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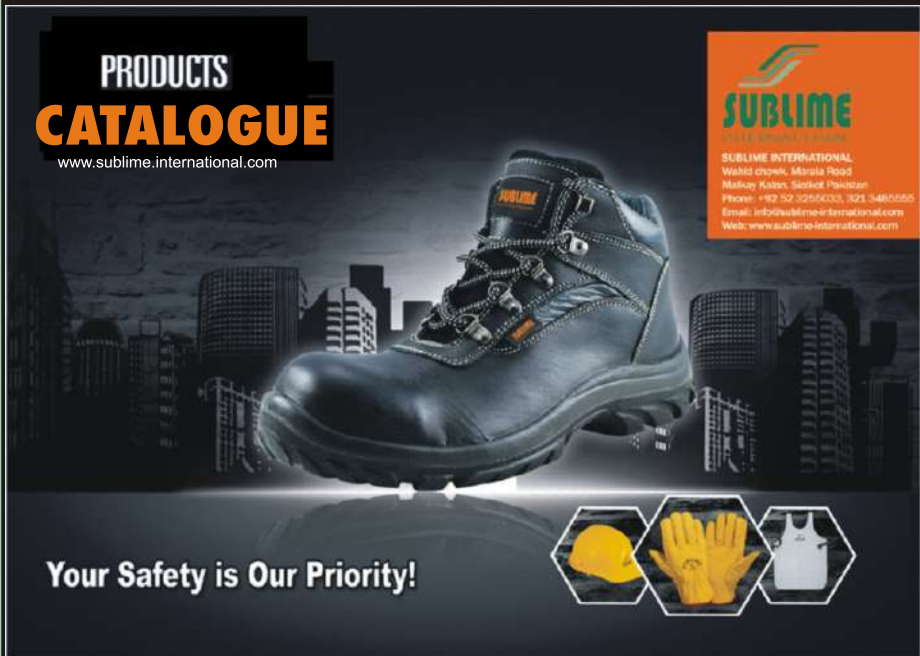
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CONTENTS

New
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PCAA Celebrates 100 years of worldATC 06
 PIA inducts another A320 to its fleet 08
 What is an airline's load factor and why does it matter? 09
 Gulf Air brings home the World's most improved Airline Award 10
 Govt drops mask mandate for all flights as Covid subsides 12
 How Qatar Airways is Embracing the FIFA World Cup Onboard 13
 SalamAir connects Prague with Oman 15
 Think airplane seats are too small? Time is running out to let the FAA know 16
 Why does Tokyo have two airports? 17
 First Etihad Airways flight using sustainable aviation fuel 19
 AirSial announces to launch of internatinal flights 20
 US-Bangla Airlines and Sabre sign new deal to support the carrier's indirect retailing growth 23
 Singapore Airlines goes live with new cargo management system 24
 Lufthansa unveils new cabins - first and business class suites 25
 British Airways brings back its full Club World service 26
 Pakistan will always come out stronger after a crisis 29
 CAA to hire private firm to maintain cleanliness at IIA 32
 Emirates increases service in Asia 33
 CPEC projects to speed up after JCC meeting: Chinese consul 34
 World Tourism Day: rethinking tourism and its global footprint 36
 Unesco expert visits Mohenjo Daro to assess damage caused by rains 37
 Wildlife reclaiming preservation area in Margalla Hills 39
 How a Chinese vase valued at 2,000 sold for 8 million 40
 My Stays Hotel Management signs new agreement with Sabre to significantly enhance its global reach 43
 Moving 'Forward' the story of Pakistan`s entry to Qatar 2022 45



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PCAA celebrates 100 years of world ATC

Marks the 100th anniversary of Air Traffic Control. As the aviation world celebrated the auspicious occasion, PCAA honored its Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs) in a well attended ceremony held in a local hotel. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla was present as the Chief Guest of the ceremony. Former Additional DGCAA AVM Arshad Jamal also graced the occasion along with other Civil Aviation officials that included Director Operations Akhter Mirza, Director Civil Aviation Training Institute (CATI) Sumair Saeed, Director Airspace and Aerodrome Regulations Iftikhar Ahmed, Additional Director ATS Naveed Ahmad Khan, President PATCG Asif Rasool and Information Secretary PATCG Majeed Ullah Khan Niazi. Also in attendance were representatives of different airlines, General Aviation companies and PALPA along with a large number of working and retired Civil Aviation employees and aviation journalists celebrating the occasion. A mini documentary was part of the ceremony that showed the ATCs in action as they guided the air traffic in and out of country's airspace and the allied inner workings of an airport's control tower. Director General Khaqan Murtaza in his message in the documentary congratulated ATCs on the occasion and praised them for being one of the key pillars of Civil Aviation operations. He also thanked them for their dedication and commitment to the cause of keeping country's skies safe and secure for flying.

Senator Mandviwalla in his key note address dwelled over the overall aviation landscape and the challenges faced by it in the wake of pandemic. The Senator showed concern over continued flight restrictions imposed on Pakistan airlines but praised Civil Aviation's strenuous efforts for the removal of restrictions, strongly hoping that our airlines would soon be flying out to EU, US and elsewhere. Senator Mandviwalla also stressed on more female representation to make Air Traffic Control a more gender balanced profession. He also suggested to work toward ATC exchange programs with friendly countries for insights into their best practices for mutual understanding and globally more aware



Mr. Akhtar Mirza, Director Operation CAA addressing on the occasion.

and adaptable Air Traffic Controllers. Director Operations Akhter Mirza and Director CATI Sumair Saeed in their key

note addresses congratulated the ATCs and explained how just a select few make it to the control tower and make up the backbone of the Civil Aviation. They informed how tech is revolutionizing ATC profession and it is absolutely imperative that we keep pace with such developments to continue to be among the very best ones. Lastly, commemorative shields were presented to high ranking Civil Aviation officers and honorable guests, acknowledging their achievements for the advancement of the organization. Civil Aviation's Air Traffic Controllers were also awarded life time achievement awards for their meritorious services, and commemorative retiree shields were presented to retired Air Traffic Controllers to remember and honor their services too. The participants also remembered deceased Ahmed Mujtaba, a proud ace Air Traffic Controller and a great friend, who was lost in a road accident while he was travelling from Lahore to return to work in Karachi.



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Glimpses of celebration of 100 years of world ATC



Mr. Saleem Mandiwalla (Chief Guest) Mr. Arshad Jamal (former DG CAA) Mr. Akhtar Mirza Director operation CAA Mr. Imran Aslam CEO Sky Wings and others cutting the cake to celebrate 100 years of ATCs.



Group photo taken with the Chief guest on the occasion.



Suspension of PIA flights to EU irks Senate panel

The Senate Standing Committee on Aviation has questioned the suspension of Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) flights to European countries and called it a deliberate move to favour the airlines from Gulf countries.

The committee, headed by Senator Hidayatullah, met at the Parliament House on Thursday 29 Sep. and took up the matters pertaining to the quality of services provided by PIA. The committee asked the aviation ministry about the steps taken to ease the restrictions imposed by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, which suspended PIA's permission to operate flights to the EU in July 2020.

The committee members said the move favoured the Gulf airlines as they transported passengers looking for a direct flight to the continent.

Senator Hidayatullah directed the aviation ministry to take up the matter with the foreign ministry and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and discuss a way forward for lifting the restriction.

Parliamentary body calls move a deliberate act to favour airlines from Gulf countries.

The CAA director general told the committee that the restriction to operate flights to the EU states is expected to be lifted in March next year.

The committee was informed that the national flag carrier suffered a loss of around Rs100 billion due to the suspension of flights to the UK.

The committee also asked the CAA officials regarding media reports about expensive spare parts being stolen from aircraft hangars at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport.

The CAA officials told the committee that the reports were false and "an attempt to malign the authority and the country".

All warehouses with spare parts are properly locked and the aircraft inside the said hangar belonged to a private aviation company, the CAA officials said.

Senator Syed Muzafar Hussain Shah, a member of the committee, asked the PIA CEO about the imposition of additional charges on seats after the ticket has been

purchased.

The PIA CEO said no such additional charges are notified and assured the committee that he would conduct an inquiry if any passenger has been asked to pay these charges.

When asked why a 15 per cent reduction in international fares announced in July has not been implemented, the CEO said the matter had been taken up by the airline's board and its decision would be the final one on the matter.

The committee also sought details about the airline's policy of providing free tickets to the employees, specifically during 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The PIA officials informed the committee that taxes are collected from the employees who are allotted those free tickets.

They further said first priority is always given to passengers who have purchased the tickets. After the boarding is closed, the employees who wished to travel are issued boarding passes if seats are available.

The meeting was attended by senators Syed Muzafar Hussain Shah, Faisal Saleem, Saleem Mandviwala and Azam Khan Swati. Officials from the aviation ministry, PIA and CAA were also present.

PIA inducts another A320 to its fleet

As part of its drive to add more aircraft to its fleet, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has acquired a narrow-body Airbus A320 and it has arrived in Islamabad, a spokesperson for the national carrier said on Saturday 24 Sep.

With this addition, the PIA now has 32 aircraft in its fleet, including 13 Airbus planes.

Last year, the national carrier invited a tender for acquiring four aircraft, out of which three have already arrived while the last one will arrive in the next few days, the spokesperson added. The first aircraft arrived earlier in April, followed by the second in July.

The spokesperson said that the arrival of new modern aircraft with improved cabin facilities will help the airline to provide better travel facilities to the passengers.

The aircraft will be operated on domestic, regional and Gulf routes.

PIA withdraws objectionable memo on cabin crew's dress code

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has responded to criticism on Friday 30 Sep. over the announcement of a dress code for cabin crew which was made a day earlier by the airline's management.

The PIA's human resource department, while responding to criticism, stated: "Despite the fact that the spirit behind the advisory was to ensure proper dress code, however, the standard bulletin, inadvertently, came out with an inappropriate selection of words."

The chief human resource officer in a written clarification said: "I personally feel regretful and am convinced that the words could have been more civilised and appropriate in this context instead of the words published which unfortunately are being trolled and twisted towards the defamation of the company in the media (electronic and social) rather than its actual essence."

Earlier, the national carrier had told its aircrew that wearing undergarments underneath the uniform was a must.

According to PIA, the flight attendants' improper attire "portrays a negative image" of the airline and leaves a "poor impression". However, the announcement received massive backlash from the masses as they felt the words used were "inappropriate".

The management of the national carrier immediately withdrew the letter keeping in view the revulsion caused by the bulletin.

In the previous notification, PIA General Manager Flight Services Aamir Bashir, in an internal instruction memo, had said: "It has been observed with great concern that a few cabin crew tend to dress casually while travelling intercity, staying in hotels, and visiting various suffices. Such dressing leaves a poor impression on the viewer and portrays a negative image of not only the individual but also of the organisation."

What is an airline's load factor and why does it matter?

Well-loaded flights can play a key role in helping airlines to break even.

Load factor might be a term you've heard while discussing the performance of an airline or specific routes. It essentially means what percentage its of available seats an airline has been able to sell on its flights during a given period. The load factor can be a critical figure for airlines, proving their success in the market.

Breaking even

Every airline aims to maximize its load factor; put simply, they want to sell as many seats as possible on all of their flights. By carrying more passengers, airlines grow their revenue and eventually reach a breakeven, beyond which they can turn a profit. Each airline's breakeven load factor differs, and depends on their costs and expenditure, with the figure usually being around 70% on average.

A 2020 analysis by Forbes showed that big US airlines like American, Delta, Southwest, and United need a load factor between 72.5% (Southwest) and 78.9% (American) in order to not make a loss on their flights. This means when these carriers reach loads of 90% and beyond, it signals a very profitable month or year.

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Keeping it high

For budget airlines like Ryanair, the load factor is absolutely critical. Since it offers extremely cheap fares with low margins, the carrier must fill up its aircraft to sustain itself. Furthermore, such carriers make a lot of money through buy-onboard catering, so busier planes will likely mean more revenue in this regard.

This model works for Ryanair, as, in 2019, the carrier achieved an impressive 96% load factor. This meant that an average of only around seven or eight seats (4% of capacity) on its 189-seat Boeing 737-800s were empty per flight.

It should be noted that full-service airlines like Delta and American can get away with slightly lower load factors (but still well above the breakeven mark). This is partially thanks to lucrative corporate contracts and business travel.

Want answers to more key questions in aviation? Check out the rest of our guides here!

Route selection

Route planning is an important step for airlines when it comes to achieving optimum load factors, and it requires extensive research to see if it will be profitable. However, once flights begin operating, airlines watch the load factor intently to see if the route is doing well. The load factor is a key indicator of success when deciding whether to cancel a route or increase frequencies and services.

More recently, airlines have also begun using low load factors as a reason to cancel flights and reduce services. In 2020, United rolled out an automatic software to cancel low-load flights under 30% and find alternatives for passengers. Amid the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, certain carriers recorded load factors in the single digits in April 2020, but how does the situation look now?

A way to track an airline's recovery

While revenue and load factor aren't always the same, they are correlated to each other. As airlines recover after the coronavirus pandemic, keeping an eye on

the load factor signals how many passengers are willing to fly, and who they want to fly with. Of course, airlines with high load factors could also be much smaller, so the number should be taken with a pinch of salt when comparing airlines.

Nonetheless, regardless of an airline's size, its load factor now compared to before and during the global health crisis can be a useful means of charting its recovery. For example, TAP Air Portugal achieved a figure of 80.4% in the second quarter of 2022, representing a 32% increase compared to the same period last year. Icelandic carrier PLAY has also seen consistent load factor growth in 2022.

What do you make of load factor as a way to chart an airline's success and recovery? Have you noticed flights getting busier in recent months? Let us know your thoughts and experiences in the comments!

