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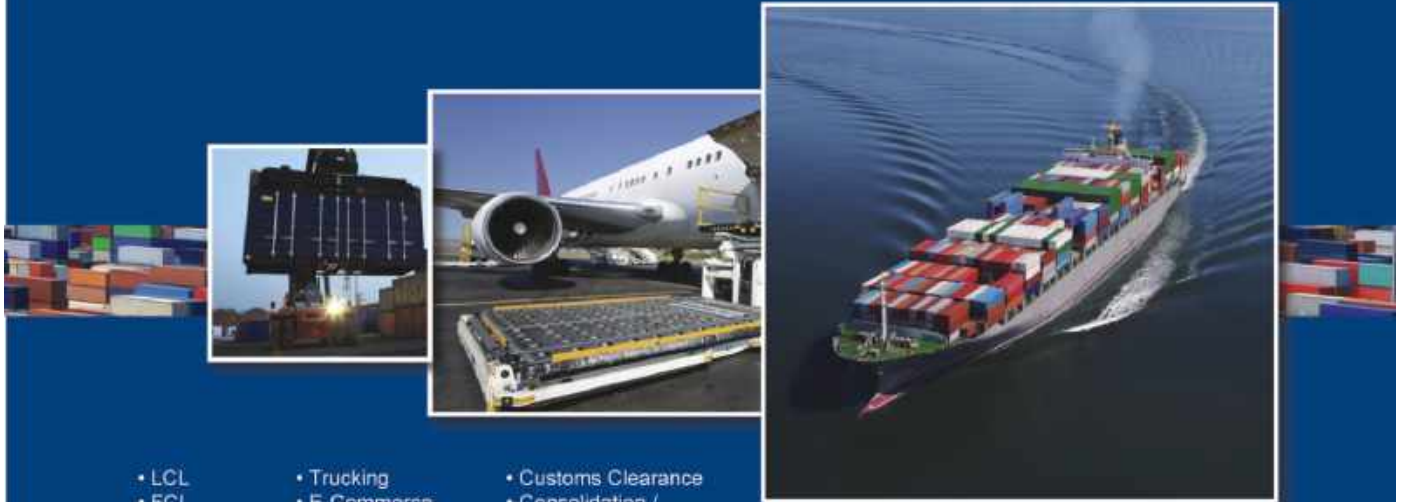
**HEAD OFFICE:**

Suite # 418-421, 4th Floor, The Plaza, G-7, Clifton Block 9, KDA Scheme 5, Karachi, Pakistan.  
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Chief Editor Abdul Sattar Azad  
 Managing Editor Muhammad Faryal Azad  
 Assistant Editor Musharrarf Azad  
 Associate Editor Shahida Hameed  
 Resident Editor Waqas Masood  
 Reporter Bazla Sardar  
 Photographer S. Shahid Ikram  
 Contributors Prof. Safdar Sandal  
 Chief Correspondent Prof. Karamat Rajput.

Address B-65 Ablagh-e-Aamma  
 (media) Cooperative  
 Housing Society  
 Block-8, Gulistan-e-Jauhar  
 Karachi-75290

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 Cell 0333-2194853  
 Web www.newflyerintl.com  
 E-mail flyer\_intl@hotmail.com  
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Lahore Waqas Masood  
 123 HH Phase 4  
 DHA, Lahore  
 Cell: 0333-3872222

Islamabad 8-Huma Plaza Block-25  
 Blue Area  
 Tel: 2275946-7,  
 Fax: 2279975

Peshawar 5-Biloor Plaza Saddar  
 Tel: 284649-50  
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Sialkot S. Shahid Ikram  
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## CAA amends SOPs for flights

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has amended its standard operating procedures (SOPs) meant to curb the spread of Covid-19 for passengers from Sept 2 to Oct 31.

The authority directed all scheduled and chartered airline operators, ground handling agents and private operators to ensure strict compliance with the revised SOPs.

Earlier, the CAA had issued SOPs for chartered and private flight operations between Aug 26 and Oct 31, deferring social distancing on domestic flights.

"In the larger interest of travelling passengers, the competent authority has deferred implementation of para 7 of the SOP for domestic passengers, chartered, private aircraft flights for a period of 48 hours from August 26, 2020," the CAA's standard operating procedures said.

However, under the fresh SOPs issued on Sept 1, social distancing gap of at least one adjacent seat between passengers has been made non-compulsory.

### Domestic flights

Under the new SOPs, the aircraft operations will be subject to full compliance with CAA instructions regarding aircraft disinfection as well as passenger and crew protection measures.

To ensure safety of passengers and crew and minimise the risks associated with Covid-19, certain measures have been adopted for all types of passenger and chartered aircraft flight operations within Pakistan.

### Pre-embarkation

No person, except the passenger and airport staff, will be allowed to proceed beyond the parking area and the drivers will have to drop passengers in front of domestic departures. In case the vehicle has to wait, the driver will have to take the car to the parking lot.

Airport managers will have to ensure social distancing at every stage of the departure formalities while the Airport Security Force will see that no person, except the passenger, remained in the concourse area.

The aircraft will be disinfected in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the CAA at each station before the passengers board.

In case of domestic flights, the disinfection certificate from the

airline/operator shall be countersigned or verified by the CAA staff.

The disinfectant brand's name must be logged in the aircraft documents while the captain should express his satisfaction over compliance of CAA instructions on disinfection. The entity carrying out disinfection must be a CAA registered handling agent.

An inventory of essential personal protection equipment (PPE), comprising protection suits, gloves, surgical masks, goggles and N-95 masks should be maintained in each aircraft.

### SOPs during flight

Passengers will be bound to comply with instructions issued during air travel in Pakistan. These are in addition to other directives which are otherwise mandated for safe air travel or as issued by the cabin crew from time to time during the flight.

Food and beverages will be served on flights with proper packaging and precautions while the cabin crew will spray disinfectant in the lavatory after every use. All lavatories will be available for passenger use to avoid congestion.

The cabin crew must use alcohol-based disinfection wipes to clean and disinfect their hands or use sanitiser or soap after touching or disposing of waste.

### Post-disembarkation

Passengers will be disembarked row-wise in an orderly manner while ensuring social distancing.

All medical PPEs, if used during flights, should be disposed of while reusable items should be properly sanitised before next use.

Data of all passengers and flight crew with their mobile numbers will be kept for record and further follow up.

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## IATA team visits Pakistan to audit PIA



The audit team was briefed on PIA's fleet, which comprises Airbus A320, ATR and Boeing 777, and the aircrafts' condition.

A four-member team of the International Air Transport Association's Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) team arrived in Karachi recently for a week-long audit inspection visit.

According to sources, the team spent most of its time in Karachi and to visit the crash site of PIA flight PK-8303 and interview people related to flight operation and engineering.

It also check the measures adopted by the airline to maintain safety and security of its operation on the ground and in the air.

Prior to the team's visit, the PIA management made necessary preparations and removed inoperable aircraft and equipment from the apron of Karachi's Jinnah International Airport and also covered the debris of the PIA plane A320 that crashed into a residential area in the city on May 22.

According to an initial report, the disaster was a result of human error, which resulted in the death of 97 people. Only two passengers survived.

A team of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which arrived in Karachi recently, started the audit of different departments of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

Sources said the four-member audit team comprised two English men, a Turkish expert and a European national.

The team held a meeting in the morning and then visited the cargo area of Karachi airport. They carried out a comprehensive visit of the airport apron / ramp area where aircraft are parked, unloaded or loaded.

The team remained at the apron area for more than two hours and carried out inspection of the loading and unloading process.

The sources said the audit team also sought the record of the PIA's engineering section and other relevant documents.

The team is expected to carry out inspection of a PIA's flight arriving from

Islamabad or Lahore.

The IATA had designed the audit programme in 2003 to assess operational management and control systems of the airlines. After the audit, the airlines are given an operational clearance certificate.

Prior to the IATA team's visit, PIA's Chief Executive Officer retired Air Marshal Arshad Malik had carried out inspection of operational installations and briefed the heads of engineering, ramp service and flight safety departments about the visit of the audit team.

As part of preparations, the inoperable aircraft and equipment on the ramp area of the airport had been removed. And the vacant space used for parking and repair work on aircraft.

## IHC seeks AG help in CAA chief appointment case

The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday Sept. 8 expressed concern over the government's act of running the office of director general of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on an ad hoc basis for the past two years.

Chief Justice Athar Minallah sought assistance from the attorney general in the matter and fixed the case for hearing on Sept 23. He was hearing a petition filed by a pilot who was sacked over the allegation of possessing a dubious licence.

The petitioner sought appointment of a permanent director general of the CAA, besides setting aside his sacking order. The court had previously issued a stay order against his suspension.

Justice Minallah regretted that Pakistan had faced enormous problems because of the licence issue, but the government was still running the important office of the CAA chief through makeshift arrangements.

Aviation division sources said that in addition to the post of CAA director general, at least 12 senior positions had been vacant for several months and junior officers were given additional charge on senior positions. These posts include deputy director general (DDG) air navigation system, DDG regulations, DDG airport services, director commercial, director engineering and director Civil Aviation Training Institute.

When contacted, CAA law officer Rana Bilal claimed that everything was in order within the CAA echelons.

However, aviation division's joint secretary Abdul Sattar Khokhar said the departmental promotion committee had

The PIA chief had expressed satisfaction over the preparations and urged the staff to work with more dedication.

The IATA carries out operational safety audit every two years. The last audit of PIA was carried out in 2018.

The PIA is hopeful that the suspension of flight operations to and from Europe will end before time enabling the airline to resume the operation.

When contacted, Albert Tjoeng, assistant director corporate communications Asia Pacific IATA said: "Following the accident involving PK8303, we have initiated an operational safety verification audit of the PIA. This is a standard practice after an airline experiences an accident or other serious event.

recommended promotion of the junior officers who would fill the vacant posts.

During a hearing on Aug 12, Justice Minallah observed that appointing an eligible and competent person against the post of CAA director general fell within the exclusive domain of the executive organ of the state. "Prima facie, it does not appear from the statutory provisions that the manner of appointment by way of advertisement has been prescribed," the court had observed.

On Tuesday Sept. 7, the court noted that in the case in hand, the fundamental right of every citizen, guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution, was involved.

"The manner, in which this case has been handled, prima facie, indicates gross mismanagement. The issue relating to licences of commercial pilots and the proceedings conducted by the acting director general of one of the most important regulatory authorities i.e. the Civil Aviation Authority has profound consequences for the image of the country and the interests of the national airline i.e. Pakistan International Airlines Corporation," the court observed.

The court had summoned the attorney general, but an assistant attorney general appeared before it when the hearing resumed on Tuesday.

At this, Justice Minallah regretted this depicted how the government was being run. He adjourned the hearing till Sept 23 and directed the attorney general to seek instructions from the government since the matter relating to appointment of the CAA director general is of paramount public interest.



# Virgin Atlantic set to launch flights to Pakistan from London and Manchester



Virgin Atlantic is pleased to announce it will be launching flights to Pakistan in December 2020.

Operating three new routes from London Heathrow to Lahore, London Heathrow to Islamabad, as well as from Manchester to Islamabad; these direct flights and new services will go on sale in September 2020 subject to applicable regulatory approvals, and will boast Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class, Premium and Economy Light, Classic and Delight offering.

Pakistan has the seventh largest diaspora in the world and the new services aim to respond to the large, fast-growing demand to visit friends and relatives (VFR) from customers in the UK and the US, as well as capturing demand for business travel to the region as global economies gradually recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adventurous travellers will enjoy the UNESCO sights of Lahore, as well as exploring the foothills of the Karakoram, Hindu Kush and Himalayas mountain ranges outside Islamabad.

The services will offer seamless, speedy connections and a consistent long-haul onboard experience for customers travelling from destinations throughout North America, including New York JFK, Los Angeles, Washington, Boston and San Francisco via London Heathrow onwards to Pakistan. Connections from European destinations will also be available through codeshare and interline partners.

As well as flying customers, Virgin Atlantic will offer a fast, efficient cargo service presenting new opportunities for companies looking to export and import goods such as fresh produce and textiles between prime markets in the UK and US, and Pakistan.

Alison Blackburne, Acting Head of the British High Commission in Pakistan, said:

"Virgin Atlantic starting flights to Pakistan is great news for the hundreds of

thousands of people who regularly travel between our two nations, as well as a boost to UK-Pakistan trade links. We look forward to welcoming Virgin Atlantic to this fantastic country."

Juha Jarvinen, Chief Commercial Officer at Virgin Atlantic commented: "With travel restrictions remaining in place for many destinations around the world, we're continually evaluating our network, looking at customer demand and where there are opportunities to launch new services."

"Pakistan is an extremely exciting opportunity for us it boasts one of the largest foreign-born populations in both the UK and the US and, as people start to travel to visit loved ones, we're anticipating the demand to visit friends and relatives will increase post COVID-



19. Both Lahore and Islamabad are popular year-round destinations and we look forward to welcoming travellers onboard as demand for leisure and business travel gradually increases to the region.

"We also see a significant opportunity to increase competition in the US Pakistan market. Using the strength of our trans-Atlantic services we're able to offer customers the shortest journey to and from destinations in the US such as New York, Los Angeles and Washington by connecting through London Heathrow".

Virgin Atlantic restarted passenger flying on 20th July after a three month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently operating flights to New York JFK, Los Angeles, Hong Kong,

Shanghai, Barbados and Miami with further routes being added throughout September and October.

To ensure the health and safety of customers and crew, Virgin Atlantic is implementing additional measures to offer peace of mind in the airport and when taking to the skies. These include enhanced and thorough cleaning practices at check in, boarding gates and onboard including the use of electrostatic spraying of high-grade disinfectant in all cabins and lavatories before every flight, ensuring no surface is left untouched. Safe distancing will also be adhered to wherever possible, and mask wearing will be required throughout the journey. All customers will be provided with a personal Health Pack for their health and safety, which will contain three medical grade face masks to be worn onboard, surface wipes and hand gel.

The airline is offering a temporary simplified hot food service in all cabins and from October, will be reintroducing special meals catering for individual dietary requirements including Halal, vegetarian, vegan and gluten free. Meals have been redesigned to limit interaction, enclosed and controlled from preparation in a Covid-safe, monitored environment to the moment it is served. Economy and Premium Economy customers will now enjoy a "Fly safe, eat well" meal box, which incorporates a choice of three hot meals, cheese and biscuits and a dessert pot washed down with a selection of beverages. Upper Class customers will receive a choice of three hot meals, desserts, including cheese & biscuits and a ciabatta roll, all delivered to their seat on a tray. All customers will receive a second meal service which, on day flights from the UK, includes the delicious Mile High Tea in collaboration with celebrity pâtissier Eric Lanlard.

Flights to Pakistan are on sale later this year. For further information visit [www.virginatlantic.com](http://www.virginatlantic.com) or call 0844 2092 770.



## **Serene Air announces business class "Serene Plus" Everything you need to know**



**S**erene Air, Pakistan's private airline has officially announced its new business class product, labelled as "Serene Plus". Serene Air is currently the only private airline in Pakistan to offer a business class product.

