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Chairman Sialkot International Airport (SIAL) Mr. Khawaja Masood Akhtar along with Vice Chairman Mr. Ch. Sarfraz Ahmed Bhatti and Chief Executive SIAL Mr. Amjad Ali Toor presenting certificate of appreciation to Manager Engineering Service Eng. Kamran Abbas at a farewell reception held for him, Mr. Mirza Abdul Shakoor Media advisor and others.

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Demand for wet-lease aircraft on the rise says ACMI specialist



THE use of outsourced supplemental aircraft to create flexible alternatives to fixed airline business models has never been so popular, reports Nigel Tomkins.

The COVID-changed air transport landscape has shown that the use of aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance (ACMI) wet-lease operations to supplement air cargo capacity supply are no longer just an emergency tool, charter specialist Avion Express has discovered.

The pandemic-induced global aviation chaos has thrust ACMI operators to new highs, insists Dainius Staniulis, vice-president commercial at the narrow-body ACMI and charter operator. "Airlines all over the world are turning to ACMI for flexible solutions," he says.

"This change is no more visible than in the African market which has only now started to discover the true potential of wet-leasing as a capacity support mechanism," Staniulis adds.

Some African airlines, for example, are now using ACMI to their advantage even though, generally, the solution is still seen as an emergency tool. Nevertheless, more and more African airlines have started to value the flexibility that ACMI offers, he points out "The pandemic has caused airlines to downsize their fleets and, in general, re-think their operating models," Staniulis notes. "With companies focusing on ways to save funds and optimise their operations, more accommodating operating models have been on everyone's minds."

Extensive conversations with existing clients in Europe and Latin America have been showing Avion Express that flexible fleet management models as a convenient answer to shifting market demands have been gaining momentum globally.

Wet-lease solutions, he says, allow airlines to expand or contract within a short period of time, helping them to address high season demand routes without long-term recourses and large investments. "Such flexibility is desirable and useful especially during volatile times when there are market and demand uncertainties, and rapid changes can be addressed in a more efficient way," he adds.

Although ACMI is already commonly used in Europe to meet such changing seasonal demands, in Africa this model is still barely used, but this situation is changing. Staniulis believes that significant change is just around the corner. "The African market is very attractive for us due to seasonality. Europe and sub-Saharan Africa are countercyclical markets, meaning peak seasons for the continents and particular countries can be different.

"Europe is the most cyclical market in the world, with huge demand in the summer season (April October) and very low demand during the winter season (November March). Meanwhile, in Africa, it can be considered the other way round, thereby creating an excellent opportunity for operators allowing them to deploy ACMI capacity depending on the hemisphere.

African, Middle Eastern, Caribbean and even Canadian markets can also be great choices to respond to European seasonality. "Having good and stable countercyclical partners helps to save costs, keep crews flying and maximise revenues," he adds.

In particular, Africa is seen as a growth market with a lot of opportunities, possibilities for new routes and new airlines as well as existing airlines growing their fleets. "And this is where ACMI could benefit the developing operators. As a flexible ACMI airline, Avion Express could be a great partner for African airlines, offering flexible and convenient capacity solutions," he concludes.



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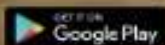
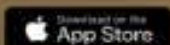
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PIA to operate Haj flights from eight cities

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a plan to start Haj flights from eight main cities of the country to Saudi Arabian destinations, including Jeddah and Madina, from May 31 to August 13.

The PIA management gave a briefing to Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique on the airline's operations, including promotion of tourism.

PIA spokesperson Abdullah Hafeez Khan said on Monday 23 May that the airline's management gave a briefing to the aviation minister on its operations.

He said the briefing covered Haj operations, promotion of tourism, flights to new destinations and a plan for expansion of the airline's fleet. The minister was informed about the airline's Haj operation commencing from May 31.

He said PIA will operate Haj flights from eight major cities: Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Multan, Peshawar and Quetta to Jeddah and Medina. PIA will operate 297 Haj flights till August 13.

The aviation minister ordered the acquisition of one Boeing 777 and one Airbus 320 from log storage for this purpose.

The minister was informed about PIA's operational fleet and the fleet expansion plan, whereby the airline is in the process of inducting four A320 aircraft in its fleet.

The minister was informed that one A320 has already joined the PIA fleet and will be part of flight operations after completion of formalities while another aircraft will join the fleet by the end of this month.

The minister instructed PIA officials to make grounded aircraft operational in order to improve its operations. He discussed the options of increasing flights to Nafaj and Damascus.

The minister was informed about the PIA's successful flight operation to Baku and plans for increasing flight frequencies to Azerbaijan's capital and also on domestic destinations, such as 18 weekly flights to Skardu, 24 flight per week for Gilgit and two flights per week to Chitral from Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore.

Mr Rafique instructed PIA officials to further improve the cargo business and also to improve the business class facilities for passengers, including upgrade of business class lounges at airports.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Civil

Aviation Authority (CAA) has taken measures to further improve ablution rooms and places of worship in order to provide better facilities to worshippers at airports.

A CAA spokesperson said that renovation of prayer places in lounges at Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore and Multan airports had been completed.

In the light of the directives of the aviation minister, places allotted for worshippers at airports are being further improved, said the CAA spokesperson.

The renovation of prayer places in lounges at Sialkot, Gilgit and Chitral airports has also been completed.

Direct PIA flights for Damascus from 28th

The Pakistan International Airlines on Thursday 19 May announced starting direct flights to Syria's capital Damascus, saying first such flight will leave Karachi on May 28.

"The national flag carrier will launch the Damascus operation on the special instructions of Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique," the PIA spokesman said.

The Damascus operation is being launched on the demand of pilgrims, he said, adding that direct flights would provide the passengers with better and more comfortable facilities. Shrines of Hazrat Zainab, the granddaughter of Holy Prophet (PBUH), and Hazrat Sakina, the daughter of Imam Hussain, are situated in the Syrian capital and thousands of pilgrims from across the world visit these places each year to pay their respects.

The spokesman said that initially a weekly flight would be operated and the number of flights would be gradually increased.

"Our aim is to provide better and more comfortable travel facilities to pilgrims and other passengers," Mr Rafique said.

He said PIA was on the path of development and soon new planes would be made part of its fleet.

The minister appealed to the pilgrims going to Damascus to offer special prayers for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

Gulf Air wins at Changi Airline Awards



Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, was recently honoured at Changi Airline Awards ceremony which took place in Singapore, winning in the "Connectivity Award" and the "New Airline Award". Commenting on this achievement, Gulf Air Acting Chief Executive Officer Captain Waleed AlAlawi said "We are pleased to have the Gulf Air services and products recognized by the Changi Airline Awards. We are constantly striving to deliver excellence to our passengers by enhancing a broad spectrum of deliverables from our convenient flight schedules, numerous international and regional flights, and a variety of products and services both on the ground and onboard. Winning these awards is a reflection of Gulf Air's ongoing commitment to fulfil the ever-changing travel needs of our passengers; placing us truly in 'a class of our own'."

The awards ceremony was being held for the first time in two years after a brief stop due to the pandemic. This comes after Singapore reopened its borders fully to travellers vaccinated against COVID-19 on April 1. Being one of the few airlines that never stopped flying during the pandemic, Gulf Air has recently received the Skytrax Five Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating after a vigorous audit by Skytrax Research that took place between November and December 2021, in flying safely throughout the pandemic and enhancing its airport and onboard protocols to combat the spread of COVID-19. The airline also received APEX's Five Star Major Official Airline Rating; an award based solely on certified passengers' feedback.

PIA opens engineering hangar at IIA

Nearly four years after the inauguration of Islamabad International Airport (IIA) by the then prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on May 1, 2018, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) inaugurated its first engineering hangar for aircraft maintenance at the airport.

The hangar, named after Noor Khan, will be used for maintenance of the PIA aircraft.

A PIA spokesman said that the planes will no longer need to be sent to Karachi airport for maintenance.

Arshad Malik, the chief executive officer PIA, inaugurated the engineering hangar recently.

The CEO said PIA was expanding its presence keeping in view the future requirements of the IIA. Most of the PIA operations are being shifted to the north due to passengers' demand, the CEO said. Though most of the flights were in the north, the planes had to be transferred to Karachi for maintenance which was very costly.

He said due to the maintenance of the planes in Islamabad, the positioning costs will be gradually reduced. Mr Malik said Noor Khan had many services for PIA and during his tenure the national flag carrier made great strides and became one of the leading airlines in the world.

"Attributing a hangar to his name is a tribute to his services."

Fly Jinnah to launch operations in June, graduates its first Fas

Fly Jinnah (Karachi) is now planning to launch operations in Pakistan in June 2022.



The new airline is a joint venture of the Lakson Group and Air Arabia of the United Arab Emirates.



Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's new low-cost carrier has announced the graduation of its first batch as cabin crew in their brand-new uniform (below), who successfully completed their technical and customer experience training.

The first batch of Fly Jinnah consisted of 13 cabin crew members who graduated after the completion of an extensive initial and practical course and training which was delivered by cabin crew instructors and learning and development professionals.



Fly Jinnah is currently in an advanced stage in training more cabin crew batches to support the launch of the airline's operations.



UK hosts 'world's first vertiport' for drones, flying taxis



A SCALE model of an electric air vehicle made by Supernal, a company developing a family of electric air vehicles, is displayed at Air-One, the world's first vertiport for flying taxis and autonomous delivery drones at the Urban-Air Port in Coventry.

A pop-up urban port for delivery drones and one day, potentially flying taxis was launched on Monday 23 April in Britain, lifting a box of prosecco for a brief celebratory test flight hailed as ground-breaking.

Air-One, a so-called "vertiport" for drones and future electric vehicles taking off and landing vertically, was proclaimed as the first of its kind by proponents and heralding a new era of low-emission futuristic air transport.

Based in Coventry, a former car manufacturing powerhouse in central England, the site will be used for a month-long showcase of the burgeoning industry.

The inaugural flight symbolically lifted the six-bottle box of sparkling wine, weighing around 12 kilograms, from the launch pad.

The commercial drone used — Malloy Aeronautics' T150, on loan from its day job doing logistics for the British military — is the largest-ever to fly in such an urban environment, according to Ricky Sandhu, founder and executive chairman of Urban-Air Port, the British firm behind the vertiport venture.

"You're standing in the world's first fully operational vertiport," he told hundreds of assembled guests, including the start-up's 25 staffers and backers from the British government.

"This is an industry that is fledgling, of course, but it's now starting to take some real speed," Sandhu added. "We're all used to change... but it's the rate of change that we always underestimate, and things are changing really fast."

Urban-Air Port develops ground infrastructure for autonomous delivery drones and the air taxis planned for later this decade, and has spent the last year preparing for its Coventry showcase.

The temporary Air-One site near the city's railway station aims to show how an integrated hub for the devices can

function in a crowded urban environment, while also illustrating how it can serve as a mini-airport for eventual vertical lift-off travel.

200 sites planned

It is planning similar demonstrations in other UK and global venues in the coming months, and is aiming for more than 200 such sites worldwide.

They are designed to be easily assembled and taken down, and use on-site hydrogen fuel cells for what the company calls "zero-emission generation".

The company says it has orders worth 65 million pounds and projects are planned in the United States, Australia, France, Germany, Scandinavia and southeast Asia.

Supernal, a US subsidiary of South Korean car-making giant Hyundai which is developing an autonomous flying electric vehicle concept that will carry passengers, is one of its partners.

"We're focused on building out the ecosystem to allow this new technology to prosper," Michael Whitaker, its chief

commercial officer, said.

"Without vertiports, without places to land, it won't be a business."

Supernal is aiming to get its all-electric, eight-rotor concept vehicle, which is on display at Air-One, certified by 2024 before beginning mass production.

"You'll see some operations this decade, but I think the 2030s will really be the decade of advanced air mobility, and you'll really start to see this will be more ubiquitous from that point on," said Whitaker.

Alongside the private sector, Urban-Air Port was one of 48 projects funded by a 300 million pounds UK government "future flight challenge", which matches money with promising projects driving the transition to greener transportation.

The firm stresses that its vertiports could be used by local authorities, including emergency responders, as well as logistics operators and even the military.

West Midlands police, Britain's second biggest force, responsible for Coventry and the wider region, launched some of their dozen drones from Air-One on Monday 23 April.

Iranian plane arrives to help fight forest fire



Iranian Ilyushin 76 aircraft taking off from PAF Base Nur Khan to participate in firefighting operation. (24-05-2022)

An aerial firefighter provided by the Iranian government reached Pakistan on Monday 23 May to take part in efforts being made to douse the fire that broke out in a pine nut forest of Koh-i-Suleman range in Shirani district days ago.

The fire could not be brought under control despite massive operations launched by Pakistan Army, Frontier Corp, Levies force and workers of the forest department and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

Forest Secretary Dostain Jamaldani, who is supervising the operation, said the fire had been put out in some areas, but strong dry winds spread it to other areas.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Iranian consulate in Quetta said Tehran had provided the aerial firefighter on Pakistan government's request.

The aircraft landed at the Nur Khan

Airbase, Rawalpindi, the spokesperson said, adding the Ilyushin-76 aircraft was considered the biggest in the world. It can carry 40 tonnes of water in one go. He claimed that the Quetta airport did not have the landing capacity for such a big aircraft.

The consulate spokesperson said that due to its excellent performance this aircraft is also used for extinguishing fire in the forests of Georgia, Armenia and Turkey.

The aircraft would take off from the Nur Khan Airbase to carry out its operation in Shirani district, he said, adding that the aircraft would stay in Pakistan till the fire in Balochistan is completely extinguished.

Describing it as a 'crown category' fire, experts are of the opinion that the fire had engulfed a vast area of the mountain forests.

Zhob division commissioner Bashir Ahmed Bazai told media that around 30 to 35 per cent of forests had been completely gutted or badly affected.

Meanwhile, Levies officials took five suspects into custody on Monday 23 May for investigation. These people were found in the area, though they do not belong to Shirani district.



