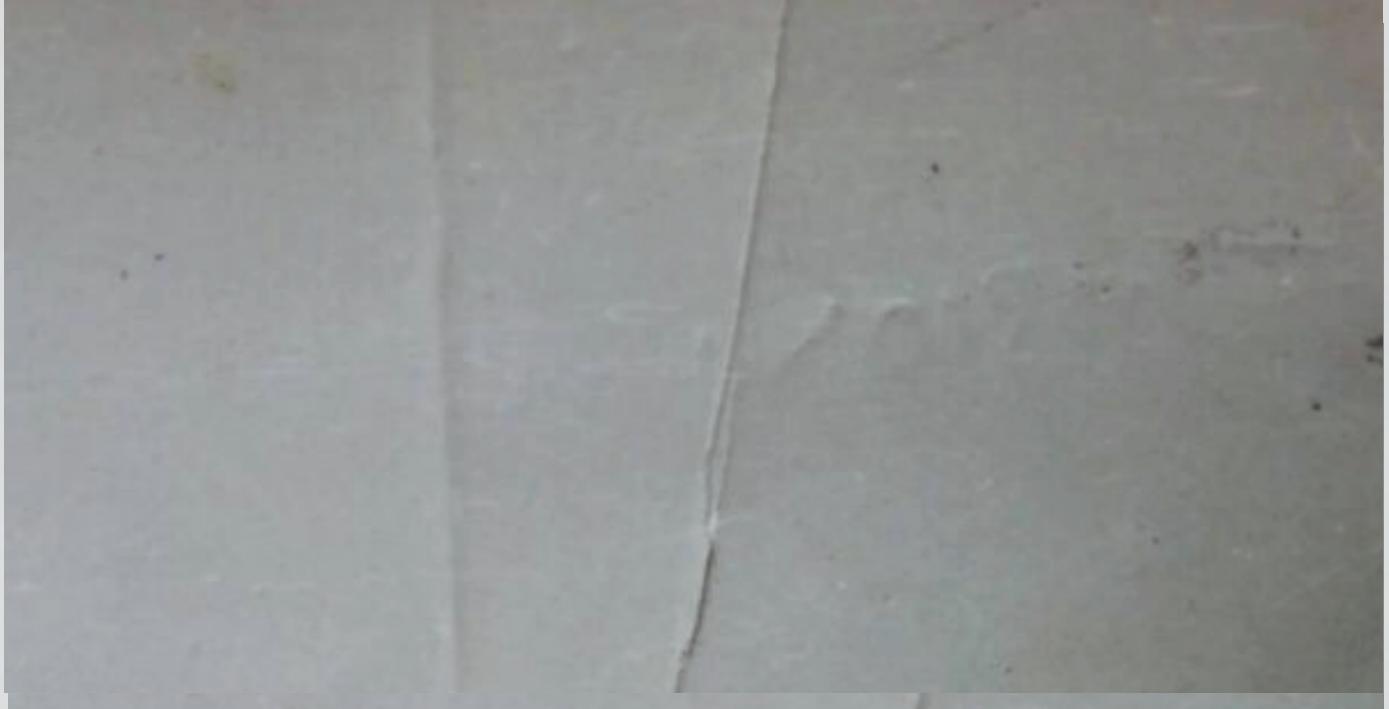


# THE SUMMIT

JANUARY 2026  
VOLUME 001



As Member of Government College Hiking club, a trek to Ratti Galli, AK, 1955



A comprehensive report of the HMC activities and events during Fall  
Semester 2025 to January 2026

# THE SUMMIT

HMC FALL SEMESTER REPORT 2025 | GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UNIVERSITY, LAHORE



## PANJPEER ROCKS

The name "Panjpeer" translates to "Five Saints" (Panj meaning five and Peer meaning Saint or Holy Man). The site is named after a local legend concerning five mystical saints who are said to have meditated at this location for spiritual contemplation. Today, the site includes a shrine dedicated to this history.

