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European Union sets new requirements for inbound air shipments

The European Union (EU) said all freight forwarders, air carriers, express couriers, and postal operators transporting goods to or through the European Union (EU) including Norway and Switzerland will be required to submit advance cargo information in the form of a complete Entry Summary Declaration (ENS), under the second phase of the EU's new customs pre-arrival security and safety program Import Control System 2 (ICS2) Release 2.

According to the EU, economic operators involved in handling, sending, shipping and transporting cargo, express or postal consignments to or via the EU by air have to comply with new advance data reporting requirements for pre-loading and pre-arrival customs risk assessments.

By collecting data about all goods entering the EU prior to their loading and arrival, ICS2 supports effective risk-based customs controls while facilitating the free flow of legitimate trade across the EU's external borders. ICS2 will simplify the movement of goods between customs offices at the first point of entry and final destination in the EU. For economic operators, ICS2 will streamline requests for additional information and pre-departure risk screening by customs authorities.

In addition to air carriers' ENS filing responsibilities under the multiple filing regime of Release 2, freight forwarders, express couriers, and postal operators will also be legally responsible for providing data. They either have to share it with the air carriers, who will then complete the ENS filing requirements, or submit the data directly to ICS2. Postal operators and express couriers, who have previously been declaring partial information regarding inbound shipments (under ICS2 Phase 1), will now also be required to coordinate with their air carrier to submit all required data.

Those in the air transport sector who are currently filing advance cargo information into Import Control System (ICS) will have to gradually start filing this data into ICS2 during the operational roll-out of Release 2.

Economic operators are strongly advised to prepare in advance for Release 2, in order to avoid the risk of delays and non-compliance.

To help prepare for the introduction of ICS2 Release 2, the European

Commission (EC) will make available a conformance testing environment from July 2022 until February 2023, to be able to verify the economic operator's ability to access and exchange messages with customs authorities through the intended ICS2 trader interface. This conformance testing is mandatory for all economic operators concerned.

Economic operators responsible for filing ENS data to ICS2 should determine whether they have an existing Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) number. If not, they should contact the EU customs authority of their choice to get this number and to receive support in preparing for ICS2 Release 2. They should also evaluate their trade operations for the handling of imports into the EU and contact their selected customs authority to connect and take part in the upcoming Release 2 conformance testing.

The EU Import Control System 2 (ICS2) is a large-scale initiative to enhance customs oversight of the movement of goods prior to their arrival at

the EU external borders (air, maritime, land and inland waterways). ICS2 enables customs authorities to identify high-risk consignments that necessitate early intervention while facilitating legitimate trade into the customs territory of the EU, Norway, and Switzerland.

The system is being implemented in three releases. Having successfully completed Release 1 covering the pre-loading process for postal and express consignments by air on 15 March 2021, Release 2 is the next step in the system's implementation, and it will go live on 1 March 2023. Release 3 will be implemented from 1 March 2024, requiring operators carrying goods on maritime and inland waterways, roads and railways to comply with the new regulations.

The European Commission is leading the operational delivery of ICS2 in close collaboration with customs authorities in the Member States, Norway and Switzerland and industry stakeholders.



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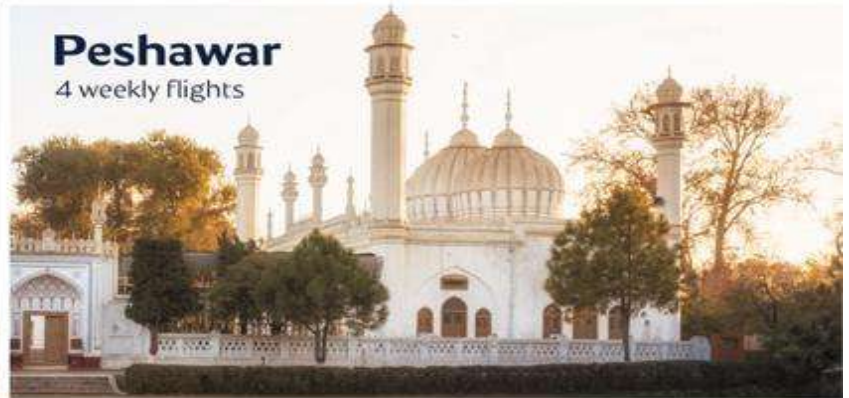
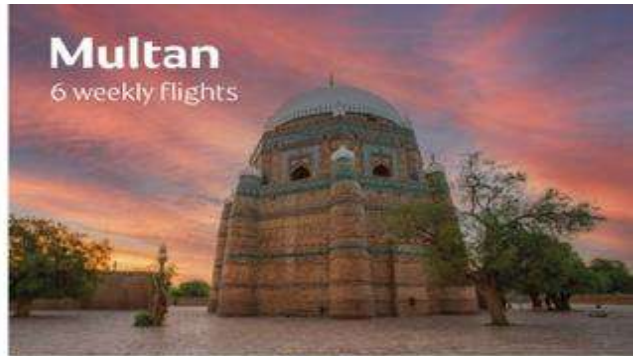
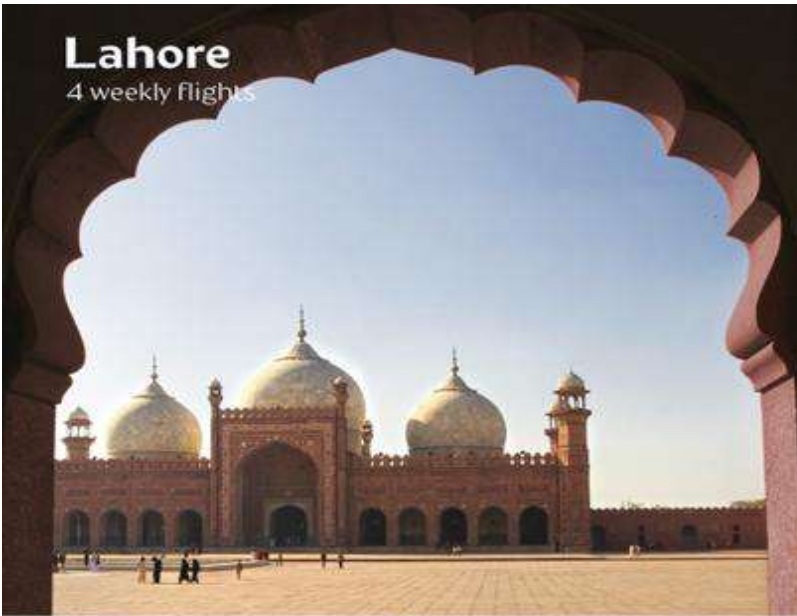
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PIA acquires A320 Airbus on six-year dry lease



PIA's newly acquired A320 Airbus.

As part of its drive to add more aircraft to its fleet, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has acquired a second Airbus A320, which flew in from Sharjah, a spokesman for the national carrier said on Thursday 14 July.

With the latest addition, the total number of Airbus A320-built aircraft in the PIA fleet now stands at 14.

The first aircraft had already arrived in Pakistan on April 29 and is currently in service, the PIA spokesman said, adding that the process of adding new aircraft to the fleet is ongoing.

He said that PIA had tendered for the acquisition of the aircraft last year, out of which two aircraft have reached Pakistan this year and two more aircraft will reach the country in the next few days.

The aircraft will be operated on domestic, regional and Gulf routes, said the PIA spokesman. He added that the aircraft has been acquired on a six-year dry lease, at the end of which PIA may take ownership of the aircraft by mutual consent.

Post-Haj operation begins

Meanwhile, PIA started the post-Haj flight operation on Thursday with 213 Haj pilgrims onboard.

A PIA spokesman said that the first PIA flight PK740 with 213 pilgrims onboard reached Lahore, where they were welcomed and given garlands of flowers on landing. PIA Station Manager Ali Asghar Zaidi and District Manager Babar Zaman received the pilgrims at Lahore airport.

Another private airliner flight with 225 pilgrims onboard landed at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, from Jeddah on Thursday 14 July.

Plug and Play welcomes Sabre as its newest Travel and Hospitality partner

A leading software and technology company powering the global travel industry, recently announced its partnership with Plug and Play's Travel & Hospitality program headquartered in the heart of Silicon Valley.

Plug and Play is a global innovation platform that brings together the best startups with the world's largest corporations. Through this partnership, Sabre will enhance its visibility and gain early access to the global startup community.

"Over the past years, we have accelerated our focus on innovation, both internally and together with strong partners," said Sundar Narasimhan, President Sabre Labs & Product Strategy. "Our collaboration with Plug and Play is another milestone on this journey and we are very excited to engage with their world-class community of forward-thinking, driven entrepreneurs to shape the future of travel."

Plug and Play's Travel & Hospitality program launched in 2016 and has since expanded to six locations around the world. Since its inception, the Travel program has accelerated over 250 startups and worked with some of the most innovative corporations in the industry. With this partnership, Plug and Play's goal is to complement Sabre's innovation roadmap through vetted introductions to promising travel technologies that will seek to ultimately translate to a faster recovery for the industry while improving the traveler's overall journey.

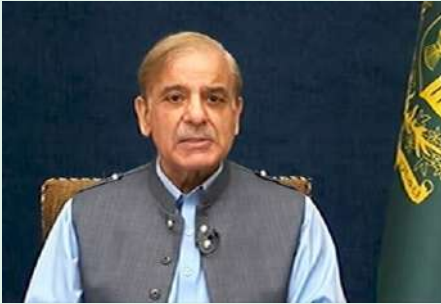
"When it comes to insights regarding the entire travel ecosystem, Sabre has demonstrated their commitment to diverse and in-depth products that touch many of our travel and hospitality partners and their customers," said Saeed Amidi, CEO & Founder, Plug and Play. "Sabre's commitment to digital transformation is exemplified by the innovative work

coming out of Sabre Labs, their support in the startup community as well as their work with forward-thinking partners both inside and outside of travel. This partnership came into fruition at a perfect inflection point for the travel industry's recovery."

About Plug and Play Plug and Play is the leading innovation platform, connecting startups, corporations, venture capital firms, universities, and government agencies. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, we're present in 35+ locations across five continents. We offer corporate innovation programs and help our corporate partners in every stage of their innovation journey, from education to execution. We also organize startup acceleration programs and have built an in-house VC to drive innovation across multiple industries where we've invested in hundreds of successful companies including Dropbox, Guardant Health, Honey, Lending Club, N26, PayPal, and Rappi. For more information, visit <https://www.plugandplaytechcenter.com/>

About Sabre Corporation □ Sabre Corporation is a leading software and technology company that powers the global travel industry, serving a wide range of travel companies including airlines, hoteliers, travel agencies and other suppliers. The company provides retailing, distribution and fulfilment solutions that help its customers operate more efficiently, drive revenue and offer personalized traveller experiences. Through its leading travel marketplace, Sabre connects travel suppliers with buyers from around the globe. Sabre's technology platform manages more than \$260B worth of global travel spend annually. Headquartered in Southlake, Texas, USA, Sabre serves customers in more than 160 countries around the world. For more information visit www.sabre.com. □ □

Govt shifts ground on air travel duty



In this file photo, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addresses the nation.

The prime minister came out all guns blazing on Saturday 2 July against a five-fold increase in federal excise duty (FED) on rich air travel passengers, something the federal cabinet chaired by the premier himself had earlier approved to add Rs3 billion to the kitty.

Confusion over the imposition of the duty on first, business and club class air travel prevailed on Saturday after some enraged passengers complained that airlines were charging Rs50,000 FED for the three classes.

The situation was only compounded by a lack of coordination between the chief executive of the government and his subordinate departments, including the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), which said budgetary measures approved by parliament were already in place after the beginning of the new fiscal year from July 1.

However, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif personally took stern notice of the matter. A statement issued by Prime Minister Office (PMO) on Saturday 2 July said the premier had expressed displeasure over complaints from passengers that the amount was being collected from them at the airports.

Ordering an immediate suspension of the duty, he said the harassment of passengers at airports should be stopped. He also ordered an inquiry into the decision to levy the duty, as it was not approved by the federal cabinet.

The prime minister has directed the finance ministry to investigate the matter and take strict action against those responsible and refund the amount collected from passengers.

He also directed the authorities concerned to immediately implement his directives.

Interestingly, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail had declared in his budget speech on June 10 that the rich would be taxed in the fiscal year 2022-23 and an additional FED had been imposed on air travel for the club, business and first classes.

The government has since announced several other measures to extract money from the wealthy, including a 10 per cent “super tax” on 13 large industries to raise an additional Rs465bn in revenue, in an attempt to trim the budget deficit to revive the stalled International Monetary Fund loan programme.

Soon after the PM Office statement, the FBR also issued a clarification late on Saturday highlighting that the federal budget 2022-23 had been implemented

from July 1.

The FBR statement, titled ‘Clarification on Rate of Federal Excise Duty on Air Travel’, said the duty was chargeable and collectable on the club-, business- and first-class international air tickets under the Federal Excise Act, 2005, at the time of issuing of the international air ticket.

The FBR has said that FED had been increased to Rs50,000 from Rs10,000, but it was not applicable to the club-, business- and first-class air tickets already issued before July 1.

The letter has been issued to all airlines and FBR offices.

Cargo.one launches in Japan



completed in less than one minute.

Moritz Claussen, founder and co-CEO of cargo.one, said “Together with many of the most important air cargo airlines, we now offer every Japanese freight forwarder the chance to modernize operations with easy and efficient bookings online. Japanese customers can expect cargo.one to help them rapidly raise performance, strengthen competitiveness and enhance their digital customer experiences.”