CAA team in Brussels to seek lifting of flight ban

A delegation of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has reached Brussels to attend a technical meeting called to discuss the possibility of lifting a flight ban to the EU member states in the coming months.

A spokesperson for the CAA said on Monday 24 Oct. that the European Commission has invited the delegation for a technical meeting on Oct 25.

The meeting has been called to discuss the measures taken by the PCAA after an audit by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

After the audit, the PCAA had implemented various safety and other issues-related actions, which will also come under discussion in the meeting.

The meeting will be followed by a visit of the European Commission's team during the first quarter of 2023. An onsite visit was a prerequisite for Pakistani airlines to resume flights to European countries.

The five-member delegation of the PCAA includes deputy director general regulatory, director airworthiness, director personnel and licensing, director flight standards and an additional director legal.

Pakistani airlines, including Pakistan International Airlines, were banned from operating to the EU member states after the national flag carrier's passenger plane crashed in Karachi in May 2020.



Gulf Air brings home the World's most improved Airline Award



Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, announced recently the airline was named the winner of the World's Most Improved Airline at the Skytrax World Airline Awards 2022; held at the Langham Hotel, London. The award comes as a testament to Gulf Air's strategy success which the airline revealed in 2018, which aims at being more customer-centric and becoming the airline of choice in the region.

His Excellency Mr. Zayed R. Alzayani, Minister of Industry and Commerce, and Chairman of Gulf Air's Board of Directors commented "We are so proud and grateful for the success of our strategy, evident by winning this prestigious award. This was made possible due to the commitment, determination and passion of Gulf Air's workforce and management team who are relentlessly working towards the airline's future, which is one of the main tributaries of the Bahraini economy and one of its assets for transport and tourism; and I thank and congratulate them all for achieving this goal".

The World's Most Improved Airline is a key award that reflects an airline's quality improvement across the entire World Airline Awards programme, evaluating an airline's change in the global rating, and their performance improvements in different award categories.

For his part, Captain Waleed AlAlawi, Gulf Air Acting Chief Executive Officer said "The new look and feel for Gulf Air, alongside its new fleet, new network, and new products and services are all improvements that represent the Gulf Air of tomorrow. We eagerly look forward to all the achievements the future has in store for us, and this delightful Skytrax award we won today proves we

are on the right path to those achievements".

The World Airline Awards began in 1999, when Skytrax launched its first global, annual airline customer satisfaction survey. Over 100 customer nationalities participated in the 2021-2022 survey, and travellers across the globe take part each year in the world's largest airline passenger satisfaction survey to decide the winners.

Lilium and SAUDIA plan to bring electric air mobility to Saudi Arabia

SAUDIA will be the first airline in the MENA region to invest in sustainable air mobility with plans to purchase 100 all-electric Lilium Jets ©Lilium

SAUDIA, the national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia and Lilium N.V. (Lilium), developer of the all-electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) jet, at the sixth edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII), have announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the proposed development and operation by SAUDIA of an eVTOL network across Saudi Arabia. The proposed arrangement will make SAUDIA the first airline in the MENA region to purchase 100 Lilium Jets alongside yearly support services.

With zero operating emissions, the Lilium Jet will enable sustainable and time-saving travel. SAUDIA intends to launch a state-of-the-art service with the purchase of 100 Lilium Jets including new electric point-to-point connections as well as seamless feeder connections to SAUDIA's hubs for business class guests. Lilium Jet's flexible cabin architecture is expected to enable a range of spacious interior configurations that are well suited to the needs of the premium market, which Lilium believes can help drive the early adoption of eVTOL aircraft

required to scale.

SAUDIA also expects to support Lilium with the necessary regulatory approval processes in Saudi Arabia for certification of the Lilium Jet and any other required regulatory approvals. As the national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, SAUDIA currently serves a network of more than 100 domestic and international destinations. Lilium and SAUDIA plan to combine SAUDIA's unrivalled market knowledge and Lilium's unique eVTOL aircraft to transform the Kingdom's domestic air transport sector.

Oman Air to launch four flights a week services between Muscat and Phuket

Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, will offer four flights a week between Muscat and Phuket, one of Thailand's most popular resort islands, starting from 15th November 2022. The flights will operate on (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday).

The Tuesday flight from Muscat will depart at 09:40 and arrive in Phuket at 18:50. The Thursday flight from Muscat will depart at 22:50 and arrive in Phuket on Sunday at 08:00. The first flight on Saturday will depart Muscat at 09:40 and arrive in Phuket at 18:50, while the second flight will depart at 22:50 and arrive on Sunday at 08:00. Economy Class tickets start at OMR 299 and Business Class tickets start at OMR 650, inclusive of taxes.

Guests travelling to Muscat and Phuket should ensure they are aware of official requirements to enter or transit through the country.

Guests can also book a customised Phuket holiday package through Oman Air Holidays.





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In what ways was the Airbus A300 a ground breaking Aircraft?

Marks the 50th anniversary of the Airbus A300's first flight. It is also the day the multinational company entered the fight against a Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and McDonnell Douglas-dominated sky. The A300B, the prototype to complete its maiden flight in 1972, became the first twin-engine widebody to grace the skies. While it never became the everlasting success Airbus hoped it would be, it became the benchmark of the company's future stars, like the A330 and A340.

While predominately known for its twin engines, the A300 was at the forefront of many innovations. From pioneering the extensive use of composite materials in commercial aviation and being founded upon multiple nations regardless of politics, the A300's rule-breaking history will live on forever.

Developing the A300 program

Before the A300 program began, European airframer companies had about 10% of the global market share compared to American manufacturers, Airbus says. By the mid-1960s, studies had surfaced to investigate 250-seat aircraft for short-to-medium haul flights. Airbus claims to enter that market, European collaboration was essential. In July 1967, the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany signed a Memorandum of Understanding to get it underway, but not without struggle.

At the time of its conception, three-engine aircraft was the minimum seen with the DC-10 and Lockheed Tristar supremacy - and twin-engine jets were considered unsafe for long distances. But due to Airbus' commitment to fewer engines, none were powerful enough. Rolls-Royce was set to build a more powerful version of its RB211 -the RB207 but decided to focus on the American market, leaving Airbus with no engine. This was the catalyst of the United



Kingdom pulling out of the partnership, on top of threats from the French government to withdraw its commitment (which never materialized).

Turkiye sells 20 armed drones to UAE

Turkish defence firm Baykar has delivered 20 armed drones to the United Arab Emirates this month and could sell more, two Turkish sources said, as a diplomatic detente between the former regional rivals expands into military contracts.

International demand for Baykar's drones soared after their impact on conflicts in Syria, Ukraine and Libya, where their laser-guided armour-piercing bombs helped repel an offensive by UAE-supported forces two years ago.

That civil war in Libya was one of several theatres where the two countries played out a bitter, decade-long battle for influence in the Middle East, until a reconciliation last year.

Now the UAE and its ally Saudi Arabia are hoping to leverage their rapprochement with Turkiye to counter a growing security challenge from Iran and its proxy forces, military sources say.

Both Gulf Arab oil states have faced drone attacks on cities and oil facilities that they blamed on Iran-aligned Houthi fighters in Yemen.

A source with knowledge of the talks said Abu Dhabi and Riyadh were negotiating to acquire Bayraktar TB2 drones from Ankara. "They decided during the negotiations with the UAE to quickly deliver 20 armed drones," the source said, adding they were transferred earlier this month.

A senior Turkish official confirmed Turkiye has delivered some drones to the United Arab Emirates and that the UAE was seeking more. Saudi Arabia also wanted to buy armed drones and to set up a factory to manufacture them, the official said.

The official said Baykar was considering the Saudi request for a manufacturing plant but said that was a strategic decision for President Tayyip Erdogan and that other issues, such as Saudi investments in Turkiye, "are not moving as fast as possible".

Baykar, the UAE foreign ministry and Saudi Arabia's government communications office did not respond to a request for comment.

Govt drops mask mandate for all flights as Covid subsides

The government no longer requires passengers travelling domestically or abroad by air to wear a face mask on board as part of Covid-19 precautions, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has said.

The requirement has been dropped as infections continue to decline both within the country and the world over.

"Mask wearing as a part of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) is no longer a mandatory requirement during domestic and international travel, however, still preferable," a notification available with media said.

75 cases, two deaths reported over 24 hours; positivity rate at 0.64pc

The latest NCOC data released recently reported 75 cases and two deaths related to Covid over 24 hours. Those cases were based on 11,718 tests, meaning a positivity rate of 0.64 per cent. Besides, 48 patients were in critical care, the data showed.

Only two cities conducted more than 1,000 tests, including Karachi (4,386) and Lahore (1,054).

There have been 1,572,598 infections and 30,616 coronavirus-related deaths reported in the country since the pandemic began in 2020.

The number of single-day infections hit record levels in January this year, crossing 8,000 on some days.

However, deaths had already peaked in 2021, with 201 citizens dying of Covid on April 27 that year.

As Covid cases subsided over time, Pakistan disbanded the NCOC, which oversees the Covid response, on March 31 this year as infections fell to the lowest since the outbreak began. However, the new government revived it two months later to fight Omicron, a variant of SARS-CoV-2 a strain of coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

How Qatar Airways is embracing the FIFA World Cup Onboard



Qatar Airways is in the process of fully incorporating and highlighting the 2022 FIFA World Cup into its in-flight services. The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be held in Qatar starting in Nov.

Passengers will see planes in a special FIFA livery and will be able to stream many of the games directly on their flights. In addition, there will be limited edition amenity kits, football jersey-styled loungewear and more for FIFA fans traveling on Qatar Airways.

Most importantly though, Qatar Airways is introduced special FIFA-themed menu items that feature a variety of meal and snack options including typical game day snacks like burgers and chicken wings along with the standard types of dishes offered on Qatar Airways.

AirlineGeeks had the opportunity to sample a few of these dishes and discuss the inspiration behind some of these dishes with Mary-Jane Bonnaud, Qatar Airways' Culinary Development Manager.

Things started off with an amuse-bouche of lobster cocktail with poached prawn topped with caviar.

This was followed by a wholesome soup, corn and jalapeno soup topped with Crème Fraiche.

Things got better when the sampler was brought out.

A play on a hotdog with sliced beef with radish, fried onions, and pickles part

of the FIFA menu

Fried shrimp in vermicelli noodles - part of the FIFA menu

A chocolate mousse cake with berries and mango

Bottom Row Left to Right:

Beef carpaccio with black winter truffles

Roasted sweet potato with corn and smashed avocado

Duck ravioli with slice duck breast, roasted brussels sprouts, and tomato

A lot of the FIFA menu items are specifically geared around snack foods that people would typically have while watching sporting events. Below is how the steak nachos would look if served on a Qatar Airways flight departing the U.S.

Things got fun with the burger. The exact type of burger will vary based on the route. On flights from the United States there will be a burger with the typical fixings of an American cheeseburger. Flights from Australia, for example, will have uniquely Australian fixings like beetroot on their burgers.

Catering Partners

Qatar Airways primarily uses Do&Co for catering in the United States where available, alternatively, Gate Gourmet and Sky Chefs are used. Do&Co has a reputation within the industry as being one of the better caterers, however, Qatar Airways' culinary director has assured AirlineGeeks that the offerings will be consistent across all North American

departures in terms of taste, appearance and quality.

Airline catering is something that's frequently overlooked so it's always refreshing to see airlines take a fun approach to cater flights. Airline catering kitchens clearly have the capability to make good food as evidenced by airlines like Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines. It is just a matter of the airline caring enough to make the necessary investments to offer good food on flights for its passengers.

Emirates to show off "spectacular" luxury private jet

Emirates is known for not holding back when it comes to luxury, especially on its premium products. Think about the famous A380 bar, first-class showers, privacy doors, and retrofitted cabins, for the passengers who fly commercial.

Now, the public will be able to see what the airline means by 'luxury' as it is putting its only private jet on display at an upcoming exhibition, promising the visitors a glimpse into "the spectacular world of private luxury".

The airline's private jet, its only Airbus A319 (registered as A6-CJE), will be on display at Abu Dhabi Air Expo 2022 on November 1, 2022.

The private jet features luxury interiors, spacious common areas, while the service onboard offers perks such as gourmet dining after all, even the cabin crew wear "exclusive" uniforms to "match the distinctiveness" of the service, according to the airline.

Among the private jet's wow factors Emirates lists:

An "even larger" version of Emirates private suites - ten private suites onboard are equipped with fully flat-bed seats, ambient lighting, a mini-bar and a 32-inch screen each.

On board showers that Emirates claims to be "one of the largest Shower Spas in the air".

Multi-functional lounge area that can be set as a personal office for conferences and meetings, while lounge seats convert to full-size beds.

The aircraft, introduced in 2013, can carry 19 passengers and fly for up to eight and a half hours non-stop.

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SalamAir connects Prague with Oman

Prague Airport celebrated SalamAir's new connections between Prague and Oman with a spectacular cake, winning *anna.aero's* prestigious Cake of the Week prize. The carrier will fly from Prague to Muscat every Wednesday, and to Salalah every Friday. During this winter season, SalamAir will connect Prague Airport with Oman twice-weekly. The airline will operate between Prague and both Muscat and Salalah, using the A321neo.

"The connection from the Czech Republic to Salalah in Oman certainly has strong tourist potential," said Jaroslav Filip, Aviation Business Director, Prague Airport. "Moreover, in the case of the direct Muscat route, we can see additional business potential and the possibility of transfers to flights to more remote destinations in the Middle East and Asia. We have estimated that SalamAir could transport up to nine thousand passengers in one direction between Oman and the Czech Republic during the winter operational season. Until now, destinations in Oman have been served from Prague mainly by seasonal charter flights."

The carrier will fly from Prague to Muscat every Wednesday, and to Salalah every Friday.

