



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Press release

For immediate release

Prime Minister inaugurates the 400 historic “The Picture Wall”



Lahore, Pakistan, 4 May 2019 - Imran Khan, Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan inaugurated the restoration of the 400-year-old “Picture Wall” of Lahore Fort. The Picture Wall is one of the principal features of the Lahore Fort UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The conservation of the 240-foot-long western façade has been carried out by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), and its country affiliate, the Aga Khan Cultural Service-Pakistan (AKCS-P), in collaboration with the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA).

Speaking on the occasion, Imran Khan, Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan emphasised the need for educational institutions to develop archaeology as a subject and the importance of preserving heritage sites in Pakistan. Citing sustainable conservation models from other countries where heritage sites are made economically viable by converting to hotels, the Prime Minister applauded how this model has been successfully implemented by the Aga Khan Development network in the Northern areas of Pakistan.

Together with the Shah Burj Gate (Hathi Pol), the Picture Wall forms the original private entrance to the Fort. The wall is exquisitely decorated with imagery of hunting, battle scenes, angels and demons, human figures, animals, birds, as well as geometric and floral patterns. Built approximately 400 years ago during the Mughal era, it is one of the largest murals in the world. It is embellished in cut glazed tile mosaic work, filigree work, fresco, painted lime plaster and cut brickwork.

Salman Beg, CEO, Aga Khan Cultural Service, Pakistan said, “The process of conservation included the stabilisation and consolidation of the Picture Wall’s structure, as well as its decorative elements, and warranted the expertise of both heritage crafts as well as conservators. It also included archaeological excavation in order to expose the original Mughal era floor level which is seven feet below the present ground level.”

Prototype conservation of a 35-foot-long section of the Picture Wall was initiated in February 2017. The approach was validated in an international workshop in January 2018. Physical conservation of the western façade of the Picture Wall was carried out from July 2018 to March 2019, with funding from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the Government of Punjab, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

In 2016, the Walled City of Lahore Authority took up the conservation of the historic Imperial Kitchens, as well as its adaptive re-use, in order to bring it into the Fort’s touristic circuit. The conservation work has been carried out in collaboration with Aga Khan Cultural Service – Pakistan, who conserved and rehabilitated the ruined eastern wing. Today, the historic structure has been conserved and put back into use, which is expected to enhance the cultural environment of the Lahore Fort complex.



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AKTC, part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), focuses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the developing world. AKDN provides a broad range of services in Pakistan – and has been doing so for over 100 years. Endeavours of AKDN in education, health, rural development, poverty alleviation, restoration of Islamic heritage, tourism, Microfinance sectors has tried to create a critical mass of integrated development activities that offer people in a given area not only a rise in income, but a broad, sustained improvement in the overall quality of life.

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The *Aga Khan Trust for Culture* (AKTC) focuses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the Muslim world. It includes the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, the Aga Khan Music Awards and Music Initiative, the on-line resource Archnet.org and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The purpose of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is the improvement of built environments in societies where Muslims have a significant presence. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, through its local company Aga Khan Cultural Service - Pakistan (AKCS-P), has been engaged in reviving pride and identity through interventions in cultural heritage that supported social, physical and institutional development. AKCS-P works on a comprehensive strategy whereby community rehabilitation precedes restoration of any landmark building. For further information, please visit www.akdn.org/aktc

The *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN) is a group of non-denominational development agencies, created by His Highness the Aga Khan, with complementary mandates ranging from health and education to architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprise and the revitalisation of historic cities. As a contemporary endeavour of the Ismaili Imam to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional action, the AKDN agencies work to improve living conditions and opportunities for the poor, without regard to their faith, origin or gender. Working in the fields of economic, cultural and social development, AKDN aims to provide choices and opportunities to communities so that they can realise and determine their own development. For further information, please visit www.akdn.org

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