## TREK AGENDA

the Hiking and Mountaineering Club (HMC) launched its 2025-26 academic year with a return to tradition, visiting Panjpeer Rocks on **"World Tourism Day"**. From September 26-27, 56 participants undertook this highland excursion to **Kahuta, Rawalpindi**. Rising to **5,900 feet**, the rocks offered scenic ridgelines and a moderately challenging track, ideal for both novices and veterans. With clear skies and temperatures hovering around **29°C**, the Rs. 6,500 tour balanced accessibility with meaningful outdoor engagement.



**26-27 September 2025 | 56 Participants**

## First Ascent : Panjpeer Rocks

### Execution of the Panjpeer Rocks Trek

Commencing on September 26, this pilot tour set the rhythm for the club's annual cycle. Participants assembled at the Rendezvous Point by **2030** hours, departing GCU at **2200** hours. Despite the typical friction of large-group movement, the convoy moved with high morale, driven by the anticipation and symbolism of the season opener.

### Night Travel and Early Morning Transition

Fatigue management was prioritized for the overnight journey. Following a brief refreshment stop at **Kallar Kahar (0100 hours)**, the group rested during the leg toward Islamabad. **Breakfast** was served between **0430 and 0630 hours**, a quiet, focused interlude, allowing participants to shift mentally from travel to the imminent physical exertion of the hike.

### Movement Toward the Trailhead

The convoy proceeded to Narrar, the trailhead for Panjpeer Rocks, arriving by **0750 hours**. Under the supervision of route planners, the travel remained orderly. Before the ascent, deputed medics conducted final checks on equipment and vitals, positioning themselves at both lead and lag to ensure climber safety.

### The Hike to Panjpeer Rocks and Shrine

Navigating rocky tracks in a strict Lead-Middle-Lag formation, the group summited by mid-morning. Against the backdrop of the rocks, the team unfurled the Pakistan and GCU flags alongside the HMC standard bearing the motto: "**WALK TO LIVE**".

### Return Journey and Conclusion

Descent began at **1530 hours**, with a dinner halt at Balkasar (**1900 hours**). The expedition concluded at GCU Lahore around **2330 hours**, marked by the quiet satisfaction of a mission well-executed.

# Between Altitude and Endurance The Siran Valley Expedition

**24–26 October 2025 | 56 Participants**

## DATELINE

Siran Valley, Mansehra (KP) | **24–26 October 2025**

Some journeys are measured in distance. Others are measured in resolve. The Hiking and Mountaineering Club's expedition to Baleja Meadows was unmistakably the latter—an ascent that tested bodies, disciplined minds, and revealed the quiet power of companionship under strain.

## WHY

With more than a century of legacy behind it, the Hiking and Mountaineering Club (HMC) has long stood as a proving ground where comfort gives way to character. From **24th to 26th October 2025**, HMC undertook one of its most demanding national treks of the season—an ascent to **Baleja Meadows (≈2,879 m / 9,416 ft)** in **Siran Valley, Mansehra**.

The expedition brought together **56 participants**, guided by senior cabinet members, local trek guides, and the club's advisor **Syed Yasir Usman**. What unfolded over three days was not merely a trek, but an uncompromising encounter with fatigue, decision-making, and collective endurance—etched into memory as *forty thousand steps*.

## FRIDAY NIGHT: RITUALS BEFORE THE UNKNOWN

Participants assembled at **GCU Lahore** between **2030 and 2100 hours** on **Friday, 24 October**. The atmosphere was familiar—controlled chaos, final checks, cabinet members moving with practiced urgency. Departure was scheduled for **2200 hours**, but the convoy rolled out at approximately **2220 hours**, heading north into the night.

A brief stop at **Kallar Kahar** marked the final pause before the unknown. Unlike many HMC tours, the journey gradually fell quiet. The awareness of the demanding ascent ahead subdued celebration; rest became preparation.

## SHINKIARI: THE CALM BEFORE THE CLIMB

The convoy reached **Shinkiari at 0652 hours**, ahead of schedule. Breakfast under crisp mountain air offered an unexpected stillness—an hour of composure before exertion. Shortly afterward, the group moved toward **Nawazabad**, reaching the trailhead by **1045 hours**.

A **15-minute briefing** followed, outlining safety protocols, pacing, and role assignments. Then, without ceremony, the ascent began.

