



[MEDIA INVITE] IHC10 Open House. The Indian Heritage Centre turns 10!

Description

I was told that the Indian Heritage Centre turned 10 on 7th of May 2025. That was the day it opened its doors to the media for a preview. Although I am Chinese, I eat Indian food more often than Chinese food. You will find me at places like Sakunthala's Restaurant, Samy's Curry Restaurant, Springleaf Prata or the ever popular and innovative RK House more often than places serving Chinese fare like Crystal Jade. (Disclaimer: I love hot pots!)

I have been to the Indian Heritage Centre on few previous occasions. We were invited to previous events held at the Indian Heritage Centre. However, this time it seemed to be a bit more grand. We were invited up to the forth level to view the latest artefacts.

Anyway, the open house to the public happens this weekend on the 10 and 11 May 2025. Hence you should take this article of mine to be a preview of what is going to happen at the actual open house.

This weekend, the first 1000 visitors will receive this tote bag.





This is how the second level looked like during the preview.









I witnessed the creation of a rangoli. Almost from scratch. It was done in slightly less than an hour. I will come back to this later in the article.





**CURTAINS UP!
THE INDIAN ODYSSEY TAKES CENTRESTAGE**

PERMANENT EXHIBITION | Indians in Singapore: Past & Present
2015
From the ancient trade winds that carried South Asian cultures to Singapore's shores, to the social awakenings that shaped our nation, the IHC's permanent exhibition is a riveting experience for visitors with takeaways at every turn. Built on the input of 56 Indian organisations, *Indians in Singapore: Past & Present* unfolds across five thematic permanent galleries. It is augmented by immersive multimedia showcases and 440 stunning artefacts such as ancient sculptures, iconic architectural pieces, and intricate jewellery.

OUR DEBUT SPECIAL EXHIBITION

SPECIAL EXHIBITION | Once Upon A Time In Little India
2016
From boat builders who brought the theemithi (firewalking) festival to Albert Street, to the cattle traders who plied Buffalo Road, our inaugural special exhibition whisked visitors through the eclectic streets of Little India past and present. Through evocative archival photos, rare artefacts, and striking contemporary art, visitors got to immerse themselves in the precinct's dynamic character, experience its whorlpoetical spirit, and delve into its transformation from a 19th-century trade hub to the cultural icon it is today.

SPILLING THE TEA ON ANCIENT SYMBOLS AND SCRIPTS

SPECIAL EXHIBITION | Symbols and Scripts: The Language of Craft
2017
Our second special exhibition featured 140 artefacts and cast the spotlight on ancient Indian motifs and scripts, including mythical beasts, mango-inspired jewellery, and local-themed art. In addition to the visual spectacle, visitors enjoyed an immersive experience featuring live demonstrations of ancient art forms—such as metalwork and palm leaf weaving—led by master artisans specialising in the craft.

SPOTLIGHT ON A UNIQUE 3-IN-1 CULTURE

SPECIAL EXHIBITION | Chitti Melaka of the Straits: Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities
2018
From their sarongs to sambals, the Chitti Melaka community has been blending elements of Indian, Malay, and Chinese cultures long before "fusion" became a buzzword. The IHC, in collaboration with the Peranakan Indian (Chitty Melaka) Association Singapore, put the community's special blend of culture and heritage on show from September 2018 to May 2019. The exhibition featured 175 artefacts and photographs, a majority of which were on loan from Singapore's Chitti Melaka community which numbers around 5,000.

UNLOCKING 1,000 YEARS OF SINGAPORE HISTORY

SPECIAL EXHIBITION | From the Coromandel Coast to the Straits: Revisiting our Tamil Heritage
2019
It was the IHC's most ambitious exhibition to date — a multi-gallery spectacle that pulled together rare artefacts from global museums and treasured heirlooms from Singapore's oldest Tamil families. All these to chart the unbroken millennia-long history of Tamils in Singapore spanning the odyssey of ancient seafarers to modern-day citizens. We also cracked the code on the mysterious Singapore Stone, revealing a link to the mighty Tamil Chola kings from 1,000 years ago. Suddenly, Singapore's history wasn't just 700 years old — it was part of a millennium-old story of trade, culture, and connection across the seas.