Japanese freight forwarders can search, compare, book and track air cargo capacity using cargo.one. The launch is the latest step in the expansion in Asia Pacific of the marketplace for digital air cargo bookings. Japanese users are offered capacity from ANA Cargo, Lufthansa Cargo and Finnair Cargo, with many more airlines to be added in the coming weeks. Cargo.one is the solution of choice for thousands of forwarders worldwide, and has earned an industry-leading NPS score. Cargo.one is available in Japanese language and is free of charge for freight forwarders of all sizes.

Japanese industries are in the process of extensive digital transformation (DX) efforts, with the aim to improve business processes and customer experiences using technology. Among others, the freight forwarding industry has much to gain from reimagining operations for the digital age for example by using digital booking to replace slow, asynchronous communication, and increasing productivity with saved time and better access to supply.

Cargo.one is a strong example of a free technology with valuable DX benefits forwarders can typically cut the amount of time needed for planning and booking air cargo shipments by 50 percent using the platform. Within a few clicks, users gain full real-time visibility of all relevant airlines, routes and rates, and instantly bookable offers and confirmation, all

Since 2020, ANA Cargo has enjoyed much success selling its freight capacity to forwarders on cargo.one. Ken Wakiya, executive vice president Global Cargo Marketing & Sales at ANA Cargo, said “We are excited to launch our digital booking channel in our home market with cargo.one, and continue improving the experience of our valued customers through Digital Transformation. Our partnership is a clear example of how DX can improve processes in air cargo, and accelerating it is ANA Cargo's top priority in the short and the mid-long term. Leveraging the experience gained from Europe and North America, our team has received the first cargo.one bookings from Japanese forwarders, for which the process has been efficient and seamless. As partners, we share high expectations for end to end customer service and, as a leading airline group in the country, we are happy that our Japanese customers now have one more option to book.”

The launch further signals cargo.one's strong commitment to the Asia Pacific region, following exclusive partnerships with ANA Cargo, Singapore Airlines Cargo and MASKargo, as well as Nippon Cargo Airlines. To strengthen its collaborations with Japanese freight forwarders, cargo.one recently opened a Tokyo office and appointed Yoichi Mizuno as country manager, Japan.

Farnborough Air Show winds up with post-pandemic slow pace

The Farnborough Air Show produced little in the way of headline news. But Boeing comes away with some momentum. Airbus announced a big order on July 1, well ahead of the show, from China, leaving show orders in high double digits.



Boeing announced orders and commitments for 278 737 MAXes, including 100 firm and 30 options from Delta Air Lines. This order was the first from Delta in 11 years, ending a long-running behind-the-scenes streak of sour relations between the companies.

The order, for the 737-10 MAX, finally fulfills Boeing's goal of getting the -10 into Delta. Boeing had counted on Delta being a launch customer of the airplane in 2017. As reported in my book, Air Wars, The Global Combat Between Airbus and Boeing, the bake-off between the MAX 10 and the Airbus A321neo came down in favor of the MAX 10. But CFM declined to grant Delta TechOps rights to perform maintenance, repair and overhaul for other airlines and lessors. Pratt & Whitney agreed, tipping the order to Airbus.

Also during the competition, Boeing was engaged in a trade complaint over

Bombardier's sale of the C Series to Delta. Boeing alleged Bombardier engaged in price-dumping, contrary to trade laws. Boeing won the trade complaint and a tariff of 292% was assessed on each C Series imported from Canada. However, the final review found no harm to Boeing, which hadn't competed for the order, a required element to impose the tariff. Many observers thought Boeing's timing concurrent with the MAX-neo campaign affected the decision. But as reported in Air Wars, Delta officials said this wasn't a factor.

Final tallies

The final order and commitment tallies give Boeing a clear win. In addition to the important Delta order, Boeing won orders for the MAX from All Nippon Airways, Aviation Capital Group and Qatar Airways. Airbus firmed up a previous commitment from easyJet. It also received a follow-on order from Delta for more A220s (nee C Series).

Embraer announced welcome orders for 41 E-195 E2s, including a follow-on order from Porter Airlines. ATR announced orders and commitments for 21 turboprops.

Slow show

This was the first Farnborough Air Show since 2018. The 2020 show, along with the 2021 Paris Air Show, was canceled due to the COVID pandemic.

Little in the way of hard news was expected beyond the orders and commitments, which totaled 436 from Airbus, Boeing, Embraer, and ATR. The

total was well below historical numbers, but this, too, was expected.

Airbus' July 1 announcement for an order for 292 A320neo family airplanes from China could just as easily have been held for the air show, but it wasn't.

Farnborough 2022: Embraer and Fokker Services deepen collaboration



Embraer Vice-President, Government Affairs, Europe, Menzo van der Beek, CEO, Fokker Services, Johann Bordais, President & CEO, Embraer Services & Support, Leon Kouters, Vice President Sales & Marketing, Fokker Services, Rodrigo Pésico, Rodrigo Pésico, Vice President, Business Strategy, Embraer Defense & Security, Rinaldo Piubeli, Vice-President of Worldwide Customer Support and Aftermarket Sales, Defense & Security, Embraer Services & Support

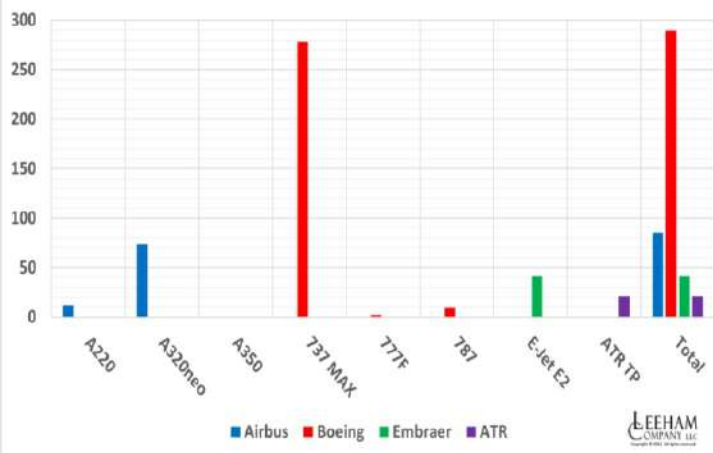
Embraer and Fokker Services announced at the Farnborough Airshow the intention to deepen the collaboration between the companies in several projects, mainly related to the services and support fields. The companies are looking at aftermarket support topics, such as aircraft modifications and customisation, programme support, logistics, repair services and all other support opportunities.

These developments are connected to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in October 2021 between the companies, which also includes Fokker Techniek. This opened opportunities to explore a broad range of activities across Defense, including collaboration for the C-390 multi-mission aircraft, Commercial and Services & Support markets. Since then, the companies have discussed a variety of opportunities and look to leverage their respective expertise and capabilities in new projects.

In May, Embraer announced the selection of Fokker Services to provide maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services, covering a series of engine line replaceable units (LRUs) enrolled in Embraer's Pool Program, supporting Embraer's first-generation E-Jets aircraft, including the E170, E175, E190 and E195. The multi-year agreement includes more than 60-part numbers of engine LRUs.

In the roadmap for opportunities that is under discussion, conversion and completion of Special Mission and Special Transportation aircraft in Defense, whilst for the Commercial aviation market, engineering, repair, and logistics support will be key elements to be explored, in addition to Hydrogen Powered Aircraft development.

Farnborough Air Show 2022 Orders and Commitments





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Islamabad airport's Bay 21 becomes no-go area for planes

A rut, a longitudinal depression caused by excessive load, has appeared at the Islamabad International Airport (IIA) due to “high temperature”, forcing the airport authorities to stop parking planes at 'Bay 21' due to safety concerns.

Sources told media that the depression emerged on a wheel path of the bay due to heavy planes which reduced its lifespan.

They said the repair work to fix the wheel path could not be started due to a “lack of funds and rainy weather”.

An official, however, termed the deformation of the pathway “not a major problem”.

“Apparently, the rutting occurred due to [high] temperature and the repair work could not be started due to [ongoing] monsoon rains as it would take time to dry the repaired part of the apron,” the official added.

According to the official, the civil work department, after a survey, estimated that at least Rs170 million would be required to fix the rut.

“Some experts, however, have been emphasising the need to reduce the cost to Rs5 million,” he added.

The sources said that since the nature of the repair work was “sensitive” therefore the cost reduction was not possible, adding that the repair could only start after the availability of funds.

On the other hand, a civil works expert termed it a “safety concern”.

It could affect the steering of planes due to “deep cuts and [possible] accumulation of rainwater” in the deformed area, he said.

He further said that as soon as the process of funds' release was completed and weather conditions became suitable, maintenance work to fix the path would start.

Another Indian plane lands at Karachi after fault in mid-air

In a short span of less than two weeks, another Indian passenger plane developed a technical fault in mid-air and made an unexpected landing at Karachi airport in the small hours of Sunday 17 July morning.

A spokesperson for the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) said that the flight of IndiGo, a low-cost airline of India, took off from Sharjah to (Indian) Hyderabad, but was diverted to Karachi when the pilot reported some fault and sought permission to land at Jinnah International Airport.

Pakistani authorities allowed the Indian airliner to land on humanitarian grounds. All 192 passengers and crew were also allowed to disembark from the aircraft and stay at a transit lounge, the spokesperson added.

In the meanwhile, IndiGo decided to send a team of engineers in a replacement aircraft to Karachi from Ahmadabad so that it could bring back the passengers.

The spokesperson said that the replacement aircraft landed in Karachi a little before 1am, and the engineers managed to rectify the fault and ready the plane good to fly. Both the planes, along with passengers, left the airport at around 1608 and 1630 hours, respectively, he added.

Earlier, in a statement shared by the PCAA with the media, the Indian airline said: “IndiGo flight 6E-1406, operating from Sharjah to Hyderabad was diverted to Karachi. The pilot observed a technical defect. Necessary procedures were followed, and as a precaution, the aircraft was diverted to Karachi. An additional flight is being sent to Karachi to fly the passengers to Hyderabad. The aircraft is currently being examined at the Karachi airport. IndiGo is planning to send another flight to Karachi to fly the stranded passengers.”

This is the second incident in less than two weeks, as on July 5, a Dubai-bound Indian aircraft, Boeing 737, of SpiceJet that carried 132 passengers and 12 crew members had made an unexpected landing at Jinnah International Airport after reporting some fault.

Pakistani authorities allowed Indian passengers and crew to disembark from plane and stayed at the transit lounge purely on humanitarian grounds. Later,

SpiceJet sent a replacement aircraft from Mumbai to bring back stranded passengers.

Meanwhile, the stranded passengers and the airliner staff praised, appreciated and thanked the airport management, said the PCAA spokesperson.

He said an IndiGo flight technician, in his remarks, wrote that the airport staff treated them as VIPs. “Very good gesture. I really appreciate. Thank you, Pakistan,” he said.

Shijin, one of the passengers, stated: “I am so much happy to be in here for a very short time. It was my pleasure to be with these lovely people. They have done a wonderful job. Hats off to each and every one who works there. All the best and I pray for them, too.”

Turkish Airlines breaks occupancy record



On July 15th, Turkey's national flag carrier, Turkish Airlines, broke its occupancy record.

“Yesterday, we hosted more than 260,000 passengers with an occupancy rate of over 87%. We had the busiest day in Turkish Airlines history,” the carrier's senior vice president for media relations, Yahya Ustun, said on Twitter.

It represents an increase in capacity of 12% compared to the same period (Friday, July 12th) in 2019. The domestic capacity was deployed on the Istanbul to Antalya route (3,979 seats), whereas, for international services, Antalya to Moscow offered the highest number of seats (2,612 seats).

Turkish Airlines, founded in 1933 with a fleet of five aircraft, currently has nearly 380 aircraft and flies to 335 destinations in 129 countries.

British Airways Airbus A380-800 G-XLEC

International Air Transport Association (IATA) Director General and former British Airways CEO Willie Walsh has said that the cost of air travel will rise in the coming months as the rising price of fuel is passed on to passengers.

Speaking on the BBC's Sunday Morning programme Mr Walsh said that a rise in oil prices following the pandemic combined with Russia's invasion of Ukraine has pushed the price of fuel to record levels and said for airlines fuel is the biggest element in an airlines cost base.

He told the BBC "It's inevitable that ultimately the high oil prices will be passed through to consumers in higher ticket prices."

Mr Walsh also criticised how airports have handled the rising demand for air travel post-COVID-19 and the disruption it has caused to passengers with cancelled flights and long delays.

He singled out Heathrow Airport saying they should definitely have done better. He told the programme: "They were arguing that airlines should be operating at least 80% of their slots through the summer period.

"They clearly did not provide sufficient resources to deal with that level of activity, so you would have to be critical of Heathrow."

Heathrow Airport called Mr Walsh's comments "ill-informed".

Willie Walsh took over as Director-General of IATA in 2020 after standing down as CEO of British Airways' parent company International Airlines Group (IAG).

He has always been a controversial figure in the industry and isn't afraid to say what he thinks, his spats with Virgin Atlantic's Richard Branson became legendary and including a bet to allow the other to put a knee in the groin of their counterpart.

Mr Walsh lost the bet but never did allow Mr Branson to carry out the forfeit.



Saudia continues departure phase of Hajj pilgrims

SAUDIA has begun transporting Hajj pilgrims to their homes after completing their rituals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Flight SV 5848 from King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah to King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh was the first domestic return flight of pilgrims this year on the 12th of July.

