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CONTENTS

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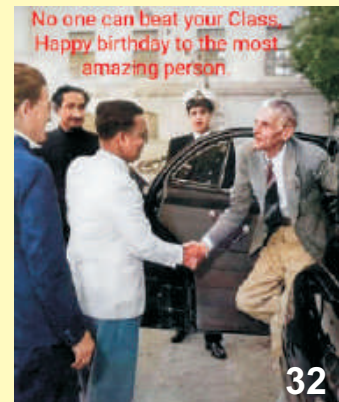
Screening of inbound passengers suggested amid fresh Covid threat	06
PM okays outsourcing management of three key airports	08
Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority holds its 29th e-Kacheri	09
EU agency calls China traveller screening unjustified	10
Emirates expands its Bangkok operations with a fourth daily flight	10
Air cargo demand drops strongly further as holiday season starts	12
Virgin Atlantic to join SkyTeam Alliance in 2023	13
With \$225m in blocked airline funds, Pakistan among top three on IATA's list	15
Lufthansa set to operate to Asturias	16
Lahore fog forces PIA to partly shift operations	17
SIAL - at its best	19
Malik Sports - manufacturer of world-class cricket bats and hockey sticks	20
10 Airlines that will fly the A380 in 2023 + fleet status	23
How to find cheap flights: Google Flights data show best days to book, fly at the best price	25
Past & present in perspective	30
Nation celebrates Quaid's birth anniversary with zeal, fervour	32
PPP lawmaker threatens to give devolved PTDC back to centre	32
Sindh heritage sites in danger due to climate change, moot told	33
Politicians, diplomats hail Sindh heritage on culture day	34
'Ganga Ram created spaces for well-rounded societies'	37
Move to launch environment-friendly, affordable E-taxi service in city	43



09



13



32

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Screening of inbound passengers suggested amid fresh Covid threat

Amid the scare of coronavirus that has once again alerted the country, the government has ordered strict screening at airports along with increased testing across the country to stop the spread of the virus.

The Sindh government has also written to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) to make testing mandatory for all inbound passengers and quarantine the positive cases.

A meeting of the NCOC on Thursday 29 Dec. also decided to increase fumigation and use sanitisers at the airports and carry out genome sequencing of positive cases to determine the variants of the virus.

The meeting, held at the National Institute of Health (NIH), was chaired by Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel.

Talking to the media after the meeting, Mr Patel assuaged the concerns and said "there was nothing to worry about" as the country's positivity was only around 0.5pc.

Moreover, he claimed Pakistan was one of few countries where 90 to 95pc of the population has been vaccinated.

According to government data, over 132 million people have been fully vaccinated, while over 139m have received at least one dose.

Eight million children between 5 and 11 years have also been vaccinated, the minister added.

The situation is under control and no death was reported during the last week, he added.

"We are keeping an eye on all borders and random testing has been increased so that the new variants would be detected," Mr Patel said.

He added the virus was rapidly spreading in some countries and that all possible steps would be taken to stop its spread in Pakistan.

Pakistan's Border Health Services (BHS) has also directed the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and other stakeholders to conduct rapid testing at the airports and isolate potential cases.

A letter written by the BHS also advised random sampling of all inbound

passengers on international flights.

The CAA, Airport Security Force and all airlines have been asked to facilitate the BHS staff at airports for random sampling.

The decision to increase screenings of inbound travellers was taken after two new variants of Covid-19, Gryphon (Omicron XBB), also termed 'Nightmare' variant and BF.7, the sub-lineage of the Omicron variant were reported in China, India, Bangladesh, Japan, the US, Australia and Denmark.

Sindh govt writes to NCOC

In its letter, the Sindh government has also sought mandatory Covid-19 vaccination for international as well as domestic travel.

The letter by Sindh's health department also suggested isolating passengers showing symptoms similar to Covid-19 and carrying out PCR tests for confirmation.

Those with symptoms but showing negative tests must undergo chest X-rays

as a part of pneumonia investigation, the health department requested.

"Mandatory administration of Covid-19 vaccine booster dose with Pfizer Bivalent to citizens who got inoculated six months ago should be ensured, particularly for the elderly people of 65 years age and above," the letter stated.

The mass gathering may be avoided while mandatory mask-wearing should be ensured in public spaces, it added.

Provincial Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Peechuho said the letter has been written after new variants were discovered in many countries.

She added the variants were yet to arrive in Pakistan, but the authorities must stay vigilant.

The government is "not in a financial position" to spend huge amounts on testing and Covid-related facilities, she said while talking to journalists at an event held at Karachi's Dow University of Health Sciences on Thursday 29 Dec.



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PM okays outsourcing management of three key airports

Reversing a decision taken by the government of his PML-N in 2017, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday 30 Dec. issued directives calling for initiating the process of outsourcing the management of three major airports in the country.

In April 2017, the then prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif had approved the policy to outsource the management of the country's three main airports.

Chairing a meeting held to discuss matters pertaining to aviation and airports on Friday 30 Dec., PM Shehbaz gave a go-ahead for outsourcing of Jinnah International Airport Karachi, Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore and Islamabad International Airport under the public-private partnership.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, Shehbaz Sharif said that under the outsourcing process all relevant departments should take the required steps efficiently, adding that transparency must be ensured during the exercise.

The meeting was informed that outsourcing of airports is a "normal profit-seeking practice" throughout the world.

The officials concerned told the participants that initially Islamabad airport and Lahore airport would be outsourced under the public-private partnership. The outsourcing of airports would not only provide revenue to the government but would also help improve facilities for international travellers, they added.

The meeting was also briefed on the performance of Pakistan International Airlines. It was informed that the national flag carrier had collected revenue worth Rs172 billion during 2022 — highest in the history of the airline. Four new A-320 planes have been added to the PIA fleet as part of expansion of its network. Wide-body aircraft are also being included in the fleet.

Expressing satisfaction over PIA's performance, PM Shehbaz appreciated the role of Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique and relevant officials.

"This is the policy that was approved by the Civil Aviation Authority in 2015," Information and Broadcasting Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb had said in 2017 while briefing the media following a cabinet meeting.

"By including private companies in the public sector, the management of airports will be outsourced," she had said then, adding that the new policy would

first apply to Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad airports.

During its tenure, the PTI government at a cabinet meeting on June 23, 2021 had allowed the outsourcing of the country's major airports and road network to raise around Rs1.8 trillion to meet the budget deficit.

Strongly reacting to the federal

SC seeks reports from CAA, others on facilities for air travellers

The Supreme Court has directed the Civil Aviation Authority and other organisations to file their standard operating procedures along with relevant documents and reports for smooth facilitation of passengers at the country's airports.

The bench was hearing a matter about inconvenience to passengers at airports. The officials of CAA, Customs, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Airport Security Force (ASF) contended that they have complied with the directives of the apex court, but sought further time to file a final compliance reports.

A two-judge bench headed by Justice Mohammad Ali Mazhar said that the apex court had issued directions from time to time for smooth performance of duties and facilitation of passengers at airports of the country.

At the outset of the hearing, CAA officials stated that they had complied with the orders passed by the Supreme Court. However, they sought further time to file final concise statement along with all improvements and developments made in their system for smooth and better performance and facilitation of the passengers.

The SC directed them to submit the relevant documents and SOPs, which had been developed for smooth performance of duties.

The counsel for Pakistan Customs also submitted that directives of the apex court had been implemented as proper facilitation centres and scanners had been installed and requested for more time to file a concise statement along with pictures in this regard.

Similarly, the general manager of PIA Agha Abdul Sami along with law officer were in attendance and also argued that the order of top court have been put in places and a final compliance report will be

government decision, Aircraft Owners and Operators Association (AOOA) announced it would move court against it.

More than 80pc aircraft owners and operators in Pakistan are currently members of the association.

AOOA Patron Imran Aslam Khan termed the move "a great excess to be committed with the coming generations" and vowed not to allow the government outsource the airports. He warned Qatar authorities and an investment group that they would challenge the decision in the court.

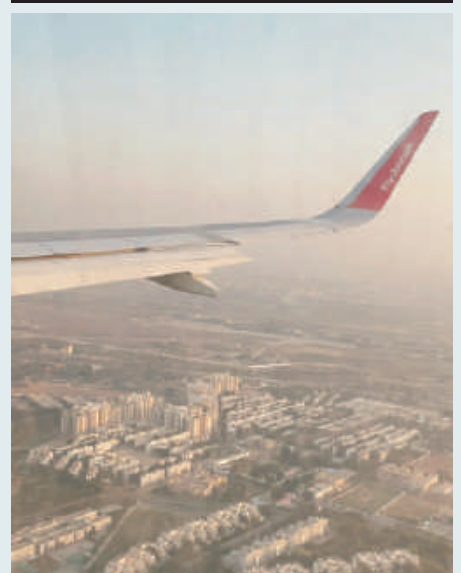
submitted at the next hearing.

The officials of FIA contended that for the convenience of the passengers and to control the menace of illegal travel documents, human smuggling and entry/exit of undesirable elements, they have also put integrated boarder management system (IBMS) and machine readable passport system (MRPS) in place at airports. But they sought further time to file a fresh statement before next hearing along with specs and features of IBMS and MRPS.

ASF officials also stated that now, they were immediately handling the complaints, if received, on their counters at airports and ASF has introduced a complaint management system in 2019.

However, they also pleaded for time for final a concise statement showing the procedure for lodging the complaints.

It may be recalled that the then CJP Mian Saqib Nisar had taken a suo motu notice about inconvenience to the passengers in baggage handling and delayed flights and in March 2018.



Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority holds its 29th e-Kachehri

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority held its 29th E-Kachehri to address the grievances of the general public. Director General Civil Aviation Authority, Mr. Khaqan Murtaza chaired the e-Kachehri and listened to the queries related to PCAA airports around the country. Addl. DGCAA, Dy DGCAA, Director Air transport & Economic Regulations, Director Airport Services, Director HR, Director Flight Standard, Director SQMS, Director Operations, Director Personnel Licensing also accompanied the DGCAA during e-Kachehri. About 54 queries/issues were raised online that included misbehavior of staff hired by car lifting contractors with the visitors at different Int'l airports, provision of meet & assist facilitation services at country's major Int'l Airports, starting of Int'l flights to/from Skardu airport, operationalization of Gawadar Int'l Airport, short listing & interview dates for finalization of CAA latest recruitments. Furthermore, complaints/issues pertaining to pending payment of civil contractors, missing & damaged luggage complaints against Serene Air, curtailing of human trafficking by FIA to Thailand, misbehavior of FIA/immigration authorities with passengers during immigration process, lack of facilities (covered area) of concourse hall at Faisalabad Int'l Airport in the winter season, lost/theft of luggage of deportee passengers from KSA arriving by Saudi Airline, issues regarding frequent cancellation of PIA domestic flights for Karachi-Lahore-Islamabad sector, provision of CAA welfare canteen for the airport employees at Quetta Int'l Airport, minimum wage issues pertaining to employees working for various PCAA contractors & CAA employees and recruitments issues. Director General, PCAA responded to most of the queries on the spot and directed the concerned quarters to redress redress issues pertaining to their respective domains at the earliest on merit and also emphasized that any laxity in dealing with queries would not be tolerated. Public appreciated the PCAA initiative to resolve their grievances. e-Kachehri was live streamed at PCAA official Facebook page.



DG CAA addressing the 29th E-kachehri meeting



Saudi Anvoy to Pakistan calls on Federal Minister Aviation Mr. Saad Rafique at Aviation Division Islamabad.



Cleanliness and Sustainability Drive held at Islamabad International Airport

EU agency calls China traveller screening unjustified

The European Union's health agency said on Thursday 29 Dec. it believed the introduction of mandatory Covid screenings of travellers from China was "unjustified", despite a surge in cases in China.

The United States and several other countries have introduced mandatory Covid tests on travellers arriving from China. But such measures are not necessary for the EU as a whole, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said in a statement.

Hospitals across China have been overwhelmed by an explosion of infections following Beijing's decision to lift strict rules that had largely kept the virus at bay, but tanked the economy and sparked widespread protests. China said this week it would end mandatory quarantine on arrival, prompting many Chinese to make plans to travel abroad.

However, the ECDC said it did not currently believe the surge in cases in China would impact the epidemiological situation in the EU "given higher population immunity, as well as the prior emergence and subsequent replacement of variants currently circulating in China".

Consequently, the agency considered "screenings and travel measures on

travellers from China unjustified".

Potential imported infections were "rather low" compared to the numbers already circulating on a daily basis, which healthcare systems "are currently able to manage", the agency added. The European Commission convened a meeting of the EU's health security committee on Thursday 29 Dec. to discuss possible

measures.

"It is crucial that the EU acts united and in coordination regarding any possible public health measures in view of the situation in China," a commission spokesperson said.

The commission would "continue to facilitate discussions between member states", the spokesperson added.

Emirates expands its Bangkok operations with a fourth daily flight



Emirates starts an exciting new year in Thailand as the airline announces adding a fourth flight between Bangkok and Dubai from 1 January 2023, boosting connectivity between the two gateways and providing more options for travellers.

The additional frequency will help serve the increased demand for international travel to and from Bangkok, as Thailand's travel and tourism sector experience a steep revival. It also builds on the success of Emirates' existing operations, as the airline reaffirms its recent Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to leverage Emirates' vast global network to boost inbound traffic.

