



Newsletter of Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation (IHCNF)



In-Heritance For the Future of Our Cities

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From IHCNF Desk in Bangalore

Greetings to all!

We are glad to present to you our 8th issue of In-heritance-our monthly newsletter for the month of August 2017. In this issue, you will find activities IHCNF undertook this month, feature article on the historic town of Melkote and updates from our partners.

Earlier this month on 11th of August 2017 the Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka and IHCNF signed an MOU for the development of 12 heritage tourism destinations in Karnataka.

Also this month IHCNF Chairman, Dr. M Ramachandran called on the newly elected Vice President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu in New Delhi and felicitated him.



As part on the ongoing collaborations with ICQHS for the Bidar Karez project, Mr Majid Labbaf Khaneiki, the Senior Expert from ICQHS, Iran visited Bidar, Vijayapura and Bangalore from the 16th to 21st August 2017. Series of meeting, workshops, stakeholder consultation was held during his visit. This was Mr. Majid Khaneiki's third visit to India and other project partners notably DHF and IIT Hyderabad also participated in the deliberations.



This month, the site inspection for the project 'Integrated Development and Improvement of Arterial Road, Transportation Infrastructure' was started by SMD Construction, contractors for the project, under the ongoing implementation of HRIDAY scheme in Badami.

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A short glimpse into the historically rich town of Melkote in Mandya district, notified as a 'heritage area' by the Government of Karnataka in 2012-13.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Heritage Village: Melkote



In 2012-13, the Government of Karnataka declared 20 new towns and villages as Heritage areas in the State of Karnataka. Last month we focused on the heritage village of Balligavi. Continuing with the aim to create awareness about Karnataka's rich heritage, this month we bring to you the heritage town of Melkote.

Regarded as one of the most sacred places in Karnataka, Melkote/Melukote, is a place of historical, religious, educational and cultural prominence in southern India. Located in Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district, of Karnataka, Melukote is also known as Thirunarayanapuram, named after the popular Vaishnavite temple built in this historic town.

Historical Background

This region can be dated back to the pre-historic times, with evidence from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Iron age. Of these, the large number of Megalithic burials in the region around Melkote is of enormous importance.

Melkote has been a part of several dynasties of Karnataka such as the Gangas, the Hoysalas, the Vijayanagara and the Mysore Wodeyars. Melkote gained prominence as a religious center during the 12th century when the famous Srivaishnava saint Sri Ramanujacharya, who in order to escape the prosecution of the Chola King, fled from Tamil Nadu and made Melkote his home for over a decade. Even today, Melkote is an important pilgrimage and religious center of the Srivaishnava sect.

There is a total of 101 ponds in Melkote enhancing the sites charm as a pilgrimage center. Of these ponds Pancha kalyani. is the most important thirtha and popular tourist site.

Melkote is also said to be a place of Mantapas and is known to have 76 mantapa eg, Vedpuskarani Mantapa, Bhuvaneshwari mantapa, Hebbagilu Mantapa etc. There are also about 210

inscriptions written in old Kannada, Tamil and Grantha found across Melkote on various materials such as pillars, beams, walls, silver pots, steps of Kalyanis and ponds.



There are many exceptional temples in this historic town of which some are:

The main temple of Melkote is the Chelunarayana Swamy Temple. It has exquisite sculptures and displays excellent craftsmanship.

Yognarsimha Temple is dedicated to Lord Narasimha, who is seen sitting in a yogic posture, the temple is therefore called Yognarsimha Temple. This temple is situated on top of the Yadugiri hill.

Dhanush Kodi is one of the most revered sites in Melkote is the Dhanush Kodi. According to the legends this is the site where Lakshmana shot an arrow to release water to quench Sita's thirst.

Apart from these historic and religious structures, Melkote has been a center of learning and produced many literary figures like Tirumalaraya, Chikkupadhyaya, Alasingachar etc. Narasimhachar, Srivaishnava mathas of Yathirajamatha, Ahobalamath and Parakala matha are located here. Importance of Sanskrit in Melkote can be dated back to Ramanuja.

According to the Paushkara Samhita, Ramanuja taught Sri Bhashyam in the temple precinct fostering the spirit of learning in Melkote. In Melkote, we see Sanskrit scholars engaging in temple duties, which is very unique to this area. Melkote is the home to the oldest Sanskrit institution 'Vedvedantabodhini Samskrta Mahapathasala'. Institutionalized by Maharaja of Mysore Krisnaraja Wodeyar in 1848, it is a prime institution in India with a library containing the valuable Ubhya Vedanta and unparalleled collection on Sanskrit literature and Sastras. During the revolt of 1857, the institution was temporarily closed under the suspicion that the Sanskrit scholars were helping British. However, 1887, the institute opened its gate all over again. The prime Sanskrit research institute Academy of Sanskrit research is also based in Melkote.