The airline recently inducted an Airbus A330-200 in a two-class configuration. The aircraft is configured with 275 Economy seats and 24 "Serene Plus" seats. The aircraft will initially fly on domestic routes before starting international flights in October. As the product has not been tested yet, there is no confirmation of the exact seat pitch / details, and whether In-Flight Entertainment will be offered or not. However this should become evident soon when the aircraft starts its flights.

Serene Air is currently offering a whopping 80kg of baggage allowance for passengers travelling on "Serene Plus". That is 50kg more than the standard travel baggage allowance. This will be very useful to travellers relocating from one area to another. Similarly students travelling for education can take good advantage of this offer.

Serene Air announces international flights to start in October

The Airbus A330 will initially perform its first commercial flight from Karachi to Islamabad on 11th September (ER504 ER505). The airline is offering a Serene Plus ticket for around PKR 20,000 one-way, which is a good offer. However it is currently unknown whether it will be regularly flying this route, or whether its a one-off flight.

Will the B737 Get Serene Plus?

Out of the total 5 aircraft in Serene's fleet, only the A330 is configured with

"Serene Plus". It is unlikely that Serene will be reconfiguring the rest of its aircraft with the Serene Plus class. Hence it will be interesting to see how Serene Air manages the premium class tickets on its international flights. In addition, if the aircraft goes out of service due to some reason, will passengers get the extra ticket amount refunded or not?

All in all, a premium product was much needed in Pakistan. Many travellers like to travel in luxury between the cities of Pakistan, and Serene will be providing this opportunity to its passengers for a reasonable price. Serene Air has planned to induct two more A330s soon.

## **Qatar Airways equips its 100th aircraft with high speed internet**



**D**oha-based Qatar Airways has announced that it has equipped its 100th aircraft with high-speed Internet. In a press release issued recently and seen by Simple Flying, the Gulf State carrier says it now offers the largest number of aircraft in Asia fitted with high-speed broadband.

An Airbus A350 is the latest Qatar Airways plane to be fitted with Super WiFi.

Calling the feature "Super WiFi," Qatar Airways claims to have the fastest broadband available in the sky, allowing businessmen to work while in the air. At the same time, other passengers can stream movies or connect with family and friends. Qatar Airways says it offers the fastest broadband connection on any airlines in the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa.

The 100th aircraft to be fitted with Super WiFi was Qatar Airways Airbus A350-900 aircraft registration number A7-ALC. Satellite communications company Inmarsat has provided Qatar Airways with its award-winning GX Aviation technology to be fitted on its

aircraft.

#QatarAirways is celebrating the launch of its 100th aircraft to feature high-speed 'Super Wi-Fi' connectivity, enabling passengers to stay in touch with families, friends and colleagues while on board using the fastest broadband available in the sky. <https://t.co/XVezFWLBtHpic.twitter.com/5OoFaTzy3P>

Since 2018, GX Aviation technology has allowed millions of passengers to surf the web while flying with Qatar Airways. Passengers on flights fitted with Super WiFi can access the Internet free for one hour and have the ability to purchase more time if needed, including Internet access for the entire flight.

When speaking about the introduction of Super WiFi on Qatar Airways 100th Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said:

"As a leader of innovation within the global aviation industry, Qatar Airways already operates one of the youngest and most technologically-advanced fleets in the skies. Where other airlines are reducing their WiFi offering, Qatar Airways is expanding it. "With connection to our loved ones and friends now more important than ever during these challenging times, we are delighted to work with Inmarsat and its GX Aviation technology to bring high-speed Super WiFi broadband to passengers on board our fleet as part of Qatar Airways' Exceptional five-star service."

## **PIA reduces fares from Islamabad to Lahore, Karachi**

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a reduction in fares for its flights from Karachi to Lahore and Islamabad.

A PIA spokesman said the one-way fare from Karachi to Islamabad and Karachi to Lahore will be Rs7,879 with only hand baggage.

However, the fare with 35 kg baggage will be Rs8,543.

PIA operates daily four flights on its Karachi-Islamabad route and two flights on the Karachi-Lahore route.

In July, the PIA had announced a reduction in fares for domestic flights without baggage but later the fares were increased.

The latest fare cuts will remain in force till an indefinite period, said the spokesman.



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## Oman Air to return to flying next month



Oman Air grounded flights earlier this year amid the Covid-19 pandemic

Oman Air will return to scheduled service on October 1st, offering flights to 16 cities in 12 countries.

The airline will connect Muscat with London, Istanbul, Frankfurt, Cairo, Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi, Dubai, Doha, Dar Es Salaam, Zanzibar, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Lahore and Islamabad, with more destinations to be added soon.

Flights to India are subject to Indian authorities lifting restrictions for scheduled international passenger flights.

Scheduled service will also connect Muscat and Khasab in Oman.

The national carrier of the sultanate of Oman will maintain its comprehensive safety program throughout all elements of the travel journey to ensure that guests fly confidently.

Masks are required when guests are on board the aircraft and in airports.

Distancing is maintained while guests board and exit the aircraft, which are carefully cleaned after each flight and at the end of every day.

Cabin crew all wear a full set of personal protective equipment, meal service has been modified to further ensure safety and several other steps have been taken to ensure that guests and crew are always safe.

Requirements for guests who plan to travel to Oman will be announced soon.

## IATA launches new system for air cargo



The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has launched IATA ONE Source, an online platform that helps the air cargo industry match shipping needs with the availability of infrastructure capabilities and certifications of service providers across the value chain. This is particularly timely amid the COVID-19 crisis when shippers of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals need accurate information for time- and temperature-sensitive shipments. ONE Source lists the latest operational information on airlines, airports, cargo handling facilities, freight forwarders, ground handlers, shippers, and trucking companies. All critical information contained on ONE Source has been verified by IATA to help ensure its accuracy. IATA ONE Source is free for all service providers across the air cargo supply chain.

“Air cargo has been essential in the global fight against COVID-19, transporting vital equipment and medicines to those who need them most. However, with over 3,500 differently sized cargo handling facilities worldwide, the industry until now has lacked visibility on the capacities and services these facilities can offer. The need for greater transparency is even more critical in the current context. ONE Source addresses this by providing a single reference point for up-to-date infrastructure and certification data, helping save time and keep air cargo moving,” said Glyn Hughes, IATA's global head of cargo.

The ONE Source platform offers:

- Single source of up-to-date certification and infrastructure data

- Streamlined information per aviation service provider type allowing for direct capability comparison

- ONE Source API providing a direct data feed to company systems.

Increased audit efficiency by complementing risk analysis data for a more accurate evaluation of auditing needs

Reduced audit complexity, focused on Unique Selling Points and security aspects

ONE Source is part of the IATA Smart Facility programme, an initiative to create transparency in cargo handling services and enhance essential cargo operational capabilities to a consistently higher baseline level across the industry.

## Air cargo demand to continue rising, IATA affirms

Global export orders are rising at a substantial rate, prompting to strong cargo volumes and a rise in demand, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) reported on September 9, 2020.

According to IATA's statement, global demand for air cargo was much more robust than air travel, standing at a decreased 13.5% of the year-on-year basis in July 2020. In contrast, the global passenger traffic demand was at a negative 80% in the same period.

While many regional air cargo market segments are rapidly recovering, with North Atlantic being the lowest at a 30% decrease in year-on-year demand, the Pacific market thrives at a positive 3.7% compared to 2019.

The report also shows that both consumer and manufacturer business confidence has been on a rapid rise since the beginning of the summer of 2020. In turn, the number of export orders is increasing sharply, and so is air cargo demand.

At the same time, the analysis reveals that freighters were doing most of the heavy lifting when it came to air cargo transport. Usually, air freighters share a 50% load with widebody passenger aircraft that carry shipments in their belly holds. However, due to the sharp decrease in air traffic demand, air cargo continues to be predominantly transported by freighters.

The rise of cargo-aircraft popularity is further evident by the fact that its utilization rose by almost 2 hours per day since February 2020. This means that freighters are, on average, flown two extra hours per day. For a single aircraft, that is over 700 hours per year.

## US Airports to stop screening international passengers for COVID-19

The United States will stop screening international arrivals for COVID-19 from mid of Sept.. Multiple media outlets are reporting the news. Screening at international arrival points for COVID-19 has occurred since early 2020. But it will end just after midnight on Monday, September 14.



COVID-19 screening is ending at airports across the United States on Monday Sept.14. Photo: Charlotte Douglas International Airport Newsroom

While the United States Government is still to confirm the decision, Yahoo News is reporting that various United States government agencies and their contractors are busy preparing for Monday.

### Screening picking up too few passengers with COVID

To date, inbound arrivals from hot zone countries have been funneled into 15 airports across the United States, including Dallas Fort Worth, Chicago, Boston, Seattle, and San Francisco. COVID-19 screening, which consisted of a temperature check and the recording of health and contact information, was mostly done by American Medical Response, a private Texas-based healthcare provider.

United States government agencies involved include the CDC, DHS, and Customs and Border Protection. A TSA official told CNN that airport screening



was ending because hardly any passengers were raising flags. The screening targeted travelers coming in from China, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Iran, and the Schengen region of Europe.

Since the screening policy came into force, 675,000 arriving passengers have undergone screening. The screening detected just 15 COVID-19 cases.



Airport screening is picking up too few passengers with COVID. Photo: Department of Homeland Security Newsroom

### CDC says screening takes up considerable resources

There is a suggestion that the United States Government is acting on advice from the CDC. According to Reuters, the CDC has drafted a plan that says the agency is;

“... shifting its strategy and prioritizing other public health measures to reduce the risk of travel-related disease transmission.

“The current entry strategy for international arrivals only covers a small portion of the traveling public, requires significant resources and is not sustainable as travel volumes increase.”

While there is some support for the United States Government discontinuing airport screening, there is also criticism that the existing screening was relatively inefficient. Conde Nast Traveller reported last month that not every airport in the United States was screening passengers properly. That report also argues the screening process was too narrow and too slow to get off the ground.

“It has been seven months since the U.S. had its first known case of COVID-19, and travelers continue to report the country's screening procedures pale in comparison to nations abroad.”

## ICAO sees digital innovations helping aviation rebuild and aid sustainability

At the official opening of the final week of the Virtual World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2020 recently, International Civil Aviation



Organisation (ICAO) Secretary General Dr Fang Liu said that information and communications technologies are critical to aviation's role in global UN Sustainable Development Goal attainment and to how air transport will build back better post-COVID-19.

“Increased air transport digitalisation promotes critical efficiencies and capabilities which improve our sector's capabilities as a catalyst for socio-economic and sustainability benefits,” Dr Liu (above) stated. “This is especially relevant given that ICAO-compliant air services and international connectivity are already improving global outcomes toward the achievement of 15 of the 17 SDGs.”

Summarising the devastation COVID-19 is now wreaking on global air connectivity, Dr. Liu also strongly emphasized how digital capabilities will be critical to air transport's post-pandemic recovery.

“Whether we are talking entirely new technologies, or new applications of existing technologies, digital, AR, and AI solutions are now at hand to permit us to pre-screen passengers and cargo more extensively than ever before, for both health and security risks and with greater efficiency and less disruption,” Dr Liu said. “They also provide the foundations for the next generation of autonomous aircraft, drones and the transformations that Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) will lead to in terms of personal mobility, e-commerce, civilian and community services, and many other applications.”

Dr Liu also reiterated that, with innovation and digitization set to play such an important role in how we restart and recover on a more sustainable path, and at an ever-increasing rate, ICAO is embracing it today as never before.

“We're working to achieve greater flexibility, responsiveness, and efficiency where the assessment and rule-making on emerging technologies is concerned, and an important part of my message to you today is that you can count on us to be your committed and effective partner going forward in all things innovation related,” Dr Liu commented. “We have a great deal we can accomplish together, and ICAO will continue to rely on the partnership and vision of the ITU as we progress together toward a greener, more sustainable and more innovative digital future for coming generations.”

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## Airbus and Boeing Jointly demand Advanced Air Traffic Management System



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The two giants of aircraft manufacturing Airbus and Boeing are jointly demanding an improved air traffic management system. Airbus and Boeing are on the same forum to get up to date and modernized Air Traffic Management (ATM) technology. It is evident that in the near future numerous small aircraft will occupy airspaces. In order to cater to that massive air traffic, both the companies have collaborated to write a report demanding advanced systems and technologies.

### Components of the Report

The paper will clearly describe new ATC system requirements for swiftly emerging number of drones, and future air taxis. Officially Airbus has led the entire efforts from the company's side. However, Acubed (Airbus's Silicon Valley-based innovation division) contributed well to Airbus's work on the paper. According to the chief executive of Acubed, this paper writing is a joint effort of Airbus and Boeing. They will release the paper in a week or two whereas it was handed over to ICAO in June 2020. Although, Boeing has not presented its contributions in writing the report. Yet, FAA recognizes the needs and reformations of future airspace and air traffic management. That's the reason, it has been working to show up with an upgraded and delayed, multi-year program known as NextGen.

The report majorly comprises the problem of overcrowded air traffic due to certain spurring actions adopted by

regulators like the FAA. The same airspace will integrate new vehicles in the near future which will introduce complexity to the existing air traffic management system. Additionally, the rapid growth of the drone industry will add a burden to the ongoing air traffic flow management system. Furthermore, air taxis will also occupy skies as a part of the urban air mobility concept. By following this concept, small aircraft will be carrying numerous people above-packed cities for short trips. These are all the factors that will contribute to making airspace more complex to deal with. Hence, the report has covered and addressed these aspects to find out a reasonable security proof solution.

### Contributions of Airbus Towards Managing Future Air Traffic

Through a project known as, "Airbus Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM)", Acubed has been working for an advanced air traffic management technology. This system has manufactured different air traffic simulation tools. Such equipment will allow aircraft to detect collision risks and respond to them automatically. The future technology will enable air traffic controllers to direct aircraft to fly in a particular area, rather continually directing them about their movement. Moreover, airbus' other subsidiary Metron Aviation has helped in developing a vision for future air traffic management systems through participating in NASA's Advanced Air Mobility National Campaign.

## Screening differences across different countries

A regular traveler quoted in the Conde Nast report criticized the United States for relying on an honor system when it came to declaring health information on arrival.

"In Amsterdam, they interrogate you," that traveler said. "They ask where you have been and look up how bad the outbreak is in your area. They took our temperatures and asked if we knew anyone with COVID-19. In the United States, no one asks if you've been around anybody with COVID."

Over the summer, there have been continuing talks between the airlines, government agencies, and health officials regarding a uniform COVID-19 screening process at all airports across the United States. That screening would have targeted all inbound passengers, not just passengers from designated high-risk zones.

Instead of stepping up screening, the United States Government is going in the opposite direction. Scaling down runs counter to what most other countries are doing. It is a high-risk play by the United States. It may turn out to be eminently sensible, or it may not.

