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Mr. M. Yousaf Chairman PCS presents a bouquet to HE Tarek Bahrough Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan on the arrival of the inaugural freighter flight of Egypt Air to Lahore



Egypt Air starts freighter flights to Lahore



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HEAD OFFICE:

Suite # 418-421, 4th Floor, The Plaza, G-7, Clifton Block 9, KDA Scheme 5, Karachi, Pakistan.
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UAN: 92 21 111 Shipco (111 744 726)
Main Tel: +92 21 35642400 9

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Chief Editor Abdul Sattar Azad
 Managing Editor Muhammad Faryal Azad
 Assistant Editor Musharrarf Azad
 Associate Editor Shahida Hameed
 Resident Editor Waqas Masood
 Reporter Bazla Sardar
 Photographer S. Shahid Ikram
 Contributors Prof. Safdar Sandal
 Chief Correspondent Prof. Karamat Rajput.

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

Phone 34615924
 Cell 0333-2194853
 Web. www.newflyerintl.com
 E-mail flyer_intl@hotmail.com

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Lahore Waqas Masood
 123 HH Phase 4
 DHA, Lahore
 Cell: 0333-3872222

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

Peshawar 5-Biloor Plaza Saddar
 Tel: 284649-50
 Fax: 284614

Sialkot S. Shahid Ikram
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Private jet operators are seeing huge interest ahead of the FIFA World Cup

The global reach of the FIFA World Cup is pushing up demand for private jets, and there's a size and type to get fans from anywhere to Doha.

Private aviation is one of the few parts of air travel that has benefited from COVID. Waiting lists for new business jets are measured in years, first-time buyers have flooded the market and charter operators have more customers than seats. Being able to go where you want, with whom you choose and avoid crowded, unreliable and chaotic airports has never been more attractive. Throw in major sporting events, like the FIFA World Cup 2022, and it's no wonder inquiries and bookings are already peaking.

World Cup demand for private jets is growing

At the pointy end in meeting that demand is Dubai-based DC Aviation Al-Futtaim, a fixed-base operator (FBO) which offers services including private jet charter, aircraft management and maintenance. Business Airport International reported that DC Aviation Al-Futtaim (DCAF) is receiving a surge in requests for private jets as football fans prepare to descend on Qatar for the FIFA World Cup. The tournament will run from November 21 and culminate with the final on Sunday, December 18. DCAF managing director, Holger Ostheimer said:

"We have seen a sharp increase in inquiries for the later stages of the tournament from the first week of December until the finals which take place on December 18 at the 80,000-capacity Lusail stadium. We are closely monitoring the level of inquiries and are well prepared with our offering."

DCAF has a wide fleet of aircraft to choose from, ranging from a four-seat Cessna Citation Mustang to the nine-seat Bombardier Challenger 604 and through to a 19-seat Airbus A319 Corporate Jet. On its website, DCAF has four helicopters and 14 business jets to choose from, plus a simple range calculator to help select the right size aircraft for the trip to Doha.

Luxury jets of all sizes and ranges are available for Doha

In terms of range, from London Heathrow Airport (LHR), a Bombardier Challenger 300 can comfortably carry eight the 2,800 nautical miles (5,250 kilometers) to Doha, while from New York, a group of 16 can enjoy the space of the Gulfstream G550. From Madrid (MAD), the eight-seat Embraer Praetor 500 will suffice, although, from football-crazy Brazil, the Gulfstream G650 with 13 seats has the range to cover the 6400NM (11,850km) from Sao Paulo (GRU) to Doha. The 19-seat Airbus A319CJ is listed with a range of 3600NM, so a bigger group of European fans might prefer that size for the trip.

Germany's DC Aviation originated in 2002 from DaimlerChrysler Aviation, a subsidiary of DaimlerChrysler, home of Mercedes-Benz luxury cars. Today DC Aviation is the largest business jet operator in Germany and one of Europe's leading operators, with facilities in Stuttgart,

Munich and Malta. In 2013 it formed DC Aviation Al-Futtaim, a joint venture with Dubai-based Al-Futtaim, a conglomerate of more than 100 companies with global operations. DCAF obtained its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) in 2015 and was one of the first business jet operators to set up a base at the Al-Maktoum International Airport (DWC) in Dubai.

Of course, apart from the luxury and security, the big benefit of private aviation is the walk-on and walk-off aspect, where the only crowd is your companions. For DCAF's guests, the immigration, customs and security checks are done within the FBO and are measured in minutes, not the hours spent at a large commercial airport. From there, it is just a short walk to the waiting aircraft, which is prepped and ready to go when you are. It is expensive and outside the reach of most, but for a once-in-a-lifetime experience, there will be many who hop onboard a private jet to Doha. How does it sound to you?



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PIA increases working hours of cabin crew from 14 to 16 hours

Pakistan International Airlines has increased working hours of cabin crew, including air hostesses, from 14 hours to 16 hours.

In a directive to cabin crew, the PIA management referred to the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority's order under which flight time and flight duty hours of the cabin crew had been revised and these would now be 16 hours instead of 14 hours.

According to PIA, at least five off days can be availed by the crew in a month and after six days of consecutive duty, and it is mandatory to provide a day off to a crew member at his/her home base after availing his/her rest period of last flight duty undertaken on sixth day and will consist of 24 hours. In case, a cabin crew being on a series of flight pattern, this seventh day off shall be afforded after the person returns to home base.

About local night, it said it is a period of eight hours falling between 2200 hours and 0600 hours local time. A crew member shall neither be detailed nor undertake any duty between periods embracing 2200 hours to 0600 hours local time for more than two consecutive nights.

About stand-by period, the airline said that it is time period during which a cabin crew member is required to be available to receive an assignment for a specific duty without intervening rest period. Crew will be planned for the airport stand-by duty for six hours and home stand-by for 12 hours. It added that airport stand-by should be considered as part of a duty period.

Regarding basic duty on long range operations, it said the time limitation will be 16 hours, including two hours for briefing and de-briefing, and it could be extended up to 20 hours for planning purposes only on single sector long range flights. The airline added that rest requirement on long range flights shall be 24 hours, including one local night. At destination outside Pakistan, a minimum of 24 hours rest shall be provided whereas rest after return to base shall be 48 hours or double the duty whichever is more.

Meanwhile, former Senate chairman Mian Raza Rabbani has condemned the decision of the PIA management and termed its move unjustified.

In a statement issued on Friday 26 August, Mr Rabbani said the PIA management's decision was against the

prescribed international standards as the fatigue factor might also affect services of the cabin crew if an emergency took place.

He also condemned the closure of hostels, saying the minister for aviation should ask the PIA management to reverse these decisions as they were not in conformity with labour practices and international safety standards.

PIA CBA Peoples Unity's president Hidayatullah has demanded the reversal of the two decisions by the PIA management.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for PIA said the increase in duty hours of the cabin crew had been made in the light of Pakistan Civil Aviation's Air Navigation Orders (ANO) as other Pakistani airlines had been following the CAA rules.

He said it was only PIA which had been following its own rule of 14 hours' duty for cabin crew. He, however, made it clear that the increase in duty timings would be only in case of flights' delay.

Only PIA adhered to its own guidelines requiring a 14-hour shift for the cabin crew, but the increase from 14 to 16 hours is only allowed for incidental or unforeseen delays,' the spokesman added.

He said the cabin crew would receive an incentive of Rs15,000 for a 16-hour shift.

This is in accordance with the CAA's Air Navigation Order (ANO).

The spokesman said it would also assist the airline in improving its reliability because PIA passengers had in the past experienced inconvenience owing to erratic work schedules of the members of cabin crew who refused to complete their duty after 14 hours.

China's home-grown C919 jet ready for commercial operations

China's homegrown C919 narrow-body jet, designed to challenge the Airbus-Boeing duopoly, is nearing certification as its test planes completed all of the test flight tasks, the company said on Saturday 23 July.

The state-owned manufacturer Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC) said on its official social media account that the six test planes have finished the testing tasks as the programme enters the final stage of receiving a certificate from the Civil Aviation Administration of China which is required for commercial operations.

That would mark a milestone in China's ambitions to climb up the manufacturing supply chain. China's COMAC is now effectively the third option in the market for planes with more than 100 seats, after Boeing and Airbus struck deals to take over production of rival planes made by Embraer and Bombardier.

Designed to compete directly with the Boeing 737 MAX and Airbus 320neo families, the C919 aircraft programme has faced a range of technical issues and tougher US export controls, after being launched in 2008. The launch customer is the state-owned China Eastern Airlines, which has placed an order for five C919 jets in March last year.

Changjiang Daily, a newspaper owned by the local government of Wuhan, said in a report on July 8 the airline is scheduled to take the first delivery in August. Assembled in China, the plane relies heavily on Western components, including engines and avionics.



A model of a C919 airliner by Commercial Aircraft Corp of China.

US restoring Pakistan's Category 1 safety rating

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) could upgrade Pakistan's safety rating to Category 1, allowing direct flights from Pakistani airports, the US media reported on Saturday 30 July.

There have been no direct flights between the two countries since 2017 when the FAA downgraded Pakistan to Category 2 due to concerns over Pakistan's aviation safety record.

Simple Flying, a niche news site focused on aviation, reported that the FAA will soon send its inspectors to Pakistan to assess the country's airports and aircraft. The FAA is the largest transportation agency of the US government and regulates all aspects of civil aviation in the country.

"Should the country's aviation sector pass the test, there is a good possibility Pakistan will receive a Category 1 rating," Simple Flying reported.

Recently Head of Prime Minister's Strategic Reforms Salman Sufi discussed the possibility of opening up direct flight access for Pakistan with US officials in Washington.

Briefing the Pakistani media after the meeting, Mr Sufi said that the US side "conveyed its readiness to have technical discussions with Civil Aviation Authority and other relevant departments and to undertake necessary visits for resumption of direct flights."

"To facilitate Pakistani exporters of perishable items to the US, we have also requested the US to appoint an inspector at Karachi port. This will ensure pre-clearance of mangoes and other food items so they can reach their destination in the US without any delays," he said.

Simple Flying, reported that if Pakistan received a Category 1 safety rating, "Pakistani carriers would be able to launch new direct routes to the US and establish code-sharing agreements with other airlines."

A Category 1 rating means the country's civil aviation authority complies with US standards. This rating allows air carriers from that country to establish

service to the United States and to carry the code of US carriers through code-sharing arrangements. The FAA lowered Pakistan's safety rating on July 15th, 2020 after determining it was not in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards under the FAA's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) programme.

With its Category 2 safety rating, Pakistani airlines have restricted access to US airspace and cannot establish new routes or code shares with US carriers. The United States had given the green light for national carrier Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to operate 12 direct charter flights a month before revoking its decision over safety concerns.

PIA to acquire three new aircraft next year

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to induct three wide-body aircraft in its fleet next year.

According to sources, the PIA will acquire Airbus A-330 and Boeing-787 within the first quarter of 2023 as part of its improvement policy.

The airline's spokesman said that the new aircraft would replace the planes acquired in 2002 and 2003.

The induction of new aircraft was aimed at expanding operations for long-haul flights as A-330 was one of the most modern and reliable aircraft.

Separately, the airlines had also planned to induct four Airbus A-320s into its fleet in this year, out of which two have already become a part of the fleet while two more aircraft will be added next month, the spokesman added.

Moreover, the airline has decided to refurbish five existing A-320s and replace their old seats with spacious and more comfortable ones.

The PIA spokesman said the process of refurbishing would be completed within four months.

Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq was briefed recently by the airline's management about the procurement of new aircraft and improvement in service delivery.

The minister also ordered replacement of the seats in PIA's special Boeing-777 long-haul aircraft which operates on Canadian routes.

Air Sial to operate International flights



The Federal Cabinet has approved the designation of Air Sial for international flight e.i. UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Iraq and Iran subject to fulfillment of all the legal and regulatory requirements of Pakistan Civil Aviation and National Aviation policy 2019 including: (1) Minimum five (05) air worthy aircraft on purchase/dry lease basis. 2. satisfactory operations on primary (5) social-Economic routes.

Air Sial had started domestic operations in Pakistan in December 2020. The airlines has completed about quarter to two years of domestic operation very successfully. Air sial had started operation with three A-320 aircrafts to the major cities of Pakistan and also operated chartered international flight to Dubai in Jan. 2022.

Air Sial has signed an agreement with BOC Aviation to acquire 2 additional A320 aircrafts, with these new fuel efficient aircrafts, Air Sial will operate to international destinations. These aircrafts are expected to join the airlines in September this year and hopefully in October 2022 the airline will start the international operations.

Serene Air resumes Lahore-Quetta flights



Serene Air on Sunday 28 July announced that it has resumed weekly Quetta flights from Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport.

As per officials of the airline, three weekly flights will be operated on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday.

It is pertinent to note that Serene Air is a privately-owned Pakistani airline that began operating services in January 2017. The airline operates scheduled domestic flights within Pakistan whereas its first international flight departed for Sharjah, United Arab Emirates on March 16, 2021.

Gulf Air to launch Ras Al Khaimah services



Gulf Air, in coordination with Ras Al Khaimah International Airport, will launch services to Ras Al-Khaimah on 3 October 2022. A signing ceremony took place at Gulf Air headquarters. The service will commence with a view to establishing a year-round scheduled operation.

Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in co-ordination with Ras Al Khaimah International Airport (RAK International Airport), will commence schedule services to Ras Al Khaimah on 3rd October 2022. The service will commence with two weekly flights, with a view to establish a year-round scheduled operation between the two airports connecting the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah beyond Bahrain to regional and international destinations on Gulf Air's global network.

The signing ceremony took place at Gulf Air Headquarters in Bahrain, represented by Chairman to the Board of Directors of Gulf Air H.E. Mr Zayed R. Alzayani, Ras Al Khaimah International Airport's Chairman H.E. Eng. Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Gulf Air Acting Chief Executive Officer Captain Waleed AlAlawi, RAK Airport's CEO Mr. Atanasios Titonis, and RAK's CEO of Tourism Development Authority Mr. Raki Phillips; including Executive Management members from both companies.

Commenting on the signing H.E. Mr Zayed R. Alzayani said, "As the region's leading boutique carrier with a global footprint, we look forward to adding Ras

Al Khaimah to our network of seaside destinations and increasing our UAE points to three (3) with Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Today we signed on the commencement of services to proceed with operations to Ras Al Khaimah, and I am confident our passengers will be impressed with all the facilities and services Ras Al Khaimah International Airport has to offer".

