



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Programme

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MUSIC OF BADAKHSHAN

A series of recitals of Badakhshi folk music were held during May and June in Kabul as part of the ongoing programme of documentation of Afghan folk music by the Aga Khan Music Initiative for Central Asia (AKMICA). Identified during field research in 2009 this remote area, 25 accomplished musicians from across Badakhshan were subsequently invited to Kabul primarily to rehearse and record. In order to raise public awareness as to the richness of traditional folk music in Badakhshan, the musicians also performed a variety of songs and instrumental pieces in the Pamiri, Takhari and Farkhari traditions. In all, 400 Afghans and internationals attended the 5 recitals that were held in the Queen's Palace in Baghe Babur and the AKTC office garden. The initiative is supported by the governments of Norway and the US.



GOLDASTA MOSQUE INAUGURATION

After more than a year of conservation, Goldasta mosque in the Tandorsazi quarter was inaugurated on 4th May 2010, in the presence of HE Sayyed Makdoom Raheen, Minister for Information and Culture, US Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, other government officials and community representatives.

Damaged during factional fighting in the old city during 1993/4, the conservation of the Goldasta mosque entailed painstaking repairs to some of finest moulded plaster decoration to survive in the old city. The works have also enabled the safeguarding of unusual painted marble panels which date from the Mughal era.



TREE-PLANTING IN BAGHE QAZI

On 19th June, HE Mohammad Yunos Nawandish, Mayor of Kabul and the USAID Director Bill Frej participated in a tree-planting ceremony in Baghe Qazi, with community representatives from the old city. USAID has pledged support for the final stage of reclamation of this historic garden, which extends for 3 hectares and in which the government of Germany and AKTC have also invested. The project is foreseen to be complete by spring 2011.



HERAT

SHISH NAL MOSQUE

The bulk of structural works are now complete on the Shish Nal mosque in Darb al Malik, which adjoins the citadel of Qala Ikhtyaruddin. The restoration of this mud-brick domed mosque, which dates in its present form from the 19th century, takes place against the backdrop of an ill-conceived scheme to widen the road through the historic Darb al Malik, once the main northern gate in the walled old city. Together with the continuing failure of the municipality to control demolition and new construction in the old city, the road-widening scheme risks jeopardizing the consideration of Herat for inclusion on the tentative UNESCO World Heritage List. The conservation work on Shish Nal mosque, which is funded by the US State Department, is expected to be complete by the end of August.



QALA IKHTYARUDDIN VISIT

On June 11th the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Stefan de Mistura and colleagues inspected the ongoing conservation work in Qala Ikhtyaruddin, as part of a visit to Herat. Together with representatives of the department of Historic Monuments, AKTC staff described to the delegation the range of conservation measures that have taken place in the citadel since late 2008, when resources were made available from the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation.

DOCUMENTA (13)

Between 29th June and 7th July, a group from *Documenta (13)*, a contemporary art exhibition that takes place in Kassel, Germany, every 5 years, visited Kabul, Herat and Bamiyan. In addition to visiting cultural heritage sites and meeting government officials, the group participated in a number of round-table meetings with professional Afghans to exchange ideas on a range of cultural and social issues affecting the country. During the course of their visit, the group had the opportunity to explore ideas for possible linkages between the exhibition in Kassel in 2012, and a site or an event in Afghanistan. Members of the group gave a presentation on *Documenta's* history, as part of the regular series of lectures held in the Timur Shah mausoleum.



MALIK CISTERN ART EXHIBITION

Following the completion of conservation work by AKTC on the historic Malik complex, the cistern was formally handed back to the department of Historic Monuments in mid-May. On 26th May, a permanent exhibition of painting and drawings was inaugurated in the main space of the cistern, which dates from the late 15th century and whose traditional waterproof *saroje* plaster (of lime, sand, ash and straw) has been restored. Organised by the department of Information and Culture, the inauguration of the exhibition was attended by artists, students and community representatives.



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