

NOVEMBER 16, 2012

'Where would you look? The straight road or interesting signboards?'

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: Traffic snarls and tensions at office need not turn the technicolour imagination of childhood into monotonous grey if only one can keep the mind awake to "the bizarre within the mundane and the funny within the serious".

This was the advice of industrialist-turned-fiction writer Aroon Raman to Infosys employees who had gathered to attend the launch of his debut novel, *The Shadow Throne*, right on their campus.

Speaking briefly before the launch, Mr. Raman said most lose their childhood faculty for wonder as they grow older, dulled by the work-a-day world, but different people deal with this condition differently. Life is an open road and it is up to each person to either keep the eyes focused "only on the straight road ahead or look at the interesting signboards and fellow passengers".

Enriching experiences

He was lucky to have a variety of enriching experiences in his life, including the nine-day stay in Tihar Jail in 1983 as a student, which was "very hard but rich in experience". Those were days when he experienced the deepest corruption in the system as well as the extraordinary humour of his jailbirds, which includ-



THAT SENSE OF WONDER: Author Aroon Raman says even the so-called ordinary in India is extraordinary. — PHOTO: SAMPATH KUMAR G.P.

ed Charles Sobhraj as well as petty thieves.

Idiosyncratic ways

While such experiences may be rare, even the so-called ordinary in India provides immense opportunities to preserve a sense of wonder with all its quirks, said Mr. Raman, illustrating it with a series of pictures that reflect the idiosyncratic ways of the people.

The Shadow Throne was launched by Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder and executive co-chairman of Infosys, who said that he had finished the book "almost in one sitting".

Mr. Raman's next book, tentatively titled *Abduction* is an adventure novel set in Moghul India.

"A sequel to *The Shadow Throne* is also under discussion," he said.