

KOLKATA HOSTS AUSTRALIA: INDIA HERITAGE WEEK

SANDIP HOR

THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL MUSEUM, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Loreto College and AusHeritage (Australia's International Network for Cultural Heritage) were partners for the recently concluded four-day Australia India Heritage Week, held in Kolkata from 11-14 January, 2010.

Key activities during the week included a workshop for museums in West Bengal and North East India at Rotary Sadan, a forum & workshop on the adaptive reuse of historic buildings with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Kolkata), evening public lectures on heritage conservation at Loreto College and visits to a number of heritage buildings. Four Australian heritage experts and a large number of Indian heritage professionals attended the sessions.

"Heritage is a very important aspect of society and I am very supportive of this close collaboration between Australia and India in this area. Professionals from AusHeritage, Australia's international network for heritage services, continue to work closely with Indian institutions on several projects, including workshops and training sessions," said Peter Varghese, High Commissioner of Australia, who attended the formal launch held at Loreto College on 12 January. The four-day program was inaugurated by Dr Saroj Ghosh, pioneer of the science museum movement in India, on 11 January, prior to the start of the workshop with Victoria Memorial.

"Though Australian and Indian



Vinod Daniel addressing the gathering



heritage practitioners have completed a number of projects over the last decade, this is the first joint heritage activity in

Kolkata," said Vinod Daniel, Chair of AusHeritage, who has been the key person organising the event from the

Australian side.

AusHeritage is Australia's international network for cultural heritage services. The organisation's members include Australian universities, national collecting institutions, state galleries, libraries and museums, private architectural firms and private and government conservation services.

The purpose of the Australia-India Council (AIC), established in 1992, is to broaden the relationship between Australia and India by encouraging and supporting contacts and increasing levels of knowledge and understanding between the peoples and institutions of the two countries. The Council initiates or supports a range of activities designed to promote a greater awareness of Australia in India and a greater awareness of India in Australia, including visits and exchanges between the two countries, development of institutional links, and supporting studies in each country. The Council offers support, in the form of funding, for projects likely to contribute to the development of the relationship, within the context of AIC objectives and guidelines. They have also funded previous initiatives in the heritage area.

AusHeritage also provided support for developing a new exhibition gallery at the Chhatrapati Shivaji (Prince of Wales) Museum in Mumbai in addition to working closely with several private and government Indian cultural heritage organisations including their recent October 2009 workshop for Museums in Kerala in collaboration with the Kerala Centre for Heritage Studies. It has a memorandum of understanding on cultural heritage collaboration with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

Quarantine says no to Indian burfi, dairy

RAJBIR SINGH

THE AUSTRALIAN QUARANTINE INSPECTION SERVICE (AQIS) is a government organisation that provides quarantine inspection services at all Australian international airports, seaports and mail centres to intercept pests and diseases. AQIS also looks after import permits and export certification, and helps the government maintain trading relationships with other countries.

Food items, plant material and animal products from overseas could introduce serious diseases and pests such as foot-and-mouth disease, mad cow disease, rabies, karnal bunt and khapra beetle, which are not present in Australia. These serious pests and diseases could have devastating effects for Australia's important agriculture, environment, and export and tourism industries.

Dairy products from certain countries are not allowed into Australia due to the risk of introducing foot-and-mouth disease. India is one of those countries.

Typical items seized from India at Australian airports and mail centres include:



- Dairy sweets such as burfi, gulab jamun, rasgula and peda;
 - Unprocessed and unshelled nuts such as almonds, walnuts and cashews;
 - Home-made pickles, spices, fruit jams and preserves;
 - Uncooked pulses, beans and grains;
 - Fresh and dried fruits and flowers;
 - Seeds for growing.
- Before landing in Australia you will be given an Incoming Passenger Card (IPC), which is a legal document. If you

are carrying anything you can eat or drink, plant material or animal products you must tick 'yes' on the card. Even if you are unsure or do not understand the questions on the card, you should tick 'yes'.

On arrival your baggage may be X-rayed, inspected or checked by a detector dog team. If you fail to declare or dispose of any quarantine item or make a false declaration:

- You may receive an on-the-spot fine

of up to \$AUD220.

■ You could be prosecuted and face a fine of up to \$AUD66,000 or 10 years imprisonment, which may result in a criminal record.

You will not be penalised if goods are declared.

Many of the food items you may want to bring into the country are available in grocery stores in Australia. The following tips may help to expedite the process of quarantine inspection and possibly avoid quarantine fines:

- Be aware of the contents in your baggage.
- Pack your own bags or be present when they are packed.
- Pack all items of quarantine concern in a separate bag at an accessible place.
- If you have items you do not wish to declare, you can dispose of them in quarantine bins in the airport terminal.

To find out what can and can't be brought into Australia:

- Visit the AQIS web site www.aqis.gov.au
- Hindi/Punjabi Fact Sheets: www.daffa.gov.au/languages/hindi www.daffa.gov.au/languages/punjabi
- Download the quarantine brochure, What can't I take into Australia? Or What can't be Mailed to Australia?