



ECHOES BY
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

ALAUDDIN ALI

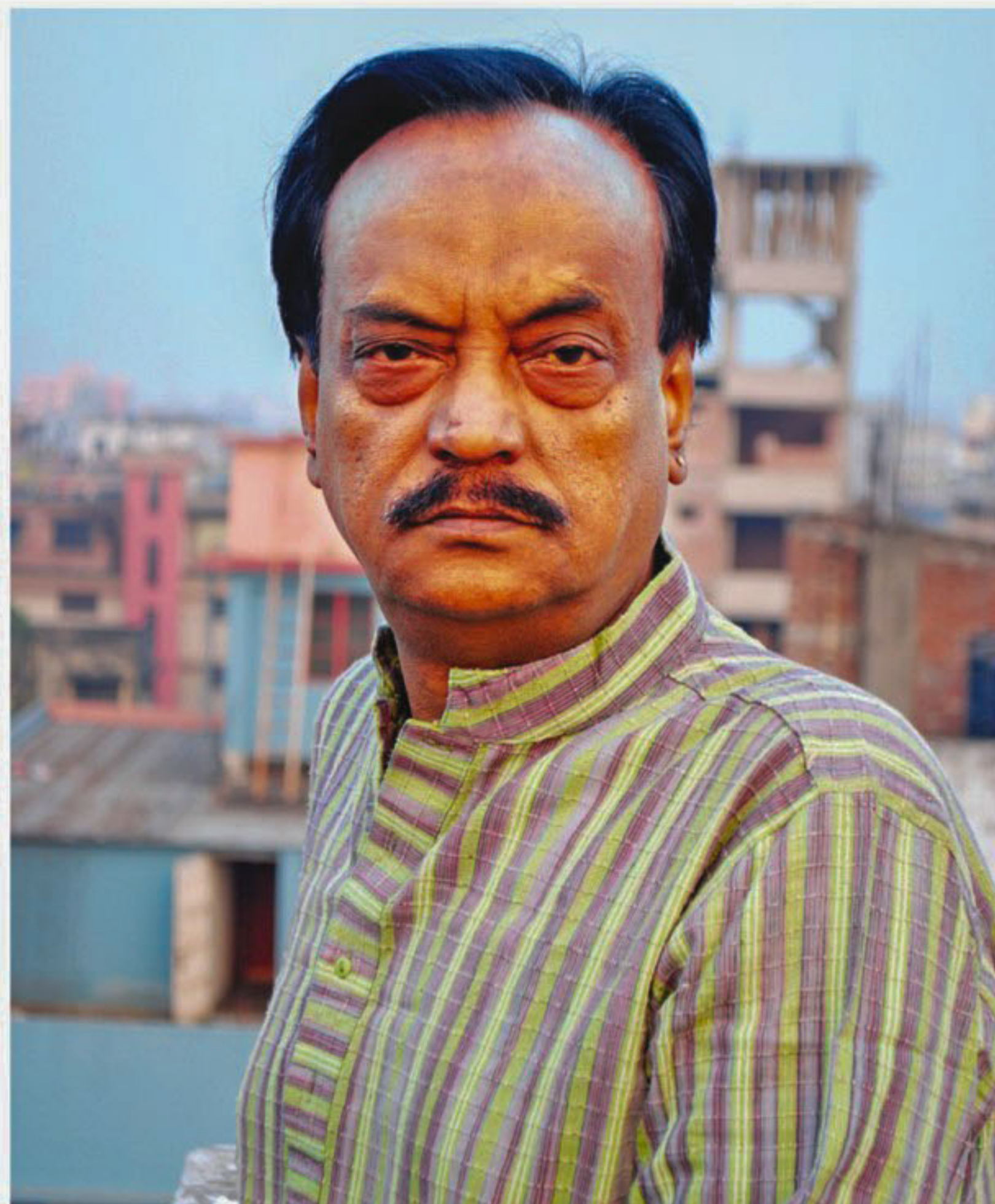
The King of Melody

It was 1971. Like many of his generation, Abul Umrah Mohammad Fakhruddin found himself at a crossroads of history. Guided by fate, he joined the Liberation War. During the war, he wrote a poem that described the seasons of Bangladesh. The poem ended with *Poush* (December). That year, *Bangla Ma* gave a *Nobanno* that was thought to be impossible: a new nation on December 16, 1971.