The first international outbound Hajj flight was SV 5782 from Jeddah to Fez, Morocco.

In addition to operating 273 international and 32 domestic inbound Hajj flights, SAUDIA has optimized the operation plan for the departure phase of Hajj.

During this year's Hajj season, SAUDIA introduced the "Luggage First" initiative; a free service to transport groups of Hajj travelers' baggage from their residence in Makkah and Medina 24 hours or more before take-off. The new dedicated service will ensure completion of all departure related procedures to ease airport congestion.

SAUDIA has also launched an awareness campaign related to the baggage instructions for Hajj pilgrims in 6 different languages and this includes the use of simplified images.

SAUDIA's offices in Makkah and Medina have prepared to facilitate and enhance the travel experience for Hajj pilgrims. Staff in the office can provide special assistance including pre-booking seats, issuing excess baggage vouchers, meal orders and special services to sick and disabled guests. These offices open on a 24/7 basis during the peak travel period.

SAUDIA is nominated as Middle East's Leading Airline 2022 by World Travel Awards.

New Air Force One schedule approved by the Pentagon



The United States Department of Defense approved the new schedule for the VC-25B, the new US presidential aircraft.

The first new aircraft will be delivered in September 2026, two years later than initially expected, while the second one could arrive in 2027 or early 2028, according to the information revealed by Boeing Defense CEO Ted Colbert in a press briefing on July 17, 2022.

The development follows numerous issues Boeing encountered with the construction of the aircraft, as well as the company's attempts to negotiate a delay and a higher price.

Boeing seeks delay and higher price for future Air Force One

Boeing warned the USAF it would be a year late on delivery of the two future Air Force One presidential aircraft, and asked to renegotiate the contract price.

The project went \$1.1 billion over budget, a sum that Boeing agreed to cover, because the original \$3.9 billion contract was a fixed-price one.

"The goal right now is to deliver two great airplanes to the federal government, to our customer, to the Air Force," BColbert said, according to Breaking Defense.

"We made changes to the program, we made changes to the way we work on the program, to the attributes of the program that are most important to have been successful. We are going to learn the lessons from supply chain perspective, from a talent perspective, from a facilities perspective," he continued.

VC-25B, based on the Boeing 747-8, is going to replace the Boeing VC-25A, which entered service in the early 1990s and is still in use.

The design process for the new Air Force One started in 2016, with plans for the first aircraft to be delivered in 2024.



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Largest logistics trade show in the USA

There is 15% more space for more than 200 international exhibitors. The transport logistic Americas & air cargo forum trade show will be held November 8-10, 2022, in Miami and is the largest logistics trade show in the world this year. Around four months before the start of the event, bookings with 75% are above target. Messe München has therefore expanded the exhibition space together with co-operation partner TIACA (The International Air Cargo Association).

On the nearly 11,000 sq m of exhibition space, from top 10 global players to startups, around 200 companies have booked or announced their presence at the show. Well-known logistics brands such as Ethiad Cargo, the Korean Air Cargo Hub Incheon, Miami Airport, FedEx or Rhenus Logistics are coming. Dr Robert Schönberger, Head of transport logistic exhibitions at Messe München is said: "This year we will have the largest logistics trade fair event not only in the USA but probably worldwide. Our cross-modal supply chain approach is working. Shippers, logistics and other service providers are offering the exhibition visitors building blocks they need for stable supply chains. In the long term, we see the new show as a supply chain platform for Americas."

Intermodal supply chains

Suppliers from around the world will gather at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Exhibitors around the air cargo forum, founded by TIACA, form the foundation. Logistics service providers,

logistics-related services and suppliers for IT and digitisation complete the spectrum. The focus will be on intermodal links with Europe and Asia as well as the North-South axis from Canada to Latin America. The exhibition expects more than 5,000 participants. Partner organisations including Americas Alliance, Neutral Air Partner or Miami-Dade Beacon Council bring forwarders and shippers from the region and Central America to the show. A high-profile conference program is being planned.

International Air Cargo

As the world's largest hub for air cargo between North and South America, transport logistic Americas & air cargo forum are a homecoming for Miami International Airport (MIA). The hub imports fish, flowers, fruits and vegetables and exports pharmaceutical, engineering, automotive and ICT products. Like exhibitor Incheon International (ICN) of South Korea, MIA ranks among the top 10 cargo airports worldwide. Together with fourteen other airports in the US, Singapore, Canada and Europe to date, they are showcasing air cargo solutions. The strong north-south axis is equally evident in the airlines. Across the Americas, exhibitors from Canada to Brazil are on hand, including AerCaribe and Latam. Ethiad is one of the air cargo brands presenting cargo flight networks via Asia, Africa and Europe. From Germany, Eurocargo and Munich Airport have already booked their space.

Fast market access

"transport logistic Americas is a perfect platform for us to engage with potential clients and network with carrier partners throughout the Americas. With our regional headquarter in Miami we intensify and establish contacts for stable supply chains via the shortest routes across all modes of transportation. Participating in this trade fair is a great opportunity to showcase our world-class logistics services and our strong presence in the Americas," explains Jörn Schmersahl, CEO of Rhenus Air & Ocean Americas.

Many of the exhibiting logistics companies and service providers for logistics-related services, IT and equipment, as well as the trade fair visitors, come from Florida and the neighboring Central American countries. The firmly booked space is occupied in part by joint stands for international digital startups, pavilions for companies from Germany, Italy as well as various associations.

"Stable supply chains are more important than ever. Miami is exactly the right place as a hub between North and South. From global players to startups, we see a lot of potential for companies from Central and South America. In the long term, the fair will occupy an important place in the global event landscape. We are confident that participating at the air cargo forum Miami and transport logistic Americas, will drive direct value to our members and worldwide customer base," says Christos Spyrou, CEO & Founder of Neutral Air Partner, a global network of leading air cargo architects and aviation specialists.

Lufthansa welcomes capacity reduction in frankfurt



The announcement published recently by Fraport that it intends to reduce the number of take-offs and landings at Frankfurt Airport to 88 movements per hour from next week is the right step to stabilize flight operations, according to Lufthansa.

Jens Ritter, CEO of Lufthansa Airline, said: "In recent weeks, we have already cancelled flights in several waves to relieve the overall system. This has disappointed many thousand customers, caused enormous additional work for our employees and additional costs in the millions. Since the already increased capacities of the ground handling services in Frankfurt are still not sufficient due to a high sickness absence rate, even for the flight schedule that has already been reduced several times, the decision taken by Fraport today is right. Other airlines flying to and from Frankfurt will now also contribute to an even reduction and stabilization with flight cancellations."



Uzbekistan opportunities: flydubai launches Samarkand flights

Flydubai is adding direct flights to Uzbekistan's second city of Samarkand, a UNESCO World Heritage site on the famous Silk Road.

Dubai-based flydubai is expanding its reach in Central Asia, adding flights to the historic city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan. It will be the carrier's second Uzbek destination, building on the existing route to Tashkent.

From September 20, flydubai will operate the twice-weekly service from Terminal 3 at Dubai International Airport (DXB) to Samarkand International airport (SKD). Flight FZ 1945 will depart Dubai at 22:40 on Tuesday and Friday and arrive at Samarkand at 02:50 the following day. It will return as Flight 1946, departing Samarkand at 04:05 and arriving back in Dubai at 06:30. Emirates is operating a codeshare on this route so that passengers will have extensive connection opportunities through Dubai's international hub.

flydubai has an all-Boeing B737 fleet, including the B737-800 and B737 MAX versions.

Since its launch in 2009, flydubai has built up a network of more than 95 destinations in 50 countries, using a fleet of Boeing B737 family aircraft. According to ch-aviation.com, it has a fleet of 66 B737s, including 33 B737-800s, 30 B737 MAX 8s, and three B737 MAX 9s. It also has an order with Boeing for 103 B737 MAX 8s and 50 B737 MAX 10s, which will be powered by CFM LEAP 1B engines. flydubai has carried more than 80 million passengers on routes to Africa, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Central and South-East Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent. It has launched services to 70 destinations that did not have direct air links to Dubai or were not served by a United Arab Emirates (UAE) national carrier from Dubai.

One of those destinations dropped off the route map recently when flydubai suspended flights to the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. The airline had little choice after the UAE Embassy issued a notice advising its citizens not to travel to Sri Lanka. The embassy added that those

already there should avoid the areas where demonstrations are being held. The

Hubei cargo hub officially opens



The Ezhou Huahu Airport in Ezhou city, central China's Hubei province officially began operations on 17 July. At 9:07 a.m., the airport received its first incoming cargo flight, Flight 767-300 of SF Airlines, from Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong province. The first incoming passenger flight, Flight CZ5679 operated by China Southern Airlines, arrived at the airport at 9:49 a.m., eight minutes earlier than expected. The flight departed from Beijing Daxing International Airport in China's capital city Beijing at 8:00 a.m. Both flights passed a welcome water gate, the highest courtesy of civil aviation, after arriving at the airport.

As an international air cargo hub, the airport's air route network covers the entire country and destinations across the globe. With its 1.5-hour flight circle reaching the country's top five city clusters and covering 80 percent of the country's population, passengers and cargos departing from the airport can arrive at major airports of the country in one night and major foreign airports the next day.

The airport has adopted a wide range of cutting-edge smart technologies and applications, enabling passengers to pass identity verification, explosives detection, and temperature measurement at one security checkpoint in three to five seconds. Three of the six security checkpoints in the terminal of the airport are smart checkpoints that allow

suspension took effect from July 10, and flydubai has offered all passengers booked a full refund.

SVP of commercial operations and e-commerce, Jeyhun Efendi, said the service would start as a twice-weekly service, and the airline hopes to see the market grow further.

passengers to board the plane in the shortest time.

Covering a total area of 118,900 square kilometres, the airport has a terminal of 15,000 square meters, a freight station of 24,000 square meters, a freight transfer center of 678,000 square meters, two runways, and an apron that can accommodate 124 planes.

Passenger air routes between Ezhou and nine destinations in Chinese cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Chengdu, Chongqing, Qingdao, Kunming, and Ningbo, as well as two cargo air routes between Ezhou and Shenzhen and Shanghai have been slated to be operated during the initial stage of the airport's operations.

International cargo routes between Ezhou and foreign cities, including Osaka in Japan and Frankfurt of Germany, are also expected to be launched within this year. By 2025, the airport will have opened about 10 international air cargo routes and around 50 domestic routes. Meanwhile, its cargo and mail throughput will hit 2.45 million tonnes; and it will handle one million passenger trips annually. The figures are expected to rise to 3.3 million and 1.5 million, respectively, by the year 2030.

Moreover, after the third runway of the airport is put into use in 2050, the airport will be able to handle 20 million passenger trips, 9.08 million tonnes of cargo, and 270,000 incoming and outgoing flights a year.

Located in the geometric center of the cities of Ezhou, Huangshi, and Huanggang in Hubei province, the airport is only about 20 minutes away from the downtown areas of the three cities by car. The airport is expected to play a significant role in boosting the industrial development of its surrounding cities and facilitate air passenger and cargo transport in China as well as the world.

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), writes Thelma Etim.

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

Malaysia Airlines signs five-year deal with SITA



Malaysia Airlines has renewed its partnership with SITA for a comprehensive upgrade that will link its global operations to its hub in Kuala Lumpur with fast, secure, and reliable network connectivity. As part of the five-year agreement, Malaysia Airlines will leverage SITA Connect, specifically designed for the air transport industry, to meet the airline's needs in and outside airports. SITA Connect will lower connectivity costs, improve the quality of service, enable ease of access to new features and applications, and facilitate their passengers' check-in process worldwide, benefiting from SITA's global presence at over 650 airports across 220 countries and territories.

SITA Connect will also provide network connectivity that allows team

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."

members to access central systems from anywhere, supporting the airline's worldwide operation for employees working remotely. Security was a key factor in selecting SITA's solution to support the airline's critical operational systems.

Izham Ismail, Group CEO, Malaysia Airlines, said: "We're excited to ramp up our operational capabilities as the industry's recovery takes hold, with the support of our trusted technology partner SITA. Boosting the connectivity, security, and agility of the backbone technologies that support Malaysia Airlines will ensure we are ready for the influx of passengers over the coming months and poised to deliver a seamless travel experience for all."

Sumesh Patel, APAC President at SITA, said: "SITA has a long history of collaboration with Malaysia Airlines. We're excited to renew the relationship once more by upgrading several services that will ultimately help deliver a smooth passenger process. Operational efficiency is under the microscope in the wake of the pandemic, and we're committed to helping the industry recover with smart solutions that are resilient, agile, and cost-effective."

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American Airlines adds routes, seats for Green Bay Packers games



Credit: Ian Dewar/Alamy Stock Photo

The carrier is catering to American football fans who travel to weekend games.

American Airlines this fall will add two one-weekend nonstop routes and upgrade to a larger aircraft weekly on another route to entice fans of the Green Bay Packers American football team.

American's "Packers routes" are an example of a practice US airlines engage in every autumn: selecting key routes to add flights and/or seats to take advantage of the large cohorts of American football fans who travel to college- and pro-football games every weekend.

On Sept. 24, American will operate a Saturday flight from Green Bay (GRB) in Wisconsin to Tampa (TPA) in Florida. It will then operate a return flight on the morning of Sept. 26. The flights will accommodate Packers' fans headed to the Sept. 25 Green Bay Packers-Tampa Bay Buccaneers game in Tampa.

