

## Dharohar | a quarterly newsletter

# Dharohar

# a quarterly n

had named it after His Highness in compliment to the latter's noble work of popular education, and had thrown it open to the public of the Baroda city free of charge. When he was shown that some of his collections of books would have a wider public utility in the Central Library, where unrestricted facilities were given to the public, he readily transferred his Vernacular and Sanskrit collections to the newly founded Central Library. The Palace Library, being His Highness' private Library formed from time to time according to the special requirements of His Highness' study, consisted of a very limited number of vernacular books. Shrimant Sanpatrao's hand of his vernacular books was therefore very welcome as it enabled the Central Library to start its Vernacular branch forthwith. Similarly his collection of Sanskrit books formed a valuable addition to the Sanskrit Branch.

At the commencement of this work of reconstruction, H. H. the Maharaja Sahib was also graciously pleased to increase the library budget. The Palace Library had an annual budget of Rs. 3,000. This was increased to Rs. 4,000 per year in consideration of the various books and manuscripts received and the efforts to make the library a model library for the whole State. The Government of Bombay, by their generous newspaper

[illegible]

The Palaeography Department at the University of Toronto has been fortunate to have received a number of donations of rare and valuable books. The first of these was a collection of 100 volumes, including 100 of the most important works of the 15th century, which were donated to the University of Toronto by the late Professor J. H. P. Lowe. These volumes, which were acquired by the University of Toronto in 1960, are now housed in the Palaeography Department. The second donation was a collection of 100 volumes, including 100 of the most important works of the 16th century, which were donated to the University of Toronto by the late Professor J. H. P. Lowe. These volumes, which were acquired by the University of Toronto in 1960, are now housed in the Palaeography Department. The third donation was a collection of 100 volumes, including 100 of the most important works of the 17th century, which were donated to the University of Toronto by the late Professor J. H. P. Lowe. These volumes, which were acquired by the University of Toronto in 1960, are now housed in the Palaeography Department.

The H. J. Heinz Foundation presents an educational exhibit at the Elliptical Gallery

through  
establishing  
the  
Circuit  
Library  
of those  
intimate  
part  
of  
to the  
carried  
never be  
look,  
match,  
in the  
ty hours

be provided with reading rooms in the first instance and small libraries wherever possible, but all those travelling libraries at least in almost all cases. All those travelling centrally directed from above, thus forming a mighty whole. In this way the whole State was eventually to be covered over with a thickly woven net of free public libraries.

### The Library Training Class

For all this work of reorganization it was obvious that a large staff of librarians and assistants was necessary and that this staff should receive a suitable training in librarianship on the most modern lines. In March of 1911, therefore, Mr. Jordan received appointment of His Highness' "Commissioned by name, John F. Jordan, Training Librarian for the Bombay University and its qualifications and emoluments of His Highness' to appoint, after a higher qualification, and was engaged, in accordance to Rs. 60 to 100 and men with lower qualifications to lower grade of Rs. 30 to 50. Although this library class was in the first instance, intended to train up a staff of librarians required for the Central Library, yet would

rooms in the  
size, it was  
stream of kn  
plunges every  
and refreshed  
many of the  
Library are signs of this  
and constant association with books on the  
H. H. the Mulsary Sahib. Like a true son of  
His Highness devoted himself heart and soul  
to the worship of the Goddess of Learning and  
with him, like a true *Batu* (student) of old, you  
want their badge of learning, his favour  
whether he was watching a cricket or a tennis  
or mounting the hill of Paragathi, or bottling  
Ajra Lake. Many a book of those times from


