

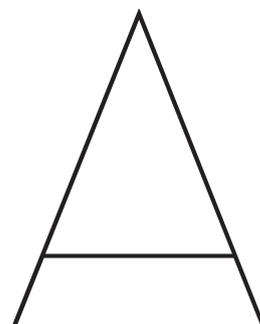




## THE CHALLENGE OF

# India

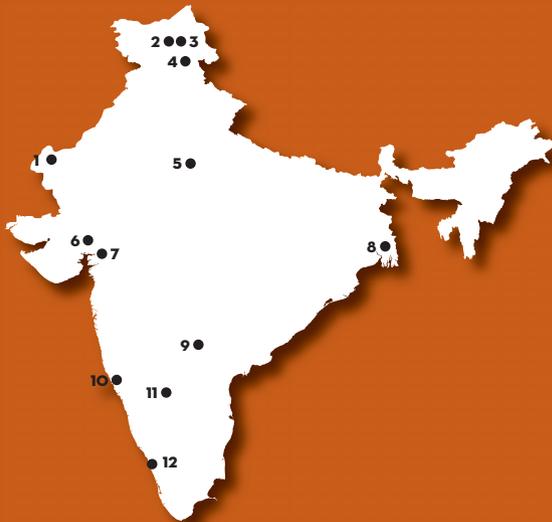
**On the eve of its 60th anniversary of independence from British rule, India is charting a new course in preservation.**



As one of the world's oldest civilizations, India has been influenced over the centuries by cultures from around the globe. From the Roman remains in Arikameddu to the Mughal architecture of the sixteenth-century Emperor Akbar and the distinctive urbanism of French, British, and Portuguese colonizers, India's wealth is the layering of multiple cultures, each of which have been absorbed, adapted, and developed. Today, India faces new challenges in the form of unprecedented economic growth and urban development, which are forcing the nation to assimilate and adapt at a pace far greater than in the past. Such dramatic societal change has also made the preservation of India's extraordinary heritage all the more difficult.

In his keynote address at a WMF-ICOMOS conference held in Sri Lanka in July 2004, archaeologist Senake Bandaranayake said that "conservation is not simply a question of techniques, although we cannot do without these at the highest level of competence. It involves theoretical and conceptual capabilities and a high level of awareness of contextual and historical dynamics—the social,

Since 1996, WMF has supported conservation work at more than a dozen sites in India—ranging from thousand-year-old temples to buildings dating to the British colonial period. Today, work continues at 12 sites, where WMF is sponsoring a host of restoration projects and training initiatives.



## Jaisalmer Fort Projects

JAISALMER, RAJASTHAN

WMF has supported three major projects at the medieval, hilltop Jaisalmer Fort in Rajasthan since the site was included on WMF's first Watch list in 1996: the restoration of the Rani Ka Mahal (Queen's Palace) and the adjoining Har Raj ji Ka Mahal (King's Palace); and the documentation and conservation of the fort's defensive walls and slope. Restoration of the Rani ka Mahal was completed in 2002, and the palace was opened to the public, complete with a new visitor center and crafts training center.

In 1999, three bastions of the fort collapsed after a period of unprecedented rainfall. WMF subsequently offered \$500,000 to the Indian government through its Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve our Heritage for the stabilization and consolidation of the fort's walls, and the Archeological Survey of India has matched WMF funding with a \$1 million commitment. The grant is being used for detailed architectural and geotechnical studies designed to restore the bastions and the original drainage systems, to stabilize the hill upon which the "living fort" rests, and prevent its further erosion. A pilot project to restore a critical section of the lower retaining wall, slope, and bastions will begin in winter 2007.



cultural, economic, institutional, and political factors that impinge upon the conservation process." The realization that the cultural heritage of India is not limited to monuments, but is in fact in every facet of life—from small icons of cherished local pride to sprawling urban landscapes—requires dynamic and continuously evolving management skills. Rapid development changes aspirations as much as it erodes historic cities. It is a reality that the attrition of the heritage is due to the fact that monuments, especially those which are unprotected, are subject to vandalism, and many is the historic edifice which has been rendered into gravel for road construction. For protection systems to work in India given the country's emerging global environment, we must position conservation within this context and establish a stake in conservation within the community, with a vision of shared custodianship.

