

## VIJAYAWADA

## Students get tips on how to reanimate meaningful heritage



## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA:, OCTOBER 03, 2016 00:00 IST

UPDATED: NOVEMBER 01, 2016 22:39 IST

## They visit Amaravati Heritage Centre and Museum

A group of 60-odd students and staff from the history department of the Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada, listened in rapt attention as Professor Amareswar Galla, Curator of Amaravati Heritage Town, explained about how the ancient town of Amaravati was an incremental and developing project that gradually unravelled, interpreted and conserved significant layers of over 3,000 years of the past, based on quality research and community engagement.

The students and staff, led by their Head of the Department Dr. Muvva Srinivas Reddy and Assistant Director of AP Archaeology and Museums Deepak Jo, visited the Amaravati Heritage Centre and Museum as part of a day-long excursion.

“Such an approach is critical prior to marketing and promoting responsible and ethical tourism,” insisted Prof. Galla.

He said the next generation of historians and heritage managers must be professionally qualified to safeguard the rich heritage of Telugu people. “AP as a new State provides an excellent opportunity to shed past colonial practices of keeping objects and sites as dead remains. They need to be reanimated and interpreted for all kinds of visitors in a meaningful way.”

On the importance of history as evidence-based scholarship, he recalled eminent Indian historian Romila Thapar’s emphasis from the book *The Past as Present*, on the “critical importance for the past to be carefully and rigorously explained, if the legitimacy of our present, wherever it derives from the past, is to be portrayed as accurately as possible”.

He said he was hopeful that the partnership between the Amaravati Heritage Town and universities and colleges that teach rigorous history would lead to upskilling in the heritage sector. The heritage expert said whenever a person comes across an artefact or an important site of heritage value they should first contact the Department of Archaeology and Museums. Serious ethical and legal issues could come into play in the event of any violation of the norms stipulated for conservation of articles of heritage value.

The trip helped students realise that they too could play an important role in protecting valuable heritage by opting for jobs in the heritage field.

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