

Conservation of Amar Singh College, Srinagar



Photo: Amar Singh College, Srinagar (INTACH 2018).

As part of the plan to set up modern educational institutions in J&K State during Dogra period (1846-1947), Amar Singh Technical Institute was established in 1911 AD. The institute started first in November 1913 as Amar Singh Technical Institute for teaching arts, skills like carpentry and masonry as also for teaching modern education. Subsequently this institute was upgraded as Amar Singh College in June 1942. However, it was formally opened by Maharaja Partap Singh on 29th May 1914. The college was lent staff and some other facilities by Sri Pratap College, Srinagar.

The main building which was constructed during the Dogra period represents the colonial style of architecture in Kashmir. It had faced many inappropriate interventions which caused defacement to the entire building in terms of its original architectural style. Also, in the devastating flood of September 2014, the building submerged and remained in flood-water for about two weeks which had amplified the dampness problems to the structure. Soon after floods, the condition assessment of the entire structure was undertaken by

INTACH and a detailed report was prepared wherein it was proposed to immediately address the issues and carry out an urgent and appropriate conservation programme for the building. The authorities commissioned INTACH to carry out further technical assessment of the structure and to prepare a conservation plan for the building. The plan was approved with the directions to start the conservation work immediately under the supervision of conservation expertise from INTACH.

The conservation of historic Amar Singh College Srinagar started from this year with a view to bring back the architectural glory of this unique heritage structure

The conservation of Amar Singh College aims at retaining the original fabric of the historic structure, by strictly adhering to the conservation principles and methods which are universally recommended. The team of architects from INTACH is overseeing the ongoing conservation work under the supervision of lead conservation architect Ms. Saima Iqbal.



Photos: On-site conservation work at Amar Singh College Srinagar. (INTACH 2018).

INTACH celebrated Earth Day, organizes a visit to Dachigam National Park

INTACH Kashmir, in collaboration with the J&K Forest Department and Earth Day Network, organized a visit to the 'Dachigam National Park' on the eve of the Earth Day. During the visit, the environmentalists from the J&K Forest Department gave insightful information about the natural resources of Kashmir, and the different types of flora and fauna present in the Dachigam National Park. They stressed upon the need to develop a sense of responsibility towards nature by planting trees, and not harming the animal species. The participants were keenly listening to the experts throughout the walk within the park.



Photo: Dachigam National Park (INTACH 2018).

Many of them shared their first-time experience of visiting the Dachigam National Park. Speaking to INTACH, the participants expressed happiness about

participating in such programmes, and stressed the need for such walks and visits to study nature.

A Visit to SPS Museum, Srinagar

On the eve of International Museums Day 2018, and as a part of the week-long celebration of India's Museums (13th -20th May 2018), INTACH Kashmir organized a visit to SPS Museum Srinagar on 16th May 2018, in collaboration with Sahapedia, for the students. There were 30 students from Government High School, Dab Ganderbal who participated in the event to explore the historic and rare collections of SPS Museum Srinagar. The Curator SPS Museum briefed students about the historic collections museum and their significance in terms of representing the history, heritage and culture of the Valley.



Photos: Visit to SPS Museum Srinagar (INTACH 2018).

She gave details about initial years of the museum, wherefrom the collections were brought like the sculptures which were excavated from the ancient sites within Kashmir. There are different sections in the museum, each section is having different rare collections and at every object, there is a caption giving brief information about the objects.

The SPS Museum Srinagar was established in 1898 AD. Approximately 79,595 artifacts and objects covering various subjects like Archaeology, Numismatics, Decorative Art, Arms and Armory, Paintings, Textiles etc are housed in the Museum.

Shireen Qalam - Exhibition-cum-Workshop of old manuscripts, rare art objects & Islamic calligraphy 7-11 June

INTACH joined hands with the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Directorate of Tourism, Directorate of Libraries, Shasvat Art Gallery, Jammu, Peerzada Collection and Hakim Collection in organizing the event 'Shireen Qalam', an exhibition and display of rare Islamic manuscripts, calligraphies, paintings and other art objects. The event was not confined to exhibit the government collections only, , but it invited private collectors of rare and old collections. During the exhibition, the collection of calligraphies on vellum owned by Shaswat Art Gallery, Jammu, the decedents of the royal jewelers of Dogra became a huge attraction for the visitors. Shri Suresh Abrol, Director of the gallery mentioned that the collection was mainly built by his grandfather Lala Rekhi Ram Abrol. He was a jeweler in the court of Maharaja Hari Singh, the last Dogra ruler. He further stated that his father sought only one thing in inheritance — these ancient manuscripts and other collections. 'We consider them our real inheritance,' he said.

Apart from the exhibition of manuscripts and art objects, there was a workshop on Islamic calligraphy open for all who were interested to learn calligraphy. J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages provided all needed support and made available the calligraphy teachers who exposed young participants to different techniques in the art of calligraphy.



The program was organized from 7th – 11th June, 2018 at Conference hall, TRC Srinagar. Many old manuscripts & calligraphy works were displayed at the exhibition. The exhibition offered a unique display of different types of rare Islamic manuscripts. One of them is 'Majooma-Illm-Ikhlaq', a nicely written manuscript in the Persian language in 1882 AD on ethics.

