

Advani Visits Mohatta Palace Museum

By the Staff Reporter

Dawn 6th June 2005

The Indian opposition leader and chief of the Bharatiya Janata Party, L. K. Advani, took a leisurely trip down memory lane on Sunday as he was guided around the Mohatta palace Museum that is currently holding the exhibition *Jewel in the Crown: Karachi under the Raj 1843-1947*.

Clad in a white shalwar kameez and a moron waistcoat, Mr. Advani seemed most interested in the gallery where artifacts from the now defunct Karachi Metropolitan Corporation are on display. Known for his retentive memory, he recognized a couple of old faces.

The exhibition's co-curators Hameed Haroon and Hameed Akhund gave him an overview of the show. Members of the executive committee of the Board of Trustees of the Mohatta Palace received Mr. Advani, who was accompanied by his wife Kamla Advani, daughter Prebta Advani, son Jayant Advani and daughter in law Geetika Advani.

Mr. Advani took a great deal of interest in the artifacts belonging to the former independent Muslim states such as Kalat, Hyderabad, Khairpur and Bahawalpur. On the first floor of the Mohatta Palace, he spent some time in the rooms where the contribution made by the Hindu elite towards the establishment and progress of Karachi is highlighted.

Mr. Advani seemed to have a great time in the room where the personal effects of Attiya Begum and Fyzee Rahamin are on display. He greatly admired Mr. Rahamin's paintings.

Mr. Advani was then taken to the *barsati* of the Mohatta Palace where he and his family members partook of specially prepared refreshments – vegetable pakoras, dal samosas, dahi bhindi, aloo ki puri and lassi. Mr. Haroon presented Mr. Advani with CDs and books specially published for the exhibition including the *Raj Quartet – Visions of Empire, Pillars of Empire* and the two volume, *Beyond Empire – Requiem for an Unsung Messiah* and *Kurrachee Past, Present and future*.

Impressed with the exhibition, Mr Advani wrote these words in the visitor's book: It is really a remarkable collection, very tastefully displayed, I wish it included glimpses of Sindh's struggle against colonial rule also. Anyway, well done, Dawn. L. K. Advani 5.6.2005