The Man Asian Literary Prize

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Novels of epic scale and ambition head 2011 Man Asian Literary Prize Longlist

SINGAPORE – Twelve novels from Japan, Iran, China, India, Pakistan, South Korea and Bangledesh have today been announced as the longlist for the 2011 Man Asian Literary Prize at the Singapore Writers Festival.

Featuring works of epic proportions by Haruki Murakami and Amitav Ghosh, the longlisted books deal with a wide range of subjects including the Opium Wars, the Iranian revolution, the rise of fundamentalism, the plight of aids sufferers in China as well as exploring relationships between the individual and family, parent and child. Featuring many million-copy selling books which have been translated into English for the first time, as well as debut authors and literary titans, the longlist for the 2011 Man Asian Literary Prize is the most diverse to be announced in its five year history, showcasing a panoply of tales from right across Asia.

The judges for this year's Prize are Pulitzer-prize finalist and author of *The Surrendered,* Chang-rae Lee, and Vikas Swarup, author of *Q&A* which was filmed as the Oscar-winning *Slumdog Millionaire*. The judging panel of three is completed by BBC Special Correspondent Razia Iqbal, who is also chair judge.

90 books were submitted for entry in 2011 and the longlist of 12 books is as follows: AUTHOR, Country – *Title* (Publisher)

- JAMIL AHMAD, Pakistan – *The Wandering Falcon* (Penguin India/Hamish Hamilton)
- TAHMIMA ANAM, Bangladesh – *The Good Muslim* (Penguin India/Hamish Hamilton)
- JAHNAVI BARUA, India – *Rebirth* (Penguin India/Penguin Books)
- RAHUL BHATTACHARYA, India - *The Sly Company of People Who Care* (Pan Macmillan/Picador)
- MAHMOUD DOWLATABADI, Iran – *The Colonel* (Haus Publishing)
- AMITAV GHOSH, India - *River of Smoke* (John Murray/Penguin India/Hamish Hamilton)
- HARUKI MURAKAMI, Japan -*1Q84* (Harvill Secker)
- ANURADHA ROY, India– *The Folded Earth* (Quercus/Maclehose Press/Hacehette India)
- KYUNG-SOOK SHIN, South Korea – *Please Look After Mom* (Alfred A. Knopf)

- TARUN J TEJPAL, India – *The Valley of Masks* (HarperCollins India/4th Estate)
- YAN LIANKE, China - *Dream of Ding Village* (Grove Atlantic)
- BANANA YOSHIMOTO, Japan - *The Lake* (Melville House)

Chair Judge, Razia Iqbal said, “In scope, range and subject matter, our longlist presents us with the epic as well as the quotidian, the established writers as well as some on the cusp of greater success. But what connects them is a thing that happens when we read good fiction: the cumulative impact of sentence after good sentence is transforming for the reader. So, while it is hoped that the list reflects among the best of what is coming out of Asia, it also presents Asia to itself, an equally important mirror to hold up.”

Chair of Directors of the Man Asian Literary Prize, Prof. David Parker said, "What this longlist shows is that if we are looking for books of the epic scale and stature of the great European nineteenth century novels, we must turn to Asia. Haruki Murakami's massive magnum opus *1Q84* and Amitav Ghosh's three volume epic of the Opium Wars, of which *River of Smoke* is the second volume, have a scale and ambition we don't often see in Western writing these days. Could it be that as the world's economic centre of gravity is moving eastwards, so too is its artistic energy and ambition?"

The longlist announcement was made at Singapore Writers Festival by judge Vikas Swarup and can be seen at YouTube.com/ManAsianLitPrize. The Prize can be followed on Twitter at @MALPrize and #MALPrize11, as well as on Facebook at facebook.com/MALPrize

The shortlist for the Prize will be announced on January 10th with the winner announced on March 15th at a black tie dinner in Hong Kong, the home of the Prize.

THE LONGLISTED BOOKS

Jamil Ahmad - *The Wandering Falcon*

Jamil Ahmad was born in Jalandhar in 1933. As a member of the Civil Service of Pakistan, he served mainly in the Frontier Province and in Balochistan. He was Political Agent in Quetta, Chaghi, Khyber and Malakand. Later, he was commissioner in Dera Ismail Khan and in Swat. He was also chairman of the Tribal Development Corporation. He was posted as minister in Pakistan’s embassy in Kabul at a critical time, before and during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. He now lives in Islamabad.

About the book

Set in the decades before the rise of the Taliban, Jamil Ahmad’s stunning debut takes us to

the essence of human life in the forbidden areas where the borders of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan meet. Today the 'tribal areas' are often spoken about as a remote region, a hotbed of conspiracies, drone attacks and conflict. In *The Wandering Falcon,* this highly traditional, honour-bound culture is revealed from the inside for the first time.