"We consider the start of operations of flights from Prague to Muscat and Salalah flights by our airline an important milestone," said Captain Mohamed Ahmed, CEO SalamAir. "The new connection creates an excellent opportunity for the citizens of the Czech Republic to explore Oman and visit incredible destinations. Oman's capital Muscat is a city of extraordinary beauty, an oasis of history and culture surrounded by sea, mountains, and desert. Muscat is a vital hub for commerce, economic and trade activities, and is considered the economic and administrative centre of

Oman. We look forward to welcoming tourists from Prague to picturesque Salalah. SalamAir is committed to opening every possible door to different

markets, enabling travel, trade, and business, while creating demand for new travellers looking to explore and experience unforgettable holidays."

Saudi Arabia to have 250+ international destinations by 2030

In chat with Khalil Lamrabet, CEO of Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Program, the link between tourism organizations and air transport.

Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Program (ACP) will play a vital role in achieving the country's highly ambitious Vision 2030. By incentivizing airlines to add many new routes and destinations, de-risking the opportunity for operators, it'll grow passenger volume and economic benefits, diversifying its economy away from oil. I spoke to Khalil Lamrabet, CEO of the ACP.

Summarize the ACP for our readers

Lamrabet: The ACP was established in 2021 to promote collaboration and engagement between critical public and private sector players in the tourism and aviation industries, connecting Saudi Arabia to new destinations.

Our vision is to establish Saudi Arabia as a global leader in tourism air connectivity, enabling a competitive aviation business environment and guiding the Kingdom toward achieving a seamless tourist air access experience.

ACP's mission is to actively stimulate air connectivity and drive Saudi Arabia's tourism ambitions. This is by maximizing the engagement of the whole 'tourism ecosystem' (i.e., all the organizations involved), facilitating collaboration, and building an engaging relationship with prospective and incumbent airlines to drive combined growth in the tourism and aviation industries.

It is a crucial enabler of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy, supporting its objectives to attract millions of visitors each year and extend the country's connectivity to 250+ international destinations by the close of the decade.

Stay aware: Sign up for my weekly new routes newsletter.

Is the ACP critical to Saudi's ambition?

Lamrabet: The disruption and travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted the aviation industry.

With a considerable portion of

the global aviation stakeholders facing a drop in revenues, the need for stronger connectivity has never been more important.

As market operators rebound from a historically difficult period, the tourism ecosystem plays a vital role in the industry's recovery by enabling regulatory environments, coherent policies, quality infrastructure, and comprehensive strategies to facilitate the smooth operation of global supply chains and drive demand.

As a new organization, the ACP operates at the interaction of tourism and air transport. It's a critical enabler, partner, and coordinator of the sector working to develop tourism air connectivity, build market opportunities and partnerships, and unlock new air routes to and from Saudi Arabia.

Korean Air A330 crashes on landing in Cebu



A Korean Air Airbus A330 has crashed on landing in bad weather at Mactan-Cebu airport in the Philippines.

The aircraft, with 173 people on board, was attempting to land for the third time at the airport as rain and high winds were affecting the area.

After landing the aircraft over ran the runway crashing through lighting poles and coming to rest in then perimeter fence.

A spokesperson for Korean Air said: "Passengers have been escorted to three local hotels and an alternative flight is being arranged," adding "We are currently identifying the cause of the incident."

Flight KE361 was operating a scheduled flight from Seoul to Cebu.



Think airplane seats are too small? Time is running out to let the FAA know



You only have a few more days to let the Federal Aviation Administration hear your thoughts about the size of seats on airplanes.

Over the summer, the agency announced it was considering establishing minimum seat dimensions for airplanes that operate in the U.S. and opened a public comment forum to solicit feedback. The comment period will close.

Sean Kollmorgen hopes the agency requires airlines to make space on board more generous. Kollmorgen works as a restaurant server in Seattle and told USA that he generally avoids flying now because it is so uncomfortable.

He's 6'5" tall and injured his knee about a decade ago.

Are airplane seats too small?:

FAA soliciting public comments on minimum dimensions

"Since my knee injury, the couple of times I have flown, it affected me for more than a week," he said. "I have to give myself two weeks for more attention to stretching ... almost rehabilitation."

Kollmorgen added that he can't even take advantage of exit row seating on family trips anymore because he has a toddler who's prohibited from sitting in an exit row.

Why is the FAA considering minimum airplane seat sizes?

Congress required the agency to consider establishing minimum standards for airplane seat size as part of its 2018 reauthorization of the agency. However, that requirement is essentially unenforceable because ignoring it came with no official penalties.

The agency has taken some steps to address the mandate though. Beyond

soliciting public feedback, it also conducted limited live evacuation testing in 2019.

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

When will minimum airplane seat sizes be established?

Maybe never. Because the requirement remains unenforceable, there's no guarantee this process will result in any change. However, the public comment period indicates the FAA is

Cathay Pacific to restart flights over Russian Airspace in November

Hong Kong-New York will return to using the polar route.

Cathay Pacific has announced plans to resume using Russian airspace on its longest routes. Starting November 1st, Cathay will use the polar route to New York, overflying Siberia to cut down flight time and remove payload restrictions. The decision will remove over two hours of flight time and comes at a time when Western airlines still remain away from Russian skies.

Back to its original route

Since March, Cathay Pacific joined a host of European, North American, and Asian carriers in refusing to overfly Russia due to sanctions imposed after the country's invasion of Ukraine. Fast-forward eight months and Cathay Pacific has opted to resume flying over Russia on select routes, according to Bloomberg. The first will be New York JFK to Hong Kong, the carrier's flagship service connecting the two financial hubs.

The usual 15-hour journey has now been stretched up to upward of 17 hours since flights now have to cross the Pacific instead of overflying the pole. Starting November 1st, Cathay is returning to the usual polar route, cutting flight times by nearly two hours from New York to Hong Kong and over an hour on the way back. Here's a look at the route maps for the two flights.

In a statement to Bloomberg, the carrier noted that it was subject to any sanctions preventing the overflying of

considering making a new rule, and experts previously told USA TODAY that the agency's next reauthorization bill, which will come before Congress in 2023, could be a milestone to watch.

What travelers are saying

More than 20,000 responses have been posted on the FAA's docket so far, most of which seem to be urging the FAA to require airlines to make economy seats more spacious.

Nicole Martinez Llaurador [posted](#) that wider seats should be available for passengers who are larger or have disabilities. "Airlines should not make a profit (out) of a person's disability."

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Russia, unlike its counterparts in the US and Europe. It added,

"There are other major airlines overflying Russian airspace and there are no sanctions which prevent Cathay Pacific overflying Russia. The Polar Route provides a safe, direct and the fastest flight experience to our customers traveling from the East Coast of North America to Hong Kong."

Complicated return

In an internal note to pilots, Cathay emphasized that flying over Russia is safe and "eliminates the need for a technical stop in another city for a change of aircrew as necessitated by mandated flight time limitations." However, it also warned that no flights should be planned with dependencies in Russia and none will be allowed.

The return to the polar route will also allow flights to avoid headwinds and carry its full payload, something not possible on the longer Pacific route currently in effect. Maximizing this would mean more passengers, checked luggage, and potentially cargo on one of the busiest international flights pre-pandemic.



Why does Tokyo have two airports?

Have you ever flown to the Japanese capital?

If you've ever searched for flights to Tokyo, you may have noticed the fact that the city boasts two major airports: Haneda (HND) and Narita (NRT). While this is not uncommon for many large cities, Tokyo's two airports both attract flights from various airlines around the world. Let's find out why the city has two airports.

Out of space

Before 1978, the Japanese capital only had one airport. This was known as Tokyo International Airport, with this facility now being Haneda. The airport opened in the 1930s as an airfield, before it became an international airport in 1952. Located in the densely populated Ōta City, in the heart of Tokyo, the airport provides ideal access to the city center, and is much busier than Narita.

Close

However, as years passed, larger jet aircraft resulted in noise complaints and limited slots at Haneda. The government knew it would need a larger airport to serve the city's growing demand. However, given Tokyo's high population density levels, a major Haneda expansion was impossible. As such, it had to look elsewhere.

The government got to work on the new airport, Narita, in 1966. It opted to place it in Chiba prefecture, which is technically located outside of Tokyo. After years of protests due to the decision to nationalize land for the airport, construction was finally completed in 1978. This gave Tokyo its second major airport, allowing for far more international capacity and room for further development.

Out with the old, in with the new

Soon after Narita opened, nearly all



international airlines moved to the larger airport. While the airport originally had plans for five runways, it only constructed three due to the threat of more protests. This lack of expansion meant Narita was handling 22 million passengers in 1991 despite only having a capacity of 13 million.

However, something interesting happened in 1983. Using a landfill in Tokyo Bay, Haneda Airport had the opportunity to expand further. By 2010, the 'old airport' had new runways and two new terminals, allowing for a scaling up of services. Considering the convenience of Haneda's location, situated just half an hour from the city center, airlines were happy to add services to the older facility.

By the early 2000s, Narita had established itself as the main international airport for Tokyo, attracting most intercontinental services and major airlines. Meanwhile, Haneda made itself known as a key regional and domestic airport, with JAL and ANA having a significant presence there, alongside carriers like Korean Air and Singapore Airlines. However, things have changed in recent years.

Recent years have seen migration

Indeed, the last few years have seen a migration of airlines from Narita to Haneda. Airlines like Delta (which moved all its Tokyo-bound flights to Haneda), United, and SAS, have all added or shifted services. Even local carriers such as JAL and ANA started new flights from Haneda to the US. After all, the new terminal and location, along with slot availability, made Haneda quite attractive for airlines.

Nonetheless, Tokyo still requires both major airports because of the large

amount of yearly traffic the city sees. Both Narita and Haneda offer their strategic advantages, allowing them to rise as major hubs. In 2019, Narita handled just over 42 million passengers, while Haneda exceeded 87 million. The airports suffered amid COVID-19, but it will be interesting to see how their numbers fare this year.

Narita's farmland conflict

One interesting aspect of Narita's day-to-day operations is that they are subjected to a six-hour curfew between midnight and 06:00. This is to reduce the impact of noise pollution on local residents, including those living in a farmhouse that is improbably located between the two runways. This was the subject of a conflict known as the Sanrizuka Struggle, which you can read more about here.

Have you ever flown to or from either or both of Tokyo's airports? Which one of them do you prefer? Let us know your thoughts and experiences in the comments!

World's longest passenger train winds through Swiss Alps

The world's longest passenger train an assembly of 100 connected coaches measuring nearly two kilometres wound through breath-taking scenery in the Swiss Alps on Saturday 5th Nov. 2022.

The Rhaetian Railway (RhB) announced that it had beat the world record for the longest passenger train, at an event marking the 175th anniversary of Switzerland's famous railway system.

The 1,910-metre train, composed of 25 separable multipleunit trains, or 100 coaches, travelled through the Alps in the eastern Swiss canton of Graubünden.

For me, this is just Swiss perfection,' RhB chief Renato Fasciati told the Blick daily's live feed of the event.



TOURISTS capture images as a 1,910-metre-long train with 100 cars passes near Bergun, on Saturday 5th Nov., during a record attempt, to mark the Swiss railway operator's 175th anniversary.





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First Etihad Airways flight using sustainable aviation fuel as part of deal with ITOCHU and NESTE departs Tokyo Narita



Etihad Airways made this announcement:

The first Etihad Airways flight to use Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) supplied by ITOCHU Corporation and NESTE took off from Tokyo Narita Airport on October 27.

The pioneering flight, EY871 departed Tokyo Narita at 1500, was the result of a partnership in which ITOCHU provided Neste MY Sustainable Aviation Fuel to Etihad, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, making Etihad the first international airline to procure SAF in Japan.

The flight operated on a ~40 per cent blend of SAF, representing the first delivery of some 50,000 gallons of SAF, to be used over a number of flights in coming weeks. It is the first time a non-Japanese airline has used SAF supplied in Japan.

The flight reduced CO₂ by approximately 75.2 tCO₂, based on the estimated fuel volume (20,000 USG) at a blend of 39.66% SAF. The flight also managed non-CO₂ environmental impacts through optimised flight planning for contrail prevention, deploying SATAVIA technology for a forecast net climate impact reduction of 71 tCO₂e



(carbon dioxide equivalent). Aircraft condensation trails, or contrails, cause surface warming responsible for up to 60% of aviation's overall climate footprint. Until recently, technical challenges made contrail prevention difficult or impossible, but UK-based SATAVIA's atmospheric modelling now enables flight plan optimisation for contrail prevention in addition to post-flight climate impact analysis.

In December 2021, the Japanese government announced the goal of replacing 10 per cent of aviation fuel consumption by Japanese airlines with SAF by 2030. To achieve this goal, ITOCHU established a SAF supply

network at Japanese domestic airports across the country for Japanese domestic carriers, which is now being expanded to international carriers, starting with Etihad.

ITOCHU has already established a domestic SAF supply chain at Haneda and Narita International Airports, spanning from SAF import and quality control to delivery to airports, as well as a refueling network for the aircrafts themselves. ITOCHU plans to expand its SAF supply base to Central Japan International Airport and Kansai International Airport, allowing it to further increase supply of SAF to both Japanese and international airlines.

Surveillance at airports enhanced amid Ebola scare

As the Ebola outbreak has been reported in some parts of Africa, the Ministry of National Health Services has directed strict surveillance at international airports and other entry points to isolate suspected patients.

On the directions of the International Health Regulations (IHR), the ministry has directed the Border and Health Services Department to ensure screening of passengers coming from other countries, especially African continent and isolate those with any symptoms of Ebola.

Minister of Health Abdul Qadir Patel, in a statement, said Uganda had declared Ebola as pandemic and chances were that the virus would enter into Pakistan through patients or passengers.

