

III. ICH Information Activities

In 2011-2012, following major activities were undertaken by Lok Virsa:

1) Lok Virsa Educates Kids about Cultural Heritage

(July 2011)

A group of about 50 children belonging to the marginalized communities of Sindh, Balochistan and Federal Administrative tribal areas (FATA) visited Lok Virsa on July 17, 2011 to get cultural education. The visitors were the students of classes of 6th, 7th and 8th. Their visit to Lok Virsa was coordinated by the Children's Global Network (CGN), a non-governmental organization working in different parts of Pakistan to provide basic education to children and training to the teachers. The children took keen interest in the rare artifacts and other ethnological collections at the museum mainly the "hall of antiquity and continuity", "hall of musical heritage" and "hall of ballads and romances". Indeed, any gap and disconnect from social and cultural reality can result in raising adults who may not possess a true relationship with their society. Lok Virsa is making every possible effort to ensure documentation preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to coming generations.

2) Independence Day Celebrations

(August 2011)

To celebrate 65th Pakistan Independence Day, Lok Virsa and Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) – two cultural organizations in association with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting arranged colorful and lively programs to entertain people, particularly youth and children. The day started with a flag hoisting ceremony at the Convention centre, where children gave a colorful performance. The prime minister urged youth to explore their hidden talents and excel in all fields of life.

The children of the twin cities were enthralled by a variety of programs including puppet show, tableaux, and especial bhangra dance and nation

songs at the National Art Gallery. While at Lok Virsa, an exhibition of artisans-at-work was organized that featured master artisans in the fields of embroidery, paper mache, truck art, shawl weaving, doll making, zari work and pottery.

3) Exhibition of Islamic Calligraphy “Quran and Peace”

(August 2011)

A 5-day exhibition of Islamic calligraphy “Quran and Peace” by eminent artist Muhammad Azeem Iqbal was organized by Lok Virsa on August 25, 2011. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan inaugurated the exhibition. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said, “Islam gives us a message of peace, unity and brotherhood. Islamic calligraphy traditionally took its inspiration from the Muslim belief in the divine origin of Arabic writing, the medium through which the Quranic revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) was recorded”. The exhibition presented 75 masterpieces of calligraphy depicting golden period of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) to different eras of Islamic civilizations to the present century. The artist has skillfully employed various medium like leather, stone, wood, bamboo, gold, bronze, copper and hand crafted papers using “Aab-i- Zam Zam” to create beautiful pieces.

4) Pothohar Folk Music Festival

(October 2011)

A six-day “Pothohar folk music festival” was organized by Lok Virsa in collaboration with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on October 12, 2011. The special attractions included folk musical shows, Pothohari Bait, traditional Dhol performance, poetry recitals by Pothohari poets. Folk performances like stick dance, Sammi dance, and comical skits were presented during the festival. The prominent folk music and dance performances given by Arshad Mahmood group, Pothohari poetry by Khadim Ali, Namberdar Ghulam Murtaza on chimta. Traditional dhol performance by Bashir and Amjad, traditional poetry recitals by Malik Shamshas, Malik Zeeshan Sadiq, and chit chat by Raja Amjad Mahmood. The festival aimed at documenting, preserving and projecting the rich musical heritage of Pothohar region.

5) Celebrations of International Day of Rural Women

Two-days festival-cum-conference with theme of “From Food Security to Peace and Security” to mark International Day of Rural Women was organized by Lok Virsa in collaboration with Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA) and other 55 organizations on 16th October, 2010. Goodwill Ambassador for Women Empowerment, Fiza Batool Gilani inaugurated the event at Lok Virsa premises and said, “We have to change the social environment constrained by a mindset of male dominance as a woman not only contributes to her family well-being but also works as an agent of change of society”. The festival included artisans-at-work featuring master crafts women from different parts of country with their tools, finished and semi finished products, promotional stalls by NGOs working for empowerment of women in Pakistan, a conference to focus on the women’s issues, audio visual presentations on women issues as well as a musical performance. In welcome address, Lok Virsa Executive Director Khalid Javaid said, Lok Virsa was the first national organization which stood behind PODA and supported them in organizing a number of cultural and promotional activities to mark the International Rural Women Day in a most befitting manner. Ms. Ghazala Gola: Balochistan Minister for Women Development, Mrs Sitara Ayaz: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Women Development, Dr. Nafisa Shah, Secretary Women Parliamentarian Caucus and Her Excellency Cecilie Landsverk, Norwegian Ambassador to Pakistan also attended the conference proceedings and highly appreciated the role of Lok Virsa. The conference concluded with presentation of awards to recognized rural women in Pakistan by the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