After the birth of Bangladesh, in 1972, Fakhruddin showed his poem to his friend, Alauddin Ali, who was working as an assistant to the music director Anwar Parvez. Although Alauddin Ali was exposed to music since childhood, he never composed a song. The lyrics read like Dwijendralal's *Dhono Dhannyo Pushpo Bhora*. Alauddin Ali mixed major notes with flat notes to bring out the melancholy in the lyrics. Thus was born *O Amar Bangla Ma Tor*: the first of hundreds of timeless melodies.

Alauddin Ali's first cinema as a music director was *Shondhikkhon* in 1975. He was only 23 then. Not too much happened in the next couple of years. However, in 1977/78, Alauddin Ali and Amzad Hossain teamed up for timeless movies and timeless tunes. Over the years, Alauddin Ali has directed music for more than 300 films. He has composed many tunes for radio and television as well. Arguably, Alauddin Ali is our SD Burman.

Alauddin Ali and SD Burman were two of one of a kind. SD Burman was to Hindi films what Alauddin Ali has been to Bangladeshi films and the music industry. Collaboration between Dev Anand and SD Burman created timeless tunes in timeless films like *Taxi Driver* (1954), *Guide* (1965), *Jewel Thief* (1967), and others.



Collaboration between Amzad Hossain and Alauddin Ali did the same with *Golapi Ekhon Train-e* (1978), *Koshai* (1980), *Jonmo Theke Jolchhi* (1981), *Bhat De* (1984), and others.

SD Burman's timeless melodies established the two playback divas of Hindi cinema in Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle. Similarly, timeless melodies by Alauddin Ali cemented the positions of the two playback divas of Bangladeshi music – Runa Laila and Sabina Yasmin.

The list of accolades goes on and on. Alauddin Ali is our only music director whose tunes have been sung by artistes from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. All in all, he has gifted tunes to around 5,000 compositions. If you didn't know before, you know now. Before Alauddin Ali, for decades Kazi Nazrul Islam held the record for composing the highest number of songs in Bangla. That record now stands with Alauddin Ali and is counting.

Musicians and poets are the soul of a nation. They leave behind their words and their melodies. These words and melodies resonate in peoples' hearts long after they have gone.

Today, December 24 is Alauddin Ali's birthday. Make a YouTube search under his name. Count the artistes who have had a hit song as a playback singer to his tunes. See how many timeless melodies you never knew were his tunes. Chances are very high that on talent-hunt programmes, the tunes of Alauddin Ali are the ones that will stand out. These are the tunes that will keep Alauddin Ali, the King of Melody in Bangladesh, alive for generations to come.

Asrar Chowdhury teaches economic theory and game theory in the classroom. Outside he listens to music and BBC Radio; follows Test Cricket; and plays the flute. He can be reached at: asrar.chowdhury@facebook.com

Beginner's Guide to Nonfiction

ISHTIAQ AHMED

When we talk about narrative literature, we generally mean fiction. Thrillers, fantasy, detective novels – name anything, and it's probably a category of fiction. But what about non-fiction narratives? What are they? Have you read one already and don't know yet? Let's find out.

Know what's it all about

Nonfictions deal with facts, experiences and ideas. A good fiction is subjective, whereas nonfiction can be both subjective and objective. It all depends on the author's writing style, perspective and what message he wants to convey to the readers. There are tons of literature websites explaining detailed characteristics and types of nonfictions. Go ahead and look them up on the internet.

Find out what specific type interests you

There are many specific types of nonfictions and not necessarily all of them will interest you. Biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, journals, travelogues, literary criticisms, book reviews, books about science, sports, history, politics, philosophy etc. all these are nonfiction categories. It's a huge genre. Suppose it is sports that you are passionate about; there are a variety of non-fiction categories such as sports science, biographies of athletes and sports history that may cater

to you.