B.K. Thapar, the first member-secretary of India's National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), a pioneer of the conservation movement in the country, held that culture and heritage are indivisible. While culture represents spirit and belief and is continuous, heritage is a physical manifestation of that which is handed down through the generations. Equally, a monument is not an inanimate spectacle of architecture, but rather each person's legacy and memory.

## Chamba Lhakhang Temple at Basgo and Sumda Chung Monastery

LADAKH, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The walls of the fifteenth-century Buddhist citadel complex at Basgo and the foundations of the three Maitreya temples within it were being eroded by wind and water at such an alarming rate that WMF placed the site on the 2000 Watch list to draw attention to its problems. In 2002, WMF granted funding to the Namgyal Institute for Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture (NIR-LAC) to restore the temple Chamba Lhakhang, which at that time was on the verge of collapse (see ICON, Summer 2006).

Following the temple's structural stabilization and replacement of its roof using traditional Ladakhi methods and materials, the extraordinary mural cycle within the sanctuary was restored—work completed this past summer. Of particular significance in this project is the fact that it has been largely driven by the community: local residents donated their time, labor, and many of the materials required for restoration, and the Indian army stationed in the area also donated materials and transportation. The temple, which was deconsecrated prior to restoration, was rededicated on October 4.

Established in the twelfth century, Sumda Chung is one of the most significant early Buddhist temples in the region. Despite its importance, it has suffered from seismic activity and exposure to the elements. The site was placed on WMF's 2006 Watch list after its adjacent monastery collapsed during heavy rains.

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India's cultural heritage falls into many categories—from nationally protected World Heritage Sites like the Taj Mahal, Fatehpour Sikri, or Ajanta and Ellora, to sacred or vernacular architecture as seen at Shekhawati, Rajasthan, in the smallest nooks of the country. Much of India's heritage remains in its "old cities" or "walled cities," many of which have been either completely neglected, erased, or subjected to attempts at cosmetic restoration.

The 5,000-odd national and state protected monuments today face the same challenges as unprotected sites. Urban growth obliterates the boundaries, pollution decays stone, mining undermines foundations, and preservation departments of the state are faced with crisis management of immense scale.

Today in India there is a realization that the state requires partnership, as it is no longer possible to protect monuments in isolation from their surroundings, as mandated in antiquated colonial laws. The non-government sector, professionals, national, and international agencies are today stepping forward to bridge this gap between the community and their heritage, taking this shared responsibility into the public domain. The future of India's heritage lies in partnership between its traditional stakeholders and its communities, and leveraging support through NGOs and professionals. Not least is the increasing

## Taj Mahal

AGRA, UTTAR PRADESH

In a unique, collaborative effort, the Tata Group's Indian Hotels Company signed an agreement with the National Culture Fund and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 2001 to undertake the conservation, restoration, and public presentation of the Taj Mahal. Three years later, WMF, through its Robert W. Wilson Challenge, joined this effort by supporting a documentation project consisting of a Geographic Information System (GIS) design and mapping database, and a topographical survey of the site. Surveys of the Mughal gardens and the site's water features and circulation system were completed in 2006 by WMF-sponsored conservators from Italy working together with a local team. The Taj Mahal GIS is now being used by the ASI as a tool to compile and record information about the site to aid future survey and restoration work. This is the first time a GIS database has been used to document and manage a cultural heritage site in India.

## Dhangkar Monastery Spiti

HIMACHAL PRADESH

The Director of Tourism in Himachal Pradesh and a local NGO have proposed the establishment of a visitor center, library, and museum at the Dhangkar Fortress, a short distance above the Buddhist Dhangkar Gompa (temple), in an effort to generate income for the monks and local villagers, and to better present the site to the public. The Dhangkar Gompa is one of five major Buddhist monasteries in Spiti, near the Tibetan border, and is threatened by geotechnical instability and inadequate maintenance.

