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Cham Wings Airlines starts flights from Damascus to Karachi







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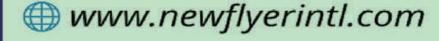


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IATA calls for governments to rescind travel ban

he International Air Transport Association (IATA) has called for governments to follow World Health Organization (WHO) advice and immediately rescind travel bans that were introduced in response to the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

According to IATA, Public health organizations, including the WHO, have advised against travel curbs to contain the spread of Omicron. WHO's advice for international traffic in relation to the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant stated: "Blanket travel bans will not prevent the international spread, and they place a heavy burden on lives and livelihoods. In addition, they can adversely impact global health efforts during a pandemic by disincentivizing countries to report and share epidemiological and sequencing data. All countries should ensure that the measures are regularly reviewed and updated when new evidence becomes available on the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of Omicron or any other variants of concern."

The same WHO advice also notes that states implementing measures such as screening or quarantine "need to be defined following a thorough risk assessment process informed by the local epidemiology in departure and destination countries and by the health system and public health capacities in the countries of departure, transit and arrival. All measures should be commensurate with the risk, time-limited and applied with respect to travellers' dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as outlined in the International Health Regulations."

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General said: "After nearly two years with COVID-19 we know a lot about the virus and the inability of travel restrictions to control its spread. But the discovery of the Omicron variant induced instant amnesia on governments which implemented knee-jerk restrictions in complete contravention of advice from the WHOthe global expert."

"The goal is to move away from the uncoordinated, evidence absent, risk-unassessed mess that travellers face. As governments agreed at ICAO and in line with the WHO advice, all measures should be time-bound and regularly reviewed. It is unacceptable that rushed decisions have created fear and uncertainty among travellers just as many are about to embark on year-end visits to family or hard-earned vacations," Walsh added.

"We also commit to a multilayer risk management strategy for international civil aviation, which is adaptable, proportionate, non-discriminatory and guided by scientific evidence in close



cooperation and coordination with the public health sector, with agreed practices harmonized to the greatest extent possible, for air travel purposes, using commonly accepted epidemiological criteria, testing requirements and vaccination, and underpinned by regular review, monitoring and timely informationsharing among States," ICAO HLCC Ministerial Declaration (link)

"Despite this clear commitment, very few governments have addressed early over-reactions to Omicron. With the European CDC already signalling that a de-escalation of measures will likely be needed in the coming weeks, governments must urgently put actions behind the commitments that they made at ICAO," said Walsh.

European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) in the latest update to its Threat Assessment Brief on the implications of Omicron in Europe notes that "given the increasing number of cases and clusters in the EU/EEA without a travel history or contact with travel-related cases, it is likely that within the coming weeks the effectiveness of travel-related measures will significantly decrease, and countries should prepare for a rapid and measured de-escalation of such measures."

Once a measure is put in place, it is very challenging to get governments to consider reviewing it, let alone removing it, even when there is plenty of evidence pointing in that direction. That is why is it essential that governments commit to a review period when any new measure is introduced. If there is an over-reactionas we believe is the case with Omicronwe must have a way to limit the damage and get back on the right track. And even in more normal circumstances, we must recognize that our understanding of the disease can grow exponentially even in a short period of time. Whatever measures are in place need to be constantly justified against the latest and most accurate scientific knowledge," Walsh concluded.



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Mohsin A Dharsi speaks about Cham Wings Airlines launches flights operations to Karachi

ham Wings Airlines has started flights operations from Damascus to Karachi from 15th of December 2021. The airlines initial starts to operates one flight a week on every Wednesday using A320 aircraft. It has plan to increase one flight to three from Karachi and to start flight to Lahore and Islamabad. The airlines has appointed K N Aviation as its GSA in Pakistan. This was told by Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director K N Aviation in a brief interview with the Flyer International.

Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi told the Flyer International that Cham Wings Airlines is a private and 2nd carrier of Syria. The airlines has set up its office at club road Karachi from where the Syrian airlines was operating its office 20 years ago. The management has appointed 15 well trained staff headed by Mr. Tariq Saleemullah as Country Manager. Mr. Dharsi told that Syria has a great potential for Pakistani passengers as well Syrian people to Pakistan as Islamic brother countries. Syria has attraction of historical and religious tourism plus unique cuisine.

Cham Wings Airlines was founded in late 2007

Cham Wings Airlines, the first Syrian private airline company was established at the end of 2007 with a national capital, as one of the commercial Shammout group companies. Its establishment came as a result of the economic openness and the new laws came out at that time by the Syrian government as an encouragement to the private sector to enter into the air transport field to meet the growing necessities of the travel market.

On the 23rd of September 2007, the company got an air operator's certificate from the Syrian Civil Aviation Authority, which has enabled it to start applying its strategy and achieve its first goal that is adding a value to the air transport field in Syria.

Cham Wings Airlines has its headquarters and center of its activities in Damascus. Its first flight took off from Damascus international airport to Baghdad airport on the 20th of November.

Afterwards, the company began its expansion gradually to be able to cover many Arab and international stations, and became, then, the second national airline that connects Syria with the rest of the world.

In a brief period, Cham Wings Airlines has been able to develop its fleet and promote its services, and has built a good reputation among its customers. That was achieved through taking care of the finest details and meeting all the necessities.

Cham Wings Airlines organizes



Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director KN Aviation (GSA) Cham Wings Airlines in Pakistan.

regular flights to many destinations that meet its customers' necessities, especially places where Syrian communities increase, like Beirut, Yerevan, Kuwait, Dubai, Doha and other Arab and international countries.

By flying from and to Damascus, the company facilitated many hardships that faced passengers, traveling either outside or back to their homeland.

Although the company had been through many big challenges, it managed to prove itself in the air transport market, both the domestic and foreign as well. That was achieved by the care and attention that the company gives to safety measures, which was and still on the top of its priorities. In addition, the company has its special staff of efficient and professional employees, and all of them care about the finest details, so that traveling would be a wonderful experience for the customers.

Cham Wings Airlines has earned many local and Arab prizes for its distinction in the services that it provides, and consequently, the company could occupy a distinguished position among all air transport companies in the area.

Fly with confidence with its fleet

Cham Wings fleet was chosen precisely and professionally to fit with the destinations and services that the customers expect. Every plane will provides for you a world of comfort, luxury and safety. As a result, traveling with it is a unique and easy experience more than any time before.

The company possesses modern "Airbus 320" planes, which conjoin the latest technology and the modern equipment, so that the customers can be

sure that every journey will be on the highest international safety measures, which it does not compromise anyway.

The company has future plans to buy and join another group of planes that suits the running plans of different domestic and foreign destinations.

Cham Wings always strive to promote and develop its fleet, especially in long journeys. That means adding more new destinations beside its current network, and thus, providing wider and broader choices for the travelers on its airlines.

KN Aviation appointed GSA for the airlines

KN Aviation Pvt Ltd, one of the Privately Dharsi family owned company working in collaboration with Airlines as a General Sales Agency,

KN Aviation is providing assistance to Airlines in Passenger and Cargo selling with high yield.

KN aviation BOD Management included Mr. Sajjad Dharsi as CEO and Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director serving Aviation industry since last 4 decades, and still playing important role in uplifting Aviation Management in Pakistan.

Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi has a very rich experience in aviation industry. He is working in aviation field since 1974. He has worked with Leena Avion for two and half years and also with Pakistan Cargo Services. He established Karachi Cargo Services in 1990. He has been an active member of ACAAP and PIFFA since its inception. He has been elected ACAAP Chairman for four times and is also current Chairman of the association. He has done a lot of work for freight forwarding and travel industry.

Skardu Airport to welcome international flights

he status of Skardu Airport has been upgraded and it will start operating as an international airport from Thursday 2 Dec.

A spokesman for the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) said in a tweet: "In line with Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision master plan to promote tourism across the country, Skardu Airport starts operating as an international airport from December 2, 2021. Initially the operations will be under visual flight rules (VFR) only."

Under the VFR, an aircraft is intended to operate in visual meteorological conditions (i.e. nice and clear weather). Clouds, heavy precipitation, low visibility, and other adverse weather conditions should be avoided under the VFR.

PIA's first flight lands at Madina airport

Meanwhile, Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) first flight with 121 passengers onboard landed at Madina International Airport on Wednesday 1st Dec. after Saudi Arabia announced lifting of Covid-related restrictions on Pakistan and five other countries from December 1. Five more flights carrying a total of 1,400 passengers to Saudi Arabia will be operated on Thursday 2nd Dec.

PIA announced its schedule to operate 35 flights weekly to Saudi Arabia after the lifting of restrictions.

The Saudi authorities had on November 25 decided to withdraw the ban on flights from six countries Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Brazil and Vietnam and announced that passengers from these countries would no longer be required to undergo a 14-day quarantine in a third country.

A spokesman for PIA said that following the easing of sanctions, PIA's flight operations for Saudi Arabia had now become fully operational as the first flight from Multan with 121 passengers onboard landed at Madina International Airport on Wednesday 1st Dec. He said PIA would operate a total of 33 flights to Saudi Arabia this week and the number would be increased to 48 flights next week. PIA flights will be operated from Lahore to Jeddah and Dammam, Islamabad to Jeddah and Riyadh and Karachi to Madina.

The spokesman said 1,130 passengers would on Friday 3rd Dec. take flights to Dammam, Riyadh and Jeddah.

PIA announces schedule of 35 weekly flights to Saudi Arabia

fter Saudi Arabia's decision to allow direct flights from Pakistan starting from Dec 1, the Pakistan International Airlines has announced its flight schedule to operate 35 flights weekly to the kingdom.

The Saudi authorities on Thursday 25 Nov. decided to withdraw a ban on flights from six countries Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Brazil and Vietnam and passengers from these countries will no longer be required to undergo a 14-day quarantine in a third country.

A spokesman for PIA said that the administration has begun expanding air operation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with operating 35 flights weekly from Pakistan's different destinations.

He said the flights will be operated to Saudi Arabia's cities of Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam and Al-Qasim.

The PIA flights will depart from different cities of Pakistan Islamabad, Karachi, Multan, Lahore and Peshawar he added.

Earlier, some flights of the national airline in some categories were operating even before this new flight schedule. Passengers departing from December 1 must comply with the five-day quarantine requirement according to Saudi law, said the PIA spokesman.

He added that the decision to increase the number of flights will be taken after the demand increases.

Since the travel restrictions were relaxed by the Saudi government, a large number of people intending to travel to Saudi Arabia have been contacting the airline offices for tickets.

The General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) of Saudi Arabia had issued a notification to all airlines operating in the kingdom's airports on November 25 allowing direct entry to the kingdom from the Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Federal Republic of Brazil, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Arab Republic of Egypt and India without the need to stay 14 days outside these countries before entering the kingdom.

"Institutional quarantine procedures must be applied for a period of 05 days, regardless of passengers' immunisation status outside the kingdom, with the continued application of exceptions issued regarding some groups in this regard."

Saudi Arabia to lift ban on direct flights from Pakistan, says minister

ederal Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry on Thursday 25 Nov. announced that Saudi Arabia had decided to allow direct flights from Pakistan from December 1 after lifting a ban.

In a tweet, Mr Chaudhry said the Saudi directive would become effective from Wednesday.

According to reports in the media, Saudi authorities have decided to withdraw a ban on flights from six countries Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Brazil and Vietnam and passengers from these countries will no longer be required to undergo a 14-day quarantine in a third country.

Saudi Arabia had issued temporary restrictions on travellers from the six countries who had not received two doses of Covid-19 vaccines in the kingdom.

A directive, issued by the Saudi Arabian General Authority of Civil Aviation to all airlines operating in the kingdom's airports, said: "Allowing direct entry to the kingdom from the Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Federal Republic of Brazil, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Arab Republic of Egypt, (and) India, without the need to stay 14 days outside these countries before entering the kingdom.

"Institutional quarantine procedures must be applied for a period of 05 days, regardless of passengers' immunisation status outside the kingdom, with the continued application of exceptions issued regarding some groups in this regard..."

A spokesman for PIA said anyone interested in travelling to the kingdom should contact the airline for a ticket.



Shaheen Airport Service (SAPS) providing Ground Handling to a new Airline from Damascus, Syria at Karachi

SAPS A Largest and Refined Ground Handling Services in the Aviation Industry Since 1982



SAPS welcomes CHAM WINGS Airlines inaugural flight to Jinnah International Airport, Karachi.

The A320 of CHAM WINGS Airlines was given Water Cannon Salute and cake cutting ceremony along with refreshments held at the arrival lounge.

A colourful Gala Dinner was also arranged at Karachi Marriott Hotel in the evening which was attended by the leading personalities of the Aviation and Travel industry of Karachi.

CHAM WINGS Airlines has started once a week flight between Karachi and Damascus and will increase its frequency to twice weekly from February 2022.



CHAM WINGS Flight was handled by Shaheen Airport Services at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi (15th December, 2021)



Group photograph of Shaheen Foundation& Shaheen
Airport Services officials with Cham Wings Crew for
Cake cutting ceremony

flydubai signs new interline agreement with PIA

n December 9th, a new interline agreement was announced between flydubai and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). This agreement will see the two carriers cooperate in providing their respective customers with more destinations via the other airline's network. Since this only applies to select routes, let's take a look at which destinations are on the table for



Based in Dubai, hybrid carrier flydubai operates an all-Boeing 737 fleet.

each carrier.