## GF ticketing revalidation new policy

Effect from September 1, 2020, Gulf Air will no longer allow Revalidation to any ticket for any scenario-voluntary or involuntary. For any change scenario, ticket re-issuance is mandatory irrespective of any Additional Collection or No Additional Collection. For group PNR's tickets issued by travel agencies with passive segment using GDS other than Sabre; revalidation is permitted to associate a ticket number to group PNR. This revalidation applies only to involuntary changes and must be performed through a GF office. For Any ADC collection and for all other cases, ticket has to be re-issued adhering to the group policy. This even implies for any planned schedule change or cancellation of a flight which occurs more than 24 hours prior to departure that require change at your end. Any ticket requiring to be reissued due to Schedule Change must be endorsed "INVOL DUE SKCHG" as per the instructions from Gulf Air and applicable tariff bulletin.

## US-Israeli delegation lands in Abu Dhabi on first commercial flight

**A** US-Israeli delegation, led by White House adviser Jared Kushner, arrived here on Monday 31 August on the historic first commercial flight from Tel Aviv to mark the normalisation of ties between the Jewish state and the UAE. In another breakthrough, Saudi Arabia allowed the flight to cross its airspace, halving what would otherwise have been a long trip around the Arabian peninsula. 'This is the first time this has ever happened. I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for making that possible,' Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, said on arrival in Abu Dhabi. The word 'peace' was written in Arabic, English and Hebrew on the cockpit of the El Al flight that landed in the Emirates capital, where US flags flew alongside the Star of David banner. The landmark direct flight by Israel's national carrier, numbered LY971 in a nod to the UAE's international dialling code, is due to return on Tuesday Sept. 1st with the number 972, matching Israel's dialling code. 'While this is a historic flight, we hope that it will start an even more historic journey in the Middle East and beyond,' Kushner, a key architect of Trump's Middle East policy, said before boarding. 'The future does not have to be predetermined by the past. This is a very hopeful time.' Kushner urged the Palestinians, who have condemned the UAE deal as a betrayal of their cause, to come to the negotiating table. 'When they are ready, the whole region is very excited to help lift them up and move them forward. But they can't be stuck in the past, they have to come to the table,' he said. The accord was announced by Trump on August 13, making the UAE the first Gulf country and only the third Arab nation to establish relations with Israel. Unlike Egypt, which made peace with its former battlefield enemy in 1979, and Jordan, which followed in 1994, the UAE has never fought a war with Israel. Saudi Arabia next? Gulf Arab nations have had increasingly publicly ties with Israel in recent years, boosted by their shared rivalry with Iran and the advantages of linking their powerful economies. Saudi Arabia, in keeping with decades of policy by most Arab nations, says it will not



normalise ties until Israel has signed a peace deal establishing an independent Palestinian state. But the overflight was a concrete sign of Saudi cooperation with Israel after years of behind-the-scenes overtures.

The plane however skirted the Gulf states of Qatar and Bahrain, who have declined so far to follow the UAE's move. 'Peace is not an empty word used to normalise crimes and oppression,' Saeb Erekat, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, said recently. Peace is the outcome of justice. Peace is not made by denying Palestine's right to exist. Sparks fly The talks in Abu Dhabi aim to boost cooperation between the two regional economic powerhouses in areas including aviation, tourism, trade, health, energy and security. The visit is also expected to include a meeting between Kushner and Israeli and Emirati national security advisers Meir Ben-Shabbat and Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed. Ben-Shabbat, who was also on the flight to the UAE, said the delegation's goal was to make a plan to push ahead relations in a broad range of areas. 'We came here to transform a vision into a reality. There are no limits to cooperation... in education, innovation, health, aviation, agriculture, energy and many other fields, he said in Abu Dhabi. Since the agreement between the UAE and Israel was unveiled, there have been phone

calls between their ministers, and the Emirates in a new milestone repealed a 1972 law boycotting Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking alongside Kushner in Jerusalem, praised 'the swift pace of normalisation' between his country and the UAE. 'You will see how the sparks fly on this. It's already happening,' he said, predicting that 'today's breakthroughs will become tomorrow's norms. It will pave the way for other countries to normalise their ties with Israel. 'There are many more unpublicised meetings with Arab and Muslim leaders to normalise relations with the State of Israel, Netanyahu said, without naming any countries. As part of the normalisation agreement, Israel agreed to suspend its planned annexations in the occupied West Bank, although Net anyahu quickly insisted the plans remained on the table in the long run. The Israeli leader has also denied reports that the accord hinges on the sale of US F-35 stealth fighter jets to the UA E.-AFP linking their powerful economies. Saudi Arabia, in keeping with decades of policy by most Arab nations, says it will not normalise ties until Israel has signed a peace deal establishing an independent Palestinian state. But the overflight was a concrete sign of Saudi cooperation with Israel after years of behind-the-scenes overtures.



## PIA terminates services of 74 employees

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) terminated services of 74 employees on various charges, including submitting fake or tempered degrees, sabotaging company property, taking bribe and for their involvement in theft and smuggling of narcotics, during August.

None of the 74 employees dismissed from service were pilots or crew members. Penalties were imposed on them after they were found guilty by respective inquiries, either conducted by officers or a committee.

A PIA spokesman said the management, however, awarded appreciation letters to 17 employees for showing dedication and commitment and

monetary awards were given to five other employees for working beyond the call of duty.

“Discipline is the most important aspect of any organisation as it binds the employees and motivates them to follow the organisation’s rules and regulations. It is, therefore, important to appreciate hardworking and dedicated employees and punish defaulters found guilty after transparent and unbiased inquiries as per law,” the PIA’s HR department said in a letter to all employees.

Out of 74 employees who were dismissed from the service 27 had submitted fake or tempered degrees and documents, 31 had been absent from duty, four were involved in damaging the

company property, two were found guilty of disclosing official information without authorisation, and three had been dismissed for taking bribe from customers.

Likewise, two employees have been dismissed for getting involved in illegal and immoral acts of omission while one was found guilty of indulgence in alcohol or narcotics, three have been dismissed for theft and destruction of official record and one has been dismissed for involvement in smuggling.

The spokesman said four employees were demoted for disobedience and the increment of six was withheld on charges of violating SOPs.

### Emirates Sky Crgo transports over 10 million mangoes from Pakistan

Emirates Sky Cargo, the freight division of Emirates airline, has transported over 10 million mangoes from Pakistan this season to destinations around the world.

An Emirates spokesman said in a press release recently that Pakistan was regarded as one of the most important producers in the world of mangoes of quality.

Mango, considered the 'king' of fruits, is a specialty export product and makes a major contribution to the national economy.

Despite challenges faced due to Covid-19 epidemic during the export season, Emirates Sky Cargo continued to link local Pakistani businesses and traders to buyers all around the world, the spokesman said.

Pakistani mangoes are popular in North America and Europe, with large quantities of the fruit transported to these regions every year. The main markets where Emirates Sky Cargo transported mangoes from Pakistan this season included the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, France, Singapore, Malaysia and the UAE.

“Pakistan is a major mango producer and we are pleased to offer our cargo services to Pakistani exporters even during these difficult times,” Faisal Yaqoob, Emirates cargo manager in Pakistan, said.

### Notices issued on plea against authorities' failure in providing safe air travel

A two-judge Sindh High Court bench headed by Justice Nadeem Akhtar issued notices to the deputy attorney general, secretary of aviation division, Pakistan International Airlines, the Civil Aviation Authority, a private company, Airbus SE, and the Pakistan Airline Pilots' Association to file their comments on a petition filed against alleged failure of the aviation authorities in providing safe environment to the public travelling by air in the country.

The petition was filed by Public Interest Law Association of Pakistan, in the interest of the public praying, inter alia, for a declaration that the respondents had failed to perform their functions and duties in accordance with the law and national safety standards.

Advocate Amel Khan Kasi, counsel for the petitioner, a public interest litigant organisation, further submitted that more particularly the respondents had failed in providing safe environment to the public at large for traveling by air.

The counsel mentioned that the private respondents Airbus SE and GE Capital Aviation Services LLC had breached their duty of care towards the victims of the Karachi-bound flight PK-

8303, coming from Lahore, and the passengers flying with PIA by negligently entrusting the respondent Pakistan International Airlines with the aircraft manufactured and owned by both the companies, respectively.

The court was also pleaded to restrain the respondents (Airbus SE and GE Capital Aviation Services LLC) not to sell or lease their aircraft to the national flag carrier.

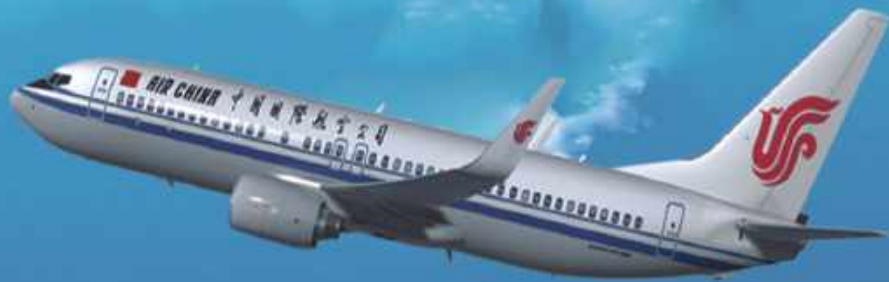
The court was also requested to direct the secretary of aviation division to appraise the court about the status of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority Bill, 2016 with further appropriate directions towards its expeditious enactment by the National Assembly under the Constitution.

A direction was also sought for the aviation secretary and the CAA to place the final reports of all the accidents involving respondent 2, including the ones mentioned in paragraph 7, and flight PK-8303 before the court.

After the initial hearing, the bench issued notices to the secretary of aviation division, PIA, the CAA, Airbus SE and Palpa as well as the deputy attorney general with direction to file their comments before the next date of hearing.



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CA945	北京-伊斯兰堡-卡拉奇 Beijing-Islamabad-Karachi	15:30-18:40-22:25	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	A330-200
CA946	伊斯兰堡-卡拉奇-北京 Islamabad-Karachi-Beijing	20:30-00:05-09:10	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	A330-200



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## Iran says black boxes show pilots alive after missile hit Ukraine jet

The black boxes of a Ukrainian airliner mistakenly downed in Tehran have revealed the pilots were still alive after the first of two missiles hit the plane, Iranian officials said recently.

Flight 752, a Ukraine International Airlines passenger jet, crashed shortly after taking off from Tehran's main airport on January 8.

Iran admitted days later that its forces accidentally shot down the Kiev-bound Boeing 737-800 aircraft, killing all 176 people on board.

Tehran's air defenses had been on high alert at the time in case the US retaliated against Iranian strikes hours earlier on American troops stationed in Iraq.

The head of Iran's civil aviation authority revealed for the first time what was on the black boxes, which had been sent to France for analysis.

Touraj Dehghani Zanganeh said that the cockpit voice recorder registered a conversation between the pilot, co-pilot and an instructor between the two blasts.

"Up to 19 seconds after the first missile exploded in the vicinity of the

aircraft, (they) noticed abnormal conditions and were in control of the aircraft until the last moment," he said, quoted by state television's website.

"The instructor indicates that the aircraft has an electronic problem and the auxiliary power has been activated," he said.

"The pilots were notified that both engines of the aircraft were on." The black boxes stopped working 19 seconds after the first explosion, making it impossible to retrieve data on the impact of the second missile, he said.

Analysis on the "effect of the second missile cannot be obtained from the black boxes," said Zanganeh.

Iran, which has no means of decoding the black boxes, sent them to France for analysis in mid-July, nearly six months after the disaster.

Analysis from the black boxes of a downed Ukrainian passenger plane shows it was hit by two missiles 25 seconds apart and that passengers were still alive for some time after the impact of the first blast, Iran said recently.

The announcement by the head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation marks

the first official report on the contents of the cockpit voice and data recordings, which were sent to France for reading in July.

Tehran has said it accidentally shot down the Ukraine airliner in January at a time of extreme tensions with the United States. All 176 people aboard the plane were killed.

The second missile hit the aircraft 25 seconds after the first, but only 19 seconds of that gap was captured on the recordings because of damage from the first missile, Touraj Dehghani-Zanganeh was cited as saying by state television.

"Nineteen seconds after the first missile hit the plane, the voices of pilots inside the cockpit indicated that the passengers were alive [...] 25 seconds later the second missile hit the plane," he was reported as saying.

"Therefore, no analysis of the performance and effects of the second missile was obtained from the aircraft's black box." The aircraft's flight crew two pilots and an instructor also travelling in the cockpit tried to keep control of the plane until the last moment, Zanganeh said.

## New distribution agreement between SAS and Sabre fairly balances agency and airline interests

SAS, Scandinavia's leading airline, and Sabre Corporation (NASDAQ: SABR), the leading software and technology company that powers the global travel industry, recently announced a new multi-year distribution agreement. Under the new agreement, Sabre-connected agencies can access competitive SAS content through Sabre's marketplace, while SAS will benefit from extensive global reach.

SAS is the main aviation service provider to, from and within Scandinavia, and is a vital part of Scandinavia's infrastructure. The distribution agreement with Sabre allows SAS more control of distribution costs while effectively selling products and services, including ancillaries, to hundreds of thousands of travel agents worldwide.

Sabre's global distribution system (GDS) presents a highly efficient way for airlines to market their fares and offers through a network of agencies and corporations across the world. As consumers are increasingly expecting more personalized, flexible experiences, Sabre's marketplace is continuously

evolving to provide airlines with more sophisticated ways to present diverse offers including branded fares, a la carte ancillaries, bundles, and NDC offers in an easily comparable way at indirect points of sale.

"In an increasingly fragmented industry, travellers are faced with billions of fare combinations per ticket searched, through a huge variety of sources," said Darren Rickey, SVP Regional Sales and Account Management, Sabre. "For the foreseeable future, the various health regulations related to COVID-19 which may differ between destinations and airlines will add another layer of complexity. We are very pleased that SAS recognises the value delivered by our global community of travel agents and buyers. We are looking forward to further improving travellers' experiences while unlocking incremental value for the travel ecosystem."

Sabre recently announced a strategic realignment of its airline

and agency-focused businesses, which will further enable the company to deliver on its promise to retail, distribute and fulfil travel by serving its customers through a collective lens. The technology provider also reaffirmed its commitment to building a marketplace for personalised travel that delivers a better experience to consumers, enables travel intermediaries to provide just the right offers to their customers, and increases value for travel suppliers.



## Advisor to the Prime Minister on trade Abdul Razak Dawood inaugurates new cargo shed at SIAL

**A**dviser to the Prime Minister on Trade, Textile, Industry, Production and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood has said that the business community of Sialkot has served the country and the nation by building a beautiful and functional international airport in the private sector.

The government will use all its resources to make the project more successful. A state-of-the-art scanning machine worth Rs. 300 million will be provided from the Export Development Fund to Sialkot International Airport for immediate inspection of export goods to send abroad. He made the announcement while inaugurating the newly constructed cargo shed at Sialkot International Airport.