Emirates ramps up operations to London Gatwick with a third daily A380 service

The additional Emirates flight will be operated by the airline's flagship Airbus A380. Emirates' flight EK374 – operated by a 3-class configuration – will depart Dubai at 22.35hrs, arriving in Bangkok at 07.35hrs, the following day. Emirates' return flight EK377 – operated by a 2-class configuration – will leave Bangkok at 02.00hrs, arriving in Dubai at 06.00hrs.

With 28 weekly flights to Bangkok and 14 weekly flights to Phuket, Emirates offers travelers flexible and enhanced connections between Thailand and Dubai, as well as onwards to 130 destinations across 6 continents. Emirates also operates a daily direct flight to Hong Kong from Bangkok.

Emirates and flydubai celebrate five years of partnership

The Emirates A380 experience remains highly sought after by travellers for its spacious and comfortable cabins, and signature products that offer travellers the best experiences in the sky like the Onboard Lounge, First Class suites and Shower Spa. The A380 experience is always rounded off by award-winning hospitality, regional culinary creations and authentic tastes, and the airline's award-winning inflight entertainment system, ice, with more than 5,000 channels of on-demand entertainment at every customer's fingertips.

In addition, Emirates customers flying to or through Dubai until 31 March 2023 will be able to take advantage of the 'My Emirates Winter Pass', which enables customers to unlock exclusive offers at over 500 locations in the UAE. Simply by showing their boarding pass and a valid form of identification to hundreds of retail, leisure and dining outlets, famous attractions and luxury spas to enjoy fantastic discounts throughout Dubai and the UAE.

Customers connecting through Dubai are encouraged to check the latest travel guidelines and ensure they meet the travel requirements of their final destination.



Passengers of a flight from China wait for checking their vaccination documents as a preventive measure against the corona virus at the Charles de Gaulle airport in Roissy, outside Paris, recently, France and Britain recently joined a growing list of nations imposing Covid tests on travellers from China, after Beijing dropped foreign travel curbs despite surging cases.

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Air cargo demand drops strongly further as holiday season starts



In the week in which the holiday season started, global air cargo tonnages have dropped strongly, as is typical for this time of the year. However, despite the weakening trend in air cargo tonnages, this year's decline at the beginning of the holiday season is smaller than last year, the latest preliminary figures from WorldACD Market Data indicate.

Figures for week 51 (19 to 25 December) show an overall drop of -11% in worldwide flown tonnages compared with the previous week. The decrease in overall chargeable weight is normal for this time of the year as the holiday period begins, with this year's drop smaller than last year (-14%) when comparing week 51 to week 50. The average rates declined in week 51 by -2% compared to the previous week, which is slightly steeper than during the same period last year and a continuation of the sliding rate levels that we have witnessed since the beginning of the month.

Global air cargo demand drops further in disappointing December

Comparing weeks 50 and 51 with the preceding two weeks (2Wo2W), tonnages decreased -7% below their combined total in weeks 48 and 49, while average worldwide rates declined -3%, combined with a -3% decrease in capacity – based on the more than 400,000 weekly transactions covered by WorldACD's data.

In this two-week period, tonnages were down between all regions, except from Middle East & South Asia to Asia Pacific (+5%), and intra-Asia Pacific (+3%). Most significant decreases were recorded from Asia Pacific to Europe (-18%), from North America to Europe (-

16%) and from Europe to Africa (-16%). **Tonnages continue to slide while rates remain stable**

Year-on-Year perspective

Comparing the overall global market with this time last year, chargeable weight in weeks 50 and 51 was down -20% compared with the equivalent period in 2021, at -3% lower capacity. Notably, tonnages ex-North America are down by -28%, and ex-Asia Pacific tonnages are -26% below their strong levels this time last year. But there were also double-digit percent year-on-year drops on tonnages outbound from Middle East & South Asia (-17%) and Europe (-11%).

Capacity reduced compared to previous year and is down almost from every region: Asia Pacific (-11%), Central & South America (-8%), Europe (-4%) and North America (-3%), whereas from

China drops zero-covid policy, ACI welcomes decision



The Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific has welcomed China's decision to reopen borders with quarantine-free travel and has called for consistent and harmonized approach from airlines and airports towards managing inbound travel. Commenting on the development, ACI Asia-Pacific Director General Stefano Baronci said: "China has played a dominating role in the region's economy and is anticipated to be one of the most vibrant aviation markets, contributing 16% of the global traffic by 2040. The decision to reopen borders is long awaited. China is a significant contributor to tourism in the region.

Africa (+15%) and Middle East & South Asia (+3%), capacity remains above its levels this time last year.

Worldwide rates are currently -28% below their unusually elevated levels this time last year at an average of US\$3.14 per kilo, despite the effects of higher fuel surcharges, but they remain significantly above pre-Covid levels.

China Eastern's flagship Boeing 777-300ER at Shanghai's Pudong Airport

After Three Years, China Set to Eliminate Travel Restrictions.

After being closed for three years, China will reopen its borders on January 8, 2023, and will eliminate the mandatory quarantine requirement for entry into the country, according to reports from the South China Morning Post.

The Asian giant was the first nation to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, because of which China closed entire cities, strict quarantines, and isolation of those infected.

Provincial health authorities are already prepared to meet the management plan for the reopening of the borders, as the country will only require a 48-hour PCR test for entry into the country.

A health official from the southern Guangdong province commented that they are already in preparations to open the border with Hong Kong. "It sets the direction for China's Covid-19 control, which is more flexible and less disruptive to people's lives," the official said.

The airline industry in China was severely hit since January 2020 when airlines started canceling operations in the country, international passenger traffic dropped to record lows.

Major projects such as the Beijing-Daxing International Airport (PKX) stalled due to lack of foreign operators and low demand in the domestic market, and Chengdu-Tianfu International Airport (TFU) has been left without a date due to the pandemic situation.

With the opening of China's borders, there's a hope for foreign airlines to soon return to the country and for domestic operators to rebuild their international network.

Virgin Atlantic to join SkyTeam Alliance in 2023

SkyTeam, the global airline alliance, and Virgin Atlantic announced that the UK airline will join as SkyTeam's newest member in early 2023.

Virgin Atlantic will become SkyTeam's first and only UK member airline, enhancing the alliance's transatlantic network and services to and from Heathrow and Manchester Airport.

Virgin Atlantic customers will benefit from a consistent, seamless customer experience, across 1,000+ global destinations. They'll also have more opportunities to earn and redeem points across member airlines and access to a network of 750+ airport lounges, spanning six continents.

The airline's Flying Club members will enjoy significant benefits from the day of joining, with a global expansion of its loyalty offering. Virgin Atlantic Silver Card holders will be recognised as SkyTeam Elite Members, whilst the airline's Gold Card members will become Elite Plus. This recognition provides a raft of benefits, including priority check in, baggage handling and boarding. Flying Club members will be able to take advantage of the benefits as soon as Virgin Atlantic officially enrolls in SkyTeam, which is expected in early 2023.

Virgin Atlantic's entry into the alliance builds upon the success of its transatlantic joint venture partnership with Delta Air Lines and Air France-KLM, each already long established SkyTeam members. The four partners are co-located at London Heathrow's Terminal Three, alongside existing SkyTeam members Aeromexico and China Eastern, providing customers with smooth airside transits and the most convenient connections times possible.

Walter Cho, SkyTeam Chairman said, "Virgin Atlantic is synonymous with innovation and excellent service, an iconic British airline with a global outlook that puts customers at the heart of its operations - like SkyTeam and its members - and we are delighted to welcome them into our alliance."

Kristin Colville, SkyTeam CEO, said, "As a member of SkyTeam, Virgin Atlantic will benefit from increased opportunities to expand its global network through partnerships and synergies: customers will have more ways to earn and burn miles while enjoying the service



for which Virgin Atlantic is renowned. Virgin Atlantic shares SkyTeam's values, caring for our customers, our employees, and the world in which they live, and we are excited to have them as part of the SkyTeam family."

Shai Weiss, CEO Virgin Atlantic, commented, "At Virgin Atlantic we strive to create thoughtful experiences that feel different for our customers and SkyTeam shares that customer first ethos. 2022 marks the year Virgin Atlantic gets back to its best for our customers and people and joining SkyTeam is an important milestone. Our membership will allow us to enhance established relationships with our valued partners at Delta and Air France-KLM, as well as opening up opportunities to collaborate with new airlines. It will enable a seamless customer experience, with an expanded network and maximised loyalty benefits."

Codeshare agreements are already in place with Aeromexico and Middle East Airlines with options for more codeshares to follow. Interline agreements with all SkyTeam members are already in place, providing one touch point for all customers, creating a seamless journey on one ticket.

Virgin Atlantic flies to 12 destinations throughout the USA in partnership with Delta and Air France-KLM including New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco. In May the airline launched a brand-new service to Austin, Texas and will start daily flights to Tampa, Florida from November. Virgin Atlantic also operates an extensive Caribbean portfolio including Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, and The Bahamas. Virgin Atlantic also operates services to Greater China, India,

Israel, Nigeria, Pakistan, and South Africa.

SkyTeam members, Delta, Air France and KLM are already collocated at Virgin Atlantic's home base at London Heathrow Terminal 3. Virgin Atlantic operates long-haul services from UK regional airports including Edinburgh and Manchester. The airline offers a comprehensive network to North America and the Caribbean in partnership with Delta Air Lines, Air France and KLM, and also operates services to Greater China, Israel, Nigeria, Pakistan and South Africa.

US set to reintroduce COVID travel measures as cases surge



Air China Boeing 777

The United States is to reintroduce the requirement of a negative test for Chinese travellers following the relaxation of travel rules from China and a surge in COVID cases in the US.

The move means that passengers arriving in the US from China will have to provide evidence of a negative COVID test within 48 hours prior to departure.

The move is the latest in a line of restrictions on Chinese visitors after the country announced it would relax travel out of China on 8th January.

Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan and India have already placed restrictions on Chinese tourism.

The US Department of Health has said the measures were necessary as China had not given clear and accurate data about COVID cases in the country which it says is critical for monitoring the spread of the virus.

In response, Wang Wenbin, China's foreign minister spokesman, has accused Western countries and media of "hying up" the situation and "distorting China's Covid policy adjustments".

The UK has so far not changed its policy on visitors from China.

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With \$225m in blocked airline funds, Pakistan among top three on IATA's list



The global airline association says the amount of funds for repatriation being blocked by governments had jumped 25pc to \$2bn over the past six months.

Pakistan has blocked some \$225 million of airlines' dues, becoming one of the top countries restricting the industry from repatriating funds, the global airline association IATA said on Wednesday 7 Dec.

Pakistan already became a 'blocked fund' country in April along with Sri Lanka. The two countries were being monitored and flagged in IATA's 'watch list countries' in 2021.

The amount of airline funds for repatriation being blocked by governments has risen by more than 25 per cent, or \$394m, in the last six months to nearly \$2 billion now, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents some 300 airlines comprising 83pc of global air traffic, said in a statement on Wednesday 7 Dec.

More than 27 countries and territories are blocking airlines from repatriation funds. Nigeria is on the top with \$551m in blocked funds, followed by Pakistan (\$225m), Bangladesh (\$208m), Lebanon (\$144m), and Algeria \$140m.

These markets don't include Venezuela, which has been alone sitting on some \$3.8bn of airline funds since 2016, when the country last authorised limited repatriation.

IATA called on governments to 'remove all barriers to airlines repatriating their revenues from ticket sales and other activities, in line with international agreements and treaty obligations'.

Preventing airlines from repatriating funds may appear to be an easy way to shore up depleted treasuries, but ultimately the local economy will pay a high price,' said Willie Walsh, IATA's director general.

No business can sustain providing

service if they cannot get paid and this is no different for airlines. Air links are a vital economic catalyst. Enabling the efficient repatriation of revenues is critical for any economy to remain globally connected to markets and supply chains,'

he said.

In an update issued in September, IATA said the industry's blocked funds had jumped 27pc in the last six months, reaching \$1.851bn.

The total amount blocked is higher mainly driven by two factors: increase of sales across most markets and deterioration in Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Russia and Ukraine and two new countries,' the association said at the time.

WFS opens new cargo facility at Copenhagen Airport

Leading Japanese online travel agency AirTrip International signs multi-year agreement to use Sabre GDS

INFINI Travel Information, the exclusive Sabre GDS distribution partner in Japan, and Sabre Corporation (NASDAQ: SABR), a leading software and technology provider that powers the global travel industry, recently announced a new, multi-year GDS agreement with AirTrip International Corp. The deal will see AirTrip International capitalizing on Sabre's global distribution system (GDS) as part of its strategy to spur growth of its outbound business with advanced technology.

Using Sabre's rich GDS content, including NDC offers, as well as Sabre's Bargain Finder Max API, AirTrip International will be able to expand its content regime while creating compelling offers for its customers.

Bargain Finder Max utilizes Sabre's proprietary shopping algorithm and broad array of rich content to deliver optimal itinerary offers in seconds. This will enable AirTrip International to create customized booking experiences for travellers by tailoring search results for the most relevant fares, based on itinerary preferences.

"This is an important partnership for AirTrip International, and we are excited by the prospects of this collaboration," said Yusuke Shibata, President & Representative Director/CFO

of AirTrip International. "Our mission at AirTrip is to use advanced products and technologies with our unique position in the Japanese market to deliver a best-in-class travel experience for our customers.

This mission is even more relevant as travel recovery gains momentum in Japan. Sabre is well-positioned to share its next-generation content and technology which will be an essential component in providing a superior customer experience."

AirTrip International established itself as a preferred choice of travellers in Japan's highly-competitive markets by focusing on meeting customer needs through a superior product experience. The OTA has proved itself to be resilient in its ability to adapt its business model quickly to the challenges which have emerged throughout the pandemic, and is now focused on technological advancement for future growth.

