Sam Dalrymple's 'Shattered Lands' wins NIF Book Prize 2026

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News

Sam Dalrymple's debut book "Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia" (HarperCollins) won the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2026, announced by the New India Foundation (NIF) on 26 Nov 2026. The book tells the story of the lesser-known partitions of the old British Indian empire, from Burma to Aden, not only the 1947 Partition. The prize (₹15 lakh) will be presented on 12 Dec 2026 at the Bangalore Literature Festival.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Prize	Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2026
Winner	Sam Dalrymple – "Shattered Lands"
Given by	New India Foundation
For	Best non-fiction on modern / contemporary India

Background

- The prize was started in 2018 and is named after Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1903–1988), freedom fighter and revivalist of Indian handicrafts and theatre. She helped set up the All India Handicrafts

Board, the Crafts Council of India and the National School of Drama, and received the Ramon Magsaysay Award (1966) and the Padma Vibhushan (1987).

- Sam Dalrymple is the son of historian William Dalrymple. The "five partitions" in his book are: Burma (1937); the Arabian Peninsula (Aden and the Gulf states); India–Pakistan (1947); the princely states; and Bangladesh (1971).

Tamil Nadu link: In 1926, Kamaladevi contested the Madras Provincial Legislative Council election from Mangalore, becoming the first Indian woman to contest a legislative election.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

Sam Dalrymple's debut book "Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia" (HarperCollins) won the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2026, announced by the New India Foundation (NIF) on 26 Nov 2026.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Prize: Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2026; Winner: Sam Dalrymple – "Shattered Lands"; Given by: New India Foundation; For: Best non-fiction on modern / contemporary India.

What is the background to this news?

The prize was started in 2018 and is named after Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1903–1988), freedom fighter and revivalist of Indian handicrafts and theatre.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Who wrote 'Shattered Lands', winner of the 2026 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize?

A) Shashi Tharoor

B) William Dalrymple

C) Sam Dalrymple

D) Ramachandra Guha

Answer: C – Explanation: It is Sam's debut book; his father is historian William Dalrymple.

2. Which organisation awards the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Book Prize?

A) National Book Trust

B) Sahitya Akademi

C) New India Foundation (NIF)

D) Bharatiya Jnanpith

Answer: C – Explanation: Since 2018 NIF has given it to the best non-fiction book on modern or contemporary India.

3. Kamaladevi – which is/are correct?

1. Headed the All India Handicrafts Board.

2. Founded the Crafts Council of India.

3. Founded Kalakshetra.

A) 1 and 2 only

B) 2 and 3 only

C) 1 and 3 only

D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A – Explanation: Kalakshetra, Chennai (1936) was founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale, so only 1 and 2 are correct.

4. In 1926 Kamaladevi contested for which legislature?

A) Bengal Council

B) Bombay Council

C) Madras Legislative Council

D) Central Assembly

Answer: C – Explanation: She contested from Mangalore, then in the Madras Presidency, and lost narrowly.

5. Which territory was separated from British India in 1937 under the Government of India Act, 1935?

A) Ceylon

B) Sikkim

C) Nepal

D) Burma

Answer: D – Explanation: Burma's separation is one of the five partitions in 'Shattered Lands'; Ceylon was a separate Crown Colony in 1937, not a part of British India.