Minister's Message

My Dear Fellow Pakistanis,

By the grace of Almighty, Explore Punjab has been successfully serving its purpose of highlighting all the tourist activities undertaken by TDCP. In the province of Punjab, TDCP has 13 tourist resorts/hotels for national and international tourists. TDCP is properly projecting salient features of these tourist resorts and destinations. These resorts have potential for pleasure and entertainment as well as economic output. These resorts are repository of history and culture. The province of Punjab has ancient civilisations dating back to five thousand years and modern cities with high level of infrastructures of comfortable living. It has breath-taking natural scenic beauty, historical monuments, living and thriving cultures, friendly and hospitable people. So, I urge you all that keep on traveling and contribute to promote your province and country as we, as an ultimate tourist destination.

Mr. Afsar Saed Ali Mansa
Minister for Tourism
Govt. of Punjab, Pakistan

Mr. Humayun Mazhar Sheikh
Patron - Explore Punjab

The Tourism Industry is a promising and over growing field around the world. We, in TDCP, continue to realize its enormous potential and strive to provide you the best of our services and endeavor to upgrade, enhance and innovate for you to enjoy the most out of your planned holiday outings. Our various projects promise a lot of adventure, experience and fun and our future projects will simply charm your desire to see around our beautiful landscapes, history and culture.

Mr. Humayun Mazhar Sheikh
Secretary for Tourism
Govt. of Punjab, Pakistan

Chief Editor’s Message

Dear Readers,

At one point or the other, we all want a break from our daily routine and want to indulge ourselves in exciting and fun-filled activities; and there is none better alternative for this than traveling. Summer vacations at educational institutions are going on and this is the high time that you plan a trip with your family and friends to explore the beauty of nature this amazing country has to offer.

In this issue of ‘Explore Punjab’ you will read about the Queen of Hill, Murree, i.e. one of the most visited hill stations of Punjab, also nearby attraction like Murree Safari train at Kashmir Point and Patiala. Special Eid desert Savian is also part of this issue.

You are more than welcome to contact us regarding any questions, suggestions and/or updates. I would like to invite you to share your travel experiences with our readers. If you have come across anything unique and thrilling, let others also enjoy it.

My team and I wish you a very Happy Eid and exciting summer of traveling. Have a blast and enjoy Me to its fullest. Thank you all once again.

Happy Reading!!!

Ahmer Mallick
MD TDCP

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Eid-ul-Fitr is the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal. It marks the end of Ramadan, which is a month of fasting and prayers. Muslims all over the world celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with religious zeal and fervor, like other parts of the country it is celebrated with same festivity across the Punjab Muslims on these occasions renew their pledge to follow the footsteps of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W).

Eid congregations are held in the Mosques and main Edahs of every town, where thousands of the faithful offer their Eid Prayers. The Imams and Khateeb in their sermons highlight the philosophy and importance of the day. Eid congregations are held in peaceful atmosphere across the country. After Eid prayer, the people greet each other with special saying of the occasion ‘Eid Mubarak’ and offer each other sweets and delicious foods such as Sheer Khurma and Sweets etc. This event is celebrated to the fullest extent particularly by Children.

In Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province, the largest gathering for Eid congregation is made in the Badshahi Mosque, where thousands of people come to offer Eid Prayers. Other Mosques are Miraj Wali Khan, Musjid-e-Shahada, Bahia Mosque and many more. Whereas in South main congregations are held at cities like Bahawalpur, Multan and Sadiqabad in North Punjab these congregations are held at Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Gujranwala, Khushab. A large number of children also come for the prayers with their parents wearing colorful dresses.

Beautifully dressed children are center of attractions during the day. Eid (Token) Lota for children is the main attraction for them. Especially, Lotus in cash for the children make them happy.

In Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan, the Eid festival goes progressively with delicious foods which are cooked each day. Eating a sweet dish or fruit, most preferably Sheer Khurma, Babu or date fruit, before offering the prayer is Sunnah. Early morning sweet breakfast gives a kick start to eat delicious foods to be cooked during the day.
TDCP IN MURREE

- Murree Safari Train
- Murree Archives Gallery
- TIC at Mall Road Murree

Murree is in a subdivision of Rawalpindi District and includes the parts of the Margalla Hills around Islamabad. It is located in the Pothohar Range, some 60 km (37 mi) northeast of Islamabad and Rawalpindi via the Murree Road.

The Murree region is known for its scenic vistas of pine- and oak-covered mountains, criss-crossed with springs and rivulets and dotted with lawns and orchards. On clear days a good view of the snowy peaks of Kashmir is possible, and the crest of Nanga Parbat can sometimes be seen. Tourist attractions in the area include the Murree Wildlife Park, TDCP-Patliata Chair LIFT & TDCP Soft Wheel Train at Kashmir Point Murree.

Last year Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab, inaugurated the revamped TDCP Safari Train Junction at Kashmir Point Murree. TDCP Soft Wheel Train was launched in 25th December, 2012 and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Today Mr. Imran Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. This is major attraction for the tourist visiting Kashmir Point, Murree with running commentary by a tour guide briefing about the culture and history of Murree. TDCP had a gallery at Kashmir Point ‘Murree Archives’ where glorious pictures of Murree regarding its history from 18th century to today’s Modern Murree are displayed.

As the most visiting area in Murree is Mall Road, where the main attraction is the local markets alongside Mall Road from GPO Chowk to downwards towards Mall road where visitors can visit and see Holy Trinity Church (1837) & Mubal Municipal Library, Murree. On the mall road Murree near the Holy Trinity Church, TDCP has a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) for the tourists and visitors. TDCP’s vigilant staff there is always seen to help the tourists by all means, all the publicity and promotional material is placed there for the tourists so that not only they visit the places but know about them as well.
In 1851 early development of Murree was done by President of the Punjab Administrative Board, Sir Henry Lawrence. It was originally established as a sanatorium for British troops garrisoned on the Afghan frontier. Officially, the municipality was created in 1850.

When the British took control of Punjab, Hazara and Kashmir, it laid the foundation of Murree, building churches, chapels, residential quarters, military cantonments and schools. Before the British, the area comprising Murree was called Misiari and the land was owned by a local Dhoondh (Abbasi) tribe.

With the passage of time, many myths have evolved around the history of Murree. Strangely, some local pseudo-historians claim that the grave of Mary is at Pindi Point and that is why the British had chosen the place for their residence. The claim has no connection with reality but the myth seems to have some connection with earlier British interest to build churches in Murree.

Three churches and two chapels in Murree are great monuments of the British era in the Sub-continent. The construction of the Holy Trinity Church on Mall Road started in 1850 and after its completion in 1857, the first religious service was performed in the city. Many British Viceroy's of India, offered prayers at this church. The weather there and now is also the factor that even today makes this hill station attractive for tourists.

Even Queen Elizabeth when she visited Pakistan, in 1999, participated in a prayer service at this church. Even today churches remain a popular pit stop in Murree for diplomats visiting from Islamabad.

The Trinity Church has a seating capacity of 400 people. The church is under the Bishop of Lahore, who runs its administration and appoints the priest at the church. Besides churches the British also built military cantonments alongside residential quarters, making it clear that they were, first and foremost colonizers in this area.

Intriguingly, a fact often overlooked, Murree's weather was similar to England's and the cottages and colonies that the British built in the hill station resembled the Island nation's architecture. At the end of the day, the English might have been colonizers but they were also homesick migrants. The yearning for "home" is all too visible when one studies the English architecture in Murree.
Patriata
Patriata is a quiet retreat at the highest point of Murree Hills which consequently is the highest point of Punjab as well. Patriata has a breathtaking landscape. High forested ridges and deep intersecting valleys with terraced slopes offer magnificent views of this naturally beautiful area.