Maharajah of the  
 whom I have the honor  
 New York Library A  
 Annual Meeting held  
 of September last, 1890

into the principal Public Library of the State. This was a very momentous step taken at the beginning of the great work, a step which pushed forward the cause of the library movement in Baroda. This was only possible because of the great generosity and enthusiasm on the part of H. H. the Maharaja Sahib for the cause he had made his own. It gave in the first instance a splendid collection of nearly twenty thousand volumes to form the nucleus of a great Central Library of the State, and it enabled Mr. Borden to lay out his future plans on a large and comprehensive scale. Mr. Borden then got permission to form a Department of Libraries for the State, called the Central Library Department, and to form rules and regulations for opening free public libraries throughout the State. He accordingly planned to establish three smaller central libraries, one each for the other three Prants or Divisions of the State, the Central Library at Baroda serving also as a Central Library for the Baroda Prant. He further planned to open one library of a fair size in each of the other 38 towns in the State, besides smaller libraries in most of the larger villages. The smaller villages were also to be provided with reading rooms in the first instance and small libraries wherever possible, but with travelling libraries at least in almost all cases. All these libraries were to be interconnected with one another and to be centrally directed from above, and whole. In this way the whole to be covered over with a thickly




...ookswad, and  
...ome Library,  
...ted books  
...s. The  
... named it  
...r's noble work of  
...en to the public of  
... he was shown that some of  
... have a wider public utility in the  
... be unrestricted facilities were given to the  
... gradually transferred His Vernacular and Sanskrit col-  
... to the newly founded Central Library. The  
... Library, being His Highness' private library  
... from time to time according to the special require-  
... of His Highness' study, consisted of a very limited  
... ber of vernacular books. Shrinani Sampatna's  
... of his vernacular books was therefore very welcome  
... enabled the Central Library to start its Vernacular  
... forthwith. Similarly his collection of Sanskrit  
... formed a valuable addition to the Sanskrit Branch.  
... At the commencement of this work of reconstruction,  
... the Maharaja Saleb was also graciously pleased to  
... to the Library budget. The Palace Library had  
... annual book budget of Rs. 3,000. This was now  
... ased to Rs. 15,000 per year in consideration of the  
... were being formed and with a view  
... Library a model library for the  
... bary had to Reading Room at

In March of 19  
tion of His H  
training librari  
the Bombay  
qualifications a  
scholarship of  
to appoint, and  
higher qualifica  
Rs. 60 to 100  
lower grade of  
was in the first



...ning Class.  
...ation.

...reorganisation it was obvious  
...librarians and assistants was  
...his staff should receive a scientific  
...ation on the most modern lines.  
...therefore, Mr. Borden received sanc-  
...ness" Government to open a class for  
...and to admit therein six graduates of  
...iversity or men with higher educational  
...and six undergraduates, on a monthly  
...s. 25 for one year and with a promise  
...one year's successful training, men with  
...ions to the higher grade of librarians of  
...and men with lower qualifications to the  
...s. 30 to 50. Although this library class  
...instance, intended to train up a staff of



**HERITAGE**

**TRUST**



# ધરોહર



## Core Committee

Sameer Khera  
Sameer Gaikwad  
Arati Desai  
Rati Desai  
Jaideep Verma  
Sandhya Gajjar

## Editorial Team

Avi Sabavala  
Sandhya Gajjar  
Arati Desai  
Alka Smart

## Design and Layout

Pranjali Ambekar

## Write to us at

623, GIDC Industrial  
Estate, Makarpura,  
Vadodara, Gujarat, India,  
390010

[heritagetrustvadodara@  
gmail.com](mailto:heritagetrustvadodara@gmail.com)

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

### Talks, Telescopes, Textiles and more!

The first quarter began with a look at the sky, literally!

Heritage Trust rang in the New Year with a visit to the Observatory at the Science Faculty of MS University of Baroda. With news about the planetary alignment in the sky it was surely a sight to behold. We thank Prof. Ashish Jaituni, Prof. of Applied Physics, Polytechnic, for inviting our members.

Our city was privileged to play host to the legendary Sonal Mansingh, the queen of classical dance, and her troupe, who brought the story of the legendary Meerabai to life.

Our quarterly event, Varsa ni Vaato on March 1st 2024, featured textile designer Mala Sinha taking us through the journey of block printing for the textile industry of Mumbai and screened an interesting documentary, "The Modern in Print."

