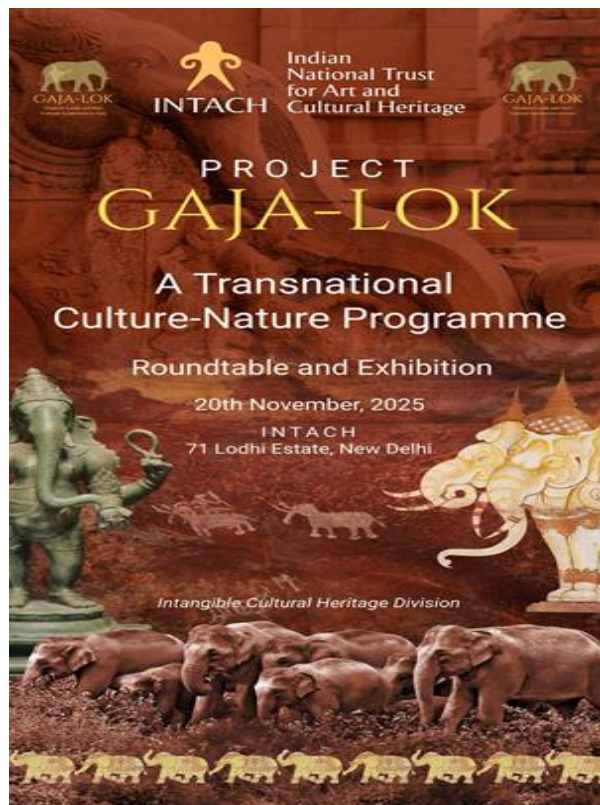


INTACH to launch Gaja-Lok: Elephant Lands and their Cultural Symbolism in Asia

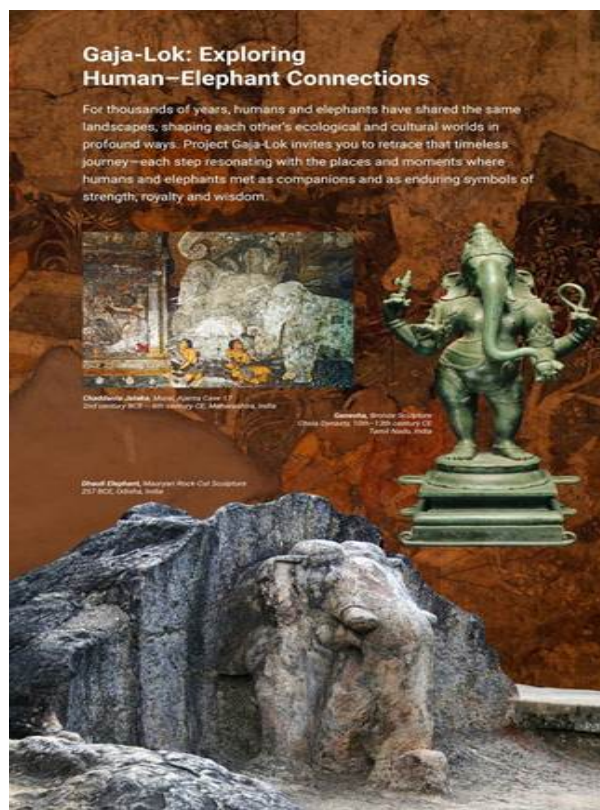
A Transnational Culture-Nature Programme

Posted On: 19 NOV 2025 9:30PM by PIB Delhi

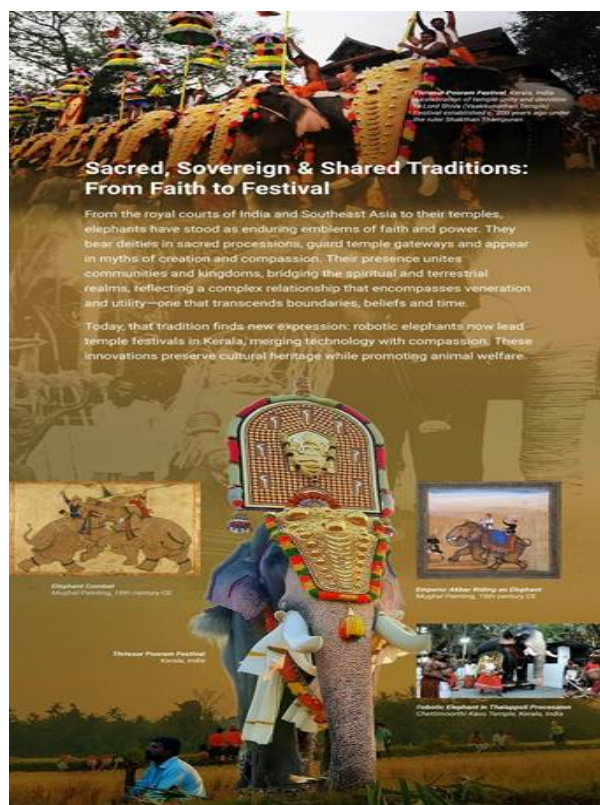
The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is pleased to launch Gaja-Lok: Elephant Lands and their Cultural Symbolism in Asia, an initiative aimed at documenting and exploring the transnational connections of the Asian elephant, highlighting the intertwined cultural, historical, ecological, and climate resilience narratives across elephant-range countries in Asia.