6) Pakhtun Cultural Night

In order to promote the Pakhtun culture, Lok Virsa organized a cultural event to focus on Pakhtun indigenous folk culture in coordination with Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on October 31, 2011. Musharraf Bangash, Waheed Achakzai, Rashid Khan, Shahab Khiski, Islam Zarin Khattak, Raj Wali Marwat, Amina Khan and Sidra Khan performed at the event. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Labour Minister: Sher Azam Wazir was the chief guest on the occasion. A large number of people from different walks of life attended the event and appreciated the efforts of Lok Virsa.

7) Youth Poster Exhibition

(November 2011)

A 7-day long youth poster exhibition titled “Children Know Peace” has been arranged on November 3, 2011 by the Friends of China to mark the 60 years of the Pak-China friendship celebrations in partnership with Lok Virsa, Islamabad Crescent Lions Club and DEVCOM-Pakistan. Muhammad Akram Zaki a former Ambassador and Secretary General Foreign Affairs & Chairman of Friends of China Association was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony. Addressing the gathering, Akram Zaki shed light on the importance of the exhibition with special reference to Pak-China relations. About hundred posters drawn by children were displayed in the exhibition. Students from 25 schools of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad took part in the contest unleashing their imagination to compare violence and peace in the society and hence coming up with the solution that peace and harmony is definitely vital and a basic need for progress, development and prosperity.

8) National Conference on Sufism

A one-day conference on “Sufism as mainspring of peace, love and harmony” was organized by Lok Virsa on November 23, 2011. In his opening remarks, the chief guest, Federal Secretary for Ministry of National Heritage & Integration, Mr. Faridullah Khan said, “Sufi saints in the sub-continent have contributed significantly towards conveying message of peace, love and harmony among the masses.” The chief guest congratulated Lok Virsa on this initiative and assured the participants all possible assistance from his ministry in this regard. Lok Virsa Executive Director Khalid Javaid explained the underlying objectives for holding the conference and stressed upon the participating scholars to highlight the message of great Sufis to help reduce the day-by-day increasing tensions and animosities across all divisions and ultimately to guide all the relevant institutions on how to revive the “Sufi Culture” in the given scenario.

9) Publication: “Forgotten Faces-Daring Women of Pakistan’s Folk Theatre”

Lok Virsa in its on-going efforts to document, preserve and promote indigenous folk culture and heritage of Pakistan, published a book on November 25, 2011 entitled “Forgotten Faces- Daring women of Pakistan’s folk theatre” by Dr. Fauzia Saeed. Faridullah Khan, Federal Secretary for Ministry of National Heritage & Integration was the chief guest at the

occasion. In his remarks, he said that theatre has deep rooted history in the sub-continent. It has been an indigenous expression for those polarities of human life, like happiness and sadness, calamities and miracles, heroes and villains, and romances and tragedies. He congratulated Lok Virsa and Dr. Fauzia Saeed, the author of book, for their efforts in bringing out the publication." In welcome speech by Executive Director, Lok Virsa, Mr. Khalid Javaid said, "Lok Virsa's mission is to foster the excellence, diversity and vitality of all facets of tradition and to broaden public access to this knowledge." A large number of people related to folk theatre, besides general public also attended the event. The launching ceremony was followed by the live performance featuring Abida (daughter of the outstanding theatre artist of her time Balli Jatti), Naznin Mano, Fazal Jat and Saima.

10) Quaid Day Celebrations

(December 2011)

On December 25, 2011, Lok Virsa in collaboration with Pakistan National Council of Arts and Ministry of National Heritage & Integration celebrated the 135th birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with a great fervor and enthusiasm. The most exciting event was the especially designed moving float with the theme "Unity, Faith and Discipline" representing the beautiful culture of all provinces and federation units of the country that travelled around the capital city. Outstanding folk artists and musicians, attired in regional costumes, performed on the float and attracted public rush through their thrilling performances. At the end, ceremony was held at the avenue wherein the services of the great leader were highlighted purely through a cultural perspective. Folk artists who performed on the occasion were Akhtar Channel and his troupe, Mureed Buledi, Musarrat, Qurban Niazi, Rukhshana Murtaza and Sunny Group. The folk dance groups performed Khattak, Dharees and Sami.

