

Tuesday, September 10th

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## Centenary celebration: Italians cherish their presence in the Karakoram range

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Series of events inaugurated with a photo exhibition, documentary.



The photographs highlight the great scientific expedition of Italian explorer Filippo De Filippi. PHOTO:



## ISLAMABAD:

**Marking a century of Italian presence in the Karakoram, The Italian Embassy inaugurated a series of events with the opening of a photo exhibition and a documentary screening on Monday.**

The Italian Science and Cooperation at the Shadow of K2 events are being organised by the Ev-K2-CNR Committee, the Social Economic Environmental Development Project (SEED) and Karakoram International University (KIU), with the patronage of the Italian Embassy.

The event took place at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), where the exhibition halls were plastered with Filippo de Filippi's expedition's photographs through central Asia in 1913-1914, which was a major step forward in spreading knowledge of the Karakoram Range, especially on the scientific side. The exhibition had a total of 300 high resolution enlargements of the original pieces that are conserved in the archives of the Society for Geographic Studies of Florence, Italy.

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” Foreigners come to scale the summits in Pakistan,  
but we have no chance to explore our own mountains  
Mountaineer Samina Baig

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The short documentary, In the Heart of Asia directed by Stefano Ardito which has recently been shot in Italy and Pakistan was played afterwards.

Ev-K2-CNR President Agostino da Polenza said for the past five years, there has been great focus on the consolidation of the great Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) in the K2 region under the framework of the SEED project.



The photographs highlight the great scientific expedition of Italian explorer Filippo De Filippi.  
PHOTO: MYRA IQBAL/ EXPRESS

The Head of the Cultural Affairs at the Italian Embassy, Federido Bianchi, informed that within the Italian Government's portfolio of development programmes worth over â,–226 million, funding different activities in the mountainous areas of Pakistan is also included. In the Pakistani Italian Debt-for-Development Swap Programme, SEED amounts to about â,–8 million. He further added that the Karakorum Range and K2 have been familiar names in Italy for a very long time and that an Italian Museum was also inaugurated in Skardu in 2004.

KIU Vice Chancellor Dr Najma Najam believes that Ev-K2-CNR is setting up new tradition of working relationship based on the scientific research to protect the natural resource base. Women empowerment and mainstreaming is a key component of the community capacity building programme. The success of this work will transfer into development which will be beneficial for the future of not just G-B but the whole country, she said.

” The Italian govt’s €226 million portfolio of development programmes includes funding for different activities in the mountainous areas  
Italian Cultural Attaché Federido Bianchi

Samina Baig Pakistan's first female mountaineer to conquer Mount Everest told *The Express Tribune* that foreigners come to scale the summits in Pakistan, but we have no chance to explore our own mountains. The provision of outbound educational and adventure activities for the youth is not a priority for our government, so we have to depend on foreign friends.

A day-long scientific conference will be held on Tuesday in which scientists from different parts of the country would deliberate on issues confronting glaciers, water and ecosystems in the Karakoram Range.

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