The re-election of Maj. Gen. (Retd) L.K. Gupta AVSM as Chairman for another two year term was announced at the Annual General Meeting held on 17th March at INTACH Central Office. He polled an overwhelming majority of 845 votes in a total of 1137 validated votes received by post.

Chairman Elected

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A LIFEline FOR INTACH

The much anticipated 2013-14 Budget attracted its usual share of votaries and critics — as expected. For INTACH however it is a milestone, a formal acknowledgement that heritage conservation has at last nudged its way to the national agenda. Almost 30 years after its establishment, INTACH now accorded recognition as an “institution of excellence”, welcomed the budgetary provision of Rs.100 crore announced by the Union Finance Minister in response to the persistent requests for a special allocation to safeguard the unprotected material, natural and living heritage of India for future generations.

INTACH Chairman LK Gupta stated “While Article 51A of the Constitution says it is the duty of every Indian to protect the heritage of the country, citizens also need to have the skills or someone to guide them to know how to preserve heritage”. With much faith and limited means, INTACH has been fulfilling this mission with the help of 172 Chapters across the country, supported by its army of ‘conscience keepers’ comprising volunteers and hired professionals. INTACH has tried to generate heritage awareness at ground level, especially among youth - its future stakeholders. It has worked in partnership with several State Governments and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on various conservation projects. It was never enough – there is always much that remains to be done in every State.

Earlier INTACH was allotted about Rs.80 lakhs to formulate heritage bye laws for 13 monuments, but the grant was utilized to cover as many as 47 monuments. As Chairman LK Gupta elaborated in his Press statement: “We spent about Rs.2 lakhs per monument to include as many monuments as possible and even invited local people to give their views”. INTACH is already working with the Delhi Government for conservation and protection of 94 unprotected monuments in the capital It has partnered ASI for conserving the iconic Lodi Gardens and Mehrauli Archaeological Park. It is collaborating with the National Monument Authority on heritage bye laws for over 3600 protected national monuments. The recently established
year. His impeccable credibility and strong advocacy on behalf of INTACH produced immediate response from the Finance Minister of India, who very generously announced Rs.100 crore Grant-in-Aid to INTACH. On behalf of all the Members, I extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Dr. Kelkar for not only being a personal friend but also on being able to move mountains and magically produce results in a difficult financial environment, in his most inimicable, simple and humble manner.

With great gifts come great responsibilities and challenges. It is one thing to be endowed with a large grant and another thing to be able to utilize it judiciously and wisely. We intend to seek advice from a Committee whose integrity is beyond reproach to advise us on the proper investment and utilization of the amount that we will receive. We expect to identify the various gaps and needs which require our intervention urgently for the conservation of unprotected heritage and for the intangible segments of endangered heritage. Awareness creation will be our major aim and will continue to receive focused attention at the grass-root level. Our conservation laboratories direly need up-gradation and new technology. We have established a Centre for Conservation Training and Capacity Building (CCTCB) which is at a nascent stage and completes one year on the 18th April, 2013 on World Heritage Day, and has received good reviews and feedback.

One of the areas which require serious attention is the up-gradation of the Documentation Centre. It requires to have state-of-the-art facilities for documentation and storage. We hope we will be able to move in that direction.

You will be happy to know that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and I met the Minister of Corporate Affairs Shri Sachin Pilot on 5th February to request him to place cultural heritage as a specific item on the Corporate Social Responsibility list. By placing cultural heritage in the Rules of the list, it will become attractive for the Corporate Sector to contribute funds under the CSR. The Minister has given us his assurance and we hope that he will be able to carry it through.

Centre for Conservation Training and Capacity Building will hone the skills of conservationists for tackling the mammoth task of the future - the protection of an estimated 10 lakh precious heritage which can generate tourism, employment and economic growth in various corners of the country.

INTACH will make judicious use of the grant provided in the current Budget. Coupled with growing national importance of ‘heritage security’, there could be enhanced budgetary allocations in the years to come.

Smt. Asha V. Seth was declared elected unopposed for the single vacancy in the Founder Members Category.

Shri Ashish Banerjee and Shri S.K. Verma were declared elected in the Life Member Category.

Dr. Sukhdev Singh was declared elected in the Ordinary Member Category.

The Mehrangarh Museum Trust was declared elected in the Institutional Members Category.

No nominations were received in the Donor Members or the Corporate Members categories.
INTACH has signed a number of MOUs with States/organizations – with the South Asia Travel Tourism Exchange (SATTE) for launching INTACH Tourism Awards for Heritage; with Aryan Books International for co-publishing and distribution of INTACH publications on conservation worldwide; with Doordarshan to telecast the programmes offered on DD Bharti Channel free of cost; with the National Museum, Denmark for Conservation and upgradation of Serampore Court Compound 2012-16; with the Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs, Government of Egypt on 19th March, 2013 during the visit of the President of Egypt, in the presence of the Prime Minister of India.

We received several major Delegations at INTACH – the CEO and Directors of the Getty Foundation; HRH Princes Aadilah Bin Abdullah Bin Abdullah along with 14 member delegation from Saudi Arabia; and Vice Minister President of the Flemish Government Mr. Geert Bourgeois along with his delegation.

During the celebrations of the Foundation Day this year, we were happy to receive a large number of Founder Members on that day, many of whom had not come to INTACH for a long time. I may also like to flag the point that INTACH became 30 years old on 27th January 2014. We urge all Chapters and Members to commemorate our 30th birthday with enthusiasm by taking up passion projects to save our heritage for the future.

I would like to end with a word of caution. While strengthening the Chapters, it is also important to ensure that INTACH membership is of a high quality, and only the true and dedicated people are enrolled as Members. As in all walks of life, it is possible that many will try to enter the organization with personal motives and for wrong reasons. We will have to be guarded on such matters. But knowing the strength of the organization, we can overcome such efforts if any.

It is my fervent prayer to all Members that we remain dedicated to the cause of heritage conservation and make ourselves worthy of the trust placed on us by the nation to further the glorious mandate of INTACH. I wish all Members the very best in the year 2013.

– Member Secretary, INTACH

INTACH thanked independent observers Shri K.S. Kutty and Shri Navya Malhotra, and INTACH team headed by Financial Controller and his team, for the counting process.

Chairman extended a warm welcome to all the Members and their families for the forthcoming festival of Holi. He stated the year 2012-13 was a momentous one in the chain of events since 1984, referring of course to the budget allocation and INTACH designated as a Centre of Excellence by the Finance Minister – on par with the Benaras Hindu University, the Aligarh Muslim University and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Guwahati. It was the good offices of Dr. Vijay Kelkar, who carried the INTACH message to the higher authorities, and “deserves the utmost thanks and gratitude”, Chairman said. He also gave credit to each and many - the voluntary workers of INTACH, the Convenors and Co-Convenors, and staff of Central Office. “The precedent set by the Finance Minister for protecting the heritage of India would have a deep impact nationwide and will create a multiplier effect on well meaning institutions and corporations to step forward to support the cause”. Hope floats!

Chairman LK Gupta also spoke at length about the impressive growth of INTACH activities, detailing the high points, the most important being the addition of Rs. 70 lakhs to the corpus during the current year despite Property Tax that leap-frogged from Rs. 10 to Rs. 70 lakhs this year. In conclusion he thanked the entire team of INTACH led by Member Secretary CT Misra for their efficient contribution and appreciated the team spirit that is propelling INTACH on its march forward.

All Members present were invited to raise queries, and there were many. A sumptuous lunch at the India International Centre concluded the Annual General Meeting.
INTACH Founder’s Day

The celebration of INTACH’s Founder’s Day (27th January) was deferred till 1st February due to practical considerations. It made little difference to the enthusiasm of the Staff participating to make it a very special occasion. The Rangoli competition ensured a decorated entrance, both inside and outside the premises, welcoming one and all in an abandon of colours and concepts that enhanced this most traditional of auspicious Indian art.

Chairman LK Gupta extended a warm welcome to the gathering in the amphitheatre and reiterated that heritage bound us together in a great cause that will serve the nation. He administered the INTACH Pledge:

**I CARE**

*For the wonders of Nature that are mine to protect*
*For the richness of Culture that I promise to respect*
*For the Heritage of India that is ours to preserve*

The participation in the *Taste of India* competition followed with many a ‘chef’ from INTACH staff lined up behind their menus with a delectable spread. It was not easy on the eye or palate to judge the artistic rangoli or to taste so many delicacies. It only left the Judges in a quandary trying to select best winners from so many best entries in both competitions. Prizes were awarded to them, and also to the winners of the Staff Badminton Matches held earlier in the day.

Many Founding Members attended the south Indian Lunch hosted by INTACH. The ongoing international Art Fair at Delhi had brought some of our Founding Members from Mumbai into town like Vice Chairman Tasneem Mehta, Dr. Sarayu Doshi and Smt Asha Seth. Among Delhi Founding Members attending were stalwarts like OP Jain, former Chairman SK Misra, and ‘heritage developers’ Aman Nath and Francis Wacriez, all of whom spent leisurely time under the winter sun interacting with INTACH Members.

Post lunch there was an exciting competition conducted by Quiz Master Kunal Savarkar. There were six eager-to-win teams, with the Gurgaon teachers group scoring high points in answering riddled questions. For those who didn’t know the answers, there was much to learn about Indian heritage.

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**CAG writes to MS, INTACH**

I am writing to you to place on record the excellent work done by INTACH, New Delhi in renovating ‘Yarrows’, the hostel of the Officer Trainees of Indian Audit & Accounts Service situated at Shimla. ‘Yarrows’ is a colonial building constructed in 1913 by Sir Herbert Baker. The building, while colonial in character, had been constructed following the local architectural style of Shimla. Renovation of ‘Yarrows’ was therefore an extremely delicate task given the need to maintain its architectural style while providing modern facilities to its inhabitants. INTACH has succeeded in embellishing the aesthetic features of ‘Yarrows’ while providing a fresh lease of life to the building. By using their professional expertise in conservation techniques, INTACH has accomplished this task with finesse.

‘Yarrows’ now wears a new look while retaining its old grandeur. I compliment INTACH and its technical staff led by Shri Divay Gupta in conceiving the changes required and detailing the associated works. I wish similar success to INTACH in all their future conservation ventures.
Director IHCD Nirupama Modwell was congratulated for organising the various programmes, and the touch of ‘inclusiveness’ shared with Patrons, Members and Friends of INTACH.

**Convenors’ Orientation Conference**

The Annual General Meeting was preceded by a two days Orientation Conference for new Convenors. In his address Chairman LK Gupta appreciated their onerous task as volunteers, and offered a few pointers to get them started on the heritage track. They must assume leadership to steer Chapter activities and try to involve the public, students and authorities to the full extent possible. The priority task must be listing, that steers the way to advocacy, and the ability to take up public causes for protection of both tangible and intangible heritage. He mentioned a number of listings published by INTACH which are in great demand from buyers. He drew particular attention to the recently published Charles Correa Lecture as it pinpoints the importance of protecting public places and involving citizens and authorities in equal measure to save our environment. It is also advisable to take up one passion project to profile the Chapter in the public eye, and to garner heritage support of local people.

Member Secretary CT Misra also warmly welcomed the new Convenors, and in particular thanked the senior Convenors present who have effectively contributed to making INTACH an “organization of excellence”, as acknowledged by the Government while approving a substantial grant for the first time to the Trust. Modestly disclaiming her own considerable efforts, she said it was some right people in the right places that had helped in this matter. She hoped senior Convenors would be like Mentors, and the new Convenors would avail this 3-day opportunity to brainstorm and interact with them.

Jammu Convenor distributed his booklet *Glimpses of Historical Mughal Route* to all present.

Dr. Narayani Gupta gave a brief on listing, pointing out how periodic random listing had created problems of reconciliation. She emphasised that listing was only the first step, and Convenors needed to pursue the matter till all the listed heritage properties are notified without which listing would be only a paper tiger. She cited the example of Delhi where after listing, notification was inordinately delayed, and how taking advantage of the loophole a prized heritage property in Lutyens Delhi was demolished for new construction. AHD Director A. Vijay further briefed the Convenors on details of the listing process and its quintessential importance.
The talk by Delhi Convenor touched on a vast range of heritage activities that have been taken up in the capital, some of which could also be taken up by Convenors in their heritage places. Special mention was made of the Conservation Plan for Rashtrapati Bhavan, because earlier there have been heritage violations even in such high places due to lack of a management plan. He enumerated various steps taken to make Delhi “more visible” like illumination of public buildings, heritage routes, development of tourism infrastructure, signages, distribution of literature, etc. New Convenors can also explore such activities in their region. Heritage Walks in particular are very good for “communicating with people”, young and old. He pointed out Rs. 250 crore development fund had been sanctioned to each State, a significant part of which is for tourism infrastructure that Convenors should tap for heritage conservation.

During the two day interactions Convenors were acquainted with the work of all INTACH Divisions through presentations made by each Division. Director CCTCB Navin Piplani reiterated Chairman’s suggestion that Chapters should take full advantage of this heritage training facility, and courses could be conducted in situ on request, by Convenors providing basic facilities. Convenors visited the laboratories of the Material Heritage Division. They were briefed by INTACH Principal Directors and Directors of various Divisions regarding their work and projects successfully undertaken. Lt. Col. MPS Bhatia briefed them on financial and administrative procedures to be followed, while Legal Cell Consultant Nayantara Roy clarified the legal structure of heritage laws, service tax, and filing of PIL ensuring there was no personal gain or private motive.

Member Secretary CT Misra requested Convenors for a feedback on the orientation programme. She took them through the objectives and basic mandate of INTACH, emphasizing that guardianship is not limited to monument-centric concerns but extends to all facets of tangible and intangible heritage.

A film on the ongoing restoration work at Balaji Ghat of Varanasi was exhibited. A Heritage Walk at Lodi Gardens acquainted the Convenors with the most popular measure they could adopt for making INTACH presence felt in their respective communities.

The Orientation concluded with a social evening at the India International Centre. There was a scintillating concert by the Tetseo Sisters from Nagaland, followed by a farewell dinner.

**Burra Bungalow and All That**

The book titled *Burra Bungalow and All That* was released again at Delhi on 1st March. It may be recalled last year State Convenor GM Kapur coordinated the publication of a memorabilia on the Assam tea industry, documented with beautiful pictures of built heritage of its tea gardens at Kolkata. The book was sponsored by the Tea Board of India and the INTACH UK Trust, and dedicated to the memory of known and unknown British and Indian pioneers of the tea industry dating far back to the 1850-1900s. It was in the following decades that heritage burra bungalows, clubs, cemeteries and machineries transformed the land of the one-horned rhino into verdant plains spreading alongside the Brahmaputra river.

Shri GM Kapur and Co-Convenor Nayantara Palchoudhuri took the initiative to introduce *Burra Bungalow and All That* to a gathering of special invitees, officials and diplomats at Delhi. He explained the book is not a photo-journalistic...
effort, the concept was documentation of the built heritage
of the tea gardens and to list all intangible elements for
posterity. “Today in Assam there is only one tea garden with
a thatched roof. Thatched roofs had to be removed from all
bungalows because of the cost of insurance and fire hazard”.
He introduced former Rajya Sabha MP and Special Guest
Praful Goradia as a “doyen” of the tea industry saying “what
he doesn’t know is not worth knowing”. Shri Goradia, is a
veteran of the tea industry who continues to be a part of
it to date. He shared interesting glimpses of times when
managers on horseback inspected tea gardens, a better
way than motorized vehicles for a closer inspection of tea
bushes. Earlier tea trees grew up to 25 feet before plantation
technology was adopted on a large scale, and tea became
the harbinger of the industrial era in India and auctioned in
places far away at the time like London. More importantly, he
also pointed out that this ‘green industry’ helps to hold the
soil on hill sides and preserve the eco-system. He dispelled
the myth that the tea industry originated from China. “While
it is true to some extent - the East India Company did smuggle
out seeds from China and the British did tempt few retired
Chinese workers – that is very peripheral today. I would guess
that 95% of Indian tea in India both from the North and the
South, would be from Assam jaat of bushes which were growing
spontaneously in Assam for possibly centuries before the British
came”..... It was Governor General William Bentinck who
decided that India must become self reliant in tea”. The tea
industry was started by an Assamese planter called Maniram
Dewan who was later killed by the British after he joined the
1857 uprising.

