

Press Release

India Heritage Walk Festival 2018: Bombay to Mumbai—Walkers Trace the Rise of a City

Mumbai, Feb 3: Mumbai as we know today is a vibrant tapestry of people, culture, art, architecture and cuisines; its residents are now getting a chance to explore some of the colourful threads and piece together the story of its rise from an ancient settlement into a pulsating modern city.

The walks, including one designed especially for children and people with disabilities, are part of the month-long, multi-city India Heritage Walk Festival 2018 organised jointly by Sahapedia, 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.

Of the seven heritage walks scheduled in the city throughout the month, the first is on Sunday, February 4, winding through the 'Bylanes of Bandra—Yesterday and Today', discovering the history of what is now Mumbai's poshest suburb.

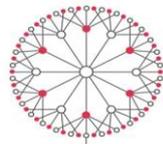
The hour-long walk is led by Achyut Bihani, a history and geography buff, and presents a true microcosm of the city where obscene opulence coexists with abject poverty.

On Saturday, February 10, Vimala M.V. leads 'A Walk in through the Neo-Classical Architecture at Dadar' in an exploration of the city's niche, upper-class Parsi colony established in the early 19th century by Mancherji Edalji Joshi and supply tidbits, such as the fact that the 'Parsi aunties' hosted Mumbai's first ever rock concert.

An exploration of the Mahakali Caves is on the cards on Sunday, February 11, under the guidance of Sneha Nagarkar, a Mumbai-based lecturer in Archaeology. The Buddhist caves consist of the remnants of *viharas* (monasteries) and a *caityaghara* (prayer hall), and are believed to be a satellite settlement of the Kanheri Caves.

No story of Mumbai is complete without a bit of Bollywood thrown in. Neethu Mathew, a graduate in urban design and an editor-photographer, leads the 'The Talkies Walk: Tracing the Historical Single-Screen Theatres in Mumbai' on Sunday, February 11, reminiscing about the pre-multiplex life of the movie buff—of one-rupee tickets, projectors, reels, red carpets, posters and tiny box offices—and gazing at buildings where people cheered for the golden feature films of the past on Grant Road.

The Oval Maidan Heritage Walk on Friday, February 16, is led by heritage architect and a disability access consultant Siddhant Shah and is designed especially for the hearing impaired, the visually impaired and children; with tactile maps, large-print visuals, Braille book and sign-language interpreters available for participants. It uncovers the unique elements of Art Deco and Gothic architecture styles of the historic Oval Maidan.



In “Bombay Meets the World at Ballard Estate” on Saturday, February 17, walk leader Alisha Sadikot, the founder and facilitator of The Inheritance Project, explores the birthplace of modern Mumbai, tracing its connections to the world—from war, trade and shipping to train travel, migration, hotels and public dining.

A walk along Fort’s Irani Cafe with renowned food blogger Kalyan Karmakaron Saturday, February 17, is one for the foodies. Mumbai’s Irani restaurants are monuments in themselves. And although unlike during their glory days in the mid-1900s the few remaining are tucked away in the bylanes of the city, they are still going strong and have many stories to tell.

Besides the walks, the IHWF will host, in partnership with ISDI and The Bohri Kitchen, a *baithak* on Friday, February 16, to discuss food start-ups and dwell on the unique cuisine of the small community of Dawoodi Bohras that illustrates the blend of Gujarati, Parsi, Mughal and Maharashtrian influences.

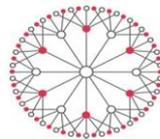
Young entrepreneur Munaf Kapadia, founder of The Bohri Kitchen, will converse with hospitality professional Romil Ratra about India’s Culinary Heritage and Start-ups.

Details of the walk including registration information and map routes are available on 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. This is exactly why the festival tries to involve people from various walks of life with a range of thematic experiences covered through the walks, and caters to as many people as possible.’

Rana Kapoor, MD & CEO, YES BANK and Chairman, YES Global Institute, adds, ‘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 whole-hearted participation and involvement of local communities and citizens, has the potential to instil immense national pride and further the agenda of heritage development.’

According to Preeti Sinha, Global Convenor, YES BANK and Senior President, YES Global Institute, ‘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 will be a touchstone for conscious thinking towards formulating historically-sensitive policy and decision making.’



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IHWF 2018, covering 20 cities and towns around the country, will feature walks to historical monuments and shrines, well-known landscapes, places known for art and culture, cuisine and flourishing trade.

There will be an online film festival of documentaries based on cultural themes and lecture series curated as baithaks and Instameets as part of the nearly-70 events scheduled throughout the month.

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