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Business 'getting back to normal' says American Airlines Cargo

CARGO customers of American Airlines will benefit from markedly increased capacity from this summer as air transport services from Europe to the USA are "gradually getting back to normal following the pandemic," says a statement from the carrier.

Daily trans-Atlantic passenger aircraft services to and from 10 key US cities will support the European freight community from the summer season, it adds. American Airlines Cargo is re-introducing its trans-Atlantic belly-hold services for cargo customers with direct services from key cities in Europe to 10 US gateways from mid-May onwards.

The airline will once again operate to New York's JFK airport, Dallas/Fort Worth, Boston Logan, Los Angeles and Miami, as well as to Philadelphia, Chicago O'Hare, Raleigh-Durham and Charlotte Douglas airports.



A new destination between Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and London Heathrow has been added to the summer list.

All routes will be operated using wide-bodied B777, or B787 aircraft.

Leading European cities with flights to the USA this summer are Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Paris, Dublin, Rome, Frankfurt, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Munich, Milan and Zurich.

"These summer services are great news for American Airlines customers across Europe where capacity to the USA

is gradually getting back to normal following the pandemic," says Andy Cornwell, the carrier's regional cargo sales manager for the northern Europe region "We continue to see strong demand for all kinds of cargo, including automotive parts, perishables and life-science products as well as pharmaceuticals," he adds.

"With the number of flights growing month on month, our European customers are continuing to take advantage of our extensive [European] trucking network to send freight on the direct flights which best suit their needs. They can also benefit from the comprehensive onward network we offer from our US hubs," Cornwell advises.

The airline's cargo customers in Europe can benefit from new real-time digital bookings via the WebCargo platform. Forwarders based in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK can search and book direct flights to the USA and beyond on the recently-adopted Freightos digital solution.

The carrier plans to expand access to this digital offering in the coming months it says.

Qantas to launch longest non-stop passenger flight

Qantas announced on Monday 2 May it will launch the world's longest non-stop commercial flight, with passengers set to spend 19 hours in the air travelling from Sydney to London by the end of 2025.

After five years of planning, the airline said it was ordering 12 Airbus A350-1000 aircraft to operate the "Project Sunrise" flights to cities including London and New York.

Non-stop flights will start from Sydney by the end of 2025, it said, with long-haul trips later planned to include Melbourne.

"New types of aircraft make new things possible," said Qantas chairman Alan Joyce, according to a statement.

"The A350 and Project Sunrise will make any city just one flight away from Australia," he said. "It's the final frontier and the final fix for the tyranny of distance."

Qantas operated research flights for the long-haul route in 2019, including a trial London-Sydney trek of 17,800 kilometres, which took 19 hours and 19 minutes.

A trial New York-Sydney flight in the same year covered 16,200 kilometres and took a little over 19 hours.

Singapore Airlines currently operates the world's longest non-stop commercial

flight from Singapore to New York, covering 16,700 kilometres in a little under 19 hours.

Qantas already operates a 14,498-kilometre Perth-London trip that takes 17 hours. "As you'd expect, the cabin is being specially designed for maximum comfort for long-haul flying," Joyce said. Qantas said the new A350 aircraft would be configured for 238 passengers with first-class suites offering a separate bed, recliner chair and wardrobe.

It promised spacier economy sections and a "wellbeing zone" designed for "movement, stretching and hydration".

Airbus listed the price of the A350-1000 at \$366.5 million (348 million euros) on its 2018 catalogue, the last one it published. Qantas said it was also ordering 40 A321 XLR and A220 aircraft from Airbus.

In addition, it bought options for another 94 of these planes until the end of 2034.

The A220 models were listed at between US\$81 million and US\$91.5 million in 2018. The A321 was unveiled after Airbus stopped publishing catalogue prices.

Qantas said the total cost of the deal was a matter of commercial confidence, though it indicated it had obtained a

significant discount on the standard price of the aircraft.

"The A320s and A220s will become the backbone of our domestic fleet for the next 20 years, helping to keep this country moving," Joyce said. The newer aircraft would reduce emissions by at least 15 percent if running on fossil fuels, and more if using sustainable aviation fuel, he said.

More than just Mriya: how well do you know Ukrainian aviation? | Quiz



Ukraine is well-known as the manufacturer of the world's largest cargo aircraft, the Antonov An-225 Mriya. While the aircraft was destroyed during Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, causing great alarm and sadness among the global aviation community, there is a great deal more to the country's aviation industry than the iconic giant.

In this week's AeroTime Quiz, we are celebrating Ukrainian aviation. So, what do you know about the country's aviation industry? Take this quiz and put your knowledge about Ukraine's aviation sector to the test!

Agility enjoys US\$41.6m Q1 profit as it stays on acquisition trail

LOGISTICS giant Agility recorded a “robust” first-quarter of 2022, with combined revenues from its numerous business segments increasing by 22.3 per cent to KD132.1million (US\$429.4m) and net profits rising to KD12.8million (US\$41.6m) in the period.

The results follow on from the Kuwait-based company's reported £571m acquisition of ground services agency John Menzies in March of this year.

In August 2021, Agility acquired 19.3million shares for an eight per cent stake of rival Denmark-based company DSV after its acquisition of Global Integrated Logistics (GIL).

Tarek Sultan, vice-chairman of Agility, reveals that the expanded company commenced the year on a good note “with our controlled businesses reporting healthy growth year over year. Despite challenging market and geopolitical conditions, we expect continued growth and performance in our operations this year,” he predicts.

The company's acquisition trail continues. “We will focus on accelerating growth in these businesses both organically and inorganically. Our recent offer for Menzies Aviation is a good example of that growth commitment. For our investments, DSV is our largest holding and we continue to believe in DSV's long-term growth and in the freight forwarding sector,” Sultan adds.

Agility's expanded range of complementary businesses which, historically, have generated some 80 per cent of the company's profits, include the Agility Logistics Parks (ALP) and National Aviation Services (NAS) divisions.

“As a combined company, by the number of countries they operate in, Menzies Aviation and NAS is expected to be the largest airport services company in the world, the second largest in terms of airports served and the third largest in revenues,” a statement insists.

“The combined revenues of Menzies and NAS were in excess of \$1.5billion in 2021. The combined company is expected to have approximately 35,000 employees with a presence at more than 250 airports in 57 countries, handling more than 600,000 aircraft turns per year,” it adds.



ALP revenues in the first quarter of 2022 grew by 7.6 per cent in comparison with the same period of 2021. To meet increasing demand for warehousing space, the segment is optimising its existing land and plans to acquire additional land for further development, especially in the Middle East and Africa regions.

Tristar, a fully integrated logistics liquids company, posted a 29 per cent

increase in revenues in the period due to the “strong recovery in international oil prices, good performance in the road and transport segments and favourable dry-bulk charter rates in the maritime segment contributed to its performance,” the statement notes.

NAS reported 37.4 per cent revenue growth year-over-year, reflecting “the broad recovery in commercial aviation as flights, passengers and cargo volumes grew in Kuwait, India and across Africa,” it says. “NAS has [also] created significant value from operations in some of its newer markets, including Baghdad, Kenya and South Africa,” it says.

Sultan continues: “Looking ahead, we expect to continue expanding our investment portfolio. We believe we can create value for our shareholders by investing in companies in high-growth sectors with strong fundamentals, proven management teams, best-practices governance and alignment with our vision and values.”

SHC dismisses pleas of CAA officials against suspension

The Sindh High Court has dismissed the petitions of three suspended officials of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) challenging the action taken against them over allegedly issuing fake pilot licences.

A two-judge bench headed by Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto dismissed the petitions for not being maintainable and observed that the petitioners might seek alternate remedy available under the law if final orders were passed against them.

The three officials had petitioned the SHC in 2020 and challenged their suspension orders and show-cause notices as they were alleged to have breached software protocols by creating user IDs to generate fake pilot licences.

After hearing both sides, the bench in its judgement stated that the discretionary jurisdiction under Article 199 of the Constitution cannot be exercised in a vacuum and it must be grounded on a valid basis showing violation of specific and enforceable legal or constitutional rights.

Such discretion must be exercised in a structured and calibrated manner with due regard to parameters put in place by the Constitution as well as a recent judgement of the Supreme Court, it added.

However, the bench noted that such factors were lacking in the present petitions and the SHC in exercise of jurisdiction vested under Article 199 can neither enter into factual controversies nor

decide disputed questions of facts.

It further observed that the Supreme Court in the suo motu case on the subject issue had also passed an order in July 2020 and observed that any interference hampered and stalled the entire process and directed for completion of departmental proceedings in due course without judicial interference.

“It is a well settled principle of law that judgement of Supreme Court is binding on each and every organ of the state by virtue of Articles 189 and 190 of the Constitution,” it concluded.

The CAA submitted that the board of inquiry constituted by the CAA, had investigated the violation/malpractices and found several employees of the authority involved in the issuance of fake licences.

The lawyer for CAA further argued that the apex court had also issued directions to the aviation regulator to take departmental action as well as to register criminal cases against all those employees who were found involved in the fake licences controversy.

He submitted that the petitions were not maintainable as the apex court had already passed an order the on subject issue and even then the petitioners had approached SHC without availing an alternate remedy available to them before competent authority.

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IAG Cargo and K + N sustain their focus on green aviation fuels



THE cargo division of International Airlines Group (IAG) and its freight forwarding customer Kuehne + Nagel (K + N) have cemented their joint commitment to reduce the air cargo industry's carbon footprint by purchasing eight million litres of the first UK-produced Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

The green fuel alternative will remove approximately 18,300 tonnes of carbon-dioxide (CO₂) emissions, which is the carbon equivalent of 150 British Airways B787 passenger aircraft flights between London and New York, says a statement.

Manufactured from sustainable waste feedstocks, the UK SAF has been created by American jet fuels supplier Phillips 66 at its Humber Refinery in the east of England. The supplier, which has been processing waste feedstocks into renewable fuels since 2018, is the first in the UK to produce sustainable aviation fuel at scale. It is currently refining almost half a million litres about 3,000 barrels of sustainable waste feedstocks a day, it says.

Research shows that the introduction of SAF, a product that will be supplied to the airline group in the course of this year, reduces lifecycle CO₂ emissions by more than 75 per cent, it says.

IAG Cargo first partnered with K + N last year in the operation of 16 chartered B787-900 cargo-only passenger aircraft flights utilising 1.2million litres of Neste SAF carrying an average of 45 tonnes of automotive spare parts and other industrial goods from Stuttgart, Germany to Atlanta in the United States.

This latest news comes after IAG declared it had become the first European airline group to commit to operating 10 per cent of its flights with sustainable aviation fuel by 2030, a plan which is stated to be the equivalent of removing one million cars from Europe's roads annually. In June last year, the group also

revealed its overall intention to invest US\$400 million in the development of sustainable aviation fuel over the next 20 years.

In a bid to meet its 2050 net zero target, the UK government has recently conducted a consultation on a proposed SAF mandate which would see the introduction of an obligation on fuel suppliers to reduce the carbon footprint of jet fuel utilised in the UK.

John Cheetham, chief commercial officer at IAG Cargo, believes that sustainable aviation fuels are supporting the industry to significantly lower carbon emissions. "We know that reducing the carbon footprint is important for our customers, colleagues and partners.

"In collaborating with Kuehne + Nagel, this is an important next step in our commitment to reducing our impact on the environment. Partnerships like these are key as we continue to look at ways to support sustainable air cargo," he says.

Yngve Ruud, member of the management board of K + N and who is responsible for air logistics, underlines: "We continue to prioritise measures that facilitate a transition to a low-carbon business model, ours and our customers. By securing another significant amount of Sustainable Aviation Fuel together with IAG Cargo we are reaffirming our commitment to the long-term transformation of the industry and readiness to drive it."

The global forwarder has so far sourced 21million litres of SAF. In its 2021 sustainability report, K + N's chief executive Dr Detlef Trefzger, underlines: "One could think that, in the current situation, sustainability, climate change, or decarbonisation [projects] are not a primary concern. Quite the contrary. We believe that they can be a powerful accelerator to create the much-desired 'new normal'.

"Using the data, we collect and applying the technology we create, we cannot only develop solutions to address climate change but, in many aspects, we can also innovate for a more sustainable future," he says.

"At Kuehne + Nagel we have committed to the Science-Based Target initiative (SBTi) and in a transition to a zero-carbon business model while facilitating a zero-carbon future for our

customers," Trefzger adds.

"With data-driven insights, design and optimisation of supply chains, alternative transport modes, routes and carrier options as well as low carbon fuel solutions, we can actively address climate change in our industry and be a responsible partner for customers and suppliers."

**European Union
supports
Indonesia in its
ambitions for
safer and greener
aviation**



The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has cooperated with the Directorate General for Civil Aviation in Indonesia (DGCA Indonesia) to make flights to Atambua, Bajawa and Larantuka in Indonesia safer and greener.

Performance Based Navigation (PBN), which uses satellites and on-board equipment to help pilots with navigation, is now available for these three airports. PBN allows the ATR aircraft operating on these routes to fly safely to and from airports in difficult weather environments and in cases where the geography is challenging. It also improves operational efficiency, thereby reducing aviation's environmental impact.

EASA is offering its support on behalf of the EU as part of the EU-South East Asia Aviation Partnership Project (APP). The overall objective of the project is to enhance the political, economic and environmental partnership between the EU and South East Asia in the domain of civil aviation.

The press release on this cooperation was released by the EU Delegation to Jakarta in the context of an EASA-DGAC Indonesia meeting at Changi Aviation Summit in Singapore.

FIATA launches paperless FBL solution



FIATA, the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, has worked on the release of a long-desired document update to ease the work processes of its members, allowing them to become digital freight-forwarders.

FIATA brings its members a solution to move from paper documents to paperless FBLs, which can be issued directly through their everyday tools. The FIATA solution improves the level of security of the FIATA BL in comparison to the paper version, making use of blockchain technology to authenticate the documents and provide an audit trail. Conscious of the various challenges which remain to be overcome to achieve worldwide adoption and legal recognition of electronic exchange of data, the paperless FBL is an answer to the needs of the industry for improved access and exchange of trade documents. The document issuer can decide in which format (s)he wishes to share the original unaltered document with its stakeholders: in paper form or as a PDF. Based on its eFBL data standard, FIATA has developed an API service, available free of charge to all software providers, allowing them to connect with FIATA to create secured paperless FBLs.

