

**PRESS RELEASE - 22 October 2015**

**JM Sali wins the S.E.A. Write Award (Singapore) 2015**

The National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) is proud to announce the selection of Mr JM Sali as the winner of the S.E.A. Write Award (Singapore) 2015!

Mr Sali is a multiple award-winning novelist, short-story writer, children's book author, TV/ Radio dramaturge, and translator. He has been writing since 1955 and has 57 books to his credit. He was born in Tamil Nadu in 1939 and came to Singapore in 1964. Parallel to his writing, which started when he was still a teenager, he has also enjoyed a career as a prominent literary editor and journalist.

For over 20 years, Mr Sali edited various Tamil language publications, including Singapore's *Tamil Murasu*, and Chennai's *Ananda Vikatan Weekly* and *Mayan Youth Magazine*. In 1983, he joined the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation as a broadcast journalist and news editor and continued this work for over three decades. In addition, Mr Sali was a Contributing Editor to the Tamil section of the literary journal, *Singa*, from 1987 to 1989, and was a member of the Editorial Team for the *Anthology of ASEAN Literature Vol. II* and *Vol. III* (Tamil Fiction) in 1988. He has also served on the editorial committee of *Nadi*, the Tamil language publication of the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), since 2004.

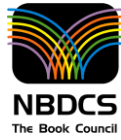
Mr Sali's numerous literary awards include: Kannan Magazine (Tamil Nadu) Children's Novel Prize (1959), Chennai Children's Writers Association's Award (1962), Best Tamil Novel Award from the Tamil Nadu Government (1978), Best Children's Book Prize (1995), and the National Book Development Council of Singapore Book Award for Tamil Fiction (1996) for *Fasting*, a collection of 22 short stories.

More recently he was received the Thamizhavel Award (2001) from the Association of Singapore Tamil Writers, the Kavimalai Award (2005) from the Kavimalai Poets Association (Singapore), and the Seera Award (2008) from the Chennai Kamban Kazhagam. In 2008 he was shortlisted for the Singapore Literature Prize for his work *Aayul Thandanai*. In 2012, he received the Cultural Medallion for his contributions to literature.

Among his recent republished works are: *Alaigal Pesugindrana (The Sound of the Waves* [1975, 3rd ed. 2006]) in which Mr Sali explores the themes of love, respect, guilt and sacrifice through a main character caught between lives split between Singapore and his native home in India; and *Birds of a Feather* (2009), which is a collection of 21 short stories written between 1955 and 1961 featuring characters from school settings. In addition to English translations, some of his short stories have also been translated into Hindi, Urdu, and Sinhalese.

Mr Sali also does Tamil-language translations of his own. He has translated for the National Archives, the Land Transport Authority, the Health Promotion Board, and the National Heritage Board of Singapore, as well as the Croyden and Merton Town Councils of London. His translation works include Mr Lee Kuan Yew's *A Battle For Malaysian Malaysia* (1965).

Mr Sali has conducted several Tamil short story writing workshops at various organisations including the National Book Development Council of Singapore (1987), the National Arts Council and the National Institute of Education (1997). He has also been invited to speak at universities in Tamil Nadu, India, including Bharathithasan University in Trichy and the Government College in



Kumbakonam. His works have been prescribed as textbooks in colleges and universities, including the University of Madras and Queen Mary's College, Chennai.

The South East Asian Writers Awards, or S.E.A Write Award, was established in 1979 to recognize and honour literary excellence in the ASEAN region. Based in Bangkok, the awards are presented annually since 1979 to leading poets and writers in the ten countries which comprise the ASEAN region.

The uniqueness of this award is that the awardees are selected by their own peers in each of the ten ASEAN countries. The award may be given for a specific work by an author or for lifetime achievement. The categories and types of works include poetry, short stories, novels, plays, folklore and scholarly and religious works. Entries are accepted only from authors who are still living.

Some of the previous winners from Singapore include: Philip Jeyaretnam (2003); Soon Ai Ling (2004); P. Krishnan (2005); Isa Kamari (2006); Rex Shelley (2007); Stella Kon (2008); Chia Hwee Pheng (2009); Johar Bin Buang (2010); Robert Yeo (2011) Suchen Christine Lim (2012), Yeng Pway Ngon (2013), and Haresh Sharma (2014).

A list of other ASEAN winners during this period is available at the NBDCS website at <http://bookcouncil.sg/awards/detail/s.e.a-write-award>

The Award presentation ceremony will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, on Monday, 14 December 2015. The winner will receive a commemorative plaque, cash award, and a trip to Bangkok to receive the award.

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