



Banibrata Mahanta wins The Muse India Translation Award 2025 for *Lavanyadevi*

Hyderabad

Muse India honours Banibrata Mahanta

The Muse India Translation Award 2025 celebrates the power of Indian literature in translation. Banibrata Mahanta wins this year's honour for bringing *Lavanyadevi* to English readers with depth and nuance.

Express News Service

Updated:13th May, 2026 at 10:29 AM

The Muse India Translation Award 2025 has been awarded to Banibrata Mahanta for his English translation of *Lavanyadevi*, originally written in Hindi by Kusum Khemani and published by Orient BlackSwan in 2024. Selected from 103 translated works spanning 18 Indian languages, the novel was praised by the jury for its nuanced exploration of migration, displacement, and fluid identities within the Marwari community.

Spanning five generations of a *zamindar* family, the narrative intertwines Bengali and Marwari cultural identities while tracing the lives of women across two centuries, The jury noted that the protagonist emerges as 'a woman of extraordinary vision and grace', while also commending the translation for its contemporary idiom, readability, and its ability to preserve the novel's layered linguistic and cultural textures.

Banibrata Mahanta is a professor of English at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. His research interests include Indian writing in English, Indian nationalist thought, contemporary literary theory, disability studies and rights in India, and translation. He translates from Bangla, Hindi and Urdu into English.

Whereas, Kusum Khemani is a well-known writer, critic, translator and social activist, has a large and eclectic body of work to her credit. She is the president of the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad, and editor of its Hindi journal *Vagarth* and is currently overseeing the publication of the Parishad's ten-volume *Hindi Sahitya Gyankosh*.

The award carries a cash prize of ₹ 25,000 along with a framed certificate. Reflecting on the overall quality of submissions, the jury observed that all ten shortlisted works displayed 'flow, intelligibility, power of evocation, richness of texture and the creative use of Indian English'. In addition to the main award, four books received the Jury's Special Commendation for their outstanding literary merit.

These include *The Last Bench*, a Bengali memoir by Adhir Biswas translated by V Ramaswamy; *The Bitter Fruit Tree & Other Stories*, originally written in Konkani by Prakash Parienkar and translated by Vidya Pal; *4 Game of Fire*, a Punjabi novel by Nanak Singh translated by Navdeep Suri; and *Kurinji Malar* by Na Parthasarathy, translated by Malini Seshadri.

The panel of 12 judges, comprising scholars and writers from across the country, was led by Sachidananda Mohanty, Member of the UGC and former vice-chancellor of the Central University of Odisha, along with Sukrita Paul Kumar, recipient of the Rabindranath Tagore International Award and former holder of the Aruna Asaf Ali Chair at Delhi University.