India's Oldest
MARINE MUSEUM
Nhava
Centenary Issue

Marine Museum
Nhava, Taluka Panvel, District Raigad, Navi Mumbai- 410206, Maharashtra, India
Ads from Souvenirs of the past
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FOREWORD

It is both an honour and a privilege to serve India’s Oldest Marine Museum as Chairperson in its centenary year. I was personally associated with the Museum 30 years ago as a “friend” filling the floors and walls with whatever exhibits one could develop and lay one’s hands on. This new avatar as Chairperson has brought its own share of nostalgia and I feel blessed that I have been given an opportunity to do something for this prestigious institution once again.

The Nhava museum has come a long way since then indeed. Today, at the end of 100 years it stands tall amongst the small museums of Mumbai and its environs. This is thanks to the effort put in over all these years by all those unsung heroes, artists, collectors, contributors and generous donors who scoured their basements, brought out their grandmother’s trousseaus and roped in designers with time to spare to make the Museum what it is today.

The contribution of Padma Shri Sadashiv Gorakshakar, former Director of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahhalaya to the gallery on the ground floor is momentous as is Mr. Debi Goenka’s inspired Ecology Section. It is our tragic misfortune that Mr. Abdul Rashid Yusuf, Chairman Emeritus of the Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation left us before seeing the Marine Museum celebrate its centenary. He was the heart and soul of the Museum.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with the Museum, with this publication and wish the Museum every success in the future.

Heta Pandit
The Chairman and the Members of the Museum Committee are grateful to the Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation, Nhava for its support in this publication.

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THE MARINE MUSEUM

Museum buildings are, as a norm, usually designed and built to house a collection of exhibits. Logically, therefore, the buildings are almost always younger than the collections they hold and display. The Marine Museum at Nhava, however, is just the other way around. This beautiful building, designed and built as a residence of the illustrious ship building family of the Wadias is most certainly of an older vintage than its collection. In fact the building may have changed uses since. A 1935 Souvenir shows the building as being that of the Marine School.

It is to the architectural acumen of the late Mr. Abdul Rashid Yusuf that this man-made gem was turned into a world class museum. It sits well, amidst sylvan green ornamentals and swaying palms and is complementary to the other historic buildings in the campus of the Training Ship Rahaman at Nhava.

The architecture of the Marine Museum is best described as British Colonial and is typical of the turn of the 20th century. To serve as a residence, its original purpose, it may have had ancillary buildings that functioned as kitchens, pantries, stores and conveniences. Evidence of any such structures has been lost to posterity but one can assume that they were located at the rear of the main building.

Like most buildings of its time, the Marine Museum building is also a load-bearing structure with thick stone walls that support its weight. A high plinth adds to its posture and beauty while saving it from any possible flooding from the sea. The coloured glass on its windows were an idea brought to life in the 1980’s and the ornamental garden designed by Mrs Elizabeth Yusuf and executed by the T.S.Rahaman gardeners catching the play of light and shade is something to be seen.
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THE COLLECTION

With all the numerous activities that Sir Mohamed Yusuf was involved with, it is no small miracle that he also had the time and the interest to collect things with a view to educate. At a time when museums were unheard of, this gentleman of means not just thought of starting a personal collection but also placed this personal collection on display for the young students at the Nhava marine school to learn from.

The earliest collection of exhibits in the Marine Museum at Nhava is the collection of stamps, coins and paper money that Sir Mohamed brought back with him from his many travels across the world. Drawings and sketches, photographs and letters were added to this collection and soon the Marine Museum began to look more like the education tool it has become today. In fact, the Marine Museum started in 1912 had a parallel in a Founder’s Museum started in 1970. The two were merged at some point.

Equipment, instruments, crockery and cutlery, wash stands and models of ships were added to the Marine Museum from the Yusuf family’s personal collection and from the erstwhile Scindia Shipping Company. Private collectors made their own small and big contributions. The bulk of the collection on the ground floor gallery, however, came from an exhibition on maritime history held at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum), Kala Ghoda, Mumbai.