Bringing together academicians, cultural experts, and conservationists, the Gaja-Lok Exhibition and Roundtable mark the beginning of a multi-country dialogue that positions the elephant as both a cultural icon and a living emblem of ecological resilience.

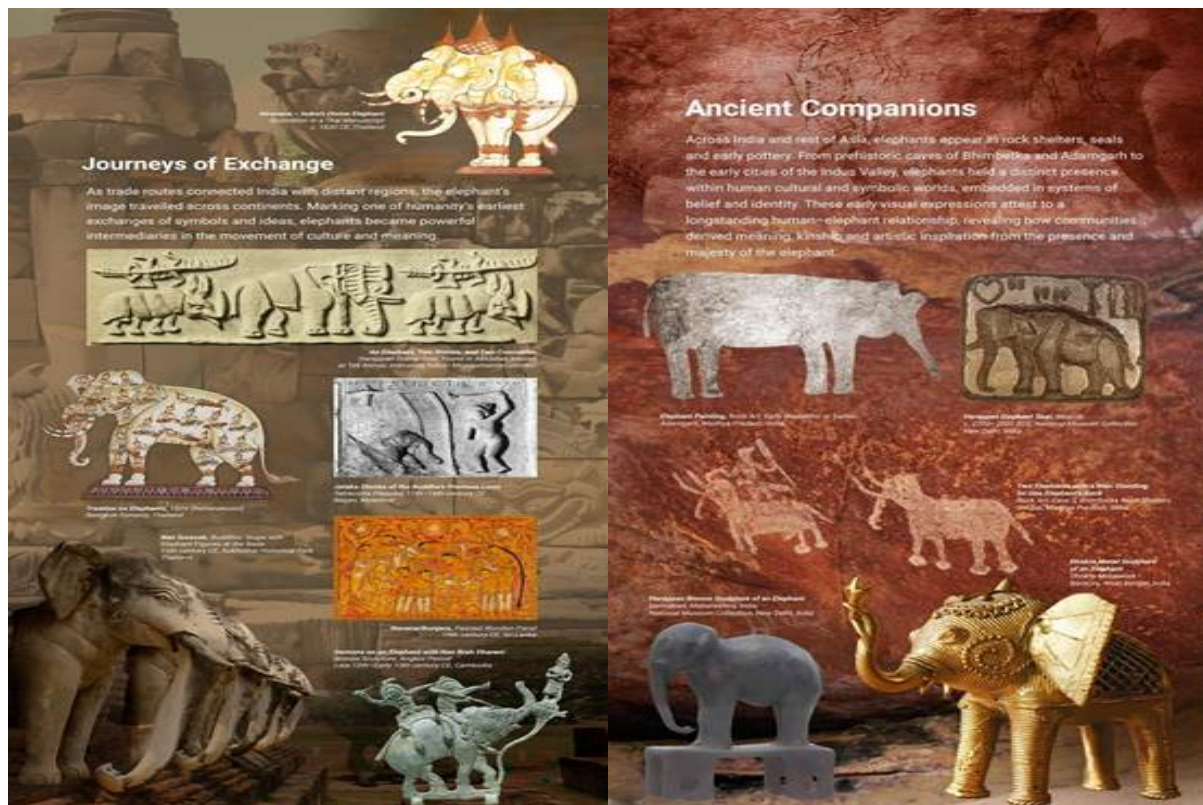


The exhibition presents six thematic panels that showcase the enduring human-elephant relationship—from prehistoric art and ancient trade routes to evolving elephant imagery and sacred traditions—revealing how elephants have shaped belief, power, and cultural exchange across Asia. It highlights both historic continuity and modern innovations like Kerala's robotic temple elephants, inviting viewers to reflect on compassion, heritage, and the possibilities of coexistence today.

