

Youth Parliament UK Study Visit

By Lehrasip Hayat

Youth Parliament Pakistan delegation to UK defends the ongoing democratic discourse in Pakistan despite its practical limitations in the form of corruption and bad governance. Delegation also stressed that countries like UK and Pakistani diaspora living in UK should support democratic processes and forces in Pakistan. One thing that delegation has learnt from this trip is that democratization within political parties is of utmost importance regardless of our South Asian legacy of having hereditary political families. This thing came under discussion in many meetings with policy makers and interest articulators in UK.

Youth Parliament Pakistan delegation visit to UK aimed at understanding the UK's democratic and political structures and learning how British have evolved shared values of tolerance and faith in their structures and processes. We in the youth parliament are of the view there is dire need to bridge the communication gap between east and west in general and Pakistan and UK in particular. Delegation focused on the fact that communities should engage in constructive dialogue and understand each other's standpoint, from where they speak. Young Parliamentarians stressed upon the need to confront the ongoing challenges at academic level and building indigenous socio-economic and political discourse. Exercise of building these discourses can't be carried out without understanding the globalized world and this visit was part of this leaning.

On the issue of terrorism, delegation argued, with policy makers in UK, that these extremist elements are in a minority in Pakistan and this minority is trying to impose their own world-view. Delegation also tried to present soft image of Pakistan, which is the true reflection. Youth parliament also holds the view that terrorism is not something which is the result of mismanagement on part Pakistan. Rather West also mishandled this issue during 1980s and 1990s. Related issues of immigration also came under discussion and delegation conveyed their concerns to the highest possible authorities concerned including British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

One thing that has been very clear from this trip has been that Pakistan is in the phase of transition where various pillars are trying to define and redefine their respective boundaries; issue-based politics has started. This process should continue and we have to build common set of shared values of tolerance and faith in our indigenous structures.