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A century of thinking ahead

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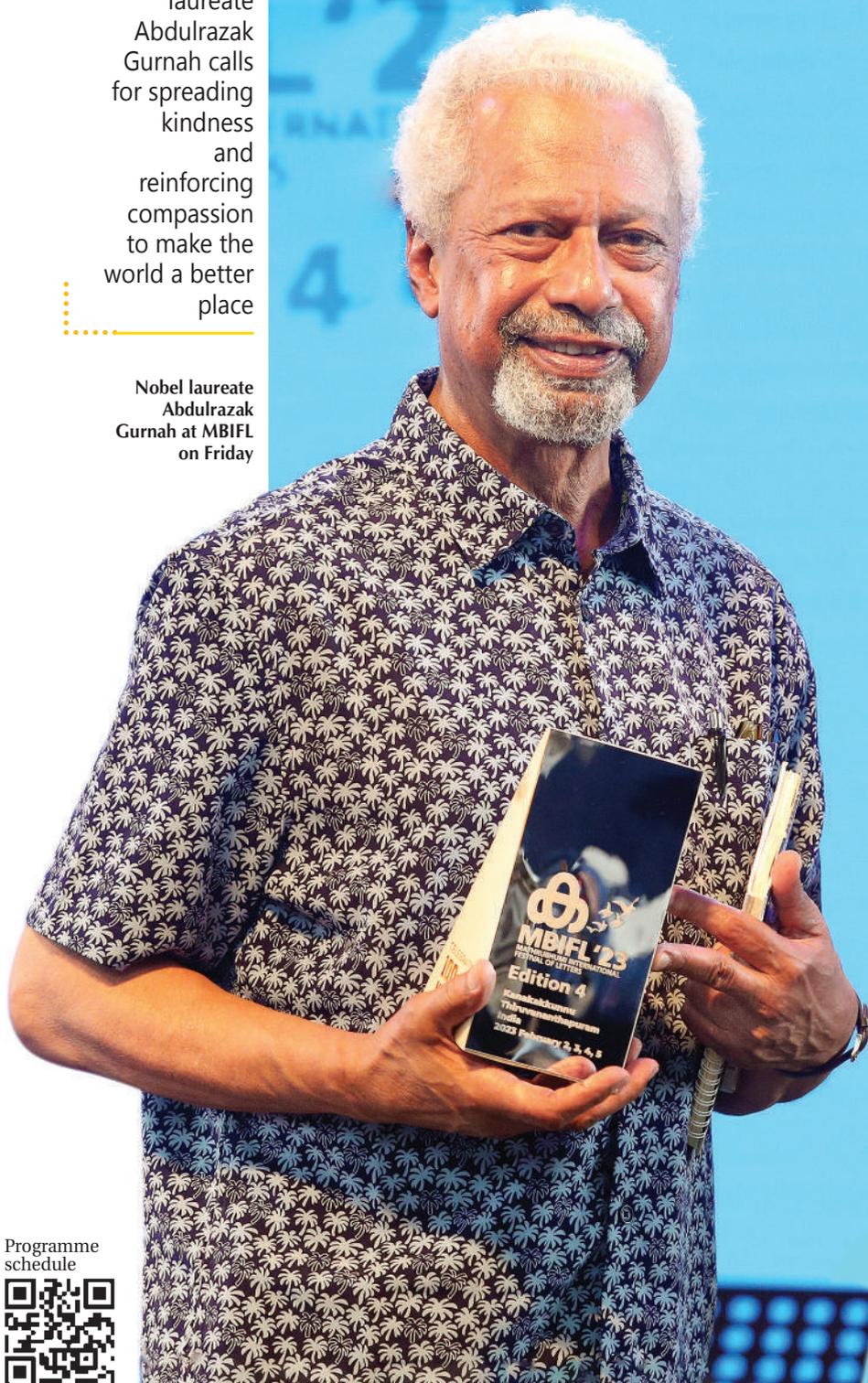
Sjón's
sojourns

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'The world needs more kindness'

► Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah calls for spreading kindness and reinforcing compassion to make the world a better place

Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah at MBIFL on Friday



At a time the world deals with climate change and the refugee crisis, the best way to light up the future is by showing resourcefulness, hospitality and generosity to the needy, Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah has said.

He was speaking on the topic 'Shadows of history; lights of future' at the MBIFL on Friday.

Hailing MBIFL, he said, "Events like this are valuable because we are here to disseminate and celebrate reflections and ideas people put together before us."

He said that 'Shadows of history' suggested that history was a dark narrative, full of catastrophic events. "History is a nightmare, something that oppresses us, something we need to shake off. History is a steady series of small moments and achievements that carry on all the time," he added.

He said that a semicolon had been placed between 'Shadows of history' and 'Lights of the future' for a balancing act, just to put behind the dark narrative of the past. "While looking into the future, we should keep in mind the dark prophecies and have to learn how

to live in crisis. For some people, future is futile. But one should believe that there is a way for a bright future," he added.

Citing the refugee crisis in Europe, he said, "Refugee crisis can be considered as the after-effect of colonization by world powers. The arrival of refugees in Europe will impact the length and breadth of Europe."

Asked whether the Nobel prize had changed him as a writer, he said that many of his books were getting translated into different languages.

Talking about the anti-apartheid movement in Africa, he said, "(I) didn't participate in the movement but grew up with awareness on racism and civil rights movements." He also expressed his admiration for Mahatma Gandhi and anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela.

Replying to a question on the need for a global leader, Gurnah pointed out that the idea of global leadership came out of mythicization.

On nationality, he said, "Millions of people have taken citizenship of their choice. If there are possibilities, one can change nationality." ►

Call to explore Arabic literature



Omani writer Jokha Alharthi has said that the world is yet to discover the secrets of Arabic literature.

Speaking at a session at MBIFL, she said that the 1,700-year-old literature never failed to evoke wonder.

"Arabic life has a lot of diversity worth exploring... Like every Arab kid, I too was inspired by the story of 'Layla and Majnun'. My grandma told me a lot of stories."

