

NEWS LETTER

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FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S DESK

Greetings from the Bihar Museum!

The Bihar Museum is more than a mere repository of artefacts; it is an experiential museum. We not only showcase Bihar's rich history but also strive to create a vibrant and interactive museum space. Through various events like exhibitions, workshops, presentations and seminars, we provide opportunities for engagement and exposure for the people and bring the art, culture and history of Bihar and its people to the global community. These events include programs such as *Women and Deities*, *Har Mahila Kuch Khas*, *Together We Art* and the *Bihar Museum Biennale*. The museum has also organised over two dozen retrospective exhibitions honouring renowned artists.

Additionally, the museum organises workshops, lectures, literature festivals, musical evenings and events like *Sham-e-Ghazal* and *Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai* to build a community around art, culture and history. In line with these efforts, last year, the museum launched a quarterly newsletter in both Hindi and English to inform the public about its events. This current issue marks the start of the newsletter's second year. Through this newsletter, we aim to engage more individuals by sharing details of upcoming exhibitions and workshops and offering glimpses into past events.

In this issue, you'll find information on various events organised by the museum from January to March 2024. These include Seema Kohli's retrospective exhibition '*Seema Kohli: Between Realms and Dreams Beyond Reality's Edge*', organised on the occasion of International Women's Day, Amresh Kumar's exhibition '*Moksha*', Ruchira Gupta's book launch of '*I Kick and I Fly*', the Patna Literature Festival - Rubaru-7, a memorial tribute to the late author Ushakiran Khan, a celebration of Kumar Gandharva through a two-day event and a photography exhibition showcasing work by students of Kilkari.

A major highlight was the 8th International Congress of the Society of South Asian Archaeology, which brought together over 500 archaeologists from across India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Korea and Iran. The conference was praised by attendees as the country's most significant archaeological event.

We hope you find as much joy and pride in reading this newsletter as we did in creating it. I want to thank Mr. Ashok Kumar Sinha, Additional Director, Bihar Museum, Ms. Moumita Ghosh (Curator), Suraj Sawant (Designer) and Adeeba (Research Associate) for their contributions to the creation of this newsletter.

Looking forward to welcoming you all at the Bihar Museum!

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Retrospective Exhibition of Ratnabali Kant and Ganesh Khetriwal 1st Feb, 2024

Two special exhibitions opened at the Bihar Museum on 1st Feb, 2024. The first showcased the renowned multidisciplinary artist Ratnabali Kant, whose artworks are admired both nationally and internationally. The second exhibition featured Ganesh Khetriwal, a businessman with a unique talent for photography. The inauguration was graced by Shri Anjani Kumar Singh, Director General of the Bihar Museum.



The inauguration started with a lamp lighting ceremony by Shri Anjani Kumar Singh and artists Ratnabali Kant and Ganesh Khetriwal. Following the ceremony the catalogues for both the exhibition were unveiled for the public.

During his speech, Shri Anjani Kumar Singh praised Ratnabali Kant for her multifaceted talents as a dancer, choreographer, painter and sculptor. He highlighted Ratnabali Kant's significant contributions to contemporary Indian art, particularly in pioneering new artistic movements like the Performance Art movement. Regarding Ganesh Khetriwal, Shri Anjani Kumar Singh noted his proficiency in both business and photography. He acknowledged Khetriwal's deep appreciation for nature evident in his photographs of rivers, mountains and urban landscapes.

Ganesh Khetriwal addressed the gathering and shared his experiences of capturing moments of beauty and significance during his travels across India and abroad. His exhibition showcased a diverse array of photographs, ranging from natural landscapes to urban scenes, reflecting his keen eye for detail and aesthetics.

Ratnabali Kant expressed gratitude for the retrospective exhibition, which showcased three decades of her artistic career. She shared her artistic journey as well as the creative process she employs to give life to her illustrious works. She talked about the Performance Art Movement she started in the Contemporary Indian Art world and how she integrates her talents to give voice to the many predicaments women face in a patriarchal society.

Shri Ashok Kumar Sinha, Additional Director of the Bihar Museum, welcomed guests and visitors. He affirmed the museum's commitment to honouring renowned artists through retrospective exhibitions. He mentioned previous exhibitions featuring notable artists such as Himmat Shah and Brahmdeo Ram Pandit.

Following the inauguration, attendees had the opportunity to explore both the exhibitions. Ratnabali Kant's artworks included sculptures crafted from various materials like Plaster of Paris, wood, metal and fiberglass. Kant's distinctive artistic compositions, showcased in golden and red hues highlighting the inequalities and injustices in the world, left art enthusiasts captivated.

Ganesh Khetriwal's photography exhibition, displayed in the Multipurpose Hall, attracted significant attention with its captivating imagery of nature, heritage sites, religious scenes and urban and rural landscapes. His photographs showed scenes from around the world, from the villages of Switzerland to the urban skylines of Dubai and Singapore.



Overall, the exhibitions were well-received, drawing a diverse audience of art lovers and business professionals. Both Ratnabali Kant and Ganesh Khetriwal's contributions to the art world were celebrated and appreciated by visitors of the Bihar Museum.



Retrospective Exhibition of Seema Kohli and Amresh Kumar 9th Mar, 2024

The retrospective exhibition featuring two renowned contemporary artists of India, Seema Kohli and Prof. Amresh Kumar, was inaugurated on March 9, 2024, at the Bihar Museum in Patna, with Shri Anjani Kumar Singh, Director General of the Bihar Museum, officiating the event.

Seema Kohli's retrospective exhibition called '*Seema Kohli: Between Realms and Dreams, Along Reality's Edge*' was a curation of some of her most celebrated works using a diverse range of mediums, while Prof. Amresh Kumar's exhibition titled '*Moksh*' had a collection of his sculptures which traced his journey from Bihar to Varanasi. Director General Anjani Kumar Singh emphasised the importance of such exhibitions in connecting people with the museum and praised the artistic brilliance displayed by both artists. Prof. Amresh Kumar addressed the gathering and expressed gratitude to the city of Patna for inspiring his artworks. Multidisciplinary artist Seema Kohli, in her address, articulated her deep connection with her art. She described her creative process as something akin to poetry and shared how she uses art as a medium to share not only various tales of life and myth but also share her story.

Former Chief Secretary of the state, Mr Naveen Kumar, greeted the audience during the inauguration ceremony, followed by a welcome address from Additional Director Ashok Kumar Sinha.

Prof. Amresh Kumar's exhibition '*Moksha*' depicted artworks based on the city of Patna and Banaras, offering viewers a chance to connect with their history and spiritual heritage. His sculptures, including Garbhagriha, Arpan and Saptamatrika, showcased themes of faith and tradition, bridging the gap between contemporary sculpture and ancient practices.

Seema Kohli's artworks reflected her dedication to art and her multidisciplinary approach. With over three decades of experience, Kohli reimagines narratives around that of the woman, drawing inspiration from mythology, philosophy and literature. Her works centred on themes of female beauty, sexuality and spirituality, portraying women as powerful beings. Amidst growing awareness of gender injustices, Kohli's complex portrayals of women challenge conventional perspectives. Each artwork conveyed intricate stories of myth, spirituality and philosophy, blurring boundaries between reality and imagination.