## THE ASCENT – WHERE RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

From the first steps, the trail made its intentions clear. Unmarked, stony, and unforgiving, it demanded constant attention. Cabinet members assumed positions at lead,



Local children in conversation with HMC participants, telling them how they are enrolled in schools and want to become 'barba aadmi' one day.

middle, and lag—the latter carrying the heaviest responsibility: ensuring that no one was left behind. Within the first hour, breathing grew heavier. Conversation faded. Brief encounters with local children along the path provided fleeting contrast before the mountain reasserted itself.

## BASE I: THE DECISION POINT

After nearly three hours of continuous ascent, the group reached Base I at approximately **1330 hours**, at an elevation of **≈6,500 feet**. Fatigue was visible. Silence replaced awe. As tradition demands, the Pakistan flag, GCU flag, and HMC flag were unfurled. The club's creed echoed briefly across the valley:

**"GCU — COURAGE TO KNOW."**

**"HMC — WALK TO LIVE."**





*Participants descending in complete darkness, moving in a single-file queue, guided only by the narrow beams of their mobile flashlights.*

By 1400 hours, daylight constraints forced a difficult choice. Continuing upward risked a descent in darkness. The rational option was to stop.

#### BEYOND BASE I: SILENCE AND SELECTION

The push resumed at approximately **1415 hours**, and the gradient intensified immediately. Rules were strict: **no prolonged breaks**, no hesitation. Within minutes, the group thinned dramatically.

At around **8,500 feet**, oxygen scarcity enforced silence. Communication became instinctive, nods, gestures, and alignment. Each step demanded intention. The mountain filtered resolve with ruthless efficiency.

#### THE FINAL CLIMB

By **1600 hours**, nearing **10,000 feet**, the terrain turned near-vertical. Upright trekking gave way to hands-and-knees movement. This was no longer a hike, it was controlled persistence.

At approximately **1630 hours**, the remaining group reached the **summit of Baleja Meadows**.

Flags were raised once more. Photographs were taken. Slogans were voiced—quieter now, heavier with meaning. For nearly **thirty**

minutes, time seemed suspended above the valley.

#### DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

The descent began as daylight vanished. Plans to complete the trek before sunset dissolved quickly. With no headlamps carried, navigation relied on limited mobile flashlights and guide familiarity.

By **1800 hours**, darkness was absolute. Loose footing, thorny shortcuts, icy streams, and exhaustion compounded risk. Slips were frequent. Minor injuries occurred. Yet movement continued—slow, deliberate, collective.

A brief but critical incident around **1900 hours** saw a primary light source fall into a fast-moving stream. Without hesitation, participants entered freezing water to recover it, refusing to let momentum break.

Wrong turns cost time. The night stretched longer than expected.

#### RETURN AND RELIEF

By **2200** hours, familiar landmarks signaled proximity to the trail's end. At approximately **2215 hours**, the group reached the coasters, greeted by visible relief from those who had turned back earlier.

After nearly 12 hours of continuous trekking, the convoy proceeded to **Mangal Base Camp**, arriving around **0035 hours**. Exhaustion rendered the buses silent.

The following morning included breakfast and a brief visit to Katas Raj Temple, before dinner at Balkasar and final arrival at GCU Lahore at approximately **2326 hours on 26 October 2025**.



*HMC at Katas Raj Temple*

#### AFTERMATH – WHAT THE JOURNEY MEANT

The Siran Valley expedition was defined by intensity rather than novelty: steep ascents, strict discipline, and a descent into darkness. Beyond the physical test, it revealed companionship under strain, where leadership was felt, not declared, and endurance quietly shared. The **forty thousand steps** became more than distance, a measure of resolve carried long after the mountain let go.

**HMC does not only teach you how to trek.  
It teaches you why you must.**



HMC at Uch Sharif

## SOUTH PUNJAB

South Punjab was selected to strategically expand HMC's geographic and training scope, exposing participants to environmental challenges distinct from mountainous regions. Unlike altitude-based treks, desert terrain demands sustained endurance, thermal regulation, and spatial navigation without natural gradient or shade.

The region also offered high educational value, integrating physical training with exposure to national heritage sites including Derawar Fort, Uch Shareef, and Panjnad. This combination aligned with HMC's mandate to promote environmental awareness, regional representation, and adaptive leadership skills.

