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Inauguration ceremony: Civil works completed at Swat Museum

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The new building of the museum has been constructed while taking seismic resistance into account. PHOTO: FAZAL KHALIQ/ EXPRESS

SWAT: Demolished during the militancy period, the Swat Museum has been successfully reconstructed with the help of the Italian government. An inauguration ceremony to mark the completion of civil works at the museum was held on Monday.

Work on the museum started in February this year under a project funded by the Pakistan-Italian Debt Swap Agreement and implemented by the Archaeology-Community-Tourism/ Field School Project. The University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar will offer technical support.

“We have crossed another landmark with the completion of civil works of one of the most important museums in Pakistan. Swat is an important valley as prehistoric, proto-historic and golden culture (Gandhara Civilisation) ruins are in its rich cultural heritage,” Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Archaeology and Museums Provincial Director Dr Shah Nazar Khan said. He also thanked the Italian government, saying, “We are grateful to the Italian archeology mission in Pakistan who added a new chapter to our history through their valuable work in Swat since 1965. We assure them full support in their activities,” he added.



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“The restoration of the museum will help revive tourism in Swat. I am happy that the land’s hard days are over and we are all hopeful that the once-thriving tourism sector will be streamlined soon,” said Dr Guido Sabatinelli, the World Health Organisation representative in Pakistan.

The master plan of the museum was developed by archaeologists Ivano Marati and Candida Vassalo. The first three of the total four phases were designed by the University of Peshawar Department of Civil Engineering and additional buildings were designed by Aires Ingegneria, an Italian firm.

Located in Zone 3, the valley falls under seismic resistance areas, which was taken into consideration during construction. “This is the first ever museum in the country to have a seismic resistant building and has been constructed with state-of-the-art methods while ensuring quality work,” Professor Qaisar Ali of the Civil Engineering University of the Peshawar University told *The Express Tribune*.

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