Narrating the hardships she faced while publishing her first book, she said, "In Oman, it's difficult to find publishers as they don't trust readers. I was forced to self-publish my first book."

Her favourite Indian authors include Rabindranath Tagore, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai and K. P. Ramanunni. ►

Programme
schedule



Dissent in verse



POETIC JUSTICE

► Meena Kandasamy blends poetry, fiction, essays and translation to create a harmony of words and sentences, using her passion for the written word as a weapon in her fight for justice and equality.

Meena Kandasamy weaves a tapestry of words, a symphony of sentences, in her pursuit of justice and equality.

Her passion for the written word is inseparable from her fight for social justice, as she blends poetry, fiction, essays and translation into a harmonious whole.

She is in Thiruvananthapuram to take part in MBIFL.

FRAGMENTS

Mulligatawny Dreams

anaconda. candy. cash. catamaran.
cheroot. coolie. corundum. curry. ginger. mango. mulligatawny.
patchouli. poppadom. rice. tatty. teak. vetiver.
i dream of an english
full of the words of my language.

an english in small letters
an english that shall tire a white man's tongue
an english where small children practice with smooth round pebbles in their mouth to the spell the right zha
an english where a pregnant woman is simply stomach-child-lady
an english where the magic of black eyes and brown bodies replaces the glamour of eyes in dishwater blue shades and the airbrush romance of pink white cherry blossom skins an english-where love means only the strange frenzy between a man and his beloved, not between him and his car
an english without the privacy of its many rooms
an english with suffixes for respect
an english with more than thirty six words to call the sea
an english that doesn't belittle brown or black men and wome -
an english of tasting with five fingers
an english of talking love with eyes alone
and i dream of an english
where men
of that spiky, crunchy tongue
buy flower-garlands of jasmine
to take home to their coy wives
for the silent demand of a night of wordless whispered love . . .

"To speak out, to show support," Meena says, her voice echoing the cries of the marginalized and oppressed. "Dissent, protest, rebellion, these are the things that inspire me."

At the tender age of 17, she found solace in the written word, using it as a weapon against the injustices she saw around her. Her debut collection of poems, 'Touch', captures the pain and struggle of being an 'untouchable' in India and her second, 'Ms Militancy', reclaims Tamil and Hindu myths with a feminist fervor.

Her critically acclaimed novel, 'The Gypsy Goddess',

smudges the line between fiction and reality, telling the story of the 1968 massacre of 44 landless untouchables in the village of Kilvenmani, Thanjavur. And in 'When I Hit You: Or, The Portrait of the Writer As A Young Wife', Meena lifts the veil on the silence surrounding domestic violence and marital rape, exploring the interplay of poetry, language and feminist philosophy in a work of autofiction.

So let Meena's words resound, a trumpet call for justice and equality, a shining light in a world still darkened by oppression. ►

'Reading makes the world better'

SWEDISH TALES



Jacob Dalborg, Christian Kamill

Literature is the best way to unite people from across the globe, Jacob Dalborg, former president of Bonnier Books, one of the world's largest publishing houses, has said.

He was taking part in a discussion at MBIFL on Friday.

"We live in a highly polarized world. Reading and education are the only ways to make it better. When you read you get to know a place and its culture better," he added. This is the idea behind Jacob Dalborg's

collaboration with Six Year Plan Books to publish translations of Swedish works into Malayalam. Asked why Malayalam was chosen among the multitude of Indian languages, he said that they were impressed by Kerala's high literacy rate and its love for books.

Swedish diplomat Christian Kamill, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Sweden, New Delhi, spoke about the 75-year ties between India and Sweden. Nandita Bose moderated the discussion. ►

Two-wheel hero: Dada



Biswajit Jha, Karimul Hak



RIDING FOR LIFE

► Discover the heartwarming journey of two heroes, as Biswajit Jha uncovers the life of Karimul Hak, the man who saved thousands of lives through his motorcycle ambulance and earned the prestigious Padma Shri award, in the captivating debut book 'Bike Ambulance Dada'

In 2015, Biswajit Jha stumbled upon the tale of Karimul Hak through word of mouth from a trusted friend. Little did Jha know, the selfless acts of this humble laborer would leave an indelible impression and eventually earn Hak the prestigious Padma Shri in 2017. Jha was so inspired by Hak's heroism, he wrote his debut book, 'Bike Ambulance Dada', as a tribute to the man who singlehandedly saved over 5,000 patients in dire need of emergency care. Both of these unsung heroes are now being celebrated in the prestigious MBIFL.

In the remote hamlet of Dhalabari in North Bengal, Karimul Hak was born into poverty in the tea-growing Jalpaiguri district of the foothills of the Darjeeling Himalayas. The lacklustre healthcare facilities in the area left a deep impact on Hak, who lost his mother, Jafarunnesa, due to the unavailability of an ambulance. Tragically, she only received medical attention four hours after suffering a heart attack.

However, a fateful moment would change the course of Hak's life forever. At the tea garden where he worked, a fellow

labourer named Azizul fell unconscious and no ambulance could be found. Hak, desperate to save the man's life, borrowed his manager's bike and, with Azizul tied to his back, raced to the Jalpaiguri Sadar Hospital, where the man's life was saved.

This experience sparked a fire in Hak and with the help of a loan, he purchased his own motorcycle, embarking on a mission to save countless lives. To the community, Hak became a savior, a godsend and has since saved thousands of patients.

In the book, Jha not only tells the story of Hak's innovative idea to transport patients on a motorcycle to far-off hospitals and health centres but also delves into the dramatic twists and turns of Hak's journey as a do-gooder wanderer. Jha weaves a narrative that intersperses political events, such as the liberation of Bangladesh and the rise and fall of political regimes in West Bengal, with the moribund economy of the tea gardens and various social welfare schemes. Through it all, Jha breaks the stereotype of a villager, even capturing the moment when he made Prime Minister Narendra Modi take a selfie with him. ►

'Sky's the limit for women'

Poorna Malavath, a 22-year-old from Telangana, created history by climbing the seven tallest mountains on seven continents. At the age of 13, she became the youngest mountaineer in the world to conquer Mount Everest. She talks to Tiffany Maria Brar, a social activist and trainer for visually challenged people



Tell us a little about your childhood. What made you take up mountaineering?