As of today, seven software providers have already signed an agreement with the Federation to implement the solution: AKANEA, Cargowise, Cargo X, edoxOnline (Global Share), InfoSys Tech-IST, Nabu and Usyncro. We are very pleased to announce that the paperless FBLs can start to be issued as of today with edoxOnline, InfoSysTech-IST and Usyncro who have already finalised the implementation.

FIATA encourages all TMS's, eBL providers and other software providers to join them and implement FIATA's solution to offer this new service to their customers. All technical specifications are available on FIATA's GitHub repository.

The solution, developed by FIATA partner Komgo, will help to reduce fraud risks, as each document is recorded on an immutable ledger and will be verifiable at any time by all stakeholders interacting with the document. Stakeholders will be able to either scan the QR code at the top right of the document, or directly upload the PDF on FIATA's verification page to access the document audit trail which will

- certify the validity of the document,
- the identity of its issuer,
- and the integrity of its content.

Souleïma Baddi, CEO of Komgo, when asked to comment on the paperless FBL launch said: "Documents are the bedrock of international trade, but they don't operate like we need them to and they're susceptible to fraud and forgery, that happens quite often."

"Trakk is the digital ecosystem of trust for trade documents. I am thrilled to see FIATA joining all companies, financial institutions, warehouses and others who are using Trakk to protect their documents against fraud."

"WiseTech Global congratulates FIATA on the launch of their electronic bill of lading. This initiative will support transparency and security across the supply chain and will help companies to accelerate their digitalisation efforts. It was a pleasure to work with FIATA on this initiative. CargoWise customers will be able to request a connection to FIATA's eFBL from June 2022."

"FIATA is very excited to embark on this important milestone of its digital journey which paved the way for great opportunities for the future of freight forwarders," said FIATA director general Stéphane Graber.

Turkey closes airspace for Russian planes flying to Syria

Turkey has closed its airspace to Russian civilian and military planes flying to Syria, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was quoted as saying on Saturday 23 April by local media.

The announcement marks one of the strongest responses to date by Turkey, which has cultivated close ties with Moscow despite being a member of the Nato defence alliance, to Russia's two-month military assault on Ukraine.

"We closed the airspace to Russia's military planes and even civilian ones flying to Syria. They had until April, and we asked in March," Turkish media quoted Cavusoglu as saying.

Cavusoglu said he conveyed the decision to his Russian counterpart Sergei

Lavrov, who then relayed it to President Vladimir Putin.

"One or two days later, they said: Putin has issued an order, we will not fly anymore," Cavusoglu was quoted as telling Turkish reporters aboard his plane to Uruguay.

Cavusoglu added that the ban would stay in place for three months.

There was no immediate response to Turkey's announcement from Russia, which together with Iran has been a crucial supporter of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during the war-torn country's civil war.

Air Arabia Abu Dhabi launches "City Check-in" services



Air Arabia Abu Dhabi, the capital's first low-cost carrier, has announced the introduction of its City Check-in services in Abu Dhabi.

The City Check-in service aims to provide passengers with added convenience and flexibility by enabling them to drop off their baggage and collect their boarding pass at a location near them before traveling with Air Arabia.

The service allows passengers to select seats and receive their boarding passes and baggage claim tags. They can then immediately proceed to the flight upon arrival at Abu Dhabi International Airport.

Located at the Air Arabia Sales Shop in Abu Dhabi, the centres will accept baggage from 24 up to eight hours before departure, which is then transported directly to Abu Dhabi International Airport. The sales shop is located next to Jumbo Electronics on Hamdan Street in Abu Dhabi and is open daily from 9 am to 8 pm.

Taliban sign pact with UAE on running Afghan airports



Ghulam Jilani Wafa (right), Taliban's deputy head of civil aviation, exchanges documents with Razack Aslam Mohammed Abdur Razack, an official from the United Arab Emirates, during a press conference on Tuesday 24 May.

A United Arab Emirates company signed a contract with the Taliban authorities on Tuesday 24 May to provide ground handling services at Afghanistan's three airports, officials said, as the country seeks to resume international transit.

Capital Kabul's only airport was trashed in August when tens of thousands of people rushed to evacuate as the US-led forces withdrew.

While some domestic and international flights are still operating out of the facility, it needs significant upgrades for major foreign airlines to restart full service. The full operation of Kabul airport is crucial for reviving Afghanistan's shattered economy.

But no country has yet formally recognised the Taliban government, with nations watching to see how the Islamists notorious for human rights abuses during their 1996-2001 stint in power will rule.

UAE firm GAAC, which was previously operating in Afghanistan, signed a new 18-month contract covering three airports: Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. "The current contract is only for offering ground handling services," Hameedullah Akhundzada, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation said at a press conference.

GAAC has provided these services at Kabul airport since November 2020, and played a key role in rehabilitating the facility in August. "We are not a new face here," Ibrahim Morafi, regional director of GAAC, said.

"But GAAC signing the new contract will give confidence to international airlines to resume flights to Afghanistan," he said, without specifying when such flights including from the UAE were expected to resume.

A Qatar-Turkey consortium has been in talks with the aviation ministry for months over operating airports at Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Khost.

But the talks snagged as the Taliban insisted its fighters will guard the facilities. Qatar and Turkey want a say in managing security, at least at Kabul airport, experts tracking the negotiations say.

Teen pilot reaches Kenya in round the world quest



Mack Rutherford, a 16-year-old British-Belgian pilot, arrives at Wilson airport on Wednesday 18 May as part of a quest to become the youngest person to fly around the world solo.

A 16-year-old British schoolboy who is on a quest to become the youngest person to fly around the world solo, landed his small plane in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, on Wednesday 18 May.

Mack Rutherford, who started his journey near the Bulgarian capital Sofia in March, is looking to clinch a Guinness World record currently held by compatriot Travis Ludlow, who was 18 when he completed a circumnavigation last year.

"I'm hoping, with this journey, to inspire young people to follow their dreams," Rutherford said after clambering out of his two-seater single prop ultralight aircraft, at Wilson Airport.

The plane's manufacturer, Shark Aero, deemed the journey too risky and declined to partner with Rutherford's project.

"Mack is no doubt a skilled pilot. However, we do not feel comfortable pushing the age limit to the lowest possible point for journeys where a certain level of risk cannot be avoided," the company said on its website.

Rutherford's journey will see him visit four more African and Indian Ocean countries, before heading to the Middle East, Asia and North America and finally returning to Europe. Coming from a family of pilots, Rutherford first took the controls of an aircraft at the age of seven, sitting alongside his father.

At 15 he became the youngest pilot in the world and is now following in the

On Tuesday 24 May, Afghan officials refused to comment on whether the consortium was still open to operating the five airports. GAAC officials also declined to comment on whether its new ground handling contract would be expanded into other services.

Currently, two Afghan airlines Kam Air and Ariana Afghan fly to Dubai, Doha, Islamabad, and Tehran from Kabul airport. Iran's Mahan Air also operates flights to Kabul.

footsteps of his older sister Zara, the youngest woman to fly around the world at age 19.

Visibility was a challenge while flying across the Sahara desert, he said, but the scenery more than made up for it.

"It hasn't let me down, I've absolutely loved the views both around the Sahara desert and in Kenya," he said.

Random testing of air travellers from Gulf states, S. Arabia begins

Random screening (Rapid Antigen Test) of travellers arriving from Gulf states and Saudi Arabia begins at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad airports from Saturday 14 May, days after the first case of Omicron sub-variant was reported in Pakistan.

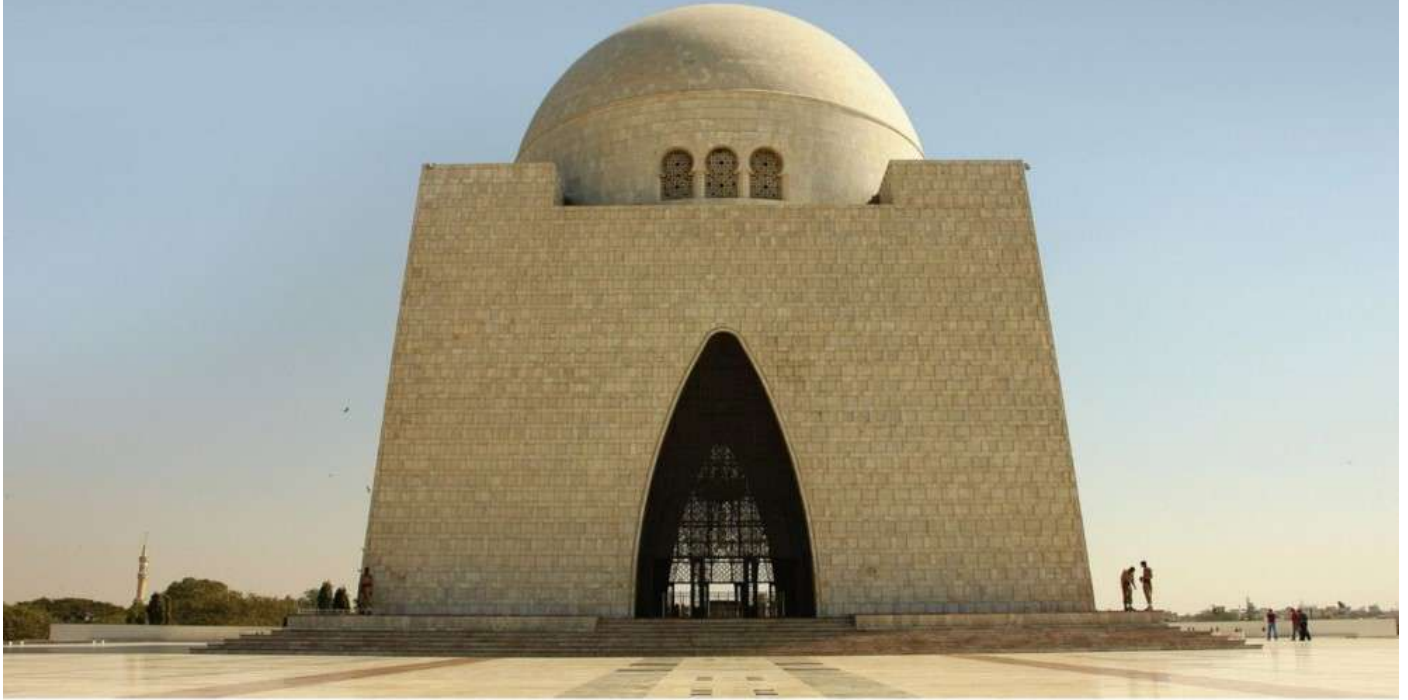
The Centre for Diseases Control, the National Institute of Health, Islamabad, which took the decision in the wake of the Omicron sub-variant, recommended the authorities concerned to keep a close check for surveillance and monitoring at points of entry.

According to a spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), RAT would be conducted at the three airports for all inbound flights from the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia as per proportion. The process through RAT would be effective from 12:01am on May 14 at Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi airports, he said.

Initially, Rapid Antigen Test of 10 to 15 passengers arriving on planes having 150 seats and between 15 and 20 travellers arriving on aircraft with minimum capacity of 250 seats will be conducted.

The spokesman explained that the CAA and CDC were implementing the measures in light of the health ministry's directive. The measures would remain in effect until further notice by the CDC, he added.

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IATA says EASA guidance to remove mask mandate a step towards normality



The International Air Transport Association (IATA) welcomed new guidance from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) removing its recommendation that masks should be required in-flight.

EASA's updated Aviation Health Safety Protocol, published 11 May, calls for the mandatory mask rule to be relaxed where rules have been relaxed for other transport modes. This important shift reflects the high levels of vaccination, natural immunity levels, and the removal of domestic restrictions in many European nations. The updated guidance also acknowledges the need to move from an emergency situation to a more sustainable mode of managing COVID-19.

"We welcome EASA's recommendation to relax the mask mandate, which is another important step along the road back to normality for air passengers. Travelers can look forward to freedom of choice on whether to wear a mask. And they can travel with confidence knowing that many features of the aircraft cabin, such as high frequency air exchange and high efficiency filters, make it one of the safest indoor environments," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

According to IATA, several jurisdictions still maintain mask requirements. That is a challenge for airlines and passengers flying between destinations with different requirements. "We believe that mask requirements on board aircraft should end when masks are no longer mandated in other parts of daily life, for example theatres, offices or on public transport. Although the European

protocol comes into effect next week, there is no globally consistent approach to mask-wearing on board aircraft. Airlines must comply with the regulations applicable to the routes they are operating. The aircraft crew will know what rules apply and it is critical that passengers follow their instructions. And we ask that all travelers be respectful of other people's decision to voluntarily wear masks even if it not a requirement," said Walsh.

Impact of Russian airspace closure on the World's longest flight

We looked at what the closure of Russian airspace would mean for a mid-European cargo airline. A cargo plane has a shorter range, and the difference in flight distance meant that the cost of transporting cargo from Far-East to West Europe increased considerably as cargo payload was reduced.

We now check what the Russian airspace closure means for the World's longest flight, Singapore Airlines flight SQ23/SQ24 between New York and Singapore.



The flight from New York to Singapore has changed the routing after the 24th of February. It now avoids Russian and Ukrainian airspace.

It results in a longer flight but the cost increase shall not pose a profitability problem on this premium route.

You're invited to Exhibit at 46th Tanzania Intl Trade Fair 2022

Tanzania 2022 is the global platform that aims to connect International Companies to showcase their products and services with the developing market of Tanzania & other East African Countries. It will provide wider opportunities for International and Tanzania Enterprises to stand out with their distinctive products & explore the current requirement of the market.

International Airlines Group finalizes agreement for up to 150 737 Jets

Purchase includes firm order and options for 737-8-200 and 737-10 airplanes

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and International Airlines Group (IAG) recently announced an order for a combined total of 50 737-8-200s and 737-10s, plus 100 options.

