

PRESS RELEASE

DECCAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

June 2026



CONTENTS

Press Release

3 Introduction

Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion & Museum Complex, Mysuru

4 Nagakunda Stepwell, Sudi

British Residency Complex & Rang Mahal, Hyderabad

5 Deccani Studies Program

6 Publications

City of Victory: Hampi Vijayanagara

Chalukya Splendours: In and around Gadag and Lakkundi

Gateway to the Deccan: Mandu

7 About Us

Why the Deccan



Mandapa ceiling, Mahadeva Temple, Itagi, Karnataka

Cover image: Parapet, Mahadeva Temple, Itagi, Karnataka

© Surendra Kumar

deccan-heritage-foundation.org

[@deccanheritagefoundation](https://www.instagram.com/deccanheritagefoundation)

PRESS RELEASE

The Deccan Heritage Foundation announces major developments across its conservation, education and publications initiatives, including the restoration of landmark heritage sites in Karnataka and Telangana, the expansion of its Deccani Studies Program in partnership with Ashoka University, and the release of three new publications exploring the architectural and cultural heritage of the Deccan.

Key Highlights and Announcements

Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion & Folklore Museum, Mysuru

Envisioned as a national model for sustainable heritage management, the Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion and Folklore Museum is the DHF's flagship project in partnership with the University of Mysore.

Built in 1901 as a royal residence for Princess Jayalakshmi of Mysore, the mansion later became home to the University's Department of Archaeology and Anthropology and today houses one of Karnataka's most important folklore and ethnographic collections.

Supported by a landmark multi-year grant from the Harish & Bina Shah Foundation, alongside the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation and the Aikyam Foundation, the project includes structural restoration of the historic mansion, conservation and cataloguing of thousands of artefacts and archival materials, and the establishment of the forthcoming Manisha Dhawan Learning Centre for Conservation dedicated to restoration, imaging, research and training.

Once completed, Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion will reopen as a contemporary and inclusive museum, conservation centre and cultural hub focused on the art, anthropology and cultural histories of the Deccan.



Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion



East Wing, Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion & Folklore Museum, Mysuru

Nagakunda Stepwell, Sudi

The 1,000-year-old Nagakunda Stepwell and adjacent medieval monuments at Sudi have recently been restored under the Government of Karnataka's Adopt a Monument scheme.

Supported by the Devineni family in memory of Dr. Devineni Subba Rao through the Gandipet Welfare Society (GWS), the project forms part of a larger vision for a sustainable heritage corridor linking Badami and Hampi.

The restoration has generated strong local community engagement, with residents from Sudi beginning to contribute historic objects and materials connected to the region's cultural history. Building on this momentum, the next phase of the project envisions the development of a small outdoor museum and interpretation centre in Lakkundi that will connect conservation with local memory, education and livelihoods.



Work in progress



After completion

British Residency Complex & Rang Mahal, Hyderabad

The DHF conservation work across the historic British Residency Complex in Hyderabad, now home to the Veeranari Chakali Iamma Women's University, is an important example of adaptive reuse within a living educational campus.

At the heart of the project is the restoration of the Rang Mahal Complex, once part of the pleasure gardens associated with Begum Khair-un-Nissa and the British Resident James Achilles Kirkpatrick, who established the Residency at the end of the 18th century.

Over the past decade, the DHF has restored the plaster model of the Residency's Darbar Hall, undertaken conservation of the adjacent British Cemetery in partnership with BACSA, and restored the Rang Mahal garden and gateway with support from Sonata Software Technology Ltd.

The Rang Mahal Complex is envisioned as a cultural and public space for performances, events and educational programming, supported by a long-term sustainability and revenue-generation model.



Rang Mahal after restoration

Deccani Studies Program

Launched with support from the Harish & Bina Shah Foundation and Ashoka University, the Deccani Studies Program is an interdisciplinary summer course combining site visits, seminars, workshops and hands-on conservation training across the Deccan. The pilot edition of the program, held last year, brought together students and emerging researchers for an intensive four-week immersion exploring the region's architectural, artistic and material histories through fieldwork and conservation practice. Participants received training in conservation documentation, imaging, materials analysis, museum practice and heritage management across multiple DHF project sites.

The program has also begun developing international partnerships. In collaboration with the Factum Foundation, two students were selected for a specialised training program in Ahmed Shah Wali Tomb, Ashtoor, Bidar, focused on digital documentation and heritage technologies.

