

Kol, Mum, Karachi architects meet on Insta, discuss history and heritage

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Kolkata: Kolkata, Karachi and Mumbai were nerve centres of trade and commerce in pre-partition India but the similarity between the three bustling metropolises doesn't end here.

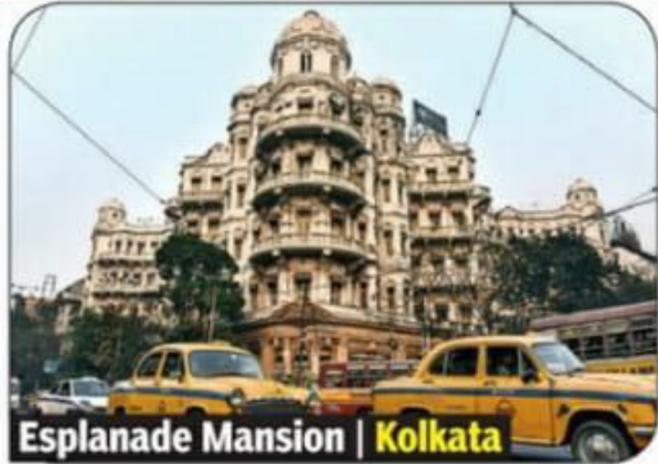
The three cities, two in India and one in Pakistan now, also have a rich collection of built heritage in forms of buildings and structures of varied architectural styles.

TIMES VIEW: Conservation is a complex subject, where multiple factors come into play, and there is no easy solution. Exchange of ideas is welcome, especially in an area where we can learn from other cities.

Three Instagram accounts from the three cities focusing on their built heritage came together for a webinar on Thursday evening to initiate a dialogue on conservation of the structures as physical records of cultural history, address intuition neglect towards heritage structures and how the concept of "adaptive reuse" of historical residence were leading to alterations of the inside of the grand structures.

Pakistan Chowk Commu-

FOCUS ON CONSERVATION OF GRAND STRUCTURES

 <p>Esplanade Mansion Kolkata</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was the capital of the British before it was shifted to Delhi ● Central Kolkata, Dalhousie, Esplanade and north Kolkata are dotted with several Raj-era buildings like Writers' Buildings, GPO & Mercantile Building 	 <p>Mohatta Palace Karachi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Was a hub of trade and commerce in India before Partition ● The Saddar area is dotted with old colonial-style buildings with historical importance 	 <p>David Sassoon Library and Reading Room Mumbai</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some of the heritage structures in Mumbai are St Thomas Cathedral, David Sassoon Library And Reading Room, Mumbai University and Asiatic Society ● The architecture style is similar to that of Kolkata and Karachi
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nity Centre (@pakistan-chowkCC) in Karachi "hosted" the webinar and Calcutta Houses (@calcuttahouses) as well Art Deco Mumbai (@art-decomumbai) represented Kolkata and Mumbai.

"We cannot see these structures, homes, monuments and historical residences as individual elements but as a part of the architectural heritage of South Asia," said Maaz Jaan, an architect and illustrator based in Karachi, in the webinar.

"The region has been under several rulers and settlers for centuries which is documented through the architec-

ture. These buildings, monuments and structures are a testimony to architectural heritage of the region, but they are not being preserved and protected properly," said Jaan.

Since Kolkata, Karachi and Mumbai were the nerve centres of British rule, all three have a rich collection of buildings and structures of varied architectural styles, ranging from early 20th-century architecture to neo-classical buildings to classical British architecture, Indo-Gothic buildings, Neo-Renaissance and Hindu architecture.

The panellists said it is of-

ten not acknowledged that the three cities are alike in several ways. "We were delighted to be a part of this dialogue, to present Mumbai's architectural heritage and appreciate other perspectives. All three cities are alike in ways we often don't acknowledge and we hope this is the start of a conversation," said Suhasini Krishnan, the panellist representing Arts Deco Mumbai.

The Saddar area of Karachi has several old colonial-style buildings like Karachi Municipal Corporation built in 1932. Empress Market in the central business district was

built between 1884-1889. Mohatta Palace is located in Clifton and was constructed on the orders of Hindu Prince Shivraton Chandraratan Mohatta in 1927.

Kolkata's central Kolkata, Dalhousie, Esplanade and north Kolkata are dotted with several Raj-era buildings like Writers' Buildings, GPO, Mercantile Building and Esplanade Mansions. South Mumbai too is also home to several heritage structures like St Thomas Cathedral, David Sassoon Library And Reading Room, Mumbai university and Asiatic Society.