

Early Years Winner Citation

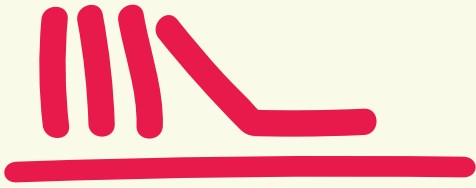
The Neev Book Award for distinguished children’s literature recognises outstanding writing that leads to a fuller understanding of Indian lives and stories—books that build empathy and resilience, explore conflict, negotiate identity, and inspire change. This annual award encourages and promotes Indian children’s literature globally.

Publishers across India submit titles for consideration. An independent jury uses a rigorous process to establish a shortlist in four categories: Early Years, Emerging Readers, Junior Readers, and Young Adults. The criteria include the quality of writing, interpretation of the theme, development of the plot, portrayal of characters, crafting of setting, and the overall presentation of the book. After months of deliberation, the four books chosen for this award are those that best voice the evolution of Indian lives and stories.

The 2022 Neev Book Award, in the category of Early Years, is presented to *Bumoni’s Banana Trees*, written by Mita Bordoloi, illustrated by Tarique Aziz, and published by Tulika Publishers.

A little girl must save her family’s banana trees. For Bumoni and her community, the banana tree is not only a major source of livelihood and sustenance but also daily essentials. Clever little Bumoni comes up with a great idea to keep the elephants away from her precious banana trees while helping the large creatures. Mita Bordoloi tells a powerful tale of human-animal conflict set in Assam, which addresses modern problems related to sustainability, our carbon footprint, and co-existence with endangered species.





Emerging Readers Winner Citation

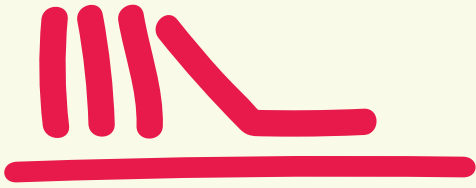
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The 2022 Neev Book Award, in the category of Emerging Readers, is presented to *Jamlo Walks*, written by Samina Mishra, illustrated by Tarique Aziz, and published by Puffin Books.

A stunning picture book that draws on a real incident, of a child carrying the chillis she earned harvesting to her home village far away. This story explores the trials of a young migrant worker during the Covid-19 lockdown in India, who, like so many others, is forced to make her way home on foot. The reader goes along with Jamlo on her journey, which is interspersed with glimpses into the lives of middle-class urban children, who do not face the same challenges. A simple, yet powerful narrative that deals with themes of justice, inequality and humanity.





Junior Readers Winner Citation

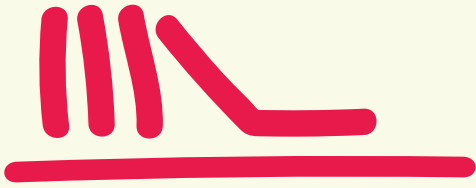
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The 2022 Neev Book Award, in the category of Junior Readers, is presented to *When the World Went Dark*, written by Jane De Suza, and published by Puffin Books.

This novel, set in an Indian city during the Covid-19 lockdown, explores how a child’s emotions expand when the world they live in shrinks. Jane De Suza deftly weaves a mystery, laced with wordplay, into the multi-part journey of eight-year-old Swara going through the grieving process for her grandmother. While fully confined to her home, Swara busts a gang of thieves with her ever-expanding group of neighbourhood accomplices and demonstrates what curiosity, kindness, and persistence can accomplish in a community.





Young Adult Winner Citation

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The 2022 Neev Book Award, in the category of Young Adult, is presented to *Rain Must Fall: Not Just a Ghost Story*, written by Nandita Basu, and published by Duckbill.

In this first-person graphic novel, illustrated with spare black and white drawings, Rumi, a non-binary 15-year-old, discovers a ghost in their ancestral home by the sea. The struggles both have experienced, across the generations, to express themselves within the family and as artists are gradually revealed. The two realise the importance of being seen – and loved – for who they really are. Teens will be drawn to this paranormal drama about friendship and identity and will root for both souls.