Participants got an opportunity to see and touch the blocks, many of them had some very old pre-Independence themes. Such a programme that brings the audio-visual element along with feel and touch was a truly immersive experience.

The Viraasat lecture is a flagship event of Heritage Trust. March 7th saw the well-known author Salil Tripathi talk about his book "The Gujaratis: A profile of the Community" to an enthusiastic audience at the Federation of Gujarat Industries. This was an appropriate occasion to felicitate our founder member, Prof. Dr. Ratan Parimoo, on being conferred the Padma Shree by the Government of India. Rajmata Shubhanginiraje Gaekwad did the honours. Prof. Parimoo is a highly respected artist and art historian.

This issue covers the above programmes, and we do hope more of our members will join our events that are specially planned for you.

Happy reading, and look out for more of our forthcoming events.

Avi Sabavala

# The Modern in Print: **Varsa ni Vaato 7**

The 7th edition of Varsa ni Vaato was held on the 1st of March, 2025. Textile designer Mala Sinha from Bodhi presented her documentary film, The Modern in Print, which traced the story and journey of a collection of 7500 wonderfully diverse blocks from Mumbai. Some of the blocks could be traced back to the pre-Independence era, with motifs and narratives depicting the visual narrative of that time. The documentary was a visual delight and gave the viewers an insight into several aspects of modern textile design.



## **Baroda** enjoys a classical dance drama

The icon of Indian classical dance, Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh regaled Barodians with her rendition of her Nathya Katha "Meera", the story of the legendary Meerabai on February 18th, 2024 at the auditorium of the SSG Medical College.

This was part of her six-city tour, organized by the Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Sahitya Academy in collaboration with IGNCA Regional Chapter, Vadodara. Heritage Trust was one of the supporters of this event.

A large number of dance enthusiasts graced the occasion. Members of the Royal family of Baroda, Rajmata Shubhanginiraje Gaikwad and Maharani Radhikaraje Gaekwad felicitated Dr. Mansingh and her troupe.



# A rendezvous with the planets!

The Astronomical Observatory is an imposing structure! It is right in front of the Zoology and Chemistry Department, a beautiful sight for anyone entering the University Campus from Sayajigunj gate. It has a spiral staircase of iron leading all the way to the top room, which houses the 3 m long Refractor Telescope. This Observatory is a gift from the late Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad, the Maharaja of Vadodara. It was built during the 2nd World War and was commissioned for use in 1939. It houses an 8-inch refractor telescope, which is still one of the biggest telescopes of its kind in India. The Observatory's charge is officially ascribed to Prof. P. K. Jha Head, Physics Department, Faculty of Science, The M. S. University of Baroda. His leadership and interest in the Observatory has ensured that regular programs and activities are organized for the benefit of students as well as the lay persons. Prof. P. K. Jha has delegated the charge of looking after the Observatory and conducting programs to Dr. Rajnikant Makwana.



*The Telescope at the Observatory*

Ever since its revival in 1997, the Observatory has been used often for academic purposes as well as for science popularization. Dr. M. B. Sureshkumar and myself regularly arranged programs for students of the Faculty of Science, especially those of the Physics Department, for whom Astronomy is a subject. They have, on a number of occasions, arranged programs for the staff and students of other Faculties/Departments of the M.S. University. On days of Astronomical importance, the Observatory has been open to the lay persons too. Most of them are very well covered by the press and the electronic media. The rotation of the dome and opening and shutting mechanism of the slit was automatized by 2003 by Prof. V. R. N. Mathrubhuteshwaran. Prior to that, this was achieved by pulling the chain.

The Observatory under Dr. Rakesh Chauhan and Dr. Rajnikant Makwana has been used frequently for observations. Presently, Mr. Tanmay Vyas has been instrumental in preparing students for experiments, general observation, handling of the Telescope and Dome and proper maintenance of the Observatory. Efforts are on to modernize certain aspects of the Astronomical Observatory.

