



# FESTIVAL REPORT



ALCHEMIST 17-19 NOVEMBER 2011  
**HAY FESTIVAL**  
in KERALA



DEBATE



IDEAS



MUSIC



“ A three day feast of stories, poetry, ideas and debates in God’s Own Country ”

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Thank You



JUNG CHANG



# THE ALCHEMIST HAY FESTIVAL 2011 IN KERALA

**THE SECOND HAY FESTIVAL IN KERALA WAS A HUGE SUCCESS, with a packed programme of international writers gathered in the old palace in the centre of Thiruvananthapuram.**

The Alchemist Hay Festival in Kerala in 2011 brought three days of stimulating discussions and events. The line-up included **Jung Chang**, author of *Wild Swans* and biographer of Chairman Mao; BBC World Anchor **Nik Gowing** chairing the Suzlon Debate about energy production; author **Anita Nair**; award-winning French novelist **Agnès Desarthe**; **Simon Singh** lecturing on cosmology and codes; and writer and academic **Germaine Greer** speaking about Shakespeare's lovers.



Authors **Nayantara Saghal** and **Tarun Tejpal** had the audience enthralled with their discussion on media, literature and politics, and Tarun Tejpal then continued on to a second event with Allianz at the Technopark on the outskirts of the city.



This is the first time the annual festival has been supported by the **Alchemist Group**. Founder of the organisation Mr K.D. Singh said: "I believe for India to shine we need not only rising incomes and multiplying goods but also an energetic intellectual life. For me, backing the prestigious Hay Festival means supporting a culture of books, ideas and serious thought."

The programme highlighted poets working in languages from around the world – Spanish, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, Welsh, Icelandic and English – and the celebration of world languages culminated in a Poetry Gala with **K. Satchidanandan**, **Arvind Krishna Mehrotra** and **Arundhati Subramaniam**, among others.



Eight poets from India and Wales came together to translate their work into each other's languages. Welsh poets **Menna Elfyn**, **Eurig Salisbury**, **Hywel Griffiths** and **Karen Owen** joined the Indians – Malayalee **K. Satchidanandan**, young Tamil poet **Meena Kandasamy**, and Mumbai-based Bengali poet **Sampurna Chattarji**. The events focused on issues of translation and the problems faced in the transitions between languages and cultures.

One of the highlights of the poetry events was the inclusion of three guests from Spain, **Carlos Aganzo**, **Clara Janes** and **Jose María Munoz Quirós**, who were joined on stage by local poet **Anupama Raju** to delight and entertain their audience along with the spiritual accompaniment of the **Veena**.



MP **Shashi Tharoor** lectured on India's superpower status. He said India and China were, due to lack of education and pollution, 'Super-poor'. Asked what the government's role in the development of India as a powerful country is, he said that much development happens when government stays out of the way; that government has to lay a foundation for development, such as IITs and IIMs, but that it is individuals reacting to situations that make the country.

As always, regional literature was celebrated, with sessions on Dalit poetry in Malayalam. Famed Dalit poets such as **S. Joseph**, **Vijila Chirappadu**, **Sunny Kappikkad**, **M.R. Renukumar** and **M.B. Manoj** took part in a discussion introduced by the famous Malayalam poet **K. Satchidanandan**. He said that Dalit literature had put forward many reforms in the fields of literal language and style.



There were also sessions focusing on children's literature and what makes writing for the young exciting, including events with the award-winning writer and illustrator **Ed Vere**.

Kerala is the most literate state on Earth, with 100% literacy and in several languages. It has the most admirable tradition of religious and intellectual tolerance. It's the home of that great political utopia – the 'convivenca'.

Sanjoy Roy, managing director of Teamwork Productions which co-produced the festival, points out that 'The festival has already been listed among the ten most important tourism-related activities in India.' (*India Times*)

The Alchemist Hay Festival in collaboration with Teamwork Productions, in association with Qatar Airways, hosted 45 wonderful sessions spread across the three days and was open to all and free of charge.



# THE FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS

**3** days  
Over **45** events

**8** languages

**11** nationalities  
**4** venues

Over **78** participating authors

**FREE** entry for all

**120** radio spots

Attended by over **5,400** visitors, with huge participation from the local area

Over **600** dedicated articles

Over **80** publications

Over **180** articles in national and international press  
**170** journalists attending



# THE FESTIVAL IN WORDS

“It was this dialogue between cultures and between languages that these festivals so triumphantly embraced.” **Lorna Bradbury, *The Telegraph***

