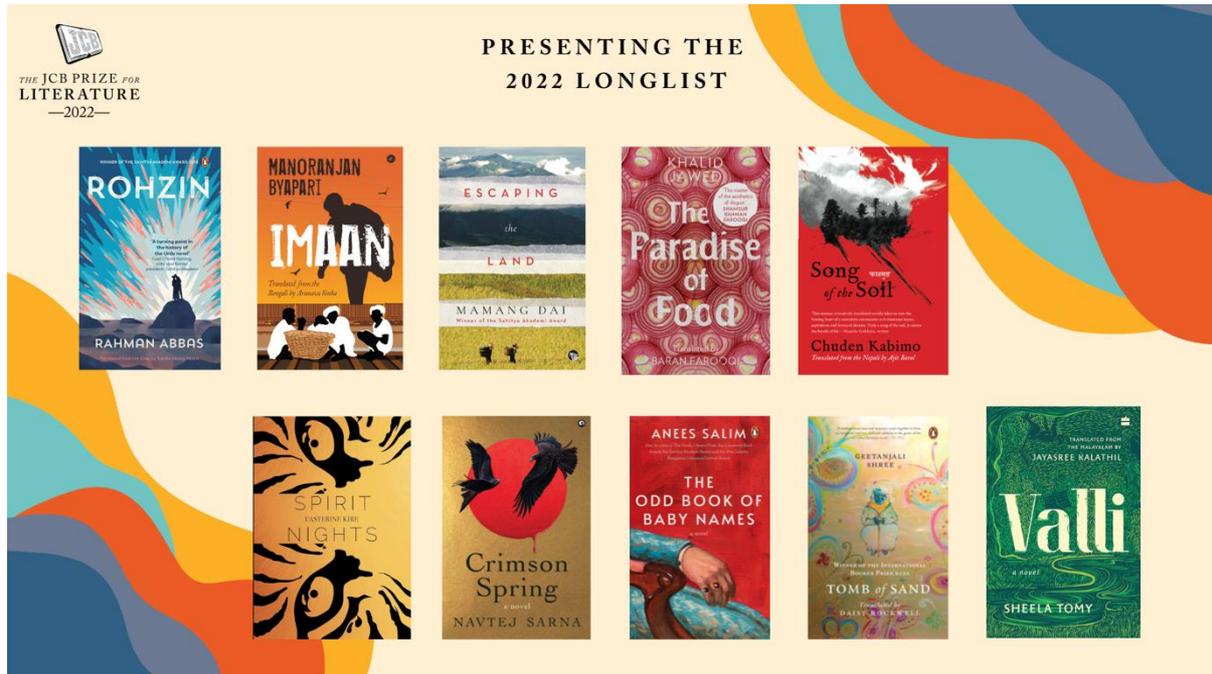


The JCB Prize for Literature announces its Longlist for the 5th year



- The 2022 Longlist for the most coveted Prize for Indian contemporary fiction features six translations
- Amidst Bengali and Malayalam, in the five years of the Prize Hindi, Urdu and Nepali translations make an appearance for the first time in the longlist
- Historic milestones and a strong sense of the geographic locations they represent is prominent in all novels

New Delhi, 5th September 2022: Now in its 5th year, the longlist is announced today for the 2022 JCB Prize for Literature.

The list of ten novels was selected by a panel of five judges: **AS Panneerselvan**, (Chair) journalist and editor, **Amitabha Bagchi**, author; **Rakhee Balaram**, author and academician; **Dr. J Devika**, translator, historian and academician; and **Janice Pariat**, author.

The longlist for 2022 is dominated by 6 translations. Amidst titles in Bengali and Malayalam, titles in Urdu, Hindi and Nepali have been featured in the longlist for the first time. A truly diverse representation of what Indian fiction has to offer, the 2022 longlist brings forth stories from Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Kalimpong, Punjab, Kolkata, Kerala and the heartland.

The longlist was chosen from a vast range of submissions by writers from sixteen states writing in eight languages including English, published between 1st August 2021 and 31st July 2022.

The JCB Prize for Literature is awarded each year to a distinguished work of fiction by an Indian writer. The jury will announce the shortlist of five titles in October. The winner of the Rs 25-lakh JCB Prize for Literature will be announced on 19th November. If the winning work is a translation, the

translator will receive an additional Rs 10 lakh. Each of the 5 shortlisted authors will receive Rs 1 lakh; if a shortlisted work is a translation, the translator will receive Rs 50,000.

The 2022 longlist is:

- **Rohzin** by Rahman Abbas, translated from the Urdu by Sabika Abbas Naqvi (Vintage Books, 2022)
- **Imaan** by Manoranjan Byapari, translated from the Bengali by Arunava Sinha (EKA, 2021)
- **Escaping the Land** by Mamang Dai (Speaking Tiger, 2021)
- **Paradise of Food** by Khalid Jawed, translated from the Urdu by Baran Farooqi (Juggernaut, 2022)
- **Song of the Soil** by Chuden Kabimo, translated from the Nepali by Ajit Baral (Rachna Books, 2021)
- **Spirit Nights** by Easterine Kire (Simon & Schuster, 2022)
- **Crimson Spring** by Navtej Sarna (Aleph Book Company, 2022)
- **The Odd Book of Baby Names** by Anees Salim (Penguin Hamish Hamilton, 2021)
- **Tomb of Sand** by Geetanjali Shree, translated from the Hindi by Daisy Rockwell (Penguin Random House India, 2022)
- **Valli** by Sheela Tomy, translated from the Malayalam by Jayasree Kalathil (Harper Perennial, 2022)

Commenting on the longlist for 2022 and the overall reading experience, **AS Panneerselvan, Chair of the jury** observed,

"This year's deliberation to select the novels for the JCB prize for the 2022-long list was an enriching experience. It was a rich collection, the translations from different languages showed how writers were pushing the linguistic and creative boundaries to document our lives. These ten novels are in a sense a metaphor of contemporary India, where each language is permitted to shine; its intrinsic beauty is not subsumed by the other."