On the 30th of January, 2025, a visit was planned in consultation with Sameer Khera, President, Heritage Trust. This program was exclusively for the EC members of the Heritage Trust. There were a few others who had come, mainly faculty members of the M.S. University. I had approached the President with an idea to do a planet viewing program for the HT members, as all the planets visible to the naked eye were seen in the evening sky. I have always considered the Observatory as a heritage building.

Dr. Rajnikant Makwana not only gave his consent but prepared a dedicated team of students under the leadership of Tanmay Vyas. They meticulously planned for our visit. Dr. Rajnikant Makwana and Prof. Rakesh Chauhan were present on the occasion.

We began our climb to the top of the Observatory via the iron spiral staircase at 6:25 PM. Along with Sameer Khera were Sameer Gaikwad, Sandhya Gajjar, Sriparna and other EC members. We could see the telescope in daylight, and the observations began with an introduction by the volunteers. Venus was the first and appeared as a bright crescent, becoming brighter and better as the evening progressed.



*Shrimant Radhikaraje at the Observatory*

A few minutes after we had begun, Sameer Khera informed me that Shrimant Radhikaraje, is here to see the Observatory and the planets. She was eager to see the telescope and the observatory and wasted no time in going up. After Venus, the telescope was focused on Saturn. The rings could not be seen in full glory as they were aligned perpendicular to our line of sight, but nevertheless, it was quite a sight, and we could easily spot Titan, one of the moons of Saturn.



*Looking at Venus through the slit in the Dome through the Telescope.*

The attendees had a great time viewing the beautiful Venus, the ethereal Saturn and its moon Titan, Mars and the Orion Nebula. Most of all, it was Jupiter who stole the hearts of the people who saw it. The giant planet looked like a roller bearing with bands on it, just like the threading on a white cricket ball. Jupiter was seen with its 4 big Jovian moons.

The volunteers went about explaining what the laymen were observing. Everyone stood in awe whenever the dome was made to rotate. We lost all our sense of direction as the dome rotated. The Orion Nebula was of great interest to the people present as it is a deep sky object. There were a number of questions asked about the 'Hows' and the 'Whys' of the Universe, the Solar System, Nebulas and the planets.

Shrimant Radhikaraje, stayed till every celestial object was seen. The EC members of the HT really made a great audience, eager to know about the history of the Observatory, the basics of the telescope, and the facts about the celestial objects they saw. There were a lot of pictures taken by the people present there.

A similar program was planned due to huge demand for HT members on the 6th of February, 2025. The small space at the Observatory, the narrow spiral staircase and the wooden base at the top of the observatory limit the number of visitors to not more than 20.

So another visit was planned. This time Arati Desai, Satyajai Mayor, Shivam Choksi and many others came for the program. The sequence of this program was exactly the same as the one before.

Details of the 8-inch refractor telescope housed at the Astronomical Observatory:

Focal length (f) = 300 cm

Focal Ratio = f/15

Magnification = 100 and 105

Resolution = 0.6" arc seconds

Aperture: 20 cm (8 inch)

The Telescope mount is equatorial

Commissioned in 1939

On a personal note, I am glad that we could arrange these programs at the Observatory. I thank Sameer Khera for extending his support in the restoration of the Dome and in near future, the Heritage Trust has graciously offered to help in putting up exhibits/display boards etc in the middle room and deliberations are on as to do what can be done so that laymen, students and visitors can know and learn more about the Observatory, Telescope and Astronomy in general.

Ashish Jaituni

Applied Physics Department, Polytechnic, The M. S. University of Baroda

## Viraasat Lectures

As part of the Heritage Trust's Viraasat Lecture Series, a well-researched talk, "Haribhakti Bankers of Baroda and the Rise of Gaekwad Power", by Sudev Sheth on a little-discussed aspect of the impact made by indigenous merchants and bankers in Gujarat on the fortunes of the Mughals, the British empire and sundry local rulers, was organized on January 8, 2025, at The Distillery, Alembic Art District, Baroda. We had a more than full house!