11) Kashmir Solidarity Day "Yakjehti Mela" and Eid Miladdun Nabi (P.B.U.H)

(February 2012)

Lok Virsa organized a day-long cultural festival to mark the Kashmir Solidarity day as well as to celebrate Eid Miladdun Nabi (P.B.U.H) on 5th February 2012 in collaboration with Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit and Baltistan Division. The festival brought Kashmiri artisans, artists, NGOs and

government organizations working for the cause of Kashmir under one umbrella to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Recurring performances of Taleh Ruz, named after traditional Kashmiri jewellery, in full costumes were arranged at the open air theatre of Lok Virsa. The main features of festival included Kashmiri artisans-at-work with more than 20 Kashmiri craftsmen/women displaying their artisanship in creatively designed cultural pavilions which attracted attention of the crowds. Beside Kashmir day programs, Lok Virsa also arranged activities coinciding with Eid Miladun Nabi (P.B.U.H). Artists and 'Naat Khawans' paid homage to Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be Upon Him) on the occasion.

12) Seminar and Interactive Dialogue On “Safeguarding Mother Tongues in an Era of Imperialist Globalization”

Lok Virsa and The Rural Development Policy Institute (RDPI) joined together to observe the International Mother Language Day on February 21, 2012. An interactive dialogue was also held in Lok Virsa premises titled “Safeguarding mother tongues in an era of imperialist globalization”. Speakers at seminar stressed the need for preservation and promotion of all endangered languages. The objective behind the dialogue was to encourage the healthy cohesion among different languages. Executive Director of Lok Virsa, Ahmed Saleem, Dr. Khadim Hussain, Saeed Bhutta, Iqbal Hyder, Karim Johar, Dr. Nadeem Omar, Dr. Hummera Ishfaq and Mazhar Arif took part in the discussion. The speakers observed that languages were promoted through culture, jobs and creativity.

13) Publication: “Children Folk Games of Pak, Norway”

On February 22, 2012, Lok Virsa in collaboration with Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren) published a comprehensive book on the “Children Folk Games of Pakistan and Norway” for documenting the folk culture of the two countries. The book was published under the Joint Institutional Cooperation (JIC) programme between Pakistan and Norway. Mrs. Samina Khalid Ghurki, Federal Minister for Ministry of National Heritage & Integration was the chief guest whereas Cecilie Landsverk, Norwegian ambassador to Pakistan attended the ceremony as guest of honor. The 100-page book contains 24 folk games along with description, number of players, preparations, steps and rules required for each game. It also comprises sketches and photographic representations so as to facilitate the readers to understand easily how to play these games. Pakistani folk games include Langri Pala (one-legged

tiger), Kho Kho (go go), Pitho Garam (hot potato), Kokla Chapaki (hide the whip) etc. while Norwegian games given in the book are Kick the Tin (hide n ' seek) Bro Bro Brille, Paradise (hop scotch), Klinkekuler (marbles), Hoppe Strikk (French skipping) and Hoppe Tau (skipping).

14) Workshop on the Protection of Endangered Kalash Heritage

On February 29, 2012, a one-day workshop on the preparation for inscription of the Kalash valley culture on the World Heritage List was organized by Lok Virsa in collaboration with Ministry of National Heritage & Integration and the Department of Archaeology. The chief guest Faridullah Khan, Federal Secretary, Ministry of National Heritage & Integration said, "the ministry is in the process of developing a plan for safeguarding endangered heritage property." The discussions revolved around certain measures to be taken for safeguarding Kalash cultural heritage including devising an inventory of endangered elements of tangible and intangible culture; efforts for documentation of Kalash culture; preserving Kalash culture in the villages of Bamborate, Birir and Rambur; safeguarding the language; preserving the music of Kalash in its original form; and protecting Kalash nomenclature currently under threat. The Kalash population has significantly declined in the past 60 years. From 10,000 in 1951, the population fell to 3,700 in 2011. Presenting the case for Kalash, Luke Rehmat, President of Kalash People's Development Network, said that "serious efforts for the protection and conservation of Kalash culture may be taken by the global community of Kalash culture as site of world heritage by UNESCO." The participants of the workshop included Lok Virsa's Executive Director Khalid Javaid, Director General, Department of Archeology and Museums, Dr. Fazal Dad Kakar, Dr. Shah Nazar from Archeology & Museums Khyber pakhtunkhwa, Zakir Hussain from Survey of Pakistan, Inamullah from IUCN, Waqar Hussain Abbasi from National Disaster and Management Division, Pervaiz Sabat Khel from Culture Department KPK, Shamsuddin from Chitral, Abdul Makal from Chitral, Syed Gul from Bumborate museum, Muhammad Arshad from Auqaf Hajj department Ministry of Religious affairs and others.

