



# Walking the Himalayas

In case you missed it, Channel Four is running a series called Walking the Himalayas that follows the explorer, Levison Woods on his journey to trek across the length of the world's greatest mountain range. What makes it of particular interest is that the second episode that aired in early January followed him in North Pakistan. It has taken a few years but significant security improvements in Pakistan have led to an increased number of visitors. This steady improvement in security is heading in the right direction and programmes like this demonstrate that confidence is returning and can only help boost the positive image of the country. For those of you visiting Pakistan over the coming months, you don't have to be an avid explorer or trekker to marvel at some of this most spectacular mountain scenery in the world. This can actually all be seen from the comfort of your vehicle as you travel along the renovated Karakoram Highway and in particular as you head north from the mountain city of Gilgit to the fabled Hunza Valley, and its central village of Karimabad. Not only that but what better

occasion to visit than to see the magical blossom during March and early April. This is when the valley's bare trees burst into life to welcome in the start of Spring. Hunza is famed for its delicious fruit such as cherries, apricots, peaches and almonds so the blossom is equally varied with a kaleidoscope of colours on display. It is a must for all nature lovers. There are also plenty of short and long walks in and around the Hunza Valley or one can simply relax at your hotel and admire the scenery. The people are hospitable and welcoming to excess and with lots of local villages to explore, a few days are never enough! Are there places to stay? Absolutely! Another misperception is that the accommodation is limited and not of a high standard which is certainly not the case. You will surely find luxury chains of hotels in Gilgit and Hunza. But there is accommodation to suit low budgets, too.

Hunza can be visited from March through to September. The best way to reach Karimabad would be to fly from Islamabad to Gilgit and then onwards by road.



Hunza Blossom with Passu Peaks



Hunza Blossom



Baltit Fort at Night



Karimabad views



Hunza Blossom

## Tributes paid to Gulgee at the Pakistan High Commission London

Tributes were paid to legendary artist Gulgee at the Pakistan High Commission London on 17 December 2015. Gulgee's younger brother Professor Colonel Noori Ismaili delivered a talk on life and works of the great artist. The event was jointly organized by Pakistan High Commission London and The Pakistan Society and was attended by a large number of avid art lovers. Professor Noori, in his illustrated talk, shed light on how art comes to life in Gulgee's portraits and

paintings. He talked through various phases of Gulgee's art: from sketches to paintings and from calligraphy to sculpture, by showing his most powerful works on presentation slides. Professor



Noori said Gulgee's art is universal, and it transcends geographical barriers. According to Dr Noori, Gulgee's art is at its peak in his Lapis Lazuli stone mosaic, which demonstrates vitality, beauty, emotions, and movement. Reflecting on artist's personal life, Dr Noori said Gulgee was a very

humble person. He said Gulgee was also profoundly influenced by the mystic side of the things which is profusely reflected in his art, particularly in his calligraphy. H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan



High Commissioner to the UK, in his remarks, paid rich tributes to the legendary artist of Pakistan. He said Gulgee would continue to be a source of inspiration for generations to come and his contribution to art and culture in Pakistan would

always be remembered. The High Commissioner thanked Gulgee's brother, the highly decorated Professor Colonel Noori Ismaili, for sharing his thoughts on the life and works of

Gulgee. Some paintings and portraits of Gulgee were also put on display at the High Commission for the viewing. Dr Colonel Noori Ismaili, a Professor in Military Surgery by profession, is an accomplished art critic and philanthropist.

## Chief Minister Punjab Shahbaz Sharif's visit to UK

Chief Minister of Punjab, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif paid an official visit to the UK in the first week of December 2015. He led a high level delegation comprising Provincial Ministers, member of national and provincial assemblies and senior officials of the Punjab Government. During the week-long visit, the Chief Minister had interactions with a number of British Cabinet Ministers and senior officials of the British Government. He held detailed discussions on promoting bilateral cooperation in areas of education, health, trade, culture, transport, police reforms and energy, along with the expanding role of Department for International Development (DFID), and the

British Council in the social sector of Pakistan. The Chief Minister attended UK-Pakistan Energy and Investment Forum and Overseas Pakistanis Investment Consortium in London. He also participated in Counter Terrorism and Extremism Conference. Besides, the Chief Minister gave a talk at Chatham House and addressed a press conference at the Pakistan High Commission London. He also visited several offices and facilities in London where several MoUs were signed. Amongst others, the Chief Minister met Philip Hammond MP, Foreign Secretary; Theresa May MP, Home Secretary; Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for International



Development; Lord Francis Maude, Minister for Trade and Investment; Tobias Ellwood MP, Minister of State for Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan; Sir Mark Layll Grant, National Security Adviser; Richard



Montgomery, Head of DFID Pakistan and Mark Coombs, CEO Ashmore Group. The visit provided an excellent opportunity for the Chief Minister to share his vision of development and governance with the British side.