Nine flydubai destinations accessible to PIA travelers

The new interline agreement allows PIA to sell seats to its customers for onward travel to nine destinations on flydubai flights. The nine cities are as follows:

Almaty (Kazakhstan)

Bahrain

Baku (Azerbaijan)

Baghdad (Iraq)

Istanbul (Turkey)

Kuwait

Mashhad (Iran)

Moscow (Russia)

Najaf (Iraq)

This means that PIA-loyal customers will be able to fly with their airline to Dubai and connect onwards to these destinations using flydubai aircraft- all on the same itinerary. As the airline's statement notes, passengers will benefit from seamless service and increased connectivity with this new deal. But what does PIA gain from this?

"The new interline will allow more passengers to benefit from easier connections on our established network in the GCC, Central Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, while adding more options to travel to Pakistan with PIA from the UAE and the region." -Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer, flydubai

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Three PIA destinations accessible to



PIA passengers can fly to Dubai and now connect onwards to nine destinations using flydubai.

flydubai travelers

On the other side of this agreement, flydubai will be able to sell seats on PIA's flights out of these three cities to Dubai:

Islamabad

Lahore

Peshawar

With over 90 destinations on flydubai's network, the Dubai-based airline's customers are now able to connect in Dubai and travel onwards to the three major cities in Pakistan on PIA aircraft- again, on the same itinerary.

Of course, some of flydubai's destinations wouldn't make sense for a connection to Pakistan-mainly those in Pakistan and on the Indian



subcontinent.

PIA's main airports are located in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi. The carrier also operates a direct flight from Peshawar to Dubai.

Significant and growing demand for travel between Pakistan and the destinations offered

flydubai notes that there is considerable demand between the three cities in Pakistan and the nine flydubai destinations involved.

flydubai has had a long history of service to Pakistan, starting service to the country in 2010 with the launch of flights to Karachi. Today, the Dubai-based carrier serves five points in Pakistan, including Karachi, Faisalabad, Multan, Quetta, and Sialkot.

"[The agreement] will enable both the carriers to cater to the strong customer demand for business and leisure travel between Dubai and Pakistan and beyond by providing our mutual customers a seamless travel experience." -Air Marshal (R) Arshad Malik, Chief Executive Officer Pakistan International Airlines

It also sounds like more cooperation could be on the table in the future, with the PIA chief noting that the interline partnership was "a first step to build[ing] logical commercial development for both carriers." Indeed, an interline agreement is a step below a codeshare. An even closer relationship, codeshares typically allow travelers to earn and redeem loyalty points

Saudi grants permission to perform Umrah

he Travel Agents Association of Pakistan (TAAP) profoundly appreciates, express their sincere gratitude and pays rich tribute to His Royal Highness King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince H.H. Muhammad Bin Salman, Khadim-e-Haramain Sharifain and Custodian of the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madina, the two Holy Mosques, for granting permission to people of Pakistan to perform Umrah.

The people of Pakistan were "waiting impatiently" to perform the Islamic rituals once again have expressed their happiness about being able to perform Umrah after 18 months-long gap due to the pandemic across the globe.

The Chairman, Senior Vice Chairman, Vice Chairmen South & North Zones, Central Executive Committee, Members Umrah and Hajj Operating Companies of TRAVEL AGENTS ASSOCIATION OF PAKISTAN (TAAP) and all other Pakistani Citizens from various segments of the society see this act as facilitation to the pilgrims the guests of Allah. May Almighty Allah be pleased with the Khadim-e-Haramain Sharifain and Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ameen.

Shaheen Airport Services the largest Ground Handling Services provider

APS is the pioneer and the largest Ground Handling Agents since 1982 in Pakistan. SAPS has the largest fleet of Ground Support Equipment and the most experience staff, and conducts Ground Handling in a very safe and professional manner. SAPS is providing services at all major airports of the country: Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Multan and Quetta. SAPS also specializes in providing ground handling at remote airfields such as: Sukkur, Rahim Yar Khan etc, for charter / VVIP/Presidential flights. SAPS has a rich experience of its years and customer satisfaction is its paramount policy. SAPS is a project of Shaheen Foundation being a subsidiary of Pakistan Air Force, it is a welfare organization, whatever it earn is being spent on martyrs' family, the workforce mainly consists of well experienced staff.

SAPS has completely implemented the Safety Management System (SMS) in entire SAPS including Syllabus and teaching is as per Airport Handling Manual (AHM), SAPS is certified on ISO 9001:2015,

ISO 14001:2015, ISO 45001:2018 accredited from British Assessment Bureau (BAB) and Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC), certified since 2014. SAPS also have RA3 certification of five (05) stations from Central Excellence Independent Validator (CEIV) of European Union.

SAPS has its own Aviation College which conducts Aviation, Ground Handling courses and also IATA Dangerous Goods Regulation (DGR) accredited Training Center.

SAPS has established a COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT at Head Office SAPS in Karachi, Pakistan. In order to have close liaison with client airlines and meet the client's expectation at optimum level, and it has CENTRALIZED business system to give the best rates along with the best services to its valuable client and will go out of the way to extend all kind of support.

SAPS establishes commercial department to ensure best services to its clients



Air Marshal (R) Muhammad Arif Pervaiz, Managing Director Shaheen Foundation is a Fighter Pilot and also a graduate of Pakistan Air Force Academy; The Command and Staff College Quetta; Joint Command and Staff College, Philippines; National Defense University, Pakistan; and The United States Army War College.

During his illustrious Air Force career, spanning 40 years, Air Marshal Arif Pervaiz has served in a various command and staff positions at nearly every level.

He holds two Master degrees in War Studies and Strategic-Studies. He served as Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Administration) in PAF and has keen insight of running various projects. He also served Shaheen Foundation as Managing Director Shaheen Foundation for three years. This his second tenure. He is an extremely hard working, honest and a visionary leader. Presently, he is heading 23 Projects of Shaheen Foundation a project of Pakistan Air Force.

Managing Director established the Commercial Deptt in SAPS which was long overdue to take care of all Sales, Marketing and Cargo procurement. All clients highly appreciated the SAPS Commercial Department.

The dynamic decision of MD SF by adopting the market-oriented strategy has started yielding good financial results.

The revenue generation of SAPS is growing day by day despite prevailing Pandemic atmosphere in which the aviation activity is restricted.



To keep abreast with the latest market development, it was strongly felt that SAPS must have a Commercial Department which will play a vital role in keeping all the clients in close liaison and for business development.

Accordingly, the Commercial Department has been established headed by Captain Saeed Khan who is highly experienced and qualified professional. Since the advent of Commercial Department in last six-month, tremendous revenue grew the number of flights handled by SAPS have also increased manifold.

Captain Saeed Khan is the veteran of Aviation Industry with over 46 years of flying experience. He has also served in PAF as a Fighter Pilot for 16 years. Subsequently, he flew with seven Commercial Airlines worldwide. He is Safety Management System (SMS) qualified from Holland and held SMS post, Test Pilot and Training Captain with GCAA Dubai. He attended many Aviation Courses with renowned airlines, also formulated 12 manuals approved by GCAA Dubai and one approved by PCAA. He possesses a very dynamic and dashing personality with a passion for sports, organizing World and Asian Squash Championship in Pakistan and many other events. It is expected that with his presence in Commercial Department, SAPS will be highly benefitted and will reach high standard of quality services.

This Commercial Department has bridged the communication gap between SAPS and its clients.

ICAO team safety audit of CAA

viation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan on Sunday 28 Nov. said a team of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has started audit on Monday 29 Nov.

An ICAO team has arrived in Pakistan for a safety audit of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority started on Monday, sources said.

The team comprises nine members out of whom eight arrived in Karachi on Saturday while one joined them later.

Mr Khan said the ICAO team would conduct audits of different areas, including security, pilot licensing, training, and wherever it had expressed concerns previously.

"The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has addressed all of the ICAO's concerns, including improvement of issuance of pilot licences and security," the minister told media.

He expressed the hope that the PCAA would get a positive response and flights to European countries would resume, adding the aviation authority had also improved the pilot licensing procedure and addressed other concerns of the ICAO.

The minister said the federal cabinet had previously approved collaboration with the UK Civil Aviation Authority to improve and strengthen pilot licences.

Earlier, the ICAO had planned the universal safety oversight audit programme (USOAP) and the continuous monitoring approach (CMA) in Pakistan from July 5 to 15, 2021, which had been accepted by Pakistan.

Later, the ICAO decided to postpone the audit based on the fact that the Covid-19 situation did not improve as initially expected.

The PCAA had offered to the ICAO that it would share with it the concerned data online to avoid postponement of their visit in July.

The ICAO had been requested not to postpone the visit of its team. The team, which comprised citizens of different nationalities, had been assured that all the PCAA officials coordinating with them during their visit would be vaccinated against Covid-19.

During their visit, the ICAO team members planned also visit Islamabad and Lahore and will hold talks with senior officials of the Aviation Division. The team also audit airworthiness of aircraft, aerodromes and ground aids, the aviation aircraft accident investigation board and the engineering department.

ICAO team completes safety audit of CAA

he visiting International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) team has completed the safety audit of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) and will release it final report in a few weeks.

According to sources, the ICAO team's visit was comprehensive and tough this time, but apparently they didn't observe anything critical. Their main focus was on pilot licensing, airworthiness and HR structure.

The ICAO audit team members also visited Islamabad International Airport where they observed the process of departure of Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) domestic flight PK-300, security, cargo terminal, safety investigation board and other areas.

The sources said the ICAO experts had been conducting the audit of security, pilot licensing, training and the areas where they had concerns previously. The team has also been conducting the audit of airworthiness of aircraft, aerodromes and ground aids, the aviation's aircraft accident investigation board and the engineering department. A spokesman for the PCAA said the ICAO experts had completed the USOAP (Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme) audit of the authority on Friday. The audit report was quite positive, with no substantial problems, as a result of unwavering efforts over a year, he claimed.

In the closing session, the ICAO audit team appreciated the progress made by the PCAA and commended the preparation and hard work prior to the audit, the spokesman said, adding that as per the ICAO procedures, a formal report would be issued in a few weeks and shared publicly.

Meanwhile, the PCAA and the United Kingdom's Department for Transport (DfT) performed a comprehensive joint inspection of selected airports in Pakistan as part of the flight security preparations. This was part of an agreement between the two governments on direct flights from Pakistan by British airlines.

The DfT team had conducted a comprehensive audit of Lahore and Islamabad airports from November 22 to December 2 this year, including flight security arrangements.

The team observed different things and remarked 100 per cent compliance all together and outstanding efforts from the PIA security side at Islamabad and Lahore stations.

Senator wants probe into plane controversy

he controversy over the grounding of a Boeing aircraft by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) after it was damaged during an anti-hijacking drill by the law enforcement agencies is likely to face a parliamentary scrutiny, as an opposition senator belonging to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Sunday 28 Nov. declared he would raise the matter before the parliamentary committee concerned.

Talking to media, PML-N Senator Afnanullah Khan said he had already asked Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Aviation Hidayatullah to take up the matter for investigation and he would formally write a letter to him in this regard.

Senator Khan said he would explain through the letter the issue to the committee chairman, requesting him to summon the high-ups of PIA and the Airport Security Force (ASF). He said the opposition members in the committee would also request for a subcommittee to hold a thorough investigation.

The PML-N senator said PIA's Boeing 777-200 LR with registration number AP-BGL had been parked at a storage facility in Karachi for almost two years. The aircraft that cost over \$300 million to the national exchequer had not been able to fly due to the damage caused during the drill by the law enforcement agencies when an ASF truck had hit it with full force, he added.

Mr Khan said the PIA management had initially denied any "wrongdoing" but later confirmed the drill and that the plane had been damaged.

Last month, a recently retired PIA pilot, Mumtaz Hussain, had filed a petition in the Lahore High Court on the matter. On October 25, Justice Tariq Nadeem directed the deputy attorney general "to procure a reply and para-wise comments from the PIA chief executive officer".

The next date of case hearing is November 30.

In his petition filed under Article 199 of the Constitution, the pilot urged the court to pass an "appropriate direction"

for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to allow inspection of the aircraft and provide information about its airworthiness.

The petitioner also sought "to initiate criminal proceedings against those who are responsible for the damage of the PIA aircraft Boeing 777-200 registration number AP-BGL".

He claimed that the CAA had grounded the aircraft due to lack of airworthiness and the aircraft was parked at Jinnah Terminal, thus causing "millions of rupees loss to the airline and national treasure".

Mr Hussain also attached a complete list of technical defects in the aircraft as "reflected by the engineering department". According to the petition, the aircraft had not flown since March 2020 "whereas in February, it took 69 flights".

The 329-seater plane had made the first flight in March 2004.

Talking to media, counsel for the petitioner Nabeel Javed Kahloon said they would submit another application to the court requesting it to constitute a highlevel commission of technical experts, well experienced and trained on Boeing 777 aircraft, to inspect the aircraft and submit a complete investigation report on the "structural damages" along with facts of the incident before the court.

Through the supplementary application, Mr Kahloon said, they would also urge the court to direct the CAA to take the aircraft's custody from PIA under Section 272 of the Civil Aviation Rules 1994 so that no one could tamper with the evidence.

PIA spokesman

A PIA spokesman, however, declared that there was no truth in the reports that the aircraft had been rendered useless.

In a statement, he admitted that the aircraft was "partially damaged" during an anti-hijacking drill, but claimed that the damage had been repaired.

"The plane is parked at the long storage," he said.

"The aircraft is parked at the long storage as the use of Boeing 777 had been decreased due to travelling curbs in the wake of Covid-19," the spokesman added.