The surveillance has been increased on the directions of the IHR and all possible steps will be taken to safeguard the people, Mr Patel added.

Ministry directs Border and Health Services Department to isolate suspected passengers coming from other countries, especially Africa.

He said passengers coming into the country will be passed through thermal screening.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Ugandan health authorities have declared an outbreak of Ebola, caused by Sudan virus, following laboratory confirmation.

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is a rare and deadly disease in humans and non-human primates. The viruses that cause the disease are located mainly in sub-Saharan Africa African countries that are south of the Sahara desert.

The symptoms of Ebola are fever, ache and pains such as severe headache and muscle and joint pain, weakness and fatigue, sore throat, loss of appetite, gastrointestinal symptoms including abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting, and unexplained haemorrhaging, bleeding or bruising.

The threat of Ebola comes months after the ministry asked federal and provincial authorities to remain vigilant as monkeypox cases were reported all over the world.

In May, the National Institute of Health (NIH) had issued an advisory for national and provincial health authorities to remain on high alert for suspected monkeypox cases.

The advisory directed the health authorities to remain vigilant and monitor airports and other points of entry and conduct medical screenings to identify infected passengers.

The steps were taken after reports of a suspected case of monkeypox in the country began circulating on social media. Later, the NIH had clarified that no case of the virus was been reported in Pakistan.

AirSial announces to launch of international flights

Chairman AirSial, Mr. Fazal Jilani has announced to launch of international flights next month in the extraordinary general meeting. AirSial hosted EOGM for shareholders recently in Sialkot for the approval of the enhancement of authorized capital. All the shareholders approved the management.

Mr. Fazal Jilani Chairman, Mr. Ameen Ahsan CEO, and Mr. M Umar Mir Vice Chairman AirSial briefed the gathering about the performance of the airlines. They said that AirSial had launched its domestic operations in Dec. 2020 from Karachi-Islamabad and Karachi-Lahore and later to other destinations i.e., Peshawar and Quetta. Despite the critical situation of Covid-19, the airline performed well because of hard work of the entire management and staff of the airline. Mr. Fazal Jilani told that AirSial reached breakeven six months ago. AirSial has acquired further two Airbus A320-300 aircraft to its fleet for making international operations possible.

Mr. Fazal Jilani Chairman told that on 30 March 2022 AirSial had an agreement with BOC aviation in Dubai for acquiring two A320 aircraft on dry lease. This enables AirSial to meet the standard of CAA for having five active aircraft before starting international flights. As AirSial is now authorized by Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority to have scheduled short-haul international flights.

AirSial is allowed to operate its international flights to Muslim countries which include, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iran, and Iraq. The Chairman said, Initially AirSial will start its international flights in Nov. this year from Karachi, Islamabad, and Peshawar to Dubai and Saudi Arab and later from Multan and Sialkot to other destinations also.



Mr. Fazal Jilani Chairman AirSial flanked by Mr. Ameen Ahsan CEO and Mr. Muhammad Umar Mir Vice Chairman on dais on the occasion



A view of the audience.



Photo shows (R-L) Mr. Adnan Kapoor, Mr. Ashraf Malik, Mr. Fazal Jilani a guest and Mr. M. Ilyas on the occasion



In the 1st row photo shows Mr. Adnan Kapoor, Mr. A. S. Azad Editor Flyer International and other guests.

Glimpses of EOGM hosted by AirSial



Mr. Fazal Jilani Chairman, Mr. M. Umar Mir Vice Chairman, Mr. Ameen Ahsan CEO AirSial

Photo shows (R_L) Mr. Sajjad Dharsi, Mr. Tahir Butt, Mr. Umar Mir, Mr. Ameen Ahsan and a guest.



Mr. Fazal Jilani photographed with Mr. Adnan Kapoor and other guests on the occasion

Mr. Sheikh Riazuddin with other guests.



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Saudia Cargo CEO re-elected to chair SkyTeam cargo alliance

SkyTeam Cargo, the global cargo alliance, has announced the re-election of Teddy Zebitz, the CEO of Saudia Cargo, as the chairperson of the SkyTeam Cargo Executive Board for another consecutive term.

The appointment was endorsed at their recent meeting in London, which is composed of the cargo executives of all cargo alliance members and oversees SkyTeam Cargo's global strategy.

With his re-election, Zebitz will continue to strategically lead the SkyTeam Cargo board for a further period of two years.

"I am honored to have been re-elected to the Cargo Executive Board and look forward to paving the path for SkyTeam Cargo's success. We are proud of how much we have accomplished in the past two years, and we have set strategic goals in place for the near future that will further elevate SkyTeam Cargo's global position as the largest cargo alliance. We will continue to empower our people,



while collaborating with our customers and partners, providing innovative and customised solutions to help them achieve their goals and realise their ambitions," Zebitz said.

With over 40 years of global industry expertise, and before leading Saudia Cargo, Zebitz has worked across several markets such as China, Southeast Asia, the United States, and Europe. SkyTeam Cargo's Executive Board will continue to benefit from his extensive leadership background gained from his previous experience in executive roles at SAS and Emirates Airlines.

Lots of traveling to spread the word?

Lamrabet: To build long-term partnerships within the aviation ecosystem and raise awareness of the diversity of opportunities that Saudi Arabia's aviation sector has to offer, ACP strives to attend all the leading international and local events on tourism and aviation industries.

With our upcoming participation in the World Travel Market event in London and the World Passenger Symposium event in Bahrain, we aim to strengthen the Saudi aviation and tourism ecosystem's presence on the international stage. It'll demonstrate our commitment to connecting Saudi Arabia with new destinations and ensuring service excellence.

We look forward to furthering our partnerships with national and foreign carriers to drive sector competition, facilitate market entries, and develop world-class amenities that ensure increased capacity and supply in air connectivity.

US-Bangla Airlines and Sabre sign new deal to support the carrier's indirect retailing growth

A leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, recently announced a new distribution deal with US-Bangla Airlines to enable the carrier to sell its fares and inventory through Sabre's global travel marketplace. The agreement gives US-Bangla the ability to extend global reach and increase revenue by providing Sabre-connected travel agencies with its domestic and international content.

The new relationship strengthens Sabre's presence in the growing Bangladeshi travel market while enabling US-Bangla to add thousands of travel agencies to its distribution network, maximizing distribution and expanding global reach. As Sabre focuses on delivering more intelligent retailing solutions to meet changing traveller expectations, Sabre-connected agencies will be able to access additional, robust content via the Sabre GDS to provide extra choices to their customers.



"Our new relationship with Sabre is an important milestone for us in the modernization of our indirect-channel retailing strategy," said Mr. Mohammed Abdullah Al Mamun, Managing Director, US-Bangla Airlines. "As we re-open existing routes and launch new flights, joining Sabre's global distribution network will enable us to better capture ongoing industry recovery, grow global revenue, and help ensure travellers to and from Bangladesh enjoy seamless travel experiences."

Based out of Shahjalal International Airport, US-Bangla is the second largest airline in Bangladesh, in terms of fleet size. As well as operating domestic routes across Bangladesh, US-Bangla also flies to key global destinations across Asia-Pacific and the Middle East including Singapore, Chennai, Guangzhou, Kuala Lumpur, Dubai and Doha, with plans to add additional future long-haul routes.

"We're delighted to be extending our presence in Bangladesh with a new relationship between Sabre and US-Bangla," said Rakesh Narayanan, Vice President, Regional General Manager, Asia Pacific, Travel Solutions, Airline Sales. "Adding US-Bangla to our distribution network provides a seamless way for Sabre-connected travel buyers, who are already familiar with our intuitive Sabre Red 360 workflow, to provide the most valuable, relevant offers from the carrier to their customers."

Singapore Airlines goes live with new cargo management system

Singapore Airlines (SIA) has successfully gone live with its new Integrated Cargo Management System (ICMS), powered by IBS Software's iCargo cargo management platform. The ICMS is a strategic initiative to future-proof SIA's core cargo platform by eliminating disparate cargo systems and bringing in the latest cloud technology to transform cargo operations and customer delivery.

iCargo supports SIA in its cargo business processes. The ICMS provides a single integrated cargo application for business users in Singapore and overseas, as well as a seamless interface with partners including general sales agents, ground handling agents, and freight forwarders, simplifying the end-to-end operations. Enhanced data quality and insights also allow SIA to make real-time, data-driven decisions across its sales, operations, and finance processes, while ensuring compliance with international regulations.

Since the ICMS went live on 1 August



2022, approximately 1,500 users across sales, operations, and finance industries have benefited from the system, with iCargo enabling more than 24,000 flights, creating 202,000 bookings and 192,000 airway bills, as well as processing and responding to 8.5 million incoming messages.

IBS Software's Consulting and Digital Transformation (CDx) business provided user acceptance testing (UAT) support to SIA. The UAT focused on business process transformation and change management efficiency, with inputs from more than 100 end users across the world, and end-to-end testing involving more than 20 upstream

and downstream messaging systems.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly accelerated the need for digital transformation, especially given the important role that air freight plays in critical supply chains, as well as the need for greater supply chain visibility to improve resilience. IBS Software's iCargo platform is a key element in SIA's digitalisation efforts to enable it to serve its customers even better, respond more quickly to changes in the marketplace and improve work processes, while allowing it to stay compliant and update-to-date with global industry standards and initiatives," said Chin Yau Seng, Senior Vice President Cargo at Singapore Airlines.

The second phase of the implementation is planned for March 2023. This includes migrating the mail module, implementing mail revenue accounting, and rolling out new capabilities in sales, operations, and cargo revenue accounting modules.

Sabre survey reveals the shifting shape of corporate travel

A leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, recently announced the results of a new survey of travel agents and Travel Management Companies (TMCs) in APAC, which reveals the changing face of corporate travel as industry recovery continues to gain strength.

The research was carried out with respondents across Asia Pacific, in five languages in 21 countries, to gain insight into the evolving expectations of business travellers, and how corporate sellers in the region are adapting to service these new demands.

Respondents pointed to a growing need for the corporate travel industry to tailor service offerings for new workforce realities, such as remote and blended working arrangements, while embracing technology to capitalize on, and drive, ongoing recovery. Key findings included:

- The majority of corporate travel agents (84%) have changed their business priorities as a result of the pandemic, and are now focused on optimizing costs and efficiencies, while meeting customer and business demands with fewer employees.
- Four-fifths of respondents have

adopted new technological solutions to manage Covid-19 related risk over the past two years. And, of those who haven't, 42% plan to do so within the next two years. The most popular solutions are travel risk management tools, automated workflows and virtual payment tools.

- Half of agents said a rise in internal corporate travel, to bring remote workers together, will create recovery opportunities, while 45% said emerging corporate travel markets are important for growth.
- There's strong optimism in the market, with 82% saying they expect a return to pre-pandemic corporate travel levels, and 15% expecting a boom greater than pre-Covid-19, within the next 12 months.
- More than two-thirds of respondents have seen an increase in bookings in the three months to August. Most are reporting an increase of not more than 30% but there's a notable 14% with an increase of more than 50%.
- 55% say company Covid-19-related travel restrictions are easing, and 38% say total travel spend is increasing.
- More than two-thirds have seen a moderate or significant increase in

bookings with low-cost carriers. The trend is most prevalent in North Asia where there's been a 42% switch from FSCs to LCCs.

- Corporate travellers place high priority on information, flexibility, and hygiene. However, companies are also turning their attention to sustainability as one of the key personalization priorities for corporate travel.

"Sabre's own booking data is showing that corporate travel is coming back strong," said Brett Thorstad, Vice President, Sabre Travel Solutions, Agency Sales, "so, it's heartening to see those same results borne out among our travel agency partners through our new research.

"However, while business travel is rebounding, what is clear is that it is returning differently," added Mr Thorstad. "It is important, as an industry, that we understand these changes, and the reasons for them, and we are prepared to drive our own evolution, supported by robust technology. In this way, we can power increased revenue and efficiency across the travel ecosystem, while ensuring corporate travel agents are best placed to create the frictionless, tailored experiences that business travellers want and expect."

Lufthansa unveils new cabins - first and business class suites



Lufthansa Group has launched the 'Allegris' cabin product for its long-haul fleet, with new premium cabins including suites in first-class and business class for the first time. The new long-haul cabin layout will arrive at the beginning of 2023.

More than 100 new Lufthansa Group aircraft, such as Boeing 787-9s, Airbus A350s and Boeing 777-9s, will be offering the new "Allegris" cabin layout. Additionally, aircraft already in service, including the iconic Boeing 747-8s, will be retrofitted.

Alongside the new premium cabins, economy passengers will also get a new Sleeper's Row product.

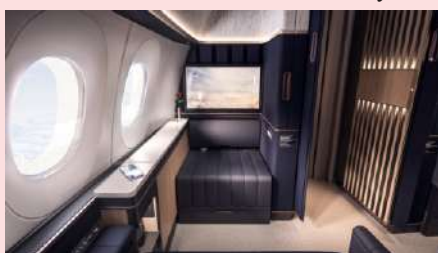
"We want to set new, unprecedented standards for our guests. The largest investment in premium products in our company's history underpins our claim to continue to be the leading Western premium airline in the future."

Carsten Spohr, Lufthansa Group CEO

First Class Suites

Lufthansa will offer enclosed suites in First Class for the first time. These suites will offer nearly ceiling-high walls that can be closed for privacy, which is a massive improvement over the current product in terms of privacy. Every seat will be nearly 40 inches or almost one meter wide and can be converted into a large, comfortable bed.

In addition, each suite will have its own personal wardrobe, along with other storage. First-class passengers can opt to dine together at a large dining table, whereby one can sit across from their partner or fellow traveller. Lufthansa will also offer Bluetooth connectivity for



wireless headphones along with full-width screens for entertainment.

