



The “**Banking on World Heritage,**” a first-of-its kind exhibition was held at the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**, Janpath, New Delhi from **Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup> 2023**. Conceptualised and curated by **Ms Rukmini Dahanukar**, independent research scholar under her proprietary research, “**Money Talks,**” that unfolds the untold story of banknote art and design from around the world.

Celebrating the theme “**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**” under **India’s G20 presidency** for the year, the exhibition showcased large size replicas of banknotes from the member nations featuring UNESCO World Heritage sites. The proposed theme translates as “**One Earth · One Family · One Future**” perfectly fitting with UNESCO’s “**Outstanding Universal Values of World Heritage.**” This presentation was even more special as it coincided with the celebration of **India’s 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence** along with **UNESCO World Heritage Convention’s 50<sup>th</sup> year**.

According to Dahanukar, the idea behind the exhibition was two-fold. First, to **recognise everyday objects like banknotes** and appreciate their **cultural value in shaping our lives**. And second, to **acknowledge the importance of our heritage** from around the world and strive to make efforts of **conscious tourism and conservation**.



The exhibition was inaugurated on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 by **Honorable Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Smt Meenakshi Lekhi**, who while speaking at the occasion said, “Each day of my life I feel it’s worth living because I learn something new. Exposure to something like currency notes is very different and **this perspective is very unique and new**. World heritage is something we all relate to and even though there are a lot of things that divide us, **our shared culture is something which connects us globally**.” She added further that “if the world has to progress and humanity has to survive then **the Indian way of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ is the way forward**.”

**Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNC**A said, “this exhibition is the reality of what at first seemed undoable and unimaginable. It was **envisioned with a perspective to bring forth the cultural heritage of the member nations of G20**.” He further remarked that banknotes and coins are an invaluable source of reconstructing our global history and concluded by saying “**IGNCA is proud to present this first of its kind exhibition for all**.”

The inauguration was followed by a panel discussion featuring **Ms. Rukmini Dahanukar**, conceptualiser and curator of the exhibition, Chief Guest **Smt. Saryu V. Doshi**, Trustee of IGNC A and eminent art scholar, art historian and educationist, **Mr Sudhakar Kaza**, former Managing Director, Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Ltd., **Mr Ashish Chandra**, Country Director, De La Rue India Private Limited alongwith **Prof. Poonam Munjal**, NCAER and **Mr Anand Kothari**, Archaeologist & Numismatist.



Mr Sudhakar Kaza said that this **exhibition is probably the first of its kind in the world**. He said that the images that we see on the notes are decided after a long process and deliberations. He also added that the banknote series of 2016 is completely manufactured in the country. Its ink and paper are now made in the country itself and its design is also prepared by the artists and engravers from India. Prof. Poonam Munjal said that the contribution of various sectors in



the economy is appreciated but **art and heritage also contribute significantly to the economy** but are not quantifiable at this point and so highly underrated. Prof. Anand Kothari said that coins are the documents of history and through **banknotes people get acquainted with the heritage of a country**. Mr. Ashish Chandra of De La Rue, a 200-year-old company involved in the printing of bank notes, said that the exhibition is a great initiative. **Banknotes are the most loved and trusted products in the world with design playing a very important role** and every note has a unique story behind its design.

The **exhibition was well attended** by ambassadors, officials and dignitaries. The IGNCA also **organised art workshops through the week** with students from Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi College of Art, Navyug School and Mayo college, to name a few. Dahanukar personally conducted an introductory curatorial sessions for the young minds to appreciate the artistic elements and historical documentation on banknotes. The best artworks were **awarded special prizes**.



The conceptualiser of the exhibition, Rukmini Dahanukar, said that **this unique presentation of banknotes provides an insight into the art, design, history, heritage, culture and symbolism combined with high-end security**. The beauty is that every banknote showcases its cultural value irrespective of its economic value. This is her effort of presenting the same to all the users of banknotes from across the world. She concluded by saying that its time for the world to listen, when **'Money Talks.'**

