

## Doctoral School Research Award Scheme, Royal Holloway

### Field Trip to Pakistan - 2023

#### Palwasha Bangash

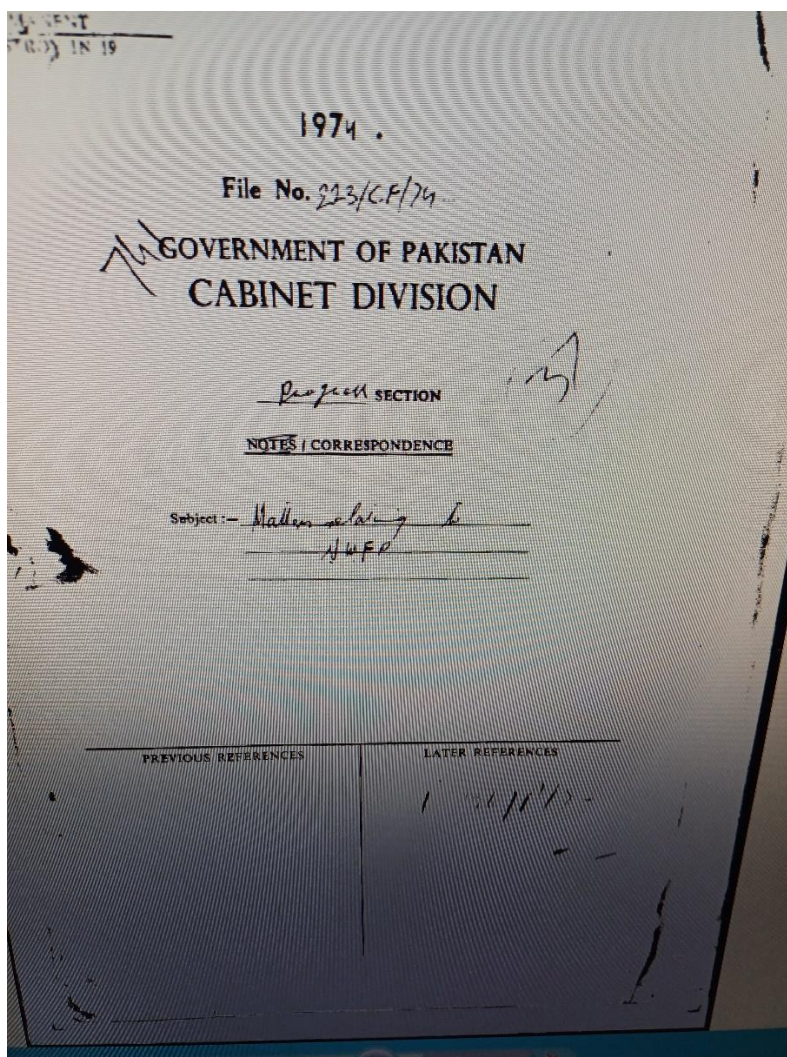
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In early 2023, I was awarded a grant through the Doctoral School Research Award Scheme at RHUL. This generous grant allowed me to undertake a field trip to Pakistan, for research purposes towards my PhD. The main purpose of my visit was to gather primary research data. The PhD centres on the charting the history of a progressive political history of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. A region where a radical Marxist party emerged in the late 1960s to mobilise peasants and labourers towards a socialist system of governance.