The introductions set the mood for the audio-visual account
Chai Bagan of life in a tea garden in the years gone by,
narrated by an old hand Asha Chopra who had lived the life
of a ‘chhota mensahib’ as the wife of a tea planter years ago.
She regaled the audience with the travails of those gone by
days and the intimidating presence of staff who deigned to
Tea plantation in those days required raw courage and drive –
clearing matted jungle with the aid of elephants and fending
off less friendly tribal people.

Joint Secretary Ministry of Tourism, Usha Sharma praised
INTACH for having taken this initiative. She said : The book
focuses on a subject that is close to my heart and those who
work in the Ministry. We can have interesting packages for
travellers. Living in such places can be a really romantic
experience”. She congratulated GM Kapur and his associates
for a most interesting evening. She said the Ministry of
Tourism is currently thinking of promoting tourism to tea
gardens as “a magical and interesting experience”.

Snippets from “Burra Bungalow and All That”

In 1834 the British Government withdrew the right to
monopoly trade primarily because of significant rise in prices
of the product.
The Assam Tea Company merged with another joint stock
company, the Bengal Tea Association to form the first limited
liability company for production of tea in India.

In the mid-1880s, any and all Chinese shoe-makers and
carpenters from Cossaitolla and other bazaars of Calcutta were
apparently hijacked and sent to Assam for growing tea.
The flurry of activities also attracted the attention of some of
the local gentry of Assam.

Tea plantation in those days required raw courage and drive –
clearing matted jungle with the aid of elephants and fending
off less friendly tribal people.

Quite a few serving officers in the British army units came to
acquire tea gardens while in service.
The railway system, started in May 1882, facilitated the
movement of tea from upper Assam to Calcutta and overseas
to Britain.

Travelling allowances are well known enough, but some of the
remote tea gardens apparently had ‘mistress allowances’.

However many a brave woman came to join her husband and
provide a happy home life for him.
GLIMPSES OF BURRA BUNGALOWS AND A TEA ERA GONE BY

Elephant tugs a car
Ferrying by buffalo cart
Managers Bungalow, Bidyanagar TG
Bogapani TG, 1915 ‘Chang’ type
Dewang TG, largest TG at Cachar
Narrow gauge steam locomotive
Ethelwold TG, once owned by Assam Co.
Collection of medical instruments, Harmutty TG
1925 Koliabur Manor overlooking Brahmaputra
Andhra Pradesh

East Godavari

Convenor L. Shesh Kumari is appointed as Member of the Expert Committee set up by the Union Ministry of Culture, for selecting awardees of the Senior and Junior Fellowships. Our congratulations to her! The first meeting of this Committee for selecting awards to artistes was held on 10th January.

On INTACH Foundation Day 27th January, the Chapter conducted an interactive session with more than 100 history students. Dr. Merapala Narayan Rao, a new Member from Tuni, gave a detailed presentation of historical data largely based on his own work that brings to light Buddhist relics around Tuni and Annavaram areas when excavations were going on for the Polavaram canals. He received an Appreciation Award from the District Collector who is the Chief Patron of the Chapter. Members wholeheartedly participated in the Beach Festival at Kakinada, organized by District Administration on 11th-13th January, where INTACH stall was put up by the staff.

Chapter Members also participated in an interactive session after screening of Pitahpuram Maharani’s Kala Durbar, a DVD brought out by the Chapter.

A meeting was held at Kakinada to honour the newly appointed Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Chapter, M. Gopalkrishna. Members introduced themselves indicating their interest and involvement with INTACH activities. The Chairman shared his thoughts on Bharata Desam quoting rich examples from the scriptures. He said since East Godavari is the seat of culture associated with the benevolence of the Rajah of Pitapuram, the influence of Raja Ram Mohan Rao’s Brahmopasanam, social reformist Sit Raghupathi Venkataratnam Naidu Guru and Kudukuri Veersalingam Guru, it is deemed a major seat of culture. The renovation of Damerla Art Gallery, development of a tourist circuit of Buddhist sites, and setting up a sub-Chapter at Rajamundry were discussed.

Kadapa

Shri S. Elias Reddy is appointed Convenor of the Kadapa Chapter. He will be assisted by Dr. P. Venu Gopal as the Co-Convenor.

Hyderabad

Convenor Anuradha Reddy is a writer, photographer, art connoisseur and curator of the Aviation Exhibition at New Delhi and several other venues. She made a power point presentation on Punjabi Melody at a function organised jointly by the Salar Jung Museum and the Historical Society of Hyderabad on 12th January at the Museum.

State Convenor M Gopalkrishna welcoming Chairman INTACH

Recently appointed AP State Convenor M. Gopalakrishna, retired after an outstanding administrative career in various States, welcomed Chairman LK Gupta to the AP District Convenors Meet on 2nd February. A total of 13 Convenors and 3 Co-Convenors met at Shilparaman, Madhapur, Hyderabad to review individual activity reports, identify priorities, and issues that need coordination with concerned authorities. Presentations were made by all attending Convenors: Anuradha Reddy, Hyderabad; T. Nagendra Swamy, Mahboobnagar; L. Sheshu Kumari, East Godavari; PV Prasad, Vishakhapatnam; DV Dharma Rao, Srikakulam;
E. Elias Reddy, Kadapa; Dr. V. Srinivas Rao, Machlipatnam; Dr. M. Pandu Ranga Rao, Warangal; B. Venkateshwarlu, Kunoor; P. Anjaiah, Nalagonda; P. Heera Khan, Guntur; Dr. K. Srinivasalu. Prakasham; Dr. S. Jai Kishan, Karimnagar; among others who attended the meeting. There was consensus to jointly revive some of dormant AP Chapters at Guntur, Nalagondi, Karimnagar and Prakasan, through the efforts of their recently appointed Convenors.

A series of interactions with specialists was scheduled post-lunch with participation of Chairman AP Heritage Committee R. Rajamani; Director Salar Jung Museum A. Nagendra Reddy; and Director National Institute of Tourism Dr. Narayana Reddy who shared their vision on heritage matters. State Co-Convenor Shri Vedakumar thanking the Convenors, requested them to bring problems and issues to the notice of the State Chapter on a regular basis.

Chairman LK Gupta encouraged the Convenors, stressing on the importance of District Chapters and the need to adopt an ‘Advocacy Role’ for safeguarding heritage under threat, before addressing the Press after the successful conclusion of the day’s proceedings.

**INTACH Heritage Awards-2013 Students Trophy**

The Chapter in coordination with the Sri Venkateswara College of Architecture is conducting student competitions in the architectural colleges of Andhra Pradesh on Adaptive Re-Use of Mahboob Mansion Building Complex. It listed the 110 year old palace of the Nizams located in Malakpet that has been vacant in a dilapidated condition for many years. The Commissioner, GHMC Hyderabad has been requested to provide the required data. The aim of the competitions is to sensitize architecture and planning students to explore the potential of conserving old heritage properties for re-use for a socially useful purpose. By launching these prestigious competitions, to be evaluated by an expert jury in April, a dual purpose of youth awareness and public utility of heritage properties are well served.

**INTACH Chairman considers this an excellent initiative, and advises all Chapters to explore such types of programmes that befit the aims and objectives of INTACH, and is inclusive of a larger circle of people in our heritage movement.**

**Missed the WHL Bus**

In the past, a sub-committee of UNESCO’s International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) had suggested removal of encroachments around the Golconda Fort, and repair and clearing of debris around the Char Minar. Alas, only some cosmetic changes had been made by the ASI that did not satisfy the ICOMOS team recently visiting the three potential sites in Hyderabad. Only the Qutab Shahi Tombs met the criteria for consideration as a World Heritage Site. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture has immediately come forward to take up the beautification and conservation of these tombs at a cost of Rs. 90 crore, so the Qutab Shahi Tombs will surely find a place on the exclusive WHL in the near future. But what about the icons of the city, the Char Minar and the Golconda Fort?

**Tribal Museum**

The Nehru Centenary Tribal Museum in Masab Tank, Hyderabad brings together culture, lifestyle, heritage and traditions of various tribes like Kondareddi, Bagata, Hill Reddi, aboriginal Chenchus, etc. hailing from different districts of Andhra Pradesh. There is depiction of the Dhimsa dance celebrating harvest by members of the Bagata and Khond tribes. On display are various types of their musical instruments, lifelike figures at a tribal haat, masks, jewelry and household items – with a tribal bazaar that allows one to taste nature’s best.

**Srikakulam**

In continuation of the pilot project of 11 paintings sponsored by the Collector, the Chapter is making an earnest effort to seek funds from various organizations to complete the project of 100 paintings of the town. It is indeed a laudable effort of Convenor DV Dharma Rao Dusi which deserves success, and would be inspirational for the local citizens.
poets and vangayakaras; the students were much impressed by this facet of heritage knowledge on classical music. The programme was provided local hospitality by INTACH.

**Warangal**

In association with the Kakatiya Heritage Trust and Kakatiya University, the Chapter organised a two day workshop on Heritage Education on 23-24th February for undergraduate and post graduate students and teachers of local colleges of Warangal District at the Silver Jubilee Seminar Hall of the University of Arts and Science College, at Subedari. It was part of the on going year long Kakatiya Festival activities.

On 28th February, Union Minister for Tourism K. Chiranjevi declared Warangal as the “best heritage city of India” – a step forward in the process of garnering better recognition.

The Warangal Chapter deserves special mention and many congratulations for actively promoting the Kakatiya monuments and heritage for the last 22 years, in pursuit of their enlistment on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Kakatiya Heritage Trust spearheaded by Shri BVP Rao and Convenor Panduranga Rao formally released the book *Nritta Ratnavali*, at Andhra Bhavan, New Delhi. Inaugurated by former Union Minister Jaipal Reddy, the function was attended by the heads of major organisations and cultural who’s who of the capital. *Nritta Ratnavali* is one of the finest treatises of the 13th century, containing a wealth of knowledge for teachers, choreographers, dancers and scholars, also present on the occasion. Authored by the scholarly Jayanacary, the English translation by BVP Rao and Dr. Yashoda Thakore has done full justice to the work.

**Bihar**

Shri Prem Sharan is appointed as the State Convenor for Bihar. He will be assisted by Shri Deepak Kumar Baxi as the State Co-Convenor of INTACH Chapter.

**Patna**

Shri J.K. Lall is appointed as the Convenor of the Patna Chapter. Dr. Devanand Prasad Singh is the appointed Additional Co-Convenor of the Chapter.

**Nalanda University**

Nalanda University has the distinction of being the world’s first international residential university. More than 10,000 scholars and students from all over the world studied here during the 5th-12th centuries. To day it only attracts wonder struck tourists. Yet it does not figure in the coveted UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites. Built during the Gupta era, it was ravaged by a Khilji invader. Efforts are also being directed to obtain world heritage status to safeguard the magnificent ruins of the ancient university. It is only recently that an ambitious plan was undertaken to set up a new international university in its vicinity.
Chhattisgarh

Shri Rakesh Surie is appointed State Convenor/ Chapter Convenor for Ranchi. Shri Amitava Ghosh is the State Co- Convenor.

The State Chapter in association with the proposed Sarangarh-Raigarh Chapter coordinated with the Chhattisgarh Pradesh Hindi Sahitya Sammelan to organise a two day program at Sarangarh at the close of 2012 to commemorate the birth centenary of famous actor and writer, the late Balraj Sahani. At another gathering in the small village Balpur on the banks of the Mahanadi river, a number of writers and poets from all over Chhattisgarh joined INTACH Members to commemorate the renowned Hindi poet Mukut Dhar Pandey who introduced a new genre Chhayavaad into Hindi literature; and his literary brother Lochan Prasad Pandey, a historian and archaeologist, who brought many heritage sites of the State into limelight. Nearly 50 members of the third and fourth generation of the Pandey family were in attendance to honour their ancestors, and show their books written in early 20th century.

Kawardha

Shri Yogeshwar Raj Singh is appointed the Convenor of Kawardha Chapter.

Korea

Shri Ramesh Chandra Singh is appointed Convenor of the newly established Korea Chapter, with Shri Ashok Jaiswal as Co-Convenor.

Custodians of Natural Heritage

Tribal communities make up nearly 35% of Chhattisgarh population, and have always had a symbiotic relationship with nature. Today it is dying a slow death like much else in the wake of developmental activities. A retired teacher Shiv Singh Anchla donated 5 acres of his own land to fellow Gond tribals, and together they planted rare herbs, plants and trees on the land. He alerts them about the looming threat to tribal communities and how they must join hands and come together to maintain nature’s balance and ensure that the next generation inherits the knowledge of their forefathers. They also depend on the dense forest cove; with each one permitted to cut as much wood as one can carry on his/her shoulder in one go to the weekly haat, and exchange it for their daily requirements. If someone violates the laws or harms the forests, the forest committee constituted by villagers themselves brings this to the notice of supportive forest officials which was not the case in yesteryears. Development measure in interior villages, aanganwadi centres, schools, communication systems, etc. are leading them on the path to progress. This kind of bhagidari is not widely prevalent in other tribal areas regrettably.

Sarangarh-Raigarh

Ms Kulisha Mishra is appointed Convenor of the Sarangarh-Raigarh Chapter, with Shri Sukalu Devangarh as the Co-Convenor.

Sarguja

Sarguja Chapter, in Ambikapur District of Chhattisgarh, is a recent member of the INTACH family with Shri OP Agrawal appointed as its Convenor. On 26th January, MLA T.S. Singh was the Chief Guest who released a book on the history of the city and the rise of Ambikapur, authored by Chapter Co-Convenor Dr. Sachin Mandilwar. He said the writing of history is always a challenging task, and this book fills a gap that is significant to people for all times to come. The function was also attended by senior citizens, important local personalities like the Chairman of Indian Farmers’ Society, US Singh Dev; and many INTACH Members. Special Guest Chairman of Bakshi Suranpeth Bhilai, Prof. Ramindernath Mishra emphasized that recent developmental works will prove an important milestone in the overall progress of Ambikapur District. Shri Surab Magalwar conducted the proceedings and gave the vote of thanks.

Delhi

As part of the process of nominating Delhi as a UNESCO World Heritage City, the Delhi Chapter has over the last two years initiated various activities to generate awareness
among the citizens of Delhi. A set of Tourism Literature covering all the heritage sites in Delhi, as part of the World Monuments Fund’s Sustainable Tourism Initiative sponsored by American Express, was released by India Representative of the World Monuments Fund Amita Baig.

A set of 20 booklets and 18 heritage walk folders was edited by Annabel Lopez and Swapna Liddle and designed by Alpana Khare. The publications were launched by the Chief Minister of Delhi Sheila Dikshit on 13th February at the Delhi Secretariat in the presence of Shri M M Kutty, Principal Secretary Tourism; Shri Manish Chatrath, Chairman, Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation; INTACH Chairman L. K. Gupta and Delhi Convenor Prof A G K Menon.

The Chief Minister awarded trophies, certificates and cash prizes to the 40 prize winning students of HECS competitions. The function was also attended by principals/teachers. They signed a pledge to look after Delhi’s Heritage led by Shri G G Saxena, Managing Director of DTTDC, the nodal agency for the nomination process.

