

# At the Shore of Thames

Article about Youth Parliament Pakistan 2009-10 UK Study Visit

By Bilal Jamaee

Delegation of Youth Parliament of Pakistan performed a study tour of UK, via the platform of PILDAT (a well known NGO highly productive in the field of constitutional and democratic process to make Pakistan a stronger and securer country). The visit was sponsored by PILDAT through the British High Commission, Islamabad and FCO, UK. The study tour of UK was for the purpose of knowing, seeking, searching and learning the methodology of legislative and political cum democratic institutions of UK.

The delegation was comprised of eight Members, selected on the base of strong influence and participation in the mock Youth Parliament. The delegation headed by Ms. Aasiya Riaz (Joint Director, PILDAT) and Coordinated by Mr. Umer Shami (Project Officer PILDAT) including Youth Parliamentarians Mr. Lehrasip Hayat, YP23-PUNJAB05; Youth Leader of Opposition; Syed Manzoor Shah, YP04-BALOCHISTAN03; Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence; Mr. Hannan Ali Abbasi, YP15-NWFP04; Former Youth Minister for Information; Ms. Anam Javed Cheema, YP29-PUNJAB11; Chairperson Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Information; Ms. Zil-e-Huma YP31-PUNJAB13; General Secretary, Youth Parliament Green Party; Ms. Madeeha Shahid Rana YP34-PUNJAB16; Former Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs; Mr. Bilal Jamaee, YP44-SINDH07; Youth Shadow Minister for Information and Mr. Imtiaz Ali YP46-SINDH09; Chief Whip, Youth Parliament Green Party.

The delegation visit's aim was to meet government officials in UK and survey best practice in their public sector. During the visit, delegation was acquainted with many initiatives and developmental projects in major public departments in UK. The participants took full advantage of the opportunity to interact and participate in a dynamic exchange of information and ideas, and were urged to observe and discuss the components which could be implemented in a tangible way in their own government departments.

The study visit aimed to provide participants with all the necessary tools to impart the expertise required to enhance their leadership capabilities in accordance with the UK Government and their respected and honorable Leaders. The Tour was a mission of enabling aspiring Youth leaders to absorb the ethos of

the Pakistani Government Strategy and successfully channel this knowledge to their teams.

David Cameron, newly elected Prime Minister of UK's coalition government, praised the visit and the opportunity it provided participants to help inculcate the expertise acquired during their visits to various public sector entities in United Kingdom.

The highlight of the Study visit for the Youth Parliamentarians was the proceedings of the House of Lords and House of Commons. The delegation also watched the Prime Minister questions session in House of Commons. The proceedings of both Houses showed the dignity and democratic traditions of the United Kingdom.

The study visit enabled the adoption of internationally recognized best practices in public sector administration, and guided aspiring leaders on the application of these principles. This visit presented a unique opportunity to expand the horizon of the participants by enhancing their leadership potential as the next layer of government leaders, and by strengthening relationships among them.

It was rarely seen in the country like Pakistan that a delegation of Youth visits UK, merely to understand and witnessed the official meetings with the British MP's. The recipient of protocol by British officials of the Pakistani delegation was as appropriate as if they were Ministers. Such protocol is much appealing and highly appreciative. It will definitely lessen the inferiority complex among the students, who are threatened by the student life there in UK.

The Youth of country representing Pakistan in UK met with British Parliamentarians, who recently elected in the general elections. The official meeting the British Muslim dignitaries was based on how the Parliament has a relation with the general public and with Muslims all together.

The delegation had also met with Pakistani origin of British MP and the cabinet minister Ms. Saeeda Warsi, is also the chairperson of the Conservative Party. Ms. Warsi talked to delegation that is so overwhelmingly joyful for her to see the Youth of Pakistan taking active step to build Pakistan a strong democratic country. They also met with the Pakistani origin Parliamentarians and Lords particularly, Lord Ahmed, Anas Sarwar, Yasmeen Qureshi and Rehman Chishti.

Most of the leg of study tour, participants tackled an array of subjects including an introduction to the UK system of government, principles of policy coordination and policy implementation at the federal level as well as synergies

between Federal and State Government, and nurturing international competitiveness through innovative policies and cluster development.

Delegation also visited the historical building of Foreign and Commonwealth office of UK. Delegates met with the officials of Pakistan Desk of FCO and discuss about the Foreign policy of UK for Pakistan.

The study tour also explored the issue of foreign students and public and private sector partnerships, governmental policy for foreign students, efforts involved in fostering health sector capabilities and improving high quality educational services. The participants were also acquainted with UK's policies towards research and development and the means by which this research is utilized in creating policies that enable coordination and integration between different government departments.

They also visited the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to observe policy coordination within the UK Government as a whole, and the UK Public Service Commission to observe best practices in HR Performance Management, Education and Health Reform, Crisis Management, Viable Systems Analysis and its applications in the public sector.

Pakistan is the inheritor of the English law legal system. That have developed over the centuries, is the foundation of many legal systems throughout the Anglo sphere. Despite now being part of the United Kingdom, the legal system of the Courts of England continued as a separate legal system to the one used in Scotland as part of the Treaty of Union. The general essence of English law is that it is made by judges sitting in courts, applying their common sense and knowledge of legal precedent and to the facts before them.

The delegation found no difference in court practices of both countries, as they deeply enjoyed the tour of UK Supreme Court escorted by Judicial Officials. UK Supreme Court is headed by the Supreme Court of Judicature, consisting of the Court of Appeal, the High Court of Justice for civil cases and the Crown Court for criminal cases. Though, Pakistan does not have Crown Court that can solve criminal cases and look after the criminal proceedings. The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom is the highest court for criminal and civil cases in UK; it was created in 2009 after constitutional changes, taking over the judicial functions of the House of Lords. A decision of the highest appeal court in England and Wales, the Supreme Court, is binding on every other court in the hierarchy, which follows its directions.

The visit was full of learning. Hospitality in U.K was extremely impressive. A visit to the Legislative and Democratic institutions provided the opportunity to learn about their system, tradition and custom. The people in U.K believe in logic, dialogue and ethics. They reach the solutions of various issues by negotiation and deliberation. Delegation had an opportunity to meet the think-tank of United Kingdom and learnt the way they think. Youth forums are acting as nurseries of their future leaders. They also reflect the degree of consciousness regarding the future of U.K. Meeting with Pakistani and Muslim communities provided the delegation with an opportunity to learn the way they represent us in front of the International community.

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