This ground floor gallery encompasses the Pre Mauryan Period, Andhra and Kushan Period, Chola Period, Pre Mogul Period, Mogul Period, Maratha Period, British Period and a section on traditional boat building techniques in Western India. The first floor covers a history of the Yusuf family and pays tribute to those pioneers in the family who laid the building blocks of modern Indian shipping. It also displays instruments, equipment, artefacts used in boats and ships of yesteryear as also uniforms of the cadets at the T.S.Rahaman. Some wall space is also shared by newspaper clippings from the 1980’s reminding the visitor of the struggle that the institution went through to save Nhava from being overrun by mindless planning. Period furniture, strategically placed on this floor give tired feet a rest.

The top floor of the Marine Museum has been set up to recall the days when Sir Mohamed held court, dispensed justice in the village and received visitors from the Bombay Government, shipping companies and marine schools the world over. Exhibits here include gilded vases presented by erstwhile princes, mirrored almirahs, ceremonial chairs, music boxes, swords, shields and armoury, Sir Mohamed’s personal artefacts and historic correspondence between him and Rabindranath Tagore.

The Marine Museum at Nhava is an autonomous body under the aegis of the Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation, Nhava. The exhibits, unless otherwise stated, are the sole property of the Foundation.
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This Centenary Issue is dedicated to the memory of Abdul Rashid Yusuf who dedicated all his waking hours to the betterment of the T.S.Rahaman, Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation and all those people whose lives he touched in so many myriad ways.
“The illustrious ancestors of Emir Sir Mohammud Yusuf, the Founder of the charitable institutions at Novha, were, by profession, seamen and were distinguished as the pioneers of Indian Shipping. Their association with the shipping industry was marked by an era of revival, progress and development of trade and commerce on the western coast of India. The great grandfather of Emir Sir Mohamud Yusuf laid, about hundred years ago, the foundation of the association of the family with shipping by starting a service of sailing ships to carry passengers across the Bombay Harbour.”

- from A Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee of the Marine College and Seamen’s Orphanage and other charitable institutions at Novha. (1910-1935)
“from nine boys, with which the Orphanage had opened in 1910, the number on the rolls began to rise steadily, and reached a total of 30 boys consisting of sons of Indian seamen and other orphans. Applications for admissions continued to pour in. No efforts were spared to cope with the increased demand, additional buildings being constructed for accommodating the staff and boys, tanks and wells being built and sanitary arrangements increased and improved.

“The School proved also a great boon to the local seamen who live in the surrounding villages, a large number of their sons being enrolled as free-day-scholars; they are also supplied with books, stationery and school uniforms.”

- from A Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee of the Marine College and Seamen's Orphanage and other charitable institutions at Novha. (1910-1935)
“A Museum was established in the school where articles of arts and handicrafts, turned out by the boys in the Industrial Classes, curios, biological specimens and a large number of other articles were placed for exhibition and study.

“The small number of books which the school possessed developed into a library by the Founder presenting his own large and valuable collection of books to it.”

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"During his European tour in 1929, our Founder took with him the Principal Mr. V. A. Pitale, to give him an opportunity of obtaining personal knowledge and experience of the leading educational and training institutions in chief European cities."

- from A Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee of the Marine College and Seamen’s Orphanage and other charitable institutions at Novha. (1910-1935)
“We, the past and present students and members of the Staff of the Marine College and Seamen’s Orphanage and your sincere admirers most humbly and respectfully offer you our humble greetings and sincere felicitations on the auspicious occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Marine College and the Seamen’s Orphanage and Other Charitable Institutions in Novha.

“Your Honor’s noble family has been long noted for its philanthropic acts and for its bold and widespread ventures in the cause of Indian Shipping on the West Coast of India. Your Honor’s worthy and illustrious ancestors were the first to train Indians to man their ships as officers. They were in fact the pioneers in establishing indigenous shipping enterprise and their deeds are commemorated in ballads which are even to-day being sung by seamen of Kathiawar and Koncan.”