Chairman Mian Naeem Javed, Vice Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Afzal Shaheen, former Chairmen Mian Muhammad Riaz, Engr Khawar Anwar Khawaja, Airport Manager Nisar Ahmed, Cargo Terminal Manager Syed Ali Azhar Amir, Manager Airport Handling Services Tariq Mahmood, Public Relations Manager Abdul Shakoor Mirza, Assistant Manager, Customer Services Adnan Hameed Khalil and other airport officials were present. Chief Guest Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood said, "it is a unique example of the business community of Sialkot that it facilitates the government by resolving their own problems". Mr. Dawood said that he would take a personal interest in resolving all the issues facing Sialkot Airport for the betterment of any department working here and the Sialkot administration would be assisted in any way possible.

He further said that in order to improve the condition of all the roads connecting the airport, he would personally talk to Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Ahmed Buzdar and try to improve the road network. On the occasion, Chairman SIAL Mian Naeem Javed said that the government has always cooperated in making Sialkot Airport a successful project. President General Pervez Musharraf had made a historic step by approving it. He will always be



Picture shows Abdul Razak Dawood inaugurates new cargo shed at SIAL alongwith Mian Naeem Javed Chairman, Mr. Afzal Shaheen Vice Chairman, Mian M. Riaz former chairman, Eng. Khawar Anwar Khawaja former chairman SIAL and others.

remembered by the business community of Sialkot and the people of the entire region. Mian Naeem Javed also extended special thanks to Abdul Razak Dawood for playing an important role in the approval of Sialkot Airport. On the occasion, Chairman SIAL also thanked Federal Secretary, Aviation Division Hassan Nasir Jami for getting Sialkot Airport out of its predicament after the Covid-19.

He especially thanked him for

allowing the all airlines to start their flights as before Covid-19 and promised to grant permission for more airlines interested to start flight operations Sialkot Airport. He assured the Federal Adviser that they would continue their efforts to provide the best facilities to passengers as well as the business community throughout the region. The Federal Adviser also visited the Airport Terminal Building and praised its quality. He was also presented with a SIAL shield.



Chairman SIAL Mian Naeem Javed held a meeting with Federal Minister for Trade and Production Mr. Hammad Azhar, Abdul Razak Dawood Advisor to Prime Minister for Trade Investment etc and Mr. Hassan Nasir Jami Federal Secretary of Aviation. Picture shows he is discussing about the Sialkot International Airport present situation.



Chairman SIAL Mian Naeem Javed, Vice Chairman M. Afzal Shaheen, CEO, Babar Iqbal and former Chairman SIAL Eng. Khawar Anwar Khawaja presenting a shield to Vice Chairman Punjab Anti corruption Brgd. (R) Ch. M. Aslam Ghuman.

## Vision Air International signs MoU with SIAL

Chief Executive Officer and Chairman Vision Air International Capt. Aijaz Ali Faizi has said that Sialkot International Airport in the Aviation sector can become a great identity in the world. His organization will make every effort to make it possible.

He expressed these views at the SIAL Secretariat on the signing ceremony of the MOU between Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) and Vision Air International to develop Sialkot, start aircraft repair work here, further improve ground handling services, expand the cargo business and providing training facilities to SIAL staff.

Chairman SIAL Mian Naeem Javed presided over the function. On the occasion, Vice Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Afzal Shaheen, Chief Executive Officer SIAL Babar Iqbal, Executive Director Vision Air Umair Ahsan, Senior Executive Vice President Farrukh Zaheer, Deputy Vice President Kashan Raza, Convener Business Development Committee SIAL Engr Khawar Anwar Khawaja, Naeem Akhtar, Ashfaq Ahmed Chaudhry, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman Air Sial Fazal Jilani, Company Secretary Mohammad Jahangir Khan, Airport Manager Nisar Ahmed, CTM Syed Ali



Captain Aijaz Ali Faizi and Mian Naeem Javed are signing the MoU between Sialkot International Airport Limited and Vision Air International while Chaudhry Muhammad Afzal Shaheen, Babar Iqbal, Umair Ahsan, Farrukh Zaheer, Kashan Raza, Engr Khawar Anwar Khawaja, Naeem Akhtar, Ashfaq Ahmed Chaudhry, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqoob, Fazal Jilani and Nisar Ahmed were also present

Amir Azhar, Business Development Manager Amir Yaqoob and Public Relations Manager Abdul Shakoor Mirza were also present.

Chief Guest Captain Aijaz Ali Faizi said that he was very happy that SIAL and his company were entering a new era in the world of aviation. Sialkot Airport could prove to be a new major route between South East Asian countries and Europe, while the launch of aircraft repairs here could prove to be a great facility for domestic and foreign airline.

Mian Naeem Javed said, "today is an important milestone in the history of Sialkot International Airport. We have been able to use only 20% of this airport. Now we are trying to introduce it to the world in a new way by equipping it with more modern facilities". He hoped that the two companies would work together to make Sialkot Airport an ideal airport. After the ceremony, the participants visited the Terminal Building. SIAL shields were presented to the guests.



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## Virgin Cargo adds Pakistan to its UK flights network

**V**IRGIN Atlantic Cargo is launching three new routes between the UK and Pakistan to capitalise on the growth in bilateral trade worth millions of dollars.

The carrier is to operate flights from London Heathrow to Lahore and Islamabad and from Manchester to Islamabad from December this year, reveals a company statement.

Air cargo customers in Pakistan will benefit from Virgin's "fast connections to prime markets in the USA as well as in Europe and Africa via London Heathrow," the statement notes.

Pakistan imports from the UK grew to US\$699.33 million during 2019, according to the United Nations' COMTRADE database on international trade, whilst UK exports to Pakistan reached \$934.98 million in the same year.

The Asian nation, which is an emerging market with a young and growing population of more than 200 million people, is the second largest economy in south Asia after India, according to the World Bank. Pakistan also harbours a growing middle class population, and an affinity for UK expertise, products and brands, the UK's Department for International Trade, points out.

Britain is currently Pakistan's third largest source of foreign direct investment, after China and the Netherlands.

"There are opportunities for British businesses to benefit by integrating Pakistani firms into their supply chains," the department notes. "Pakistan is keen to expand and diversify its export base and is already competitive in products such as textiles, garments, surgical instruments, steel, and sporting goods," its guidance about Pakistan's trade and exports adds.

Since 20 July, Virgin Atlantic has been ramping up its passenger aircraft belly cargo capacity by resurrecting flights to New York/JFK, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Barbados and Miami, with further routes scheduled to be added throughout next month and October.

Meanwhile, the airline's freight division is continuing to offer cargo-only flights to Atlanta, Brussels, Chicago, Delhi, Dublin, Johannesburg, Lagos, Milan, Mumbai and Tel Aviv.

With regards to the new Pakistan services, Dominic Kennedy, managing director of Virgin Atlantic Cargo, reveals: "The import and export market for goods between the UK and Pakistan is extremely healthy, so we're offering our cargo

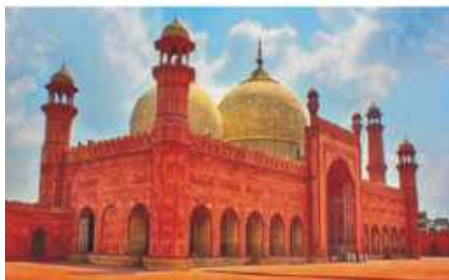
customers another prime route with such positive growth opportunities.

"This is supported by our fast connections over London to Europe, the USA and Africa, and this potential will become even greater as Virgin Atlantic continues to reintroduce more routes and frequencies as part of our COVID recovery plan."

Juha Jarvinen, chief commercial officer at Virgin Atlantic, further explains the Pakistan decision: "With travel restrictions remaining in place for many destinations around the world, we're continually evaluating our network, looking at customer demand and where there are opportunities to launch new services.

"Both Lahore and Islamabad are popular year-round destinations and we look forward to welcoming travellers onboard as demand for leisure and business travel gradually increases to the region. The growth in trade between both countries offers great potential for our cargo customers too."

We're thrilled to announce that from December, we'll be flying direct to Pakistan. We'll have flights from @HeathrowAirport to both Lahore and Islamabad, plus direct services from @manairport to Islamabad. Flights go on sale in September.



## GCC logistics industry assessment 2020

**T**he "Digitalization, Infrastructure, and Connectivity Set to Transform the GCC Logistics Industry, 2020" report has been added to ResearchAndMarkets.com's offering.

The logistics industry in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region is evolving rapidly driven by increasing non-oil sector contribution to GDP, infrastructure development, the emergence of free trade zones and industrial parks and increased trade cooperation.

Governments in the region have undertaken policy measures to reduce their dependency on oil exports by strengthening economic diversification initiatives, tax reforms, improving the investment climate, and increasing investment in food security and encouraging private sector participation. The region's geographical location on the trans-continental trade has facilitated its focus on the development of logistics hubs for both domestic and transit goods.

Stringent containment measures to arrest the spread of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) have resulted in a sharp decline in economic and trade activities. Some of these measures include the imposition of travel restrictions, border closures, and lockdowns which have impacted freight capacity and flow of goods in the GCC region. The region is anticipated to see a contraction in the first two quarters of 2020. As the curfews and lockdowns are relaxed, trade activities are expected to pick up in the second half of 2020.

During the rebound phase from the pandemic, digital transformation initiatives are likely to be undertaken in the region with the support of government initiatives which call for the application of digital technologies in both government and private sectors. United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are likely to emerge as front runners in technology adoption in the areas of customs clearance and port terminal operations. The logistics start-up ecosystem has benefited from government initiatives, increased internet penetration, and mobile technologies. Modern warehouses are becoming automated with more use of robotics, and companies are experimenting with the use of autonomous vehicles and drones for efficient and faster last-mile deliveries.

## PK 8303- where were the safety nets?



Technical Safety Issues from the Past

Aviation is considered to be the safest mode of travel among all modes of travel based upon the mortality rate. By virtue of the complexity of operations involved during aviation flying, safety is always put on the top of the checklist of every aviation organization.

There were days when aircraft accidents used to occur frequently and there was a reason for that. Earlier, the safety systems were not defined properly and so much was evolving at the same time. The earlier approach in the aviation history was reactive as people knew little and they used to react to the situations accordingly. At that time, technology was raw and most of the accidents were attributed to technology. The trend continued till the 50's when man started improving the technology.

### Safety Started Evolving



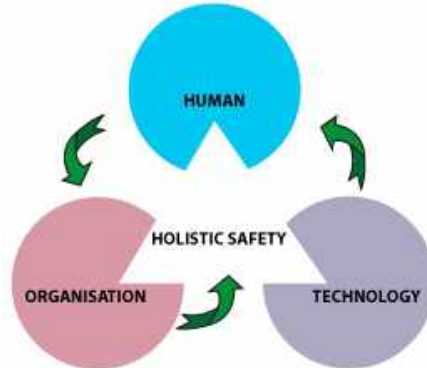
Safety Management

The era from 50's to 90's witnessed a paradigm shift when technology grew astronomically. The concept of safety improved with better investigations models. No wonder, technology made things easier but human was, and still remains the weakest link in any chain of events. As technology outsmarted the humans, human error cases started taking their toll. It was the time when people realized that humans have high tendencies of committing mistakes if not contained on time. With improvements in the areas of investigations, the need of a Safety Management System (SMS) came that finally materialized in 2013. All commercial airlines are now bound to have a Safety Management System within their organizations.

### Safety Nets

Safety Management System brought the

concept of safety nets. The aim of these nets was to contain errors and violations in the systems to improve the safety standards of aviation industry. A typical holistic approach in aviation safety runs along three sides of a triangle where humans are at one corner. Technology on the second corner, and organization at the third corner of the triangle.



### Holistic Safety Approach What About PK-8303?

Aircraft systems, Trainings, Safety systems; all have matured. We have come out of the times of blaming humans or technology. Things have changed now. In the present day safety concepts, any occurrence or accident attributable to human error is to be blamed on the organization, not the individual(s) involved. It is the organization that fails to monitor the deviations. Most of the times, those deviations are accepted as a norm. Such norms become the cultures of the organizations.

It is not blaming the Pilot or the Air Traffic Controller. It's about questioning the organizations involved whom these people belonged. The safety nets in these organizations failed to identify deviations on the part of those humans. If the organizations do not monitor, identify and curb such unacceptable tendencies among the personnel; be it a pilot, maintenance engineer, air traffic controller or any person directly or indirectly involved with the aircraft, then the losses are catastrophic and that's what happened in the case of PK-8303.

It must be borne in mind that accidents do not occur in isolation. The last pin is nailed in the coffin when all the safety nets fail. Last minute actions in the cockpit of PK-8303 suggest that such procedural violations must have occurred earlier as well but somehow got managed by the aircrew. It can also be inferred that such close calls, even reported after flight, were never taken seriously by these organizations, not for the purpose of

penalization but improvement.

Like in the past accidents in Pakistan, this time, again, Safety remained confined to the pages with no effective implementation. Frequency of air accidents in Pakistan in the recent years is the clear depiction of an ineffective implementation of the State Safety Program, as well as for the independent Safety Management Systems of the local operators.

### What is Needed in Future?

The crash of PK-8303 is a sheer outcome of an organizational failure. Safety is a culture. What is needed in future is about maintaining a strong monitoring control through State Safety Program (SSP) and Safety Management System (SMS) Program respectively. There is also a need of an effective reporting and follow up system by the Safety and Quality Departments in order to identify and contain the undesired human deviations through effective safety nets at each and every level of the regulatory and operating organizations.

## Boeing 737 MAX takes first EASA test flight

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has started test flights of the Boeing 737 MAX. The agency is already the third authority to conduct a series of tests on the aircraft, following the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Transport Canada. The test findings of European regulator will have a very significant value in 737 MAX's recertification process as a number of European air carriers have the grounded 737 MAXs in their fleet.

A 737 MAX has flown to Vancouver to perform a set of test flights scheduled by the EASA. The aircraft, registered as N7201S, departed from Seattle's Boeing Field (BFI) at 08:11 on September 8, 2020 and landed in Vancouver (YVR) at 08:41 on the same day, as recorded by FlightRadar24.com.

The same aircraft has already performed a set of flights for the Canadian authority's review from August 27, 2020 as well as completed the FAA's tests on June 1, 2020.

During the latest EASA's test flight, numbered as BOE701, which lasted for 30 minutes, the aircraft climbed up to 15,600 ft and reached a maximum ground speed of 357 knots just as the descent started.



## Aviation Division told to file 2016 ATR crash report by Oct 15

The Sindh High Court on Tuesday Sept 8 sought the report of the Aircraft Accident and Investigation Board (AAIB) by Oct 15 regarding the 2016 ATR aircraft crash,

A two-judge bench headed by Justice Mohammad Ali Mazhar observed that in case of a further delay in submission of the report, the secretary of the aviation division would be summoned for an explanation.

When the matter came up for hearing on Tuesday Sept 7, the deputy attorney general along with an official of the aviation division submitted a statement and mentioned certain reasons for the delay in the investigation report of the ATR crash and sought 45 days for completion of investigation and submission of the report.

The aviation division in the statement stated that the final draft of the investigation report of PK-661 was sent to the accredited representative including the Bureau of Enquiry and Analysis for Civil Aviation Safety (BEA) of France, Transportation Safety Board (TSB) of Canada and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) of the USA in May in accordance with the international obligations on all the signatory states to the ICAO convention.