Now in its 5th year, the JCB Prize for Literature has had four winners so far, the 2018 Prize was awarded to Benyamin for his *Jasmine Days*, translated from the Malayalam by Shahnaz Habib. In 2019 the Prize went to Madhuri Vijay for *The Far Field*. In 2020 the Prize was awarded to S. Hareesh for his *Moustache* translated by Jayasree Kalathil from the Malayalam, followed by M. Mukundan's *Delhi: A Soliloquy* translated by Fathima E.V. and Nandakumar K. in 2021.

Talking about the journey of the JCB Prize for Literature and the support it has had from the industry, **Mita Kapur, Literary Director**, said:

"The JCB Prize is chuffed with pride to announce a Longlist of ten books that are bracing, vigorous, transformative, experimental in voice and story. Elemental to storytelling, each book takes soaring flights of imagination even as it is strongly rooted in India. The Prize enters its fifth year, marking 50 Longlisted titles that catch the pulse of our literary traditions. This journey, of course, would be incomplete without the publishers who bring these stories to light, the bookstores, online and offline, that give them a platform and the readers who open themselves to the new worlds these books create."

JURY COMMENTS ON THE TEN LONGLISTED NOVELS

Rahman Abbas: *Rohzin*

With a dramatic love story at the heart of it, this novel is also the story of a young boy moving to a big city. It presents parts of Mumbai, like Mohammad Ali Road, that are rarely seen in English fiction. The real and the fantastical, the contemporary and the ancient, mix seamlessly while the grand themes of Hindi cinema play out in the background.

Manoranjan Byapari: *Imaan*

Imaan is a completely novel iteration of the humanist tradition of Bengali literature. It presents a vivid portrait of people from the periphery but is neither voyeuristic nor patronising. Each character has agency no matter how circumscribed their life may be. A raw, deeply authentic and honest story which is also well-paced, poignant and eloquent.

Mamang Dai: *Escaping the Land*

Breathtakingly lyrical and poetic, *Escaping the Land* is a memorable account of a life lived on the North-eastern frontier of India. Amidst the varieties of masculinity portrayed in fiction the protagonist in this novel is a rare one—that of a man who fails and accepts his failure. There is an underlying intelligence that runs through the book, becoming more vivid as the narrative progresses.

Khalid Jawed: *Paradise of Food*

Paradise of Food is a brutal and mesmerizing account of the contemporary body, home and nation told through the food and kitchen. In a world consumed by hyper-consumerism, the book provides a bracing counter-narrative making it an important piece of work. The incredibly skilful translation highlights the poetry and music of the original text.

Chuden Kabimo: *Song of the Soil*

Song of the Soil is a shining example of how one can write about a violent incident without recreating the violence. The author blends bildungsroman with a conflict story with great dexterity, bringing out new aspects of both forms. This book is able to make poetry out of brutal situations, but does so with honesty, humour, and gentleness.

Easterine Kire: *Spirit Nights*

Spirit Nights posits a different view of the world where the human is just another creature struggling within the vastness of creation. Simple yet evocative, full of deep insights and important teachings, this grounded, lyrical novel is a powerful celebration of oral storytelling traditions.

Navtej Sarna: *Crimson Spring*

A solidly crafted work of historical fiction, *Crimson Spring* not only talks about the historical moment of turbulence and terror triggered by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre but also vividly brings to life rural Punjab at the turn of the century.

Anees Salim: *The Odd Book of Baby Names*

Dealing with a multiplicity of perspectives, the narrative moves from one to the other with ease. A smooth and enjoyable read, with a smattering of dry humor, yet filled with tenderness and poignancy. The book proves it is possible to produce a criticism of the decaying feudal order, presided over by Muslim authorities without resorting to any othering devices

Geetanjali Shree: *Tomb of Sand*

Wild and unruly, *Tomb of Sand* challenges our notions of what a novel should be. The impression of several novels within one give it a carnivalesque atmosphere. This novel is witty and irreverent yet filled with tenderness and psychological insight.

Sheela Tomy: *Valli*

Valli is a beautifully written work that transports us into another time and place. It presents a world gone by in which the natural world is an extension of the human world. The prose has many textures, with letters and quotes from scriptures, making for a deeply satisfying reading.

NOTE 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 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.

KEY 2021 DATES

Longlist announcement: **3rd September 2022**

Shortlist announcement: **October 2022**

Winner announcement: **19th November 2022**

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 *Kafila*, *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 *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. Her novel *Everything the Light Touches* is forthcoming.

Rakhee Balaram is an Assistant Professor of Global Art & 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.