



中国传媒大学  
COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF CHINA



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## Tracing Civilization through Cultural Heritage and

## Festive Celebrations



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## Culture

A culture is a way of life of a group of people, the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Imagine culture as the special flavor that makes each group of people unique. It's like a magical recipe that defines how we live, what we believe, and what we create. But what does that mean?

Now, imagine traveling to a different country. You might notice people doing things differently there maybe they greet each other with a bow instead of a hug, or they eat different kinds of foods. That's because they have their own unique culture. And here is the cool part culture is not set in stone. It changes over time as people come up with new ideas and mix. This keeps things interesting and makes our world colorful and diverse.

Understanding culture helps us connect with others, appreciate our differences, and learn from each other. It's like discovering a whole new world right in front of us. So, let's celebrate culture the beautiful tapestry of traditions, beliefs, and customs that make each group of people special.

In this article, we will look closely at Pakistan's fascinating culture, from its ancient ruins to its lively festivals. Whether you are interested in history or just looking for some fun, Pakistan has something for everyone to enjoy.

## Culture of Pakistan

Pakistan's culture is incredibly diverse because the region that is now Pakistan has been influenced by many different groups of people throughout history. These include invaders and occupiers such as the White Huns, Persians, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, and various other groups.



This diverse history has led to a rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and practices within Pakistan. Different ethnic groups have their own unique cultures, which can be seen in various aspects of life such as clothing, food, and religion.

For example, the clothing styles may vary among different ethnic groups, with some preferring traditional attire like shalwar kameez, while others may have different preferences influenced by their historical background.

Food is another area where diversity shines through. Different regions of Pakistan have their culinary specialties, influenced by the cultures that have inhabited those areas throughout history. This results in a wide variety of dishes and flavors across the country.

Religion also plays a significant role in shaping Pakistani culture. While Islam is the dominant religion, there are also indigenous pre-Islamic customs that are practiced by some

ethnic groups. This can lead to differences in religious practices and rituals among different communities within Pakistan.

Overall, the diversity of Pakistani culture is a reflection of its complex history, with influences from various peoples and civilizations contributing to the rich tapestry of traditions that make up the country's cultural heritage.

### Punjabi Culture

Punjabi culture is a vibrant tapestry woven with the lively spirit of the Punjab province. Enriched by the melodious beats of Bhangra and the graceful twirls of Giddha, Punjabi culture is deeply rooted in its traditional music and dance. The Punjabi language, filled with warmth and vigor, is the heartbeat of this culture, fostering a strong sense of community and identity. Punjabi cuisine, known for its rich flavors and hearty dishes like Biryani and Saag, reflects the hospitality ingrained in the culture. The colorful festivals, such as Basant, bring communities together with kite-flying competitions, adding a festive air to the cultural landscape. Overall, Punjabi culture is a celebration of life, love, and the shared heritage that binds the people of Punjab.





## Sindhi Culture

Sindhi culture is a testament to the rich heritage of the Sindh province, where the booms of Sufi poetry, vibrant music, and traditional Sindhi Ajrak clothing resonate. Sindhi is not just a language it's a cultural bridge connecting people through stories and expressions. The region boasts a diverse cultural array, with festivals showcasing traditional Jhoomar dance and craft exhibitions. The aromatic Sindhi cuisine, featuring delicacies like Sindhi Biryani and Sindhi Karhi, reflects a deep connection to local flavors and culinary traditions. In essence, Sindhi culture is a harmonious blend of history, art, and community, creating a distinctive and captivating identity within the broader mosaic of Pakistani diversity. Sindhi Culture Day, also known as “Ekta day”, is the festival celebrated by Sindhi people living in Sindh and all over the world each year on the first Sunday of December by wearing Ajrak and Sindhi topi.



## Balochi Culture

Balochi culture unfolds as a fascinating narrative of nomadic tribal traditions and unique heritage in the vast expanse of Baluchistan. The Balochi language, a key thread in this cultural fabric, is spoken with pride and carries the tales of a resilient community. Distinctive in its nomadic lifestyle, Baluchistan boasts a rich tapestry of cultural traditions,

including the Chhap and Leva dances. Sajji, a slow-cooked lamb dish, stands as a symbol of Balochi culinary excellence. Amidst the challenging terrain, the people celebrate their culture through events like "Sibi Mela," showcasing the resilience and vibrant cultural expressions that define Balochi identity. In the mosaic of Pakistani diversity, Balochi culture weaves a story of history, uniqueness, and the enduring spirit of its people.