A compilation of these pledge cards was handed over to the Chief Minister. Paintings created by the students had been printed as cards, postcards and posters and were distributed by INTACH and DTTDC.

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee presented INTACH Delhi Chapter the National Tourism Award 2011-2012 in the category of “Best Heritage Walk” instituted by the GOI Ministry of Tourism on 18th March at the Vigyan Bhawan. Convenor Prof. AGK Menon and Co-Convenor Dr. Swapna Liddle accepted the honour on behalf of the Delhi Chapter.

Two publication of INTACH that will facilitate tourists Delhi:20 Exploratory Walks and Delhi Explorer: Heritage & Tourism Guide Map were released by Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit on 12th February, with Chairman LIM Gupta present. INTACH is planning several projects including an interpretation centre at Qutab Mlnar with the budget sanctioned under the 2012-17 Plan period for improving the tourism infrastructure of the capital.

INTACH Delhi is entrusted with the replication of the Arch of Labna, a world famous Mesoamerican archaeological site and a ceremonial centre of Mayan civilisation in Mexico. It will be erected at Delhi’s Garden of Five Senses - an artistically challenging task for our architects. The original arch, an exquisite portal vault forming a spacious 20-foot passageway, with an elliptical ceiling and checkerboard patterns and relief spirals in its sides, is located in the Yucatan region. The construction at Delhi, as a tangible expression of “the many years of artistic, political and economic exchanges between the two countries” is being funded by Indo-Mexican Chamber of Commerce with the support of Delhi Tourism and Transport Department. The Foundation Laying Ceremony was held on 15th February, as part of the annual Garden Festival was inaugurated by Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit in the presence of the Mexican Ambassador.
Convenor AGK Menon indicates that drawings for the Arch will be sent by a Mexican organization equivalent to ASI, which will also ascertain a faithful replica. It will be a beautiful addition to the Garden of the Five Senses which has several public art pieces and epicurean restaurants. Cultural events are proposed to be held here periodically.

**Refurbishment of Heritage Monuments**

Under the terms of agreement signed with the Dept. of Archaeology, the Delhi Chapter has been assigned the refurbishment of 16 monuments, at various localities like Mehrauli, Vasant Vihar, Greater Kailash, Sadhana, Bhadarpur, Gautam Nagar, etc. As mandated under the Delhi Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, the Government outsourced the project of survey and conservation of ancient monuments of local importance to INTACH since 2008 when the first MOU was signed and subsequently renewed.

**“Working with Nature”**

Once a botany student, and now a 75 year old retired Air Marshal Vinod Rawat, and founder of a volunteer group *Working with Nature*, took the lead in creating nearly 800 acre Aravalli city forest in the scrubland near Qutab Minar, including DDA’s Sanjay Van. To begin there was only one native Khejri tree, but now 3000 saplings from Rajasthan have been planted. It was the Khejri tree that inspired the first Chipko movement 300 years ago in Jodhpur region with many women sacrificing their lives. Under Rawat’s guidance, DDA has planted many other species including medicinal plants. Even students on school trips have planted some saplings. Now several birds have returned to their old habitat. There is colour coding on trees, with red markings on vilyati trees that are not suitable for the ecosystem of the Aravallis. One man’s inspiration has transformed into a thriving forest abuzz with abundant wildlife.

*Ack: Ambika Pandit, Times of India*

**Lutyens Showpiece**

Another prestigious project undertaken by the Chapter is the conservation plan of Rashtrapati Bhavan. The first phase will include the landscape and urban design of the President’s Estate after studying the detailed descriptions of what was originally the Viceroy’s House for which Lutyens chose horticulturist William Robert Mustoe. Convenor AGK Menon points out “many of the structures have come up in complete disregard to the character of the place which today houses about 10,000 people. We will have to look at the original layout and decide what kind of structures fit the heritage character of the estate”.

**Goa**

Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar was the Chief Guest at the Reception hosted by Dipti D. Salgaocar, Chairperson of Reis Magos Heritage Centre in honour of Lady Helen Hamlyn on 18th February. It was Lady Hamlyn Trust that funded INTACH’s restoration work on Reis Magos Fort, which was formally inaugurated on the occasion.

**Haryana**

**Rewari**

Convenor Sudhir Bhargava organized a visit to the Loco Shed for old steam engine trains at Rewari. A team of 15 INTACH Members visited this heritage site to gauge plans for its renovation, as the local MP Rao Inderjit Singh recently announced a grant of Rs.10 lakhs for its renovation. The team also visited the four old gates of the city.

**Yamunanagar**

The Chapter joined hands with the local Buddhist Forum to set up replicas of the 14 Rock Edicts of Ashoka at a park in Topra Kalan village, Radaur District where people are followers of Buddha. The original edicts are a collection of 33 inscriptions on pillars as well as caves and boulders.

**Heritage Tag**

The Forest Department has mooted a proposal to identify several trees of the capital that are old as New Delhi and some even older. Of late there has been rampant tree felling due to developmental activities and the Metro. The Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun, which is associated with a similar exercise in Cambodia and Indonesia, will help in identifying such trees in Delhi. Some will inevitably be lost given the fact that trees usually have a life span of 100 years, but the effort are being made to ensure that at least a few trees per species will get the heritage tag and care. “Tree ambulances” are in shortage, as reported.

**Condolences**

INTACH Founder Member R.P. Billimoria passed away on 3rd January. A former Chairman SAIL, he was President Emeritus of the Foundation for Organisational Research and Education and its FORE School of Management. He extended his considerable experience to many other organizations like PESB, Indian Airlines, NTC and NDMC with which he was associated.

INTACH sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife Frenny Billimoria and other members of his family. We wish them strength to bear this loss, and good wishes for their future well being.
dating to the Mauryan era 269-231 BC. The Forum is assisting the gram panchayat in establishing the Edict Park at a site where King Ashoka erected one of the original pillars which now stands in Kotla, at Delhi.

Convenor Major RS Bhatti hopes the Park, being setup with INTACH logistical support, will be linked to a tourist circuit of the area to ensure a holistic development of the area. The Forum is in contact with Nalanda University for development of a study-cum-meditation centre at the Park.

**Himachal Pradesh**

The State High Court had directed that sufficient funds be released to INTACH for restoration of the Thakudwara Dei Ji Sahiba Paonta Sahib some years ago. The then Deputy Commissioner, Sirmaur filed an affidavit in August 2011 that a sum of Rs 70 lakhs sanctioned by the GoI Tourism Department for the development of the temple be released for work to be execute by the HP PWD. Subsequently based on an averment made to the Court, Orders were passed from time to time for the work to be carried out by INTACH and not the PWD. Surprisingly the current Deputy Commissioner has refused to release funds, moreover there has been encroachment on temple land in the meanwhile.

State Convenor Malvika Pathania has brought the matter to the attention of the Court. The Deputy Commissioner has been directed to explain his unsatisfactory stand, and make a preliminary sum available to INTACH.

**Jammu & Kashmir**

The Chapter organized a week long exhibition *Voices of Srinagar* commencing 29th January. The photographs exhibited were part of the contest organized at the time of inauguration of the Lal Ded Memorial Centre set up in a restored heritage building on the banks of Jhelum River by the J&K Government.

At Delhi, on 1st February Theatre Director MK Raina and DOP Anant Raina collaborated with the India International Centre to screen the film *A Journey through Kashmiri Sufi Music*. The film presents the synthesis of past and present, through the *Sufiyana Kalam* music which evolved in Kashmir after the advent of Islam, and the inter-cultural confluence that took place between India, Persia and Central Asia. It also traces the long tradition of singing verses from Lull Ded in 13th century to contemporary poets, in the context of an unbroken relationship between poetry, music and the changing landscape of Kashmir valley. Subsequently on 4th February there was a panel discussion on the *Intangible Heritage of Kashmir* in which J&K Convenor Saleem Beg, former VC Kashmir University Prof. Reyaz Punjabi and MK Raina representing performing arts and theatre, participated.

**Jharkhand**

**Condolesences**

It was indeed shocking to learn that Convenor Bulu Imam’s young son Jason was “called to eternal rest” on 11th February. It is often said that those whom the Gods love are called away earlier, but it offers cold comfort when one’s offspring passes away in the prime of youth. When life should have just begun for him. INTACH extends its deeply felt condolences to Bulu Imam and his family at this sad time. They have great strength of mind to come to terms with this grievous loss. As Bulu himself wrote “The abilities of his mind and hand will perhaps never be reborn again. Whatever of his vast output remains will be carefully preserved and displayed along with the outstanding house he built from mud with his own hands as a living symbol of himself”. Born during Diwali 1975, he was 38 years old when he left this earth during the Maha Khumb. Our prayers and good wishes go with him and to his family.
Karnataka

Bijapur

Convenor Dr. Krishna Kolharkulkarni informs that the 79th All India Kannada Literary Conference held in the historic city of Bijapur on 9th-10th February attracted more than 5 lakh people. The Chapter and many of its Members including Co-Convenor Anand Joshi joined hands with ASI to form a ‘cleaning brigade’ for beautifying the renowned monuments of the city in advance of this major event being held after 90 years. This voluntary work was much appreciated by the Deputy Commissioner, and extensively covered with photographs by the print and electronic media. Lakhs of people including many from overseas visited the sites during and after the conference.

Bagalkot

Convenor Dr. HF Yogappanavar organized a Photo Exhibition on Paintings of Prehistoric Period in Badami Region at the Archaeological Museum, Badami on 27-28th January. It was inaugurated by Dr. SM Mittalkod, a well known local manuscript specialist. Artist MI Barawali, whose photographs were on display, was felicitated on the occasion.

Kerala

Member of the INTACH Governing Council and Chairperson of the Vasant J Sheth Memorial Foundation (VJSMF), Smt. Asha Seth forwarded a note on Museum Development Workshop in Kochi. Australia and India are in the process of strengthening cultural and trade links. In this connection a major exhibition East of India – Forgotten Trade was held in Kochi on 4th-5th March coinciding with the visit of a team from the Australian National Maritime Museum Development (ANMM). The VJSMF took the opportunity

Historic Wealth

The Archaeological Survey of India discovered 12th century copper plates and 4th-12th century gold coins belonging to the Kalachurya and Ganga dynasties. They were found during restoration work of Praneswara Temple in Talagunda, Shimog District of Karnataka. The gold coins are of the ‘Are Gadyana’ variety portraying elephants on the obverse and floral designs on the reverse. A copper plate charter recording gifts of land, with 5 leaves held together with a royal seal, has beautiful engravings of a couchant bull and varaha (boar). The ASI now plans to excavate a big mound near the temple that may reveal vestiges of an ancient township of the Kadambas.

Lalbag History

Documents pertaining to the correspondence between Governor General of India Marquis of Hastings and the British Resident at Mysore reveal that Lalbag was gifted to him by military paymaster Major Gilbert Waugh (its keeper for 12 years) in 1819. The superintendent of the Calcutta Botanical Garden, Wallich was directed to maintain Lalbagh with expenditure met by the Imperial Government. Surprisingly after 4 years the gift was declined and the garden was returned to the government of the Maharaja of Mysore. The reason cited was: “the estimated value of the garden is so considerable that the acceptance of it on the part of the government would be a serious injury to Major Waugh”. Not so strange a logic, considering that the East India Company was always a profit making entrepreneur and gardens only a burden on the exchequer! This was not the case in Farhat Baksh, a garden in Saharanpur, which served as a nursery for acclimatising trees and plants of Europe and China brought into India for commercial ventures.
to hold a workshop and played a key catalyst role for drumming up student participation, arranging site visits to important maritime sites like the historic Kottapuram Fort and Pattanam excavation sites. The Muziris Heritage Project highlights this ancient seaport that existed from 1st-14th centuries establishing trade links with China, South East Asia, Africa and Europe. The meeting with the Excavation Director, Kerala Council of Historical Research threw light on their proposal for establishing museums at various Muzaris sites. Smt. Seth informs that “The ANMN team considered this visit a milestone in the museum’s long term strategy for engagement with India in museum practice particularly in the areas of exhibition design, maritime history, heritage and archaeology”.

**Calicut**

The City Express wrote: *His reputation as the perfect tour guide precedes him, but K. Mohan has more to offer for the wanderlust stricken*. Our INTACH Convenor is indeed a self taught tour guide with the book *Unknown Kozhikode* to his credit, but what distinguishes him is his vast knowledge of history and architectural wealth of Kerala, its immigrants and craftsmen, and other fascinating details. Some of his significant work includes leading the Communist China Television (CCTV) and NHK Japan team on projects related to the *Silk Route from East and the See India with the Indian Railways*. The Kerala State Tourism Department awarded him as the *Best Tourism Guide* in Kerala in 2010.

No wonder the bi-annual newsletter of the Chapter *Pathemari* elicits an avid interest among its readers. The last issue highlighted the contribution of various communities like the Gujaratis, Jains, Bhatkalis, Brahmins, Goans and other migrants – each with a distinct identity and aptitude, that have made Kozhikode what it is today. K. Mohan highlights how different people have grown to live amicably together. He was recently invited to attend a face-to-face interaction organized by the authorities to discuss the Master Plan for Kozhikode. His presentation pointed out that a number of heritage sites had been pulled down either by private owners as they could not maintain them, or by municipal bodies for road widening. Many associations and organizations have now come together, and a definite strategy might emerge to save remaining heritage sites if civic bodies can be sufficiently sensitized.

The Chapter organized a Training Camp for the Naval Wing of NCC, an all-girls gathering from 20th-31st January. It was another unique new initiative taken by Convenor K. Mohan.

**Tolpavakoothu**

Kerala’s cultural tapestry is woven with many art forms like the better known *Kathakali, Mohiniyattam Pulikali*. Lesser known is the 2000 year old *Tolpavakoothu*, the shadow puppetry performed for Goddess *Bhadrakali* with deerskin puppets based on Tamil poet Kambar’s version of the 12th century *Ramayana*. It is enacted in 21 continuous shows at temple theatres behind a white cloth screen lit up with lamps. There is dialogue and stylized narration accompanied by music from traditional instruments like *chenda, sankh, ilathaalam, chengila* and *kurumkuzhal*. Devotees believe the Goddess stays awake whole nights to watch the show with them. A few Pulavar families are keeping this tradition alive, and have been hosted at some international festivals. Of late they are even attempting contemporary themes to nurture the interest of younger generation to keep the tradition alive.
**Pre-Historic Rock Art**

A new prehistoric rock art site has been discovered at Kappikunnu near Pullally in Wayanad District, the others being the Edakkal Caves and Thovarimala in Kerala. The petroglyphs (rock engravings) – one of two deers facing each other and three abstract ones were found on a huge rock dislodged from the precincts of the 12th century Sree Veliyambam Kotta Siva Temple. The petroglyphs probably date back to the Neolithic period, according to the Belgian scholar Gira Gratier who visited the site related to her research project on the tribesmen of South India.

**Madhya Pradesh**

State Convenor Dr.HB Maheshwari and Belgium Convenor Geert Robberechts met on 10th February to discuss the development of a heritage village at Rajnagar linked to the on-going Lost Gardens Project. Focus on traditional farming and Bundelkhand cuisine would also feature in this project. Efforts will be made to introduce local varieties of fruits like *kalmi ber*, *tandoo*, *makoi* which are difficult to find but popularly used for making pickles. Dr. Maheshwari will take up the proposed report prepared by Mr. Robberechts and Ameet Babbar with the MP Government. Already land and budget have been approved to transfer the school from the 18th century Rajnagar Fort which has the potential to be developed as a heritage hotel. The possibility of tourists staying overnight in the Lost Gardens with easy access and a better trajectory on the by-pass road around Rajnagar was also discussed.

