

Beyond Barriers.....

Visit to Aitchison College, Lahore

Mannat Sidhu shares her experience at Lahore...



Given an opportunity to visit Pakistan earlier this month was like a dream come true for me. The thought of visiting the country had settled in the back of my mind a long time ago, but I seriously doubted the possibility of its occurrence. So when the chance came to visit Aitchison College, Lahore on the occasion of their 125th anniversary this year, it was only yes for me. Five prefects, Manikpreet Singh Sandhu, Seerat Brar, Azam Singh, Sukhmani Anand and I were chosen for this wonderful experience. We along with Mr. and Mrs. SV Kumar, Mrs. Arshdeep Mangat and Mr. and Mrs. Jawanda headed for Lahore on the morning of 11th November. Mr. Pardeep Ghuman, along with his family had already reached a day earlier. Crossing the border on foot reminded me of every possible overly-dramatic Hindi movie ever made on the subject. I, for one, was overwhelmed as soon as I set foot on the Pakistani territory. A bus awaited us on the other side to take us to Aitchison College. We were given a warm welcome by the Principal of the College, Mr. Fakir Syed Aijazuddin and the members of their Prefectural Body. Determined not to waste even a single moment, we visited the Anarkali Bazaar later in the evening. The Founder's Day celebrations took up most of the next day. We participated in the march past with Manik leading the YPS contingent. After the show, we headed for tea which was a rare scene in itself, where a number of

Old Yadavindrians, Old Boys, present Yadavindrians and Aitchisonians came together along with a number of dignitaries to connect. Meeting new people and hearing old tales was a treat. We were lucky enough to meet the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Yousaf Raza Gillani, the chief guest for the day. The evening brought with it a Strings concert, and all the joyful madness that follows a rock concert. The next day we visited Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthplace, Nankana Sahib and a number of sites across Lahore including the Lahore Fort and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Samadhi. Though exhausted, we couldn't have been more excited.



Principal, S.V.Kumar and YPS students with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Yousaf Raza Gillani.

The last day saw packed bags being loaded into the bus, it was time to come back home again. On the way back, I asked myself, what would I miss the most? Would it be the magnificent school campus? Or was it the impeccable hospitality? Everything else seemed to fade when I thought again of the people we'd interacted with, shared thoughts with and whose perspective about India we had managed to change and who in turn had shown us what real Pakistanis were made of. The only differences are physical, the only barriers are superficial. I realized, the hearts are full of love and not resentment. Lastly, I would like to

thank the Principal, Mr. SV Kumar, for having given us this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Inshallah! We shall visit again!



Aitchison College, Lahore