

Nishtar Timeline:

Dr. Durr-e-Sabih

- 16.11.1950 The phone call
- 28.04.1951 Foundation stone laid by Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar
- 01.10.1951 First MBBS class
- 01.10.1951 Principal Dr. M.J. Bhutta
- xx.xx.1951 Anatomy Department
- xx.xx.1952 Departments of Physiology and Biochemistry
- 01.10.1952 First Girl students admitted
- 01.10.1953 Nishtar Hospital starts functioning at Civil Hospital
- xx.xx.1953 Departments of Pathology, Pharmacology and Medicine
- xx.09.1953 Ibne Sina Hall completed
- xx.05.1953 First University exam (Nishtarian tops)
- xx.09.1953 Hospital construction begins
- xx.xx.1954 Departments of Community Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Radiology, Paediatric Medicine, Anaesthesia, Radiotherapy, Ophthalmology and ENT.
- xx.05.1956 First batch of students graduate
- 04.01.1957 Principal, Dr. M.H Toosy
- 06.09.1960 Chairman Academic Council, Dr. M.H. Toosy
- 17.12.1960 Chairman Academic Council, Lt. Col (Ret'd) Najib Khan
- 14.09.1963 Chairman Academic Council, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim
- xx.xx.1965 Department of Orthopaedics
- 12.04.1966 Chairman Academic Council, Dr. Nazeer Uddin Ahmad
- xx.xx.1968 AEMC (Now MINAR)
- xx.xx.1969 Departments of Paediatric Surgery
- 03.03.1971 Principal, Dr. Nazeer Uddin Ahmad
- 30.03.1971 Principal, Dr. Gulzar Ahmad
- 21.08.1972 Principal, Dr. Abdul Hameed Khan
- xx.xx.1975 Departments of Dentistry and Psychiatry
- 01.02.1975 Principal, Dr. Mohammed Hayat Zafar
- xx.xx.1975 Department of Plastic Surgery
- xx.xx.1976 Department of Neurosurgery
- xx.xx.1979 Department of Urology
- xx.xx.1980 Department of Dermatology
- xx.xx.1980 Department of Dermatology
- xx.xx.1981 Departments of Cardiology and Forensic Medicine
- xx.xx.1984 Department of Nephrology
- 01.05.1989 Principal, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad
- 06.06.1993 Principal, Dr. Iftikhar Ali Raja
- 24.03.1996 Principal, Dr. Abdul Wahid Qazi
- 20.03.1996 Principal, Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir

01.04.1996 Principal, Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir
05.05.1997 Principal, Dr. Munawwar Zahin Ashraf
01.06.1998 Principal, Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir
16.07.1998 Principal, Dr. Tariq Iqbal Bhutta
25.12.2000 Principal, Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir
06.09.2001 Principal, Dr. Ashiq Pervaiz
16.02.2002 Principal Executive Officer and Dean, Dr. Ashiq Pervaiz
21.09.2002 Principal Executive Officer and Dean, Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir

Nishtar, 50 years of Service 500 of Hope

Dr. Durr-e- Sabih

Golden jubilee, two generations, half a century. Whatever the standards of measuring time, 50 years are almost a lifetime for an individual and a significant amount of time even for an institution. An appropriate time for reflection and for taking measure of what has been achieved, what needs to be done, where one excelled, where one faltered.

Buried Treasure

Prof. Dr. Noor Ahmad Noor narrated this fabulous tale to me. During excavation of the site of the present Qasim Hall, a huge snake was discovered that was killed with great difficulty, causing much fear in the area. Soon after two *Diags* filled with gold ornaments were discovered, Prof. Noor who was a student then witnessed the whole incident. These *Diags* were taken away by the local police and were never seen again.

I feel inadequate as I prepare to try and write the important events of the last 50 years, mostly because I have not witnessed all of these 50 years myself; but I also consider myself specially honoured to be given this task, a labour of love actually. I am also heartened by the fact that I was here for at least half of Nishtar's life. I was a student on the eve of the Silver Jubilee and am fortunate to be here on the Golden jubilee too. I was then, the editor of the silver jubilee issue of the Nishtar, this issue, if you remember, carried the "magnum opus" of the founder principal of Nishtar, Dr. Jamal Bhutta. It is a strange coincidence that I was involved with the history at the silver jubilee and now again at the golden jubilee, who knows what the platinum jubilee will bring about. Dr. Bhutta's history forms the major source of this "chronicle" supplemented by interviews of some of the very senior Nishtarians I could find; Professor Noor Ahmad Noor, Professor S.M. Salem, Professor Hayat Zafar, Professor Iqbal Chaudhry and many others.