“Following the success of the inaugural edition of the prestigious Hay Festival's India chapter last year, this literary festival returns to the country for a second time this month. Catch a bevy of international poets, novelists, journalists, film makers and performers in this three day fest. While literatis can look forward to interactions with Jung Chang, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Simon Armitage and Anita Nair, amongst many others, discussions with BBC World anchor Nik Gowing, Oscar-winning film maker Andrew Ruhemann and French novelist Agnès Desarthe are particularly promising. ‘This year’s programme is a stunning line-up that celebrates the languages of the world and the issues of the day,’ says Lyndy Cooke, executive director of Hay Festivals.” ***Harpers Bazaar***

“The second edition of the Hay Festival was inaugurated with a clash of cymbals and the thumping of drums. But once the lamp was lit ceremonially in the 200 year old Kanakakunnu Palace, it was serious business as writers discussed Malayalam fiction, poetry and children’s writing. MP Shashi Tharoor said that literature and reading had always been a part of Kerala’s culture.” ***The Times of India***

“The Hay Festival, one of the biggest literary events in the world, will be back in India this November. The festival which began 23 years ago in Hay on Wye, a small town in Wales, UK, has over the years reached Spain, Colombia and Kenya and is now in its second edition in India. ‘It will present a great venue for dialogue, debate, discussion and exchange of ideas. Audiences can look forward to literary and cultural celebrations, while enjoying the wonderful hospitality, beauty and tranquility that Kerala offers.’ said Sanjoy Roy, festival producer and managing director of Teamwork Productions. Peter Florence, founder and director of Hay Festivals worldwide says: ‘We had a wonderful time in Thiruvananthapuram last year, it felt like a natural home for the festival.’” ***The Hindu***



STORYTELLER JAN BLAKE

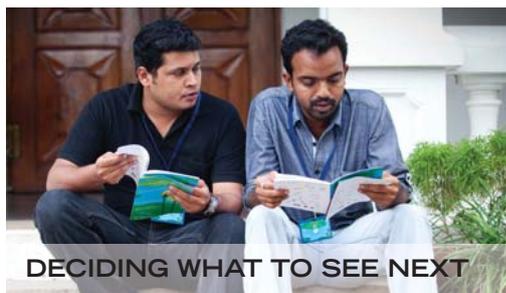


# THE FESTIVAL IN WORDS

“The public interactions that follow each of the sessions at The Alchemist Hay Festival at Thiruvananthapuram throw up interesting responses.” ***Hindustan Times***



“At the end of the day, the great appeal of the festival is that it can bring together book lovers and thinkers, often with interesting results. Now established as an event around the globe, Hay Festival is a place for ideas to be explored.” ***India Real Time***



“If one must pick an exceptional section at The Alchemist Hay Festival Kerala, it would be the sessions on children's literature and the story-telling sessions by Cat Weatherill and Jan Blake. There is magic in childhood. A greater magic is at work when grown-ups turn into children.” ***The Week***

“Large turnout at Kerala Hay Fest: authors Germaine Greer of Australia and Jung Chang of Britain, along with oral storytellers Jan Blake and Cat Weatherill, drew in crowds including a large number of children at the Hay Festival. The three day literary extravaganza featured poets, authors, film-makers and journalists who discussed a variety of themes and influences ranging from literature, politics, science and media to film.” ***Press Trust of India***



“It is Hay Festival time again in Thiruvananthapuram. For this year's edition the organisers, in collaboration with Teamwork Productions, have lined up poets and writers working in different languages from around the world. Says poet K. Satchidanandan: ‘The festival culture is something new to Kerala, but going by last year's experience at Hay, it is catching up and has begun to ignite the imagination of young students and readers.’” ***Deccan Chronicle***



# THE FESTIVAL IN THE MEDIA

THE ALCHEMIST HAY FESTIVAL 2011 ACHIEVED A MINIMUM of 600 pieces of media coverage, including previews and reviews in major magazines, online, and both national and regional as well as international newspapers.

## REGIONAL TITLES INCLUDED:

*Malyalam Manorama, Mathrubhumi, Deshabhimani, Kerala Kamudi, Madhyamam, Mangalam, Veekshanam*

## NATIONAL TITLES INCLUDED:

*Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Hindu, The New Indian Express, The Economic Times, Deccan Chronicle, Mail Today, PTI, IANS, Business India*

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA INCLUDED:

*The Telegraph, The Mail, Wall Street Journal (India Real Time), ABC National Radio (Australia), South China Morning Post*

## NATIONAL TELEVISION MEDIA:

NDTV, CNN IBN, NewsX



## COVERAGE IN THE HINDU



# THE FESTIVAL IN IMAGES



TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT: GERMAINE GREER; APPLAUDING AUDIENCE; SHASHI THAROOR MP; MARKET VEGETABLE SELLER; AUDIENCE WAITING FOR AN EVENT TO START IN THE PALACE HALL; ARVIND KRISHNA MEHROTRA; ENTERTAINED AUDIENCE MEMBER; IN THE FESTIVAL BOOKSHOP



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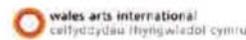
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