As for Captain Waleed AlAlawi, he commented, "We are delighted to add Ras Al Khaimah as third destination on our growing UAE network, and we would like to recognise and thank the proactive cooperation with Ras Al Khaimah International Airport as we provide our passengers with a new destination known for its quality tourism appeal and attracts tourists from the GCC and Europe."

H.E. Eng. Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Al Qasimi remarked, "This agreement expands Ras Al Khaimah International Airport's airspace by introducing multiple destinations from East to West. It is a great development to cater for the needs of regional and international travellers. This agreement enhances the services between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the UAE; and we are delighted to have this in partnership with Gulf Air."

For his part, Mr. Titonis stated, "Gulf-

state and European connectivity is a key factor of our expansion strategy, and Gulf Air is an ideal partner for this mission. We are looking forward to further developing our partnership and providing more scope for passengers to select their destination of travel from our airport".

About Ras Al Khaimah International Airport

Established in March 1976 under the government of Ras Al Khaimah, Ras Al Khaimah International Airport (RKT) is the gateway between Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) and the world. Operating passenger and cargo services from an array of carriers, RKT connects the United Arab Emirates through regular flights to destinations that include Cairo, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Calicut, Katowice, Poznan, Warsaw, Wroclaw, Luxembourg, Prague, Istanbul, and Moscow. With its progressive addition of ever more destinations to its current schedule, RKT is a major asset in Ras Al Khaimah's stated goal of opening up the emirate to a greater number of international visitors.

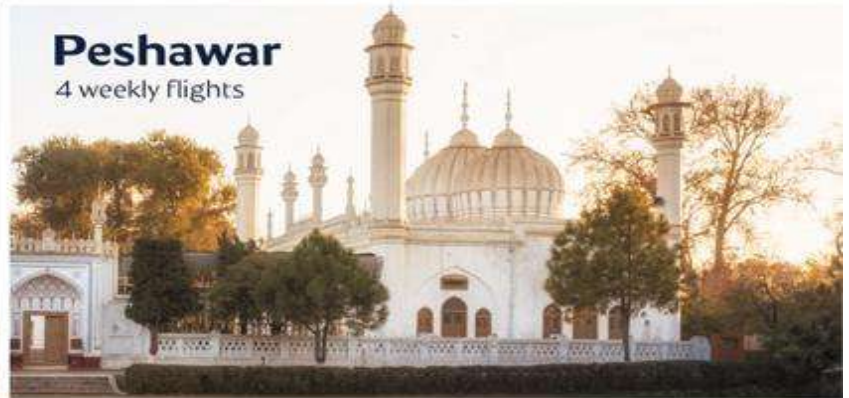
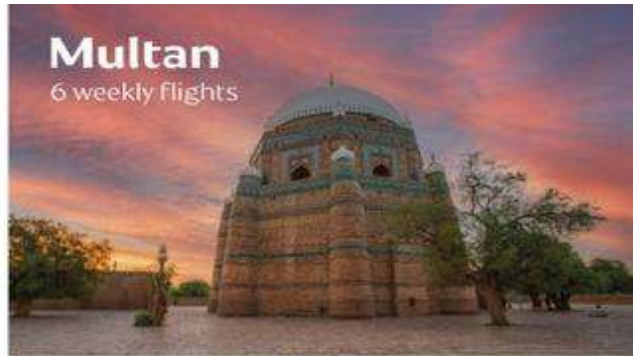
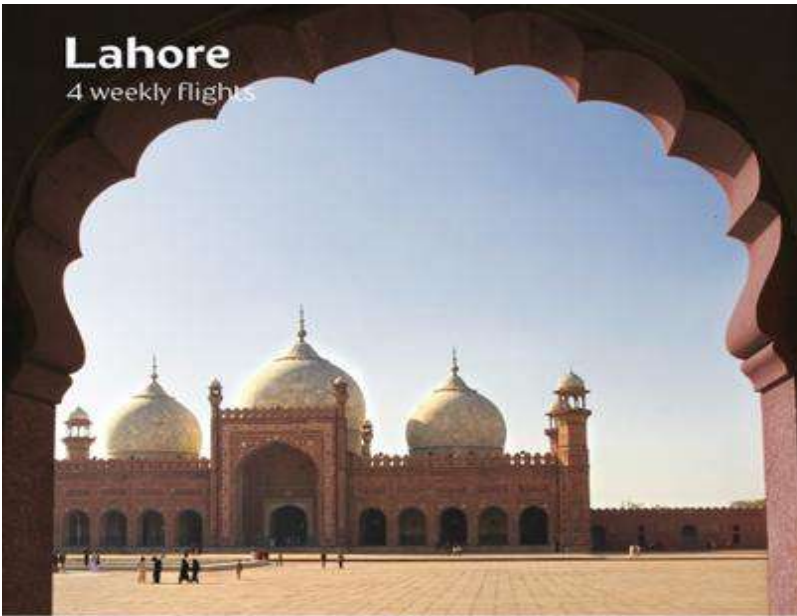
Officials to visit West for PIA flights revival

In an effort to restart Pakistan International Airlines' flights to Europe and the United States, three teams of PIA and CAA will visit Brussels from Sept 11 to Sept 13.

The director general of Civil Aviation Authority, Khagan Murtaza and deputy director general Nadir Shafi Dar would lead the first team, federal Minister for Aviation Saad Rafique was informed during a briefing by the PIA management.

The PIA was restricted from flying to EU countries in July 2020 after the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) suspended the national flag carrier's authorisation to operate flights to EU member states.

A PIA spokesman said that another team comprising officials of PIA and the ministry of aviation would leave for the US in early September to discuss their aviation security, safety and operational issues. Also, a third team will go to the UK to secure London Heathrow airport's slots and return after completing work on the issue.



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IPS Airways delays flight operation from Leeds/ Bradford to Pakistan

The airline was scheduled to launch early August, but is now expecting to begin only in October.

As the airline industry has been awakening from its long pandemic slumber, the rising passenger demand for air travel and the attractive aircraft leasing rates have widened the doors for new airline startups to spring amidst stifling global circumstances. And out from Leeds Bradford Airport, a new UK airline startup, IPS Airways, is hoping to offer the first-ever direct flight between Leeds/Bradford and Pakistan.

All about IPS Airways

IPS Airways was incorporated in July last year and founded this year. Not much is currently known about the airline's management, with the exception of the Chief Commercial Officer, Irfan Khan, and the Head of Inflight Services and Training Department, Qazi Akber Abbasi. Besides these two, IPS Airways only explains having a highly professional management team that combines all essential aspects of the aviation business, such as financial ability, solid on-the-ground knowledge, and familiarity with utilizing the latest aviation technologies.

The airline startup seems to be leaning toward operating as a full-cost carrier, considering the website promotes a Business Class option with lie-flat beds, in-flight entertainment, and in-flight meal and beverages throughout the flight. Passengers flying with IPS Airways can expect an Airbus A330-200 fleet with the airline code IP. However, it is uncertain at this time of writing if the airline has taken in any aircraft just yet, especially since there have been no hints on what the airline's livery would even look like. However, the airline's website shows that IPS Airways also offers leasing and procurement services.

And though IPS Airways is looking to connect Leeds/Bradford with Pakistan directly, the original idea was for the airline startup to offer flight services from both East Midlands and Leeds/Bradford to Pakistan, specifically Lahore and Islamabad. Unfortunately, that idea seems to have been scrapped, and IPS Airways stuck with offering direct flights from Leeds/Bradford instead.

A very delayed take-off

While seemingly little is known about IPS Airways, the airline startup had quite the initial planned departure, which never

took off. When its presence in the aviation market was made known a few months ago in May, IPS Airways already had an ongoing recruitment drive and held a high-profile launch event in Bradford in June to promote its direct flights. With the support from such a significant community, IPS Airways was scheduled to launch in August. Tickets had already been sold, with eager passengers anticipating the first-ever direct flight from Leeds/Bradford to Pakistan.

Unfortunately for these passengers, excitement turned to vast disappointment and anger as just a few days before the supposed inaugural flight, IPS Airways was canceling all of its flights. If the cancelations weren't harsh enough, the airline startup postponed its launch further, which has now been rescheduled for October. When attempting to book flights in October, or even November and December, the airline's website could not show any available flights, perhaps in an attempt not to get passengers' hopes up yet again.

Already receiving complaints

Perhaps even more unfortunate for IPS Airways is that the airline is already facing complaints from its unhappy passengers, of which there are several. One such passenger was Naveed Ahmed, who was supposed to fly down from Leeds/Bradford to Islamabad on August 6th with his wife and three children to celebrate a family wedding. Ahmed had booked the flight in June and paid approximately £3,000 (\$3,642.50). Five days before the scheduled departure, Ahmed received a text message from IPS Airways informing him about the cancelation.

When Ahmed contacted IPS Airways, he was told the cancelations were due to staffing issues at Leeds Bradford Airport. But when he reached the airport's Chief Executive Officer, Vincent Hodder, the blame was put entirely on the airline startup and not on any services provided by the airport, which was not suffering from any staffing issues. Although he will be fully refunded, Ahmed was frustrated with how things were handled, commenting:

"I am so angry. I don't understand why they didn't contact us earlier when there would have been time to make other arrangements. I know the industry is struggling, and I emailed IPS to check everything was okay last week - they said everything was fine, but they must have

known there were problems."

Will IPS Airways ever take off?

Although the actual reason for the delayed launch and sudden cancelations were never fully revealed, it might have something to do with the fact that IPS Airways allegedly does not hold any UK licenses, not even to sell flights. The airline startup is also currently being investigated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Even if the airline's website prompts a launch in October, the chances seem pretty unlikely, and the lack of any sale of flights beyond October seems quite the indication. Perhaps, IPS Airways might take a lot longer to take off than anyone anticipated.

Two PIA planes avoid collision

Two Pakistan International Airlines planes averted a midair collision on Sunday 24 July over Iranian territory near the United Arab Emirates (UAE) airspace, as both planes were on the same route and altitude.

Due to alleged negligence of the Iranian Air Traffic Control (ATC), which is said to have cleared the same altitude, the two planes came dangerously close to each other. According to sources, a PIA Boeing 777 was en route from Islamabad to Dubai while the other airliner was Airbus A320 from Doha to Peshawar.

Captain Samiullah was flying Airbus A-320 while captain Athar Haroon was flying Boeing 777.

However, when the two planes came closer, one was asked to ascend and the other descended as per standard practice.

There is a system on all planes, called Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS). It automatically guides the plane by communicating with the TCAS of other aircraft.

A PIA spokesman said: "PIA is writing to Iranian air traffic control (ATC) to investigate as the Iranian ATC instructed the plane, but it was wrong."

He said a PIA flight (PK-211), a Boeing 777 from Islamabad to Dubai, was maintaining 35,000-foot altitude when it came close to Peshawar-bound PIA flight (PK-268) of Airbus A320 from Doha. He said PK-268 flight was flying at an altitude of 36,000 feet and was cleared to descend to 20,000 feet.

The descent would have come in the flight path of PIA flight of Boeing 777 PK-211, the spokesman added.

However, he added, the aircraft's TCAS corrected the course for both the planes and automatically guided them.

'Descent without ATC clearance' behind PIA planes near-miss

The Iranian Civil Aviation Organisation (CAO), which investigated the July incident when two Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) planes flying over the Iranian territory narrowly escaped a mid-air collision, has found that one of the aircraft descended without Air Traffic Control (ATC) clearance.

Based on their findings, the Iranian authorities have suggested that the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) take remedial action about the pilot's "misunderstanding" for prevention of similar occurrences, according to a CAO report available with media.

The matter was probed by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB) of Iran after the PIA had asked the Iranian aviation authorities to dig out facts behind the incident, allegedly caused by 'wrong instructions' by the [Iran] ATC to Peshawar-bound PK-286 that subsequently came in the way of Dubai-bound PK-211 flight.

On July 24, PIA flights PK-211 (Boeing 777), en route from Islamabad to Dubai, and another PK-286 (Airbus A320), flying from Doha to Peshawar, came dangerously close to each other, when their Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) a system in the cockpit on all planes that automatically guides it by communicating with the TCAS of another aircraft corrected their course. Sources said Captain Athar Haroon was flying the Boeing 777, while Captain Samiullah was flying Airbus A320.

"Based on radar service within control area (airspace), the controller's instructions and clearance for both traffics were correct, and the cause of TCAS/resolution advisory (RA) serious incident was the pilot's misunderstanding, leading to mistakenly (PIA211) commence descent without receiving any clearance from Tehran [air traffic] controller," the AAIB report stated about the cause.

In its report, the AAIB's safety investigation panel concluded, "The flight PIA211 started to descend without ATC clearance. Details of the flight plan route for PIA211 were against Iran Traffic Orientation Scheme (TOS). Disclosure of the incident report details to public by Pakistan International Airlines spokesperson before issuing the Final Report was against international regulations."

The report also issued safety recommendations to avert recurrence of

such incidents. The Iranian authorities suggested the Pakistan CAA "take remedial action about pilot mistake based on the findings on the report for prevention of similar occurrences". Simultaneously, it also wrote to the Iranian Airport and Air Navigation Company, "Even though the phraseology used by the controller was proper and correct, in order to prevent such an ambiguity or misunderstanding by pilots, it is recommended to make an inquiry from other States about similar and proper phraseology, for the purpose of substitution or amendment of current phraseology."

The report recalled the on July 24, PIA's flight PK-211 made a radio contact with Tehran air traffic controller, when it was identified by the Tehran radar controller. The pilot then requested the controller to advise any "level restriction at MOBET position, and the controller told him expect FL200 20 miles before PATAT, 'report when ready for descent'. The granted message was acknowledged by the pilot accordingly".

"Another flight, PIA286... on reciprocal track... was identified by the Tehran radar controller, and following the pilot's request, this flight was instructed to proceed directly to NABOX waypoint. At 005107UTC, the controller instructed the PIA211 to proceed directly to PATAT waypoint and expect FL200, 20 [nautical miles] before PATAT and stand by for descent.

The pilot acknowledged the message correctly. At 005307UTC, the pilot of PIA286 declared TCAS/RA descending. Immediately, the controller told the PIA211, 'You were told to stand by for descent'.

