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## Pakistan's Malala in school for first time since shooting



Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai returned to school for the first time since October when she was shot in the head by the Taliban for campaigning for girls' education.

The 15-year-old said she had "achieved her dream" and was looking forward to meeting new friends at the independent Edgbaston High School for Girls in Birmingham, central England, where she is now living.

Malala was flown to Britain after the attack for surgery for her head injuries and underwent several operations as recently as last month.

"I am excited that today I have achieved my dream of going back to school," she said in a statement. "I want all girls in the world to have this basic opportunity."

She added: "I miss my classmates from Pakistan very much but I am looking forward to meeting my teachers and making new friends here in Birmingham."

Pictures showed her going to school carrying a pink backpack and wearing a black headscarf over a green sweater.

She will be studying a full curriculum in preparation for selecting subjects for GCSEs, the standard exams that English schoolchildren typically sit at 16.

Malala was shot at point-blank range by a Taliban gunman as her school bus travelled through northwest Pakistan's Swat Valley on October 9, in an attack that drew worldwide condemnation.

She has since become a global symbol of the campaign for girls' right to an education and has been

United Nations education envoy and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who has backed Malala's cause, said it was a "great day."

"This is a great day for Malala, for her family -- and for the cause of education worldwide," Brown said in a statement.

"By her courage, Malala shows that nothing -- not even bullets, intimidation or death threats -- can stand in the way of the right of every girl to an education.

"I wish Malala and her family well as her courageous recovery continues."

Doctors say the bullet fired by her Taliban attacker grazed her brain and travelled through her head and neck before lodging in her left shoulder.

Malala was discharged from hospital in early February after surgery to fit a custom-made piece of titanium to her skull and an electronic implant to help restore hearing to her left ear.

Her father Ziauddin Yousafzai is serving as Brown's special adviser on education and her family have temporarily moved to Birmingham, Britain's second city which has a large Pakistani population.

Malala first rose to prominence aged 11 with a blog for the BBC's Urdu-language service charting her life under the Taliban.

Since her attempted murder, millions of people have signed petitions supporting her cause for education.