Tahmima Anam - *The Good Muslim*

Tahmima Anam was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1975. She attended Mount Holyoke College and Harvard University, where she earned a PhD in Social Anthropology in 2005. Anam has been published in *Granta* Magazine and *The New Statesman*. Her debut novel, *A Golden Age*, won the Commonwealth Writers' Award for Best First Book and was shortlisted for The Guardian First Book Award and the Costa First Novel Award. She lives in London.

About the book

Set in the dusty streets of Dhaka and the villages and river-islands of rural Bangladesh, at a time when the rise of religious fundamentalism was a whisper in the wind, *The Good Muslim* tells the story of Maya Haque as she returns home. As she attempts to come to terms with her brother's radicalism, Maya will be forced to rethink what it means to be a good daughter, sister, friend and citizen—and to be a good Muslim.

Jahnavi Barua - *Rebirth*

Jahnavi Barua is based in Bangalore. She is a medical doctor but has been writing fiction for the past seven years. Her first book, *Next Door*, a collection of short stories, was published by Penguin India in 2008 to wide critical acclaim. Barua's short fiction has been widely anthologized and she also contributes essays and book reviews to various publications. In 2006, the British Council awarded her a Charles Wallace Trust fellowship for Creative Writing.

About the book

Rebirth is the story of Kaberi, a young woman coming to grips with an uncertain marriage. It is also an intimate portrait of the passionate bond between a mother and her unborn child. Moving between Bangalore and Guwahati the novel weaves together Kaberi's inner and outer worlds as she negotiates the treacherous waters of betrayal and loss.

Rahul Bhattacharya – *The Sly Company of People Who Care*

Rahul Bhattacharya was born in 1979. A cricket journalist since 2000, he is now a contributing editor with *Wisden Asia Cricket* and has been writing for the *Wisden Almanack* since 2003, when he compiled the series overview of India in England, 2002. He also writes for the *Guardian*.

About the book
A twenty-six-year-old Indian journalist decides to give up his job and travel to a country where he can escape the deadness of his life'. So he arrives in Guyana, a forgotten colonial society of raw, mesmerising beauty. From the beautiful, decaying wooden houses of Georgetown, through coastal sugarcane plantations, to the dark rainforest interior scavenged by diamond-hunters, he is absorbed by the fantastic possibilities of this place where the descendants of the enslaved and the indentured have made a new world.

Mahmoud Dowlatabadi – *The Colonel*

Born in 1940 in the Khurasan village of Dowlatabad, Mahmoud Dowlatabadi is the most prominent Iranian novelist since the 1980s. Self-educated and forced to work from childhood as a farm hand, Dowlatabadi went to Tehran later on to become an actor. He started writing in the 1960s and has published numerous novels, novellas, plays and essays.

About the book
A pitch black, rainy night in a small Iranian town. Inside his house the Colonel is immersed in thought. There is a knock on the door. Two young policemen have come to summon the Colonel to collect the tortured body of his youngest daughter and bury her before sunrise. The Islamic Revolution, like every other revolution in history, is devouring its own children. And whose fault is that? This shocking diatribe against the failures of the Iranian left over the last fifty years does not leave one taboo unbroken and has been banned in Dowlatabadi's home country.

Amitav Ghosh – *River of Smoke*

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta in 1956 and grew up in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India. He is the author of several novels including the bestselling *Sea of Poppies* which was shortlisted for the Man Booker prize in 2008. He currently divides his time between Calcutta, Goa and Brooklyn.

About the book
In September 1838 a storm blows up on the Indian Ocean and the Ibis, a ship carrying a consignment of convicts and indentured laborers from Calcutta to Mauritius, is caught up in the whirlwind. On the grand scale of an historical epic, *River of Smoke* follows its storm-tossed characters to the crowded harbors of China. There, despite efforts of the emperor to stop them, ships from Europe and India exchange their cargoes of opium for boxes of tea, silk, porcelain and silver. Following *Sea of Poppie*s, this is the second novel in Ghosh's Ibis trilogy.

Haruki Murakami – *1Q84*

Haruki Murakami was born in Kyoto in 1949 and now lives near Tokyo. He is the author of many novels as well as short stories and non-fiction. His works include *Norwegian Wood*, *A Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, *Kafka on the Shore*, *After Dark* and *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*. His work has been translated into more than forty languages, and the most recent of his many international honours is the Jerusalem Prize.

About the book

The year is 1984. Aomame sits in a taxi on the expressway in Tokyo. Her work is not the kind which can be discussed in public but she is in a hurry to carry out an assignment and, with the traffic at a stand-still, the driver proposes a solution. She agrees, but as a result of her actions starts to feel increasingly detached from the real world. Meanwhile, Tengo is leading a nondescript life but wishes to become a writer. He inadvertently becomes involved in a strange affair surrounding a literary prize to which a mysterious seventeen-year-old girl has submitted her remarkable first novel. Both Aomame and Tengo notice that the world has grown strange; both realise that they are indispensable to each other. While their stories influence one another, at times by accident and at times intentionally, the two come closer and closer to intertwining.