After completion of two months to review the draft, the AAIB received the responses from the BEA and TSB in July, but the scope of participation of the NTSB was complicated and additionally there were several restrictions on working and travelling due to Covid-19, thus response from the NTSB was delayed and received last month, it maintained.

It further said that all the responses required reconciliation on few technical findings and relevant recommendations of the report and sought further time.

The petition was filed after an Islamabad-bound flight of Pakistan International Airlines had crashed near

Abbottabad after it took off from Chitral on December 7, 2016 in which 42 passengers and crew, including singer-turned-preacher Junaid Jamshed and his wife, lost their lives.

Impleading the PIA, CAA and others as respondents, the petitioner argued that there were various incidents where ATR planes of PIA had crashed in which a large number of precious lives were lost and pleaded for a judicial inquiry to fix responsibility on the officials responsible for it, prosecute them and order compensation to the legal heirs of the victims.

## Pakistan Navy frigate launching ceremony held in China

The launching ceremony for the first ship of Type-054 class frigate constructed for Pakistan Navy was held at the Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard Shanghai, China, on Sunday August 23.

According to reports reaching here, the ceremony was graced by Commodore Azfar Humayun (Chief Naval Overseer, China) as the chief guest in the presence of China Shipbuilding Trading Co, Ltd. (CSTC) Chairman, Li Hongtao.

The launching event was hailed as a milestone in the construction of the state of the art frigate for Pakistan Navy. The Type-054 class, fitted with latest surface, subsurface, anti-air weapons, combat management system and sensors, will be one of the technologically-advanced surface platforms of the Pakistan Navy Fleet.

These ships will significantly contribute to peace and security in Pakistan's area of responsibility.

Earlier, while addressing the ceremony, the chief guest termed the event a new chapter in Pakistan-China defense relationship.

He also acknowledged the commitment and dedication of the Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, China and the inexorable support provided by CSTC for the continuity of programme despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ceremony was also attended by officials of Pakistan Navy and CSTC/Hudong Shipyard.

## Three CAA officials sacked over licence Scandal

The aviation authorities probing allegations of suspicious licences of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) pilots and involvement of some officials of the Civil Aviation Authority in the scandal have sacked three CAA officials, while the fourth one obtained a stay order from a court.

A senior official told media that initially five officials of the aviation and licensing branch had been suspended and show-cause notices issued to them for their alleged involvement in the scandal, and later three of them had been removed after the completion of the process.

Of the three, two senior officials were dismissed by the CAA director general, while the third one, a junior officer, was removed by an additional director. Of the five suspended officials, two were senior joint directors (licensing), an HR senior superintendent and two assistants.

The Aviation Division had sent the cases of the five CAA officials to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for criminal inquiry against them. However, the FIA had yet to complete the inquiry against them, sources said.

The authorities, meanwhile, have completed the verification of licences of 262 pilots from their personal manual data and will present a report in a cabinet meeting. These pilots have been categorised by the aviation authorities as some of them may face cancellation of their flying licences and some may be cleared. They also included those who had committed 'rest times' violations.

In June this year, Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan had disclosed in parliament that out of 850 pilots, 262 were holding 'suspicious' licences. The minister's statement had caused panic in aviation circles, leading to grounding of 262 pilots.

A five-member committee had been constituted by the Aviation Division to investigate the cases of pilots' licences and provided fresh lists of pilots of the PIA, Serene Air and Airblue after making some corrections in their names and reference numbers.

## NA panel calls for thorough probe into Karachi air crash

The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat has called for a thorough investigation into the crash of Pakistan International Airlines A-320 plane in Karachi to ascertain real causes behind the incident which claimed 97 precious lives.

The committee, during a meeting held recently, observed that the incident took place despite reported unquestionable airworthiness of the plane and experience of the pilots; therefore, its reasons should be identified to avoid re-occurrence of such incidents.

The committee was informed that a 12-member investigation team, including aviation experts, representatives of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), PIA and Boeing company and a psychologist, had conducted examination of the debris of the aircraft and recording of conversation of the pilots with the control tower in the black box during the course of investigation.

The preliminary investigation revealed that airworthiness of the aircraft was unquestionable, the weather was favorable, the pilot and the co-pilot were experienced, but there were quite a few deviations by the pilot and the air traffic controller from the prescribed procedures, the committee was told.

Aviation Division Secretary Hassan Nasir Jamy informed the panel that the inquiry into the tragic incident would be completed within eight to 10 months and its report would be presented to the committee.

Initial report finds human error on part of pilots, ATC officials in PIA crash: aviation minister

Taking up the issue of suspension of PIA flights to Europe, including the United Kingdom, the panel directed the authorities concerned to pursue the resumption of flights to Europe with the European and British airspace authorities.

The committee was apprised that PIA flights to European destinations and UK were discontinued over five different issues related to safety management of aircraft and passengers.

A PIA representative informed the committee that the objections of the European and UK authorities had been addressed; however, the flights would be resumed on clearance by the European and UK airspace agencies.

The official said that keeping in view

the problems faced by the Pakistani diaspora and foreign nationals intending to travel to Pakistan by PIA, alternative arrangements had been made on a code sharing basis. He said that code sharing agreements had been made with Etihad Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Pegasus Airlines.

The committee was also apprised about the dubious licences of PIA pilots or pilots carrying licences issued by the CAA.

The committee observed that the case had brought disgrace to the country, besides putting a question mark on the veracity of all licences issue by the CAA. The panel members observed that none of the officials of the CAA had been held responsible for issuing dubious licences.

The committee asked the Aviation Division to complete the inquiry so that the officials responsible for issuing dubious licences could be identified and taken to task.

The committee was informed that a Board of Inquiry had been constituted to investigate violations/malpractices observed in issuance of flight crew licences and in the light of the finding of the board, 28 licences had been cancelled and 193 suspended, apart from referring the case to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for an inquiry.

"The FIA has made considerable progress in the inquiry into pilots' suspicious licences since July 24," the aviation secretary said and added: "Serious violations of flight duty time limitations have been noticed by the Board of Inquiry."

The aviation secretary said the CAA had verified/cleared 200 licences of Pakistani pilots whose names were received from civil aviation authorities of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Ethiopia, the UAE, Vietnam, Bahrain, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

The committee was also briefed on

the plan for bifurcation of the Civil Aviation Authority. The aviation secretary said the authority at present was performing its functions as a regulatory and service provider agency and after the implementation of bifurcation plan, two

separate entities would be established. He said a law in this regard would be presented before parliament within two months.

Referring to alleged mismanagement in recruitment in the CAA and the Airport Security Force, MNA Ali Nawaz Awan suggested formation of an "internal grievance cell" to make the officials concerned answerable on public complaints.

MNA Mohsin Dawar suggested calling a joint meeting of the CAA and PIA to resolve major issues as they blamed each other.

The committee meeting was presided over by MNA Kishwer Zahra and attended by Muhammad Aslam Khan, Uzma Riaz, Rana Iradat Sharif Khan, Shahnaz Saleem Malik, Naeema Mohiuddin Jameeli, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, Syed Mehmood Shah and senior officials of the Aviation Division and Airport Security Force.

## China's biggest airshow will go ahead in November

China's International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, the country's biggest airshow, will go ahead in November, the organizer said, backtracking on an earlier announcement the 2020 event had been canceled due to COVID-19.

The biennial event usually draws key suppliers such as Airbus, Boeing and Commercial Aircraft Corp of China and has traditionally been used by Beijing to show off its growing aviation capability, such as military fighters and drones.





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## A formidable bloc to be

Prof. Safdar Sandal

Indian isolation and a new regional order in South and Central Asian Region (CARs) is, in the offing. It will have global repercussions unequivocally. Under BJP rule, India has shown lack of strategies or divine spark for which its diplomacy was always famous for. Today, under Hindutva government, New Delhi has isolated itself in the region and in pursuit of catching American eyes has distanced itself from its close allies Russia and recently betrothed Iran. The term Hindutva is an alternative used to signify a variety of the concepts such as 'Hindu Nationalism', 'Hindu Supremasim' and 'Brahmanism'. These self-imposed complexes and racial anatomy is bound to decipher as these are against the norms of a civilized society. It has started to make dents in the literate part of the Indian people too. Its strategic importance due its geography and due its neo-colonial mindset and its military haughtiness but in-capability, has come on the shore. It has treated with Kashmir in the same manner; it had dismantled Babri masjid in Ayodhya. Kashmir is not Ayodhya; it must have been realized.

In my last article, I had dwelt on growing cooperation between Iran and China, when some details were yet to come on board. Now, the 'New York Times', in its July 11.2020 edition has revealed some details of the undergoing China-Iran twenty-five-year comprehensive strategic partnership's final draft. Earlier Iran's foreign minister Javed Zarif presented this historic understanding in the Iranian Parliament (Majlis). He there disclosed that a decision to this effect had earlier been taken in January 2016 when President Xi Jinping had visited Iran. According to the initial report, the 18 page draft outline identifies nearly a hundred different projects between the two countries, ranging from building the Iranian infrastructure, like airports, subways and high speed trains for development of trade-free zones, and up-gradation of the

telecommunications network, and many more allied subjects. The opening lines of the proposed draft signify the vastness of this understanding.

It states, "Two ancient Asian cultures, partners in the sectors of trade, economy, politics, culture and security with a similar



outlook and many mutual bilateral and multilateral interests will consider one-another as strategic partners".

Before examining the implications of this agreement on regional and global geo-strategic alignments, it is important to review its key points: First, the deal is worth 400billion USD: of which \$280 is expected to be spent by China on Iran's energy sector, while \$120 to be reserved for industry and transportation development. Second, the agreement is likely to address Iran's economic problems, especially unemployment, which it faced because of the American sanctions, after unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by the Trump administration, commonly known as 'Iran Nuclear Deal'. Third, Iran will supply oil to China at a special discount price, for 25 years, thus fulfilling the energy needs of China. Fourth, under the same plan, China is likely to introduce a new digital

currency called "e-RMB", which will be able to counter the monopoly of the US Dollar in the international economic system, sidelining the American-sanction-regime. Fifth, the benefits of this strategic agreement would not be limited to China and Iran, but will extend to the whole region, as it would be the first Asian alliance of its nature. At this juncture I would like my readers to note the difference of Chinese investment in Pakistan-related projects being of 62 billion USD, as compared to the 400

billion USD in Iranian projects. The deal displays the vastness of the cooperation and its political impacts. Pakistan is supposed to benefit again from this huge investment, indirectly.

The strategic nature and permanence of this agreement have alarmed the United States, in particular, who finds this as an unforeseen alliance and as a stepping stone for China's growing influence in the Persian Gulf Region. In the concerned quarters of Washington-DC, this closeness is clearly visualized as a challenge to US strategic and economic monopoly in the Gulf and wider Middle East region. Under the circumstances, the only option left for Iran was to ally with a powerful state having a potential to sidetrack the worse effects of the US sanctions. On its part, the emerging



economic and industrial prowess of China has shown its ability to ensure security for Iran and create a balance of power in the tense region of the gulf. All these goals are achievable through a long-term, mutually beneficial Iran-China partnership. It is important to note that the effects of this agreement will not be limited to only these two countries but much more beyond. China's ingress into Iran was always on the cards.

India has since been unceremoniously ousted from Iran, its Chaubahar Port and other projects. Its nefarious efforts to bypass Pakistan to reach Afghanistan and the CARs have been summarily smothered. India has lost its firmest base in the Greater Middle East Region (GEMER). Its relation with Iran has been sacrificed at the altar of the embryonic Indo-US strategic partnership, drastically curtailing its sphere of influence and power-projection-potential. Ironically China, its nemesis, is most effectively replacing it.

As for Pakistan, before assessing the ramifications of the Sino partnership, it is important to glance at the background of Pakistan-Chinese close ties. In the 1950s after its independence, when China was struggling to establish its place in the regional and global environment, Pakistan decided to establish good relations with emerging China, even though Pakistan was committed in the Western camp and a member of the 'SEATO' (and later CENTO which were US sponsored defense pacts). The purpose of this organization was to prevent communism from gaining ground in the region. Although Pakistan was an ardent member of this arrangement against communism and some clauses of this treaty explicitly stated that it is an alliance to deal with Chinese military threat. At this point and time, Pakistan took the courage to categorically make its position clear in a documented 'SEATO' meeting that although Pakistan was a member of this arrangement but it does not consider itself as antagonistic towards China, its immediate neighbour. This gesture was welcomed, in a speech by the legendary Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. Since then, the relations between the two countries have been more than cordial, despite US obstacles, directly or maneuvered through its policies of the Gulf.

Pakistan and China are partners in the "CPEC", another long term strategic partnership, and Chinese close ties with Iran would provide a tactical shield to Pakistan's strategic and economic interests, strengthening still further if Pakistan's all-weather ally Turkey joins in this situation. Ties with Iran and Turkey will bounce back, like in the RCD-era

albeit the intervening bad tastes in the good relationship of Pakistan and Iran mainly created by India, and are now poised to recover for good. Prime Minister Imran Khan remarked in a recent TV interview, "We should be clear that our future is with China". He went on further to say that Pakistan is lucky to have China as our friend, as on all occasions it has stood by us, while the others shied away. To be sure in the near future, China, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey would form a formidable regional- strategic understanding. The hitherto spoiled by

India; the sour country Afghanistan will also see reason and will tie itself with the string of friendship though feared by me, to be at the fag end. Ungrateful as it is, despite Pakistan having sheltered over four million Afghanistan refugees for the last forty years. More important are neighboring 'Central Asian States' who have a rich Muslim heritage and with whom Pakistan has enjoyed kinship-like relations due past common history, will not stay away from this invincible bloc to be.. (China, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Iran Make a Perfect Alliance).

## **Pakistan, China agree to boost industrial cooperation under CPEC**

**P**akistan and China recently agreed to elevate the memorandum of understanding on industrial cooperation to the framework agreement under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to realise the vision for development of special economic zones (SEZs).

Speaking at a consultative forum on draft framework agreement on industrial cooperation, Board of Investment Chairman Atif R. Bokhari said that the first phase of CPEC required leading role of the government, while the second phase requires a 180-degree shift in management and roles.

"It calls for enhanced role of industrialists, private sector, and business community, while the government's role would only be that of a facilitator by devising effective policies, laws and efficient infrastructure, to facilitate business-to-business and people-to-people linkages", Bokhari said.

He explained that the draft framework agreement on industrial cooperation is being aligned with the long-term CPEC framework. "A world of opportunities will open up by setting the fundamentals of industrial cooperation under the CPEC and it is high time for all of us to tap the right opportunities at the right time," he affirmed.

Bokhari said significant progress has been achieved on development and colonization of the SEZs in the last few months wherein four CPEC SEZs at Rashakai in Khyber- Pakhtunkhwa, Dhabeji in Sindh, M-3 Allama Iqbal in Punjab, and Bostan in Balochistan are now in advance stage of development.