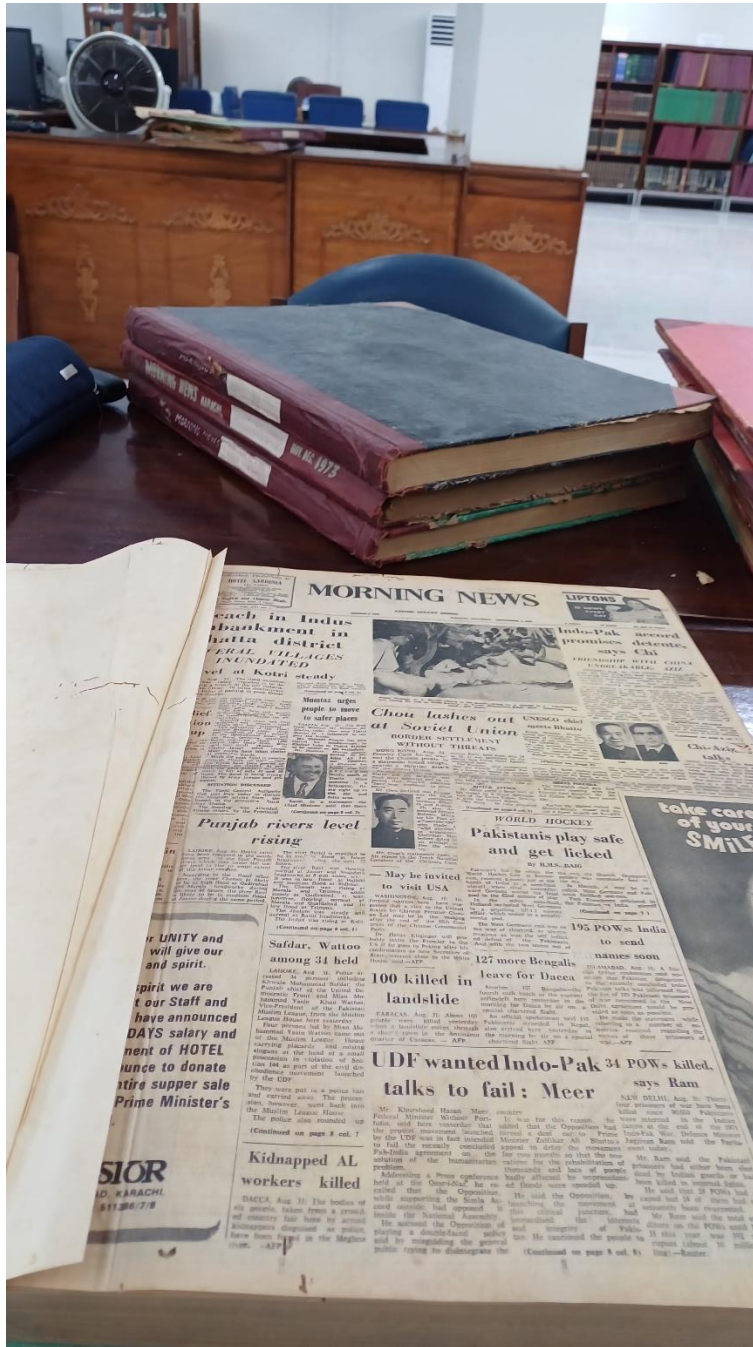
I began my trip in the southern port city of Karachi in July 2023, where I interviewed individuals ranging from factory workers to civil servants and intellectuals. I collected rare written material that would directly support my analysis and write up. From Karachi I flew into the northern border city of Peshawar, where I embarked on interviewing more key individuals related to my research. I also ventured into the dusty and chaotic domain of the provincial archives. This was a challenging process due to the extreme heat and the bureaucratic environment. However, at the end of this time period, I was pleased to have uncovered important information connected to my work. In between my work in Peshawar, I dashed over to the national capital, Islamabad, where I was able to visit the national archives and view at their newspaper collection. The staff were helpful even if the task was daunting.



My friends in Islamabad put me in touch with a student who is undertaking her doctoral research at Princeton University, in the United States of America. We exchanged notes and she pointed me towards another state institution 'The National Documentation Centre', Islamabad which houses cabinet documents including minutes, memos and updates on the political situation of Pakistan until 1980. This avenue proved to be worthwhile, even if it took a lot of insistence and perseverance on my part. As a result, I was able to gather further material to support my work.



In between travelling and working in the archives I was able to establish contact with a number of individuals whom I still intend to interview. Overall, the field travel broadened understanding of my research topic. My visit proved to be productive, even if hectic and challenging at times. This trip motivated and rejuvenated me and provided me with new insights on how to advance my research.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Doctoral School, Royal Holloway, and my supervisor Professor Sarah Ansari for having confidence in, and awarding, me this grant. This financial support enabled me to travel to the place of my research, and gather key information and data towards my doctoral research.