





## 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

### Heritage unveiled

In our past, the first 3 months of the year are a time when the season is just right to experience the great outdoors of the country. Heritage Trust captured the cool season to introduce new and innovative experiences also.

Our new initiatives included a session on passion gardening and the first edition of Supper Club "Heritage on a Plate."

Culinary delights have always been a big hit. A repeat of the Alavi Bohra walk at Badri Mohalla to enjoy the cultural and food heritage of this minuscule community was a grand success. Our food heritage events, rebranded as "The Supper Club", saw the first program at the stately haveli of Madhav Baug. Very appropriately, the theme was the Royal Gaekwad cuisine. While the delicious meal prepared by our gracious hostess, Ms Indrayani Gaekwad, was relished by all, it was also time to meet and greet in traditional Maharashtrian costumes and with some fun games to test our knowledge of Baroda's history.

Collaboration with like-minded individuals and organizations is key to our outreach. Some interesting programs were held with Parul University and Navrachana group of institutes, that was specially focused on the student community.

We express our gratitude to all those who have put in tireless efforts to curate and organize the many events and invite you to delve into reliving these events covered in this issue.

We wish our readers good health and pray for peace in our world.

Avi Sabavala

# Alavi Bohra **Heritage walk and dinner**

On the 18th January, a heritage walk was organized for the members of the Heritage Trust in Badri Mohalla in which 36 members participated.

This walk started at 11 am from Noorani Masjid where everyone saw the architecture of the mosque. This mosque has completed 53 years and there was a 350-year-old mosque on its site. This mosque is called the Wonder of Marble.

From there, a 90-year-old house was visited where a boathouse and other rare things were seen. The main attraction in this house is the ceramic tiles of Belgium which are still in the same condition.

After that, all the members visited Syedna Sahib where they were shown a 670-year-old manuscript. Syedna Hatim Zakiuddin Sahib added that it is our duty to preserve the heritage. This Syedna Saheb's house is 125 years old and we have preserved all the things of our elders.

After that, all the members saw the collection of old cameras which Hussainbhai Edenwala has preserved the heritage of his father Ziyauddin Bhai. The 100-year-old camera became the center of attraction. Hussainbhai Surti, who lives in Surti Haveli in Mogalwada, showed the old crockery of his haveli which is from Germany, France and Holland. It is about 100 years old.

Dr. Zulqarnain Bhaisaheb who hosted this walk explained that the religious place was not only for religious activities but also a school, a social center. Today everything has changed. Our heritage is our identity and that is the reason for our existence. Lastly, all the members had lunch in Bohra Thal and enjoyed all the Bohra dishes.

Bhaisaheb Hakimuddin



*Heritage Antiquities*



*The group at Masjid*



*Participants being showed the different elements in the community*

# An evening with Planets

On repeated requests Heritage Trust organized, two sessions of stargazing at the Astronomical Observatory, Faculty of Science, M S University on Feb 12 & Feb 13. This event was graciously organized by dept of Physics and Prof Ashish Jaituni and the enthusiastic student volunteers at the Observatory in the M.S.University Campus. The participants were shown the Pleiades star cluster and Orion Nebula as well as Saturn and Jupiter.

Some comments from the enthusiastic participants are as under:

"Witnessing the planets through India's largest operational historic telescope inside the iconic Sky Watch Dome felt like traveling through time and space at once. "

"A true Gaekwadi legacy, this magnificent Carl Zeiss refractor (1939) with its classic German equatorial mount, once housed atop the Laxmi Vilas Palace and personally used by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, now continues to inspire seekers of the sky at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda astronomical observatory."

"A royal passion for astronomy that turned into a timeless gift for learners and dreamers."

"Grateful to Sameer Khera and Heritage Trust of Vadodara for curating this unforgettable celestial experience and inviting me to this session, the very first and one of its kind for me."

Garima Malvanker

## Heritage on a plate

Experiencing **Culture** through the **Supper Club**.

There is a certain kind of heritage that cannot be archived. It doesn't live in buildings or within the pages of a catalogue. It lingers instead in the aroma of a tempering, in recipes that are never quite written down but always remembered.