"The addition of new Boeing 737s is an important part of IAG's short-haul fleet renewal. These latest generation aircraft are more fuel efficient than those they will replace and in line with our commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050," said Luis Gallego, IAG's chief executive.

The 737-8-200 will enable IAG to configure the airplane with up to 200 seats, increasing revenue potential and reducing fuel consumption.

The largest model in the family, the 737-10 seats up to 230 passengers in a single-class configuration and can fly up to 3,300 miles. The fuel-efficient jet can cover 99% of single-aisle routes, including routes served by 737s.

"With the selection of the 737-8-200 and larger 737-10, IAG has invested in a sustainable and profitable future, as both variants will significantly lower operating costs and CO2 emissions," said Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "Today's agreement for up to 150 airplanes, including 100 options, is a welcome addition of the 737 to IAG's short-haul fleets and reflects our commitment to support the Group's continued network recovery and future growth with Boeing's unrivalled family of airplanes."

The 737 incorporates the latest-technology CFM International LEAP-1B engines, Advanced Technology winglets and other improvements to deliver the highest efficiency, reliability and passenger comfort in the single-aisle market. The 737 family of airplanes is on average 14% more fuel-efficient than today's most efficient Next-Generation 737s and 20% more efficient than the original Next-Generation 737s when they entered service.

Recently announcement finalizes a commitment made by IAG for the 737 at the 2019 Paris Air Show and is subject to approval by IAG shareholders.

Hi-Tea & Award ceremony of YTO Cargo Airlines held in Lahore



Mr. Muhammad Ilyas CEO/Chairman XPress Aviation Group CSA, YTO Cargo Airlines addressing on the occasion.



Glimpses of Hi-Tea & Award ceremony of YTO Cargo Airlines held in Sialkot



Photo shows Mr. Muhammad Ilyas CEO/Chairman Xpress Aviation Group CSA, YTO Cargo Airlines presenting awards to the Cargo Agents for their outstanding performance for the airlines.



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Lindbergh and the first non-stop solo transatlantic flight



It was on this day, 95 years ago, that Charles Lindbergh landed at Paris Le Bourget Aerodrome at 10.22pm, becoming the first person to fly solo non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean.

After traveling a distance of 5,800km, the 25-year-old arrived 33 hours and 30 minutes after leaving New York and was welcomed by 150,000-strong crowd just outside Paris, France.

Charles Augustus Lindbergh

Born in Detroit, Michigan in the U.S. on February 4, 1902, Charles Augustus Lindbergh had, from an early age, shown interest in various forms of transportation before going on to study mechanical engineering in college.

By the time he was 20, Lindbergh had expressed a particular interest in flying and quit his studies to enroll at the Nebraska Aircraft Corporations flying school in Lincoln. It was while in Lincoln that he took his first flight as a passenger in a training aircraft. He then began taking lessons.



Setting his sights on flying, Lindbergh left Lincoln and spent time earning money and gaining flight experience. He took up barnstorming - stunt pilot air displays, popular during the 1920s in America - as a wing walker and parachutist.

In 1923, Lindbergh purchased a Curtiss JN-4 biplane for \$500 and, after half an hour of dual flying instruction, flew solo for the first time. With only five hours experience flying as pilot in command, he departed on his first solo cross-country flight, traveling more than 140 miles.

By March 1924, Lindbergh had begun flight training with the United States Army Air Service, graduating top of his class in 1925 and earning his wings. After graduating, he returned to barnstorming, now as a pilot under the name 'Daredevil Lindbergh'. He was also employed as a flight instructor and worked flying mail from St. Louis to Chicago.

Transatlantic Flight

Until the mid-20th century, passenger ocean liners were the only accessible way to cross the Atlantic Ocean. In 1913, the Daily Mail offered a prize of £10,000 for the first crossing of the Atlantic by aeroplane, but with the onset of war it wasn't until 1919 that serious attempts were planned.

In May 1919, New York hotelier Raymond Orteig also offered a \$25,000 reward for the first allied aviators to fly non-stop between New York City and Paris. It was seven years later when the first attempts were made. Six aviators died in unsuccessful attempts, with several others injured in crashes.

The Spirit of St. Louis

Still an unknown aviator, Lindbergh found financial help from two St. Louis businessmen, who gave him \$15,000 to fund his attempt at the Orteig Prize.

The task of finding an aircraft proved difficult as larger companies including Wright Aeronautical and Columbia Aircraft Corporation insisted on selecting the pilot to fly. Eventually, Lindbergh turned to the Ryan Aircraft Company. Based in San Diego, the small manufacturer agreed to build a custom monoplane within 60 days.

The aircraft 'Ryan NYP' (New York Paris) model was a single seat, single-engine, high-wing aircraft based on the similar 'Ryan M-2' mail plane. The 'Ryan NYP' was named the Spirit of St. Louis in honor of Lindbergh and his then hometown of St. Louis. On May 10, 1927, after initial test flights, Lindbergh flew the aircraft to Roosevelt Field, New York, ready for his transatlantic attempt.

First Solo Transatlantic Flight

Early in the morning of May 20, 1927, Lindbergh left Roosevelt Airfield, Long Island, New York. The plane weighed a mere 2.7 tons when it departed. Throughout the flight, Lindbergh piloted through challenging conditions, navigating only through dead reckoning - estimating track, groundspeed and position based on earlier known positions - without the use of radio navigation equipment.

Lindbergh landed at Le Bourget

Aerodrome, Paris, at 10:22pm on May 21, 1927 after a flight time of 33 hours and 30 minutes. He was an instant celebrity with a crowd of 150,000 people welcoming the Spirit of St. Louis.

It would be another 31 years before the first jet aircraft passenger service crossed the Atlantic when BOAC flew the de Havilland Comet from London to New York.

By comparison to 1927, the fastest subsonic crossing stands at four hours and 56 minutes. During the era of Concorde, the iconic supersonic aircraft managed a crossing in just two hours and 53 minutes.

Today, The Spirit of St. Louis aircraft flown by Lindbergh is on display at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

**Fly now, pay later
with new Qantas
and Zip
partnership**



Qantas customers can 'fly now, pay later' with a new payment option helping them make up for lost time and travel more as destinations reopen.

Customers will be able to book domestic and international flights on qantas.com using buy now, pay later provider Zip and earn Qantas Points.

Frequent Flyers will also be able to choose to earn Qantas Points through Zip's loyalty program, Zip Rewards, when making some everyday purchases providing another way for members to maximise the points they earn.

Specifically, frequent flyers can earn: 3,000 points when they sign up and link their Zip account and complete their first transaction. 500 points each time they reach their Zip Rewards goal (see below for further details).

1 point for every \$3 spent on eligible flights on qantas.com with Zip.

Qantas Loyalty CEO Olivia Wirth said this is the first time the airline has partnered with a buy now, pay later

provider to offer the payment option for flight bookings.

“After two years of restricted travel Australians are making up for lost time. Domestic travel is back at pre-COVID levels while international travel is building back strongly to destinations like the US, Europe, Bali and Fiji,” Ms Wirth said.

“The option to buy now, pay later through Zip gives our customers more choice in how they pay for their flights. With Zip they can spread the cost over time choosing flexible repayments, and also earn Qantas Points on the payment as well as the flight itself.

“While our 14 million frequent flyers all have different spending habits and payment preferences, we know that financial services are one of the most popular ways to earn points. Being able to earn points on buy now, pay later purchases through Zip Rewards when shopping online or in store is something that will appeal to many of our members.

“We know that Australians love Qantas Points, so we're continuing to develop new partnerships like this one with Zip to give our frequent flyers more ways to earn points. It helps keep members engaged in the program and ultimately drives value for our business.”

Zip ANZ Managing Director, Cynthia Scott said, “Zip is thrilled to partner with Qantas to transform the way Australians pay for travel. By giving customers access to Zip's fair, flexible and transparent payment solutions, travellers can sit back and enjoy their trip knowing they're in control of their finances when they get home.

“We are also giving freedom and choice back to customers by giving them the option to pay for their trip before they go, or when they get back. Plus, they can earn Qantas Points along the way. We want Zip to be the first payment choice everywhere and every day and partnering with leaders in travel like Qantas will help get us there sooner.

“Our research shows that Buy Now, Pay Later users are more likely to travel in the next 12 months compared to non-users. This means our alliance with Qantas is incredible news for our 3.1 million customers. In fact, more than 75 per cent of Zip customers intend on travelling in the next 12 months. We put our customers at the centre of everything that we do, so it means a lot to us that we can give Zip users the option to pay for their next trip with Zip.”

Qantas Loyalty offers points on a number of financial services products including credit cards with all the major banks, home and personal loans, insurance, Qantas Travel Money and investment and wealth management solutions.

Virgin Australia selects Sabre's Revenue Optimizer



The Australian carrier will be using Sabre Revenue Optimizer to support decision-making with real-time data analytics as Australia welcomes back international travellers

A leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, recently announced that Virgin Australia is migrating to Sabre's Revenue Optimizer solution to enable optimal pricing decisions and drive total revenue optimization to respond dynamically to today's fluid travel environment.

While previously, airline pricing and availability planning has typically relied on historical data, the pandemic has resulted in unprecedented changes to the global travel marketplace, making past patterns much less reliable. Sabre Revenue Optimizer will enable Virgin Australia to take a 360-approach to forecasting, analysing and optimizing revenue streams by providing real-time visibility into the total revenue of every flight, market and departure date.

Currently, the Brisbane-headquartered carrier is using a number of different systems in its revenue optimization strategy. The airline will be moving to Sabre Revenue Optimizer to drive its technological transformation and break down data silos to enable it to leverage intelligent decision support to recommend availability, customer choice-based demand forecasting and competitive intelligence.

“We're delighted to be advancing our technology with Sabre at this key time for travel industry recovery in Australia and beyond,” said Virgin Australia Group

Chief Commercial Officer, Dave Emerson. “As we continue to ramp up our operations following the easing of Australian domestic and international travel restrictions, it's more important than ever that we can understand evolving booking behaviours across our network with customer-centric, real-time data analytics that give us the power to make sophisticated decisions, so we are able to seize recovery opportunities.”

Virgin Australia is the largest airline by fleet size to use the Virgin brand and has a strong domestic Australian network as well as its own short haul international services to Fiji, with more international services planned across the year. Virgin Australia Group has also expanded its international network through partnerships with leading global airlines, building an enviable international network in the process.

“As soon as borders opened in Australia, our Sabre booking data showed an immediate surge in bookings as people, unable to travel for the past two years, immediately started to make plans. So, we're thrilled to announce this new agreement with Virgin Australia at this important milestone in industry recovery,” said Rakesh Narayanan, Vice President, Regional General Manager, Travel Solutions Airline Sales, Sabre. “As a scalable Cloud-native solution, our Revenue Optimizer will help to seamlessly support the future of dynamic pricing for Virgin Australia to capture opportunities as we move ahead with further industry recovery.”

Passenger who landed plane says 'hand of God' was with him



The Associated Press May 17, 2022 12:37 PM In this still image from video by WPTV shows emergency personnel surrounding a Cessna plane at Palm Beach International Airport Tuesday, May 10, 2022, in West Palm Beach, Fla. A passenger with no flying experience was able to land the plane safely with help of air traffic controllers after the pilot was too sick to handle the controls. (WPTV via AP) In this still image from video by WPTV shows emergency personnel surrounding a Cessna plane at Palm Beach International Airport Tuesday, May 10, 2022, in West Palm Beach, Fla. A passenger with no flying experience was able to land the plane safely with help of air traffic controllers after the pilot was too sick to handle the controls. (WPTV via AP) WPTV AP A Florida man with no flying experience who kept his cool while landing a small plane says "the hand of God" was with him after the pilot collapsed at the controls. Darren Harrison told NBC's "Today" show that he was relaxing with his feet up in the back of the single-engine Cessna after a fishing trip in the Bahamas when the pilot told him and another passenger: "Guys, I gotta tell you I don't feel good." "He said, 'I've got a headache and I'm fuzzy and I just don't feel right,'" the 39-year-old flooring salesman said. "And I said, 'What do we need to do?' and at that point he didn't respond at all." Harrison climbed into the cockpit and saw that the plane was diving, and fast. "All I saw when I came up to the front was water out the right window and I knew it was coming quick. At that point I knew if I didn't react, that we would die." Get unlimited digital access Subscribe now for just \$2 for 2 months. CLAIM OFFER Harrison said he reached over the unconscious pilot and grabbed the controls, slowly pulling back the stick to level the plane. It was a common-sense move, he said. "I knew if I went up and yanked that, the airplane would stall," he said. "And I also knew that at the rate we were going, we were going way too fast, and it would probably rip the wings off of the airplane." That, he said, was "the

scariest part of the whole story." With help from the other passenger a friend of the pilot, he said they moved him out of the pilot's seat. Harrison jumped in and put on the headset, only to realize that the wires were frayed and the plug was gone. So he got the headset from the other passenger. He reached an air traffic controller in Florida. Asked if he knew the plane's position, Harrison said the GPS was out so he had no idea. Midday Business Report Sign up for this newsletter for news and developments from the local business scene. This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply. According to Flight Aware, the plane had taken off earlier Tuesday from Marsh Harbour International Airport in the Bahamas. The air traffic controller then asked what he could see. "I see the state of Florida and I see a small airport," Harrison told him. At this point, he refused to let fear set in. "When I was flying and saw the state of Florida, at that second I knew I'm going to land there," he said. "I don't know what the outcome's going to be, I don't know how it's going to happen, but I knew I'm going to have to land this airplane because there's no other option." Harrison said he had to get home to his wife Britney, seven months pregnant with their first child. "People said what if you had crashed and died? You could have at least called her, you could have reached out to her, you had time," Harrison said. "In my mind I knew I wasn't going to die, and the thought never crossed my mind to call and tell my wife 'bye.'" Air Traffic Controller Robert Morgan, who coached Harrison into a safe landing at Palm Beach International Airport, told him the runway would appear bigger and bigger as he approached. At around 200 feet, Harrison said Morgan told him he needed to slow down. "At that point I told the other guy, hey take the throttle and dump it on the floor. Just dump it on the floor as far as it will go," Harrison said. The plane touched down safely. "I said thank you for everything and I threw the headset on the dash and I said the biggest prayer I've ever said in my life," Harrison recalled. "That's when all the emotion set in," he added. He said he offered up a "thankful prayer for the safety and everything that had happened. But the last part of the prayer and the strongest part was for the guy in the back because I knew it was not a good situation." The pilot was taken to a hospital and is expected to be released early this week, Harrison said. Harrison then called his wife, who wasn't expecting to hear from him so early. She said that last year, her sister was six months pregnant

when her husband died, "so honestly I took a deep breath and prepared myself for it not to be him on the other line." "I told myself, 'God we can't do this again. I don't think I could do it again. And thankfully we didn't have to.'"

