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Shashi Tharoor Wins Sahitya Akademi Award

AUTHORS SHASHI Tharoor (pictured), Shafey Kidwai and Nand Kishore Acharya will receive the 2019 Sahitya Akademi Award in English, Urdu and Hindi respectively, the Akademi announced on Wednesday. These awards are given annually to writers in 23 Indian languages. The awards will be given to seven poetry collections, four novels, six collections of short stories, three books of essays, and one book each under creative non-fiction, autobiography and biography categories. The books bestowed with the top literary honour for 2019 include those published between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2017. The award ceremony will take place in New Delhi on February 25 next year..

Tharoor has won the award for *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*, which analyses the "exploitation and destruction" of India at the hands of the imperial forces. While Bikaner-based Hindi playwright, poet and critic Acharya will be awarded for his poetry collection, *Cheelte Hue Apne Ko (Peeling One's Self)*, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) professor and Urdu author, Kidwai, will receive the award for *Savanahe Sir Syed: Ek Baazdeed (Sir Syed's Memoir: Revisited)*, a book based on Altaf Husain Hali's biography *Hayat-e-Javed (1900)*. It aims to clear misconceptions around 19th century educationist, reformer and founder of AMU, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. "Sir Syed was a great believer in a unified India," said Kidwai.

Besides Acharya six other poets who will be awarded include Phukan Ch Basumatary (Bodo), Niba A Khandekar (Konkani), Kumar Manish Arvind (Maithili), V Madhusoodanan Nair (Malayalam), Anuradha Patil (Marathi), and Penna Madhusudan (Sanskrit).

The Statesman 19.12.19 P.10

Tharoor among 23 named for Sahitya Akademi Award

PIANS

NEW DELHI, 18 DECEMBER

Author, politician and diplomat Shashi Tharoor was among the 23 named today for the Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 for his book "An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India" in the creative non-fiction section in English category.

Sahitya Akademi Secretary K Sreenivasa Rao made the announcement in a press release. The awards, comprising an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and Rs 100,000 in cash, will be given away on February 25, 2020, during the Akademi's Festival of Letters.

They relate to books first published during the five years immediately preceding the year of award -- between the period January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2017. Tharoor's book appeared in 2016. Its British edition, titled "Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India", appeared a year later.

The awards were recommended by distinguished jury members representing 23 Indian languages and approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi, which met on Wednesday under the chairmanship of its president, Chandrashekhara Kambiar, the release said.

Seven books of poetry by Phukan Ch. Basumatary

(Bodo), Nand Kishore Acharya



(Hindi), Nilba A. Khandekar (Konkani), Kumar Manish Arvind (Maithili), V. Madhusoodanan Nair (Malayalam), Anuradha Patil (Marathi) and Penna Madhusudan (Sanskrit) have been awarded.

Four novelists -- Joysee Goswami (Assamese), L. Birmangol Singh (Beryl Thanga) (Manipuri), Cho Dharman (Tamil) and Bandi Narayana Swamy (Telugu) -- feature in the list.

Awards have also been given to six books of short stories by Abdul Ahad Hajini (Kashmiri), Tarun Kanti Mishra (Odia), Kirpal Kazak (Punjabi), Ramsawroop Kisan (Rajasthani), Kali Charan Hembram (Santali) and Ishwar Moorjani (Sindhi).

Vijaya (Kannada) and Shafey Kidwai (Urdu) have been cited for an autobiography and a biography.

Three essayists, Chinmoy Guha (Bengali), Om Sharma Jandriari (Dogri) and Ratilal Borisagar (Gujarati), also figure in the list of awardees.

Tharoor, 63, who represents the Thiruvananthapuram constituency in the Lok Sabha and is also the patron of the Kerala Literature Festival in Calicut next month, has authored bestsellers like "Why I Am A Hindu", "The Hindu Way" and "The Paradoxical Prime Minister".

He has penned three works of fiction, 13 works of non-fiction and two picture books, including "Kerala: God's Own Country" with M F Husain and "Inde/ndia" (in French and English) with photographer Ferrante Ferranti.

A former Minister of State For External Affairs and a former UN Under-Secretary General of Communications and Public Information, Tharoor has won various awards, including the Rajika Kripalani Young Journalist Award for the Best Indian Journalist under 30, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the Best Book of the Year in the Eurasian Region, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, Inspiration of the Year Award at GQ's Man of the Year Awards, New Age Politician of the Year Award by NDTV, the first Sree Narayan Guru Global Secular and Peace Award and PETA's Person of the Year. In addition, he has also been conferred the Commander of the Order of Charles III by the Spanish King.