The Chapter hopes to bring Datia (summer palace) and Orcha (*Phool Bagh*) into focus. It was decided at the meeting to hold a one day workshop on the *Rai Praveen Gardens* and *Phool Bagh* in Orcha at the Amar Mahal Hotel in June, with the participation of the State Archaeology, Temple Trust Tikamgarh and the Collector so that a road map can be drawn for their future development. Another workshop will also be scheduled on the *Life and Time of Prince Hardaul* at Datia, with the collaboration of historians, and coupled with folk songs, to create public interest in this popular local saint.

The State Chapter proposes to hold a National Seminar on *Gond* Legacy jointly with INTACH UK Trust in April at Jabalpur. Interested persons among anthropologists, sociologists, archaeologists, architects, artists, historians and researchers have been invited to send an abstract of their presentation well in advance.

**Mandla**

Convenor Girija Shanker Agarwal informs that Chapter Members undertook a survey of the Adivasi area of Mawai and adjoining villages. They came across a number of *kollus*, large stone relics at Satwaha village that presumably were parts of some equipment for oil extraction in ancient times. Efforts are being made by the Chapter to establish an INTACH Sangralaya (Museum) for exhibiting historical and cultural heritage items and manuscripts.

**Maharashtra**

**Mumbai**

Convenor Tasneem Mehta curated a major exhibition of artist Shettar titular work *High Tide for a Blue Moon* held Dec 12-Feb 13 at the Kamaayan Bajaj Gallery. The *BMW Guggenheim Lab*, a mobile laboratory travelling to cities worldwide and led by a team of emerging talents in areas of architecture, urbanism, science, technology, education, sustainability, was presented in Mumbai in collaboration with the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum (BDLM).
The Lab Week began with rangoli art, and local craft activities transformed the Lab into a community centre. Visitors participated in surveys documenting their perspectives about public spaces. A film series explored issues about Mumbai’s changing cultural landscape. A series of panel discussions brought together urban planners, social workers, industry experts, government officials to discuss infrastructure, transportation, housing, green spaces and other issues of Mumbai. The BDLM presented Stories of Mumbai in collaboration with a professional puppeteer Meena Naik highlighting themes of development, opportunity and cosmopolitanism. The Museum plans to take this programme beyond its walls to Mumbai schools.

The exhibition Quintessential held earlier in December 2012, which was also curated by Tasneem Mehta, has been awarded the 2012 Skoda Prize.


Actor Kabir Bedi paid a glowing tribute: The Dr. Bhau Gaji Lad Museum is Mumbai’s “Newest” Treasure. What a fantastic restoration of a long neglected institution. I congratulate Tasneem Mehta and all the restorers and sponsors for the magnificent work that they have done. Mumbai is richer with this great achievement”.

A lecture on Place and Communities: A historical perspective on local materials, technique and traditions in the UK by architect Sir Ingyal Maxwell was organized at BDL Museum on 5th March, in collaboration with the Mumbai Chapter. He highlighted the internationally recognized ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines, as applicable to the understanding of 19th century rural farm buildings and in converting 18th century Georgian era Duff House in England.

Other interesting lectures of this quarter were Glimpses into the Vanished Originals by Shaurya Kumar held in conjunction with the exhibition The Lost Museum; Raja Ravi Varma – Breaking Barriers by Ratan Parimoo; Influence of Western Painting on Country Style by Shridhar Andhare; Modernist Art from India by Beth Citron; and Transforming Language of Visual Art in Bengal by Dr. Sanjoy Kumar Mallik.

It is this multi-stranded string of activities that has made the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum a cultural hub, and a live and educative centre, which museums ought to be adding a new dimension to city life.

**Convolences**

INTACH received news that our Member Smt. Lalita Jalan passed away last year, communicated belatedly by her Secretary. She was closely associated with the Elphinstone Spg. & Wvg. Mills Co. Ltd., Mumbai. May her soul find ever lasting peace. We extend condolences to her family members.

**Odisha**

The India International Centre in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha organized a two day festival on 22nd-23rd March. Shri PC Dhir of Bhubaneswar Chapter organized a photographic exhibition of Monuments of Odisha, inaugurated by INTACH Chairman LK Gupta.

**Balasore**

Convenor Himanshu Das and Co-Convenor SN Das Mohapatra attended the meeting at Bhubaneswar on 27th January to mark INTACH Day, along with several other Chapter Members. The main thrust of the Balasore Chapter will be on conservation of wall paintings to be found in prominent places of the city including the Collectorate and other Government offices. The Chapter proposes to send some skilled craftsmen to INTACH Training Centre at Delhi for conservation training.

**Cuttack**

The Cuttack Chapter met on 8th March at Akbari Hotel. Justice DP Mohapatra, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court was invited to release the Unprotected Monuments of
Tangi, Choudhwar (Cuttack District). He complimented the Chapter on this work that has been meticulously compiled by historians Kunja Bihari Jena and Dr. Subhransu Ranjan Das.

Convenor PK Mishra informed the gathering that the Chapter would next be taking up the listing of unprotected monuments of Athagarh, Badamba, Narsingpur, Dampar, 42 Muza and Barang. He apprised Members about renovation of the 1826 Christ Collegiate School building, the Old Jail at Darga Bazar, Cuttack and Gora Kabar (a Christian burial ground) that will be taken up.

Cuttack Chapter Member Dr. Pratibha Ray has been honoured with the prestigious Jnanpith Award. She has authored more than 40 books, and was the first Oriya litterateur and woman poet to receive the Mutri Devi Award. She also received the national Padmashree in the field of literature and education awarded by the President of India.

**Mayurbhanj**

About 200 kms from Baripada in the adjacent district of Keonjhar is Sitabinji, there is a projecting rock shelter with beautiful fresco paintings on its interior face dating to approximately 5th century AD. A painting in Ajanta style depicts a king in royal procession with elephants and horses. Nearby are a few large stone boulders with ancient inscriptions resembling the South Indian scripts. This site under ASI protection is famous for an old ruined temple linked to Sita’s exile in Ramayana. Chapter Members visited the tribal shrine of goddess Tarini at Ghatgan and the Shiva temple at Swampatna on the banks of the Baitarani river, along with students. The Chapter proposes to organize a Tribal Festival in early 2013 to highlight the intangible tribal heritage of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar.

The Chapter held its Annual Function on 10th February at the Saheed Smruti Bhawan, Baripada with many Guests of Honour attending the function with family and friends. Advisor Ananta Mohapatra, State Convenor AB Tripathy, Vice Chancellor NOU Prof. Smt. S Mohanty, Kendriya Sahitya Academy Award winner Dr. Smt B Besra, and RCCF cum Field Director Dr.AK Das were specially invited by Convenor.
PK Mishra and his Co-Convenors PK Mohanty and R. Sahu. They spoke on the decadence of culture in general and various ways to arrest this. They were highly impressed by the congregation of artists coming from different parts of the District. An exhibition was inaugurated highlighting the heritage of Mayurbhanj through the ages. Also on view were artifacts, musical instruments, war implements, ornaments, utensils, tribal clothes and several photographs of Chapter activities. Prof. Mohanty suggested listing of documents followed by digitizing to ensure that future generations are benefited by this wealth of heritage knowledge.

A Tribal festival was organised at the same venue at which experts on Santhal Culture Smt. Damayanti Besra, and social activist and former MP Sri Birabhadra, both spoke on how to preserve this heritage. The audience was left spell bound by the young cultural troupes from ST Govt. Girls High School, Ranibhole; Shhrima Mahila Mahavidyalay, Baripada and their performances of Kolha community, Jhumur dances of Rairangpur, the Kathi dance of Gorumahisani, Chhau dance of Uttarsahi, and Dakshinsahi of Baripada.

**Errata:**

Editor *Virasat* extends all due apologies to Convenor Dr. Prabodh Kumar Mishra, and to all INTACH Members of the Mayurbhanj Chapter, for the misprint of photographs received from the Chapter under the head of Bhadralok Chapter in the last issue of *Virasat*.

**Sambalpur**

Convenor Dr. BB Mishra was the Chief Judge at the *Gala Exhibition* of the Guru Nanak Public School held on 1\textsuperscript{st} January, in association with Member Dr. DK Gour who is also the Convenor of the Attabira Heritage Club. INTACH Coordinator Dr. Dilip Kumar Oadhi as Chief Guest spoke at length on the Rock Art Heritage of West Odisha, the placement of pectoglyphs and pictographs, categorisation as anthropomorphic (human figures), zoomorphic (animal figures) and abstract figures with a panorama of photographs.

Dr. BB Mishra also addressed the students of Dr. P.M. Institute of Advanced Study in Education, his old alma mater. The Vice Chancellor, Sambalpur University graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

**Pondicherry**

Lt. Governor Dr. Iqbal Singh held a meeting of senior State officials to discuss 5 heritage buildings that the Public Works Department had indicated as beyond restoration. Convenor Ajit Koujalgi and Co-Convenor Ashok Panda were also invited to the meeting. They reiterated INTACH has been battling the local PWD proposal since many years to demolish and rebuild these structures.

In all there are 31 Government properties classified as heritage buildings, out of which 22 are in a state of degeneration. The discussion however pertained to only five buildings: Marie Building at Goubert Avenue; Pensionnate de Jeunes Filles School at Dumas Street; Calve College and V.O.C. School at Mission Street; and Maha Kavi Subramania Bharathiar Memorial Museum at Iswaran Kovil Street. A team of officials from ASI, Chennai inspected them and certified that the buildings had no serious structural problems vindicating INTACH stand.

It was decided that funds would be made available to INTACH under a MOU to be signed between INTACH and...
Department of Culture when funds from the National Culture Fund are released, and restoration work would be executed in association with ASI experts. Convenor Koujalgi is thankful for ASI support that enabled INTACH to obtain this favourable decision.

**Punjab**

State Convenor Sukhdev Singh visited Patiala on 7th January. He reports a meaningful interaction with students and teachers of different schools. He also visited Bhatinda and Malerkotla subsequently on 18th-20th to meet Members of both Chapters, and emphasized that due importance should be given to listing and awareness programmes. He met the Begum of Malerkotla, and discussed preservation of the old fort of the Nawab which has a strong structure and needs to be protected from deterioration and land grabbers. The aged Begum lives in the fort, but relatives of the Nawab stationed abroad are laying claims to a share of the property. It was suggested to her that filing a PIL to get the property declared protected might be a possible option to consider to safeguard this heritage property.

**Rajasthan**

State Co-Convenor Thakur Ranvir Singh rushed to Jhalawar on hearing that the Ren Basera, a famous landmark and heritage of Jhalawar, had been burnt. It is suspected that the land and building mafia are behind this nefarious conspiracy to grab precious land. The Co-Convenor wrote an extensive note to the Collector requesting him to inspect the site, and also pointed out the on-going haphazard restoration work at the Garh Palace Complex. Cement is being used indiscriminately at contractors’ whims, as there is no supervisory ASI presence at Jhalawar. A request was made to the Rajasthan Government to assign professional bodies for heritage restoration work. As Thakur Ranvir Singh rightly points out “one does not call a doctor by tenders, similarly the heritage buildings require specialists”!

**Ajmer**

An inter-regional workshop on Urban Heritage Management was organised by Convenor Mahindra Vikram Singh specially inviting four prominent INTACH Members - Prof OP Sharma, Dr. Manoj Kumar, AP Ganderiwal and Sayyed Azam Hussain, for an in-depth dialogue on heritage matters. The details of the workshop were subsequently communicated to all Chapter Members who will no doubt

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**Acknowledgement**

“Open Sesame”

It is reported that collector Narinder Pal Singh of Ludhiana has a treasure trove of rare coins, daggers and manuscripts in a trunk at his modest home. Among *Nanakshi* coins and those belonging to Ranjit Singh’s reign with *Om, Trishul* and *Ram* emboossed on them, he also has handwritten manuscripts, swords, daggers, a 300 year old handwritten *Quran*, etc. There is also *Ramayana* translated into *Gurumukhi* by a Kashmiri Pandit, costing Rs. 42 for the printing of its of 1,400 pages. Mostly given by people who know about his periodic exhibitions and future plans to convert his ground floor into a Sikh Museum, perhaps by selling some items that do not belong to Sikh history.

*Ack: Indian Express, Dec. 2012*
communicate their own reactions to facilitate issues that need to be prioritized.

At the instance of INTACH Convenor, the District Collector was persuaded to shift the 400 years old six canons found at Sarvwar tehsil to the Government Museum at Ajmer and are now one of its prominent tourist attractions.

During the visit of Thakur Ranvir Singh, the Convenor chaired a meeting on 3rd March at Akbar Fort where Members reviewed 10 years of Chapter’s activity. He apprised them of current INTACH concerns in order to accelerate the pace of Chapter activities.

**Jaipur**

Sambhar Lake, India’s largest saline water body may soon emerge as a major tourist destination of Rajasthan. Two public sectors, the Hindustan Salt Limited and India Tourism Development Corporation have joined hands to develop a new golden triangle of Jaipur-Sambhar-Ajmer. Sambar, once capital of the Chauhans and their presiding deity Sakamba Devi, has a rich architectural and cultural heritage with temples and shrines of many religious sects.

It was the combined initiatives taken over 4 years by Thakur Ranvir Singh, Convenor Dharmendra Kanwar, PD Natural Heritage Division Manu Bhatnagar, and Member Rakesh Mathur that resulted in considerable work at Sambhar, and revival of the historic Devyani Kund. Inspired by his recent visit to Krakow with the INTACH delegation, the Convenor is of the view that the town’s attractions like the old salt museum, tourist trolley/train, Circuit House, etc. built by the British, can be added attractions of Sambar which is a designated Ramsar Site (i.e. a recognized wetland of international importance).

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and Hindustan Salts Ltd. (HSL) have signed a MOU to develop tourism infrastructure on Sambhar. INTACH hopes to step in and assist with past studies that have been conducted in the area. Convenor Dharmendra has also met with stakeholders who are happy to participate as locals would be the greatest beneficiaries in the long run. The Lake is the third largest producer of salt in the country.

**Jodhpur**

A PIL was filed against Jodhpur Nagar Nigam and Jodhpur Development Authority to stop encroachment on the fort road in public interest. The city wall of Jodhpur is a declared protected monument by the State Archaeological Department. Convenor Dr. Mahendra Singh Naggar states that the Chapter is therefore rightly fighting hard to ensure that no construction takes place in the 100 metre area around the wall. The Collector has been approached to make that area available for plantation, and to ensure that the Nagar Nigam does not issue new “pattas” for residential plots near the City Wall.

The Chapter has completed the survey of Oran and Gochar with detailed history of the lands, related anecdotes and photographs. Also, 150 important inscriptions have been listed with details and photographs, so vital to a great touristic city like Jodhpur. All the old faded sign boards have been replaced at each heritage city gates and monuments. This is an important way of sensitizing the younger generation to take pride in their heritage.

A meeting of INTACH Members was arranged at the Suchna Kendra on the directions of Shri Gaj Singh who welcomed Shri Thakur Ranvir Singh to address the gathering. Convenor Dr. Mahendra Singh Naggar made a detailed power point presentation on Jodhpur heritage sites and related problems. The State Co-Convenor’s visit to each Chapter of Rajasthan was important as he was able to address the deep concerns of each Chapter, and create a positive awareness among Members for better coordination of their efforts.

**Kota**

The Annual General Meeting of the Chapter was held on 5th January at the historic Abheda Mahal near Kota. The
Divisional Commissioner and the CEO of Kotal Municipal Corporation have been approached for enforcement of the Rajasthan Prevention of Defacement of Properties Act, 2006. The Chapter is dissatisfied with the lack of action on this issue, as the authorities to date have removed only some posters, hoardings and banners from heritage precincts and historic gates without addressing larger issues to protect the integrity of heritage sites.