"At 005407 another flight on frequency told the PIA211 without expressing his call sign: 'you were never given a clearance; you were told to call when ready'. At 005427UTC, the controller cleared PIA211 to descend FL200 and to maintain 20NM before PATAT waypoint. The message was acknowledged. [Later], PIA211 was handed over to the UAE radar... for further descent.

The report further said that on Jul 27, some parts of the above information were disclosed to social media by PIA.

Meanwhile, according to media reports, due to the alleged negligence of the Iranian ATC, which was said to have cleared the same altitude, the two planes came dangerously close to each other and

averted a midair collision over Iranian territory near the UAE airspace.

A PIA spokesman was reported to have said: "The PIA is writing to Iranian ATC to investigate as it instructed the plane, but it was wrong."

He had said the flight PK-211 was maintaining a 35,000-foot altitude when it came close to PK-268, which was flying at an altitude of 36,000 feet and was cleared to descend to 20,000 feet.

The descent would have come in the flight path of PK-211, the spokesman added. However, the aircraft's TCAS corrected the course for both the planes and automatically guided them, he added.

A few days later, Iranian state media had reported the country it was investigating the claim of a near-miss in its airspace between the two passenger jets due to "human error" by air traffic controllers.

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Emirates to upgrade interiors of 120 aircraft as airline expands fleet

Emirates recently announced that it is undertaking its largest fleet retrofit project ever, involving 67 Airbus A380s and 53 Boeing 777s. This project is part of a multibillion-dollar investment that Emirates is making as a part of the “Fly Better” campaign that began in November 2018.

The retrofit will officially begin in November and will be managed entirely by a specially hired team of 190 Emirates engineers who will carry out a full retrofit of four aircraft each month, continuously for more than two years. The retrofit project will be completed in April 2025, and nearly 3,000 new premium economy seats (which will be added for the first time in the 120 aircraft involved) 728 refurbished first class suites and over 5,000 business class seats upgraded to a new style and design will be installed.

Premium economy on some Emirates A380s arrived in December 2020. Since then, the last Airbus A380s to be delivered by Airbus to Emirates have been flying without selling these seats, but offering them free of charge to travelers. As of June 2022, ticket sales began. Premium economy differs from economy in giving a few more inches for the legs and a larger and more reclining seat than in economy class, despite still not having access to the bar on board the A380, which is reserved for business and first class.

A Planned Expansion

Emirates' fleet currently consists of over 250 aircraft, 118 Airbus A380s (the world's largest operator of this type of aircraft) and 134 Boeing 777s (including 10 Long Range and 124 Extended Range, again Emirates is the world's largest operator of this type of aircraft). Emirates' goal, however, is not only to modernize its fleet, but also to expand it to nearly 450 aircraft, having already ordered 50 Airbus A350-900s, 115 Boeing 777Xs, and 30 Boeing 787-9s, currently awaiting delivery. Emirates also has its own Emirates Executive fleet, which offers a private jet option to its customers, consisting of a single Airbus ACJ319, and its own Cargo fleet, but these will not be involved in this retrofit project.

The first tests to implement the retrofits began in July on an A380, where engineers disassembled the cabin piece by piece, recording each step, timing and mapping each action and then repeating it with the other aircraft in the fleet. According to Emirates, a complete retrofit of an aircraft takes 16 days and 1,000 hours of work each day for the team

involved. In addition, new workshops have been specially built at Emirates Engineering to repaint, reupholster and upholster Business and Economy Class

seats with new covers and cushions. The First Class suites, on the other hand, will be disassembled and sent to a specialized company to replace the leather, armrests and other materials.

The total cost of the investment for Emirates is about \$2 billion, and Emirates has announced that it will take about 900 days for the project to be completed if there are no slowdowns.

Thai Airways adds NetLine IT solutions from Lufthansa Systems



Lufthansa Systems announced Thai Airways as a new customer of its network planning system NetLine/Plan and the schedule management solution NetLine/Sched. The carrier has also opted for SchedConnect, the Lufthansa Systems' codeshare management and schedule distribution system. With NetLine/Plan, airlines can maximise the profitability of their route network while balancing commercial realities and operational constraints.

NetLine/Sched enables the airline to measure the best commercial timings for flights with the optimum aircraft utilisation while considering market condition changes and maintaining operational integrity. SchedConnect delivers efficient and automated code share management by saving significant time in daily tasks and identifying ideal and potential codeshare connections.

All applications for Thai Airways are provided as an end-to-end service in Lufthansa Systems' Global Aviation Cloud. The security measures are certified in accordance with multiple industry standards and are regularly reviewed in

audits. Lufthansa Systems is the customer's single point of contact for the entire technology and service stack.

“Thai Airways has been using the efficient and reliable Lido Data solutions and Lido Pilot solutions for many years. Therefore we are familiar with Lufthansa Systems' airline know-how and knowledge and we believe that with these advanced Network Planning, Scheduling and Codeshare Management solutions we can optimise our performance, enhance our working processes and ultimately generate more revenue, with higher profitability,” said Thiti Arayakhun, Head of Scheduling Management at Thai Airways.

“We are happy to welcome Thai Airways as a valued customer of NetLine/Plan, NetLine/Sched and SchedConnect. The joint project was initiated with remarkable speed, focus and commitment by both Thai Airways and Lufthansa Systems, resulting in a swift and successful implementation,” said Tom Vandendael, Senior Vice President Regional Management and David Parrish, Vice President of Sales Southeast Asia and China from Lufthansa Systems Asia Pacific.

IATA applauds central Bank of Nigeria to release \$265 million to the airlines



IATA Applauds As Central Bank of Nigeria Releases \$265 Million To Airlines For Outstanding Ticket Sales

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced it released \$265 million to airlines to settle outstanding ticket sales.

According to the CBN, “a breakdown of the figure indicates that the sum of \$230 million was released as special FX intervention while another sum of \$35 million was released through Retail SMIS auction.”

This followed the escalation of tensions in the airline industry as foreign airlines flying to Nigeria could not repatriate their earnings, causing Emirates Airlines to announce exit from the Nigerian market from September 1, 2022.

Foreign Airlines have also resorted to



selling only their higher fares and selling from abroad as a strategy to take hold of their revenue.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has expressed pleasure over the release of the money by the CBN, emphasising the essence of strong air connectivity to Nigeria's economy.

“We welcome the decision of the Government of Nigeria @cenbank to release \$265 million in airline #blockedfunds. Aviation and strong air connectivity are key enablers of #Nigeria's economy,” IATA noted in a tweet.

There have been worries over more airlines choosing to suspend services to Nigeria after Emirates announced its stoppage of flights to Lagos and Abuja by September 1, 2022. The fears have been allayed by the Nigerian travel agencies association (NANTA), which stated that

no other foreign airline is planning to quit the Nigerian market, apart from Emirates.

Air travellers must declare currency, jewellery: CAA

The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has started implementing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards in accordance with the government's directives for submission of customs' declaration forms by all inbound and outbound passengers of international flights giving details of their currency, gold jewellery, precious stones and restricted goods such as narcotics, weapons, satellite phones, etc.

Pakistan Customs has been directed to depute its staff at all international airports to facilitate inbound/outbound passengers of all international flights.

The airlines' crews will distribute the customs' declaration forms during the flights among all passengers, irrespective of their nationality.

The declaration forms will be deposited at the customs' counters before the immigration desks at all airports.

For outbound flights, airlines have been directed to ask their staff and travel agents to ensure that they would provide a copy of the Customs declarations to passengers to fill it at the time of booking of tickets.

A PCAA spokesperson said that all international passengers coming to and going from Pakistan will have to fill a Customs' declaration (including currency declaration) form.

He said the issuance of the boarding passes to passengers going abroad from Pakistan was subject to submission of Customs' declaration forms.

All passengers coming to the country from abroad will also fill customs' declaration forms at Pakistan's airports, the spokesman said.

During incoming flights to Pakistan, flight crew will inform passengers about the currency and customs' declaration forms' details to facilitate them, he said.

The declaration's details must be provided at the customs' counters at all International Arrivals Lounge desks before the immigration.

The Pakistan Customs has also been directed to depute its staff along with airlines staff to supervise and assist passengers at facilitation counters inside the check-in halls of all airports.

The PCAA would provide full support, space and counters to Pakistan

Customs and airlines for implementing the FATF code of conduct, the CAA spokesman said.

The assistant collector of customs, customs house, dry port, station managers of PIA, Fly Dubai, Air Arabia and Gulf Air have also been directed to implement the government's instructions.

Iran tests drones amid US concern of possible supply to Russia



Technicians operate a military unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drone) on a runway during a two-day drone drill at an undisclosed location in Iran.

Iran on Wednesday 24 August launched exercises to test its combat and reconnaissance drones, state media reported, amid US concerns over the possible supply of Iranian-made unmanned aircraft to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine.

The two-day war-games will involve 150 drones and will cover Iran's Gulf coast and most of its territory, state television reported. The country's air-defences and “electronic warfare” capabilities will also be tested against mock enemy drones.

Iran and the regional forces it backs have increasingly relied in recent years on drones in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf.

The United States said earlier this month that Russian officials were being trained in Iran as part of an agreement on the transfer of drones between the two countries, and accused Tehran of planning to supply hundreds of unmanned aircraft to Moscow for use in Ukraine. Iran's foreign minister denied the claim last month, including in a phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart.

Iran has developed a large domestic arms industry in the face of international sanctions and embargoes that bar it from importing many weapons.

Western military analysts say Iran sometimes exaggerates its weapons capabilities, though concerns about its ballistic missiles contributed towards Washington in 2018 leaving Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with world powers.

HC moved against 'deal with Qatar on PIA control'

The Lahore High Court has been requested to restrain the federal government from striking a "deal" with Qatar allegedly for selling 51 per cent shares of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), and handing over the administrative control of the national flag carrier and the Islamabad International Airport to the Gulf state.

Nabeel Ahmad Kahloon, a lawyer with expertise in aviation laws, has made this request through a writ petition, saying during a recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Qatar, a massive investment had been pledged by Doha in Pakistan's aviation sector.

He stated, as per reports, Qatar expressed its interest in making investments in the airport and hotel sectors. He said that under the "deal" the federal government would hand over administrative affairs of the Islamabad International Airport to Qatar, whereas a Qatari company would provide the relevant services of the airport's terminal and cargo. The petitioner submitted that the Qatari government would also be given shares of the PIA's Roosevelt Hotel in New York's Manhattan in return for the investment. The investment would be received through state-to-state agreements between Pakistan and Qatar, he adds.

He further submitted that the worth of Islamabad airport's land is around Rs4 trillion, besides the revenue being generated out of it. He argued that the government, while signing such a deal with the gulf country should keep the commercial potential of the land in mind.

The lawyer explained that PPRA rules would apply to all financial transactions since both the PIA and the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority were federal government entities. He argued that the federal government did not get approval of the parliament before making the impugned deals for the Qatar investments, whereas the PIA has been converted into a public limited company through PIA Conversion Act 2016, passed by the parliament.

He said any such impugned deal and sale of the national flag carrier need approval of the parliament through amendment in the relevant law.

The petitioner asked the court to declare the impugned deals by the government regarding sale of the PIA shares and surrendering administrative control of the Islamabad airport to Qatar as illegal.

Lufthansa group receives first b787 dreamliner



Boeing and the Lufthansa Group recently celebrated the delivery of the first 787 Dreamliner, a 787-9, to Europe's largest airline group at Paine Field, Everett.

The Lufthansa Group has 32 firm orders for the 787 and joins nearly 50 customers worldwide.

"With the Boeing 787, we are introducing another modern aircraft type that is one of the most fuel-efficient long-haul aircraft in our fleet," said Jens Ritter, CEO Lufthansa Airlines. "This will allow us to significantly further improve the average CO2 balance. This aircraft is sustainable and offers customers a premium flying experience."

"Today's delivery to the Lufthansa Group is a significant milestone for both companies as we resume European 787 deliveries and Lufthansa receives its first 787. I am delighted to see Lufthansa join a growing set of airlines worldwide operating the industry's most capable twin-engine airplane,"

Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes

"With unmatched fuel efficiency and

huge passenger appeal, the 787 will play an integral role in the Lufthansa Group's long-haul network." Deal said.

In addition to 32 787 Dreamliners on order, the Lufthansa Group has firm orders for 20 777-9 passenger airplanes and recently placed a firm order for seven of the new 777-8 Freighter.

Lufthansa 787 Business Class

According to Executive Traveller, Lufthansa's first five Boeing 787s were previously built for China's Hainan Airlines, although financial difficulties mean the Chinese carrier never took delivery of the jets.

As such, these 'Lufthansa' Boeing 787s come fully outfitted with Hainan Airlines seats.

The interior is intended to serve as an



Hainan B787 interior

'interim' business class, bridging the gap between Lufthansa's current and next-generation product.

A brand new Lufthansa business class seat will be added to the mix in 2023, with factory-fresh A350s and 787s due to launch the airline's long-awaited next generation business class seat developed for the Boeing 777-9.



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Airline reliability, refunds: Dot data shows the biggest gripes for flyers in June

The Department of Transportation released the latest data on passenger complaints against airlines on Friday, and the numbers are pretty clear: travelers were most frustrated in the month of June with delays and cancellations.

DOT received almost 35% more complaints overall in June than it did in the previous month about 270% more grumbling than what was normal before the pandemic.

More than a quarter of the 5,862 complaints the department received in June were related to flight delays, cancellations or other schedule deviations.

"DOT remains committed to ensuring airline passengers are treated fairly and is concerned about recent flight cancellations and flight disruptions," The department said in a statement. "The Department's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection (OACP) is monitoring airlines' operations to ensure that airlines are not engaging in unrealistic scheduling of flights and are complying with aviation consumer protection requirements."

"The space was not built for me": Plus-size flyers say airlines have room to improve

Which airline is the most reliable?

The high volume of reliability-related complaints reflected the fact that airlines operated fewer flights in June than May, with more than 3% of domestic flights canceled according to the June report.

American, Delta and United had the most cancellations in June, cutting 4.4%, 3.9% and 3.5% of their schedules, including flights operated by their regional affiliates.

Don't panic: More than 30,000 flights cut in November

Hawaiian, Alaska and Frontier had the fewest cancellations at 0.1%, 0.7%

and 1.1% of their schedules.

Alaska Airlines was also the most on-time carrier in June, with nearly 80% of its flights arriving on schedule. Allegiant Air, meanwhile, had the most delays. Almost 40% of its flights were late in June.