He said the plane would be made operational when travel restrictions would be lifted. He said the use of Boeing aircraft would increase after the decision of Saudi Arabia to allow direct flights from Pakistan. He added that the aircraft would be made operational as soon as the flights on long routes resumed.

Travellers from nine more countries banned



A woman receives a dose of the Covid vaccine.

s the new Covid-19 strain Omicron reached several other regions, Pakistan recently added nine more countries mostly from Europe to category C and imposed air travel restriction.

The countries are the Netherlands, Hungary, Ukraine, Ireland, Slovenia, Poland, Croatia, Zimbabwe and Vietnam.

On the other hand, 13 countries have been included in category B. They are the US, United Kingdom, Germany, Azerbaijan, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Russia, Thailand, France, Afghanistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Austria and Turkey. The remaining nations remain in category A.

Moreover unvaccinated Pakistanis, having valid proofs, have been allowed to return.

These decisions were taken at the meeting of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), which discussed the prevailing Covid-19 situation across the globe in order to revise the categorisation policy for air travel.

It is worth mentioning that on Nov 27, the forum had prohibited air travel from South Africa, Hong Kong, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini and Botswana by placing them in category C. Hong Kong was later moved to category A.

According to the NCOC, there will be complete ban on inbound travel from countries listed in category C, however, essential travel will be allowed after obtaining certificates from the exemption committee and undergoing health protocols, including 100pc vaccination for all inbound travellers.

Those passengers aged six years and above (locals/foreigners) must be in possession of a negative PCR test report (maximum 48 hours old) before boarding.

Deportees are exempted from the PCR test/report requirement, but all inbound passengers (six years and above) travelling via direct or indirect flights from category C countries will undergo

the rapid antigen test (RAT) on arrival at the airport.

"RAT negative cases from Omicronhit countries will have to undergo three days of mandatory quarantine followed by a PCR test conducted by the civil administration on the third day," the NCOC stated, adding that RAT positive cases would be quarantined for 10 days and their PCR test undertaken on the eighth day of quarantine.

In case of a negative result, passengers will be allowed to proceed, but if the test turns out positive, they will either undergo additional quarantine or will be shifted to a hospital as per advice of the health authorities, the forum said.

On the other hand, for inbound passengers from category B countries, 100pc vaccination will be required while those aged six years and above (locals/foreigners) must possess a negative PCR test report (maximum 48 hours old) before boarding.

Similarly, "RAT of passengers from random flights will be conducted at the airport on arrival from category B countries. Negative cases will be allowed to proceed while positive ones will be quarantined for 10 days," the NCOC said, adding that all other nations not included in categories B and C will fall in category A.

The forum also stated that screening of transit flights would be carried out, including 100pc RAT of passengers on transit flights arriving via Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar as a precaution against Omicron variant.

However exemption/waiver have been announced for some categories under which all Pakistanis can travel from category C countries without exemption till Dec 15, however, the above-mentioned health/testing protocols on arrival will remain applicable.

"Pakistanis who have already travelled or are travelling to category C countries on short-term visa and deportees are permitted to return without the exemption process. Those citizens who have been unable to get themselves vaccinated abroad (all categories) due to some reasons such as expired visa, illegal immigrants/deportees, pending court cases, medical conditions/issues, pregnant women and partially vaccinated from Pakistan are exempted from mandatory vaccination after producing a valid proof to airline/immigration authorities before boarding," the forum stated.



American Airlines announces service to Doha, Qatar



American Airlines has made this announcement:

American will launch service from New York's JFK to Doha, Qatar, on June 4, 2022, as part of its deepening relationship with Qatar Airways.

Seasonal routes to customer favorite destinations such as Barcelona, Lisbon, and Venice return to American's summer 2022 schedule.

For customers wanting to visit Athens and Rome, American will launch seasonal services earlier than in previous years.

Customers looking for unique travel experiences will have a new destination and many returning favorites to choose from as American Airlines announces its summer 2022 schedule.

Starting in June, customers will be able to travel to the Middle East and connect to the African continent, Indian Ocean resorts and beyond with American's new service from New York (JFK) to Doha, Qatar (DOH). Located in the heart of the Middle East, Doha offers a range of attractions, including museums and galleries, desert safari adventures and beautiful landscapes such as the amazing Inland Sea.

With the launch of American's new service to Doha, the airline will deepen its relationship with Qatar Airways. Customers have already benefited from the expansive codeshare between the two airlines as it has allowed customers to access new destinations in the Middle East, East Africa, South Asia, and South East Asia that American does not currently serve.

A seasonal summer 2022 schedule

To offer our customers the most connectivity to the destinations they want to travel to, American has strategically built a summer schedule that optimizes the use of the airline's widebody fleet, focused on the most popular destinations and maximizes connections with international partners.

All widebody aircraft currently being used on short-haul routes in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Mexico will be redeployed to popular trans-Atlantic destinations next summer, including Barcelona, Spain (BCN); Lisbon, Portugal (LIS); and Venice, Italy (VCE). This spring, American will

resume service from Charlotte, North Carolina (CLT), to Rome (FCO) and start up seasonal services to both FCO and Athens, Greece (ATH), earlier than in previous years.



Continued delivery delays of Boeing 787 aircraft have provided unique challenges in planning international flying months in advance. As a result, American will not resume service to Edinburgh, Scotland (EDI), or Shannon, Ireland (SNN), in 2022. And as demand remains soft in Asia, American is discontinuing service to Hong Kong (HKG).

American has also adjusted operations on some existing Asia and South America routes and reduced frequencies, allowing the airline to offer more options to customers next summer.

Continuing a robust international schedule

In the past year, American has continued to provide customers with international travel options, getting them where they want to go when they decide to return to travel. American launched 37 long-haul international routes in 2021, including seven new routes: Seattle (SEA) to London (LHR); JFK to Santiago, Chile (SCL); JFK to Tel Aviv, Israel (TLV): Boston (BOS) to LHR; JFK to ATH; Miami (MIA) to TLV; and JFK to Delhi, India (DEL).

American's global partnerships with fellow oneworld alliance carriers and the innovative domestic partnerships with JetBlue Airways and Alaska Airlines complement American's network and create more choices for customers whether they want to travel to London, Seattle or Boston.

It marks the 80th anniversary of the attack on #PearlHarbor, and to commemorate this anniversary, we partnered with @bestdefense, @GarySiniseFound,



and others in taking 63 WWII veterans on a week-long trip to Hawaii. Visit the link below to read more.

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, American Airlines partnered with the Best Defense Foundation, Gary Sinise Foundation, Veterans United Home Loans and others.

Cathay Cargo's click and Ship ebookings launched in Middle East

ir Cargo Newsdesk, airline news, airlines, automation, business news, digital airfreight shipment e-bookings platform, digital news, digital platforms, digitalisation, digitisation, Editor's choice, Hong Kong, IATA, IT services, technology trends, The Middle East.



CATHAY Pacific Cargo is forging ahead with its plans to digitalise and automate its business processes with the launch of a new e-bookings platform starting in its Middle East airfreight marketplace, writes Thelma Etim.

Branded as Click and Ship, the platform allows freight forwarder customers in the region particularly those located in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain to access the carrier's real-time flight schedules, capacity availability, prices and allotments.

Designed by Cathay's own technology subsidiary Global Logistics System (GLS) which is an IATA partner organisation that provides e-freight services to forwarders and other airline cargo divisions it will be introduced gradually across the Hong Kong airline's global airfreight network, says a statement.

Whilst Click and Ship will be available initially to registered customers only, the airline's cargo rates can also be accessed via alternative third-party platforms, it adds.

Commenting on the company's latest digital move, Rajesh Menon, Cathay









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Email: info@icmpk.com www.icmpk.com Cargo's regional head of cargo for the south Asia, Middle East and Africa regions, explains: "Our customers globally have been telling us that they want a quicker and more efficient way to book shipments at any time.

"We listened. We are rolling out Click and Ship progressively across our network including the Middle East. We aim to make real-time flight schedules, space availability, allotments and updated rate information available on [the airfreight division's website] and the GLS EzyCargo platform for all Cathay Pacific Cargo customers over the next year," he

explains.

He has no doubts that the platform will be advantageous for customers in the region. "It will transform the cargo booking experience, making it a streamlined process with a fast and intuitive interface that mimics the passenger ticket-booking experience. It gives our customers visibility of price and inventory and means that registered agents can book shipments at their convenience with auto-confirmation."

Simon Ng, chief executive of Global Logistics System, says the IATA strategic

partner is committed to helping the airfreight industry move from paper transactions to e-freight and, ultimately, towards full cargo digitalisation. "We are particular proud to have taken the shortest period of time to build the booking platform, and successfully launched it in November," he says.

"We have strong confidence that the booking platform will introduce to the industry a new booking experience for Cathay Pacific Cargo, with simple and speed process, price transparency and, most important of all, instant confirmation," he adds.

and Sabre will define the future by developing distribution software and capabilities that provide our customers and supplier partners with the value, choice and experiences they expect," said Paul Abbott, CEO, American Express Global Business Travel. "Combining Sabre's retailing and content aggregation capabilities and GBT's corporate customer software and world class customer service, will enable us to deliver the business travel experiences corporate travelers want."

Sabre and American Express Global Business Travel announce multi-year technology partnership

abre Corporation [NASDAQ: SABR] and American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) recently announce a long-term, multifaceted strategic partnership focused on developing technologies that will enable the future of corporate travel distribution.

Under the terms of this newly expanded technology partnership which takes effect in January 2022 GBT will increase its commitment with Sabre and make a multi-million dollar, long-term annual investment in joint technology development with Sabre over the next ten years. The partnership between two industry leaders puts the two companies in an ideal position to deliver best-in-class products and services throughout the corporate travel ecosystem and drive meaningful growth to both companies and the travel ecosystem in its entirety.

"While the pandemic has undoubtedly challenged the travel industry, we firmly believe in a robust recovery over time, particularly in corporate travel," said Sean Menke, President and Chief Executive Officer at Sabre. "However, the expectations of corporate travelers and corporations have fundamentally changed; the demand for new, differentiated products that are designed for specific travelers' needs is likely to be more pronounced. Our strategic partnership with GBT is rooted in the common beliefs we share regarding the technology needs which will enable participants throughout the travel ecosystem to meet these new demands. We look forward to our expanded commercial relationship with GBT and partnering with them for many years to come."

Together, the companies will work to accelerate product innovation and develop a distribution eco-system that meets the future needs of customers and suppliers. This will include collaborating

on corporate travel booking capabilities that enhance value to customers and suppliers, accelerating merchandising and retailing solutions, and enabling efficient and superior customer service.

"As industry thought leaders, GBT

UAE places biggest order for French warplanes



President Emmanuel Macron and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan smile during the former's tour of the French pavilion at the Dubai Expo.

The United Arab Emirates signed a record 14-billion-euro contract for 80 Rafale warplanes and committed billions of euros in other deals as French President Emmanuel Macron kicked off a Gulf tour on Friday 3 Dec..

The biggest international order ever made for the French jets came as Macron held talks with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed at the start of a two-day trip which will also take in Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The resource-rich UAE, one of the French defence industry's biggest customers, also inked an order for 12 Caracal military transport helicopters for a total bill of more than 17 billion euros.

Macron starts Gulf tour

"French engagement in the region, active cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the clear positions we have taken have allowed us to grow closer with the United Arab Emirates," Macron told

journalists in Dubai.

"And at a time when questions are being asked about other long-term partners, I think this reinforces the position of France," he added, describing France as a "solid" and "trustworthy" ally that "sticks to its commitments".

Abu Dhabi's Mubadala sovereign wealth fund also pledged eight billion euros in investments in French businesses, while the licence of the UAE capital's branch of the Louvre art gallery was extended for 10 years to 2047.

The Emirates was the fifth biggest customer for the French defence industry with 4.7 billion euros from 2011-2020, according to a parliamentary report.

France has faced criticism after some of these weapons were used during the UAE's engagement in Yemen, where a Saudi-led coalition is fighting Iran-backed rebels in a war that has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

'Historic contract'

The Rafale order, signed on Friday while Macron met with Sheikh Mohammed at Dubai's Expo site, is the biggest made internationally for the Dassault Aviation aircraft since it entered service in 2004.

It follows the collapse of a multibillion-dollar submarine deal with Australia in September that left Paris fuming after Canberra negotiated a new defence pact with London and Washington.





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GF785 GF787	PESHAWAR(PEW)	TUE,THU
GF789	MULTAN(MUX)	MON,SAT

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Special PIA flight for Hindu pilgrims

he Pakistan International Airlines operated a special flight for Hindu pilgrims from Karachi to Peshawar on Thursday 25 Nov.

The special flight was operated at the request of the Pakistan Hindu Council's leader and member of the National Assembly, Dr Ramesh Kumar.

A PIA spokesman said that a large number of local and foreign Hindu pilgrims travelled from Karachi to Peshawar via Kirk on the special flight.

He said the pilgrims visited the sacred temple of Shri Paramhans Dayal Ji Maharaj Samadhi in Karak. Special prayers were offered at the temple for the security and religious harmony of Pakistan

On his return to Karachi, Dr Kumar thanked the government of Pakistan, local authorities and PIA for their hospitality.

He said that it has been proven that all religions in Pakistan are free for their rituals.

The government is taking important steps to increase religious tourism in the country, he said.

The MNA said that PIA has been asked to operate such international flights now so that people from foreign countries can easily visit Pakistan.

