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## William, Kate visit Pakistan's north

AFP | Bumburate | Pakistan

Wearing traditional headgear and clapping to music, Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate met a tiny animist tribe in northern Pakistan on Wednesday, after flying by helicopter to a remote Hindu Kush glacier near the Afghan border.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge spent the afternoon witnessing the effects of climate change on the Kalash, Pakistan's smallest religious minority -- an ancient, polytheistic tribe who live in three valleys.

Believed to be descended from Alexander the Great, they worship their gods with music and dance.

Men and women mingle freely, and women can choose their husbands but also move on to new loves, setting them apart from much of patriarchal Pakistan.

But their way of life they have practiced for centuries is under threat, both by global warming and the gradual absorption of their people into Islam.

Before visiting the Kalash, the royal couple travelled by helicopter to a melting glacier in Broghil Valley National Park, near the border with Afghanistan.

They walked around the northern tip of the glacier and saw how far it has retreated in recent years, a statement from Kensington Palace said.

Pakistan's north is one of the most glaciated regions in the world, and experts say its vast, hoary rivers of ice serve as a water store for 250 million people.

But rising temperatures have alarmed residents who watch helplessly as the glaciers melt so quickly that they have un-



The verdant, plunging valleys of Chitral have long attracted tourists for their natural beauty and their brush with legend as the home of the Kalash

leashed devastating floods.

In Chitral district -- where the Kalash live -- floods in 2015 left thousands of families camping in the open just as the cold winter approached.

The couple met with environmental experts to discuss the melting, and later spoke with residents who have suffered in the floods.

Emergency response teams demonstrated first aid and a river crossing, then posed for selfies with William and Kate.

The Duke of Cambridge called the glacial melt an "impending catastrophe" in a speech delivered at a glittering reception in Islamabad late Tuesday.

#### Feathers and dancing

Earlier Wednesday, during a refuelling stop on the way to the glacier, the Duke and Duchess tried on a Chitrali cap given a

touch of luxury with a peacock feather, which local media said was a gift to them from residents.

The flat, woollen hats, also known as "pakols", are popular in northern Pakistan and throughout Afghanistan, though feather decorations are usually reserved for special occasions. They also tried on chapans, long bulky embroidered coats popular in Central Asia; as well as a lush woollen shawl for Kate, who snapped her own share of pictures during the trip.

The verdant, plunging valleys of Chitral have long attracted tourists for their natural beauty and their brush with legend as the home of the Kalash.

But the diminishing tribe -- who now number only around 3,000 people -- fear that their unique culture will not endure.

Not only are their young peo-

ple increasingly converting to Islam, but the modern world beckons for many eager to see beyond the valleys, where internet and mobile access can be patchy at best.

Even the peace of those valleys is being eroded as tourists from other areas of Pakistan arrive in droves, eager to see the colourful tribe.

A reporter said Prince William listened eagerly as a local guide explained the steps to the dance performed by the Kalash for the royal couple.

Kensington Palace has called the Cambriges' five-day trip, which ends Friday, their "most complex" tour to date.

Security is extremely tight for the trip, during which the couple is also set to visit Pakistan's second-largest city Lahore, once the capital of the Mughal Empire.

## 'SOS' picked up on CCTV saves Aussie woman lost in bush



Deborah Pilgrim, who went missing about 100 kilometres from the South Australian state capital of Adelaide, was discovered via CCTV

#### The 55-year-old took a walk from her campsite and lost her way

AFP | Sydney

An Australian woman lost for three days in dense bushland was found Wednesday after a man remotely monitoring security footage saw an 'SOS' sign scrawled in the earth on his property.

Deborah Pilgrim went missing on Sunday while camping with friends about 100 kilometres from the South Australian state capital of Adelaide.

The 55-year-old took a walk from the campsite and lost her way.

Dozens of police and emergency services personnel, as well as a rescue helicopter, were called in to search the remote area, but after three

days had failed to locate the missing woman.

Late Tuesday a man remotely monitoring CCTV footage of his property near the South Australian search area, noticed an SOS sign etched into a dirt driveway near his unoccupied home.

He alerted police, who found Pilgrim close to midnight on a neighbouring property where she had located water.

"It was so overwhelming," an exhausted Pilgrim told *Nine News* yesterday.

"I think I dropped to the ground," she added, recalling the moment rescuers arrived.

Neil Marriot, whose CCTV cameras had picked up Pilgrim's distress signal, said he'd only recently had the security system installed after several recent break-ins.

"I'm so pleased she was able to find water because I feared the worst for her -- I really did," he told national broadcaster *ABC*.

## NASA unveils flexible, one-size-fits-all space suits

AFP | Washington

Bye bye to bunny hops: when bus astronauts next touch down on the Moon, expect them to walk almost as they do on Earth, thanks to a new generation of spacesuits offering key advantages over those of the Apollo-era.

Prototypes of the Orion Crew Survival Suit that will be worn on the journey and the Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit (xEMU) for the lunar surface were unveiled at NASA's Washington headquarters Tuesday ahead of the agency's planned return to the Moon by 2024.

Standing in front of a giant US flag, spacesuit engineer Kristine Davis wore a pressurized red, blue and white xEMU suit, showing off a vastly improved range of motion thanks to bearings systems on the waist, arms, and legs.

They are also extendable and therefore one-size-fits-all, meaning there won't be a repeat of an embarrassing flub in March that caused the first all-female spacewalk to be aborted when a second medium-sized suit



Prototypes of the Orion Crew Survival Suit (R), which will be worn on the way to the Moon, and the Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit (xEMU) to be worn on the surface

wasn't available.

"If we remember the Apollo generation, we remember Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, they bunny hopped on the sur-

face of the Moon," NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine told a hall filled with students and interns at the space agency.

"Now we're going to be able to

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If we remember the Apollo generation, we remember Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, they bunny hopped on the surface of the Moon. Now we're going to be able to walk on the surface of the Moon, which is very different from the suits of the past

JIM BRIDENSTINE, NASA ADMINISTRATOR

walk on the surface of the Moon, which is very different from the suits of the past."

Another key innovation is the xEMU's unlimited capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, a byproduct of respiration that is also poisonous in high quantities.

It achieves this through a system that both absorbs and



then removes the gas into the vacuum of space, unlike current systems that merely absorb it until its reaches a saturation point.

The crew survival suit, meanwhile, is designed to provide full life support for up to six days -- a scenario that could be required, for example, if a meteorite punches a hole in the spacecraft's hull.

Under the Artemis mission, NASA plans to land on the Moon's South Pole in order to exploit its water ice, discovered in 2009, both for life support purposes and to split into hydrogen and oxygen for use as rocket propellant.

The agency views its return to the Moon as a proving ground for an onward mission to Mars in the 2030s.