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**major A portion of this publication has been written exclusively for Tourism Corporation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by Isobel Shaw**

Born in Ireland, Isobel Shaw has lived in the Geneva area of Switzerland since 1981. She studied Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge University and also English.

She lived in Pakistan 1978-81. She has authored:

Pakistan Illustrated Guide (five editions)

Pakistan Handbook (two editions)

Pakistan Trekking Guide - being updated now

Also many articles on Pakistan and chapters in various books such as Old Roads New Highways which came out for 50th anniversary of Pakistan Independence.

Isobel Shaw works as travel writer and travel guide. She leads occasional trips to Pakistan and still enjoys gentle trekking. She has three children and 9 grandchildren



**KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA PROVINCE**

Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa formerly the North-West Frontier Province, or NWFP, runs for over 1,100 kilometres along the border with Afghanistan. Peshawar is the capital, and the heart of the province is the fertile Vale of Peshawar, which is watered by the Kabul and Swat rivers. This was the centre of the ancient kingdom of Gandhara and is rich in archaeological remains.

The Khyber Pass linking Pakistan to Afghanistan is perhaps the province's best-known feature, though it was little used in prehistoric times, and even centuries later was considered too narrow and easily ambushed a route. It was not until the 1st Century AD, when the powerful Kushans invaded Gandhara and pacified the area, that the Khyber, the most direct route from Kabul to Peshawar, became popular as a safe trade route.

**PESHAWAR**Peshawar (pronounced Pe-SHAH-wur), the capital of Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa (NWFP), is a frontier town, the meeting place of the subcontinent and Central Asia. It is perhaps the oldest living city in this part of Asia - a place where ancient traditions jostle with those of today, and where the bazaar in the old city has changed little in the last hundred years except to become the neighbour of a modern university, some modern hotels, some international banks and one of the best museums in Pakistan.

No other city is quite like old Peshawar. The bazaar within its walls is like an American Wild West movie costumed as a Bible epic. Pathan (Pukhtun or Pashtun) tribesmen stroll down the street, their hands hidden inside their shawls and their faces partly covered by the loose ends of their turbans (they have now been forbidden to walk armed in town). With his piercing eyes and finely chiselled nose, the Pathan must be the handsomest man on earth. Overlooking all the crowded and narrow streets are the massive Balahisar Fort still used by the army, and the elegant Mahabat Khan Mosque. The railway, built by the British, divides Peshawar's old town from the Cantonment, laid out by the British after 1850, with wide tree-lined streets bordered by once gracious administrative buildings and spacious bungalows in large gardens. Clubs, churches, schools, The Mall, Saddar Bazaar and the airport are all part of the British contribution to modern Peshawar. Peshawar University, founded in 1950, and surrounded by University Town, lies to the west on the road to the Khyber Pass. Hayatabad, the newest suburb, is west of the university nearer the Khyber Pass.



**SIGHTS**

Peshawar is divided into four sections:

* the old walled city
* the british cantonment
* university town
* hayatabad

**WALLED CITY OF PESHAWAR**

**BAZAR TOUR**

The most exciting part of Peshawar is the old city, which dates from Buddhist, Mughal and Sikh times. It is a labyrinth of narrow lanes and colourful bazaars, a mosaic of traders, travellers, Pathan tribesmen and Afghans. Until the 20th century, it was surrounded by a wall. In typical Asiatic style, shops selling similar wares are found together; they are almost always open except during Jumma prayers on Friday afternoon. A tour taking in all the most interesting and picturesque bazaars, and some of the specialist shops and workshops, can be accomplished in two to three hours if you do not stop for the endless cups of tea offered by the shopkeepers.

**Khyber Bazaar**

Here you will find many of Peshawar's cheaper hotels and, in the evening, food stalls selling excellent kebabs and fry-ups. Meat is sold by weight and then cooked while you watch. The main street, full of doctors, lawyers and dentists, features billboards depicting sets of false teeth of nightmarish proportions**. Kabuli Gate**, one of the walled city's 16 gates, is at the end of Khyber Bazaar. The wall survived until the mid-1950s, and though the names remain, the gates and the wall have, for the most part, disappeared.