The next step is to develop a long-term program for the conservation of the temple and fortress within the overall context of village development, including rural tourism, crafts revival, and other income generation schemes. Funds are currently needed for the documentation of the site and the preparation of the conservation plan to ensure the lasting stabilization of this important site. The monastery appeared on WMF's 2006 Watch list.



role for funding agencies to come together and expand the arena for intervention, shifting from mere preservation to incorporate contemporary challenges and demands from tourism, urbanization, and related problems. Equally complex are the socio-cultural aspects of each site, which require a completely fresh and consultative approach in such a rapidly changing environment.

World Monuments Fund has had a presence in India since 1996 collaborating with NGOs such as INTACH, a Delhi-based organization founded in 1984 with a mandate to preserve the country's tangible and intangible heritage but firmly rooted in advocacy and public participation in the preservation of that heritage. WMF has leveraged funds and developed partnerships with professionals and other NGOs to work in partnership with government agencies such as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in a shared goal of preservation of the heritage both in the public and private realm.

Public-private partnerships are not just about funding. They are about nurturing human resources and building capacities



within the communities to whom the heritage belongs. WMF has invested substantially in this aspect as evidenced by its support of the restoration of the Buddhist temple of Chamba Lhakhang at Basgo in Ladakh (see *ICON*, Summer 2006), which has paid rich dividends in garnering local pride. In Buddhism, there is no concept of restoration, for impermanence is one of its fundamental principles. That the local community which drove the project, and WMF's partners, the Namgyal Institute for Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture (NIRLAC), were able to negotiate a conservation program speaks volumes. It has meant many hours spent reconciling the conflicting imperatives of scientific and technical skills with basic philosophic issues. The need for the community to become active stakeholders in a restoration project secures its future management. No project is sustainable if there is not an inbuilt sense of pride and possession which will ensure preservation for future generations. Much of the heritage in India which has been lost is because of a lack of that sense of custodianship.

Partnerships can also help in finding ways to reinforce traditional and local management systems and skills that sustain a preservation project. This is clearly seen in the Dwarkadeesh temple in Ahmedabad, one of WMF's first Watch sites, where the restoration project led to a remarkable synergy between the skills of local craftsmen and trained professional architects. The architects

## Champaner Archaeological Site

### GUJARAT

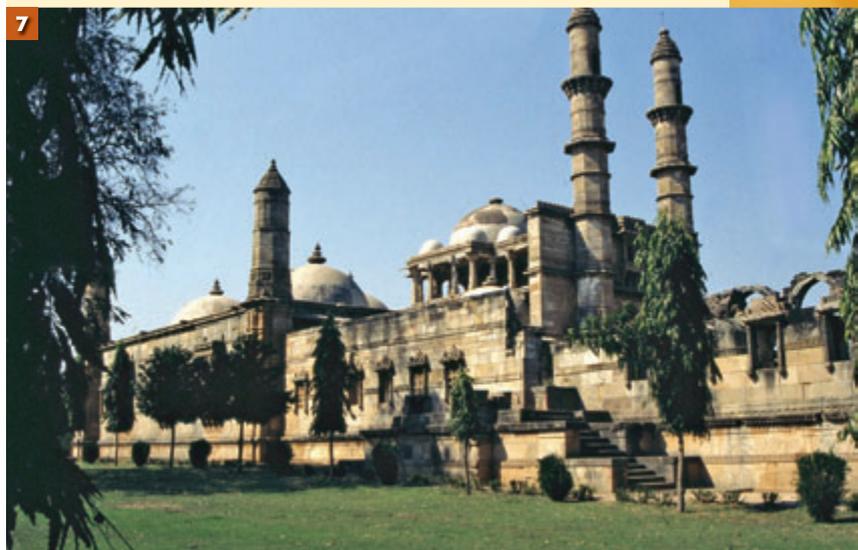
The Baroda Heritage Trust (BHT) has been lobbying to save the monuments of this important fifteenth-century capital of Gujarat for more than two decades. Champaner, an important medieval city strategically situated along the trade route between Malwa and Gujarat, has a wealth of secular, civic, and religious structures that reveal the sophisticated city planning of the fifteenth century. The threats to Champaner's built heritage from encroachment and unplanned development prompted its inclusion on WMF's 2000 Watch list, and it was subsequently listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The BHT is involved in developing short- and long-term strategies for Champaner's preservation and management. From a portfolio of proposals submitted to WMF by the trust, the restoration of Atak Fort within the archaeological site was chosen as a priority. In addition, archival research has to be undertaken to accurately restore the military installations and water gardens and present the history of the site to the public. The initial phase of fabric surveys and architectural mapping has been completed and will serve as the baseline documentation for the Atak Fort project and conservation masterplan.