International Hotelier setting up luxury helicopter service



Erwin Jager, chairman of Barrows Hotel Enterprises, is entering the luxury helicopter charter business with service to start in 2023 with two Airbus helicopters fitted with VIP interiors.

Hotelier Erwin Jager is entering the luxury helicopter charter business with an eye to providing an air link between airports and high-end resort hotels, as well as sightseeing flights for guests. Jager is chairman of Barrows Hotel Enterprises, which manages over 10,000 hotel rooms in more than 10 countries, specializing in the MENA region including West Africa.

Jager said the helicopter service will start next year with two Airbus helicopters fitted with VIP interiors, but his goal is to have 10 helicopters in service by 2025. Financing for the rotorcraft would come via a long-term bond loan, he said.

The impetus for the service came from Jager's own experience of the long ground commutes between Barrows' luxury properties and airports in locations such as Barbados, Maldives, Bora Bora, Mauritius, Seychelles, and the Bahamas. "The idea came because we often arrived at our hotel locations tired and stressed after hours of travel. A luxury chauffeur service offers some comfort on short distances, but certainly not if you have to travel longer than 45 minutes between the airport and the final destination," Jager said.

ATR 42-600S STOL takes flight in its partial configuration

ATR, the world number one regional aircraft manufacturer, has announced the successful first flight of the partially configured STOL variant (for 'Short Take-Off and Landing') of its ATR 42-600 aircraft. The flight took off at 10:00 from Franczal airport and lasted 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The crew onboard performed a number of tests to measure the upgraded aircraft systems' performance.

Following the successful completion of this first flight, new functionalities will be tested one at a time, starting with the MFC-NG (Multifunctional Computer New Generation), followed by the Autobrake, Ground Spoiler, and increased take off rating systems.

The aircraft will enter its final configuration at the end of the year with the addition of a new larger rudder and move on to the certification phase in 2023.

To-date, ATR has recorded 20 commitments from airlines and lessors for this ATR 42-600S.

There are currently close to 500 airports around the world with a runway length between 800 and 1,000 meters (2,625 to 3,281 feet) that could welcome the ATR 42-600S. This new STOL variant will help passengers benefit from an increased regional connectivity.



British Airways owner confirms 50 aircraft 737 Max order



LEAP engines on a Boeing 737 Max (Image: Nick Harding/TransportMedia UK)

British Airways parent International Airlines Group (IAG) has finally confirmed an order for 50 Boeing 737 Max aircraft, 3 years after showing interest in the airliner.

The order consists of 25 Max 200s (currently used only by Ryanair) and 25 Max 10s (after certification).

Industry sources have suggested that Boeing has put together a favourable package for IAG in order to boost its order books after a dark period for the US airframer.

IAG said they had negotiated a substantial discount off the list prices.

The first aircraft will be delivered in 2023 and the order includes options for 100 more aircraft for delivery between 2025-2028.

Boeing has been in turmoil recently with the 737 Max requiring recertification following two fatal crashes and delays plaguing its 787 and 777X deliveries.

Luis Gallego, IAG's chief executive, said: "The addition of new Boeing 737s is an important part of IAG's short-haul

fleet renewal. These latest-generation aircraft are more fuel-efficient than those they will replace and in line with our commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050."

Whilst the destination airlines haven't been announced for the order, Spanish low-cost carrier Vueling is likely to be one recipient of the Max 200 variant.

It is unlikely that any will enter the British Airways fleet which operates an all-Airbus fleet for its short-haul operations.

Islamabad airport staff banned from using smartphones

The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has banned the use of smartphones by low-grade staffers like porters, helpers and loaders working at the Islamabad International Airport as a security measure.

However, they may still use feature or keypad cell phones inside the airport's premises.

The airport management said in a directive on Tuesday 19 May that it was being observed with great concern that these staff workers had been using smartphones openly without any restriction, which might lead to any untoward incident.

Taking pictures or videos of the airport's sensitive areas and posting them on TikTok or other social media platforms was not good from a security point of view, it said, adding that miscreants or smugglers might induce these staffers to fulfil their nefarious designs or perform illegal activities.

The airport management said it was instructed by the PCAA to restrict low-level staffers from bringing or using smartphones to the airport and instead encourage them to use simple keypad cell phones during work to avoid any untoward incident at the airport.

The airport management also directed the sectional heads of agencies and airlines working at the airport to ensure strict compliance in this regard.

A senior official at the airport said the employees were concerned about the ban on smartphone usage, claiming that it would affect their productivity and lead to arguments with security staff.

Earlier, the airport management pointed out some security lapses while citing a security audit conducted earlier this year and asked the Rawalpindi's district administration to take appropriate measures for the safety and security of the airport.

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Tourism season starts in gorgeous Pakistan*

*PROTECTION OF OUR KALASHA CULTURE
(Prof. Safdar Sandal)



After having passed through busy spring days in the country; the people faced and felt that the mercury is going up in the plains rather too early and that too in severity; the fun loving people of Pakistan have therefore started moving on roads, leading to the paradisiac mountains of Pakistan and the most beautiful holiday resorts of the world that are placed in this country by nature; to find cold and comfort. It will not be out of place to mention that the scribe has profusely visited the tourist areas of the world and can claim proudly that Pakistan possesses one of the most beautiful places and that too with very rich-culture, historic and romantic tourist places, which I can say are seldom found anywhere else.

As the weather became hot in Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and some

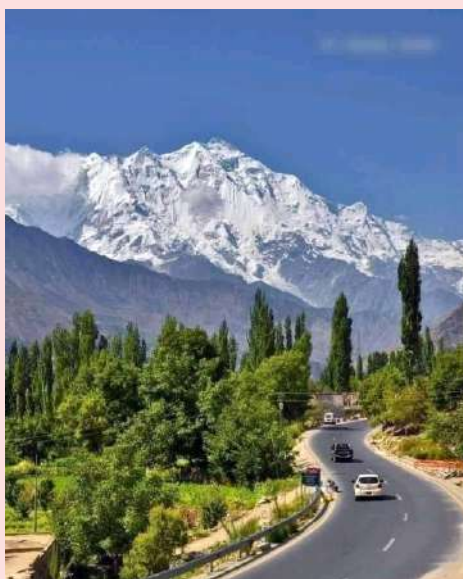


parts of the KP, tourists have taken to the roads and thronged the cold hilly areas of Hazara, Hunza, Kaghan, Swat and innumerable other places, where they can enjoy the journey by driving to and having showers alongside under waterfalls, swimming in lakes, rivers, streams, fountains that abound and eating tasty fruits in the accompanying all the way orchards wishing to stay there for a fortnight or for full summer according to family plans.

Despite good measures taken by the traffic police in the mentioned districts, the main Murree road which leads to Galyat and Thandyani was blocked for many

hours owing to the heavy traffic of tourists. The weather in the upper parts of Hazara and Galayat divisions is very pleasant now with inter mittent rains, coupled with thunder storms before the arrival of heavy monsoon rains, a few weeks away. The National Highway Authority has also opened the MNJ (Manshra-Naran-Jalkhad) road by clearing the snow up to the Pondian Glacier and beyond in the Kaghan valley. This has allowed tourists the opportunity to go up to Lolopatsar Lake for which the road has been cleared off snow up to Babusar-top. Rescues 1122's nearest health centres or PDMA's helpline - 1700 have facilitated tourists who can contact them in case of any emergency or possible difficulty faced during travel.

Chillam Joshi Festival: The famous festival 'Chillam Joshi' has kicked off from May 13th in Kalash(Chitral) Valley; the festival commemorates the arrival of summer and Kalashi people celebrate it by dancing and singing, a type of their pray for the abundance of dairy products and good crop during the season. The people of Kalash love music and dance to the beat of drums. Both men and women partake in dancing festivities, where they make circles and enjoy the sound of music by singing their folk songs. The festival gives an excellent opportunity to celebrate the beginning of summer and it is accustomed to give a message of peace to the world. During this festival, the people of Kalash



pray also for the safety of their fields and animals. The celebration in this way has a religious tinge in the ancient-most culture of the Kalashi people.

It will be interesting to go a bit more into the history of Kalash. When Mehmud Ghazanvi invaded India in 1036 AD, the conversion of the 'Kafirs of Kafirstan, now Nuristan, was on his checklist. The romantic tales of the Hindu Kush people (Bashgali and Kalasha) had not only spread over the subcontinent, but also spread rapidly over Europe when explorers mentioned their tales of European descent. In a previous article relating to Kalashi cultural heritage and dancing beliefs, I had proclaimed that these customs had origins in those of ancient Greeks and the belief that the Kalashi people are the descendants of the Greek soldiers who under Alexander had invaded India in 326 BC and many a good part of Greek soldiers, tired of long wars and being too away from their homes for no good reason, had decided not to go back to their homeland and instead preferred to get settled in Kalash-Chitral valley, where the weather was similar to their own. Gradually they got mixed with the local people and married here too, because obviously they had not brought their families with them. Both the modern day Greeks and the Kalashi people have some common cultural habits despite a lapse of 2,500 years. For instance both dance by forming a circle and both are specialists in making good wine and prefer to stay aloof to keep their identity. The area of Kalash and Chitral they had chosen, because it matched with Greece climatically and for giving good grapes fruits.

During my several visits of Greece, where I have some good friends and who have always invited me in their feasts, participated by their families. I did have a chance to participate in their cultural dance (upon their compelling invitation) together with Greek family, forming a circle. Later I enjoyed by swimming in the neighbouring Mediterranean coast. This rare opportunity gave me an insight into the close cultural affinity and I discovered a similarity of both the people (Kalashi and Greek) till to this day, notwithstanding with the difference that later developed by introduction of

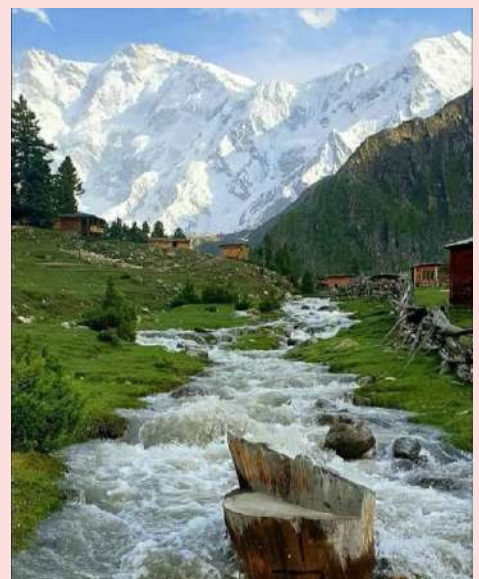
Christianity. 'Eastern Orthodox Church' made its entry in Greek people's life. Christianity came to Greece, 380 years after the time of Alexander. Ancient Greeks had 'Hellenic-ethnic-polytheistic' beliefs, through which that they believed in and had multiple deities, Zeus being the king of them (although not to be obeyed necessarily by other gods). Zeus created the first woman goddess 'Pandora' in the universe, according to Greek mythology and asked other gods to obey his creation which was resisted and envied too. From there starts another interesting story, which will be written on some other occasion.

Babar had romanticized the Kalashi people and mentioned their fine wine-making skills in his autobiography. History has mixed theories on the Kalash, but one narrative that resonates with all historians is that they have been the early rulers of the current region which now makes Chitral. Their conversion has been of great concern to the Government and the enlightened people of Pakistan, who desire that the original identity of Kalashi people and their original culture and religion must be preserved in order to have a charm and originality of their own. This will be an attraction of our country's rich cultural life.

We already have enough of half-Muslims like in the words of Ghalib : 'Aadha Mussalman hun - Sherab peetahun - Suirnahaienkhat'. An exception of a few old conventional people is a beauty of our land and it must be preserved, as a pride possession, like we consider Ghalib as an all-time glossary poet, never to be faded.



At present, the Kalasha are decreased in number and are constantly under a threat of gradual conversion by the die-hard religionists, which is a clear social murder of a people of our land who are a wonderful specie of the past and it must be our national duty to protect and preserve them, as they carry with them their beautiful and colorful past and a culture to be proud of. The Kalasha, which once formed a great number have squeezed in the current three valleys of Bhirir, Rumbur and Bumberat. Their conversion has been of great concern to the Government and international organizations as they imbue the region in a classical hue with their distinct hierarchical lifestyle. The unconverted Kalasha have managed to uplift not only Pakistan's image in the international touristic world, but have also put the picturesque Chitral valley, as a prominent region on the map of Pakistan. The converted Kalash are called Shaikhs who are also a source of discomfort for their Kalasha brethren. With all the discomforting affairs beside, the Kalasha have managed to uplift not only Pakistan's image in the international tourism world, but have also put the unrivaled Chitral valley on the map of gorgeous Pakistan. Whenever somebody says Chitral, the response is always "that's where the Kakasha live". Simple, grounded and lost in their own world, Kalasha are one of the most beautiful people to cross paths with. I would like to end with a Chinese saying: "When eating fruits remember the tree; when drinking water, remember the source".





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Mango export target slashed



The king of fruits production plunges to half this season due to above-normal temperatures and severe shortage of irrigation water.