## Pashtun Culture

Pashtun culture, rooted in the rugged landscapes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), is a vibrant tapestry of traditions and hospitality. The Pashto language, spoken with pride, carries the essence of this culture, fostering strong bonds within communities. Known for their code of conduct, Pashtuns uphold principles of honor and respect, shaping their way of life. Traditional Pashtun music and the rhythmic Attan dance capture the spirit of celebration, often seen in cultural festivals. The aromatic flavors of Chapli Kebab, Peshawari Naan and lamb contribute to Pashtun cuisine, reflecting a deep connection to local tastes. As resilient as the mountainous terrain they call home, Pashtuns celebrate their identity through a rich cultural heritage, blending old traditions with a forward-looking mindset in the diverse tapestry of Pakistani culture.



## Kashmiri Culture

Kashmiri culture in Pakistan, particularly in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, is a tapestry of beauty and resilience. Kashmiris maintain a deep connection to their traditions, expressing their identity through traditional crafts, intricate art, and soulful music that echoes the valleys. Pherans are usually made of cotton, but in winter, they're made of wool. They keep people warm, especially when it's snowy. People in Kashmir and some Kashmiris in Chenab Valley wear them to stay cozy during the cold months. The exquisite Wazwan cuisine, known for its aromatic and flavorful dishes, adds to the cultural richness. Kashmiris in Pakistan, in the face of complex geopolitical dynamics, showcase a tenacious spirit, emphasizing community bonds and cultural pride, contributing a unique and significant chapter to the diverse narrative of Pakistani culture. Festivals feature traditional dance, painting, diverse cuisine, and handicrafts. Fairs like Bahu-Mela showcase Kashmiri culture, enhancing its rich heritage. Kashmir showcases unique dance forms like Mask Dance during festivals, alongside folk music featuring Rabab and traditional instruments like Sitar.





## Muhajir Culture

Muhajir culture in Pakistan is a dynamic blend of historical migration and the resulting diversity in the social fabric of the country. The term "Muhajir" refers to those who migrated to Pakistan during the partition in 1947. Primarily settled in urban areas like Karachi, Muhajirs have played a pivotal role in shaping the economic and cultural landscape. The Urdu language serves as a unifying factor, reflecting a synthesis of various linguistic backgrounds. Muhajir culture embodies a fusion of traditions from various regions, resulting in a vibrant tapestry of cuisines such as quorum, chai, paan, and Hyderabadi cuisine. The traditional attire of shalwar kameez is commonly worn daily, while special occasions call for pajamas paired with colorful vests. Additionally, Sherwani and Sari are notable choices for formal events. Muhajirs commemorate Muhajir Cultural Day as an annual celebration of their ethnic and cultural heritage.





## Gilgit Baltistan Culture

Gilgit Baltistan culture has a diverse cultural heritage. Gilgit-Baltistan, northern Pakistan, is a rich textile that unfolds with diverse languages, traditions, and customs. The multilingual environment, shaped by the Shina, Burushaski, and Balti languages showcases a unique cultural identity. Traditional attire, adorned with special hats and embroidered dresses, reflects the local heritage. Music and dance, resonating with the sounds of traditional instruments, take center stage in festive celebrations. Influenced by mountainous terrain, the cuisine boasts hearty dishes like momo and thukpa. Festivals like the Shandur Polo Festival unite communities. Warm hospitality is a hallmark, with guests receiving a friendly welcome and the symbolic offering of tea. Skilled artisans contribute to the cultural mosaic through intricate handmade carpets, Pashmina shawls, and wood carvings, preserving heritage in this breathtaking mountain landscape.



## Ancient Civilization in Pakistan

### Soan Civilization

The Soan Civilization began about half a million years ago in what is now Pakistan. People in this ancient society used basic stone tools and lived a nomadic life, moving around to find food and resources.





## **Indus Valley Civilization**

The Indus Valley Civilization, flourishing from around 3300 to 1300 BCE in present-day Pakistan and northwest India, was an advanced society. Known for well-planned cities Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa mehergarh and kotdiji people had a system of writing, advanced architecture, and engaged in trade. The civilization declined, leaving behind intriguing artifacts.

