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BANGABASI MORNING COLLEGE

19, RAJKUMAR CHAKRABORTY SARANI
KOLKATA- 700 009

'A' Grade Re - Accredited by NAAC, 2016

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REPORT ON A VISIT TO INDIAN MUSEUM

We, The students of History honours of Bangabasi Morning College (second year, third semester) were taken to the Indian Museum by the teachers of the respective department on 5 th January ,2023 for a visit as an integral part of the CBCS curriculum . It was a wonderful learning experience for us. The trip began with a lot of enthusiasm and vigour. On that day we gathered at the college premises early in the morning and then were taken by a public bus. Around 10 a.m the team has reached to the spot .After collecting the tickets from the counter finally we were allowed to enter the two hundred years old and prestigious Indian Museum. Founded in 1814and originated from the Asiatic society of Bengal Indian Museum ,Kolkata is the oldest and largest Museum in India. This multipurpose Museum of national status aims at acquisition, preservation, study in all objects of national importance and dissemination of knowledge and recreation through them. The collection highlights the oriental culture, history and the natural science and contains some specimens of other countries also.

In 1814,Dr Nathaniel Wallich , known as the father Indian Museum, proposed to the Council of Asiatic Society for the foundation of a museum on February .He was appointed as Honorary Curator (Superintendent) of the Oriental Museum of the Asiatic Society. In 1837 James Prinsep, Secretary of the Asiatic Society, wrote to the government to adopt a proposal of the Society for the formation of a 'National Museum at the cost of the State' on July26 .Later,in 1862the Government of India advocated for the foundation of a Public Museum in Calcutta which resulted as the first Indian Museum Act(Act No 17)passed for the establishment of a Public Museum and a body corporate by the name of the Trustees of the Indian Museum formed with Sir Burness Peacock, the Chief Justice of the judicature at Fort William, Bengal, as the President of the Board in 1866.After that the foundation of the Imperial Museum laid on the finest site of Chowringhee(a corner plot in Park street area) in front of the Small Cause Court in 1867. In 1913 Indian Museum Act (Act No X of 1910) passed.

The spectacular building of the Indian Museum is an architectural style which is a form of Italianate neo-classicism was designed by Walter B. Granville, a leading architect of nineteenth century. At present the Museum has six sections comprising thirty five galleries of cultural and scientific artefacts.

The feeling of awe and wonder at the magnificence and monumentality of the objects on display increases as we ascend the steps of the grand staircase of this Museum.

The Kalpadrum (5 feet 6 inches) or wish-fulfilling tree of Indian tradition discovered at Besnagar probably belongs to Sunga period (2nd century BCE and has an impressive feeling of volume and massiveness.

The colossal male figure of the Yaksha-one of a pair,carved out of reddish-grey sandstone and was excavated by Dr Buchanan Hamilton from the vicinity of Patna in 1812, and presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal by J. Tytler in 1821.

25-02-2024

X *Amitava Dutta*

Dr. Amitava Dutta

Principal

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The Besnagar Yakshi (6 feet 7 inches), a symbol of fertility with her swelling breasts and ample pelvis.

As one walks up the flight of 14 stairs at the Museum's Chowringhee entrance, one enters the Bharhut gallery represents the Sunga period in the 2nd century BCE. The spectacular nine-foot high railing or vedika and the 23 feet high gateway or torana was part of the ruins of a stupa at Bharhut in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. The red sandstone remnants of Bharhut were carried all the way to their current location and re-erected there by Alexander Cunningham, the first Director- General of the Archaeological Survey, constitutes visual store -house for the re-constructions of the political ,social, economic and cultural history of that period.

The Gandhara gallery gradually moves forward in time - first to fourth century BCE and represents the Gandhara School, which flourished in the northwestern corner of the Indo-Pak sub-continent and eastern Afghanistan, and owes its existence to the conquest and colonization of these regions by successive waves of Greeks, followed by the Kushanas under whom Kushana art flourished.