State Co-Convenor Thakur Ranvir Singh drew attention of the Chief Secretary Rajasthan to the news published in the local Patrika regarding burning of the Ren Basera, a beautiful bungalow in Jhalawar. It is a 75 year old landmark of the city, made entirely of wood, that stood on the banks of a lake. Land and building mafia are suspected to be involved in the destruction of this heritage site, that sent shock waves through the entire Hidauti region. There is much haphazard restoration work going on, and the authorities need to be more vigilant to retain Rajasthan’s status as India’s premier tourist state.

Nagaur

Thakur Ranvir Singh also visited Nagaur where he was welcomed by Convenor Karani Singh Jasol and Co-Convenor Himmat Singh Rathore.

The Chapter has identified 400 monuments spread over 17,718 sq. kms of the District for documentation, and awaits some expert assistance for completing the listing work. It was suggested that the collage paintings of established artiste Sharwani Soni, who is also a INTACH Member, be made into a photographic album and sent for display to Central Office. In the closing month of 2012, the Chapter organized a Debate Competition at Nagaur Fort, providing a platform for citizens to directly interact with the city administration. This public forum interaction on civic issues like use of polythene, rain water harvesting, etc. also involved teams from local schools and colleges. The Collector Nagaur was the Chief Guest, and cash prizes were awarded to the best contributors by an independent jury.

A Quiz Competition was held for students of the Gurukul and St. Anselam Schools. The Government Secondary School at Makodi village joined INTACH by establishing a Heritage Club.

Sirohi

Thakur Ranvir Singh visited the Sirohi Chapter on 17th February during his Rajasthan tour. At the meeting with Members and students at the Circuit House, the young people sang about planting trees. Convenor Ashutosh Patni and Co-Convenor Dr. KK Sharma gave a brief account of Chapter activities, focusing on future activities to be taken up by the Chapter.

Udaipur

The General Body of Udaipur Chapter met on 26th February at the Hotel Ram Pratap, Fatehpur Saga, presided by former Foreign Secretary and Chairman Executive Committee, Padmabhushan Jagat Singh Mehta, with Thakur Ranvir Singh as the Chief Guest who lauded the methodical approach consistently adopted by the Chapter in pursuit of its heritage targets. Also present were Senior Life Members: Sarva Shri former Vice Chancellor B.P.Bhatnagar, Sajjan Singh Ranawat IAS (Retd.), Munish Goyal IAS (Retd.), Dr. Onkar Singh Rathore, Dr. Satish Sharma, P.S Ranawat, architects and historians, and Co-Convenor Sushil Kumar who is also Chairman of six Working Groups. Young Members enrolled as Life Member, subject matter specialists and two research scholars SK Verma and SS Ranawat were given a warm welcome by the Shri Sajjan Singh Ranawat.

Apart from important organizational matters, new initiatives and progress on projects; as well as forthcoming events at Udaipur and its new sub Chapters at Rajsamand and Bhilwara were discussed. Shri Jagat Mehta gave the presiding address stressing on urgent need for further collaborative efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies. Co Convener Shri Sushil Kumar gave the vote of thanks.
Convenor S.K. Verma presented a report on important organization matters, rise in membership from 20 (2005) to 76 (January 2013), with 2 Sub Chapters viz. Rajsamand and Bhilwara, and important forthcoming events. Reviving Heritage of Mewar – 20 years of INTACH Udaipur, a Directory of all Members, Field Note Book of Listing and Documentation of Natural Heritage Sites, are some of the publications in the pipeline.

Several young and experienced members in specialized fields are working on Tangible and Intangible Heritage, Living Heritage and Natural Heritage projects and studies. Several initiatives like Terracotta of Molera village and Hand Block Fabric Printing of Akola village have been completed.

The Chapter has succeeded in actively networking and enlisting the cooperation of the local government and non-government bodies, notably Udaipur Municipal Council, Urban Improvement Trust Udaipur, District Administration, Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation, University and other educational institutions, UNESCO, Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation, and cultural organizations like Centre of Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) and West Zone Culture Centre (WZCC) Udaipur; also the IIM and some voluntary organisations – often acting as a Pressure Group for District Administration and guiding the local Municipal Council in restoration works.

Various local and international personalities have visited INTACH Udaipur office, notably Ms. Minja Yang former Head of UNESCO; Mayor Chinon of France; Ms. Moe Chiba - Program Specialist Culture UNESCO; US Minister Councillor for Cultural Affairs; and a Specialist Team from Strasbourg (France).

**Tamil Nadu**

**Coimbatore**

The Chapter in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu State Chapter hosted a Book Exhibition of select INTACH publications on 5th-6th January at Pollachi, to coincide with the 23rdAnnual Conference of the South Indian Numismatic Society. State Convenor Dr. S. Suresh was awarded the prestigious Prameswari Lal Gupta Medal for his pioneering research on the ancient Roman coins. The venue was well chosen as it was at Pollachi that Roman coins were discovered and well recorded for the first time in the early years of the 19th century. The Award Ceremony and Conference was held in the college managed by the family of Sri Shankar Vanavarayar, one of the most active members of the Chapter.

**Kodaikanal**

Convenor Sunayana Choudhry met the teachers and musicians at Coimbatore to reschedule the training programme for young artistes. Besides 12 children already in the programme for the last two years, an additional 13-15 children from rural schools will be selected for the future programmes. 40 children were short-listed for the screening sessions scheduled later.

**Nagercoil**

Fortifications like Marunyhukottai, Maiyya Kottai, Aralvaimozhi and Eraneil Palace in Kanyakumari District, built in the times of Bala Marthanda Varma under supervision of the French General Delennoy (1729-58), are languishing due to lack of maintenance. Even the Padmanabhapuram Fort and Palace, a royal abode till 1865, is in a sorry state with trees and roots clambering all over its walls. Convenor RS Mohan Lal rightly says that “in some other country they would have become a top tourist centre”. The Chapter has repeatedly urged the State Government to renovate the neglected Chera historic monuments of the erstwhile Travancore princely state—but no positive action has been forthcoming to date.
Dr. M. Immanuel on behalf of Chiliro-India has made several representations to the Collector and the Chief Minister for recovery of records and documents related to the Eraniel Palace now in a state of deterioration. This Palace belonged to the Cheraman Perumal family rulers for several centuries, the last of whom 94 year old Sir John Jagdish Aiya breathed his last in 2008. His only son is a small businessman and his daughter lives in poverty. Through a legal notice INTACH Convenor RS Lal Mohan stalled the move of the Collector from deploying the premises for other purposes. The Records contain valuable heritage oriented history and lineaological proof.

N. Ramachandran. Art Critics, Kumamkonam and Dhenuja delivered Heritage Lectures. Students from 10 colleges participated in the painting and photography competitions, with prizes and awards distributed to the participants by the judge SG Vidyasankar Shapathy, a former Principal of the College of Arts and Crafts, Kumbakonam. A Heritage Awareness Campaign was also organised, presided by INTACH EC Member Dr. V. Varadarajan. Dr. K.Manonman from PMU Heritage Society gave the vote of thanks.

A Talk on the Importance of Palm-Manuscripts for the study of Hindu iconography by Dr. Anna A. Slaczka from the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam was organized on 12th February. Dr. Slaczka, a Sanskrit scholar and Art is a Fellow at International Institute for Asian Studies, Netherlands, and the Ecole Francaise d’Extreme Orient in Puducherry. An author of several books on Sanskrit, Indian Art and Ritual, one major monographs is Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India, and her other research works include Saiva Ritual Texts (anagamas) and iconography, pratistha rituals between South and South East Asia.

A Festival of Sacred Music was held on 1st-3rd March at the Diwan Wada Palace with a warm welcome extended to the many invitees to the event. Hon. Secretary of the Chapter S. Muthukumar reports that the programme comprised a sitar performance Music of Benaras by Pt. Shivnath Mishra and Deobrat Mishra; Qawwali by Najmuddin Saifuddin and Brothers from Pakistan; Saptakshara by Padmashri TH Vikku Vinayakram; and a Vocal Concert by Sanjay Subrahmanyam. The programme was jointly sponsored by INTACH, Marabu Foundation, South Zone Cultural Centre, and the Tamil Nadu Tourism.

**Uttarakhand**

**Pauri Garhwal**

Convenor Dan Singh Rawat reports a heritage awareness programme conducted on 26th January, Republic Day at the Inter College Lalitpur. It was attended by all the students and Chapter Members. Together they took a
pledge to protect the national heritage and preserve the environment.

**Uttar Pradesh**

The State Chapter organized a *Heritage Vintage Car Drive* in association with the Oudh Heritage Car Club at Lucknow on 10th February. It was flagged off by Co-Convenor from the fore court of the *Bada Imambara*. He informs that the Times of India was the media partner, with Amity International School as the host school. The ‘accelerator’ of the event from the Oudh Club, Capt. Paritosh Chauhan enthused the students and teachers on the drive through various heritage sites of the city like the Residency, Chhatar Manzil, Lal Baradari, Tarewali Kothi and La Martinere College. Eminent historian Ravi Bhatt accompanied them pointing out the historical importance of heritage structures and finer details of their architectural beauty.

The event concluded at the host school with a quiz and creative writing competition on *Lucknow – My City*. Prizes were awarded to Tathagat Bhatia from MR Jaipuri School, Ananya Sahai from Amity International School and Tushar Mishra of Dr. Virendra Swaroop School.

**Mahoba**

Shri Pramod Paliwal is appointed Convenor of the Mahoba Chapter, Uttar Pradesh.

**Urai**

On INTACH Founder Day 27th January, the Chapter held an exhibition of coins of Mughal, British and post Independent India periods at the Dayanand Vaydic Vidyalaya. It was inaugurated by Shri Inderjeet Singh Yadav who said such exposure instills in young people a love for their heritage. 35 students participated in the exhibition which attracted more than 300 viewers. Dr Devendra Kumar of the Vidyalaya also praised the students for their efforts. A workshop was also held on how and why coin collection enriches knowledge, that was elaborated by Convenor Dr. Hari Mohan Purwar.

**West Bengal**

**Kolkata**

The Chapter signed an agreement with Ms Bente Wulff, Director of the National Museum, Denmark for the Serampore Restoration Project. Architect Flemming Aalund from Denmark and INTACH appointed architect Manish Chakraborti would be the principal executors of this project.

State Convenor GM Kapur along with his Co-Convenor met with Convenor Bharat Prakash Rai and Members to review the activities of the Kolkata Chapter. The listing of

*Holy Dip*

Over 10 million people flocked to Allahabad to take the holy dip during the auspicious *Maha Kumbh Mela*. The pictures we saw were staggering, but even more staggering is the ugly truth drowned in spiritual fervor. The Central Pollution Control evaluated that the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) used to measure levels of pollution increased to 7.4 milligram per litre at the main bathing place *Sangam* during the *Kumbh* (against 3 milligram as passable water quality for bathing). Human waste and untreated sewage illegally discharged from industries in Kanpur neither bestirs the authorities, nor did it deter 15 million bathers who visited during this 55-day festival that ended 10th March. The Hindu belief that the *Ganga* has the power to clean and purify itself has not yet been scientifically proved. May this faith never shatter!
89 sites is in the final stages of compilation. The Chapter successfully protested against the proposed construction of a War Memorial at Batasia Loop, a part of the WHS Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which would have resulted in “visual pollution”, and succeeded in getting it shelved. The Chapter was also instrumental in saving 12 heritage trees at Brabourne Park in the heart of the city. Local school children have been sensitised to environmental matters so the Chapter hopes to involve them in the restoration of the Alubari Monastery which was damaged in last year’s earthquake. It awaits funds to be sanctioned to the Yoimowa Buddhist Association by the Ministry of Culture.

Many such matters were subsequently followed up at the Regional Chapter Meeting held on 22nd March. An independent publishing professional from Singapore Ms. R. Bhomik made a presentation on two regeneration projects on which the Chapter would like to join hands – the revival of College Street and the China Town.

Convenor GM Kapur was invited by Amit Kr. Sen, President of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce & Industry, to address a Seminar on Heritage Tourism – the Way Forward. The Kolkata Chapter indeed has many outstanding heritage tourism projects to its credit. Member Ayan Ghosh suggested Sunday walks to houses like the Tagores of Ballygunge and other prominent Kolkata personalities. Other speakers on the occasion were Principal Secretary Tourism Vikram Sen and Regional Director India Tourism JP Shaw.

The formal release of Burra Bungalow and All That Burra at Kolkata was attended by the Chief Guest, Tourism Secretary Parvez Dewan. A discussion on varieties of tea by a tea boutique was the subject of much interest. Another book Frederiksnagore to Serampore, the memoirs of a zamindar is being published by the Chapter with the support of a member of the erstwhile Serampore Raj family Prosun Goswami.

Among other activities are restoration projects – an Anjolie Ela Menon painting, a project revived by the Metro Rail Authorities after its neglected state was highlighted in the media; archives and paintings at the Netaji Research Bureau and of St. John’s Church. The Chapter partnered Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival and arranged heritage venues like the Lascar Monument, National Museum and St. John’s Church. The well attended seminar on Women & Craft: Creativity, Empowerment, Transformation held at the local ICCR centre interested many INTACH Members as well.

Santiniketan

Chapter Members embarked on a Heritage Tour on a cold winter morning of 20th January to Dholla Village, at a

Red Alert: Sunderbans in Danger

The forests spread over 54 tiny islands comprising Sunderbans, have many species of flora and fauna thriving due to the many tributaries of the Ganga that zig zag through this mangrove of 10,000 km of land and water. It is not only home to the Royal Bengal Tiger but endangered Olive Ridley turtles, salt water crocodiles and hundreds of species of land and aquatic creatures. Today the Sunderbans eco-system is rapidly changing according to studies conducted by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Without their protection, India and Bangladesh would lose a natural shield, and will face the havoc of sea cyclones, huge tidal waves, tsunamis that can vanquish coastlines. Unlike other natural parks no jeeps and guides are to be found here, visitors like locals “find themselves holding their breath and stiffening to a state of alertness as their boats glide through the creeks and rivulets, bordered with mangroves. Even daily existence is a rigorous task… it is not for experts and conservationists, but residents of these floating forests to understand the ground reality.” And for the authorities to help them understand that it is not enough to pray to their protecting deity Ma Banabibi and Dakshihii Ray (God of Tiger), and support them to become protectors of the Sunderbans without bureaucratic interferences.

Condolences

Convenor GM Kapur communicated the sudden demise of Shri Subrata Kar, a Life Member of the Chapter who was passionate about heritage issues. He always took a keen interest in the Chapter’s activities, that lately had been circumscribed due to his ill health.

INTACH sends its heartfelt condolences to Smt. Anita Kar, who is herself a Life Member of the Chapter. She used to edit the Chapter’s Newsletter Chetana for many years. We send our good wishes to her and daughters Aditi and Jayanti, and wish them strength to bear their loss at this time of grief, and for their future well being.

Art for All

Renowned artist Anjolie Menon had once presented a 10 panel fiber glass painting, with scenes of a railway platform, to adorn the Espalanade Metro Station of Kolkata. Five years ago she complained to the then Governor Gopal Gandhi that it had been reduced to a board for hammering posters and bills on it, causing cracks almost covering the fiber glass. Surprising in a city that prides itself on cultural refinements. The Station has now been given a year’s notice by the artist to repair or return the painting! INTACH offered to restore the painting. INTACH estimated the repair cost of Rs. 75,000, but the Metro Railway wants bank and performance guarantees. State Convenor GM Kapur commented “We are an NGO that restores heritage, paintings and other art works in the country. How can we give such guarantees?” Why Indeed!
distance of 20 kms from Santiniketan. It is inhabited mostly by a farming community, living under thatched huts with their cattle. Behind the jamindar’s house, there are 12 Shiva temples dating back to 13th century encircling a square area.