## **Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro (3300-2000BC)**

Around 3300 to 2000 BC, there were two ancient cities called Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. These cities were part of what we call the Indus Valley Civilization, which was one of the world's earliest urban civilizations. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were located in what is now modern-day Pakistan and northwest India. They were both very advanced for their time, with organized city layouts, sophisticated drainage systems, and well-built houses made of baked bricks.

The people of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were skilled traders and farmers. They engaged in long-distance trade, exchanging goods such as pottery, beads, and jewelry with other civilizations like Mesopotamia. Agriculture was also vital, with evidence of advanced irrigation systems and a wide variety of crops being grown. The civilization suddenly disappeared around 2000 BC, and we're not entirely sure why. Some theories suggest natural disasters or changes in the environment, while others think it might have been due to conflicts or migrations of people. But despite the mystery surrounding their decline, the



legacy of the Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro civilizations lives on, influencing later cultures in the Indian subcontinent.



## Mehrgarh

Mehrgarh, starting around 7000 BCE in present-day situated on the Kacchi Plain of Balochistan in Pakistan. It is located near the Bolan Pass, to the west of the Indus River, and between the modern-day Pakistani cities of Quetta, Kalat, and Sibi. Pakistan was one of the first places where people started farming. They also raised animals and made pottery. The discoveries from this site show that these early communities had complex societies with special art and trade, giving us a glimpse into early human development in South Asia.





## **Kotdiji**

The KotDiji Civilization, around 3300–2600 BCE in present-day situated in city of Khairpur Sindh Pakistan, was an ancient culture with well-planned cities. People built homes from mud bricks, engaged in agriculture, and crafted pottery. Evidence suggests a sophisticated society with trade links, but much about their way of life remains a mystery due to limited archaeological findings.



## **Indo-Greek civilization**

The Indo-Greek civilization was a time when people from Greece, a country in Europe, mixed with the people living in parts of what we now call Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northern India. This happened around 2,300 to 2,000 years ago, a long time before now. Archaeologists claimed to have discovered the secondary gate of the city of Bazira during new excavations at Barikot in Pakistan's Swat valley.

Imagine people from Greece and people from these places in Asia meeting each other and sharing their ideas, languages, and ways of doing things. This mix of Greek and Asian cultures created something unique, known as the Indo-Greek civilization. Now, think about how different cultures have their own special ways of doing things, like how they dress, what they eat, and the stories they tell. The Indo-Greek civilization had a blend of both Greek and Asian customs. They spoke Greek, used Greek-style buildings, but also picked up on Asian practices and beliefs, like Buddhism.

One cool thing they did was make coins. On one side of the coin, you might see Greek symbols and gods, while on the other side, you'd find symbols and gods from Asia. These coins tell us a lot about how the Indo-Greeks saw themselves and their world. Over time, other groups in the region, like the Indo-Scythians and Kushans, became more powerful, and the Indo-Greek civilization faded away. But their mix of cultures left a mark on the history and culture of the area, showing how different groups of people can come together and create something new and fascinating.





## Gandhara Civilization

The Gandhara Civilization prospered in the region that is present-day Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan. It existed from around the middle of the 1st millennium BCE to the early years of the 2nd millennium CE. During this period, various empires ruled over the region, united by a profound reverence for Buddhism and the distinctive artistic style influenced by the interactions between the Indo-Greeks and Alexander's expeditions into India.

The Gandhara name has different interpretations, but the most widely accepted theory connects it to the words Qand/Gand, which means "fragrance," and Har, which means "land." In simpler terms, Gandhara can be understood as the "Land of Fragrance".

The ancient kingdom of 'Gandhara,' situated in Taxila and its surroundings, flourished from the 6th century BCE to the 11th century CE. This period was marked by cultural exchange and fusion, notably combining Greek and Buddhist influences. The civilization established the world's premier monastic university, becoming a center for learning. Gandhara embodied a harmonious blend of diverse religions and cultures, showcasing the coexistence of differences. Citizens lived in perfect harmony, expressing their positivity through art, science, and literature. The Gandhara civilization is a witness to the possibility of unity in diversity, demonstrating the richness of its cultural tapestry. Taxila, the epicenter of the Gandhara civilization, boasts numerous sites preserving glimpses of the past. Khanpur Cave is a historical site brimming with artifacts spanning diverse cultures and epochs, including relics from Buddhists, Muslims, Greeks, and Hindus. Nearby, Bhir Mound stands as a testament to the Achaemenian era, dating back to the 6th century. Here,



visitors can explore remnants of walls, housing foundations, and streets, offering insights into the urban landscape of that period. Meanwhile, Sirkap, a fortified area dating from the 2nd century, boasts remnants of houses and temples that exhibit a distinct Western influence on Gandhara architecture, providing a glimpse into the fusion of cultures in ancient times.