When I got the opportunity to pursue mountaineering, I seized it and went to train at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling. I belong to a small village where traditionally girls are married off at a very young age. I wanted to come out of those traditions and pursue

something different. I felt the inner calling to embrace change.

What challenges did you face during your mountaineering expeditions?

The first challenge was to adapt oneself to climatic

conditions. Sometimes the temperatures go to minus 40 degrees Celsius. High altitude poses a huge hurdle. I remember vomiting continually at the base camp during my climb to Mount Everest. Eating packaged food, stomaching its smell which I didn't like, was another challenge.

What do you feel after conquering all the seven tallest summits of the world?

I want to conquer more peaks (smiles)

What is your message to the women of India, many of whom are still closeted within the four walls of their homes and who have put their dreams on hold?

Follow your dreams. Do not be intimidated by social criticism. Times have changed. These days, no one will value a girl if she lacks dreams and ambitions. ▸

'Economy crumbling, dissenting voices silenced'

PRICE OF THE MODI YEARS

Author Aakar Patel has described the economic policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance government as illogical.

Speaking at a session at MBIFL on Friday, he alleged that there was a calculated attempt to silence critics and isolate minorities.

"It should be noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has faced pushback from civil society. He was forced to apologize for the farm laws. The government enacted the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019 but failed to implement it even after three years. Minorities were on the streets protesting against the CAA. The judiciary is at loggerheads with the Centre on certain issues. Opposition parties have rallied together and the loss of power in Bihar had given the sense that somebody can't hold North India for long," he said.

▸ Is India on the brink of a serious economic crisis?



He observed that the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, formed in 1951, didn't have an economic ideology for decades. "When A. B. Vajpayee became the President in 1971, the Jana Sangh resolved to limit the maximum income of all citizens to Rs 2,000 per month and the minimum to Rs 100, maintaining a 20:1 ratio. They also insisted that residential houses in cities would be on plots that did not exceed 1,000 square yards. They felt that the introduction of machinery will lead to job loss."

He said that the International Monetary Fund's latest data showed that Bangladesh had outpaced India on per capita income. "India's labour force participation rate has fallen to 40 per cent. The unemployment rate is the lowest since 2019," he added. ▸

VOICES



Bogumila Kaniewska

Writer
"Maybe God is a she."



Dariusz Sosnicki
Polish poet

"The belief that man is the master and ruler of the earth has led us to a situation that our place in the universe, our planet, is seriously threatened."



Piotr Sliwinski
Critic

"The combination of memory and emotion is a good ground for literature."



Anindita Ghose
Writer-journalist

"The definition of the novelist has changed a lot now. Novels once needed to be appeared real. If you ask any writer today...they would underline that their novel is fiction and has no connection with real life."



Nirmala Govindarajan
Writer

"To me, cities are a minuscule part of India... the soul of India lies in its rural areas..."



Jahnavi Barua
Writer

"In some sense, no writer can escape from their homeland."



Carlo Pizzati
Writer and political analyst

"Literary fiction is supposed to give us some sense and very often we experience reality and understand that it doesn't make any sense and this is where novels really bring us some meaning."



Anjana Menon
Writer

"Writers can take their own stand on an issue. But I'm not sure if an AI-related system like ChatGPT can do that."



Binoo K. John
Writer-journalist

"To get a publisher to accept a book is an impossible task in India."



Meghna Pant
Writer

"We are being pedantic and opaque about women's issues. I want women's issues to be heard in every corner of land through entertainment."



Sonnet Mondal
Poet

"Travelling across cultures is not always about crossing borders...you can go to the nearest bookstore, buy a book and read it...this is also a part of understanding different cultures."



Mita Kapur
Writer-journalist

"We are human beings... we have stories to tell...if we stop doing that, it'll affect our existence."



Kiran Manral
Writer

"Unless I can visualize a character as a full-fledged human being with whom I can sit and talk imaginary things, I can't sit down and write it down."



Rebecca Vedavathy
Academic and writer

"Within the context of our culture, just travelling in a bus in an evening will make you realise the privileges men enjoy..."



Jennifer Mckanzie
Australian poet

"Gender can have an effect on what kind of writing you do."



Sagarika Ghose
Writer-journalist

"We always talk about founding fathers...but we also have founding mothers...unless and until biographers show the courage to write down about how unconventional these women were, we'll miss out a lot of details about such strong women."