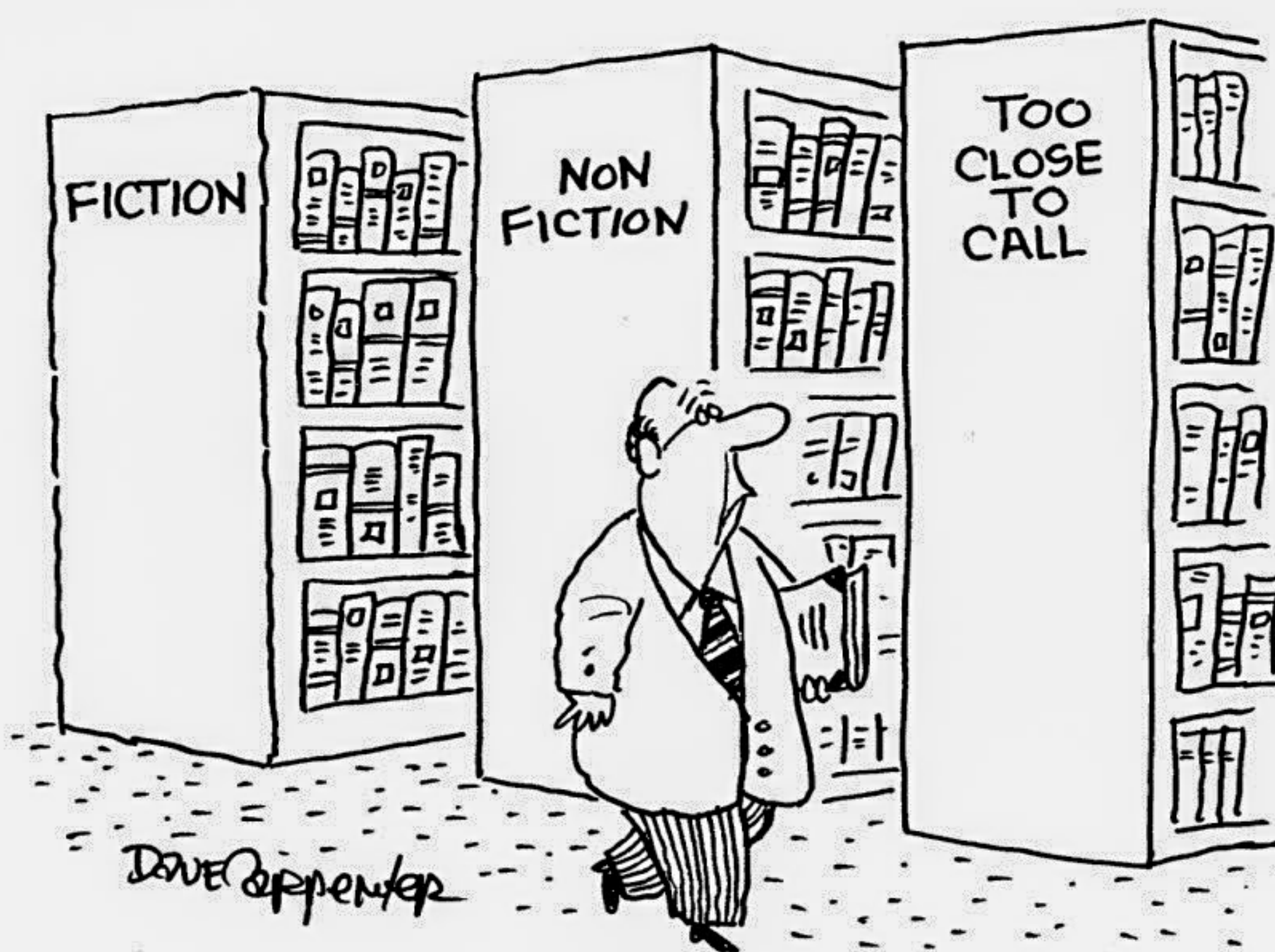
List down books you "should" read and prioritize them

The best privilege of reading nonfictions is that you can handpick topics or areas that interest you and read books written about that particular field of interest. It gives you an unprecedented reading liberty – the kind you more often than not won't get while reading fiction. So now that you have identified your category of interest, you have to find out

the best books of that category. Ask people who have similar interests for suggestions. Go on the internet and search. A particular website can help you a lot while prioritizing: Goodreads has a plethora of customized lists tailored just for your topic of interest.

How many authors to follow

This basically depends on the type of nonfiction. Let's say you don't have the time to read a lot of authors, and are into travelogues. You can quite happily read



Paul Theroux for the rest of your life without touching Bill Bryson. This is a more subjective type of nonfiction and one author can be enough. If you want to get an objective understanding of an issue such as the Israel-Palestine Conflict, you should read the works of multiple authors to get a substantial idea of the whole thing. People tend to be biased, more often than not, and authors aren't an exception either. History, politics, etc. demand that you read a wide base of authors.

Don't over-read

Reading supposed to be fun, and one common complaint about nonfictions is this – that they make you absorb so much information it can be a bit of a chore to read. It's best to take your time reading a non-fiction piece, and you probably shouldn't finish one book and pick up another. Try mixing things up. Read a thriller or fantasy novel after finishing a time-consuming autobiography. Balance heavy reads with lighter reads.

You're well set now. Go, explore the magical (er, factual!) world of nonfictions!

Ishtiaq Ahmed is a travel enthusiast who devours fictions, dreams of Paris and writes only when his brain parasites need a place to crash. Can be reached at Ishtiaq_Ahmed_26@yahoo.com