

## The Prestigious Vodafone Crossword Book Award returns

*Crossword and Vodafone announce the first list of books longlisted for the Awards; An unprecedented 186 entries across three categories*

New Delhi, Delhi, IND, 2008-05-06 18:48:11 (IndiaPRwire.com) **Vodafone**, India's leading cellular service provider and **CROSSWORD**, India's leading chain of lifestyle bookstores, announced the first list of nominees for the **Vodafone Crossword Book Award 2007**. The nominations have been longlisted from entries received from Indian publishers in three categories -- English Fiction, Indian Language Fiction Translation and English Non-Fiction. **Mr. C.B. Navalkar, CEO - Crossword Bookstores Ltd.**, and **Harit Nagpal, Director-Marketing and New Business, Vodafone Essar Ltd.**, made the announcement in Mumbai.

The **Vodafone Crossword Book Award** is the only Indian award that recognizes and rewards excellence in Indian writing in English and Indian vernacular works which have been translated in English. The award also actively promotes these authors and their books. **This is the fourth chapter of the Awards.**

For this year's Awards, 5 books in each category will be shortlisted and the same will be announced in May. The final awards will be distributed at an Award function to be held in Mumbai in June, 2008. Each Award will carry a cash prize of **Rs. 3 lakhs, a trophy and a citation**. In the case of the category for Indian Language Fiction Translation, the author and the translator share the prize money equally. The Popular Award entitles the winning author to a cash prize of **Rs. 1 lakh** and a certificate.

Speaking about the longlist, Mr. **C.B. Navalkar, CEO - Crossword Bookstores Ltd.** stated, *'I am pleased to announce the longlist for the Vodafone Crossword Book Award 2007 we have received an unprecedented 186 entries this year which is the highest in the history of the awards. This enthusiastic response is also a strong indication of the equity enjoyed by the award which is in its 8th year now. I am also delighted to have Vodafone join hands with us again to present the Vodafone Crossword Book Award 2008'*

Speaking about the award, **Harit Nagpal, Director-Marketing and New Business, Vodafone Essar, said**, *'We have been part of the Crossword Book Awards for the past 3 years because it celebrates the achievements of Indian writers.'*

This year, the Award has generated great enthusiasm among Indian publishers and **186 valid entries** have been received for the 3 categories. For the category of Best work in English Fiction, as authors of renown like **Raj Kamal Jha** ('Fireproof'), **M.G. Vassanji** ('The Assassin's Song'), **Indra Sinha** ('Animal's People'), as well as new authors such as **Saikat Majumdar** ('Silverfish') and **Nikita Lalwani** ('Gifted').

In the Indian Language Fiction Translation category, this year's nominees include author **Sivasankari** - 'Deception' translated by Uma Girish, **Ashokamitran** - 'Today' translated by Shanti Sivaraman, **Sankar** - 'Chowringree' translated by Arunava Sinha and **M.T. Vasudevan Nair** - 'Naalukettu : The House Around The Courtyard', translated by Gita Krishnankutty.

In the English Non-Fiction category, there are books by **V.S. Naipaul** (A Writer's People: Ways of

Looking & Feeling), **William Dalrymple** ('The Last Mughal'), **Ramachandra Guha** ('India after Gandhi'), **Sudhir Kakar** (The Indians: Portrait of a People), and **Rajmohan Gandhi** ('Mohandas: A True Story of A Man, His People and an Empire').

The winner of the 2006 Award for English Fiction was Vikram Chandra for '**Sacred Games**'. The prize for the best work in the Indian Language Fiction Translation category was jointly won by author, C.S. Lakshmi (Ambai) and translator, Lakshmi Holmstrom for '**In a Forest, A Deer**' and author M. Mukundan and translator A.J. Thomas for '**Kesavan's Lamentations**'. The prize for the best work in the English Non-Fiction category was won by Vikram Seth for '**Two Lives**' and the Popular Award was won by Kiran Desai for her book '**The Inheritance of Loss**'.

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### **About Crossword:**

**Crossword** is India's leading bookstore chain, which has pioneered the lifestyle bookstore concept in India. Its innovative approach to book retailing and its achievements have received wide acclaim in India and has won the '**Reid & Taylor Award for Best Retailer of the year - Leisure & Specialty**' at the **India Retail Summit 2005 'Images Retailer of the Year award for the books, music and gifts category for 2005'**. Businessworld rated Crossword as the '**6th Most Respected Retailer in the country**' for the year 2006; the only bookstore to feature in the top ten. Launched in 1992, Crossword currently has **47 stores across 13 cities** in the country in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Ghaziabad, Hyderabad, Jaipur, New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, Vadodara & Vishakhapatnam. Crossword Bookstores Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary Company of Shopper's Stop Ltd - India's leading department store chain. The Holding Company inter-alia also acts as a Master Franchisee of the Company.

### **About Vodafone:**

Vodafone Essar in India is a subsidiary of Vodafone Group Plc and commenced operations in 1994 when its predecessor Hutchison Telecom acquired the cellular licence for Mumbai. Vodafone Essar now has operations in 16 circles covering 86% of India's mobile customer base, with over 44.12 million customers\*.

Over the years, Vodafone Essar, under the Hutch brand, has been named the 'Most Respected Telecom Company', the 'Best Mobile Service in the country' and the 'Most Creative and Most Effective Advertiser of the Year'.

Vodafone is the world's leading international mobile communications company. It now has operations in 25 countries across 5 continents and 40 partner networks with over 252 million customers worldwide. Vodafone has partnered with the Essar Group as its principal joint venture partner for the Indian market.

The Essar Group is a diversified business corporation with interests spanning the manufacturing and service sectors like Steel, Energy, Power, Communications, Shipping & Logistics and Construction. The Group has an asset base of over Rs.400 billion (US\$ 10 billion) and employs over 20,000 people.

\*Figures from Cellular Operators Association of India, March 31, 2008

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