What airlines owe you when flights are canceled, delayed If your flight is delayed, you may be eligible for compensation What happens if your checked bag is lost or delayed? What you're owed What to do if you're sexually assaulted on a plane

Passenger refunds

DOT also received a high volume of complaints related to airfare refunds in June almost 25% of responses were on this topic.

Rules around refunds can be confusing for passengers, but the department is working to clarify when travelers are entitled to their money back. In the meantime, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg recently announced that the department would roll out a dashboard before Labor Day to help travelers figure out when they're entitled to a refund from their airline.

Are you entitled to an airfare refund? DOT seeks to clarify rules

"The Department's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection (OACP) continues to communicate with airlines and travel companies that receive refund complaints to ensure compliance with the refund requirements," DOT said in a statement. "Many passengers who were initially denied refunds have since received the required refunds. The Department has taken and will take enforcement action against noncompliant airlines and ticket agents as necessary."

Complaints from passengers with disabilities rose in June, with DOT reporting 177 complaints about the treatment of disabled passengers compared to 158 in May. Passengers also reported that airlines mishandled 1,145 wheelchairs and scooters in June, about 1.68% of the total number carried, and another increase from the May totals.

Are airplane seats too small? FAA soliciting public comments on minimum dimensions

Other issues

DOT reported higher instances of mishandled baggage in June compared to May

and a relatively high rate (0.36 per 10,000 passengers) of involuntary denied boarding. The department also received 15 complaints related to discrimination and one complaint about the death of an animal in transit.

India to ground all MiG-21 fighter jets

India will ground all its Soviet-era Russian fighter jets, the MiG-21, by 2025, following the death of two officers in a crash, the latest in a series of casualties involving the single-engine jet's failure, a newspaper reported on Saturday 30 July.

The Times of India quoted unnamed Indian Air Force officials as saying the MiG-21s have long past their retirement but must be replaced before being grounded.

The report did not specify what portion of India's fighter-jet capability would be affected.

The Wion news outlet said the air force has around 70 MiG-21s. The air force and defence ministry have been buying aircraft from Western makers in recent years.

A senior defence ministry official declined to confirm or deny the Times of India report, telling only that discussions on the future of the MiG-21 were underway, as sourcing of spare parts from Russia was increasingly difficult due to the war in Ukraine.

A defence ministry spokesman did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The MiG-21, dubbed "flying coffins" by the Indian press, has been the country's key fighter jet since its introduction in 1963 but has been plagued by crashes in later years.

The jets have been a critical security asset in India's military infrastructure, used for example to strike neighbouring rival Pakistan after an alleged suicide attack in the disputed Kashmir region in 2019.

Crash of an air force MiG-21 Bison in the desert state of Rajasthan brings to six the number of MiG-21 crashes since last year, with five officers killed, according to official data and a source.

In 2012, then-Defence Minister A.K. Antony told parliament that more than half of India's 872 MiG-21s had been lost to crashes over the previous four decades.



Egypt Air Cargo Pakistan hosts reception in Lahore



Mr. Waseem Abbas Shah Country Manager Egypt Air Cargo Pakistan addressing on the occasion.



Group photo taken on the occasion of a Hi-Tea hosted by Egypt Air Cargo Pakistan to celebrate the inaugural Freighter Scheduled flight to Lahore at Nishat Grand Ball Room Lahore. Photo shows Mr. Javed Director (PCS) Mr. Zameer Akram Sheikh, Mr. Abdul Imran, Mr. Jahanzeb, Mr. Waseem Abbas Shah and other guests.

Egypt Air starts freighter scheduled flight to Lahore



Mr. M. Yousaf Chairman Pakistan Cargo Services with HE Tarek Bahrough Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan on the occasion of the inaugural freighter flight of Egypt Air from Lahore to Cairo, the airlines will operate freighter flight on every Sundays.



HE Tarek Bahrough Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan and Mr. M. Yousaf Chairman Pakistan Cargo Services along with other guests cutting the cake on the occasion



Mr. M. Yousaf talking to HE Tarek Bahrough Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan



Mr. Waseem Abbas Shah Country Manager Egypt Air Cargo Pakistan receiving the crew of Egypt Air at Alama Iqbal International Airport Lahore.



Group photo taken with Mr. M. Yousaf Chairman PCS.



Group photo of the crew, ground handling staff and guests taken on the occasion.



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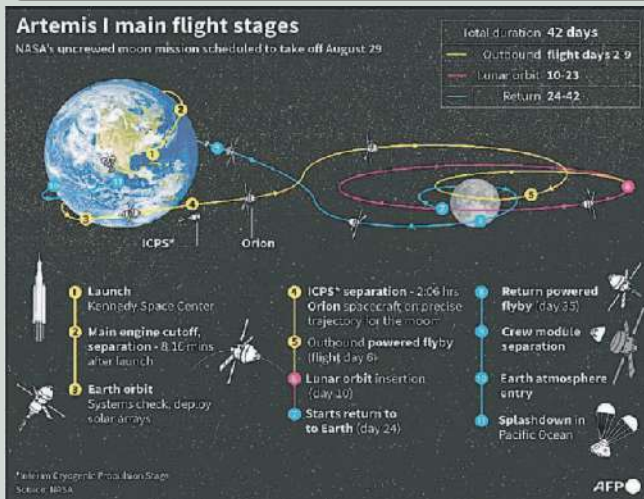


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'Sight to behold': tourists flock to Florida for Moon rocket launch



Seeing a rocket blast off to the Moon is “a once-in-a-lifetime thing to experience,” says Joanne Bostandji.

The 45-year-old has travelled all the way from northern England to the US state of Florida with her husband and two children for a space-themed vacation, and they're prepared to make sure they don't miss a second of the action as NASA's newest and most powerful rocket is scheduled to launch for the first time.

“The plan is to drive very early in the morning and get a spot” on Cocoa Beach, she said, not far from the Kennedy Space Centre.

“I know it's going to be from a far distance, but I still think it's going to be a sight to behold,” Bostandji said as the family waited to enter a park dedicated to space exploration.

Between 100,000 and 200,000 visitors are expected to attend the launch of the mission, called Artemis 1, which will propel an empty capsule to the Moon as part of a test for future crewed flights.

The “historic nature” of Monday's flight, the first of several as the United States returns to the Moon, “certainly has increased public interest,” Meagan Happel of Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism said.

Traffic jams are expected to start by 4am, with the launch scheduled at 8:33am.

And even more people might show up if the launch faces a weather delay, as the make-up date falls on a weekend.

Space cruise

Sabrina Morley was able to find an apartment to rent not far from the beach,

and plans to bring her two children and a few dozen other people on a boat called Star Fleet Tours.

For \$95 a ticket, “we'll go out into the ocean as close as they can get to the launch and we'll watch the launch from the boat,” she said.

“I've never been this close to a launch before,” said the 43-year-old, who grew up in Orlando, less than an hour away.

As a child, she could see space shuttles taking off from her backyard, like “an orange ball of smoke” rising into the sky.

“We would hear the sonic booms,” she remembered.

Morley likes that NASA's Artemis program aims to land a woman on the Moon for the first time, with a crew to head up in 2025 at the earliest.

“Representation matters,” she said, glancing at her two-year-old daughter, who is already wearing an imitation astronaut helmet on her head.

Good for business

The return of prestigious space launches is an economic boon for the region. A family of three will spend an average of \$1,300 over four or five days, according to the tourism office.

On the main road to Merritt Island, the peninsula where the Kennedy Space Centre is located, Brenda Mulberry's space memorabilia shop is packed with tourists.

As soon as they enter, visitors are greeted with Artemis T-shirts for sale, printed in-house there were 1,000 copies made Saturday alone.

The last few days have seen an influx of customers, Mulberry, who founded “Space Shirts” in 1984, said.

“They're just excited I think to see a NASA launch because the private space business is not so motivating to the people,” she said.

This rocket, called the SLS a large model of which is displayed in front of her shop “belongs to the people,” Mulberry said.

“It's their rocket. It's not a SpaceX rocket,” she added.

There is an air of nostalgia for the Apollo rocket program it's been 50 years since the last time a crewed mission went to the Moon, in 1972.

“My family, they had to go to the neighbour's house to watch [the Apollo missions] because they didn't have a television,” Bostandji, who was not yet born, said.

“Now we're going to see it hopefully for real.”

Solar-powered drone crashes in US after record 64-day flight

An unmanned solar-powered aircraft crashed after flying for 64 days, more than doubling the record for a pilotless plane, the US army and media sources said recently.

The Zephyr-8 drone, made by Europe's Airbus, “encountered events that led to its unexpected termination” over a desert test facility in Arizona on Aug 18, the Army Futures Command said in a statement.

The statement did not provide details, but the Simple Flying website, studying online flight tracking data, said the gangly high-tech aircraft was flying in S-shaped patterns over south-western US at 45,000-50,000 feet when it suddenly descended at an accelerated rate.

The army did not explain what happened, but said there were no injuries from the incident.

“Our team is working hard to gather and analyse important data following the unexpected termination of this flight,” Michael Monteleone, director of the army programme overseeing the flight, said in a statement.

The solar-powered Zephyr, with a 25-metre wingspan and weighing just 75 kilograms, had more than doubled the previous flight record for an unmanned aircraft.

The flight fell just shy of the all-time record for any propeller-driven aircraft. In 1959, two pilots flew a Cessna 172 over the south-western US desert for 64 days, 22 hours, and 19 minutes, refuelling twice a day from a pickup truck driving beneath them on the ground.

The Zephyr flew nearly the entire time in the stratosphere, testing its ability to collect and transmit data and be directed via satellite connections, according to the US army and Airbus.

American furthers its commitment to sustainable aviation fuel

American Airlines has announced it has finalized an agreement with biofuel company Gevo, Inc. for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Over five years, American has committed to purchasing 500 million gallons of SAF, the most significant SAF offtake commitment to date for the carrier.



American's Gevo agreement was developed alongside others in the oneworld® alliance. In September 2020, oneworld became the first global airline alliance to announce a target of carbon neutrality by 2050, establishing its commitment to long-term sustainability for the industry. The alliance followed up that commitment with an intermediate goal to achieve 10% SAF use across the member airlines by 2030.



The agreement brings American's total low-carbon fuel commitments to more than 620 million gallons fulfilling roughly 20% of the airline's goal to replace 10% of jet fuel usage with SAF by 2030. The SAF deliveries are expected to begin in 2026 from future commercial operations of Gevo.

American's aggressive climate goals include achieving net-zero greenhouse



gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. That includes becoming the first airline globally to receive validation from the Science Based Targets initiative for its 2035 GHG emissions reduction targets. In 2021,

American received a CDP Climate Change score of "A-" the highest score among airlines in North America, and one of only two airlines globally to score that high. The company's most recent ESG Report further details its forward-looking goals for the coming years and its progress to date.

American aircraft photo gallery (Airbus):

Female captain a first for Etihad, UAE



Captain Aisha Al Mansoori receives her stripes from her sister Mariam Al Mansoori.

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the UAE, announced that Captain Aisha Al Mansoori has become the UAE's first female Emirati Captain in a commercial airline. This is a significant milestone for aviation within the UAE and part of Etihad's efforts to expand the roles of women in aviation, in particular the pilot community. The command upgrade ceremony took place at Etihad's Crew Briefing Centre in the presence of the pilot's family, her peers in Etihad's pilot community, and the airline's senior management.

The 33-year-old Captain joined Etihad's Cadet Pilot programme in October 2007 and was one of only two UAE national females in her batch. In 2010, Aisha Al Mansoori successfully graduated from the programme and took her first flight on an Airbus A320 to Amman, Jordan. Since then, Al Mansoori climbed the ranks, completing the requisite flying hours to become a Senior First Officer. She was then the first female UAE national to fly the superjumbo passenger aircraft the Airbus A380.

To obtain the rank of Captain, Al Mansoori completed Etihad's rigorous programme of checks and the mandatory number of flying hours required to be considered for the rank of Captain. She

passed the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority's theoretical knowledge and flying exams successfully and officially became the first Emirati female Captain to hold an Air Transport Pilot License in the UAE.

Mohammad Al Bulooki, Chief Operating Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, said, "Etihad is extremely proud of Captain Aisha's achievement and the trailblazing role she is playing for women in aviation in the UAE. She

will no doubt be the first of many, and Etihad looks forward to welcoming more female pilots to the rank of Captain in the future. Etihad remains committed to Emiratisation and to elevating Emirati women to play their part in the growth of the aviation industry. Aviation is gender blind, and to prove oneself, Etihad's pilots undergo intensive exams and meet strict requirements on flying hours to ensure the highest standards of training in international aviation are upheld. Aisha earned her rank and will no doubt inspire her fellow Emiratis and young women around the world to follow their dreams in aviation."

Al Mansoori said: "I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to join Etihad's Cadet Pilot programme and grow my career over the years with Etihad. I am thankful for the tremendous support I have received from my instructors at Etihad and for their guidance through my training, which has shaped my skills and prepared me for the rank of Captain. I am proud to be the first female Emirati to be a Captain in a commercial airline, and I hope I will be an inspiration to young women to follow this career path."

On 28 August, Al Mansoori will commence regular flying duties as a Captain at Etihad, a day which also marks Emirati Women's Day.

Teen becomes youngest person to fly solo around the world



Radomir (Bulgaria): Mack Rutherford poses with Guinness World Record certificates after his arrival at an airport.

A British-Belgian teenager became the youngest person to fly solo around the world on Wednesday after a five-month journey that saw him battle monsoon rains, searing heat and bureaucracy.

Cheers went up as 17-year-old Mack Rutherford landed at an airfield near the Bulgarian capital Sofia after flying 54,124 km and visiting more than 30 countries since he departed from the same site in his Shark Aero microlight airplane on March 23.

There were many points in my journey where it would have been easy to give up...But I kept going, even when it seemed like I wouldn't be able to make it to the end," he said. His journey broke two Guinness World records, including one set by his sister Zara, 19, who handed him one of the certificates on the tarmac.

Amazing to finally be here again and to have done my goal, he said with a wide smile.

It took a little bit longer than I had hoped for, but it was very exciting, very interesting trip and I don't regret at all going on it.

Rutherford's journey took longer than planned due to permit delays that forced him to alter his route twice and fly over Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, North America and back to Europe.