"We very much welcome the AirTrip International decision to choose the Sabre GDS as a distribution channel in Japan," said Kimio Uemura, CEO, INFINI Travel Information. "It validates our vision for the Sabre/INFINI partnership and the need for advanced industry solutions that meet service needs, while effectively supporting travel agents' desire to expand the breadth of their business models globally."

"As travel agencies look to secure a competitive edge amid continuing recovery, they need a technology partner with the stability and resources to continue investing in advanced and new technology solutions," said Brett Thorstad, Vice President, Sabre Travel Solutions, Agency Sales, Asia Pacific. "There's a huge opportunity for AirTrip International to act fast and position itself for growth. AirTrip's decision to become part of Sabre's GDS will enable the OTA to tap into expected increased demand, during the recovery period and beyond."

Lufthansa set to operate to Asturias

Lufthansa will start operations to Asturias (OVD) with two services from its main hubs in Frankfurt (FRA) and Munich (MUC). The German airline will offer fifteen destinations in Spain.

“The arrival of Lufthansa will provide Asturias with global connectivity through the airlines of the Lufthansa Group, its partners and Star Alliance. With these two new routes, Asturias reaches 27 direct destinations in 9 countries and improves its strategic connectivity,” said Adrián Barbón, President of the Principality of Asturias.

Lufthansa will offer four weekly flights to Asturias (OVD) and passengers will have the connection to connect through more than 200 destinations offered by the company through its hubs in Frankfurt (FRA) and Munich (MUC), thus reinforcing the global connectivity of the region.

Flight schedule

Services to Frankfurt (FRA) set to start on April 23, 2023.

Frankfurt – Asturias Flight LH 1552 FRA 13:40 – OVD 16:10 Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Asturias – Frankfurt Flight LH 1553 OVD 17:00 – FRA 19:35 Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

The route will be operated on Airbus A319 aircraft and promotional fares are available from EUR 147 each way.

Operations to Munich (MUC) start on April 29, 2023.

Munich – Asturias Flight LH 1792 MUC 14:20 – OVD 17:00 Saturday. Asturias – Munich Flight LH 1793 OVD 17:00 – MUC 19:35 Saturday.

This service will be operated by Lufthansa Cityline Airbus A319 aircraft and promotional fares are available from EUR 157 each way.

Lufthansa in Spain

According to Aena Estadísticas, Lufthansa between the period January – November 2022 has mobilized 3,772,739 passengers and 3,296.2 tons of cargo in Spain in 24,715 air operations. This represents a recovery of 84% and 59.3% in passenger and cargo traffic respectively compared to 2019 levels.

By May 2023, Lufthansa will offer services in Spain to Alicante (ALC), Barcelona (BCN), Bilbao (BIO), Fuerteventura (FUE), Ibiza (IBZ), Gran Canaria (LPA), Madrid (MAD), Malaga (AGP), Menorca (MAH), Palma de Mallorca (PMI), Santiago de Compostela (SCQ), Seville (SVQ), Tenerife – South (TFS), Valencia (VLC) and Asturias (OVD).

Increased international connectivity in

Asturias

With Lufthansa's new services from Munich (MUC) and Frankfurt (FRA), Asturias (OVD) will have twelve international non-stop operations by the 2023 summer season and services to three

cities in Germany will be available.

Asturias' international network also offers destinations to Brussels – Charleroi (CRL), Dublin (DUB), London – Stansted (STN), Rome – Fiumicino (FCO), Düsseldorf – Weeze (NRN), Milan – Bergamo (BGY), Lisbon (LIS), London – Gatwick (LGW), Amsterdam (AMS) and Paris – Orly (ORY).

US blizzard causes travel chaos as death toll rises



A woman shovels snow beside a house and downed tree, coated in ice, formed by the spray of Lake Erie during a winter storm in Hamburg.

Temperatures were expected to moderate across the eastern and midwest United States recently, after days of freezing weather from “the Blizzard of the Century” left at least 50 dead and caused Christmas travel chaos.

However, according to a BBC report, the death toll has risen to 62.

Blizzard conditions persisted in parts of the northeastern US, the stubborn remnants of a sprawl of extreme weather that gripped the country over several days, causing widespread power outages, travel delays and deaths in nine states, according to official figures.

In New York state, authorities described ferocious conditions, particularly in Buffalo, with hours-long whiteouts, bodies being discovered in vehicles and under snow banks, and emergency personnel going “car to car” searching for survivors.

The perfect storm of fierce snow squalls, howling wind and sub-zero temperatures forced the cancellation of more than 15,000 US flights in recent days, including nearly 4,000, according to tracking site Flightaware.com.

Buffalo — a city in Erie County that is no stranger to foul winter weather — is the epicentre of the crisis, buried under staggering amounts of snow.

“Certainly it is the blizzard of the century,” New York Governor Kathy Hochul told reporters, adding it was “way too early to say this is at its completion.” Hochul said some western New York towns got walloped with “30 to 40 inches (0.75 to one meter) of snow overnight.” Later on Monday, Hochul spoke with President Joe Biden, who offered “the full force of the federal government” to support New York state, and said he and First Lady Jill Biden were praying for those who lost loved ones in the storm,

according to a White House statement.

Biden also approved an emergency declaration for the state, the White House said.

“Temperatures are expected to moderate across the Midwest and the East over the next few days ahead of this system,” the National Weather Service said in its latest advisory, but warned that “locally hazardous travel conditions” would persist.

Zero visibility

National Guard members and other teams have rescued hundreds of people from snow-covered cars and homes without electricity, but authorities have said more people remain trapped.

Drivers were being warned not to take to the roads — even as the nation reached what is usually its busiest time of year for travel.

BOC aviation expands its B737-8 max portfolio with a firm order for 40 aircraft



BOC Aviation has expanded its Boeing 737 MAX portfolio by placing a firm order for 40 new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. All aircraft are scheduled for delivery in 2027 and 2028. David Walton, BOC Aviation deputy managing director and chief operating officer, said: “We are pleased to continue to build on our existing relationship with Boeing, with this 40-aircraft incremental order for the fuel-efficient Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. The incremental aircraft takes our total 737 MAX 8 orderbook with Boeing to 80 aircraft. We look forward to continuing to provide one of the industry's most technologically advanced aircraft.

Lahore fog forces PIA to partly shift operations

Due to poor visibility and fog in Lahore, Pakistan International Airlines on Wednesday 21 Dec. decided to shift all international flight operations between 10pm and 11am from the capital of Punjab to Islamabad.

The rescheduling of flights during these hours is temporary and will be restored as soon as the foggy conditions improve, according to the national flag carrier.

A PIA spokesman said, in a press release issued on Wednesday 21 Dec., the international flight operations between 10pm and 11am was moved from Allama Iqbal International Airport to Islamabad due to foggy weather conditions. The move was aimed at ensuring air safety and saving long waiting time for passengers, he claimed.

For timely information of flights, air travellers, as well as those visiting the airport to pick or drop passengers, have been requested to contact PIA call centre at 786786111. PIA passengers have also been requested to record their correct contact number at the time of booking so that they can be provided with timely information about changes in flight timings through call or SMS.

All international PIA flights between 10pm and 11am to use Islamabad airport

The PIA spokesman made it clear that the arrangement for shifting the flight operations had been made temporarily in order to avoid inconvenience of 'prolonged wait' to travellers. As soon as the foggy conditions improved, the operations would be restored at Lahore, he added.

Motorway closure

Not only air travellers but also

motorists using GT Road and motorway were facing problems due to the foggy weather.

The motorway section from Kot Momin to Faisalabad was closed due to the severity of the fog, which started to increase at around 6pm on Wednesday, DIG Motorway Police (North Zone), told *media*.

He said the motorway's closure depended on visibility usually affected by fog.

Heavy fog also caused problems on the Peshawar-Burhan highway, he said.

The Swat Expressway had already been closed for all types of traffic from Colonel Sher Khan to Ismaila due to fog, according to a motorway police spokesman.

He said the public had been requested to avoid unnecessary travel in foggy weather.

In case of necessary travel, however, drivers should use fog lights and ensure the functioning of backlights and wipers and seek assistance from helpline 130 before starting the journey.

More flights diverted, cancelled owing to fog, poor visibility

Foggy weather and poor visibility continued to divert, delay and cancel flights on Wednesday 21 Dec. as four international flights were diverted to Islamabad while two flights of Turkish Airlines were cancelled due to bad weather in Lahore.

The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said that due to poor visibility at

Lahore and Multan airports since last night, Pakistan International Airlines' flights PK840 from Jeddah to Lahore, PK739 from Lahore to Jeddah and PK230 from Muscat to Lahore were delayed. Likewise, Airblue's flight PA413 from Sharjah to Lahore also got delayed.

The CAA spokesman said that Turkish Airlines' flight TK714 from Istanbul to Lahore, and TR715 from Lahore to Istanbul were cancelled.

PIA's flight PK180 from Dubai to Sialkot was diverted to Islamabad on Tuesday night, while flight PK768 from Jeddah to Lahore, PK848 from Madina to Lahore, and PK748 from Madina to Lahore were also diverted to Islamabad.

Passengers of these flights were driven to their cities by buses provided by the airline. The CAA asked the passengers to check with their airline for any update before leaving for the airport. They can also visit www.caapakistan.com.pk for flight inquiries, it said.

Besides, due to poor visibility and fog until 10pm at the Lahore Airport, two inbound international flights were delayed on Wednesday 21 Dec. Arrival of PIA flight PK204 from Dubai was delayed till Friday 4.10am, while PK740 from Jeddah to Lahore was delayed till Friday at 5.10am.

Similarly, the Airblue flight PA872 from Jeddah to Multan was delayed, while the Sharjah-Multan PA813 flight was also delayed till Friday 1.45am.

PIA's flight PK740/743 Jeddah-Multan-Jeddah was cancelled.

Bird strikes Separately, the CAA said that 111 incidents of birds hitting the aircraft at various airports of the country were reported from June to November.

Bird strikes to aircraft are a common but serious threat to both safety of planes and passengers.

Though CAA did not share data, it claimed to have recorded an overall gradual decline in the trend of bird strikes between June and November due to effective measures taken by the authorities.

According to the CAA spokesman, the highest number of bird strike incidents, 35, were recorded at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore, over the period under review, while the least number — three — were documented at Sukkur Airport.



Students on their way to school as heavy fog enveloped the city on Wednesday 21 Dec.



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SIAL - at its best

Prof. Safdar Sandal

Sialkot International Airport' has completed 15th years of its operations domestically and internationally in a marvelous and successful fashion. Primarily, it was intended and designed to lift available Export Cargo alone, which it did in superb swiftness and set a paradigm to handle now large volumes of both incoming and outgoing cargo. Sialkot has been known for production of sports goods, surgical instruments, musical instruments, motorbike leather garments, hosiery garments, cutlery ware, embroidered badges, novelty goods and many a hundred other articles of skilled human craft which cannot be matched and encompassed here. All of these items are meant for meeting the demands of the entire world markets. These goods (consisting of air shipments) are now passing this Airport. Side by side, the most important feature of SIAL's business has been that the airport meanwhile has graduated from cargo service to the domestic and international passenger service to an extent that today in its short -span of life of a decade; the airport has become the sixth busiest international airport in the country and is fast striding to further upgrade its services, deceiving all calculations. Let us be amused about the future; after a decade or so, considering its pace, what can be its stature? Can it be anybody's guess; myself; I may not theorize!!!

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

exports originate. S i a l k o t International Airport filled the vacuum and served this important economic hub of the country. Besides this commercial activity, it served a religious duty as well. The Hujjaj, Umra and Zaireen passengers felt elevated to have a greatest facility available at their doorstep, to take direct flights to their desired international destinations of religious importance. There are currently about 60 international flights per week despite partially Covid. The presently flying air carriers are adding more frequencies and new carriers are also adding to the list that will start their flights in the coming months. Currently over one million passengers are travelling through Sialkot Airport in a year. The numbers are increasing day by day and after the operational opening of the Shehbaz Pur bridge (built over River Chenab (down the 'Head Marala Works) linking Gujrat with Sambrial, the traffic is multiply and facilitate residents of a large number of towns and villages of Gujrat and Jehlum districts and parts of



Sialkot International Airport

completes 15 years of its operations

Azad Jamun & Kashmir (AJK) like Mir Pur and Bhimber districts etc. Completion of Sialkot-Lahore Motorway also increased other areas passengers of into the fold of SIAL, who currently have to cover a long, full of traffic and cumbersome distance for going to Lahore. As soon as their route is shortened by the motorway connecting Lahore with Sialkot; they prefer to come to Sialkot airport which is far more convenient for them. Development of the fast growing new infrastructure will enhance manifold the clientage and business of SIAL in the coming years.