How to Get There
Patriata is located to the west of the Jhelum River, 59 kms south east of Islamabad and is less than 26 kms south east of Murree. Road access to Patriata from Islamabad/ Rawalpindi is along one of two routes via Karor and Ban, or via the busier, but best is from Murree Road through Lower Topa and Gulera Gali.

Major Attractions
Visitors to this area take pleasure in a breathtaking panoramic view in an area unmarrred by over commercialization. At the same time fully equipped facilities for its visitors are provided. It was named during British rule ‘little England’ after which oak and chestnut trees were planted. One of the thrilling features of Patriata is the dual chair lift and cable car system from Gulera Gali to Patriata ridge.

This dual system incorporates a chair lift from Gulera Gali to Patriata Bazaar, from here at the midpoint, pedestrians transfer from the chair lift to an enclosed cable car (gondola) from an elevated platform, traveling onward from Patriata ridge, a distance of 3.1 km. Gondola cable cars made their appearance here, for the first time in Pakistan. Gondola cable cars are designed to give passengers a panoramic view without blind spots while incorporating all possible safety features.

Accommodation
Nestled in the shade of those mature trees planted so long ago is the Tourism Development Cooperation of Punjab Resort. Here is a place you can relax and enjoy tranquility, in peace and privacy, and in complete harmony with nature. The chestnut trees provide an ideal picnic spot with the valley below deep and irregular. Patriata also has thickly wooded pines and side facilities with snack bars.
Muree is an exurbs of Islamabad and the administrative centre of Muree Tehsil, in the Punjab province of Pakistan. It is in a subdivision of Rawalpindi District and includes the parts of the Margalla Hills around Islamabad. It is located in the Pir Panjal Range, some 60 km (37 mi) northeast of Islamabad and Rawalpindi via the Muree Road.

The Muree was established in 1851 as a sanatorium by Sir Henry Lawrence for British troops garrisoned on the Afghan frontier. The permanent town of Muree was constructed at Sunny Bank in 1853. The "Mall Road" was established in 1860. Muree was officially declared the summer capital of the Punjab during British Raj in 1863 until 1875. After that the it was transferred to Sial. Originally, the Mall Road was from Post Office to Holy Trinity Church.

The Post Office in Muree was established in 1867 at Lower Mall (Lower Bazaar). The present Land measuring 0.65 acres was purchased in 1904 from the Rajahs of Kashmiri state & the building at present location was built in 1910. After that the historic GPO building has undergone numerous interventions since it was build by the British in 1867. In 1970, the façade was torn down in the name of modernization and the original façade was destroyed.

Recently, Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the newly renovated building of General Post Office (GPO) in Muree. Renovation of GPO Muree is part of Prime Minister’s package to restore natural beauty of the hill station. Building of GPO Muree was constructed in 1910 and now the building has been restored in to its original façade on the orders of Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif as its façade was changed in 1976 and certain alterations were made in the design. The new building on the old design is worth seeing/good looking. The philatelic counter has also been restarted. A new commemorative stamp has been issued on the day of inauguration of restored building.

A tourist philatelic counter was also established by the Director General Pakistan Post Office Department on 16-08-1975 on seasonal basis (for summer seasons). After two seasons, it was made regular (for whole year). Along with the philatelic material, the tourists information, view cards & brochures etc. were provided to the Tourists as good will gesture by the Post Office as no such services were available at Muree even before.

Virgil Medemere recorded in his book “A glimpse through the forest” as under:

In 1883, the mail longa between Rawalpindi & Muree was a bargain for travelers. It was also an essential means of communication with mail being delivered daily by this means between Rawalpindi & Muree Post Office well into the twentieth century. The mail longa driver was a romantic figure.

Its (mail longa) drivers were a class of men apart, who through storm & rain, torrents & hill slides, hail & snow fearlessly carried His Majesty’s mails often at the risk of their lives. The ponies (horses), selected Kabul entries were also class of their own.

