

# U.S. Department of State Edward R. Murrow Program

## Participant Spotlight:



## ***Gul Ayaz***

Brought up in a political family from Peshawar, Pakistan, Gul Ayaz seemed an unlikely person to pursue a career in journalism. But instead of marching lock-step at the political institution, his innate curiosity, insatiable thirst for travel and desire to untie mysterious important stories would eventually bring him all the way to Islamabad to work with AVT Channels, the prestigious an organization where he has assumed multifaceted roles ranging from news reporting to the bureau chief and manager planning and development.

The main impetus behind his work for the Pashto language TV channel is the eagerness to serve his destitute community that had faced the neglect of mainstream media and powerful bureaucracies. Like the AVT group Gul Ayaz is steadfast in his mission of erasing the label of extremism and fanaticism from the pakhtoons, by making the entire world believe that his 5000 years old nation is peace loving and hospitable.

Prior to his services for the AVT Channels, Gul started his journalistic career in 2000 working for renowned local media organizations like *The Frontier Post*, the Daily Maidan and the Statesman, Peshawar. He remained finance secretary of Peshawar Press Club.

Gul's noteworthy work at Khyber TV includes production of a mini documentary of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh birth place Chakwal, aired on Zee TV, Produced & reported exclusive documentary on military operations in South Waziristan (Wana), Host of marathon live transmission on great Pakhtoon leader and veteran politician Khan Abdul Wali Khan, hosted live marathon programs on Judicial Crisis from March 09, 2007 to July 2007. Conducted exclusive interview with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband on November 26, 2008 and besides many other programs, host a weekly programme "*Zamung Numainda*" Our Correspondent & *Islamabad Diary*.

Gul earned his masters degree in journalism and mass communication from Peshawar University.

Gul attended the Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists in Oct 2008 sponsored by the State Department and visited New York, Washington DC, Wisconsin and San Francisco. Presently he is working as Bureau Chief Khyber News in Islamabad.

**On his Murrow exchange experience:**

“When I heard about Murrow exchange program I become excited because of many reasons. Firstly, Edward R. Murrow name, being a pioneer of television news broadcasting and so many things on his account. Before visiting United States I watched a movie Good Night & Good Luck I was so curious to attend this program.

Secondly, it was an opportunity to closely monitor or to observe American society, democracy, media, diverse cultures etc. because here in Pakistan there is negative perception regarding US because of their policies regarding our region. To get the answers what American journalists, academics, officials and common are people thinking about us I was lucky enough to achieve some of my goals.

Besides this interacting with journalists around about 100 countries was also a great experience to know their society culture and democratic system. To sum up my Murrow exchange experience it was productive, informative and very much helpful for our journalistic career.”

**On the most professionally rewarding part of his Murrow exchange:**

“It was my honor to be part of Murrow program and the most professionally rewarding part of this program was Milwaukee News Pub (Press Club). I got the chance to speak about the war on terror and how it is affecting our region in front of senior journalists in the press club. Unlike in Pakistan, they listened and put questions.”

On how his program experiences in the United States have been of value to him as a journalist in his home country:

“Yes of course, through this program many of our misconceptions were removed from our mind. Journalistic norms and importance of blogging was valuable things which we derived from this program. We learn how we can mobilize masses towards issues and what will be the role of media in democracy.”