**“THE HERITAGE BILL SHOULD BE USER FRIENDLY”**

-  **Gaj Singh Jodhpur**

The Heritage Bill should be user friendly and help conserve the age-old heritage. This was stated today by the Convener of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur at the Annual Rajasthan Conveners Meet at Hotel Ginger in Jaipur.

The Convener further said it was appropriate that the ‘Rajasthan Heritage Conservation Bill’ mooted earlier had been dropped since it had not taken into account the various issues pertaining to heritage properties. He also hoped that the new Bill would address the issues and challenges of the heritage properties. He also urged that the municipal bodies should come out with byelaws for heritage properties.

The Chairman of INTACH, Maj. Gen. (Retd.)L K Gupta, informed that there had been a strategic change in the working of the organisation since earlier it was only monument-centric. Now the organisation was also looking into protection of natural heritage. Geo-heritage, water bodies and step wells were some of the areas that INTACH was also focusing on. He urged the chapter representatives to closely work with district administrations.

The Chairman further stated that INTACH was doing a large number of awareness programmes in schools and colleges to inculcate in the students the value for heritage and conservation. While earlier, the capacity building was done only for conveners and co-conveners at the INTACH head office in Delhi, now it was being done for all the members who wanted to attend such training programmes. Active involvement of members is becoming increasingly important for the organisation, he said. A sensitisation programme for the officers and engineers of the Municipal Corporations was also being undertaken by INTACH, he informed.

The State Co-Convener, Mr. Hari Singh Palkiya said that one area that INTACH wanted to focus on was saving the sacred groves that were being increasingly encroached upon by Corporate Houses.

The State Co-Convener and Jaipur Convener of INTACH, Ms. Dharmendar Kanwar said that the objective of the Annual Rajasthan Conveners Meet is to discuss the various issues pertaining to different chapters. With the Chairman of INTACH being present many proposals and suggestions mooted by the members can be taken up by the central office of INTACH, she said.

The 2-day Annual Rajasthan Conveners Meet is being attended by all the chapters of the State including the new ones like Bhilwara, Rajsamand and Karauli.