The geographic proximity between China and Pakistan will allow these zones to foster economic interdependence for

mutual economic advantage, he added.

The framework is being developed with a special focus to enhance industrial competitiveness of Pakistan, ensure technology transfer, relocate Chinese businesses and skill development and labour productivity.

The modus operandi of the cooperation would likely enhance business-to-business and project-to-project ties ensuring projectised mode of medium- and long-term projects in industrial cooperation, balance and modernise existing industry, make joint efforts to expedite SEZ development and promotion, seek technical and financial assistance from China, enhance production capacity, facilitate businesses by financial institutions from both sides and ensure joint marketing and media efforts to promote industrial cooperation and SEZs.

BOI Secretary Fareena Mazhar, while highlighting board's role as lead agency for industrial cooperation under CPEC, shared the corridor's journey and its future action plan, conceived for its second phase that includes development of SEZs, agricultural cooperation, relocation of Chinese industries into Pakistan, public private partnerships for business prospects and creation of vocational training and employment opportunities.

She said that Pakistan and China have agreed to elevate the MoU on industrial cooperation into a framework agreement focusing on SEZs development of SEZs and B2B joint ventures as core elements of industrial cooperation under CPEC. Serious efforts for provision of gas and electricity are underway to ensure these basic utilities are provided at zones, she said.

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## Parties vow to ensure CPEC progress, guard it against threats

Leading political parties on Thursday Aug. 20 vowed to ensure a conducive political environment and favourable public opinion for the progress and development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), besides shielding it from threats.

The political parties at the conclusion of the Second Conference of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Political Parties Joint Consultation Mechanism (JCM), through a joint statement, denounced the “slander on and disturbance in CPEC development by external forces” and pledged to “shape and safeguard the enabling political environment and favourable public opinion for CPEC development”.

The JCM was organised by the International Department of Communist Party of China (CPC) in collaboration with the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) on the theme of 'Working Together to Promote Economic Development and Improve People's Lives Through High-Quality CPEC Cooperation'.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani and Chinese Minister of the International Department of CPC Song Tao co-chaired the online session.

The virtual consultations were participated in by nine Pakistani political parties: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakistan Peoples Party, Balochistan Awami Party, National Party, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, Awami National Party, Jamaat-i-Islami, and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party. Senior government officials and representatives of the business community of the two countries also participated in the conference.

President Arif Alvi, in a message to the conference, reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support to One China policy and said Islamabad opposed any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of China with regard to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Mr Song appreciated the political consensus and noted that party-to-party cooperation between China and Pakistan was increasing as CPEC moved into a new phase.

Senator Sanjrani said that Senate would play a greater role in taking forward the consensus of political parties and delivering political support for more cooperation between the two countries under CPEC.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Mushahid

Hussain Sayed, who is also the founding chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI), said: “Pakistan fully supports China in the defence of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, rejects politicising of the pandemic, appreciates China's positive role, and rejects the notion of a new cold war. Both countries support each other's core interests.”

He referred to the presence in China of a high-level civil-military delegation led by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said that the resilient nature of Pakistan-China friendship and CPEC could be gauged from the fact that it survived even the Covid-19 pandemic and became stronger.

Executive Director of PCI Mustafa Hyder Sayed called for a 'Health Silk Road' in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic and criticised West's double standards on issues relating to China.

Speaking on the occasion, PPP's Parliamentary Leader in Senate Senator Sherry Rehman said that national unity in the country was need of the hour for CPEC to thrive and prosper.

She said that all provinces must be on the same page when it came to the greater good of the country and all of them must be included by the planning ministry in their roadmap project every day.

“The CPEC goes beyond partisan politics for us, and we are all united around one fundamental truth: In a world defined by unexpected conflicts and challenges, the CPEC is the economic stabiliser that can steer Pakistan into the 21st century and become a connected highway to the future,” the PPP leader said.

Lauding President Xi Jinping's vision, she said: “We at the PPP pay particular tribute to President Xi's vision of the Belt and Road Initiative, under which China is stepping up to take global responsibility for global goals based on a dream of mutual growth and shared prosperity. China, under President Xi, has entered a new phase of taking up a global role. In this awakening of the dragon through a transformational vision, we appreciate that the CPEC is the poster-child of the Belt and Road Initiative, holding in its vision a potential new future for Pakistan in multiple possibilities that deepen both economic and political ties between China and Pakistan.”

“Pakistan and PPP support One China policy and the sovereignty and continual

growth of China. As we see China's investments power their way through the jugular vein of CPEC, it is a matter of both responsibility and pride that makes me say that the PPP is fully committed to realising the dream of this great platform connecting the two countries. This vision is now shared and will be carried forward by PPP under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's leadership,” Ms Rehman said while highlighting PPP's commitment towards CPEC.

“Close interactions between our two parties are a strong testimony to the dynamism of inter-party cooperation in driving CPEC forward. Over the years, the PPP government in Sindh has worked closely with Chinese officials and investors in facilitating projects, people-to-people relationships, cultural exchanges, and most importantly in ensuring the security of all those involved in CPEC projects. As part of our history of joint cooperation, PPP looks forward to continuing to work closely with local and Chinese stakeholders, including from Jiangxi province, in achieving our common goals and interests for the betterment of our people and the region.

“With employment opportunities an integral part of the CPEC dream, almost 1.1 million people can come out of the poverty trap in Pakistan. Better transport infrastructure will help Pakistan increase trade. It has been forecast that Pakistan's trade can increase by 9.8 per cent if it implements reforms well in addition to transport infrastructure under CPEC.

“The project will create nearly 700,000 new jobs and add up to 2.5pc to Pakistan's annual growth rate. Not to forget, the implementation of SEZs can also revolutionise the job sector and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship, which can be the key sector to accommodate the youth bulge as more than 60pc of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30,” the PPP senator said while highlighting the benefits of CPEC for Pakistan.

Discussing changes brought about by global warming, she said: “We hope that the Chinese government can bring the clean energy initiatives they have enforced at home, to Pakistan. It is our responsibility to ensure that we are doing the best we can to protect the environment. Together, we must move towards eco-friendly, sustainable and renewable energy sources.



## Pakistan should benefit from emergency trade relaxations

The country should take full benefit of the relaxations under arrangement of special and emergency clauses allowed by the global trading system under World Trade Organisation, said Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Vice President Sheikh Sultan Rehman.

Speaking at a webinar on "Covid-19: Trade and Trade Related Measures", he said that the trade and trade facilitated allowances should also be capitalised for making appropriate pressure on public sector to structure the temporary policies towards the gain economy in the present crisis generated by declining world trade due to the pandemic.

He said that successful temporary policies may eventually convert into permanent ones for time to come to conduct global trade.

Sohail Hanif, Joint Economic Adviser Ministry of Finance, said the government is endeavouring to make fiscal adjustments through the Federal Board of Revenue as well as providing budget lines for tax refunds as well as being engaged in convincing the State Bank to take appropriate measures for reducing the cost of exports and domestic commerce.

The participants included from finance, commerce ministries, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Applied Economic Research Center and trade bodies.

## Exports to EU under GSP+ rise 3.3pc

Pakistan's exports to the European Union (EU) increased by 3.3 per cent under the generalised system of preferences plus (GSP+) scheme, a report produced by the Democracy Report International and European Commission showed on Friday 28 of Aug.

Before the GSP+ scheme, Pakistan's exports to 28-member union stood at €4.54 billion in 2013, which jumped to €5.51bn in 2014. In the second year of the

GSP+ scheme, exports further jumped by 10pc to €6.09bn.

Since 2016, exports proceeds have stagnated at €6.30bn at 2016, €6.69bn in 2017 and €6.88bn in 2018.

Of the €6.739bn exports to the EU in 2018, Pakistan was able to avail tariff concessions on €5.885bn. From 2013 to 2019, Pakistan was able to considerably enhance its exports to the EU with an increase of 65pc.

The findings were reported by the 'EU's GSP+ Assessment Report 2020: How has Pakistan progressed in its compliance?'

The European Commission inked a law in 2013 allowing Pakistan the GSP+ status under which exporters will be exempted tax on certain categories of goods exported to the EU.

The preferential scheme is conditional on implementing international conventions on human and labour rights, and freedom of speech in Pakistan. The current EU report states that some provinces have demonstrated an improvement in compliance with labour conventions, yet much of the issues reported in its 2018 report not addressed by 2020.

Weak occupational safety can be attributed to weak labour inspections. Low numbers of labour inspection officers and lack of training and capacity affect law enforcement. Freedom of association and collective bargaining is an issue which the EU noted as having 'limited progress'. This, like occupational safety, had also been mentioned in the EU's previous report.

Pakistan ranks 8th in 167 countries by the global slavery index ranking and classified as one of the worst countries in terms of its government response. The EU report uses strong language while describing the lack of compliance with the abolition of forced labour and states that despite existing laws "the issue is that of non-implementation and is rooted in either political unwillingness or inability to implement the law."

The EU suggests "more industrial and economic zones need to be initiated in the country to address increasing bondage labour, as the higher number industrial zones can reduce the chances of the forced labour."

The data on female workforce participation and remuneration for Pakistan reflects a dismal situation. The 2018 Labour Force Survey shows less than 15pc participant rate of women in the labour market as compared to 46pc for men. Added to this is discrimination towards women in terms of their representation in high skilled occupations and positions of senior management.

The report praised merger of the

Former Federal Administered Tribal Areas as part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the extension of the High Court and the Pakistan Supreme Court, representation for former FATA residents at the federal Parliament and in the KP Assembly.

However, there is also mention that these developments have been undermined by the passage of the KP Action (in aid of civil power) Ordinance, 2019, which allows the military in the merged districts to detain without reason or the need to produce arrested individuals at a court of law, which the report recognises as 'serious concern'.

Freedom of expression was cited as restrictive in Pakistan's 2018 Universal Period Review, same as in 2017 report. In its report in 2020, the EU again repeats its call to improve freedom of expression, as stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Restrictions on freedom of expression only increased during the reporting period with curbs of broadcasting, self-censorship by journalists and disruption to the distribution of a national newspaper.

## Mango exports exceed target

Pakistan exported 125,000 tonnes of mango well above the 80,000 export target set for 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic fetching the country \$72 million in foreign exchange.

Highlighting that the country exported 45,000 tonnes above the set target, All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters, Importers and Merchants Association (PFVA) Patron-in-Chief Waheed Ahmed anticipated that within the next one-and-a-half month, an additional 25,000 tonnes of mangoes would be exported before the season ends.

The country exported 130,000 tonnes of mangoes in 2019. Waheed said that during the current season, mango production fell by 35 per cent, bringing the volume to 1.3 million tonnes compared to last year's 1.8m tonnes.

The PFVA head termed the current mango season as one of the most difficult seasons in the history of exports due to the challenges posed by coronavirus.

He noted that exporters moved to sea and land routes for shipments after airlines shutdown flight operations due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns globally.

Afghanistan emerged as one of the top countries which imported Pakistani mangoes while United Arab Emirates, Iran and Oman proved to be major international markets.

## Textile exports jump 14.4pc in July

Pakistan's textile and clothing exports revived in July increasing 14.4 per cent year-on-year to \$1.272 billion compared to \$1.112bn in the corresponding month of last year, data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics showed recently.

The easing of lockdown in the North American and European countries top export destinations for Pakistani textile goods will help revive the sinking exports. The Covid-19 has collapsed the demand for country's exports during the last four months.

However, there has been a revival in international orders for Pakistani products since June whereas exports through land routes were also allowed to Iran and Afghanistan. It was only in February when the textile and clothing exports jumped nearly 17pc on a year-on-year basis. This growth was reported after a long time as the past few years had been marred by single-digit increases.

Details showed ready-made garments exports jumped by 18.04pc in value and drifted much lower in quantity by 32.82pc during July, while those of knitwear edged up 20.42pc in value and 14.49pc in quantity, bed wear posted positive growth of 25.30pc in value and 6.36pc in quantity.

Towel exports increased by 21.40pc in value and 26.98pc in quantity, whereas those of cotton cloth rose 1.15pc in value and dipped by 22.31pc in quantity.

The government lifted the ban on exports of seven products classified as personal protective equipment (PPE) in a bid to allow manufacturers to honor international orders.

Exporters are receiving inquiries about PPEs from foreign buyers as government allowed exports of disposable gowns, disposable gloves, face shields, biohazard bags, goggles, shoe covers and hand sanitisers with immediate effect.

Previously, the government allowed exports of textile masks as well. The

cabinet is expected to allow export of surgical mask and N-95.

Among primary commodities, cotton yarn exports dipped by 37.88pc, while yarn other than cotton by 47.53pc. However, export of made-up articles excluding towels surged by 26.04pc, and tents, canvas and tarpaulin increased by a massive 155.86pc during the month under review. The export of raw cotton declined by 100pc during the month under review.

The import of textile machinery dropped by 33.91pc during the first month of current fiscal year a sign that no expansion or modernisation projects were taken up by the textile industry during the month.

The country's textile and clothing exports posted a negative growth of over 6pc year-on-year to \$12.526bn in the fiscal year 2019-20 compared to \$13.327bn in the corresponding period last year.

## UK seeks to 'clarify' Brexit divorce deal, angers EU

Britain said on Monday Sept. 7 it was seeking to "clarify" key parts of its EU divorce deal just as Brexit trade talks reached a crucial final stage, triggering warnings that it risks damaging its international reputation.

Alarm bells rang in Brussels after reports that Prime Minister Boris Johnson was planning new legislation that would override parts of the Withdrawal Agreement treaty he signed last year.

The Financial Times said a bill to be put before parliament this week would undermine agreements relating to Northern Ireland customs and state aid.

Under the protocol, Northern Ireland, which will have Britain's only land border with the EU, will follow some of the bloc's rules to ensure the frontier remains open.

Eliminating border checks with the Republic of Ireland was a key part of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended 30 years of violence over British rule in the province.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said Britain was legally obliged to implement the Withdrawal Agreement, which would form the basis of future relations.

"Everything that has been signed must be respected," the EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier added, promising to quiz his UK counterpart, David Frost, about the plans when they

resume talks.

In Ireland, Foreign Minister Simon Coveney cautioned the UK: "This would be a very unwise way to proceed."

Johnson's spokesman confirmed the government was taking "limited and reasonable steps to clarify specific elements of the Northern Ireland protocol in domestic law".

The move was designed to "remove any ambiguity and to ensure the government is always able to deliver on its commitments to the people of Northern Ireland", he told reporters.

Portraying the changes as technical tweaks, he added that the government remained "fully committed" to the Withdrawal Agreement and the Good Friday peace accord. But it provoked an angry backlash in Dublin and Belfast, where the prospect of a potential "hard border" is a reminder of "The Troubles".

Jitters were also felt on the currency market, where the pound slid against the dollar and euro on fears of a "no-deal".

Sinn Fein president Mary Lou McDonald said the UK would show "total disregard for the lives and concern of the people of Ireland" if it backtracked on the Withdrawal Agreement. Sinn Fein and other pro-EU parties in Northern Ireland said in a joint statement that any change by Britain would be a "serious betrayal".