After climate change related phenomena cut the country's mango production in half, exporters have been forced to slash the export target by 25,000 tonnes to 125,000 tonnes for the current season, which is expected fetch around \$106 million.

This year, mango production may be confined to 0.9m tonnes from 1.8m tonnes last year, according to All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Association (PFVA) Patron in Chief Waheed Ahmed. He feared that exporters would face crises like shortage of electricity and diesel, an increase in cost of packaging processing and high freight charges to meet the export target.

Mid-March saw average temperatures between 37-42 degree, which severely damaged mango production. In contrast, the average temperatures during the previous season was recorded around 34 degree, Irrigation problems, water shortage due to blockage of canals, power load shedding and shortage of diesel during the season further deepened the climatic effects.

In a statement, Waheed said rupee depreciation, rising labor costs along with high tariff of electricity and gas have significantly multiplied the cost of processing mangoes. Packaging material prices have also gone up by 30pc since last season, making it quite difficult for mango exporters to compete in the international market.

Exorbitant increase in sea freight rates is also playing a significant role in making competition stiff for Pakistani mangoes. Last year, sea freight for the Gulf and Dubai were \$1,900 per container as compared to current rate of \$2,800-\$3,000, he said.

MoU signed for Chinese investment in Gwadar

With a view to enhancing business-to-business cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing, a Chinese entrepreneur will make an initial investment of \$50 million in Gwadar for setting up of an end-to-end supply chain facility for export of seafood to China.

A high-tech processing facility with technology transfer will be set up in the industrial zone of Gwadar for the export of fish from Pakistan to China. The facility will be a large-scale production unit with infrastructure upgrades for high quality processing, associated modern technologies, and robust cold chain logistics.

This will enable the two companies to export in large volumes and empower them to command a premium price.

The project will also include a Chinese customs clearance facility through which all exports to China will get customs clearance while on Pakistani soil in Gwadar. Both companies will work with high-quality wholesalers and use their own cold chain transport for export to China from Gwadar.

The Board of Investment (BoI) facilitated the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Optima Integration Group of China and Asia-Pak Investments of Pakistan in Islamabad on Monday. The Chinese General Administration of Customs has already approved 79 species of fish for export from Pakistan to China.

According to the terms of the agreement, the first phase of investment will create more than 100 jobs in Gwadar and Karachi in the fishing, power and logistics sectors. In the second phase, the project will first expand from the fishing sector to livestock, commencing with the export of beef and goats to China through cold chain transport, and then scaling with Chinese standard breeding, feedlot operations, vaccinations, track and trace technology, and slaughter and packing facilities at Karachi.

The MoU was signed by Sam Siu, Chairman of Optima Integration Group of China, and Eusha Saleem Bajwa, Chief Executive Officer of Sino Pak Optima Technologies, on behalf of their respective sides.

ITI train finally reaches Turkey after two months

The fourth Istanbul-bound freight train, which departed during the third week of March from Pakistan, has finally reached Turkey, a Pakistan Railways (PR) official said on Saturday 21 May.

The train which may take another three to four days to reach its final destination, i.e. Istanbul was stuck at Taftan after the freight forwarder in Turkey allegedly refused to send wagons for the transshipment of goods at Zahidan towards Istanbul.

Pakistan Railways said that to avert a similar situation in future, all freight forwarders have been instructed to proceed with the operation by signing a formal agreement with freight forwarders in Turkey and Iran before booking goods.

A PR spokesman said in a statement on Saturday 21 May that the train carrying goods in containers was currently parked near Lake Van, the largest lake in Turkey and lies in the country's far east.

"From here, the goods would be transported to the other side of the river through a ferry boat. Since there is only one ferry boat on the Lake Van at the moment, the process to shift the containers/train would take three to four days to complete," he said.

He said Pakistan Railways was only responsible for the ITI train operations in the areas under its control. According to the agreement, he said, the responsibility for customs clearance, loading, unloading, transshipment and related matters lay with

the three companies Haroon Brothers of Pakistan, Rasan Rail Pars of Iran, and MFA Logistics of Turkey.

Of the four trains that departed from Pakistan from December last year to March this year, three reached the destination on time, but the fourth train was stuck at the Iran-Turkey border mainly due to a payment-related dispute between Haroon Brothers and MFA Logistics.

"To resolve the issue, Pakistan Railways' officials issued instructions to Haroon Brothers, who then sent their officials to Turkey and the matter was resolved after negotiations with the other party," the spokesman said.

The issues related to train delays were also discussed at the 12th high-level working group meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), he said, adding that minutes of the meeting would be released by the ECO secretariat soon.

Meanwhile, Haroon Brothers a co-national freight forwarder on behalf of Pakistan Railways for the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul train project said that in the current situation, the train had successfully completed four operations from Pakistan to Turkey, a fifth train was on the move while another one was getting ready.

"The project is the spirit of our national trade and boost in exports of Pakistan," a company director said in a statement on Saturday 21 May.

Ahsan directs winding up of CPEC Authority



Ahsan Iqbal

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has recently called for immediate removal of problems faced by the Chinese investors and contractors working on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) including swift processing of their visa cases.

During a visit to CPEC Authority offices, the minister also directed the authorities concerned to prepare a structure so that the CPECA could be wound up and integrated into the Ministry of Planning and Development because it was in conflict with rules of business of the various ministries.

Mr Iqbal told media that the CPECA was dysfunctional and was in conflict with the role of line ministries. Under the rules of business, ministries had the basic roles in the implementation of policies and projects under the CPEC but a parallel organisation only created duplication of work and lack of ownership.

Responding to some media reports that the CPECA's chairmanship had been given to newly sworn in federal minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain of PML-Q, the minister said he was not aware of any such move and added that it was illogical to have a parallel set up.

He recalled that PML-N had strongly opposed the creation of CPECA through an act of parliament because it was

unnecessary and superfluous as the planning ministry had discharged the role very diligently and effectively in the past.

He said the opposition members had dissented to the act because it appeared to be a parallel Planning Commission with little utility and become a "white elephant".

Ahsan laments slow progress on CPEC projects

Terming the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a top priority, Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal recently expressed serious concern over the sluggish progress on CPEC-related projects.

The minister showed displeasure over the waste of time and resources over the last four years at a meeting he presided over to review the progress on CPEC projects. The meeting was attended by secretaries of various ministries.

Executive Director, CPEC, Qammar Sarwar Abbasi gave a briefing on the so far progress in executing the projects which is a game-changer for the region.

The minister directed that progress on CPEC should be reviewed twice a month and all Joint Working Groups (JWG) of CPEC to pursue their sector-specific projects and initiate work on them immediately, the Planning Commission said in a statement.

"How pathetic the delay on CPEC projects which is the potential game-changer for the regions, said the minister while directing the official concerned to hold a meeting to review the progress every fortnight. There is zero progress on the Industrial Zones of Port Qasim, Islamabad and Mirpur which is unfortunate. "When you don't value your investors why they would come for investment", lamented the minister.

In 2017, the excitement around SEZs was so high that all major foreign direct investors were lining up to be a part of it. However, due to an inordinate delay in projects Chinese investors moved away, said the minister.

The minister noted that further delay

Mr Iqbal in his dissenting note had recalled that more than \$29 billion worth of investment had been channelised by the Planning Commission successfully without any authority and with the support of various ministries which should continue for successful implementation.

Meanwhile, Mr Ahsan invited his predecessor Asad Umar to a farewell briefing on the development initiatives of greater public importance that PTI started and should continue in public interest. Mr Umar could not be reached for comments.

in projects will not be acceptable and directed the officials to ensure the expedite the work. "How would you attract our investors when we fail to complete such important projects in time, the minister said while directing the concerned official to hold a separate meeting over SEZs so that it could be streamlined.

As per the initial plan, CPEC plan, the SEZs were supposed to be ready by 2020 but unfortunately, in the last four years, there has been zero progress on SEZs, said the minister, adding that Interior Division should ensure foolproof security of the Chinese nationals working in Pakistan.

During the briefing, the minister directed the officials to complete Zhob-Quetta Road which was initiated under the CPEC project. "Infrastructural development in less developed regions will contribute towards uplifting quality of life of the locals and generation of socioeconomic activity," he added.

The minister stressed that all line ministries and departments divert their immediate attention towards SEZs. In this regard, all potential foreign direct investors are to be engaged as well to hear their perspective and requirements which can be accounted for in SEZs design.

The minister also directed the officials to address the bottlenecks, especially in Early Harvest Projects, including infrastructure and energy projects.

There is a dire need of the hour for developing quality human capital that can take benefit of socioeconomic opportunities, opening up due to CPEC, he added.

Shehbaz proposes including Turkey in CPEC

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has proposed turning the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into a “trilateral arrangement” between China, Pakistan and Turkey so that all three nations could benefit from its potential.

He made the remarks while addressing a launching ceremony on Friday 20 May at Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works for the third Milgem corvette built by Turkey, where he was the chief guest. “Trade activities have the potential to increase manifold with the development of financial and industrial activities. The ongoing CPEC project is set to translate our desire to enhance regional connectivity and maximise trade [...] with Gwadar at its focal point,” the premier said.

“I would like to avail this opportunity to propose that let this CPEC be a trilateral arrangement between China, Pakistan and Turkey and let us benefit from its wonderful potential to benefit our nations,” he said, assuring the participants that the government was committed to developing maritime infrastructure.

At the outset, PM Shehbaz began by lauding the launch of the warship built with the cooperation and collaboration of a Turkish company.

Mr Sharif said indigenisation was at the forefront of Pakistan's national policy and it was encouraging to see modern warships being built in Pakistan and Turkey.

The newly launched corvette is equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, including surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles and anti-submarine weapons, which would significantly boost Pakistan Navy's defensive and offensive capabilities.

In a video message, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country wanted to share its expertise with Pakistan in the area of defence, adding that the Milgem project was one such example.

FPCCI slams Pakistan Railways for failure of ECO freight train

Expressing serious concerns over the inordinate delay in reaching its destination, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has held Pakistan Railways responsible for the failure of the operations of the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) freight train.

The fourth ITI train, which started its journey in the first week of March, has yet to reach Istanbul despite the passing of nearly two and half months reportedly due to a dispute between Turkish and Pakistani freight forwarders.

In letters, written separately to the federal minister for Railways and the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), the apex chamber said the ITI freight train operation resumed after a gap of around 12 years and the Pakistani exporters and industries were happy over this decision of restoring this rail route with the shortest transit time of 15 days.

“Unfortunately, corrupt practices, mishandling of freight forwarders, negligence by Pakistan Railway officials and other administrative issues has endangered continuity and fate of ITI freight train,” the FPCCI letters read.

The federation said the Pakistan Railways Freight Transportation Company (PRFTC) didn't develop any complaint handling management system and monitoring of freight forwarders and resultantly the fourth train started from Azakheil in the first week of March and is still stuck up in Iran, after two and half months and goods have not reached Turkey till now.

“One freight forwarder nominated by the PR has allegedly defaulted 34,000 euros to Turkish forwarder. Due to nonpayment, the fourth ITI freight train was stopped at the Turkey-Iran border.

It may be mentioned that Pakistani exporters have paid all freight charges to forwarders in advance before loading

cargo on the ITI train that has reportedly entered the territory of Turkey after being stuck at the Iran-Turkey border station for many days.

The FPCCI expressed wonder that the freight forwarders nominated/appointed by the PRFTC have not submitted any performance guarantee or security deposits. Even some of them are not registered with the Freight Forwarders Association of Pakistan and have no background in the international logistics business.

“We request you to intervene personally and investigate the corrupt practices involved in ITI freight train operation,” the FPCCI sought.

It also urged the ECO Secretariat to put in place a complaint handling and freight forwarders monitoring system in place as agreed during the 12th meeting of the high-level working group.

The 4th ITI train started its journey from Pakistan during the first week of March. By the end of that month, it reached Taftan, where it got stuck for a few days due to the dispute between the Pakistani and Turkish freight forwarders and some customs-related issues.

Later, it arrived in Zahedan, where the goods were transshipped to wagons compatible with Europe's standard gauge rail system in six containers. When the train reached Zahedan, the Turkish freight forwarder refused to send wagons for transshipment. However, after being assured of the payment by the Pakistani freight forwarder, the wagons were sent to Zahedan.

But the Pakistani freight forwarder again avoided clearing dues, which forced his counterpart in Turkey to get the train stopped at Razi station situated at the Iran-Turkey border. However, after being paid some partial payment to the Turkish forwarder, the train was allowed to enter Turkey. However, it is yet to reach Istanbul.

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Saudia and Tourism Authority of Thailand enter partnership



SAUDIA, the national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). This agreement will pave the way for future joint ventures and collaborations to further enhance tourism marketing and promotion efforts between the two nations through the airline's SAUDIA Holidays platform.

The MoC was signed by Captain Ibrahim Koshi, CEO of SAUDIA, and Mr. Chattan Kunjara Na Ayudhya, Deputy Governor for International Marketing Europe Africa Middle East and Americas. The signing ceremony was held at Prince Sultan Aviation Academy in Jeddah.

According to the terms of the MoC, SAUDIA will organize promotional campaigns for various hotels and tourist attractions in Thailand through the platform - www.holidaysbysaudia.com and its mobile application. The airline will also create a comprehensive range of travel packages to suit the budgets of all SAUDIA guests looking to visit Thailand's top destinations.

Mr. Majed Al-Harbi, Manager of Saudia Holidays, said that SAUDIA has once again demonstrated its commitment to expanding its scope of international multi-sector partnerships. This will result in increased interest and subsequent investment in the airline's tourism promotion platform, which helps guests from every budget-range plan their next trip.

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Earlier in February of this year, SAUDIA announced that it would be running three flights a week between the Kingdom and Thailand as the two nations bolster their bilateral relations. The new flight route comes as part of SAUDIA's overarching efforts to broaden its international network of routes that span across four continents.

Mr. Chattan stressed the importance of this MoC, which was signed soon after direct flights between the two countries

had been launched, and will aid each nation's efforts to promote Thailand as a preferred travel destination.