Lufthansa will present details of the suite, as well as further innovation in First Class, at the beginning of next year.

Business Class

The "Allegris" generation Lufthansa Business Class offers six more seating options. All Business class passengers will have direct aisle access.



Lufthansa Business Class passenger can also look forward to their own suite, which offers even more comfort and privacy due to higher walls and sliding doors that completely close. All seats can be converted into a two-meter-long bed.



Passengers can enjoy the in-flight entertainment program on monitors measuring nearly 17 inches. Wireless charging, noise-cancelling headphones and the ability to connect one's own devices, such as a PC, tablet, smartphone, or headphones, to the entertainment system, via Bluetooth will provide much-needed entertainment.

Sleeper's Row 2.0 in Economy Class

Lufthansa will offer new booking

options to provide more space and choices in Economy class. Following the launch of the "Sleeper's Row", which offered Economy Class passengers to book an entire row of seats on long-distance flights since August 2021, Lufthansa now plans to introduce a "Sleeper's Row 2.0" on all new long-haul aircraft, as part of the new product generation.

In the "Sleeper's Row 2.0", one must simply fold up a leg rest and utilize the additional mattress on offer, for rest and relaxation on a reclining surface that is 40 percent larger compared to the original "Sleeper's Row". Alongside, passengers can also book a vacant neighbour seat.



Premium Economy Class

Lufthansa is also introducing a new Premium Economy Class which was already introduced at SWISS in spring 2022. The comfortable premium economy seat is integrated into a hard shell and can be adjusted effortlessly, without affecting fellow passengers in the row behind.



Image Source: Lufthansa

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PIA loses contact with flight attendant in Toronto

A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight attendant reportedly vanished in Canada shortly after appearing for immigration at Toronto airport in the third such instance this year, despite measures taken by the airline to prevent such occurrences.

The airline's management launched an inquiry into the disappearance of steward Aijaz Ali Shah who went from Islamabad to Toronto on PK-781 flight on October 14 and was scheduled to return to Islamabad on PK-782, but was not part of the crew when the flight returned.

Subsequently, the airline's investigators debriefed the rest of the crew upon their return to determine the circumstances in which the steward went missing.

The PIA management, meanwhile, also informed Canadian immigration authorities of the 'missing' crewmember who failed to join his colleagues before the flight returned to Islamabad.

Mr Shah, a resident of Bahria Town, Rawalpindi, had joined the national flag carrier 20 years ago.

Upon reaching the airport, according to sources, Mr Shah quickly moved towards the Canadian immigration counter because he was the first person in the row but he then disappeared as none of the crewmembers could find him again at the airport. Shortly after the steward went missing from the airport, they said the remaining crewmembers of the flight waited for him for about two hours in their bus besides looking for him at the airport.

“Even the PIA station manager at

Toronto attempted to contact him on his cell phone, but his efforts proved unproductive,” sources said.

This was not the first such disappearance of a PIA crewmember, as an airhostess and a steward on international flights had previously gone missing after reaching Canada.

Earlier in January, a flight steward on PK-781 flight went missing in Canada soon after landing at Toronto. An airhostess of the national flag carrier also disappeared on reaching Canada this year.

A PIA spokesman said the management had started an inquiry into the disappearance after the latest incident was reported.

The Canadian border security was also informed by the PIA station manager regarding the incident, he added.

British Airways brings back its full Club World service

British Airways is returning to its much-loved full Club World service, enhancing the premium dining experience as part of the airline's plans to continue to improve its product proposition.

The service was simplified during the pandemic to reduce interaction between cabin crew and customers.

The airline has also introduced new seasonal menus in the cabin to champion the best of British cuisine.

Menu variations and service styles have been trialled with the airline's cabin crew to ensure they meet customers' expectations.

These enhancements accompany the improved service the airline has already implemented across its First, World Traveller Plus, World Traveller and Club Europe cabins earlier this year.

British Airways is relaunching its much-anticipated Club World (business class) service today with delicious new menus offering customers a more brasserie-style dining experience when they travel.



The return to a full service will include new enhanced standards of dining where each course is served to customers individually. British Airways will start serving signature hot soups and warm desserts, such as artichoke and parmesan soup with rye croutons and warm apple strudel with vanilla sauce, which are both perfect starts to the airline's winter menus.

British Airways' new Club World menus will reflect its commitment to using British provenance and premium ingredients from local producers celebrating originality. There will also be a range of seasonal options for customers to choose from, such as the British Original Cottage Pie or chocolate fondant with crème anglaise. In addition, the airline will also be offering menus with regional variations that features cuisines tailored to specific routes, including lemon and herb grilled mahi-mahi fish on its Caribbean flights, chicken dum biryani on routes from India and king prawn machbous from the Middle East.

For those customers wanting to

maximise their sleep on board, the airline is also reintroducing its express service on evening flights. Customers will be able to request a one tray service so they can enjoy a quick bite to eat and then head to sleep if they wish.

The new menus have been carefully curated by British Airways' culinary experts and have been thoughtfully paired with beverage options from the airline's inflight drinks menu. Over the last few months, the airline has been trialling menu variations and service styles with the airline's cabin crew to ensure they meet customers' expectations.

The airline also launched its newest campaign last week, which celebrates British Airways' people, its customers, the nation and how it has helped make British Airways a British Original. As part of this campaign, customers can expect to see the celebration of originality throughout the menus with British classics and a focus on British provenance.

The airline is also introducing a refreshed Club World check-in zone at Heathrow Terminal 5, to enhance the premium experience at every step of their journey.

British Airways is also continuing to roll out its newest business class seat, Club Suite, across its Boeing 777 fleet. The airline has taken delivery of another A350 aircraft this year, which has the Club Suite installed as well as the latest generation of the First cabin, including the introduction of the First suite door.





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Pakistan will always come out stronger after a crisis

(Prof. Safdar Sandal)



Most people bear feeble memories. It is very common amongst us to overlook the past or entirely ignore historical facts. We utterly disregard external and internal challenges, neglect weak economic policies and with absolute indifference to regional and global politics, either start drawing comparisons of Pakistan with the developed western states or with Bangladesh and Malaysia.

This is a futile assessment in its entirety as we are ignoring Pakistan's geopolitical location, global impediments, a fervently implacable enemy-neighbour and intrusions by dictators, a frail democracy and domestic unrest. New propaganda has been generated in every era to prove that we are inferior, incompetent, dishonest and ill disciplined. Pakistan has blessed to have been located in areas that have been central to worldly affairs. Movements originated, religions were born, developed and preached to other countries from this region, and entire civilizations settled here because of our rich resources, converted into present day industries.

In spite of all these, problems, handicaps and obstacles existed persistently. Pakistan is a realm where chances and opportunities of progress surpass any other state. Pakistan has never

been evaluated holistically in the context of its specific circumstances. Biased opinions and unfounded philosophies are propagated through organized propaganda that is intended to breed disappointment and despair. Its people have suffered from these impediments, ever since their independence. Despite all these ills, courageous people of Pakistan have managed to live a happy life because of their rich cultural habits.

haunts us badly till to this day. Extremely complicated and precarious circumstances including ideological, pushed Pakistan towards the capitalist American block, which to its dismay has not proved to be a 100% perfect choice holistically, considering the hitherto hostile attitude of main ally of its own selection, the US, with some lapses during the military regimes, again imposed by the same ally.



Textile Industry

The extremely hostile environment, events and circumstances leading to the creation of Pakistan made its survival extremely unlikely however, Quaid and his sincere followers set waste to all the poisonous plans and desires. From its very existence, Pakistan had to face the challenge of choosing either America or Russia. The decision in one direction only,



(A lunch break)

Once the US had also brought one of its main ally in Europe Greece under a military dictatorship against the will of the people. Greece has been the birth place of democracy since 2000 years and the people still hate the US despite lapse of approximately half a century for their abhor able role. Visit of Bill Clinton (20-Nov-1999) was protested against by the Greek people. I happened to be in Athens during the fiery protest of the people and remained confined to my hotel for five days. Protesters fought running street battles with riot police as banks and shops in the heart of Athens were set on fire. I had seen the burnt out Dept. stores later, one of which was my important customer named 'Skitzis' near to the Parliament building.

Muslims were extremely oppressed in pre-Pakistan era, in addition to being





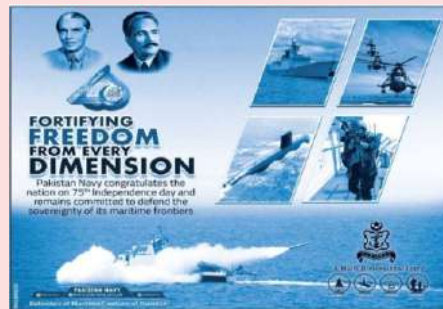
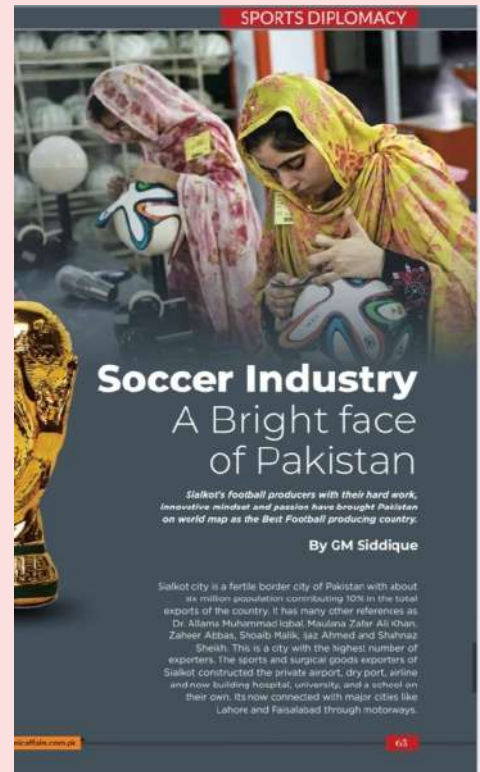
(Pakistani drama)

inferior in education, economics and technical skills, due to the avowed British policy, the previous oppressors. The reason being that the British had snatched power from Muslim rulers in the sub-continent and as a result were inclined to punish Muslims and put them to the back burner for no less than 200 years and at the same time favoured Hindus who were friendly to them, the later also having been remained subjects of Muslims for 800 hundred years. Most Pakistanis were migrants who were kept illiterate by the British. Resultantly they also lacked practical training and the capital for investment. This had forced them to live in abject poverty for nearly 150-200 hundred years of British rule in different parts of India.

Today still there is hue and cry of poverty in Pakistan and the fact remains

powers and the United States, Pakistan had to make very unpleasant choices that forced it to focus on building military might rather than concentrate on economic prosperity and industrial development. This factor alone has greatly handicapped its progress as compared to its neighbours and the proven fact that Army's interference and dominance in most underdeveloped counties, continues to haunt Pakistan's growth and democratic progress.

Corruption is often used as an excuse to malign Pakistan. In fact, corruption is a global phenomenon, whether more or less. Inefficiency and incompetence are far more damaging. External powers never let meritocracy to take its place in Pakistan due to their ulterior motives. Unfortunately, the leader of the Western bloc never wanted to see Pakistan as self-reliant and developed nation because a



Karachi : Quaid's city

that until 1960, household workers had no shoes to wear. It wasn't until later years that simple rubber flip-flops shoes became available to comfort them. Most people still walked bare-footed. Compare now with the present situation; an unimaginable change. I have seen during my early life, people coming to cities from their villages, bare footed while saving their shoes by tying them over their heads in a piece of cloth, thus sparing them for a long wear or saving their wear and tear.

Since its very inception, Pakistan faced precarious global conspiracies. No other nation faced so much difficulties and challenges. Yet it moved on and demonstrated its will and prove its undeniable geopolitical significance to the entire world. As an ally of Western

self-sustaining liberated country would neither get intimidated nor plead for financial assistance. Woefully, they have succeeded in checking the once fast growing into a creeping economy, putting it into a grey, black or whatever list of their liking, as part of their foreign policy.

China an emerging superpower is lending enormous financial and technological support to uplift the economy of Pakistan. A question is often raised whether China would act as another East India Company!! This contention seems very immature as there is a stark difference in the economic benefits and interests between those of old colonial Britain and the progressive new China. With Pakistan, China has extremely beneficial relationship. China does not



Avacado of Pakistan
Sialkot: Iqbal's city of exports

have a shorter, cheaper and safe route to the international market which geographically Pakistan provides it, so it would never strain its relations with Pakistan which could negatively impact its trade and economic interests. Likewise Pakistan equally shares these common interests with China. Hopefully, it will not be a cunning partner like the British or (East India Company).

This is not a wishful thinking. Pakistan has passed through very challenging times and is all set to embrace a new horizon where the common man will have better opportunities and economic wellbeing which will eventually be here curing many social inequalities too. China will not only support Pakistan on the economic front for bilateral interests, but will also assist in education, technological and technical and portray Pakistan as a role model for other countries to follow as its partners in

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prosperity, hand in glove.

The 'Belt and Road' initiative has the potential to encompass the entire world. Argentina in South America, some countries in Africa and Russia too have already joined in the plan. In spite of countless inadequacies, Pakistan has a very bright future and surely the

opportunities and possibilities are endless. CPEC is among one of its major hopes. After the completion of this mega project, Pakistan will get a kick start in the international market. In the recent few months, around 331 million dollars were invested in Pakistan by foreign companies, as of FDI report. Such

developments are a cause of a 'sore eye' for some countries who do not like to see Pakistan 'eye to eye'. On the contrary, there are enough safeguards for the security of Pakistan. All we need as Pakistanis is to believe that Pakistan will never let you down and that Pakistan has always come out stronger every time when it has faced challenges.