This is intangible heritage; fragile, evolving, and deeply human. The idea of the Supper Club, Heritage on a Plate, emerged from a simple thought: how do I make people experience and appreciate heritage, rather than just observe it? Something that people could feel a part of, regardless of their familiarity with heritage discourse.



Supper

Food felt like the most natural entry point. Because food, in its essence, is a universal connector. Our first edition, centred around Maharashtrian cuisine, drew inspiration from the Gaekwadi table, an ode to Baroda's layered cultural history. But what unfolded went far beyond the menu. Dressed in traditional attire with *naths* and *topis*, the participants came together over riddles, trivia, and a deck of cards tracing the Gaekwadi lineage, discovering the city, cuisine, and each other along the way.

Breaking bread together (read: *puran poli*) in a historic boutique property like Madhav Bagh sparked conversations, connections and a shared curiosity for culture.

To me, this is supper in its truest form: people coming together to cherish heritage while building a like-minded community.

In a city like Vadodara, rich in legacy yet evolving, there is a need to make heritage more engaging, especially for younger audiences. 'Heritage on a Plate' attempts to bridge this gap between preservation and participation with each edition in these series celebrating culture, cuisine and community, while facilitating conversations around conservation.

Look out for our 2nd Edition!

Krupa Saraiya



*Trivia Times at Supper Club*



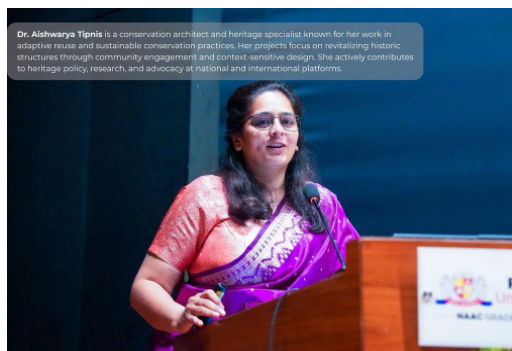
*The first edition of Supper Club*

# International Conference

## Learning from **Architecture Heritage of South Asia**

Heritage Trust was invited to participate in the International Conference, "Learning from Architectural Heritage of South Asia, Sthapatya Samvaad 2.0", organised by Parul University, from 9th to 11th February 2026.

Ms. Aishwarya Tipnis (Conservation Architect, Founder – Atelier Aishwarya Tipnis Architects) represented Heritage Trust as a keynote speaker. Her session reflected on the critical role of community engagement and cultural continuity in conservation practice.



*Aishwarya Tipnis representing Heritage Trust at the Conference*

Drawing from her extensive work on adaptive reuse, heritage restoration, and post-disaster reconstruction across India, she emphasized that conservation is not merely about preserving structures, but about sustaining living traditions and collective memory. She highlighted how sensitive interventions, rooted in research and context, can revitalize historic environments while ensuring their relevance for contemporary society.

An inspiring and thought-provoking lecture that deepened our understanding of conservation as a dynamic dialogue between past, present, and future.



*Heritage Trust photo exhibition at Conference*

## The Architect of **Modern** Baroda Interpreting **Maharaja Sayajirao's** Legacy into a **Sustainable & Resilient** 21st Century City

The Maharaja Fatehsingh Museum and the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad Smarak Trust celebrated the extraordinary legacy of the visionary, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III on his 163rd birth anniversary with the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad Memorial Lecture held on the 11th of March at the Laxmi Vilas Palace.

President Sameer Khera delivered a lecture "The Architect of Modern Baroda: Interpreting Maharaja Sayajirao's Legacy into a Sustainable & Resilient 21st Century City". He drew fascinating parallels between the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the progressive governance introduced by the Maharaja more than 125 years ago.

From education and public infrastructure to inclusive urban planning and social reform, the talk highlighted how Sayajirao's visionary policies continue to offer lessons for building sustainable and resilient cities today.

An inspiring evening reflecting on a ruler whose foresight continues to guide Baroda's future.