## TREK AGENDA

Led by Advisor Syed Yasir Usman and senior faculty, **23 members** embarked on a three-day expedition (**Nov 14-16**) across unmarked sandy trails and riverine paths. The itinerary balanced physical rigor with cultural discovery, featuring desert hike near the iconic **Derawar Fort**, historical immersion in **Uch Shareef**, and recovery at the serene banks of **Panjnad**. Logistics were centrally managed to ensure safety while navigating temperatures rising to **32°C**.



HMC at Derawar Fort

**14-16 November 2025 / 23 Participants**

# Golden Expanse - Cholistan Desert Hike

### Departure and Night Travel

Participants assembled near the GCU fee section at **2200 hours** on **14 November**. Departure, delayed slightly to **2325 hours**, marked the beginning of a long overnight journey. Brief stops were made at Babu Sabu, M3 Toll, and Nankana Sahib, before the convoy reached the **Multan Service Area at 0332 hours**.

### Arrival in Bahawalpur

The convoy arrived in Bahawalpur at **0542 hours**, proceeding to **Sadiq Mosque**, where participants offered Fajr prayer and witnessed sunrise at the historic site. Breakfast followed at **Shahi Bazar at 0725 hours**. The warm yet pleasant morning allowed participants to transition gradually from night travel to exploration, using early sightseeing to absorb the city's historical context.

### Derawar Fort and Desert Trek

By late morning, the group reached Derawar Fort. After a formal group photograph, participants explored the fort before starting the desert trek. Accustomed largely to mountainous terrain, members

found the desert uniquely demanding—testing balance, endurance, and coordination on unmarked sandy paths, rocky stretches, and intermittent dunes. HMC leads and lagers guided movement closely, with regrouping points established near the **Royal Cemetery** and surrounding dunes. Despite mounting fatigue, encouragement and camaraderie sustained momentum. The trek concluded near sunset, offering a rare dual spectacle: the desert sun dipping below the horizon as the moon rose over the dunes—a moment both visually striking and quietly reflective.

The group then traveled to **Ahmed Pur East**, where dinner was served at **1934 hours**, followed by an overnight stay.

### Day Two - Uch Shareef & Panjnad

The group explored the spiritual landmarks of **Uch Shareef** before shifting to the riverside calm of **Panjnad**. Here, boating and lunch provided a refreshing break from the arid trek.

Extended by traffic and tire repairs, the journey concluded with a safe arrival at GCU Lahore at **0013 hours** on **November 17, 2025**.

# Into the Frozen Valleys, HMC's Arang Kel Expedition 2026

**1–4 January 2026 | 56 Participants**

**Fifty Six** Ravians embarked on the first tour of 2026, journeying to the snow-covered heights of **Arang Kel** in Neelum Valley, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, from 1st to 4th January. **Accompanied by the club's advisor and co-advisor, Syed Yasir Usman and Hafiz Muhammad Naeem** and senior faculty member Dr Babar Naseem, HOD Persian Department, guided by the club's leadership, participants braved sub-zero temperatures ranging from **-2°C to -14°C**, navigating icy trails and forested slopes at elevations reaching **8,371 feet**.

This inaugural tour of the year was designed not just as a trekking expedition, but as a kickoff for personal and collective resilience, endurance, and camaraderie. Hiking the steep, snow-laden paths of Arang Kel, the tour combined rigorous physical challenge with awe-inspiring natural beauty.

Structured meticulously, the four-day itinerary included long-distance travel, carefully timed hikes, and cultural exploration of **Sharda** and **Kel**. Meals, accommodations, and safety protocols were organized to ensure that participants could focus on the adventure and start the year on an exhilarating note.

The Arang Kel tour symbolized more than a trek; it marked a fresh beginning, offering participants the chance to test their limits, strengthen teamwork, and embrace the spirit of adventure that will define HMC's activities throughout 2026.