Similarly, American will run a flight from GRB to its Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) hub on Nov. 12, with a planned return flight on Nov. 14. The route is aimed at fans headed to Texas for the Packers-Dallas Cowboys game on Nov. 13.

American normally serves GRB with regional aircraft from Chicago O'Hare (ORD). This fall, flights on and surrounding weekends will be operated with larger Airbus A319 aircraft to match the expected demand for passengers traveling to/from Green Bay for Packers games. Playing in Lambeau Field, one of the oldest stadiums in the US National Football League, the Packers attract football fans who travel to Green Bay to experience a game day at the iconic stadium.

"At a time when many airports are seeing a downturn in the number of airline seats each day, it's exciting to see

American Airlines bring in its Airbus A319 with 120-plus seats on each flight to

accommodate the demand by football fans," GRB director Marty Piette said in a statement. "These schedule changes and larger planes allow fans the best options when connecting to the game or to their home airport. It's good for the fans and for our local economy."

UAE set to run Kabul airport in deal with Taliban

The Taliban and the United Arab Emirates are poised to strike a deal for the Gulf nation to run Kabul airport and several others in Afghanistan that could be announced within weeks, according to sources familiar with the negotiations.

The Taliban, whose government remains an international pariah without formal recognition, have courted regional powers, including Qatar and Turkey, to operate Kabul airport, landlocked Afghanistan's main air link with the world, and others.

But after months of back-and-forth talks, and at one point raising the possibility of a joint UAE-Turkey-Qatar deal, the Taliban is set to hand the operations in their entirety to the UAE, who had previously run Afghan airports, the sources said.

An agreement would help the Islamist militants ease their isolation from the outside world as they govern an impoverished country beset by drought, widespread hunger and economic crisis. It would also hand Abu Dhabi a win in its diplomatic tussle with Qatar for influence.

Under the deal with the UAE, Afghans will be employed at the airports, including in security roles, crucial for the Taliban who want to show they can create

jobs but also because they staunchly oppose the presence of foreign forces, sources said.

An Emirati state-linked contractor had been contracted to provide security services, which should be announced soon, while negotiations over airspace management are ongoing, they said.

The militants in May awarded the ground services contract to UAE statelinked GAAC, which was involved in running security and ground handling services at Afghan airports before the Taliban takeover, shortly after Taliban officials had visited Abu Dhabi.

Meanwhile, Qatar and Turkey's joint negotiations with the Taliban broke down around the same time, sources said.

Emirati officials had no immediate comment. GAAC did not respond to a request for comment.

A Taliban transport ministry spokesman confirmed an aviation security contract had already been signed with the UAE but said the air traffic contract was not finalised or confirmed yet.

The sources said UAE airlines, which have not flown to Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover last year, were expected to resume flights to Kabul and possibly other Afghan airports after the deal was finalised.—Reuters



Firefighters spray water on a plane that flipped over after a crash landing in this screen grab obtained from a social media video. All those on board - more than 30 passengers.

Iraqi Airways starts flight operations to Pakistan

Iraqi Airways has resumed its flight operations after two and half years on 27 of July 2022 to Pakistan. SAPS Karachi and airlines staff held a cake cutting ceremony at International transit lounge restaurant to celebrate the inaugural flight.

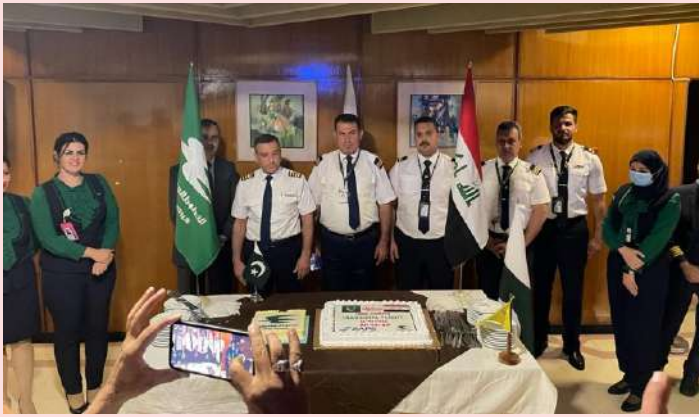
Iraqi Airways has started 3 flights a week to Karachi, one from Baghdad to Karachi on every Monday and two flights from Najaf to Karachi on every Thursday and Saturday. The airlines also operates two flights to Islamabad from Najaf on every Wednesday and Sunday.

Shaheen Airport Services (SAPS) being a project of Shaheen Foundation and a Welfare Organization of PAF, is providing Ground Handling Services with latest setup at all the major airports of Pakistan. SAPS is equipped with huge size of latest GSE and also have efficient and experienced staff to provide quality services to its valued clients. Over a period of 40 years, SAPS established and achieved its sole aim to provide safe, cast effective and quality services to client airlines.



Iraqi Airways crew with Air Commodore (R) Zahid Aslam General Manager SAPS Karachi and Mr. Ahmed Mahmood DGM (Operations) SAPS cutting the cake on the occasion of the inaugural flight of Iraqi Airways.







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What's next for the LCC sector?

Mike Barrera, VP, Product management, Low Cost Carrier Segment, Sabre, tells Sabre Aviation Festival Asia that the LCC sector now needs to disrupt itself to win in the evolving travel marketplace.

Low Cost Carriers (LCCs) are known as the disruptors of the aviation industry. However, now that it is no longer enough to simply offer the lowest base-rate fare to attract passengers, what do LCCs need to do in order to stay competitive in today's increasingly-complex marketplace?

Mike Barrera, VP, Product Management, Low Cost Carrier Segment, Sabre, spoke at the Aviation Festival Asia, held at the Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre on June 14 and 15, telling an aviation and travel industry audience that LCCs need to differentiate themselves to remain relevant to travellers.

"The LCC market is going to be the fastest growing in the next five years," said Mr Barrera. "And, the high number of new LCCs that are entering the sector are dramatically changing the environment. So it's vital carriers are able to differentiate themselves to remain competitive. They need to have the mindset and the technological support to act like an online retailer, to offer passengers what they need when they need it."

Mr Barrera said that traveller expectations are higher than ever before as consumers have come to expect personalization from all of their retail interactions. But despite the challenges, there are significant opportunities for those who are prepared to capture them. Many consumers would prefer to book their whole combined trip with one vendor if they are able to, representing a major opportunity for airlines with a retail mindset.

Sabre and Sabre company Radixx have taken the opportunity during the pandemic to accelerate their technological transformation. LCCs now also need to take the time to look at their own business models and the technological support they need for success.

Mr Barrera said LCCs need to prioritize choosing a technology partner which offers security and reliability; ensuring their chosen technology is easy to use and train, especially given staff shortages and high turnover rates in the current travel industry; and selecting best-of-breed technology that has scalability and modularity so offer management systems can interact seamlessly with

order systems.

"At the heart of all of this innovation is data," added Mr Barrera. "But data can be overwhelming. LCCs need the ability to capture data, understand it and utilize it to create very personalized offers. Individual carriers can have access to significant AI

8 killed as Ukraine's cargo plane crashes in Greece



Debris is strewn over the crash site of an Antonov An-12 cargo plane owned by a Ukrainian company.

A Ukrainian cargo plane carrying munitions from Serbia to Bangladesh crashed near the city of Kavala in northern Greece late on Saturday 16 July, killing the crew members on board, Serbian authorities and Meridian airline said on Sunday 17 July.

Drone images from the scene showed smouldering debris from the Antonov An-12 aircraft strewn in fields. Greek authorities said there were eight crew members on board and a Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman said they were all Ukrainian citizens.

Ukrainian-based airline Meridian, which operated the aircraft, said all the crew members were killed in the crash.

Serbia's defence minister said the plane was carrying 11.5 tonnes of products, including mortar and training shells, made by its defence industry. The buyer of the cargo was the defence ministry of Bangladesh, he said.

Denys Bogdanovych, Meridian's general director, confirmed Serbia's account of events. "This is not related to Ukraine or Russia," Bogdanovych told Reuters by telephone.

Witnesses said the aircraft came down in a ball of flames before exploding on impact in corn fields around midnight local time. Earlier the pilot had reported engine trouble and had requested an emergency landing.

and ML infrastructures through Sabre and Radixx that simply would not be possible when acting alone. This investment in technology is the key to being able to seamlessly deliver products and services at a lower cost, to maximize revenue opportunities and enable LCCs to really differentiate themselves by creating enhanced, personalized experiences for travellers."

Greek authorities could not provide information on the aircraft's cargo or the crew. The special disaster response unit and army experts were dispatched to the scene, while local authorities issued a ban on people moving in the area.

Serbia's defence minister Nebojsa Stefanovic said the cargo included illuminating mortar shells and training shells. It had taken off at 1840 GMT Saturday from Nis in Serbia.

"The plane carried 11.5 tonnes of products made by our defence industry. The buyer was the Bangladesh defence ministry," Stefanovic said.

He said the plane's cargo was owned by Serbian company Valir, a company registered to perform foreign trade activities of armament military equipment and other defence products.

Greek state TV ERT said the aircraft's signal was lost soon after the pilot requested an emergency landing from Greek aviation authorities due to an engine problem.

Amateur video footage uploaded on ertnews.gr showed the aircraft in flames descending fast before hitting the ground in what appeared to be an explosion.

"I wonder how it didn't fall on our houses," one witness, Aimilia Tsaptanova, told reporters. "It was full of smoke, it had a noise I can't describe and went over the mountain. It passed the mountain and turned and crashed into the fields." A senior source at Jordan's civil aviation regulatory commission denied initial reports that the plane was headed to Jordan. The source said that its flight itinerary included a stopover in Jordans Queen Alia international airport at 9:30 pm, to refuel, state news agency Petra reported on Sunday 17 July.

It was also due to stop in Riyadh and Ahmedabad in India before heading to Dhaka, Serbia's defence minister said.

Etihad Airways named airline ratings 'Environmental Airline of the Year 2022'

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the UAE, has been named 'Environmental Airline of the Year 2022' in the annual Airline Ratings awards. The ranking recognises Etihad's industry-leading strategy to improve aviation sustainability for both the airline itself and the entire industry.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change chose the UAE as host for COP 28 which will take place in 2023. Etihad's achievement is fully aligned with Abu Dhabi and the UAE's own commitment to work with the international community to accelerate global efforts to address climate change and environmental protection and create a more sustainable economic future.

The airline recently published the Etihad Airways Sustainability Report which Airline Ratings deemed as a benchmark for the industry, demonstrating the potential advancements to be made in sustainable aviation by a wide range of initiatives.

Tony Douglas, Group Chief Executive Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, said: "Our ambition to become a leader in aviation sustainability has taken us on a journey to reduce the impact of aviation on the environment, not just for Etihad, but for the entire industry.

"We continue to explore and test all possible ways to decarbonise from research into sustainable aviation fuels and contrail avoidance to offsets and reforestation through the Etihad Mangroves. The Sustainability Report we published earlier this year is a culmination of our efforts demonstrating the work we have done and what we have learned so far and I would encourage everyone to read it."

Etihad's sustainability initiatives began with a focus on creating operational efficiencies. The airline quickly went on to unite industry leaders and build the most comprehensive, cross organisational aviation sustainability initiative ever undertaken. This umbrella programme, now in its third year, includes partnerships with Boeing, GE, Airbus and Rolls Royce, as well as a wide range of collaborations with pioneering new-technology organisations, academic researchers, smaller businesses and start-ups.

Etihad's flagship sustainability programmes include the Greenliner programme using the airline's fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners as flying test-beds, as well as the Sustainable50 A350-1000 launched earlier this year.

Mr Douglas continues: "We are



grateful to our partners from the major manufacturers to academics and small start-ups who have partnered with us on this mission, in particular through the Greenliner and Sustainable50 programmes. And we're appreciative of our guests and corporate clients who have signed up to our green loyalty programme Conscious Choices or played their part by bringing a little less luggage or choosing to offset their flights.

"This accolade is testament to our efforts over the past few years to be the greenest airline in the sky and we're proud to be awarded the Environmental Airline of the Year 2022. We are tremendously proud of this achievement but will not rest on our laurels as we have ambitious, industry-changing and climate critical action to continue to build on."

Airlineratings.com Editor-in-Chief Geoffrey Thomas said "Etihad Airways has shown its clear leadership in the push for sustainable flight with its Greenliner Boeing 787 programme and this year with its Sustainability50, A350 aircraft.

"At every touchpoint, Etihad Airways staff and management are committed to reducing the airline's CO2 footprint and it shows. The mantra at Etihad Airways is a million things count in reducing emissions and thus the focus is all-consuming."

Mr Thomas added that "the airline's Sustainability Report 2020-2021 demonstrates the potential advancements to be made in sustainable aviation by a wide range of initiatives, coordinated to achieve a 20% reduction in emissions intensity in its passenger fleet by 2025, cut 2019 net emissions by 50% by 2035, and reach net-zero emissions by 2050."

Over the past three years, the airline has conducted a vast number of research eco-flights demonstrating potential carbon emission savings of up to 72% on a single flight. Etihad has also tested and implemented world-first operational efficiencies and technology solutions including Jeppesen Flite Deck Advisor, SATAVIA contrail avoidance, GE Engine Foam Wash, eTech logs and lightweight Unit Load Devices

In addition to the airline's comprehensive testing and innovation programme, Etihad became the first airline to secure commercial finance based on verified compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (UN SDGs).

