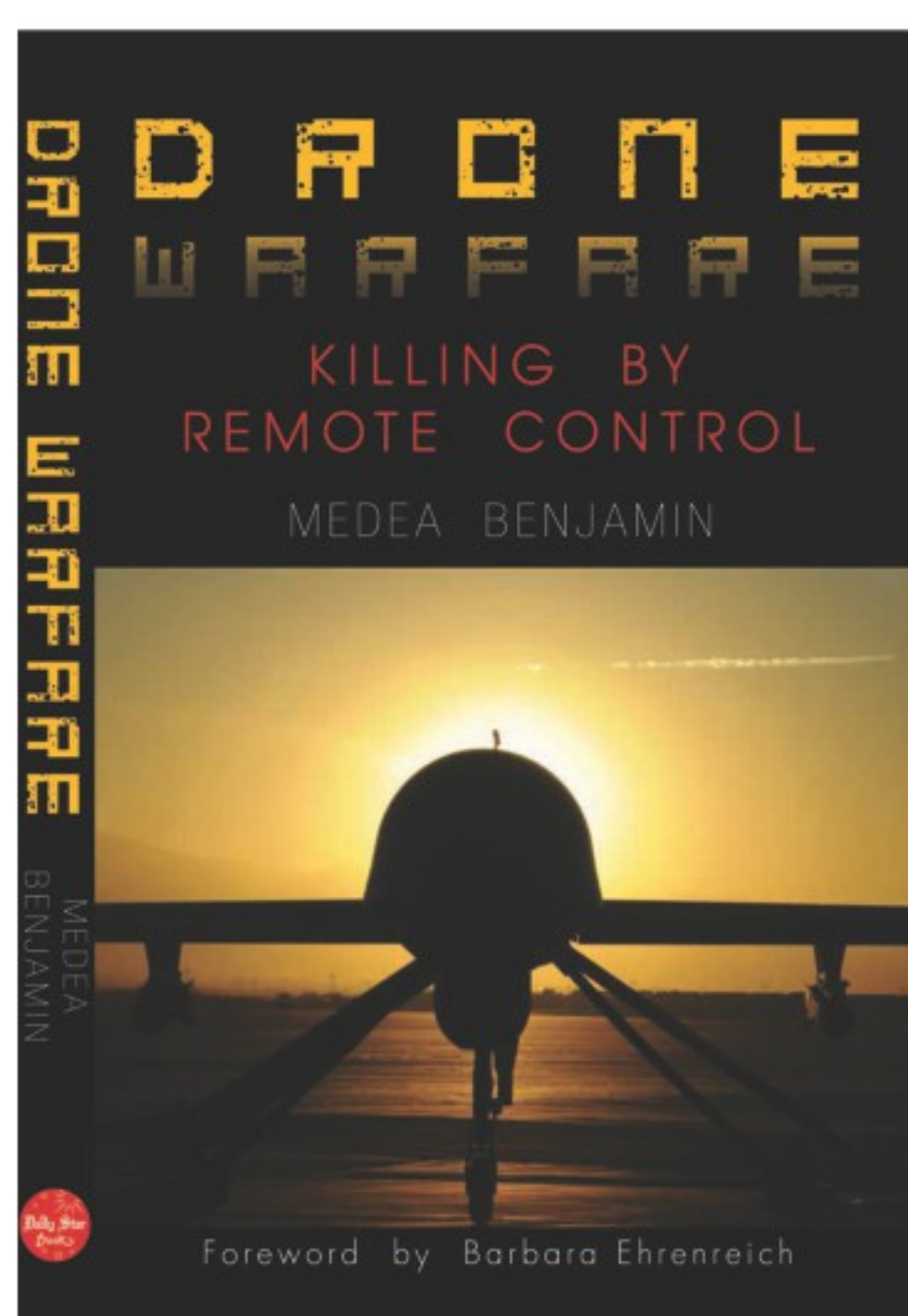
## Unmanned killing jets

Shahriar Feroze ruminates on a book that exposes history, politics and the secrets of the unmanned aerial vehicle

Medea Benjamin's *Drone Warfare* is a well researched book full of firsthand reports, investigative writing, and historical facts enriched with one-to-one encounters with victims of US drone attacks and technical information about the unmanned aerial vehicle. The book comes with fear-less comments on what she terms 'Drone politics' spearheaded by American politicians and the Pentagon.

The book, having nine chapters with an introductory note and a conclusion, comes at a time when use of drones by the US in war-torn countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Yemen has given rise to serious debates following deaths of innocent civilians and children.

The military role of unmanned aircraft systems is growing at an unprecedented rate. Its use in the US has not only been upgraded but also increased 40-fold within the span of a single decade. So has increased the mass abuse of the drone technology.



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Price Tk 400

As Benjamin's well-researched book points out, speculation about the potential of autonomous flying vehicles long predates their actual construction. It was in the early 1980s that one Abraham Kareem, chief designer for the Israeli air force, who migrated to California, began building drones in his garage with direct support from the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and, later, from the CIA. Although it may never be known how many civilians have actually died so far as a result of U.S. UAV strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq but there are estimates of thousands of innocent bystanders who have perished due to drone attacks carried out from as far as 8,000 miles and more.

