**Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters goes live**

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Festival Dates- The 2nd edition of Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters 2019 is scheduled to take place from 31st January –3rd February, 2019 at Kanakakkunnu Palace, Trivandrum

Programme and Themes -will bring together over 300 international and Indian writers with sessions devoted to divergent topics, trends, ideas and genres ranging from fiction, poetry, nonfiction, politics, environment, travel, science & technology, activism and cinema prominently. Heralding the theme **Known Lands; Unheard Voices**, the festival will have a strong field of speakers from all the five continents

**Thiruvananthapuram 31st January, 2019**: The much-awaited Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters kicks off its 2nd edition of annual event today, featuring over 30 sessions with world – renowned authors, speakers across the globe.

The event was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri Pinarayi Vijayan, along writer, pre-eminent feminist alive Prof Germaine Greer, MP Veerendra Kumar – Managing Director, Mathrubhumi, PV Gangadharan – Managing Editor – Mathrubhumi Group and MV Shreyams Kumar – Jt Managing Director – Mathrubhumi Group, and P I Rajeev, Executive Editor – Mathrubhumi.

In his opening remarks Chief Minister said “A man becomes a man only when he acquires knowledge,” he said. He also mentioned that no political party can mislead an educated public.

Speaking on this occasion, MP Veerendra Kumar said “*The festival will see vibrant writers from across the world with a common purpose of celebrating literature and celebrating human mankind, dignity and freedom at the same time, the true value of human freedom can only be felt by someone who has lost freedom he said*.

MBIFL 2019, opening session was addressed by writer-diplomat-politician Dr Shashi Tharoor as the keynote speaker on **“Era of Darkness – Then & Now**” the title which is a reference to the book he had published in 2016, ***Inglorious Empire what the British did to India***. A book that looked at 200 yrs of British colonolionsm not as a narrative history but as an argument which laid out what the British had done in the course of these centuries that we could look back upon and formulate a judgement about.

He spoke on India as a country which in1700 accounted for 27 per cent of global GDP, the richest country in the world, the revenues of the then emperor Aurungzeb exceeded the revenues of every single crowned headed Europe combined including Louis in his grand palace in Versailles and Queen of Elizabeth it was a wealthy prosperous thriving society with a sophisticated civilization the world’s leading exporter of textiles since the days of the roman empire. Speaking on the present era he said the present government is imposing a different kind of darkness over India at a time when in 70 years India had built up a thriving democracy with free press, with autonomous independent institution, and thriving culture. He said “The prime minister is the ruling party, ruling party is the government, the government is the nation,” he said and added that “Any opposition to the prime minister is said to be anti-national.”

He also requested the British to undo the scars and wanted any of the members of the Royal family to visit India and apologise for the atrocities and 200 years of criminal exploitation.

**Other highlights of the Day 1 session were as follows**: -

1. Are we becoming just DATA? is our collective future poised to be one where human creativity (social impact) is no value? Are we becoming just data ? – Liam Brown, Nithin Eapen, Akash Sonthalia, Adrija Bose
2. Our children Our Future, Are we investing enough ? – P Vijayan IPS, Dr Gita Gopal, Prof Dr Anil Kumar, Dr Arun B Nair, Saif Mohammed
3. MBIFL Solo – History of Mankinf as Science Fiction Anything you dream is fiction, and everything you accomplish is science. Then, the whole history of mankind is science fiction.
4. Under the Tree – Why I Read – Prof Germaine Greer, Jenny Brown, Corinne Pearlman
5. Poet Tree – Book Reading – Alvin Pang, Elizabeth Haynes, Yvanne A Owour, Amrita Mahale
6. BlackBox – Students Editors Workshop – Subhash Chandran, P V Shajikumar
7. Bamboo Grove – In search of Voice – Preethi Shenoy, Amrita Mahale, Suneetha Balakrishnan
8. Why I Read & Book Reading – Andrey Kurkov, Shashi Tharoor

The Day 1 concluded with book reading by Paul Zachariah, and Arundhati Subramaniaman and a documentary film show by Methil Devika.. The event was attended by over 3000 people on day 1.

MBIFL19, 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 literature, 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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