He added that both parties had set clear joint marketing goals to help empower Saudi Arabia and the Middle East's tourism sector (one of Thailand's major target markets), through the latter country's tourism expertise.

SAUDIA Holidays is one of many SAUDIA's travel incentive programs that help guests plan their vacations easily and efficiently. Through its advanced online platform, SAUDIA guests can find competitive rates to suit every budget, along with hotel booking, car rental, and vacation tour packages.

SAUDIA is nominated as Middle East's Leading Airline 2022 while Tourism Authority of Thailand is considered Asia's Leading Cultural Destination 2021 by World Travel Awards. Meanwhile, Golf Saudi was named World's Best Sustainable Legacy Award by voters of World Golf Awards.

Multiple passport holders get seven-month amnesty

The government has approved yet another amnesty scheme for holders of multiple passports which allows them to get their additional passports canceled and avoid a jail term under the law.

Informed sources told media that under the seventh amnesty scheme, the holders of more than one passport have been given a little over seven months to either set things right or be ready to face the music.

Information Minister Marriyum Aurengezeb confirmed that a summary to this effect had been approved by the federal cabinet on May 10. She said the scheme would remain in force till December 31.

An official told media that the cases of those who failed to benefit from the scheme would be referred to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

The official said the scheme would benefit overseas Pakistanis currently facing difficulties for being blacklisted on being found to be holding more than one passport.

So far 12,000 individuals have benefited from six earlier amnesty schemes and around 200 applications were pending in the absence of a policy.

Iraq exhibits restored art pillaged after 2003 invasion



A wooden sculpture of a gazelle with undulating curves is on display at Iraq's Ministry of Culture.

Verdant landscapes, stylised portraits of peasant women, curved sculptures an exhibition in Baghdad is allowing art aficionados to rediscover the pioneers of contemporary Iraqi art.

Around one hundred items are on display in the capital, returned and restored nearly two decades after they were looted.

Many of the works, including pieces by renowned artists Jawad Selim and Fayiq Hassan, disappeared in 2003 when museums and other institutions were pillaged in the chaos that followed the US-led invasion to topple dictator Saddam Hussein.

Thousands of pieces were stolen, and organised criminal networks often sold them outside Iraq.

Tracked down in Switzerland, the US, Qatar and neighbouring Jordan, sculptures and paintings dating between the 1940s and 1960s have been on display since late March at the Ministry of Culture, in a vast room that used to serve as a restaurant.

"These works are part of the history of contemporary art in Iraq," ministry official Fakhre Mohamed said. Pictures and sculptures were in 2003 spirited away from the Saddam Arts Centre, one of Baghdad's most prestigious cultural venues at the time.

While he crushed all political dissent, Saddam cultivated the image of a patron of the arts. The invasion and years of violence that followed ended a flourishing arts scene, particularly in Baghdad.

Now, relative stability has led to a fledgling artistic renaissance, including book fairs and concerts, of which the exhibition organised by the ministry is an example.

800 adventure tourists apply for Pakistan visa

The government has received over 800 applications from adventure tourists from around the world and is expecting to welcome at least 500 mountaineers and trekkers this summer.

"So far, 22 applicants have been issued permits to visit the northern areas for adventure tourism. The visa processing time has to be speedy to allow more foreign tourists to visit Pakistan for trekking and climbing activities," said a source in the tourism department of Gilgit-Baltistan.

According to a senior official, in a meeting held on Saturday 14 May the concern of delay in visa processing time was raised and conveyed to all stakeholders. It was emphasised that the visa processing time should not take longer than 10 days instead of one to two months during which tourists either lose interest or change their travel plans and move to attractive destinations in other countries.

"All applications are forwarded to security agencies which give clearances before visas could be issued to trekkers and climbers planning to visit the northern areas," said the official.

Cancellation of the first international flight to Gilgit-Baltistan on May 13 for unknown reasons was quite discouraging.

"We were looking forward to GB becoming the hub of international tourist destination," said Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) Secretary Karrar Haidri while talking to Dawn, adding the Skardu airport upgraded to international standards to handle the first international flight would be a major breakthrough for promotion of tourism in Pakistan.

To handle the first ever international flight to the beautiful city of snow-capped peaks and high altitude desert, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) had requested all concerned departments and institutions to complete/furnish all necessary preparations and formalities.

Mr Haidri said Pakistan needed to welcome foreign tourists like Nepal where a flight full of tourists landed every 10 minutes.

Pakistan Tour Operators Association Joint Secretary Mohammad Umar demanded that visa processing of foreign tourists should not be longer than 15 days minimum to four weeks maximum. "Often applications are left pending for weeks," he complained.

He also suggested that once foreign tourists were issued visas, they should not

be harassed for no-objection certificates (NOCs) to visit every corner of the country.

"In many popular destinations, foreigners enjoy peace of mind and roam freely without worrying about bureaucratic hurdles. After a visa is issued,

there should be no more hurdles, especially after the tourist has landed," he said.

But the situation is far better than past years, Mr Umar said. However, there is always room for improvements, especially when Pakistan was being promoted as the nicest and best tourist destination in the world blessed with breathtaking natural beautiful. "Visa process has to be made easier than before if foreign tourist has to be attracted to Pakistan," he said.

Abdul Joshi, Shehroze Kashif conquer two highest peaks



ABDUL JOSHI (left) and SHEHROZE KASHIF

Two Pakistani climbers separately summited the world's highest peak, Mount Everest, and fourth highest, Lhotse, in Nepal on Monday 16 May morning.

Abdul Joshi from the Shimshal valley of Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan, who scaled the 8,849-metre Mount Everest, is part of a 13-member expedition team, led by Nepalese mountaineer Mingma Gyalje Sherpa (Mingma G). While 20-year-old Shehroze Kashif set the record for becoming the youngest mountaineer in the world to summit four highest peaks after scaling the 8,516m Lhotse.

Dawa Futi Sherpa, the manager of the trekking company facilitating Joshi, told Dawn that the team included Liu Wenwei, Hai Qiannan, Feng Jianfei and Zhan Xiongchang from China; Anna Surysheva from Russia; Nathan Peter Longman from Australia; Marina Cortes from Poland; Gabriel Tarso from Brazil; Montana from Thailand; Raju Lama, Ramkumar Shrestha and Suraj Paudyal from Nepal.

Dawa Futi confirmed to Dawn that the expedition team reached the top of the world's highest mountain at 6:40am on Monday 16 May. She said according to Pakistan Standard Time, the team started the summit push from camp-4 at 9pm on Sunday 15 May. After the summit, they returned to camp-4 and will descend for camp-2 on Tuesday 17 May, and return to the base camp on Wednesday.

Karrar Haidri, the secretary of Alpine Club of Pakistan, in a statement congratulated Joshi for the successful feat.

Joshi is also the first Pakistani to summit Annapurna, the tenth highest

mountain in the world at 8,091m, in 2021. He also led a 12-member Pakistani team to the first-ever summit of Passu Cones.

Not only has Joshi summited a number of peaks, he also explored and discovered places that are still unknown and unreachable for others. Known in the community as the "Path Finder" for his extraordinary talent of finding new routes, Joshi was the first person in the world to cross FN/Joshi Pass and Verjerav Pass.

Meanwhile, Shehroze Kashif from Lahore, who was also part of an expedition team, summited the fourth-highest peak in the world, Lhotse, directly from camp-3. Kashif and his team had started the summit push on Sunday.

Earlier on May 5, the young Kashif had summited the 8,586-metre Kanchenjunga. He also holds other records, becoming the youngest Pakistani to scale the Everest -- the world's highest peak -- on May 6, 2021, and the youngest person in the world to climb K2 -- the second highest mountain -- on July 27 the same year, peaking both the mountains within a span of nearly three months.

Following the Monday morning climb, Kashif set a world record by becoming the youngest mountaineer ever to summit the four highest peaks of the world.

He is also the youngest Pakistani to have climbed the Broad Peak (8,047m) at the age of 17. He used supplemental oxygen during his climbs at the Broad Peak, Everest and K2. Kashif first started climbing mountains at the age of 11 when he summited the Makra Peak (3,885m), followed by Musa Ka Musalla (4,080m).

He continued his passion with Gondogoro La K2 Base Camp trek at the age of 14, and at 15 he was able to complete the Khurdopin Pass (5,800m) trek. At 18, he did Khushar Gang, a 6,050m peak, Alpine style.

Fellow climbers, politicians and journalists congratulated both the mountaineers for their feats.



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Folklore & Sufism as reflected in Pakistani languages

FOLK literature is a strange phenomenon in the sense that it proffers humanistic and universal notions that transcend time and borders.

'Folk' means, literally, people. And 'lore' is the body of traditions and knowledge on a subject, says Concise Oxford English Dictionary. So folklore is sum total of traditional beliefs, customs and stories of a people having been passed along from generations to generations by word of mouth. Folklore comprises of intangible cultural heritage as well as material culture, such as artefacts and art forms.

The term folklore covers a wide range of things, such as, customs, rites, rituals, poetry, legends, tales, fables, proverbs, riddles, jokes, songs, dances and many other traditional phenomena --- even games, curses, swear words and superstitions.

Folk stories and verses are generally very popular among the native speakers of a specific language, but not every popular story or poem can be termed as folk. Folk literature has some characteristics and one of them is indeed being popular among the natives of a specific region. Other peculiarities of folk literature are: oral tradition transmitted through centuries, depiction of local culture and local environment, a deep sense of lives of locals narrated through historical or quasi-historical legends in a local dialect, hence, folk literature records and preserves the language, too.

Aside from these features, there are some other commonalities among folk literature written in Pakistani languages. Such common traits are explored and narrated with evidence by Prof Fateh Muhammad Malik in his new book *Spiritual Heritage of Pakistan: Sufi Poetry in Folk Idiom*. Just published by Sang-i-Meel Publications, Lahore, the book's theme is Pakistan's mystical heritage as reflected in poetry written in Pakistani languages and the author thinks "Sufi poetry is an essential part of Pakistan's literary and cultural heritage".

Malik discovers some remarkable attributes of Pakistani folk poetry, for example, while he stresses the fact that

Sufis and their message was grounded in the communities they served and a local touch is always there, the universality of the message in Sufi poetry written in our languages cannot be overlooked. Sufi saints spread the message of love for the entire humanity and strived for creation of a society that was just, plural and favoured inclusivity. "Sufis opposed religious orthodoxy and were, in turn, rejected and ridiculed by local clerics. They also actively defied local structures of power", says Malik. As a result, in many cases, folk literature and Sufi poetry became a narrative for political resistance. "This defiance is best represented in the poetic struggle of Sindhi saints", he adds.

Malik has mentioned in the preface to the book that these are notes and reflections that served as basis for the lectures that he delivered as Iqbal professor at Heidelberg University and Berlin University. He admits, in his usual humble style, that some chapters of the book may sound more developed while others may sound like "reflections". His modesty notwithstanding, one finds some incisive critique that makes the reader understand some essential attributes of Sufi poetry in Pakistani languages, which, says Malik, is steeped in the long history of Islamic mysticism and connected with the perennial themes of moral philosophy.

The book has 12 chapters, describing Sufi poetry and its essential themes, in Pakistani languages, with reference to some colossi and their poetry. As pointed out in the preface, "each chapter included in this volume focuses on a separate Sufi poet that operated in the area that currently constitutes Pakistan". The Sufi saints and their poetry discussed in the book include: Baba Farid, Lal Shahbaz Qalanadar, Baba Guru Nanak, Shah Hussain, Sultan Bahu, Rahman Baba, Bulleh Shah, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Sachchal Sarmast, Baba Siar and Mast Tawkkali.

This indeed does not include all the Pakistani languages as the number of languages spoken in Pakistan is quite high, but it reveals some characteristics that are strikingly common across the board, be it Kashmir or Sindh, Punjab or Balochistan or the KPK.

Prof Fateh Muhammad Malik is a

veteran academic and critic known and respected for his work on a wide range of topics, especially on Urdu literature, Iqbal, Pakistan and Pakistani culture. Interestingly, Malik is known to have leftist leanings and his sympathies for left-wing political parties have never been a secret, but he has always been carrying out objective, unemotional and research-based literary and cultural analyses. So much so, that he has often criticised his contemporary leftist writers and Marxist intellectuals --- some close friends among them --- for their dogmatic and assertive approach on literary issues.

The book may serve as a useful guide for those who want to understand the philosophical message behind folk poetry by some of Pakistani Sufi poets.



A view of the Katas Raj temples located near Choa Saidan Shah in Punjab's Chakwal district. The site houses the saughara (seven temples), remains of a Buddhist stupa, a couple of mediaeval sanctuaries, havelis and some newly built sanctuaries around a lake considered sacred by Hindus. The temples, connected to each another by walkways, preserve at least 1,500 years of history ranging from the Buddhist era to British rule. According to Alan Cunningham, the first director general of the Archaeological Survey of India for 1872-73, Katas Raj is the second biggest holy place in Punjab for Hindu pioneers after Jawalamukhi. According to tradition, the five Pandava brothers of Mahabharata fame spent a large part of their exile here. Legend has it that the pond at Katas Raj temples was formed by the tears that Lord Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction and rejuvenation, shed after the death of his wife Sati.



Dressed up in new knitted clothes with elaborate headgear and jewellery in vibrant colour Kalasha women dance to traditional drumbeats during the Chilum Joshi festival that concluded here at the scenic Bamburet valley on Monday 16 May with fanfare. The four-day event attracted an unprecedented number of tourists, including a group of 22 Malaysian motorcyclists, besides the French, Australian and Italian nationals. On the concluding day of the festival, young men and women select their life partners while each day features different rituals such as prayers for protection of their herds during spring at summer.

In GB, hope evaporates as glaciers melt faster and faster

With glaciers melting faster than before, Gilgit-Baltistan residents in some areas live under the constant threat of a natural disaster.

Those living in downstream areas and near lakes and rivers are most vulnerable, particularly those near Shisper and Hoper glaciers.

Glaciers in the Himalaya, Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountain ranges have melted rapidly, creating thousands of glacial lakes in the country's northern areas.