His favourite flyovers ranged from the Sahara Desert to Greenland and Iceland. But his trip was also full with challenges, like a 10-hour flight from Japan across the Pacific Ocean to the uninhabited US Attu Island during bad weather.

In Sudan, his solar panel system fell down because the heat melted the glue

maintaining it in place combined with extreme haze. In India, monsoon rains entered his main fuel tanks and soaked his aircraft including some documents on board.

Rutherford became the youngest person to fly around the world solo, taking the title from Travis Ludlow, who was 18 when he completed his attempt last year.

He is now also the youngest person to fly around the world in a microlight aircraft, the title held previously by sister Zara, who completed her own trip around the globe in January this year.

For now, he is not planning on breaking any new records but to go back to school and catch up with his studies.

Rutherford, who gained his pilot's licence in 2020 when he was 15 after training with his father, hopes his five-month voyage will encourage young people to pursue their dreams.

Shell Pakistan to stop aviation operations

Shell Pakistan Ltd announced on Wednesday 17 August it's going to discontinue its aviation operations across Pakistan.

In a regulatory filing to the Pakistan Stock Exchange, the oil marketing firm said it was "no longer commercially viable" for it to run the aviation business.

The company currently conducts its aviation-related operations at four locations: Karachi's Jinnah Airport, Quetta International Airport, Sukkur's Begum Nusrat Bhutto Airport and Nawabshah Airport.

Following the expiry of the leases related to these airports, the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) floated a joint tender for the operation of six airports, including Skardu International Airport and Gwadar International Airport.

"After due consideration of a wide range of factors, including legal compliance, financial and commercial considerations, Shell Pakistan has taken the decision not to participate in the tender," it said, noting that the final date of exit from these airports will be communicated after consulting with the CAA.

However, "Shell Pakistan remains committed to continuing all its other businesses and operations in Pakistan, which remain unaffected," the company said in its latest statement.

As per the last annual report of Shell Pakistan, it was the "second largest jet fuel supplier" in the country and catered to over 25 domestic and international customers.

Speaking to media, Topline Securities Associate Director of Research Umair Naseer said fuel suppliers in Pakistan operate on low profit margins while striving for bigger volumes.

The dominant player in the country's

jet fuel market is Pakistan State Oil Company Ltd (PSO), with a share of 94.5 per cent in 2020-21, according to the state-owned oil marketing company.

The share of PSO is disproportionately high in the jet fuel segment given that its overall share in the oil marketing industry stands at 51.4pc.

Sales of jet fuel underwent a major decline following the pandemic-related curbs that limited international travel following March 2020. As a result, the jet fuel industry shrank 32.4pc in 2020-21 from the preceding year, with the business of PSO declining 32.2pc with the closing volume of 331.5 thousand tonnes, according to the oil marketing company.

In a blow to its already minuscule competitors, PSO also acquired new business in 2020-21 from international airlines and customers, including Virgin Atlantic, Pegasus Airlines, Istanbul Jet, British Airways, Air China, Air Sial and Air Falcon. It also exported jet fuel to cater to Nato/Isaf requirements.

"Oil marketing companies in Pakistan drive profitability on the back of inventory gains. Jet fuel is a very thin-margin segment," said Mr Naseer.

Meanwhile, Shell Pakistan told stock market participants on Wednesday 17 August its net profit for the April-June quarter clocked in at Rs5.4 billion, up 26.8 times from the comparable period a year ago.

Its half-yearly profit amounted to Rs7.5bn after increasing 3.5 times from a year back.

A separate statement by the company released to the press said the turnaround was driven by improved business performance focusing on strategic priorities such as differentiated fuels and lubricants and a favourable change in the pricing formula to the pricing agency S&P Global Platts' indexes by the government.

Rights organisation urges CAA to use humane bird deterrents

Animal welfare organisation, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has discouraged the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority to reverse its “deadly” decision to deploy bird shooters on the runway at Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore and use humane bird deterrents instead.

A letter by the organisation was sent to director general of the authority Khaqan Murtaza regarding the recently reported plan to use lethal means in an attempt to deter birds from colliding with airplanes.

“Money spent on shooting or poisoning birds at airports is wasted on an endless killing cycle because when wild animals are killed, more will simply move in to take advantage of the available resources. Effective wildlife-management programmes are based on a simple rule: If you remove food sources and make an environment unattractive to wildlife, animals will move on. PETA, recommends banning the public from feeding wildlife, installing fencing, planting dense vegetation around nearby water sources, and implementing non-lethal scare tactics, such as sonic devices, lasers, motion detectors, scarecrows, or mylar streamers in order to prevent animals from frequenting an area,” said Shalin G Gala, vice president of International Laboratory Methods.

In response to the letter, the authority highlighted that bird shooters were deployed as a last resort, when the bird population around airfields becomes difficult to control and risk of collisions with aircraft increases.

“Clearing airfields of birds is a round the year activity. Trimming grass, clearing vegetation, use of fire crackers, acoustic systems and flashing bright lights are some of the measures already in use. There is already a plan to acquire modern sound devices to scare birds away and prevent collisions with aircraft. But bird concentration becomes a problem after Eidul Azha and especially in monsoon. Bird shooters are only deployed when danger of bird strikes is critical,” said Saifullah, who is the spokesperson for CAA.

He elaborated on the door-to-door drives and campaigns on radio and television to create awareness about keeping neighbourhoods clean and the risks of littering around airfields.

“Fortunately, nine out of 10 bird strikes in the past have been reported by pilots after safely landing,” he said.

From 2018 till May 31, 2022, about 662 incidents of bird strike were reported to the authority. Since 2018, there have

been 198 bird strikes at the Lahore airport alone, Karachi followed with 192 bird strikes in the last four years, 100 bird strikes have been reported in Islamabad, 40 in Peshawar, 26 in Multan, 53 in Sialkot, 22 in Faisalabad, five in Gilgit, 17 in Quetta, four in Sukkur and one in Skardu.

So far, from January till May 31, this year, there have been 48 bird strikes. The authority is compiling reports of bird strikes in the last few months since Eid and during monsoon when bird concentration around airfields is the highest than at any other time of the year.

“No air space is free from this phenomenon. Of course, safety of passengers is paramount. Damage to aircraft can cause loss of millions of dollars, which causes flight delays. Nonetheless, the authority is in the process of inducting technology to prevent such incidents,” Saifullah said.

Soldier's body found on Siachen after 38 years

The body of an Indian soldier who went missing 38 years ago on a glacier in Siachen has been found. A unit of the Indian Army tweeted pictures of the coffin of Chander Shekhar wrapped in an Indian flag early on Wednesday 17 August, two days after India celebrated the 75th anniversary of independence.

The army said Shekhar was deployed for Operation Meghdoot in 1984 when India and Pakistan fought a brief battle to assert control over the Siachen Glacier, reputed to be the world's highest battlefield. At over 5,486 metres with temperatures that can plunge to minus 50 degrees Celsius, Siachen is one of the toughest military deployments in the world, located in the Himalayan region of Ladakh.

Local media reported that Shekhar was part of a 20-member group that got caught in an ice storm during a patrol. Fifteen bodies were recovered at the time, but the other five could not be found, among them Shekhar, the reports said.

His last rites will now be performed with full military honours in the state of Uttarakhand, where his family lives. His daughter, who was four years old when he went missing, said the family would now get closure.

“He has been long gone... Papa has come but I wish he was alive,” the Hindustan Times newspaper quoted her as saying.

Taliban test repaired planes, helicopters



A Taliban air force plane flies over Kabul on Wednesday 17 August.

Taliban military aircraft roared over the Afghan capital on Wednesday 17 August as the group's defence ministry tested out recently repaired hardware, much of it left behind by foreign militaries and acquired since the Taliban seized power a year ago.

Aircraft, including helicopters and at least one plane, flew low over Kabul skies near the airport, including what appeared to be at least one Russian-made MI-24 attack helicopter and two other American-made aircraft.

A defence ministry spokesperson, Enayatullah Khwarazmi, said the Taliban had recently repaired some helicopters and were conducting the flyovers as a test. He did not confirm the exact make or country of origin, saying only that “all types of aircraft” were being tested.

It was not clear who had provided the technical expertise to repair the helicopters.

Taliban officials have said that pilots, mechanics and other specialists from the former Afghan National Army would be integrated into their security forces.

The defence ministry also said in a statement that its engineering team had recently repaired 35 tanks, 15 Humvee armoured vehicles and 20 US-produced Navistar 7000 military vehicles. All had been damaged as the Taliban took over the country in August 2021, the anniversary of which was marked recently with gatherings and gunfire by the hardline Islamist group.

US troops destroyed more than 70 aircraft and dozens of armoured vehicles and disabled air defences before flying out of Kabul's airport following a chaotic evacuation operation.

Between 2002 and 2017, the United States transferred to the Afghan government over \$28 billion worth of defence articles and services, including weapons, ammunition, vehicles, night-vision devices, aircraft, and surveillance systems, according to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.



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Qatar declares intent to invest \$3bn in Pakistan



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gestures at a briefing during his visit to '974 Stadium', a venue of the FIFA World Cup 2022, on Wednesday 24 August. He said the nation was proud of the fact that Al-Rihla, the official match ball of the Cup, was a 'Made in Pakistan' product. Pakistan Army will provide security during the event to be held in November and December

The state-owned investment fund of Qatar is going to invest \$3 billion in Pakistan, an official statement from the office of the energy-rich country's ruler said on Wednesday 24 August.

The Emiri Diwan, the administrative office of the emir, released the statement as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held official talks with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in Doha following a meeting with the sovereign fund officials a day ago.

The \$450bn Qatar Investment

ماشاء الله #فارورڈ سپورٹس فخر سیالکوٹ، فخر پاکستان

Congratulations to Pakistan's Football industry. Once again, a football produced by a company located in Sialkot has been selected by #FIFA for the 2022 World Cup. The ball, named "Al-Rihla," which means "journey" in Urdu, is manufactured in Pakistan by Adidas through 'Forward sports', a sialkot-based company with 26 years of manufacturing under its belt.



Authority announced its "aspiration to invest \$3bn in various commercial and investment sectors in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan", it said.

The investment from the Gulf nation is expected to help Pakistan bridge the widening gap between the inflows and outflows of dollars that's resulting in a persistent balance-of-payments crisis. The

dollar shortage has weakened the local currency and caused a drawdown on the central bank-held foreign exchange reserves, which dropped to \$7.9bn at the last count.

Speaking to media, Arif Habib Ltd Head of Research Tahir Abbas said the information about the nature of the pledged investment is sketchy at the moment. "I think \$2bn will be in the form of safe deposits with the central bank while \$1bn will constitute the investment part," he said.

Earlier this week, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Acting Governor Murtaza Syed told analysts in a post-monetary policy briefing that the country would receive \$2bn from Qatar in the next 12 months. Although the Qatari statement didn't mention if the pledged investment was in addition to \$2bn indicated by the SBP's acting chief, analysts believe the two amounts will likely overlap.

International news agency Bloomberg reported Qatar is evaluating strategic investments in Islamabad and Karachi airports in addition to stakes in renewable energy, power and hospitality sectors.

Wire service Reuters said Doha has shown interest in airport management



Khawaja Masood Akhtar CEO Forward Sports presenting the ball 'Al-Rihla' to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif during a meeting held recently.

partnership and the Roosevelt Hotel in New York's Manhattan, which is owned by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). It quoted officials as saying that Pakistan has offered a 25pc stake in the hotel, which shut down in 2020 because of a coronavirus-related slump in international travel.

However, Mr Abbas said any substantial progress in the matter of investments in PIA and its hotel is unlikely given the mounting political challenges the government faces on the domestic front.

"We were expecting some update on LNG, but there's been no word on that so far. We get eight cargoes from Qatar every month. We're looking for two to three additional cargoes on the long-term basis," he said.

Qatar is a major supplier of LNG to Pakistan on a long-term contract basis. It's also sponsoring one of the two upcoming LNG terminals in Karachi.

Topline Securities Associate Director of Research Umair Naseer told media it'll be futile to expect Qatar to provide Pakistan with additional LNG cargoes on a long-term basis.

Meanwhile, a statement from the prime minister's office on Wednesday 24 August said Mr Sharif and Qatar's emir agreed to increase the bilateral trade, deepen collaboration in agriculture and food sectors and boost cooperation in energy, renewable energy, tourism and hospitality segments. They also agreed to expand cooperation in defence, aviation and maritime sectors.

Recalling Pakistan's long-term partnership with Qatar in the LNG sector, the prime minister thanked the emir for his support in meeting Pakistan's energy needs. The two sides also explored new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation in the energy sector.

Sheikh Tamim reassured Mr Sharif of Qatar's commitment to forging a stronger economic partnership with Pakistan. The premier thanked the emir for Qatar Investment Authority's readiness to invest \$3bn in various commercial and investment sectors in Pakistan.

Mr Sharif's visit to Qatar comes ahead of an International Monetary Fund meeting that is expected to approve more than \$1bn in financing that has been stalled since the beginning of the year. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also indicated to provide \$1bn each in oil purchase financing.

The prime minister invited the Qatar Investment Authority to invest in Pakistan's energy and aviation sectors. He previously mentioned renewable energy, food security, industrial and infrastructure development, tourism and hospitality among sectors of interest.

Malaysia's acting HC visits mango farms



Chargé d'affaires of the Malaysian High Commission in Islamabad Deddy Faisal Ahmed Saleh visited an 105 years old mango orchard at Adamwali along national highway, some 15 kms from here.

Having liking for the fruit, Saleh noted that mangoes of Rahim Yar Khan were the best in the world due to their taste.

He showed his concern over the impact of climate change which has decreased mango production by almost 50 per cent.

According to an announcement by the orchard management, Saleh visited Rahim Yar Khan along with his father and other family members on their invitation extended to him last year when he visited a mango exhibition arranged by the RYK chamber of commerce in the President House in Islamabad.

"Saleh was much impressed last year after visiting the mango exhibition," Malik Abdul Waheed, the director of the orchard, said.

He said Mr Saleh spent whole the day in the orchard and collected information about different mango varieties. He had a detailed session with gardeners and other staff to learn about packing and grading facilities for the export of mango.

He was told that there were more than 100 mango varieties in the country but Chaunsa was the most sought after which was exported to several countries.

Waheed said mango orchards on 71,000 acres in Rahim Yar Khan district produced 35 per cent of total production of Punjab. But, he regretted, RYK could not get the status of mango zone like the citrus zone of Sargodha.