## Gandhara Art

Between the 4th century BCE when Alexander the Great conquered the region and the 8th century CE during the Hindu Shahi period, Gandhara art went through a thousand years of growth and decline. Its peak was under King Kanishka of the Kushan Empire when the first Buddha statues were made.

Gandhara art mostly focuses on Buddha. It shows scenes from his life, like his birth, enlightenment, and passing away. These scenes were carved into stone panels and put on stupas, which are religious monuments. The art of Gandhara is a mix of many cultures like Greek, Roman, Central Asian, and Indian. They used a special kind of rock called schist for carving statues. Originally, these sculptures were painted and sometimes even covered in gold.

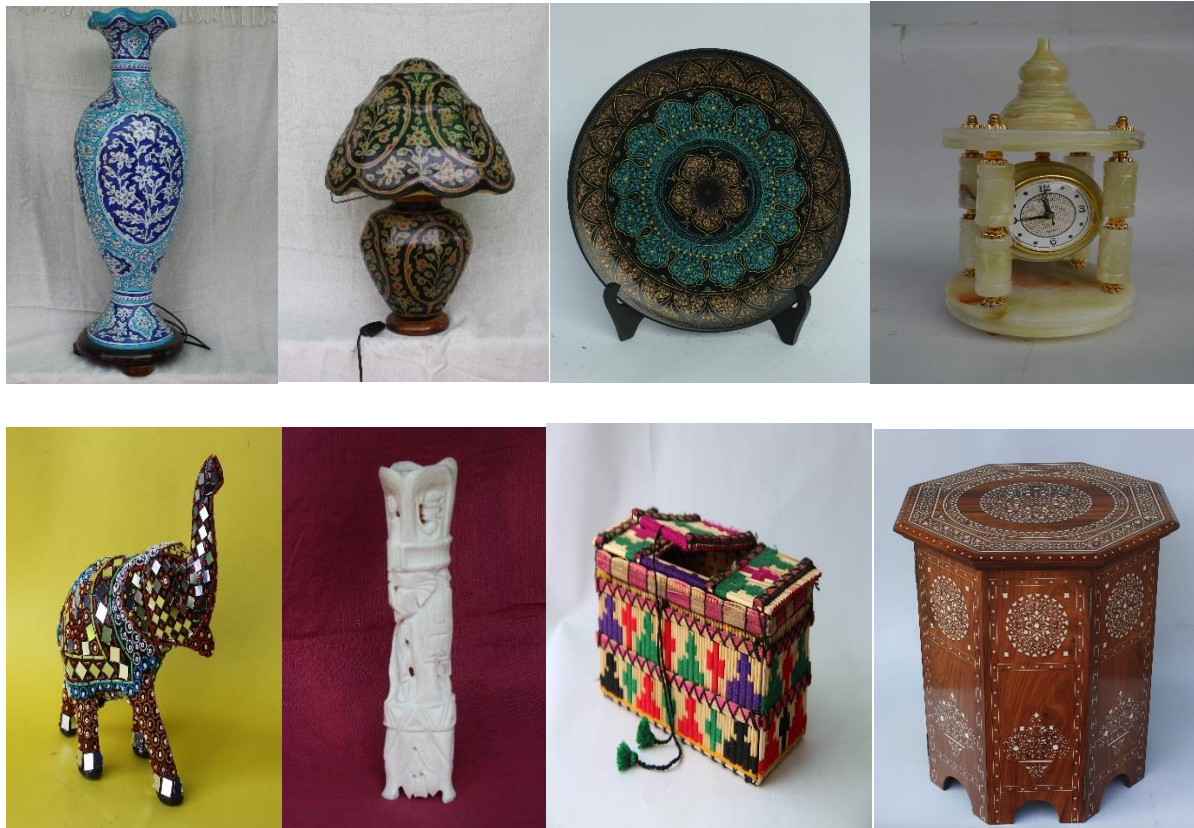


As time went on, the use of stone declined, and they started using lime plaster for sculptures. The influence of Gandhara art spread to other places like Mathura in India and even to China, Korea, and Japan along the Silk Road. So, Gandhara art is a blend of different cultures, focusing on Buddha, and it influenced art in many other places as well.