Not as happy as I should be, says Sahitya Akademi Award winner

I am distressed at the prevailing condition in Assam: Joyasree Goswami Mahanta

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Novelist and former Asom Gana Parishad Rajya Sabha member Joyasree Goswami Mahanta on Wednesday said, "I am not as happy as I should be" with the news of winning the Sahitya Akademi Award. She also promised to distribute the prize money among the families of those killed during the anti-citizenship law protests in Assam.


In a dig at the AGP for supporting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, she said she is deeply hurt at the betrayal by "those elected by the people" as the law is not acceptable to the people of Assam.

"I received the news... but I am not as happy as I should



be on hearing it due to the prevailing troubled situation in the State," Dr. Mahanta, wife of former Assam CM and senior AGP leader Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, said.

Dr. Mahanta was chosen for the Sahitya Akademi award for her novel *Chanakya*. Twenty-two other writers and poets will receive the award, which comprises

 Young people have lost their lives for a cause... I have decided to pay my tribute to them by distributing the prize money among their families

JOYASREE GOSWAMI MAHANTA
Novelist, ex-MP from AGP

an engraved copper plate and ₹1 lakh cash prize, on February 25, 2020, in Delhi.

"Young people have lost their lives for a cause and for their homeland and I have decided to pay my tribute to them by distributing the prize money among their families," she said.

"I am deeply distressed and hurt at the betrayal by

those elected to Parliament from the State and to the Assembly on the CAA issue as it is not acceptable to the people of Assam," she added.

"I will be grateful to the families if they accept it. This my humble way of honouring them," Dr. Mahanta said.

Criticism for AGP

Mr. Mahanta has been vocal in his criticism against the party leadership for not opposing the Act in public and its lone Rajya Sabha MP Birendra Prasad Baishya for voting in its favour.

Dr. Mahanta has to her credit several books including *Dronacharya*, *Sreshta Bideshi Galpo*, *Ekuki Dhemali Sadhu* and some volumes on the Assam agitation.

Sahitya Akademi award winner takes a dig at AGP

TNN & PTI

Guwahati: Novelist Jayashree Goswami Mahanta has promised to distribute the Sahitya Akademi prize money among the families of those killed during anti-citizenship law protests in Assam. The award comprises an engraved copper plate and Rs 1 lakh cash prize.

Taking a dig at AGP for supporting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the author said she is deeply hurt at the betrayal by "those elected by the people".

Jayashree is the wife of former Assam CM and senior AGP leader Prafulla Kumar Mahanta. She has been selected for the Sahitya Aka-

THEY RETURNED THEIR AWARDS

MUJTABA HUSSAIN: Well-known Urdu humour writer decided to return Padma Shri protesting against the 'atmosphere of fear & hatred'

UDAY SHANKAR: Assamese choreographer decided to return best choreography award to state govt to protest against CAA. Had bagged them for two Assamese films: 'Jibon Bator Logori' and 'Bakor Puteke'

YAQOOB YAWAR: Urdu author-translator will return UP State Urdu Academy Award for translation

SHIRIN DALVI: Senior Urdu journalist and writer decided to return her state Sahitya Akademi Award. Was conferred special award by Maharashtra Rajya Urdu Sahitya Akademi in recognition of her literary contributions

demi award for her novel, Chanakya. Her husband, who is the founder president of the AGP, has been vocal in his criticism against the party leadership for not opposing the Act in the in public

and its lone Rajya Sabha MP Birendra Prasad Baishya for voting in its favour.

She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2018 and was Rajya Sabha member for a single term from 1999

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Sahitya Akademi honour for Kazak

FROM PAGE 1

Bhai Jodh Singh and Dr Harbans Singh, spotted the mason with a 'unique talent'. "I was asked to join the engineering wing of Punjabi University, Patiala, as a 'mortar mate' (in charge of labourers) in 1986," says Kazak. Just read and write, was his brief.

Soon, he was brought to the department of literary studies of the university as a technical assistant. Under a project from the university, he started a study on the culture of Sikligars and Gadi Lohars, the nomadic tribes of Punjab. "Wherever

they would go, I would travel with them on their carts. I would eat whatever they would offer and sleep under the open sky," Kazak says, adding that he became one among them. Later, he chased the Santhals in Jharkhand and Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir. His work was often compared with the British-born anthropologist Verrier Elwin's work on tribes in Central India.

But Kazak kept on working as a technical assistant with the literary studies department until former bureaucrat Swaran Singh Boparai joined

as vice-chancellor of the university. Just 45 days before his retirement in 2002, in a rare honour, the university appointed him as a professor in the same department despite his not being even a matriculate.

Besides research on Punjab's culture and nomads, Kazak is known for his short stories. Now, his works have been prescribed in the syllabus of almost all the universities of Punjab as well as Delhi University. "People like me come from the grassroots. So, it is an honour for the hard work that I have done," he says.