

NOTES

GARGOTI MINERAL MUSEUM

Gargoti is a unique mineral museum dedicated primarily to zeolites (Fig.1). Situated at Nashik in Maharashtra, this is perhaps the only museum built and owned by an individual. The museum is the brain child of Mr. K.C. Pande, a retired naval officer who had a childhood hobby and love for attractive minerals that probably emanated, as he feels, from a divine connection. Gargoti in Marathi means useless stone. Choice of such a name for the museum reflects the



Fig.1. Gargoti Museum at Nashik.

passion for gems by the founder, who marvels at the transformation of raw zeolite into the most sought after collector's item. The museum has supplied pieces of rare zeolites to the renowned natural history museums of the world. Pleased with the success of the zeolite museum at Nashik, Mr. Pande plans to have similar museums in other cities, beginning with Shirdi.

The museum houses a worldwide collection of zeolites of immense beauty, so aesthetically displayed as to convert any curious visitor into a connoisseur of zeolites. The main zeolites on display are scolecite, apophyllite, cavansite, heulandite, stilbite, chabazite, mesolite, cryolite, natrolite, powellite etc. The specimens are collected by careful blasting from stone quarries in Deccan Trap at Jalgaon and other places. The raw stones are skillfully processed for display at the factory to become valuable museum pieces. Unlike other gemstones, these are not cut and polished, and therefore retain their pristine natural beauty. Zeolites lack the hardness of a diamond, a quality that is desirable to ensure the durability of a gemstone. That is the reason why the zeolite is described as vulnerable, and requires careful handling. Its delicateness is more than compensated by its adorable beauty in the form of aggregates of crystals of all geometric shapes in a wide range of vivid colours. Apart from its visual appeal, these semi-precious stones are believed to have medicinal properties.

The museum also displays an exclusive collection of other precious and semi-precious stones from many parts of the world. Geologists in particular will immensely benefit from a visit to the exquisite collection in the museum that will at once be aesthetically pleasing and educative.

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M. RAMAKRISHNAN

WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATED STRATIGRAPHY AND GEOCHRONOLOGY OF CRETACEOUS SEDIMENTS AND NATIONAL SEMINAR ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SEDIMENTARY BASINS OF INDIA

A workshop on Integrated Stratigraphy and Geochronology of Cretaceous Sediments and the 23rd Annual Convention of Indian Association of Sedimentologists (IAS) and also the National Seminar on Environmental and Economic Significance of Sedimentary Basins of India

were held on 6th and from 7–9 December, 2006 respectively in the Department of Geology, Anna University, Chennai. The workshop was sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi and inaugurated by Dr. V. Palanisamy, Director, Geological Survey of India,