

## MEDIA RELEASE

## With scintillating performances, Mahindra Kabira Festival enters day two

**Varanasi, 5 November, 2016:** After a magical opening on Friday at the Brij Rama Palace, the Mahindra Kabira Festival began on Saturday Morning at the historic Darbhanga Ghat with Varanasi based Flautist Atul Shankar followed by Kabir experts Shabnam Virmani & Vipul Rikhi who reflected on Kabir's *dohas* through music and poetry.

Atul Shankar's mesmerizing flute recital complemented the serenity of the early morning as the sun rose on Darbhanga Ghat. Atul Shankar's renditions of some of morning *ragas* in the Benaras Gharana style were uplifting.

Following this, Shabnam Virmani and members of the Kabir Project presented Kabir's poetry through songs and conversations explaining the meanings of his couplets. The artistes articulated various emotions and moods of the mystic poet through their poignant recitals.

Music paved the way for conversations during the Literature Sessions on the Ganga where Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi read from and discussed their upcoming book which explores songlines through Bhakti, Sufi and Baul oral traditions. The session included readings from their translated work and an opportunity for audiences to engage with the musicians atop the terrace at the Brij Rama Palace, overlooking the banks of the holy Ganga.

The afternoon at the Mahindra Kabira Festival offered an exploration of the mystic city of Varanasi. Beginning at 3 pm from the Darbhanga Ghat, the Heritage Walk offered an intensive crash course through the ancient streets and by lanes as well as sites and locales of cultural significance. Passing through the famous Chaushakti Maa temple, it reached Tarabadi temple known for its beautiful artifacts, the four courtyards of which are dedicated to one deity each. The next stop was Kalibari temple, created by the Maharanas of Kooch behar where musicians sat in the *angans* playing the shehnai. This was followed by Baba Farid's *mazaar* and other places including Karpatri math, Kedar temple, Harishchandra ghat, Juna akhada of naga sadhus behind Hanuman ghat, Lolark kund, Svaminath akhada famous for wrestling, and the birthplace of Rani Laxmibai, before finally concluding at Assi ghat. Throughout the walk visitors also got to savour local delicacies like *kachoris*, *chaat*, *parathas*, *lassi* and *paan*.

At the Assi Ghat, the sun set with the riveting Vedic chants followed by the beautiful Ganga *arti* lighting up the whole area with a golden glow. *Nagada* maestro Nathoo Lal Solanki spread a cheerful enthusiasm in the audience with his powerful performance. Vidya Shah's blessed and



rich voice was captivating, followed by Mir Mukhtiyar Ali singing the poetry of Kabir with a blend of Rajasthani folk and refined classical.

The evening ended with legendary Hindustani Classical vocalist duo Pt. Rajan-Sajan Mishra, whose stellar voices and performance served as a perfect conclusion to the events of the day.

Sunday, November 6 will be the final day of the first edition of the Mahindra Kabira Festival and promises more interesting performances. Morning Music will reverberate at the Darbhanga Ghat again with performances by Azeem Ahmed Alvi and Pt. Debashish Dey. For the Literature Session on the Ganga, bestselling mythological fiction author Amish Tripathi who penned the Shiva trilogy will speak about Kabir's Varanasi and its significance in Indian religio-cultural ethos and identity. Audiences who missed the Heritage Walk today have another chance to explore the city with BHU professor Ajay Pandey.

Evening Music will be held at the Chota Nagpur Bagheecha at Assi Ghat with performances by Prahlad Tipanya, Shabnam Viramani and Vipul Rikhi of the Kabir Project, Kabir Café, and Pt. Ajoy Chakrabarty.

Note: The Literature Session and Heritage Walks have limited audience capacity.

## NOTES TO EDITOR

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**For further information on Mahindra Kabira Festival, please visit:**

<http://mahindrakabira.com/>

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