CAA to hire private firm to maintain cleanliness at IIA

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has decided to hire the services of a private company to fill the manpower gap and step up the task of better cleaning and disinfecting at Islamabad International Airport (IIA).

According to sources, the airport has been facing a manpower deficit of 100 personnel for the past two years after which the authorities concerned were approached to resolve the manpower shortage due to which cleanliness issues were emerging.

They said since the new airport was inaugurated, there were 320 sanitation staffers, but after some time 100 of them left the job and since then no new induction had been made.

The sources said it had been decided that services of a private company would be hired to fill the manpower gap and maintain proper cleanliness at the airport.

Earlier, the entry of visitors/greeters had been restricted at the airport due to which cleaning the premises was not so difficult with limited manpower, but since three visitors with one passenger were allowed, the airport authorities have been facing problems in maintaining cleanliness.

"Majority of visitors ignore using dustbins and remain seated in the concourse hall for a long time which makes it difficult for the cleaning staff to do their job properly," said an airport official.

On the other hand, the CAA director general had constituted a three-member committee to probe into the deplorable and poor cleanliness conditions at the IIA built at a cost of over Rs105 billion in 2018.

The inquiry was ordered by the aviation minister Khawaja Saad Rafique after his recent visit to the airport.

The committee, comprising Air Vice Marshal Mohammad Jamal Arshad, additional director general CAA, Air Cdre Shahid Qadir, director security, and



Naveed Ahmad Khan, additional director operations, has completed its report and submitted it to the CAA Director General Khagan Murtaza.

The committee had been directed to highlight poor cleanliness at the airport and submit a report within three days.

The inquiry team had also been directed to identify loopholes in

monitoring and supervisory mechanism and lapses in system at IIA leading to such poor conditions at the airport.

More importantly, the inquiry team was to affix responsibility besides suggesting measures to avoid such a situation in future.

The country's first green-field airport was inaugurated by the then prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in May 2018.

The airport has been designed to cater to millions of passengers from all over the world.

A green-field construction project is one that is not constrained by existing infrastructure. The analogy refers to using unused land for building a new project from scratch.



Allama Iqbal International Airport (AIIAP) Lahore launches drive promoting safe and clean drive culture at Airport.

Emirates increases service in Asia

As we start a return to normalcy after lockdowns and travel restrictions due to COVID-19, travel isn't what we expected. Business travel is still returning but leisure travel is returning in full force, often in greater numbers than before the pandemic.

Many leisure travelers are also becoming premium travelers resulting in unprecedented business and first-class loads across airlines are boosted by leisure travelers spending more for better travel experiences.

Emirates is seeing a lot of this across their global network and this is giving the airline reason to increase frequency or up-gauge the aircraft flying on certain routes. This is particularly true for flights to Asia.

Growth in Asia

Taiwan is reopening to the world soon following the termination of mandatory COVID-19 quarantine restrictions for arrivals. Emirates is planning daily service between Taipei and Dubai using Boeing 777 aircraft shortly after the restrictions are lifted, this is an increase in flights from the current four weekly flights. It's expected that the end of the COVID restrictions will result in a significant increase in travel to Taipei and will also increase connectivity from Dubai for Emirates passengers.

Prior to COVID Emirates regularly flew an Airbus A380 in a two-class configuration to the Asian city. It's likely that demand may be sufficient enough to start seeing the A380 heading to Taipei again from Dubai.

In addition to Taiwan reopening borders, Japan is set to remove daily arrival caps and mandatory COVID-19 testing and quarantine rules for arriving passengers.

Emirates has seen a significant spike in bookings for flights to Narita and Osaka from Dubai, this has resulted in an up-gauge of the aircraft used to service Japan's Narita airport.

A380 on More Routes

The airline will reintroduce the A380 on their flights to Narita as a way to quickly provide more capacity to the high-demand location. Osaka will see daily service operated by Boeing 777 aircraft.

India is seeing some of the A380 love as well. Emirates flies to Bengaluru from Dubai three times a day using B777s. Starting on October 30, Emirates will replace one of those B777s with an A380. This will result in daily service with the A380 supplemented by two additional flights using B777 aircraft, an overall

capacity increase.

This will make Bengaluru the first South Indian city to be served by an Emirates A380 and the second Indian destination for the Emirates A380 after Mumbai.

The airline has been accelerating the deployment of its flagship A380 aircraft across the world, currently the A380 flies to 30 destinations with more to be announced in the future. Emirates is planning on deploying the A380 to over 40 destinations by March 2023.

Cabin Refurbishments

During this expansion, Emirates is also planning on spending \$2 billion to refresh airline cabins. AirlineGeeks recently had the opportunity to speak to Essa Sulaiman Ahmad, Emirates' Divisional Vice President, USA and Canada about this refresh and what it means for the fleet.

Emirates will be retrofitting the interiors of 67 A380s and 53 B777s at a rate of one aircraft rolling out into service every 16 days.

The update will involve 5,092 A380 business class seats and 1,702 B777 business class seats along with their respective cabins. This goes from re-upholstered seats, new paneling, upgraded carpets, stairs, and flooring. All will be updated to reflect the new tones and design motives Emirates is prioritizing for this generation of seats.

Seven hundred and forty-eight first-class seats on the A380 and 272 first-class seats on the B777 are also due for upgrades. This means new leather, updated armrests, new paneling, flooring, and other design features. The fully enclosed suites found on a subset of aircraft will not be put on additional aircraft but many look and feel aspects of these seats will be incorporated in first-class cabins across the fleet as part of the retrofit program.

This retrofit will also extend the service life of some of Emirates' existing aircraft according to Essa. This is an additional way the airline plans on coping with delays to the Boeing B777X program for which Emirates is a launch customer.

Menu Enhancements

Additionally, the airline is revamping menus in first class and offering unlimited portions of caviar for first-class

passengers. It has also entered into an exclusive deal to serve Dom Perignon on flights, the reason behind Singapore



Airlines dropping the champagne from their first-class offerings.

The airline is also investing millions of dollars into the development of vegan choices for passengers in all cabins. It has influences from Chinese, Indian, and Arabic cuisines and will be available for pre-order. New vegan offerings will also be expanded into Emirates lounges. A significant portion of these plant-based offerings will be sourced through Bustanica, the world's largest hydroponic farm located just miles away from Emirates Flight Catering in Dubai.

Some of the example meals available:

Creamy Spinach & Avocado Mousseline with marinated tofu, blanched snow peas, radish, asparagus, pomegranate seeds, courgetti ribbon and sriracha oil

Multicolored Quinoa with caramelized pear and celeriac puree, roasted cauliflower, glazed carrots, sauteed kale and lovage pesto

Barley Risotto with Mushrooms served with sundried tomatoes, buttered chestnuts, blanched broccolini and toasted pumpkin seeds

Dark Chocolate Custard Cake with strawberries

Lemon Tart with coconut cream

Chocolate tofu cheesecake with strawberry compote

The menu items are imaginative and actually highlight vegetables instead of just using things like plant-based meat to duplicate meat-based dishes. Usually, vegan meals on flights are incredibly boring so it's refreshing to see genuinely imaginative dishes available for people with dietary restrictions that are on the same level as normally catered dishes.

Emirates is putting its best foot forward as the world recovers from the COVID-19 lockdowns. From increased frequencies and larger aircraft to a completely refreshed fleet Emirates has big plans as it aims to go beyond where the airline was in 2019.

CPEC projects to speed up after JCC meeting: Chinese consul

The work on china-pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) projects is expected to speed up after the joint cooperation committee (JCC) meeting to be held later this year.

The meeting of JCC on CPEC will be preceded by the first official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China next month.

“Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif is coming to China next month and after his visit JCC meeting will be convened later this year to ensure that all CPEC projects see smooth functioning. Work on pending projects will be resumed and they will be put on fast track to make sure that they meet the deadline,” Mr Shiren said.

Mr Shiren further said the CPEC was not alone a Chinese project, Pakistan needed to take its full ownership. “It is for the people's livelihood as it has improved Pakistan's infrastructure, alleviated energy crisis, playing a pivotal role in getting Pakistan out of poverty and embarking on the path of growth and recovery. The CPEC should be implemented wisely as a lot of work in

this respect has to be done,” he said.

To a question about 'certain hiccups' in the CPEC in the past, he said: “No matter which party in Pakistan is power...the CPEC is here to stay as it is more for the people than the government. It will help primarily with the acute power shortage which Pakistanis are facing today.”

Talking about the fate of the multi-billion ML-I project, the Chinese consul general said: “It is in the pipeline and going to be launched. Let me make it clear that this project was always there. Pakistan needs it the most. It is one of the major components of the CPEC.”

He was of the view that financing and technical issues of ML-I were being resolved. “A banking consultant will be appointed to arrange finances for this project,” he informed.

Earlier, the Senate Standing Committee on Railways was informed on Monday that the ML-I project of Pakistan Railways, which was to revolutionise the entire railway network of Pakistan, had

been delayed due to the poor handling of the previous PTI government, and its cost had also jumped up.

Secretary Railways Syed Khalid Ali Gardezi informed the committee that certain security-related issues and uncertain situation also caused delay in the project which would now cost \$9.8 billion instead of \$6.8bn.

China tops among flood donation countries China tops among the countries that provided flood assistance to Pakistan. “China has provided a collective assistance of over \$90 million to Pakistan to help flood victims,” Mr Shiren said.

The Chinese government, military and its companies operating here had contributed to the funds for the flood affectees, he said. “We will continue providing more assistance to the flood victims,” he declared.

“The Chinese construction companies may also be engaged during the rehabilitation work,” he said, adding China stood by Pakistan in this hour of need. China would continue supporting Pakistan for its rehabilitation efforts. Mr Shiren stressed for more people-to-people contacts to bring both countries closer. “We are also introducing different exchange programmes to further enhance the people's interaction,” he said.

KPT hasn't cleared over 5,000 containers in six months, PAC told

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was on Wednesday 5 Oct. told that the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) had withheld more than 5,000 containers for the past six months.

The matter was brought to the attention of the PAC by Senator Ahmed Khan, who said that failure to clear the containers was causing distress to a lot of people.

The PAC meeting pertaining to the ministry of maritime affairs was held under the chairmanship of MNA Noor Alam Khan in the Parliament House to discuss the audit paras and examine the grants for 2019-2020.

The government responded that there was a backlog of containers at the Karachi Port and Port Qasim for the past 15 years and that the matter was being looked into, as in some cases auction took time.

The committee directed the maritime affairs secretary to provide the PAC with a list showing the correct number of containers being withheld at the two ports.

Reviewing the audit report, the members expressed displeasure over the poor governance of the former KPT



Containers are piling up at Karachi ports. chairman.

The committee requested the prime minister not to post him anywhere for allegedly committing several irregularities while awarding contracts to disqualified bidders and giving government-owned lands on lease at unimaginably low rates.

It had been revealed that the loss of more than Rs8 billion was caused by giving the KPT land to housing societies on lease at lowest rates.

The committee also decided to hold its next meetings in Gwadar and on the same day, it would travel by air to the Port Qasim Authority and KPT with the purpose to discuss their audit objections in

the report on the anomalies in these departments.

Two paras were also referred to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for inquiries and directions were also issued to the secretary to fix responsibility on the officer(s) for violating law.

In his response, the maritime affairs secretary informed the committee that an inquiry had been ordered. However, the committee handed over the matter to NAB for investigation.

PAC chairman Noor Alam appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his unflinching support to the committee for its smooth functioning and accountability across the board.

“I must appreciate the prime minister. I met him twice and he assured full support to the committee as he never interfered in the business of the PAC because he himself had been heading the committee in the past. He is well aware with the scope and mandate of the PAC,” said Noor Alam.

The chairman also constituted four subcommittees of the PAC.

The subcommittees each headed by MNA Wajiha Qamar, MNA Muhammad Barjees Tahir, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla and Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed would look into the pending audit objections.

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World Tourism Day: rethinking tourism and its global footprint

A leading company in big data and tourism intelligence, celebrates World Tourism Day by presenting its seventh Tourism Sustainability Index for destinations. In its strong commitment to sustainability, the company is working to rethink tourism and the priorities of destinations with its new Income / Carbon Footprint indicator, which analyzes the ratio of income to carbon footprint in CO2 emissions generated by tourists visiting a destination.

According to Mabrian, the basis of the sustainability of a destination is to achieve a balance between the tourist experience, the well-being of the residents, the conservation of the environment and the profitability of the sector. In this way, the leading company in tourism intelligence helps destination managers and tourism companies with tools that allow them to make decisions aligned with this balance through big data analysis.

To its six existing Sustainability indices that Mabrian has, it now adds a new index: the Income / Carbon Footprint Index. This new indicator relates the average income generated by a visitor at the destination, with the impact of the carbon footprint of traveling to the destination by air. The objective of this index is to identify the markets or segments that offer greater efficiency between the pollution they generate and the wealth they contribute to the destination.

Although the carbon footprint

generated by a tourist is not limited to air travel, nor is the tourist's expenditure dedicated exclusively to sustainability, it is an index with a very valid approximation to identify those markets that generate more wealth in the local economy of residents, with the least possible impact on the environment.

This indicator, added to others Mabrian offers such as the distribution of tourist income in the local economy, the concentration of the tourist offer in the territory, the perception of sustainability, the motivational diversification of visitors, the degree of dependence on certain markets of origin and, finally, seasonality offer a more complete vision of the desired balance of a sustainable tourist destination.

Seville as an example

Analyzing the case of Seville, if we apply this index we can verify that the average income per stay that the city receives directly from visitors is 1.8 dollars for each kilogram of CO2 emitted into the atmosphere. This ratio shows great disparity between the average and the main markets of origin. In the top 10 most efficient markets for Seville are Portugal, Switzerland and France, while the United Kingdom and Germany, more traditional markets by volume of visitors to the destination, are much further down.

