**Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters 2019, day 2 delight audiences with inspiring sessions and stunning play performance of A Very Normal Family, by Roshan Mathew**

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**Trivandrum, 01st February, 2019**: MBIFL Day 2 opened to a Jam-Packed audience on M P Veerendra Kumar book on Swami Vivekanada titled “Vivekandan Sanyasiyum Manushya”. Which was released today at the festival by Former Chief Secretary K Jayakumar. The author narrated what prompted him to pen the book on the life of Swami Vivekanada.

MP Veerender Kumar said “*penning the book resonated during his MA philosophy classes and his book talks about how Vivekananda was not the kind of ‘Sanyasi ’who renounced the worldly life completely. Instead, he constantly interacted with society, had friends all over the world and was very close to his family. His book also reflects the influence of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his wife Sarada Devi on Vivekananda.* *The book also spoke about Swami’s political ideals, his equation with Gandhiji, and how he loved birds and animals*”.

MBIFL 2 , first Solo session was by acclaimed writer Jonathan Gil Harris, where he spoke on a preposition of if Shakespeare was alive now he wouldn’t be writing for theatre, or for cinema or Hollywood he will be writing for Bollywood” He spoke on how Shakespeare has been an Indian for a very long time giving the instances of going back in time and travelling to Kolkatta, where there is a street name called Shakespeare Sarani and there is also a police station Shakespeare Sarani Thana which is a police station where the policeman wear the Shaskespeare on their batch, there are also politicians all across the political spectrum who are *Shakesphering* he said, he added “ even the Bollywood and Indian language movies have also been influenced by Shakespeare movies such as Khoon Ka Khoon influenced by Shakespeare Hamlet play, Angoor film based on The Comedy of errors, films like Mughal-e-Azam,,Bobby, Ramleela, Dhadak, Jatt & Juliet, Ishaqzade etc are all influenced by Shakespeare play Romoe & Juliet”.

The session, Prof Germain Greer was about her perspective on menstruation, and to dream of a world where the women can decide about her menstruating cycle over a period of time, she spoke on how billions of sanitary napkins have already to be found in Indian roadways and it would be a disaster if someone decided to increase their supply even more they are very slow biodegradable product and many of them have polmar in them which absorbs enormous amount of water which would completely disrupt the hydrology of any region, which provokes our thought about looking out for an alternative option.

The conversation between BJP state president Adv  PS Sreedharan Pillai, DYFI state secretary AA Rahim and Thrithala MLA VT Balram on the topic "When Institutionalised Religions Gobble Up Politics" Adv Jayasankar kick-started the session by opining that the politics in India, especially in Kerala is deeply influenced by the religions. He began by quoting historical events including the partition of India. Pakistan was the first nation established on the basis of religion. Israel was the next. He pointed that India was unfortunate to have been divided on the basis of religion. BJP state chief started by accepting the truth that the institutionalised religions have gobbled up the Indian politics. He quoted Ram Manohar Lohia to say that the Communist Government came to power in 1957 in Kerala by appeasing the religions. He criticised both the Congress and Communist parties by quoting the history.
In response to Sreedharan Pillai, DYFI state secretary AA Rahim alleged that Pillai's opinion was as that of a selective deaf. He agreed that the Communist party was always keen on maintain a warm relationship with all religious groups but never gave an ear to them before forming a Government. Rahim sharply criticised Sangh Parivar ideology of Hindutva as it represents racism. They are politically misusing Hindu religion. He likened the concept of Hindutva to the ISIS ideology.
The religions represent monism as the sacred texts cannot be amended but Indian democracy is pluralistic, we are free to amend the constitution itself. So it is hard to implement the hindutva ideology in India, added Rahim.

 The Interactive session on Women and War by Joumana Haddad, Shahad Al Rawi, moderated by Dr Meena T Pillai, where acclaimed Lebanese writer Joumama Haddad, spoke about the patriarchal system of the Arab world comparing it with to *Dante’s inferno* where they still are considered in the lower circle many Arab women who have no control over their destinies, because of the whole man dominated system whether in politics or society at all levels”. Adding to the conversation Shahad Al Rawi the Iranian writer compared the *Iranian women born as gladiators* where the women not only look after their family when their husbands fight in the war, they give education to their children but also have to face the grief of their children and family killed in the war.

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

1. **Bamboo Grove – The butterfingers effect a conversation on the spell of creating the popular butterfingers series – khyrunnaisa A, Aiswarya Thara Bai**
2. **Book reading – Umi Sinha, Arunava Sinha, Michelle Green**
3. Book Launch – Book Name : Tiger Women, Arunava Sinha,released by Umi Sinha
4. **Poetry – Dr Tiny Nair, Soni Somarajan, Harvinder Kaur, Meera Nair, Babitha Justine, Dr Anand Kumar, Dr Mathew Jasper, Priya Dileep**
5. **Conversation: Who cares for a Poet? Is poetry relevant in a fractured, polorized world?**
6. **Words with picture : Collection of animation film based on famous short stories – curated by Deepika Susselan**
7. **Conversation : Sathyan Anthikad, Sreekanth Kottakkal**
8. **MBIFL SOLO : Debunking Fake News – Devdas Rajaram**
9. **Conversation : When a Community Becomes a Character on writing the biography of the Bengalis – Sudeep Chakravarty, Vaishna Roy**
10. **Conversation : What we talk when we talk about rape**

The MBIFL 2019, evening cultural program included play performance on a very normal family directed by Roshan Mathew and a musical performance by Kerala’s famous musical band Oorali express.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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