

## Pakistani paves the way in police force

Hong Kong Unison says Heina Rizwan Mohammad is the first South Asian woman recruited for training as a constable since the handover

The Hong Kong force has recruited the first South Asian woman to be a police officer since the handover in 1997.

This comes after the force started to give extra points to applicants who know foreign languages other than Chinese and English.

The inability to read or write Chinese well has long been a barrier to hiring *minorities* in the disciplined services.

While police did not reveal her identity, Hong Kong Unison, which campaigns for the rights of *minorities*, confirmed that it was Pakistani Heina Rizwan Mohammad, who will enter the police college as a constable for a 27-week training course this month.

Unison director Fermi Wong Wai-fun said: "I am very happy that the police have hired her. I hope there will be more *ethnic minorities* joining the force in the future."

Mohammad, 21, had previously worked for the force as a community liaison officer, organising activities and reaching out to minority groups.

In a previous interview, she said she aspired to become a police officer because her grandfather was once a policeman.

Her recruitment means she passed a revised test asking candidates to write reports in both Chinese and English after watching video clips showing people asking police for help.

The force earlier hired policeman Faisal Abdul, who is of mixed Pakistani and Chinese heritage, to patrol in Yuen Long, a district with a mix of locals and members of *ethnic minorities*.

Patrick Lee Chung-wah, from the police's recruitment division, said a fine-tuning of recruitment policy had been successful.

"[We] don't want the general public to misunderstand that we only lay emphasis on certain language abilities. We also emphasise practical skills," he said.

In the 2011-12 financial year, there have been 24 non-Chinese applicants, compared with six for the previous period.

Fourteen applicants were given extra points for demonstrating proficiency in writing and speaking Japanese, Korean, German, French, Russian and Urdu. Five of them had been hired.

Wong said she hoped the force would educate both officers and the general public to respect officers from the minority groups.

"I hope the general public will treat them fairly. I also do not want them to be allocated to do less important work [because the public does not accept them]," she said.

A police recruitment booth will be at the Education and Careers Expo from Thursday to Sunday at the Convention and Exhibition Centre.

RECRUITMENT



Heina Rizwan Mohammad has been a community liaison officer for the police force, organising activities and reaching out to minority groups. Photo: May Tse

## PAKISTANI PAVES THE WAY IN POLICE FORCE

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Meanwhile, the force is facing a peak period of retirement with many officers who joined the force during an expansion in the 1970s reaching the retirement age of 55, or 57 for senior assistant commissioners or above. It is expected that 576 officers will retire in the 2012-13 financial year, and 749 and 830 in the following two financial years.

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**890**

The number of constables the Hong Kong Police Force aims to hire in coming years. A total of 180 probationary inspectors will also be hired

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