Sanskrit Manuscripts at the Academy of Sanskrit Research

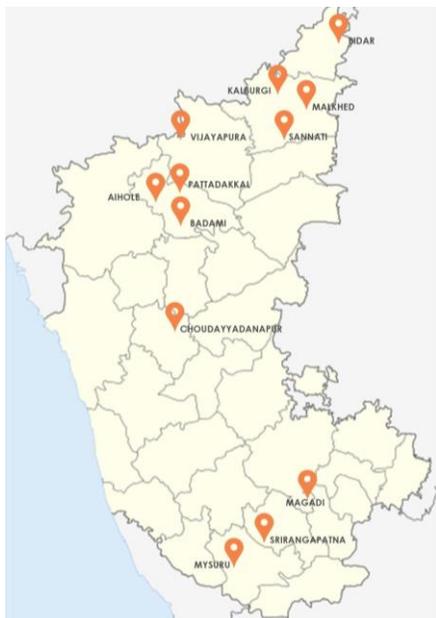
PROJECT UPDATES

Tourism Destination Development

On August 11, 2017 the Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka and IHCNF signed an MOU in the presence of Sri Priyank Kharge Minister for Tourism GOK, Sri Gaurav Gupta, Principal Secretary Tourism, Dr N Manjula Director Tourism, Sri Kumar Pushkar MD KSTDC for the development of 12 heritage tourism destinations in Karnataka.



Under this MOU IHCNF will work in the following 12 locations in Karnataka namely Mysore, Srirangapatna, Magadi, Chaudayyadanapura, Badami, Pattadakal, Aihole, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Sannati, Magadi and Bidar.



The work entails preparation of Tourism Master Plan and also preparation of DPRs and supervision of work in the 12 destinations. An orientation workshop will be organized by IHCNF in September 2017 to familiarize IHCNF's technical staff who will be working in these sites about the project, its objective and project duties.

Karez Projects: Bidar & Vijayapura

Rehabilitation and Revitalization of Bidar and Vijayapura Karez

As part of the ongoing collaboration between IHCNF-DHF and ICQHS for the Bidar Karez project Mr Majid Labbaf Khaneiki, Specialist from ICQHS Iran, visited Bidar, Vijayapura and Bangalore from 16th to 21st August 2017. On 17th August 2017 a joint delegation from IHCNF, DHF & ICQHS participated in a technical workshop held at IIT Hyderabad wherein presentations were made by experts from the Dept. of Civil Engineering, IIT Hyderabad on the progress made and future directions for various studies and analysis related to water resources, geotechnical and structural studies related to the Bidar Karez.



IHCNF, DHF and ICQHS delegates participated in the stakeholder workshop in Bidar on the same day which was chaired by the Assit. DC Mr Shanmukha and attended by Assistant Commissioner Bidar Mr Shiva Kumar Shilvant and other departmental officials. Shri K S Raykar, ED IHCNF presented the background of the Bidar Karez project following which Sri Ganesh, Landscape Consultant presented the Proposed Master Plan and Phase 1 works for implementation under approved Tourism funds. Mr Majid Labbaf made a presentation on 'Karez and Tourism' in which he presented case studies of Karez/Qanats of Iran and demonstrated its potential for development of tourism.

Various issues for the implementation of 1st phase of project was discussed including land ownership matters, no development zone in masterplan, stopping ingress of sewage into karez, implementation of Zero Waste Management and Sanitation project in the project area including integrating Nestle grants for the project with existing Central and State schemes.

The IHCNF team and Mr Majid Labbaf subsequently visited Vijayapura on 18-19th August 2017.

The team visited Surang Baudi, which has been recently excavated. An onsite meeting with ASI Dharwad officials was also held to discuss site issues and way forward for the project.

A stakeholder consultation was held on 19th August 2017 at the ZP office in Vijayapura which was chaired by Shri Sivakumar K B, IAS and attended by Shri Harsh Shetty, Municipal Commissioner Bijapur and several other district and departmental officials from the city. Various aspects and issues of the Vijayapura Karez were discussed.



Implementation of HRIDAY Badami

As part of IHCNF's ongoing engagement in Badami as HRIDAY City Anchor, in the month of August 2017 following requisite approvals from the nodal agency KUIDFC, the site inspection for the project 'Integrated Development and Improvement of Arterial Road, Transportation Infrastructure' costing Rs 6.9 Crore was started by SMD Construction, the contractor for the project.