**Qissa Khawani** (Story-tellers') Bazaar was described in the mid-19th century by the British Commissioner in Peshawar, Sir Herbert Edwardes, as 'the Piccadilly of Central Asia'. Towering over the street are tall, narrow buildings with intricately carved balconies and window frames.

Before the advent of radios and television, the art of professional story telling flourished in the traditional teahouses and balakhanas in the bazaar. The storyteller relied on his tongue and his imagination to earn his livelihood. The tales were partly narrated, partly sung to an audience of traders and travellers arriving with their caravans from distant corners of the world.

**Chitrali Bazaar**

is in the street to the right (south) and a great place to shop for traditional woollen hats (pakol) and waist coats**. Mochi Lara** nearby offers traditional footwear (chapli)

**Brass and copper shops** are in the street to the left (northwest) at the end of Qissa Khawani. These sell a range of new and old wares. Ali Brothers on the left is the bestknown, and sells Gardner Russian china plus brass and copper.

Back on the main street are the shops selling blankets and shawls from the valley of Swat. Made of handspun wool, they are predominantly red and black with brightly patterned borders. The lane to the right (southeast), opposite the street to the pottery, leads to the cloth bazaar. Beyond that is the basket bazaar, where baskets from Dera Ismail Khan are sold. Here also is the

**Banjara Bazaar,** which specialises in unusual decorative items such as bells, bone and wooden beads and hair braids. Ask here for the way **to Peepul Mundi,** the main grain wholesale market, where there is a Peepul tree believed to be the offspring of the tree under which the Buddha preached.

If you choose instead to continue on the main street towards Chowk Yadgar, you pass the bird market and more cloth shops selling all types of chadors (multipurpose sheets) and blockprints.

**Chowk Yadgar** is the 'Speaker's Corner' and central square of old Peshawar. The monument at the centre commemorates the heroes of the 1965 IndoPakistan War and is the traditional town meeting

On the left of the square the money-changers squat on their hand-knotted carpets with their safes behind them and their pocket calculators and mobile phones at the ready. They will change any currency, but only accept clean notes.

From Chowk Yadgar there are two interesting walks, one to the west and the other to the east. Running off the square to the west is Andershehr Bazaar, a narrow street of gold- and silversmiths selling jewellery (both tribal and modern), antique silver, old coins and military buttons and buckles. While you rummage through the boxes of treasures, trying on nomads' earrings, the shopkeeper plies you with cups of sweet green tea brewed in huge copper samovars. Shinwari Plaza, 70 metres beyond the Mahabat Mosque on the right, is a plaza full of the best Afghan shops, happy hunting ground for jewellery and carpets, and all things Afghan.

Mahabat Khan Mosque is at the top of the hill on the right (north), its entrance a narrow gateway between the jewellery shops. Built in the 1670s, this beautifully proportioned Mughal mosque, named after a regional governor who served under both emperors Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, is orthodox in design. Its open courtyard has an ablution pond in the middle and a single row of rooms around the sides. The prayer hall on the west is flanked by two tall minarets. According to the late 19th-century Gazetteer, the minarets were frequently used in Sikh times 'as a substitute for the gallows'. A fire that raged through the Andershehr Bazaar in 1895, (the Gazeteer continues) failed to destroy the mosque thanks only to the 'unremitting efforts of the faithful'. The interior of the prayer hall is sheltered beneath three low fluted domes and is lavishly and colourfully painted with floral and geometric designs.

From Andershehr Bazaar, a street leads into Dhaki Munawar Shah where the famous Bollywood actor Raj Kapoor's ancestral house is located. Dilip Kumar's house is nearby too.

However, if you start again at Chowk Yadgar, but go east this time, you pass the ancient vegetable market on the right and an alley full of hardware shops on the left before coming to the Cunningham Clock Tower. It was built in 1900 'in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen Empress', but is named after commissioner of Peshawar of that period. A marble tablet on one side of the monument calls one's attention to the sacrifices made by the people of the city in foreign lands: “From this city 200 men went to the Great War 1914-1919 of these 7 gave up their lives.”

The leather and skin market around the clock tower features the skins of very young Karakul lambs, and many of the shops have tailors on hand to make astrakhan hats.