HERITAGE: NOW STREAMING

SPECIAL CAMPAIGN | Digital CultureFest
2020
When the world hit pause, IHC hit play — streaming the Ramayana's quest for light over darkness straight into living rooms during the pandemic. The special live broadcast was part of IHC's first digital CultureFest — a celebration of heritage and community spirit when Singapore needed it most. Despite a challenging time, in over 2 weeks, the IHC rolled out more than 40 free digital programmes including dance dramas, storytelling sessions, hands-on art workshops and cooking demonstrations. The centre's digital collaborations with more than 100 artists and practitioners helped support the city's art sector.

LANDMARK SIKH EXHIBITION LAUNCHED AMID PANDEMIC

SPECIAL EXHIBITION | Sikhs in Singapore – A Story Untold
2021
No face-to-face meetings? No problem! The IHC team and representatives from Singapore's Sikh community got creative, powering through virtual meetings to launch one of the most extensive exhibitions on Sikhs ever held in the country. The 13,000-strong community's story was told through more than 450 artefacts such as 19th-century royal shields and hand-stitched textiles. That wasn't all. A powerful photo installation featuring 50 young Sikhs as well as a trilogy of films added an extra layer of depth, unlocking tales of faith, resilience, and adaptation.

STUDENTS GET INSIDER ACCESS TO LIVING TRADITIONS

Launch of Museum Based Learning
2022
POV: You're an 11-year-old student, wide-eyed and curious, ready to dive into the electric world of Little India. But where do you begin? Since 2022, more than 80,000 Primary 5 students in Singapore have gotten special access to the precinct's delightful stories and heritage via our Museum-Based Learning curriculum. The programme facilitated by our passionate Museum Educators regale students with tales on Singapore's Indian culture and heritage, providing the young ones a precious touchpoint into cultures other than their own.

MAPPING OUT THE MALAYALEE MOSAIC

SPECIAL EXHIBITION | Ente Veedu, My Home! Malayalees in Singapore
2023
The advice is to eat the rainbow — a colourful spectrum of foods for nourishment and health. The Sadya feast, a sumptuous Kerala tradition, checks all the boxes. Every year, Malayalee families gather and dig into a delicious vegetarian spread during the Vishu and Onam festival celebrations. The IHC's first-ever exclusive spotlight on the Malayalees explored the practices, roots, and evolving identities of the community who are Singapore's second-largest Indian sub-group and a living mosaic comprising Hindus, Muslims, Syrian Christians, and Roman Catholics. It featured over 200 artefacts — from a dazzling elephant caparison used in Kerala festivals to a traditional Syrian Christian doorway.

SETTING NEW HIGHS: DEEPAVALI OPEN HOUSE

Community Festivals
2024
The IHC's Deepavali Open House has been lighting up Little India since 2015, bringing together people from all walks of life, regardless of race, to celebrate the Festival of Lights in the precinct. Whether it's trying traditional crafts, catching a dance performance, or taking a walk in Little India, there's something for everyone to enjoy and learn from. The 2024 celebration saw the biggest turnout yet with over 45,000 visitors in 4 weeks, showing just how much this festival has become a must-visit highlight in Little India's cultural scene.







Ok I kept focusing on the rangoli. That is Ms Vijaya Mohan. She is the record holder for creating the largest rangoli in Singapore (or was it the world?). The rangoli was more than 2000 square feet in size.

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This is on the forth level.







Oh yes. This is an artist at work. Sketching on the spot!



Some pictures to show you what is to come this weekend.

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Overall the presentation, even for the media preview, was very engaging. I recorded the presentation. You can view it here:

Anyway, the rangoli is completed! I spoke to Ms Vijaya Mohan. She conducts rangoli therapy classes at institutions like the IMH. She is also a yoga instructor. Kind of makes sense. Creating the rangoli required her to bend, squat and stand multiple times. I guess this is how she keeps herself fit and her joints healthy!



Now if you are coming to the IHC10 Open House this weekendâ? This is the Indian Heritage Centre.





Welcome to the Indian Heritage Centre's (IHC)
10th anniversary celebrations!

In 2015, a new pearl in the heritage ecosystem emerged. Part of a fresh wave of heritage revival across the country, the IHC was launched to great excitement by then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on May 7. To date, it has charmed over 1.6 million visitors with six special exhibitions and wide-ranging programmes celebrating the rich journeys and cultural heritage of the Indian community.

In conjunction with our anniversary and the nation's SG60 celebrations, members of the public can look forward to a slew of 60 new artefacts to go on display for the first time. Whether you're a local or a curious traveller, there's always something to discover at our centre!





Happy 10th birthday IHC!

Yours sincerely,

Daryl



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