## Dwarkadheesh Temple

### AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT

Within the medieval walled city of Ahmedabad, the dominant form of housing was a *haveli*, a residential complex built around a central courtyard. These dwellings are fast-disappearing due to the pressures of urban development and as people move out of crowded town centers and into the suburbs.

The Dwarkadheesh temple is situated within a *haveli*, and forms part of one of the oldest surviving house-temple complexes in India. After it was damaged in the massive 2001 earthquake, WMF placed the temple on its 2002 Watch list, and granted funds for its restoration. The temple's delicately carved polychromatic wood façade has since been restored in partnership with the local temple trust who mobilized funds from pilgrims, and from the Gujarat state government.



assisted craftsmen in recording the dismantled sections of the temple, which was extensively damaged in the earthquake of 2001, and were so impressed by the way the craftsmen reconstructed the entire front section of the temple that scholars actually came to the site and watched them rebuild it using traditional, time-tested earthquake-proof layering techniques. For WMF to support the project through its Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Protect our Heritage, however, funds from the program had to be matched at the local level. Beyond garnering local support to ensure the success of the project, restoration of the temple prompted additional projects in the Old City, further underscoring the notion that renewal is part of the faith.

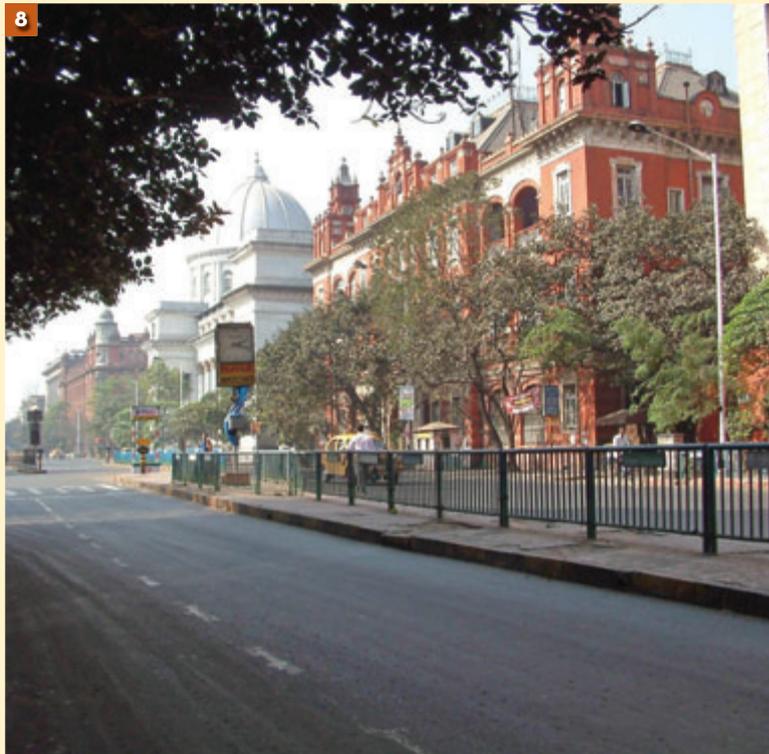
The Paradesi synagogue, where WMF undertook a restoration project, is another example of working with community custodians. The main attraction of the sixteenth-century synagogue is its sacred altar and extraordinary Chinese blue-tile flooring. Its Dutch-style clock tower, unused for more than 60 years, had

## Dalhousie Square and St John's Church

CALCUTTA, WEST BENGAL

Dalhousie Square was at the heart of the city that served as the first capital of the British Raj in India. When the British moved their capital to New Delhi in 1911, it drew attention and political power away from Calcutta. For much of the twentieth century, the square has suffered from badly planned urban development and massive population growth. Demolition threatens its imperiled buildings and other landmarks.