15) Painting Art Exhibition (March 2012)

The painting exhibition by the students of Foundation University, Rawalpindi was jointly organized on March 01, 2012 by Lok Virsa, Universal Women Children Arts Therapy Association (UWCATA), Pakistan

Sweet Home (a charity project of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal) and Ministry of National Heritage & Integration. The chief guest, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Managing Director, Zumurrud Khan highly appreciated the efforts of the students who gave vent to their thoughts in skillful and artistic manner. Executive Director, Lok Virsa Khalid Javaid invited students to make best use of Lok Virsa's facilities for their educational requirements. Some 150 paintings of 50 Students were put on display in the exhibition that caught attention of the visitors. The painting themes included historical places, landscapes, portraits and flowers. The paintings were mainly in oil paint, water color and pastels.

16) Balochi Cultural Show

Folk artists and musicians from the restive Balochistan province enthralled visitors at the Balochi cultural day. The event was organized by the Lok Virsa, Wash TV and Radio jointly on March 02, 2012. Hundreds of Baloch families and locals turned up to make the show a success. The Baloch youth wearing the traditional turbans and dresses showcased their way of celebration in their folk rhythms. The singers also performed the Balochi dances "Chapp" and "Leva" making the audience sway and dance along with them. This show was part of the ongoing efforts of Lok Virsa to provide equal opportunity to all provinces and regions for safeguarding and promoting their indigenous folk culture.

17) Music Freedom Day Celebration

Lok Virsa in collaboration with Institute for Preservation of Art and Culture and Folklore Society of Pakistan celebrated the World Music Freedom Day on March 05, 2012. A special concert was arranged in this regards at Lok Virsa auditorium, featuring artists, Taimur Khan (Sarangi), Sarfaraz Anwar (Tabla), Farhan Bogra (Rubab), Shiraz (Tumaknari), Taj Buledi (Baluchi folk singer) and Asghar Ali (Suroz) from Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta. Gerald Sholomenko (Saxophone & flute), James Steben (guitar & violin) from Canada and Chinese folk singer Zhang Mi were among the visiting musicians. A number of music fans of the twin cities and foreigners attended the concert and applauded the versatility of the performers.

18) National Women-at-Work Festival

To mark International Women Day, a five-day festival "National Women-at-Work" was organized by Lok Virsa and Devcom Pakistan with support from

the UN-Women, NDMA, Save the Children, SPO and Helping Hand on March 08, 2012. Over 60 public and private sector organizations set up stalls featuring work of the home-based women workers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, corporate sector, and educational institutions. Traditional food courts, entertainment area for children and families, and dance performances by musical groups were also part and parcel of the festival. Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan inaugurated the festival. Senator from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rubina Khalid, Dr. Fauzia Saeed, Anjum Asad Amin, member National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Riffat Ara Beg were also among the guest speakers. Prominent artisans who participated in the event included Khalida Perveen (Multani embroidery), Fouzia Naheed (doll making), Yasmin and Robina Ghazi (embroidery), Afshan Azhar (jewellery) and Spozmai (Balochi embroidery).

19) Pubilation: “Working with Sharks”

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, Dr. Fouzia Saeed, a noted rights activist, launched the paper back version of her much proclaimed book “Working with Sharks”. The launching ceremony was organized by Lok Virsa in association with Development Communication Network (DEVCOM, Pakistan). Lok Virsa’s Executive Director Khalid Javaid, renowned artist Jamal Shah as chief guest and Dr. Fouzia Saeed spoke on the event. Dr Fouzia described this book as a beginning of a major change where members of the society will stand in solidarity with a woman who wants to speak out against such crimes as opposed to the tradition of stigmatizing women. The audience praised the author for such an informative interaction.