SCHEDULE

	Nishagandhi	Mathrubhumi Hall	Hall of Letters	Festival Hall	Under The Tree	Bamboo Grove	Poetree	Ka Corner	The Place	Pagoda	Kids Corner
10:00	DIALOGUES ആനന്ദനാഥൻ തൃത്തത്തെയും ജീവിതത്തെയും കുറിച്ച് • അലർമ്മൽ വള്ളി • വി. കലാധരൻ	CONVERSATIONS വരവേൽക്കും വനിതാസംവിധായകരെ • വിധു വിൻസെന്റ് • കാവ്യ പ്രകാശ് • ജിയോ ബേബി Mod: ഹർഷിതി ജെ നാഥ്	DIALOGUES എഴുത്തുകാരന്റെ മനസ്സും ഇനത്തെ കേരളവും • ബി. രാജീവൻ • സജയ് കെ.വി.	DISCUSSIONS Poetry as a political tool • Meena Kandasamy • Madhu Raghavendra • Ashwani Kumar Mod: Jose Varghese	INSPIRATIONS Saving Lives: Bike Ambulance Dada • Karimul Haq • Biswajit Jha Book Launch: ബൈക്ക് ആംബുലൻസ് ദാദ - ബിശ്വജിത് ജാ	DISCUSSIONS രൂമി അരുചി • ശ്രീബിത പി.വി. • ഡോ. പി.എസ്. മനോജ്കുമാർ • ഷാഹിന കെ. റഫീഖ് Mod: രാമോഹൻ പാലിയത്ത് Book Launch: ബെബിനിവേശം • രാമോഹൻ പാലിയത്ത്	DIALOGUES Poet's home - in the global village by Polish Team from Adam Mickiewicz University in Pozna, Poland • Dariusz Sosnicki • Marcin Jaworski	DISCUSSIONS വിഷയം ആർക്കിടെക്ചർ ഡിസൈൻ തന്നെ • മനോജ് കിണി • എം.എം. വിനോദ്കുമാർ • രാജശ്രീ രാജമോഹൻ Mod: ബിജിൻ കോത്താരി	Morning Chill • DJ ABIL & PRANAV	POETRY READING • Rochelle Potkar • Mani Rao • Sonnet Mondal	STORY TELLING • Geetha Ramanujam
11:00	DIALOGUES തോക്കുകൾക്കിടയിലെ ജീവിതം • ല.പി. കേശവ് • ഡോ. സോണിയ ചെറിയാൻ • ഡോ. എൻ. ശൈലജ	SOLOS The Future of Kerala Political and Economic Imperatives • V. K. Mathews	DIALOGUES കഥ തുടരുന്നു കഥാകൃത്തിൽ 75 വർഷം തികയുന്ന കഥാകൃത്തിന്റെ രചനാലോകം • ടി. പത്മനാഭൻ • മധുപാൽ	DISCUSSIONS European Voices II by Literature Across Frontiers Megan Angharad Hunter • Beatriz Chivite Ezequeta • Raquel Santanera Vila Mod: Alexandra Buchler	DISCUSSIONS Wild Tales from the Wild • Saad Bin Jung • NP Ullekh	CONVERSATIONS ഇതല്ലേ അഭിനയം നാ താൻ കേസ് കൊടു് മല യാള സിനിമയിലെ വഴിമാറി നടത്താമെന്ന്. • സി. ഷുഭാംഗു വർമ്മ • കുഞ്ഞികൃഷ്ണൻ മാഷ് Mod: ദിവിഷ് മണി	CONVERSATIONS ലോകവിതയുടെ സംഗീതത്തിന്റെ വഴികൾ • ബിന്ദു ഇരളം • സുകുമാരൻ ചാലിഗു Mod: അനൂ പാപ്പച്ചൻ	DIALOGUES The poem, the body of the language by Polish Team from Adam Mickiewicz University in Pozna, Poland • Natalia Malek Mod: Piotr Sliwinski	Morning Chill • DJ ABIL & PRANAV	BOOK SINGING • Karimul Haq	KIDS WORKSHOP Caricature workshop - • Balu V
12:00	SOLOS Battles of the mind • Gaur Gopal Das	DISCUSSIONS സ്വപ്നലോകം • കെ.പി. കണ്ണൻ • ശ്രീധർ രാധാകൃഷ്ണൻ • ടെഡി Mod: ബി. ശ്രീജൻ	DIALOGUES കഥാകൃത്തും സാഹിത്യകാരനും രചനാജീവിതം • സക്കിയ • വി. ഷിനിധാൽ	DIALOGUES Ancient Promises and Lights of Future The journey • Jaishree Mishra • Kaikasi Mod: Karthik Venkatesh	DISCUSSIONS We are the agents! Are you a writer? • Kanishka Gupta • Mita Kapur • Siddharth Jain Mod: Karthik Venkatesh	CONVERSATIONS ഇതല്ലേ അഭിനയം നാ താൻ കേസ് കൊടു് മല യാള സിനിമയിലെ വഴിമാറി നടത്താമെന്ന്. • സി. ഷുഭാംഗു വർമ്മ • കുഞ്ഞികൃഷ്ണൻ മാഷ് Mod: ദിവിഷ് മണി	DIALOGUES The story of India through its languages • Peggy Mohan • Jitheesh PM	SOLOS Adithi Harikumar	Jam Music Conservatory University of West London Western Latin American Pop Music	KID'S FESTIVAL TRAILING - TRIP 1 Kidsperience	
13:00	SOLOS Reimagining India - Nationalism • Prof. Makarand Paranjpe	SOLOS എന്തുകൊണ്ട് ശ്രീയോടിത് സാമൂഹിക പദവികളിൽ സ്ത്രീകൾ കുറയുന്നത് എന്തുകൊണ്ട് ? • സന്ദാ ജോസഫ്	DIALOGUES Chinaman to Seven Moons Sun, sea, strife and spirits • Shehan Karunatilaka • Shahina K Rafeek	DISCUSSIONS തിരക്കഥ മാറുന്ന കലാവസ്ഥ • ഡോ. എസ്. അദിയാഷ് • ഡോ. രശ്മി • കെ. സന്ദീപൻ Mod: ഗോപകുമാർ ചേലയിൽ	DIALOGUES അമ്മി ബംഗ്ലാ മലയാള പരിഭാഷകയുടെ രചനാ ജീവിതം • ലീലാ സർക്കാർ • സുനിൽ ഞാളിയത്ത്	DIALOGUES Who is Bharat Mata? On Nehru • Purushottam Agrawal • Amb. Venu Rajamoni	SOLOS ആശാന്റൻ കവിതാലോകം • സുനിൽ പി. ഇളയിടം	SOLOS Appupen	Open Mic	Jam Music Conservatory University of West London Western Latin American Pop Music	
14:00	SOLOS Reimagining India - Women in power politics • Mahua Moitra	DIALOGUES Lighting up the dark side of the moon • Samson David • Sreeduth Pillai	DISCUSSIONS കൂട്ടപ്പലായനം • ബെന്നു രാജാമണി • ഡോ ഗോപകുമാരൻ നായർ എൻ Mod: ഡോ. ടി.പി. സേതുമാധവൻ	CONVERSATIONS Changing Wings New Trends in Latin American Literature • Carlos Fonseca • Mateo Garcia Elizondo Mod: Parvati Salil	SOLOS Writing to be read after 100 years • Sjon	DIALOGUES Poetry: Reading, Performance • Shinie Antony • Avrina Jose • Madhu Raghavendra	DISCUSSIONS സുസന്നയും സീതയും പിന്നെ റോസിലിയം • അജയ് പി. മങ്ങാട്ട് • ഹരിത സാവിത്രി • ബിപിൻ ചന്ദ്രൻ Mod: ഷബീത്	SOLOS Rachitha	Jam Music Conservatory University of West London Western Latin American Pop Music	STORY TELLING Subhash Chandran	