Dalhousie Square has twice been listed as an endangered site by the WMF (2004 and 2006). A stakeholders' workshop funded by WMF and American Express was held in 2005 to raise awareness and develop a schematic management plan and guidelines for repair and new construction. The local government gave its commitment to the preservation of Dalhousie Square and backed action plans aimed at achieving this goal. Part of the WMF grant will support a pilot demonstration project to restore a prominent building in the square. Local stakeholders have proposed the restoration of Calcutta's original parish church, St. John's, with its early nineteenth-century steeple and classical façades. Additional funds are needed to restore and rehabilitate the church grounds, which are as historically significant as the structure itself.



decayed extensively from neglect. A cultural oddity, with its multilingual clock faces reflecting the multiple layers of Indian society, the tower and its synagogue stood in Cochin as a symbol of multiculturalism long before the phrase became fashionable, and certainly before the assertion of perceived cultural differences threatened sites across the world.

While the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan and the sacred site of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh have come to symbolize religious intolerance in the world, this small, picturesque clock tower, now restored, speaks of a time when communities coexisted, and clock towers were built with multiple influences, drawing from royal, sacred, and civil architecture, using eastern materials and western features, all of which came together in this unique building. The continued existence of the synagogue is due to the dedication of Cochin's Jewish community, who continue to use the building and care for it.

The existence of motivated stakeholders is key when it comes to successfully managing a preservation challenge. The recent discussions about Saint Anne's Church, one of the earliest and largest in Goa, are a case in point. In an unfortunate development, the state government removed the church's designation as a protected site because they did not want to be responsible for the management of a "living" site. The building was subsequently struck by an earthquake, virtually splitting it through the center. Ultimately, the Archaeological Survey of India stepped up, and is now seeking financial support to preserve this landmark building in the "Rome of the East." Although the church has a small congregation, their presence at every meeting ensures that the spiritual dimension of the structure is kept at the forefront, as well as the important role it has in the lives of the local community, which justifies and validates any project to restore the church.

With minimal bureaucracy, a demonstrated ability to manage projects, and the active engagement of the international preservation community in the process, Indian organizations like INTACH have been in-

strumental in introducing higher standards of conservation work in India. While the idea of architectural conservation as an integral part of a holistic plan for sustainable development has been embraced by the international conservation community for quite some time, it is a concept that came into India only in the 1990s through young architects, several of whom had trained abroad in conservation. Their scientific rigor and methodology—espoused by the private sector—represented a paradigm shift from the approach in which ASI’s sensibilities are rooted.

That said, the ASI is undergoing a sea change. “What we are seeing now is the ASI forging creative partnerships with NGOs within India and with the international preservation community as a whole to find more efficient and effective ways to manage sites, as well as garner financial support for its projects. In the process, new approaches to conservation problems and innovative methods for solving them are being demonstrated, some unique to India and others based on models previously developed by the international conservation community for similar building

## Saint Anne’s Church

GOA

Listed as an endangered site on the World Monuments Watch List in 1998, the late-seventeenth-century St. Anne, or Santana Church, is one of Goa’s most elaborate religious buildings. The whitewashed, five-story church with its high vaulted ceiling and embellished wood interior surfaces is a masterpiece of the Indo-Portuguese Baroque style.

Detailed documentation and analysis of the structure has been completed, with the preparation of estimates for the emergency stabilization of the bell tower and repair of the cracks in the nave’s vaulted stucco ceiling. The project is being undertaken by WMF in partnership with the Fundação Oriente of Lisbon. Once restored, the church is set to be listed under the “Churches of Goa” World Heritage Site, designated by UNESCO. Funds are still needed, however, for repair work to proceed.