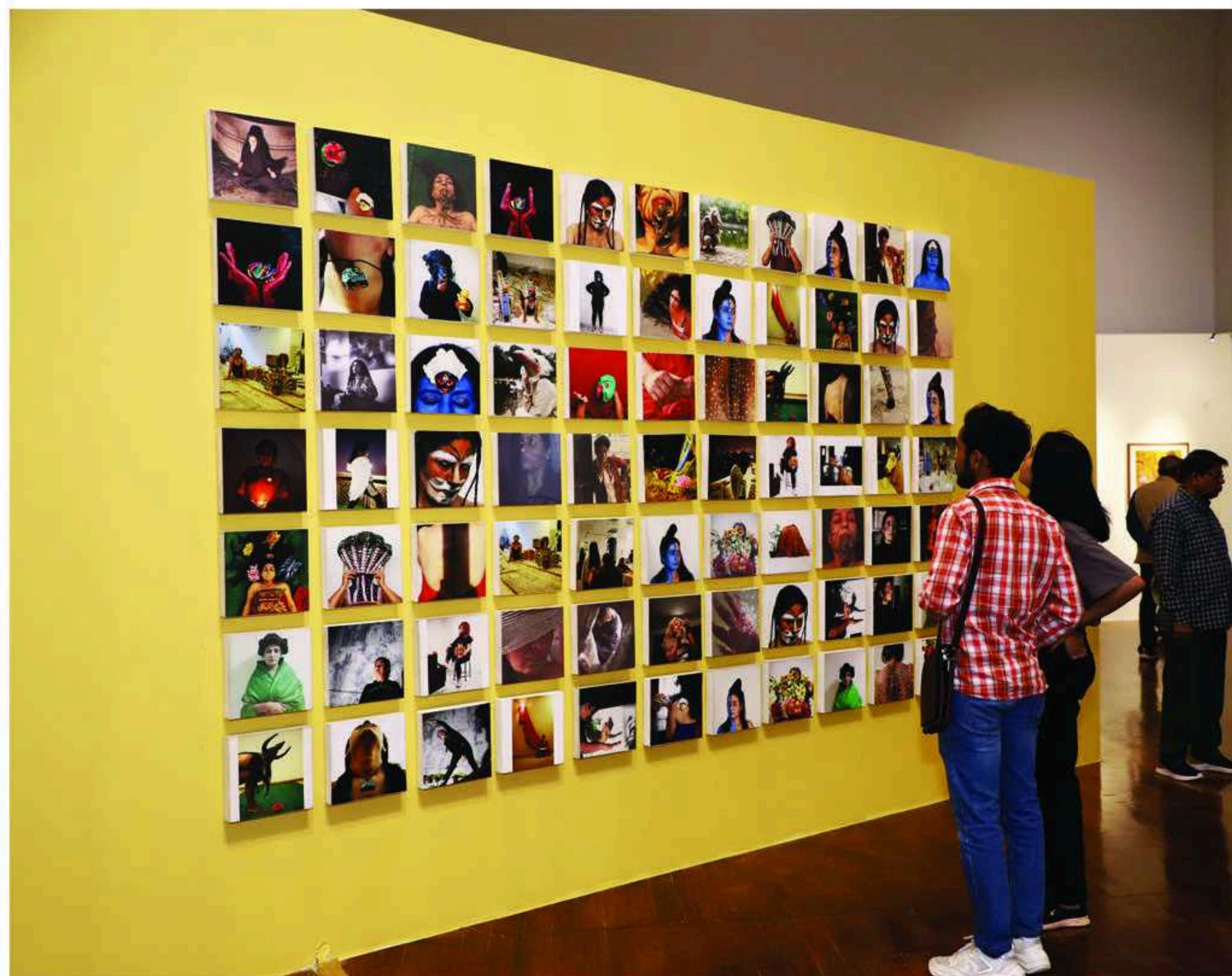
Attendees had the opportunity to explore the artworks of both artists after the ceremony. The exhibitions attracted a large number of spectators who appreciated the artistic expressions showcased by Seema Kohli and Amresh Kumar.



Seema Kohli 9th Mar, 2024

Seema Kohli's retrospective exhibition, *Between Realms and Dreams, Along Reality's Edge*, at Bihar Museum was a moving experience for visitors. Kohli's artworks were an intertwining of myths, narratives, metaphors, customs, experiences and religious motifs. Titled aptly, the exhibition explored the depths of primal desires and aspirations while maintaining a tether to reality. Women, birds, snakes and the golden colour recurrently feature in Kohli's works. Central to Kohli's narrative is the redefinition of the age-old relationship between man and snake, a motif that embodies apprehension, fear and curiosity. Whether it's a snake coiled around a woman's body, entwined in her hair, or soaring through the sky with her, Kohli's imagery compels viewers to pause and contemplate, as ancient tales seem to come to life before their eyes.

In Kohli's paintings, faces often remain enigmatic, devoid of identity or distinct features, hinting at existence beyond the tangible. Kohli's focus lies on visual narratives rather than explicit storytelling, drawing inspiration from childhood tales, mythologies and folklores.



Moreover, Kohli's female figures, though lacking in facial identity, bear a striking resemblance to the artist herself, positioning Kohli as both the creator and the subject of her narrative. In this sense, Seema Kohli travels through history, narrative and myth, keeping herself at the centre. Surrounding elements like animals, birds and foliage evoke nostalgia for simpler times. Kohli uses numerous focal points which captivate the viewers and invites them into a world of wonder and introspection.

A highlight of the exhibition was Kohli's 2023 masterpiece, *"Hiranyagarbha: Time, Space, Movement,"* which incorporates gold and silver leaves alongside acrylic colors and ink to convey ancient Indian concepts and narratives. Drawing inspiration from the Rigveda's description of Hiranyagarbha as 'the one inside the golden egg,' Kohli's artwork explores themes of fertility and productivity, celebrating the inexhaustible wellspring of female energy embodied by the womb.



Through various mediums, including painting and metalwork, Kohli challenges conventional perceptions of divinity, humanising deities like never before. The "Golden Womb" series, particularly close to Kohli's heart, explores the omnipotent energy housed within the female form, transcending traditional boundaries of spirituality.

Similarly, Kohli's *"Yogini"* series reinterprets ancient tantric concepts. Yoginis belong to the Tantra cult. The mythology of Yogini is considered to be before the Aryans. Their temples were kept separate from human habitation for centuries. But Seema Kohli brings Yoginis, traditionally secluded, into the realm of human experience. Female goddesses have had a strong presence in Hindu religion. Kohli reclaims the divine feminine within Hinduism, centering goddesses like Durga and Kali in her narratives.

Works such as *"Vishwaroop," "Rising of Kundalini,"* and *"Narasimhi"* showcase Kohli's versatility and innovation, while pieces like *"Shakti"* and *"Kalia Daman"* stand out for their exquisite craftsmanship and evocative imagery. Each artwork, whether in serigraph or mixed media, offers a unique journey through Kohli's creative vision, captivating audiences with its blend of tradition and modernity.



Amresh Kumar 9th Mar, 2024



A Retrospective Art Exhibition by Prof. Amresh Kumar titled 'Moksha' was organised at Bihar Museum from March 9th to March 31st. The concept of 'Moksha' is a philosophical one prevalent in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in the Indian subcontinent, meaning liberation from worldly attachments. In the religious scriptures, four goals of life are elucidated– Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Among these, Moksha is considered the ultimate goal or 'Param Purushartha'. The attainment of Moksha is described as realising the true nature of self. In Vedanta, Moksha is attained by liberating oneself from the bondages of Maya and transcending all kinds of worldly pleasures, sorrows and attachments.

The exhibition was a culmination of Amresh's past, present and everything in between. The first segment of the exhibition showcased a combination of sculptures titled 'Garbhagriha'. These sculptures depicted the sanctum sanctorum of a temple or a meditation room. The technical uniqueness of these sculptures unveiled the unresolved mysteries of Mauryan sculpture known for its unique polish, which has been a challenge for historians and archaeologists for centuries. The special brilliance seen in sculptures made of Chunar sandstone during the Mauryan period has been recreated by Amresh through years of research and experimentation, as evident in the exhibited artworks. A special attraction in the exhibition was a mechanically operated sculpture titled 'Memoriam,' meaning remembrance. This remembrance is also connected to the Mauryan era through its depiction as it made use of the famous Didarganj Yakshi in a unique form.



Among the women deities that have been given a special place in our art history are the 'Saptamatrikas.' These Saptamatrikas include Brahmi, Maheshwari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Kaumari and Chamunda. The sculptures on the Saptamatrikas were not just representations of goddesses but they were also representations of ordinary women.

Amresh also depicted, through his sculpture, the story of 'Bhishma Pitamah'. One knows of this mythical character from the Mahabharata as the one who laid on a bed of arrows at the end of his life. Interpreting this mythological narrative in a modern context, Amresh Kumar depicted Bhishma Pitamah as symbolising our earth and environment, pierced with numerous arrows of human destruction.

Varanasi played a very crucial part in the artist's life and this was clear in the exhibition as well where Amresh chose to beautifully depict the city that is believed to be where one attains salvation. His artwork titled 'Moksha Dwar' depicted Varanasi, the Moksh Nagari in a contemporary form. Another artwork showing Amresh's deep connection with Varanasi was the 'Banaras Darshan.' In his artwork Varanasi is depicted as a city with narrow alleys, this goes on to show that if one truly wants to know Varanasi and its people, there is no alternative but to navigate through these intricate alleys that hold the essence of the city.



While Varanasi has an important place in his artworks, Amresh Kumar holds an equally significant place for Bihar. The sculpture titled 'Arghya' depicted the tradition of offering water to the sun after bathing in rivers or ponds, which is still prevalent during festivals like Chhath. The final artwork of the exhibition was titled 'Arpan,' a collection of thekuas which depicted memories associated with Bihar and the Chhath festival. For this creation, he used the medium of papier-mâché.

Amresh Kumar's retrospective exhibition can be seen as a beautiful and meaningful harmony between history and the present, alongside the incorporation of contemporary expressions and his journey as an artist from Varanasi to Bihar.

Conversation with Amresh Kumar

A retrospective exhibition was held at the Bihar Museum showcasing the works of sculptor Amresh Kumar, a Professor of Sculpture at the Banaras Hindu University. As part of the retrospective exhibition, a discussion focusing on Kumar's works was organised on March 17 by the Bihar Museum, marking the first of its kind during such exhibitions at the museum. Notably, Jyotish Joshi, a renowned art critic and columnist from Delhi, was invited to lead the discussion. Joshi urged attendees to appreciate Kumar's sculptures from a broader context, emphasising their role in advocating for environmental preservation and spiritual introspection. It was followed by an engaging conversation between art critic and cultural activist Anish Ankur, Jyotish Joshi and Amresh Kumar.

