PM for concerted efforts to project soft image of Pakistan

* Gilani hopes to develop cultural policy in consultation with all stakeholders soon

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani at Lok Virsa (National Institute of Folk & Traditional Heritage), Shakarparian inaugurated an exhibition ‘Connecting People Through Crafts’ on Tuesday.

This programme is under the framework of UNESCO – Norway funded project Mapping of Cultural Assets in District Multan & Bahawalpur (empowering women through crafts) and UNESCO project handicrafts of District DG Khan. The exhibition was organised under the aegis of Trust for History, Art & Architecture of Pakistan (THAAP), UNESCO, Royal Norwegian Embassy and Lok Virsa.

Gilani on the occasion said, “This is an opportunity to recognise cultural knowledge and traditional skills. Pakistan has a rich and diverse culture. The people of Pakistan are the proud custodians of a cultural heritage transferred to us from generation to generation over a period of more than 4,000 years. Mere acknowledgement of culture is not enough. I think it is a high time to put our hands together for the promotion and projection of our traditional culture and uplift and betterment of the craftspeople. We hope to develop a cultural policy in consultation with all stakeholders in the near future”.

Minister for water & power Raja Pervez Ashraf, Minister for Culture Pir Aftab Hussain Shah Jilani, Leader of the House in Senate Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, UNESCO representative Ms Farhat Gul and others dignitaries received Gilani.

A 15-member authentic folk dance from Multan attired in colourful costumes escorted the prime minister to the entrance of Lok Virsa Heritage Museum.

The PM said concerted efforts were needed to project the soft image of Pakistan. “It is a collective and moral responsibility for all of us”. Gilani highly commended the efforts of UNESCO, THAAP, Norwegian Embassy...
and Lok Virsa for promoting and projecting the craft heritage of Pakistan, in particular Southern Punjab through the exhibition on display.

Responding to the recommendation made by the organisers for initiating excellence awards in culture, Gilani directed the Ministry of Culture to move a summary in this regard for consideration of the government.

Minister for Culture Pir Aftab Hussain Shah Jilani apprised the PM that National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) was a unique cultural organisation in Pakistan, which was established by ZA Bhutto in 1974 with a mandate to collect, document, preserve and project Pakistan’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Talking about Norwegian funding, Jilani said, “Norway has always been very generous in promoting and projecting Pakistan’s traditional culture. The on-going joint institutional Cooperation between Pakistan and Norway, being implemented by Lok Virsa in collaboration with Norwegian Embassy, is a unique example of this generosity on the part of Royal Norwegian Government. We are thankful to them for this valuable support”.

Norwegian Chargé d’ Affaires, Terje Barstad, said, “Pakistan and Norway differ in many aspects as well, in politics, history and culture. “But there are many bonds between our two countries that have been created by many years of cooperation and by the citizens of Pakistani origin in my country”. The Norwegian diplomat said, “Our objective is to help preserve and strengthen Pakistan’s rich culture heritage. “The philosophy behind is simple”.

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