*The attentive audience at Laxmi Vilas Palace*



*President Sameer Khera delivering the lecture*

# Passion Gardening

Where each **Plant** tells a story at **Dar Us Salaam**

On a cold Sunday morning in January, around thirty-five Barodians were escorted by Bhaisaheb Nurrudin to his residence, named 'Dar Us Salaam'. Its big garden was the centre of interest at the 'Passion Gardening' walk which was generously hosted by Bhaisaheb belonging to the spiritual family of the Alavi Bohra sect who have made Vadodara their home since the 15th century.

Welcomed warmly at the gate by Bhaisaheb's family members with an 'ittar', the visitors were made comfortable in the large 'verandah' where the Bhaisaheb gave a short introduction on the importance of being one with nature. Environment takes care of itself when we humans comply with nature's need and not greed, he said.

Introducing the various large trees, plants and shrubs, many fruiting ones, he maintained that human touch, feel and emotion is equally important to the plants. They also need space, light and nourishment – both above and below the soil. Gardening is an act of giving which should be pursued as a means to connect with the soul.

That is when vegetation gives manifold returns. This was the biggest takeaway for the group, as he sprinkled nuggets of gardening wisdom while introducing the varieties at his compact but thoughtfully curated garden all around the house.

The varieties of plants in the garden are listed below:

## Fruiting trees and plants:

Papaya, Khatumbda, Palestinian Lime, Kamrakh, Guava, Mulberry, Chinese Lime, Pomegranate, Apple Bor, Chikoo, Banana, Anjeer, Sweet lime, Custard apple, Mango, Cashew nut, Avocado, Falsa.

## Vegetables:

Brinjal, Tuber, Surti Papdi, Valor, Drumstick, Sponge gourd (galka), Ivy gourd (giloda), Chilli,



*Bhaisaheb describing his garden*



*Sameer Gaikwad thanking Bhaisaheb Nurrudin*



*The group*

Chives, Spring Onion, Green Garlic, Ginger, Coriander, Fenugreek, Potato, Tomato.

**Medicinal plants:**

Mint, Nagod, Ardusi, Patthar chatta, Noni, Betel leaves (paan), Fennel seeds (variyali), Giloy, Tulsi, 7-spices, Curry leaves, Hadjod, Green tea, Madhu Nashini, Aloevera, Chanothi, Damro, Mehndi, Ajwain.

The walk and talk came to an end with the visitors being offered sweet and savoury breakfast along with coffee by the gracious hosts. Indeed, it was a lesson on how with passion, knowledge, love and care, one can create an Eden Garden, anywhere.

Heritage Trust is thankful to Bhaisaheb Nurrudin and his family for hosting us for an enchanting morning.

Sameer Gaikwad

# Sevasi Vaav **School Project**

On 23rd January, as a part of the School Project, Mr. Sameer Gaikwad, Ms. Alka Smart, and Ms. Advaita Jalan, guided the grade 6 students of Navrachana International School, Vadodara (IB) through the several aspects of history, architecture, sustainability and folklore embedded within stepwells during their visit to the historic Sevasi Vav.

Through close observation, the students engaged with concepts of symmetry, measurement, and settlement patterns—connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts. It was a morning of immersive discovery, where heritage became a living classroom, fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper connection to our shared past.



*The students listening to Sameer Gaikwad and Alka Smart*

# Vaarsani Vaato

In the 9th edition of Vaarsani Vaato held on 27th February 2026, Dr. Srinivas Solapurkar enlightened the member audience with several unknown and known stories about Vadodara's glorious past and enduring legacy.