I cannot hope to match the feeling and the depth managed by Dr. Bhutta's piece but the little that I know of Nishtar is this:

The beginning

All good stories have a beginning, but in real life, the exact point of inception of a drama can often not be pointed out; but the saga of Nishtar probably had a conclusive moment of time when events were set into motion that resulted in the birth of Nishtar. This moment was 16th November 1950; when two phone calls were made, one to the Commissioner Rawalpindi and the other to the Commissioner Multan. The proposal was the same, "do you want a medical college in your district? Can you collect a million rupees from the local population to contribute towards this institution?" The Rawalpindi commissioner balked at the challenge (and Rawalpindi had to wait over 20 years to get its medical college) but Inayat Ullah Khan, the then commissioner Multan rose to the occasion and without hesitation accepted the challenge. Nishtar was born! Magically, the

idea of a medical college in Multan fired the imagination of the local population and donations started pouring in, crossing the million mark in only 4 weeks. Remember this was 1950 and a million rupees was a huge amount. But the enthusiasm continued and by the time the foundation stone was laid on 28th April 1951 over 3.3 million rupees were collected. Never before or ever since have the people of any region of the country participated with such wholeheartedness in a public project. It was magic indeed.

A meeting took place at the Commissioner's house in Multan, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Col. Mallick, Dr. Jamal Bhutta and IU Khan stood under a tree in the lawn and decided there and then that the college would have the government's blessings. That tree still stands, bearing witness to vision of these great men.

The Nishtar Mosque

The year was 1959 and Col. Najeeb was principal. Col. Najeeb's brother Khan Inam Ullah Khan was the Chief Engineer Punjab. During a meeting with his brother and other engineers, Col. Najeeb raised the issue of the yet un-built mosque after almost 8 years. He managed to so inflame his brother that he picked up a brick and threw it at his Superintendent Engineer another brick was sent flying at the XEN. This was accompanied by the choicest expletives when they made lame excuses as to why the mosque had not been built yet. An ultimatum was delivered to make the mosque within 3 months so that regular Namaz could be arranged. Things got moving after that and the mosque was built in time.

Mr. Habib J. Somjee, the chief consulting architect for Punjab, designed the college; Mr. Muradt Khan was in charge of designing the hospital. The pillars, the domes (eighteen of them), the tower, the bridges connecting the college to the hospital all come together to make this one of the most graceful medical college campuses of the country. There is majesty and beauty that inspires awe and captivates at first sight.

Classes started on 1st October 1951, as promised, less than a year after the first proposal. The whole project of setting up Nishtar had its protagonists and opponents; those "for" the institution were visionaries like Col. Mallick, Abdur Rab Nishtar and the people of Multan, but the corridors of power had a number of important men with whom this idea did not go down well at all. They thought it was impossible to have Nishtar, "Bhutta is mad", they said, "and Mallick caught by the contagion". It would be a nonevent they predicted, but classes did start on time. The first contingent of students was 52 strong (there were 262 letters of recommendations, all but one were refused entry because they did not meet the merit). The students wore uniforms then, khaki trousers, white shirt and coat, grey Jinnah cap.

The first day of college

The first lecture on the first day of Nishtar was on physiology and was delivered by the principal himself, Dr. Jamal Bhutta. The first anatomy lecture was delivered a week later.

Nishtar has never looked. It has gone from strength to strength and has managed to impress not only Nishtarians but also visitors. There is a long list of dignitaries who have lavished praise on the institute; some of those who visited Nishtar during its first year include Madar e Millat, Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah, The Governor General Mr. Ghulam Mohammed, and the Prime Minister Khwaja Nazim

Uddin. All were deeply appreciative of the effort and dedication that had gone into the concept and creation of this great institution.

