

Hindustan Times, Chandigarh

Hollande, Modi hail Indo-French team's findings at govt museum

- **Aneesha Bedi, HindustanTimes, Chandigarh**

| Updated: Jan 25, 2016 09:10

- French President Francois Hollande and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were greeted by a high-energy giddha and bhangra performance as they visited the Government Museum and Art Gallery on Sunday afternoon.
- The dignitaries arrived at the museum at 3.45pm, soon after their visit to Rock Garden. They stayed there for about 15 minutes, before leaving for a business summit at Taj Hotel.
- The VVIPs were briefed about some exquisite archaeological findings by prehistorian Dr Mukesh Singh and palaeo-anthropologist Dr Anne Dambricourt Malasse. Modi and Hollande were shown archaeological findings from the foothills of the Himalayas that suggest human activity dating 2.6 million years back, making them among the oldest known remnants of human existence.
- The two leaders congratulated the Indo-French team for their joint research work leading to this discovery and underlined “that this example of successful bilateral collaboration illustrated the long-standing cultural ties and enduring collaboration between India and France in rediscovering, preserving and promoting our shared cultural heritage”.
- The highlight during their visit to the museum, however, was when they posed for a picture with the bhangra troupe on their way out.
- “Visit to the government museum -- an example of Indo-French collaboration in historical & archaeological work,” tweeted external affairs ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup during the visit. Swarup in another tweet said the guest from France was accorded a traditional welcome.
- Others who visited the place were equally impressed by it's charm, “It is great that both state leaders could take out time to come to the museum and witness the cultural ties. It is indeed a historic moment for all of us,” said, Dr Mukesh Singh, prehistorian, The Society for Archaeological and Anthropological Research (Indo-French Team).
- “The fact that it is the oldest pre-historic site where we found human activity makes the leaders' visit to the museum all the more significant, although I wish they could have stayed longer.”said Dr Anne Dambricourt Malasse, palaeo-anthropologist, department of prehistory, National Museum of Natural History, Paris (Indo-French team)
- Located in the heart of the city, the museum and the gallery houses a part of the collection of art objects, paintings, sculptures and decorative arts that were kept in the Central Museum, Lahore, the then capital of Punjab, prior to the partition in 1947.
- Dr Mukesh Singh, prehistorian, The Society for Archaeological and Anthropological Research (Indo-French Team) said, “It is great that both the state leaders could take out time to come to the museum and witness the cultural ties, indeed, a historic moment for all of us.”
- While Dr Anne Dambricourt Malasse, palaeo-anthropologist, Department of Prehistory, National Museum of Natural History, Paris (Indo-French team) said, “ The fact that is the the oldest pre-historic site where we find human activity makes the leaders' visit to the

museum all the more significant, although I wish they could have stayed longer.”.