A point to raise here of utmost importance

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

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

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

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

Malik Sports - manufacturer of world-class cricket bats and hockey sticks

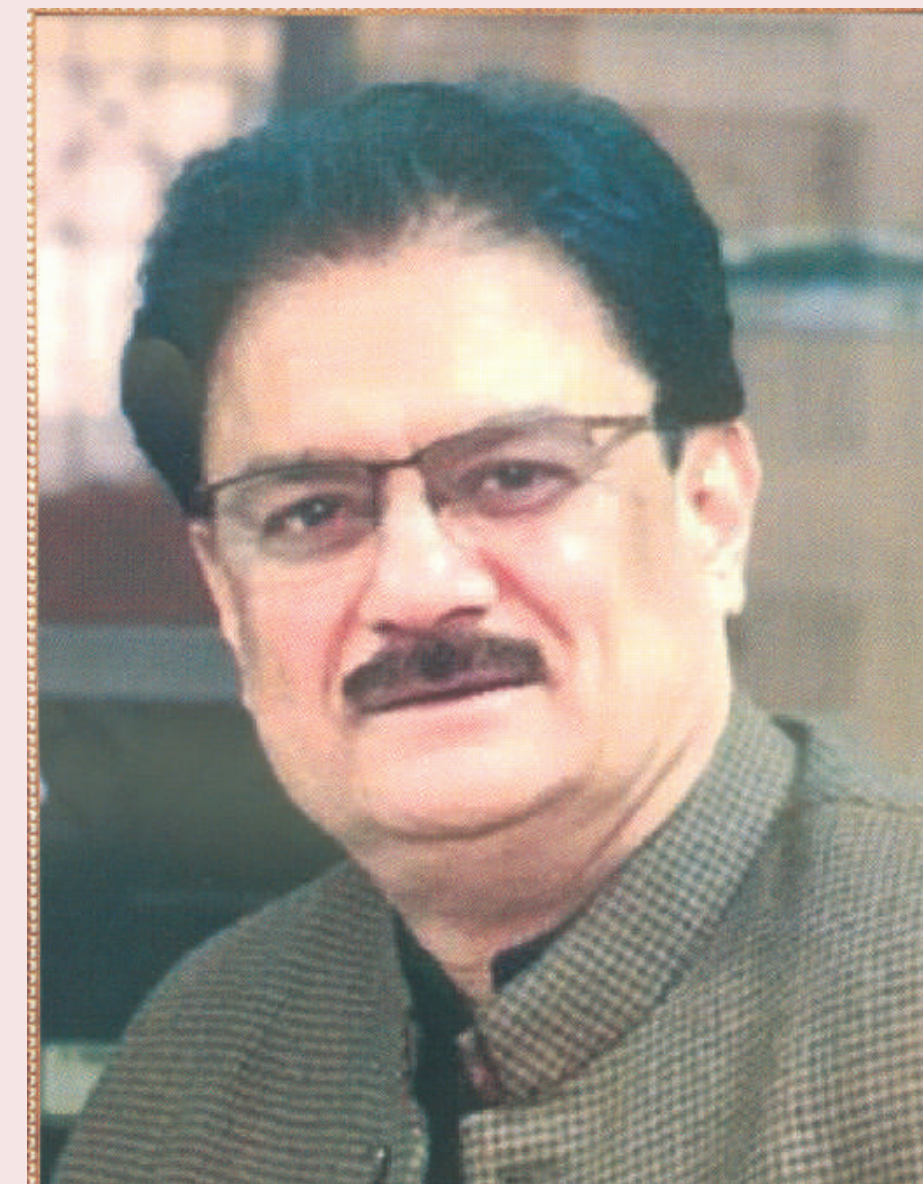
Mr. Zulfiqar Malik Director Malik Sports and the immediate past Chairman of Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers & Exporters Association told Flyer International in a meeting that he made a lot of efforts & worked hard on the lines to develop new markets for export sports goods in Africa, central Asian countries and other parts of the world during his tenure 2021-22 with their "Own Brand" and "Made in Pakistan". The FIFA World Cup has recently played with Pakistani football Al Rihila' in Qatar and the Pakistani cricket team also played the cricket world Cup in Australia with MB Bat made by Malik Sports Sialkot. He also told that MB Bat is used by Pakistani batsmen, Sri Lankan, Afghanistan, and some other international cricketers in international events. The international players of Hockey also used to play with the 'Made in Pakistan' Hockey stick, when and where it's played in the Olympics. Malik Sports manufactures world-class Hockey Sticks Cricket Bats Cricket Balls, Padel rackets, etc.

Flyer International had an opportunity to interview Mr. Malik Zulfiqar, Director, Malik Sports, a specialist in cricket and hockey manufacturing in Sialkot. Malik Sports has a special brand of cricket, MB Bat. The world-fame cricketers play with this bat. Malik sports has the honor to sponsor some famous Pakistani cricketers.

Mr. Malik Zulfiqar graduated from Punjab University in 1982. He joined his family business which his father Malik Anaytullah established 60 years ago. His father was a top bats artisan in the city of Sialkot. Malik Sports is one of the best companies in Sialkot manufacturing cricket bats, hockey sticks, and soccer balls. The company exports thousands of cricket bats and hockey sticks to England, Germany, and other parts of the world.

Mr. Malik was elected as Chairman of PSGMEA for the year 2021-2022 and also has been Regional President of the Sialkot Cricket Association. He also had been secretary for three years of this Association. This association is working under Pakistan Cricket Board.

Mr. Malik and his colleagues administer Jinnah Cricket Stadium, College Road Sialkot which facilitates players to play the most matches at night also. Jinnah Stadium has 20000 capacity of visitors in Sialkot. They have built shops outside the stadium. The income of the shops is spent on the renovation and



other expenses of the stadium.

He has set up an MB Malik Cricket Club for the last 30 years. He also has set up an academy adjacent to Jinnah Stadium which has 16 pitches and the 20 players can practice at a time.

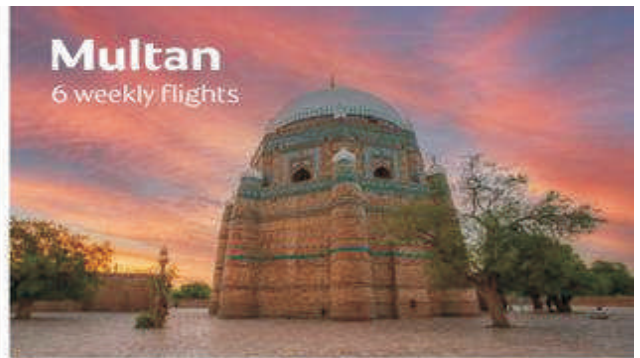
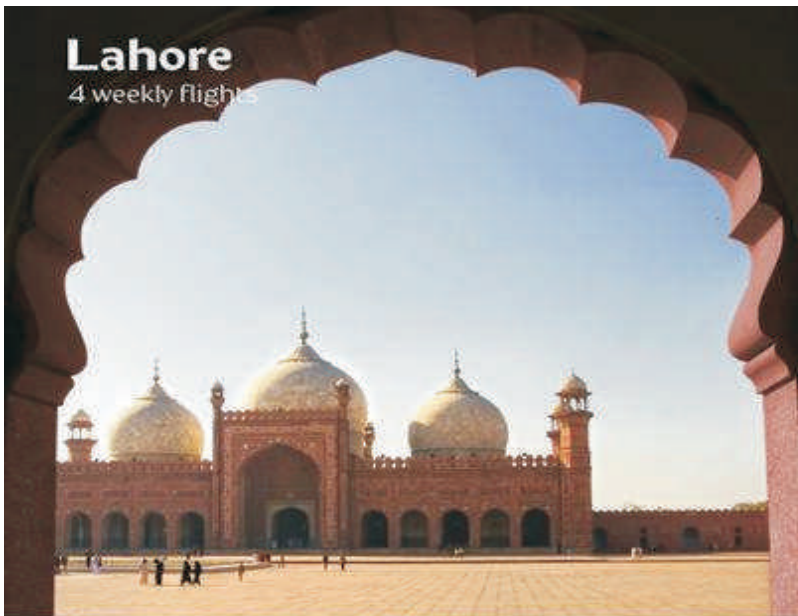
He said Shahid Afridi, Shoaib Malik and Yaser played half of their career matches with Malik bats. Malik Sports also has the honour that captain Younes Khan (during his captainship) and some other cricketers played with MB bat during their tenure.

Malik Bats are made for many brands including Adidas and Slazenger world famous brands etc. and are exported to many countries.

Mr. Malik is the Director of Malik

Sports, Shanco, Malik Soccer and he is also the Director/Partner of Hotel Taj Palace Sialkot. Hotel Taj Palace is situated at Kutchery Road Sialkot. It is regarded as one of the best hotels in Sialkot. It has about 30 decorated bedrooms with all the modern amenities. The cricket teams usually stay at this hotel when they come to Sialkot to play cricket. It also caters to national and international guests/buyers outside the city as well as outside the country who come to visit Sialkot, the sports city of Pakistan.

The hotel also caters for the most prestigious functions receptions, and wedding parties of the city because it has a large banquet hall, and meeting rooms and is located in the hub of the City.



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10 Airlines that will fly the A380 in 2023 + fleet status



Before the COVID-19 pandemic there were 15 airlines that operated the A380 superjumbos. However, almost all A380s were grounded following the outbreak of the pandemic with many of those aircraft sent into long-term storage, and some airlines even decided to retire the superjumbos, with Air France retiring its entire A380 fleet in May 2020.

Currently, ANA, Asiana Airlines, British Airways, Emirates, Korean Airlines, Qantas, Qatar Airways, and Singapore Airlines have been operating the A380s, soon to be followed by Lufthansa and Etihad Airways in 2023. In this post, we will take a look at the A380 fleet status and the route they deploy their A380.

All Nippon Airways

Active A380s: 3 Parked A380s: 0

All Nippon Airways (ANA) has a fleet of three Airbus A380s, widely known as the Flying Honu fleet. These superjumbos exclusively operate on the Tokyo-Narita to Honolulu route. ANA became the 15th operator of the world's largest passenger aircraft when it took delivery of its first A380 in March 2019.

After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, two of the A380s were grounded after the Tokyo-Narita to Honolulu route was suspended. Moreover, the third and final A380 was directly placed into storage after the airline took delivery of the aircraft during the pandemic. ANA's Flying Honu fleet features special Hawaiian-themed liveries for its three A380s, symbolizing the sky, ocean and sunset.

Two of the three A380s have already returned to service whereas the third one, which features an orange livery inspired by the Hawaiian sunset is also entering into service. The third superjumbo completed a test flight on 27th December before entering into passenger service.

Asiana Airlines

Active A380s: 3 Parked A380s: 3

Asiana Airlines has a fleet of six Airbus A380s, out of which three are in active service with the Korean carrier.

Asiana brought the giant of the skies back in service in June earlier this year, with the superjumbos operating daily flights between Seoul and Bangkok. The A380s also returned on its flights to Los Angeles in July. The frequency of these routes might be increased depending on the passenger demand.

Currently, Asiana's superjumbos are deployed on flights to Bangkok and Los Angeles.



ANA Airbus A380 British Airways

British Airways is one of the most committed airlines to the Airbus A380, with the airline bringing back its entire fleet of A380s until at least August 2027.

Recently, the British flag carrier has been operating more A380 flights than in the corresponding previous months since the first Airbus A380 was delivered to the airline. British Airways is preparing to return its last A380 to service as it is currently under maintenance.

Currently, British Airways A380s are deployed on flights to Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Doha (Until 8th January), Dubai, Johannesburg, Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco and Washington Dulles.

Etihad Airways

Active A380s: 0 Parked A380s: 10

After months of speculation during



Asiana Airlines A380



British Airways Airbus A380

the peak of the pandemic, the superjumbos are finally looking forward to re-entering into service with the Abu Dhabi-based carrier, which will start flying to London next summer.

Etihad Airways has a fleet of 10 Airbus A380s. Etihad's A380 return means the return of its industry-leading cabin product – the Residence, alongside the three cabin classes. They all have the same 498-seat configuration, including two Residence suites, nine First-class apartments, 70 Business seats, and 417 Economy smart seats. It is the last carrier on this list to announce the return of the A380s.

Etihad will return four of its giant aircraft for the time being in a move to fulfill a surge in demand for air travel across the airline's network and customer feedback for the return of the fan-favorite aircraft. After the pandemic, the first Etihad A380 flight is scheduled for the 15th of July next year. It will operate a daily flight to London starting in July, rising to double daily from August.

Emirates

Active A380s: 86 Parked A380s: 33

Emirates, the largest A380 operator has been gradually bringing its superjumbos back into the skies with multiple A380s being retrofitted with premium economy seats. Earlier in July, the Dubai-based carrier said that it was aiming to operate close to 90 A380s by the end of this year. So far, 86 of the superjumbos are in active service.

Being the largest A380 operator by a considerable margin, the destiny of the superjumbo will largely rest in its hands. Emirates plans to operate the superjumbos until the mid-2030s as the A380 continues to be well received by its customers across its global network. The A380s will remain Emirates' flagship aircraft for many years to come.

So far, Emirates has scrapped two of its A380s (registration A6-EDA and A6-EDB), whereas two more have been retired, according to Planes potters.net.

Moreover, Emirates is planning to return its full fleet of A380s into service by the end of next year as it ramps up its operations to meet strong demand for air travel. Currently, the Gulf carrier's capacity has recovered to 80 per cent of its pre-pandemic level and commenting on the same, Emirates' chief commercial officer, Adnan Kazim said:

"Closer to the end of next year, that's our target to bring all our A380s back to operation and recover the remaining 20 per cent of the capacity."

Speaking to aviation journalist Andreas Spaeth, Emirates President Sir Tim Clark urged Airbus to make plans for a future very large aircraft with zero-emission engines to meet the gradually increasing medium to long-haul travel demands. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of the A380s and mentioned that he would build another A380 twice the size of its predecessor.

"I would build another A380 twice the size because of the zero-emissions engines we have now, with four, possibly three engines."

Emirates President Sir Tim Clark

Korean Air

Korean Air similar to Asiana has been operating half of its A380 fleet, with the airline recently hiring A380 pilots on a five-year contract. The Korean flag carrier is expected to fly the A380s until at least the mid-2020s.