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"I am very pleased to see the School. It is one of the neatest and cleanest little institutions I have seen and it shows a personal touch of Sir Mohamud Yusuf, who deserves to be congratulated for the genuine service he is rendering to the orphans of this small Island. I was greatly struck that the Institution welcomes the boys of all communities. I wish him all success and trust that it may grow into a real College and in future provide servants for the marine service of India and the Navy.

(Sd) M.A. Jinnah
Bar-at-Law"

- from A Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee of the Marine College and Seamen's Orphanage and other charitable institutions at Novha. (1910-1935)
“19th September 1964

... I visited the Nhava Island and saw for myself the excellent and productive activity engaged in, in a silent spirit of dedication, by all concerned with the management and the functioning of the several institutions under the Trust.

“I wish these institutions and their management every success and progress in this noble and philanthropic work being done by them.

Govind H. Seth
Director General Shipping, Ministry of Transport and Communication, Government of India

- from A Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the Nautical and Technical Institute and The Seamen’s Orphanage and an account of the development of other charitable institutions at Nhava Island in the Bombay Harbour. (1910-1964)
“During the last fifty years with the exceptional farsightedness they founded these fine institutions called the Nautical and Technical Institute and Seamen’s Orphanage. These were established on a beautiful Island in Bombay Harbour known as Nhava, called in the past by the Europeans as Hog Island which was owned by the Founder, and now forms part of the Trust created by him.”

- from A Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the Nautical and Technical Institute and The Seamen’s Orphanage and an account of the development of other charitable institutions at Nhava Island in the Bombay Harbour. (1910-1964)
The forefathers of Sir Mohamed Yusuf had been seafarers but Haji Hasham Yusuf, Sir Mohamed Yusuf’s grandfather and brother of the famous Haji Cassum, was the first to start his own shipping line and the founder in the year 1865 of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company, a coastal ferry service shipping concern. Soon after the establishment of the firm he lost his life, in what could justly be considered the cause of Indian Shipping, in the year 1868 while on an underwater dive in the then unexplored Nagothana Creek when charting it for his ships to navigate safely.

- from *A Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the Nautical and Technical Institute and The Seamen’s Orphanage and an account of the development of other charitable institutions at Nhava Island in the Bombay Harbour. (1910-1964)*
“There are amenities in the Colony such as large number of wells, reservoir and tank built to provide fresh water; and a Power House to generate electricity for road and other lighting purposes as also for working pumps used in drawing and supplying water by pipe. Playground and recreation grounds are also provided. Flower gardens have been laid out, and road and drainage constructed.”

-from A Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the Nautical and Technical Institute and The Seamen’s Orphanage and an account of the development of other charitable institutions at Nhava Island in the Bombay Harbour. (1910-1964)
“Although the main object of the Institution was to impart Nautical Training, classes were started to teach crafts such as Weaving, Tailoring, Carpentry, Tinsmithy and Metal Work with a view to enable those boys who did not have the aptitude for a sea faring career to earn a decent livelihood in other fields.”

“The Founder worked for the development and progress of the firm with his late father Mr. Haji Ismail Hasham Yusuf for nearly 20 years before their partner Capt. J A Shepherd retired in the year 1904, when the Private Shipping Firm was formed into a Public Limited Company, and the firm’s Managing Agency known as Shephered and Company was entrusted to Killick Nixon and Company in the year 1906. Though a major portion of the shares were sold by the family at the time, still the founder associated with the Shipping Firm’s management till the year 1912, when he sold his remaining shares for giving to the government of the then Bombay Presidency, now State, a donation which amounted to a sum of Rs. 8 lacs for establishing an Arts College in the memory of his father and called after him, the Ismail Yusuf College to be built at Jogeshwari in Greater Bombay.”

- from A Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the Nautical and Technical Institute and The Seamen’s Orphanage and an account of the development of other charitable institutions at Nhava Island in the Bombay Harbour. (1910-1964)
“Tributes are cheap in a country where mediocrity is all too often hailed as excellence and where eulogy is easily earned and still more easily lavished. Occasionally, however, merit may be found of abounding worth and one feels that the glowing praise is well bestowed and reading the tribute paid by the Hon. B G Kher of Novha Island yesterday to the great Muslim philanthropist of Bombay, Sir Mahomed Yusuf, one could not help feeling that here was just this case.”

