The author of the book *India Shastra: Reflections on the Nation in our Time*, Dr. Shashi Tharoor is a writer of several books, and currently a Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He is also a former Minister of State in UPA government. Tharoor has had a long career at United Nations and has served in various UN mission before joining politics. He has also been actively involved in academia. Having authored many books on India, he is regarded by many as an authority on India.

The book *India Shastra: Reflections on the Nation in our Time* is a treatise on contemporary Indian polity, society and religion, and India's role in the rapidly globalizing world, as is suggested by the name itself. The cover page reflects the mood of the book, placing tradition and modernity side-by-side. The articles which constitute this book have previously been written by the author in various media platforms and speeches. The book is the last in his trilogy on his attempt to explore India, the previous books in the series being, *India: from Midnight to Millennium* (1997), and *India: From Midnight to Millennium and Beyond* (2004). The series reveals Tharoor's deep fascination with India and its myriad ways.

The book is divided into eight parts starting with Mr. Narendra Modi's win in 2014 Lok Sabha election and ushering in of a new wave of politics. In the first section "India Modi-fied" the author gives an account of Lok Sabha Elections held in 2014 and critically examines the initiatives taken by the current government in the first six months of coming to power. He is appreciative of the PM’s desire for a cleaner India, minimum government maximum governance, etc. He is extremely critical of the silence of the PM on rising communalism and notes that BJP’s majority in the Lok Sabha has emboldened the fringe Hindutva elements which has led to a sense of insecurity among minorities.

The second chapter 'Modi's India and the World' highlights foreign policy undertaken by the Modi government. The focus of the present government is on facilitating trade through diplomatic channels. However, the notion of diplomacy for Mr. Modi does not focus on building ties with foreign nations by taking interest, but rather on building self-image. As Tharoor points out, "The Modi notion of diplomacy as stoutly resisting the siren call of foreign countries while haranguing others about the strengths of your own is wrong-headed and downright dangerous" (p.59). The author lauds Mr. Modi’s efforts at following in the footsteps of his predecessors in matters of India’s relations with its neighbours especially Pakistan and China, and reaching out to Afghanistan. However, he terms Chinese President Xi Jinping’s much publicized visit to India in September 2014 as a ‘damp squib’. These reflections on the government’s foreign policy show a keen eye on foreign affairs.

The chapter on 'The Legacy' gives an account of the political inheritance left by the previous governments as well as the independence movement and the British rule. Tharoor is a harsh critic of the colonial rule which can be summed up from the essay on colonialism. Further, this chapter highlights the role of forgotten heroes such as those who participated in the First World War apart from the legacies of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and many other great personalities, which has greatly contributed to the rich history of India. The contribution of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Ambedkar towards making India into a modern and pluralistic self-governing nation cannot be undermined. As the author notes, "... each day over a billion Indians govern themselves in a pluralist democracy is testimony to the deeds and words of these four men and the giants who accompanied them in 1940s to the march of freedom" (p.104-105).

The next chapter ‘Ideas of India’ presents the paradox of India, and the competing ideas of what is India. The notion of ‘development’ which focuses on overall growth not only in terms of GDP and economic growth as the only markers is gaining...