The PIA spokesman said that the national flag carrier will assist in all purposes that are in the national interest and to promote tourism in the country.

PIA arranges special flights to serve followers of different religions, said PIA CEO Air Marshal Arshad Malik

"We want to serve humanity in the light of Quaid-i-Azam's words and this has always been the mission of PIA," CEO Arshad Malik said.

Pakistan is the homeland of believers of different religions and PIA is the national airline, said the CEO.

Meanwhile, PIA operated its first flight to Fujairah (United Arab Emirates) with 186 passengers onboard, including the PIACEO, on Thursday 25 Nov.

The PIA's first flight took off from Bacha Khan Airport, Peshawar and touched down at Fujairah airport in the afternoon.

On landing at the airport, the PIA flight was given water cannon salute by crash tenders with powerful cannons on taxiway in the honour of the flight.

The PIA spokesman said at the airport members of the royal family of Fujairah and other senior officials welcomed the PIA's flight and CEO Air Marshal Arshad Malik.

A traditional welcome dance was

performed at the airport on arrival of the flight.

The PIA flight was started at the special request of the emir of Fujairah.

At the airport, he said that the immigration of all passengers was

completed within 15 minutes under special arrangements made by the Fujairah authorities for the PIA flight.

In addition, special busses were arranged for PIA passengers which will also provide free access to other cities.

It may be mentioned here that PIA launched regular service to Najaf, Iraq last month with 91 passengers onboard the first flight.

New Covid strain prompts govt to place travel curbs

akistan on Saturday 25 Nov. placed seven countries in category 'C' and imposed a ban on direct and indirect inbound travel from these regions with immediate effect following the emergence of 'Omicron' a virulent strain of Covid-19 in South Africa and its subsequent transmission to several countries.

Passengers from South Africa, Hong Kong, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini and Botswana will face the travel ban. "A complete ban has also been enforced on direct and indirect travel from these high-risk countries," a notification issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) stated, explaining that the countries have been included in category 'C' due to the surfacing of Omicron coronavirus variant in South Africa and its spread to adjoining regions.

Omicron has been classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "highly transmissible" variant the same category that includes the predominant Delta variant.

The strain was first detected in South Africa this week, with scientists holding it responsible for the recent spike in Covid-19 infections in Gauteng, the country's most populous province.

"However, Pakistani passengers travelling from these countries on extreme emergency will only be allowed after obtaining exemptions and a number of health/testing protocols including presenting vaccination certificates, negative PCR report (72 hours old maximum) before boarding and rapid antigen tests (RAT) on arrival at the airport."

The NCOC statement said RAT negative cases would undergo three-day mandatory home quarantine and re-RAT would be conducted on the third day by the civil administration.

Positive cases would have to observe a mandatory quarantine

(government/self-paid) for 10 days after which a PCR test would be carried out, it stated. "To facilitate stranded Pakistanis, travel from these countries will be allowed till Dec 5 without exemption but abovementioned health/testing protocols will remain applicable," the statement added.

Moreover, the Aviation Division, Airport Management and Airport Security Force have been directed to devise a mechanism to screen passengers traveling from category C countries through indirect flights and share it with the relevant authorities by Nov 29.

Meanwhile, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, who also heads the NCOC, advised people to get themselves as well as their children over the age of 12 years vaccinated at the earliest in the wake of new Covid variant.

"Based on the emergence of the new Covid variant, notification has been issued restrict travel from 6 South African countries and Hong Kong. The emergence of new variant makes it even more urgent to vaccinate all eligible citizens 12 years and older," the minister tweeted.

The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) also expressed its concerns over the classification of the new variant by the WHO as "highly transmissible".

According to the PMA statement, Omicron was detected in South Africa where very mild to moderate symptoms of the variant were clinically found with no loss of smell or taste. The PMA warned the government to be vigilant and take urgent measures to prevent the variant entering into Pakistan.

The PMA stated: "We strongly suggest the government to improve the facilities at airports and other entry points of the country to scan and monitor passengers and resume antigen Covid-19 test at airports, especially for passengers arriving from high-risk countries particularly South Africa."

First flight of Cham Wings Airlines lands in Karachi

ham wings Airlines has started its flights operations from Damascus to Karachi from 15 Dec. 2021. The first flight landed at Jinnah International Airport Karachi. The A320 aircraft of Cham Wings Airlines was welcomed with a water cannon salute at Jinnah International Airport.

Shaheen Airport Services (SAPS) one of the largest Ground Handling Services Provider in Pakistan along with KN Aviation GSA of the airlines welcomed the first flight at Jinnah

International airport. Senior Management of SAPS, Shaheen Foundation and GSA for the airlines Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi along with Syrian Charge D'affairs in Islamabad H.E. Mazen Obeid were present at the airport to welcome Mr. Mohd Anwar N A Shammout CEO, Mr. Hamdi Khalaf Commercial Director, Mr. Qatiba Zahde, Manager Network Sales, Mr. Khaled Alchater, Ground Operations Director, Mr. Mohd Osama Setea PR Business Development Director, Zeina Matar, Marketing Manager, Grace Ibrahim & Gehan Abbdulla, Crew Cham Wings

Airlines who came from Syria on the inaugural flight. The cake cutting ceremony was held at the arrival lounge of the airport.

The colourful Gala Dinner was hosted by the airlines at Karachi Marriott Hotel to celebrate the inaugurations of flights operations to Karachi. It was attended by the leading personalities of the travel industry and the deligats from Syria. Delicious food was served to the guests followed by the Syrian music. The beautiful gifts were presented to the guests.



Business Executive SAPS, Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director GSA of the airlines for the airlines along with other dignitaries. welcome the inaugural flight.



HE Mazen Obeid Syrian Charge D'affairs in Islamabad, Captain Saeed Khan Mr. Humayun Ziqar Zephyer Executive Director SAPS ground handling agent





Cake cutting ceremony held at the arrival launge of Jinnah International Airport Karachi





Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi and Mr. Humayun Ziqar Zephyer receive the guests.

Glimpses of the dinner hosted by Cham Wings Airlines





Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director KN Aviation GSA for the airlines receives the guests on the occasion.





Group photograph of Cham Wings Airlines officials at Gala Night Karachi.







Glimpses of the dinner hosted by Cham Wings Airlines



Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi shares happy moments with ED SAPS Mr. Humayun.



Syrian Charge D'affairs in Islamabad HE Mazen Obeid and Air Marshal (R) Muhammad Arif Pervaiz MD Shaheen Foundation.



















SIAL - at its best, despite Covid-19

Prof. Safdar Sandal

Sialkot International Airport' has completed 14th years of its operations domestically and internationally in a marvelous and successful fashion. Primarily, it was intended and designed to lift available Export Cargo alone, which it did in superb swiftness and set a paradigm to handle now large volumes of both incoming and outgoing cargo. Sialkot has been known for production of sports goods, surgical instruments, musical instruments, motorbike leather garments, garments, cutlery hosiery embroidered badges, novelty goods and many a hundred other articles of skilled human craft which cannot be matched and encompassed here. All of these items are meant for meeting the demands of the entire world markets. These goods (consisting of air shipments) are now passing this Airport. Side by side, the most important feature of SIAL's business has been that the airport meanwhile has graduated from cargo service to the domestic and international passenger service to an extent that today in its short -span of life of a decade; the airport has become the sixth busiest international airport in the country and is fast striding to further upgrade its services, deceiving all calculations. Let us be amused about the future; after a decade or so, considering its pace, what can be its stature? Can it be anybody's myself; I may not theorize!!!

In the early twenties, it was the result of a mere conjecture of some members of the 'Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI), who realized the need to have an independent airport of their own for the city, which would connect it not only with the whole country, but with the whole world. It was a purely privatesector-thinking and initiative. What a bold and loud thinking it was on the part of the participants of the meeting (which included the scribe too). But in the beginning, it looked like Pharaoh's Dreams, a fantasy which ultimately got fulfilled, due to its pure human effort on the part of the Directors and Providence's grace. The need of the hour was to serve the interests of local populace, business, trade, commerce and industry of Sialkot district. But soon it developed into an epicenter of cargo and passengers or/ expatriates coming from the close-by districts. Ideally situated amidst the so 1 named 'golden triangle' of three districts, of Sialkot, Gujrat namely Gujranwala, the travelers of this region now thronged the Sialkot airport which was near to their homes. The region has also been called the "Triangle of

Technology" from where in dustrial goods worth billions of dollars of Pakistan's total exports originate. Sialkot International Airport filled



the vacuum and served this important economic hub of the country. Besides this commercial activity, it served a religious duty as well. The Hujjaj, Umra and Zaireen passengers felt elevated to have a greatest facility available at their doorstep, to take direct flights to their desired international destinations of religious importance.

There are currently about 60 international flights per week despite Covid-19 and the presently flying air carriers are adding more frequencies and new carriers are also adding to the list that will start their flights in the coming months. Currently over one million passengers are travelling through Sialkot Airport in a year. The numbers are increasing day by day and after the



operational opening of the Shehbaz Pur bridge (built over River Chenab (down the 'Head Marala Works) linking Gujrat with Sambrial, the traffic is multiply and facilitate residents of a large number of towns and villages of Gujrat and Jehlum districts and parts of Azad Jamun & Kashmir (AJK) like Mir Pur and Bhimber districts etc. Completion of Lahore Motorway also increased other areas passengers of into the fold of SIAL, who currently have to cover a long, full of traffic and cumbersome distance for going to Lahore. As soon as their route is shortened by the motorway connecting Lahore with Sialkot; they prefer to come to Sialkot airport which is far more convenient for them. Development of the fast growing new infrastructure will enhance manifold the clientage and business of SIALin the coming years.

A point to raise here of utmost importance is that the air-ticket when purchased from the US or European cities for Sialkot airport or vice-versa is much more expensive than of Lahore or other Pakistanis airports, for which there definitely is no logic behind or justification, as the distances are nearly the same or may be less for Sialkot, if calculated geographically. Moreover a uniform policy ought to be adopted with no discrimination whatsoever for the nascent airport, which needs encouragement rather than discouragement. The matter needs urgent attention of the concerned authorities for removing this anomaly and thus giving SIAL equal opportunities of business like other cities.

Initiation of international flights connecting for Manchester, Barcelona, Oslo, and Copenhagen from sialkot Airport have been fulfilled too, since the Golden Triangle' is replete with expatriates seeking direct links to these places, from their hearths. Development of new and extensive communication network within the zone by the Government has provided better quality and shorter road linkages to a greater number of surrounding districts. For the purpose of ameliorations at the airport, a 'Green Field' development as envisaged by SIAL Directors, was put forward by the Chairman SIAL before the PM during the above said meeting and was promised by the later, to be salvaged by the Government in the interests and for the betterment of the project, created on selfhelp basis which was highly admired and which deserved further encouragement from all quarters.

At the airport, a high quality new-Departure Lounge has been completed on Level -11 of the International Terminal Building which is connecting it to Avio Bridges. State of the Art High-Tech Common User Terminal Equipment and Baggage Reconciliation System (CUTE BRS) and Flight Information Display System (FIDC) have been installed in the terminal. SIAL is positioning itself to handle a much greater passenger and cargo movement. Road network leading to the airport and infrastructure is being improved and has been further promised by the Government side. Lush green surroundings of the airport have further been implanted with mangrove and removing of unnecessary bushes.

"I think there is beauty in everything. What normal people would perceive as ugly, I can usually see something of beauty in it." (Alexander Mequeen)

Turkey, Qatar vow joint push to reopen Kabul airport

urkey and Qatar on Monday 6
Dec. raised the possibility of
j o i n t l y o p e r a t i n g
Afghanistan's Taliban-controlled airport,
as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan set
off for two days of talks in Doha. "We are
going to act together," Turkish Foreign
Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told a joint
press briefing with his Qatari counterpart
ahead of Erdogan's arrival.

"Qatar and Turkey are continuously working with the interim government in Afghanistan to reach an agreement to open the airport (so it can function) normally," Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani added.

Erdogan's visit comes as Turkey seeks to rebuild relations with former rivals in the energy-rich Gulf region, including the United Arab Emirates, whose crown prince last month visited Turkey for the first time since 2012.

Simmering tensions between Ankara and its Gulf rivals escalated after a Saudi Arabia-led blockade on Qatar by Arab countries in 2017.

Ankara backed Qatar in the dispute, and the two countries have grown closer ever since.

Erdogan, whose country is reeling from a fresh economic crisis and is searching foreign investment and trade, said he wanted to use the trip to foster closer relations with all Gulf states.

"We are in favour of strengthening our relations with all the Gulf countries," Erdogan told reporters at an Istanbul airport before leaving for Doha.

"The blockade and sanctions imposed on Qatar have been lifted as of the start of this year. Right now, solidarity is being restored among Gulf countries," Erdogan said. The two countries will sign dozens of deals during a visit to Qatar by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, who also sought to meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman there, according to two people familiar with the plan.

Such a direct meeting appeared unlikely this week, but could come soon, one of the sources said. It would be the first between the two leaders after the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Erdogan arrived in Qatar, a key regional ally, as Turkey's economy is grappling with an historic currency crash and soaring inflation following a series of interest rate cuts that he had sought despite widespread criticism.

At a news briefing in Doha, Foreign



TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and wife Emine Erdogan being welcomed by a Qatari official upon their arrival in Doha on Monday 6 Dec.

Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey had no plans to ask Doha for financial assistance. His counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said Qatar was looking at opportunities emerging from Turkey's economic challenges.