15:00	SOLOS Reimagining India - How Left politics shapes India's democracy • Sitararam Yechuri	DIALOGUES Daring to Fly Life Journey • Captain GR Gopinath • Kaikasi	CONVERSATIONS Are there lights of hope for Media • Abhinandan Sekhri • M G Radhakrishnan • Dhanya Rajendran	DIALOGUES Why I Write for Children • Jaishree Misra • Colum McCann • Shobha Tharoor Mod: എം.പി. സുരേന്ദ്രൻ	CONVERSATIONS പക്ഷം പ്രതിപക്ഷം • അഡ്വ. എ. ജയശങ്കർ • ജോസഫ് സി. മാത്യു Mod: എം.പി. സുരേന്ദ്രൻ	DIALOGUES A poem as a diary room and a voice for peace • Joanna Roszak • Piotr liwi ski	DISCUSSIONS പുരാതനങ്ങൾ കഥയിലേക്കെത്തുമ്പോൾ • അംബികാസുന്ദർ മാങ്ങാട്ട് • പി.കെ. പാറക്കടവ് • ഷാഹിന കെ. റഫീഖ് Mod: വി. സുരേഷ്കുമാർ	SOLOS Evening Chill • DJ ABIL	Jam Music Conservatory University of West London Western Latin American Pop Music	KID'S FESTIVAL TRAILING - TRIP 2 Kidsperience	
16:00	CONVERSATIONS ഇതിഹാസങ്ങൾ പുനരാഖ്യാനം ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ • ജയമോഹൻ • ആനന്ദ് നിലകണ്ണൻ • ആർ.എൽ. ഹരിലാൽ	DISCUSSIONS Kerala's Transition to a Knowledge Economy • Dr P V Unnikrishnan • Dr Rajan Gurukkal • Sashikumar Sreedharan • Tina James	DIALOGUES ഇന്ത്യ- ജനഹിതം ജനാധിപത്യം • ജോൺ ബ്രിട്ടാസ് • പി പി ശശീന്ദ്രൻ	DISCUSSIONS A writer's life in different worlds • Rochelle Potkar • Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor • Colum McCann Mod: Priya Nair	DIALOGUES Insatiable - My hunger for life • Shobhaa De • Saraswathy Nagaraj	DISCUSSIONS കഥയിൽനിന്ന് നോവലിലേക്കുള്ള പാലങ്ങൾ • അശോകൻ ചുറ്റുവീൽ • അഷ്ടമൂർത്തി • മിനി പി.സി. Mod: ഡോ. ആർ.വി.എം. ദിവാകരൻ	CONVERSATIONS Of poetry, prose and poignance • Meena Kandasamy • Anupama Raju	SOLOS Turning books into movies • Sidharth Jain	Jam Music Conservatory University of West London Guitar African		
17:00	DIALOGUES Reimagining India - Federalism • Shashi Tharoor • Palanivel Thiagarajan	SOLOS പൈതൃക ഭാവന തിരുവിതാംകൂറിന്റെ പൈതൃകം • അശ്വതി തിരുനാൾ ഗൗരി ലക്ഷ്മിനായ്	DIALOGUES My Other Life എന്റെ കവിതാ ലോകങ്ങൾ • Prakash Raj Mod: Viju V	DISCUSSIONS Do we need a change in Education Policy? • Dr Anirudh Sreedhar • George K Thomas Mod: Sidharth M Joy	DISCUSSIONS ഒക്രം ക്രൗൺഡ്കേരള • എ . ഹേമചന്ദ്രൻ • അഡ്വ. ശാമി വിശ്വനാഥ് • ജി.ആർ. മന്ദൂസോപൻ Mod: ഡോ. മെഴ്സി സെബാസ്റ്റ്യൻ	CONVERSATIONS മലയാളനോവലിലെ പുതുമുദ്രകൾ • പി.എ.പി. മാത്യുസ് • എം. നന്ദകുമാർ • സിബി തോമസ് Mod: പ്രവീൺ ചന്ദ്രൻ	CONVERSATIONS എന്റെ കവിതാലോകങ്ങൾ • കൽപ്പന നാരായണൻ • എസ്. ജോസഫ് • വിരാൻകുട്ടി	SOLOS The magic of moving images • Adhithi Harikumar	Open Mic		
18:00	DISCUSSIONS വേണോ വിവാഹം. കുടുംബം? • ഹരിത നീലിമ • അരുന്ധതി ബി. • വിഷ്ണുമോഹൻ • കെ. വിശ്വനാഥ്	DIALOGUES Spy Master As a Chronicler • AS Dulat • NP Ullekh	DIALOGUES കാൻസർ മനസ്സും പ്രതിരോധവും • ഡോ. ബോബൻ തോമസ് • എം ജി രാധാകൃഷ്ണൻ	CONVERSATIONS The uneasy peace India, Global South and G20 • Gurjith Singh • Pravin Sawhney • K M Seethi	DIALOGUES Memory of departure and enigma of arrival. • Abdulrazak Gurnah • Peggy Mohan	CONVERSATIONS മെഴ്സെല മലയാളത്തിലേക്ക് വരുമ്പോൾ • പി.കെ. രാജശേഖരൻ • സംഗീത ശ്രീനിവാസൻ • പ്രവീൺ ചന്ദ്രൻ	DIALOGUES Everything the Light Touches • Janice Pariat • Suneetha Balakrishnan	CONVERSATIONS വര വഴിമാറണം • ഇ.പി. ഉണ്ണി • ബോണി തോമസ് • എസ്. ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണൻ	Open Mic		
19:00	DIALOGUES Why dont you write something I might read? • Suresh Menon • N S Madhavan	DISCUSSIONS വാമൊഴി വരമൊഴി • എൻ രാജൻ • പ്രാൻസിസ് നെറോണ • കെ.എം. നരേന്ദ്രൻ Mod: എം എസ് ശ്രീകല	DIALOGUES Black River Discussing a riveting murder mystery • Nilanjana Roy • Parvati Salil	DISCUSSIONS The Indian Tales • Sara Rai • Anindita Ghose • Arunava Sihna Mod: Premenka Goswami	CONVERSATIONS മെഴ്സെല മലയാളത്തിലേക്ക് വരുമ്പോൾ • പി.കെ. രാജശേഖരൻ • സംഗീത ശ്രീനിവാസൻ • പ്രവീൺ ചന്ദ്രൻ	DIALOGUES What shape are you? • Sneha Shah • Vinod G Nair	DISCUSSIONS എന്റെ കവിതാ ലോകങ്ങൾ • പി. രാമൻ • ഒ.പി. സുരേഷ് • ബി സസ്യ	Open Mic			