Another big temple in the vicinity is completely engulfed by a huge banyan tree but continues to be worshipped by the villagers who requested INTACH to restore their heritage.

Sunderbans Endangered

According to the latest report by research body CUTS International, “in view of the growing threat of climate change and contribution of the electricity sector to the overall green house gas emissions, there is need for adopting appropriate strategies to rationalize the use of coal and fossil fuel in the electricity sector”. That is why the on-going extension of the electric grid to the remote islands of Sunderbans will adversely affect existing renewable energy projects, and moreover accelerate the climate change. India’s fossil fuel-driven energy sector is one of the biggest contributors (more than 50%) to carbon emissions; and in West Bengal 96% of electricity is generated through use of coal. Environmentalist have warned that the soil of the Sunderbans wetlands is soft, and setting up of large and heavy transmission poles will increase erosion and change tidal patterns surrounding the fragile islands. Renewable energy is the only solution in Sunderbans, declared a World Heritage Site for its unique bio-diversity and dense mangrove forests, not to forget the famous Royal Bengal Tiger. NGOs can warn, but will concerned authorities listen and then act?

Convenors Please Note : Timely receipt of news of any given current quarter, if received by 20th of the closing months (i.e. in March/June/September/December) are assured of coverage. Late receipts cannot be included as Virasat is always under processing/designing/printing in the last week of each quarter. News cannot be carried over to the next issue of Virasat as there are budget constraints on the number of pages. With all due apologies, complaints regarding omissions due to late receipt of reports are overlooked for reasons stated above.

CONServation Institutes News

Wall Paintings, Mangyu

Principal Director, Material Heritage Division/INTACH Conservation Institutes (MHD/ICI) met the monks of Likir Monastery, Leh regarding conservation work at Mangyu Monastery. The work undertaken during the last season involving the prestigious Courtauld Institute of Art, London was explained in detail with the teams from both institutions having worked together, and various issues discussed relating to wall paintings conservation. The meeting concluded with discussions on the future scope of work during the current year.

Training Programmes

A Swiss intern, undergoing graduation in conservation of paintings from Switzerland University, underwent 6 weeks intensive internship and in-house training programme at the Delhi Centre. She visited the ICI Lucknow Centre for further upgrading her knowledge of the subject. Many interns are getting training from the National Museum Institute and Delhi Institute of Heritage and Research Management, in conservation of art objects, with theoretical as well as practical acquaintance at ICI Delhi Center.

Supply of Conservation Material in India –

ICI efforts to get the best materials for INTACH conservators have been successful by getting an Italian company CTS to establish its offices in Delhi. Material conservators everywhere now have access to international products for better conservation results. One of their senior scientists was invited to INTACH Central Office for detailed discussions related to materials being used in conservation.
of art. Apart from INTACH, students of conservation and other private conservators will also benefit by this initiative taken by MHD.

**Training Program on Wall Painting Conservation**

MHD organised a one month training program at site in Courtallam, Tamil Nadu, with the grant from MOC. This program for increasing knowledge base on wall painting conservation, was conducted with in-house both participants and course leaders.

Director ICI Lucknow visited Najafgarh to examine some historic temples having wall paintings from the early 19th century. A report is under preparation.

**Bhootnath Temple, Mandi**

The restoration of Bhootnath Temple at Mandi is currently being undertaken by ICI Delhi. This historically significant temple has lost its magnificence over the years due to ugly intrusions in the form of layers of plaster and industrial paint applications which has weakened the stone structure; and the removal of fine carvings detracting the original beauty of the temple. The conservation work started last year in November, as *Mahashivratri* is the most important event of the temple. The local administration requested INTACH to finish the first phase of the conservation work before the festival with only three months in hand. When work commenced the team discovered the presence of plaster beneath the enamel paint, and details of carving beneath the plaster layer. Further research revealed that there was an earthquake in the region in 1904, which caused major structural damage to the temple when plaster was applied on the lower section of the temple in a very unscientific manner obscuring the fine carved tiers at the base as well as the details on the stone. With time, this layer was re-applied a number of times extending even up to the middle section of the temple and was even replaced by cement plaster at a later date. Enamel paint had been applied both on the interior and exterior walls of the temple. The conservation team decided to remove the plaster layers to reveal the original carvings on the stone in the three months time. With a tight schedule to follow the conservation work posed a number of challenges. The team worked relentlessly in the severe cold and heavy rains in the hill town of Mandi perched on more than 45 feet high scaffolding.

As Bhootnath Temple is a living temple, with a large number of devotees and visitors visiting the temple complex daily, the challenging work continued without hampering the daily activities of the congested temple and ensuring the safety of the visitors. On *Shivarathri*, the temple was the centre of attraction, earning praise from all sections of society and the authorities. Currently ICI Delhi is embarked on the next stage of structural repairs on the interior walls, and the *mandapa* is scheduled to be completed by May 2013.

**ICI Kolkata**

The painting of “Charles Weston”, benefactor of the first British built Anglican church in Kolkata, at the Parish of St. John’s Church which now owns it, was restored by the ICI Centre, Kolkata. In a tag pasted on the lower portion of the frame it is mentioned that Charles Weston always wore an ordinary cotton handkerchief stiffly starched as a protection against cold as he suffered from rheumatism. The approximate size of the painting framed in a plain golden coloured wooden frame is 70.2 cm X 92 cm. The main problem associated with the painting was flaking at various place, leaving the supporting canvas very weak and fragile. The layers of paint required consolidation, after dirt removal and solvent cleaning, the painting was lined to impart mechanical strength and brought back to its original glory by reintegrating portions and lastly given a protective coating.
Calcutta Regional Chapter has undertaken the work of converting the residential house of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, the father of Modern Physics, into Science Heritage Museum. The inventory and documentation of all the objects related to him and his family present in the house was completed by ICI Kolkata. The conservation of objects started with the paintings, the first of which is a 25 cm X 41 cm paper painting depicting the picture of a war, on the reverse side of which is a stamp of Lahore Museum. The painting previously mended was stuck with strips of paper, with the adhesive used for restoring becoming hard and the joining areas brittle. Tears and fold marks were visible as support was lost in several parts. After stabilizing the support from the reverse side and non-aqueous de-acidification, the painting was lined on tissue wasli and the lost portions restored.

ICI Lucknow

Curative Conservation of Manuscripts

National Mission for Manuscripts, New Delhi; INTACH Indian Conservation Institute and Manuscript Conservation Centre, Lucknow jointly organized a one month Advance Level Training Program on “Curative Conservation of Manuscripts” from December 13, 2012 to January 12, 2013 at ICI Lucknow. It was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Mohd. Azam Khan, Urban Development Minister, U.P. The training of 17 participants focused on developing their key skills and techniques in conservation of manuscripts, causes of deterioration, analysis of inks and pigments, etc. updating them on the use of latest equipments so that they are able to apply new techniques at their respective institutes in different states to which they belong - Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

ICI Lucknow is also working on conservation of Crown Representative Records at National Archives in Jaipur. These government records collected from western states of India like Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, and Daman & Diu comprise Public Records, Private Papers, Miscellaneous and Crown Representative Office records.
The Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad, Gujarat has great significance in India’s history. It was founded on the western bank of the river Sabarmati upon return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa in June 1915 where he chose to live and work for social upliftment and the struggle for freedom. In March 1930 he embarked on the Dandi March and did not return back to the Ashram. Of all the places associated with Gandhiji, it ranks second after Rajghat in terms of the number of visitors it attracts (over 10 lakh annually from India and abroad). It is a place associated in subtle ways with Gandhiji’s presence that is ‘felt’, not just due to the memorabilia but because of its essential ambience. The most visible attraction at the Ashram is the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalya inaugurated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 10th May 1963. Its main part comprising an auditorium, is housed in a building measuring 28,000 sq.ft. designed by Charles Correa, which is one of the outstanding works of modern Indian architecture. The Sangrahalya houses a very vast collection of Gandhiji’s legacy.

ICI Lucknow was entrusted with the work of conservation of this very rare and important collection of account files/ Bahikata, some of the account files having turned yellowish due to acidity, some others faded or creased, torn or missing. After a laborious process of conservation treatment, each account file has been carefully documented graphically and photographically. Various tests like solubility of ink, acidity, alkalinity, spots and stain testing were conducted. The work started in 2004 is still being carried out by the ICI Centre.

ICI - Bengaluru

The ICI Bengaluru undertook the conservation and restoration of an art work, pastel on board, by artist Mr. John Fernandes, measuring 117 x 96.5 cms, received in a very unstable condition. The main challenge was the removal of the fungal spores that had spread in the intricate fibres of the board. The artist had used pastel colours and not used a fixative, making the task of cleaning a very challenging assignment.

A condition status report of the mural paintings in Sriranganatha Swamy Temple, Srirangam in Tamil Nadu was submitted to the Joint Commissioner/ Executive Officer of the Temple, for which approval is awaited.

Along with the ongoing treatment of art works at their Lab, the Centre as a Manuscript Conservation Centre (MCC) for the National Mission for Manuscripts is doing preventive and curative conservation treatment of Palm Leaves and Paper Manuscripts in Kolkata. During the last three months two important repositories of manuscripts were taken up of the B.M. Shri Prathishtana and Rashtrothana Research Foundation. In these institutions the treatment of 74 bundles with 15798 folios were completed.

An in house training programme (small workshop), was also conducted at B.M. Shri Pratishtana in which 15 people including research students, trust members and staff of the Prathishtana were trained in preventive conservation.

At the invitation of Keladi Manuscripts Resource & Conservation Centre, Shimoga, Karnataka, conservator NMM Bhanu Prakash delivered a lecture demonstration on encapsulation and preparation of book covers in the five day workshop conducted on "Preventive Conservation of Manuscripts".
ICl Jodhpur

A 3ft. × 5 ft. oil painting on canvas depicting Sardar Singh standing on a carpet with big curtain behind him and a landscape drawn in the background was received at the ICI Jodhpur Centre from Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur. After proper photographic and graphic documentation, several problems like deposition of dust and dirt, cleavage at several places, bird excreta, etc. were identified. The painting was cleaned with a soft brush and cotton swabs, consolidating the paint layer with proper conservation methods. The tears were mended laboriously by bridging the transverse threads of appropriate size from new cotton canvas of matching thickness and weaving, and joining them to the original threads with suitable acrylic adhesive.

The entire painting was lined with a new cotton canvas; a thin layer of Paraloid B-72 (2%) was applied before taking up the reintegration process with mineral colours using Paraloid B-72 as binder. Finally a protective coat of picture varnish was applied before it was re-framed.

Deities of Ravi Verma

A rare collection of Ravi Verma’s oleographs were on display in Delhi during the month of February. There was Sita sitting under a tree deep in thought, Lakshmi standing on a lotus flower with the river flowing at her feet, Krishna with lute enchanting the gopis, Vishnu mounted on the mythical Garuda, Shiva on Mount Kailash with Parvati and Ganesh on his lap and Nandi at his feet. There were over 7 oleographs, some embossed in zardori and embroidery. They are priceless, judging from the actual sales by auction houses like Sotheby that sold the portrait of a Parsi lady for $1,04,500 in 2008; and a portrait was sold for £10,000 (sterling) at the Gorringes auction in London in 2011.

Ganesh Payne 1937-2013

Four decades ago it was no other than MF Husain who ranked the then 37 years old Ganesh Payne as the best painter in India at a time when Francis Souza, Tyeb Mehta and Syed Raza ruled the art world. Payne never yearned for fame or space in art gallery. He spent a lot of time doodling lines on a chalk slate and sought inspiration from children’s story books. His admirers thought of him as a master “fantasist”. He struggled to keep afloat in the gloom that engulfed the art world in the 1950-60s. Hussain continued to rate him highly in later years. Recently he passed away as quietly as he lived. The art world also lost Jagmohan Chopra and Bal Chhadba who left behind their legacies.

NEWS OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Urban Haat, Amritsar

The 1864 Victoria Jubilee Hospital was one of the oldest medical institutes to be established in the region, which later became a premier health care institute of Amritsar named Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital. Recently the medical facilities were shifted to a new location. As it is located in the heart of the city next to Ram-Bagh gardens and Crystal Chowk, the proposed reuse will rejuvenate the unused site.
as a tourist attraction with an *Urban Haat* and a heritage hotel for local citizens and visitors. The Architectural Heritage Division (AHD) prepared a conservation plan for this complex which will also include an array of facilities like a multi-use open air theatre, open plazas, shading devices, installation spaces, craft bazaar, food courts, restaurants, etc.

**Balaji Ghat, Varanasi**

AHD jointly with the Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) conducted a three day workshop at the site of Balaji Ghat, Varanasi on Conservation of Timber in Historic Buildings from 18th-20th February. It was conducted by INTACH Centre for Training and Capacity Building (ICTCB).

**Temple of Najafgarh, Kanpur**

The temple complex in Najafgarh is highly significant both historically and architecturally, but long neglected and subjected to unsympathetic repairs and alterations. It was a local historian who brought these buildings to the notice of historians and heritage enthusiasts working for the Kanpur Chapter and the Puratatvamitr. The site includes a conglomeration of temples, each consisting of a main temple along with their baradars and shrines, located along the banks of the river Ganga - each a masterpiece on its own. With false arches adorning the interior and exterior.

**Lectures by Benny Kuriakose, an expert in timber**

Expert in timber conservation Benny Kuriakose from Chennai was the guest speaker. He presented various case studies of timber defects. It included practical training on site in carpentry under the guidance of local artisans and timber experts. There was enthusiastic participation of professionals from different parts of the country like Delhi, Gujarat and Kerala.

**Planning and preparing timber joints**

**Demonstration by local carpenters**

**The main temple in one of the complexes**

**The setting of the temples along the Ganga**
walls, the temples are also intricately ornamented with fine frescoes and ornamental relief work. Stucco figurines adorn the niches within the temples.

The temples, which hold immense cultural and architectural values, suffer from structural problems, moisture penetration, decay of building materials, lack of maintenance and inappropriate interventions. It is of utmost importance to restore the buildings. INTACH proposes to address the problems in 2 phases; the first phase will comprise proposals for the restoration of the built fabric of the temples and the conservation of the rich art-work ornamentation within them; the second would address the overall site development and the visitor facilities to make Najafgarh an attractive tourist destination.

**Conservation Work, Lucknow**

AHD prepared the Initial Assessment Report for Conservation Projects of Archaeological and Historical Sites under the care of the Hussainabad and Allied Trust in Lucknow. The IARs prepared for 3 sites await sanction of funds from the UP State Government for the restoration of these building:

**Satkhanda:** (its literal meaning: seven storey’s) is a structure at Hussainabad built by Muhammad Ali Shah (1837-1842), the third Awadh ruler during the British rule. The deteriorated building has excellent views of the surroundings. With its prominent location and open land, it has the potential to be on tourist itinerary. INTACH recommends structural strengthening and utilization of the site for pathways, landscaping, display gallery, visitor facilities and stalls to attract visitors.

**Shahi Masjid:** a two hundred year old mosque at Hazratganj is another remarkable architectural landmark of the Awadhi period, where prayers are offered by both sects of Muslims, Shia and Sunni. Well situated just behind the Jhalakari Bai Women’s Hospital, opposite Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Park and the GPO on National Highway, the mosque has seen major alterations changing the architectural and aesthetic vocabulary. AHD recommendations are based primarily on maintaining authenticity in design, detail and material for the restoration works.

**Karbala Mallika Afaq Sahiba:** located in the Maqqaganj area of Lucknow, was constructed under the supervision
Sacred Landscape of Yamunotri Region

In recent years there has been great emphasis on the Upper Ganga Region due to increasing pilgrim pressure, development induced destruction, extensive damming that has impacted river flow, and displaced population. There has been little commensurate emphasis on the Upper Yamuna region. Partly because the Yamuna rates lower on the religious-cultural scale, but also because the other factors at play (unlike the Ganga) are of a comparatively lower order. Whilst there is no dearth of pressure groups raising Ganga related issues, there appears to be a deafening silence about the Yamuna except for academic interest but the literature remains unexposed to the public domain.

