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JCB Literature Prize announces 2019 jury, includes Arvind Subramanian

The JCB Prize for Literature, India's richest literary prize given out annually, announced the jury for its secondA edition on Wednesday. It includes former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian.

The five-member 2019 jury comprises author and critic Anjum Hasan, authors K.R. Meera and Parvati Sharma and economist and former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian. Filmmaker and environmentalist Pradip Krishen is the jury's Chair, JCB said.

Subramanian, who is a Visiting Lecturer at Harvard University, has authored "Eclipse: Living in the Shadow of China's Economic Dominance" (2011) and the more recent "Of Counsel: The Challenges of the Modi-Jaitley economy".

The Rs 25-lakh prize, presented each year to a distinguished work of fiction by an Indian author selected by the jury, aims to create greater visibility for contemporary Indian writing.

It also has a particular focus on translation.

The jury, appointed by Literary Director Rana Dasgupta, is responsible for selecting the longlist of 10, the shortlist of five, and the winner.

Each shortlisted author receives Rs 1 lakh. The winning author receives a further Rs 25 lakh. An additional Rs 5 lakh is awarded to the translator if the winning work is a translation.

"Each year, the jury is conceived in such a way as to reflect a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. This is how we ensure the verdicts are fresh and interesting to a large number of readers.

"The members of the 2019 jury are all passionate readers, very eminent within their respective fields, and I think they will have fascinating debates about the books we send in their direction," Dasgupta said in a statement.

Jury chairman Krishen said he felt honoured at the "opportunity to peer deeply into a year's worth of Indian fiction".

Author Benyamin's novel 'Jasmine Days' translated from the Malayalam by Shahnaz Habib, had bagged the inaugural edition of the award in 2018.

Through the life of radio jockey Sameera Parvin, it describes the lives of foreign workers caught up in the turmoil of the Arab Spring.

The entries for this year's prize opened on March 1, and will close on April 30. The longlist and shortlist will be announced in September and October respectively, with the final winner announcement coming on November 2.

The prize is funded by JCB, a global manufacturer of earthmoving and construction equipment, and administered by the JCB Literature Foundation.