

Dr. Ishrat Husain inaugurates SBP Museum & Art Gallery

Dr. Ishrat Husain, Director, Institute of Business Administration and former Governor, State Bank of Pakistan inaugurated the SBP Museum & Art Gallery at an impressive ceremony held at State Bank, Karachi on July 1, 2011.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that he was extremely delighted that one of his best projects — a Museum and Art Gallery — has come to fruition. ‘Though this project was started in my tenure yet its completion is the result of the relentless efforts of my successors, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Syed Salim Raza and Mr. Shahid H. Kardar,’ he added.

Appreciating the efforts of SBP Governor, he said that Mr. Kardar is a person who believes in institution building and his patronage for this project will never be forgotten. ‘I am grateful to him and all those who contributed to this project, which is unique in nature,’ he remarked.

He said that there is hardly any central bank in the world, which does not have a monetary museum. Having a monetary museum is a usual function of a central bank, he added.

Dr. Ishrat Husain said that when the idea of establishing a monetary museum was conceived, there was a library in this building. Realizing the historical value of this building, we shifted the library to Learning Resource Centre (LRC) and decided to utilize this building for SBP Museum and Art Gallery, he added.

‘One of the reasons of establishing the museum in this building was that we always wanted to preserve the original character of this monumental and historical building. Moreover, we also wanted to preserve the gems of world’s great artist, Sadequain that were acquired by the former SBP Governor, Mr. S.A. Hasnie during his tenure,’ he added.

He said that this is just a beginning and we have a long way to go ahead. He further said that Pakistani artists have great potential and this is the duty of our state institutions like SBP to patronize and encourage the talented artists especially the young ones.

He asked the employees of the State Bank to own this project as it is one of the best projects SBP has ever initiated. 'My request to all my colleagues at State Bank of Pakistan is to ensure that this project not only thrives but also becomes one of the memorials to the State Bank as far as its cultural aspects are concerned,' he emphasized.

'That's my humble request to all of you who are the members of the staff of the State Bank that please do take care of this project and make sure that it really becomes one of the finest monetary museums not only in Asia but also in the world', Dr. Ishrat added.

Appreciating the efforts of Dr. Asma Ibrahim, Director, Museum & Art Gallery, he said that she has done a tremendous job.

Earlier, Mr. Shahid H. Kardar, Governor, State Bank of Pakistan said that this museum, the first of its kind in Pakistan, was the culmination of the strenuous efforts initiated by Dr. Ishrat Husain.

He lauded the role of Museum Advisory Committee especially its chairperson, Mrs. Sabiha Hassan and members, Prof. Salima Hashmi and Dr. Kalimullah Lashari whose dedicated efforts made this project worth seeing.

Mr. Kardar said that the way this museum was conceptualized and materialized has really fascinated him and he was really touched by the work and the rare collections it houses. He said that the State Bank of Pakistan is one of the institutions which have the rare collections of Sadequain. He said that he was always inspired by the great artistic work of Sadequain, who was a friend of his father.

In his welcome address, Mr. Azhar Kureshi, Executive Director, State Bank of Pakistan said that the project of Museum and Art Gallery was the brainchild of Dr. Ishrat Husain, who not only initiated the project but made the needed funds available, hired competent personnel & facilitated formation of a core team, which successfully completed the task of establishing a monetary museum from scratch.

He said that today's inauguration puts Pakistan among a smaller group of nations which have monetary museums of international standards. This museum preserves history and documents journey of the money through time and related artifacts, he added. Mr. Kureshi also acknowledged Dr. Asma Ibrahim's strenuous efforts in bringing the project to this stage.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Asma Ibrahim, Director, Museum & Art Gallery, SBP said that the collections in the museum are exceptional that include coins, currency notes, stamps, rare documents, different rare machines etc. 'As a whole, the Museum helps its visitors to gain understanding and appreciation for the monetary system and coinage from early times to modern age,' she added.

She said that SBP is going to unveil Sadequain's murals not seen by the public before this day. She said that our collections span over 2500 years from all corners of the subcontinent.

It may be added here that the 'Museum Section' of the museum is comprised of Coin Galleries, Stamp Gallery, Currency Gallery, History of State Bank, Governors' Gallery and Art Gallery. The 'Art Gallery' of the museum displays Sadequain's murals and other rare paintings.

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