

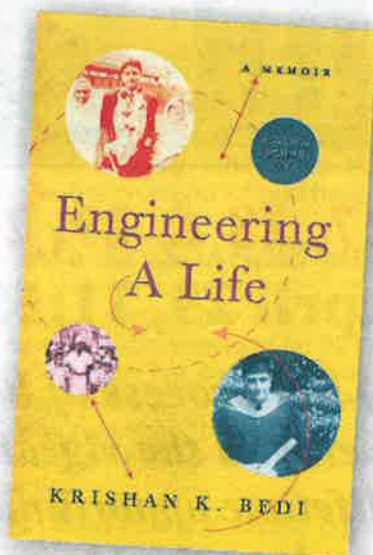
BOOK REVIEWS



"Our Time Has Come: How India is Making its Place in the World" (340 pages; \$27.95) by Alyssa Ayres; published by Oxford University Press (www.oup.com/us)

India is on the march and there is just no stopping the third largest economy (GDP PPP share of world total), the third biggest military and by 2022, the most populous country in the world. So points out the author, who served as U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asia from 2010-2013. Of course, India has several vulnerabilities, notes Ayres, such as being home to the largest number of the world's poor, strained infrastructure in dire

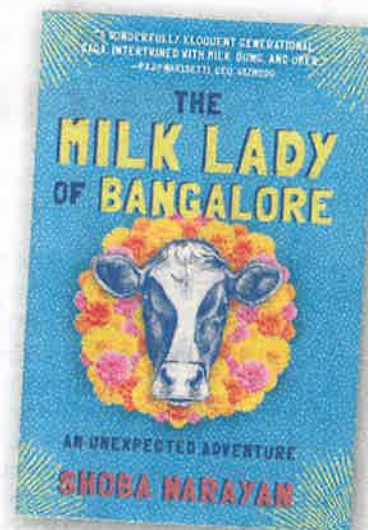
need of repair, social discrimination and religious tensions, and its location in a tough neighborhood with Pakistan and China presenting challenges at every turn. While recognizing that Pakistan is a security threat, she writes with assurance, "Pakistan-based terrorist groups can do harm, but they cannot alter the fundamental transformation that has now positioned India among the world's largest economies and with a significant contribution to global democracy, peace and security, development, and governance." As India and America are drawn closer, she has several suggestions for the world's sole Superpower such as developing stronger bilateral ties, expanding technical partnership with India on democracy, etc. Just as importance is given to countries like Japan, China, Russia, Brazil, India's significance to U.S. national interests should also receive some spotlight, she suggests. "India, as a major rising power of Asia, should be better understood and better appreciated in its own terms—as a competitiveness issue for U.S. economic and business interests, and as a matter of the demands of the new global diplomacy in which all of Asia plays a much more pivotal role," writes Ayres. Whether you are an Indophile or not, this is a book to treasure as India moves toward "making its place in the world." Against all odds.



"Engineering a Life – A Memoir" (312 pages; \$16.95) by Krishan K. Bedi; published by Spark Press (www.gosparkpress.com)

"The Milk Lady of Bangalore: An Unexpected Adventure" (256 pages; \$24.95) by Shoba Narayan; published by Algonquin Books (www.algonquin.com, www.shobanarayan.com)

After 20 years in the U.S., the author and her family return to India. One fine day, she comes across a cow in the elevator of her modern high-rise apartment building. There it stood, angled diagonally to fit, not looking uncomfortable, merely impatient and tethered to its owner, Sarala, the milk lady who sells milk right across the apartment. "It is for the housewarming ceremony on the third floor," reveals Sarala. The two quickly become close friends, which kicks off a wild adventure in search of a new milk cow. Though both women come from diverse backgrounds, they bond together. Along the way, the reader is treated to a history lesson of the cow in Indian culture and life in general as well. With a dose of wild humor. "Cows may foretell death, but they also give life." "Cows are not slow; they are just deliberate. Cows don't linger; they rush to their calves like a river rushes to sea." "The Sanskrit word for cow is go, and cows are venerated as Go-matha, or 'Cow-mother.'" "Milk is my way of reconnecting with the patch of earth that I call home." "There are certain explanations that you can use with impunity in India – traffic jams and power cuts being two of them. I plunge in with the delicacy of an assassin." "Is grief a luxury that the poor cannot afford, caught as they are in the business of making ends meet?" "I hate goodbyes. Always have. Goodbyes are guilt on steroids." We too hated saying goodbye to this superbly written and stirring book by Shoba Narayan. This one deserves a spot on your must-read list for the year.



him, "Krishan, if you really want something, you should not give up simply because it is too hard. Please, you have my blessing to

OUR TIME