Welcoming the audience at the outset, Mr Ashok Kumar Sinha, the Additional Director of the Bihar Museum and a noted writer, expressed the aim of facilitating direct interaction between the audience and the artist. Mr Sinha emphasised the importance of understanding the artist's personality to better appreciate their artwork, making the conversation a valuable endeavor.

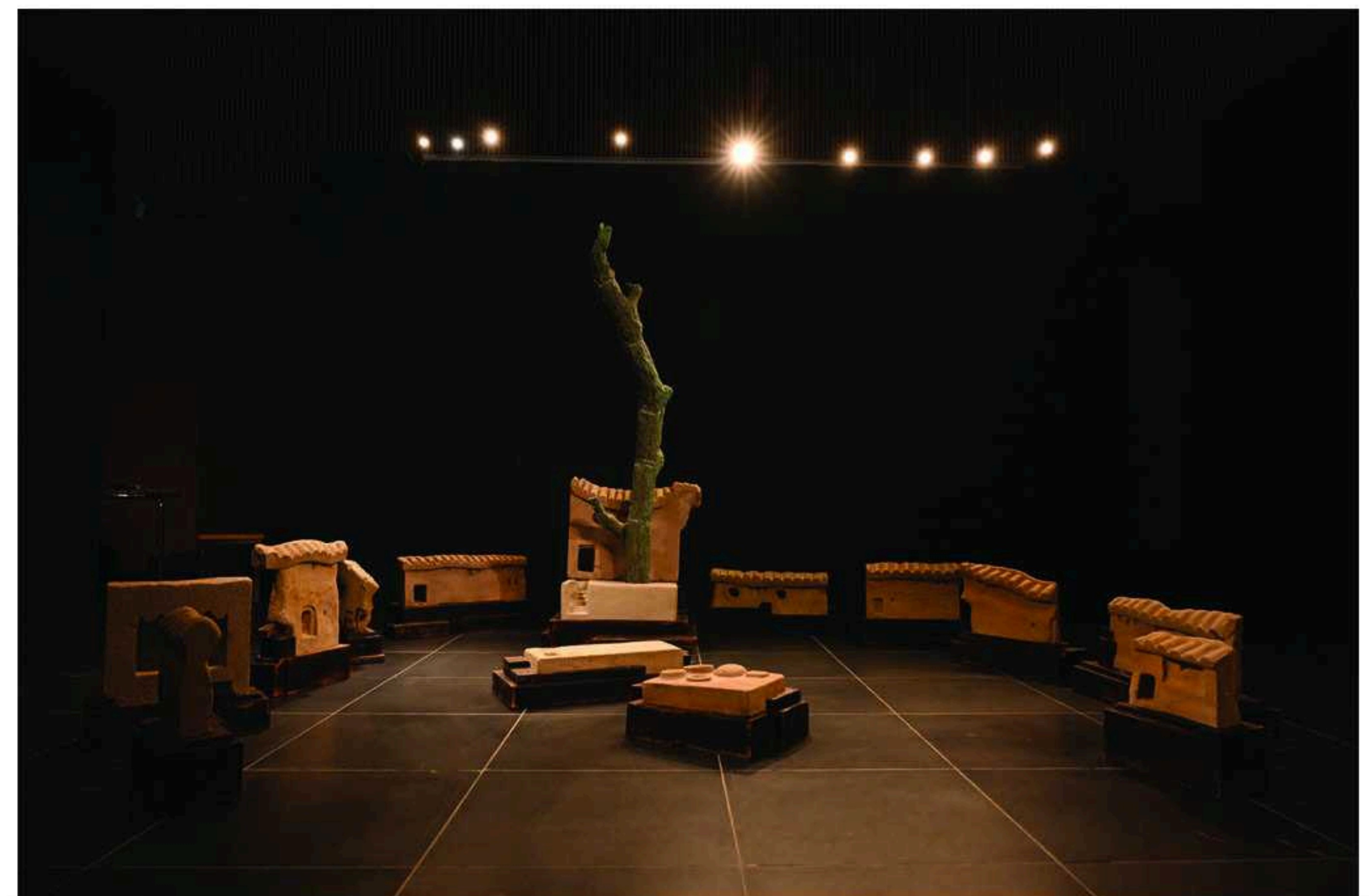
During the conversation, Jyotish Joshi stressed on the importance of viewing and understanding Amresh Kumar's work from a broader perspective. He stated, *"The exhibition of renowned sculptor Amresh Kumar, titled 'Moksha,' helps us recognise our true selves. Amresh Kumar's last exhibition was in Delhi in 2014, so this exhibit after a decade-long gap presents seventeen sculptures that are exceptional examples of abstract art. From this, we can conclude that the five works in the Garbhagriha series, as well as the other pieces such as Saptamatrika, Jal Kund (Water Pond), Padh Chinh (Footprint), Ghat, Purnima, Mokshadwar, Bhishma Pitamah, Kashi Darshan, Arghya and Arpan, contribute to the conversations on the conservation of nature and the environment. They enable us to understand our identity."*

Jyotish Joshi also stated, *"In these works, the various images of folk symbols crafted in sandstone, wood, papier-mâché, and intricate combinations are incredibly captivating. These pieces showcase the harmony of multiple art forms such as installation, sculpture, painting, and collage. Through these mediums, Amresh Kumar has produced projects that delve into spiritual, mystical, and metaphysical themes."*

During the discussion that took place after Jyotish Joshi's insightful remarks, Amresh Kumar shared his journey into the world of sculpture, reminiscing about his early education in Bokaro and his subsequent artistic training in Patna and Banaras Hindu University. He credited his mentors at the university for instilling in him a transformative vision that continues to influence his work to this day.

Explaining the remarkable polish and shine in his sandstone sculptures, Kumar revealed, *"I have tried to create a shine that comes from within the stone. Having worked with sandstone for a long time, I have used various rubbing, sanding and grinding techniques. The shine has been achieved through polishing and*

is likely to remain so over time. This effort to create a unique shine has captured the attention of many." He proudly stated that this shine has endured for over two decades, akin to the timeless polish found in ancient mauryan sculptures discovered in Bihar.



Anish Ankur questioned the absence of human figures in Kumar's works, to which Jyotish Joshi responded, *"We may not directly see the portrayals of man, but human presence is felt through the works whether it is in Garbhagriha or Moksh Dwar. The human element is present everywhere, even if it is not immediately apparent."*

Theater artist Jaiprakash raised a thought-provoking question about the prevalence of abstract imagery in contemporary art, juxtaposed against a resurgence of historical and mythological themes. Jyotish Joshi delved into the complexities of this trend, tracing its roots to the Cold War era and the influence of abstract painters like Jackson Pollock. He emphasised the importance of both abstraction and reinterpretation of tradition in contemporary art, urging for a balanced appreciation of artistic endeavors that delve into history and mythology while embracing abstraction as a form of expression.

The dialogue session attracted art enthusiasts not only from Patna but also from Banaras Hindu University. Among the esteemed attendees were veteran painter Anandi Prasad Badal, Prof. Ajay Pandey, Principal of Patna Art College, writer Shivnarayan, poet and psychiatrist Vinay Kumar, as well as artists Archana Sinha, Rashmi Singh, Satya Sarth, Rakesh Kumud, Dhananjay, Sunil Kumar Jha, Manoj Kumar Bachchan, Ranjita, Neetu, Ranjan, Mukesh, and many others. This session served as a significant platform for fostering dialogue on art, tradition and the ever-evolving landscape of contemporary expression.



EXPLORE

The Use of Technology to Enhance the Visitor Experience: History Gallery A

The Bihar Museum celebrates Bihar's ancient past and strives to inculcate a sense of pride and belonging in modern-day Biharis. Its purpose is to make the state's people aware of their heritage. The Bihar Museum presents a rich and poignant collection, allowing visitors to witness what shaped the region's and India's history. The Bihar Museum fulfils the need for a world-class museum that not only displays antiquities from the past but also uses state-of-the-art technologies for interactive displays and audio-visual presentations for an enhanced visitor experience.

The Bihar Museum is designed to be experiential. The museum marks a new milestone in the museum movement of the country, where visitors do not just view the artefacts but interact with them to discover and learn more about their glorious past. The Bihar Museum houses diverse objects, including stone and bronze sculptures, miniature paintings, prehistoric artefacts and manuscripts from various historical periods. The museum has several galleries such as the Orientation gallery, Children's gallery, History gallery, Visible Storage gallery, Historical Art gallery, Regional Art gallery, Bihari Diaspora gallery, Contemporary gallery and Temporary Art gallery. The Orientation gallery gives viewers a quick peep into the land's rich history and the museum's collection, along with a demarcated timeline that the museum galleries follow. The Children's Gallery both entertains and educates young visitors with games, puzzles, hands-on excavation experiences, etc. The History gallery is divided chronologically, from prehistory to the rise of dynasties.

History Gallery A is carefully curated to transport visitors through the evolution of humanity, from nomadic hunter-gatherers to the period of the first empire on the Indian subcontinent. It is divided into six distinct sub-sections, each rooted in a different era: Prehistory, Proto-History, Rise of Mahajanapadas, Buddhism, Jainism, Second Urbanisation and the Mauryan Empire.

