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Islamic Indian art on show

ABOUT 180 pieces of Sultanate and Mughal Indian works of art will be showcased in a three-month exhibition entitled The Islamic Art of India beginning next Saturday. The artefacts are collections of the National Museum of India and it is hoped they will promote better understanding and appreciation of Islamic Indian art and culture, as well as its parallels and influences on Islamic art and the Malay world. The exhibition, which is a collaboration between the National Museum of New Delhi and the Islamic Arts Museum here, will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The artefacts on exhibit include manuscripts depicting the annals and antiquities of the Mughal emperors, illuminated royal decrees, calligraphy and miniature paintings, jewellery, luxurious tiles, as well as gold and silver coins. Certain masterpieces have never been displayed outside India.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Dr Nasim Akhtar, head of the National Museum of New Delhi, will deliver a talk on Secular Heritage of Indian Art on March 31 at 10am.

The talk will be followed by a kathak dance workshop entitled Andaz E-Raqs by Rani Khanam and Sallauddin Pasha (from India).

Kathak is an Indian classical dance form which originated in northern India. During its initial phase, kathak was an artistic form of story-telling through stylised movements with deep religious associations.

When this art came to the royal courts, it became more secular and soon evolved, sparkling with character. Kathak today is basically a solo dance performance. The kathak dance workshop featured at the museum will be performed by a six-member group with Rani Khanam as its principal dancer and choreographer.

Meanwhile, from March 30 to April 2, and every subsequent Saturday, a Mehendi-Henna demonstration will be held at the Museum Shop from 11am to 4pm.

Dr M. Ismail Marcinkowski, associate professor (History), International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), will deliver a talk on Iranian Cultural Contacts with Siam and Maritime South East Asia Throughout History. The talk will be held on April 6 at 10am at the Auditorium, Rehal Terrace.

Admission is free. For details call 03-22742020.

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