Carlos Cendra, Director of Sales and Marketing at Mabrian, explains: "Based on the fact that traveling is vital for human beings and tourism is a necessity, we have to try to ensure that its impact is positive for both the traveler and community who

receives these visits and the impact on their environment. On this World Tourism Day, we at Mabrian propose to work with tourism objectives based on efficiency and sustainability, instead of the normal volume of visitors, to create a balance and make destinations more sustainable ions."

Pink diamond sells for nearly \$58m in Hong Kong



The Williamson Pink Star diamond.

A rare pink diamond has sold in Hong Kong for nearly \$58 million, setting a record for price per carat paid at auction for any diamond or gemstone, according to Sotheby's.

The 11.15-carat Williamson Pink Star recently fetched HK\$453.2 million (\$57.7 million), the second-highest price paid at auction for any jewel, Sotheby's added.

The winning bid, by an undisclosed buyer from Boca Raton, Florida, was more than twice the estimated \$21 million sale price.

The stone was the second-largest pink diamond to be sold at auction. Pink diamonds are the rarest of the precious gems and the most in-demand on the global market.

The world record for a pink diamond was set in 2017, when a stone known as the CTF Pink Star was sold in Hong Kong for \$71.2 million.

Recently sale "not only attests to the resilient demand for top quality diamonds in Asia, but a heightened awareness of the great scarcity of pink diamonds", said Wenhao Yu, chairman of jewellery and watches at Sotheby's Asia.

The Williamson Pink Star was named after two other pink diamonds: the record-setting CTF Pink Star and the Williamson Stone, a 23.6-carat diamond given as a wedding present to Queen Elizabeth II in 1947.

Tobias Kormind, managing director of UK jewel retailer 77 Diamonds, said the "astounding" sale proved high-quality diamonds could still fetch major prices in a shaky economy.

"Hard assets such as world-class diamonds have a history of performing well even in times of instability," he said.



Dry core drilling confirms Mohenjo Daro spread over 360 hectares

The dry core drilling process that began at Mohenjo Daro on April 5, 2014, has accomplished its initial object of determining the ancient city's boundaries but studies on cultural material unearthed in the drilling are yet to be completed.

Dr Kaleemullah Lashari, chairman of technical consultative committee of National Fund for Mohenjodaro (NFM) told media at the ruined city on Wednesday that the scheme had been launched to ascertain actual limits of the site and undertake a deep study of the cultural material secured during the drilling.

He said the initial object of the scheme had been completed and it was confirmed during the huge exercise that the ancient city was spread over 360 hectares. The dry core drilling had been under taken thrice since 1922 when Sir John Marshal first conducted the drilling. During all three exercises the experts had gone down to 80 feet, he said. Dr Lashari said the second object of the drilling exercise was to study the cultural material obtained in the process by Dr Sarfaraz Solangi, the then head of the department of geology at University of Sindh who headed the project.

A three-member committee headed by him with Michael Jansen and another expert Mr John from United States of America as its members was tasked to carry out studies on the cultural material, he said. He said the studies were to be conducted on the things that had remained in the use of the ancient people and the behaviour of the Indus River. The committee was scheduled to meet at the archaeological site on July 26 but it had to be postponed after the death of one of its members Dr Michael Jansen, he said.

We will now co-opt Dr Sarfraz Solangi, who had conducted the geological studies, as member of the committee to move further, he said.

He said the scheme pertaining to the cultural segment of the dry core drilling had been prepared and subsequently submitted to the department of culture along with its PC-I in 2018. It was revised after two years and submitted in 2020 to

the department which still required the nod of the head of the department, he said.

He said that research itself was a big task which would definitely require

financial assistance. 'We, therefore, have prepared a scheme with estimated cost of Rs80 million,' he said.

Asked what would be the fate of this segment of the dry core drilling as the scheme submitted twice to the department had not yet seen the light of the day, he said that it was an ongoing project which required to be given priority.

Unesco expert visits Mohenjo Daro to assess damage caused by rains



UNESCO expert Thierry Joffroy (third from right) inspects a portion of Mohenjo Daro damaged during recent rains.

Unesco expert, Thierry Joffroy, is on a visit to Mohenjo Daro for a survey to assess the extent of damage caused to the ancient ruins by recent unprecedented rains and floods in Sindh.

Sources privy to the visit told media on Monday 24 Oct. that Mr Joffroy, an architect and researcher, arrived at the world heritage site on Sunday 23 Oct. and visited the 'SD' and 'L' areas along with a team of local conservationists and officials of the culture department.

He also discussed with archaeology director Shakir Shah, engineer conservation Ali Haider Gadhi and others the issues that had surfaced at the world heritage site owing to the massive rainfall and flooding.

On Monday, Mr Joffroy inspected the DK area of the ancient site.

The expert has been assigned the job after UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres visited Mohenjo Daro on Sept 8, besides many flood-hit cities, towns and archaeological sites in the country.

Sources at the site said that Mr Joffroy was likely to visit historical sites in Makli and Thatta as well after leaving Mohenjo Daro on Thursday (Oct 27) for a similar survey.

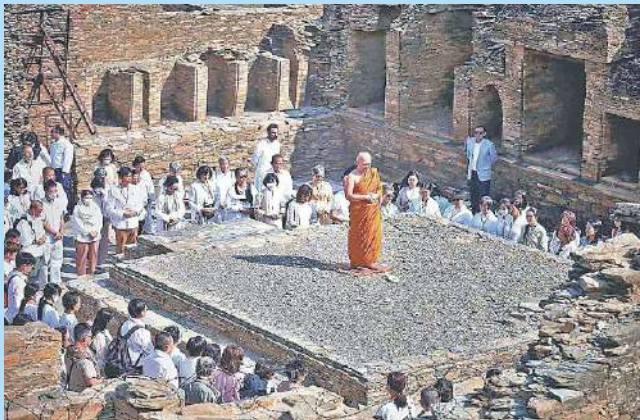
According to the sources, an amount of \$150,000 had been allocated for the survey and corrective measures to protect Mohenjo Daro from further damage.

During inspection of the DK area, the Unesco expert discussed with officials of the culture department and archaeology creating a drainage outlet, as no such thing existed there.

A plan to design a drainage system after extensive mapping of the area was also discussed. It was proposed that pipes should be laid to channelise rainwater so that it could be diverted to an outer area from the site.

The Unesco expert considered a plan under which rainwater could either be released into Dadu Canal (as had been in practise in the past) or into River Indus through heavy pumps, the sources said.

Atlaf Assem, a member of the technical consultative committee, and Shabir Ahmed Joyo also accompanied the Unesco expert during his visit.



The most venerable Thai Buddhist monk, Arayawangso, leads a prayer along with his disciples and followers at the famous archaeological complex of Takhtbhai, Mardan.



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Wildlife reclaiming preservation area in Margalla Hills

As nature begins to heal itself after a drop in human activity, the wildlife in Margalla Hills has started to reclaim the preservation area in the hills a nocturnal leopard even ventured out during the daytime.

"Porcupines, Khalij pheasants, foxes, and wild boars roam freely, which used to be unusual because under 'normal circumstances' there would be traffic [in the area] that pushed the wildlife into the bushes," Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWM) Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan told media on Sunday 25 Sep.

The IWMB completed a study in April that helped define a leopard sanctuary, stretching roughly 10 square kilometres. The board was readying to conduct another study this year since the habitat has been restored there were higher than usual sightings of pheasants dancing, ambling porcupines, and foxes trotting.

Earlier this month, the IWMB released fresh images from camera traps set up in the leopard preserve area showing the apex predator roaming and occupying spaces that they would



normally avoid due to trekkers and hikers.

Since the leopard preserve is closed to minimise the outside disturbance, the IWMB has been taking visitors to Trail 6 on guided tours. "We don't want people to disturb the place...[since] now it's completely rehabilitated. A few species that we did not expect to see in the wild have come back as well, especially after the rains have filled the ponds and streams," the IWMB chairperson said.

After a six minutes' video presentation, groups of 10 to 15 were taken into the leopard preserve for educational purposes. "The guides teach you to read pug marks, show you trees where monkeys like to feed, the information you cannot learn otherwise," she said, adding, "It's for education, enjoyment of nature, peace of mind, walking quietly, [and] encouraging ecotourism."

Fayaz Khan, who was on a guided

tour with his wife, said they felt as if they had been transported to another time before people started intruding. "You could not ask for a better..." he said.

Ecosystem restoration is in full swing in the leopard sanctuary from Kalinjar, behind the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) cantonment area till Trail 6 near the Faisal mosque. Although Monal, Trail 5, and areas near the Quaid-i-Azam University are denser parts of the Margalla Hills National Park, Ms Khan dismissed rumours that the predator was spreading out.

Talking about trails 3 and 5, the IWMB chairperson said that a large number of people visited these treks and it was next to impossible to stop them from littering. The only sound coming from these trails beside the wind is of people talking out loud and playing music, she added.

Asma Khan, who visits Trail 5 regularly since it was first opened to the public a few years ago, said that the wildlife on Trail 5 was rarely witnessed as "animals hang back at the edge and move in the shadows" due to the human activity in the area.

Falconry, trophy hunting allowed despite wildlife loss in calamity

In what appears to be an effort to appease influential quarters, the Sindh government has allowed falconry and trophy hunting this year, ignoring the devastation caused by floods to the wildlife population, it emerged recently.

According to a notification, the hunting season of (native) game birds and water fowls would remain closed for the season 2022-23 on the grounds of natural calamity.

The closure would be applied to all areas including privately owned hunting reserves so registered under the wildlife laws.

However, other forms of hunting such as trophy hunting and falconry shall not be under the scope of the orders on the grounds of nonoccurrence of natural calamity in such areas at deserts and foot hills of the province," the Oct 27 notification issued by the forest and wildlife department says.

It may be recalled that the provincial cabinet in a recent meeting had decided to ban hunting of native game birds and migratory waterfowls for a year 'until the wildlife gets recovered from the shock sustained due to natural disaster.

However, there was no mention to the widely criticised falconry organised for Arab hunters and trophy hunting.

When contacted, Sindh conservator Javed Ahmed Mahar said the floods had largely affected the fertile plain areas of the province where hunting had been banned.

The government has allowed falconry and trophy hunting in nonprotected hilly and desert areas, which have remained safe from the disaster," he explained, adding that 80 per cent of the proceeds from trophy hunting went to the community.

About the loss of wildlife and their habitats in floods, he said flooding along the river belt heavily affected both human and animal life. 'All forms of animal life especially reptiles, rodents and insects as well as flora were amongst the worst sufferers.

Majority of the recently hatched brood faced mortality, though surviving birds took refuge at scattered dry pieces of land and trees.

According to Mr Mahar, the government has banned hunting of water fowls as they were expected to land all around due to water, contrary to their traditional sites, attracting masses to avail shooting opportunity and posing a threat not only to migratory water fowls but also to people that have taken refuge in relief camps.

Saeed-ul-Islam of the World Wildlife

Fund for Nature agreed with the argument on trophy hunting. 'It's conducted in hilly areas that have remained safe from the devastation.

Besides, communities benefit from the activity targeting old male animals,' he said, while declining to comment on falconry, reasoning that he was not aware of current data on the population of migratory birds.

Speaking to media on condition of anonymity, wildlife officials stated that the government was under immense pressure not to slap a complete ban on hunting.

There were written requests from influential quarters to allow hunting. Hence, the government was in no position to take this drastic step,' an official said, adding that wildlife could not be restricted to one area as they migrated due to different reasons including threat to life.

Hence, the logic behind the permission makes little sense.

According to the notification, the wildlife department will carry out a survey by engaging the field staff of their divisions and submit a report to the extent of breeding, sightings and stability of wildlife population once the floods recede to enable the department for taking decision regarding hunting season 2023-24.

How a Chinese vase valued at 2,000 sold for 8 million



The blue and white porcelain vase named Tianqiuping (heavenly sphere) is covered in enamel and decorated with nine fierce dragons and clouds.

IN the 41 years of wielding the gavel at his auction house, a stone's throw from the royal chateau at Fontainebleau, a town southeast of Paris, Jean-Pierre Osenat has never seen anything like it. "This is a crazy story," he said. "Quite extraordinary."

According to The Guardian, the story has cost one of the auctioneer's experts his job, after a Chinese vase he declared an ordinary decorative piece worth €2,000 (£1,750) at most sold for almost €8m, nearly 4,000 times the estimate.

"The expert made a mistake. One person alone against 300 interested Chinese buyers cannot be right," Osenat said. "He was working for us. He no longer works for us. It was, after all, a serious mistake."

The extraordinary story began earlier this year when a French woman living abroad decided to sell furniture and various objects from her late mother's home in Brittany, France. Having entrusted Osenat with the sale, the vase which had belonged to her grandmother was packed up, dispatched to Paris and put in a "furniture and works of art" auction of 200 lots, none of which was valued over €8,000.

Last Saturday, the vase, a Chinese tianqiuping meaning "heavenly globe" and denoting the round base and long neck stood on a display table at the Osenat auction room. The catalogue described it as: Lot 36 "large tianqiuping

porcelain and polychrome enamel vase in a blue-white style with globular body and long cylindrical neck, decorated with nine fierce dragons and clouds (mark under the base)".

The 54cm by 40cm vase was noted as being in "good condition". The estimated price, between €1,500 and €2,000, reflected the expert's view that it was a 20th-century decorative piece and not a rare artefact.

Osenat said his suspicions this might not be the case were raised when the catalogue went online and the pre-auction exhibition was swamped with 300 to 400 interested buyers 15 days before the sale.

"They came with lamps and magnifying glasses to look at it. Obviously they saw something," he said. "There were so many registrations [to take part in the auction online] we had to stop them. At that point we understood something was happening."