The Natural Heritage Division (NHD) has undertaken the documentation of the sacred landscape of the Yamunotri covers many facets and details:

- Major and significant sacred sites in the area
- Impact of pilgrimage (construction, waste generation, greater traffic movement)
- Impact of road construction
- Major habitats (protected) and their characteristics and impacts upon them
- Unprotected habitats (High altitude lakes, in-stream habitat)
- Flora and fauna
- Impact of mining
- Impact of dam construction
- Evidence of climate change

The study, based on a combination of secondary studies and field work, will organize the material in the form of a Natural Heritage News.
coherent narrative/perspective laying out broad areas for future work. The NHD exploratory report is now ready for work to be undertaken with the support of a financial grant from the Ministry of Culture.

Vanishing Biodiversity

The country’s national report shows progress in afforestation with 5 million hectares added over the last decade. Environmentalists however point out that beyond these figures, the picture is that of untouched pristine forests being replaced by paper and timber plantations in the name of afforestation – without any thought given to the loss of priceless biodiversity. Activists point out that community protection of forest areas is the most effective way of biodiversity conservation. Far from recognizing this basic fact, the Government is regularly infringing on the rights of forest dwellers in the name of development, according to organizations like the Greenpeace. Eminent scientist MS Swaminathan is one of the architects of the National Biodiversity Act. His Research Foundation points out that the 3-tier format of the NBA mechanism – national, state, and local – has not been effective because at the grassroots there is a lack of economic stake in conservation, despite the existence of 32,000-level biodiversity management committees. Campaign Director of Greenpeace states: It can change only when the planning process of Government of India considers biodiversity as an integral part of national development and implementation strategies are enforced across sectors with specific financial allocations.

Out of Bounds

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has suggested new parameters to declare pristine forested areas as ‘inviolate’, and thus out of bounds for mining and harmful non-forest activities. It has recommended that national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, areas within a kilometer of protected areas; compact patches of very dense forests; last remnants of forest types located near direct catchment of first order perennial streams being utilized as water source or feeder stream; areas in direct draining of first-order perennial streams feeding hydro-power projects, and boundaries of important wetlands would be automatically considered ‘inviolate’. A final Report is now awaited from a Committee headed by Director General, Forest Survey of India, and Member from the Wildlife Institute of India, National Bio-Diversity Authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority, State Forest Departments, and remote sensing application centres identifying “inviolate areas” with geo-reference maps.

Ack : Indian Express Service, Jan. 2013
HERITAGE EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

The Heritage and Education Communication Service (HECS) project, funded by the Lady Hamlyn Trust UK and initiated in 2008, is now in its fifth running year and held in different schools across the country. About 400 short films of 2-3 minute duration by the participating students from Classes 6 and 7, including some Government Schools, were prepared under Filmit. Apart from filming equipment provided to them, each of the participants were given training in film making and in editing and script writing. Director HECS Purnima Datt says: “Making films is an exciting way for children to understand the world in which they live, and the contributions made by different cultures and communities”

Filmit Film Festivals

The Filmit India Festivals are held in coordination with INTACH Chapters at various venues across the country, some for the first time and others running for 2nd-5th year in succession. Students share their Filmit experience through these films, with Director Purnima Datt making the preliminary introductions at each event and concluding with an award ceremony:

4th February at Birla High School for Boys, Kolkata attended by 80 students and teachers from 8 prestigious schools. Shri Shyamal Kumar Karmakar, presently teaching Cinema at Satyajit Ray Film & T.V. Institute of India, was the Chief Guest; with Shri Supriyo Nandy, Communication Director for Centre for Built Environment and Convener of Society for Park Street Rejuvenation Kolkata as the Guest of Honor, along with State Convenor G.M. Kapur.

6th February in collaboration with India International Centre at Delhi, with 200 students and schools: The Chief Guest was Editorial Director NDTV Sonia Singh, with eminent filmmaker and entrepreneur Rupin Dang, noted theatre personality Faisal Alkazi, and CEO National Culture Fund Dr. Shobita Punja as Guests of Honor. After the welcome address by Ms. Moby Sara Zacahriah, and introductions of special invitees by Ms. Bashobi Banerjee, the festival showcased presentations highlighting the students learning experience followed by screening of the best films. Shri Dang showed interest in doing collaborative work with the young filmmakers. Event concluded with an award ceremony hosted by Ms. Shivaa Rawat and vote of thanks was given by Shri Abhishek Das.

9th February in collaboration with the Goa Chapter at Sharada Mandir School, with more than 100 students and teachers from 7 committed schools: The Chief Guest was Dr. Isabel Vaz, Director, Masterseed Art Company and Professor of English; with Principal Sharmila giving an encouraging talk to the students.

New Ratings

GRIHA LD, a new rating for large green area developments, was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, in collaboration with TERI (Energy & Resource Institute) and ADARSH (Association for Development & Research of Sustainable Habitats), at the National Conference on Green Design held in February. It was inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee who stated “Its adoption should give a fillip to both the public and private sectors to construct environmental friendly buildings in a big way”. The objective of is to provide planning practices and guidelines to reduce environmental impact of large scale development that is taking place all over the country.
Goa Convener Fatima Gracias spoke on the Chapter’s projects.

11th February at Mumbai in coordination with the Chapter at the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, with 50 students and teachers from four eminent schools participating: Resource persons Ammar Mahimwalla and Gargi Mashruwalla conducted the event as it was a first time experience of making films for the Mumbai students as a part of their heritage club activities.

15th February at the Meridian School, Hyderabad attended by 80 Students and teachers from 8 schools: The Guest of Honour Pranav Pingle Reddy, a young film maker and budding photographer, is the brainchild behind the media production house Mirage Media. Having worked with World Health Organization on a 48 hour film project ‘Dont Drink and Drive’, he was an appreciative critic who lauded the creativity and the children’s sense of ownership with heritage.

20th February at Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Hr. Sec. School, Chennai and attended by 90 Students and teachers from 7 schools: Former Chairman Public Relations Society of India Satyan C. Bhatt, who currently teaches public relations in various local colleges, was the Chief Guest. Tamil Nadu Convenor Dr. Suresh welcomed the gathering; and Abhishek Das spoke about the Filmit presentations and students experiences.

**Volunteer Training Workshop**

The Volunteer Training Workshop is an entirely new initiative launched by INTACH which was inaugurated by Chairman L.K. Gupta (AVSM) and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Dr. R. Venu. The booklet *Hands for Heritage: INTACH Volunteer Kit* released on the occasion outlines the role of volunteers in various aspects of heritage preservation and its listing; highlighting heritage issues that should be of vital concern for all citizens. 42 undergraduate history students, accompanied by teacher representatives of Delhi University attended. They were exposed to the various components of heritage; training in conducting heritage walks; an outline of the heritage of Delhi, and the on-going initiatives for getting Delhi its UNESCO nomination as a Heritage City. They were also given an overview of INTACH conservation projects undertaken by its various Divisions, through a series of lectures. A heritage walk to Safdarjung Tomb and Lodi Gardens was conducted by Dr Swapna Liddle at the conclusion of the workshop.

**Adopt a Tree**

To commemorate INTACH Founder’s Day, HECS released a publication *Adopt a Tree* funded by Ministry of Culture on 1st February. Designed by Ms. Anitha Balachandran and edited by Ms. Bashobi Banerjee, the book concept and development was undertaken by HECS Director Purnima Dutt and Ms. Chandni Sengupta. It is yet another INTACH initiative to draw young people together and to encourage them to care for their environment.
Harit Sankalp – Care for Nature

Another on-going HECS, project in collaboration with INTACH UK Trust, is Harit Sankalp - Care for Nature comprising essay and painting/poster/film making competitions for students of 6th – 9th Standards. They were organised at each venue jointly with the INTACH Chapter concerned. To date HECS has received almost 5000 entries and is in the process of selecting the prize winners. Enlisted below are the places where Harit Sankalp received great response with media coverage. Some of the reports date back to the closing months of 2012 – Coimbatore on 24th November; Chandigarh on 8th December; Chennai on 8th December; Mayurbhanj on 9th December; East Godavari on 9th December; Hazaribagh on 10th December; Darjeeling on 12th December; Jabalpur on 19th December; Chandrapur on 22nd December; Mehsana on 27th December; the “Vruksho Ne Vachha Futi” at Ahmedabad on 29th December, at Calicut on 30th December – their detailed coverage could not be mentioned in the last Virasat due to late reporting.

The Harit Sankalp – Care for Nature programme gathered full steam with the commencement of 2013:

At Kangra on 4th January 49 students from 9 schools took part in the Harit Sankalp program at Govt. Sr. Secondary School, Dharamsala.

At Rajpipla on 6th January the All India Essay Competition was organised at Rajpipla Club. Around 80 students from 10 schools. There was media coverage for the event.

At Tamil Nadu State Chapter, Chennai on 8th January the 8 schools participated in the Harit Sankalp – Care for Nature competition, with the help of other INTACH members.

At Dharwad on 9th January at RLS PU College, with 17 schools from the district participating in competition, the chief guest was noted environmentalist and the Principal of JSS College, Dr. S.N. Hegde. It was widely covered in the local newspapers as well as AIR Dharwad.

At Marwar/Jodhpur on 10th January the painting and essay competition was conducted at Chokelao Palace, Jodhpur with the participation of 50 students.

At Bhubaneshwar on 12th January at Mother’s Public School with the participation of four of the city’s schools, the Guest speaker Vivek Patnaik, IAS (retd.) enlightened the students on nature and its conservation.

At Aurangabad on 15th January, the essay competition attracted 175 students from various school. Renowned historian R.S. Morwanchikar gave an interesting talk on the history and water system of the medieval city of Aurangabad.

At Mizoram on 15th January the competition was held at the Govt. Higher Secondary School, Aizwal with 88 students from 8 schools participating. Dr. Lalnuntluanga, Associate Professor of Environmental Science from Mizoram University, gave a talk on the environmental and biodiversity issues facing Mizoram.

At Trivandrum on 19th January, 52 students from 11 schools participated in the essay competition held at the St Roch’s Convent. Renowned activist for environmental issues, Prof. E. Kunhikrishnan gave a talk on how Kerala’s ideal climatic conditions for the cultivation of pepper led to trade with the Arab countries and eventually to India’s colonization by European powers.

At Gwalior on 19th January at the Oxford Public School Campus, with the participation of 98 students from 7 schools, INTACH GCEC Member Dr. Kamaksh Maheshwari spoke about the role of the younger generation in preserving natural heritage with special reference to INTACH efforts.

At Jammu on 21st January at Shri Mata Vaisho Devi Spiritual Growth Centre Katra, 43 students from 7 schools participated the programme.

At Kodaikanal on 21st-22nd January the care for nature essay competition at Zion school, Kodaikanal & Panchayat Union Matriculation School at Poombarai respectively was conducted with 120 students from 13 schools participating in the Kodaikanal area from both Tamil and English medium schools.
At **Ambala** on 22nd January 191 students from 13 schools took part in the all India essay competition. There was good newspaper/media coverage.

At **Patna** on 23rd January, at Sanjay Gandhi Jaivik Udyayan, with the participation of 108 students from various schools, a heritage awareness talk was given by an eminent expert on wild life management, Director IFS Abhay Kumar at the Sanjay Gandhi Jaivik Udyayan Patna.

At **Mumbai** on 24th January, three schools – Arya Vidya Mandir (Bandra), Bombay Scottish and Lilavatibai Podar - participated with a total of 29 students, in the programme hosted by the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum at its newly restored museum plaza.

At **Ajmer** on 27th January, the essay and painting competition at the Mayoor School with a total of 6 schools participated in the event.

At **Bijapur** with the participation of 67 students from 14 schools at PDJ High School, Convenor Dr. Krishna Kolharkulkarni gave a short talk on the need to preserve and conserve environment.

### Heritage Awareness Program for Navyug Schools, Delhi

The Delhi Heritage Awareness Program, with a view to fostering curiosity and interest in students at an early age, entails classes for Grades 4-5 where one topic of heritage is explored each week. Over 300 students from three Navyug Schools at Peshwa Road, Laxmibai Nagar and Lodhi Road - are involved in this program. The students are learning about the importance of flowers, the mythical origin of the Onam festival, the history behind the Humayun’s Tomb, and the interesting architectural elements of this Mughal monument. The program covers at least one topic from each category of heritage - natural, material, built and living.
The Intangible Cultural Heritage Division (ICHD) released *The Naga Folk Tales* on 15th March at the India International Centre. Minister of State for Development of North East and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar did the honours as the Chief Guest. Many new Convenors who were in Delhi for the Orientation Conference availed the opportunity to learn about this important region. INTACH has in the past also published several books on the North East periodically, subsequent to organizing seminars at Itanagar (2005), Kohima (2006); Shillong (2006); and Aizwal (2007) for interpreting the rich heritage of the North East.

Presently many more such publications are being coordinated, designed and edited by ICHD. India's tribal and indigenous communities represent a precious legacy of culture and tradition - but today many face the possibility of extinction with some already a faint memory. Somewhere, as you read this, an Adivasi senior passes away extinguishing yet another glimpse of tribal culture and history forever. There is an urgent need to document these traditions through various media.

ICHD is undertaking a cultural mapping and audio-visual documentation project on the Kutia Kondh tribe of Odisha. The information collected will provide meaningful insight into the lives of the Kondh people and help in formulating policies for safeguarding their rights in future. The project has a threefold objective with a view to strengthen historical and anthropological records and seeks to establish a path for conservation with varied stakeholders. Also, to identify and map the Kutia Kondhs of Odisha with respect to their cultural footprints - tangible and intangible. The intangible cultural heritage includes forms of traditional expressions such as oral literature, music, dance, rituals, craft know how, and folklore/folktales. These cultural vehicles are also regarded as ‘Human Treasures’. Other objectives of the project are to map cultural practices and establish sustainable activities; and to map and link resources (organizations/individual agencies) to pool efforts for long term conservation.

ICHD is also undertaking a project for the documentation of the ethno-cultural practices of the tribes of Andhra Pradesh, commencing with a pilot project 4-5 endangered tribes of the region to be taken up as case studies, substantiating the texts with photos taken from the field or collected from the locals. There will be documentation of rituals, folklore, aesthetic sensibilities, narratives, religious practices,

**Surviving Languages**

Jarawa, Onges and Great Andamese are the only languages still surviving in the Andamans today. Boro and Boa senior were the last two speakers of the Khora and Bo dialects that became extinct in 2009. Padma Shree Anvita Abbi, a professor from the JNU School of Languages, Delhi has worked on tribal and endangered languages since 1977, and written books and multi-lingual dictionaries on dying languages. Her research establishes that the history of the linguistic groups of Andaman and Nicobar islands goes back many thousands of years linked to the earliest migrations out of Africa. Another of her books to be published shortly is *A Grammar of the Great Adamanese: An Ethnolinguistic Study*. She states “A large number of languages which are endangered in India should be researched on, preserved, or revitalized and documented. Above all, languages are the witness of the diverse and varying ways human cognitive faculties perceive the world….There has been no documentation of languages spoken by the people in the North Sentinel Island, even though it is believed that the 200 people who live there speak a sister language of Jarawa……. Anyone venturing within 1 km of the island is welcomed with arrow”. No work has been done on these people.