The 1893-94 Gazetted of Rawalpindi District recorded that, Muree Post office was working as Debarasing Sub Office with the facilities as Money Order Office, Savings Bank, Combined Post & Telegraph Office. It was upgraded to class-1 (Later on called GPOs i.e. General Post Offices) w.e.f 07-05-1983.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah visited Muree in 1944. It was in this chowk (Post Office chowk presently known a GPO chowk Muree) that Royal reception was given to Quaid-e-Azam. On the Eids, the Post Office chowk becomes an Eid gah.
TDCCP HILLTOP RESORT KHAJOT  
(Near Murree)

TDCCP Hill Top Resort, Kha jot is about 22 kilometers from Murree Express Way Toll Plaza, with easy access to Murree and Patriata from here for the tourists. Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab province has developed a beautiful resort in Kha jot, overlooking the beautiful landscape, fully furnished accommodation with 2 luxury annexes and 5 single bedrooms, a restaurant and a snack bar. A tourist information desk of TDCCP is working here to provide information and assistance to the tourists.

This resort has lush green landscape with dense forestation surrounding the vicinity, which provides peace, calm and serenity to the visiting tourist. Moreover, TDCCP has developed a site of the art camping site at this resort along the dense forestation of the resort. This camping site has been hosting national and international tourist since inauguration.

How to get there
One can reach Kha jot from Islamabad or Lahore via M2 Motorway. It is located 22 kilometers on Murree Expressway towards Murree.

Nearby Destinations
- Murree Mall Road
- Patriata
- Nathia Gali
- Ayubia
Saviyan has always been a romantic dessert — one that celebrates the romance of the land's history, the warmth of Pakistanis hospitality, the cool sea breeze of the coast of the Arabian Sea and the love we have for our Land of the Pure (the literal meaning of the word Pakistan). It highlights all the aromas used in our desserts, ones borrowed from our Mughal heritage, Iran influences and Muslim traditions — it food of all reminds me of lazy, carefree, safe days of my childhood and growing up in a country that to me will always be home. Every bite transports you to your childhood when these sweet dishes were made by your mothers & grandmothers with purity of love.

**Ingredients**

- Half a packet of Pakistan roasted vermicelli, crush these into small pieces before adding to milk.
- 325 grams caster sugar
- 100 grams of sweet condensed milk
- 1 pinch of saffron, soaked in 1 tsp hot boiling milk
- 1 pint of whole milk / soya milk / almond milk
- A handful of chopped pistachios, almonds, raisins
- 4-5 cardamom pods, bruised open
- Ghee
- Decorate with silver leaf (optional)

**Method**

- Heat ghee in a saucepan on medium heat and add the cardamom. Once fragrant add the crushed vermicelli and keep stirring to avoid burning them.
- Once fragrant slowly add both the milks and keep stirring. Add sugar and stir and cook until the mixture becomes thick and vermicelli is cooked through.
- Pour in saffron and then place in a serving dish. Garnish with nuts and raisin — and silver leaf if available. Serve cold or hot.

Preparation time: 15-20 minutes  
Cooking time: 15 minutes  
Serves: 7-10 people

Our memories associated with Ramazan and meethi Eid-ul-Fitr are of wonderful times with family and friends, food, laughter, joy and of course, saviyan. One of the special Eid Delights is Saviyan or Sheer Khurma, as you come back home after Eid prayer the ultimate desire for everyone is to have Saviyan.

Saviyan and Sheer Khurma are both Eid favourites, and are considered Mughal Dish. Sheer means milk in Persian and Khurma means dates, how and when vermicelli was added to this delightful dessert is anyone's guess. The cooks in the royal kitchens decided to make a ghee, sugar dessert (much in the style of halva, a reduction dessert) keeping the vermicelli as the base. Milk was used to make the dessert, but only sparingly and it was topped with all kinds of nuts.
On way to Kohala, there is a place called Aylot which is about 25 km from Murree. And from Aylot there is a village down the mountain called Potha where basketry is practiced.

