

**Bookends**

Akshita Nanda

**Who:** Music historian V. Sriram, 47.

The British citizen, who lives in Chennai, has been writing for more than a decade about music and heritage for Indian newspapers such as *The Hindu* and *Madras Musings*.

He will give a lecture in Singapore, on the historic and modern temple dancers of South India on Saturday evening.

The free talk – at the National Library Building in Victoria Street – is part of Samarpana, the festival of Asian classical dance.

The festival also features performances from local flamenco dance troupes *Flamenco sin Fronteras*.

Sriram is married to an educator and has two teenage sons.

**What are you reading now?**

*Raga'n Josh* by the late Indian singer-author Sheila Dhar. It is a hilarious autobiography of her journey into the world of Hindustani music.

As for fiction, I have been reading a lot of Jeffrey Archer and, recently, *The Collected Short Stories*, which was so enjoyable.

The other one is a book by Calcutta-born, New York-based author Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace*.

I really enjoy it because it talks about Calcutta, where I grew up.

A book I would recommend that everyone read is *India After Gandhi* by Indian historian Ramachandra Guha. It is a phenomenally good book to



PHOTO: THE HINDU

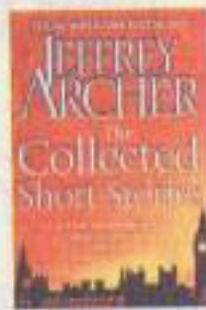
understand India and, despite the book's size, the writing just flows.

The other book I enjoyed was *A History Of Modern Britain* by Scottish journalist Andrew Marr, which starts with British history after World War II. I find it very refreshing compared to similar histories, which repeat a lot of the same thing.

**What book would you save from a burning house?**

A house full of books burning is the greatest tragedy that could befall anybody. I would not want to contemplate it.

If I had to, I would save the books of P.G. Wodehouse and Khushwant Singh because they make you laugh and remind you that you can get other copies of the lost books elsewhere.

*The Glass Palace*

*The Glass Palace* by Amitav Ghosh (2001, Random House, \$20.33), *The Collected Short Stories* by Jeffrey Archer (2013, Pan Macmillan, \$17.66) and *A History Of Modern Britain* by Andrew Marr (2008, Pan Macmillan, \$24.95) are available at Books Kinokuniya.

*Raga'n Josh* by Sheila Dhar (2005, Permanent Black, \$20.50) and *India After Gandhi* by Ramachandra Guha (2008 reprint, Harper Perennial, \$16.20) are available from Amazon.com