Around 30 of these lakes are at risk of sudden hazardous flooding, known as glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), the climate change ministry said earlier this week, adding that around seven million people were vulnerable.

In the Hassanabad village of Hunza Valley, the vast Shisper glacier dominates the landscape, heading towards villagers at an estimated speed of around four metres per day.

Climate change is causing most glaciers worldwide to shrink, but due to a meteorological anomaly, this is one of a few in the Karakoram mountain range that are surging.

This means hundreds of tonnes of ice and debris are pushing down the valley at ten times the normal rate or more, threatening the safety of the people and homes below.

According to an assessment report of the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), the Shisper glacier started to surge in May 2018.

The unusual surge blocked water flow from a stream originating in the nearby Muchuhur glacier, which normally falls into Hunza River at Hassanabad, thus forming an artificial lake.

According to the GBDMA assessment, the possible lake burst could submerge a portion of Karakoram Highway, a bridge, over 37 houses in Hassanabad, two powerhouses, a Frontier Works Organisation camp office and vast fertile lands. It may also block the flow of Hunza River, triggering an Attabad-like disaster.

The water discharge from the dammed lake increases in summer when glaciers melting starts.

'Govt indifferent'

Tariq Jamil, a resident of Hassanabad valley, told media that hundreds of kanals of fertile land, trees, homes, a powerhouse and water channels along with Hassanabad nullah were damaged by high water flow last summer.

"Three families were displaced when



CRACKS have appeared in the Hoper glacier in Nagar district this summer.

their homes located near the nullah were damaged last year when water eroded land," he said. "The government has failed to provide alternative arrangements to people living in the red zone."

In summer, residents live in constant fear as water discharge increases, he said, adding that this time around, water discharge had increased even before the season started.

Another resident, Amjad Ali, said the people of Hassanabad were at risk of dammed glacier lake outbursts.

He agreed that water discharge from the dammed lake was high this season. "If heatwaves continue in the next months, an outburst of the dammed lake or high water flows are feared, resulting in floods," he said, adding that he was unsatisfied with the arrangements to protect the lives and property of local people.

According to the local administration, a contingency plan had been prepared to cope with an emergency.

Officials said work was under way to channelise the nullah and construct protective walls to control the excessive flow of water.

Besides, the administration was monitoring the daily movement of the glacier and has set up an automatic weather station and rebuilt irrigation channels.

Hoper glacier

Likewise, the unusual surge of an 18km-long Hoper glacier in Nagar district also gives residents nightmares.

Ahmed Hussain, a resident, told media that the speed of Hoper melting had increased this season.

The height of the glacier has decreased, crevasses have appeared and the sound of falling ice can be heard. Several lakes have also formed in the glacier.

Residents of Hoper valley have to cross the glacier to access the other side. However, the recent glacial movement has blocked trekking paths, making the exercise extremely dangerous. A local resident recently got injured while crossing the glacier.

Mr Hussain said the surging Hoper

glacier had also destroyed many tourist destinations and adversely impacted the ecology, reducing the snow leopard and Markhor population in the recent past.

Another resident, Dr Sajjad Hussain, told media that Hoper was one of the rare glaciers in the world situated downside of human settlement and cultivated land.

He said it was alarming that the glacier started moving at an unusual speed this summer.

He regretted that the possible threats from the glacial surge to local people had never been discussed and the government had yet to take steps to mitigate the potential threats and or even make locals aware of them.

Shahzad Shigri of the GB Environmental Protection Agency told media that possible heatwaves could affect the speed of melting glaciers across the region.

He said snow received in winter at peaks particularly in Astore, Diamer and Ghizer started melting rapidly, creating flash floods and thus endangering people living in downstream areas.

Mr Shigri said heatwaves could cause GLOFs or make active glaciers slip, leading to major disasters.

Glacier central

Pakistan has more glaciers than any other country outside the polar region nearly 5,300 in the Karakoram, Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

Their feed the Indus River system, the country's water lifeline. But data gathered over the last 50 years shows that almost all glaciers exhibit signs of melting due to rising temperatures.

As the glaciers retreat, they leave behind lakes supported by ice dams or accumulations of rock and soil. Inherently unstable, these dams often burst, sending huge volumes of water rushing into the villages below them.

Environmental experts say GB residents are particularly at risk from glacial melting.

In July 2018, a small glacier melt had swollen Barsuwat Nullah in the Ishkoman valley of Ghizer district, creating an artificial lake and blocking the flow of the Immit River.

The water submerged more than 30 houses, cultivated land, a link road and cattle farms and washed away over a dozen vehicles in upstream areas.

On Jan 4, 2010, a massive landslide buried the village of Attabad, destroying 26 houses and killing 20 people. The landslide dammed Hunza River and formed Attabad lake.

Camels, horses leave Seaview with memories, footprints behind

They are not that prominent or visible from the main road but if you make a turn towards the right from the urban forest entrance along the Clifton beach, you may be able to spot several camels on the horizon. Heading in that direction on foot you reach an open area with a few small thatched shades scattered here and there and plenty of camels and a few horses with a foot tied to iron pegs with long ropes.

Some of the camels munch on the thorny bushes growing in the sandy soil while some quench their thirst from the recycled yellow plastic whitewash paint buckets or the recycled blue chemical containers that are used for holding clean water for them. Being not of much use these days, they while away their time eating and drinking under the open sky with their poor owners keeping watch over them from their little airy makeshift sheds. There are no camel or horseback rides allowed on the Seaview beach these days, which has put a big dent in their meagre earnings.

Samar Gul is glad to see his five-year-old camel Shahrukh Khan munch on the dried bushes. "At least it is free. Otherwise, I am spending Rs4,000 a week on one camel's food and Rs500 a week for his water. Actually, all of us camel owners pool in the money to get a 5,000 gallon sweet water tanker, which costs us Rs8,000 to Rs10,000," Gul told media.

"With working on the beach out of the question on the orders of the Cantonment Board Clifton [CBC], I take my camels out towards the city side to offer rides. But it is not the same as offering rides at the beach. A kind of tradition, camel rides have always been a significant part of any beach picnic. In the 1980s, they were also joined by horses but all of that has come to a stop after the authorities, who give us contracts to work on the beach, watched Dale Philip's YouTube video about some boys taking the travelling YouTuber for a ride," said Gul. "We are all being punished for the mistake of two or three devious boys," he added.

"The rides are allowed on the Clifton beach but there are few picnickers there. And we have so many camels, almost a 100 in number. The Clifton beach becomes too small for us. The picnickers, too, seem to like Seaview more as the



After the ban imposed by the Cantonment Board Clifton on riding animals on Seaview, the camels and horses are forced to leave the beach.

beach is bigger and it offers plentiful parking. The Seaview beach extends to Do Darya. But we are not allowed to go beyond Dolmen Mall," he said.

Mohammed Abid, another camel owner, said that with no work they had resorted to take loans to be able to feed their animals and families. "We are drowning in debt now. We owe people Rs40,000 or more and with no work we can only pay all our debt by selling our camels as sacrificial animals for Eidul Azha. After all, camel prices start at one to one-and-a-half lacs," he said.

Mohammed Zafar, who used to offer horseback rides on his beautiful and well-groomed white horses Raju and Babloo, also said that he had had to resort to make his horses skip one meal in these difficult times.

"I spend Rs600 a day on each horse's food and upkeep. They are like my children, needing good nutrition and care but I would not be able to care for them for long because with very little earnings now I am getting poorer by the day," he said.

"Those three horse owners who fooled the foreigner and overcharged him have ruined our livelihoods by making all of us look bad. All of us got punished for the wrongdoing of those three," he sighed.

"We already charge so little. Only Rs100 to Rs150 for a little round. The children take rides, their families click pictures, creating happy memories. Tell me, what's a beach without camel or horseback rides? But all that is over now. Now, for most of the time I keep my horses at my little shed/stable behind the Ziauddin Hospital in Clifton. I only brought them out here for some much-needed exercise and fresh air today," he added.

When Dawn reached out to the CBC over the matter, a spokesperson there informed that the overcharging of a foreigner by horse owners was not the

main cause for banning camels and horses from the Seaview beach, although it was one of the reasons.

"Our major reason to keep the horses and camels off the beach is that the CBC is developing a stretch of parks at the beachfront, which the animal owners have a problem with. Then there was also that incident with the visiting foreigner that has also added to our decision. But they are free to work at any other beach or any other place that they may like. We can only keep them off Seaview, which comes under our jurisdiction," said the spokesperson.

When reminded that there are plenty of parks in Clifton that remain quite empty and are not as popular as the beach, sand and sea. Also, camel rides and horseback rides add to the beach's charm and draw more people there. To this the spokesperson said that at the moment they were exercising zero tolerance for these people and their animals but they would see if they needed to be brought back once the development work at Seaview had been completed.



A Kalash woman, wearing a traditional dress, knits clothes outside her shop on Friday 13 May, ahead of the Chilum Joshi festival. The four-day event, one of the three main festivals of the Kalash area, the other two being the Uchau in autumn and Caumus in midwinter, highlights their cultural richness and message of peace.



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Showcasing local cultures, Sindh Craft Festival gets under way

They were all life-size dolls and mannequins but the sweet Sindhi village wedding scene that they were portraying drew you in and wanting to explore the three-day Sindh Craft Festival organised by the Sindh culture department which opened at Port Grand here on Friday 13 May.

There was the bride seated on a Hala jhoola (swing) with one of her friends waving the pretty traditional cloth hand-held fan to her. Another friend carrying henna was heading in their direction while several others were busy in dholki (playing music and singing wedding songs). On one side, you could also spot the handsome garlanded groom with his crisp black mustache.

But aside from the mannequins, there were the 80 stalls with people coming from all over the province selling and showcasing you pretty handicrafts of Sindh.

There were colourful ralli (traditional patch and applique work quilt) stalls, gajj (Sindhi embroidery with mirror work for dresses) stalls, kaashi (pottery and ceramics) stalls along with others that were selling embroidery work from Tharparkar, Balochistan, Kohistan, date palm leaf baskets, tie and dye suits, chunri suits, khaadi suits, chadors, ajrak, khes, lungi, sussi, jute work, bangles, Sindhi caps, dolls, even books, etc. And they came from all over Sindh including Thatta, Badin, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Ghotki, Kotri, Pannu Aqil, Sanghar, Sukkur, Umerkot, Mithi, Shahdatkot, Jacobabad, Thano Bula Khan and Naushahro Feroze.

At a stall from Khairpur you could buy the traditional decorated Sindhi hand-held fans made from date palm leaf and cloth for only Rs350 each. They also had pretty embroidered shirt pieces with mirror work for Rs1,500 to Rs2,000 along with cute little vests and waistcoats for children for Rs400 only.

There were pouches, purses and bags, ralli, cushions covers and duvet covers at another stall representing Umerkot. The most expensive ralli there cost Rs70,000 while the duvet covers were worth Rs30,000 and the cushion covers you could buy for Rs5,000 each. Hajra, the woman at the stall, told Dawn



THE life-size dolls and mannequins depict village life and culture of Sindh.

that each product was handmade hence the price. "It took me two years to make the ralli and several months to make the other items. So I'm not just charging for my effort but also my time. And I have made everything with love," she smiled.

But it was not like everything was expensive. Zarina from Badin also had ralli that cost from Rs3,000 to Rs15,000.

At Rs1,600 the unstitched woven two-piece shirt and dupatta and the block prints with natural dyes also could not be passed up. They were the biggest sellers of the festival.

Qamarunisa Jokhio from Naushero Feroz was showcasing the old and traditional art of doll-making of Sindh with jute yarn. She had made all kinds of dolls. There was the Edhi pair of Abdul Sattar Edhi and Bilquis Edhi, Mother Theresa, whirling dervish and even Michael Jackson. She was not selling most of her dolls, only some of them for Rs3,000 to Rs5,000.

Also towards one side were a line of stalls offering beautiful ceramics, mostly in hues of peacock blue and mostly from Hala. There were also beautifully decorated wooden rolling pins and charpoy legs on sale at very reasonable prices.

The President's Pride of Performance-winning kinetic artist and sculptor Abdul Karim Solangi was there with his glass encased models that run on electricity and move and sing of which the Alan Faqir sculpture was making the most music. As always Solangi Saheb was also not there to sell his models but he deserved much praise and appreciation for his work.

The festival concludes on Sunday 15 May.

Each of the three days of the festival also offers some entertainment in the form of a musical concert every evening.

Pakistani youngster scales world's third highest peak



Shehroze Kashif.

Pakistani climber Shehroze Kashif, 26, on Thursday 5 May made history by becoming the youngest person in the world and first in his country to reach the summit of Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest peak (8586m) in Nepal.

The Lahore resident was accompanied by Namja Bhote, Purnima Shrestha and Ming Temba Sherpa of Nepal, Rudi Bollaert of Belgium and Ariunzul Chuluunbaatar of Mongolia in the expedition organised by Seven Summit Treks.

Mr Kashif already has the distinction of being the first youngest person in the world to scale two highest peaks, including Everest (8849m) and K2 (8611m).

Alpine Club of Pakistan secretary Karrar Haidri said the Kanchenjunga summit by Mr Kashif was reported at 3:05pm PST on Thursday.

The organisers said from logistics to base camp management to gear arrangements to information sharing, Shehroze had done everything single-handedly on expeditions unlike other mountaineers, who got the services of a manager.

They said Mr Kashif had reached the base camp of Kanchenjunga on April 15.

The Alpine Club of Pakistan and Pakistani mountaineers congratulated Mr Kashif for his accomplishment.

Meanwhile, Sirbaz Khan of Gilgit-Baltistan began his Kanchenjunga summit push on Thursday 5 May for the second time this week. He had established the base camp at 5,500 metres on April 5.

Expedition organiser Saad Munawar told media that Mr Sirbaz Khan and other members of his team had begun the climbing journey on April 27.

He said the team had to return to the base camp due to deep snow and bad weather and for getting late.

Mr Munawar said the team had planned to scale the peak.

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