Saudi Arabia's Prince Mohammed, widely known by the initials MBS, was due to visit Doha recently.

There had been discussions to set up a meeting between Erdogan and the Saudi prince in Qatar, said a Turkish official and a Gulf official with knowledge of the visit plans.

"The programmes didn't align ... so it does not appear like there will be a comprehensive meeting this week," said the Turkish official, who requested anonymity.

"But it is possible for this meeting to take place at a near date when programmes align," the person said, adding there were "many opportunities for cooperation" as regional issues are resolved.

There was no immediate response from the Saudi government to a request for comment.

Saudi Arabia last year imposed an unofficial boycott on Turkish imports, as political tensions over the killing of Khashoggi, a critic of the crown prince, spilled into trade between the two regional powers.

After Saudi agents killed Khashoggi in October 2018, Erdogan had said that the order came from the "highest levels" of the Saudi government, although he did not name Prince Mohammed, who is Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler.

A US intelligence assessment released in February found that the crown prince approved the killing a charge Saudi Arabia rejects.

Yet Saudi Arabia and Turkey have in recent months been working to amend ties after having been rivals for years over differences on regional issues and political Islam.

French President Emmanuel Macron held face-to-face talks in Saudi Arabia with MBS, becoming the first major Western leader to visit the kingdom since Khashoggi's murder.

The Qatari minister said the timing of the visits to Doha by Erdogan and the crown prince was a coincidence.

Qatar's Sheikh Mohammed said Qatar was ready for "heavily investing in Turkey", adding it was looking forward to opportunities that may emerge from the talks.

PIA flight diverted twice, scaring passengers

More than 140 passengers refused to travel by a Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) Karachi-bound flight on Sunday 12 Dec. after its pilot made two attempts to continue the journey but was forced to return to Islamabad owing to a technical fault with the aircraft.

Finally, the national flag carrier's flight PK-301, an Airbus A320, took off for Karachi for the third time at around 5.30pm with only 17 passengers on board.

The passengers had an exchange of words with the crew members and a Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) provincial leader onboard, and criticised the government and the airline management for causing inconvenience to them.

Passengers were nervous and furious while the PIA staff kept insisting there was nothing wrong with the aircraft.

Over 140 of the 160 people on board refuse to travel

According to sources, Captain Amjad Malik operating the plane from Islamabad to Karachi took off at the scheduled time of 12.30pm on Sunday 12 Dec. with 160 passengers on board, but he was forced to return after half an hour when the plane's inertial navigation system a device that can precisely guide an aircraft without any reference to the ground developed some problem.

Unconfirmed sources said that the plane had to return to Islamabad after developing "a trouble in the engine".

The captain safely landed the plane at the Islamabad International Airport, where engineers tried to rectify the problem. However, an interesting situation developed when the captain disappeared after disembarking. After some time, he was located by the airline's officials. The captain then made another attempt to take off the plane at around 4pm.

Again, the flight was diverted back to Islamabad as the fault could not be removed. It created panic among the passengers who demanded the crew members to open the doors to disembark them, as most of them were not willing to continue their journey.

At this stage, the passengers protested and had an exchange of words with the crew members and the PTI leader. They forced the crew members to open the doors to allow them to disembark.

The engineers were again called to recheck the problem, but they insisted that the issue had been rectified and the captain was in stress.

A video posted on social media showed some passengers arguing with crew members and thanking God for a safe landing. "We thanked God for blessing us with new life," said the passengers.

A spokesman for PIA, Abdullah Hafeez Khan, said the flight had landed at Islamabad airport for the second time because the captain decided to return back due to safety concerns. "We apologise for the inconvenience caused to the passengers," he said. "There is no compromise on precautionary measures."

After maintenance, the plane departed for its destination and safely landed at Jinnah International Airport at around 7.15pm.

Body set up to improve aviation industry, enhance tourism

or the first time in Pakistan, the Aircraft Owners and Operators Association (AOOA) has been established with the goal of improving and reforming the aviation industry to encourage tourism in the country.

The AOOA founder, Imran Aslam Khan, told media that the association would work with the relevant authorities for developing the aviation sector and promoting tourism through the aviation industry.

Since 1932, he said, such organisations had worked with regulatory authorities in numerous countries to develop the aviation industry. In the United States, general aviation is strong as there are 208,000 general aviation aircraft, compared to only 80 in Pakistan.

Mr Khan said: "There are many restrictions from governments who have over-regulated processes of import and financing in the aviation industry which need to be considered."

He further stated that the AOOA will recommend to the government modifications and improvements in the

National Aviation Policy and Legislation to boost the aviation business and tourism in Pakistan's best interests.

The AOOA will represent its members at relevant forums to highlight issues faced by the aviation sector and propose solutions. He said he is delighted to announce the formation of the association as it will develop and revolutionize the aviation industry in Pakistan. More than 80pc aircraft owners and air operators in Pakistan are already members of the association, he said.

Associate membership for aircraft engineers and pilots will also be open soon so that the whole aviation community is represented from one platform.

Airlines will also be offered to join the association as the aviation industry is not that big in the country. A single platform for the development of this sector will have a manifold impact. Capt Aijaz Ahmed from Lahore was elected as the president and Capt Asim Nawaz (LLM) from Karachi has been elected as general secretary of AOOA.

Exports to Canada rise by 32pc

Pakistan's exports to Canada have registered an increase of 32 per cent in the first nine months of the current calendar year.

This was stated during an online public forum-cum-ekatchehry, organised by the Pakistan High Commission in Canada recently along with its consulates in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal to take up questions and concerns of the Pakistani diaspora in Canada about consular and public services offered by the government.

During the forum, it was mentioned that the total exports from Pakistan to Canada during the January-September 2021 period increased 32 per cent compared with the corresponding period last year.

As per figures shared by Statistics Canada, during the Jan-Sep 2021 period, the total exports from Pakistan to Canada amounted to \$313 million as compared with exports of \$237.1 million in the same period last year.

In reply to another question, members of the Pakistani community were informed that a series of educational webinars and eworkshops were being planned by the Pakistan High Commission in Canada.

He said the first such webinar involving educational experts and consultants from Canada and Pakistan would be held on November 23.

The purpose of the webinars will be to explore opportunities and prospects for

Pakistani students to pursue higher education in Canada under the Student Direct Stream launched by the Government of Canada to fast track visa processing for students from certain countries, including Pakistan.

67 countries reach `historic` deal on trade in services

group of 67 countries, including the United States, China and EU members, reached a deal at the World Trade Organisation on Thursday Dec. 2 on facilitating trade in services.

The countries, which account for just over a third of all WTO members but represent 90 percent of global trade in services, concluded the accord after four years of negotiations.

WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-lweala hailed the deal as 'historic', pointing to estimates that it would lower the costs associated with the services trade by as much as \$150 billion each year.

Faced with WTO's long-time failure to conclude multilateral trade deals among all 164 members, smaller numbers of countries have increasingly moved to plurilateral negotiations in a bid to move forward in areas including domestic services regulation.

Washington hailed Thursday's deal in a statement, saying it would 'improve the transparency and fairness of processes for obtaining authorisations to provide services by professionals and firms in a wide array of fields.' 'This initiative is the first successful WTO services negotiation in years, and shows how WTO members can take practical, common sense steps to address clearly defined trade problems,' US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said in a statement. EU Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis also hailed the 'groundbreaking' deal, tweeting that it would 'cut red tape in services trade.

Trade in services has grown significantly over the past decade and the WTO now estimates that it accounts for around half of world trade. However, trade in services costs are about twice that of trade in goods.

A significant portion of the costs is attributable to regulatory differences as well as opaque regulations and burdensome procedures.

WTO members are free to regulate their service sectors, but starting in 2017, the growing group of countries has worked towards developing good regulatory practices so as not to restrict trade unnecessarily.

KN Aviation GSA Cham Wings Airlines hosts reception to interoduce the airlines

ham Wings Airlines a private carrier of Syria has announced to start flights operations from Damascus to Karachi from 15 Dec.

KN Aviation GSA Cham Wings Airlines in Pakistan hosted a reception at Movenpic Hotel Karachi on 1st December, for travel and Cargo agents to introduce Cham Wings Airlines. Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director KN Aviation GSA for the airlines addressing the gathering briefed about the airlines and informed about its history etc. The airlines has announced to operate its flights initially from Damascus to Karachi, once a week and then to Lahore and Islamabad.

Cham Wings airlines is a second carrier of Syria. This is a private airlines and has fleet of a all A320 aircrafts. Karachi is the 14th destination of the airlines. The airlines will increase its frequency in Feb 2022 to Karachi, from one flight to three flights a week.

At present Cham Wings has all A320 aircrafts and it will soon acquire wide body aircrafts to expand its network and capacity. Mr. Dharsi told that the airlines has a great potential for religious tourism for Syria, Iraq and Iran. They will offer incentive to the groups and introduce special tour packages. The Zarine could stay in Syria for Ziarat even after visiting Najaf and also can go to Iran. The tourist can also travel by road to these countries.

He said flight from Karachi to Damascus is scheduled in such a way that it offers excellent connections with flights to Najaf and other cities with religious & historic importance. He said pilgrims to all Holy cities in three countries, Syria, Iraq and Iran, can benefit from this service in just one ticket purchase.

Mohsin A. Dharsi who is also Chairman of Air Cargo Agents Association of Pakistan (ACAAP) urged cargo agents to make full use of the cargo space available on all routes offered by Cham Wings Airline. He said that Cham Wings Airline is a full-board private airline offering excellent meals, Arabic & continental cuisines, in-flight entertainment and all other facilities those are offered by leading airlines in the region.

Cham Wings Airlines flies to Abu Dhabi, Aleppo, Sharjah, Kuwait, Muscat, Erbil, Yerevan, Beirut, Basra, Baghdad, Qamishli, Khartoum, Tehran, Najaf, Moscow and Karachi.

Mr. Rafiq Khan, Chairman Bukhari Group congratulated Mohsin A Dharsi on bringing a new airline to Pakistan and assured his full support to Cham Wings and KN Aviation. Mr. Salim Buxamoosa, Chairman Universal Freight System Pvt Ltd., said that it's an encouraging sign for Pakistan aviation industry, especially after Covid-19 pandemic. He said it will bring

new opportunities for the promotion of religious and general tourism between Pakistan and Syria. He said, Syria, is a beautiful country and has lots of historic sites worth visiting.

Farrukh Iqbal, COO Bluex and UNS welcomed the new airlines to Pakistan. He said that we all should work hard for bringing more airlines so that Pakistan aviation industry can get back to its past glory. Mr. Shakeel Ahmed Executive Director United Insurance also addressed on the occasion and congratulated Mr. Mohsin A. Dharsi.



Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi Director KN Aviation GSA Cham Wings Airlines addressing on the occasion.



Glimpses of reception hosted by KN Aviation to introduce Cham Wings Airlines























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Past and Present in Perspective

(Prof. Safdar Sandal)

"I believe in everything until it's disproved. So I believe in fairies, the myths, dragons. It all exists, even if it's in your mind".

(John Lenin)

Supernatural and mythology



Russian mythology, (A Hunza nymph appearing charming the world at two placesspontaniously) by flute)

In ancient times, belief in mythical beings was fairly common and often driven out of superstition. People never liked to mention them by name out of fear and referred to them with other names like 'the little people' (wowney in Punjabi) and the 'Hidden People'. Many explanations were given for their existence, like as if they were the spirits of the dead, ghosts or 'Fallen Angels' that were not good enough for heaven but not evil enough for hell. According to the folklore, there are hundreds of different kinds of fairies that people believed in and do so even now in the modern scientific world. Perhaps the oldest one of such 'hidden people' dates back to the 13th century and is called the Gervase of Tilbury. One might think that belief in these creatures was common in ancient times more than it is now. But as recently as in 1962; a Somerset farmer's wife relayed a story of how she got lost in the Berkshire Downs and was directed back to the right path by a man in green, who she considered to be non-traceable entity later on. A double-figured, selfstyed beautified nymph (pari) striding to and fro in the Hunza hills has been claimed by many tourists to have seen while traversing in the Hunza's most enchanting valleys. This is what is the most interesting and charming part of our folklore. Nearly a decade ago a Pakistani Don Quixote, an acquaintance of mine, residing in London, told me that once he was about to cross a busy London road and was facing a difficulty, when suddenly a teenage boy appeared on the scene, took his hand and helped him to cross the road safely. The boy disappeared after that act. He claimed it was an angel who had come to help him.

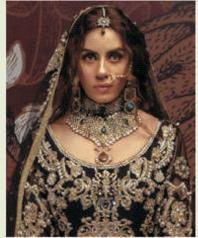


The saying that "only the believers see the giant (fairies, angels, ghosts inclusive)" also exists in the book of idioms and amongst us are surly abundant people who are fully convinced about these unseen people and call them *Aasmani makhluq*. I personally however, believe it or not!! but I definitely like the rich folklore that we possess to exist, as our precious asset.

Piercings

"One's appearance bespeaks dignity corresponding to the depth of his character". Piercings have been common throughout human history. Otzi, the 5.300 year old man found perfectly preserved in the Alps had pierced ears, along with 61 tattoos. This proved that it was a practice that dates back to ancient times, before humans could read and write. More often than not, piercings have been associated to communicate class, document, and an experience, participate in social rituals and symbolize certain cultures. For instance, the practice of piercing the nostril in India to help women with menstrual pain dates back to centuries. However, piercings did have some practical uses also as sailors would pierce their ears knowing that if they died on sea, the earring would be enough to pay for their funeral. Piercing of ears is still in vogue both in India and Pakistan among the women folk which is intended to wear earrings of gold and these are intended to give them a charming look, which it really, does in most cases. In South India the nostrils of women are pierced for wearing ornaments all the time, but in Pakistan such piercings have become less common, except for use only on marriage ceremonies or family gatherings and not for all the time. The custom as a tradition continues and perhaps it must continue to identify our rich cultural past and living in the religioninfested society of the Sub-continent.