20) Pakistan Day Celebrations

Pakistan Day, March 23, 2012 was celebrated with great fervor and enthusiasm. A festival was organized in the premises of Lok Virsa featuring special programs to mark the historic day. Artisans-at-work exhibition, song and dance performances by folk artists, musicians and traditional drummers as well as an exotic craft bazaar displaying and selling a variety of traditional handmade items were among major features of the festival. The major attraction remained the artisans exhibition which featured outstanding master artisans in various specialized craft fields including Zahid Riaz in wax painting, Fazl-e-Wahid in Swati shawl, Habib-ur-Rehman in truck art, Hafeez Nasir in zari work, Mukhtar Dar in Kashmiri namda-

gabba weaving, Zulfiqar Ghazi in Kashmiri papier machie, Fouzia Naheed in doll making, Muhammad Saleem in wood carving, Sadaf Nisar in motikaari (needle work), Fouzia Malik and Motahir in embroidery work. A large number of visitors including families, youth and general public attended the activities and enjoyed them immensely.

21) Nauroz Festival

Festival “Nouroz” that heralds the arrival of the spring season in the Persian was celebrated by the Lok Virsa in collaboration with Iranian Embassy’s cultural consulate and Ministry of National Heritage & Integration, on March 26, 2012. Federal Information and Broadcasting Ministers Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan was the chief guest on inaugural ceremony of the festival. She said, “Pakistan and Iran enjoy very cordial relations. I am proud to join the celebrations for this centuries-old festival.” Iranian Embassy Cultural Counselor Taghi Sadeghi also spoke on the occasion and shed light on the important features of the event. The festival featured crafts, miniatures, books, photographs, paintings, features films, a group recitation of Holy Quran, Naats and devotional folk music from Iran. According to Iranian people, the word Nouroz invokes colorful images which are elegant, and opulent as well as delightfully simple.

22) UNESCO Cultural Exhibition to Promote Women Empowerment (April 2012)

With an aim to project and promote southern Punjab’s indigenous cultural crafts across the country, United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with THAAP and Lok Virsa organized a cultural exhibition on April 02, 2012 at Lok Virsa. Dr. Ali Abbas Qazilbash inaugurated the exhibition and offered technical expertise of UNIDO to strengthen market linkages of the handicraft enterprises established under the project. The UNESCO Country Director Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, UNDP Country Director Toshi Hiro Tanaka and THAAP Executive Director Professor Sajida Vandal also attended the event. Professor briefed the audience on outcomes and achievements of the project and appreciated the UNESCO for its financial and technical support. The exhibition displayed the cultural products prepared under the joint initiative of the One UN (ARP-JPC-2) project, ‘Promotion of Cultural Industries for Poverty Alleviation in Bahawalpur’ which was spearheaded by UNESCO in partnership with THAAP in 2011.

23) Annual Folk Festival “Lok Mela”

Lok Virsa organized a Ten-day folk festival “Lok Mela” in collaboration with Ministry of National Heritage & Integration, at Lok Virsa Complex, Shakarparian from 6th April to 15th April 2012. Federal Minister for National Heritage & Integration Samina Khalid Ghurki inaugurated the event by performing “dastarbandi” and “chadarposhi” of an established master artisan. The minister said, “Traditions and cultural values are the identity of a nation. Changes over the time can diminish them, but they cannot be wiped away”. Speaking on occasion, Federal Secretary for National Heritage & Integration Asaf Ghafoor said that the event is a true depiction of rural Pakistan. The direct beneficiaries are rural folk including crafts people, folk artists, musicians and other performers participating from each and every corner of the country. More than 500 artisans from different parts of the country, including remotest regions, participated in the festival. The festival included an artisans-at-work exhibition, provincial cultural pavilions, folk songs and dance ensembles, rural musicians, cultural evenings, promotional stalls by public organizations and NGOs, general assembly of craftspeople, a craft bazaar, traditional food cuisine and activities for children. Hundreds of master artisans, folk artists and rural musicians from all over the country took part in the festival by the way of demonstrating their skills. These people from Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan brought with them their creativity in arts, crafts and innovation. The major thrust of the festival was the focus on provincial harmony and national integration highlighting the contribution of our people in building future of Pakistan. The Sindh pavilion consisted of more than 100 artisans, craftsmen, musicians, dance groups. The wide range of folk crafts included lacquer art, farasi weaving, blue pottery, ajrak, block printing, traditional carpet weaving, rilli, khes weaving, wood work, thari embroidery and several other handicrafts were the part of festival. On April 7h, 2012, the Cultural night of Sindh of was organized wherein the performance of Sindhi folk artists enthralled audience by giving a true reflection of diverse culture and musical heritage of the land of Sufism. Famous artists & folk dance performers included Sain Dad, Imam Dino, Agha group, Thari dancers, Chandi Faqir, Chapli dance group. The Punjab pavilion with a majestic gate included more than fifty master craftsmen and craftswomen which were seen in the artistically erected stalls practicing centuries old traditional crafts. The crafts on display were bone work, lacquer art (jundri ka kaam), Multani blue tiles, tie & dye, block-printing, wood carving, darree-weaving, khaddar-weaving, basketry, pottery, embroidery, zaradozi, metal work,