There is a seamless blend of technology with artistry to craft an immersive and transformative visitor experience. As the visitors step into the gallery, they are welcomed by a colour-coded map that serves to guide them through the ages. Each colour on the map corresponds to a specific era, and the walls of that particular era are in the same colour, allowing the visitors to navigate their museum visit easily.

The visitor's journey begins in the prehistory section, where an interactive display awaits, serving as a gateway to technology's genesis. A tablet drawer, accompanied by overhead speakers, is placed to help visitors trace the origins of technology, starting with the creation of stone tools. This enlightening audio-video setup is in both Hindi and English, ensuring accessibility to a diverse audience. The walls of this section have projections of the sky, providing a glimpse into the people's lives during this historical period, portraying how they lived in open spaces.

On the right of the gallery, the visitors will encounter the treasures of the Harappan Civilisation, one of the world's earliest advanced societies. A striking copper-plated wall takes centre stage to emphasise their mastery of copper, and historic jars from Mohenjo Daro, Pakistan, are prominently displayed. On progressing further, the gallery's spotlight shifts to the Harappan

seals and sealings made with steatite. Visitors can engage in a puzzle, which will allow them to learn about not just the Indus code but also the scripts of its contemporary civilisations, such as Sumerian and Egyptian Hieroglyphs and Mesoamerican glyphs. In addition, the interactive game provides further insights into these ancient scripts.

Next is a breathtaking mural showcasing the rock art of Kaimur. This mural is accompanied by an interactive program that brings to life the Rock art of Kaimur. Through the touch display, visitors can explore the fascinating rock art of Mokwa, Patsar and Dugha Hathiadah in Kaimur, gaining insights into the lives, thoughts and boundless creativity that thrived within the hearts of early humans in this region. As one progresses further, they will enter the era of the Second Urbanisation, the Mahajanapada period. Here, the ambience is transformed by the recreation of the Cyclopean Wall of Rajgir to transport visitors to that particular time in history.

The subsequent section marks the section of spiritual awakening, beautifully curated to transport visitors into a realm of divine introspection. There is a dual display on both walls to craft an ethereal ambience. One side showcases a sacred Hawan Kund, while the other has a celestial galaxy, signifying the visitor's entrance into the spiritual realm. This sacred sanctuary is an ode to two religions that originated in Bihar: Buddhism and Jainism. They are represented by two tapestries suspended from the ceiling. One of the tapestries is brown, symbolising Buddhism, and is reminiscent of the monastic attire worn by Buddhist monks. The other is white, representing the purity and simplicity synonymous with Jainism. The artefacts are carefully curated and thoughtfully positioned on these brown and white pedestals, serving as visual markers of the faith to which they belong. As visitors progress through this spiritual sanctuary, they will find the profound teachings of Buddhism and Jainism inscribed upon the gallery wall. The Jal Mandir Pawapuri projection is on the right, accompanied by the religious chants from two overhead speakers. Similarly, on the Buddhist side of this section, there is a motion-sensor speaker that plays Buddhist chants, creating an atmosphere of tranquillity. For those seeking deeper understanding, an interactive screen provides insights into the symbols of Buddhism and Jainism.

The final section of Gallery A is the Mauryan Empire. At the threshold of this section is a recreation of the Toran Gate, borrowed from the sacred Buddhist site of Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh. Crafted from wood, the Toran Gate symbolises the passage into an era of enlightenment and transformation. To the right is a projection recounting the epic battle between Nanda and Maurya, a pivotal conflict that paved the way for the rise of Chandragupta Maurya and the subsequent establishment of the Mauryan Empire. The weapons wielded in this historic battle are recreated and suspended from the ceiling.

Continuing deeper into this section is the period of Emperor Ashoka. Specific design choices are made to show the visitors the horrors of the Kalinga War. A series of angled red slabs serve as both tribute and reminder of the staggering toll of lives sacrificed, evoking a sense of devastation and sorrow that war begets. Emperor Ashoka, the third Mauryan king, experienced a profound transformation during this time. The devastation brought by the Kalinga War disturbed Ashoka, leading him to vow never to pursue conquest through violence again. Instead, he embraced the ideals of righteousness and championed the doctrine of "Dhamma Vijaya," a Buddhist philosophy advocating peace and harmony. He embraced Buddhism after witnessing the futility of war, with 150,000 captured and 100,000 sacrifices.

"On conquering Kalinga, the Beloved of the Gods felt remorse, for when an independent country is conquered, the slaughter, death and deportation of people is extremely grievous to the Beloved of the Gods and weighs heavily on his mind."

The History Gallery A ingeniously combines technology and design elements to emulate the ages it represents, bringing history to life in an unforgettable and experiential way for visitors.

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Testimony of victories and assimilation of religions.

(A case study through the lenses of coins at Bihar and Patna Museum)

Chapters of Indian history are full of wonders and exhilarations. Where literature perplexes the facts, the study of coins fills the gap in research. Coins were the easiest and fastest way to register an event for the kings of ancient India, especially if the event was relevant to the achievement of a king and made the polity powerful. To consolidate the empires, kings used to conceive policies of battle and intermarriage agreements, and, sometimes, if the ruler was a foreigner, they assimilated the religions of the ruling lands. Coins played a vital role in making all such events immortal. The victory coin of Alexander is the earliest example, which was minted in Babylon (c. 322 BCE) in memory of his campaign in the Indian subcontinent and the defeat of Indian king Poras. Next, in the 2nd century BCE, Indo-Greek king Demetrios celebrated his victory on the Indian land, known as the Gandhara region (present Pakistan), by issuing coins along with his portrait, wearing a helmet of elephant skin. Indian land was swarming with elephants in ancient times. In the 1st century CE, the counter-struck coins of Western Kshatrapa Nahapan by Gautamiputra Satakarni amazed Numismatists, which are a testimony of the war between Western Kshatrapa and Satavahana dynasties. Gautamiputra Satakarni counter-struck Nahapana coins with his own symbol of an arched hill surrounded by a Prakrit legend, giving his name on the obverse, and the reverse had a Ujjain symbol. Gupta King Chandragupta II achieved military success against Western Kshatrapa in Gujrat and issued silver coins in the pattern of Western Kshatrapa for circulation in the Gujrat area. Skandgupta 1 followed his father's sovereignty and issued the same victory coins in Gujrat.



Zodiac type of gold coin of King Jahangir

The migrated kingdoms like Indo-Greeks, Shakas, Kushana, Mughals, etc., from foreign lands who gained victory over local Indian kings and established their empires in India might have faced many challenges, including gaining humility and popularity among their common masses. Assimilation of Indian religion by employing coins as a medium was the easiest way to please the local people. Indo-Greek king Agathocles adopted the portrait of Lord Krishna and Balram on his coins; Kushana King Wim Khadphisis and Kanishka carved out the effigies of Shiva with Nandi bull and Buddha in their coins, respectively. Muhammad Gori in the 12th century CE adopted the image of Lakshmi for his gold coins. Mughal king Akabar issued Rama-Sita coins, while his son Jahangir minted the coins with the twelve zodiac signs of the Hindu religion. Coins reveal a lot about the kings who issued them, like their interests and their personal hobbies. However, the victory type of coins and coins with Hindu religious motifs show their strong policies of consolidating their empires.

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Shiva-Nandi type of gold coin of Wim Khadphisis



Museum, Children and Children's Section

Bihar's land narrates a history that can be traced back to the Paleolithic Period. In 2009, a seed was sown in Bihar to bring a futurist museum to this rich historical land. That museum is the 'Bihar Museum', which narrates the long, rich and proud history of Bihar.

Here, we introduced a separate children's section, a perspective that changes the museum concept and is usually not followed in India. The children's section of the museum includes a museum shop, a cafeteria and design galleries based on Bihar's history. Children are the future of any nation. Investing in children's futures paves the way for a brighter nation. The children's section was inaugurated in 2015, creating zeal among the visitors as they saw a specific edu-tainment area for children. The section is not only enjoyed by children but also by adults. Children need a place in museums worldwide where museum themes are explained at their level. Children are visionaries. They act, learn, adapt and apply quickly if things are presented to them in a way that would both engage and comprehend. The children's gallery adds the flavour of adventure, excitement and education with entertainment. Here, they can quickly grasp the idea of a museum and enjoy it.

Bihar Museum's children's section is presented to children in a stimulating and edu-taining way. The section is based on different themes, starting with the Orientation Section, Flora and Fauna Section, Discovery Section, Maurya Section, Sher Shah Suri Section, King Procession Section and a section on Bihar folk

dances, presented through the 3D electronic panel. Dances are represented through Madhubani Art, which shows three different Bihar folk dances.

The children's section allows children to use all four senses: sight, hearing, feel and touch. There is not a single sign that says 'don't..'. Children or visitors are encouraged to do activities that will help them understand the Bihar Museum's collections better. Bihar Museum has Historical galleries, a Regional Art gallery, a Diaspora gallery and a Temporary Art gallery. Collections of antiquity are divided among these galleries as required. The children's section encourages children to visit galleries of history and art after visiting the museum's children section, which builds excitement among them. Children might find visiting history and art galleries overwhelming and tiring at first. More than one visit is required to see the entire galleries or sections. More than one visit to the same museum is only possible if your interest is awakened. In the case of children, this part is challenging; they will not like to spend their time where they feel bored, so integrating something exciting into their visit is essential for museums. The Bihar Museum children's section prompts children to engage with the museum further. Children then plan accordingly and come, visit and learn something new at the Bihar Museum through its exquisite collections.

