



WORLD HERITAGE DAY

Heritage is the essence of India, we must preserve it

We celebrate April 18 as World Heritage Day. But, most of us do not work to preserve our heritage culture. We find it to be a boring subject, mainly because of lack of awareness about the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Intach).

Intach was founded on January 27, 1984, by Rajiv Gandhi, who was its first chairman. Headquartered in New Delhi, it is the largest non-government, non-profit organisation, dedicated to the conservation of Indian culture and heritage.

Ever since its inception, it has spread in most cities across the country, and has signed MoUs with various nations for coordinated effort.

The organisation, over the years, has taken over the restoration work of hundreds of monuments that fall outside the purview of the Archaeology Survey of India (ASI).

At places, the local administration also hands over the task of upkeep of heritage structures to Intach.

Documentation and listing of heritage sites is one of its thrust areas. Heritage



education and communication services are a big hit. A large number of publications are regularly brought out, including the quarterly newsletter 'Virsaat' for spreading awareness.

The scope of Intach is slowly widening. With conveners and co-conveners in each state till district level, the latest addition has been a Centre for Training and Capacity Building to promote expertise for better maintenance of our heritage.

It is also focusing on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) to preserve endan-

gered tribal of India. In its long journey it has even gone to the extent of moving judicial courts to save our heritage, which was threatened due to vested interests. Project Ganga was its first initiative in 1984.

India, a member of the World Heritage Convention, proudly possesses 29 world heritage sites (23 cultural and six natural), and over 3,650 protected monuments.

Cultural heritage is the essence of India. We must preserve it.

Colonel R D Singh (retd)
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TOI Chandigarh, 17 Apr '19