In 1952 the first batch of 6 girl students was admitted to the College. Nishtar's growth surprised many, including Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar himself, he was moved to write, on the occasion of his second visit to the College in 1953 "at least I did not expect the organizers would be able, in such a short time, to start two classes and complete a considerable part of the building. I was overjoyed.....the speed with which this institution has developed, is an excellent example of human effort and determination".

Professor Toosy was the first Head of the Department of Anatomy, Professor Dr. Ibrahim the first Head of the Department of Physiology, Professor Dr. Fateh Mohammed Mian was the first Head of the Department of Biochemistry, Professor Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan headed the Department of Pathology and Professor Dr. Nazeer Uddin Ahmad was the first Head of the Department of Pharmacology completing the college faculty for the pre-clinical years.

Defending Nishtar

In 1953 a pall descended upon Nishtar's future briefly when the government ordered the closure of the college and the renaming of the hospital to "Feroz Khan Noon Hospital". The very next day, a hundred telegrams were dispatched to the chief minister and health minister protesting against the order. Rallies were taken out, effigies of those responsible burnt and the people of Multan rose in unison against this breach of faith against "their" institution. They forced the government to reconsider its ill-advised decision and the college was allowed to continue. This incidence highlights the affection the people of this area felt for Nishtar, how they "owned" the institute and shared the dream of Nishtar's bright future.

Affection for Nishtar cuts across geography

Nishtar fired the imagination of all who came in contact with it. Lord Llewellyn Davis, Professor of Architecture at the London University provided the basic plan of a ward, which was modified slightly to suit local conditions. Construction of the hospital began in September 1953. Professor Drennan of the Pathology Department of the Edinburgh University sent, for a token payment of only Rs.500/-, over six thousand histopathology slides, covering the graduate course of pathology being carried out in the UK at that time. UNICEF supplied the equipment for the Nursing School.

The first clinical faculty

On 1st October 1953, Nishtar Hospital opened its doors to the people of Multan. Initially the building of Civil Hospital was used for this. For the first time the people of Multan would have specialists available to them in their own city. In February 1954 Dr. Abdul Aziz MRCP(Edin) TDD assumed charge of the department of tuberculosis and chest diseases, the legendary Dr. Alamgir Khan was the first specialist physician started working at Nishtar, he was soon joined by Dr. N.A Sial. FRCS an equally eminent Gynaecologist. Dr. AA Wyne was appointed Professor of Surgery in September 1954, Dr. Abdul Ghani FRCS joined as Head of Department of ENT in October 1954 and Dr. Mohammed Akhtar was the first professor of medicine appointed in November 1954. Dr. Mohammed Shafi FRCS. DO was the first eye specialist who arrived in 1955. Dr.

Khurshid Begum DA was the first person to head the Department of Anaesthesia in 1958, Dr. Sardar Ahmad was head of the department of Radiology and joined also in 1958. Dr. Shaukat Raza Khan joined as head of the department of paediatric medicine in May 1959. In September 1959 Dr. Maryam Khatoon was the first radiotherapist to join Nishtar.

A team of volunteers who looked after seriously ill patients assisted the medical team. These were medical students who worked regularly in the OPDs, this was another first in the country.

The Alumni

Nishtar produced, from the very beginning graduates that would grow to become giants in their profession. Over 8000 graduates have gone forth into the world, healing the sick, holding the infirm, supporting the weak and lighting the way of medical education. Those who have made Nishtar proud are too numerous to list here but some names are S.

Tajammul Hussain Zaidi who retired as Professor and Head of the Department of

Prof. Gulzar's Sartorial tastes

Prof. Gulzar was the greatest physiologist of Pakistan during his time. A born teacher, his lectures would extend beyond two to three hours regularly. He was also very particular about wearing his white coat. The only concession he made to the heat of Multan's summers was that he would take off his shirt and deliver lectures in his vest, but with the coat of course. Such was his respect that during his 15 years of service in Nishtar, not one student commented upon his rather peculiar attire.