Re Shashi Tharoor talks to Palanivel Thiagarajan @ Nishagandhi @ 5 p.m. Author, politician and former international civil servant, Shashi Tharoor who straddles several worlds of experience talks to Palanivel Thiagarajan, Tamilnadu Finance Minister

journey through the beauty of poetry.

The Future of Kerala V. K. Mathews speaks @ Under the Tree @ 11 a.m. Entrepreneur and founder Chairman of IBS Software Services V. K. Mathews shares his vision for Kerala's business future.

Black River Nilanjana Roy talks to Parvathi Salil @ Hall of Letters @ 7 p.m. Author of 'Black River' Nilanjana Roy chats with young poet Parvathy Salil.

Reimagining India -The India Question Mahua Moitra speaks @ Nishagandhi @ 2 p.m. Indian politician and member of Parliament Mahua Moitra shares her views on the present regime and how current politics shapes India.

Storytelling Featuring Subhash Chandran @ Kids Corner @ 2 p.m. Execution of language, symbols and idioms make his stories stand out. As a post-modernist writer, he is well-known for his short stories.

Kabir, Kabir Featuring Purushottam Agrawal and S Gopalakrishnan @ Bamboo Grove @ 5 p.m. Drawing from several references and his scholarship on Kabir, Prof. Purushotham Agrawal throws light on different facets of the complex subjects in great detail with S. Gopalakrishnan, author, columnist and Kerala Sahitya Akademi award winner.

Rhymes & Realms Featuring Rochelle Potkar, Mani Rao and Sonnet Mondal @ Pagoda @ 10 a.m. Step into the world of words as three gifted poets, Rochelle Potkar, Mani Rao, and Sonnet Mondal take the stage for a spellbinding poetry reading. With their unique voices and captivating words, they paint vivid imagery and stir emotions, taking you on a

My Other Life Prakash Raj speaks @ Hall of Letters @ 5 p.m. Indian actor and film director Prakash Raj speaks about various aspects of life and career.

Battles of the mind Gaur Gopal Das

Reimagining India - Nationalism Prof. Makarand Paranjpe

Reimagining India - Women in power politics Mahua Moitra

Reimagining India - How Left politics shapes India's democracy Sitararam Yechuri

Insatiable - My Hunger for Life Shobhaa De talks to Saraswathy Nagarajan @ Under the Tree @ 4 p.m. Shobhaa De, author and columnist, talks about her new book that includes stories and anecdotes written in a candid and unique style.

20:00
GOD'S OWN GROOVE - HIP HOP PERFORMANCE

Appupen tales

GRAPHIC WIZARDRY

From his dark tales and dystopian universes to his captivating allure, Appupen's unique perspective offers a window into the world of graphic novels, challenging us to question the limitations of our reality

As Appupen gazed out into the never-ending abyss of the night sky, he felt a great sense of dread about the world and all its complexities. Despite the darkness that surrounded him, the stars glimmered in the distance, as if to remind him of the endless possibilities of the universe.

George Mathen, a graphic artist based in Bangalore and famously known as Appupen, dives into the world of graphic



novels through his unique perspective. Though he

cannot recall the exact moment he became Appupen, he has an array of stories surrounding the origin of his moniker, which translates to 'grandfather' in Malayalam. He attributes the name to his thick, framed glasses, a common trait among grandfathers.

A man of dark tales and dystopian universes, Appupen reflects on his views of the world through his work. He has traversed various interests, including music, tattooing, cricket, event management, before finally settling on art. Disillusioned with the advertising industry, Appupen laments, "Artists have sold their soul for things

they don't believe in and have become empty shells."

In 2004, he began showcasing his artwork on the Internet, which eventually caught the eye of Braft Publishers in Chennai, which published his first book in 2008. Appupen's work has always been known for its dark, macabre themes. His first book, 'Moonward', was released in 2009 and incorporated dark humor to lampoon various aspects of life. His second book, 'Legends of Halahala', explores five silent stories that shape-shift to fit the narrative. In 'Aspyrus', Appupen challenges readers to question the limitations of the world they live in. Through a dragon-like creature representing capitalism's aggressive nature, he highlights the idea that the freedom we experience is often restricted by the boundaries imposed upon us.

Beyond his writing, there is a captivating allure to Appupen's train of thought and nickname, hinting that there is more to him than meets the eye. ▶

Narratives of women

Leela Gulati stood before the crowd at an MBIFL session, her eyes bright, as Prof. P. Vijayakumar introduced her monumental work.

She recounted the journey of women in India's rich cultural history.

Born in Mysore and educated at the Maharaja

Is concern for women's rights taking a backseat in Kerala?

