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Pause & Ponder

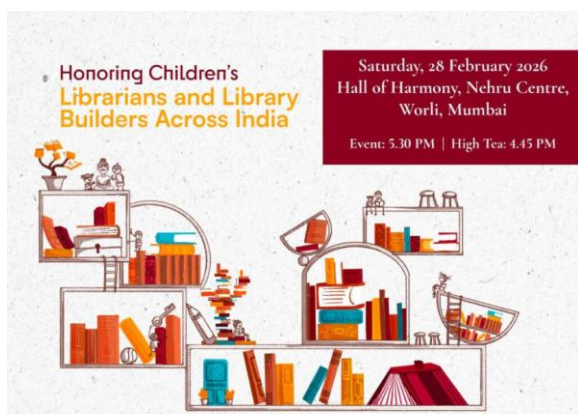
“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who’ll decide where to go.”

–Dr. Seuss

****Readers Please Note****

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H T Parekh Foundation to Host Inaugural Harsha Parekh Librarian Awards in Mumbai



The H T Parekh Foundation is set to host the inaugural Harsha Parekh Librarian Awards (HPLA) on Saturday, 28 February 2026, at the Hall of Harmony, Nehru Centre, recognising the contribution of children’s librarians and library leaders from across India.

The initiative comes at a time when discussions around literacy, digital distraction, and evolving education systems are gaining prominence. The Harsha Parekh Librarian Awards seek to highlight the role of librarians in shaping young minds and fostering reading cultures within communities nationwide.

The awards honour individuals who extend their impact beyond traditional

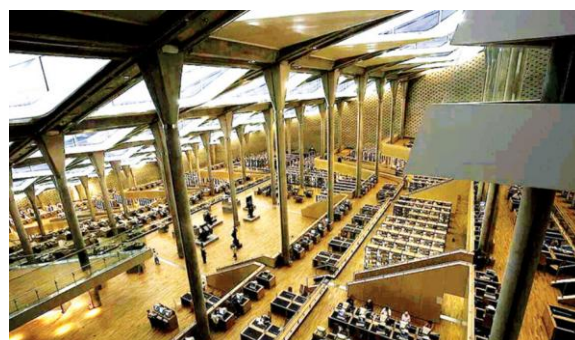
library management. From building inclusive library spaces and designing innovative reading programmes to expanding access in underserved communities, the recognised librarians have contributed to advancing curiosity, imagination, and lifelong learning among children.

As part of the inaugural ceremony, awardees will participate in a discussion focused on reading cultures, community literacy, and the future of libraries in India. The conversation is expected to explore the evolving role of libraries in supporting educational equity and social development.

Through the Harsha Parekh Librarian Awards, the Foundation aims to strengthen awareness of the critical role libraries play in enabling access to knowledge and opportunity. By celebrating excellence in librarianship, the initiative seeks to encourage greater institutional backing and public recognition for professionals working to expand learning opportunities for young readers...

Source: [EventFAQs Media, 26 Feb 2026](#)

Libraries as critical infrastructure: Cambodian Librarians Association highlights knowledge security in digital era



The Cambodian Librarians Association (CLA) is positioning libraries at the

centre of national and global resilience discussions following international attention from Mark Williams, Editor-in-Chief of The New Publishing Standard (TNPS), a global publishing industry journal published by StreetLib, which recently highlighted a CLA webinar exploring security risks to knowledge access, including the role of space-based infrastructure.

The webinar, part of CLA's "Global Power, Intelligence, and Trusted Information" series, featured a lecture by space-warfare theorist Paul Szymanski examining how disruptions to satellite systems could affect education, research, publishing, and public information access worldwide. While the topic may appear unconventional for the library sector, the discussion was fundamentally about information access and public safety rather than military strategy...

Source: [Khmer Times, 26 Feb 2026](#)

'Where knowledge is free... ': 5 Kolkata libraries you don't need a membership to walk into



Kolkata is often celebrated for its bustling streets, extravagant festivals and popular eateries that almost never go quiet. But for book lovers, the city offers quaint reading spaces where the urban cacophony cannot get to you — and many of these facilities are free of cost.

Here are five such libraries that offer free reading spaces within the city's alleys.

Jagat Mukherjee Park Library

Run by Satyaranjan Dolui, a security guard at Jagat Mukherjee Park, this reading space tucked amid lush greenery is home to a vibrant collection of books. From magazines to children's classics, the Jagat Mukherjee Park library houses over 1,000 books, easily qualifying as a reader's paradise.

Address: 1, Jatindra Mohan Ave, Shobhabazar

Timings: 7am to 9pm

Little Free Library...

Source: [The Telegraph, 25 Feb 2026](#)

U.S. Library, Museum Projects to Receive \$4.1M for AI Literacy



As artificial intelligence continues to loom large over the future of the American workforce, federal officials are looking beyond K-12 classrooms and higher education programming to prepare the public for a transformative digital age, including an AI-driven economy.

The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is providing over \$4.1 million in grant funding for eight projects designed to turn these American cultural institutions into

learning spaces for AI literacy. A recent news release from IMLS said the investment is part of a strategic federal push to leverage museums and libraries as "catalysts for AI learning and workforce preparation," consistent with the Trump administration's AI education priorities that prompted the AI Action Plan and a 2025 executive order focused on expanding tech education...