The Etihad Mangroves Forest project was launched with plans to establish carbon-absorbing forests in countries where the airline operates.

In an initiative to involve its guests and corporate clients, Etihad offers the Conscious Choices programme with rewards for customers who take environmentally positive action such as offsetting their flights. Corporate clients can benefit from accredited solutions to reduce their Scope 3 emissions.

Cathay Pacific resumes Dubai route



Hong Kong's home airline will resume direct flights from Dubai to Hong Kong on 2 October.

The airline will operate three flights per week on Monday, Friday and Saturday, providing cargo customers with direct access to Hong Kong in addition to seamless connections to onward destinations including the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea.

Cathay Pacific area manager Middle East Vishnu Rajendran said: "Reactivating our link from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to Hong Kong is extremely important to us as the market remains a priority."

Cathay Pacific will deploy its Boeing 777-300 on its Dubai-Hong Kong route, catering to the increased cargo demand as well as passenger traffic.

EgyptAir introduces additional flights to Russia until end of October



The Egyptian national airline EgyptAir recently announced it was adding three weekly flights from Cairo to Moscow until the end of October.

"A decision has been made to introduce additional flights during the summer season between Moscow and Cairo on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays every week from July 7 to the end of October, provided that the flight departs from Cairo at 19:00 local time, and from Moscow Domodedovo Airport at 02:25 Moscow time," EgyptAir said in a statement.

Currently, the Egyptian carrier operates flights to the Russian capital seven days a week, departing from Cairo in the morning. The airline told TASS the planes fly to the Russian Federation almost at full capacity.

The Russian company Aeroflot also performs Cairo - Moscow flights.

Emirates: Heathrow is demanding airlines 'throw out paying passengers'



The airline is resisting LHR's efforts to impose capacity limits to deal with staffing shortages at the airport.

Emirates Airline has refused to accept the demands of London Heathrow (LHR) that carriers operating to the UK hub should cut capacity over the summer peak season.

The airport has asked all airlines to stop selling flight tickets for departing passengers until Sept. 11, as it struggles to maintain services in the face of ongoing staffing shortages. LHR has capped the number of daily departing passengers at 100,000 and approximately the same number of arriving travelers.

Emirates operates six daily Airbus A380 flights between Dubai (DXB) and Heathrow.

In a strongly worded statement issued July 14, Emirates said that it valued its partnerships with airport stakeholders across its network "with whom we engage continuously, and collaboratively, to secure our flight operations and ensure minimal customer disruption."

The UAE airline added: "It is therefore highly regrettable that LHR last evening gave us 36 hours to comply with

capacity cuts, of a figure that appears to be plucked from thin air. Their communications not only dictated the specific flights on which we should throw out paying passengers, but also threatened legal action for non-compliance. This is entirely unreasonable and unacceptable, and we reject these demands."

The major pinch point at Heathrow has shifted in recent weeks from security staff to ground handlers, with widespread complaints of passengers failing to be reunited with their baggage on arrival, or discovering after departing that bags had not been loaded.

Emirates noted that its ground handling and catering services at LHR are operated by Dnata, part of the Emirates Group, and are "fully ready and capable of handling our flights."

The airline added: "From our past 10 months of regularly high seat loads, our operational requirements cannot be a surprise to the airport. Now ... [LHR wants] to force Emirates to deny seats to tens of thousands of travelers who have paid for, and booked months ahead, their long-awaited package holidays or trips to see their loved ones."

The carrier said that "re-booking the sheer numbers of potentially impacted passengers is impossible with all flights running full for the next weeks, including at other London airports and on other airlines."

Emirates continued: "Now faced with an 'armageddon' situation due to their incompetence and non-action, [LHR is] pushing the entire burden of costs and the scramble to sort the mess to airlines and travelers. Until further notice, Emirates plans to operate as scheduled to and from LHR."

Responding, a Heathrow spokesperson said a key problem was airline ground-handling teams that are "currently only resourced up to 70% capacity to serve passenger demand, which has returned to 80-85% of pre-pandemic levels."

He added: "For months we have asked airlines to help come up with a plan to solve their resourcing challenges, but no clear plans were forthcoming and with each passing day the problem got worse. We had no choice but to take the difficult decision to impose a capacity cap."

Something will have to give: Emirates has stated it will make no cuts and the LHR spokesperson said "airlines are required to comply with the process to manage passenger demand at the airport."



Firefighting vehicles spray water during a ceremony for the arrival of the first four F-35 fighter jets at Volkel Air Base recently. The F-35s will take over all tasks of the F-16 from 2024.

Etihad Cargo reinforces commitment to China capacity with 15 direct passenger, freighter flights per week



Etihad Cargo, the cargo and logistics arm of Etihad Aviation Group, has reinforced its commitment to the Chinese market with the introduction of 15 direct passenger and freighter flights per week.

Throughout the pandemic, the carrier said it remained committed to the market with a wide variety of capacity, including reconfigured cargo-only passenger freighters. From July onwards, it will continue to expand operations, focusing exclusively on direct passenger flights and dedicated 777 Freighter flights.

In addition to cargo capacity on passenger flights, Etihad Cargo also operates Boeing 777-200 freighter flights daily for Shanghai and six times per week for Hong Kong, bringing the total cargo capacity into and out of China to 2,708 tonnes per week.

Martin Drew, Senior Vice President of Global Sales & Cargo at Etihad Aviation Group, said: "As the Chinese market starts to recover from COVID challenges and zero-COVID restrictions are lifted, Etihad is pleased to resume its passenger operations to Beijing and reaffirm our commitment to Etihad Cargo customers with the introduction of capacity on key trade lanes. These flights will connect China to the Middle East, Europe and the rest of the world via Etihad Cargo's hub in Abu Dhabi.

"China is a critical strategic market for Etihad Cargo, and the direct flights between the two capital cities and other major destinations will further strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the United Arab Emirates and China," Drew concluded.

Etihad Cargo continues to operate direct routes into China, providing cargo capacity via a fleet of modified mini freighters. With the resumption of passenger flights and a schedule of freighter flights, the mini freighters will be taken out of rotation.

Etihad Cargo recently announced its summer schedule, which introduced the capacity to key destinations across Asia,

Africa and Europe. In addition to adding direct flights into and out of Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, the carrier will continue to operate its Boeing 777

freighter network with flights across Chicago, Dhaka, Frankfurt, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Johannesburg, Kenya, Milan and Riyadh.

Boeing showcases Future Flight concepts for a Zero Carbon Future



Boeing Future of Flight

As the aviation industry looks for new ways to reduce its carbon footprint, Boeing has unveiled a data modelling tool to show the best ways to get there by 2050. The model includes consultation with leading universities and will continue to be used with key stakeholders. The company also shared illustrative hydrogen and electric concepts that could power the future of flight.

Boeing Chief Sustainability Officer Chris Raymond at the Farnborough International Airshow said: "There are multiple ways to a future where aviation has zero climate impact. We created Cascade on a foundation of credible data and analytical models to allow users to explore various pathways to net-zero. We think this model will help our industry visualize, for the first time, the real climate impact of each solution, from beginning to end, and to inform the most probable and effective strategies."

Cascade was created with the support of leading universities and helps forward Boeing's agenda of decarbonisation and emissions reduction through the following methods:

Airplane fleet renewal

Renewable energy sources such as sustainable fuel, hydrogen, electric propulsion

Operational efficiency improvements
Advanced technologies

This model assesses the full life cycle of renewable energy as it takes into account the emissions from the production and distribution of alternative fuels such as hydrogen, electricity and Sustainable

Aviation Fuel.

With the current threat of increasing greenhouse gases and environmental concerns, emissions reduction is a major concern for the aviation industry as a whole.

As part of the 'SAF and' approach, Boeing continues to advance the safety and viability of other renewable energy sources and their use on aircraft. Since the mid-2000's, Boeing has conducted six hydrogen technology demonstrations with crewed and uncrewed aircraft using hydrogen fuel cells and combustion engines. Last year, Boeing successfully tested a cryotank designed for space with the capacity to hold 16,000 gallons of liquid hydrogen or the energy equivalent of the Jet A fuel in a typical regional jet.

Boeing is also working on electric aircraft through its joint venture known as Wisk which works to bringing the first all electric, autonomous air taxi to the United States. The eVTOL prototype is on display at the Farnborough Air Show 2022.



Boeing Future of Flight

The Wisk fits in the Boeing Future of Flight concepts aviation model for a more sustainable aviation industry and future.

"Our common goal is to enable the societal benefits of air transportation while reaching zero climate impact on our planet. To make that a reality, we believe it is best to learn and share our findings broadly, based on a foundation of data, scientific research and collaboration, as we work together to decarbonize aviation," said Brian Yutko, Boeing chief engineer and vice president of Sustainability and Future Mobility.



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About Reko Diq Project

(Prof. Safdar Sandal)



A project suspended since 2011, has fortunately been re-opened. It is with 'Barrick Gold Corporation' to whom the contract has been assigned. The international company plans to invest \$7 billion in Reko Diq project and has sought the ratification of the deal from the Parliament and Supreme Court of Pakistan for legal protection.



disagreement regarding the deal. He further added "We want a partnership framework that complies with the law". Total transparency is the spirit of the project, he added.

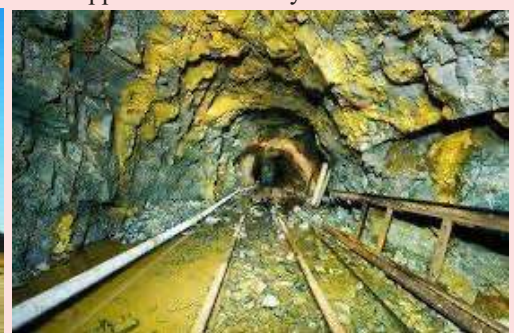
for the re-constitution and resumption of the project, which already had remained suspended since 2011. It will be operated by Barrick and owned in equal proportions by Barrick, the Balochistan provincial government and the Pakistani-state-owned enterprises.

Under the agreement, the Barrick Gold Corporation would be the operator of the Reko Diq mine, with 50% share, 25% by Pakistan's state-owned enterprises and 25% by the Balochistan government. The consortium of the 'Pakistan state-owned enterprises' and the government of Balochistan will be as equal stakeholders in the successful development of Reko Diq. Legalization and closing will occur at the completion of legalization process too. Closing of the mineral agreement and joint venture will take effect as per the agreement; major project lease and licenses will be issued; resolution ICSID (International Centre for Settlement Investment Disputes) of litigation will be completed. He added that Antofagasta (name of an international company engaged in exploring gold and copper finds: instantly it is also the name



After the legalization process is completed, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Barrick Gold Corporation, Mark Bristow said the work will start soon after all formalities are completed. He said so, while briefing media in Islamabad. Pakistan and the consortium led by Barrick Gold Corporation reached an out of court settlement during previous (Imran Khan's) government and the company is negotiating the legal framework with the incumbent government. The CEO however was confident that they would start production from the Reko Diq Copper-Gold mine by 2027-28. Mark said we don't have any substantial

An agreement reached in principle between the Government of Pakistan, the provincial government of Balochistan and Barrick Corp' earlier this year, allows





provide 100pc employment to Pakistani nationals. Balochistan's infrastructure, water security and energy supply will be improved. At Reko Diq, Balochistan's shareholding will be fully funded by the project and the federal government; he elaborated, allowing the province to reap the dividends, royalties and other benefits of its 25 percent ownership without making any financial contributions to the construction or operation of the project. He said that during the construction, **Balochistan will receive \$70 million in royalty, with \$5 million in the first year, \$7 million in the second year and \$10 million each in the following years.**

On closing, the mineral agreement and the joint venture, will take effect, major project lease and licenses will be issued; resolution of ICSID litigation will be complete and Antofagasta will sell their interest in the project. The whole process of the project appears positively crystal clear and viable except for untoward political intrusions or impediments, if any. I hope there would be none, supposedly protected by state institutions, considering the viability, profitability and utility of the project for the immense interests of all stakeholders, for the country or for the whole people of Pakistan and also for the world at large. Reko Diq is one of the largest underdeveloped copper and gold deposits/reservoirs in the world, capable of producing 200,000 tons of copper and 250,000 ounces of gold per year for more than half a century. Reko Diq gold mines are valued at \$260 Billion initially and could be worth \$1 Trillion in totality. Reko Diq is one of the world's biggest mines of copper that can brighten the future of the generation.

of a port city in Chile) will sell their interests in the project. He told the media that Pakistan is the most desirable location for investment and added that as per rules, legal protection was essential in Pakistan or anywhere else because of the substantial foreign investment. Updating feasibility study will take two years, and following its completion, a formal decision for starting the construction of the project would be made by 2024, Mark explained.

The CEO (Barrick Gold Corporation) termed Reko Diq as one of the world's largest under-developments copper and gold deposits-standard-open pit mining method- project, with low strip ratio, expected to produce high quality clean copper-gold concentrate. It is a historical resource for five porphyry is a rock deposits of approximately 3 billion tons, Mark claimed that during the construction stage, the project was expected to employ 7,500 local people and with the starting of production, it would further generate 4,000 long-term jobs. With its unique combination of large scale, low strip and good grade, the Reko Diq would be a multi-generational mine with a minimum life of 40-years in the current phase. But the project's life can be extended up to 100 years or more. Following its investment, Mark said that they were negotiating with IFC (International Finance Corporation) and export-import banks for a \$4billion debt comprising 50% of the total debt. \$2 billion will be secured by the project's running consortium.