Anuradha Roy - *The Folded Earth*

Anuradha Roy was educated in Calcutta and Cambridge. She has worked as a publisher and a journalist and is now an editor at Permanent Black. She was the winner of the Picador-Outlook Non-fiction Prize in 2004 and her first novel, *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*, was shortlisted for the Crossword Award and has been translated into thirteen languages across the world.

About the book

In a remote town in the Himalaya, Maya tries to put behind her a time of great sorrow. By day she teaches in a school and at night she types up drafts of a magnum opus by her landlord, a relic of princely India known to all as Diwan Sahib. Her bond with the eccentric scholar and her friendship with a village girl, Charu, seem to offer her the chance of a new life in Ranikhet, where lush hills meet clear skies.

Kyung-sook Shin - *Please Look After Mom*

Kyung-sook Shin is the author of numerous works of fiction and is one of South Korea's most widely read and acclaimed novelists. She has been honored with the Manhae Literature Prize, the Dong-in Literature Prize, and the Yi Sang Literary Prize, as well as France's Prix de l'Inaperçu. *Please Look After Mom* is her first book to appear in English and will be published in twenty-nine countries. Currently a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York City, she lives in Seoul.

About the book
A million-plus-copy best seller in Korea, *Please Look After Mom* is the stunning, deeply moving story of a family's search for their mother, who goes missing one afternoon amid the crowds of the Seoul Station subway.

Tarun J Tejpal – *The Valley of Masks*

Tarun J Tejpal is the founder-editor of Tehelka, a news organization acclaimed globally for its aggressive public interest journalism. *The Valley of Masks* is Tarun's third novel, following his debut novel, *The Alchemy of Desire,* published in 2005, which was hailed by *Sunday Times* as "an impressive and memorable debut", translated into more than a dozen languages, in France the book won the Prix Millepages. Tejpal's second novel, *The Story of My Assassins* has been published in 2009. He lives with his wife in New Delhi. His two daughters work in cinema and in conservation.

About the book
The novel tells the story of a physically faceless being known variously as Karna and as X470, a renegade from a mysterious brotherhood, on what he knows will be his last day alive. *The Valley of Masks* examines the pathologies of power, purity and dogma to give us a frightening yet ultimately redemptive vision of the future.

Yan Lianke – *Dream of Ding Village*

Yan Lianke was born in 1958 in Henan Province, China. He is the author of many novels and short-story collection, including *Serve the People!*, and has won China's two top literary awards, the Lu Xun for *Nian, yue, ri (The Year, the Month, the Day),* and the Lao She for *Shouhuo (Pleasure).*

About the book
Officially censored upon its Chinese publication, *Dream of Ding Village* is Chinese novelist Yan Lianke's most important novel to date. Set in a poor village in Henan province, it is a deeply moving and beautifully written account of a blood-selling scandal in contemporary China.

Banana Yoshimoto – *The Lake*

Banan Yoshimoto wrote her first novel, *Kitchen*, while working as a waitress at a golf-course restaurant. It sold millions of copies worldwide, and led to a phenomenon dubbed by Western journalists as "Banana-mania." Yoshimoto has gone on to be one of the biggest-selling and most distinguished writers in Japanese history, winning numerous awards for her work. *The Lake* is her thirteenth book of fiction.

About the book
The novel tells the tale of a young woman who moves to Tokyo after the death of her mother, hoping to get over her grief and start a career as a graphic artist. She finds herself spending too much time staring out her window, though ... until she realizes she's gotten used to seeing a young man across the street staring out his window, too. They eventually embark on a hesitant romance, until she learns that he has been the victim of some form of childhood trauma. Visiting two of his friends who live a monastic life beside a beautiful lake, she begins to piece together a series of clues that lead her to suspect his experience may have had something to do with a bizarre religious cult.

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Notes to Editors

For **press enquiries** please contact Mr. Harrison Kelly: media@manasianliteraryprize.org

About The Man Asian Literary Prize
The Man Asian Literary Prize was founded in 2007. It is an annual literary award given to the best novel by an Asian writer, either written in English or translated into English, and published in the previous calendar year. The judges choose a longlist of 10 to 15 titles announced in October, followed by a shortlist of 5 to 6 titles announced in January, and a winner is awarded in March. The winning author is awarded USD 30,000 and the translator (if any) USD 5,000.

About Man
Man is a world-leading alternative investment management business. It has expertise in a wide range of liquid investment styles including managed futures, equity, credit and convertibles, emerging markets, global macro and multi-manager, combined with powerful product structuring, distribution and client service capabilities. At 30 September 2011, Man manages USD65.0 billion.

The original business was founded in 1783. Today, Man Group plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a member of the FTSE 100 Index, with a market capitalisation of around USD7.0 billion.

Man is a member of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index and the FTSE4Good Index. Man also supports many awards, charities and initiatives around the world, including sponsorship of the Man Booker literary prizes and the Man Asian Literary Prize.

Man sponsored literary prizes are the Man Booker Prize, the Man Booker International

Prize, the Lost Man Booker Prize and the Man Asian Literary Prize.