The Evening News of India, March 6th, 1939.

“In the year 1949 the Government of India amended the Indian Shipping Act, 1923, and assumed powers to set up Seamen Employment Offices under State auspices, and thereafter in pursuance of the recommendation of the Merchant Navy Training Committee, a training scheme for ratings was brought into force by the establishment of Training Ship “Badra” at Calcutta in 1950 and “Mekhale” at Vizagapattam in 1951. The establishment of the above training ships was the beginning of a decade of uncertainty and anxiety for the Institute, as its trainees who were originally employed directly by various shipping companies were now declared as not eligible for employment in the Merchant Navy.”


Natural patterns (palm leaves, shells, etc.) were popular elements of style in the period furniture of the early 20th century.
“A visit to the Island of Nhava is an education in itself, and one can feel the unique and refreshing way in which training is being conducted not only to budding sailors, but also to others who are being groomed as technicians in other fields.”

"In 1774 after the fall of the fort at Karanjia, Nhava together with Elephanta was rendered by the Marathas to Col. Keating without any resistance. In 1776 after prolonged negotiations with the Peshwas Col. Cockburn agreed under the 'Bombay Treaty' to give up the British conquests made since 1773 including Nhava, to the Maratha Government, but Warren Hastings, the then Governor General, disapproved of the treaty and signed a fresh treaty with the Marathas, under which the British were not to be disturbed in their possession of Salsette, Elephanta, Karanjia and Nhava. However, it was not until 1782, when the General Goddard signed the Treaty of Salbye with the Peshwas, that the cessation of those islands to the British was finally confirmed."

"In the year 1864 the British Government acquired lands on the north western tip of Nhava for the purpose of a hydraulic lift, in anticipation of the increase of shipping expected by the opening of the Suez Canal."


"Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose with principal Rahaman and members of the college union."
“The Founder’s Museum recently started by the Managing Board, and amalgamated with the Marine Museum established in 1912 contains various articles and photographs of historical interest to the visitor. The visitor can peruse at leisure through the personal stamp and coin collection of the founder, or acquaint himself with the history of the Hydraulic Lift constructed in 1872 or the history of “The Bombay Steam Navigation Company” initially founded in 1845, and later to become the first Indian owned Shipping Company, with which the founder and his ancestors, who were the pioneers, had a long and fruitful association.”

“To aid the boys in their study, a small museum was started in 1912 on the premises. This magnificent building to this day holds a treasure house of curios, marine biological specimens, models of famous ships of old and a whole lot of information on marine history. When Sir Mohamed Yusuf presented his own collection of books to the museum, the small collection on its shelves turned into a rich library. And with that, the first maritime museum in the country had been founded.”

“In a desperate bid to save India’s oldest maritime establishment from defacement or demolition, the Chairman of the Foundation appealed to the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri V P Naik in the middle of 1973. His appeal was echoed by several distinguished personalities from the field of shipping, shipowners, members of the Union of Seafarers of India and voluntary environmental organisations. The Ministry of Petroleum, Chemicals and Fertilisers and the Ministry of Shipping & Transport were approached and finally matters went up to the attention of Smt. Indira Gandhi.”

“The local inhabitants of the island are mainly of ‘Angria’ origin, whose history may be considered to have begun with Kanhoji (1700-1754), the son of the famous Tukaji who distinguished himself in the fleet of Shivaji. Kanhoji, became master of the entire coast from Bombay to Vijaydurg, and was recognised as an independent ruler as early as 1713.”

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Builder’s presentation model of a ferry boat under construction for the Bombay Steam Navigation Company

Model of the ship Lady Nyassa
"Towards the end of 1872 the Governor and a large party of invitees were taken in a large vessel to see the working of the wonder lift. However, as ill luck would have it, the vessel instead of being lifted clear off the water, nearly went down to the bottom, together with the Governor and his distinguished guests. From that day onwards the lift was looked upon with suspicion and finally abandoned by the Government."