To a query about funding from the Barrick side, Mark ruled out offering an IPO (Intellectual Property Origination) to

generate funds and added that they themselves had a strong balance sheet and did not need to raise money because they could support the investment. According to him the project would attract \$7 billion in investment in the first phase and a \$3 billion minimum investment in the second phase. Regarding the establishment of a refinery in Pakistan to process the project's raw materials, he admitted frankly that at this time it is too early and thus not feasible, but can be developed at a later stage. In response to a question about the security situation in Balochistan, he stated that the Barrick firm had worked in conflict-ridden regions. It devised its own strategy for project execution. The company would employ a three pronged strategy to protect and provide high-quality assets in order to unlock additional value for the Pakistani people. The company will invest in the communities in social responsibility-sector and will



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Key CPEC projects back on track as confidence restored

Pakistan and China's ties are back on track after Pakistani security forces successfully smashed the terrorist cell and nabbed the mastermind involved in an attack that killed three Chinese teachers at Karachi University, a source told media recently.

The Main Line 1 (ML-1) upgradation project, the largest in China's Belt and Road Initiative in Pakistan, has been revived after the temporary halt caused by the April 26 suicide attack, the source further said. The project had previously been delayed due to financing related issues.

Pakistan's railways ministry and China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) recently held a meeting on the project and the two sides are currently working on the financial modalities.

The ML-1 project, the source said, would be the centre-piece of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's (CPEC) second phase.

After the Karachi University attack, Beijing had not only linked progress on CPEC to security for their personnel working in Pakistan and the arrest and prosecution of the attackers, but the entire relationship had virtually come to a standstill over this one sticking point.

This view was strengthened by Senate Defence Committee Chairman Mushahid Hussain Syed, who told media that success in tracing and capturing the culprits behind the Confucius Institute bombing had "reassured and restored China's faith" in the Pakistani security apparatus's ability to protect Chinese personnel and projects in Pakistan.

"Our eastern neighbour, irked by Pakistan-China camaraderie centered now on CPEC, has been working overtime to undermine and sabotage this bond, using both information warfare as well as kinetic warfare through local proxies, Senator Mushahid added.

The Chinese frustration over the slow pace of investigations into the attack is said to be the major reason behind Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif avoiding a trip to Beijing, even though China has been one of the first foreign destinations that new Pakistani prime ministers head to, owing to the close strategic ties between the two countries.

Progress in the case was made public this week when Pakistani authorities on Tuesday claimed that alleged facilitator and planner of the Karachi attack, which was jointly executed by terrorist groups BLA and BLF, had been arrested. The accused identified as Dad Bux has been presented before an anti-terrorism court in Karachi.

Though law enforcement agencies claimed that the arrest was made a day earlier (on Monday), the source said that he had been in custody for weeks.

Security forces in Balochistan had eliminated six suspected terrorists in the Central Mekran Range around June 19, while two others are said to be on the run.

Chinese counterterrorism officials also worked closely with Pakistani agencies on this case.

"A Chinese team was in Pakistan closely coordinating with their local counterparts on the investigation," the source said.

Welcoming the progress in the case, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lijian Zhao, in Beijing, said: "We appreciate the strong efforts made by the Pakistani side. At the same time, further

investigation is still underway."

"We hope the Pakistani side will... ensure the safety of Chinese projects, personnel and institutions in Pakistan," he added.

The source said that visit of high ranking Chinese politician Yang Jiechi, seen as personal envoy of President Xi Jinping, was made possible after this breakthrough.

Gen Bajwa had weeks earlier visited Beijing and offered "iron clad security guarantees" on security for Chinese and vowed to track down the perpetrators of Karachi attack.

The source said that Mr Yang had privately reassured Pakistan government that both CPEC and bilateral ties were now back on track.

IT companies urged to participate in CPEC projects

There is a need to encourage local IT companies to participate in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects for eventual entry into the Chinese market, the Advisory Council on Information Technology (IT) and Digital Economy said on Thursday 14 July.

At the first meeting of the advisory council, it was stressed that there must be consistency in government policies to be attractive to local and international investors. Chairing the meeting, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Syed Amin-Ul-Haque said that Chinese investors were vying to establish another optic fibre link from Khunjerab to Rawalpindi and along the railway line to Karachi.

The meeting was informed that the objective was to link Karachi with Gwadar and carry the cable onwards under sea, towards the Persian Gulf region.

Minister says Chinese investors want optic fibre link stretching from Khunjerab to Persian Gulf. The minister said the government held a high-level meeting with the companies involved in CPEC projects. "The target was to have market access for Pakistani companies in the Chinese market," he added.

He highlighted the steps identified to achieve this target, which include facilitating Chinese IT companies in establishing offices in Pakistan. "We can harness Pakistan's position in the region to make Pakistan a cloud regional hub, and we need collaboration with Chinese counterparts on cloud initiatives," Mr Haque said.

Talking to about the ambitious target to export IT services to Chinese markets, the minister said that most Pakistani firms involved in IT exports started as sub-contractors for large companies in the West and other areas.

"Now we have stable IT exports while the freelancers' base is also strong. Now is the time to ask Chinese companies to outsource projects to the Pakistani IT industry," he said, adding, "It has been agreed that Chinese firms will start involving Pakistani experts in projects within China."

The council meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muftah Ismail, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima, Senator Afanullah Khan, representatives of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and council members from the public and private sector. The advisory council was formed on June 5 and is headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, with the view of promoting the IT industry and enhancing the digital economy of Pakistan.

The council decided to form committees for IT Export, Personal Data Protection, and Telecom Sector Growth.

The three committees will finalise their recommendations in a week, which will be presented to the PM and the Chairperson of the Advisory Council.

The committee for IT Exports is led by former secretary IT Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui; the committee for Personal Data Protection Rules by Senator Afnanullah Khan; and the Telecom Committee is chaired by Jazz CEO Amir Ibrahim.

Several missing in shipwreck during typhoon in S. China Sea



A ship that broke into two amid Typhoon Chaba during a rescue operation of the crew members in the South China Sea, 160 nautical miles southwest of Hong Kong.

More than two dozen crew members are unaccounted for after their ship broke into two during a typhoon in the South China Sea recently, with rescuers scrambling to find them, officials say.

China's first typhoon of the year brought gales and rain to its southern shores, as forecasters warned of record rainfall and high disaster risk in provinces including Guangdong, the country's most populous.

Typhoon Chaba, the Thai name for the hibiscus flower, was moving northwest after the eye of the storm made landfall in Guangdong's Maoming city, the National Meteorological Center said in a statement.

According to the Hong Kong Government Flying Service, an engineering vessel that was 160 nautical miles southwest of Hong Kong "suffered substantial damage and broke into two pieces" and the 30-member crew abandoned ship. Three people were rescued and taken to hospital for treatment, authorities said. Footage provided by authorities showed a person being airlifted onto a helicopter while waves crashed over the deck of the semi-submerged ship below.

The three survivors said other crew members may have been swept away by waves before the first helicopter arrived, according to an official statement.

Typhoon Chaba earlier formed in the central part of the South China Sea and made landfall in Guangdong province in southern China. Rescuers found the ship

near Chaba's centre, where harsh weather conditions and nearby wind farms made the operation "more difficult and dangerous".

The ship's location recorded wind speed of 144km per hour and waves that were 10 metres high, authorities said.

The Government Flying Service

dispatched two sorties of fixed-wing aircraft and four helicopter sorties, with mainland Chinese authorities also dispatching a rescue boat. Rescuers said they would increase the search area "due to the large number of people missing" and extend the operation into the night if conditions allowed.

Rice exports fetch record \$2.5bn



Rice exports crossed the \$2.5 billion mark during the 2021-22 fiscal year for the first time in country's history, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Last year, the country fetched \$2.041bn foreign exchange through rice exports.

The volume of rice exported, both Basmati and non-Basmati varieties, this year was over 4.877 million tonnes, which was 1.19m tonnes more than last year's figure of 3.684m tonnes.

According to the PBS data, the volume of rice exports grew 32.35 per cent while the value in dollar terms rose 23pc on a year-on-year basis.

Basmati rice accounts for more than 0.75m tonnes of export volume and more than \$69m in financial terms.

Talking to media, Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (Reap) chairman Ali Hussam Asghar said lower rice prices than in India at the start of the season attracted international buyers towards Pakistan, which helped increase the export volume.

He said the non-availability of

containers did create problems, and Reap representatives resolved them with the help of the Trading Corporation of Pakistan through the provision of bulk vessels.

He promised to work on the supply chain so that rice export volumes could reach \$3bn in the coming year.

Mr Asghar predicted that Basmati acreage and production were set to increase in the next season as farmers had got a good price for their produce during the year ending June 2022. Until last year, rice sector stakeholders had been expressing their concerns at the increasing trend of sowing non-Basmati, particularly hybrid rice varieties, even in the Basmati producing belt of Gujranwala division.

According to rice sector expert Hamid Malik, the supply side has greatly improved in the last three years, with production increasing from 7.2m tonnes to 8.9m tonnes.

Mr Malik said the demand side also remained robust during 2021 and 2022 despite odds like a three-time increase in ocean freight, the non-availability of empty containers and bulk vessels, and restrictions related to the Covid pandemic.

Visa regimes relaxed to promote Pak-Aghan trade



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presides over a federal cabinet meeting in Islamabad on Tuesday 28 June.

The government on Tuesday 28 June decided to relax the visa policy for bilateral trade with neighbouring Afghanistan, and hoped the decision will help improve economies of the two countries.

The decision was taken in the federal cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

According to the Prime Minister Office, PM Sharif directed the authorities concerned to issue six-month multiple-entry visas to transporters from Afghanistan. He also approved all the proposals put forward by the Afghan Inter-Ministerial Coordination Cell. The cabinet directed the Pakistan embassies abroad to assess Afghan visa applications on the basis of current nationality and passport instead of the country of origin.

Moreover, the cabinet directed that a sub-category under the work visa category be introduced in the online visa system. It was also decided that initially, six-month multiple-entry visas would be issued, and the interior ministry would have the authority to extend the period to one year.

Documents required with the visa application would include the applicant's photograph, passport, registration as a transport company, and employment letter. The meeting exempted the condition of recommendation letters by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan and the Board of Investment for visas of drivers, transporters, helpers, etc.

The federal cabinet noted that these decisions had been taken and amendments made to the visa policy to promote bilateral trade with Afghanistan.

In a post-cabinet meeting press conference, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said the visa policy

for Afghans was reviewed by the Interior Ministry's Afghan Inter-Ministerial Cell during an apex committee meeting, which also included representatives of the Foreign Office, Nadra and the Board of Investment.

Flanked by Adviser to the Prime Minister on

Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira, Ms

Aurangzeb said under the revised policy, Pakistan's missions abroad would process the visa applications of Afghans on the basis of their existing passports and nationalities instead of their country of origin.

The cabinet also constituted a committee to ensure the continuity of ease of doing business for traders, she added.

Moreover, the technical supplementary grants approved by the Economic Coordination Committee and endorsed by the cabinet included Rs125.8 million for various requirements of 6 Aviation Squadron, Rs40m for publicity campaigns by the National Command and Operation Centre, Rs1.22 billion for payment admissible to the families of deceased/shuhada under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package, Rs39.36m for purchase of surveillance cameras with accessories for maintaining law and order situation during the upcoming protest/sit-in by a political party and others.

To a question, the information minister said the issue of pay scales and regularisation of the Associated Press of Pakistan emphasized text employees was old. "This is not only a problem of APP, but also of all corporations, which will be decided in line with the government's policy," she maintained.

Responding to a question regarding media reports that self-exiled former finance minister Ishaq Dar was returning to the country, Ms Aurangzeb claimed the court cases against Mr Dar were fake and part of the political vendetta of the previous Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf regime. "The former finance minister has every right to return to the country," she added.

She stated Mr Dar had rendered great services for Pakistan and nobody could

deny his contribution to the development of the country.

Casting of Rodin's Thinker fetches \$11.14m at Paris auction



A camerawoman films a posthumous cast of "The Thinker" (around 1928) by French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) on display before its auction at Christie's auction house.

A casting of Auguste Rodin's "The Thinker" sculpture, one of the most iconic works of art in the world, sold for 10.7 million euros (\$11.14 million) at a Paris auction on Thursday 30 June.

The auction house, Christie's, had estimated the casting, one of roughly 40 authentic outstanding ones, would fetch between nine to 14 million euros. The record for a Rodin "Thinker" was set at a Sotheby's auction in New York in 2013, when one sold for \$15.3 million.

When conceived by Rodin in 1880 in its original size of approximately 70cm "The Thinker" was called "The Poet" and was designed to be the crowning element of "The Gates of Hell", another major work by the French sculptor.

The sculpture initially represented Dante, the medieval Italian poet and author of the Divine Comedy, leaning forward to observe the circles of Hell, while meditating on his work.

While remaining in place on the monumental Gates of Hell, The Thinker was exhibited individually in 1888 and thus became an independent work.

The statue was first enlarged in 1904, and monumental man-sized versions of the statue such as the one on display in the Paris Rodin Museum proved even more popular, with its the image of a man lost in thought but whose powerful body suggests a great capacity for action.

The copy sold this Thursday 30 June by Christie's was the size of the original model.

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FIFA lifts Pakistan's suspension, NC mandate extended

It took nearly 15 months, but Pakistan has finally returned to the international football fold.