Planned activities in museums play a significant role in developing museum strengths. Bihar Museum cautiously plans activities for children to help strengthen their inner selves. Activities on arts and crafts, mock archaeological excavation, hands-on activities, treasure hunts, learning regional arts and



crafts through renowned folk artists, storytelling and story writing sessions in or around Bihar Museum and its collection give a unique experience to children.



In 2023, Bihar Museum organised various activities for students, and participants from all backgrounds. Unique activities that happened for the first time at Bihar Museum were photography workshops for students as well as storytelling activities where students wrote stories on the theme of Bihar Museum and its collection, which Bihar Museum published and made available at the Bihar Museum Study Centre. The most interesting one was the thematic walk of historical characters, where young students played the character of particular inhabitants or the king, queen or local people of the region or the time in history based on the themes of Bihar Museum Galleries. This thematic walk took place in the galleries of the Bihar Museum.

These activities promote museum value to a large mass of people. In this way, the Bihar Museum connects with people whose shared treasures are kept in the galleries. Making people aware of what a museum holds or why that museum is essential for the community, region and country is the core job of museums. Bihar Museum takes up this vision diligently by adapting various means to reach its targeted audiences.



Reaching and delivering the idea of Bihar Museum to the people is done in various ways; like educational programs, cultural or folk activities and workshops. Bihar Museum runs a souvenir shop where only local artisan's products are sold. Most of them are handmade, promoting regional artists and their artwork, something that the Bihar Museum proudly does. These local artists are also invited as workshop experts who train students and visitors about Bihar's regional arts and crafts. This way Bihar Museum generates employment for regional artists and people of the art and cultural world.

This exchange provides opportunities to the regional community and trains future generations to care for Bihar's regional arts and crafts. Bihar's regional arts and crafts carry Bihar's history and folklore. Galleries, collections and these various activities bring the region, community and the people of the state together to understand the rich past that Bihar Museum offers. Children, who are at the core of any nation's progress, are cared for by the exquisite and engaging children's section at Bihar Museum.

Ms Swati Singh

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Padma Shri Felicitation Ceremony

A special felicitation event was organised at the Bihar Museum in Patna on January 30, 2024, to celebrate the Padma Shri Awards being given to three talented folk artists from Bihar: Mrs. Shanti Devi, Mr. Shivan Paswan (Mithila Art) and Mr. Ashok Kumar Bishwas (Tikuli Art). The ceremony started with a brief introduction to each artist by Ashok Kumar Sinha, the Additional Director of Bihar Museum.

Ashok Kumar Sinha marked the groundbreaking nature of the event, as it was the first time in Mithila painting history that both a Dalit man and a Dalit woman were honoured with such distinction. With addition of Shri Shivan Paswan and Mrs Shanti Devi to the list, Mithila Painting now has nine Padma Shri artists.



Ashok Kumar Sinha shared the numerous challenges faced by Mrs Shanti Devi, including the caste-based discrimination she encountered over the years. Despite enduring numerous adversities since childhood, Shanti Devi exhibited unwavering perseverance and dedication to her craft, remaining actively engaged in painting. Her relentless pursuit of excellence resulted in her receiving the Padma Shri Award in 2024 for her contributions to the Godna style of Mithila (Madhubani) painting, making her the first Dalit female artist to achieve this honour.

Turning to Shivan Paswan, Mr Ashok Sinha highlighted his pivotal role in the world of art and culture. Paswan's innovative approach to Godna painting revolutionised the Mithila art scene, earning him widespread acclaim and the distinction of being the first male artist in Mithila painting to receive the Padma Shri Award.

Ashok Kumar Bishwas was commended for his efforts in revitalising Tikuli art, a form that was on the brink of extinction. His significant contributions to the resurgence of Tikuli art garnered him the Padma Shri Award in 2024. Bishwas' recognition has not only uplifted Tikuli painting but also contributed to its rising popularity.



Ms Harjot Kaur Bamhrah, the Additional Chief Secretary of the Art, Culture and Youth Department, Government of Bihar, reiterated the ethos of talent transcending societal barriers. She praised the indomitable spirit demonstrated by Shivan Paswan, Shanti Devi and Ashok Kumar Bishwas in overcoming obstacles on their path to success.

Mr Anjani Kumar Singh, the Director General of Bihar Museum, mentioned the transformative impact made by the Bihar government's initiatives on the art scene that has encouraged more artists to take up art as their livelihood. He also used the platform to mention an upcoming book on the different motifs in mithila painting which is currently underway under the guidance of National awardee Mrs Moti Karn. Each recipient was also given a financial assistance of Rs. 1 lakh.

The artists themselves expressed gratitude and humility in their acceptance speeches. Ashok Kumar Bishwas regarded the Padma Shri Award as a collective achievement of all involved in Bihar's folk art, while Shanti Devi and Shivan Paswan attributed their success to the support of their communities and families.

Book Launch of 'I Kick and I Fly'

Emmy Award winning author and social activist Professor Ruchira Gupta's book '*I Kick and I Fly*' was launched on January 14, 2024, at the Orientation Hall of Bihar Museum. The Director General of Bihar Museum, Shri Anjani Kumar Singh, released the book. Upon addressing the audience, he remarked on how times have changed and how women are no longer quiet victims of the patriarchal society but are actively progressing in every field, Ruchira Gupta's book being an example of this.

Ruchira Gupta is originally from Forbesganj, Purnia, and is a professor at the New York University. Her novel is based on the story of Heera, a girl from Forbesganj's red-light area, who empowers herself and transforms her community.

The novel tells the story of Heera, a girl living in the red-light area of Forbesganj, and her journey as she navigates through the numerous challenges in front of her. The author, Ruchira Gupta, worked to empower women and bring about change by working at the grassroots level in the Purnia area. Her work and that of her team have been effective and visible in the red-light area there. She has played an essential role in empowering the girls of the nomadic tribe. Mr Anjani Kumar Singh, the Director General of Bihar Museum, worked with Ruchira Gupta during his time as the secretary of the Education Department. He added how the arrival of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme at the same time as Ruchira was fighting for these young girls also positively impacted her campaign. Mr Anjani Kumar Singh narrated stories related to Forbesganj during his Purnia training. He said that when he was training there, the biggest problem was in teaching the girls. Their parents wanted to get the girls married early. At that time, girls started getting enrolled in Kasturba Gandhi Girls School after the new scheme, which yielded encouraging results.

Addressing the people present at the launch ceremony, writer Ruchira Gupta said that people often treat truth as data and do not experience it. Therefore, through this novel, she presented the sorrows and pain of the girls living in the red-light area, highlighting issues of unemployment, debt, lack of education and other problems. She added how, with this novel, she has tried to portray how a girl from a red-light area realises her strength while training in Kung Fu and even gets a gold medal. This story is not just a story of Heera but all the girls who believed in themselves and fought for a better life for themselves and their loved ones.

After the release, there was a panel discussion with panellists Ruchira Gupta, Film Producer and Actor MK Raina, moderated by Film Critic Ratnottama Sengupta. During the panel discussion, Ruchira Gupta said that in Forbesganj, miscreants would often climb over the walls of hostels and community centres and try to kidnap girls. One day, while going home from school, she saw a couple teaching Kung Fu. After talking to them, the girls' training started. When one of the girls went home after winning a gold medal, her father's perspective changed. An essential thing in the victory of these girls was that they were not just changing the perspective of their mothers and fathers but were also rediscovering themselves and finding a new hope to fight for a better future. Actor, director and filmmaker M.K. Raina, in response to a question discussing the power of art to bring about change, said that art can be a potent tool to influence people and bring about positive change in society. While introducing the book and the author, Additional Director of Bihar Museum, Shri Ashok Kumar Sinha, said there is a great need in society for people like Ruchira Gupta who come forward for women's rights and help the victims struggling in a casteist, classist and patriarchal society.



Rubaru

The Patna Literary Festival, Rubaru, in collaboration with the Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Government of Bihar, was organised at the Bihar Museum on January 13, 2024. The program, "Do Shayar Ek Naam," featured two distinguished poets of the nation, Alok Srivastava and Farhat Ehsaas, founder of Jashn-e-Rekhta.

The event began with engaging conversation between the anchor, Prerna Pratap, and the poets. A diverse audience from cities like Dubai, Hyderabad and Lucknow participated in the program. Notable figures, including the Director General of Bihar Museum, Mr Anjani Kumar Singh, the Additional Chief Secretary of the Art, Culture and Youth Department, Ms Harjot Kaur Bamhrah and the Additional Chief Secretary of the Cooperative Department, Dipak Kumar Singh, graced the occasion with their presence.