## Second Councillors Convention held at Bradford Narrative about Pakistan is changing: Syed Ibne Abbas

The High Commission for Pakistan in London organized the "Second Councillors Convention" at Bradford Consulate of Pakistan on 12 December 2015. This was in continuation of a series of "Councillors Conventions"--an initiative of the High Commission to reach out and connect with British Pakistani community. The first Convention of this series was held in London in September this year. The purpose of the Convention was to celebrate the success of the British Pakistanis in various walks of life and to provide a platform to the elected

representatives of the British Pakistanis to effectively address the challenges and work for common causes related to the



Pakistani community. The Convention was divided into two main sessions and the panellists spoke along the following themes:

for pro-active and positive participation in socio-economic life in UK; and

2. Role of community leadership in helping youth identify and avail opportunities to excel professionally and to meet societal challenges. The High Commissioner, in his remarks on the occasion, said:

"Narrative about Pakistan is changing. Pakistan is on the move on all fronts including economy and security. Let's be confident and celebrate our successes." The key message to the community given by the High Commissioner was to "move forward with optimism as there was a lot to celebrate about British Pakistanis as well as Pakistan." During his Bradford visit, the High Commissioner hosted a dinner to honour local British Pakistani MPs Ms Naz Shah and Mr Imran Hussain, and congratulated them on their election victory.

## Speaker National Assembly meets members of the APPG on Pakistan

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan met members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Pakistan (APPG), at the UK Parliament on 2 December 2015. Rehman Chishti, MP, who is Chairman of the APPG on Pakistan, led the group.

The Speaker appreciated the efforts of the APPG on Pakistan for promoting the cordial relations between Pakistan and the UK. The discussions encompassed a wide range of issues pertaining to bilateral relations, regional situation, Kashmir issue, and Parliamentary exchanges. He also briefed the parliamentarians about the progress on the ongoing operation Zarb-e-Azb which he stated would continue undeterred till its logical end.

The speaker briefed the APPG on legislative developments that have taken place in the current Parliament, including legislation

on protection of women, child rights, minorities and human rights in general. He also highlighted the recent reforms undertaken in the parliament including establishment of legislative council for facilitating drafting of private members bills,

university courses on parliamentary work and internships for generating interest in parliamentary affairs among the youth. The Speaker extended an invitation to the parliamentarians to visit Pakistan which they accepted with thanks.



## Peshawar School Shuhada remembered at the Pakistan High Commission London

On the first anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Army Public School Peshawar (APS), Shuhada were remembered at the High Commission for Pakistan in London on the evening of 16 December 2015. Hundreds of people from cross-section of the British society turned up to honour the memory of the martyrs by participating in the Candlelight Vigil. H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, conferred Tamgha-I-Shuja-at on APS student, Ahmad Nawaz, who received this award on behalf of his younger brother, Shaheed Haris Nawaz of APS. The Government of Pakistan had announced the conferment of this award for all martyrs of APS last year. Paying tribute to the martyrs, the High Commissioner said: "APS martyrs' sacrifices

united the entire nation on a single point agenda to defeat the forces of darkness and their extremist ideology. Since that fateful day, our national narrative has changed. The entire nation is united to revive the vision of Quaid's tolerant, modern and pluralistic Pakistan.

"The progress and resilience of our nation is reflected today by the presence of these brave children, Ahmed Nawaz and Ibrahim Khan, who despite their ordeal are fully determined and steadfast to continue their education. Insha Allah, we shall not rest until we fulfil the dream of Quaid's Pakistan."

On this occasion, Ahmad Nawaz vowed to work for peace, tolerance and education. He thanked the Government as well as the High Commissioner for looking after him and his family. Senator Najma Hameed,



Members of the National Assembly of Pakistan Mrs. Tahira Aurangzeb and Mrs. Belum Hasnain, as well as

representatives of the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), attended the commemoration ceremony.

## Governor Punjab visits the High Commission



Governor Punjab, Malik Muhammad Rafique Rajwana, visited the High Commission for Pakistan in London on 31 December 2015, and interacted with the officers of the High Commission. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor gave an overview of

various initiatives undertaken by his office for the welfare and relief of general public, as well as overseas Pakistanis. He emphasized on provision of better services for the overseas Pakistanis, terming them as "our ambassadors abroad". The Governor commended the

contribution of the Pakistani diaspora in the development and progress of Pakistan. He also shared that the government has established a comprehensive mechanism for the redressal of the issues of overseas Pakistanis. The Governor said, as the

Chancellor of the universities of the Punjab province, his special focus is to improve the quality of education. He also informed that, in order to enhance educational opportunities for the students of Balochistan, he has taken special measures to increase their quota in universities of the Punjab province.