Sayajirao University, Baroda, Gulati has dedicated her career to the study of women's rights. With a focus on the female dimension of aging and widowhood, she has

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

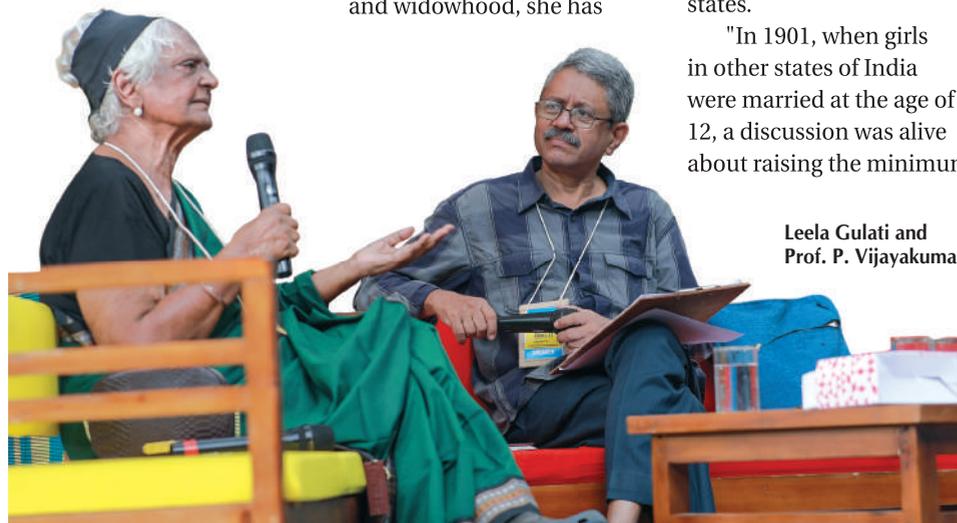
worked with the Laurie Baker Centre to pursue her architectural passion. Through her research, she discovered the progressive nature of women's rights in Kerala, where women had rights to property and residence and were not forced into early marriages unlike in other states.

"In 1901, when girls in other states of India were married at the age of 12, a discussion was alive about raising the minimum

marriage age. But this was not necessary for Kerala as the minimum marriage age was already 17 here," she said.

She stated that the issue of women's rights was receding to the background in Kerala now. "If you say in a public space that the plight of Kerala women was so high...they'll immediately hit you on the head. They don't want to believe they are different from the rest of India...they want to do the exact wrong thing that all of the others do."

Her passion for the uplift of women of India shone through as she talked about her book, 'A Space of Her Own: Personal Narratives of Twelve Women'. "Their profiles are similar. They faced similar challenges," she said. ▶



Leela Gulati and Prof. P. Vijayakumar

'Migration is not gender-neutral'

LABOUR OF LOVE

Languages and cultural continuity happen when women travel and set down roots



Women, by nature, do not migrate, Indo-Caribbean novelist and linguist Peggy Mohan has said.

Lecturing on 'Marking their memories: 'Indenture literature' at MBIFL on Friday, she pointed out that languages and cultural continuity happen when women travel and set down roots.

"All the big migrations to India have involved men. If women came, it was only when things were set up. The other unusual thing was that these women were very rarely married to the people they were going with. Many women were running away from arranged marriages. My great-grandmother was thrown out of the house. What will you do in such a situation? Suddenly somebody is offering you the chance to go to the Caribbean and you will take it," says Mohan.

She talked about Jahajis. Jahajis were indentured labourers from British India transported to work on plantations in Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa and the Caribbean.

"When I wrote my book, I feminized the word, 'Jahajin', because I was looking at that unusual situation where women migrated," she says.

Literate men from India wouldn't enjoy the idea of being bonded to anybody. So they have a very different take on their writing. But women always have a circle of friends, mostly other women. They fine-tuned and edited their stories. In the course of editing their stories about the past, one thing they did was gloss over the negative things. ▶

Sjón's sojourns

■ NO MAN IS AN ICELAND

▶ Sjón's work has long been celebrated in Europe

It's musical to hear Sjón pronounce his name — a cascade of tender G's and rolling R's.

Small wonder as music has played a major role in the career of this writer.

Sjón's full name is Sigurjón Birgir Sigurdsson. He adopted his pen name, meaning 'vision', when he published his first book. He self-published poems at 15, was Oscar-nominated for his lyrics for Lars von Trier and gave Björk's *Sugarcubes* a hit — but novels are his bedrock.

Though his work spans many media, he loves to call himself a poet. "The highest form of literature is, of course, poetry as it is the amazing trance mutation of language that we use in everyday life. It is an ancient art and the highest form of human achievement obviously," he said at a session at MBIFL on Friday.

Sjón's fiction has long been celebrated in Europe. The books started appearing in English in 2011, and before long they drew rave reviews. "Every now and then a writer changes the whole map of literature inside my head," A.S. Byatt wrote in 'The New York Review of Books'. Sjón is closely behind the likes of Karl Ove Knausgaard or Stieg Larsson in becoming an international literary Nordic megabrand.

"The first literature we experience is the literature that is sung to us, the lullaby is the first encounter we have with literature," he said.

Born in Reykjavík in 1962, he is the author of the novels 'The Blue Fox', 'The Whispering



Muse', 'From the Mouth of the Whale', 'Moonstone', and 'CoDex 1962', for which he won several awards, including the Nordic Council's Literature Prize and the Icelandic Literary Prize. He has also been shortlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, and his work has been translated into more than 35 languages.

In addition, Sjón has written more than seven poetry collections, several opera librettos, and lyrics for various artists, including Björk. He was nominated for an Oscar for his lyrics in 'Dancer in the Dark', and he co-wrote the script of the film, 'The Northman', with its director, Robert Eggers. In 2017, he became the third writer — following Margaret Atwood and David Mitchell — to contribute to Future Library, a public artwork based in Norway spanning one hundred years. ▶

■ PASSAGES

An ominous hush lies over the busiest, most bustling part of town. No hoofbeats, no rattling of cartwheels or rumble of automobiles, no roar of motorcycles or ringing of bicycle bells. No rasp of sawing from the carpenters' workshops, or clanging from the forges, or slamming of warehouse doors. No gossiping voices of washerwomen on their way to the hot springs, no shouts of dockworkers unloading the ships, or cries of newspaper hawkers on the main street. No smell of fresh bread from the bakeries, or waft of roasting meat from the restaurants."

