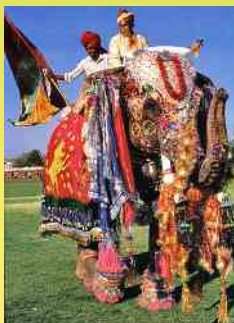


ELEPHANT PAGEANT TO MARK HOLI FESTIVAL



The Elephant Festival – an extravagant affair involving both man and animal – is held every year in Jaipur. To mark the occasion of Holi (the festival of colours), Rajasthan Tourism organizes this unique festival in which domesticated elephants gather from all over the state.

From morning, the *chaugan* (field) in front of the City Museum in Jaipur becomes a scene of activity. In the earlier days, this was the venue of deadly elephant fights organized for the entertainment of the royal court. On the day of the festival, the crowd begins to gather as the

mammoth animals start arriving with their owners or trainers.

The flourish of huge tusks makes some of the animals look grand. But most of the participating elephants are females. Each elephant is gaily decorated with multiple *jhalars* or velvet drapes, elaborate headgear and ornaments, and prodigiously painted over with colourful designs. The rider or the mahout perched atop the elephant's back is also dressed in royal finery and together they recall the days when Maharajas ruled over Jaipur.

The programme begins with a procession of elephants. Attired in full regalia, they walk past the dignitaries, the judges and the rows of spectators, occasionally stopping to garland important people. The most attractive elephant is awarded the "Best Decorated Elephant Shield", a proud moment for its owner too. Even though it is a day long function, preparations starts days ahead. The attendants ready the trousseau, often a brand new one every year, while the trainer washes and cleans the animal. Then the elephant is covered with elaborately painted designs. Next comes the gorgeous drapes and the shiny ornaments, followed by the elaborate headgear.

In the *Jataka* stories of Buddhism, references are made to the tradition of Hastimangala (Elephant Festival). For Rajput kings the elephants were of special significance not only during war, but also during royal celebrations. The procession was led by the *Nishan-ka-Haathi* or the flag carrier. The king always mounted a caparisoned elephant.



Although elephants are the star attraction in this festival, there is also a parade of gaily decorated horses and camels immediately after. A stream of folk dancers and musicians, showcasing their various talents, follows them. The events that arouse the most excitement, apart from the beauty pageant, are

the elephant race, elephant polo matches and gymnastics. One cannot but stare in awe as the elephants stand, stretch and bend to the commands of their masters. The tug-of-war between the elephants and a group of 10 men evokes more laughter than anything else and the result of the game is a foregone conclusion.

Meanwhile, folk artistes also regale the crowd with shows of *dhaph*, and other folk dances and tunes. The Gaj Shringar is an astonishing exhibition of howdahs, *jhalars*, ornaments, headgear and other elephant-related paraphernalia, as well as food and medicine for the animals. Then as the sun is about to go down, men on elephant back rain coloured powders on the crowd.

Contd.

Cultural Calendar for March

- March 10** Mirudangam & Carnatic Vocal Music Recital by Master. Abilash Thevaraj & Mr. A.K.Karunakaran, eminent Carnatic Vocalist
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30p.m.
- March 13** *Holi Milan* - Programme to mark the Holi festival
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00p.m.
- March 21** "Nav Prathibha" – A display of new talents in Indian Classical Music & Dance by the Students of the Indian Cultural Centre
Venue & Time: Bishops College Auditorium, Perehera Mw., Colombo 03 at 6.30p.m.
- March 30** Film: Indian (with English subtitles)
Language: Tamil
Directed by: Shanker
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs

(Admission to all programmes is free on first come first served basis except March 21st programme)

An introduction to Hindustani Classical Music

Music appreciation course in a series of lectures, with live demonstration starting from 16th March 2006. Every Thursday at 6.00 pm at ICC. For further details please contact ICC on tel. no. 2500014

The festival concludes in a sparkling show of fireworks. Spectators and participants prepare to return home with dreams of enjoying a colourful Holi the next day.

The exuberant festival of Holi is also associated with the immortal love of Krishna and Radha. The young Krishna would complain to his mother Yashodha about why Radha was so fair skinned and he so dark. Yashodha advised him to apply colour on Radha's face and see how her complexion would change. Holi is celebrated with particular gaiety in Mathura, the birth place of Krishna. Down the ages the spirit of Holi has remained the same.

Each year, Holi is a time for revelry, meeting with friends and relations and playing with colour. Friends squirt coloured water on each other and apply coloured powder (*gual* and *abeer*) on each other. There is the constant accompaniment of special Holi songs, mostly about Krishna's play of colour with the gopis of Brindaban, and the pulsating rhythm of the *Dhol* (Indian drum). Special foods and sweets are prepared. Much horseplay and joking is permitted and a popular Hindi phrase goes- do not take offense; it's Holi. In times pass as well as now, Holi remains a time to celebrate- relationships, friendships, the coming of summer and the ties that cut across all strata of society.

(For further information in regard to Elephant Festival in Jaipur, contact Department of Tourism , Art & Culture Government of Rajasthan Tel. : 5110595-7 , Fax. : 5110591 E-mail : adv@rajasthan-tourism.gov.in)



March 2006



Paresh Maity, *Melody*, Oil on canvas 137 x 137 cms, 2003

Indian Cultural Centre

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Colombo 4, Sri Lanka

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ICCR Website: www.iccrindia.org

In Retrospect

10th January

World Hindi Day Celebrations



The Indian Cultural Centre celebrated World Hindi Day on 10th January. World Hindi Day commemorated the inauguration of the first World Hindi Conference on 10th January, 1975 by the former Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi. The World Hindi Conferences aim to popularize Hindi and to gather together Hindi lovers and to have literary exchanges in the language.