The High Commissioner briefed the Governor about the role and responsibilities of the High Commission, which, among others, included strengthening bilateral relations with the UK, improving Consular Services, community outreach efforts, media outreach to improve the perception about Pakistan, and enhancing bilateral trade.

## Professor Zafarullah Chaudhry wins International Socrates Award 2015



Professor Zafarullah Chaudhry, President, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan (CPSP), won the prestigious International Socrates Award 2015, in the category of Science

and Education, for outstanding professional achievement as well as personal contribution to the development of science and education on both national and international level. The award

ceremony took place at Oxford, UK on 15 December 2015.

During his UK visit, Professor Chaudhry, along with Dr Aamer Zaman Khan of Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Lahore and Dr Riaz Ahmad, of Kings College London, called on H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK on 16 December 2015, and shared his views on improving the quality and standards of medical education in Pakistan. He said that by virtue of professionalism and team work, the CPSP is now recognized as one of the leading

postgraduate medical institutions in the world.

The High Commissioner felicitated Professor Chaudhry on this unique honour that brought good name to Pakistan. He commended Dr Chaudhry's professionalism and hard work, which was duly recognized at the international level. The High Commissioner added that Pakistani youth needed role models like Professor Zafarullah Chaudhry, whose contribution to the field of scientific knowledge makes him stand out at the global level.

## Community mobilized to help flood affected people in the UK

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, expressed solidarity with the flood affected families and appealed to the Pakistani diaspora to come forward and extend all possible help to thousands of people who have been affected by floods in Northern England and Scotland. In his message, the High Commissioner called upon the volunteers to liaise for assistance with the rescue centres, relief organisations and other aid agencies, already working in the affected areas. He said: "The floods are unprecedented and devastating; we must help the affected families in our communities to alleviate their sufferings."

In this regard, the Consul General of Pakistan in Manchester, Dr. Zahoor Ahmed,

mobilized the British Pakistani charities and philanthropic individuals to provide support to the flood affected people in Cumbria. He also accompanied Amir Khan, the boxing champion, and volunteers from Amir Khan Foundation, to the worst affected town of Carlisle and distributed food and other necessary items among the flood affectees.

The Consul General also talked to the local volunteers from Blackburn Muslim seminary who had gathered to provide support to the local household in terms of removing the damaged goods from their water drenched homes.

The charitable work done by the British Pakistani youth and charities is a reflection of Pakistani values of sacrifice and support to other communities in distress.



## Christmas celebration at Manchester Consulate



The Consulate General of Pakistan at Manchester arranged a special event to celebrate the start of Christmas festive season with British Pakistani Christians and other faith communities on 5th December, 2015 at a local banquet hall. The British Pakistani Christian community was invited to share the joys of Christmas festivities. While welcoming the guests, Dr Zahoor Ahmed, Consul General, said the Constitution of Pakistan accords equal rights to all religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan.

The choir of St. Edmunds Grace Church sang many Christmas carols in Urdu

language. The banquet hall was decorated with a Christmas tree and colourful flags and bunting. Special arrangement was made for face painting and Mehndi for young children. A large number of families attended the reception. Among others, the guests included MEPs Afzal Khan and Sajjad Karim and singer Yasir Akhtar. All applauded the effort to promote interfaith harmony and cohesion.

On this occasion, shields and certificates were given away to the supporters and participants of the Pakistan Parade Manchester, 2015.

## High Commissioner felicitates Rehman Chishti on MP Of The Year Award

H.E Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK felicitated British Pakistani MP, Rehman Chishti on receiving MP Of The Year Award recently. Speaking to Rehman Chishti at the High Commission, the High Commissioner, calling him a role model for the British Pakistani youth, congratulated Mr Chishti on this honour and commended his hard work for the community engagement. Rehman Chishti, Chair APPG on Pakistan, thanked the High Commissioner and said it is important to work with all communities to forge better understanding amongst them. He also appreciated High Commissioner's initiative of community outreach and hoped that it would help bring the British Pakistanis into the mainstream British society. The Patchwork Foundation



presented Rehman Chishti with the Conservative Party People's Choice MP of the Year Award on 4 November 2015 at their annual ceremony. The Award was given in recognition of his community engagement work.