"In 1923 the Government formed the Indian Mercantile Marine Committee which subsequently visited the Marine School at Nhava. Thereafter the committee proposed to Sir Yusuf to hand over his Marine School to the Government for conversion into a Maritime Training Centre which he refused to do, and in 1924 he went ahead with his own scheme to upgrade his Marine School into a Marine College recognised by the University of Bombay for training of Indian seafarers in Home Trade Certificates of Competency. The College thus became the first maritime training facility in the whole country, indeed in South Asia as Training Ship Dufferin was only established subsequently in the year 1927."

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“Mr. Rashid was thus drawn into a whirlpool of activities about which he was not too familiar. Through sheer dint of hard work and application of mind, he gradually got into the intricacies of maritime training and so to say, dragged the institute by its boot laces into what it is today—one of the finest Maritime Training facilities in the Country.”

“By now the Institution's standing and reputation had travelled far and wide and thus Dockendale Shipping Company, Nassau, Bahamas came up with the proposal of donating funds for a Maritime Library.”

“The transformation of Training Ship ‘Rahaman’ from a school set up for the limited purpose of imparting basic seafaring knowledge to new recruits, to its present eminent position of being amongst the ‘Top of the line’ maritime training institutes of Asia, did indeed pose many challenges to him. It was his vision for the future of the Foundation and his dedication to the cause which enabled him to move step by step by mustering all possible physical, financial, manpower and material resources.”

- Commander (Retd.) L.K.Sharma, VSM, Indian Navy
“After the preliminary interview and a swimming test at Worli, I was selected and on the first Monday of September 1975 a batch of 25 ratings and 20 Bhandaris (Crew Cooks) took a machwa (large sailing boat) from Mazagaon Pier. I had butterflies in my stomach and as the coastline receded apprehension set in. Most of the other rating cadets selected were talking of life at sea clearly indicating that they came from a family with seafaring background. The group seemed divided- boys from Ratnagiri, Goa, Gujarat and some of us who did not fit into any group, sat lost trying to figure out what lay in store on the isle of Nhava.”

-Captain Najib Peshiman, Captain Superintendent, T.S.Rahaman

-from A milestone in its historical passage

“Our past however painful or colourful it may seem, cannot be wished away.”
-Bandana Singh, former curator, Marine Museum

- from A milestone in its historical passage Souvenir issue December 2005,
"As the journey through the galleries continues, you come across the live display of a Machwa, the pride of Maratha’s and realise its importance as Marathas struggled for supremacy during East India Company. The development of passenger and cargo traffic initially through the Bombay Steam Navigation Company and later through the Scindia Shipping Corporation is well chronicled."

-Bandana Singh, former curator, Marine Museum

“Due to the very fragile viability of T.S. Rahaman’s operations in those days, it had to work under severe financial constraints. The only vehicle on Nhava was an old Ford T minus the engine, pulled by one buffalo and a cow, with the imposing number plate 'NHAVA'. “

-H.E. Kizilbash, family friend.

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“On the 20th September which is designated as Founder’s Day, the Indian Postal Department issued a First Day Cover to commemorate 100 years of Maritime training on Training Ship Rahaman, a rare honour indeed and given only on special occasions to acknowledge an event of historical importance.”

– from Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation Training Ship Rahaman Centenary 1910-2010

Sword collection

Early 20th century music box
“T.S. Rahaman is now a national monument. It should be so recognised by the Government of India.”

- Manohar Awati, Vice Admiral (Retd.), Indian Navy, Vinchurni
“Thanks to our interest in the Museum, Rashid Yusuf invited Heta and me to join the Museum Committee. Meetings of this Committee were held once or twice a year, either at Nhava or at the Prince of Wales Museum. Dr Gorakshakar who was the Chairman of this Committee suddenly decided to hold a meeting at Nhava. Since the roads were in terrible condition during the monsoons, he decided we should go by boat from the Gateway. The sun was shining when we left, and we spent a pleasant hour in the harbour watching the gulls and the shipping activity in the harbour. After our meeting followed by a magnificent lunch and a siesta in the garden, we decided it was time to head back.

