About the Author

- Shri Jairam Ramesh, a Rajya Sabha MP, was Union minister between 2006 and 2014, holding several key portfolios including environment and forests. Associated with various education institutions in India and abroad, he has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the IIT, Bombay, where he completed his B. Tech in Mechanical Engineering. He has been a founding member of the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad. He received a master of science in public management at the Heinz College at Carnegie-Mellon University, USA, and has also studied technology policy at MIT. He is the author of several well-known books including *Indira Gandhi: A Life in Nature* and *Intertwined Lives: P.N. Haksar and Indira Gandhi*. His last book, *A Chequered Brilliance: The Many Lives of V.K. Krishna Menon* won the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2020.

About the Panellists

- Pavan K. Varma is a writer-diplomat and now in politics, where he was till recently an MP in the Rajya Sabha, and earlier Advisor to the Chief Minister of Bihar. Author of over a dozen best-selling books, including Ghalib: The Man, The Times; The Great Indian Middle Class; The Book of Krishna; Being Indian; Becoming Indian; and Chanakya's New Manifesto, he has been Ambassador in several countries including Bhutan, Director of The Nehru Centre in London, Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Director General, ICCR, and Press Secretary to the President of India. Pavan K. Varma was conferred an Honorary Doctoral Degree for his contribution to the fields of diplomacy, literature, culture and aesthetics by the University of Indianapolis in 2005. In 2018 he has also been conferred an Honorary Doctorate by Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management for his book 'Adi Shankaracharya: Hinduism's Greatest Thinker' (Westland-Amazon). This book has also won the Atta Galatta-Bengaluru Literature Festival prize for the Best Book of Non-Fiction for the year 2018. In 2012 Pavan K. Varma was conferred Bhutan's highest civilian Award, the Druk Thuksey, by His Majesty the King of Bhutan. Mr Varma has

received the Kalinga International Literary Award 2019. Mr. Varma's latest book is 'The Greatest Ode to LORD RAM: Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas' (Westland-Amazon). Pavan K. Varma lives in Delhi and can be contacted at pavank.pa@outlook.com and on Twitter @PavanK_Varma

- Dr Sanjeev Chopra was former Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. An IAS officer of the 1985 batch, originally from Kapurthala, Punjab, Dr Chopra has served in multiple capacities with the central and state governments in India. He was awarded the prestigious Robert S McNamara and Hubert H Humphrey fellowships in 1998 and 1999, respectively. He has also been a Guest Scholar at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC.

From 2002 to 2007, he was on deputation to the newly formed state of Uttarakhand and served as Secretary, Industrial Development, Information Technology, Rural Development and Horticulture, in the State Government. Currently Dr Chopra is also working on a Mapping the Indian States of India project, which looks at the interstate boundaries, the formation of linguistic states and into the meta narratives of Indian history post-independence. He is the patron and the Honorary Curator of a premier literary festival known as the Valley of Words (VoW) International Literature and Arts Festival, which is held annually in Dehradun.