Zeus – god (Greek mythology) Athens – Ancient Greece



In Greek mythology, Zeus is the king of all the gods. When he was born from Cronus and Rhea, he was sent to the Greek Island of Crete where he was considered to be safe from his father who intended on killing him out of the fear that he may one day usurp his throne. In Crete, Zeus was raised by nymphs and was fed on honey and milk from the broken horn of a goat called Ameltheia. When he came of age, Zeus began his battle against his father and the Titans and even managed to free his older siblings in the process. With their help, he was able to overthrow the existing empire, only to be confronted by giants from Typhon. He defeated them too successfully. Witnessing his unwavering success, all bowed down to him as the king.

Machiavelli



Niccolo Machiavelli was an Italian Statesman who worked as a diplomat for 14 years until the Medici family returned to power in 1512. He was accused of conspiracy and was soon arrested, tortured and exiled. In exile, he wrote 'The Prince' which was his description of the political reality of the world. The book is famously seen as a guide for fascist states that glorifies the prince, an absolute ruler, and justifies his approach towards securing and retaining power and maintain it, no matter, through whatever means, he can employ. The book became infamous in later times of growing political thought.

Machiavelli's personal life experiences got him to the belief that the nature of human beings was such that they were self-serving, vile, ruthless and cunning at best. Thus the world he paints in his book is also one that emulates this belief and instructs the ruler to exploit this human nature for the purpose of remaining in power. While some consider this to be a brilliant piece of political literature, others have condemned him and his work, calling it cynical and amoral.

Sikh farmers in India

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete".

In November of 2020, farmers in India staged the largest protest in history. Over 250 million people participated in the protest on the first day and a 24-kour general strike was organized and followed rather strictly. The entire country stood in solidarity with the farmers who were protesting against the unjust policies of the government all throughout the six years that PM Narendra Modi has been in power. As he marchers went to Delhi, they were met at the city limits by the Police who used tear gas and water cannons to obstruct the crowd. They even damaged the roads outside the city to prevent the marchers from moving forward and entering the city after city.

Kartarpur



Kartarpur, Kashmir and Ayodhya will impact Indo-Pak subcontinent's socialreligious-political milieu and bilateral relations between India and Pakistan in emphatic albeit contrasting ways. The colossal paradigm-shifts and the ominous precedents being set will henceforth define and determine the future of this region of well over a billion and half people of diverse religions, cultures, traditions, languages, ethnicities, nationalities and persuasions. To find ways and means of compounding this cleavage, a successful effort has been initiated by PM Imran Khan of the Pakistan Government for ameliorating the situation, at least in the divided Punjab. There have been signs of jubilation in Indian Punjab over the inauguration of the Kartarpur Corridor, which has been opened for the followers of Sikh religion, as Baba Guru Nanak (the founder of Sikhism) was born and had died in Pakistani Punjab; the land is most revered by the Sikh community living in India and spread all over the world, as being one of the largest diaspora who are much dedicated to their origins.

This year, the 552nd birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev will fall on November 19th being today (the date of writing these lines).

Kentucky



("One has to remember that every failure can be a stepping-stone to something better). Col. Sanders. KFC was incorporated by Colonel Harland Sanders in Corbin, Kentucky in 1955. Born In in 1890, Sanders left home to work at a farmland after a troubled childhood and then transitioned into working for a series of businesses. He tried his hand as a painter, railroad fireman, plowman, streetcar conductor, insurance

salesman and many more; but by 1929, he opened his own gas station where he also cooked for his family and the occasional customers. He used to enjoy making the recipe his mother taught him and ultimately, his spice-blend of 11 spices that has stood and become KFC', as an internationally registered trademark. Harland Sander's venture eventually expanded to a 142-seat restaurant which was sold, after which he travelled to the US to open his franchise KFC. With over 10,000 outlets in the world, KFC has maintained its title, for the last 60 years, of being the chicken experts and which has maintained its exclusive-taste-recipe, as well.

Cold War

The Cold War was a term that was first used by George Orwell in an article published in 1945. He predicted that there will be a nuclear stalement between two to three super-states, each of which would possess a weapon that could wipe out millions in a second. In line with this theory, he Cold War fought between the US and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, the Western and Eastern bloc. While there is no agreement on what started it exactly, it took place after WW2 and is considered to span between the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and the dissolution of USSR in 1991. The two powers never fought directly but engaged in proxy wars so that their geopolitical and ideological struggle i,e. capitalism versus communism could be settled. engaged in psychological warfare, propaganda, espionage, trade embargoes, technological competition and a space race. The USSR has vanquished meanwhile and its place has been taken by China. Production and exports rose in China of any conceivable item.

Economic might is achieved through the accumulation of wealth and by exercising socio-economic influence over the world. China and the US have been in a tussle sort of a tug of war to determine who is more powerful. Next is the geopolitical warfare, in which the US has suffered badly in the past 2.50 decades which has cost it several trillions of dollars and a political bad face too in the world. China continued to rise as a worthy contender meanwhile, and has spread its roots in all the continents of the world, including the US itself. According to a recent report issued by McKinsey & Co, China has finally surpassed the United States as the world's richest state and is poised to continue its rise to global dominance. In the coming years and decades, the future could overwhelmingly belong to China, as the pace of its current progress suggests.



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Most CPEC projects complete

hinese Consul General Li Bijian has said that most of the projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have been completed while Gwadar has become more important in the region.

China has invested in various projects including the airport, training centre and Gwadar, the envoy said during a visit to the office of Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (Kati).

"I am happy that the power crisis in Pakistan has ended due to CPEC. The development work of Gwadar Airport is 90 per cent complete and hopefully operations will begin in 2023," the envoy said, according to a press release issued by Kati.

The diplomat said a hospital was also being constructed in Gwadar which was expected to become functional next year.



Chinese Consul General Li Bijian meets members of the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (Kati) on Monday Dec. 6.

CPEC is an important part of the Pak-China friendship, he highlighted.

The envoy stressed that there were ample trade opportunities in China for Pakistani industrialists and investors. "China has a population of 500 million middle-class people which could be a big market for Pakistan," he added.

He said that Pakistan could export fruits and vegetables to China, while China has a larger seafood market of which Pakistani exporters could take full advantage.

In addition, cooperation between the two countries in the field of IT and electric vehicles could be further enhanced.

The Chinese envoy said the two countries could work out a strategy to increase Pakistan's export volume through trade.

He urged Pakistani industrialists to take advantage of the free trade agreement between the two countries.

Kati President Salman Aslam said the economic corridor project was important for the economy of both the countries.

Former Kati president Danish Khan said that Chinese investors should set up industries in Pakistan and stressed on the need for holding joint trade fairs with China to promote Pakistani products.

Textile exports projected to cross \$20bn target

ith the ongoing \$3.5 billion expansion plan for the textile industry, Pakistan's textile exports are likely to increase by \$6bn and cross the \$20bn target projected for the fiscal year 2021-22.

In November alone, textile exports were up 36 per cent as compared to the same period last year, data shared by the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (Aptma) showed.

"With the ongoing expansion plan, our exports are gradually rising and reflecting very positive signs for the industry. [Textile exports will] easily reach \$21bn which is one billion more than the actual target of the \$20bn set for FY22," Aptma chairman Abdul Rahim Nasir told Dawn on Saturday.

"The total investment and expansion plan for all sectors for FY22 is worth \$4.5bn and includes \$3.5bn for textile sector alone. Investments of \$1.5bn have been made so far in the textile sector while the rest \$2bn would be in place by June 30, 2022," the Aptma chairman explained. Major investments and expansions have been made for value-addition including from semi-finished to finished goods, raw cloth to dyed cloth to garments for example, he maintained. "Since things are in the right directions at present, we will surely achieve our targets and even more this year subject to continuation of proexports' policies," the Aptma chairman believed.

The association has termed textile growth in November and July to

November, 2021 a good omen for the textile industry. "Alhamdulillah Textile entrepreneurs have honoured their commitment, with expansion plans well on track Textile exports are set to increase by 6 billion dollars this year compared to last year, thereby equivalent to the 3 year IMF Program," the association said in a tweet on Saturday.

According to data shared by Aptma, textile exports (silk, wool, cotton, vegetable textile fibres, man-made staple fibres, wadding, carpets, special woven fabrics, impregnated, coated textile fibres, knitted fabrics, apparel and other made-up textile articles etc) jumped to over \$1.747bn (36pc) in November from over \$1.286bn attained in the same period in 2020. Likewise, exports jumped to over \$7.834bn from July to November 2021, posting a rise of 29pc from over \$6.052 recorded in the same period last year.

It may be mentioned that the textile & apparel sector had touched a figure of \$15.380bn in FY21. The government, keeping in view the exports growth, projected \$20bn target for FY22.

Similarly, agri sector exports last year reached \$4.341bn. For FY22, the target has been set at \$4.858bn. Non-agri exports reached to \$5.578bn last year and target for FY22 has been fixed at \$6.357bn.

Country's total exports including textile, agri and non-agri remained at \$25.300bn last year. The ongoing year's target has been projected as \$31.225bn subject to continuation of the ongoing enabling environment aiming at exportled sustainable growth.

Kinno export outlook sour amid rise in freight costs

inno exports are likely to fall by 35 per cent year-on-year to 300,000 tonnes this season due to a significant increase in sea freight costs and the adverse effect of climatic changes on the fruit's production.

Waheed Ahmed, the patron-in-chief of All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters, Importers and Merchants Association said on Tuesday 30 Nov. the country's kinno production is feared to drop to 1.7 million tonnes this year compared to 2.4m tonnes last year.

A few kinno factories in Sargodha were preparing for the export, he said.

However, large-scale preparation to export the fruit had yet to begin, although the season was due to start from Dec 1, he added.

Last year, kinno exports reached 450,000 tonnes against the target of 350,000 tonnes. However, due to the crisis of high sea freight costs this year, the exports were likely to suffer to the international markets of Russia, Canada, Ukraine, Indonesia, and the Philippines the countries where Pakistan sent half of its kinno exports, he said.

The cost of sea freight to Russia, an important international market, was \$2,500-3,000 per container during the previous season compared to the current rate of \$7,000.

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Education, tolerance stressed on Sindh Culture Day



A man plays the dhol on stage as a large number of people take part in celebrations and dance, sing and take pictures outside the Karachi Press Club on the occasion of Sindh Culture Day on Sunday 5 Dec

ike other parts of the province, 'Sindh Culture Day' was observed in Karachi on Sunday 5 Dec. with this year's slogan of Ilm Pirayo, Sindh Sanwaro (promote education, foster Sindh).

People wearing traditional Sindhi dresses took out rallies in different parts of the metropolis.

The main event took place outside the Karachi Press Club (Deen Muhammad Wafai Road-Corner Fawara Chowk), which was organised by different Sindhi TV channels.

A police officer said that elaborate security arrangements were made and law enforcers were closely monitoring the events to maintain law and order as estimated 5,000-6,000 people were participating in events in the evening.

Thousands of people mostly youths including women and children sang and danced when famous singers Ahmed Mughal, Tufail Sanjrani, Taj Mastani, Shehla Gul and others demonstrated their performance, singing songs depicting longing for Sindh.

Politicians, mostly nationalist leaders, also joined the celebrations apart from civil society members.

Qaumi Awami Tehreek chief Ayaz Latif Palijo on this occasion said that singing, dancing and wearing traditional Sindhi dresses were good thing, but it was more important to remember as to why great civilisations like Greece, Romans, Egyptians shrunk and as to why Red Indians in America and Aborigines in Australia vanished.

"These civilisations and the communities were eclipsed as they did not change themselves as changing time and did not seek knowledge, technology and science," observed Mr Palijo.

Referring to the recent tragic incident in Sialkot, he said the lynching of a Sri Lankan man by a mob over allegation of blasphemy had presented a danger to all and urged the people "to put a wall against this extremism".

"We, Muslims are in majority, but Islam does not allow force and compulsion in the religion and it talks about respect for others' religions as well," he added.

Citing recent gruesome murders in certain parts of Sindh allegedly at the behest of influential persons like Nazim Jokhio on the outskirts of Karachi, the QAT head said these killings took place because of Jirga system and Wadera Shahi (feudalism). "We have to promote education to fight against feudalism, Jirgas and tribalism," he said.

Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz chief Sanan Qureshi said that Sindh was passing through a difficult situation.

He said: "Outsiders are being settled in Karachi as large housing schemes like Bahrai Town Karachi are aimed at turning Sindhis into a minority". Jeay Sindh Mahaz chairman Riaz Chandio claimed that Sindh had deliberately been deprived of its resources.

He urged the people to promote education as it would end hunger and poverty and enhance prestige of Sindhis.