Pharmacology Nishtar Medical College, Rashid Latif khan who retired as CEO and Professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at the PGMI Lahore, he was also given the Presidential Award for excellence in the medical profession, Iftikhar Ali Raja, Professor of Neurosurgery who retired as CEO of KE Medical College Lahore. Jalil Ul Daula, Professor of Ophthalmology, SM Saleem Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Nishtarians reign

Nishtarians have provided leadership to other medical institutions of the country and have headed most medical institutions of 3 provinces, there was a time when almost all medical colleges were headed by Nishtarians; Professor Dr. Haider Bukhari Principal Khyber Medical College, Peshawar; Professor Dr. Mohammed Nawaz and then Professor Dr. Nasim Ullah Principals of the Rawalpindi Medical College; Professor Dr. Iftikhar Ali Raja, Principal and PEO King Edward Medical College Lahore; Professor Dr. Azhar Chaudhry, Principal Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Lahore; Professor Dr. Eis Mohammed, Principal Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore; Professor Dr. Munawwar Zahin Ashraf, Professor Dr. Noor Ahmad Noor, Professor Dr. AW Qazi, Professor Dr. Ashiq

Pervaiz and now Professor Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir, Principals PEOs and Deans of Nishtar Medical College, Multan; Professor Dr. Iqbal Khan, Principal Qaid e Azam Medical College Bahawalpur; Professor Dr. Abdullah Jan Jaffar, Principal Bolan Medical College, Quetta. Other institutes of medical excellence headed by Nishtarians include Sheikh Zaid Hospital Lahore, which was headed by Professor. Dr. Tahir Shafi and

Professor Dr. Mahmood Chaudhry. The Army Corps of Medicine have been headed by Nishtarians like Gen. Dr. Saleem and the present Surgeon General of the Pakistan Army Dr. Karamat. The present health minister, Dr. Mahmood Chaudhry, is a Nishtarian too.

The recent past

After the first few years of rapid development, Nishtar entered into a phase of consolidation and quiet expansion; subspecialties like cardiology, urology, nephrology, gastroenterology and plastic surgery were introduced in quick succession. A dedicated private and family ward was constructed and the casualty department upgraded. A CT and more recently Digital Subtraction Angiography brought Nishtar's diagnostics at par with the other modern institutes.

Dentistry

A school of dentistry was established in 1973 with 22 students. Nishtar is the only medical college in Punjab that is currently offering both MBBS and BDS courses.

Postgraduate training

Nishtar moved on from graduate medical studies to postgraduate training in 1965 when the Departments of Anaesthesia, Ob/Gyn, ENT, Ophthalmology and Paediatric Medicine were recognized for FCPS. Today Nishtar is recognized for FCPS in 18 specialties. It is also offering postgraduate training for the diplomas of DA, DO, DCP, DCH and DGO. MD and MS trainings are also being offered. Nishtar is recognized by the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology for training for MRCP. FRCS (Surgery and Otorhinolaryngology) and MRCOG.

The Future

Nishtar is looking ahead to fulfilling its destiny of providing leadership in healthcare and medical education to the people of Southern Punjab. The recent appointment of a Nishtarian CEO, Prof. Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Nasir, and Prof. M. Hayat Zafar as the Chairman Governing Body bodes well for Nishtar's future because the two share a very special rapport. There are ambitious plans of revamping Nishtar's facilities and expansion of healthcare services under the aegis of Nishtar.

Circles of time, future meets the past

A dedicated tertiary referral center for paediatrics has almost been completed at the Civil Hospital, history has come one full circle; Nishtar started from Civil Hospital and now has expanded back into it.

Another circle of time is nearing its completion, a state of the art cardiology center has been sanctioned for Multan, and land allocated to it on Abdali Road, at the site of the previous Commissioners House and planning is in its final stages of completion. With its completion, the Cardiac Institute will provide state of the art healthcare facilities to the people of Multan. The tree that witnessed the inception of Nishtar still stands and will witness another vision of service, Insha Allah.

Safdar Ali Safdar, of the first batch spoke for all Nishtarians and I end by reproducing his prayers.

پھول مہکیں تیرے حکمت کے گلستانوں میں
جام چھلکیں تیرے عرفان کے مے خانوں میں
تیرا چرچا ہوزمانے کے دبستانوں میں
مطلع فیض ہو تو علم کے دیوانوں میں
تیرے طلبا تیرے استاد سدا شاد رہیں
قاسم و رازی و سینا تیرے آباد رہیں

صفر علی صفر (مرہوم)