The Meena Bazaar, the Women's Bazaar, is down the alley to the right (south) from the clock tower. Groups of black-tented women flit like ravens between the stalls shopping for beads, trimmings, machine embroidery and trinkets. Visitors considering adopting purdah can buy their burqa (veil) here in a choice of colours.

Further up the hill from the clock tower is the shoe bazaar, which is down an alley on the right. Next is the blockprinting shop where cloth is handprinted using a variety of carved wooden blocks dipped in different coloured dyes.

The archaeological complex of Gor Khatri was once a Mughal caravanserai crowning the hill at the top end of Sethi Street. Huge Mughal gateways on either end lead into a large courtyard, over 200 metres square, that was once surrounded on all four sides by rooms for travellers. The site has been considered holy for more than 2,000 years. In the second century AD, it was a Buddhist shrine and monastery known as the Tower of the Buddha's Bowl. Remains of a temple to Gorakhnath, a yogi sect, stand in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard, with a shrine to Nandi beside it.

An archaeological dig in the north-eastern corner of Gor Khatri has established that Peshawar is one of the earliest living cities in this part of Asia, inhabited continuously from the 4-6th century BC, when it was a province of the Persian Achaemenian Empire. From then onwards it was ruled in turn by the Mauryans, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Sasanians, White Huns, Hindu Shahis, Ghaznavids, Ghorids, Suri Afghans, Mughals, Durrani Afghans, Sikhs, and the British, before becoming Pakistan in 1947.

Sethi Street continues up the hill to the Mughal caravanserai (Gor Khatri). Most of the old interconnected houses here belong to the Sethi family, one of the oldest merchant families in Peshawar. They once had offices in Czarist Russia and Shanghai; they imported silks and china and exported cloth, indigo and tea. The tall houses with wooden balconies have intricately carved wooden doors leading into spacious courtyards. Cool cellars, 15 metres deep, provide a retreat from the heat in summer. Victorian glass chandeliers evoke 19th-century opulence. Hidden inside these houses, covering their ceilings and walls like a mantle, is decorative woodwork of exquisite quality. Through a galaxy of pre-Islamic, Moghul, Sikh and even British motifs, much of Peshawar's rich and varied cultural history can be traced.

**INTERESTING BUILDING IN THE OLD CITY**

**BALAHISAR FORT**

Balahisar Fort, is a massive structure built by the Sikhs in 1834 on the site of Babur's earlier fort. It has been the headquarters of the Frontier Corps since 1907 and is still used by the army. Most of the existing barracks and military installations date back from the British period. The fort houses an interesting military museum which is open to public on special permission. A ceremonial changing of guards takes place ten minutes before sunset daily.

The Koh-i-Noor diamond, which is now part of the British Crown Jewels, was taken from the former Afghan rulers by the Sikhs inside Balahisar. It was then acquired by The East India Company after the annexation of Peshawar in 1849 and later presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria the following year.

**LADY READING HOSPITAL**

Lady Reading, the Viocrienie who visited Peshawar in 1921, founded Lady Reading Hospital outside the old walled city in 1929. The hospital was built on the site of the Bullock, Elephant and Camel lines that once existed behind the Balahisar Fort. The famous Bolton Block is a historic building worth seeing. The typical ambience of hospital life of the Raj period is remarkably preserved here.

Another old hospital, formerly the Military Station Hospital and now Combined Military Hospital (or CMH) was started at the turn of the last century. It is located opposite Company Bagh on the Mall in the cantonment.

**EDWARDS MISSION HIGH SCHOOL OLD CITY**

The Frontier's first school is located near All Saints Church near Kohati Gate. After the British annexation of Peshawar in 1849 this property was confiscated and handed over to one of the pioneer missionaries, Major Martin, to establish the first school on the Frontier in 1853. A marble plaque on a surviving gateway at the site reads: “This building was formerly the residence of the Governors of Peshawar Yar Muhammed Khan (1823-1829) Sultan Muhammed Khan (1831-1834) brother of Amir Dost Muhammed Khan (King of Afghanistan)”

**DURRANI GRAYEARD**

Located on the southern side outside the walled city on Wazir Bagh Road is a muslim cemetery dating back to the time when Peshawar was the winter capital of Afghanistan. Here lies the tomb of Afghan prince Ayub Khan of Maiwand fame. He was the son of Sher Ali, Amir of Afghanistan, and cousin of Amir Abdur Rahman. He confronted the British force commanded by General Burrows at Maiwand, On 27th July 1880, near the close of the Second Afghan war and was able to win one of the very few pitched battles that have been won by Asiatic leaders over an army under European direction.