Building on the success of the pilot edition, the American Friends of the Deccan Heritage Foundation have raised funds to support scholarships for several students participating in the Summer 2026 program, helping expand access and training opportunities for the next generation of heritage practitioners and Deccan scholars.



*Golkonda Fort, Hyderabad.
Photograph by Sai Charan Palakurthi.*



*Inside Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion & Museum, Mysuru.
Photograph by Sai Charan Palakurthi.*

PUBLICATIONS

City of Victory: Hampi Vijayanagara

Launched in January 2026, this exhibition and hardcover publication bring together scholarship and photography exploring the architectural and urban history of Vijayanagara.

Chalukya Splendours: In and around Gadag and Lakkundi

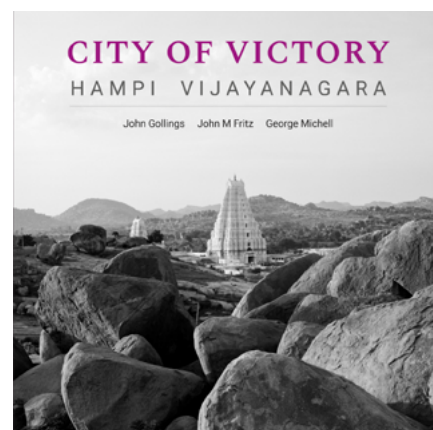
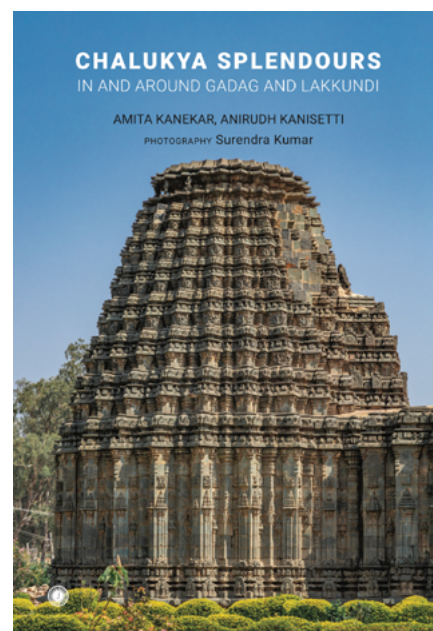
Published by Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage (DAMH), Karnataka & Jaico in collaboration with the DHF, this recent guidebook – the fifteenth in the DHF's acclaimed series exploring the many facets of the Deccan's architectural heritage – examines the remarkable temple architecture and sacred landscapes of the Later Chalukyas across northern Karnataka.

Authored by Amita Kanekar and Anirudh Kaniseti, with a preface by former minister H.K. Patil and photographs by Surendra Kumar, the publication was developed with support from the Government of Karnataka.

Gateway to the Deccan: Mandu (Forthcoming Guidebook)

Currently in development with support from Evolve Back / Orange County Resorts, this forthcoming publication — the sixteenth in our guidebook series — explores the extraordinary fortifications, palaces, mosques and pleasure pavilions of Mandu and the Malwa Sultanate.

Authored by Michael Brand, Pushkar Sohoni and Helen Philon, with photographs by Surendra Kumar, the guidebook continues the DHF's commitment to accessible and visually rich publications on the architectural cultures of the Deccan.



ABOUT US

The Deccan Heritage Foundation (DHF) is dedicated to preserving, restoring and promoting the architectural heritage of the Deccan region. The DHF partners with experts, local residents and patrons to undertake architectural conservation projects that are socially minded, keeping the values of local entrepreneurship, community ownership and the environment at the forefront.

A core objective of the DHF's restoration and community projects is to develop a sustainable model of heritage management by institutionalising historic building maintenance and management, building an in-house capacity and engaging the local community.

The DHF also takes on numerous initiatives to promote the art and culture of the Deccan through its webinars and lectures, and facilitates travel to the Deccan region with its informative books and guidebooks.

Why the Deccan

The Deccan region of India is home to thousands of monuments of historic, artistic, and architectural significance dedicated to several faiths – Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Christianity and Buddhism – as well as a myriad of non-religious monuments, such as forts, palaces and water storage systems. With the pace at which India is growing, whole landscapes are undergoing transformation, threatening the very existence of these monuments and altering livelihood patterns in the surrounding areas.



deccan-heritage-foundation.org
[@deccanheritagefoundation](https://www.instagram.com/deccanheritagefoundation)

Press
Monsoon Malabar
Anishaa Taraporvala
anishaa@monsoonmalabar.co
+91 98869 42096