

One day suddenly, I got a phone call from South Asia Youth for Peace and Prosperity Society (SAYPPS) that I was nominated for the student exchange program between Bangladesh and Pakistan 2012. Then I was very excited for this tour. I was waited for the phone call from Pakistan High Commission. But alas! No call coming from them. I become worried if they rejected me. Then, our teacher called me to send him my passport and papers. He told me that may be I was rejected by them. But still there is a chance or not any chance. Everything depends on Almighty. I went to the SAYPPS office and talked with my teacher. Then he pretended that I was rejected and I was become sad. He gave me some papers and told me that you want to go to Pakistan, if you wouldn't go there, then what will happen! But when I saw the papers, I was surprised and also smiling. From then, I was counting the days when I will visit Pakistan. At first, I would like to thank my organization for giving me the opportunity. Without their cooperation, this tour would be impossible! I think this student exchange program will play a vital role for developing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh. If they continue this program, it will works as a catalyst for improving the relations between these two countries.

A delegation of 19 students from Bangladesh headed by Dr. Abdul Khair, Professor, Department of Botany, Jahangirnagar University were selected for this program. On June 7, we left Bangladesh at 12.pm and we reached Qaide- Azam Md. Jinnah International airport at 4pm. On the plane, I saw the play of white and blue clouds in the sky. I always press the shutter of my camera and enjoy the beauty.

There is a short description of our visit of some universities and historical places below:

Karachi

In Karachi, our journey started from NED Engineering & Technology University at 9.30 am.

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* *Tahmina Haque*, Member, SAYPPS, Dhaka and student of University of Dhaka

Here 38% girls study. I think they are developing in their science and technology sector. This University has a rich library and laboratories. Their library is inter-transfer library and also the facilities of using e-books. They have 40, 00 e-books.

After visiting NED Engineering & Technology University, we visited Aga Khan University. This was the first private university in Pakistan and it was established in 1983. It ranked as the best university in Pakistan by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. We visited the medical college, sports and rehabilitation centre, hospital, nursing centre and their library. There is an interesting thing I have found that they have a nursing training centre where mannequins were displayed as a patient.

On 9th June, we visited Karachi University at 9.00 am. It was established in 1951. It has 52 departments, 19 research centres and 24,000 students. Here we were roaming around the campus. We visited the visual studies department, HEJ research institute, Area study centre for Europe and Pakistan study centre. The visual studies department promotes social issues and their slogan is 'Taking responsibility for social change'. Here, we came to know that this is the first university which established Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in 1955. It was the first university in the third world which established IBA. Karachi's Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Muhammad Qaiser welcomed us warmly. He said that cooperation in academics and research will prove to be beneficial for both countries. Because both nations are trying to achieve success in all walks of their life. He also said that he recently visited Khulna University.

At 3.00 pm we visited Greenwich University. I like the way they welcomed us. They decorated their campus gate and prepared a beautiful presentation for us. In this presentation they presented colors of Pakistan, the vibrant cultures of four provinces of Pakistan, tourist attraction and birds eye view of Pakistan. Assistant director Major Akrama recalled his visit to Bangladesh and praised the hospitality of Dhaka University's Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique. Vice Chancellor of Greenwich University, Seema Moghul, said that bilateral study tours are always very fruitful in knowing each other's academic environment and culture. She said that the Greenwich University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Dhaka University, which will go a long way in promoting research and benefitting from each others

experience. Moghul said that the visit would promote harmony and goodwill between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Lahore

Lahore is a city in Pakistan that is known for its rich historical and cultural heritage. It is regarded as the capital of the Punjab province in Pakistan, and it is sometimes referred to as the "Garden of Mughals," because it was once the capital of the Mughal Empire.