## Osmania Women’s College

HYDERABAD, ANDHRA PRADESH

One of the earliest and finest classical revival buildings in India, Osmania Women’s College was originally built to house the British Resident, or representative to the Nizam (ruler) of the independent state of Hyderabad. Renowned for its architectural merit as well as its historical significance, the structure has nevertheless suffered from years of neglect stemming from inadequate funds available for its upkeep and restoration.

Since its placement on the Watch list in 2002, the trustees of Osmania University have drafted and endorsed a comprehensive restoration plan for the building. With funding by a grant from American Express, architectural research, documentation, and surveys of the building’s historic fabric are currently underway. The studies are due to be completed by spring 2007, after which the work will be assembled into a detailed site management plan that will address the priority work areas of the deteriorated structure, including the roof, walls, foundations, and drainage. Substantial funding will be needed to carry out the restoration work.

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types elsewhere in the world,” says Mark Weber, who manages WMF’s India portfolio.

Despite ASI’s new commitment, problems remain. Most recently conservationists were troubled to learn of new construction at the World Heritage site of Hampi. Thoughtless planners built a modern cable-stayed bridge in the center of this thirteenth-century archaeological site. The absence of management structures or consultative processes in this case threw into sharp relief the challenges faced by protection agencies at even world-class sites like Hampi. While nothing can be reversed in terms of the bridge’s construction, it stands as a clear example of why consultative processes and partnerships are the only way to manage India’s heritage, scattered as it is across cities and the countryside. In the 20-year history of the public conservation movement many battles have been won, but perhaps the biggest development has been the growth of public

and private partnerships as varied as WMF's efforts at large iconic sites like the Krishna Temple in Hampi or small community-based endeavors like Basgo in Ladakh.

Today these partnerships address the need to not just preserve sites, but to accommodate the aspirations of local people, custodians, and stakeholders; it is an enormous challenge. The former Maharaja of Jodhpur, who is being honored with WMF's Hadrian Award this year, has been an example for the Indian conservation movement. He has deftly incorporated the aspirations of the people of Marwar with the conservation challenges he has undertaken. At the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur, founded in 1459, and the fifteenth-century Nagaur Fort, also in Rajasthan, he has shown how the painstaking restoration of degenerated bricks and mortar can tap into latent local skills, and excite a community, visitors, rural and urban people, young and old alike. Such private entrepreneurs have restored a sense of pride and commitment in the people because of their commitment and cultural awareness. His approach is a model that needs to be emulated, adapted, and adopted across the country, and can only be done in the realm of public and private shared responsibility. ■

## Krishna Temple

HAMPI, KARNATAKA

A collaborative project of WMF and the Jindal South West Foundation, the sixteenth-century Krishna temple is situated within the sacred core of the Hampi World Heritage Site, the last capital of the Vijayanagar kingdom before it was pillaged and abandoned in 1565. The Krishna temple, a fine example of the Vijayanagara style, was the largest place of worship in the city. A conservation masterplan for the site was completed in fall 2006, and WMF is currently finalizing plans for a first phase of restoration—the stabilization and restoration of the East Gate, and a parallel project for a conservation program, including a training component to address the deteriorated decorative stucco and brickwork throughout the complex.