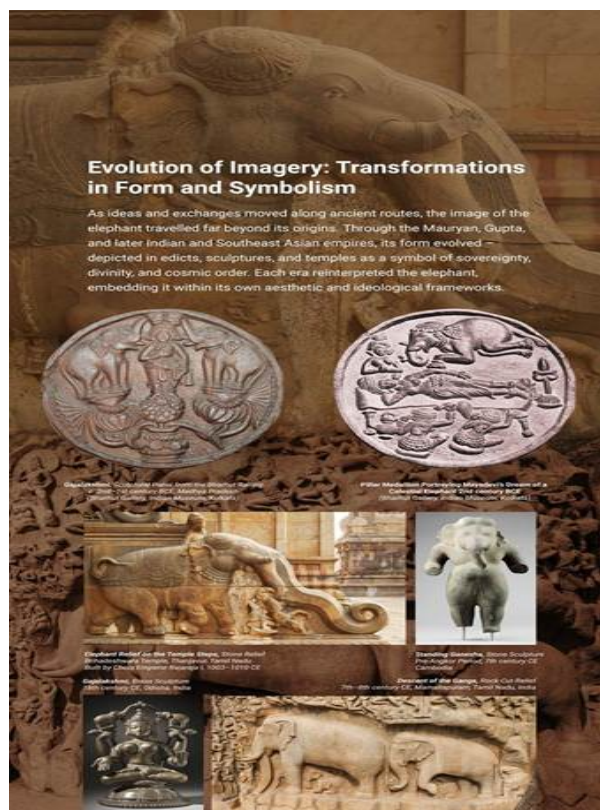


Project Gaja-Lok and its accompanying exhibition will be inaugurated by Shri Vivek Agarwal, I.A.S., Secretary, Ministry of Culture, in the presence of Shri Ashok Jairaj Singh, Chairman, INTACH, Shri Ravindra Singh I.A.S. (Retd.), Member Secretary, INTACH, and Ms. Nerupama Y. Modwel,

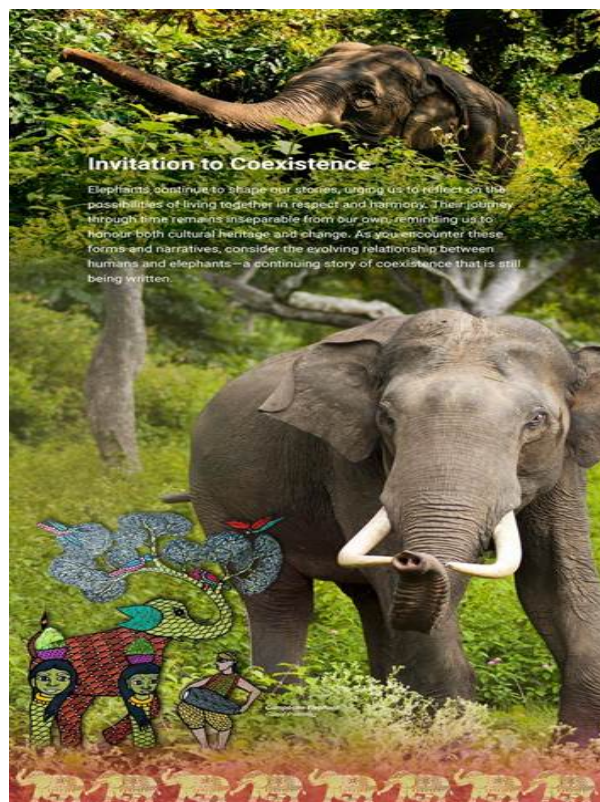
Principal Director, Intangible Cultural Heritage Division, INTACH, Mr Manu Bhatnagar, Principal Director, Natural Heritage Division, INTACH, and other INTACH officials and invited guests.



The Gaja-Lok Roundtable brings together distinguished scholars and conservationists, including Prof. Raman Sukumar, Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, a noted authority on the Asian elephant; Mr. Vivek Menon, Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission and Founder & ED, Wildlife Trust of India; Dr. Vinod Mathur, Former Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority of India and Former Director, Wildlife Institute of India; Dr. Khalid Pasha, IUCN Asia Regional Coordinator, Bangkok; Mr. Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO, WWF-India; Dr. Sashi Bala, Dean, Centre of Indology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan; Ms. Sujatha Shankar, Architect and Convenor, INTACH Chennai Chapter; Dr. Nanditha Krishna, President, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, Chennai; Prof. Archana Shastri, Former Director, Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Asian Traditional Textile Museum, Siem Reap, Cambodia; Dr. N.V.K. Ashraf, Wildlife Trust of India; Dr. Arun Venkataraman, Technical Consulting Director, ERM; Prof. Mahesh Rangarajan, Historian, Ashoka University; Ms. Ina Puri, Writer, Biographer, and Art Curator; Prof. Ali Anooshahr, Historian, University of California; and Dr. Suman Jain, Historian, Banaras Hindu University.



Together, the sessions will explore historical, cultural, ecological, and conservation perspectives on the Asian elephant. Insights from the roundtable will contribute to the Gaja-Lok Dossier, a multidisciplinary research and documentation initiative supporting transnational recognition of elephant-related heritage.



Gaja-Lok is more than a cultural programme; it is a celebration of the enduring bond between humans and elephants. By bridging art, environment, scholarship, and international partnerships, the initiative seeks to inspire a shared commitment to conservation, cultural heritage, and ecological stewardship.

across Asia.

Sunil Kumar Tiwari

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