



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Scholastic Asian Book Award 2016 shortlist announced**

*Five literary works selected from 54 submissions, representing 11 countries*

**Singapore, 28 March 2016** – The National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) and Scholastic Asia today announced the shortlist for the Scholastic Asian Book Award (SABA) 2016. This year, five finalists were selected from a pool of 54 submissions. Entries came from 11 countries, with Iran and Palestine being represented for the first time.

Mr R Ramachandran, Executive Director of NBDCS said, “Since its inception, SABA has been positioned to be an avenue for budding and established writers from around the region to showcase their diverse literary talents. With each edition, we’ve received an increasing number of submissions and better quality ones – this is a clear indication that SABA is well-recognised by authors as a platform for promoting their works to a larger audience.”

Organised since 2011, SABA promotes Asian experiences and expression in creative and innovative forms, by celebrating writers of Asian origin whose works have the potential to share uniquely Asian experiences with the rest of the world.

### **SABA 2016 shortlist**

Shortlisted entries were submitted by authors from India, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea. They are:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>
Chasing Freedom	Tina Cho	South Korea
Codex: The Lost Treasure of the Indus	Aditi Krishnakumar	India
Dragonflies, Jigsaws and a Rainbow	Varsha Seshan	India
Island Girl	Ho Lee Ling, Stephanie	Singapore
The Budding Traveller	Golda Mowe	Malaysia

The five titles were elected by a panel of experts in the field of children’s books. These works are in the running for the grand prize of \$10,000 cash, and the winning manuscript may be published by Scholastic Asia. Between 2011 and 2014, the world's largest children books publishing and distribution company had published six SABA winners’ and finalists’ works, with another three to be launched at the Asian Festival of Children’s Content (AFCC) 2016.

Selina Lee, Vice President of Scholastic Asia said, “At Scholastic, we believe that literacy is the cornerstone of all learning, and we aim to help children discover the pleasure and power of reading. SABA is a demonstration of our commitment to producing quality, engaging educational content, and we look forward to once again bringing the experiences of life, spirit, and thinking in different parts of Asia to the world, through this year’s award.”



The SABA 2016 winner will be announced at the Opening Ceremony of the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) 2016 on 24 May 2016 (Tuesday).

Further details about shortlisted titles for the SABA 2016 are available in Annex A, and at <http://bookcouncil.sg/awards/detail/scholastic-asian-book-award>.

For more information about AFCC 2016, please visit <http://afcc.com.sg/>, or follow AFCC on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AFCCSingapore>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/afccsg/>) for up-to-date news about the Festival.

###

### **About the Scholastic Asia Book Award (SABA)**

The Scholastic Asian Book Award (SABA) is a joint initiative between the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) and Scholastic Asia. To promote Asian experiences and expression in creative and innovative forms, this award recognises writers of Asian origin whose manuscripts have the potential to share uniquely Asian experiences of life, spirit, and thinking with the rest of the world. For more information, visit: <http://bookcouncil.sg/awards/detail/scholastic-asian-book-award>.

### **About the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS)**

The National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) is a non-profit, charitable organisation founded in 1969. It promotes storytelling, reading, writing, and publishing through a variety of programmes and festivals, including the Asian Festival of Children's Content and the All In! Young Writers Festival. NBDCS also presents many annual and biennial awards, including the Singapore Literature Prize and the Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award for works published in Singapore; the Scholastic Asian Book Award, and the Scholastic Picture Book Award for unpublished works. Their training arm, the Academy of Literary Arts and Publishing (ALAP), also runs publishing-related and literary arts-focused courses and workshops throughout the year.

For more information, please visit [www.bookcouncil.sg](http://www.bookcouncil.sg).

### **About Scholastic**

Scholastic Corporation is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology and related services and children's media. Scholastic creates quality books, print and technology-based learning materials and programs, magazines, multi-media and other products that help children learn both at school and at home. The Company distributes its products and services worldwide through a variety of channels, including school-based book clubs and book fairs, retail stores, schools, libraries, on-air, and online at [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).

### **About the Asian Festival of Children's Content**

The Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) 2016 is a flagship event organised by the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) to celebrate and promote the creation and appreciation of children's books and content, with a focus on Asian themes.



In 2016, the five-day festival at the National Library Building will feature 140 ticketed sessions including seminars, conferences, panel discussions, workshops and masterclasses, as well as many free public activities including book launches, language programmes, and the AFCC Book Fair.

AFCC 2016 will feature 116 local and international speakers including writers, illustrators, educators, publishers, and media professionals from 14 countries: Singapore, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Philippines, New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, Iran, Indonesia, Ghana, England and the United States.