In his inaugural address, Anjani Kumar Singh reminisced about the illustrious history of music festivals in Patna, which once set the standard for success in the realm of music. Ms. Harjot Kaur Bamhrah emphasised the Art, Culture, and Youth Department's commitment to preserving Bihar's rich cultural heritage through events like Rubaru.

The program commenced with a thought-provoking question posed by anchor Prerna Pratap about the role of literature and poetry in today's fast-running world. Farhat Ehsaas highlighted the significance of etiquette and manners in self-discovery, while Alok Srivastava commented on the current political scenario; according to him, the role of individuals is like characters in a scripted narrative. Both poets noted the increasing popularity of Urdu among the younger generation. Alok Srivastava expressed his love for Urdu through ghazals, which possess a sweetness and a distinct charm.

The poetry recitations mesmerised the audience, with Farhat Ehsaas's ghazal resonating throughout the museum, evoking thunderous applause. The poetry session lasted about one and a half to two hours, leaving the audience captivated by the poets' unique and heartfelt verses. The event successfully showcased the timeless beauty and relevance of poetry in contemporary times, with both Alok Srivastava and Farhat Ehsaas winning the hearts of the audience with their soulful poetry.



In Memory of Ushakiran Khan



On February 11, 2024, the renowned Hindi and Maithili litterateur, Ushakiran Khan, passed away. In honour of her, a tribute was held on February 20, 2024, at the Orientation Hall of the Bihar Museum. Ushakiran Khan, celebrated for her notable works such as "Bhamati," "Sirjanhaar" and "Simant Katha," had been recognised with prestigious awards, including the Sahitya Akademi and Padma Shri.

The tribute event commenced with a soulful performance of "Kawan Thagwa Nagariya Lootal Ho" by Abhishek Raj and his team. Dr Savita Pareek shared poignant lines from the famous poet Dr Kedarnath Singh's poem, "Jana Hindi ki khofnak kriya". Author and critic Prof. Tarun Kumar highlighted Ushakiran Khan's disciplined persona and shared the significance of her literary contributions, particularly the formation of Aayam. Dr Ajay Kumar acknowledged the Khan couple as embodiments of compassion, kindness and love. He acknowledged their invaluable role in enriching Patna's cultural and literary scene.

Former minister Sanjay Paswan discussed the harmonious blend of Gandhi's ideals, Lohia's principles and nationalism in Ushakiran and her work, suggesting that delving into her literature would serve as a tribute to her legacy. Shahnaz Fatmi invoked the essence of Ushakiran Khan through the song "Dharti Par Sitaare Rahenge Sada," putting out her scholarly and literary genius in front of the audience.

Director General of Bihar Museum, Anjani Kumar Singh, paid homage to Ushakiran Khan by recalling her supportive role during the construction of the Bihar Museum through her collaboration with Kilkari. The event was gracefully conducted by Dr. Kumar Varun.

The gathering witnessed the presence of esteemed personalities including senior poet Alok Dhanwa, Prof. Ramvachan Rai, Prof. Mangala Rani, Veena Amrit, Mr Tripurarisharan, Mr Ashok Kumar Sinha, Mr Shivanand Tiwari, Prof. Usha Singh, Prof. Kalanath Mishra, Dr Smriti Anand, Alok Anand, Vijay, Mangalam Ranveer and Piyush K., alongside members of Aayam, literary enthusiasts and family members of Ushakiran Khan.

Kumar Gandharva Birth Centenary Celebration at Bihar Museum

The Department of Art, Culture and Youth, in collaboration with Ahad Anhad, organised a two-day program commemorating the birth centenary of Kumar Gandharva at the Bihar Museum on February 24 and 25, 2024. "Wa Ghar Sabse Nyara" paid homage to the legendary artist Kumar Gandharva.

On the first day, the program featured classical music performances, a picture exhibition and discussions about Kumar Gandharva's life. The event comprised two sessions, with the first session dedicated to discourses on the life and work of Kumar Gandharva. Poet, critic, translator and senior editor Ashok Vajpayee reminisced about his cherished moments with Ustad Kumar Gandharva. He highlighted the artist's captivating melodies and unique singing style. Padma Shri Pandit Madhup Mudgal, a renowned disciple of Kumar Gandharva, paid tribute to his guru through soulful renditions of Kabir's compositions.



Sujata Prasad, the founder of Ahad Anhad, talked about Kumar Gandharva's creative and intellectual presence, along with his unparalleled singing of Saguna and Nirguna verses. Dr Ajit Pradhan, the founder of Navaras School of Performing Arts, reflected on the rich cultural heritage of Azimabad, emphasising its historical significance in nurturing literature and music.

Distinguished guests who graced the occasion with their presence were Mr Anjani Kumar Singh, Director General of Bihar Museum, Ms Ruby, Director of Art, Culture and Youth Department and Mr Ashok Kumar Sinha, Additional Director of Bihar Museum.

On the second day of the program, Kumar Gandharva's daughter Kalapini Komkali and grandson Bhuvnesh Komkali mesmerised the audience with their musical performances. Accompanied by Abhishek Shankar on harmonium and Ramendra Singh Solanki and Pawan Sem on tabla, their performance of 'Geet Basant' received widespread acclaim. Yogika's songs further added to the jubilant atmosphere, evoking applause from the audience. The program concluded with the screening of a film by filmmaker Dr Jabbar Patel, shedding light on Kumar Gandharva's life and his invaluable contributions to the world of music.

Kilkari Photography Exhibition

Kilkari Bihar Bal Bhavan, established by the Education Department, Government of Bihar, is dedicated to the creative development of children aged 8 to 16. Offering free training in various disciplines, including photography. The institution regularly organises photography tours, project works and exhibitions. In collaboration with Bihar Museum, Kilkari organised the 'Classical Portrait Photography Exhibition' from March 16 to 17, 2024.

The exhibition showcased 30 photographs captured by 25 children belonging to Kilkari's photography wing. Under the guidance of instructor Mr Ankit Ranjan Pathak, these children underwent a week-long training inspired by the artistic techniques of 17th-century Dutch artists Rembrandt and Johannes Vermeer. What made this exhibition truly unique was that the children themselves acted as models, prepared props and arranged lighting within the premises of Kilkari.

The photographs captivated visitors, many of whom expressed interest in purchasing the artworks or arranging photoshoots with the children. Visitors from various states, including Patna, enthusiastically penned down their reactions in the visitor's book, engaging the children with questions about their work. On March 16, the Director General of Bihar Museum, Anjani Kumar Singh, visited the exhibition and commended the children for their outstanding work, praising the concept inspired by the 17th-century Dutch Golden Age. He also addressed the students about this unique concept and movement.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Shri Ashok Kumar Sinha, Additional Director of Bihar Museum. He appreciated Kilkari and the children for their remarkable artwork under the guidance of instructor Ankit Ranjan Pathak.

Padma Shri Prof. Shyam Sharma graced the event as a special guest, bestowing his blessings upon the children. He acknowledged the exceptional nature of the exhibition, where children served as both photographers and models, showcasing their talent in portrait photography and artistic expression. Prof. Shyam Sharma applauded the children's ability to perceive the world differently through their cameras, praising their artistic vision and creativity.



The 8th International Congress of Society of South Asian Archeology (SOSAA)

The Bihar Museum and the Directorate of Archaeology, Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Government of Bihar, in collaboration with the Society of South Asian Archaeology (SOSAA), organised the 8th Congress of the Society of South Asian Archaeology from April 4th to April 6th, 2024 at the Bihar Museum in Patna. The inaugural session of this landmark academic conference was conducted on April 4th, 2024, at the Gyan Bhawan, Gandhi Maidan, Patna.

More than 300 papers on various subjects of archeology, architecture, art and museums were presented during the conference. Apart from India, people from various countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Iran, Syria, South Korea participated. Distinguished guests gracing the inaugural session included Shri Anjani Kumar Singh, Director General Bihar Museum, Ms. Harjot Kaur Bamhrah, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Govt of Bihar, Prof. Vasant Shinde, President, Society of South Asian Archeology, Prof. Gamini Ranasinghe, Director General of Archeology, Sri Lanka, Prof. Alok Tripathi, Additional Director General, Archeological Survey of India, Dr. Sanjay Kumar Manjul, Additional Director General, Archeological Survey of India and Prof. Abhay Kumar Singh, Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University. These esteemed personalities were given a warm welcome with bouquets and mementoes by the Bihar Museum officials.

The inauguration was followed by the launch of 5 significant publications, including *Revisiting the Cultural Heritage of South Asia: Emerging trends* edited by Prof. Vasant Shinde, Shrikant Ganvir and Astha Dibyopama, *Bharatiya Gyan Pranali* by Prof. Vasant Shinde, *Bharatiya Knowledge Systems* by Prof. Vasant Shinde, *Abstract Book of 8th International Congress of Society of South Asia Archaeology (SOSAA)* by Bihar Museum and *Peopling and Cultural Spread: Studies in South Asian Archeology* edited by Prof. Vasant Shinde, Ajaml Shah, Mumtaz Yatoo and Astha Dibyopama.

