**A jewel in the metropolitan**

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The 18th of May was also observed as International Museum Day with great fervour. This year, the theme was the power of museums—the power of achieving sustainability and community building through education and the crystallisation of thoughts and wisdom. Museums can enhance our sense of well-being and can inspire and stimulate us for incorporating good values and systems into our society.

The issues prevailing in society such as poverty, inequality, intolerance, discrimination, and frustration can be dealt with by developing some understanding through museum education. Museum education and information is more effective as it works in the informal mode of education which is the most powerful mode as it works according to the convenience of the people in which the teacher (Museum) is available according to the convenience of the taught (visitor) all the time. Lahore Museum can be regarded as the jewel of Pakistan’s cultural history as it is the oldest and largest cultural museum in Pakistan and among the leading museums of the world in terms of the richness of its collection, history, and culture. Its building itself has a grandeur that fascinates the public.

[President Arif Alvi to address joint session of parliament today](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Oct-2022/president-arif-alvi-to-address-joint-session-of-parliament-today)

The design of its building was prepared by the architect Bhai Raam Singh in the colonial period who also designed other seven buildings of the same design like Mayo School of Arts (NCA), University of Punjab (old campus), General Post Office, Lahore High Court, Lahore Railway Station, Aitcheson College and Chamba House Lahore, among others. The land of Pakistan inherits its roots from the Indus Valley civilisation which is one of the three greatest civilisations of the world dating back to 5000 B.C.E, like the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilisations. The second source of pride is in the form of the inheritance of the Gandhara civilisation dating back to the 1st century C E. and spanning over a large area of North-West Pakistan from Taxila to Afghanistan.

The Indus Valley Civilisation was first identified in 1921 at Harappa in the Punjab region and then in 1922 at Mohenjo-Daro, near the Indus River in the Sindh region. The ruins of Mohenjo-Daro were designated by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites in 1980. Excavations of Indus cities have produced much evidence of artistic activity. The Gandhara collection in Lahore Museum portrays the complete life story of the Buddha and attracts hundreds of thousands of people from Buddhist belt countries like Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Nepal, Tibet, and Myanmar due to their religious passion. Other prominent collections of Lahore Museum comprise the coins collection, a painting collection, and Islamic art collections having no equal elsewhere in the world. Having such a rich historical and cultural background one can imagine the importance and role of the Lahore Museum. Among other prominent collections of the museum are the coins collection, painting collection, Islamic collection, and Sikh collection, reflecting the history, art, and culture of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. The Lahore Museum also has a considerable number in its miniature paintings collection, depicting different schools of arts once prevalent in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, to illustrate the origin and development of miniature painting in the Subcontinent.

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The Museum is in addition a social sciences research institution that has a research and reference library which was established in 1894 with a small collection and now grown up with a large number of 35000 books and periodicals/journals on the subjects of Archaeology, History, Anthropology, Art and Art History. Likewise, Lahore Museum has a full-fledged Conservation Laboratory for the conservation of museum artifacts which earned a good name in the field nationwide during the last decades for providing guidance and training to the staff of other smaller museums in Pakistan. But unfortunately, this laboratory is now non-functional due to the non-availability of staff after their retirement.

Museums have the primary mission of preserving the culture and heritage of a nation. Museums provide us an opportunity to look into the past as well as to conceive the future. According to modern trends museums are regarded as the saviour of ideological and cultural boundaries of a nation. Similarly, Lahore Museum, with its rich historic collection, has great potential to serve the purpose. We can save our Ideological and cultural boundaries and create harmony in society by giving a sense of ownership to the citizens. Through Museum educational programs we can make our young generations more confident for a prosperous Pakistan. And this powerful potential of the Lahore Museum for sustainable development could only be tapped through the integration of curriculum at all levels of the formal education system with the museum’s collection of visual aids and resource material. Furthermore, apart from permanent display/exhibitions, holding temporary exhibitions in museums is another powerful tool to educate people and transform society. Holding temporary exhibitions on other current social issues can also be beneficial to educate and transform society and for this objective to be achieved, research projects to students of Social Sciences can be given on different social issues to hold exhibitions on these topics, in collaboration with Lahore Museum, for better understanding of our younger generation and the general public visiting the Lahore Museum.