

DECCAN Chronicle

'Dev' in the royal detail!



This local student from Jain College was invited by our PM Narendra Modi to meet Prince William and Kate

POOJA PRABHAN DECCAN CHRONICLE

While you may have never envisioned seeing them in the flesh, 24-year-old para-athlete and a Queen's Young Leader'15 awardee, Devika Malik is already living the dream — after having attended the formal luncheon by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, graced by the likes of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge during their recent visit, the youngster is set for bigger pursuits. She tells us more in candid chat, as she preps up to represent the country as a youth summit ambassador at the World Youth Summit in Lahore early in August...

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"Getting invited on the Prime Minister's guest list was absolutely unexpected and surreal. It was a very small gathering of about 25 eminent personalities from the social, public, private and academic sectors and I was also the only young leader (below 30) at the event. It was a very enriching experience as everyone there valued my contributions to society and treated me as an equal. It was also a great networking opportunity. Having met the Queen early last year, I believed that she is a very sociable person dedicated to civic duty. Now I met her grandson, Prince William and the Duchess, and find that the couple is also very genuine and down to earth," says the student of Jain University, who's currently pursuing an M.Phil in sports psychology about her recent visit to match-talked about luncheon at the Hyderabad house in New Delhi.

Unfazed by the hullabaloo around her visit, the vivacious Bengaluru lass has her eyes set on a series of social initiatives. "As I understand the challenges of disability first hand, I am passionate about not just the wellbeing of



Prince William, PM Modi, Devika and HRH Kate Middleton

people with disability, but also their caregivers, who are often overlooked. I undertake counseling for caregivers of people with disabilities and cancer patients. I am a firm believer of equality

across the gender spectrum and a very vocal advocate for the feminist movement, as the stereotypes patriarchy imposes are equally harmful and constraining for both men and

women. Hence, I'm looking to continue being actively involved with sport-related causes and its developments." Despite having her hands full, the intrepid traveler maintains

that she's mastered the art of balancing, down pat. "I make it a point to explore various adventure sports, every time I travel to a new place. Reading up about the works of Eastern scholars in the field of spirituality is another passion too."

Giving us a peek on what's next on the radar, she pipes, "I am currently assisting a spinal cord injury patient in Mumbai to raise funds for a patient's treatment. I also have an upcoming international competition in Phoenix, USA in the month of May. In August, I have been invited as a youth peace ambassador at the World Youth Summit (supported by UNESCO) to be held in Lahore. Let's see how it all pans out."

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