Initially, the auction house staff put the unexpected interest down to the passion of the French Chinese community for China's art and history.

Faced with overwhelming interest, auctioneers decided not to allow online bids and the number of buyers was limited to 30 half in the auction room the other bidding by telephone, with each required to pay a €10,000 deposit to take part. The tianqiuping-style vase attracted hundreds of interested buyers to a pre-auction exhibition.

Almost as soon as Lot 36 came up frantic bidding erupted. Osenat was conducting the sale of rapidly increasing bids €100,000, €200,000, €500,000 when someone shouted "2m". By the time bids reached €5m, 10 buyers were still competing; by €7m only two remained.

When the gavel was finally brought down, to applause from the room, the final bid had reached €7.7m. With fees, the anonymous Chinese buyer will pay €9.12m.

Osenat said for the seller, who had moved abroad 15 years ago, the windfall came with problems and the amount would be "hard for them to come to terms with".

"The vase had been in her family for generations. She said they used to put flowers in it. She had lived with it for 30 years and never imagined it was worth that much," he said. "She's completely unsettled. If it had sold for €150,000 that would have been something, but €7.7m is

something else. She's terrified of being in the press and quite traumatised by it."

The buyer bid by telephone and lives in China. It has been suggested that in addition to the vase featuring the dragon and cloud, a sought-after motif among east Asian collectors, some may have spotted a stamp of Qianlong, an 18th-century Chinese emperor, who is a sacred figure.

The expert, who was sacked and has not been named, is reported to be standing by his original valuation.

Cédric Laborde, the director of the auction house's Asian arts department, is still not entirely convinced the expert was wrong. "We don't know whether it [the vase] is old or not or why it sold for such a price. Perhaps we will never know," Laborde said.

"The valuation corresponded to what the expert thought. In China, copying something, like an 18th-century vase, is also an art. In this case I don't have an answer. Over the last few years there have been some surprises in auctions of Asian objects."

Osenat, whose previous record sale was the €4.8m paid in 2007 for the sword Napoléon Bonaparte carried at the Battle of Marengo in 1800, said he had faith in the auctioneer's hammer.

"The expert thought it was a 20th-century copy, a decoration, so we didn't change the estimation. In the end the market decided it was 18th century," he said. "I have confidence in the market. One expert said what he said ... but the real price is what the buyers decide."



A man uses a traditional carpet manufacturing machine at a stall during the 38th Pakistan Internastional Carpet Exhibition held recently. Importers from the United Stases, Turkiye and the European Union arrived here to attend the three-day event that began. Turkish consul General Ahmar Azubay, who inaugurated the exhibition, praised Pakistan's had-woven carpets for their unique recognition the world over due to their quality and beautiful design.

\$3bn railway to link Oman, UAE

A new \$3 billion railway is to link Oman's Sohar port with Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, officials said on Wednesday 28 Sep.

The 303-kilometre (188 miles) railway, with passenger trains travelling up to 200 kilometres per hour, will join up with the UAE's national network that is now under construction. The joint venture between Oman Rail and the UAE's Etihad Rail was agreed during a visit by UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed to the Omani capital Muscat.

The railway... promises huge strategic economic and social gains, Abdulrahman Salim Al Hatmi, Group CEO of Oman Rail's parent company Asyad, said in a statement issued by the Abu Dhabi government.

AJK PM invites people to visit Kutla valley



Visitors enjoy at a waterfall in Patikka town in Azad Kashmir on Sunday 23 Sep.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas has invited people from across the country to visit Kutla valley towards northwest of Muzaffarabad to explore its hitherto hidden natural beauty.

He was speaking at the concluding ceremony of a four-day event to introduce tourism potential of Kutla, home to many breathtakingly beautiful meadows, snow-capped mountains, waterfalls and streams, in the town of Patikka, some 18 kilometres from here en route Neelum valley.

Kutla lies along the right bank of Neelum River in Muzaffarabad district, beginning right from Kamsar camp on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad up to Nauseri village, the gateway of Neelum valley.

The prime minister announced that a "state of the art one kilometre long tourist

strip" would be constructed on both sides of the icy Neelum River in Patikka and road infrastructure in Kutla area would also be improved to eventually provide easy access to the tourists to its scenic locations.

The prime minister said the proposed strip along the riverbanks would also serve as a launchpad for water sports-related activities as well as a point for serving traditional food.

"I am fully cognizant of the tourism potential of this area and its exploitation on the modern scientific lines would help create massive employment opportunities and subsequently increase the revenue receipts of the state," he said.

PM Ilyas announced that the government would spare Rs60 million for promotion of tourism and creation of employment opportunities in the little explored Kutla area to be spent through a committee headed by PTI's regional senior vice president Chaudhry Zafar Anwar.

Along this strip, residential huts for professionals would also be built, he added.

The prime minister was of the view that this would create employment opportunities for no less than 600 people at the very beginning.

He directed the concerned departments to construct restrooms at all tourist spots along the Neelum valley road and Kutla.

Mr Ilyas maintained that while promoting tourism people must also pay full attention to saving their environment. In this context, he warned against releasing untreated sewage or dumping garbage in the river whose cleanliness was an attraction in itself.

Thai monks conclude maiden rain retreat in Taxila



A disciple performs rituals at Kathina ceremony at Taxila Museum on Wednesday 12 Oct.

At least 100 monks and their disciples mostly belonging to Thailand participated in a Kathina ceremony the largest alms-giving ceremony of the Buddhist year at Taxila

Museum on Wednesday 12 Oct. to mark the end of the first-ever rain retreat.

In July, a group of Buddhist monks along with their disciples had gathered at Dharmarajika stupa in Taxila for the annual rain retreat (vassa). Chief Buddhist Monk of Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand Most Venerable Arayawangso, who along with his disciples is on a three-month pilgrimage to Pakistan, performed the ceremony.

Envoys of Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar besides tourism secretary Ayisa Gull were also present on this occasion.

In his sermon, Mr Arayawangso said the pilgrimage and rituals at various Buddhist sites in Taxila, Haripur, Peshawar, and Swat brought a new aspect to modern Buddhist history.

Tourism secretary says Buddhist sites are getting their 'lost pilgrims' back

He said that the rituals were telecasted to over 700 million followers across the world and added that this coverage would not only help fetch more religious tourists to Pakistan but also promote a soft image of the country. "I found Pakistan a safe country and termed the Pakistani people peaceful and hospitable."

Talking to reporters, Ambassador of Thailand Chakkrid Krachaiwon termed the event landmark, hoping that this would give a boost to Pakistan-Thailand bilateral relations.

The envoy added that the Thai government was keen to arrange more such pilgrimages to Pakistan. "According to 2010 estimates, the vast majority of the Thai population, around 93 per cent, are Buddhists and Pakistan could be their favourite destination for religious tourism," he added.

Speaking to the media, Adam M Tugio, Indonesian envoy, said that Buddhism was the majority religion in nine out of 10 ASEAN countries. "Such events would play a key role in fetching tourists and pilgrims from these countries," he said, adding, "May this be a start for millions more Buddhists to come to Pakistan."

Punjab Tourism Secretary Ayisa Gull told reporters that the delegation of Thai monks had been in Pakistan for the last three months and over 100 more monks arrived later on.

In a comment on the rain retreat that started in July, she added that the Buddhist sites in Pakistan were getting back their lost pilgrims back.

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My Stays Hotel Management signs new agreement with Sabre to significantly enhance its global reach

A leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, recently announced a new alliance with My Stays Hotel Management. The agreement will enable the Tokyo-headquartered hotel chain to grow its global reach, including putting its offers in front of increasing numbers of international and corporate guests.

MyStays Hotel Management has significantly expanded its portfolio over the past few years and will now be able to share its inventory with hundreds of thousands of travel agents globally across all major Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), through Sabre Hospitality's innovative SynXis platform. The deal expands Sabre's already strong presence within the Japanese travel marketplace, while providing travel agents globally with access to content from the hotel chain, and enabling MyStays Hotel to significantly increase its distribution reach and revenue opportunities

"We've remained laser-focused on the expansion of our portfolio during the pandemic, adding more hotels and serviced residences in Japan's major cities," said Shoichi Iwami, managing director, MyStays Hotel Management. "As Japan continues to ease travel restrictions, it's essential to us that we have the right technology partner with an extensive global marketplace, to enable us to grow our international reach and better connect our destinations in Japan to the rest of the world."

MyStays Hotel has more than 100 premises throughout Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa, and has opened

more than 20 new hotels over the past two years. With a wide-ranging portfolio that caters to both leisure and corporate travelers, the chain specializes in full-service city hotels, resort hotels, community-based properties, hot springs, and serviced residences for short and long-term stays.

"Japan has recently relaxed travel requirements to allow individual travelers to enter, so it's more important than ever that hoteliers are able to easily place their offers and inventory in front of travel agents and buyers worldwide," said Frank Trampert, senior vice president, global managing director commercial, Sabre Hospitality. "We're thrilled to add MyStays Hotel Management to the Sabre SynXis family so we can connect them to our network of global travel buyers and, together, play a part in the recovery and future growth of Japan's tourism industry."

Pakistan-Iran railway service restored after two months

The railway service between Pakistan and Iran has been completely restored after the repair of track damaged by heavy floods and torrential rains.

The track between Ahmedwall and Quetta section was repaired after almost two months, making the Quetta-Zahedan section fully operational.

A Pakistan Railways official told media that more than one hundred breaches, along with a damaged bridge in Ahmedwall, were repaired.

The service was suspended on July 29 as

heavy rains followed by floods damaged the track in Chagai, Noshki, Mastung and Quetta districts. However, the train service was partially restored till Dalbandin on Aug 18 to allow freight trains carrying relief goods for flood-hit people to proceed, the official added. - Ali Raza Rind



A Yemeni woman, dressed in traditional clothes, poses for a picture during a coffee fair in the Yemeni capital on the eve of the International Coffee Day.



A picturesque view of Pissan Stadium, which is among the world's highest cricketing venues; batsmen from the 'Disbars of Gilgit-Baltistan' punch gloves during a match against 'Ranjhas' of Punjab'; and, Ranjhas' players practice before the match. The two-day Rakaposhi Cricket Cup 2022 concluded at the stadium recently. The aim of the tournament was to explore the potential of the 'natural' stadium situated at the foot of the mighty mountain.





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Moving 'Forward' the story of Pakistan's entry to Qatar 2022

With mere weeks to go before the first kick-off at Qatar 2022, football fever is upon us all. But while a Pakistan squad has never been part of the competition, the country is represented at nearly every major soccer game in the world by the balls themselves.

Like the 'Tel Star 18' in 2018 and the 'Brazuca' in 2014, this year's Fifa World Cup will also be played exclusively with the Al Rihila.

"We make sure to give our hundred percent to every single ball, but when it comes to the football World Cup, the level of dedication is something else," explains an assembly line inspector at Forward Sports, the factory in Sialkot that manufactures these balls.

Smartly dressed women positioned around an expansive assembly line are busy stitching, cutting and putting the finishing touches on specimens of the now world-famous match ball.

Although this is the third consecutive Fifa World Cup that Forward Sports is catering to, this is perhaps the first occasion that the product that will be kicked around by the likes of Ronaldo and Messi come November will be a truly 'made in Pakistan' product.

Forward Sports CEO Khawaja Masood Akhtar explains that unlike the last two outings, when the official ball was co-produced with China, this time his company is the exclusive manufacturer of the match balls. This is no mean feat, considering how ubiquitous the 'made in China' tag has become, thanks to their legendary manufacturing prowess.

Mr Masood views this as a testament to the company's commitment to "innovation, automation and efficiency coupled with untiring research and development".

In his words, their greatest advantage



Workers make up a sizeable number of the workforce in football manufacturing units around Sialkot and Forward Sports is no exception.

is cheap labour. "But labour will only get you so far if efficient systems are not place," he says.

Founded in 1991, Forward Sports has been working with Adidas since the mid-1990s and claims to supply match balls to some of the world's top football competitions, including the Champions League (since 2008), as well as the FIFA World Cup (since 2014).



A display of some of the balls supplied by the company to the world's most prestigious football events, including the World Cup.

Specimens of balls that were used in past competitions are displayed in the corner of a meeting room, where a brief presentation details the various milestones and many national and international accolades the company has garnered over the years.

Despite the political uncertainty that clouds things on the national front, Mr

Masood is nonplussed. "When all is said and done, the client is concerned only with their demands being met timely and efficiently," he reasons.

"If we are able to provide them quality goods at competitive rates, the client isn't too concerned with who the head of



Mr. Khawaja Masood Akhtar (SI) CEO Forward Sports (Pvt) Ltd.

the state is."

The company is driven by a desire "to stay one step ahead of the competition", which is evidenced by the breakthrough technologies employed by them. The most celebrated of these is 'thermo-bonding', whereby football panels are glued together for a completely seamless finish, unlike traditional hand and machine-stitched balls.

The company also boasts a host of patents most notably for eliminating the need for the 'last manual stitch', previously deemed mandatory to seal machine-stitched balls, as well as the Airless mini ball that never deflates and doesn't need an air pump.

The company's testing lab is also one of their most prized possessions, for it is here that technicians in lab coats subject footballs to various stringent durability and heat, humidity, mould and impact tests; all in a bid to ensure that the product going into the hands and feet of international footballers are of a befitting quality.

A tour of the factory reveals that assembling a modern football isn't simply about needle and thread work anymore the craft that originally put Sialkot on the map.

"In this day and age, it is not just necessary but essential to do away with the old and make way for the new. In the past, we were dependent on the individual kaarigar (artisan). Now, it is the machine, nay the whole system, which serves as a karigar," Mr Masood explains.

Small wonder, then, that they are able to produce around a million balls a month and successfully meet the demands of their growing customer base, even on "impossibly short notice".

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