Meanwhile jubilant crowds celebrated Sindh Culture Day in Hyderabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Tangwani, Kashmore-Kandhkot, Khairpur, Pano Aqil, Ghotki, Mirpur Mathelo, Mehar, KN Shah, Johi, Sehwan, Sann, Jamshoro, Kotri, Nooriabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Naushahro Feroze, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Mirwah Gorchani, Digri, Jhuddo, Tando Jan Mohammad, Naokot, Kot Ghulam Mohammad, Sindhri, Phuladyyoon, Hingorno, Khaan, Jhilori, Badin, Golarchi, Matli, Talhar, Tando Bago, Kadhan, Kario Ganwher and other towns on Sunday 5 Dec.

Film festival on mountain tourism begins in Gilgit

wo-day Bam-i-Dunya Film Festival kicked off in Gilgit on Friday to mark the International Mountain Day with the aim to promote responsible mountain tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The inaugural ceremony of the event was held at the Karakoram International University.

WWF-Pakistan in collaboration with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, GB tourism department and other organisations is organising the event.

GB chief secretary Asif Khan, tourism secretary Rashid Ali, home secretary Mohammad Ali Randhawa, forest and wildlife secretary Sumair Syed, WWF's regional head Haidar Raza, experts, researchers and students participated in the inaugural ceremony.

The event provides a platform to the filmmakers belonging to GB and Chitral as they are keen on documenting mountain ecology and socioeconomic and climatic changes occurring in the mountainous regions.

The organisers said the region was organising the biggest ever film festival for the first time.

The event will enable the youth to share and discuss local and regional challenges, opportunities, success stories, and provide the local researchers and filmmakers with an opportunity to interact, discuss, form networks and to foresee opportunities for joint ventures and play a role for effective policy recommendation.

Speaking on the occasion, chief secretary Mohammad Asif said purpose of celebrating the International Mountain Day was to create awareness about importance of mountains and their protection.

He said mountains were facing threats from climate change impact.

Mr Asif said the government made policies from the ideas generated from such events. He said protection of mountains was their collective responsibility.

He announced to celebrate the day at government level in GB as the biggest festival. GB secretary tourism Rashid All said the government was taking every step for promotion of sustainable tourism in the region.

WWF regional head Haidar Raza said unplanned tourist influx to GB was the biggest threat to environment.

Environmental experts explained the threats to mountains from environmental degradation. They emphasised the need for promoting ecotourism and awareness for safety of mountains and sensitive environment.



Record-holding Shehroze dreams of climbing world's all tallest peaks



Mountaineer Shehroze Kashif holding a painting of himself during the interview.

hehrozeKashif faced many dangers climbing the planet's tallest peaks, but his toughest moment came when he passed the corpse of his hero on the savage slopes of K2.

Kashif was 19 years and 138 days old when in July he became the youngest person to summit both Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, and K2, the second-highest.

It was on K2, just below the infamous stretch known as the Bottleneck, that he passed the bodies of Iceland's John Snorri, Chile's Juan Pablo Mohr and Pakistan's climbing legend Ali Sadpara.

"The most emotional moment for me was going on past those climbers, the dead body of Pakistan's national hero," Kashif said in an interview.

Many Pakistanis have crucial roles as high-altitude porters, but Sadpara was one of the few to break into the elite ranks of mostly western climbers who have long dominated headlines in mountaineering.

He was declared missing along with Snorri and Mohr on Feb 5. It was more than five months before their bodies were found, on July 26, and Kashif made his summit push as dawn broke the next morning.

"I got emotional, thinking that they had come with the same passion I had," Kashif said.

"But then I thought, why not fulfil their unfulfilled dream? And I took their dream with me."

This month, the Guinness Book of World Records officially declared him the youngest person to climb K2 and the youngest to climb both the world's two highest mountains.

Kashif summited Everest, which at 8,849 metres is Earth's tallest peak, in May.

But the 8,611-metre K2 known as the 'Savage Mountain' and located near Pakistan's border with China is the more brutal summit.

They are "poles apart", Kashif said, calling K2 a "beast".

In winter, winds can blow at more than 200km per hour and temperatures can drop to minus 60 degrees Celsius.

Kashif suffered snow blindness and frostbite and said he was lucky his big toe was not amputated.

"My energy was too low, it was a difficult time... One wrong step and you are history," he told AFP from his home in Lahore.

Blessings of God

Kashif was first entranced by the mountains at 11 years old when he spotted the scenic 3,885-metre Himalayan peak Makra while on holiday with his father in northern Pakistan. "It all started there," he said.

While standing on top of the world he felt "chosen" a feeling that he described leaving on the peak, "so others coming behind you can also feel it". Now, he said, Everest and K2 are not enough.

He plans to become the youngest person to climb the world's 14 highest mountains, the only peaks on the planet that are above 8,000 metres.

All lie in Asia, in the Himalayas or the Karakoram range, and five are in Pakistan.

Only around 40 people in history are believed to have climbed all 14. But it can be difficult to verify summit claims and some experts said there could be even fewer.

The youngest is Mingma Gyabu "David" Sherpa, of Nepal, who the Guinness Book of World Records said summited them all by age 30.

Kashif still has 10 to go.

He has also climbed Manaslu in Nepal and Broad Peak in Pakistan, the eighth and 12th highest mountains, respectively and has given himself until 2024 to summit the rest. He is well aware of the dangers.

Pakistan mourned the loss of Sadpara but Kashif also lost a friend, Pakistani-Swiss climber Abdul Waraich, on Everest in May.

Still, he refuses to contemplate an urban life at sea level.

"I think mountains are blessings of God," he said.

"I feel tired looking at all these concrete buildings, garbage and pollution. "I just go where I feel most alive, and I feel mountains are the most suitable place for me."

Traditional raft rally concludes in Skardu



Raft race participants arrive in Sandus area of Skardu.

two-day traditional Zakh (raft) rally aimed to promote winter tourism and revive the tradition of travelling through water concluded in Skardu the other day.

A total of 22 teams comprising 88 members started their journey from Gulabpur area of Shigar and arrived in Sandus area of Skardu on Tuesday 30 Nov., travelling 70 kilometres distance through Shigar and Indus rivers.

The Zakh tradition was set by the residents of Shigar as they used the traditional rafts to travel through the Shigar and Indus rivers.

In ancient times, Zakh also remained a source of crossing rivers in the region when there were no roads and bridges.

Each team comprising four people, including the boatman, holding national flags and singing national and traditional songs travelled through the rivers amid freezing temperatures.

They had arrived near the central Shigar on Monday 29 Nov. evening, where they stayed for the night.

On Tuesday 30 Nov. morning, the teams started their journey and arrived in Sandus area of Skardu in the evening. The locals warmly received the participants of the rally, showering them with flower petals.

However, the participants of the rally were disappointed as the local administration did not arrange reception for them.

Javaid Shigri, one of the organisers of the event, said no administration official came to receive the participants despite the fact that the rally was meant to promote winter tourism in the region. He demanded of the government to encourage such events.

Zulfiqar Ali Shigri, another organiser, said the youth of Gulabpur village of Shigar had organised the event. "The Zakh rally was held to promote winter tourism and explore the old ways of travelling long distances through water by the indigenous people," he added.

Zakh is a traditional raft made of skin of animals and wooden sticks.

Thal Jeep Rally proves milestone for Muzaffargarh

ain Mahmood won the final of the sixth Thal Jeep rally on Sunday 28 Nov.

Forty-three drivers participated in the final round at a venue about 35 kilometres away from the city.

Zain Mahmood won the first prize, Sahibzada Mohammad Ali Sultan second and Mir Nadir Magsi third position. Tushna Patel got first prize among women contestants. She said it was a proud moment for her and the event also served as a source of recreation for people. The award-distribution ceremony was held at Faisal Stadium.

Deputy Commissioner Musa Raza said it was a huge challenge for him to make arrangements for the mega event. He said the tourism department helped the administration in preparing the 195-kilometre track. He said the event would be held every year.

He told the media that it was an honour for the district to have arranged such an event.

Kot Addu SDPO Saadat Hussain said 14 check posts had been made besides deployment of police, Rescue 1122 and TMA officials.

A number of people from all over the country came to see the mega event in which famed drivers participated. Some people complained about a lack of arrangements for having eatables. They said no political figure visited the event which showed a lack of interest of the public representatives in promoting country's soft image.

Women drivers add thrill to jeep rally

Seventy-two people, six women among them, participated in the stock category of the Thal Jeep Rally on Saturday 27 November.

The women competed by driving vehicles on the 195-kilometre track. The results of the race will be announced on Sunday 27 Nov.

The women participants particularly expressed their enthusiasm and said it was a proud moment for them and the country.

They said dozens of women would participate in the event next year.

The visitors also were enthralled to see the competition, especially the participation of women, and said such events promoted soft image of the country.-Correspondent

Two foreigners hunt ibex in Hunza



Spanish hunter with his trophy in the Khunjerab conservation area, Hunza.

wo foreigners and a Lahore resident hunted two Himalayan ibex and a blue sheep in Hunza district of Gilgit-Baltistan under GB trophy hunting programme 2021-22.

According to the GB conservator parks and wildlife, Mr Waleed from Lahore hunted the season's first blue sheep with horns measuring 28 inches in Shimshal community control hunting area in Hunza on Saturday 4 Dec. He had obtained the permit by paying 6,600 US dollars.

Likewise, a Spanish citizen hunted 46-inch Himalayan ibex in Khunjerab conservation area at payment of 8,000 US dollars as licence fee.

Meanwhile, another foreigner, whose name and country couldn't be known, hunted a 48-inch trophy-size Himalayan ibex in Mintika valley of Misgar conservation area of Hunza. He had paid 6,200 dollars for the hunt.

Eighty per cent of the amount of trophy goes to the community for conservation of wildlife, while the remaining 20 per cent is deposited in the government exchequer.

GB parks and wildlife department had auctioned four licences for hunting of four Astore Markhor, 14 licences for blue sheep and 85 licences for Himalayan ibex under the trophy hunting programme 2021-22.

Sikh pilgrims mark birth anniversary of Guru Nanak



Sikh pilgrims perform rituals at Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib to mark the 552nd birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak.

sikh pilgrims, including 2,500 from India and other countries, participated in the 552-birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak at Gurdwara Janamasthan in Nankana Sahib on Friday 20 Nov.

The Sikhs performed their religious rituals as langer was served among them throughout the day. Later in the day, a Palki procession was taken out in which the pilgrims enthusiastically participated.

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Pir Noorul Haq Qadri, Evacuee Trust Property Board chairman Dr Aamer Ahmed, secretary board Hamid Masood Gondal and Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee president Sardar Ameer Singh attended the main event at Nanakana Sahib.

Mr Qadri said the government was striving to provide the best facilities to the Sikh yatrees during their visit to the country.

NAROWAL: The arrival of Sikh pilgrims from other countries to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur, continued on the third consecutive day on Friday 20 Nov.

Among the pilgrims included the chairperson of the Indo-Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and Indian Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Randawa. Up to 242 Sikh pilgrims from India arrived in Kartarpur on Friday via the corridor.

Another VIP delegation, headed by Jagir Kaur, chairperson of India Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, also reached the gurdwara...



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KP CM wants speedy work on access roads to tourist sites

hief Minister Mahmood Khan has directed the relevant officials for taking necessary action to immediately stop unauthorised construction activities in Kalam, Kumrat and other tourist spots of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He also asked them to expedite work on the construction of access roads to tourist areas of Malakand, Hazara and southern districts.

The chief minister issued these directives while chairing a meeting to review progress on various initiatives of the government for boosting tourism activities in the province, said an official statement here on Sunday 28 Nov.

The meeting was informed that action was being taken to discourage and stop unauthorised construction activities in Kalam and Kumrat areas.

It was added that section 144 had been enforced, as the concerned TMAs had imposed ban on registry, issuance of NoCs and fresh constructions in those areas.

The chief minister directed the quarters concerned to carry out assessment survey of all the rest houses owned by various provincial departments so that suitable rest houses could be handed over to the tourism department for their use for promotion of tourism activities.

Taking notice of delay in implementation of certain tourism access-related road projects in Hazara division, the chair decided to constitute a committee comprising secretary tourism, secretary communications, secretary energy and other officials. The committee members would visit the site of those projects and come up with proposals within a month to be placed before the provincial cabinet for consideration.

About progress on the establishment of special purpose development authorities on tourist areas of the province, it was stated that a draft act had been cleared by the provincial cabinet to establish Kalam Development Authority on the pattern of Galiyat Development Authority, which would soon be tabled in

the provincial assembly for enactment.

Similarly, board of directors has been notified for Kumrat Development Authority whereas its building codes and other related matters have been finalised and will be presented to the board for formal approval within a week. The meeting was informed that work was in progress on the establishment of Kalash Development Authority.

It was stated that considerable progress had been made on construction of various roads for promotion of tourism in Malakand division whereas work on two roads to the historical tourist spot of southern districts, Shaikh Badeen, was also underway.

India allows Sikhs to visit Kartarpur after one year



Sikh pilgrims collect their passports from Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee officials on Tuesday 16 Nov. on the eve of travelling to Pakistan to celebrate the 552nd birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev.

ndia gave the green light for thousands of Sikh pilgrims to cross the border into Pakistan from Wednesday 18 Nov. ahead of the birth anniversary of the religion's founder Guru Nanak.

The Kartarpur Corridor, a visa-free crossing allowing Indian Sikhs to visit the temple in Pakistan where Guru Nanak died in 1539, first opened in 2019 for Nanak's 550th birth anniversary but was closed last year because of the pandemic.

India's Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the corridor will re-open from Wednesday ahead of Nanak's birth anniversary celebrations this Friday 20 Nov.