Johnson earlier said an EU summit on October 15 was the ultimate deadline for

any free-trade deal to be in place by January 1 next year.

"If we can't agree by then, then I do not see that there will be a free-trade agreement between us, and we should both accept that and move on," he said, vowing no compromise on Britain's fundamental interests.

Ireland's deputy prime minister Leo Varadkar said the increased rhetoric from London and Brussels was inevitable "sabre-rattling" and "posturing" as the deadline approached.

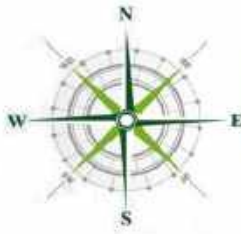
Talks have been deadlocked over key issues such as the extent of EU access to UK fishing waters, state aid and fair competition rules.

Brussels has already indicated that mid-October is the latest a deal could be struck, given the need for translation and ratification by the European Parliament.

But if the deadline passes, Johnson said Britain would have an "Australia-style" deal with the EU or one similar to that agreed with Canada and other countries.

"As we have said right from the start, that would be a good outcome for the United Kingdom," he said.

Britain formally left the 27-member bloc on January 31 but remains bound by EU rules until the end of December while it tries to thrash out new terms of its relationship.



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## Enemy can't defeat a nation united in purpose: PM



Members of the Pakistan Air Force march past the mausoleum of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah during a Defence and Martyrs' Day ceremony on Sunday Sept. 6.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, while recollecting his memories of the 1965 war, said on Sunday Sept 5 that the whole nation had stood resolutely as one against the enemy.

The prime minister said in a message on Twitter that no enemy could defeat a nation so united in purpose. He further stressed that such a spirit was needed today to make Jinnah's Pakistan.

The prime minister used his Twitter handle to reflect on the occasion as the whole nation was observing the Defence and Martyrs' Day to pay homage to the 1965 war heroes who had laid down their lives and the war veterans who valiantly defended the country during the 1965 war.

"As we pay homage to our war heroes today, I still recall, as a 13 yr (years) old, the 1965 war vividly. Can never forget the unity when nation stood resolutely as one against the enemy. No enemy can defeat a nation so united in purpose. It's this spirit we need today to make Jinnah's Pak," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Sunday Sept. 6 paid glowing tributes to the martyrs who lost their lives in the line of duty.

In a video message on the occasion of Defence and Martyrs' Day, the minister said that the nation saluted the martyrs and 'Ghazis' who gave supreme sacrifices for the protection, defence and security of the motherland.

"Today, we also renew our pledge and commitment that Pakistan stands firm with its Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to do so," he said, adding that Prime Minister Imran Khan would continue to advocate the Kashmir cause at every forum and Pakistan would continue its political, diplomatic and moral support.

## Events held to celebrate Defence Day



FIGHTERS put on display at the Archives Gallery of the PAF Museum

The 55th Defence Day of Pakistan, celebrated and commemorated every year with much fervour on Sept 6, started with the change of guard ceremony at the Mazar-i-Quaid early in the morning.

Every year on this day, a contingent of cadets from the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Academy Risalpur Asghar Khan, assumes the guard duties at the mausoleum of the Father of the Nation Mohammad Ali Jinnah. This year the contingent of 46 also included three women cadets.

Air Vice Marshal Shakeel Ghazanfar SI(M), Air Officer Commanding, PAF Academy Asghar Khan was the chief guest at the ceremony. He also laid a wreath at the grave of the Father of the Nation.

At PAF Museum

At the Archives Gallery of the PAF Museum, there were three fighters prominently placed right in the middle of the floor 0151 the F-86 Sabre, the F-104 or the Star Fighter and the Indian Gnat. All of these fighter jets are especially significant on the Defence Day of Pakistan.

It was M.M. Alam, one of Pakistan's finest fighter pilots, who destroyed five Indian jets during the 1965 war, in the very single-seater F-86 Sabre now on display at the gallery. The aircraft was also accompanied with a statue of the decorated pilot. Alam shot down four of those five enemy jets within 30 seconds of his mission on Sept 7. The great pilot throughout his career downed some nine Indian fighter aircraft. Other than the nine destroyed, he also managed to damage two more Indian jets, a record which remains unbeaten to date. For his courage and valour, he was decorated with the Sitara-i-Jurat twice.

The other aircraft, the F-104 Star Fighter, also proved extremely useful in the 1965 war. It was this plane that forced an Indian Gnat to surrender and land near Sialkot at Pasrur during the war. The Gnat was also placed nearby as a war trophy. It

was on September 3, 1965 that two Star Fighters flown by Flt Lt Hakimullah and Flg Off Abbas Mirza took off from Sargoha to intercept four Indian Gnats as a result of which one Gnat was made to surrender and force land at Pasrur. There was also a picture of the captured Indian pilot of the time, Sqn Ldr Brij Pal Singh, who later rose to be an air marshal in the

Indian Air Force.

Team Cyclogists

Also in commemoration of Pakistan's Defence Day, Pakistan Maritime Museum hosted a group of cyclists, known as Cyclogists, to pay their tribute to the martyrs and acknowledge the contributions of defence services provided by our military forces.

Team Cyclogists had arranged a 30-kilometre-long cycle ride to honour and inspire the masses and to stir in them the spirit of patriotism. The cycling ride started immediately after dawn from Delawala Clifton with over 70 male and female cyclists of different ages moving in the form of a procession through Sharea Faisal before turning towards Karsaz to the Pakistan Maritime Museum.

The cyclists gathered at the propeller roundabout, a prominent landmark of this museum. Entering the museum area, they witnessed a formal flag hoisting ceremony at 8am by Commodore Jamil Akhter SI (M), the director general at the museum with the museum staff. The cyclists sang the national anthem with full enthusiasm and paid their respects to the military who selflessly served the country before leaving the venue chanting slogans of Pakistan Zindabad!

Song and film releases

Meanwhile, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) awakened the spirit of patriotism in the entire nation with the 4.15-minute-long release of a remake of an old patriotic song from the late 1970s and '80s called 'Har Ghari Tayyar Kamran Hain Hum' sung by Ali Hamza, Ali Azmat, Ali Noor and Asim Azhar.

Not forgetting the ongoing fight being put up by the front-line warriors of Pakistan, the doctors and healthcare workers of the country, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the ISPR also released a, 11.15-minute video package to pay a special and touching tribute to them called 'Sarfarosh'.

## A bird's eye view of the deterioration of education in Pakistan

By: Prof. Karamat Rajput

Having acquired my Master's Degree in Pol. Sc. from the Punjab University in 1968, I started looking for some respectable job. I had never wanted to be a teacher at school, instead, I was agog to find a teaching job for me in a college. I had many good reasons to be a teacher. For instance, doing so, I wanted to pay regards to my teachers who really had edified me. Another reason was that I used to give tuitions to students at their homes to earn money for my higher education. So, I had a bit of experience in this trade.

Although I did get opportunities to join Army, banks or in such other high-profile institutions but my inner aptitude convinced me to serve the cause of Education. It was my good luck to be inducted in Islamia College, M.A Jinnah Road, Karachi as lecturer in 1969.

I've a sharp memory & as such, I can recall my school days since I was a student of class IV. I had always been among the top students. I always chose for me such subjects that interested me only for the reason that I had to put in very little efforts to get better results. I knew the art of convincing my theory examiners.

I started learning English as usual in class VI. I remember, I always preferred to write my own translations rather than learning by heart.

Keeping aside my early five years, I can say that I have been in educational activities for seventy years. I've my own assessment of our education system to which you may not agree. Briefly, I rank this system a wastage or rather a complete wreckage.

We, unfortunately, have manifold system of education in Pakistan which is based on economic-class-system. There are strong reasons for this classified system of education. The top most among the reasons is the insincerity of the ruling class. Initially, this insincerity was not intentional as it is now. It is really sad that this corrupt system is based on the theory of Elite & Subject Class.

There are three beneficiaries of Ruling class in Pakistan. They are Bureaucrats; Politicians & Armed Forces. They are righteously called the Elite Class who are roughly 2% of the total population. The rest of the citizens who are 98% are their subjects.

As such, there are four slots of job. First three slots belong to the elite class. The present & the future aspirants from elite class get their education either abroad or in their affiliated campuses in Pakistan. They differ in habits, etiquettes & personality from their subjects as much

as the Brahmins differ from the Shooders in Hinduism. The families of the subject class have been pushed into civil & social worries by the above said elite class deliberately to keep them away from ruling circles.

All this fuss is based on the outcome of multi standard system of education. Time has elapsed when a son of a poor man reached Civil Services of Pakistan.

Doubts are often closest to realities. I reckon that the selection boards to pick candidate to fill vacancies in the top slots are not more than puppets whose strings are systematically controlled by the ruling class. Time would perhaps never come when there would be one education system for all classes.

All members of the ruling class, without exception, plunder money assuming that doing so, is their right. Nation, on the other hand, is plunging nose down into debt.

Our fault education system is a strong source of this classified society. The only way to undo the money-oriented society thus, lies in implementing one system of education, with one syllabus for all with sincerity & commitment.

### IMPACTS OF NATIONALIZATION

Another source that brought disaster to education is the Nationalization of private institutions. This policy made the teachers & the parents feel financially comfortable. The Govt charged Rs 20/= per month as tuition fee. Almost every student turned to the coaching centres. Beside providing skilful teachers, they also offered co-education system.

The students could afford tuition fee of the coaching centers as they paid a meager amount of Rs 20.00 per month to the regular nationalized & Govt colleges. Beside teaching in Govt/ nationalized institutions, some teachers worked either in coaching centres or in Private colleges too. This caused mass exodus of students to coaching centres from Govt & Nationalized colleges.

Another factor that made students to stay away from colleges was act of terrorism by various groups of students in the colleges. Leaving the talent aside, the teachers were appointed on political grounds.

On the other hand, several ghost teachers were inducted in the fold which became a source of earning black money for the high ups of education officers. So the deterioration of education at Govt & Nationalized colleges spread by leaps & bounds.

*(To be continued in the next issue)*

## Pakistan Navy celebrates Defence Day with resources Metro Karachi

The Pakistan Navy on Sunday Sept. 6 celebrated the 55th anniversary of Defence and Martyrs' Day with reverence and effervescent spirit.

The Navy said in a statement that the day was observed "to commemorate sacrifices of our armed forces, shuhada, ghazis and national heroes, who stood against the enemy with unparalleled display of unity and tenacity during 1965 Indo-Pak War".

In his message on the occasion, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi paid homage to the shuhada and ghazis who remained undeterred by the size of the enemy and foiled its nefarious designs with grit, courage and honour.

"On this day, the nation acknowledges the sacrifices of its gallant and resilient soldiers, sailors and airmen who defended the ideological and geographical frontiers of their motherland," he said, adding that Pakistan Navy was fully capable and prepared to give a befitting response to any misadventure by the enemy across the entire spectrum of maritime threat.

The admiral said: "This day being a symbol of courage, resolve, sacrifice and national integrity demands a pledge to work selflessly and to adhere resolutely to the Quaid's great principles by anchoring strong faith in God."

The day dawned with special prayers offered in all naval mosques for preservation of integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan. Quran Khawani was held for interminable peace of the martyrs of the 1965 war.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi laid floral wreath at Shuhada's Monument at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad, interacted with the families of the martyred and offered Fateha.

Wreath-laying ceremonies were held and prayers were offered at Shuhada's memorials at the Field Command Headquarters.

Flag-hoisting ceremonies were held at all naval units and establishments where commanding officers of all units and establishments addressed special gatherings of officers and men and highlighted the significance of the day.



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## Riding the waves



The monsoon season in Pakistan brings not only rain relief from the scorching sun, it also brings wild waves for extreme surfing. From May to October, the shallow sandy beaches and rolling waves of Pakistan's coastline from Sandspit, Hawke's Bay, French Beach and Abdul Rahman Goth, all the way up to the Balochistan coast past Mubarak Village and Bhit Khorri, including Gadani, Kund Malir, Ormara, Pasni and right up to Gwadar offer many good surfing spots, beckoning the surfer to ride the waves.

Surfing is a difficult skill to learn but, once one is booked on to it, there is no turning back. With around 35 million active surfers all over the world, surfing can no longer be called a small sport. It is also an Olympic sport. In this part of the world, especially in coastal countries such as Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Iran and Oman, it has only recently started becoming popular.

Sadly in Pakistan, despite the enormous potential, the sport is practically non-existent except for the local beach villagers, who are pretty much born to surf the waves, and a single surfing school.

Like it is for all sports here, surfing also needs government patronage, but our dilemma is that tourism is a provincial subject and, unfortunately, the governments of Sindh and Balochistan, which have the coastline for it, lack the capacity to facilitate water sports and maritime tourism. The general lack of adventurism in our people is another major reason for our lagging behind in the sport in our region.

Now the central government is trying to develop maritime tourism.

One step is to set up water sports centres, including facilities for surfing. Another is to form a surfing federation, opening more surfing schools, training the local fishing community to surf and teach surfing (thereby increasing employment opportunities as well), sponsoring and popularising surfers and

media coverage and promotion of the sport.

All these small steps can raise a community of at least 500 die-hard surfers within three to four years.

This trajectory adopted by regional countries has given them a headstart over Pakistan. Iran has a surfing school run by a woman and, in the Maldives, nearly 100 per cent of the girls know how to swim. Why not in Pakistan? Shaykh Hashim Ahmad grew up in the hometown of surfing in California in the 1960s, and it was natural that he should be riding the waves in his neighbourhood of Santa Monica. When he moved to Karachi in the 1980s, he brought along his surfboards with him.

Last year, when he saw some young boys surfing at French Beach, he was inspired to come out of a long hiatus, when he realised there was not a single surfing school or coaching facility here. He set up his Darul Khair Surf School at Hawke's Bay to open up healthy recreational avenues for the youth and to create awareness about the eco-environment of our polluted sea and shores.

If you are a new surfer just starting out, you will have to find someone who can teach you the ropes,' says Ahmad.

Also, to be a good surfer, you first have to be a good swimmer. But the problem is that most Pakistanis don't know how to swim. Safety is essential. Never go into the water unless you know what you are doing, and unless you know that you can get back out on your own speed, he cautions.

Pakistan could be considered a new surfing frontier, because of the superb waves here that roll in from May until October, and sometimes even up to November,' he points out.

Some collaboration from the private sector can help with this initiative. Along the end of Mauripur Road at Machli Chorangi, there is a low-lying area, which could be ideal for developing a surf park and salt-water swimming zone.

## Rome beach awaits baby turtle hatching



The nesting site where baby turtles are expected to hatch from their eggs to make their way out to the Mediterranean Sea.

A loggerhead sea turtle has buried its eggs in the sands of a popular beach near Rome, the first time one has travelled this far north up the Italian peninsula to hatch its offspring.

Beach-goers have been gathering around the fence of a marked-off area waiting for the baby turtles to emerge.

The loggerhead sea turtles are endangered species that live in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea.

They usually nest in southern Italy but since 2016 they have gradually made their way up through the peninsula.

