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SINGAPORE LITERATURE PRIZE 2018 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

18 Writers Won Prize At Awards Ceremony

SINGAPORE, 6 August 2018 – The Singapore Literature Prize (SLP) has announced the much-awaited winners of Singapore's national literary award. A total of 18 winners from across 12 categories won the SLP at an awards ceremony this evening. Seventeen of them are first-time winners.

The winners were selected by a panel of local and international judges in each of the 12 categories. The categories span across three genres – fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry – in the four languages of Chinese, English, Malay and Tamil. There are a total of 10 writers who won the top prize; three writers who won the merit prize; and five writers who won the commendation prize. Each top winner receives a cash prize of \$10,000. If they are co-winners, they will split the prize money. The merit winners receive \$5,000 each, while commendation winners receive \$1,000 each. All the winners also receive a special SLP 2018 plaque and a personalised notebook sponsored by Bynd Artisan.

Among the winners this year, Farihan Bahron is a double winner: He won the top prize for the Poetry in Malay category and a Commendation for Fiction in Malay. His winning poetry work, *Tukang Tunjuk Telunjuk (Finger-Pointing Expert)*, is a collection of 40 poems presenting the voices of cosmopolitan young people who appreciate the tradition of their community, while understanding the reality of their day. His Commendation award is for his fiction work *Kesumat Sang Avatar (Avatar's Wrath)*. The other winners in the Fiction in Malay category include Hamed Bin Ismail's *Bunga Tankong (A Dancing Club: Bunga Tanjong)* for Merit and Adam Bin Fadila's *Bilal Mencari Nur (Muezzi In Search of Light)* for Commendation. Ahmad Bin Mohammed Tahir received a Commendation prize for his work in Malay Creative Nonfiction, *Rona Wicara (Colour of Expression)*.

The judges for the Tamil Creative Nonfiction category unanimously chose Bala Baskaran's work, கோ. சாரங்கபாணியும் தமிழ் முரசும்: இன்றைய பார்வை (G

Sarangapany and the Tamil Murasu: A Current Appraisal) as the winner. The judges said: "This research book, based on old *Tamil Murasu* editorials and the author's own experience as a journalist, unearths hitherto unknown events that have had a profound effect on Singapore's Tamil community." For the Fiction category, M K Kumar's *5:12 P.M.* and Chitra Ramesh's ஒரு துளி சந்தோஷம் (*A Drop of Happiness*) received a Merit award each. M Segar's இராவணனின் சீதை (*Ravana's Seethai*) and A K Varadharajan's லீ குவான் இயு பிள்ளைத்தமிழ் (*Lee Kuan Yew Imaginary Childhood*) received a Commendation award each for Poetry in Tamil.

In the Chinese category, 陈志锐 Tan Chee Lay was the winner for Poetry for his book 《狮城地标诗学》 (*Landscape Poetics of the Lion City*). The awards in the Creative Nonfiction and Fiction categories were both shared by co-winners. 《蔷薇边缘》 (*Roses at the Edge*) by 流苏 Liu Su and 《第二张脸》 (*The Second Face*) by 翁弦尉 Weng Xian Wei were both winners for Creative Nonfiction. The Fiction's co-winners were 张挥 Zhang Hui for 《烟事袅袅》 (*Smoker Memories*) and 李选楼 Lee Chuan Low for 《救灾前线》 (*Rescue Frontline*).

Finally, Jeremy Tiang's *State of Emergency* won the English Fiction category. Samuel Lee's *A Field Guide to Supermarkets in Singapore* took home the English Poetry prize and Melissa De Silva's "Others" *Is Not A Race* received the judges' vote for Creative Nonfiction. The Creative Nonfiction's panel of judges called "Others" "a most Singaporean book, from its grapples with life's purpose and meaning to its scrummy paeans to local food".

The full list of winners are as follows:

POETRY		
CHINESE		
Prize	Author	Title of Book
Winner	陈志锐 Tan Chee Lay	狮城地标诗学 (Landmark Poetics of the Lion City)
ENGLISH		
Winner	Samuel Lee	A Field Guide to Supermarkets in Singapore
MALAY		
Winner	Farihan Bahron	Tukang Tunjuk Telunjuk (Finger-Pointing Expert)
TAMIL		
Commendation	A K Varadharajan	லீ குவான் இயூ பிள்ளைத்தமிழ் (Lee Kuan Yew Imaginary Childhood)
Commendation	M Segar	இராவணனின் சீதை (Ravana's Seethai)

CREATIVE NONFICTION		
CHINESE		
Prize	Author	Title of Book
Co-Winner	流苏 Liu Su	蔷薇边缘 (Roses at the Edge)
Co-Winner	翁弦尉 Weng Xian-Wei	第二张脸 (The Second Face)
ENGLISH		
Winner	Melissa De Silva	"Others" is Not a Race

