

Khalid Jawed's *The Paradise of Food*, translated from the Urdu by Baran Farooqi wins the 2022 JCB Prize for Literature

New Delhi, 19th November 2022: *The Paradise of Food* by Khalid Jawed translated by Baran Farooqi, published by Juggernaut, was announced the winner of the 25-lakh- JCB Prize for Literature, at the Oberoi, New Delhi. The winner was announced by Lord Bamford, Chairman, JCB, virtually, during the hybrid event, where the trophy was handed over to the winning author by Sunil Khurana, Chief Operating Officer, JCB India and AS Panneerselvan, Chair of Jury for 2022. A bildungsroman of a man (and society) where food triggers memory and tragedy *The Paradise of Food* tells the story of a middle-class Muslim joint family over a span of fifty years where the narrator, whose life one follows from boyhood to old age, struggles to find a place for himself, at odds in his home and in the world outside.

The Paradise of Food is the fourth translation to win the award and the first work in Urdu. Khalid Jawed also received the Prize trophy, which is a sculpture by Delhi artist duo Thukral and Tagra, entitled 'Mirror Melting.'

The award ceremony commenced with a welcome note from the Literary Director of the Prize, Mita Kapur, following an address by Mr. Deepak Shetty, CEO & Managing Director, JCB India. The evening was brightened by an amalgamation of classical dance performances by Shriram Bhartiya Kala Kendra, leading up to the announcement.

The book was selected by a panel of five judges, out of the JCB Prize' most diverse shortlist yet by AS Panneerselvan (Jury Chair), Amitabha Bagchi, Dr. J Devika, Janice Pariat and Rakhee Balaram. Members of the esteemed jury were unanimous in their praise for *The Paradise of Food*.

AS Panneerselvan (Jury Chair): "*The Paradise of Food* is a celebration of human spirit, hope, loss, aspirations, and anxiety. It is a fine artistic achievement where aesthetics negotiates a difficult political trajectory that is haunting our country. The carnivalesque element makes this a modern fable."

Janice Pariat: "This rare, beautiful book achieves, with exquisite, startling, singing prose, what few others have in recent and not-so-recent-years—a microscopic yet epic exploration of humanity in all its ugliness and beauty, its cruelty and kindnesses, its silliness and wisdom. I was left amazed, enthralled, thrilled.

Amitabha Bagchi: "This singular and moving book shines a scintillating light on the violence at the heart of human civilization. The language contains several beautiful and unusual formulations that are a literary achievement by both the author and the extremely skilled translator. A literary landmark in a less celebrated genre of Urdu's grand literary tradition, this work deserves to be widely read in India and beyond."

Dr. J Devika: "*The Paradise of Food* works like a powerful ice-pick in the winter of civilizational crisis that has engulfed the countries of South Asia. And it does this by mobilising the poetic powers of Urdu, placing liberation above nation-building, which we think is the work of a novel. The translation is perfect and inspired."

Rakhee Balaram: "A book of indescribable brilliance, Khalid Jawed's *The Paradise of Food* blazes a trail and redefines the contemporary Indian novel. Beauty and horror, sacred and profane, the book

attracts and repels us as we turn each page. Our understanding of the personal and political intersect through the food and kitchen in the most unforgettable ways.”

About Khalid Jawed

Khalid Jawed is one of the leading Urdu novelists today. He is the author of fifteen works of fiction and non-fiction, and is a recipient of the Katha Award, the Upendranath Ashk Award and the UP Urdu Academy Award. He is a professor at Jamia Millia Islamia University.

About Baran Farooqi

Baran Farooqi is a professor of English at Jamia Millia Islamia University. She is the acclaimed translator of *The Colours of My Heart*, a selection of poems by Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

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](https://www.facebook.com/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.

2021 WINNER

Delhi: A Soliloquy by M. Mukundan, translated from the Malayalam by Fathima E.V. and Nandakumar K

ABOUT JCB LITERATURE FOUNDATION

The JCB Literature Foundation, a not-for-profit company registered under Section 8 of the Indian Companies Act, is single-handedly responsible for running the Prize.

In 2018, JCB India established the JCB Literature Foundation, whose purpose is to promote the art of literature in India, and whose principal activity is to administer The JCB Prize for Literature. A leading global manufacturer of earthmoving and construction equipment, the company has been active in India since 1979. JCB's desire to create an enduring cultural legacy in India is based on this substantial and long-standing involvement in the country's social and economic life.

ABOUT THE JURY

AS Panneerselvan (Chair) is an Indian journalist, editor and columnist. He heads the Centre for Study in Public Sphere, Roja Muthiah Research Library in Chennai. He is also the author of *Karunanidhi: A Life*, his definitive biography of M Karunanidhi, and the editor of an anthology of essays produced by journalist fellows, *Uncertain Journeys*. In 2022, the Government of Tamil Nadu has conferred him with the GU Pope Award for his literary contributions. In his extensive career in the media, he has worked with several prestigious media houses and networks, including the Sun Network, Outlook magazine, the Hindu, amongst others. His next book is the Periodic Table of Tamil Modernity: 1858 to 1968.

Amitabha Bagchi is the author of four novels. The first, *Above Average*, was a bestseller. His second novel, *The Householder*, was published to critical acclaim, the third, *This Place*, was shortlisted for the Raymond Crossword Book Award 2014, and the fourth, *Half the Night is Gone*, won the 2019 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and was shortlisted for the 2018 JCB Prize for Literature. He has written and published several research papers over his extensive career as a researcher and professor, specialising in Computer Science.

Dr J Devika is a historian, feminist, social critic and academician. She currently researches and teaches at the Centre for Development Studies. She has authored several books and articles on gender, politics, social reforms and development in Kerala on publications like Kafilā, Economic and Political Weekly and The Wire. She has translated both fiction and non-fiction books between Malayalam and English, including the translation of Nalini Jameela's autobiography and the short stories of KR Meera and Sarah Joseph.

Janice Pariat is the author of *Everything the Light Touches*, *The Nine-Chambered Heart*, *Boats on Land: A Collection of Short Stories* and *Seahorse: A Novel*. She was awarded the Young Writer Award from the Sahitya Akademi and the Crossword Book Award for Fiction in 2013. In 2014, she was the Charles Wallace Creative Writing Fellow at the University of Kent, UK, and a Writer in Residence at the TOJI Residency in South Korea in 2019. Janice also teaches Creative Writing and Art History at Ashoka University.

Rakhee Balaram is an Assistant Professor of Global Art and Art History at the University of Albany, State University of New York, where she specializes in modern and contemporary art. She is the author of *Counterpractice: Psychoanalysis, Politics and the Art of French Feminism* and *20th-Century Indian Art: Modern, Post-Independence, Contemporary*. Her curatorial work includes *Fragility*, an exhibition of contemporary Indian art. Her research has been supported by the Art Histories Fellowship in Berlin, the ICI Berlin Institute of Cultural Inquiry, and the Tata SPEAR grant, among others. Balaram holds double doctorates in French Literature from Cambridge University and History of Art from The Courtauld Institute of Art.