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# PARADESI SYNAGOGUE

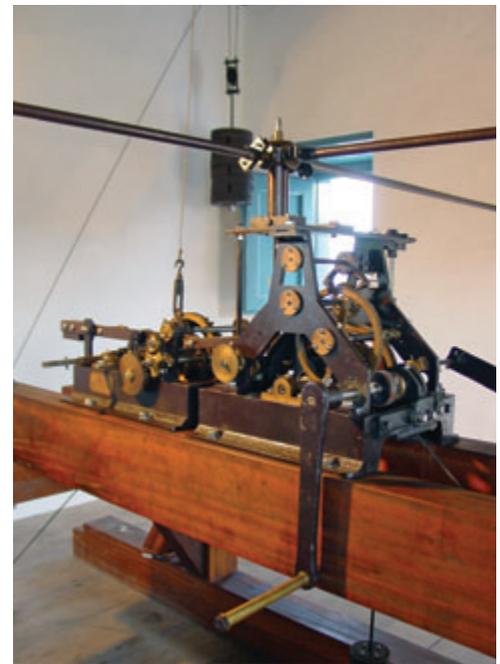
## Restoring a Beacon of Hope

The oldest surviving Jewish temple in India, the Paradesi synagogue in the southern port city of Kochi, or Cochin, continues to be used by the tiny Jewish community that remains there. Standing at the end of Synagogue Lane, the eclectic buildings of the complex, with their distinctive decorative elements and architectural features, are a testament to the long history of the Jewish population of Cochin. And in turn they stand as evidence of centuries of peaceful coexistence of the many different communities who built their lives in this picturesque coastal city, reaping the commercial benefits of its natural harbor, at the point where the Periyar River flows out into the Arabian Sea.

Built in 1568 on land granted by the ruler, Kerala Varma to Cochin's Jews, the synagogue lies adjacent to the royal palace, in an area that has come to be known as "Jew Town." The original building was burned down by the Portuguese in the seventeenth century, but was soon rebuilt with a unique, richly ornamented interior. It was used for worship by the "white" Jewish community of Cochin, descendants of Jews from Spain, the Netherlands, and other European countries who had settled in the region in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and were members of a vibrant, mercantile community founded upon the Indian Ocean spice trade that centered on the Malabar Coast and the ports of southern India.

In 1996, WMF's Jewish Heritage Grant Program (JHGP) identified the synagogue as one of ten Priority Projects, signaling the beginning of the organization's involvement in the restoration of the complex. Preliminary site assessments, underwritten by the Yad Hannadiv foundation, revealed that of the four buildings within the compound, the clock tower, built in 1761, was the most imperiled, having suffered from years of exposure to tropical weather, insect infestation, and the effects of a high water table. There were cracks in its masonry walls and a rotting interior frame structure. As the most prominent structure within the synagogue complex, the 15-meter-tall clock tower is also its most public symbol, with its three multi-lingual clock faces displaying numerals in Roman, Hebrew, and the local language Malayalam. The original Dutch clock mechanism, which ceased to function in 1936, was removed in 1941 and subsequently lost; unusual for a synagogue, there was also a bell that chimed on the hour.

In 2001, conservators opened up of the tower's roof structure to facilitate the removal of the rotten wood members of the teak framing system. These were replaced in-kind, with new material matching the original species and size. The structure's load bearing walls of soft laterite stone had also decayed extensively and were structurally unsound, and the weight of the roof and clock mechanism had caused the walls to crack, separate at the corners, and splay outwards. Structural restoration work included the removal of the iron tie rods and exterior braces—installed during



**PHOTOS FROM TOP RIGHT: THE PARADESI CLOCK TOWER BEFORE RESTORATION, ITS NEW CLOCK MECHANISM, AND THE RESTORED TOWER ENTRANCE**

the twentieth century in an effort to prevent the structure from collapse—and the replacement of missing and badly decayed stones with laterite blocks set in lime mortar. Wherever possible though, the original stone was retained, strengthened, and reused. Upon completion of structural stabilization, the tower was whitewashed with a lime-plaster mix, as it had been originally.

Following the restoration of the tower, Gani & Sons, a firm based in Madras (Chennai), was hired to build a replacement clock with a similar counterweight mechanism as the original. They re-created a mechanical striking clock movement, with two counter-weights that operate the hands on each of the clock faces, and have to be wound up once a week. The mechanism is in turn connected to each of the clock faces, and to a hammer that strikes the old brass bell in the cupola, making it ring on the quarter hour.

The project, which took more than four years to complete, was carried out by local craftsmen and contractors. Restoration of the clock tower, however diminutive in scale, has become one of WMF's most prominent projects in recent years, its visibility as a beacon of hope for a diasporal community increasing as Kerala becomes one of India's largest tourist destinations, attracting both local and international visitors. ■