

## Kerala's newest lit fest germinates in the fertile land of Wayanad



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The logo of Wayanad Literature Festival.



Topic | Wayanad

Kalpetta: A new lit fest is germinating in Kerala. And it's far away from the bustling cityscape.

The first edition of the Wayanad Literature Festival (WLF) will be held at Dwaraka in Mananthavady on December 29 and 30.

Writer and rights activist Arundhati Roy will be among the key speakers at the first edition of WLF, said Vinod K Jose, festival director and executive editor of The Caravan, a long-form journalism magazine.

The other speakers at the Wayanad Literature Festival are writer and documentary maker Sanjay Kak, poet K Satchidanandan, Malayalam writer Paul Zacharia, journalist, and filmmaker O K Johnny, writer and orator Sunil P Ilayidom, Dalit thinker and writer Sunny M Kapicadu, flash fiction writer P K Parakkadavu, writer and social activist K J Baby, novelist and poet Kalpatta Narayanan, poet and lyricist Rafeeq Ahammed, actor-screenwriter-director Madhupal, actor Abu Salim, investigative journalist and author Josy Joseph, artist Deva Prakash, novelist Sheela Tomy (shortlisted this year for JCB Prize), poet-writer and top bureaucrat Joy Vazhayil, poet-writer Sukumaran Chaligadda from Wayanad's Chaligadda village, storytellers Leena Olappamanna and Nawaz Mannan, writer Sithara S and short story writer Abin Joseph (recipient of the Sahitya Akademi's Yuva Puraskar).



Arundhati Roy

WLF will be a celebration of Wayanad as a fertile ground for writing and literature, said Vinod Jose, a native of Wayanad. It will also be about giving students and residents of Wayanad exposure to global and Indian literature and writers, he said. "As students, we had experienced the lack of exposure in this hill district. This festival is to address it," said the award-winning journalist.

The literature festival will be held in the courtyard of Casa Maria Mystica, a residential complex close to Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School, Dwaraka, where Vinod Jose studied.

The third aspect of the festival is for the local artists, budding cultural artists and literati to showcase their skills and art with the best in the world. The locals have visions for culture, environment, and social change which can educate the world at large, he said. Vision need not always be city-centric or from the cities, he said.

"The Wayanad Literature Festival will be an exchange of ideas between the people and the speakers," Vinod Jose said.

It will be a new experience for the people of Wayanad, said cultural activist Babu Philip Kudakkachira. Writers Dr Joseph K Job and V H Nishad are curators of WLF.

The logo of the festival captures the ubiquitous wetland bird crane flying with a book on its long bill. The iconic Thamarassery mountain pass takes the shape of the bird's neck and body, said Nishad.