In 2019, Korean Air used to fly its jumbo jets on flights to Bangkok, Heathrow, JFK, Los Angeles, Paris, Sydney, and Taipei. The whole fleet of A380s was grounded at the height of the pandemic.

The first Korean Air A380 returned to the skies with a weekly service to Guangzhou, China while the remainder of the fleet remained grounded. Currently, Korean Air is deploying its A380s on flights to Bangkok and New York-JFK.



Korean Air Airbus A380

Lufthansa Active A380s: 0 Parked A380s: 8

Earlier in June this year, Lufthansa decided to reactivate some of its A380s by

March 2023, in response to the gradual rise in demand and the delayed delivery of ordered aircraft.

Lufthansa had a fleet of 14 Airbus A380s, half based in Munich and the other half based in Frankfurt before the pandemic. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of these superjumbos were parked in Spain and France for long-term storage or the so-called "deep storage". As of now, six of these A380s have already been sold, whereas eight of them remain part of the Lufthansa fleet for the time being.

The German flag carrier expects to use the superjumbos again in the summer of 2023. At the moment, the company is assessing how many A380s will be reactivated and which destinations the Airbus will fly to. Recently, a Lufthansa spokesperson said that the carrier is preparing to reactivate at least three A380s to be ready for operation early next summer.



Lufthansa A380

Qantas

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire Airbus A380 fleet of the Australian flag carrier was sent to California for long-term storage, with many speculating if they would ever return to service.

However, with the faster-than-expected recovery in demand for air travel, Qantas brought forward the A380's initial return date, with the first A380 returning into its service in January earlier this year.

Qantas currently operates six A380s on flights to London Heathrow (via Singapore) and Los Angeles. Moreover, it has confirmed that it will reinstate four of the five in storage by 2024, while one of those will be scrapped.

Qatar Airways

Qatar Airways is currently flying eight A380s on flights to London Heathrow, Sydney, Perth and Bangkok. The remaining two A380s are grounded for the time being. However, they might eventually return to the skies due to the ongoing A350 groundings and the delay in Boeing's 777X program.

Even though Qatar Airways' CEO called the A380 the airline's biggest



Qantas Airbus A380

mistake, the A380s returned to service due to the A350 groundings, as the gulf carrier didn't want to sacrifice too much capacity. The Gulf carrier initially returned five A380s to service, with three more following their siblings' footsteps to add up more capacity on key routes, also to cater to more fans during the FIFA World Cup.

Before the pandemic, these aircraft operated flights to Bangkok, Guangzhou, Frankfurt, London Heathrow, Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Paris CDG.

Qatar Airways Airbus A380

Singapore Airlines

Singapore Airlines is currently flying 10 of its superjumbos out of its fleet of 12. Although the Changi-based carrier has



retired 12 of its 24 A380s, only nine seem to have been deregistered or scrapped. Singapore Airlines retired its first A380 earlier in 2018.

The Airbus A380s launch customer and the second-largest carrier only behind Emirates have confirmed that two more A380s will re-enter into service as they are currently being retrofitted.

Currently, Singapore Airlines is deploying its A380s on flights to London Heathrow, Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Mumbai and New York-JFK (via Frankfurt).



Singapore Airlines Airbus A380

How to find cheap flights: Google Flights data show best days to book, fly at the best price

Inflation and high gas prices are squeezing traveler's budgets these days. When booking your next trip, you're probably hoping to score the best deal on flights. With a little planning, you most likely can.

Using tools such as Google Flights or Hopper when you're planning your vacation can help you figure out the best time to buy that plane ticket.

"Google Flights is my go-to for finding and comparing flight prices," Jenita Lawal, owner of Lawal Travel Services, told USA TODAY, calling it one of her research tools when planning vacations. In particular, she likes the price tracking and explore features to find good deals to new destinations she has never heard of, like Merida, Mexico.

The Google Flights team recently analyzed five years' worth of data – from August 2017 to August 2022 – to find out the best time to book a flight and other times airfare deals are at their best. (The team also debunked the flights-are-cheaper-on-Tuesday thing.)

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

This town of 7,500 people has 2 daily flights: How a lesser-known government program keeps us connected.

Keep in mind, though, that your specific route may not always follow these price patterns, especially during these hectic travel times.

"Honestly, there doesn't seem to be a rhyme or reason with flight prices lately," Lawal said. "There have been times when I've seen some great last-minute flight deals, which are great if you're flexible. For my clients, I recommend booking eight to six months out."

Also, consider a vacation package, she said, which has everything rolled into one price, often including charter flights.

Here's what the Google Flights data found about booking the cheapest flights, plus some expert tips from travel advisers.

"Google Flights brings a lot of helpful information right to your



fingertips, so you can easily track prices, filter for your exact preferences, or browse destinations around the world that fit your budget," said James Byers, group product manager at Google Flights.

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How far in advance should I book a flight?

For domestic trips, the lowest prices tend to be between three weeks and three months ahead of your departure date, according to Byers. The lowest prices average out 44 days, or about 1½ months, before,

International trips will require a bit more time and planning. For trips from the U.S. to Europe, you're going to want to err on the early side – 129 days, or almost five months, ahead will provide the best deals. Try not to book less than 50 days before

your trip.

Flights to Mexico or the Caribbean offer a little more slack when it comes to planning: The best prices are 59 days, or nearly two months, out.

April Cheng, a travel adviser and owner of TravelChic, recommends even more time – six to eight months for international and four to five months for domestic – so you have the most flight options to choose from.

"Too early or too late, you will not get a ton of times to fly," she said.

Exclusive: International low-cost airline Play will begin European flights to this American airport

Airfares for less than \$300?: 'Start monitoring those prices now' for holiday travel

What day of the week is cheapest to fly?

Flights that depart on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday are historically the cheapest days of the week to fly, especially if you're going international. According to Byers' analysis, you could save up to 12% on airfare if you book a flight for those days rather than the weekend.

Lawal agrees that Tuesday and Wednesday flights tend to have the lowest fares, probably because most people are traveling Thursday through Sunday or Friday through Monday, she said.

"Most U.S. travelers, I find, try to book their travel to include the weekend," Lawal said.

The most expensive day to fly is Sunday.



Is it more expensive to fly nonstop?

Time is money when it comes to flying, it seems. Google Flights data showed that those who are willing to take a layover could save about 20% in fares.

If you do decide to go the layover route, Lawal said there are a few options you can do to make the most of the extra time, maybe even including some sightseeing.

For layovers longer than two hours, she suggests checking out an airport lounge.

For layovers of more than five hours, she said you can probably fit an activity into your schedule. "On my first trip to Mexico, I purposely booked a flight with a five-hour layover in Mexico City," she said. "It was enough time to take a taxi to the historic center and grab a bite to eat before heading back to the airport."

Consider an overnight layover or one that's more than seven hours and book a hotel (with an airport shuttle and breakfast, she recommends.) "In the U.K., I had a nine-hour layover at Heathrow, so I bought a subway ticket and enjoyed a few hours in London – even popped into Wolseley's for authentic English tea," she said.

Stopover vs. layover: The difference between a stopover and layover, and why you should care

Is it true that flight fares are cheapest on Tuesdays?

Unfortunately, waiting until Tuesday to book your flight won't save you any money. In fact, putting it off for even a few more days may cost you.

Over the past five years, flights booked on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays have been only about 1.9% cheaper than those booked on the weekend.

"So if your trip is just a couple of weeks away, don't wait for Tuesday to roll around – book your flight now in case the price goes up," Google's Byers said.

Flight delayed or canceled? What you need to know, what you're owed If your flight is delayed, you may be eligible for compensation What happens if your checked bag is lost or delayed? What you're owed My flight was canceled but I got most of my costs covered (after 3 months) What to do if you're sexually assaulted on a plane

When should you start booking

flights for the holidays?

For domestic Thanksgiving travel, the best airfare deals occur 36 to 74 days before the travel date, with the price bottoming, on average, 52 days, or right under two months, out, according to Google Flights data.

Domestic trips during Christmas are typically low at around 22 days, or about three weeks, before departure, but low prices tend to become available up to 88 days – or almost three months – before.

To come up with this data, Byers looked at five- to nine-day trips and 13- to 16-day trips with departure dates before the holiday and return dates after the holiday.

Cheng foresees holiday travel to be just as busy as it was this summer and suggests her clients book with more time in advance for the holidays, like at least six months for international and four months for domestic travel, she said.

Thanksgiving travel: What you need to know about airline cuts ahead of Thanksgiving

What about purchasing summer vacation flights?

If your trip is domestic and taking place in July or August, aim for three weeks before your planned departure date to catch the best deals.

Other ways to use Google Flights to find a good deal on airfares

Google Flights will show you if today's prices are low, typical or high – which they calculate based on similar flights in the past 12 months – so you can determine whether the current price is a

good deal.

When you turn on price tracking for your destination and travel dates, you'll receive an email if prices change substantially, so you know if you should book ASAP or wait, according to Byers. Those with more flexible schedules can also track for any dates in the next few months for a destination.

When planning, check out Google Flights' calendar view, date grid and price graph to see how fares change based on dates.

Etihad resumes direct flights from Abu Dhabi to Beijing

Etihad returns to Beijing, China with weekly direct flights from Abu Dhabi starting June 29, 2022, almost two years after it resumed flights to Shanghai.

The national carrier of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said that this will be the first regular direct international passenger flight to resume for Beijing under the latest mandate of China's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council, in response to Covid-19.

The Beijing route will be the second China destination that Etihad Airways is resuming after it restarted scheduled services from Abu Dhabi to Shanghai, one of China's biggest cities, in July 2020.





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News in pictures



Mr. Imran Peracha CEO of Gul Aviation Group receiving the PIA top cargo agent Award for Poineer Express at the Business Partner's Award Ceremony 2022 of PIA held in December 2022 at Avari Tower Karachi



Mr. Faisal Kharal of PIA Presents best Performance award to Mr. Muhammad Rahat Khan CEO Aero Express International at the PIA's Business Partner's Award Ceremony 2022 held on 16 Dec. 2022 at Avari Tower Karachi.



Photo shows from (R-L) Prof. Safdar Sandal Director SIAL, Sh. M. Yaqub former Chairman SIAL and other guests on the occasion of a social get together function in Sialkot.



Mr. M. Ilyas CEO Xpress Aviation handover the key of a car to his staff, Mr. Mazhar Hussain Manager of Air Freight XPress Aviation Karachi.



**DGR (CATEGORY-11) TRAINING
CABIN CREW OF AIR SIAL**



**DGR TRAINING OF AIR SIAL AIR HOSTESS
ON 28-SEP-2022 AT SAPS AVIATION COLLEGE KARACHI**



**DGR TRAINING OF AIR SIAL & SERENE AIR PILOTS
ON 27-SEP-2022 AT SAPS AVIATION COLLEGE KARACHI**



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Past & present in perspective

Prof. Safdar Sandal

The International Atomic Energy Agency' (IAEA) was created in 1957 in response to fears and anxieties generated by the discovery of nuclear technology and its vast applications.

(Nuclear weapons offer us nothing but a balance of terror, and a balance of terror is still terror) – George Wald.

Nuclear-Technology Development

The genesis of the agency (IAEA) was President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" address, in the General Assembly of UN in 1953. The agency is strongly linked to nuclear technology and its varied application, the latter however, controversial can be President Eisenhower's ideas shaped the statute that was further approved by 81 other nations. The agency's mandate is to work with all member-states and their partners to prevent the line from being crossed at which point nuclear development becomes rather detrimental for mankind.

India developed and tested a nuclear bomb with the name 'Smiling Buddha' (the bomb concealed under the arm pit yet with a smile in the face; reminding a famous Hindu-characteristic) on May 18, 1974 in Rajasthan's Pokhran village and thus became world's sixth nuclear power, much at the cost of Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan's nuclear test was tolerated though tacitly by the world powers, to carry out a similar nuclear bomb test on 28 May 1998 at Chagai-1 which proved stronger in technology. The World powers accepted it though mutely, not because of their love for Pakistan, but it was desired in their sub-conscious heart to contain India and keep a balance of power in the Indo-Pak region, so that India may not overwhelm Pakistan one day territorially and become dominant in matters of defense and foreign policy. Needless, to say that this act of nuclear test, did favour Pakistan in a way, to ultimately exist as a separate state strong enough to maintain its independence.

Once in Athens-Greece, while crossing a road, I happened to meet an Indian gentleman who sympathetically talked to me 'why we two people fight with each other' and from my mouth fizzled-out a spontaneous sentence that there will be no war now between India and Pakistan because both have become nuclear powers. It is perhaps rightly claimed that nuclear is for peace; at least it has been proved so far about our two countries. The gentleman agreed with me



also. It was noted and is in profiles that "Pakistan's Bomb Could Kill Us All" wrote 'Washington Post' at that time.

On the contrary, we see that Iran has been completely banned to carry out nuclear activity and severe embargo has been imposed upon it, by the US because of its love for Israel; a state-idea carved out in a foreign land England, through a self-created 'Belfour Declaration' issued in 1917 to give a national home to the Jewish people in Palestine, in the heart of Middle East, then an Ottoman region with a small minority of Jewish population.

