

Tales of Malabar



Malabar needs no introduction. This coastal region of Kerala, distinguished with rich history, great cultural significance and cosmopolitan sophistication, is more than a place. Rather, it's more like an idea, a warm feeling, a deep experience of fusion and harmony. Home to many distinct traditions and unique cultures, over several centuries, this place has welcomed innumerable travelers, traders, migrants, mystics, evangelists, scholars and even invaders. Acting as a gateway of trade and cultural exchange, connecting the south Indian regions to the Arab world and Europe, Malabar had been an epicentre of coastal commerce and spice trade, thrived under the care of merchant communities and local kings, with bustling ports all across the coast. Acclaimed historical accounts by famed globetrotters, from ancient to medieval times, have referred to the centuries-old trade and cultural bonds between the visitors and the locals, often blending and erasing the boundaries between them. Also, the European colonial invasion and the subsequent attempt to alter the economic, social and political landscape of Malabar resulted in stiff armed opposition, prompting large-scale militarisation. It also caused sprouting literary works in tribute to the anti-colonial fighters in Malabar. Naturally, thanks to its prolonged tradition of hospitality, Malabar is home to several distinctive cultures, faiths, heritage and aesthetics that the communities in the region reserve with high esteem. Needless to say, the literary tradition of the region, both in the classical and the folk formats, in multiple linguistic lineages, stands out par excellence. The same could be said about its cuisine, music and architecture, as well. MLF is a committed and authentic endeavour to express and discuss Malabar's rich history and cultural heritage. Both academic and popular in nature, this



focused festival brings about an array of topics that are urgent and significant for the people of this place. To be held in Kozhikode from November 30 to December 3, 2023, the first of its kind, MLF celebrates the amalgamation of Malabar's language, literature, arts, culture and cross-continental relations while featuring a diverse range of authors and scholars, including prominent figures around the globe. Exploring literature through the vantage of Malabar and expecting a footfall of literary and cultural enthusiasts, the MLF also brings together distant lands and littorals like Kayalpattinam, Lakshadweep, Sri Lanka, Gujarat, Andaman and Nicobar, Hadhramaut, Hijaz, Malay world and Africa, which have been historically associated with Malabar from time immemorial. With a conscious focus on the diverse and often unexplored life worlds of Mappila, Dalit and Adivasi subalterns, MLF days will host discourses, deliberations, interactions, film exhibitions, documentary screenings, cultural events, book fair and heritage walks, lending a true experience of Malabar's rich legacy.



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