In Lahore, we visited Pakistan's largest museum named Lahore museum on June 10. It was established in 1865-66 in the hall building and later it shifted in Mall in 1894. Lahore Museum is also known as Central Museum. It has large collections of pre-historic and historic period. Their collections are Mughal, Sikh and British eras. The Museum has a collection of musical instruments, ancient jewellery, textiles, pottery, coins and armory. The most notable collection in the museum is the Fasting Buddha, which draws throngs of Japanese tourists to the area. In this international museum, 20% items are displayed and other 80% are protected. But we had the chance to see some protected sculptures. We saw Buddha's fasting sculpture.

On June 11, we visited a private university, University of central Punjab at 9.00am. This is a Punjab group of college. Here, we also visited their campus. Food Street is only found here. In sport activities they scored number one in the country. They have the second largest television named Duniya TV.

At 12.00 pm, we visited University of Punjab and met with Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Liaqat Ali and senior faculty members at the Centre for Undergraduate Studies. It was established in 1882. It has 13 faculty, 72 departments, 13000 students (3 shifts), and 26 hostels. Both the semester and year systems are running in this university.

Then we visited University of Management and Technology at 6.00 pm. Here, we also visited their campus.

We visited Government College University (GCU) on June 12 and met Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Muhammad Khaleeq-ur-Rahman, Director Academic Planning and External Links

Fauzia Shaheen. It was established in 1864. We visited Naqoosh Museum, Sports Complex and Postgraduate Library and also enjoyed a musical performance by the students of GCU Nazir Ahmad of Music Society. As I was a representative of South Asia Youth for Peace and Prosperity Society, here I found South Asian Regional Centre and I visited this centre. VC briefed us about glorious history, academic achievements and recent developments at the GCU Lahore. He also told the education system of Pakistan including courses offered by various universities. Pakistan and Bangladesh are brothers and they would continue to be, they told us during our visit.

At 3.00 pm we visited National College of Arts. It was established in 1875 by the British and renamed 1957 as it is now. It specializes visual arts. They have also other departments like Film, TV and Communication design, Multi-media arts, Cultural studies, and Textile design. Famous artist Zainul Abedin, Mortuza Bashir was achieved degree from this university.

Then we visited Shalimar gardens at 6.00pm. There are three Shalimar Gardens, one in Kashmir, one in Delhi and one in Lahore. I have visited the garden in Lahore. This is a Persian garden built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. Shalimar Gardens was included as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. In the heat of the Lahore summer the Emperor used to walk with his wives and enjoy the peace and calm of his garden. With the pavilions, pools and fountains they were a place of ease and respite from the heat. I feel privileged that I have had the opportunity to visit and see for myself places we usually can only read about.

On June 13, we visited Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD). It was established in 1995. Here, I came to know that textile industry is the heart of Pakistan's economy. We also visited the campus accompanied by a teacher.

At 12.00 pm, we have visited University of Lahore. It was established in 2000. It has 12,000 students, 23 departments. They also provided all kind of facilities to the students.

Visiting some of the universities we got some time to visit other historical places. We went Lahore fort. Locally it termed as Shahi Qila. The base structure was built by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1556-1605 and upgraded by the Mughal, Sikh and British rulers. It has two gates one is

known as Alamgiri Gate build by Emperor Aurangzeb which opens towards Badshahi Mosque and other older one known as Masjidi Gate was built by Emperor Akbar. Currently Alamgiri Gate is used as the principal entrance while Masti Gate is permanently closed .The fort manifests the rich traditions of Mughal architecture. Some of the famous sites inside the fort include: Sheesh Mahal, Alamgiri Gate, Naulakha pavilion, and Moti Masjid. In 1981, the fort was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Then we visited The Badshahi mosque which was built in 1673 by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Badshahi is the second largest mosque in Pakistan, after the Faisal Mosque in Islamabad. The design of the Badshahi Masjid is closely related to the Jama Masjid in Delhi, India, which was built in 1648 by Aurangzeb's father, Emperor Shah Jahan. It accommodates one lakh people. Here, both male and female can say their prayers.

After that we visited Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Here we saw the Gaddafi stadium and took lots of photos in front of the stadium.

Then we visited Jinnah graveyard at 7pm and also visited the museum. In the museum I have seen Jinnah's car, his cloths, his rooms, furniture etc.