The Gandhara Art Village in Taxila, Pakistan, displays a lot of beautiful old stuff made by talented people. In early 2023, the Punjab Small Industry Corporation Government of Punjab established Gandhara Art Village with assistance from the Zaildar Family. The Zaildar family's initiative to establish the Gandhara Art Village, aimed at creating a platform for artists to practice and showcase Gandhara-inspired art, can contribute to a revival of interest in this ancient art form. The primary objectives of the Gandhara Art Village include the preservation of Gandhara art, providing training facilities for artisans, establishing common and display facilities, and promoting the art of both residents and non-residents of the village. The establishment of the Gandhara Art Village is expected to have significant cultural and economic benefits for the region. It would contribute to the preservation and revival of Gandhara art, create employment opportunities for local artisans, boost tourism by attracting visitors interested in the cultural heritage of Taxila,

and promote the region's identity as a hub for artistic expression and craftsmanship. Taxila welcomed the addition of the Gandhara Art Village, a lively embodiment of the city's cultural richness and remarkable artisanal skills. Within its confines, patrons can marvel at exquisitely crafted jewelry and pottery fashioned from marble and stone. It is not just about old things though, modern people in Taxila are also super skilled at making all sorts of cool stuff like Straw work, Blue Pottery, Camel skin, Camel Bone, Lacquer Art, Mirrors Work, Wood Carving, Onyx Marble, Metal Craft and many other different things. They are keeping old traditions alive and making new things that people love. Taxila's crafts and history make it a really interesting place to visit for people from all over.





## Archeological site

Pakistan has been home to many ancient civilizations over time. It has a rich cultural history that is among the oldest and most respected in the world. Mohenjo-Daro, also situated in modern-day Pakistan, was part of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. It is renowned for its advanced urban planning and drainage system, indicating a highly organized society. The city's layout and infrastructure suggest a sophisticated understanding of city planning and engineering for its time.

Harappa, another significant site contemporaneous with Mohenjo-Daro, was also a key urban center of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. Like Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa showcases advanced urban planning and craftsmanship, highlighting the cultural and technological achievements of the Indus people. Mehrgarh, an ancient site near Bolan Pass, contains low mounds along the Bolan River. Spread over 250 hectares, its layers date back to 6500-2500 BC. Mud-brick structures suggest storage use. Excavations reveal shifts in focus from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age.

Taxila, a valued archaeological site nestled in Rawalpindi District, is a window into the rich tapestry of the Gandhara period's culture. Formerly known as the Gandharan city of Taksasila, Taxila was a bustling metropolis where Hinduism and Buddhism flourished side by side.

Bhir Mound, nestled in its historical significance, is often revered as the very birthplace of Taxila. This ancient site carries profound cultural and archaeological significance, symbolizing the origins of one of the most important ancient cities in South Asia.



Sirkap is a 2,300-year-old city in Pakistan built by Greek rulers. Wander its streets to discover Greek-inspired architecture and bustling marketplaces. Experience the unique blend of Greek and Pakistani cultures, offering a captivating glimpse into ancient history and enduring legacies of cultural exchange.

The remains at Taxila are like ancient leftovers including Jandial, Pippala temples, Giri fortress, and others. They were built using different materials at different times. We found cool stuff like old relics and sculptures from different cultures like Indo-Greek and early Kushan periods. Each of these sites in Taxila is a chapter in the story of human civilization, waiting to be discovered and appreciated by visitors from around the world. Whether you're a history enthusiast or simply curious about the past, Taxila offers a fascinating journey through time.

Overall, Pakistan's archaeological sites provide valuable insights into the cultural, social, and technological evolution of human societies in South Asia, spanning millennia of history.







## **Significance of the Orange Festival**

The Orange Festival showcases the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan, offering a genuine and positive representation of the country to the global community. Promoting the real image of Pakistan internationally by expressing them to our rich culture & traditions.

Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah and Mr. Zaildar Zaheer Shah have been hosting the festival for the last 11 years continuously to facilitate foreign community visits to the ancient city of Gandhara civilizations. This event attracts the participation of diplomats and their families based in Islamabad, who come together to participate in the festivities and celebrate this cultural tradition. The oldest university in the world was in Taxila. It means the city is not only the center of thousands of years old civilizations but it was the center of education as well. Orange Festival is a great way to introduce the diplomatic community to Pakistan's people, culture, and history.

The occasion also sought to draw attention to and promote Pakistani's rich cultural heritage. Cultural diplomacy plays a key role in our efforts, as we engage in dialogue and collaboration with other nations to promote mutual understanding and strengthen diplomatic ties. This event creates opportunities for people to connect, learn from each other, and build bridges across borders. The audience was amazed by the talent of the locals. Foreign diplomat corps, belonging to different countries of the world, took a keen interest in Pakistan's traditional culture, music, local crafts, and delicious food. They all lauded the festival for creating the opportunity to showcase Pakistan and Taxila's local culture helping them to understand the softer image of the country.



## **11<sup>th</sup> Orange Festival Celebration**

Orange Festival was organized by Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah, Vice Chairman of Elaan Research Center, in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and the Office of Dean of the COSA at Zaildar House Taxila. H.E Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Mohammad Afridi was the chief guest on the occasion. In this event, more than 200 representatives from 60 nations, including the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, High Commissioners, Deputy Head of Missions, Defence Attache, Ambassadors, and Political Cultural counselors were among the Participants.

The Orange Festival is an annual traditional event, organized by the Zaildar Family under the leadership of Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah and Mr. Zaildar Zaheer Shah. This event attracts the participation of diplomats and their families based in Islamabad, who come together to participate in the festivities and celebrate this cultural tradition.

At this festival, distinguished participants were offered Fresh Red Blood oranges from Khanpur, along with servings of fresh orange and sugarcane juice. Moreover, folk music and traditional dancing of tame horses on the tune of drums, raising their front feet to present their salute, besides lifting stones weighing 120 kilograms, a game of warriors to prove their menhip was the center of attraction for the diplomats and their families which they admired.

Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah warmly welcomed the Chief guest and foreign diplomats, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, High Commissioners, the Deputy Head of Missions, Defence Attaches, Ambassadors, and their families on their participation in the Orange Festival.



Addressing the participants, he spoke about the rich cultural heritage, work of master craftsmen and black stone carvers, the world-famous red blood oranges of Khanpur, and the exploration of footprints of Buddha at over two dozen sacred sites of Gandhara civilization. Furthermore, he emphasized that the primary objective of the Orange Festival is to bring together diplomatic families at Zaildar House, fostering a sense of respect and affection for these families while introducing them to Pakistan's rich traditions and culture. Highlighting Pakistan as the cradle of civilizations, he mentioned Taxila, one of the oldest civilizations, formerly known as Takshasila. With over 30 sacred historical sites in the region, efforts are underway to designate Taxila as a 'World Heritage City.' The Orange Festival serves as a gateway to the diverse cultural heritage, presenting a genuine and positive image of Pakistan to the global community. In his address, he pledged to contribute earnestly to Pakistan's well-being and expressed confidence in resolving the nation's issues through collaboration between Pakistani institutions, the government, its people, and the support of friends of Pakistan, ensuring the country's prosperity.

Office of Dean of the COSA, in his address, said that Pakistan has a unique and diverse culture and hospitality that are showcased through events such as the Orange Festival. He said such events should be held regularly because these could be an opportunity for the diplomatic community to get familiarized with the culture, traditions, and Real image of Pakistan.

Dean of the diplomatic corps and Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov termed the event historic. He said Pakistan is blessed with four seasons with scenic valleys in the



north besides rich cultural heritage like Gandhara civilization making it valuable among the world community. He said that events like the Orange Festival would not only play an important role in promoting the real image of the country but would also provide opportunities for diplomats to better understand Pakistani culture.

Dr. Jamal Nasir, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare in Punjab, commended the Zaildar Family for their commendable efforts in hosting a splendid event. He expressed that such events play a crucial role in showcasing the tourism potential of Pakistan. He added that Pakistan is the home of ancient civilizations and cultures that are not only heritage assets but are the best attractions for foreign tourists as well. He emphasized the urgency of enhancing infrastructure in areas of historical and cultural significance to attract foreign tourists, particularly from Buddhist nations. He underscored the need for government support in promoting religious tourism, urging collaboration between the private sector and the community to devise effective strategies.