*Srinivas Solapurkar with Sandhya Gajjar presenting him with a memento on behalf of the Trust.*



*Srinivas talks of the splendour of the Gaekwadi era.*

## Viraasat Lecture: Mapping the world from Gujarat.

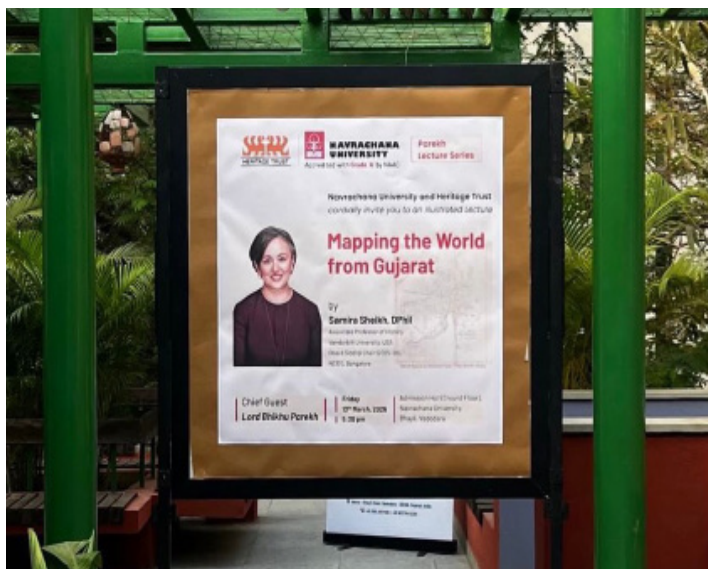
On Friday, March 13th, this year's first Viraasat Lecture by Samira Sheikh, was held in collaboration with Navrachana University. It was a captivating exploration of how people from Gujarat understood and mapped their world long before modern cartography.

Welcoming their distinguished alumnus back to campus, Navrachana School, Sama proudly hosted Dr. Sheikh, whose engaging narration brought centuries-old maps to life. Drawing from her extensive research, she shared remarkable insights into historic maps of Gujarat — including the rare 17th-century map preserved at the Baroda Museum & Picture Gallery.

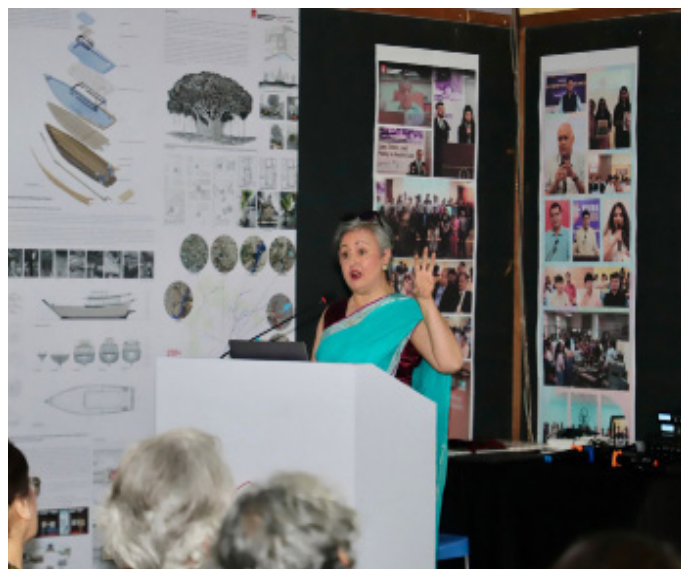
This was the inaugural lecture of the Parekh Lecture Series organised by Navrachana University to mark the generous donation of Lord Bhikhu Parekh, UK, of a considerable section of his library to the University.

The lecture revealed how maps of that era were far more than simple tools for directions. They recorded landscapes rich with flora and fauna, wildlife, settlements, infrastructure, and religious sites, alongside trade routes, river ways, and travel paths — offering a vivid picture of how people once understood their environment and navigated the world.

Blending rich scholarship with captivating storytelling, she held the audience completely engrossed, revealing how sailors, merchants, monks, scholars, and the rulers of Gujarat once understood, imagined, and mapped their place in the wider world.



*Virasat lecture at NUV*



*Samira Sheikh entralling the audience*



*The audience in rapt attention*



*Provost of NUV, Pratyush Shankar, Lord Bhikhu Parekh and Sameer Khera*

# Signages

As part of our ongoing project, 2 more plaques were installed at the Suryanarayan Temple and the Mairal Ganapati Temple in the city. This takes the total to 35 plaques installed.



*The signage at the Suryanarayan Temple*



*Installed Signage at Mairal Ganapati Temple*



*Installation of Signage at the Mairal Ganapati Temple*