The site inspection for construction of 'Zero Waste Management Plant' costing 82.5 lakh was also done by SMD constructions on 17th August 2017. Tender for Improvement of historic / vernacular houses and streetscape costing 1.69 crore has been floated on 24th August 2017, the tender is expected to be opened in September first week.



NEWS AND INFORMATION

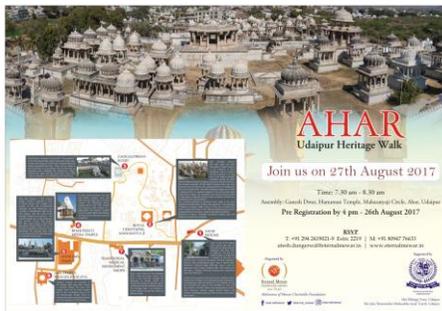
NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

UNESCO New Delhi

UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office and the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO jointly hosted the consultation meeting of the National Commissions of UNESCO Delhi Cluster Office, from 28th-30th August 2017, at UNESCO House, New Delhi. The consultation seeks to enhance the cooperation between the New Delhi Office and the UNESCO National Commissions in the cluster Member States, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Senior officials of UNESCO National Commissions participated in the meeting.

Ahar Udaipur Heritage Walk, Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation in support with Udaipur Municipal Corporation.

The 'Ahar' Udaipur Heritage Walk is the story of the day's bygone but still creating an impact on the present. 'Ahar' is one of the largest rural bronze age sites of Ahar-Banas Culture of South Rajasthan. It was represented by various stone structures, hearths, copper/bronze objects and evidence of smelting and then, for the first time, it was named 'Ahar' Culture.



Beginning from the Ahar Mound, it is the story of the great culture that was found to be in the oldest layer of the excavation, dating back to the bronze age of The Indus Valley Civilization.



Then comes the Royal Cenotaphs (Mahasatya Ji), one of the largest cenotaph complexes among the other Medieval Rajput cenotaph covering an area of 3.02 hectare.

The splendid architecture, beautiful torans, chattris and chautras which recalls the contributions of the Maharanas of Mewar who lived here and devoted themselves for the good and betterment of the people.

The walk then continues through various walk spots, including Gangaubhav Kund – which means the origin place of holy river Ganga and it is believed in Udaipur that river Ganga originated from here, Bhaktimati Meera Temple – built in 10th century has projected walls resting on high plinth and it is famous for its elevated plinth with intricate carvings and continuous panel of sculptures, Ahar Jain Temple – the first Teerthankara Aadinath, the 24th Mahaveera and a temple of Shantinatha and it ends to traditional musical instruments shops where traditional tie and die craftsmen inhabit and are still down the line carrying the valor in its tunes of the time that has passed but still remains in the air forever.

This Heritage Walk is an initiative to further protect and promote crafts and folk art of Ahar.

Indian Independence: With special Reference to Mewar Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation:

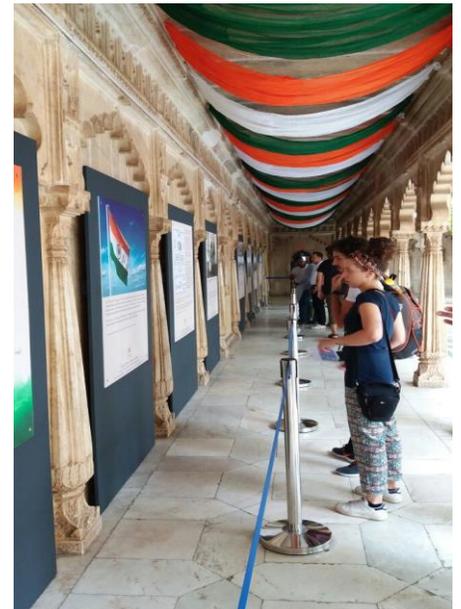
India is known for its rich heritage and artistic and ancient sites that hold a lot of character and value. The City Palace Museum, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, has come up with a stunning way of celebrating 70 years of independent India.



A special exhibition titled 'Indian Independence with special reference to Mewar' captures the essence of the region during the merging of the erstwhile princely states into the Union of India and the special role of the state of Mewar in forming what is present day India.



The exhibition shows rare photographs taken from the Museum Archives and one the highlights being Maharana Bhupal Singh of Udaipur signing the 'Instrument of Accession', merging the 1400 year old Mewar State into the Union of India. The formal ceremony had taken place on 18th April 1948 in the presence of the first Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, in the Durbar Hall, Fateh Prakash Palace, Udaipur.



The exhibition was displayed at Shiv Prasanna Amar Vilas, popularly known as Baadi Mahal (Garden palace) situated on the fourth floor of the Mardana Mahal, The City Palace Museum, Udaipur.