'Love me love my dog' an English phrase applied to them, here. (Not only are indigenous people forced to shoulder the burden of colonialism; they are expected to celebrate it). – Tanya Tagaq

I was in class 2, when the colonial British Empire were still here in our land as the rulers of the Indian subcontinent, although on their last leg.. I remember that a Coronation Ceremony of king George-VI was celebrated in England and we in our school in Sialkot were given sweets (mithai) on the occasion (in no other but an Islamic School) and a 'aadhichutee' (half day-leave) was also gifted to us over which we felt more joyed in that age. Naturally this was done in the whole of India and in all the British dominions spread over in all continents of the world. Hence now I feel, we were also made to love the British dog by celebrating the event though in our innocent way. Instantly, this was also the period when the World War -11 had just ended and Britain (once termed Great Britain) had started squeezing to their small Island. King George VI was admired by his people though, because he had stayed on in his Buckingham Palace during the war, despite the fact that the palace was bombed nine times by the German warplanes. Later, he earned the privilege as the first British king to visit France, Canada and USA. An able Prime

Minister was no other than Winston Churchill in his time.

'Invaders in the Garb of Traders'. The British Pirates were famous and dreaded sea-dacoits looting merchant or other ships plying in the open seas. From among these people (sea-dacoits), some more clever, formed a company with the name 'East India Company' and they landed on the shores of East India and one of them, being Bengal who became prey to the traders. Siraj-ud-Daula was the last Nawab of Bengal who ruled after succeeding the thrown from Alivvadi Khan since the Nawab had no male heir to inherit the rule after he passed. He had adopted Siraj-ud-Daula in his lifetime, and had brought him up like his own son. He was provided all the necessary training and expertise needed for a ruler of the state and soon after he became the son that Alvardi always wanted. By 1752, he was nominated as the crown prince and soon after that; he became the next Nawab of Bengal. His rise to the thrown caused rifts in the family and many of the family members opposed him, especially Mir Jaffar, Shaukat Jung and Ghaseti Begum. In the end, Siraj-ud-Daula's ruler ship was cut short after the arrival of the British through 'East India Company' (EIC) and their complete takeover of Bengal for the next two hundred years. Siraj-ud-Daula was the last Nawab of Bengal. He was ousted out of his government by the British few who in connivance with Mir Jaffar and Shaukat Jung succeeded in their diacritic plans.

For the next 200 years Bengalis were treated as less than animals by the East India Company. All local small industries were annihilated. For instance weaving of Bengali silk was famous as a home industry. One full women scarf 'dopatta' could be folded and wrapped in a small match box. The makers were offered by the British to get cut of their thumbs for a meager sum of a hundred rupees. The first tool of the British ruler ship was to make the local people extremely poor no matter wherever they ruled. Their result was that in Bengal the poor workers did offer their thumbs to be cut-off to live, though an abject life. At present you would not like to see the face of such cruel white people; but this is the history of Colonial Invaders who came in the garb of Traders.

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Nation celebrates Quaid's birth anniversary with zeal, fervour

The nation celebrated the 146th birthday anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, on Sunday 25 Dec. across the country, showing great zeal and enthusiasm.

The day dawned with special prayers for the progress and prosperity of the country while the national flag was hoisted on all major government buildings in the country.

Public and private departments arranged a variety of events, including seminars, conferences, competitions, and discussion programmes, mostly during the last week to pay rich tribute to the Father of the Nation for his untiring struggle, sagacity, and leadership that led to the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Special events were arranged to highlight and promote the vision and messages of the Quaid-i-Azam, particularly with regard to the rule of law, the supremacy of the Constitution and upholding of democracy.

A special ceremony was arranged by the Pakistan Academy of Letters on Dec 22 (Thursday) to mark the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam.

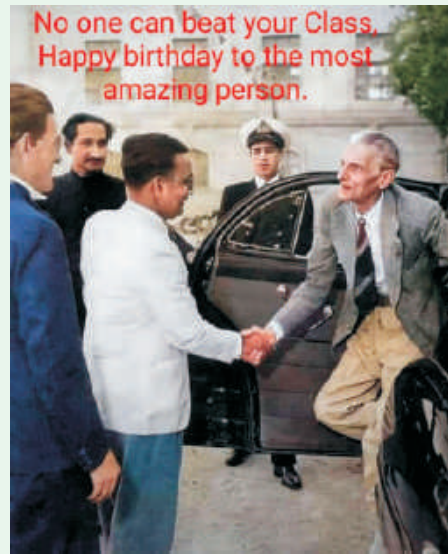
The ceremony was presided over by Dr Ehsan Akbar while Haroon-ur-Rasheed Tabassum, Yusuf Aziz, Jabbar Mirza and Dr Fakhar-ur-Islam were the special guests on the occasion.

A series of programmes were arranged by the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on Dec 25 (Sunday) at the Pakistan National Heritage Museum which included an opening ceremony featuring vibrant performances at the Heritage Museum Hall, Lok Virsa, and screening of video documentaries on Quaid-i-Azam at the Pakistan National Monument Museum.

The essay writing competition was arranged by the Nazariya Pakistan Council in connection with the Youm-i-Quaid celebrations in which students of different educational institutions participated and exhibited their extraordinary oratorical skills.

President, PM pay tribute

Paying tribute to the Father of the Nation, President Arif Alvi urged the nation to reiterate its commitment to cherish and uphold the vision of the Quaid-i-Azam for Pakistan and mobilise



resources to tackle the grave issues to move on the path of political stability and economic prosperity.

In his message, Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif called on the nation to take guidance from the life of the Quaid-i-Azam and follow his principles to ensure the progress and prosperity of the country.

PAF special song

To mark the occasion, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on Sunday 25 Dec. released a special song to pay tribute to the Quaid-i-Azam. The video of patriotic song features a message of the Founder of the Nation about the importance of air force. "A country without a strong air force is at the mercy of any aggressor. Pakistan must build up its own air force as quickly as possible. It must be an efficient air force, second to none," the Quaid's message said.

Earlier in the day, a spectacular change of guard ceremony was held at the Mazar-i-Quaid where Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, assumed the ceremonial guard duty from Pakistan Air Force cadet guards. Major General Umar Aziz was the chief guest on the occasion.

PPP lawmaker threatens to give devolved PTDC back to centre

Chairman Special Committee on Affected Employees of federal government PPP lawmaker Qadir Mandokhel on Tuesday 20 Dec. suggested introducing legislation aimed at bringing the devolved Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) back under the federal government control.

Addressing the committee meeting here, Mr Mandokhel reiterated the need for resolving the issues faced by the employees of the corporation who have been placed in the surplus pool.

He criticised the provincial governments for not accommodating the employees of the devolved PTDC despite taking over its assets worth billions of rupees.

He even talked about giving PTDC back under the federal government control through legislation, if the provinces did not take the responsibility of its employees.

The PTDC was devolved to the provinces in the wake of 18th Amendment in the Constitution, and all the scenic spots all over the country were transferred to the respective province by the federal government.

However, the provinces have

declined to accommodate the employees, and the bulk of them have been placed in the surplus pool.

The committee has issued notices to different ministries and departments in this regard, while the special assistant to the Prime Minister Aoun Chuadhry has been requested to attend the Special Committee on Affected Employees to help resolve issues being faced by the former employees of PTDC.

Responding to the concerns of one of the members of the committee Aliya Kamran, he said the 15th meeting had already issued directives to different departments related to service matters and if needed they would be protected by legislation.

Mr Mandokhel said that a committee known as "Khursheed Shah Committee" was constituted in 2012 by the federal cabinet to look into the service matters of sacked employees while the Special Committee on Affected Employees has been constituted by the speaker National Assembly which had more powers than the previous one.

The committee issued notices to all ministries asking them to apprise the committee about the issues faced by them to settle the issue of regularisation of contractual and daily wage employees.

Sindh heritage sites in danger due to climate change, moot told



Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah admires a painting at the exhibition.

Addressing a conference on challenges to heritage sites of Sindh and the centenary celebrations of excavations of Mohenjo Daro, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah stressed the need for studying effects of climate change in order to protect national heritage sites.

He said that the inheritors of the Indus Valley Civilisation were now facing severe patterns and effects of climate change and there was a serious need to understand and study the effects so that researchers and scholars could provide guidelines for policymaking and addressing the issue.

The conference titled 'New Challenges to Sindh Heritage & Sculpture & Paintings Exhibition on Centenary Celebrations of Mohenjo Daro Excavations' was convened by the culture department here at Arts Council on Sunday.

The chief minister inaugurated the Sculpture & Paintings Exhibition on Centenary Celebrations of Mohenjo Daro Excavations.

"We are inheritors of the Indus Valley Civilisation and originators of the world's leading and centuries-old civilisation. Most of the past civilisations, including ours in the Indus Valley, were doomed due to certain, sudden, and severe patterns of climate change, which needed to be understood and studied by researchers and scholars for guidelines," he said.

He said the recent calamity of flood had affected the province greatly and his government had tried its level best to rise to the crises.

"It is a fact that our monuments and ancient properties suffered a great deal of loss and I have personally been to a few such places and observed the effects on the World Heritage Site of Mohenjo Daro," he said.

"When the United Nations secretary-general recently visited Pakistan and went to Mohenjo Daro to assess the damages to the heritage site, I led the team and briefed him in details and requested him for saving and securing at least the heritage sites," the CM said, adding: "He had assured me of his full support at that time."

He said the recent Sharm El Sheikh Climate Change Conference (COP 27) also achieved some level of success and Pakistan actively participated in it.

"Our case with a call for climate justice was passionately advocated by chairman PPP and foreign minister in Egypt, as a result, the world now has agreed to create The Loss and Damage Fund, whereby developing countries like us would be financially incentivised rather than compensated — as they take the burden of carbon emissions of the developed world, which are the key reasons for changed and severed patterns of the climate change," Mr Murad said.

The Sindh government as a policy would try to implement recommendations made by a heritage fraternity represented by Dr Kaleemullah Lashari.

The CM said that under his advice, The Endowment Fund Trust (ETF) had started work on Ranikot to restore its walls damaged by rain and flood.

"A French team has surveyed Sehwan city and the fort this month and an international conference is to be held on Sehwan, (Alexander) in February 2023 where 10 eminent scholars are likely to participate," he disclosed.

The chief minister proposed to set up an independent monitoring committee to study and initiate restoration works.

He said in January 2023, the Sindh government was going to Davos, Switzerland, at World Economic Forum with a case study of Sindh.

He appreciated Education and Culture Minister Syed Sardar Shah to have taken this initiative and starting a discussion on challenges of climate change to the cultural

heritage.

Those who spoke on the occasion include minister Sardar Shah, archaeologist Dr Lashari, Italian archaeologist Dr Valeria Piacenti and others.

Vintage car rally reaches Khyber Pass

Over 50 participants of the 13th Vintage and Classic Car Rally reached the Khyber Pass here on Saturday 3 Dec.

A convoy of 55 cars, including Mercedes, Ford, Chevrolet and Volkswagen models of 1930 to 1970 reached the Michni Post, overlooking the Torkham border, where they were given a briefing about the Durand Line.

Strict security arrangements were made all along the 40-kilometre road from Peshawar up to the Michni Post. A large number of tribesmen welcomed the participants upon their arrival in Jamrud and Landi Kotal, while groups of youngsters cheered them along the roadsides in different locations of Khyber Pass.

A brief exhibition of vintage and classic cars was held at the Michni Post, after which the convoy was taken to Khyber Rifles Mess, where they were offered lunch while also enjoying traditional Khattak, Chitrali and Mehsud dances. The car rally is jointly organised by the provincial sports and youth affairs department, Land Rover Group and Frontier Corps North.

The convoy of classic cars reached Khyber after attending an exhibition at the Balahisar Fort in Peshawar. The car rally had taken off from Swabi on Friday 2 Dec. The convoy had left for Peshawar in the afternoon.

The rally will conclude with an exhibition at the Peshawar Services Club on Sunday 4 Dec.



Participants of a vintage car rally pass through a road in Khyber tribal district on Saturday 3 Dec.

Politicians, diplomats hail Sindh heritage on culture day

As 'Sindhi Culture Day' was celebrated across the country on Sunday 4 Dec., several political leaders and diplomats, in their messages, felicitated the people of Sindh and hailed the traditions, values and heritage of the province.

President Arif Alvi extended greetings on the occasion and called Sindh "a symbol of peace and love."

In a message posted on his official Twitter account, President Alvi said that "humility and affection for others" enshrined in Sindhi culture are a source of inspiration for people.

In his message, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the day represented the unity of the country, according to APP.

"For thousands of years, Sindh's heritage has been beautifying not only the region's heritage but that of the entire humanity," he said in a tweet posted on his official account.

He felicitated the people of Sindh on the occasion.

In his message, Foreign Minister and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari felicitated people all over the world who were celebrating the day.

"The culture of Sindh is a beautiful amalgamation of Indus civilisation and Islamic heritage," he added.

He said Sindh's ajrak, cap, literature, music and food hold distinct value all over the world.

Promoting Pakistan's art, culture and literature all over the world was part of PPP's manifesto, the party's chairman said in the message.

Former president Asif Ali Zardari, in his message, said nations never forget their culture, heritage and language. "Sindh has always kept its history and

culture in high esteem."

He said the residents of Sindh have not forgotten those who laid down their lives while protecting their land.

PTI Chairman Imran Khan, in a tweet, called Sindh the "land of Sufis and freedom" and added the province was "suffering under the tyranny of Zardari mafia".

"Today we celebrate the rich culture & traditions of Sindh going back to the great Indus Valley Civilization," he wrote.

"Sindh will rise again against the tyrant to reclaim its greatness & freedom."

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah congratulated Sindhis living all over the world and said their culture "promotes love and respect for other cultures".

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani also extended his greetings to the people of Sindh in a message issued by his office.

"Today is the day to celebrate the love of the Sindhi language and to highlight the importance and traditions of Sindhi culture," he added.

Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi called the day "Aekta Jo Dihaaro" (The Day of Unity).

In his message, he said the Sindhi culture was rich with spirits of hospitality, tolerance and love.

"The Sindhi culture is a pleasant and alluring blend like the various colours of



TWO young girls display their dresses, jewellery and henna at a gathering in Hyderabad.

ajrak," he added.

"The beauty of Sindhi culture, based on brotherhood and tolerance, is distinct from all other cultures."

Other political leaders, including PPP MNA Faryal Talpur, Federal Minister Sherry Rehman, PML-N's Hina Pervaiz Butt and Balochistan's Minister for Home & Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langove also extended their felicitations.

Greetings from diplomats

Foreign diplomats and missions in Pakistan also hailed the culture and history of Sindh in their messages.

US Consul General in Karachi Nicole Theriot, while felicitating on the occasion, said Sindh was a land of rich culture and history.

"The people of Sindh have created an inclusive and tolerant society. On this Sindh Cultural day being celebrated on December 04, the United States wishes the people of Sindh and Pakistan peace and prosperity," she said in a video message posted on the official Twitter account of the US Consulate Karachi. Wearing an ajrak on her shoulders, she added: "Today, we join Pakistanis to celebrate Sindh Cultural Day. We do it with the understanding that many are still recovering from the plight of the devastating floods this year."

"I thank the people of Sindh for your warmth and hospitality as I continue to learn more about Sindhi history, poetry, and culture."

She added that the government of the US stands with the flood-affected people of Sindh and Balochistan.

German Consul General in Karachi Dr Rüdiger Lotz wished "a very happy Sindhi Culture Day" to the people of Sindh.

Clad in a Sindhi topi, Dr Lotz added Sindh was the land of Sufis and they played an important role in promoting peace in the province.



A large number of men, women and children gather in front of Karachi Press Club to mark Sindhi Culture Day on Sunday 4 Dec.

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British rulers destroyed Sindh's ecology by laying irrigation system, says minister

Geologists, historians, literati and other scholars speaking at a conference held recently in Nohato village — known for its centuries-old historical sites — of Tharparkar district resolved to work together for the revival of ancient Hakro river and its natural courses.

People from different walks of life attended the event, titled 'Hakro Literary and Cultural Conference', organised by the Hakro Literary Forum.

Sindh Minister for Culture Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Nasir Abbas Nayyar (from Punjab), Jami Chandio, Khalil Kumbhar, Dr Ishaq Samejo, Dr Fateh Mohammad Marri, Mir Hassan Arisar, Dr Adal Soomro, Tooba Qazi, Qasid Mallah, Mumtaz Bukhari, Mehboob Rana, Mumtaz Nohrio, Naseer Kumbhar, Bharu Mal Amrani and other scholars spoke at the moot.

Sardar Shah said it was totally wrong that British rulers had brought a revolution in the region by introducing reforms and laying an irrigation and railways network during the colonial era. "They, rather, destroyed or badly damaged Sindh's historical sites in pursuit of their goal to plunder resources of the culturally rich region of Indus civilisation," he added.

Resolves to ensure revival of ancient Hakro river and its natural courses

He said that the irrigation and railways network were laid by the colonial rulers for the benefit of their own East India Company and certain parts of the United Kingdom. "British rulers had dug up the Nara Canal using Hakro riverbed and disturbing the river's natural course, thus stopping it from flowing towards Shakoor Lake, the ancient river's natural destination," said Sardar Shah.

Hakro's natural courses were first destroyed during the Kalhora dynasty but British rulers caused more damage to them and the historical sites existing all along waterways to dig up Nara Canal, he said. He said the canal was meant for irrigating lands in various districts falling along (Indus river's) right bank after Sukkur Barrage was built, he added. The last and lethal attack on Hakro river and its flows was inflicted by implementing the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) project

in the late 1980s.

The minister asserted that the LBOD proved fatal for natural flows as the courses of the once mighty river were badly disturbed and obstructed.

"It's necessary to restore the vanished [Hakro] river and its natural courses by clearing its occupied and encroached upon beds so that floodwaters could safely dispose of into its natural destination," he said.

Mr Shah told the audience that research on the centuries-old historical site of Nohato had been undertaken in 2018 under the supervision of geologists and other relevant experts. "The Nohato civilisation resembles to that of Mohenjo Daro ... we are trying to explore more such sites along the banks of vanished Hakro river," he said, and added that once revived, the river's flows towards Shakoor Lake would be restored by marshalling all available resources.

The minister said it was the prime duty of his department, experts, historians and researchers to find ways to revive the pristine glory and grandeur of Hakro river.

"It's very unfortunate that with the destruction of such ancient rivers, not only the ecology and environment of the region was badly affected, but also the history was distorted. I am making my sincere efforts to get the history corrected and also rectify the damage done to historical sites," he said.

He resolved to go ahead with his mission and to clear the bottlenecks created to obstruct the natural waterways, he said, and urged experts of the field to help him accomplish the task.

Eminent novelist and Seraiki poet Riffat Abbas said that such events would help unveil hidden aspects of Sindh's rich history, heritage and culture.

Nasir Abbas Nayyar welcomed the resolve to restore and preserve all historical sites in Sindh.

Jami Chandio said it was the need of the hour to protect historical sites and discover more such sites in Sindh.

Partab Shivani, head of the Hakro Literary Forum, said that Hakro river had great cultural and religious significance. He called for a halt to unplanned urbanisation and ensure proper capacity-building of officials posted at various

barrages and canals, besides producing early warning system for disasters, especially rains and floods.

Thailand hits 10m visitors in 2022 as tourism recovers

Thailand celebrated the arrival of its 10 millionth international visitor of 2022 on Saturday 10 Dec, according to the tourism authority, as the kingdom consolidated the recovery of its Covid-battered travel sector.

Thailand welcomed some 40 million people in 2019, but then the pandemic hit and travel was decimated as nations tightened border controls to contain the coronavirus.

With those restrictions easing worldwide Thailand's travel numbers have begun a slow recovery and the government expects to generate nearly \$16 billion in tourism revenue this year.

Traditional dancers and drummers at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport on Saturday 10 Dec. welcomed passengers arriving on a Saudi Arabian Airlines flight that authorities believe clocked the 10-million milestone.

"The sky is open," Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha said in a speech at the airport.

"We would like to build confidence that Thailand is still one of the (top) tourist destinations of people around the world." Finance minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith said this week that visitor numbers were expected to grow next year too. Government figures suggest Thailand would welcome roughly 23 million tourists in 2023, while some analysts believe a full recovery in tourist numbers could happen in 2024.

Thai hotel owners and restaurateurs have breathed a sigh of relief as business has slowly picked up.



Steeply pitched roofs and iron railings of the majestic Empress Market, one of the remnants of the British colonial painted red under a renovation project.

'Ganga Ram created spaces for well-rounded societies'

Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale feels that her great-grandfather, Sir Ganga Ram while building buildings for Lahore city, not only erected physical structures but also created spaces for well-rounded societies to be developed in the future.

American politician and activist Ms Hinsdale, a senator from Vermont, US, sat at a session themed "Bridging the Divide" at Alhamra on Saturday 26 Nov. and shared her experiences about her week-long tour of the city. Her husband, Jacob Hinsdale, also sat on the stage, while writer F. S. Aijazuddin conducted the session.

She said the city that preserved her great grandfather's legacy was full of cultural monuments, and it was an honour for her to visit the city and reconnect with history.

She said she was privileged to be in the company of Nayyar Ali Dada, an ace architect from Pakistan.

Lahore keeps on celebrating the memory of Sir Ganga Ram by preserving the buildings designed and constructed by him during British Indian rule. The landmark monuments include the General Post Office, the Lahore Museum, Aitchison College, Mayo School of Arts (now the National College of Arts), Ganga Ram Hospital, Lady MacLagan Girls High School, the chemistry department at Government College University, the Albert Victor wing of Mayo Hospital, Sir Ganga Ram High School (now Lahore College for Women), the Hailey College of Commerce (now the Hailey College of Banking & Finance), and Model Town and Gulberg.

"Model Town was designed by Sir Ganga Ram to bridge gaps between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, the four major communities of Lahore," said Aijazuddin. The housing scheme had a mosque, temples and a church to create harmony among the residents.

Senator Hinsdale was born to a Jewish mother and a Hindu father in Los Angeles.

She said that while growing up in the US, she was yelled at and often faced security scrutiny because of her colour and background.

Her father's migration from Punjab to the United States haunted her, but she did



not give up; instead, she promoted dialogue among different communities and enjoys representing the public.

Her husband Jacob Hinsdale said he was impressed to see the work and legacy of Sir Ganga Ram intact despite the passage of several decades.

He said Lahore was a proud host to Mughal monuments, which had imposing grandeur and splendid looks.

This was the couple's last public appearance of their tour to Lahore.

The audience gave them a rousing ovation as an acknowledgement of Sir Ganga Ram's great services for the region.

Before the dialogue, an exhibition of photographs and maps of Lahore monuments was arranged by the Office for Conservation, and Community Outreach. The event showcased the work of Sir Ganga Ram, John Lockwood Kipling and Nayyar Ali Dada.

Ganga Ram's descendant visits Lahore Museum

Kesha Ram Hinsdale, the great-great-granddaughter of Sir Ganga Ram, has termed the Lahore Museum one of the architectural masterpieces designed by her ancestor, saying that the museum is of great historical and cultural importance.

"I am very pleased to come to the place where my grandfather spent some time of his life and it feels as if I have returned to my ancestral home," Ms Kesha Ram said during her visit to the museum, an architectural masterpiece built by Sir Ganga Ram, on Thursday 24 Nov.

Praising the preservation of various artifacts and historical records, she said it was need of the hour to preserve these masterpieces for the generations to come.

Lahore Museum Director Muhammad Usman welcomed Ms Kesha Ram. He said most of the architectural gems of Sir Ganga Ram were located in Lahore and the museum enjoyed a distinct place vis-a-vis conservation of archaeology, culture and history.

Kesha Ram Hinsdale – a Vermont State Senator from the Democratic Party – is on a week-long visit to Lahore on the invitation of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

Ganga Ram is the architect of buildings like the Aitchison College, National College of Arts (NCA), General Post Office, Government College University, Model Town, Lahore College for Women University (Ganga Ram High School) and Hailey College of Commerce.

Three tourists found dead in Murree hotel

Three tourists died in mysterious circumstances at a private hotel in Murree.

According to locals, four friends booked a room in a hotel located at Dhana Area on Murree Expressway in the limit of Patriata police station.

They stayed over there, however, did not come out till Friday noon. To this, the hotel management opened the door to check, if they want to check out or will extend their stay.

To this, locals said that hotel management found three friends dead in mysterious circumstances while another was found unconscious.

Bodies and the unconscious person were shifted to Murree Tehsil Headquarters hospital. Murree SHO Chaudhry Aslam while speaking to media confirmed the death of three persons. He, however, did not share the cause of death saying investigations are underway.

An employee of the hotel said that the two deceased were residents of Sadigabad area of Rawalpindi while one belonged to Aro Kas area of Murree. They all were young and in late 20s.

While, the fourth one, who fell unconscious belonged to Gujranwala.

He said that deceased were identified as Mohammad Owais, Faisal Ayaz and Mohammad Shahrukh, while the unconscious person was identified as Mohammad.

Police sources said that the cause of the death will be established after autopsy report and in the light of forensic evidence.



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Rediscovering Mohenjodaro

Tandling atop the highest brick platform in Mohenjodaro's Citadel district, just a few steps from a second century Buddhist stupa, it is impossible not to feel awed as you take in the sheer scale and complexity of the prehistoric city around you. It takes a moment for one to come to terms with the fact that what you behold is more than 4,500 years old one of the earliest known settlements in the entire history of humankind.

A hundred years ago, some of the most renowned archaeologists of the world stood in this same spot and experienced a thrill very similar to what you are feeling. In 1922, there would have been nothing remarkable all around, save a few mounds of earth and the Buddhist stupa nearby. Yet, as the excavation teams scraped away mud and silt to uncover wall upon wall of red brick, the excitement and sense of wonder would have been palpable in the camp. The discoveries those archaeologists made and the theories they came up with to explain their finds paint a vivid picture of what life would once have been like in the city below.

Imagine standing on that same spot at 9am on a breezy December morning, around 2,500 BCE. Half a continent away, the ancient Egyptians of the Old Kingdom and the Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia are probably just starting to stir from their sleep. However, the city below a neat grid of mud-plastered, red-brick buildings, plain to the sight but remarkably well-organised would already be bustling with life.

In the distance, chariot riders and bull-cart drivers would be shouting for people to get out of their way as they rumbled through the city's main thoroughfares, the latter bringing fruit and grain from the fertile farmlands all around. Traders, grocers, butchers and artisans would be hawking their wares from small shops as well as the city's formal markets, calling out loudly for buyers in a strange language we will never hear and may never understand. Children would be playing with terracotta toy animals or running through the streets, winding noisily through groups of somber priests



A view of the famous drains in the Citadel, covered neatly with slabs of limestone that may have also served as a disinfectant: the Great Bath, which also appears on the back of the Rs20 note; and, pottery shards that have surfaced during recent rains lie scattered across the site.

headed for the city's iconic Great Bath or its sprawling monastery.

Wisps of smoke would rise from the open-air courtyards of the houses, carrying the smell of baking bread and cooking meat.

In a corner of the metropolis, officials from the city administration would be supervising repair and construction works. Municipal officials would be inspecting the complex, remarkably sophisticated drain network to make sure it was functioning well, and also making sure the various public 'dustbins' had been cleaned out satisfactorily.