FIFA announced on Thursday 30 June that the Pakistan Football Federation's (PFF) suspension was being lifted after the global football body received confirmation that its appointed Normalisation Committee for the PFF had "regained full control of the PFF's premises and was in a position to manage its finances."

While other modalities will take time to complete, this immediate relief for Pakistan football will mean that the national team can now take part in Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA competitions.

Pakistan's national teams have been bereft of international action due to the crisis in the PFF. Over the last four years, the men's team has played just seven international matches, while the women's team has not even stepped onto a football pitch once.

It was at the FIFA Congress in Doha at the end of March where the all-powerful Bureau of the FIFA Council had been given the power to lift the suspension on Pakistan once "the pertinent requirements had been met".

Pakistan was suspended by FIFA in April last year after PFF headquarters were seized from the NC by a group of football officials led by Ashfaq Hussain Shah, who claimed that the Haroon Malik-led committee wasn't willing to hold elections of the body.

Ashfaq's group, which came into power following an election of the PFF held by the Supreme Court (which wasn't recognised by FIFA) had handed over the PFF headquarters to the NC upon its appointment back in September 2019.

The main mandate of the NC is to hold fresh elections, which have been mired in conflict and crisis since the disputed elections held back in 2015.

Out of office, the NC sought government support to get back control of its offices and a vital breakthrough was reached in March when it regained control of the PFF headquarters.

However, the PFF accounts remain frozen after the NC obtained a stay order following the takeover, preventing Ashfaq's group from accessing them.

PFF NC member Shahid Khokar told media on Thursday that the NC would receive funding from FIFA directly for

now, as a case regarding the accounts continues to be heard in court.

The NC was first to announce the lifting of the suspension, minutes before the FIFA statement came through.

"The Bureau of the FIFA Council decided on 29 June 2022 to lift the suspension that was imposed on the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) in April 2021 due to undue third-party interference," the FIFA media release stated.

"The decision was taken after FIFA received confirmation that the normalisation committee of the PFF had regained full control of the PFF's premises and was in a position to manage its finances."

FIFA, however, warned that any interference in the matters of the NC could

result in the suspension being reimposed.

"As the deadline by which the normalisation committee was required to fulfil its mandate (30 June 2022) is now no longer realistic, the Bureau has also decided to extend the committee's mandate until 30 June 2023 at the latest. This will enable the latter to finally carry out the tasks assigned to it in full."

In order to regain control of the PFF headquarters, the NC had given an eight-month roadmap to the government to hold fresh elections.

Pakistan Sports Board director general retired Col Asif Zaman had told media on the sidelines of the Trophy Tour event for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Lahore in June that it would push the NC to complete the election process in that timeframe, once the suspension is lifted.

Although FIFA did not specify this in its release, media has learnt that the PFF NC has also been given powers to ratify the PFF constitution and bring its clauses in line with FIFA Statutes. With additional reporting by Mohammad Yaqoob in Lahore

Hotel M's Co. Ltd in Kyoto chooses Sabre technology

A leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, today announced a new agreement with Hotel M's Co. Ltd in Kyoto, Japan, to help the chain to grow geographic reach and attract international travellers as Japan eases border restrictions.

Japan has been steadily relaxing travel restrictions since March ahead of a wider-scale re-opening to foreign visitors. To prepare for, and capture, the expected influx of tourism, Hotel M's Co. Ltd has inked a new technology agreement with Sabre. The deal will enable the chain to put its inventory in front of hundreds of thousands of travel agents globally across all major Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) through Sabre Hospitality's innovative SynXis platform.

"We want more people to know about Kyoto and to love the city as much as we do, and we want all of our guests to come back again and again," said Kohei Otsuki, President for Hotel M's Co. Ltd. "Our philosophy when it comes to true hospitality is to look outside of services that are traditionally thought of as within the bounds of the hotel. We think about the entire city as a hotel. So, it's vital to us to have a technology partner who will enable us to expand our geographic reach while

sharing a forward-thinking vision of hospitality retailing that goes beyond the hotel room."

Just as Sabre has advanced its technological transformation during the pandemic, Hotel M's has taken time to rethink its own growth strategy. Established in 2014, the chain has 16 hotels across Kyoto city, opening one close to Kyoto Station during the pandemic in anticipation of future inbound tourists. With 1,274 hotel rooms currently, the chain has selected Sabre technology to help advance its expansion strategy and revenue growth.

"Our Sabre recovery data clearly shows that as soon as borders re-open and markets open up, there's an influx of inbound and outbound tourism, so we expect that as soon as it is possible to travel to Japan, there will be a huge demand to do so," said Frank Trampert, Senior Vice President and Global Managing Director of Community Sales for Sabre Hospitality. "It's essential hoteliers have the right technological tools to put their offers in front of global markets, and we're very excited to be working with Hotel M's to enable them to capture and create future travel demand at this key moment for Japanese tourism."

Celebrating the journey of young Pakistani filmmakers



British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy pose for a photograph with upcoming filmmakers at a ceremony in Islamabad on Friday 24 June night

The British Council organised a film screening event titled 'Pakistan Stories' in collaboration with Patakha Pictures in Pakistan and the Scottish Documentary Institute in the UK.

'Pakistan Stories' sought to support a new generation of female Pakistani documentary filmmakers to enable them to create engaging films that reflected on their society, and Pakistan's 75 years of independence. The event celebrated the journey of 10 selected filmmakers through the programme. They were mentored by experts in Pakistan and Scotland to develop and finance their creative skills so they could produce five short documentaries in a safe environment and reach new local and international audiences through their work.

The documentaries covered important themes including child and forced marriages, the rights of transgender persons, women and disability, women in education and the feminist movement in Pakistan. Guests at the event included British High Commissioner to Pakistan Christian Turner, Deputy Director of the British Council Mark Crossey, filmmaker and founder of Patakha Pictures, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, director of the Scottish Documentary Institute; Noe Mendelle as well as diplomats, senior government officials, journalists, established artists and young aspiring artists and filmmakers.

Christian Turner said: "Film is a brilliant vehicle for telling stories and giving women voice. With trailblazers like two-time Oscar winner Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, and by combining the best of UK and Pakistan expertise, we can unleash the potential of the next generation of female filmmakers and women and girls across Pakistan."

British Council Pakistan Deputy Director Mark Crossey said: "The British Council is delighted to have enabled this platform for emerging female Pakistani filmmakers to hone their skills and tell

stories about Pakistan as we mark its 75th anniversary with our Pakistan/UK: New Perspectives programme of activity. I look forward to these films being showcased across festivals in Pakistan and the UK."

In her remarks, the founder of Patakha Pictures and leading filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy said in the past week she had witnessed the growth of these 10 filmmakers and that the seeds of a movement were being laid that would

ensure that young women across Pakistan would be empowered to finally tell their own stories in their own words.

Noe Mendelle said the Scottish Documentary Institute was excited to be part of collaboration with Patakha Pictures and British Council Pakistan, involving nurturing female filmmakers in enhancing their directorial voice in documentary.

"Working with reality is a humbling experience and female filmmakers are especially well equipped creatively and mentally to engage with emotional, challenging stories that need to be shared with the rest of the world," Noe Mendelle said.

First 'rain retreat' at Taxila stupa after ages



Thai monks and disciples perform rituals in connection with monastic practices of 'rain retreat' at Dharmarajika Stupa near Taxila on Thursday 14 July.

For the first time in Pakistan's history, a group of Buddhist monks along with their disciples gathered at Dharmarajika stupa in Taxila for the annual 'rain retreat' (vassa). According to Britannica Encyclopedia, vassa is the monastic retreat observed primarily in Buddhist communities in Southeast Asia during the three-month monsoon period each year.

A 26-member group led by Mr Arayawangso, chief monk of Thailand, and comprising six months and 20 disciples performed the ritual at the stupa in Taxila. The Dharmarajika stupa is the largest and most sacred of all the stupas constructed by Kushan dynasty in the 2nd century. It also contained fragments of Buddha's bones.

The Thai monks also participated in the turning of the Dharma wheel at the stupa. The ritual was performed to commemorate the first sermon and establishment of Buddhism. This event is celebrated in India, Nepal and Bhutan every year but for the first time ever the Buddhist monks came to Pakistan to perform the service.

Thailand's chief monk says Buddhist delegation to visit religious sites in Taxila, Takht Bhai

Similarly, various rituals were performed and a sermon was delivered at the end of the ceremony which was

broadcasted live in 32 countries in addition to the Pojhariphunchai monastery in Thailand.

Later, a function was held at the Taxila Museum in honour of the Buddhist monks. Addressing on the occasion, Mr Arayawangso said that event was performed to commemorate the perpetuation of the "Dharma wheel" in this world for the benefit and happiness of all beings.

He said that about 150 monks and disciples would subsequently join the delegation to take part in various monastic practices at important Buddhist sites in Pakistan, especially in Taxila and Takht Bhai.

He said that the event was streamed live to invite the followers of Buddhism to visit Pakistan and explore its potential. According to the distinguished monk, he inaugurated the "bell of peace" in Taxila and Peshawar during his visit to Pakistan in 2019 and also wrote a short book, in English and Thai, to teach his followers about the importance of Gandhara in the Buddhist world.

He said that he was visiting Pakistan at the invitation of the Punjab tourism department and added that his visit coincided with the 70th anniversary of the Thai-Pak diplomatic relations.

Gandhara Art and Culture Association Secretary-General Dr Kyo Soon Park said that Most Venerable Arayawangso was the first "Dhamma ambassador" in this endeavour. He was hopeful that as a result of the visit, the global communities will have a better understanding of Buddhist sites in Pakistan, especially stupas and monasteries.

Thai Ambassador Chakkrid Krachaiwong said that the history of Taxila was almost 2,000 years old and that it was taught in their textbooks. "It is an immense pleasure for us that we are part of the team preserving this heritage."



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Indian woman wants visa regimes eased to facilitate people on both sides of border



Reena Varma stands at a neighbour's house next to her ancestral home in Rawalpindi.

The visit of the Indian nonagenarian to her ancestral three-storey home tucked away in the narrow alleys of the garrison city has opened a new chapter for the authorities to facilitate citizens of India and Pakistan on humanitarian grounds.

Reena Varma, 90, from Pune, Maharashtra, finally fulfilled her family's dream to visit the house that she left 75 years ago.

Her visit and related formalities were facilitated by the administrator of the Facebook page, 'India Pakistan Heritage Club' Imran William.

Mr William said the Indian authorities should reciprocate as more than 20 senior citizens from Pakistan wanted to visit their ancestral homes across the border.

"We work to highlight the shared heritage of both countries and reunite families separated by partition," Mr William said, adding that, "we want to help people in getting permission to travel across the border."

Talking to media after her visit to the house which was built by her father an employee of the Military Accounts in the British India Army the teary-eyed Ms Varma said: "We had a radio and a gramophone in those days and I used to sing from the balcony of our house, especially when it rained."

She urged both countries to ease their visa regimes to enable people from either sides to meet frequently.

"I would urge the new generation to work together and make things easy," she

said, adding that humanity was above everything and all religions taught humanity.

She said the only thing which made her sad was that no one from her family of eight was alive to share her joy.

"I am very happy to see that the house stood intact; even the fireplace is still in functioning condition," she said, adding that, "during holidays in winters we used to burn wood for heating".

Incidentally, for her age, Ms Varma not only recalled all details of the house but her life in Rawalpindi when she was merely 15 years old.

"We plan to visit Murree in the coming days I remember we used to go there every summer," she said.

Since her brother was in the British Army, the family moved to Pune after 1947 where he was posted, but the family did not take any property in claim against the Rawalpindi house.

"My mother always wanted to have this house, and she maintained that if we take any other house, our right to this house would be lost," she said, adding that, "things have changed but the love and affection showered by the people of Pakistan will remain in my heart forever".

REUTERS ADDS: Ms Varma has vivid memories of the day she and her family left their house.

Her family was among the millions whose lives were thrown into turmoil by the partition of colonial India into two states, mainly Hindu India and mostly Muslim Pakistan, when British rule ended in 1947.

At one point, Ms Varma burst into laughter over being unable to climb a staircase without a support, saying she had once tackled it "like a bird" countless times a day.

When she lived in Rawalpindi hers was a Hindu street, she said, but Muslims, Christians and Sikhs all lived in her neighbourhood peacefully.

Magnificent ancient mosaic found near Tel Aviv returns home



Workers clean a restored Roman-era mosaic after it was put on display at its original site in Lod on Monday 27 June.

An exceptionally well-preserved Roman floor mosaic, showing a rich variety of fish, animals, birds and ships, has returned to the site where it was first found in a Tel Aviv suburb after a decade-long tour of some of the world's top museums.

The 1,700 year-old mosaic, from the late Roman period, was discovered in 1996 during highway construction work, but was not put on display until 2009, when sufficient funding to preserve it was donated.

The colorful mosaic, 17 metres (55 ft) long and about 9 metres (29 ft) wide, may have served as the foyer floor of a mansion in a wealthy neighbourhood of Lod, near what is now Tel Aviv, the Israel antiquities Authority said in a statement.

"The owner was probably a very rich merchant because he travelled throughout the world and he saw things, like all the ships and the fish on display in the mosaic," said archaeologist Hagit Torge from the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The design of the mosaic was influenced by North African mosaics and lacks any depiction of people, suggesting it may have belonged to a Christian or a Jew who wanted to avoid pagan attributes such as depiction of Roman gods, said archaeologist Amir Gorzalczany from the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The mosaic will now be exhibited at an archaeological centre built where it was found, in Lod.

