

BOOKS



SANDESH AND SNAPSHOTS, METRO AND MEMORIES — THE LAUNCH OF RAVINDER SINGH'S *LIKE IT HAPPENED YESTERDAY* WAS ONE 'YESTERDAY' TO REMEMBER

Pouring rain, maddening traffic and yet Salini Kanoi was intent on battling all odds to get a pack of sweets from Balaram Mullick & Radharaman Mullick for her 'special date'. "I came to know about his love for *sandesh* from Facebook and I just knew that I must get it for him. Even I love this sweet," said the BCom student as she shot forward with her pack of white *sandesh*.

On Saturday, Salini and 300 others geared up for a 'special date' in their own little way. But who was The Date?!

It was not *fangiri* for any film star, but for an author who has managed to connect with many a romantic soul in India through his words. Turning up at Crossword, Elgin Road, meant a chance to catch up with Ravinder Singh.

Tall and spunky, dressed in khaki pant and red 'Bullet' tee, the 31-year-old behind the 2009 bestseller *I Too Had a Love Story*, was in town to launch his third book *Like It Happened Yesterday* (Penguin, Rs 140), and take his Calcutta readers on a trip down memory lane.

Joined by film-maker Mainak Bhaumik and Tathagata 'Theatreclan' Chowdhury, it was an evening of connecting with readers for the Delhi-based bestselling author.

"This is the first time that I'm taking pictures of my readers, since you all have turned up in such huge numbers," said Ravinder, inspiring them to pose for their moment in Ravinder's album.

"I just loved reading your book. Loved it, loved it, loved it. You are writing about an era that was pre-WatsApp, pre-Twitter, pre-narcissism..." said Mainak, before plunging into a discussion of the



(Clockwise from above) Ravinder Singh and Mainak Bhaumik at the launch of *Like It Happened Yesterday* at Crossword, Elgin Road, on Saturday; fangirl Salini Kanoi's *sandesh* moment with Ravinder; the author busy clicking the crowd of readers. Pictures: Sayantan Ghosh

yesteryear, comparing childhood notes and growing-up years, from Odisha to USA.

"My mom hails from Calcutta. So one of my earliest memories of this city is travelling by Samaleswari Express from Odisha to Calcutta. The treats of *chamcham* and *sandesh*, Durga Puja at Md Ali Park and the Metro in Calcutta... 20 years back, it was a unique experience and I remember being amazed how there could be air-conditioning underground or how the train suddenly came above ground at Tollygunge. I also remember running up and down the escalators at the stations," shared Ravinder, making an

instant connect with the Calcuttan.

Soon it was raining questions for the Indian School of Business graduate, who chose his passion as his profession. Questions, wishes and demands flowed aplenty even as readers jostled in a queue to get their books signed.

Ravinder was Mr Patience, promising to be the "last man standing" unless the store decided to down the shutters!

Sreyoshi Dey

Were you there at Ravinder's book launch? Tell t2@abp.in



"The book released on June 15, but I didn't buy it as I would have ended up reading it. I was waiting for today, to get it signed by him, and then read my personally-autographed copy," smiled homemaker **UPASANA VORA**.



"I was introduced to Ravinder's books by my friend and right since I laid my hands on the first one, I have loved his stories. He really writes from the heart," said South City College student **ADRIJA BANERJEE**.



"I know I am *too* young for his books, but even then I really like his stories. I came all the way from Dakshineswar just to meet him," said 13-year-old **SAMPURNA CHANDRA**, a student at WWA Cossipore English School.



ANKITA AUDDY was one really 'strong' fan as she brought along seven of her friends to the launch, even though none of the others has ever read Ravinder. "His writings are for us, the students. It's like our lives come alive in those pages," said the Victoria Institution (College) student.