*Professor Sudev Sheth*

Sudev Sheth is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Pennsylvania, teaching across its various institutes and schools. His path-breaking research on how, by the beginning of the 1700s, the mighty Mughal Empire that ruled all of the Indian sub-continent, would begin to collapse from its pinnacle of power, losing its influence to local rulers and foreign powers, is compiled in his recent book titled, "Bankrolling Empire: Family Fortunes and Political Transformation in Mughal India."

Drawing on original sources, ranging across multiple languages, and moving between microscopic and wide-angled perspectives, Sheth traces the fortunes of various families of Jain jewelers and bankers, prominent amongst them that of the Jhaveris of Ahmedabad, revealing how they calculated and conducted their relations with political power during critical times – surviving the decline of Mughal power, the expansion of British control, and the ambition of local rulers, to emerge as a significant industrial house today, the Lalbhai's, taking the name from the family's pioneering industrialist, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai (1863-1912).

Like the Jhaveris, in Baroda, the banking firm called Haribhakti ni Pedhi, established by two brothers – Haribhai and Bhaktidas -- began to wield power in the 18th century by consolidating influence and wealth through associations with political aspirants. They lent money to the Gaekwads, earning profits through temporary rights to land revenue entrusted to them as a form of repayment by the state. They also played an important role in the financial administration of the Gaekwads in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Haribhakti family ended their run as elite bankers by the late 19th century. Major changes in how the Baroda state was organized under British paramountcy made indigenous finance obsolete in favour of modern banking. By the 1850s, the family had reoriented their enterprise towards managing assets in Baroda, including collecting rents from their several properties. Surviving members of the family took to entrepreneurship, building small-scale technology firms and accounting enterprises.



*A view of the audience*



*Prof. Sudev Sheth with HT-EC members*

Sudev Sheth's extremely well-presented and engaging talk threw light on various aspects of Gujarat's, and specifically Baroda's, financial history over the last 200 years.

This talk was followed by another Viraasat Lecture by New York-based award-winning journalist and author, Salil Tripathi, who spoke on his recent book, *The Gujaratis: Portrait of a Community*. It was held at the FGI Auditorium on March 7. Salil Tripathi, the great grand-nephew of Govardhanram Tripathi, author of the 19th century Gujarati classic *Sarasvatichandra*, has been a foreign correspondent covering South-east Asia, and a human rights researcher in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. He is the author of three works of non-fiction.



*Salil Tripathi*

Tripathi's book on Gujaratis celebrates this uncommonly industrious and resourceful community with 55 million people speaking the Gujarati language as their mother-tongue in India and about 6 million who stay abroad, spread across all continents, and mostly in every country. They are known for their entrepreneurial spirit, love of business, and profitable deal. No wonder then that most of the brilliant businessmen in India are Gujaratis. But beyond these stereotypical representations of the community, he questions, who are the Gujaratis, really? Where do they come from? Why are they the way they are? How do they build a sense of self and community and then take it too far, making 'others' out of those on the fringes?

No study of the Gujarati people has yet been attempted to answer all these questions and more. Until the appearance of this book, running into over 700 pages with detailed Notes. Through wide-ranging scholarship, original research, and a lifetime of observing the community he was born into, Tripathi crafts an engrossing account of the community. He dissects the Gujarati presence in India and across the world, and observes the strengths, weaknesses and idiosyncrasies of the community with acuity and wit. He talks about *asmīta* – the essence of being Gujarati and what it means to be one – as he traces the epic story of his people through centuries of social, political and cultural upheavals.

Sandhya Gajjar

## Historic Landmark Project

As part of the on going Historic landmark project, 7 more legacy plaques were installed. We are indebted to our sponsors who make this project possible



*Prof. Dr. Ratan Parimoo bring felicitated by the Rajmata*



*Salilbhai autographing his work for Sameer Khera, President, HT*



**Lukhshmi Vilas Palace-** Unveiled by Rajmata on 13th Jan



**Sayaji Vihar Club-** 8th February 2025



**Aurobindo Nivas-** 24th January 2025



**Bhadra Kacheri-** 4th February 2025



**General Post Office-** 4th February 2025



**Bandstand-** 24th January 2025



**Training School for Women-** 8th February 2025