Phaian branches are brittle when dry. So they are soaked and kept flexible until they are used for basket weaving. The bark is scraped off the branches which are later divided and sub-divided into several strips. Knife is the only instrument used by these craftsmen in basket making.

The simple colour strips which are also used in the baskets as a design are the same twigs which are dyed before weaving. These straight-coloured strips are directly woven while making the basket. For only such colour strips, these craftsmen dye the twigs before weaving. But the motifs which are prominently seen on the baskets are woven with plain twigs in a way mentioned earlier. While weaving, the craftsmen keep in their mind the motifs to be used in the texture of basket. After the baskets are completed, the woven portion of the motifs are coloured with the brush, using only red, yellow and green colours, which are used for the motifs woven into the basket. The name of the motifs are: Chaursus gudda, larriam wala gudda, chhotian guddian wala gudda, punj guddian wala gudda, chhoti guddi.

The art of basket-making is common among women in Pakistan and abroad. But in Murree, these craftsmen do not like that women folk to work on it which is really a handicap in the development of this craft. The only help rendered by the women folk in basketry is that they keep the sticks wet by sprinkling water every day.

Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) operates a handicrafts shop at the Mall Road Murree where crafts of Murree and Pothal region including a wide range of Basketery products along with handicrafts collected from all over Punjab are available for display and sale. PSIC also operates a small handicrafts shop at the Patriata to facilitate the tourists.

The origin of basket-making is lost in the mist of antiquity. It is perhaps one of the oldest crafts in the world which still holds the imagination of the primitive as well as the advanced man. The perishable raw material used in basketry is as varied as are the types of finished products as well as the large variety of uses to which these products are put. Although the art of basketry was already well-developed in the Neolithic age in each society, it is still popular in even most of the advanced countries of the West.

In Pakistan this craft is being utilized for making hand-fans, soft prayer-mats for the mosques and chik (curtains) for doors. But be it in the West or the East, old or new, there is surprisingly no substantial change in the techniques of weaving baskets to this day. Basket weavers everywhere in the world usually prefer to use for the raw material such wild plants in jungles or on river banks which require little or no processing.

In Pakistan too the art of basketry had existed since the time immemorial. It had existed in all parts of the country and is certainly the country's most common and most popular craft. From the remote Kalash people in the north to the wilds of Sind desert and from the rugged mountains of Balochistan to the rugged plains of Derawar Khan and Derawar Khan, baskets, in their variety of forms and shapes, are still a part of most Pakistanis' households for domestic use and decorative purposes.

Like, other areas, in Murree too, basketry is the most flourishing craft. It is dependent partly on some indigenous material available locally and partly on raw material brought from the plains. The best locally available material is phaan (Rhizos cruciata). Wild phaan is found in the Murree Hills. Its branches are more suitable for making baskets as compared with other available plants.
MALL ROAD (MURREE)

Murree was a town and it was built according to building frame of European cities with Church in the centre and main road. The Mall. Mall Road is running along with commercial places and administrative offices around the same. The Mall was and still is the centre of attraction. Only Europeans were allowed to access the Mall and after 1947, Non-European got access to the Mall.

Murree’s Mall Road is famous small stretch of road that starts from famous GPO, Murree, having number of shops and restaurant. It’s popular among people around the country and tourist all over the world. Mall Road is a huge populated road in Murree in fact during summer it would be jam for traffic due to huge number of people walk on this road. Mall Road is a best crowded shopping place in Murree for buying anything like food, traditional dresses, and souvenirs.

Mall Road is one of the most crowded places in Murree. It’s good to go there when you get hungry and want to have a good lunch or dinner. But other than that, I’d recommend to go to the surrounding areas of Murree and not the Mall road itself.

Night View
Mall Road, Murree

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