"In a major decision, that will benefit large numbers of Sikh pilgrims, PM Narendramodi govt has decided to re-open the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor from tomorrow," he said on Twitter.

"I am sure that (the) govt's decision to reopen the Kartarpur Sahib corridor will further boost the joy and happiness across the country," Shah added.

Indian Punjab CM pays his respects at Kartarpur gurdwara



Sikh pilgrims sit inside the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib complex on the eve of the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in Kartarpur on Thursday 19 Nov.

he chief minister of Indian Punjab, Charanjit Singh Channi, and his cabinet members on Thursday visited Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur and performed religious rituals.

The high-level delegation comprising 37 members arrived here via Kartarpur Corridor that the Indian authorities opened on Wednesday 18 Nov. after a gap of 20 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Channi and his team were welcomed by Kartarpur Management Unit chief executive officer Mohammad Latif, Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) president Sardar Ameer Singh, provincial minister Pir Syed Saeedul Hassan and MPA Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora.

The Indian CM laid a wreath at the resting place of Baba Guru Nanak, visited different parts of Kartarpur and ate bread made from the wheat and vegetables of the fields looked after by Guru Nanak. The gurdwara's head priest, Sardar Gobind Singh, performed special rituals.

Mr Channi, who returned to India the same day, thanked the government of Pakistan for building a complex housing Gurdwara Darbar Sahib. He also thanked Mr Latif and the PSGPC for arrangements made for the occasion.

Over 90 Sikhs from India, including the CM's delegation, visited Kartarpur on Thursday 19 Nov.

Meanwhile, the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) arranged transportation facilities for the visiting Indian pilgrims to Gurdwara Sacha Sauda in Farooqabad where they performed their religious rites.

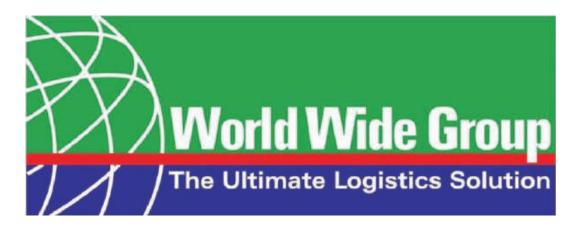
ETPB Additional Secretary (Shrines) Rana Shahid said foolproof security arrangements had been made for all the visiting Sikhs at Nankana Sahib for the main event in connection with the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak on Friday 20 Nov.

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Murree over the hills and far away



Originally owned by one Rivett Carnac, the Cecil was bought in 1916 by John Faletti from Italy, who made it one of the most desired addresses in Murree. The hotel was the official residence of Lord Mountbatten in the 1940s | Photos from the book

ntriguingly titled 'The Principal Arrives by Boat', 'Alcohol in the Teapots', 'Dancing at Astoria', 'The Butcher of Delhi at Richbell Road' and 'Playing in the Chapel', almost all the chapters in the five sections of Dr Omar Mukhtar Khan's book Once Upon a Time in Murree open in the last century.

Some go back even further. Besides the historical stories and rekindled memories pouring forth from the pages, it is Khan's informal yet academically fact-checked handling of his subject matter, and the beautiful hardcover opening into pages upon pages of vivid photographs and stories retrieved from the debris of the original hill station, that make this coffee table presentation a showstopper all the way. Where Khan falters is the occasional faulting of tense excusable, because retaining memories should be given the benefit of doubt where language is concerned.



A winter wonderland at the Lockwood Hotel located on the quiet Mountain View road

Rekindling personal and political memories, reincarnating the Gothic spires and stained-glass windows of churches and chapels, rebirthing the young men and women on the rolls of those bastions of an elitist education St Denys High School and the Convent of Jesus and Mary reimagining the evening promenades of the British elite on the Mall, revisiting the five-star hotels that hosted cocktail parties, sensitively exposing the social divide between the rulers and the ruled and the inhumane attitude of the British officers to their own other ranks, Once Upon a Time in Murree is a pictorial and

textual history long overdue.

Who, for instance, would know that Murree originally Marrhi was bought dirt cheap from local landowners in 1850, followed by a perpetual payment of Rs50 per month!

Murree of yore, both colonial and postcolonial, comes alive in the pages of this showstopper of a coffee table book, which reminds us of the need to preserve our heritage



Remains of the Murree Brewery, which was burned down in 1948

Each chapter throws readers deeper into the city's past, opening up colonial and postcolonial secrets of the Raj criminals it has sheltered, the unmarked graves of homesick British wives and children innocent victims of Subcontinent-specific epidemics the business empires of minority citizens at their zenith and their pitiable demise and the wrath of zealots against what should have been retained as heritage. The book is a conversation spanning centuries, a compendium of social and geopolitical life that has long returned to dust.

Besides making us privy to the secret of why Murree lost to Shimla as a Raj hill station in the last century, the book also brings the realisation that the honeymooning couples of today, the tinkling sounds of crockery floating out of the tiny chai khaanas those poor cousins of the once prestigious Lintott and Sam's restaurants along the Mall during evening tea and the games of afternoon tennis are all a rambling heritage of a past our generations could learn from.

In a documented landscape where zealous nationalists take pride in tearing down past monuments, this book is a lesson in history, because it allows us to look at our follies.

You can call them memories of glorious pursuits, such as Murree being

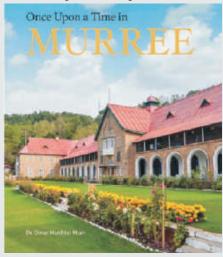


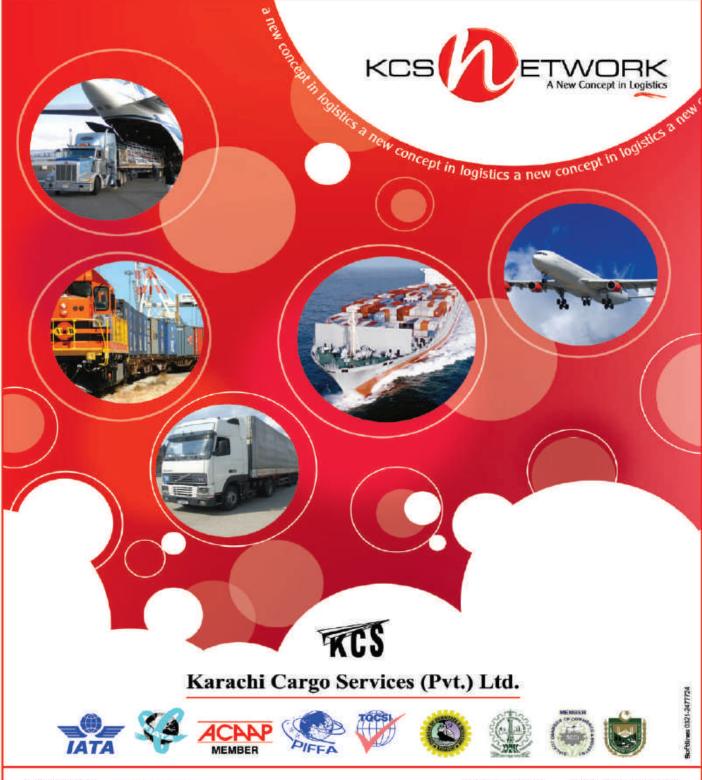
The Holy Trinity Church on the Mall is one of Murree's most prominent landmarks

the site of some of the Subcontinent's best boarding schools, or hoteliers coming from as far off as Italy to set up establishments such as the Cecil Hotel.

Or call them inglorious recollections, with Murree being the birthplace of the infamous Gen Reginald Dyer who spearheaded the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, or the cottage now torn down that housed the heartless Major Hudson who escorted the last Mughal emperor to exile in Rangoon. Or that Francis Edward Younghusband who went on to play a crucial role in the Great Game had once romped about under the pines and cedars of the Durdens, a quaint little villa off Richbell Road.

The Murree of yore, today usurped by a mafia of real estate brokers and littering crowds, has to be preserved. Khan has done just that; not by mere description, but in a style that makes the reader actually live Murree. As one's eyes moves along the lines, the text fades into the background and from it emerge paintings of a time and tide in which each one of us, old and young, has a page. "That," says Khan, was why he "spent five years coursing the Murree hills, so that every reader finds [themselves] in the book."







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Laos opens \$6bn Chinese-built railway line

sleek red, blue and white bullet train departed a new Vientiane station on Friday 3 Dec., signalling the opening of Laos' \$6 billion Chinese-built railway.

The 414-kilometre route took five years to construct under China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative.

Laos President Thongloun Sisoulith heralded a "new era of modern infrastructure development" for his country.

"I am proud that the dreams of Lao people have come true," he said at the opening ceremony on Friday 3Dec. afternoon.

The railway will connect the Chinese city of Kunming to the Laotian capital Vientiane, with grand plans for high-speed rail to ultimately snake down through Thailand and Malaysia to Singapore.

Analysts have acknowledged a potential economic lift, but have asked how infrastructure-poor Laos will pay its \$1.06 billion debt liability and whether it is ready to exploit the state-of-the-art transport system.

The Laos government also took out a \$480 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of China to cover two-thirds of its equity stake, bringing its total share of debt to \$1.54bn.

Scores of dignitaries in Vientiane waited on the red carpet waving flags at the launch ceremony before some, including Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh, clambered aboard for a train trip to Vang



This photo released by Xinhua News Agency shows an electric train of the China-Laos Railway arriving at the Yuxi station in southwestern China's Yunnan province on Friday 3 Dec.

Vieng the adventure capital.

At the same time a green train left Kunming station for the maiden journey to Laos.

Chinese President Xi Jinping beamed in for the ceremony to extend his congratulations.

"(We must) ensure the railway's continued operation and maintenance as well as guarantee its safety, in order to build a high-quality, sustainable economic belt that benefits people's livelihoods along the way," he said.

Laos, a communist-run country of 7.2 million people, previously had only four kilometres of railway tracks.

The trains will speed along the new line at up to 160kmh, passing through 75 tunnels and across 167 bridges, stopping at 10 passenger stations.

Passenger services are expected to begin on Saturday 4 Dec., state media reported, although only for those fully vaccinated against Covid.

Four passenger services and 14 freight trips will operate daily, local media reported.

A Buddhist ceremony was held on Thursday 2 Dec. to bless the new railway, with Viphavanh banging a gong nine times to bring good luck, the Laotian Times reported.

Laos took a battering in the pandemic with economic growth declining to 0.4 per cent in 2020, the lowest level in three decades, according to the World Bank.

Hopes for a 2021 rebound were dashed when the country locked down as it registered more than 76,000 infections in the past eight months.

The railway could boost Laos' economy, but the government needed to undertake substantial reforms including improving its border management systems, a World Bank report noted.

But the project could be an economic "game changer", according to Bangkok Bank chief economist Burin Adulwattana.

"I don't look at it as China trying to bankrupt Laos... it's not a Trojan Horse strategy. I think it's going to be a win-win situation," he said.

But there is little transparency around how Laos will fund its debt, Australian National University lecturer Greg Raymond said.

A World Bank report noted "funding of the existing public infrastructure programme looks increasingly unsustainable".

Laos gives Buddhist blessings to its new high-speed rail line

aos held a Buddhist ceremony on Thursday 2nd Dec, to bless its new \$6 billion high-speed rail line, a Chinese-led initiative that marks one of the biggest leaps towards modernisation by one of Asia's leastdeveloped nations.

The rail connects China's southeastern city of Kunming to the Laos capital Vientiane, stretching more than 1,000 km, and traversing mountains ranges and water systems.

Laos state news agency KPL on Thursday 2nd Dec. said the project was part of the government's strategy to convert Laos "from a landlocked country to a land-linked one".

The rail line, which China hopes to eventually extend to Singapore, is part of its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

On Lao National Day on Thursday



A MONK blesses a train during a Buddhist ceremony in Vientiane one day before the handover ceremony of the high-speed rail project.

2nd Dec., Buddhist monks chanted at a new railway platform and blessed a train car with water and auspicious markings ahead of Friday's official opening. With a population of 7 million and gross domestic product of just \$18 billion in 2019, communist Laos is one of Asia's poorest

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Economists have warned the rail project could complicate its challenges in repaying external debt, much of it to China.

China holds a 70pc stake in the rail joint venture established in 2015.

Total investment was 50.55 billion yuan (\$7.93 billion), according to an article by China's Belt and Road Portal earlier this year. KPL put the value at \$5.98 billion.

For Nokphone Photsavang, 35, who works in the hotel sector, the rail project will be a boon for Laos.

"I believe the railway will bring a lot of opportunities and I'm looking forward to the economic growth," Nokphone said. "It also eases travel between towns and will bring families closer together."

Air Logistics Group - GSA Gulf Air hosts reception for Cargo Agents in Lahore

AirLog Pakistan, a part of the Air Logistics Group, appointed GSA for Gulf Air Cargo (GF) in Pakistan, hosted a reception in Lahore for the Cargo Agents recently.

Gulf Air has a large fleet of aircraft and can carry a wide variety of products, ranging from perishables and oversized freight to dangerous goods and valuable cargo as well as live animals. GF operates direct flights from seven cities across Pakistan: Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Peshawar, and Multan to Bahrain and beyond to Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia.



Mr. Imran Peracha MD AirLog, Mr. M. Sohail Peracha Director Sales and a guest.



Group photo with Mr. Imran Peracha and Mr. M Sohail Peracha.



Group photo graph taken on the occasion of a reception hosted by AirLog Pakistan GSA Gulf Air Cargo in Pakistan for Cargo Agents of Lahore.











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