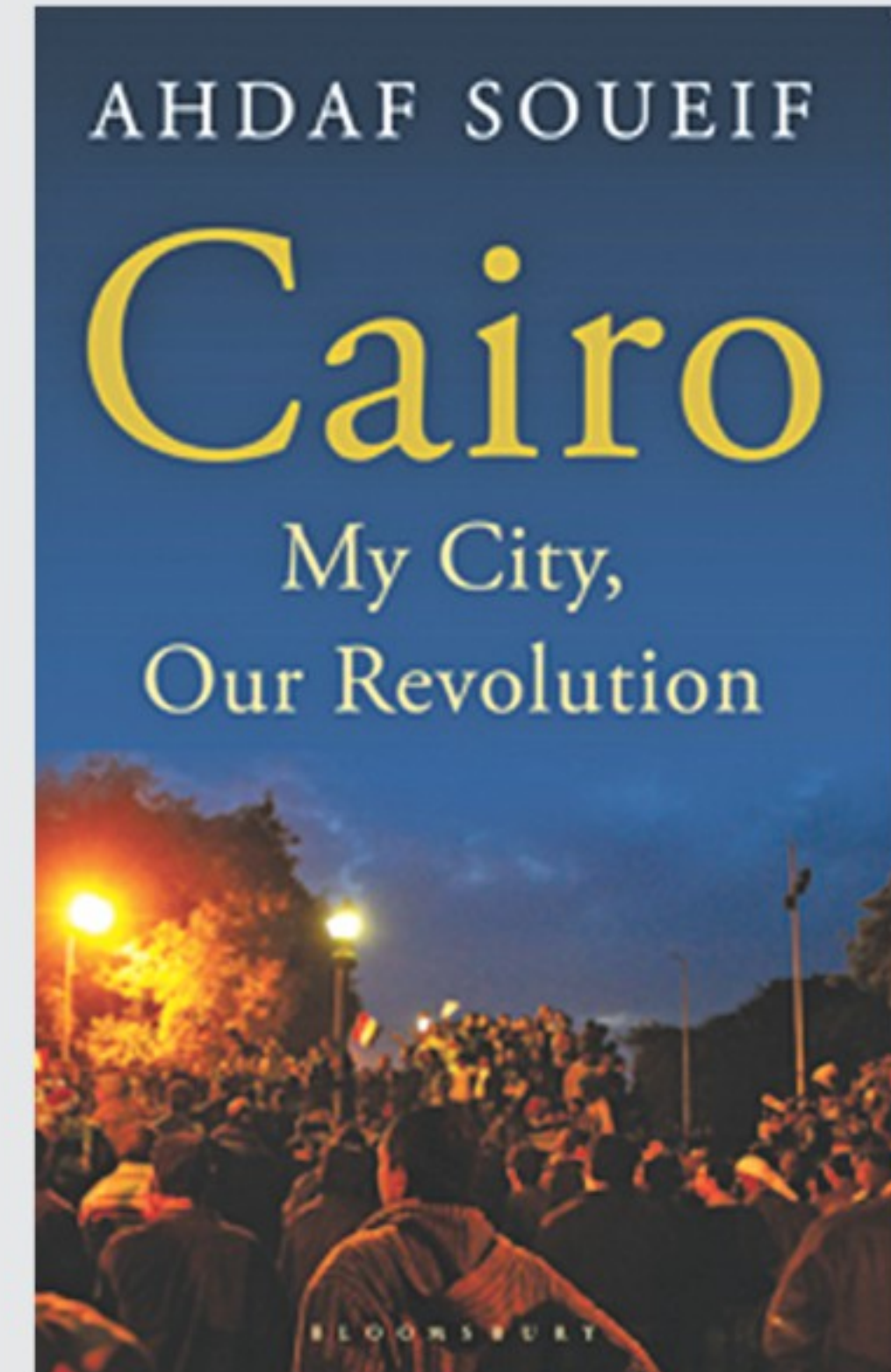
Military abuse of drones is the focus of Benjamin's book. Though initially used for surveillance, by 2003, US drones were flying 1500 hours a month in Iraq; and by 2010, 20 Predator flights were providing

some 500 hours of video surveillance a day in Afghanistan. Their use was limited during George W Bush's presidency, which Barack Obama widened by approving "targeted killing". An escalation in drone use has also been pioneered by the Israelis in Gaza.

Chapters 5-9 of the book urge readers to create a global campaign against the use of drones. To our relief, her campaign comes with jaw-dropping data, with hundreds of thousands of peace lovers supporting this cause.

Nevertheless, an advanced technology such as this can be used for the common good of mankind. It largely depends on the intention on how the technology should be used. As of late, US intentions and practices of unmanned mechanical planes known as drones have been criticized globally for an alarming number of civilian casualties in times of ongoing and non-military conflicts.

SHAHRIAR FEROZE IS CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYST, THE DAILY STAR.



In this unique and beautiful personal document of an extraordinary moment in history, Ahdaf Soueif – novelist, commentator, activist – navigates her history of Cairo and her journey through the revolution that is redrawing its future. Through a map of stories, drawn from private history and public records Soueif charts a story of the revolution that is both intimately hers and publicly Egyptian.