

PRESS RELEASE

INDIA HERITAGE WALK FESTIVAL 2018

- *Heritage Walk with Banarasi Snacks*
- *Exploring Kashi - Then and Now*

Varanasi, Feb 15: You may have dressed yourself in the elegance of a Banarasi sari, you may have savoured a Banarasipaan, you may have even encountered a Banarasi thug that finds portrayal in popular tales and Bollywood films but there is no way you can miss out on the lip-smacking Banarasi street food that seduces your palate unabashedly.

Think about *Sora Kuan ke Pandit Ji ki Alu ki Kachori, Ram Bhandar ka Samosa, Malaikipudi, Malaigilori, Rasvanti* and many more mouthwatering delicacies. They are all part of the famed culinary traditions of the city that have endured without losing any flavour or fervour. The only thing you need is some money in your wallet and a big appetite.

The stories behind the street food offered in the famed concrete lanes of Varanasi will be revealed during walk series curated as part of the ongoing India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF).

The month-long, multi-city IHWF 2018 is organised jointly by Sahapedia (sahapedia.org), the online encyclopedia of Indian arts and culture, and YES Culture, the cultural division of YES Global Institute, a practising think tank of YES BANK, to encourage citizens to explore the tangible and intangible heritage of their cities and towns.

The first of two walks in Varanasi will be held on February 17 (Saturday) and will be led by Ajay Ratan Banerjee, a historian by heart who loves to preserve the ancient culture and ethnicity of the city. He will take participants through the lanes of Varanasi and reveal in an anecdotal style the tales behind its culinary traditions.

The second walk in the series will be held on February 24 (Saturday) and will take local residents on a tour of Kashi (now Varanasi), which is older than history, older than tradition and even older than legends – a city that draws believers seeking ‘moksha’ and eternal bliss.

The walk will be a journey into the old, forgotten heritage of the oldest living city. Walking in some of the oldest markets, narrow and mystical alleys of Varanasi will take participants to a hidden world of chaos and contentment.

Granny Asha, a 70-year-old feisty woman running Granny's Inn (www.grannysinn.in) at her own home in Varanasi, and Mayur will lead the two-and-a-half-hour walk. Asha loves to host people and is preserver of some ancient Indian food wisdom. Granny's Inn has been shortlisted for 2018 Outlook Responsible Tourism Award in the category of ‘Individually-run Homestay’. Partner for this walk is UNHOTEL, which started as an outfit selling uncommon, soulful stays that are hard to find and are a treasure trove for the discerning traveller.

Details about the walks and other programmes of IHWF 2018, map routes and registration information are available on <http://www.indiaheritagewalkfestival.com>

Vaibhav Chauhan, Festival Director (IHWF) and Secretary, Sahapedia, says, ‘The India Heritage Walk Festival 2018 is a celebration of all that Sahapedia stands for. In an attempt to create authentic, credible, and exhaustive content on our rich heritage and culture, we are developing a network of cultural practitioners across the country. This festival is a part of this pan-India movement, making heritage spaces more popular, more accessible, and more experiential.’

Rana Kapoor, MD & CEO, YES BANK and Chairman, YES Global Institute, says “India is blessed with a rich heritage and cultural history, which is abundantly manifested in monuments and architectural sites across our country. Civil society participation in our Nation’s heritage, aided by activities such as heritage walks, is integral to the preservation and conservation of these sites. Such heritage tourism initiatives, with the wholehearted participation and involvement of local communities and citizens, have the potential to instill immense national pride and further the agenda of heritage development,”

Preeti Sinha, Glocal Convenor, YES Global Institute, says, “The understanding of heritage in 21st century India has expanded from the protection of historic buildings and monuments to focus on more general understanding of the wider context and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural forms. Through active engagement with built, natural and living heritage through the design of walks, talks, and digital media such as films and social forums, the festival is a touchstone for conscious thinking towards formulating historically-sensitive policy and decision making.”

IHWF 2018, covering 20 cities and towns around the country, features walks to historical monuments and shrines, well-known landscapes, places known for art, culture, cuisine and flourishing trade. There is also an online film festival of documentaries based on cultural themes and lecture series curated as 'baithaks' and Instameets as part of nearly 70 events scheduled throughout the month.