## Departure and Transition

The expedition began on January 1, with assembly at **2200 hours** and departure from GCU Lahore at **0050 hours**. Following a stop at **Kallar Kahar (0355–0435)**, the group arrived at **Pattika** for breakfast at **1205 hours** where the participants had breakfast along Neelum River. Activities were slightly delayed but provided participants with their first close encounters with the sub-zero temperatures of the region (daytime -2°C to -6°C, nighttime -12°C).

Participants acclimatized to the cold conditions while exploring landmarks, balancing adventure with careful attention to personal safety and winter gear. Dinner at **Dosut** concluded the first day, and lights out was observed at **2300 hours**.

## Hike to Arang Kel

Saturday's wake-up was slightly delayed to 0530 hours, and breakfast followed at **0730 hours**. Departure for Kel was scheduled for 0730 but commenced at **0859 hours** due to preparation delays. The group left their resort on



*The view of Neelum Valley a.k.a Kishan Ganga from The Country Resort where HMC participants stayed overnight*

on jeeps. The two hours scenic jeep track was an experience in itself. The hike from Kel to Arang Kel began at **1215 hours** and concluded at **1300 hours**. The steep, snow-covered slopes required careful coordination, use of trekking poles, and adherence to group protocols for safety.



Participants spent approximately 90 minutes at Arang Kel, absorbing the breathtaking views, photographing the snow-covered forests, and experiencing the remote tranquility of the valley. The return hike to Kel concluded at **1614 hours**, and the group returned to Dosut by jeep, arriving by **1714 hours**. The evening concluded with dinner at **2000 hours**, marking the completion of the physically demanding day.

### Return Journey and Sightseeing

Sunday's wake-up was at **0345 hours**, and departure from Dosut was at **0510 hours**. The route included a short stay at **Dhanni Waterfall (0817 hours)** and breakfast at Pattika 1000 hours. The return journey was extended by traffic and minor delays, but the group arrived GCU Lahore



by **2338 hours**, completing the three-day expedition.

Participants had the opportunity to enjoy natural sights, winter landscapes, and team coordination challenges throughout, reinforcing both endurance and camaraderie

### Overall Assessment

The Arang Kel expedition blended adventure, winter trekking, and cultural exploration, offering participants a thrilling start to the year. From snow-laden slopes and forest trails to the serenity of River Neelum and Dhanni Waterfall, the journey demanded endurance, patience, and teamwork.

This first 2026 tour exemplified HMC's commitment to fostering adventure, leadership, and companionship, leaving participants with memories of pristine landscapes, shared challenges, and the exhilaration of exploring one of Pakistan's most beautiful winter destinations.

### Membership Desk

On Friday **26th September**, the Hiking and Mountaineering Club (HMC) set up its Membership Desk as guided by the Vice Chancellor. The desk sold its first membership around 9 in the morning as soon as the desk was set up and continued selling membership due to the combined efforts of the club's Cabinet Members and Volunteers, all throughout the day till 5 in the evening. An overwhelming 700+ memberships were sold in just a day, an ode to HMC's longstanding legacy of discipline, resilience and courage.



*A memorial plate on a tree enroute to Panjpeer shrine, placed on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2014, on the occasion of World Tourism Day.*

### Cabinet 2025-2026

The 2025-26 academic year commenced in August with the appointment of **eight senior cabinet** members guided by **Advisor Syed Yasir Usman**. This was followed in November by the induction of a **30-member Junior Cabinet**, selected from a pool of 120+ applicants through a rigorous interview process.

#### **Sobaan Usmani**

Economics

President

#### **Sufyan Hotiana**

Economics

General Secretary

#### **Sohaib Nawaz**

Electronics

Senior Vice President

#### **Eman Abdullah**

Psychology

Senior Vice President

#### **Usman Raza Malkana**

International Relations

Vice President

#### **Noor Fatima**

Psychology

Vice President

#### **Ahmed Bilal**

International Relations

Joint Secretary

#### **Warda Hassan**

International Relations

Joint Secretary

**Report Prepared by**  
**Warda Hassan (Joint Secretary)**  
**Fajr Sandhu (Media Manager)**



# “WALK TO LIVE”

*Hiking and Mountaineering Club, GCU*



## EST. 1901

*Discipline under strain and leadership  
through action for over a century*



## LEGACY

*Wilderness. Resilience. Tradition*