He said a cold store worth millions was inaugurated for mango exports by former CM Shahbaz Sharif near the Sheikh Zayed International Airport but it could not be completed, he told.

Exports to US hit \$9bn

Pakistan's annual exports to the United States increased by 35 per cent to \$9 billion in 2021-22, statistics released on Saturday 30 July showed.

Last year, Pakistan exported \$7bn of goods and services to the United States. Noting this net increase of \$2bn in a year, Pakistan's US Ambassador Masood Khan said, "there's great potential for further increase in our bilateral trade."

In 2021-22, Pakistan imported \$3bn worth of goods from the US, compared to \$2.4bn in 2020-21. Thus, the total trade volume between Pakistan and the United States has increased to \$12bn from nearly \$9.5bn last year.

Ambassador Khan pointed out that the US has maintained its primacy as the largest export destination for Pakistani goods anywhere in the world.

"If the exports continue to grow at the rate of 35pc per year, in the next three years overall Pakistan-US trade volume would cross \$20bn, which would still be a modest goal given the immense potential that is there between the two markets," he said.

The ambassador said that the remarkable growth of overall Pakistani exports should "contribute to the stability of Pakistan's economy and assuage fears being stoked. "What we need the most is market confidence", he added.

A breakup showed that goods constitute \$6.8bn of the total exports to the US while the component of services, including IT, is \$2.2bn in FY22. Last year, the Pakistan-based tech startups earned around \$800 million out of which 60pc has been funded by US-based Venture Capital firms, primarily in San Francisco. Top American Venture Capital firms like Kleiner Perkins, Tiger Global and Sequia have started supporting Pakistani startups at the pre-seed, seed, and incubation stages.

"The emphasis is on connectivity and productivity as well as tangible results," Ambassador Khan said, adding that early dividends would be forthcoming soon.

Recently Salman Sufi, who heads the prime minister's team for strategic reforms, also discussed various proposals for enhancing bilateral trade with US officials in Washington.

At the White House, he met National Security Council Director Courtney Dunn, discussing a wide range of issues with him, including the resumption of direct PIA flights to the US.

The two sides also talked about posting a representative of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Karachi to ensure Pakistani products get clearance at home.

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A perspective on Pakistani Architecture



The Mohatta Palace was constructed in 1927. Shiv Rattan Mohatta, a Marwari entrepreneur, commissioned a palatial house in the affluent seaside neighbourhood of Clifton. The architect commissioned for his palace, Ahmed Hussein Agha, was one of the first Muslim architects of India and had come from Jaipur to take up an assignment as chief surveyor for the Karachi Municipality.

It is an established fact that architectural outputs are one of the most vocal and pronounced features amongst all environmental ingredients, mainly due to their dimensional magnitude and instant impact on the human mind. Notably, the degree of excellence is directly dependent upon several factors that affect architectural development during the process. It also requires a considerable amount of professional acumen and institutional arrangement to develop a built environment that has the right blend of design finesse and utilitarian merit.

It is interesting that some of the best edifices developed in Pakistan belong to the pre-independence era. The Sindh High Court, Mohatta Palace, Sindh Assembly, KMC Head Office, the KPT building in Karachi, Punjab Assembly, GPO and Lahore Museum in Lahore, and countless other heritage buildings are a reminder of the unrivalled design excellence and functional quality acquired many decades ago.

Recent times have marked many changes and brought new dimensions to the architectural fabric of the country. Corporate head offices are a distinct addition to the built environment. Karachi has witnessed their growth correspondingly. The head office of Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) on main Sir Shah Suleman Road was a dominant structure designed and supervised by the late Habib Fida Ali. In his simple, straight-lined yet ornate approach, he designed the exterior in fair face concrete. The elegant grey cement appearance provides a weatherproof effect, which makes the building not only efficient but also contextually relevant. The intelligent

use of glass enhances the optimum use of daylight, making the building energy efficient.

The Faisal Bank Building on Sir Abdullah Haroon Road, by another eminent architect, Yasmeen Lari, made a fine addition to the city architecture. Aesthetically balanced use of granite and glass has given the assemblage a smart appearance. MCB Towers by Arshad

Shahid Abdulla comprises a balance of glass fenestration and industrialised panels with subtle grooves and niches. The building acts as a dominating edifice of its kind.

Pakistan's built spaces have transformed over the years to better reflect the aspirations of its upwardly-mobile social classes. There are pitfalls that must be avoided for building spaces in the future.

The skyline in Karachi and other prominent cities is being added upon by corporate structures, most of which possess design inputs of reasonably sound quality. In Lahore, the foremost addition is the Allama Iqbal International Airport complex. Designed and supervised by Nespak, it has added a worthwhile edifice which shall remain the gateway to the historic Mughal town for times to come.

Mixed responses have been received about the new Islamabad Airport. Whereas it is grand in scale and possesses a wide range of purpose-built transportation infrastructure for its connectivity, its overall aesthetic and functional performance leave many steps to be covered.

Besides the strength and vigour of the corporate sector, other influences also show in the buildings and spaces created in the recent past. Flexibilities in financial markets and new products in leasing/loaning have allowed large-scale real estate ventures to flourish. Many local and international realtors can also be found developing joint projects and ventures with their local counterparts. Sprawling, up-market real estate ventures abound in major Pakistani cities. The element of comfort is now facilitated by the use of multi-ranged technologies, gadgets and

products.

The ideas and images related to the built environment are largely developed to show gloss and glamour, which has become the ultimate aspiration of all and sundry. However, the building solutions available for low-income groups are extremely limited and sub-evolved without the input of professionals. For this reason, we find that the quality of life and the corresponding built environment for low-income groups is degrading fast. In Karachi, one finds many visible architectural developments in the above respect.

A significant trend is the patchwork of corporate spaces in existing buildings. In this phenomenon, corporate enterprises choose a portion of an existing building and transform it according to their requirements. Building interiors, partial external elevation, signage and décor, partial landscape and even invisible infrastructure are changed to suit corporate standards. Hundreds of buildings in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan have been given such partial facelifts. This approach has created melodramatic effects on the built fabric. One finds a shining, well-articulated and bright-looking built space in an otherwise shabby and run-down structure. In other words, the contrasts in input and appearance of buildings are too sharp to be ignored.

Automobile showrooms of very gaudy kinds are another visible trend that has consolidated itself during the past few years. Major arteries where the elite and upper-middle-income groups move have converted into outlets for glowing auto showrooms. Khalid Bin Waleed Road, Shahrea Faisal, Rashid Minhas Road, Korangi Road and the New M.A. Jinnah Road in Karachi are a few examples where this phenomenon is visible. Similar trends are also found along the M-9 motorway.

Glass façade structures, outlandish building elements and powerful illumination are a typical configuration of this mundane assemblage. The architects who have designed such structures have been pinned down by their demanding clients to increase the capacity and visibility of their merchandise. The trend is growing fast. As automobiles are being marketed and acquired with flexible conditions, car showrooms are likely to rise in number, though not in quality.

Condominiums and multi-storied apartment projects are also on the rise. Due to international partnerships, foreign entrepreneurs have brought their formulae and images for new avenues of luxuries and comforts corresponding to a global

lifestyle. Exotic verdures, gymnasia, restaurants, fitness centres, swimming pools and clubhouses are a few of the ancillary spaces now routinely incorporated into real estate development projects. This rising trend has taken over prized locations, such as beachfronts, highway edges and affluent neighbourhoods. Ecological considerations are compromised against the prospective revenue gains.

The fact is that architects can be engaged in socially responsive approaches and practises through exposure and awareness attempts. Professional bodies may be sensitised to their social responsibility. Vocational training in building, surveying and construction-related trades must be up-

scaled. Every profession possesses a 'para' category paramedics, for instance. Architecture shall also benefit from para-architects if a properly designed course and curriculum are imparted. The Technical Training Resource Centre (TTRC) in Karachi has successfully taken steps in this respect. After careful analysis, this model can be upscaled widely. The TTRC team was able to take cue from Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan's inspirational teachings and practical interventions in various low-income settlements in Karachi and elsewhere in the country.

Architecture in Pakistan, as elsewhere, is governed by numerous factors that have a direct bearing on societal dynamics. No worthwhile architectural project is approved that lacks

commercial potential, especially in the short term. It simply follows the proverb 'all is well that sells well'. The attitudes and working relationships that exist between architects and their clients are fairly amorphous in nature. With the exception of established multinational corporations, enterprises and individuals of repute, the general clientele has not yet understood the material value of the design and execution service that an architect provides under a contractual agreement.

A myopic perception remains that architects charge ultra-high fees for a few criss-cross scribbles and doodles. Such a conception brews misunderstandings, ultimately resulting in the qualitative decline of architectural products.

Punjabi becomes Canada's second-most spoken language

Punjabi has ranked second after Mandarin among the non-official languages, spoken predominately at home, by the largest number of people in Canada, new census data released by Statistics Canada has revealed.

The 2021 census, released on August 18, found that 4.6 million Canadians speak predominantly a language other than official English or French languages at home, among them Urdu has become the fifth top language in the ranking of 12 spoken languages in Canada.

The number of people whose mother tongue is Mandarin or Punjabi, the two most spoken languages nationwide, has grown significantly, with the former increasing from roughly 610,000 in 2016 to 730,000 in 2021 and the latter increasing from 543,000 to 763,000. The Punjabis counted in the census have come mainly from India, speaking gormukhii Punjabi.

Other South Asian languages that also saw marked growth in terms of numbers of people reporting them as their mother tongue include Hindi (133,000 to 224,000), Tagalog (510,000 to 590,000) and Urdu (243,000 to 297,000).

Conservative estimates show that the number of Canadians of Pakistani origin is far more than the official estimates, and an official of the Pakistan High Commission in Ottawa when contacted said 500,000 to 600,000 Pakistanis live in Canada.

In 2021, more than half a million Canadians spoke predominantly Mandarin at home and more than half a million spoke Punjabi. Arabic language is spoken by 290,000 people, the census shows.

The growth rate of the number of speakers of these languages was at least

eight times larger than that of the entire Canadian population. The number of Mandarin speakers grew from 2016 to 2021, but was outpaced by the growth in the number of Punjabi speakers.

Roughly one-quarter of the permanent residents who arrived in Canada from May 2016 to December 2020 were born in a South Asian country, according to the census results.

The results show while the number of Canadians who speak English or French predominantly at home has never been higher, their relative weight in the population has been declining since at least 2001 because of the more rapid increase of other languages.

The 2021 census also found that 4.6mn Canadians speak predominantly a language other than English or French at home. These individuals represent 12.7 per cent of the Canadian population, a proportion that has been increasing for 30 years.

By comparison, the proportion was 7.7 per cent in 1991, when immigration levels were rising.

The vast majority of the Canadian population commonly uses English and French to communicate and access services. Although both are spoken throughout the country, English is a minority language in Quebec, while French is a minority language in other provinces and territories, as well as in Canada as a whole.

According to the Canadian statistics, the number of Canadians who spoke predominantly a South Asian language such as Gujarati, Punjabi, Hindi or Malayalam at home grew significantly from 2016 to 2021, an increase caused by immigration. In fact, the growth rate of the

population speaking one of these languages was at least eight times larger than that of the overall Canadian population during this period.

In contrast, there was a decline in the number of Canadians who spoke predominantly certain European languages at home, such as Italian, Polish and Greek.

In 2021, 189,000 people reported having at least one indigenous mother tongue and 183,000 reported speaking an indigenous language at home at least on, are gular basis. Cree languages and Inuktitut are the main indigenous languages spoken in Canada.

A vast majority of Canadians knows and speaks at least one of Canada's two official languages. In 2021, 98.1 pc population in Canada could have a conversation in English or French, and 92.9pc spoke one of these languages at home at least on a regular basis.

Of the two official languages, most Canadians spoke English at home at least on a regular basis (74.2pc) or predominantly (63.8pc), and English was the mother tongue of more than half of the country's population (54.9pc). From 2016 to 2021, the number of Canadians with English as their first official language spoken, rose from 26m to 27.6m.

More than 70 different indigenous languages are spoken in Canada. In many cases, incomplete transmission to future generations is reflected in the decrease and the aging of populations speaking these languages.

In 2021, more than 20 indigenous languages in Canada were the mother tongue of 500 or fewer people, whose median age was 60 years and older.

Transit agreement to allow regional countries to expand trade: Uzbek envoy

The transit trade agreement (TTA) between Pakistan and Uzbekistan will allow regional countries to expand their trade and transit horizons.

This was highlighted by Uzbek Ambassador Aybek Arif Usmanov while speaking at a round-table conference organised to commemorate 30 years of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The conference was hosted by Centre for Central Asia and Eurasian Studies-Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies in collaboration with the Embassy of Uzbekistan.

Terming the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project an anchor for regional peace and prosperity, Mr Usmanov said the project would soon materialise, making regional re-connectivity possible.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan have diversified relations and made a substantial contribution towards regional peace and stability, he said, adding that both countries have developed stronger and deeper ties in trade and economics, health, security, agriculture and information technology.

He said cooperation between the two countries was building with each passing day, adding that, "there are growing investments from each other's side where people-to-people ties have been diversified".

Mr Usmanov said there was ever deeper and close cooperation in political, economic and security areas.

In her opening remarks, Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies President Farhat Asif highlighted the significance of relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and about chairmanship of Uzbekistan in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) where the country had made substantial contributions by hosting scores of events of diversified nature.

Prof Dr Manzoor Hussain Soomro, president of ECO Science Foundation, highlighted the importance of human development while discussing youth engagement.

Speaking from Tashkent, Kabuljon Sabirov, director, SCO Centre for Public Diplomacy in Uzbekistan highlighted how strong people-to-people ties are building between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, especially at the level of SCO.

Dr Amna Mehmood, professor, Department of Politics and International Relations at International Islamic University said there was a need for

Pakistan and Uzbekistan to work together to promote peace in Afghanistan.

Through enhanced security and political cooperation, countries can resolve common challenges, she said.

Mukhlisa Shayakhmetova, head of the Urdu language department at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, joined virtually and spoke in Urdu about deep-rooted fraternal Pak-Uzbek ties.

She also highlighted the intellectual

and academic contribution of legendary scholars towards enriching the language and literature from both sides.

Finally, Dr Rashid Aftab, director of Riphah Institute of Public Policy thanked all speakers and participants for their contribution to the roundtable.