The tablet at the cemetery gate reads: "The mausoleum of Maiwand's Victor Ghazi Sardar Mohammed Ayub Khan" (b.1855 d.1914). His mother, the wife of Amir Sher Ali, and other relatives are also buried nearby.

Two 18th century mosques dating also occupy the same compound. The smaller one is in a forlorn and dilapidated state and no longer used. Its walls still bear faint hand written Persian inscriptions in ink. The curious geometric shapes and mystical religious poetry appear to be of a Sufi nature.

**GURDWARA BHAI JOGA SINGH**

An old Sikh temple is inside Mohallah Jogan Shah situated between Namak Mandi and Dabgari.

Gurdwara Bhai Biba Singh

Inside Chaka gali area of Hashtnagri and Jogiwara lies a beautifully preserved Gurdwara which is an architectural jewel from the Sikh-Era.

Hindu Temple Karimpura

A street from Chowk Yadgaar leads towards Karimpura Bazaar. The Hindu temple is located nearby in a historic quarter of the old city.

Kotla Mohsin Khan

This site boasts a historical gateway and tombs as well as links with many great personalities who once lived here. The last Mughal governor, Nawab Nasir Khan welcomed the Afghan King Nadir Shah Durrani and gifted him the key to Peshawar in 1741 when he visited the city. This signalled the end of the Mughal empire in Peshawar. According to an earlier legend, the foundation of the Kotla gate was

The Peshawar Pottery is down a side street on the left, immediately after the brass shops. Here you can watch the potters at work 10.00 to 16.00, except Fridays. The wide range of ornamental and utilitarian pottery is glazed in strong earthy colours.

laid down in the latter half of the 16th century in the presence of renowned personalities of the time, Shiekh Kaka Sahib and Akhund Derwaza Baba.

It is also recorded that Arbab Mustajab Khan, being the representative of the Moghuls, settled disputes amongst the Ghori Khel tribes in the balconies of the building. When the Moghuls arrested Khushal Khan Khattak, Arbab Mustajab Khan, secured his release from the dungeon, and kept him as a guest in the castle.

The original name of this site was Kotla Mustajab Khan. It was renamed as Kotla Mohsin Khan due to the owner's close relationship with Mustajab Khan during the reign of Afghan King Ahmad Shah Durrani.

During the siege of Peshawar in 1830s, the Sikhs also burnt this site and it was later refurbished. The gateway and minarets of Kotla Mohsin Khan are historical landmarks of the 16th and 17th century “Roshnai period”. Bayazid Ansari alias Pir Rokhan started his religious and political movement against the Moghul emperor Akbar from this site. Allah Dad Doshani alias Rashid Khan constructed minarets at this site to conduct judicial duties.

**THE CANTONMENT**

n British India, the term 'cantonment' meant a permanent military station or settlement where the soldiers lived, not in private houses, but in barracks. After occupying Peshawar in 1849, the British founded a new cantonment turning it into a boulevard city lined with trees. The extensive military infrastructure, built to suit their needs during that period is still in use.

Peshawar's cantonment sprawls along the west side of the railway line. It was laid out under the direction of Sir Colin Campbell in 1850, following the gracious British layout found all over the Indian subcontinent. Barracks, officers and civilian residences, churches, clubs, schools and other amenities line the wide streets shaded by huge trees.

Between the old city and the cantonment is Saddar Bazaar, an area full of hotels, offices, restaurants and shops stocked with carpets and antique. The Cantonment Railway Station is here, and the later additions of a stadium and the airport.