The Gandhara sculptures were arranged in the second room, while the collections from Mathura, Sravasti, Amravati, Sarnath, Bodh-Gaya, Bengal, Bihar, central India, south India, South-East Asia and other places were placed in the Long gallery on the south side of the Museum. In the Long gallery stone sculptures are arranged from various schools of Indian art from the beginning of the Christian era to about the end of the 12th century CE.

Harappan terracotta pieces depicting the Mother Goddess, male figures, animal figures, pottery, terracotta from Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Bangladesh, a copper hoard collection from Fatehgarh and Gungeria comprising swords and anthropomorphic forms form part of the collection displayed at the ground floor.

The Indian Museum is in possession of particularly rich collection of specimens of the Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture, which, originating from the eastern version of the Gupta (Sarnath) idiom, flourished in Bihar and Bengal from the 9th to the 12th centuries CE during the reign of the Pala and Sena kings. The influence of India's art, culture and religions is represented by the South-East Asia collection comprising both Buddhist and Brahmanical specimens. The bronze collection comprises a large assemblage of metal images ranging in date from about the 8th to the 19 centuries CE.

The Numismatic Gallery opened in 1981. The Indian Museum has a treasure trove of 52,000 coins, including gems and jewellery dating from the 5th century BCE right up to modern times, when the decimal system was introduced. Among the gems are the Piprawah relic casket (its authenticity was confirmed by the excavations of archaeologist S.M Srivastava) of inscribed steatite, which, some say, is of the 4th century BCE, and some of the

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3rd century BCE. Valuable manuscripts are in the custody of both the Archaeological and Art Sections. These are in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Bengali languages ranging from the sixth to the twentieth century CE.

The Minor Antiquities Gallery on the ground floor displays terracotta objects, beads, baubles and trinkets from the Maurya to the 12th century CE Pala periods. The most valued objects here are two relics of Buddha loaned from the National Museum and excavated from Piprawah. Relic caskets from Piprawah and Taxila are displayed here.

One of the enduring attractions of the Museum is the Egyptian mummy in the first floor gallery, where it is displayed along with a mummified hand. It arrived in Calcutta in 1882,

The two most spectacular exhibits of the Decorative Art gallery are the Kathiawad housefront from Bhavnagar in Gujarat and the wooden and coloured glass Buddha temple fronts from Myanmar. Ivory artefacts including a Durga from Murshidabad and filigree ivory boxes from Mysore are also worth mentioning. The collection of arms and weapons, too, is impressive. Outstanding are the damascene sword and shield of Rana Pratap and a bid silver hukka.

Besides, a good collection of the paintings of Pahari school. Deccani Ragamala paintings and the exquisite Radha Krishna Dana-Lila of Garwhal, works by Abanindranath, Gaganendranath, Rabindranath (Thakur) and Nandalal Bose (Bengal school of Art) also preserved and displayed here.

The new galleries of the Anthropology Section on the ground and first floors have an open plan so that visitors can walk through these. The mask gallery has specimens from New Guinea, Bhutan and different regions of India. The second gallery is a short-term Palaeoanthropological gallery but it has been renamed Human Evolution. It depicts human evolution, both physical and cultural. It incorporates latest information on DNA studies related to modern human migration,

Among the four Geology Galleries of the Indian Museum, three are open. These are:

1. Fossil Gallery- I (Siwalik Gallery) (Ground Floor) -.
2. Earth & Meteorite Gallery (Ground Floor)
3. Rock & Mineral Gallery (Ground Floor)
4. Fossil Gallery-II (Invertebrate Fossil Gallery) (First Floor)

The collection of the zoological exhibits in the Indian Museum reflects both the historical and present day patterns of biological diversity.

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Finishing there we finally reached back college by a bus around 5 pm in the evening. It was enriching visiting this place. We got to know so much which we had only read about and heard about from our teachers. Also I would like to thank the teachers who organized and accompanied us in this wonderful ,educational trip.



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