The students, faculty members, scholars, senators, businessmen, and representatives from local media attended the roundtable.

Import ban on luxury items lifted

The government has increased dealers' commission on the sale of petroleum products by up to an unprecedented 70 per cent and lifted a ban imposed in May on the import of "non-essential and luxury items", excluding automobiles, cell phones and electronics.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet presided over by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail.

The committee also approved tenders for 200,000 tonnes of wheat at about \$408 a tonne and allowed \$11.6 million goodwill compensation for the Chinese casualties at the Dasu hydropower project in July last year.

The meeting approved an increase of 70pc in the dealers' commission on the sale of high-speed diesel (HSD) to Rs7 per litre from Rs4.13 at present.

Likewise, it also increased the dealers' commission on the sale of petrol by 43pc to Rs7 instead of Rs4.90 per litre at present.

This is the steepest increase in margins allowed in one go in the country. The meeting was informed that dealers' margin on the sale of HSD and petrol was also increased by more than 25pc with effect from December 2021. Put together, the commission has jumped 79pc and 112pc on petrol and HSD since then.

The increase was approved based on an agreement reached with dealers in 2018 by former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik, who held the same post at the time.

The meeting was told that dealers had threatened to go on strike and demanded about Rs14 per litre commission on both products, but it was brought down to Rs7.

The ECC was told that oil marketing companies (OMCs) had demanded an increase in their margins to Rs7 per litre from the existing Rs3.68 on both products

but this would be taken up separately so that benefit was given to dealers with effect from Aug 1 and OMCs on Sept 1 to increase prices in phases.

Import ban

The ECC also lifted the ban on imported goods except for completed built units (CBUs) of automobiles, mobile phones and home appliances.

The meeting was told the ban had helped cut the imports of banned items, which shrank by around 70pc from \$399.4 million to \$123.9 million between May 20 and July 19.

Editorial: Lifting import ban

The major contributors to this reduction of about \$275m were automobile and mobile phone CBUs, which had a share of 79pc in the total import reduction. The remaining 21pc reduction was spread over 810 tariff lines impacting multiple sectors of the economy, including foreign investments.

The ECC also decided that all held-up consignments (except items which still remain in the banned category) which arrived at the ports after July 1 should be cleared subject to payment of a 25pc surcharge.

Wheat import

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research submitted a summary on urgent advice relating to the award of the fourth International Wheat Tender 2022 opened on July 25.

The tender was opened on July 25, in which six international suppliers participated, out of which five offered bid rates. The ECC approved the lowest bid offered by Falconbridge FZ LLC at the rate of \$407.49 per tonne CFR bulk on a sight-letter-of-credit basis.

The ECC also approved domestic gas supply to Fatima Fertiliser's Sheikhpura plant and Agritech and advised the TCP to negotiate wheat imports from Russia at lower rates.

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Railways to receive 46 Chinese passenger coaches by December



The Pakistan Railways (PR) will receive 46 coaches, of 230, from China in December.

The coaches will have the capacity to run at the train's speed of 160 kilometres per hour. PR teams are in China for the inspection of the prototypes of the coaches as well as the modern high-capacity wagons (goods/freight wagons) and to receive training on manufacturing of such rolling stock.

An official source in the department said the first batch of high-capacity freight wagons would also be ready by January or so as their prototypes are not ready.

The railway is working to upgrade the dilapidated track as the Khanpur-Kotri section is not fit for high-speed train operation.

"But most of the ML-1 parts are fit for the 120km per hour train operation, and after the completion of the ML-1 project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the entire ML-1 track would have the capacity to bear the rolling stock operations at the speed of 160km per hour," the source claimed, adding that the work on the upgrade of the track, especially the Khanpur Kotri, would be launched soon.

Under \$140 million contract (Rs31 billion, approximately), the Chinese company is to manufacture 230 state-of-the-art passenger coaches, of which 46 will be provided as completely built units and the remaining 184 will be manufactured in Pakistan by the PR engineers and technical staff under the supervision of the Chinese experts.

Pakistan - PR Carriage Factory, Islamabad - the Chinese firm will provide spare parts and raw materials.

The PR teams left for China in the second week of August consisting of 18 officials for design inspections, 20 for other inspections and the others for participating in the training related to the transfer of technology.

The dilapidated condition of the railway tracks and rolling stock, faulty signalling/interlocking system, officials' negligence, speeding, unmanned railway level crossings, poor maintenance, financial crises and shortage of staff have caused a number of fatal accidents during the last couple of years.

The year 2019 was the worst for the railways in terms of accidents, including the horrible Tezgam fire tragedy, which occurred in October 2019. Over 100 accidents besides 111 incidents of engine failure were reported in 2019 alone. Over 100 people also lost their lives. The main accidents included the derailment of eight wagons of a freight/container train near Rahim Yar Khan (Taranda) on April 1, the derailment of a goods/container train near Padedan Station (Sindh) on May 18, derailment of Thal Express near Kundian on May 21, derailment of Jafar Express near Gujjar Khan on May 30, the fire incident in Jinnah Express dining car near Harappa (Sahiwal) on June 18, accidents of Jinnah Express near Hyderabad on June 20, parting of a running Pakistan Express train in two portions near Khanewal on July 11, accident of Akbar Express and goods train at Walhar station on July 12, derailment of Zakariya Express and a

Under another similar nature contract, a Chinese firm will manufacture 800 freight wagons and 20 brake wagons. The manufacturing of 184 coaches in Pakistan will be under the 'Transfer of Technology' project. For the coaches planned to be manufactured in

goods train near Kotri and Rohri stations on July 23, Tezgam train fire tragedy on Oct 30, accident of Sargodha Express with a dumper truck on Dec 10 and derailment of Jinnah Express near Lahore Railway Station on Dec 17.

Similarly, in 2020 train accidents continued, including a collision between Sir Syed Express and a mini truck at an unauthorized level crossing/passage, and the ramming of a train at an unmanned level crossing into a passenger coach near Sucha Soda. Up to 22 people died in the accidents. Likewise, in 2021 (especially from January to May), 64 accidents were reported. However, the railway authorities claimed that the accident ratio declined by 23 percent, while comparing the data with 2020's first five months. However, on June 6, 2021, up to 55 people lost their lives while nearly 100 others were injured after two passenger trains (Millat Express and Sir Syed Express) collided near Daharki, a city located in the Ghotki district of upper Sindh.

Thousands trapped in China's tourism hotspot

Over 80,000 tourists are stranded in a resort city popularly known as "China's Hawaii" after a Covid flare-up led authorities to impose strict travel restrictions.

Tourism hotspot Sanya is a city of more than a million people on the southern island of Hainan, where 483 Covid cases were reported on Sunday. All flights out of the city were cancelled over the weekend, with authorities also halting train ticket sales.

Tourists who want to leave must test negative in five PCR tests over seven days, health authorities said. Hotels in the city have been asked to offer guests a 50 per cent discount until the travel restrictions ease, an official said during a news briefing on Saturday 6 August.

China is the only major economy still holding fast to a zero-Covid strategy with snap lockdowns and long quarantines, battering local tourism.

The country's borders have also remained largely closed since early 2020, halting international tourism.

The latest Covid outbreak comes during peak tourism season in Sanya, a popular surfing spot.

All entertainment venues including spas, karaoke bars and pubs have been closed since last week, but essential services such as supermarkets and pharmacies remain open.

Thai Buddhist monk visits Peshawar Museum



A Buddhist Monk Arayawangso from Thailand on Sunday 31 July visited the Peshawar Museum along with 20 followers.

A Buddhist Monk Arayawangso from Thailand on Sunday 31 July visited the Peshawar Museum along with 20 followers.

He expressed his interest in Gandhara and various relics of Buddhist civilisation kept in the museum.

Arayawangso said that he would write a book by researching the Buddhist relics in Taxila, Havelian, Swat and Peshawar.

He added that the book would also be translated into different languages.

The book, he said would be used as a reference for research papers in the world.

"I want to tell the world that the smiles of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Thailand match each other," Arayawangso said.

"Buddha followers living in 32 countries have been coming to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as there is complete peace here," he said.

"There are many opportunities for religious tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, besides natural scenery tourism," Dr Abdul Samad, the director of archaeology and museums, told this news agency.

He said that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there were holy places of six religions of the world. "Like the people of Peshawar, the food of Peshawar is also of high quality," Dr Samad said while briefing the delegation.



The Director of Archaeology, Dr. Abdul Samad, briefs Thai monk Arayawangso and his disciples about a statue at the Peshawar Museum.

Thai monk visits Buddhist sites in Swat



Buddhist monk Arayawangso bows before the Buddha footprint in Swat Museum.

The most celebrated monk from Thailand, Arayawangso, said that Buddhist sites in Swat were an important part of Buddhist history in Pakistan and must be visited by followers of the religion from all around the world.

He was visiting the Buddhist sites along with his 20 disciples and other people from Thailand. On the first day, the members of the delegation visited Swat Museum, Saidu Sharif Stupa and Butkara Buddhist Monastery where the monk worshipped.

Monk Arayawangso said that it was his first visit to Swat. He said that he had studied a lot about Uddiyana, the ancient name of Swat, and its rich and diverse history.

"I am happy to see the Buddhist sites and hundreds of artefacts in Swat Museum. I wish Buddhists from the 32 countries of the world visit Swat and see the ancient monasteries and other sites," he said.

Dr Nitinant Wisaweisuan, the dean of Puey Ungphakorn School of Development Studies, Thammasat University, a member of the delegation told media that she was impressed with the scenic beauty of Swat and its diverse cultural heritage and history including Buddhism.

"I would like to encourage and invite all the Buddhists of the world to find an opportunity to come to Swat as this is the place where they will find a lot of Buddhist monuments and sacred sites. In this way, the Buddhists can learn and understand how Buddhism evolved and spread from here," she said.

The director of archaeology and museums, Dr Abdul Samad, who accompanied the group, told media that it was the first time in the history of the region that a high-ranking monk was visiting Buddhist holy places in Pakistan for a Rain Retreat Programme and spreading a message of peace.

Gasho Lake fishing festival ends



A FISHERIES official weighs a trout caught during the competition.

A two-day fishing festival concluded at Gasho Lake, Sai Bala, on Monday 25 July.

A large number of locals and enthusiasts from different parts of the country took part in the competitions, with individuals using all their skills to catch the heaviest of all trout fish to secure their victory.

Traditional games such as basra (in which a player stands and moves on one leg and hit the other with his body with an aim to make him fall to the ground), a tug-of-war and volleyball were also organised during the festival.

Folk artists sang traditional songs and performed dance on the sidelines of the games and the fishing competitions. The event was organised by Gilgit-Baltistan's fisheries department in collaboration with the district administration.

"Gasho Lake is the nearest tourist spot from Gilgit city and the GB government is trying to make it easy for domestic and foreign tourists to reach here," said Gilgit-Baltistan information minister Fathullah Khan while speaking at the closing ceremony.

He expressed the hope that this tourist spot would become the centre of attraction for tourists. He said the government was organising such activities to promote the cultural identity of the region.

He said tourism activities in Gasho Lake area would create employment opportunities for locals.

GB Scouts Director General Ziaur Rehman, NLI Bunji Centre commander, agriculture secretary Khadim Hussain Saleem, information secretary Momin Jan and a number of other officials attended the closing ceremony.



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Nagarparkar being made a unique tourist site: minister

Sindh Minister for Culture, Tourism and Education Syed Sardar Ai Shah has said that the provincial government was committed to promote tourism in the hilly areas of Nagarparkar and other parts of Tharparkar district by providing more facilities to tourists and picnickers.

Mr Shah, who visited Karoonjhar Hills recently, was speaking to the media about his plans to promote tourism in the desert region.

“We have already established a beautiful tourist attraction, Roolpo Kolhi Resort, here whereas more such projects are in the pipeline to develop the area as a unique tourist site. These project would help promote seasonal tourism in Tharparkar,” he said, and added that board and lodging facilities for families in other rest houses here would also be made available.

Mr Shah said that a 30-room comprehensive English-medium school

with all essential facilities and science equipment would be established for local boys and girls in Nagarparkar. Besides, he said, a centre for archaeological research and another resort with modern facilities were being established this town.

Regarding illegal extraction of granite from Karoonjhar hills, the minister said that he was trying his best to check the illegal activity that was damaging the hills. “The PPP leadership believed in protecting all such sites and encouraging healthy activities so that people could get maximum benefits from them and Sindh’s culture could be promoted in a very effective manner,” he said.

He pointed out that a museum and certain other structures were built and named after eminent freedom fighter Roolpo Kolhi and Thari philanthropist Miskeen Jahan Khan Khoso.

Mr Shah said that the higher authorities would again approach the command of the border security forces on a plan to install a chairlift at Karoonjhar.

He said he was delighted by seeing a large number of tourists thronging Nagarparkar and other parts of the Thar region to enjoy natural beauty amid heavy rains over the last few weeks that had turned this desert region lush green.

Speaking about the acute water shortage experienced by Sindh in the first half of the year, Syed Sardar Shah said that the provincial government had undertaken certain mega projects of small dams to store rainwater which brought about an agricultural revolution in this region. “More projects to promote culture and heritage were being undertaken with a view to ensure people’s easy access to historical sites, especially the ancient Jain temples,” he said.

MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro told the media that the ongoing rainfall had already turned the entire desert region lush green and thousands of people were visiting it these days to enjoy natural beauty.

Baba Ghundi festival brings together Afghans, Pakistanis

The 12th International Baba Ghundi Festival kicked off on Friday 22 July in Upper Hunza’s Chipursan valley, close to the Pak-Afghan border.

The festival was held every year at the shrine of revered Sufi saint Baba Ghundi to pay homage for his services to spread Islam in the region.

The festival, which was held near Afghanistan’s Wakhan region, brings together the Wakhi speaking people from the two countries.

The three-day festival was inaugurated by Force Commander Gilgit Baltistan Maj Gen Jawwad Ahmed. The ceremony was attended by a large number of tourists, locals and officials.

The festival was being organised by the Chipursan Local Support Organisation in collaboration with the Gilgit-Baltistan government.

Sufi night, Buzkashi competitions, polo matches, traditional sword dance, Yak Safari and race, traditional food and folk Wakhi music were part of the festival.

