

ASI to conserve 7 Maratha military forts across state

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Pune: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will focus on maintaining and conserving the forts located in Maharashtra this year, said Sanjay Kumar Manjul, additional director general of ASI, in a conversation with TOI.

The statement followed the nomination of seven Maratha military forts under its jurisdiction in Maharashtra for the Unesco world heritage tag for the years 2024–25. These were among the 12 17th-century forts marked as the Maratha military landscapes for the nomination this year.

From Maharashtra, Shivneri, Lohagad, Raigad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, and Sindhudurg forts are nominated.

“We have proposed these forts for their outstanding universal value. It is an important yet difficult task to conserve these forts, as they have gone through several environmental changes over decades,” Sanjay Manjul told TOI. “There has been water percolation over the years due to the rise of drainage chambers in the city’s landscape. The fort’s landscape, on the other hand, has receded comparatively,” he added.

Arvin Manjul, the regional director of ASI (North), were in the conversation during the ‘History Literature Festival 2024’ at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economy on Saturday. She talked about the Sinauli chariots and their significance.

The ASI excavated three Sinauli chariots in two burial chambers in 2018, which date back to 2000 BCE.

The three Sinauli chariots discovered in 2018 along with antennae swords, ornaments, shields and daggers, however, were the oldest chariots discovered in the entire world. This helps us in understanding that the discovered chariots were war chariots, claim Arvin Manjul.

“These discoveries debunk the Aryan-invasion theory as the existence of horse chariots has been claimed to have been present only after their entry to the Indian peninsula. Now, we have evidence that they existed way before 1,400 BCE, the time when Aryans were said to have come to India,” Sanjay Kumar Manjul told TOI.

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