— Excerpts from 'Moonstone: The Boy Who Never Was'

'Everything depends on the judge'

■ LEGALLY SPEAKING

▶ His life continues to be a one-man crusade against injustice

Justice K. Chandru takes lightly the instant celebrityhood he got after 'Jai Bhim', a film based on his life, became a hit.

He took part in MBIFL on Friday.

"The power of the film is remarkable. After the screening of the film, many youngsters approached me and said that they were shocked that such instances were happening. They wanted to know what they could do to combat such issues," he said.

He referred to a case depicted in 'Jai Bhim', similar to the Rajakannu case in which a man was tortured and murdered at a police station in Cudallore 28 years ago.

"The real hero of the case was Justice P. S. Mishra who made a remarkable judgment in the Rajakannu habeas corpus case. In any court, it is the judge that matters. The law is the same, the arguments are the same, and it is the discretion of the judge what matters. If there was no Justice Mishra, 'Jai Bhim' would never have been a story at all," he said.

He recalled instances where helpless people come in search of him from places far away from Chennai, where he



stays, to fight their cases.

"Many of them have seen the film. They believe that once they reach my place, all their worries are taken care of,"

he said.

The success of the film has made him don a new role. "That of a consultant for court scenes in films," he said with a smile. ▶



"Self-censorship is on the rise and its impact can be far-reaching. In the U.K. and the U.S., it is increasing. Censorship is becoming an increasingly complicated matter. Publishers should stand by writers in the fight against censorship."

Alexandra Pringle,
publisher

‘Gabo is an alchemist’



MY GRANDPA

▶ Mateo Garcia Elizondo remembers his grandfather Gabriel Garcia Marquez

For writer Mateo Garcia Elizondo, ‘One Hundred Years of Solitude’, written by his grandfather Gabriel Garcia Marquez, is not just a classic.

“It is like a chronicle of my family,” he said at a session at MBIFL. “When I read the novel, I understand Gabo.”

Has he been influenced by his grandfather? “Obviously it’s a great influence, especially when you have a grandparent like him. When you decide to become a writer, it’s very hard to deny that. Gabo was an amazing grandpa... a very close, very smiling, talkative

man. He used to tell us a lot of stories and tricks for writing,” he said.

Marquez advised Garcia Elizondo to strive to retain the reader’s attention all the time.

“He used to say that writing was like hypnosis. If you lose your readers, you will lose them forever. So you have to keep them with you all the time. Books are magical and Gabo is an alchemist. His influence is hard to escape and hard to avoid.”

Mateo talks about his own novel. It is the story of a character who has decided to give up life, a very Mexican theme according to him. ▶

Petrol, queues and Booker Prize

PEN AND PAPER

▶ The journey to be a writer has been arduous, yet exciting, for Shehan Karunathilaka

The world knows Booker Prize winner Shehan Karunathilaka’s first work of fiction as ‘Chinaman: The Legend of Pradeep Mathew’. But the author disagrees. He says it is ‘The Painter’.

He was speaking about his journey into writing at MBIFL on Friday.

According to Shehan, it is a work that he has kept hidden under his bed. “I wrote it when I was 23. I had this stupid goal of writing a novel and recording an album before I was 25. I managed to achieve both. But the album was not listenable and the novel was unreadable,” he says. After that, he took up writing seriously. The result was ‘Chinaman’. But the journey was not easy. He self-published it in 2011. Chinaman bagged many awards, including the Gratiaen Prize of Sri Lanka and the Commonwealth Prize.

“I approached a lot of publishers,

but many of them were reluctant to publish it outside Sri Lanka. That is when I decided to self-publish the book. My wife designed the cover, my friend did the typesetting and my brother did the illustrations. That’s how it all began,” he said.

It took another 10 years for his second novel to come out – the Booker Prize-winning work, ‘The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida’. He shared an interesting incident. “I got the news that I was longlisted for the Booker prize at the time when Sri Lanka was reeling under political instability and there were long queues for food, gas and petrol. I was walking my kid to school and my wife was in a queue for petrol. In the evening, my wife returned home with petrol. A few friends also came by and I broke the news. But to my dismay, my wife getting petrol was celebrated more than the Booker Prize longlisting,” he said. ▶



‘Make language more inclusive’

LGBTQIA+

▶ Inclusive language is a way of acknowledging and respecting the diversity of bodies, genders and relationships

Transgender rights activist, writer and artist Kalki Subramaniam has called for making language more inclusive.

“When its language becomes more inclusive, a society too becomes so. It changes generations of people. It changes young minds,” she said at a session, ‘We are not the others: gender fluidity and sexual orientation’, at MBIFL on Friday.

“Tamil has an amazing queer vocabulary. Other languages of India lack such vocabulary. In Tamil, ‘Thirunangai’ means a ‘transgender woman’ and ‘Thirunambi’ means a transgender man,” she said.

She said that the support of the family was crucial for every queer person.

“My sisters are begging on the streets or engaging in sex work because their parents do not accept them. I was accepted by my family while many of my peers did not get similar treatment from their families. I got English education and my parents belonged to the upper middle class. I got my space. So it is my duty to be a voice for my friends in the queer community, stand up for



them and fight for them through different ways of art, literature and social work.”

She said that her poetry reflected her sufferings. “I was punished in schools more than other students were. I used to run away and write down all my anxieties. They later inspired my poetry,” she said.

LGBTQIA+ inclusion advocate Parmesh Shahani said that legalization of queer marriages would grant the community much more than legal rights.

“They would really help take the conversation of LGBTQIA+ inclusion ahead,” he says. ▶