Jirga bars women from recreational spots in Bajaur tehsil

Women from visiting tourist/picnic spots, and announced that if the government didn't implement the decision by Sunday 17 July the jirga members would take it upon themselves to impose it.

The all-male jirga (tribal council), held at the hilly Danqool area, was organised by the local chapter of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl, which is also one of the main members of the ruling coalition. The move comes just days after the World Economic Forum, in its Global Gender Gap Report, ranked Pakistan as the second worst country in terms of gender parity in the world as well as the region.

Besides scores of elders from various tribes and areas of the Salarzai tehsil, a number of JUI-F leaders and religious figures of the region also attended the gathering, held after the JUI-F district leadership raised concerns during their presser over what they called 'unethical' activities in the name of entertainment at Ragagan dam.

Addressing the gathering on Saturday 16 July, JUI-F district chief Maulana Abdur Rasheed -- who also belonged to the Salarzai region, senior party leader Haji Said Badshah -- who is also the chairman of Khar tehsil council, and other speakers pointed out that the jirga was meant to discuss several issues of the region that emerged during Eid, and



A tribal elder speaks at the jirga organised by the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl here on Saturday 16 July.

resolve them peacefully and amicably.

The participants were told that it was noted that besides men, scores of local women either with their husbands and other relatives or separately had visited different tourist and picnic spots in the Eid holidays in the region, including Ragagan dam, to attend musical concerts and boat rides, which they claimed were against the local customs and traditions 'based on Islamic principles'.

The speakers further said women visiting the said places for tourism and entertainment was "totally unethical and unacceptable" as, they claimed, there was no room for such activities both in Islam and local traditions, adding that a result-oriented move was vital to discourage such "anti-customs" practices in the region. The participants, on the occasion, expressed concerns over women's movement, and sought strict restrictions

in this regard. The ban on women from visiting picnic sites was later announced by JUI-F's Maulana Rasheed, calling it a "joint declaration" of the jirga. He said all the participants approved a complete ban on women's visits to tourist spots -- with or without husbands.

"We want to promote tourism in our areas as it is vital for socioeconomic development of the region. We are only against women visiting such areas as it was in contrast to our customs and traditions. Hence, the jirga banned it," he announced, adding such activities could not be allowed in the name of tourism.

He further stressed that if the government/district administration failed to take any action in this regard until Sunday 17 July, the jirga would enforce the ban itself. According to the Maulana, the jirga had also requested the residents of Salarzai region not to take women in their families to picnic places now. It also asked the local authorities to recruit local residents in various departments in the district instead of outsiders.

There was no word from the district administration, nor was there any indication if the JUI-F-backed jirga decision had been endorsed by other political parties, or if it was indeed "representative" of the tribal council. The party has influence in the tribal district, but social activists said the announcement lacked any legal and constitutional backing.

Pakistani peaks set to attract record number of international climbers

As many as 1,400 mountaineers from around the globe, including the first female Arab climber, are expected to scale some of the world's highest peaks located in Gilgit-Baltistan this year.

It's a stark contrast to the previous year, when 550 foreign climbers arrived for adventure tourism. The Gilgit-Baltistan tourism department had already issued 700 permits to international climbers, and as many were expected to be issued this summer, an official told media.

The climbers coming from Europe, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, China, Russia, Poland, Japan and Norway are eyeing to summit various peaks, including five eight-thousanders (i.e. mountains towering above 8,000 metres) and 20 seven- and six-thousanders. Pakistan boasts five of the world's 14 eight-thousanders, including the world's second-highest peak K2 (8,611 metres), followed by Nanga Parbat (ranked ninth at 8,126 metres), Gasherbrum-I (11th at 8,080 metres), Broad Peak (12th at 8,051 metres), and Gasherbrum-II (13th at



EXPEDITION teams set up tents at K2 base camp.

8,035m).

700 permits have been issued so far and as many are expected to be given this summer. Moreover, 40 Pakistani mountaineers are also in the race, including Sajid Ali Sadpara, Sirbaz Khan, Abdul Joshi, Sheroze Kashif, Samina Baig and Naila Kiani. As many as 3,000 local porters have been hired by several expedition teams to carry the supplies.

Peaceful environment

Alpine Club of Pakistan Secretary Karrar Haidri said many international expedition team members from various countries had already arrived in Pakistan. He said this was the highest number of

international mountaineers coming to Pakistan since the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

Mr Haidri said a record number of more than 400 climbers would attempt to scale K2, the second-highest and also the most challenging peak in the world.

He believed that the prevailing peaceful environment in Pakistan and the introduction of online visas had helped attract such a large number of international tourists this year.

GB Tourism Minister Raja Nasir Ali Khan told media the tourism department was ready to facilitate climbers and cope with emergencies. He said 1,200 international climbers had applied for permits, adding that this year would witness record adventure tourism activity in Pakistan.

Home Secretary Iqbal Hussain Khan told media the GB government and the army had all arrangements in place to rescue climbers in case of emergency.

Adventure Pakistan CEO Muhammad Ali Nagri told media several expeditions had reached base camps while more were on the way.

Peoples bus service starts commercial operation in Karachi

In this era of exquisitely expensive petrol and diesel, when the people of Karachi are also looking around for alternative means of transport, there has come a gift by the Sindh government in the shape of the 120 brand new bright red air-conditioned buses, which started their operation as soon as they were inaugurated by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari here on Monday 27 June.

Though he did not have much to say, the young foreign affairs minister quickly climbed on the bus after carrying out the inauguration. Then he took the back seat in the first bus parked in a long row of buses on Fatima Jinnah Road and waved out to the Karachi media gathered outside. The tinted glass was making it difficult to see him very well as the bus started moving.

That's when the media also tried getting on the buses behind him. Only six or seven of them were successful in hoping inside as the doors jammed shut and the buses picked up speed to follow the one in the front with the VIPs, namely Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Sharjeel Memon, Sharmila Farooqi, Saeed Ghani, Karachi Administrator Murtaza Wahab and others.

Bearing part of Sindh's ruling political party's name, the 'Peoples Bus Service' is an intra-district bus project.

The buses, imported from China, are quite nice, roomy and comfortable. What's more they are affordable and accessible, too. The bus fare, depending on the distance travelled, is said to vary from Rs25 to Rs50.

There is a section for women in the front, an area for handicapped persons in wheelchairs, a section for families and another for men in the back. It is a 29-seater bus with provision for some 25 people to also travel while standing so it has a capacity of around 54 persons.

Having 38 stations, identified by red markings on the road, the buses will operate on seven routes.

From Model Colony to Tower (29.5 kilometres), from North Karachi to Indus Hospital in Korangi (32.9km), from Nagan Chowrangi to Singer Chowrangi in Korangi Industrial Area (33km), from North Karachi to Dockyard (30.4km), from Surjani Town to PAF Masroor (28.2km), from Gulshan-i-Bihar in Orangi Town to Singer Chowrangi (29km) and from Mosamiyat to Baldia



Along line of buses ready to hit the road; Foreign Minister and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari along with Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and others takes a ride on the bus after inaugurating the project; the buses are ferrying passengers as part of their regular operations in the metropolis on Monday 27 June.

Town (28.9km).

However, only route one i.e. from Model Colony to Tower was launched on Monday 27 June. Remaining six routes will be launched one by one after every 10 days.

Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon, who also holds the portfolio of transport, said at the inauguration that the buses have inbuilt wifi, mobile phone charging ports and security cameras, too.

"It is a bus for the people of this city that are at par with any international city bus service. I hope the people here will also take care of this bus and not litter around in it like you don't litter around in your home. The PPP government also promises you to bring in more such buses and work at bettering the infrastructure," he said.

A smiling Sharmila Farooqi was spotted taking selfies with the buses.

"I am simply loving it. It is a bus for everyone, including differently-abled persons. As a Karachiite I feel so good and proud today that finally we have a great bus system," she told media, while requesting the citizens of Karachi to take care of the buses. "Keep them clean, do not spit paan or betel quid inside. You need to also have the civic sense to deserve this gift," she said.

Sindh Minister for Labour and Human Resources Saeed Ghani also said that the buses carry more importance for people now with the cost of fuel having

gone up. "The people, who are feeling the burden of fuel becoming too costly, would probably leave their cars and motorcycles at home to take the Peoples Bus to commute. It is a comfortable option for them," he told media.

"But I still feel that those who can afford to buy petrol or diesel would still prefer travelling by their personal vehicles," he said.

The buses are hybrid, meaning that they will run on electric battery but switch to fuel when the battery is low. Then as it runs on fuel the battery gets charged and then its back to running on battery.

The Sindh government has allocated a sum of Rs4 billion in its budget for the next financial year of 2022-23 for procuring more buses to be run in Karachi under the same project. The number of the buses are said to soon be increased to 240.



Iranian women work on weaving the largest kilim in the world in the southern Fars province. Iran on Monday 27 June announced producing the largest hand-woven kilim in the world at 105 square metres.

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Sikh pilgrims commence rituals at Gurdwara Punja Sahib

Sikh devotees from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Hindus from interior Sindh and over 450 pilgrims from neighbouring India have commenced their rituals at Gurdwara Punja Sahib in Hassanabdal in connection with the 183rd death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who ruled Punjab in the 19th century.

It is the second time during the month of June that Indian Sikh pilgrims are paying their visit to Punja Sahib in Hassanabdal. Earlier upon their arrival, they were welcomed by officials of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the local administration.

ETPB Deputy Secretary Shrines Imran Gondal and Assistant Commissioner Ishtiaque Ullah Khan received the pilgrims. Officials of the police, Elite Force and the Anti-Terrorist Squad were deployed at the gurdwara to avert any untoward incident.

Talking to newsmen in Hassanabdal, the pilgrims said they were satisfied with the arrangements.



An Indian pilgrim takes part in a ritual at the Gurdwara Punja Sahib in Hassanabdal recently.

A leader of one of the groups, Sardar Balvinder Singh, thanked the Pakistani government for allowing a large number of pilgrims to visit their religious places.

Indian Sikh contingent leader Gurmeet Singh Bahoo also thanked the government for making arrangements for them and appreciated the religious freedom and security provided to them. ETPB Deputy Secretary Shrines Imran Gondal said the Pakistan embassy had issued visas to over 450 Indian pilgrims and subsequently the board had made necessary arrangements for their boarding, lodging and transportation to different gurdwaras, including Punja

Sahib Hassanabdal, Dera Sahib Lahore, Gurdwara Janam Asthan and Gurdwara Sacha Sauda Farooqabad.

He said keeping in view the regional security threats to Sikhs, foolproof security arrangements would be made in collaboration with the district administration and law enforcement agencies, adding that the board as per the vision of the government remained committed to preserving sacred religious places and providing facilities to the pilgrims of all faiths.

Responding to a question, Mr Gondal said the Indian pilgrims would return on June 30, adding that every year, a large number of devotees from neighbouring India visited Pakistan to observe their religious festivals.

The pilgrims will proceed to Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, on June 26.

Mr Gondal said the main ceremony of the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the concluding ceremony of Bhog would be held at Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, on June 29.

Around 100 embark for K2 summit, six scale Broad Peak

At least one hundred climbers from multiple expeditions on Monday 18 July began their push for the K2 summit, to take advantage of weather conditions that are likely to remain clear until July 22.

Meanwhile, six climbers managed to scale Broad Peak as several foreigners started their push to reach on top of the peak which is 8,051m high.

Sources at base camp told media that climbers were taking advantage of the clear weather window

Before their departure to higher camps, a puja ceremony was held at the base camp by Nepalese climbers who prayed for their safety during the ascent and descent from the summit. "This is first summit push this season ... team members have already fixed ropes from base camp to Camp 3 ... [have] deposited oxygen, and stocked tents with food," the sources added.

Sakhawat Hussain from Summit Karakoram told media that 10 climbers from the Pioneer Adventure team, 23 climbers from the 8K Expeditions team, three climbers from the Dolma team, and four climbers from the Makalu Extreme team started the summit push on Monday



NEPALESE climbers hold puja at base camp before setting off.

18 July. Climbers from Elite Expeditions, Imagine Nepal, Seven Summits Treks, and Adventure Pakistan also started their summit push.

Base camp sources told media that 250 total climbers would be in action at K2 this summer, while 150 climbers had abandoned their attempts to push for the summit.

Mingma G, the expedition leader of Imagine Nepal team, said that K2 gives a limited weather window and they would depart for the K2 summit push on Monday 18 July. "None of our Sherpa and members went above Camp 2 and we were supposed to set up our Camp 3 before summit push but I am here with my best team and we don't give up anything easily," he said in a statement on social media.

"We have Rene Dai from Netherlands who is 65 years and trying [to scale] K2 for the fifth time and he alone is enough to inspire us towards our goal. I will have a picture with him on the summit," Mingma G said.

Another Imagine Nepal team will depart for the Broad Peak push, said the climber as he hoped to see his team reach the summit on July 20.

According to a statement by 8K Expeditions, their team will be heading to Camp 2 and hopefully summit by July 21.

Sakhawat Hussain confirmed to media that six climbers, including two from his company, summited the peak at 2pm on Monday. Luc Benoit from Canada and Louis from Bolivia were among the six climbers who reached the top. The names of the other four summiteers could not be known till the filing of this report.

Meanwhile, other expedition teams also started their efforts to summit Broad Peak and Gasherbrum-II. Pakistani climber Sajid Ali Sadpara, who started his Broad Peak summit, had also reached Camp 2 by Monday evening.



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