

***Delhi: A Soliloquy* by M. Mukundan, translated from the Malayalam by Fathima E.V. and Nandakumar K., wins the 2021 JCB Prize for Literature**



New Delhi, 15th November 2021: *Delhi: A Soliloquy* by M. Mukundan, translated from the Malayalam by Fathima E.V. and Nandakumar K., was announced the winner of the Rs 25-lakh-JCB Prize for Literature. The winner was announced by Lord Bamford, Chairman, JCB in a hybrid awards ceremony. M. Mukundan's novel, which is a narrative of epic proportions that casts an unflinching gaze at the country's capital as it changes into the megalopolis that it is today, was the unanimous choice of the jury.

Delhi: A Soliloquy is the third translation to win the award. Mukundan also received the Prize trophy, which is a sculpture by Delhi artist duo Thukral & Tagra entitled 'Mirror Melting'.

The book was selected by a panel of five judges: Sara Rai (Chair), Annapurna Garimella, Shahnaz Habib, Prem Panicker, and Amit Varma. Members of the esteemed jury were unanimous in their praise for *Delhi: A Soliloquy*:

Sara Rai (Chair): “*Delhi: A Soliloquy* by M Mukundan speaks with grace and poise of the large lives of small people in a city with a broken soul. Clairvoyant in its human empathy, this extraordinary book is the distillation of a lifetime of experience.”

Annapurna Garimella: “Mukundan’s *Delhi: A Soliloquy* deserves to win because it is a finely written novel of many stories, set in an epic city. Mukundan’s characters take us back to a time when the promises of the new nation broke; through them, we understand that kindness can endure even as political and social forms fail to fulfil hopes and dreams.”

Shahnaz Habib: “I love the way *Delhi: A Soliloquy* captures what it is like to be a bit player in the story of a big city. This book is full of bit players, and in the quiet and grim unfolding of their lives, against the political crises of the sixties and seventies and eighties, Mukundan invests their lives with the quiet dignity of witnessing.”

Prem Panicker: “History writes with a big brush. Its concerns are with headline events, with the lives of the big and the powerful. M. Mukundan’s *Delhi: A Soliloquy* is a history with a small ‘h’, and its concerns are the little people in the cracks and crevices of that history – their lives and loves and hopes and despairs that play out unnoticed against the backdrop of seismic change.”

Amit Varma: “*Delhi: A Soliloquy* is a masterful novel that zooms into the interior life of its characters, zooms out to paint a picture of the times, and makes both equally vivid. It is that rare book that succeeds in being both intimate and epic.”

About M. Mukundan

M. Mukundan was born and brought up in Mahe. He rose to critical acclaim and popularity with *Mayyazhippuzhayude Theerangalil* (1974). His stories and novels have been widely translated into various Indian languages, English and French. He has been awarded Ezhuthachan Puraskaram, the highest literary honour given by the Government of Kerala, the Crossword Book Award twice, first in 1999 for *On the Banks of the Mayyazhi* and again in 2006 for *Kesavan’s Lamentations*, and the Sahitya Akademi award and N.V. Puraskaram for *Daivathinte Vikrithikal (God’s Mischief)*. His other major works include *Kesavante Vilapangal* (2009) and *Prasavam* (2008). He was presented with the insignia of Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government in 1998. He also served as the president of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi from 2006 to 2010. Four of his books have been adapted into award-winning films. *Delhi Gathakal* (2011), translated as *Delhi: A Soliloquy*, is based on his experiences of living and working in Delhi for forty years as a Cultural Attaché at the French embassy. In 2004, he retired from that position and returned to Mahe, his hometown.

About Fathima E.V.

Fathima E.V. is an award-winning writer and translator. Her translation of Subhash Chandran's *Manushyanu Oru Amukham*, translated as *A Preface to Man*, was awarded the Crossword Book Award (2017) and the V. Abdulla Translation Award (2017). She was the translator-editor of the *Indian Ink Mag*, and her poems and short fiction have appeared in international anthologies and journals. She holds an MA and a PhD from the University of Calicut, and completed the TESOL course from the University of Surrey. Currently, she heads the department of English at Krishna Menon Memorial Government Women's College, Kannur.

About Nandakumar K.

Nandakumar K. started his career as a sub-editor at *Financial Express*, after completing a master's degree in Economics, followed by stints in international marketing and general management in India and abroad. Having travelled in over fifty countries, he claims he can speak enough German and French to save his life. Strangely, his tryst with translation started with a paper in French on the blood diseases of fishes for his sister-in-law, using a borrowed dictionary. He is now an empanelled copy editor with Indian publishers and IIM Ahmedabad. *Delhi: A Soliloquy* is his first published translation from Malayalam. He lives and works in Dubai.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE JCB PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

The JCB Prize for Literature was set up in 2018 to enhance the prestige of literary achievement in India and create greater visibility for contemporary Indian writing. The prize encourages translations and aims to introduce new audiences to works of Indian literature written in languages other than their own. It is funded by JCB India and administered by the JCB Literature Foundation.

For information about the Prize, please visit: www.thejcbprize.org. For updates, look for [@thejcbprize](#) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

2018 WINNER

Jasmine Days by Benyamin, translated from the Malayalam by Shahnaz Habib.

2019 WINNER

The Far Field by Madhuri Vijay.

2020 WINNER

Moustache by S. Hareesh, translated from the Malayalam by Jayasree Kalathil.

ABOUT JCB

JCB India is a leading manufacturer of Earthmoving and Construction equipment. The company entered India in 1979 and is a fully owned subsidiary of the J.C Bamford Excavators UK. It has five factories at New Delhi, Pune and Jaipur. Its Sixth factory is coming up at Vadodara. Over the years, JCB's products have contributed significantly towards the development of Infrastructure in the country. It has invested in creating a local supply chain and JCB's Made in India products have been exported to over 110 countries. The company's CSR initiatives today extend across three in-house foundations, nine of the Sustainable Development Goals and reach out Women, Adolescent Girls, Children, Rural Artisans and Youth. It also established two pioneering CSR projects, Nila House, a centre of excellence for craft in Jaipur and an annual prize for Literature, celebrating distinguished works of fiction by Indian writers, The JCB prize for Literature.