**Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters 2019, Day 3: Vibrant with diverse ideas of change and stunning performance by Agam Musical Band**

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**Trivandrum, 02nd February, 2019**: The morning of 2nd edition of Mathrubhumi Festival of Letters 2019, began with a scintillating discussion on What Did Nehru Do Right? Between Dr Shashi Tharoor and Swapan Dasgupta. In his opening statement to the topic tharoor gave reference about the biography book he wrote on Nehru titled *Nehru the invention of India* in 2003, which reflects on how much more important it was to evaluate Nehru’s legacy at a time when everything he stood for, advocated was fundamentally contested by the powers of been, emphasising on the relevance of the session Tharoor said” *Nehru’s 4 major contributions to India during his prime ministership were Democracy, Secularism or pluralism, building of basic economic infrastructure and scientific and technological infrastructure and the place of India on the world stage*”. Countering the argument Swapan said that “*It was not Nehru impulse alone which led to democracy, it was a certain mood in the country, which was backed by the legacy of the freedom movement of what people believed in and congress party was not entirely Nehru, they were other forces which were there and it was very large extent a form of rainbow coalition, a broader party which contained diverse impulses”, he also added saying “The story if Indian entrepreneurship would have been little different if there hadn’t been the institutional discouragement of free enterprise which Nehru initiated”.*

The literary festival first Solo session was by acclaimed writer J J Bola, where he spoke on “No Place to Call Home”, sharing his struggle of his life of being born in Congo and living as a refugee in Britain, and having to attend university without any papers and having no legal representation, he emphasised that individuals should connect physically rather than digitally in this difficult times and shared the story of his ancestors who lived in Congo in the 1970’s & 80’s, and they never wanted to leave Congo but it was a situation of life & death which forced them to leave their homeland. His writing is inspired by a hope that things will get better and we will see a better world tomorrow.

The session, by the famous Ukraine writer Androi Kurkov became the most creative exercise for children on storytelling, the kids went on to create imaginary characters and created their own story versions of the characters with a plot and beautiful ending to a perfect story one could relate with.

The conversation on ‘Has Indian Crime Writing come of age? Of late, the crime fiction writers have found themselves more popular than ever. But does that mean we have what it takes to keep the readers on the edge of the seat?’ witnessed a discussion on both fictional and non-fictional aspects of crime writing. Award winning writer and author of the famous Muzaffar Jang series Madhulika Liddle, the distinguished police personnel and author of ‘The Tandoor Murder’ Maxwell Pereira and Dr. Jijo Thulaseedharan participated in the conversation. Moderated by Dr. Jijo Thulaseedharan, the conversation started with the difference between fictional and non-fictional crime writing. Maxwell Pereira said that he writes in a blunt police language and so cannot try his hand in fictional crime writing. But the readers of crime writing prefer sensational stuff over serious narratives.  He also noted that his book was written with the intention to give a clear picture of police, judiciary and investigation to the general public.

He added that the resources for crime writing are rather low in our country. Even the modern equipment for crime investigation was introduced very late here. The application of DNA test to prove crimes were first rejected by the court. However, it turned out to be trustworthy source of evidence later. The book ‘The Tandoor Murder’ even affected the general public’s perception of the tandoor ovens in India, he said.

Madhulika Liddle pointed out that her books contain more history than mystery. So, the mystery in the plot is diluted with the historical background. They are written after conducting thorough research. The readers often find the works more complex to understand for this reason. She also said that she does not like being addressed as Indian Agatha Christie, because their style of writing is entirely different from each other.

The Interactive session on Shashi Tharoor and Manu Joseph spoke on Tharoor’s latest book The Prime Minister : Accidental or Paradoxical  Politician opened to a large gathering ,Moderating the session, noted journalist Manu Joseph began by asking Shashi Tharoor on why people would not vote for the Modi Government in the upcoming elections.  Shashi Tharoor said that Modi had failed to deliver after coming to power within the first 6 months and had only made liberal promises which he did not fulfil.

Speaking about his latest book The Accidental Prime Minister, Shashi Tharoor said that the book is a stocktaking of the Prime Minister and is divided into 5 sections namely, Profile, Modification of India, Governance, section on Economics and on foreign policy. Tharoor pointed out that Modi has not raised the image of India across the world.

To Manu Joseph’s question on the 3 things that Tharoor likes about Modi, he said that Modi has risen to the highest office from a humble beginning. Secondly, Modi’s tireless energy and thirdly his oratory skills in Hindi.

Shashi Tharoor praised Congress president Rahul Gandhi for his extraordinary reading which many people were not aware of.

  **Other highlights of the Day 2 sessions were as follows:** -

1. **Bamboo Grove –** Catching them young ! Conversation about the nuances of catching the imagination of the young adult readers – Reshma Krishnan Barshika, Parvathy Salil
2. **Book reading –** Gabi Martinez, Lin Anderson,Sonnet Mondal,Shyam Selvadurai
3. Book Launch – Book Name : Being Reshma, Author: Reshma Qureshi & Tania Singh, Release by Yvonne A Owour
4. **Poetry – Poetry Chain –** Neerada Suresh, Lexmi Priya, Thara D Souza, Soorya Menon, Sindhoor Varkoor, Arun Babu Zachariah, Sulochana Ram Mohan, Geetha Namboodiripad
5. **Conversation: The Migrant’s voice**, A discussion on the contribution of immigrants to the contemporary British writing – Jonathan Davidson, J J Bola, Jenny Brown, Rajeev Balasubhramanyam
6. **Words with Picture :**Literature based animated short film show
7. **Workshop :** Podcasting , Devadas Rajaram
8. **Conversation :** Fire Burns Blue, Will women steal the show in cricket ? – Sidhanta Patnaik, Karunya Keshav, Ayaz Memon
9. **MBIFL SOLO :** On Higher education, - T P Sreenivasan

The MBIFL 2019, evening cultural program included musical performance by famous musical band Agam .The festival takes place at Kanakakkunnu Palace. On spot registrations are now open, For more Information and a complete program, visit [www.mbifl.com](http://www.mbifl.com)

**About Mathrubhumi International Festivals of Letters 2019**

**MBIFL** iscelebration of Kerala’s inherited syncretic culture and an initiative to take forward the legacy of literarture, words, and their potency. High – profile conservations, reading sessions. A cartoon / illustration exhibition, story-telling, impromptu performances and an exploration of traditional Malabar cuisine and the wandering history of the Malayalee are among the main attractions. Each day of the festival will culminate in cultural evenings.

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