In his address to the Participants, the deputy chairman Senate Mr. Mirza Mohammad Afridi said that cultural diplomacy can play a pivotal role in promoting the historic and rich heritage of the country at the international level. He said activities like the orange festival are an excellent way to bring the diplomatic community closer to the culture, history, and people of Pakistan. He said the time has come for Pakistan to promote this treasure and introduce its unique orange and mango through exhibitions across the globe. The Deputy Chairman expressed his pleasure in seeing the enthusiastic members of the foreign





diplomat's corps, along with their families, and thanked Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah for his warm welcome and hospitality.

Throughout the festival, the audience was amazed by the talent of the locals. Foreign diplomat corps, belonging to different countries of the world, took a keen interest in Pakistan's traditional culture, music, local crafts, and delicious food. They all lauded the festival for creating the opportunity to showcase Pakistan and Taxila's local culture helping them to understand the real image of the country.

This Orange Festival in Taxila was 11<sup>th</sup> annual event that highlighted and showcases the real image of Pakistan through local culture, heritage and hospitality of Pakistan. This year's festival was a huge success, thanks to Zaildar Family and the collaboration of various organizations and the enthusiastic participation of the foreign diplomats corps.

During the event Horse Dance was showcased in which three different horses dance to the beat of drums. This horse dance is a traditional part of Pakistan's Culture. Horse dancing has become a culturally significant and widely celebrated tradition in Pakistan. The country showcases this unique form of entertainment through various events and festivals, drawing attention to the beauty and skill involved in choreographing horses to dance to rhythmic beats, especially accompanied by traditional instruments like the Drums.

Additionally, stone lifting was also part of the Orange Festival in which stone lifters lift stones weighed from 80 kg to 120 kg. Participants enjoyed the traditional stone lifting and appreciated the talent of stone lifters. Stone lifting, a centuries-old tradition, thrives in Taxila, Pakistan, particularly in the Potohar region and rural areas of Hazara. The practice,



also known as "Watee" or "Gutti" lifting, involves competitors lifting stones in a fluid motion onto their shoulders and occasionally throwing them behind. This traditional and folk sport, documented in local competitions, holds cultural significance and has faced challenges, with concerns about its extinction. The stone lifting competitions often involve lifting heavy stones with specific rules, showcasing the strength and skill of participants.

Folk Music was performed by Ajmal Qawwal. Folk music comprising Qawalis brings spirituality to the event in which local and foreign guests dance to the tunes of tabla with folk verses of "Dam Dam Ali Ali". Qawali, a traditional form of devotional music, has experienced a resurgence in Pakistan in recent years, marking a comeback in cultural events and celebrations. Once replaced by DJs at weddings, Qawali has reclaimed its popularity, becoming a notable trend at high-end functions and festivals. Events like Qawali Nights have become a popular choice, showcasing the enduring appeal of this Sufi art form. The trend reflects a cultural shift towards appreciating and preserving traditional musical expressions in Pakistan.

Various stalls were arranged to exhibit artifacts of Gandhara art, featuring finely crafted jewelry and pottery made from marble and stone. Participants expressed admiration for the exquisite items displayed on the stalls.

Concluding the event, participants moved to the patio and foyer area, where a lavish spread awaited the guests. The culinary presentation was remarkable, showcasing a diverse selection of Pakistani delicacies, including Chicken Tikka, Malai Boti, Rice, and Qourma. For dessert, Kheer and Carrot Halwa were elegantly presented.



## Conclusion

Pakistan's cultural diversity is like a colorful mosaic, made up of traditions passed down through generations. As the country moves forward, it holds onto these traditions while also embracing new ideas and influences from around the world. Each region of Pakistan has its own unique cultural identity. For example, Punjabi culture is known for its lively music and dance, while Sindhi culture celebrates its rich history through poetry and clothing. Balochi traditions reflect the nomadic lifestyle of the region, while Pashtun communities uphold principles of honor and respect.



Throughout history, Pakistan has been home to ancient civilizations like the Gandhara, which blended Buddhist and Greek influences. Today, efforts are being made to preserve and promote this rich heritage, such as through events like the Orange Festival in Taxila. These cultural celebrations not only showcase Pakistan's traditions but also help foster understanding and appreciation among people from different backgrounds. Ultimately, Pakistan's cultural journey is a vibrant tapestry of unity, resilience, and pride in its diverse heritage.