Japan is the Country of Focus for AFCC 2016. The Country Partner is the International Library of Children's Literature, National Diet Library, and its Special Partner is Genting Singapore. AFCC 2016's Supporting Partners are Chihiro Art Museum, Japan Book Publishers Association and the Joshibi University of Art & Design.

For more info, visit [www.afcc.com.sg](http://www.afcc.com.sg)

**Media contacts**

Ninemer PR  
Charlene Ho  
Account Manager  
[charleneho@ninemer.com](mailto:charleneho@ninemer.com)  
+65 6534 9909

Ninemer PR  
Kherray Yeo  
Account Executive  
[kherrayyeo@ninemer.com](mailto:kherrayyeo@ninemer.com)  
+65 6534 9959



## **ANNEX A: Write-ups on Scholastic Asian Book Award Shortlist**

### **Chasing Freedom: The Asian Underground Railroad (Author: Tina Cho, South Korea)**

Two unhappy kids. Two stories that lead to separate escapes across the North Korean border to China.

Brokers, a pastor, and other people help Yunho and Joo Ri escape to freedom along the Asian Underground Railroad through China, Laos, Thailand, and eventually to America. Soldiers, child slavery, fake IDs, jail time, and trekking through jungles are difficulties they must face. Will they be caught and repatriated back to North Korea and sent to brutal concentration camps? In the worse moments, Yunho and Joo Ri come to terms with their past, their fears, and face the enemy head on.

Tina Cho is the author of *The Girl's Guide to Manners* (Legacy Press Kids, 2014) and colouring book, *God Is So Good* (Warner Press, 2013). She also has three more books, including *Seasons of the Asian Pear Tree*, due to be published soon. Cho lives in South Korea with her husband and two children, and teaches first grade at an international school.

### **Codex: The Lost Treasure of the Indus (Author: Aditi Krishnakumar, India)**

When a discovery that might be the key to deciphering the mysterious script of the Indus Valley Civilisation proves to be a puzzle in three languages, it's a job for Codex, who's a linguist, mathematician and all-round geek. But Codex soon discovers that this isn't like anything she's done before. As the sinister implications of the find become apparent, Codex must work with Agent Lila Raman to get to the bottom of a four-thousand-year-old mystery.

Aditi Krishnakumar has worked in the finance industry in India and Singapore, where she resides presently. Her first book, *A Whole Summer Long*, was published in 2012. Additionally, another of her manuscripts was shortlisted for the Scholastic Asian Book Award in 2014.

### **Dragonflies, Jigsaws and a Rainbow (Author: Varsha Seshan, India)**

*Dragonflies, Jigsaws and a Rainbow* is an assortment of stories, featuring characters like a retired school-teacher, a mynah, a colour-blind child, and a pair of siblings who rarely get along. With urban stories about a boy whose father is in the army and a glassblower's daughter, rural stories about a village school and the peanut harvest, and fantasy stories about a creature called Moonstone and the colours of a rainbow, this collection explores the joy and variety of storytelling.

Varsha Seshan enjoys working with children, conducting reading and writing workshops at places ranging from the British Council Library to small schools in Baramati. Her collection of short stories for children, *The Story-Catcher*, was published in 2012. It has been on the publisher's bestselling list since May 2013 and was the second runner-up for the "Parents and Kids Choice Awards 2014".

### **Island Girl (Author: Ho Lee Ling, Stephanie, Singapore)**

Habibah is a girl living in the 1800s on a remote island in the Malay Archipelago. Her peaceful life begins to change after her thirteenth birthday: she receives a wedding proposal and learns that her long-lost mother is still alive. When her mother returns to the island, Habibah is faced with a dilemma: should she marry and stay on the island, or leave in search of something more?



Ho Lee Ling, Stephanie is a Singapore writer and researcher. Her first book, *Samsui Girl*, was awarded a First-Time Writers & Illustrators Publishing grant in 2006. Ho has also written picture books for government agencies including the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education. In addition to writing children's stories, Ho is a partner in the History Workroom LLP, a research and writing consultancy.

**The Budding Traveller (Author: Golda Mowe, Malaysia)**

Nine-year-old Randau is afraid of new people and places because his mother is afraid. In a moment of bravado during his first visit to Singapore, he leaves the hotel then loses his way in the streets. He accidentally travels 100 years to the past and meets Kai, the traveller of islands. Kai talks about the traveller's rule and helps Randau return to modern-day Singapore to be reunited with his parents. After spending two days seeing the island through his father's eyes, Randau promises to grow up into a brave traveller.

Golda Mowe is a writer from Malaysia who writes about the Iban people of Sarawak. Her novels *Iban Dream* (2013) and *Iban Journey* (2015) are published in paperback by Monsoon Books. The traditional stories and life philosophies of this indigenous tribe are a major source of inspiration in many of her work.