At the inauguration, Anjani Kumar Singh, Director General of Bihar Museum, said that the Bihar Museum, one of the top most modern museums in all of South Asia, was conceived for two reasons - to showcase the history of Bihar and to create a museum of international standards that reflected the history of Bihar and India. He expressed his delight in hosting the 8th International SOSAA Congress which will accelerate discussions on archaeological findings amongst peers. He noted that while museums in general have been mere repositories of artefacts, Bihar Museum was created to be an experiential museum where visitors can engage with history and discover about the past glory of the state.

Ms. Harjot Kaur Bamhrah, Additional Chief Secretary of Art, Culture and Youth Department, Government of Bihar, extended a warm welcome to the gathering. She expressed the importance of bridging the gap between archaeology and other fields through

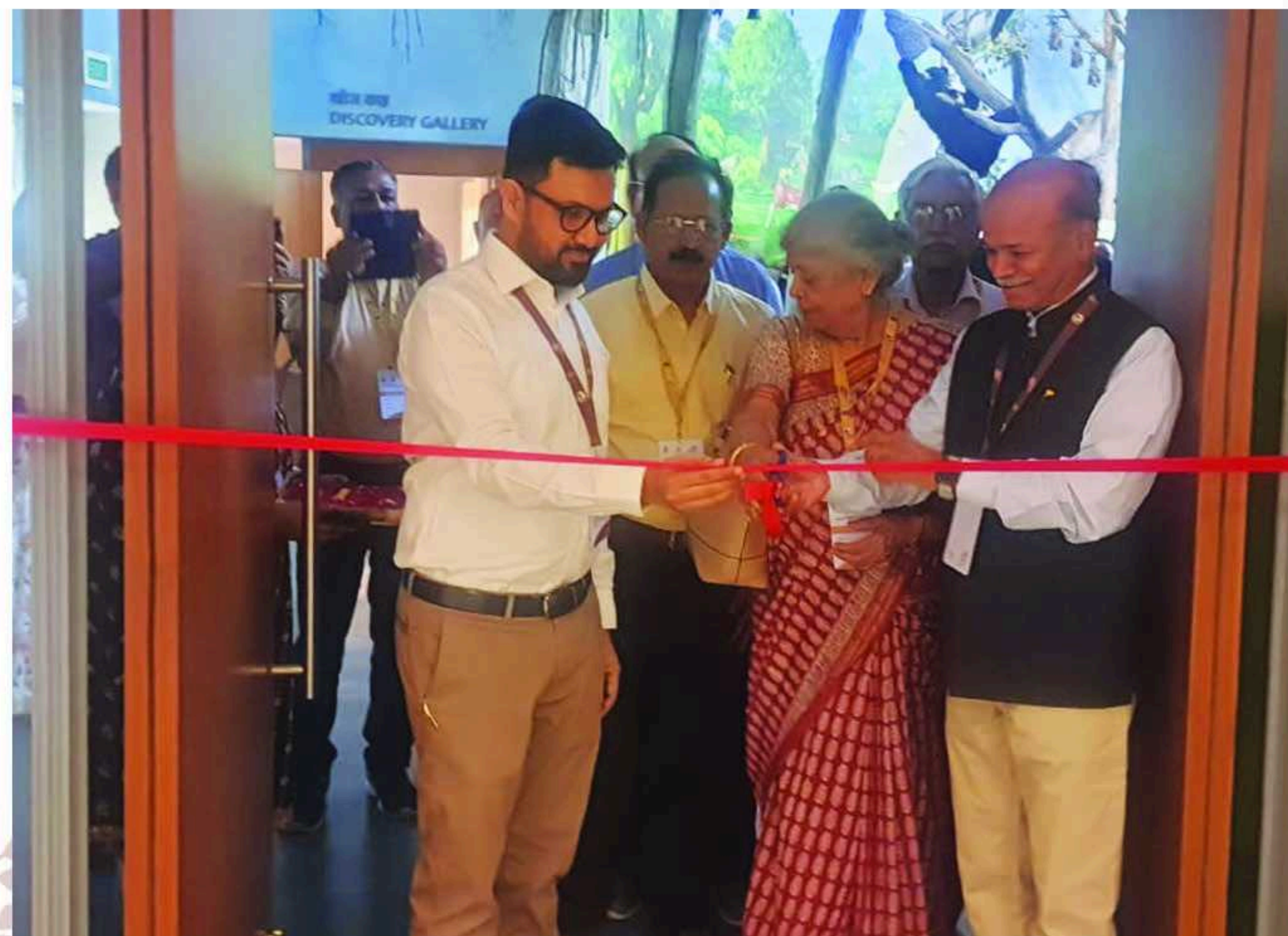


multidisciplinary approaches. She even expressed her disappointment at the lack of efforts by institutions and universities for research in this field ever since she took charge of the Department of Art, Culture and Youth. She encouraged young researchers to explore this field with dedication and emphasised the need for the preservation of archaeological and cultural heritage.

Prof Vasant Shinde shared the aim behind the inception of SOSAA. He said that SOSAA was established in 2005 with an aim to bring together Archaeologists, Historians, Anthropologists, Museum experts, Social Scientists and Archaeological Scientists on a dedicated platform to discuss and share their views and research as well as exchange ideas and issues relating to South Asian Studies. He formed the society along with two eminent archaeologists – Prof. Ishan Ali (Pakistan) and Prof. Sudharshan Seniveratne (Sri Lanka). Till now SOSAA has organised seven conferences in different South Asian Countries including Iran and Sri Lanka.

The gathering was addressed by the special guests Prof. Abhay Kumar Singh, Prof. Alok Tripathi, Additional Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India and founder of the Underwater Archaeology Wing in the Archaeological Survey of India and Dr. Sanjay Kumar Manjul, Additional Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India. They all shed light on the rich archaeological significance of Bihar, and its unexplored potential, emphasising its status as a treasure trove of archaeological wonders. They highlighted the necessity of platforms such as the SOSAA Congress in facilitating discussions and collaborations among archaeologists and researchers. Prof. Tripathi said that the Archaeological Survey of India plans to conduct excavations in every state in collaboration with all the state government, with an aim to uncover our collective history. Prof. Abhay Kumar Singh announced plans to introduce a postgraduate program in archaeology at Nalanda University.

Following the inaugural session, delegates reconvened at the Bihar Museum, where a special exhibition on Recent Researches on Rakhigarhi was inaugurated by Mr Rahul Kumar, Director (Directorate of Museum, Directorate of Archaeology), Department of Art, Culture and Youth, Government of Bihar. The exhibition had photographs illustrating the excavation process



and the archaeological findings such as jewelry, along with information on their preservation post-excavation. Additionally, young researchers presented 15 posters covering various topics at the convention.



On the first day the museum held five engaging sessions of paper presentations. The first session of the convention was presided over by Dr. Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Executive Director, Virasat, Patna and Dr. Sunil Kumar Jha, Deputy Director, Bihar Museum, Patna. A total of 6 papers were presented in this session, in which Dr. Ravi Shankar Gupta, Associate Curator, Bihar Museum, Patna, presented the report of the archaeological survey conducted by him in Jamui district, from which several important and new information were obtained. Dr. Toshvanatha Pradhan of Nalanda University shared important information through the current archaeological survey of Rajgir. Dr. Ankit Sahay shared information about Sasaram inscriptions. Chandan Kumar provided information about the recovery of stone tools from Rajgir, Sheikhpura and Nekpur. Mr. Manoj Kumar presented about the Western Vishnu idol and Priyatam Kumar about the Mundeshwari temple and the prehistoric remains of that area.

The subsequent session on the Archaeology of Eastern India with special reference to Bihar was presided over by Dr. Umesh Chandra Dwivedi, former Director, Museum and Dr. Ranbeer Singh Rajput, Curator, Bihar Museum, Patna. In the said session, Dr. Ishani Sinha shared detailed information regarding the new excavation of Buddhist stupas at Giriyak across Rajgir. Ranjana Mishra presented a research paper on the Landscape Archeology and Environmental History of Kesariya Stupa in Bihar. Dr. Dilip Kumar shared information about various elements of terracotta figurines in Moranjan in ancient Bihar. Anshu Mishra, while giving information about the stone idol of Mansa in the Bateswar Sthan temple, advocated the promotion of that place. Shanker Sharma outlined the archaeological viewpoint on the three new inscriptions found from Nalanda. Dr. Mandeep Kumar Chaurasia presented very important information about the clay sculptures of Buxar, while Snehdip Saha, outlined the settlement patterning and archaeological landscapes of the South Bihar Plains, with emphasis on Nalanda Hinterland.

Another session was chaired by Prof Vidula Jaiswal and Dr V. Selvakumar in which seven research papers were presented. Bulu Modak provided insights into the early phases of human settlement in North Bengal, while Kumar Saurabh discussed findings from the excavation at Kaseruakhera (Manpur) in

Palawal district, Haryana. Gautami Choudhari explored the Fauna from Muchchatla Chintamanu Gavi in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh. Hari Chandra Sharma focused on the early development of agriculture through archaeological ethnography and Neolithic tools from surveys in Sikkim. Jougathi Basumatary presented information on Palaeolithic settlements in Sonai Valley, Western Tripura, while Kumari Abhilasha and P.D. Sabale showcased the geographical landscape of the Mula River Basin in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. Dr. Manish Rai discussed temples located in Palghar district, Maharashtra, within the context of the early medieval period, and Rhutvij Apte and Mr. Divyansh Kumar Sinha shared information on the recovery of Stone Age tools from Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra.