**Peshawar Museum**,

formerly the Victoria Memorial Hall, was built near the east end of the Mall in 1905. Its long hall, flanked by side galleries and with a raised platform at the far end, was the ballroom. The museum has one of the best collections of Gandharan art in Pakistan, all well arranged and labelled. Sculptures illustrating the life of the Buddha are laid out in chronological order. The fasting Buddha here is even more haunting than the one in Lahore Museum. There is also an ethnological section, the Hall of Tribes, with wooden carvings from the Kalash people in Chitral, and a Muslim Gallery. (Museum guided tours by Gandhara experts are informative and highly recommended. They can be easily arranged by the museum authorities upon special request. Tel: 091-9211488, 9211194) The smaller Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum located inside the University of Peshawar also houses a fine collection of Gandhara Art)

Adjacent to the museum building is the Shahi Mehmankhana, or the Royal Guest House, formerly called Cunningham's Mehmankhana, which was built in 1942 and named after Sir George Cunningham. It serves as a government rest house.

The government-run Archives Library is situated near the eastern end of the museum. It has a fair collection of old documents, books and other research material related to the region.

**St John's Cathedral**

is the oldest church in Peshawar. The foundation stone was laid on 23 March 1851. Adorning its walls are numerous memorial plaques each telling a different story. The church bell was made at the 'Canal Foundry Roorkee 1864'.

There are a number of monuments outside chiselled in stone and marble. One memorial honours the great frontiersman, Sir Field-Marshall Claude Auchinleck. He had previously been the commander of the Peshawar Brigade from 1933-36.

**Seventh Day Adventist Church**

Built originally in 1885, this small chapel was formerly run by the Scottish Episcopal Mission and was handed over to the Adventists after 1947. It is located at the back of St John's Church.

St Michaels's Roman Catholic Church

This church is located on the Mall adjacent to the Presentation Convent School. A marble tablet records: “This church stands on the same place as the original St Michael's Church blessed by the Bishop of Agra Rt. Revd. N.N.D Carty D.D on 30 November 1851”

**Peshawar Christian Cemetery**

The Christian cemetery is not beside the church but, as is usual in Pakistan, lies outside the residential area in two different locations on the road to the Khyber Pass. The oldest graves are in the middle, and tell of death on the frontier: Lieutenant Colonel Walter Irvine, Chief Medical Officer, NWFP, 'lost his life in the Nagoman River when leading the Peshawar Vale Hunt, of which he was Master, 26 Jan 1919'; Reverend Isidor Loewenthal, 'Missionary of the American Presbyterian Mission who translated the New Testament into Pushtoo ... was shot by his Chokeydar, April 27 1864'. Donations for the upkeep of the cemetery are welcomed by the bishop at St John's Cathedral.

**Peshawar Club**

The Peshawar Club, on Sir Syed Road near The Mall (officially Shahrah-e-Pehlavi, but no one calls it that), is for members and their guests only, but you can go in to look around and browse in the library. The Far Pavilions, paints a typical scene of the Peshawar society in Victorian times. In the novel, the dashing young Guides officer Ashton asks Belinda for a dance at the Club.

Established in 1864 as a small hut for the Peshawar Vale Hunt enthusiasts, the club became the focal hub of social life for British families in Peshawar. Meant exclusively for the Europeans, the garrison men used to fill the bars in the evenings or engage in club sports during the day if they were not riding with the hounds. It was a venue for memsahibs' afternoon garden tea parties and other social gatherings and the place to catch up on the latest gossip on the unpredictable Frontier scene. The style and panache of the Raj was more evident here than anywhere else.

After the creation of Pakistan, this institution retained many of its time-honoured club etiquette and traditions. A few years ago, however, the military took over the club administration and renamed it 'Garrison Club', and went about bringing swift alterations. The fresh renovation, albeit gives it a modern appearance but seems incongruous with the older mood of the surrounding air.

The club is the cradle of squash in the region. The famous 'Khan dynasty' of nearby village Nawe Killi that has dominated international squash for more than half a century began its modest beginnings here.