camel bone carving, okair sazi, khussa making etc. A performance area was also created at the centre of Punjab pavilion, where folk singers and musicians attired in colorful costumes entertained visitors all the day. The Balochistan pavilion set up by the Balochistan Cultral department in collaboration with Lok Virsa included craftspeople, folk artists, folk musicians and dance groups. Master artisans displayed their work of traditional shoemaker, Mastung embroidery, Balochi embroidery, Makrani patti, saroz making, dhambura making and Kalat embroidery. A large troupe performed to mark the Balochi Cultural night. The galaxy of folk singers & dance groups included Pushtoon Athan dance party, Leva party (camel dance), Balochi Chaap party, Noshi and Kharan, Amanullah, Hunoor Bux, Saal Muhammad, Behar Ali, Adbul Wahid, Ali Ahmed, Muhammad Saleh, Allah Dad, Saeed Ahmed, Gul Sher, Asghar Ali, Shahzada, Ashiq Hussain and Mashooq Hussain. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pavilion, the major attraction of Lok Mela marked by more than 20 craftsmen from different parts of the province displayed the work of wood lacquer, phulkari, embroidery, stone carving, baskets making, traditional chappal, metal work, taghar and others. Bibi Shireeni and many other Pushto hit songs made the Khyber Pakhtun Khaw Cultural night a big show on 15th April, 2012. The tunes of traditional music instruments rubab, Chitrali sitar, sarinda, daff and flute created great excitement for Pashto music fans where the leading Pushto folk singers and musicians, including Zarsanga, Khan Tehsil, Ahmed Gul, Almas Khalil, Bukhtiar Khattak, Neelo, Rafi Bano and Saeed Rehman Shino Group. The pavilion of Gilgit-Baltistan captured the cultural values of the area. Among craftsmen and craftswomen, displayed the work of Hunza embroidery, patti weaving and traditional embroidery. A cultural night with Gilgit-Baltistan was also held during the festival in which the artists and musicians including Jabir Khan Jabir, Nida Hussain, Ikram Khan, Abdul Hameed, Salim Khan, Salam Habib, Naveed Ahmad, Asif, Muneer and Sher Khan performed. A contingent of over 30 participants from government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir took part in the Lok Mela. They included ten craftspeople in the field of papier machie, wood carving, namda, gabba, Kashmiri shawl and embroidery etc. A group of Gatka dancers from Kashmir was also an integral part of culture and entertainment programme. A Kashmir cultural night was also organized wherein known vocalists and musicians gave thrilling performances to a jam-packed audience. On April 13th, 2012, an award ceremony was held. Federal Minister for National Heritage & Integration Samina Khalid Ghurki, was the chief guest on the closing ceremony. She gave away the cash awards to the winning artisans and trophies to the festival participants and sponsors. The Norwegian

Ambassador Cecile Landsverk also attended the ceremony and presented the awards. The Lok Mela was concluded on April 15th, 2012.

24) World Intellectual Property Day Celebrations

On April 26th, 2012 a panel discussion on the occasion of World Intellectual Property Day was organized by Lok Virsa in collaboration Rural Development Policy Institution (RDPI). The theme of discussion was "Traditional Knowledge, Folklore and Intellectual Property (IP) Rights in Pakistan". Federal Secretary for National Heritage & Integration Asaf Ghafoor, as chief guest, said, "Intellectual Property Right is an important subject for Pakistan, I am glad that now a lot of awareness about it is seen in the institutions and among the individuals dealing with various national projects in the country." The panelists who took part in the discussion were Khalid Javaid, Executive Director, Lok Virsa, Ahmed Saleem, South Asia Research and Resource Centre, Abdul Shakoor Sindhu, Principal Coordinator, Rural Development Policy Institute (RDPI), Dr. Nadeem Omar, Director, Centre for Civic Education, Dr. Khadim Hussain, Executive Director, Bacha Khan Research Centre, Mazhar Arif, Managing Director, School of Political and Strategic Communication, Hummera Ishfaq of International Islamic University, Karim Johar, Cultural Adviser to Gilgit-Baltistan governor. The aim and objective of the dialogue was to stimulate a discussion on the role of Intellectual property in national cultural heritage.