MALAY		
Commendation	Ahmad Bin Md Tahir	Rona Wicara (Colour of Expression)
TAMIL		
Winner	Bala Baskaran	கோ. சாரங்கபாணியும் தமிழ் முரசும்: இன்றைய பார்வை (G Sarangapany and the Tamil Murasu: A Current Appraisal)

FICTION		
CHINESE		
Prize	Author	Title of Book
Co-Winner	李选楼 Lee Chuan Low	救灾前线 (Rescue Frontline)
Co-Winner	张挥 Zhang Hui	烟事袅袅 (Smoker Memories)
ENGLISH		
Winner	Jeremy Tiang	State of Emergency
MALAY		
Merit	Hamed Bin Ismail	Bunga Tanjong (A Dancing Club: Bunga Tanjong)
Commendation	Adam Bin Fadila	Bilal Mencari Nur (Muezzin In Search of Light)
Commendation	Farihan Bahron	Kesumat Sang Avatar (Avatar's Wrath)

TAMIL		
Merit	Chitra Ramesh	ஒரு துளி சந்தோஷம் (A Drop of Happiness)
Merit	M K Kumar	5:12 P.M.

To celebrate the Singapore Book Council's 50th anniversary this year, the awards ceremony was open to the public for the first time in its history. It celebrated the theme "acknowledge, celebrate and inspire" and paid tribute to past winners of the prize. The ceremony was attended by over 500 audience members, including both invited guests and members of the public.

To promote SLP and showcase the winners, SBC will be organising a series of outreach events. One of the events is a special display of all the SLP-winning titles at the National Library. Running from 16 Jul to 8 Sep at the Lee Kong Chian Reference section on level 9 of the library, the exhibition "Celebrating Our Writers: The Journey of the Singapore Literature Prize" will trace the development of the prize vis-à-vis SBC's own history.

Furthermore, winners will be featured in public talks at different locations around Singapore. SBC has also launched the SLP Campus initiative in an effort to promote Singapore writers and SingLit in schools.

For more information about SLP Outreach and Campus events, please visit <https://bookcouncil.sg/awards/singapore-literature-prize>.

Annex I: About Singapore Literature Prize

Annex II: About Singapore Book Council

Annex III: SLP 2018 Winners

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ANNEX I: About Singapore Literature Prize

The Singapore Literature Prize (SLP) is organised by the Singapore Book Council (SBC) and is Singapore's top literary prize. Established in 1991, the awards aim to:

- Promote Singapore literary talent through recognition of outstanding published works by Singapore authors in any of the four official languages: English, Chinese, Malay, or Tamil;
- Stimulate public interest and support for creative writing in Singapore.

This biennial competition is open to Singapore citizens and Permanent Residents whose works of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction have been published in Singapore or abroad during specified period of time in any of Singapore's four official languages.

The award has undergone many changes over the years. During the first years of the award, it was conceived as an annual competition to promote creative writing and local literary works in English. The award was presented to the best unpublished work and carried a cash prize of \$10,000. Veteran writer Suchen Christine Lim won the inaugural award in 1992 for her novel "Fistful of Colours".

SLP became biennial in 2004 and was open to published works in the four languages. In 2014, a creative nonfiction category was added, and a separate category for poetry was created as well.

Many notable local writers have won the SLP, including Mohamed Latiff Mohamed, Yeng Pway Ngon, KTM Iqbal, Cyril Wong, Josephine Chia, Amanda Lee Koe and Sonny Liew.

For more information, please visit <https://bookcouncil.sg/awards/singapore-literature-prize>.

ANNEX II: About Singapore Book Council

Singapore Book Council (SBC) is a charity founded in 1968. Its vision is to support Singapore authors and literature, and Build Our Imagine-nation by developing creativity, imagination and original thought through writing, reading, illustrating and storytelling. Its mission is to fulfil this vision by developing the literary arts sector through books and literary arts events, workshops, and awards. Its focus is Singapore and Asian content, content creation, training, translation, and appreciation of SingLit.

SBC is currently chaired by Ms Claire Chiang, co-founder of Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts.

SBC supports the community at all levels, from language programmes and books for children, to aspiring individuals and professionals like writers, illustrators, storytellers and relevant industry partners by providing a platform to learn, network and collaborate. It also organises events to foster professional and community engagement like the annual Asian Festival of Children's Content and All In! Young Writers Festival, and grants prestigious awards, like the Singapore Literature Prize, to recognise and encourage excellence. Finally, SBC offers publishing-related and literary arts-focused courses and workshops to enhance skills and encourage lifelong learning through its academy.

SBC aims to become a hub for Asian content for the world, encouraging stories to be created and told across platforms. Through telling our own stories by writing or illustrations, it promotes understanding, impacts legacy and connects Asia with the world.

Because it all starts with a story.

SBC is supported by NAC under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019. For more information, please visit bookcouncil.sg.