

10 October 2004

Sunday

24 Shaban 1425

ISLAMABAD: Karachi under the Raj exhibition inaugurated

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI, Oct 9: The sneak preview of a major exhibition showcasing the history of Karachi from the Battle of Miani to partition was held on the lawns of Mohatta Palace on Saturday.

Organized by the Mohatta Palace Museum in collaboration with the Dawn Group of Newspapers, the exhibition is titled Jewel in the Crown: Karachi under the Raj 1843 - 1947.

Opening the exhibition, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz announced a one-time grant of Rs10 million for the Mohatta Palace Museum. He observed that fund-raising was an art, and exhibition co- curator Hameed Haroon excelled in it. He also appreciated the manner in which exhibits had been put on display.

The prime minister recalled that he had spent most of his youth in Karachi, adding that the city has become a bustling metropolis.

Earlier, Mr Haroon recalled that the exhibition had first been held as part of Dawn's All about lifestyle show the previous year.

"Judging from the response of the people of the city - 25,000 visitors in 36 hours - we decided to expand the exhibition, with an accent on the achievements of the sons of Karachi, including Sir Abdullah Haroon, the Aga Khan and Quaid-i- Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah," he said.

He added that when the exhibition was formally launched after Ramazan, it would be accompanied by 24 CDs and 18 books, documenting the history of Karachi as well as the southern part of the country.

The lenders whose donated exhibits have been tastefully put on display in all the 23 rooms of the Mohatta Palace and its corridors include Allahbaksh Soomro and Maulabaksh Soomro families, Arif Hashwani, Ashraf Liaquat Ali Khan, Ava Cowasjee, Bai Virbaiji Sopariwala School, Bunto Kazmi, City District Government, Civil Hospital Karachi, Cowasjee Family

Collection, Cutchi Memon Biradari, Daud Pota and Akhund families, Dayaram Jethmal Science College, Dow Medical College, Fakhri Asad Ali, General Post Office, Ghinwa Bhutto, Golra Railway Museum, Governor House (Sindh), Hanif Mirza, Hashim Raza Family, Hussain Haroon, Hussain Shah Rashdi, Illahi Bakhsh Soomro, Karachi Boat Club, Karachi Fire Brigade Department, Saifur Rahman Grami, Karachi Grammar School, Karachi Port Trust, Karachi Zoo, Khan Suleman Khan of Kalat, Kharadar Jamatkhana, Lady Dufferin Hospital, Mahmoud Abdullah Haroon and Amber Haroon Saigol, Mama Family, Mama Parsi School, Masuma Lotia, Mir Ahmed Ali Talpur, Mir Haider Ali Talpur, Mir Mehdi Raza Talpur, Mir Murad Ali Khan Talpur, Mirza Khaleej Baig Collection, Aijaz Baig, Mohammad Ali Wasan, Mumtaz Rashdi, Muneeza Shamsie, Munira Lotia and Amy Halai, N.K. Shahani, Naseem Ramzan Merchant, Pakistan Maritime Museum, Pakistan Memon Educational and Welfare Society, Pakistan National Museum, Personal Collection of Sir Sultan Mohammad Shah Aga Khan III, Quaid-i-Azam Museum, Quetta Museum and Archive, Rahimtoola Family, Salim Wahidy, Seafield Collection with Hameed Haroon, Shah Murad Aliani, Sindh Assembly, Sindh Madressah, Sindh Police, Sindh Provincial Museum, St Patrick's Cathedral, Syed Jalal Shah and G.M. Syed's Collection, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah Jamote, Talat Hashmi and Zain Alvi.

Addressing Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad and Chief Minister Dr Arbab Rahim, Mr Haroon urged the government to be a little more proactive in preserving the fast decaying archaeological heritage of the country. He promised that the Mohatta Palace Museum would extend all possible help to the government if it agreed to restore the Mirs' bungalow in Hyderabad and Faiz Mahal in Khairpur.

Mr Haroon also asked for government help in the procurement of artifacts for the exhibition, which were otherwise gathering dust in musty underground cellars and the junk yard of the defunct KMC.

On the occasion, Sindh Chief Minister Dr Arbab Rahim announced an annual grant-in-aid of Rs500,000 for the Mohatta Palace.

Later, Mr Haroon presented the prime minister with the Raj Quartet: Karachi: Vision of Empire, Karachi: Pillars of Empire and two volumes of Karachi: Beyond Empire. The prime minister was also given a guided tour of the exhibition.

Mohatta Palace Museum curator Nasreen Askari and co-curator of the exhibition Hameed Akhund also spoke.