“But nature decided to take a hand. Ten minutes after we had decided to sail from the Nhava jetty, we were hit by a fierce thunderstorm. The calm sea had suddenly been replaced by a dark and angry one, and the boat was tossed up and down. We were all drenched—both by the rain and the waves—and visibility had come down to about 10 feet. I gave up all attempts to keep dry and decided to enjoy myself. Leaving my cameras in the leaky cabin, I went up on the upper deck and was thoroughly enjoying getting drenched. After about 30 minutes, Mother Nature decided that we had had enough, and the clouds disappeared as quickly as they had come. Much to everyone’s astonishment, we discovered that our boat had sailed around Elephanta and that we were on our way back to Nhava.

“We were really lucky that we had not sailed into the Island—and that was the last time anyone suggested a boat ride to Nhava in the monsoons.”

- Debi Goenka, Executive Trustee, Conservation Action Trust
- from Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation Training Ship Rahaman Centenary 1910-2010
“However the Campus is now full, or nearly so and one can only wonder whether this Centenary means that further advancements will be difficult to accommodate. The family connection with the establishment has continued with the appointment of the son Haroun as Chairman and the daughter Farzana to a senior management position.”

- Franz de Zwart, Adelaide, Australia

- from Sir Mohamed Yusuf Seamen Welfare Foundation Training Ship Rahaman Centenary 1910-2010
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**Getting there ...**

**A) By Air:**
- To Sahar International Airport or Santa Cruz Domestic Airport, from where various travel options as mentioned below are available to Nhava.

**B) By Sea:**
- By Hovercraft from Gateway of India to Belapur Hoverport, and from there by bus or auto to Nhava.
- By ferry boat from Ferry Wharf to Mora pier, Uran and from there by bus or auto to Nhava via Jasai and Gawas villages.

**C) By Train:**
- By Harbour line via Manakhurd to Belapur station and from there by bus or auto to Nhava.

**D) By Road :**
- From Mumbai-Cross Thane Creek bridge, take left underpass to Belapur, Nerul, Sanpada and Dronagiri onto Palm Beach Marg, turn right at end Cross over Belapur Creek bridge continue along pipe road to Ulwe Village then turn right down village road to junction with road to Darave Village turn right again to Shivaji Nagar and right to Nhava
- From Panvel - drive towards Uran, turn right at MSWSW Water Tanks, down village road to Khar Koper village (Shivaji’s statue), and right to Nhava.

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**Nhava Office Tel Nos. :** (91-22) 2721 2800 / 2721 2236
**Fax. Nhava :** (91-22) 2721 2201 / 2721 2096

**Worli Office Tel Nos. :** (91-22) 2493 3324 / 2493 8740 / 55761472 Fax : (91-22) 2495 0270

**Email :** booking@tsrahaman.org Email : tsrahaman@tsrahaman.org

**Visit Our Website :** www.tsrahaman.org
"As chairman of the Foundation it is my privilege to continue the legacy of my forefathers and make the marine museum into a successful education tool."
- Haroun A.R. Yusuf

"The marine museum completes 100 years this year and we are fortunate to be an integral part of this important milestone."
- Farzana Jameela Yusuf

"Unless you have a sense of legacy you cannot know your true potential."
- Capt. K.S. Varadkar

"Being associated with the Museum has been a learning curve for me and I am enjoying every minute of it."
- Major Madhav Zope

"I have been associated with this wonderful family for over 30 years. I do hope that now I will be able to do something for the Marine Museum as well!"
- Heta Pandit

"I am privileged to be a member of the Managing Committee and look forward to spruce up the magnificent museum."
- Rajan Jayakar

"The importance of mangroves was recognized in this Museum more than 25 years ago."
- Debi Goenka

"It’s amazing that Sir Mohamed Yusuf thought of a Museum when the concept was unheard of in the country!"
- Sadashiv Gorakshakar