Islamabad

On June 14, in the morning we visited Quaid- Azam University. It was established in 1965 and its former name was Islamabad University. It has ranked number one in Pakistan and within 57 states of the OIC. It has 60,000 students, 40% is female and 60% is male. History department is the pioneer department of this university.

National University of Science and Technology (NUST) was our next destination. We reached there at 2.30 pm.

NUML Director General Brigadier Azam Jamal briefed us the working of the university, its unique features and disciplines offered. He told us “We have a strong social, cultural, geographical, political and religious bond and common roots and history of choosing for a separate Islamic country. There can be no better ambassadors of Pakistan in Bangladesh than you

people. Convey our affections, warmth and love to our Bangladeshi brothers. We are thankful to the HEC that it provided you people a chance to see the real Pakistan,” he added. The head of the Bengali Department, M. Kamal ud Din, director academics and others were present on the occasion. We visited university’s FM radio station, library and language laboratories. In the end, they gifts to the head of delegation and students.

FJWU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Samina Amin Qadir welcomed us and briefed us about history, academic achievements and recent developments at the university. She said that the bilateral study tours were always very fruitful in knowing each other academic environment and culture. She told about the education system of Pakistan including courses offered by FJWU. After that Dr Shamim Zaidi, Chairperson Communication and Media Studies gave the introduction of the university to the students. Professor Dr Abul Khair, spoke about the role of the universities of Bangladesh in the growth and development of the country. He said that mission of this tour was to strengthen the relationship between the two countries. Here, we visited the university library, information technology centre, day care centre and radio station.

We visited the International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) on June 18. President of IIUI, Dr. Mumtaz said Bangladesh is my second country and I am proud to say that as a social scientist I have worked on Bangladesh for more than 20 years. He said that IIU is younger as compared to other universities but through commitment and enthusiasm we have achieved third position among the largest universities of Pakistan. Answering to a question raised by student Dr. Mumtaz Ahmad said that IIU is still very affordable university for the students of various countries in terms of its fee structures. He further said that a scholar from Bangladesh will be fetching in the near future. During their visit to IIUI the delegation visited various faculties of the university, female campus and central library.

We visited Higher Education Commission (HEC) on June 17. HEC Chairperson Dr. Javaid R Laghari welcomed us very warmly and briefed the various HEC initiatives in the higher education sector of Pakistan. We admired the quality of teaching, research and development in higher education sector of Pakistan especially in the fields of engineering and sciences. On a

conversation, the HEC chairperson announced that the HEC would send its cricket team to Bangladesh.

Taxila is an archaeological site in the Rawalpindi district. It was declared as UNESCO world heritage site. We also visited the Taxila museum where we found Buddha's sculpture.

We visited Cultural Heritage Museum. This museum has a huge collection of exhibition from all the four provinces of the country which includes the local handicrafts, costumes and musical instruments. There are also displays of documents and folklore of Pakistan and the institute is the main organizer of the huge annual festival in the month of October. There is also a library and a shop in the museum.

We visited King Faisal Mosque at night. I said my prayers here.

Pakistan Monument is a national monument representing the nation's four provinces and three territories. The blooming flower shape of the monument represents Pakistan's progress as a rapidly developing country. The four main petals of the monument represent the four provinces (Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh), while the three smaller petals represent the three territories (Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas). The Monument has been designed to reflect the culture and civilization of the country and depicts the story of the Pakistan Movement, dedicated to those who sacrificed themselves for future generations.

After visiting Pakistan, I found them very hospitable, friendly and cordial. I have to appreciate their education system. They are quite advanced in science and technology and they encourage them on innovation of technology. They also encourage entrepreneurship. Like our country, they do not practice nasty student-politics. During the visit, I made lots of friends here and our delegations are become so close. This tour is a memorable tour of my life. Finally I want to express my view that the way they welcomed us is really charmed me very much. The 14-days tour was so colorful and enjoyable that we can not forget these days.