**From the Age of Flintstones**

An international Rock Art Exhibition going back to the age of flintstones was held in January at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Delhi. It showcased rock art from 4000 and 12,000 BCE which included paintings of animal figures belonging to Madhya Pradesh, bull paintings from Spain, etc.
customary laws, dress patterns, ornaments, utensils, agricultural implements, fairs and festivals, musical instruments, habitats, economy, indigenous knowledge about the nature, bio-cultural diversity of each Tribe. Other interesting facets will be to document the specialization of women’s world with special reference to their creativity and aesthetic sensibility in the changing time and perspectives; and the role of elders in traditional Tribal societies and the meaning of ancestral worship.

At the conclusion of these studies INTACH will bring out interactive DVDs and also publish a series of multicolored monographs adding up to a systematic, scientific and authentic visual and textual documentation of the intangible heritage and life-style of the Tribes of India.

**Butter Sculptures**
A group of Buddhist monks from the Palpung Sherabling Monastery in Himachal made butter sculptures for the festival dedicated to Atisha on the occasion of the International Conference and Exhibition on Buddhism held in January at Delhi. Called *Torma*, butter sculptures are a traditional art form common in colder climes. Eight monks created sculptures live throughout the day, dipping their hands in cold water to make them cold enough to shape the models. There was also on display a sand *Mandala*, a Tibetan version of *Rangoli* called *Dultson Kyilkhor* in Tibetan comprising tri-dimensional graphical and geometric designs representing Buddha’s enlightened mind and body, which has great power, creator Lama Dawa stated.

**Maithali Paintings**
In Madhubani, wall art became a tradition dating back to the times of the *Ramayana*. According to folklore, when the region was getting ready for the wedding of Ram and Sita, the bride’s father Janak asked the villagers to dress up their walls with paintings. They painted mythological events and geometric patterns mingled together with a rustic touch. Since then, every wedding in the region followed the ritual of decorating the *kohbar ghar*, the bridal chamber with intricate paintings in bright colours. Today Madhubani or Maithali Art has gained world recognition.

**Chhau**

*Chau* dance covers three forms known by the place names in India’s eastern region: *Purulia* (West Bengal), *Seraikella* (Jharkhand) and *Mayurbhanj* (Odisha). The first two are masked dance forms. While *Chhau* dance has significant martial association, it is also rooted in everyday physical activities with all three forms stemming from a common origin. It is because *Chhau* is intrinsically entwined with ancient religious beliefs and living traditions that it was placed by UNESCO on its intangible cultural heritage list.

**Natyotsava**
The remote hamlet of Gunavante, near Honnavar in south Karnataka, is fast becoming a well integrated cultural centre. Karemane Shambhu Hegde has long been associated with the *Yakshagana*, and with his son Shivanand this art form is escalating to a new level. *Dakshina and Uttara Kannada* is where *Yakshagana* thrives, but due to the efforts of the Hegdes the *Natyotsava* has now become a multi-dimensional festival bringing art and artistes from Assam, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Maharashtra into its fold. As Shivanand says “The focus of *Natyotsava* is to make it a meeting point of small arts, and to expose and sensitise people to them”. Eight new forms were introduced at the recently concluded festival, fourth in a series, held in a spacious amphitheatre ringed by thickly canopied trees of coconut, *jamun*, and cashew.

**Conservation Engineering Course**
The INTACH Centre for Conservation Training and Capacity Building (ICCTB) organized a specialized three day course on 6th-8th February to discuss issues and complexities related to structural engineering for conservation of historic buildings. It was conducted by a former Chief Engineer at English Heritage, UK, Ian Hume. It was attended by civil engineers from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Delhi State Department of Archaeology, Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Delhi Development Authority (DDA), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC), conservation architects from INTACH Architectural Heritage Division and students of architecture, etc.

A new and unique concept of ‘conservation engineering’ was introduced, underpinning, understanding, analysis and conservation of historic buildings from the perspective of structural engineering. Discussions and case studies illustrated some of the key scientific and non-destructive methods of testing and analysis. Participants explored a range of issues related to introducing modern services into historic buildings – toilets, heating, cooling/air conditioning, fire fighting, lighting, etc. The interesting aspect of the course was to make it interactive and participatory, at the end of which all participants presented...
a case study illustrating the challenges that they are facing whilst conserving a historic building or site. A special site visit was arranged to a historic site in Lodi Gardens, where participants examined the structural conservation issues with an expert resource person and amongst themselves.

The course was very well attended and the number of participants exceeded INTACH expectations.

Training course was held at the on-going project site at Balaji Ghat in Varanasi. In addition to lectures and presentations, a specially designed all-day practical session provided a unique opportunity to work alongside traditional crafts people and gain hands-on experience of conserving timber members.

This first-of-its-kind practical training course, funded by the US Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), was attended by about 20 participants and experts from different parts of the country. ICCTB organized the course in collaboration with the Architectural Heritage Division.

The post course comments from participants indicated that the studies covering a wide range of related issues were very useful. Dy. Dir. (Arch.) from DDA expressed his interest in attending some more of these kind of technical lectures in future.

**Timber Conservation in Historic Buildings**

Another specialized practical training course was organised on 18th-20th February for the study, use and conservation of timber in historic buildings. An expert on timber conservation, Benny Kuriakose was invited from Chennai to conduct the course. Discussions examined some of the key philosophical approaches and practical issues related to the conservation of timber, using examples. This practical
Round Table Meeting

ICCTB held a Round Table Meeting on 1st March in honour of Chairman, Charles Wallace India Trust (CWIT) Ingval Maxwell’s visit, in continuation of the collaboration between CWIT and INTACH in the field of heritage conservation and management. A panel of CWIT conservation scholars was invited to participate in this meeting to assess the collaborative efforts to date and to share views for future joint activities. The event also marked the fortieth year anniversary of the Centre for Conservation Studies, University of York.

The meeting was attended by Chairman LK Gupta, Member Secretary CT Misra, and Heads of all INTACH Divisions; Secretary of CWIT; British Council Director Programmes; and former CWIT scholars of heritage conservation studies.

An Introduction

David Dimbleby, one of the lecturers from UK, shared his impressions of “his voyage of discovery to find out what links our buildings to who we are”. This may not be universally applicable to architects in India, but it triggers a fascinating array of thoughts, he said:

“As physical objects all buildings are intriguing, the materials that are available to their builders and the way they use them determine their appearance. It is as true of primitive cottages built of stone and mud and roofed with turf, as it is of the latest gleaming skyscraper in its polished steel frame.....Then there is the pleasure of discovering what the building is trying to say. Is it trying to impress me with its grandeur or intimidate me with its power? Is it wanting to welcome me or excite me? Is it friendly, even easy, or cool and aloof? Buildings that are meant to look grand can sometimes look embarrassingly overblown. Others, completely unpretentious, can inspire by their very simplicity.....Then again, buildings display our aspirations. There are cathedrals and churches that seek to enhance religious experience. There are schools and libraries hoping to encourage learning. Railway stations and airport terminals try to arouse us to the excitement of speed and freedom to travel. These buildings are signposts to our history. Through them we can discover what mattered most to previous generations, and where they found their inspiration and their solace.

The greatest delight always comes when buildings are also works of art. The thrill of coming into a place which makes one catch one’s breath with excitement or gasp with pleasure is as powerful and moving as that inspired by any other form of art”.

An Excerpt: How We Built Britain, BBC

In India we indeed have so much to inspire us, but so few who can resist the value-per-square-foot approach to construction.

NEWS FROM LEGAL CELL

The Legal Cell is in the process of collating Heritage Legislation around the country, by way of regulations inserted/adopted in the various Municipal and Town & County Planning laws; and also any State laws. The Environment Act contains provisions for protection of built and natural heritage. Any such consolidated compilation is not available to date.

Convenors are requested to obtain copies of any such legislation effected in their region. It would be greatly appreciated if they are sent to Central Office as it would be valuable for drawing up an all-India data bank. Soft copies are also welcome.

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

FEATURE: NATURE’S RHYTHM

Dr. Narayani Gupta, Advisor, INTACH Documentation Centre

Tourism brochures have always projected India as a land of many cultures and mysteries. The large number of ethnic groups, their costumes, rituals, and customs, art and craft traditions, historic forts and palaces, sun-soaked beaches and religious fairs have together contributed to this colourful imagery.

What, however, escapes public perception is the association
of festivals with the seasons, or as the Upanishads point out, “the cycle of natural rhythms”. For man is believed to be part of the larger cosmos, and cannot divorce himself from its influence.

In a predominantly agrarian society, this belief finds expression in the celebration of many harvest festivals. The year begins with Makara Sankranti in January – also celebrated as Pongal (literally meaning ‘boiling over’) in Southern India that is celebrated for three days, the last being devoted to cow worship.

Makara means ‘Capricorn’ and Sankranti is the ‘day when the sun passes from one sign of the zodiac to the next’. According to the Hindu scriptures, this is the time when Surya, the Sun-God rides his chariot drawn by seven horses from the southern skies. For farmers, this day is of prime importance as it marks the end of winter. The Dravidian ritual of cooking freshly harvested rice till it “boils over” is symbolic of Pongal, celebrated in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. It has survived the Aryan practice of ritual dips in the holy river.

Spring is ushered in with Holi – India’s famous festival of colours. But beyond the custom of spraying one another with colours, is the tradition of burning the remains of harvest crops. A mythological interpretation is given to this with the symbolic burning of the evil demon, Holika. Holi coincides with Bihu, the harvest festival of Eastern India, particularly Assam. It is a thanks giving celebration, accompanied by group dances and prayers to the sun, the earth, cattle and all the implements a farmer uses to earn his livelihood.

The advent of Spring is also celebrated with Vaisakhi – another harvest festival popular in rural Punjab. It literally means “fifth day of Spring” and owes its origin to ancient Vasantotsava celebrations which mark the beginning of the new agricultural season.

In Bihar and Odisha, the festival is observed as Sirapanchami. Ploughs are worshipped, and the land is furrowed. The blessings of Indra, Varuna and Brahma are also invoked for a more bountiful harvest. In Bengal, the day is dedicated to the Goddess of Learning, as Saraswati Puja.

Then there are many tribal festivals associated with Spring, such as the Sahul, celebrated by the Santhals of the Damodar and Kasai regions. Variations of this are the little known Moi Mur and Sohrai festivals that celebrate good crop. The process of crop-gathering is also a good season to rejoice. Accordingly, the Gond tribes have the Mahua (flower) festival, millet festival, and even the mango and cucumber festivals.

With the monsoon, comes Nag Panchami – celebrated on the fifth day of the Shravan month, in honour of the Serpent God. The explanation here is that – while harvesting in the fields, farmers expose themselves to snake bites, which are often fatal. It is out of this fear, that they propitiate the Nag, Serpent God.

Then comes the autumnal festivity of Dussehra, marked by the customary planting of barley seedlings, which symbolize the ‘first fruit’ man discovered. In most parts of North India, sugarcane is harvested during the ten-day festival, and winter crops are sown.

The Goddess Lakshmi is also invoked on that occasion, though it is more on Diwali that the blessings of the Devi of Good Fortune is sought. References to bursting of firecrackers oraatishbaji on this occasion can be traced to ancient mythological texts like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Although firecrackers are supposed to be an expression of people’s joy on the homecoming of Lord Rama, farmers have another reason for the celebration. They believe that the poisonous fumes from the crackers would help kill the insects that infest the newly harvested crops in the granaries.

These festivals also celebrate the cycle of birth, death and rejuvenation – the basis of perpetuating life on Earth. They fall on “auspicious dates”, determined centuries ago, by a system of studying the alignment of various stars and planets. The system is valid to this day.
World Beyond

Astronomers from University of California, Berkely report thousands of earth-sized ‘exoplanets’, some probably in habitable zones in temperatures that allow water to exist. It is based on three years of data from planet-hunting Kepler spacecraft. Scientists from the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics state there could be at least 17 billion ‘exoplanets’, so it must be pretty crowded out there in the Milky Way. The discoverer of planets beyond our solar system Geoffrey Marcy said “This is an exciting moment in scientific history”.

Swaminarayan Temple

The 68th Swaminarayan Temple near Hollywood city at Chino Hills, Los Angeles at the cost of $100 million dollars is built of 35,000 pieces of carved Italian Carrara marble and Indian pink sandstone. Using cutting edge technology it is the first earthquake proof mandir in the world. The temple encompasses five pinnacles, two large domes, 122 pillars and 129 archways, and 6600 hand carved motifs in a mosaic of inspiring tales of devotion and dedication, along with historical figures from Hindu mythology. Situated on a 20 acre plot with an immense lotus shaped reflection pond, with classrooms and gymnasium, it is designed to “calm the mind and open it” according to the local Swaminarayan Sanstha.

India-Bound Birds

The External Affairs Ministry drew the attention of Pakistan that poaching in Sindh Province, mainly along the Sind border by “wanton falconry”, had drastically reduced the annual winter migration and affected the desert regions of Gujarat and Rajasthan. It is also a gross violation of wildlife protection laws and international conventions. After hunting of protected birds was banned in India, Arab falconers initiated Houbara bustard captive breeding programs in UAE and Saudi Arabia, although it is classified as an “Endangered Species” and listed in the Convention of the International Trade in Endangered Species.

Asanas and Art

The 1902 film Hindoo Fakir made by the great inventor Thomas Edison was the first movie on India ever produced in the West. A variety of camera tricks were used to portray yogic postures. The film will feature in one of the most prestigious exhibitions Yoga: The Art of Transformation which will open at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington DC later this year. More than 100 works on the art of Yoga and its depiction through various forms of art will be on display. Three monumental stone Yogini from a 10th century Chola Temple, 10 folios of the first illustrated asanas compiled by Emperor Akbar in 1602, will be prominent among other exhibits of temple sculptures, illustrated manuscripts, court paintings, medical illustrations, iconography, etc.

Rashtriya Smriti Sthal

Delhi is also the capital of samadhis – at present there are twelve in the city including the internationally well known Raj Ghat, Shakti Sthal and Shanti Van. Finally the paucity of urban space has prompted the authorities to work out a plan to develop a common Samadhi for its illustrious citizens. The proposed Rashtriya Smriti Sthal will serve as a memorial place for VIPs in future with inscribed plaques honouring the departed souls.
Fanned Across the World

One of the oldest crafts, when man moved from treetops to dwellings, gradually became an invention. The early man might have used large leaves to cool himself, that then evolved into palm leaf and straw fans. Among the earliest surviving are ostrich feather fans excavated from the 2nd century Tutankhamen’s tomb, woven bamboo fans of the same era, and 250 AD circular Roman fans. The Japanese invented folding fans in the 6th century, and its beautified versions also flourished during the Renaissance in Europe. Indian Maharajas and British sahibs had pankhawalas who made them out of a frond of palmyra palm, khus or woven bamboo, attached to the ceiling and hand swung by a coolie who sat sweating in the corridors outside. There are ritual temple fans of silver and brass, and some dressed with silk and satin. The electric fan is a 20th century invention!

Year of the Snake

2013 is the Year of the Snake in the Chinese Lunar Calendar. Some associate snake with intelligence and happiness, for some others it means impending disaster. In culinary terms however it is a delicacy in Chinese cuisine and good for blood circulation and to ward off winter illnesses. Take your pick! It is reported that increasingly reptiles are slithering into the households, no doubt due to their environmental deterioration.

Elixir of Life

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation. Further, it dedicated the World Water Day 13th March this year to ‘Water Cooperation’. The estimated global population in 2050 will be 9 billion, all of which will depend on finite and vulnerable water resources. Everyone’s water use affects others. We use or waste or pollute the common water resources.... ‘Water Cooperation’ can build mutual respect, understanding and trust among countries..... However operationalising this philosophy in a developing country like India (that possesses the world’s 17.5% of human, 11% of livestock and 2.4% of land) is an extremely great challenge.

Ack: Prakash Nelliay, Hindu, 31st March 2013