Source: [government technology](#), 25 Feb 2026

Why every scientist needs a librarian



Librarians can be key research partners who help to scour the literature, manage data and make science open.

Walk into a big academic library, and chances are you'll enter a hushed space with soaring ceilings. "It's like going into a church or a place of worship," says Jane Harvell, director of library culture and heritage at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK.

But academic scientists don't always take full advantage of these temples of knowledge, which have morphed from places full of quiet, dusty stacks to dynamic research centres with the latest technologies. Researchers who do enter these hallowed spaces seeking help with their toughest research questions might encounter coding classes, maker spaces, platforms for citizen-science

projects or students and researchers engaged in a hackathon. Librarians like to say that an hour in the library is worth a month in the laboratory, quips Kristin Briney, biology and biological engineering librarian at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena, California. And the Caltech library team points out that a researcher could avoid hours of solo Internet searching by just sending a quick e-mail to a specialist librarian to get the same results.

Depending on their positions and skill sets, librarians might have job titles such as information specialist, informationist or knowledge manager. Whatever they're called, they can help scientists to search every relevant database to start a literature review, ensure they comply with evolving requirements to make their data or papers freely accessible, and separate the good from the bad in search results or code generated by artificial intelligence. Moreover, the need for data experts in the library makes it a possible career path for scientists (see 'From bench to bookshelves')...

Source: [Nature](#), 23 Feb 2026

How transparent policies can protect Florida school libraries amid efforts to ban books



Florida has ranked No. 1 in the United States when it comes to banning books for the past three years, with 2,300

books removed or restricted from public school libraries.

What's driving these numbers are small, grassroots organizations made up of vocal, media-savvy members. Moms for Liberty is one of the best known to school and public librarians.

Moms for Liberty has chapters in every state, with a particularly active Florida chapter that has been aided by legislation easing restrictions on banning books under Governor Ron DeSantis. Moms for Liberty created and regularly updates a document it calls the Book of Books, with a content-based rating system the organization created. The document is meant to serve as a template that parents can use to make complaints about a book to school boards and school district administrators.

In some cases, book challenges have gone beyond heated public debates, escalating to harassment and even death threats against school librarians...

Source: [The Conversation, 23 Feb 2026](#)

Gujarat budget 2026-27: Gandhinagar to get India's largest library



Gandhinagar: In a major push to provide citizens with access to digital resources, the Gujarat govt on Wednesday announced a budgetary allocation of Rs

100 crore for setting up the Namo Central Library, the largest in the country, in Gandhinagar.

"Study and reading facilities will be provided in digital form here," said finance minister Kanu Desai in his budget speech.

An additional Rs 50 crore was allocated to set up digital libraries in municipal corporations. Desai added that 15 such libraries are proposed to be set up in 2026-27 as part of the govt's ongoing programme to set up Birsa Munda libraries in all tribal talukas...

Source: [The Times of India, 18 Feb 2026](#)

AI@Work in Libraries



Libraries have always been the place to go when you have questions. Right now, people have lots of questions about artificial intelligence (AI) and its place in the workforce, recreation, the arts, research, commerce, and more.

But AI, primarily generative AI, has moved so quickly that many librarians are trying to catch up. Although they've made strides in learning more, they may not be comfortable using the technology themselves, let alone explaining how it works to a student who wants to use it for a project.

H. Blake-Lee '19 '22 MA, a graduate student at UNC Greensboro, wants to move that needle. "I started my master's of information and library science (MLIS), not specifically to work as a librarian, but to work with the community within libraries," she explains. "My work focuses on bridging different perspectives, and I think that it's really important to start those connections internally."

While researching her IRB-approved capstone, "Understanding Generative AI in Academic Libraries," a few statistics stood out:

While the majority are aware of AI-related concerns, "librarians' comfort and confidence level in using, teaching, or talking about AI is only in the 30-35 percent range," she says. "About 70 percent want to learn about AI, but not from a computer. They want to learn from engaging with others."...

Source: [UNC Greensboro, 17 Feb 2026](#)

A 200-year-old book distributor is closing. Here's what that means for public libraries



It's been a tough year for public libraries.

In March, President Trump issued an executive order to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the only federal agency devoted to funding public libraries (a decision reversed in November by a Rhode Island District Court judge). Then, in May, the president also delivered a blow to the nation's leading library when he fired Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden. At the same time, libraries across the country have continued to face challenges to what books should and should not be available on their shelves – and pressure to remove certain titles – culminating in lawsuits in states like Texas and Florida.

Now, the nation's largest distributor of print books to public libraries – Baker & Taylor – is set for imminent closure.

For nearly 200 years, Baker & Taylor has played a key role in getting books from manufacturers to warehouses to library patrons' hands. Partnering with more than 5,000 U.S. libraries, the company has been a staple in the industry, selling books at wholesale prices and providing them with labels and lamination so libraries don't have to.

The closure comes as a surprise but not a shock to many in the industry, as the company faced several challenges in recent years, including a data breach in 2022 – after the company was acquired by a private investment group in 2021 – that put it in what independent library consultant Marshall Breeding called "a weak financial position."...

Source: [npr.org, 07 Jan 2026](#)

**This issue has been compiled by
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