"We learned that no turtles have ever laid eggs here, so this is a new nesting site," TartaLazio environmental expert Elena Santini said on the beach of Torvaianica.

Santini said the turtles' choice to move north was mainly due to rising sea temperatures. There was no direct evidence of a relationship between their presence on the beach, south of Rome, and the quietness during the Covid-19 lockdown, she said.

Over the night of June 22 and morning of June 23, Daniele Masano, a member of the Italian coast guard, filmed the moment when the turtle came to the beach to lay and bury its eggs.

The eggs could number up to 100 and are expected to hatch after about 50 days and beach-goers are eager to see the baby turtles.

"We come here every day, we hope it's the right day and that the eggs hatch, at least we can see the baby turtles," Rome resident Elena Bondi said.

## Turkey to convert another museum into mosque



A priest and a woman visit the Kariye Museum, formerly the Church of the Holy Saviour, in the Fatih district recently.

**T**urkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan recently ordered another ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum to be turned back into a place of Muslim worship.

The decision to transform the Kariye Museum into a mosque came just a month after a similar conversion for the Unesco World Heritage-recognised Hagia Sophia.

The moves have added to Turkey's problems with prelates in both the Orthodox and Catholic worlds.

The Greek foreign ministry called the decision "yet another provocation against religious persons everywhere" by the Turkish government.

The 1,000-year-old Kariye building's history closely mirrors that of the Hagia Sophia its bigger and more famous neighbour on the western bank of the Golden Horn estuary on the European side of Istanbul.

The Holy Saviour in Chora was a Byzantine church decorated with 14th-century frescoes of the Last Judgement that remain treasured in Christendom. It was originally converted into the Kariye Mosque half a century after the 1453 conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks.

It became the Kariye Museum after World War II as Turkey pushed ahead with the creation of a more secular new republic out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

A group of American art historians then helped restore the original church's mosaics and opened them up for public display in 1958.

But Erdogan is placing an ever-greater political emphasis on the battles that resulted in the defeat of Byzantium by the Ottomans.

"It's a place steeped in history which holds a lot of symbolism for a lot of different people," said 48-year-old French

tourist Frederic Sicard outside the building. "For me, (these conversions) are a little difficult to understand and to follow. But we would visit if it were a mosque. We might just have to arrange visits around prayer times."

## Taj Mahal to reopen then as virus rages in India



Visitors will be limited to 5,000 a day, down from the usual daily average of 20,000.

**I**ndia's top tourist attraction the Taj Mahal is set to reopen more than six months after it was shut, officials said on Tuesday Sept. 8, even as the vast nation battles soaring coronavirus infections.

India, home to 1.3 billion people, on Monday Sept. 7 overtook Brazil to become the world's second most-infected nation with more than 4.2 million cases, behind only the United States.

"The Taj Mahal will reopen on Sept 21. All Covid-19 protocols, like physical distancing, masks will be followed," northern Uttar Pradesh state's Tourism Department deputy director Amit Srivastava said.

Visitors will be limited to 5,000 a day, down from the usual daily average of 20,000, he added.

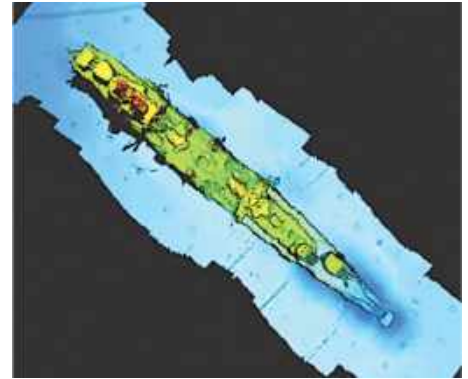
One of the New Seven Wonders of the World, the shining marble mausoleum south of the capital New Delhi has been closed since mid-March as part of India's strict virus lockdown.

Uttar Pradesh, home to Agra city where the Taj is located, is one of the worst-hit states in India with more than 270,000 virus cases recorded so far.

India has pushed ahead with reopening to boost its virus-battered economy even as infections have steadily increased.

Since August, India has been reporting the highest single-day rises in the world.

## Sunken German world war two battleship found of Norway



A sonar scan of sunken German WWII warship cruiser Karlsruhe, after it was observed 13 nautical miles from this city in Norway.

**T**he wreckage of a major German warship has been discovered off the coast of Norway some 80 years after it was sunk in a World War Two battle, Norwegian power grid operator Statnett and a maritime archaeologist said.

Identified this year from images and sonar scans of its hull and of details such as the position of gun turrets, the cruiser Karlsruhe was first detected in 2017 just 15 metres (50 feet) from a subsea power cable that has been operating since 1977.

Built in the 1920s, the ship was later fitted with a Nazi-era swastika that was also captured in subsea images taken by Statnett and its partners, and first televised by Norwegian public broadcaster NRK.

The 174-metre vessel, part of the German force that invaded Norway in April 1940, was struck by a British submarine torpedo shortly after starting its return voyage from the southern Norwegian port of Kristiansand.

The ship's crew subsequently evacuated and the vessel was finally sunk by the Germans themselves, resting upright on the seabed at a depth of 490 metres, some 13 nautical miles (24 kilometres) off the coast.

"You can find Karlsruhe's fate in history books, but no one has known exactly where the ship sunk," Norwegian Maritime Museum archaeologist and researcher Frode Kvaloe said.

Statnett said its subsea power cable, which connects Norway with Denmark, would have been laid further away from the wreckage if its location had been known at the time of construction.



## **PATA Gold Award winners to be announced live during Virtual PTM 2020**

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) will be announcing the PATA Gold Awards 2020 live during Virtual PTM 2020.

Supported and sponsored since 1995 by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), this year's awards will recognise the achievements of 21 Gold Awards and three Grand Title Winners during the Online PATA Gold Awards Presentation on Thursday, September 24.

The PATA Gold Awards 2020 attracted 121 entries from 62 organisations and individuals worldwide. The winners will be selected by an independent judging committee of 16 personalities from various destinations.

Ms Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of MGTO, said, "I am looking forward to present live the awards to the winners of this year's edition. The spirit of innovation acknowledged by the PATA Gold Awards is more than ever in high demand, as we are called to unite and revive the industry, amid the unprecedented global disruption brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a tourism city, Macao is proud to continue its long-standing support to PATA, helping to bring to the limelight some of the very best practices in our industry."

"The winners of the PATA Gold Awards set industry standards for excellence and innovation, and provides the Association with the perfect opportunity to recognise and reward the very best the Asia Pacific travel industry has to offer. I encourage all industry stakeholders to join us in celebrating the achievements of all the winners. I am truly excited to see who will be this year's winners and wish all submissions the best of luck," said PATA CEO Dr. Mario Hardy. "Furthermore, we are sincerely grateful to MGTO for once again sponsoring the PATA Gold Awards and for their continued commitment to a responsible and sustainable tourism industry."

PATA will present 21 Gold Awards and three Grand Title Winners for best of show entries in the following broad categories: Marketing, Sustainability and Human Capital Development. This year, PATA has enhanced the PATA Gold Awards by introducing several new categories in order to reinforce its position as an innovative and prestigious award for the Asia Pacific travel and tourism industry. New categories include Climate Change Initiative, Tourism for All, and

Youth Empowerment Initiative.

Virtual PTM is a business-to-business travel contracting and virtual networking event that both mirrors and enhances the features of the long-standing PTM, which boasts over four decades of experience in connecting qualified international buyers and sellers from all of Asia and the Pacific region through pre-matched business appointments.

Virtual PTM is being organised in conjunction with the Sichuan International Travel Expo with the support of the Leshan Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism Bureau and is powered by official virtual partner Dragon Trail Interactive.

For more information or to register for the Online PATA Gold Awards Presentation, visit [www.PATA.org/ptm](http://www.PATA.org/ptm) or email [ptm@PATA.org](mailto:ptm@PATA.org)

## **Tourism lost \$320bn in pandemic: UN**

The tourism global industry has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, with \$320 billion lost in exports in the first five months of the year and more than 120 million jobs at risk, the UN chief said.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a policy briefing and video address that tourism is the third-largest export sector of the global economy, behind fuels and chemicals, and in 2019 it accounted for seven per cent of global trade.

It employs one in every 10 people on Earth and provides livelihoods to hundreds of millions more, he said.

In addition to boosting economies, "it allows people to experience some of the world's cultural and natural riches and brings people closer to each other, highlighting our common humanity, he said.

But the UN chief said that in the first five months of 2020, because of the pandemic, international tourist arrivals decreased by more than half and earnings plummeted.

Guterres said this has been a major shock for richer developed nations but for developing countries, it is an emergency, particularly for many small island developing states and African countries.-

## **Ferry service for pilgrims approved**

The federal cabinet on Tuesday Sept. 8 gave approval to the launching of a ferry service for pilgrims (Zaireen and Hujjaj) to provide them an affordable travel facility.

Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Zaidi termed the cabinet's decision a historic one, saying: "Maritime frontiers (of Pakistan) are now open for sea travel."

"The federal cabinet has approved launching of a ferry service for Zaireen," Information Minister Shibli Faraz said in his post-cabinet meeting press conference.

He said all necessary facilities immigration and customs would be provided to passengers at Port Qasim, Karachi, and Gwadar.

Ali Zaidi, in a tweet, said: "In pursuance of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of blue economy, the federal cabinet has allowed the initiative to start ferry/passenger ships to all possible destinations across the world."

Responding to a query, Shibli Faraz said there was no opposition to the ferry service in the cabinet and the decision was taken through a majority vote.

However, a participant of the meeting, who did not want to be named, told media that defence authorities had some reservations as they wanted the service to be initially confined to local ports and Muscat.

On the other hand, the maritime ministry's proposal said it had prepared a feasibility to launch the service not only for the Middle East but other destinations as well.

Mr Zaidi had last year hinted about launching the ferry service to provide economical transport to pilgrims going to Saudi Arabia for Haj and Umrah.

He had said that ferry and passenger ship services required NOC from the defence ministry and his ministry had applied for the service.

The minister hoped that Haj, Umrah and pilgrimages to the middle-eastern countries could become economical through this service.

He said the government would welcome the private sector to operate such services including the one for pilgrims going to Iraq.



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## Launch of steam safari train to boost tourism in KP

Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has approved the launch of historic steam safari train service to boost tourism in the province.

This decision was made in a meeting chaired by the chief minister and attended by relevant officials, said a statement issued here.

According to the statement, the secretary of sports, tourism and culture department, Mohammad Abid Majeed, said that the steam safari train would chug on two rail routes to take tourists and passengers to the two historical destinations. He said that on one route, the steam safari would take tourists from Peshawar to Attock Khurd while on the other route it would take passengers from the provincial capital to the historic sites in Takht Bhai.

Mr Majeed said that work on the two rail routes would be carried out by the newly-established Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority in collaboration with the Pakistan Railways.

He said that tangible steps were being taken for the promotion of heritage tourism in the province to create employment opportunities for the youth and generate revenue.

Khyber steam safari to Landi Kotal was one of the main attractions in the province and former Fata for foreign and domestic tourists for decades. However, it was stopped many years ago and the track was never used since then. It could not be revived during last many years due to terrorism in the region.

Later, the tourism department launched steam safari train to Attock Khurd, located in Attock district of Punjab province.

Attock Khurd houses the historical Attock Fort built by Mughal King Akbar in 1581. Bahram Ki Baradari is another Mughal-era monument situated on the southern side of G T Road near Attock Khurd. Currently two bridges on the track in Khyber remained destroyed and authorities will have to reconstruct them before revival of the steam safari to Landi Kotal. Because of these reasons, the safari steam is now being introduced to Attock and Takht Bhai.

Peshawar to Attock Khurd trip's distance is 184 kilometres from both sides and one side travel takes around 90 minutes. The second route round trip is around 162 kilometres. Mr Majeed said that the activity was aimed at reviving train trips to historical sites such as Attock Khurd, Attock Bridge, Attock Fort, Indus

River, Takht Bhai Buddhist archaeological site and raising awareness about tourism among the people and building a baseline for the domestic tourism.

He said that as part of the joyride, the tourists would be amused with live instrumental music on the joyful excursion. Besides traditional rabab mangay, games and traditional foods, a number of fun-filled recreational activities and competitions like kite flying, camel ride, tug-of-war, uphill race, archery and taking selfies would also be arranged at the river bank.

## Lockdown badly affects tourism industry in Swat

Speakers at a training session here recently said that tourism industry was badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic during the five-month lockdown in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The training session and awareness campaign on standard operating procedure for tourism was organised by directorate of tourism services. The director general of the directorate, Ghulam Saeed, the general manager of tourism corporation, Sajjad Hameed, officials of district administration, Rescue 1122, police and Levies, hotel owners and managers attended the session.

Trainer of the session Dr Ziaullah said that tourism industry was the backbone of Swat's economy. "Tourism and hospitality sector is one of the most important not only for Swat but for the entire province. Unfortunately, during the Covid-19 pandemic the sector received heavy losses," he added.

He said that about 56,000 people lost jobs owing to closure of tourism industry in the province. He said that government reopened the tourism industry and now it was the reasonability of tourists as well as hotel staff to follow the guidelines and SOPs to stop spread of Covid-19.

Haji Zahid Khan, the president of All Swat Hotel Association, said that tourism industry received heavy losses during the past few years. "We received huge losses first during the militancy, then during the floods and now due to the pandemic. Hotel owners suffered Rs7 billion losses and more than 25,000 families were affected owing to closure of hotels," he added.

that the government must come up with financial solution and other benefits to the hotel industry.

Ghulam Saeed Khan said that promotion of tourism was top priority of the government for which several projects were initiated. "To promote tourism in a true sense, the government has launched Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development Project. Apart from that several other schemes have been launched to explore new tourist sites in KP," he added.

He said that government assessed losses of hotel industry during the lockdown. "Initially, hotel and restaurant owners, travel and tourism agents will be compensated in different means," he said, adding that matching grants would be awarded to them against their losses through Smeda.

## Trial for double-decker bus service conducted



A test run of the double-decker bus is being carried out on Murree Road in Islamabad. The bus service is being launched to promote tourist sites in the twin cities.

A test trial for the double-decker bus service was conducted recently in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The Tourism Development Corporation Punjab (TDCP) will operate two such buses from Allama Iqbal Park and Shamsabad bringing tourists to Constitution Avenue via Shakarparian.

Asif Mehmood, adviser to the Punjab chief minister on horticulture and tourism along with PTI MPAs Farah Agha, Gull Zaiba and students visited Rawalpindi and Islamabad via the bus.

Mr Mehmood told media that the government decided to launch double-decker buses because it wants to promote culture of the Potohar region.

"Initially, two buses will be operated and local people can benefit from this plan as well. On Independence Day, the test trial was conducted. However, the formal inauguration is expected next week as the bus station in Islamabad is not yet completed," he added.

The Parks and Horticulture Authority has provided space at the double road in Shamsabad for the terminal. The Tourism Development Corporation Punjab will bear all expenditure.

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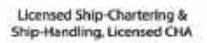
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