25) Kyrgyzstan Cultural Corner in Heritage Museum

(May 2012)

To mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyz Republic, a cultural corner depicting the art and traditions of Kyrgyzstan society was inaugurated at National Heritage Museum on May 10, 2012. Federal Minister for National Heritage & Integration, Samina Khalid Ghurki was the chief guest while Kyrgyz Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Alik Orozov was also present at the occasion. The chief guest Samina Khalid Ghurki said, "Pakistan attaches high importance to its relations with Central Asian States (CAS) particularly with Kyrgyzstan. Both the countries enjoy very cordial and brotherly ties that are growing day-by-day. The creation of the Kyrgyz cultural corner will certainly enhance this friendly relationship." On the occasion, the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said, "Our countries are united not only by geographical proximity but also by common historical roots." Marking the

opening ceremony, a photographic exhibition on Kyrgyz Republic portraying folk life, architecture, scenic views as well as a Kyrgyz musical performance was also organized. The exhibits gifted by Kyrgyz Republic permanent display at the Museum include 32 master pieces including carpets, costumes for men and women, traditional dolls, musical instruments, folk paintings, wooden and several household items.

26) Cultural Grant by Japan for Improvement of Lok Virsa Audio Visual Centre

Furthering economic cooperation the Government of Japan has extended Cultural Grant of Japanese Yen 49.00 million to the Government of Pakistan on May 14, 2012. Dr. Waqar Masood Khan, Secretary, Economic Affairs Division and H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Oe, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan signed the exchange of notes on behalf of respective Governments. The Cultural Grant will be utilized for the improvement of Audio Visual Equipment of the Lok Virsa. It will enhance audio/ video archive of Pakistan for students, scholars, researchers and people related to this field having video documentation of traditional cultural visual anthropology.

27) Celebration of “World Museum Day”

The World Museum Day is observed annually all over the world on 18th May with a view to highlight the importance, necessity and role of the museums for educating and enlightening people, especially younger generation about culture, heritage, history, flora and fauna, and progress of a country. Lok Virsa also celebrated the World Museum Day. On the day, Lok Virsa Executive Director Khalid Javaid said, “Museums have a great importance and role in the lives of people. There are many types of museums, some depict the indigenous culture and traditions inherited by people from their forefathers from generation to generation like museums created and operated by our institution.” A musical performance featuring folk artists and museums was organized to mark the day.

28) Folk Festival “Pakistan Week”

(June 2012)

A weeklong folk festival “Pakistan Week” with the objective to save the national heritage for future generations and also to project the soft image of Pakistan across the globe was organized by Lok Virsa in collaboration with Ministry of National Heritage & Integration on June 04, 2012. Federal

Minister for National Heritage and Integration, Samina Khalid Ghurki inaugurated the weeklong activities. The activities of Pakistan Week featured artisans-at-work with participation of craft persons from across the country to mesmerize the visitors forgetting a taste of cultural heritage. Besides other attractions, exhibition on cultural heritage was a major feature of the celebrations in which over hundred master artisans demonstrated their works in artistically designed cultural pavilions. The craft on display were embroidery (including Multani, Bhawalpuri, Hazara, Swat, Balochi and Sindhi embroidery), block printing, lacquer work, Khussa making, pottery, tie and dye, doll making, khaddar weaving, truck art, wood carving, wood work, namda and gabba, metal work, shawl weaving, zari work, motikari, traditional carpets, blue pottery, Ajrak, wax printing, stone work, wooden spoon making, pattu weaving and many others.

29) Folk Festival “Lok Mela Lahore”

A week-long 'Lok Mela Lahore' was organized by Lok Virsa under the auspices of Ministry of National Heritage and Integration at Jallo Park, Lahore on 12th June, 2012. Minister for National Heritage and Integration, Samina Khalid Ghurki, as chief guest said that cultural festival is a gift for people of Lahore by the federal government which would not only help them to get awareness about their national culture but would also provide recreational opportunity. She thanked the administration of Lok Virsa for organizing the event. Artists, artisans and a large number of people from all provinces participated in the festival. The artisans put their articles on display at the stalls set up in the festival. Singers from the provinces including Gilgit Baltistan also performed on the occasion.