Another type of manuscript is 'Sud Pand Luqman' 100 tales from the wise prophet, Hakim Luqman, It is a Persian manuscript

scribed by Peer Baksh of Punjab in Khate Nakhoon. This manuscript written in 1870 AD is highly ornamented with gold and the borders are decorated with pictures of animals and birds.

The exhibition-cum-workshop was a huge success and a major public event.

Authorities sit on restoration of Khushalsar, Gilsar lakes



Mukeet Akmali (Greater Kashmir)
Srinagar, Publish Date: May 20 2018

Failure of authorities to take measures for restoration of Khushalsar, Gilsar lakes in Downtown is taking a heavy toll on locals. Gilsar and Khushalsar are two interconnected lakes which receive waters from Dal lake and gradually flows into Aanchar. Nestled between Hawal and Zadibal areas, these lakes till few decades ago were one of the major tourist attractions and bird watching sites. However in absence of conservation measures, these water bodies have been marred by encroachments and siltation.

Aghast over the deteriorating condition of these lakes, locals have joined hands to prevent encroachments. "We are now fed up to see these pristine water bodies Khushalsar, Gilsar dying a silent death in front of us," said Showkat Ahmad Shah, a resident of Nowshera who has been a part of the group fighting against encroachment of water bodies.

As part of their strategy, Shah along with like-minded people have been blocking the Nowshera road for past couple of days to get their voices heard.

"Water of these lakes is polluted to such extent that if somebody touches it, they will get skin infection without seconds," Shah said adding that recently a team of SKIMS doctors visited the site and conducted test of the Gilsar waters.

"Though they didn't give us the report, but they stated that the water could cause epidemic in adjoining areas," he said. Farhan Kitab, a social activist stated that they have raised the issue with LAWDA and other concerned agencies. "But nobody paid any heed," he said.

A large expanse of Khushalsar along the Ali Jan road has been extensively encroached upon. In absence of any regulation, shops, automobile workshops and buildings have come up on fringe of the lake. Similarly, extensive constructions on both sides of banks of Gilsar lake have come up.

To mention a study carried by the Department of Earth Science Kashmir University reveals that Khushalsar and Gilsar have shrunk half their size. The twin lakes of Khushalsar and Gilsar occupied almost a square km in 1965 and have shrunk to less than 0.50 sq. Km.

Studies reveal that most of the zones near habitations have become dumping sites of all allochanthus and non-allochanthus materials hampering the flow of waters.

Source: www.greaterkashmir.com

Srinagar to get separate museum: Naeem Akhtar

Culture minister dismayed over potential fire hazards at Old Secretariat building housing rare archives

GKNN

Srinagar, Publish Date: May 19 2018

Highlighting the significance of Museums as means of cultural exchanges, Minister for Culture, Naeem Akhtar, today said the State Government will carve out a separate museum for the capital city Srinagar as a tribute to the city's rich history.

"The old building (of SPS Museum) is being conserved and we are hopeful that the process of conservation will be finished by the end of this year. Once the work is finished, we will design a separate museum for Srinagar city which will be a tribute to the city's rich cultural and historical landscape," Akhtar said.

The culture minister made these remarks during a function held at SPS Museum today to commemorate the International Day of Museum. The function was also attended by senior officers of the museum, enthusiastic school children and art lovers from different corners of the state.

A special exhibition of 'Rare Manuscripts' was held at the SPS museum here to commemorate the day.

"A nation's museum is as rich as its history. In this regard, the SPS Museum is one of the most important museums in the country. It is the repository of Kashmir's history enriched over the last 5000 years starting with the discoveries made at Burzama," he said.

The Minister urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly school children, to visit the SPS museum and cherish the company of rare artifacts and manuscripts in order to rediscover the rich history of J&K and reconnect with their roots.

Meanwhile, the minister reviewed the process of preservation of archives kept at Old Secretariat building. Akhtar directed the officials to complete the process at the earliest while ensuring that the rare manuscripts do not suffer any damage. He also expressed displeasure over the potential fire hazards in and around the building and ordered their removal at the earliest.

Source: www.greaterkashmir.com



INTACH

Moisture hits exquisite Basohli paintings in Dogra Art Museum

Akshay Azad

(Early Times Report)

Jammu, Mar 11: The world famous Basohli paintings, symbolizing Jammu's precious cultural heritage is under serious threat as moisture has struck over 500-600 paintings, worth over Rs. 3000-3600 Crores, kept in Dogri Art museum Mubarak Mandi.

Despite gravity of the situation, the authorities at the helm of affairs have been trying to hush-up the matter allegedly under a well -planned conspiracy to destroy Jammu's heritage.

Sources informed Early Times that over 500-600 world renowned Basohli paintings were kept in a wardrobe of the Dogra Art Museum, which is housed in a building of Mubarak Mandi heritage complex.