The programme at ICC comprised poetry recitations by the students of the Centre, small skits in Hindi and a musical recital of Hindi songs by Mr. Heshan Gamage. The programme commenced with a speech by the Director of the Indian Cultural Centre Smt. Nagma Mallick. She spoke with appreciation of how Hindi language is popular in Sri Lanka and also the various courses conducted by the Centre. The speech was followed by poetry recitation by the students of various ages on different subjects and the comedy skits in Hindi language which had a good following. The programme was very well attended and was indeed a special treat for Hindi lovers



12th January

Bharatha Natyam Recital by Ms. Vidhya Kamalabayson



Ms. Vidhya Kamalabayson, an upcoming and talented Bharatha Natyam dancer presented a Bharatha Natyam recital at the Centre on 12th January. Vidhya received her training in Bharatha Natyam under Kalabhooshanam Sivakumari Gnanendran.

The first performance for the evening was "Pushpanjali" an invocatory item in praise of Lord Nadaraja and continued with "Ganeshavanthanam", "Allarippu", "Jeya Jeya Sambo" dance for a song in praise of Lord Nadarajah, God of dancing, "Velan Varuvanadi", "Ambal Sthuthi", "Kaliyuga Varadhan", "Thillana" and concluded with "Mangalam". The performance was greatly appreciated by the audience gathered at the Centre.

20th January

An evening of Hindustani Vocal Music Recital by Prof. Krishna Kumar Kapoor



Prof. Krishna Kumar Kapoor, an accomplished singer and musician from Lucknow, presented an evening of captivating Hindustani vocal music at the Indian Cultural Centre on 20th January. Prof. Kapoor obtained his Master's Degree in vocal music from Kanpur University and Sangeet Nipun from Bhathkhande Vidyapith, Lucknow.

He has been teaching at the Bhathkhande Vidyapith, Lucknow over 35 years.

Prof. Kapoor commenced the recital with raag "Bhagyashree" Vilambit Madyalaya & Tarana and continued with raag "Basanth", raag "Binnasaja" and concluded with a bhajan in raag "Binnasaja". Prof. Kapoor's melodious voice mesmerized the audience, and his remarkable mastery over the art was immensely appreciated by the music lovers gathered at the centre.

23rd – 31st
January

Performances by eminent Odissi exponent Smt. Ranjana Gauhar & her troupe from India



Renowned Odissi dance exponent Smt. Ranjana Gauhar & her 13 member dance troupe from India captivated the Sri Lankan audience with their performances. Their visit to Sri Lanka, included performances in Colombo at the Bishops College Auditorium, India House, Indian Cultural Centre & the John de Silva Theatre and in Kandy at the Hindu Association Auditorium & the University of Peradeniya. Ranjana Gauhar & her troupe's visit was sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs & National Heritage, Sri Lanka.



In celebration of the 56th Anniversary of the Republic Day of India Smt. Ranjana Gauhar & her troupe presented "Geet Govindam" – a dance drama, Jayadeva's dramatic lyrical poem at the Bishop's College Auditorium on 25th January to a packed audience. The troupe also presented a classical Odissi dance performance at the India House at the Republic Day reception hosted by Her Excellency Smt. Nirupama Rao, High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka on 26th January, a classical Odissi dance performance & lecture cum demonstration for the students of the University of Visual & Performing Arts on 28th. The "Geet Govindam" dance drama was repeated at the Hindu Association Auditorium, Kandy & the Peradeniya University on 29th & 30th.

Smt. Ranjana Gauhar & her troupe's performances received rave reviews at all places.

NEW COURSES

HINDI

Course begins	:	16 th March 2006
Class day	:	Monday to Friday
Age limit	:	Children's class 6 to 15 years Adults class over 16 years
Course fee	:	Registration fee Rs.150/= Monthly fee Rs.200/=
Registration	:	Commenced from 4 th January 2006

Vacancies exist

CARNATIC VOCAL MUSIC

Course begins	:	1 st March 2006
Class day	:	Saturday
Age limit	:	Over 6 years
Course fee	:	Registration fee Rs.250/= Monthly fee Rs.300/=
Registration	:	Commenced from 1 st February 2006

LIBRARY

Recent Library Accessions

India in the Antarctic: Scientific and Geopolitical perspectives

Schatarvedi et al ed.
New Delhi: South Asian
pub.,2005,255p.
002397
080 IND

Adventure Stories

Dutta, Arup K
New Delhi: CTBT,1995,397p.
002399
808.068 DUT

Vitality of India (The)

Gopal Krishnan ed.
Chandigarh: CRRID,2004,366p.
002400
080 VIT

No My Lord: A window on India's realpolitik

Jai Singh, Hari
New Delhi: Siddharth pub.,2005, 531p.
002396
320 JAI

Three plays: Naga Mandala,

Hayavadana Tughlaq
Karnad, Girish
New Delhi: OUP,1994,221p.
002401

Press in India (The) : An overview

Bhargava G.S.
New Delhi: NBT,2005,217p.
002402
070.54 BHA

Indian Foreign Service

Dixit J.N.
Delhi: Konark pub.,2005,328p.
002429
327.2 DIX

Reform in the Arab World

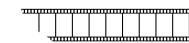
Ahmad T.
New Delhi: India Research
press,2005,173p.
002430
327 AHM

Indian Cricket Through the Ages

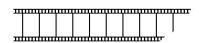
Majumdar B. ed.
New Delhi: OUP,2005,425p.
002431
796.5 IND

India and Neighbours

Contemporary News & Features(CNF)
New Delhi: CNF,2005,283p.
002432



Film in March



Indian (with English subtitles)

Language: Tamil
Directed by: Shankar
Starring : Kamalhasan, Manisha Koirala,
Urmila Matondkar, Suganya & Kasthuri

