

Wayanad Literature Festival will be a cultural festival: Satchidanandan

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Wayanad will witness two days when world literature, Indian literature, and the Malayalam language will become the subjects of debate.
Photo: File image and Twitter/ @WLFWayanad

Topic | Ernakulam

Kochi: Kerala Sahitya Akademi president and noted poet K Satchidanandan inaugurated the website of the first Wayanad Literature Festival (WLF) to be held at Dwaraka near Mananthavady on December 29 and 30.

"Let Wayanad's literature festival fly like the wetland bird crane," he said, referring to WLF's logo, after launching the website <https://wlfwayanad.com/>.

The festival's arrival to Wayanad, the land of black gold, soothing mist, evergreen forest, and its rich oral storytelling tradition, was long-awaited, said the poet.

"WLF is going to be a cultural feast for the people in the hill district and its neighbouring places," Satchidanandan said.

The Twitter page (@WLFWayanad) was given an official start by P Valsala, the first major Malayalam writer to move to Wayanad and who penned the classic 'Nellu' (Paddy). "Wayanad is my favourite place. The memory that Wayanad gave me resulted in the novel, 'Nellu'. The old Wayanad, the land of wild diseases, animals and underdevelopment needs big modern-day opportunities like the WLF," said Valsala.

Valsala Teacher, as she is known in Malayalam literature, wrote 'Nellu' after she moved to Thirunelly in north Wayanad in the 1960s. The novel was later made into a movie by director Ramu Kariat with Prem Nazir and Jayabharati as the lead actors.

Midhun Manuel Thomas, the young film director who is part of the new wave movement and a native of Wayanad, launched the WLF's Facebook page. "Wayanad has not seen so many writers and cultural artists visiting for one event, and the WLF is going to be like our Valliyoor kavu festival of literature and ideas," Manuel said referring to the famous temple festival in Wayanad's Valliyur Kavu. "This is my home, and I'm very excited to welcome the famous writers reaching Dwaraka," Manuel said.

For the first time in its history, Wayanad is becoming the venue for a big literary festival, said novelist KR Meera. "The Wayanad Literature Festival has the distinction of being the first in India to have a panchayat organise a literary festival. I have attended many literary festivals in big cities and city corporations, but the village experience as a venue with the participation of the local people is going to be unique," she said after launching the WhatsApp group for the festival.

Adding a new chapter to the map of literary festivals in Kerala, the first Wayanad Literature Festival will be held on December 29 and 30 at Dwaraka near Mananthavady. Wayanad will witness two days when world literature, Indian literature, and the Malayalam language will become the subjects of debate.

Highlights of the festival

The speakers of the festival include Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy, K Satchidanandan, novelist Paul Zacharia, critic and orator Sunil P Ilayidom, novelist Sheela Tomy, orator Sunny Kapicadu, poet Joy Vazhayil (also known as Kerala's chief secretary V P Joy), poet-writer Sukumaran Chaliyadda from Wayanad's Chaliyadda village, flash fiction writer P K Parakkadavu, writer and documentary filmmaker Sanjay Kak, writer and activist K J Baby, agriculturalist and storyteller Cheruvayal Raman, novelist and poet Kalpatta Narayanan, poet and lyricist Rafeeq Ahammed, actor-screenwriter-director Madhupal and film editor Bina Paul.

Journalist, film critic and documentary filmmaker O K Johnny, actor Abu Salim, investigative journalist and author Josy Joseph, artist Devaprakash, writer Sithara S, journalists Leena Reghunath and Dhanya Rajendran, short story writer Abin Joseph, emerging Tulu language poet Dhanya Vengacheri, storytellers Leena Olappamanna and Nawaz Mannan, social critic and thinker Manikuttan Paniyan of Thonichal village in Mananthavady, poet P Naveena and youth icon Anarkali Marikar will also speak in the event. The festival will also have music and cultural programmes.

Stage plays, debates, storytelling avenues, lectures, interviews, poetry platforms, rural art forms, the wondrous street of literary characters, workshops, theatres, student biennale, book fair, music, magic, and heritage walk will be the main features of the festival, said Vinod K Jose, festival director and editor of The Caravan magazine.

Authors VH Nishad and Dr Joseph K Job are the curators of WLF. Mananthavady block panchayat president Justin Baby and Edavaka grama panchayat president HB Pradeep Kumar are the leaders of the organising committee.