"Regular care of these precious artworks is to be seriously taken by the authorities, such as exposing them to sunlight at regular intervals, chemical treatment beside others", sources said, adding that but in the last few years, there was some carelessness shown by authorities, which deliberately or un-intentionally refuse to take care of these precious artworks.

Due to casual approach of authorities towards these paintings, few days back when one such wardrobe was opened, it was found that moisture had struck to over 500-600 paintings.

"The cost of one such Basohli painting is over Rs. 6 Crores and as per a rough estimate, the damages could be over Rs. 3000-3600 Crores", sources

said, adding that the authorities have been trying their best to measures, due to whose negligence, moisture has struck these precious paintings", sources alleged.

When Director Achieves MS Zahid was contacted, he admitted that moisture had struck to some Basohli paintings, kept in Dogra Art Museum. On being asked, why so far no responsibility has been fixed, he said that the matter has been forwarded to Deputy Director Archives to fix the responsibility.

Deputy Director Archives S N Tashi said that the officials of department were not experts in this work. "Only an expert team could access the losses as well as suggest measures to conserve these antique artworks, which are very precious and delicate.

It will also require some budget for doing all this exercise as it is an expert's job", he said, adding that he had forwarded a communiqué to authorities to engage an expert team for the purpose.

Pertinently, the work on Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex is also running at snail's pace whereas the other heritage structures of Jammu province are also in shambles.

The authorities, since ages have deliberately turned blind eye towards preserving several Dogra heritage structures and artworks.

Source: www.earlytimesnews.com

Takht-i-Bhai: A spiritual Buddhist heritage in Mardan, KPK

by **Asma Malik** Published on May 1, 2018 (Edited May 1, 2018)



MARDAN: Takht-i-Bahi meaning 'Throne of the water spring', is an Indo-Parthian historical site of the Buddhist religion. This archeological site is situated in Mardan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Pakistan is a land of rich cultural and religious diversity. The northern areas of the country were once under the great civilization of Buddhism. This civilization is now known as the 'Gandhara Civilization'

The site was discovered by the British officers in the 19th century. The first excavations are believed to have started in 1864. This site lies near a modern village known by the same name. It is located around 500 feet atop the small hill and around 2 km from the village bazaar.

It is located at a height of 500 feet on top of a small hill, about 2 kilometers east of the Takht Bhai bazaar in Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), once known as the heart of the Gandhara civilization, which attracts tourists, historians, archaeologists and Buddhists from across the world.

The historical site has a spiritual feeling in its atmosphere and calmness which attracts the people to visit the place. The architecture of the site is unique and its ruins still exhibit the grandeur of the past. One can have a clear view of the nearby cities while visiting the top of the historical site and it makes us imagine the mind of the great people of the past who constructed such a masterpiece for meditation purpose which still carries its legacy.

It is really a wonderful place for those who love history, antiquity, and archaeology. It inspires everyone and every Pakistani should try visiting this great monument at least once in a lifetime.

Source: <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk>



INTACH

news letter

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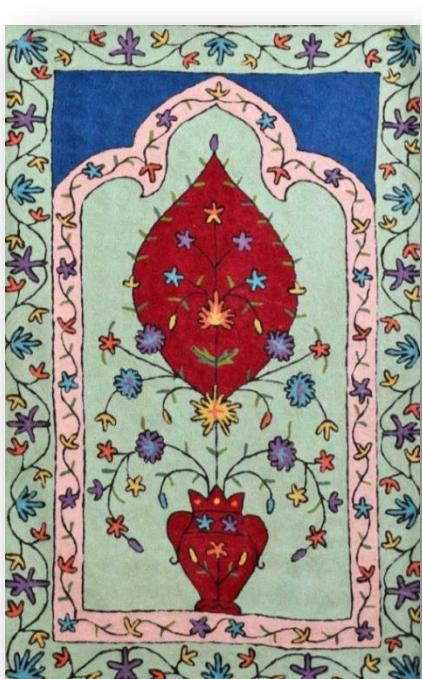
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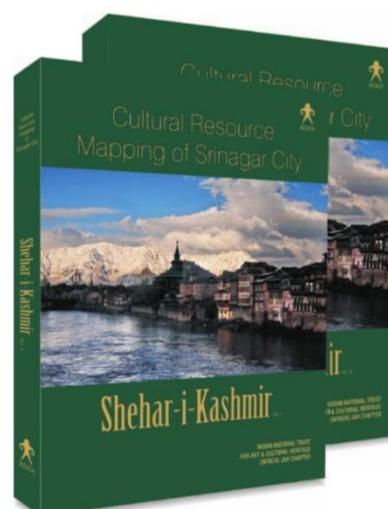
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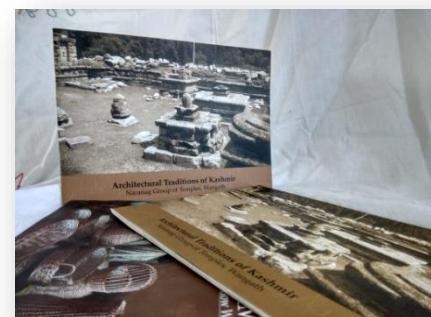
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