On the second day, i.e. April 5, 2024 more than 100 research papers were presented across 18 sessions. The sessions were presided over by eminent scholars, researchers, senior archeologists and historians of the country, Dr. Bijoy Chaudhary, Dr Sunil Kumar Jha, Dr Umesh Chandra Dwivedi, Dr Ranbeer Singh Rajput, Prof Vidula Jaiswal, Dr V Selvakumar, Dr Atul Kumar Verma, Dr Vimal Tiwari, Prof Jaydev Misra, Dr Umesh Kumar Singh, Prof. O. N. Singh, Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh, Prof. Amarjiva Lochan, Dr. Manish Rai, Prof. Shivangi Reddy, Dr. Arpita Chatterjee, Prof. D.P. Tewari, Dr. Arun Raj, Dr. Ajit Kumar Prasad, Dr. Mumtaz Yattoo, Dr. Sreelakshmi, Dr. Lalit Gupta, Prod Kuldeep Bhan, Dr Narendra Parmar, Prof Humanshu Chaturvedi, Dr Arun Mallik, Dr Neekee Chaturvedi, Dr Archana Sharma, Dr. D.N. Sinha, Dr. Tamegh Pawar, Dr. Vinay Kumar, Dr. P.B.S. Sengar, Prof. Atul Tripathi, Dr Joseph Manuel, Prof Vibha Tripathi, Dr Prabhakar Upadhyay, Dr Rajiv Nigam, Dr Arati Deshpande–Mukherjee, Dr Sunil Patnaik and Dr Pramod Dandawate. The presentations covered topics ranging from the discovery of ancient antiquities during different periods of the Stone Age to detailed insights into megalithic archaeological sites in South India, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Additionally, scholars delved into the architectural configuration, origin and development of temples, as well as the evolution of Buddhist worship practices from the Hinayana to the Mahayana and Vajrayana periods.

Scholars presented articles discussing discoveries of ancient antiquities and provided detailed information on various periods of the Stone Age, including the Lower Palaeolithic, Middle Palaeolithic and Upper Palaeolithic. Scholars from South India, including Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, shared insights into the

megalithic archaeological sites in their regions. They explained that people in the ancient time erected megaliths in memory of their ancestors, a tradition that was not only practiced in South India but also in other parts of the country, and it continues in various forms today. Numerous prehistoric and historical research papers were presented, with scholars offering in-depth information about the architectural design and development of temples. The scholars discussed the early phase of Buddhism, during which statues of the Buddha were not made, instead, stupas were venerated as symbols of the Buddha. Chaityas were constructed where meditation, spiritual practice and worship occurred. Whenever a chaitya was built, a Buddhist monastery was also constructed nearby to accommodate Buddhist pilgrims. Scholars presented their own research on these topics and shared their findings in detail. As Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism gained prominence in later years, statues of Lord Buddha were created, and this practice continued until the end of the 12th century.

On April 6, the third day of the convention, over 90 research papers were presented across 12 sessions. These sessions were chaired by eminent historians, archeologists, researchers and scholars of the country such as– Prof. Gyaneshwar Chaubey, Prof. Prasad Joshi, Prof. P.D. Sabale, Prof. Shivanagi Reddy, Prof. Usha Rani Tiwari, Prof. Ajay Pratap, Prof. Jeevan Kumar Kharakwal, Prof. Vinay. Rao, Dr. P.D. Jagtap, Dr. Shreekant Jadhav, Dr. Md. Ajmal Shah, Dr. Md. Nazrul Bari, Dr. Skand Kumar Mishra, Dr. Rajat Sanyal, Dr. Shankar Sharma, Dr. Vasu Usapkar, Dr. Sushila Bharti, Dr. Ajit Kumar, Dr. Chander Shekhar, Dr. D.P. Sharma, Dr. Sanjeeb Kumar Singh, Dr. Nidhi Pandey, Dr. Sachin Kumar Tiwari, Dr. Aarti Deshpande, Dr Mhd Sayeed & Dr. Kishori Lal Chand.

Archaeologists and historians from southern states delivered detailed presentations on archaeological findings, showcasing remains obtained from surveys and excavations. They provided poignant information on ancient rock paintings in regions like Vidarbha and the Deccan, as well as the construction methods and evolution of caves in Maharashtra. Additionally, scholars shed light on modern technological advancements in understanding the architectural design of iconic sites like Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta. Furthermore, scholars from central Indian states like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh shared insights into archaeological discoveries and temple architecture. Scholars from Goa presented information on the region's cultural heritage and maritime archaeology, providing evidence of India's historic trade connections.

Representatives from Kashi Hindu University discussed cultural settlements along the doab of Ganga and Yamuna rivers, and the continuous technological developments of human life. Dr. Sunil Kumar Jha, Deputy Director of Bihar Museum, delivered a PowerPoint presentation on efforts to upgrade and expand the Patna Museum. He discussed the documentation, conservation and modern display of artefacts stored at the museum. The scholars attending the event expressed their appreciation to the Bihar Museum Administration and Director General for their significant contributions to this project. Scholars from various parts of Bihar delivered detailed lectures on Archaeology, Art and Culture. Furthermore, scholars from Odisha spoke about

archaeological excavations around the current enclosure of the Lingaraja Temple in Bhubaneswar. These excavations revealed ponds and excellent temple structures, including some ancient engraved artefacts. Dr. Salam Shyam Singh, an archaeologist from the North–Eastern regions, provided a detailed presentation on the cultural heritage of the North–Eastern states, particularly focusing on rock art in Mizoram.



The closing ceremony, held on April 6, took place in the Bihar Museum's Orientation Hall, with Prof. Kishore Kumar Basa, Chairman, National Monuments Authority, Delhi, Prof. Vasant Shinde, Prof. Prasad Joshi, Pro Vice Chancellor, Deccan College, Pune and Mr. Anjani Kumar Singh, in attendance. The welcome address was given by Dr. Sunil Kumar Jha and the vote of thanks was given by Dr. Ravi Shankar Gupta. The General Secretary of SOSAA, Shrikant Ganveer, expressed satisfaction with the event's success, noting that 31 sessions had been conducted over the three days, with over 300 research papers presented. Prof. Vasant Shinde commended the Bihar Museum and the Art, Culture and Youth Department for organising such a groundbreaking event, describing it as historic. Prof. Prasad Joshi lauded the convention as a milestone, while Prof. Kishore Kumar Basa, expressed hope for uncovering new chapters of history through such initiatives. Mr Anjani Kumar Singh, expressed happiness over the event's success, anticipating its impact on future research and understanding of history.



On the 7th of April, the fourth day of the South Asian Archaeological Society (SOSAA) Congress, an excursion was organised to Nalanda and Rajgir. This excursion included 250 archaeologists coming from various corners of the world like Sri Lanka, South Korea, Bangladesh, Iran and India. Distinguished figures such as SOSAA President Prof. Vasant Shinde, Former Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India and Current Head of the National Monuments Authority Prof. K.K. Basa and Director General of Sri Lanka Archaeology Department Prof. Gamini Ranasinghe were among the participants.

During the visit to Nalanda University, Assistant Superintending Archaeologist Shri Shankar Sharma provided insights into the historical significance of the ancient ruins. Following this exploration, the archaeologists were hosted at the Sushma Swaraj Auditorium of Nalanda University. Here, they were addressed by Nalanda University Vice Chancellor Prof. Abhay Kumar Singh and Prof. Vasant Shinde. Prof. Shinde expressed delight at witnessing the revival of Nalanda University and commended Vice Chancellor Prof. Singh for his visionary leadership and efforts in bolstering the academic infrastructure. The group of archaeologists concluded their tour and returned to Patna in the evening, enriched by their experiences and insights gained during the visit.





Natalia Leigh, Head of Political and Bilateral Affairs & Bhavna Vij, Senior Political Economy Advisor, UK High Commission Delhi



Patna Pirates visit to Bihar Museum



ICCR Team visit for 75th anniversary of ICCR



Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society – JEEVIKA & BARC International



Chang Jae Bok, Korean Ambassador to India



Mr. Philip Green OAM, Australian High Commissioner

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Visiting Hours

Tuesday–Sunday: 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM

Evening Visiting Hours: 5.00 PM to 7.00 PM

Monday is weekly Off

Tickets

Indian Adult–	100 INR
Indian Children– (5–12 Years Old)	50 INR
Foreigner Adult –	500 INR
Foreigner Children – (5–12 Years Old)	250 INR
School trips–	25 INR

Evening Tickets

Indian Adult–	50 INR
Indian Children– (5–12 Years Old)	25 INR


Facilities


Wheel Chairs
Ramp
Elevator
Child Care Room
Volunteer Guides
Cafeteria
Amphitheatre
Museum Shop
Library


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