

Sahapedia

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PRESS RELEASE

INDIA HERITAGE WALK FESTIVAL 2018

Exploring Indo-Saracenic Facades of Maharaja Sayajirao University in Vadodara

Vadodara, Feb 15: The Maharaja Sayajirao University (MSU), gifted to the city of Vadodara (formerly Baroda) by the Gaekwad dynasty, is not only amongst India's celebrated academic institutions but also a spectacular heritage building. It is an architectural marvel with its facades shaped in the Indo-Saracenic style defined by a distinctive fusion of Indian and Byzantine arches and domes.

Through a curated heritage walk as part of the ongoing India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF), local residents can refresh their knowledge of Vadodara's history and its position in colonial India through the metamorphosis of the built facades taking shape in the Indo-Saracenic style.

The two-hour walk, titled 'Exploring the Indo-Saracenic Facades of Maharaja Sayajirao University', is to be held on February 17 (Saturday). It is part of the month-long, multi-city IHWF 2018 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.

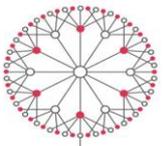
Led by Ms Dhara Mayavat, who is currently specialising in the History of Architecture from Baroda College of Fine Arts, the walk in Vadodara will unfold several niches of MSU, a domed structure which is a testament to Sayajirao III's generous contribution to art as a patron and connoisseur.

The main dome of the convocation hall of the university, designed by British architect Robert Fellowes Chisholm, has been modelled after the great dome of the Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur. The walk inside the campus will lead participants into a world that is a historical amalgamation of architecture and knowledge. Among other places, this walk will take them through the tastefully done 100-year-old intricate woodwork on the railings and pillars.

Another distinctive feature of MSU, which was established as a college in 1881, is that it is the only state university in Gujarat whose chancellor is not the state's Governor, but a member of the Royal Family of Baroda.

Ms Mayavat had earlier hosted a curatorial project, 'Re-adaptive Monuments of Baroda', highlighting the heritage buildings of the city and how they are being re-used rather than being abandoned.

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



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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, Global 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 and 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.