**Peshawar Golf Club**

The sprawling 18-hole golf course is adjacent to the Polo Ground on Shami Road and dates back more than a century. It has tall shady trees and lovely greens. The charming surroundings are tended by the Pakistan Air Force. The club has living accommodation and guest rooms on its picturesque premises for members. Visitors and non-members can have a swing at the ball for a certain fee that covers the cost of hiring golfing equipment and a caddie. There is a circular walking track on the periphery, but watch out for the golf balls! (Club Secretary: 091-5613846)

**Edwardes College**

Edwardes College, another of Pakistan's prestigious boarding schools, was founded in 1855 as the Sir Herbert Edwardes Memorial School in the old city and elevated to college level in 1900 in its new cantonment premises. It has splendid Mughal-Gothic buildings with ornate cupolas, baubles and pillars.

**'Nau Gaza' Grave**

Just across the road from Edwardes College is a unique grave that is nine yards long. It was perhaps a mass burial site at one time (most invading armies attacked the city from this direction) which was designated a Muslim 'shrine' at the turn of the last century. Many superstitions surround its origins. On Thursday evenings the shrine is illuminated with tiny earthen lamps.

**Khalid Bin Walid Bagh** (formerly Company Bagh) is the narrow park on The Mall, full of beautiful peepal trees. It is all that remains of an old Mughal Shalimar Garden. It was renamed Mackeson Garden in memory of a famous Frontiersman, Lt Col Frederick Mackeson the first Commissioner at Peshawar who was assassinated whilst in office in 1853. Mackeson's Memorial, which was a tall obelisk built to his memory stood in the centre facing the main entrance, now no longer exists.

**Government House**

Built during the tenure of Harold Arthur Deane who was the first Chief Commissioner of North West Frontier Province between the years 1901-08, this elegant mansion is the Frontier's 'Viceregal palace'. Charming in every way, its architecture is a splendid example of a legacy from a bygone era. The imposing white structure with its tall columns and long verandas stands atop a high mound. Archaeological evidence suggests that the site was an Aryan burial ground in ancient times. Magnificent fountains and lush green sprawling lawns surround the building on all sides. Smartly turned out waiters walk about delicately balancing china on their brass trays with upturned palms

Many important world statesmen and royalty from around the world have stayed here. Those lucky enough to be given a tour of the inside are treated to a fine display of items and souvenirs that symbolise the grandeur and lifestyle of the Raj. Portraits of Frontier administrators, vintage photographs, oil paintings, old furniture, animal furs and trophy-heads; almost everything here is reminiscent of the rich opulence of that period.

Darbar Hall inside is a spacious hall where important meetings and official balls took place. In the evenings, the fanciful illumination and playing fountains evoke enchanting visions of the fabled Shalimar Gardens surrounding Peshawar as described by Mounstuart Elphinstone in his memoir Kingdom of Caubul during his visit in 1809.

**University Town**

lies about seven kilometres from the centre of Peshawar on the road to the Khyber Pass. Its oldest building is Islamia College, which was founded in 1913 to educate the sons of Pathan chiefs. If the elegant Mughal-Gothic hall looks familiar, you may have noticed it on the new One Thousand-rupee note. The main Roos-Keppel Hall is named after its founding father Sir George Roos-Keppel. The college formed the nucleus of the University of Peshawar when it was founded in 1950.

**Hayatabad**

the new residential area and Karkhano Bazaar, or the new Bara Bazaar, are beyond University Town on the road to the Khyber Pass. The Bazaar is closed on Friday.

**TRIPS FROM PESHAWAR**

From Peshawar to the Afghan border at Torkham is 56 kilometres or a drive of about one hour. The road is open as far as Jamrud Fort, 18 kilometres from Peshawar, and leaves Peshawar past the university, Islamia College and Hayatabad.

**Jamrud Fort,**

made of rough stonework and faced with mud plaster, was built by the Sikhs in 1823 on the site of an older fort. The famous Sikh general Hari Singh was killed in battle with Afghans nearby and is buried here. The modern stone arch across the road (Bab-e-Khyber) dates from 1964. Those without permits are turned back at the checkpost here.

At its mouth the pass is wide and flat, bounded on either side by low stony hills. Every small hillock in the area is capped with a picquet manned by the Frontier Corps. In the 19th century the soldiers used heliographs and semaphore to maintain contact.

The road zigzags up past two viewpoints. The second one has the better view back to Peshawar showing both the road and the Khyber Railway, which threads its way through a string of tunnels on the north wall of the pass.