

The Annasi and Kadalagotu Lit Festival: A tasty treat

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MENU





Walking in through the gates of the Aesthetic Resort on Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha on 25 April, the literature lover of Colombo was met with carts of annasi, kadala, veralu, and a whole host of street food. Walking up the staircase, one was greeted by booksellers Vijitha Yapa, M. D. Gunasena, Sarasavi and Deen the bookman, along with the AK Lit Festival Bookshop with books autographed by the panellists featured in the day's program. With acoustic music playing over the common areas, the atmosphere was eclectic and electric. Throngs of people were milling about browsing the books or sampling the food.

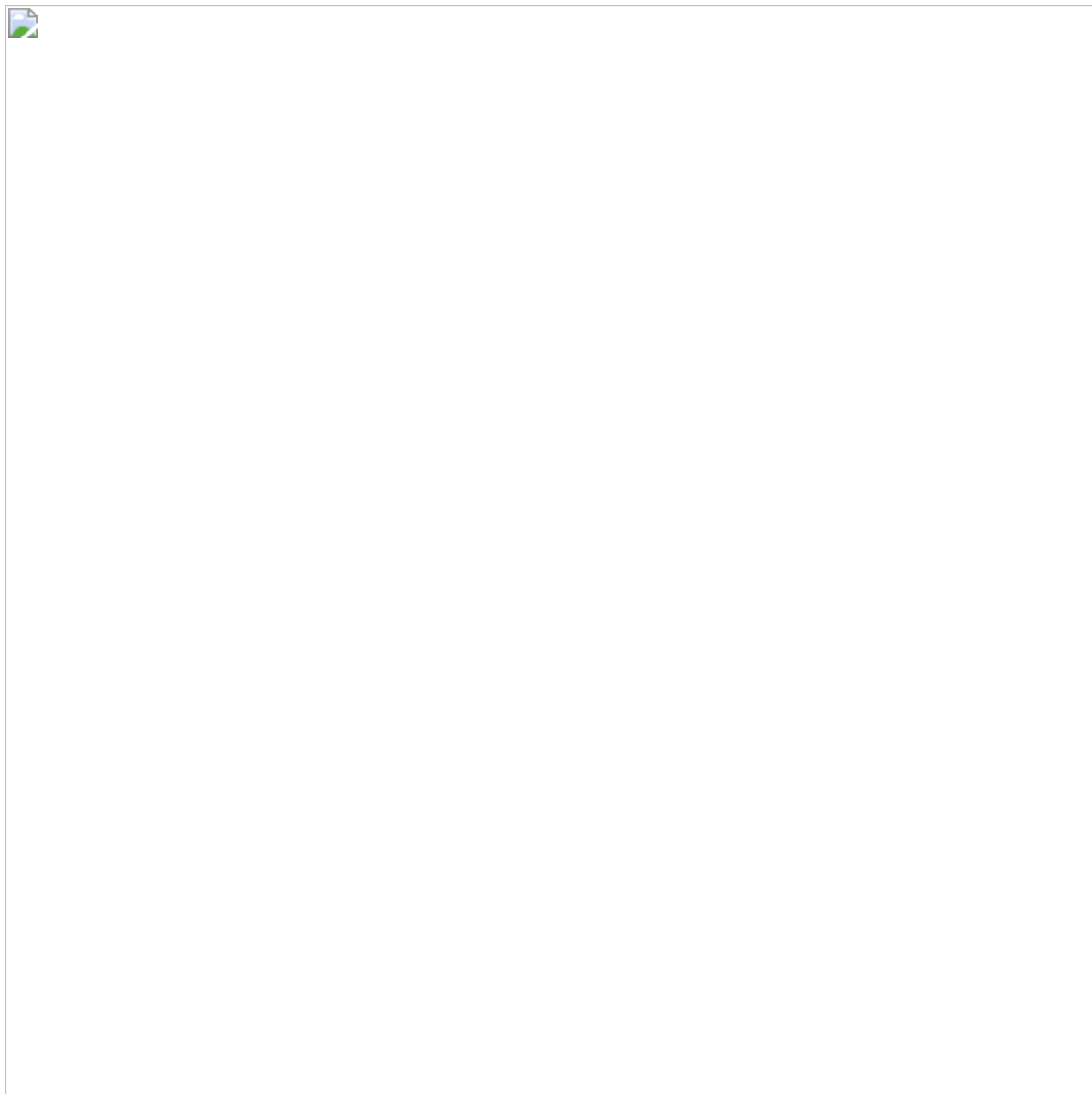


The three halls selected for the discussions were filled with others listening to such sessions as, 'Women in Sri Lankan literature: The feminine presence in SL literature' (with panellists Manuka Wijesinghe, Rozaine Cooray, Vivimarie Vanderpoorten and P. Arasanayagam, moderated by Tissa Jayathilaka), 'Silver Shaded Literature: Writing in retirement' (with panellists Bradman Weerakoon, Ananda Liyanage, Lucky De Chikera and Lalitha Somathilake, moderated by Peter De Almeida), and 'Youth Literature: Poetry of youth' (with panellists Saumya Liyanage, Timran Keerthi, and Sunanda Karunaratne, moderated by Dr. Amara Keerthi Liyanage). The short film 'Butterfly' by Vishnu Vasu drew immense crowds, and the main hall was filled to capacity. The program was diverse, with panellists speaking beautifully on varied topics of timely importance: Technological literature was made prominent with 'Blogging in Sri Lanka: A New Platform for Creativity' (with panellists Ajith Parakum Jayasinghe, Yashodha Sammani Premaratne, and Abdul Halik Azeez, moderated by Nalaka Gunawardane). 'Insights from a Writer's Creative Process' saw Shehan Karunathilake in conversation with Dileepa Abeysekera, discussing the former's Chinaman.



The power of expression was eloquently explained by panellists Batuwangala Rahula Thero, Ariyawansa Ranaweera, Piyal Kaariyawasam, and Sumithra Rahubadda who were moderated by Dhananath Fernando. Chammi Rajapathirana's book launch, moderated by Sabina Omar drew large crowds, and many could be seen buying the book outside the hall. The Gratiaen Forum was titled 'Talking Poetry, Prose and Drama with some Gratiaen winners' and winners Malinda Senewiratne, Lal Madawattegedara, Madubhashini Ratnayake, and special guest Jeanne Thwaites discussed the process of writing award-winning literature (moderated by Dr. Harshana Rambukwella). The making you a writer session – 'How to Make a Start. How to Turn Desire into a Book or Poem. Where to get help to write' had Ramya Jeerasinghe, Vihanga Perera, and Jean Arasanayagam talk to Ameena Hussein about the process of writing and publishing. A noteworthy element from the outer festival that complemented this session was the inclusion of a Publishers' Clinic, where people could talk to publishers about any questions they may have. 'Undoing the stigma of 'Broken English': Towards a Sri Lankan English Literary Culture' (with panellists Dilith Jayaweera, Deepal Sooriyaarachchi, Shivaneel Ilankoon, and Dr. Amarakeerthi Liyanage, moderated by Arun Dias Bandaranayake) was extremely well-received. 'Tamil Foot Print in Sri Lankan Literature'

saw S. Pathmanathan, Dr. Shriganeshan, and Dr. Selvy Thiruchandran, speak to S. Gayathri about the cultural and literary heritage particular to Tamil writers writing in Sri Lanka.



COMMENTS