The festival was included in the annual calendar of the GB government in 2010. However, it couldn’t be held in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

The residents of the Wakhan region, who have ancestral and cultural ties with the people of Chipursan and Gojal valleys



A polo match was played on Saturday 23 July as part of the annual Baba Ghundi festival, which also features a Sufi night, Buzkashi competitions, sword dances, Yak Safari, and a food and folk Wakhi music show.

in Upper Hunza, travel on yaks, crossing glaciers and mountain peaks for days to attend the festival.

This journey is only possible during the summer season that lasts from June to September.

Rahimullah Baig, a resident of Gojal, told Dawn that the people of Chipursan and Wakhan had been carrying out barter trade for centuries.

Afghan traders cross the Irshad Pass and exchange yaks, sheep and goats with

shoes, garments, utensils and other products procured from the Pakistan side.

The organisers said the festival provided an opportunity to the people of both Chipursan and Wakhan to interact and develop trade links.

A large number of devotees also visit the shrine from various parts of GB and enjoy Buzkashi and yak race competitions held there.

The three-day festival will conclude on Sunday 24 July.

Dawn breaks on Independence Day with 21-gun salute

Independence Day celebrations marking 75 years of freedom this August 14 commenced with a 21-gun salute at the Naval headquarters here at dawn following a 31-gun salute in Islamabad along with prayers offered for the country and the nation.

Acting Sindh Governor Agha Siraj Durrani along with Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited the Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum and offered fateha. They also hoisted flag and laid floral wreaths on the Quaid's grave.

The national flag was hoisted at all important public and private buildings while cake cutting ceremonies were held.

In a spectacular ceremony, the smart young cadets of the Pakistan Naval Academy, dressed in their crisp white full dress uniforms, assumed guards' duty at the Mazar-i-Quaid.

The Commandant of the Pakistan Naval Academy Air Commodore Mohammed Khalid, the chief guest on the occasion, laid a wreath at the mazar and offered fateha.

Sindh Acting Governor Agha Siraj Durrani and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah laid wreaths at the Mazar-i-Quaid and hoisted the national flag.

Administrator Karachi, law adviser to the Chief Minister and Sindh government spokesperson barrister Murtaza Wahab also visited the Mazar-i-Quaid to lay a wreath and sign the guest book.

After the VIPs visits, the mausoleum was opened to the general public.

Other than the change of guards ceremony at the Mazar-i-Quaid and special gun salutes and flag hoisting ceremonies at all their units, all Pakistan Navy ships and establishments were illuminated in Navy's traditional manner.

There were the singing of the national anthem at daybreak and a graceful display by the Pakistan Navy band along with a Jashn-i-Azadi walk, tree plantation, a hifz-o-qirat competition, various sports events and Independence Day rallies by schoolchildren and women.

Also under the auspices of the PN led CTF-151, Independence Day was also celebrated at HQ Combined Maritime Forces Bahrain.

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) joined the nation in their 75th Independence celebrations with fervour and dignity.

The day commenced with offering of special prayers for integrity, progress and



Under a blue sky and the shadow of the Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum, children of government schools sitting on stairs appear to be anxiously waiting something exciting to happen during Independence Day celebrations as a lone soldier stands sentinel over them.

prosperity of Pakistan in mosques of all the Pakistan Air Force Bases, headquarters, regional air commands and installations followed by flag hoisting ceremonies which were attended by a large number of officers, airmen and civilians.

Similar ceremonies were also held at all Regional Air Commands.

On the occasion, a special national song was prepared by the PAF Directorate of General Public Relations to pay homage to their brave officers who have always led from the front.

Boat rally

A boat rally was organised by the Fishermen's Cooperative Society (FCS) at noon, which saw participation of hundreds of fishermen.

They had all decorated their boats and were flying the Pakistani flag.

The rally, which started at the Keamari Jetty, finished after sailing around all the prominent islands near the harbour.

Federal Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel, the chief guest on the occasion, appreciated the enthusiasm and passion of fishermen.

Administrator of FCS Zahid Ibrahim Bhatti praised the fishermen and their love for their country.

Pakistan Maritime Security Agency Director General Mohammed Farooq, Brigadier Tauqir of the Sindh Rangers, Commodore Abid Hussain of Pakistan Navy, Col Waqar Azeem of Pakistan Coast Guard were also present on the occasion.

Schools celebrations

Many schools in the city marked

Independence Day with singing of national songs and presenting tableaux. The children were seen dressed up as the various freedom fighters for school plays that looked back at the history of Pakistan and its creation.

Classic cars rally

The 75 years of Independence were celebrated in a big way by the Motor Club of Pakistan in collaboration with the Vintage and Classic Car Club of Pakistan and the Heritage Motoring Club of Pakistan by holding the Freedom Drive comprising some 50 of the most beautiful and exquisite automobiles in the country flying the Pakistani flag.

These included a 1924 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost, a 1961 Mercedes Benz W-121, a 1972 Mercedes Benz W108 300SEL 4.5, an iconic 1966 Porsche 356, the 1979 Ford Bronco, a 1954 Austin Healey, a Chevrolet Caprice station wagon, a 1989 Chevrolet Caprice Classic Brougham, a 1969 Fiat 500D, a 1955 Triumph TR2 1955 and a 1966 Jaguar E type.

The highlight of this annual Freedom Drive was the inclusion of the newly launched electric vehicle Rinco Aria and indigenous motorcycle SideCAR along with lots of heavy bikes, too.

One of the most exquisite cars in the collection were the Rolls Royce Silver Ghost, which was once used by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah during his oath taking ceremony as the first Governor General of Pakistan and the 1972 Jaguar XJ6 Series-1 painted in the national flag green colour.

The drive which started from Frere Hall concluded at the Nishan-i-Pakistan at Seaview.

Electric vehicle launch

The bright red prototype of Pakistan's 'first indigenous electric car', the Nur-E 75 was unveiled at a local hotel here.

The '75' in the car's name refers to the country's 75th Independence Day and the 'E' in there obviously stands for 'electric'. The car is gifted to Pakistan by the Distinguished Innovations, Collaboration and Entrepreneurship (DICE) Foundation, a US non-profit organisation, run by Pakistani expatriates.

DICE joined hands with local academia and industry to found the car company JaXari, named after the 12th century scientist Ismael al-Jazari, to design and build the car.

Earlier, at the strike of midnight, the Karachi Press Club members celebrated the occasion by cutting a 75-pound green cake.

Political parties celebrate Independence Day

Political parties - both ruling and opposition - on Sunday marked August 14 with number of events and rallies to celebrate Independence Day across the city vowing to keep the national interest as first priority of their political struggle.

The ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) organised a flag hoisting and cake cutting ceremony at party office which was attended by a large number of workers and addressed by its Sindh chapter president Senator Nisar Khuhhro.

The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf staged several rallies and ceremonies in different area of the city.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) in the wee hours of the day carried out fireworks in different city districts and organised flag hoisting ceremony at its temporary headquarters in Bahadurabad.

The Jamaat-i-Islami staged a "family festival" in North Nazimabad near KDA Chowrangi that included rally and fireworks. The event was addressed by party Karachi chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman.

Former city mayor and founder Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) Mustafa Kamal led the party celebration held in North Nazimabad which included fireworks and a rally.

Sindh Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen president Allama Baqir Abbas Zaidi also visited the Quaid mausoleum and paid homage to the founder of Pakistan. He placed wreath of flower on the leader's grave and offered fateha for his eternal peace.

Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan Karachi chief Qasim Fakhri led a rally to Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum where it offered fateha and paid homage to founder of the nation.

More tourism bane, not boon for northern areas



Michael Beek with Magda from Poland and Ameer Ullah from Diamer at Rupal Valley near Nanga Parbat base camp.

German journalist and tour operator Michael Beek has warned that unplanned tourism activities on some of the world's highest mountains in Gilgit Baltistan pose a serious threat of environmental degradation.

Mr Beek has been a frequent visitor to these mountains in the past four decades and also authored a guide book "Pakistan". After his recent trek to Nanga Parbat (8,126m) base camp, he made a post on his Facebook account highlighting the environmental degradation caused by rapid development.

In the post, he wrote: "I have just returned from Nanga Parbat, the mountain that has dominated my life since 1981. A wonderful natural paradise, such as is rarely found on our planet. I know every side of the valley, every pass and many mountain farmers, without whose help the tourists could not manage a trek."

He continued, saying: "I have often walked around this mountain and been happy. But in the last five years, everything has changed. There are now 25

hotels on Fairy Meadows and there are so many people that the peace is over. Individuals incapable of walking are carried up on horses with their mobile phones in their hands, sometimes more than 600 in one day. Plastic waste is everywhere along the path, drinking bottles are simply thrown down into the Rakhiot River, nobody cares. It makes me sad. In the meantime, a road leading to Biji (Herrligkoffer camp) in Rupal Valley where the rich drive up in their heavy off-road vehicles to distribute their rubbish. Everything is full of plastic waste and the spring river in the base camp is filthy.

"The authorities don't care about anything. No Rangers, no waste disposal, nothing. Everyone does what they want and nature is irrevocably destroyed. I am just appalled and angry about so much ignorance and stupidity."

Talking to media Mr Beek said that he has been coming to Pakistan for the past 40 years.

"I love the country and the people. I have a lot of friends all over the country. It's my second home," he added. "Tourists who visit the region should understand the sensitivity of the area," he said, adding that they should visit on foot and not on their cars or motorbikes.

He warned that mass tourism and development in the region without responsibility and planning would result in a disaster. He observed that there should be a ban on the construction of hotels in national parks and on speed boating in lakes.

He also expressed concerns over the mass trekking activities on the K2 and its consequences for the nature. "The new expedition tourism we faced this year at K2, for example, is a disaster. Rich people in a big camp with parties in the evening and bonfires. From where do they bring wood," he said while hinting at the environmental degradation caused by these activities.

He said the government should take responsibility and empower the forest department, public work department and environmental protection agency and help these departments to enforce the laws.

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Records smashed as over 100 leave a mark on K2 summit

For the first time, more than 100 climbers summited the world's second highest peak in a single day, with female mountaineers from Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Oman creating history by becoming the first-ever woman of their respective country to reach the top of 8,611-metre K2.

Pakistani climber Samina Baig, who had summited Mt. Everest in 2013, summited K2 along with her team, three hours before 'mountaineer mom' Naila Kiani, who had scaled Gasherbrum-II only last year, summited it. In all, 18 Pakistanis, including many from Gilgit-Baltistan, scaled the country's highest peak on the same day.

Also, 29-year-old Grace Tseng has become the world's youngest female climber to summit K2 without supplemental oxygen and the first Taiwanese ever to have stood on top of the Savage Mountain.

While 170 climbers from various continents had started their summit push from the base camp recently, more than 100 mountaineers from the US, Canada, the UK, Russia, China, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Andorra, Poland, South Africa, Japan, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Nepal and Malaysia started reaching the top of K2 from the early hours of Friday morning till afternoon.

Samina Baig creates history, again; 29-year-old makes it to summit without supplemental oxygen; women from Iran, Saudi Arabia and Oman break glass ceiling

The astonishing feat by several expedition teams was made possible as the forecast of stable weather at Karakoram Range Mountains encouraged five people from Nepal to fix ropes to the top of the peak, opening the route for other climbers on late evening.

Besides the two Pakistani women, Sirbaz Khan, Fida Ali, Eid Mohammad, Sohail Sakhi, Bulbul Karim, Ahmed Baig, Rizwan Dad, Waqar Ali, Shah Doulat, Shah Shimshali, Wajidullah Nagri, Akber Hussain Sadpara, Abid Hussain Sadpara, Zakir Sadpara, Ashraf Sadpara and Mr Inayat from different parts of Pakistan with various expedition teams summited the peak.

"We are extremely proud to announce that Samina Baig with her strong Pakistani team, successfully summit the world's most fascinating and dangerous mountain known as Savage Mountain, the world's second and Pakistan's tallest mountain, this morning at 7:42am," said Karakoram expedition through a press release.



Mountaineers take a selfie at one of the last camps before the K2 summit.

Samina Baig who comes from the remote village Shimshal not only has the honour of being the first Pakistani woman to summit K2 and Mt Everest, but also holds the unique record of being the first Pakistani amongst men and women to climb seven summits in seven continents.

From Iran, Afsaneh Hesamifard is the first woman to summit K2. She has already summited Mt Everest and Manaslu. Similarly, Lebanese-Saudi fitness expert Nelly Attar set a new record by becoming the first-ever Arab woman to summit the world's second highest peak. Also, Nadhira Alharthy is the first woman from Oman to have graced her country with the honour.

As part of her campaign to beat the time record of ascending all the 14 eight-thousanders across the world within six months, a 36-year-old woman from Norway, Kristin Harila, also summited K2. For this purpose, she had started her attempt to climb five 8,000-metre high peaks in Pakistan, including K2 and Nanga Parbat, in two months.

Tseng Ko-Erh, aka Gr Stefi Trouget, a woman from Andorra, who summited K-2 without any supplemental oxygen, dedicated her summit to late Sergi Mingote, Ali Sadpara, Antonio Atanas all fallen heroes of K2 Winter 2021 expedition.

Also, Ms Jing from China, who earlier climbed Mt. Everest and Lhotse in spring season without supplemental oxygen, summited K2 without additional oxygen.

French trekker rescued

Meanwhile, female French trekker,

Nadia Sarah Baloul, who had been stranded at Concordia near K2 base camp since Wednesday, due to high altitude sickness was airlifted to Skardu by Pakistan Army helicopters.

The foreign trapper was awaiting rescue at Concordia near K2 base camp after she came down with high-altitude sickness. She is under treatment in Combined Military Hospital, Skardu, where her health condition is improving, said Apricot Tours managing director Wajahat Khan while speaking to media.

He said the French trekker was part of a 13-member team of foreign trekkers who had started their base camp trek from Skardu about 10 days ago. He said Ms Sarah complained about breathing problems and nausea when she reached Concordia.

First summer push

This was the first K2 summer push of the season, as climbers are expected to summit the peak till July 25 before the next weather window on July 28 allows them to make an attempt, Mohammad Ali Nagri from Adventure Pakistan told media.

He said over 100 climbers started their final summit push after the Nepalese team opened the route from camp to the top. The climbers started reaching the top of K2 at 2am and continued to do so till afternoon.

Karar Haidri from Alpine Club of Pakistan said K2 summiters descended to camp 4 or camp 3 after the summit. According to him, the fresh teams of climbers would start to move towards the summit.



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