There, in the quarters of a large guest house, visiting traders from far-off lands would be exchanging tales as they unwound from their long journeys over the mighty Indus or the plains of Sindh and Balochistan.

The Indus would be flowing serenely just beyond. One of the paths out of the Citadel area would have led to the city's noisy docks, where labourers would be unloading goods while fisherfolk inspected their catch and prepared their hooks and nets for their next trip.

In the evening, men and women would congregate for games of dice, board games, song, music and dance. There would be restaurants too, buzzing with laughter and activity. In these eateries, the

inhabitants of the city probably met to combine gossip with eating and drinking, and the latest peccadilloes of the city fathers were doubtless retailed with gusto over rich food and the stronger kinds of drink, wrote Ernest Mackay, one of the archaeologists who excavated Mohenjodaro in the earliest years, in his book, the Indus Civilization.

A cosmopolitan marvel The ancient city only came to be known as Mohenjodaro 'Mound of the Dead' many millennia after its fall. It is an unfortunate misnomer, considering the city was once a living jewel; the apogee of an ancient civilisation whose people seem to have lived simply, but lived well.

Mohenjodaro was, by all accounts, a peaceful, cosmopolitan city which seems to have concerned itself primarily with trade. Scholars do not believe the Mohenjodaro residents to have been a warring people, as no significant weapons caches have yet been found, and the few weapons that have been discovered seem to have been good only for hunting purposes. It would appear that in sharing their prosperity, the people were able to avoid conflict for most of their history. The society, believed to have been comprised of multiple ethnic and racial groups, is considered to have been egalitarian, even proto-democratic, given

no great temples or palaces were ever found during its excavations.

It is believed it may have been ruled by a council of elders elected from society, or a priest-king or governor appointed by a higher authority elsewhere in the Indus Valley Civilisation.

Be it in their arts and crafts or their municipal sophistication, the people of Mohenjodaro were well ahead of their time. Some of the sculptures and figures uncovered in the early years of excavation left archaeologists in awe of what these people accomplished. The Dancing Girl, for example, continues to delight people thousands of years after it was cast by a Mohenjodaro coppersmith. It is a wonder not just for its aesthetic value, but also for its craftsmanship. The Mohenjodaro people also seem to have created very elaborate toys and refined jewellery, paying particular attention to both form and function in their crafts.

The city's utilitarian planning, construction and complex drainage system is, of course, nothing short of art itself. It has been said that these people, instead of expressing their civilisational attainment through megaliths and ornate architecture, did it by meticulously planning their settlements to maximise their utility for residents. From plentiful water supply, to uniformity of proportion in the baked clay bricks they used to build, to the layout of residential areas, to the orientation of the streets, to the elaborate drains that allowed residents to even have functioning bathrooms on the upper floor of their houses the entire city of Mohenjodaro is a marvel of civil engineering.

Cleanliness seems to have been a core tenet of their way of life, if not integral to their belief system, and what little excavations have been done so far have unveiled no less than 700 freshwater wells that once watered the houses and public utilities of the city. Not only that, the aforementioned drain network that ran through the city was carefully covered and designed such that it wouldn't cause the city's residents any discomfort.

Many of the houses also appear to have had their own latrines and bathing areas, some even on their first floors, which were carefully drained using terracotta pipes and water chutes into sewers outside.

The language of the Indus Valley Civilisation has generally confounded historians and remains a mystery to this day. The only samples of it that have been collected are from seals and amulets, which appear to have been widely owned. Most of these seals depict various animals, human figures and even deities, along with pictographic inscriptions that have come to be known as the Indus Valley script. Some depict inscriptions alone. The animals that have been inscribed on these seals are varied and many, including the fabled 'unicorn' - a mysterious creature which appears very frequently and seems to have been of an iconic significance for the Indus Valley people. Other animals include two different kinds of oxen, rhinoceroses, tigers, hares, gharials, elephants, antelopes and buffalos. There is evidence to suggest that the people may have believed in a very early form of Hinduism, with one of the deities represented in these seals believed to resemble Lord Shiva, and others seeming to correspond to later deities in the modern Hindu belief system.

Present and past The centenary of Mohenjodaro's discovery brought with it a reminder of why this once thriving ancient settlement may have been abandoned.

The 2022 monsoon season brought massive floods to the area around Mohenjodaro. The site itself was damaged in the rains.

Widespread inundation of the area wreaked havoc in local communities, displacing many and ruining crops all around. Even in early December, months after the last rains fell, many surrounding fields remain submerged in water. It is difficult, if not impossible, to drain them due to the extremely high water table.

It seems of interest to mention here what the archeologists who excavated Mohenjodaro said about the ancient city's fall. Writing in his book, *The Indus Civilization*, Ernest Mackay noted: 'The subsidence of walls and well-linings at two distinct levels of the city, one much lower than the other, proves that a flood took place early in the history of Mohenjodaro and that another marked the beginning of its decline Mr Mackay clarified that while Mohenjodaro itself was never substantially flooded as it was considerably higher than the surrounding plains due to constant rebuilding, the

water probably extended for miles, and put a stop to all commerce and trade for many months. This would be a disaster for the people, as the character of its buildings, no less than the fact that it traded with other countries, proves that their city was a thriving commercial centre.

This could have led to the eventual collapse of the Mohenjodaro economy, which would have sparked an eventual exodus from the area of its people, who would have dispersed in their search for new, safer homes.

Fear in a handful of dust There is another old threat faced by Mohenjodaro: the saline soil of the area, a consequence of once wellwatered lands growing more arid with time.

Salts present in the soil dissolve in water and then travel up to the surface through porous materials, such as mud or clay bricks.

When the water evaporates, it leaves a coating of salt crystals behind. These crystals are extremely destructive and crumble the bricks they form on into dust.

Writing after the earliest excavations were made, Mr Mackay had noted: 'Both Harappa and Mohenjodaro, being built almost entirely of burnt brick, have become so heavily impregnated with salt that, to this day, a shower of rain produces a mass of crystals which crumble the surfaces of newly-exposed walls. The same thing also occurs during the rare frosts that are experienced in Sind. The denudation of the mounds is slowly but surely reducing their height, while their area is correspondingly increased by the debris carried down from above. The masonry lying a foot or so beneath the surface is, of course, unaffected. When wind, rain, or the excavator's spade removes the superficial coating of dust and exposes fresh masonry, this in turn gradually crumbles away,' he observed.

Qasim Ali Qasim, a former archaeology director, explains that the once towering walls of Mohenjodaro have diminished in stature over time due to this phenomenon. The challenge gets worse during the winters. He recalls that in 2001, a national fund was set up for Mohenjodaro to combat the climate's effects on the heritage site.

An SOP was made under Unesco supervision for maintenance and

preservation in all four seasons. Unfortunately, due to devolution after the 18th Amendment, all archaeological sites were given to the provinces. The experts who used to work on them were also divided between the provinces, and there has been a persistent shortage of trained personnel since then.

One hundred years of decay At Mohenjodaro, one of the conservation engineers working to protect the site, Ali Haider Gadhi, takes me through his responsibilities, which have taken on a greater urgency following the monsoon this year.

During a stop in the Citadel area, he gestures to the Buddhist stupa to point out some of the damage caused to the site by the monsoon rains.

Because the structures are in considerably weakened condition since this year's monsoon, the staff and tour guides are keeping a wary eye. They immediately shout out warnings if they see anyone attempting to scale a wall or walk over one. Unfortunately, most of the visitors do not feel as protective of the place.

Additional measures, like completely shutting the site on gazetted holidays, have also been taken to limit footfall at the site.

A drainage plan for the site is right now the number one concern for the people working to protect it. Some of the excavated buildings, especially in the DK area, accumulated substantial quantities of rainwater during the monsoon, which damaged the integrity of their excavated walls. The ground level in the area subsequently had to be raised with dirt in a bid to force the water to flow out.

Concrete pipes have already been inserted into the bases of some walls in areas which have proven difficult to drain out naturally. As we discuss these later additions, it is pointed out to me that some of Mohenjodaro's 4,500-year-old drains still work and carry a substantial amount of water away from the site.

The one which drains the Great Bath has been particularly helpful.

Upon request, Mr Gadhi leads me to a hitherto unexcavated area where new ruins have been exposed after heavy rains washed the topsoil away. It is an unremarkable corner at a short distance behind the Mohenjodaro museum.

As we explore the area, he points to several patches on the ground to show me where the unmistakable rectangular shape of red bricks has started to peak through. He traces the curved rim of what he believes is a well with his foot, pointing out how nothing seems to be growing where the well's walls would be, but there are bushes right in its centre. We also stumble on pieces of ancient pottery and a broken terracotta bangle, likely deposited as the waters drained out of the area.

None of this was here before the rains,' he tells me.

Mr Qasim regrets how Mohenjodaro is gradually falling into disrepair. 'This was not just a site of national importance, but a global one. A World Heritage Site, as designated by Unesco.

Forget global, after the 18th Amendment, it seems it is no longer considered important even on the national level.

The provincial government has turned it into a prop for its political narratives around Sindhi nationalism, even though the Indus Valley Civilisation was much larger than any of this. It is tragic that we may never get to uncover more of Mohenjodaro. 'Even the 10pc that has been excavated is something we have not been able to protect, notes Mr Qasim. 'Most of the superstructures have been built anew. This is not archaeology. You are supposed to protect what you have uncovered, not add to it or rebuild it.

If you excavate further without the means to save it, you will destroy what remains of this heritage. It's much better to leave what is in the ground buried. Unless we find new technologies or methods to protect the site, what is already there is all we will get to see,' he says.

Telling the story As I walk around the considerably modest museum, there is an inescapable realisation that a major national and global heritage is being grossly neglected and squandered. Museum labels are missing from the displays, so visitors cannot really understand the significance of the many millennia-old artefacts. I am reminded of the museum at Harappa, which seems in comparison to have been considerably better equipped, stocked and presented than the one here.

The museum and archaeological site's short comings are also symptomatic of a larger problem: for a place that offers

so much promise, adventure and mystery, its administrators have been woefully unable to tell its story right.

There are no visual aids on the excavated grounds that can help an ordinary visitor imagine how the city, its inhabitants and their everyday life must have looked like; no model or scaled recreation of any of the important buildings that it may be more fully admired. It is left entirely to the visitor's imagination to make of the place what they may, and it is not surprising that after the novelty vanishes, many seek to entertain themselves by climbing and tinkering with its architectural features.

The two murals that do attempt to show what the city may have looked like once are now both faded. In any case, they lack much detail. Despite the museum hosting an interesting array of artefacts, even if the collection is modest, there has been no attempt to demonstrate how these objects may once have been used.

They lie there on glass plates, lacking any significance for the ordinary visitor, apart from the fact that they are very old.

Even the souvenir shops lack appeal, selling wares that seem bereft of aesthetic quality. In fact, the tacky imitations of Indus Valley artefacts they sell only reinforce the impression that we seem to be holistically doing much worse than the people who lived here more than 4,000 years ago.

This quite obviously needs to change. The Sindh government is sitting on a tourist goldmine if it gets its act together and pays its heritage some attention.

With the northern areas the go-to destination for holiday getaways, Sindh must capitalise on the rich history of its land if it wants to tap the growing domestic tourism market.

Larkana is no longer a backwater it is well connected with good roads and within a very manageable distance from the country's largest city. However, it will remain cut off from the traveller's imagination as long as it fails to capture it and engage it.

With Mohenjodaro, the Sindh government has all that it needs to make a big mark. It is sad that it seems to be so lacking in imagination that it does not know what to make of a place that otherwise should be on every traveller's itinerary.



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Move to launch environment-friendly, affordable E-taxi service in city

The Sindh government is in talks with local and foreign players to bring electric cars in Karachi to ply them as online E-taxi service, a key member of the provincial cabinet said on Sunday 27 Nov.

Sindh Information, Transport and Mass Transit Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon did not share details about the proposed cab service and the role of the government in a purely commercial operation during his interaction with reporters during his visit to the construction site of the Red Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project near Jinnah Avenue, Malir.

“A modern, affordable and environment-friendly electric taxi service will be launched in Karachi and extended to other major cities of the province,” he said. “Negotiations are under way on the project and the Sindh government is working seriously on it.”

He said that the existing online taxi services in the city were charging very high fares due to the rising cost of petroleum products. “The Sindh government is endeavouring to provide affordable taxi service to the citizens.”

Sharjeel says all federal institutions including Malir Cantt are extending full support for Red Line project

He said the leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party had directed him to expedite the pace of work on all ongoing public transport projects in Karachi so as to address the long-standing transport issue of the city.

Mr Memon added that public transport projects with the investment of billions of rupees had been launched in city. The Sindh Mass Transit Authority was working day and night to increase the number of buses in the city and improve the transport infrastructure, he added.

He said the work on the 22-km-long Red Line project was in process at a rapid pace. It starts from Malir Halt and passes through University Road before its integration with Green Line at Numaish traffic intersection.

The minister said Red Line, launched with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, was the Pakistan's first project which would be run on biogas. In this regard, the construction of Pakistan's first biogas plant would be started soon, he said.

He said that Sindh was the first province that had started an electric bus service in the field of public transport and now the work on Red Line running on eco-friendly biogas was in progress.

He said that the Sindh transport department had started Orange Line and Peoples Bus Service.

Soon the electric bus service would also begin its formal operations in the city, he said, adding that paper work on the Yellow Line project with the support of the World Bank was in final stages and the construction would commence soon.

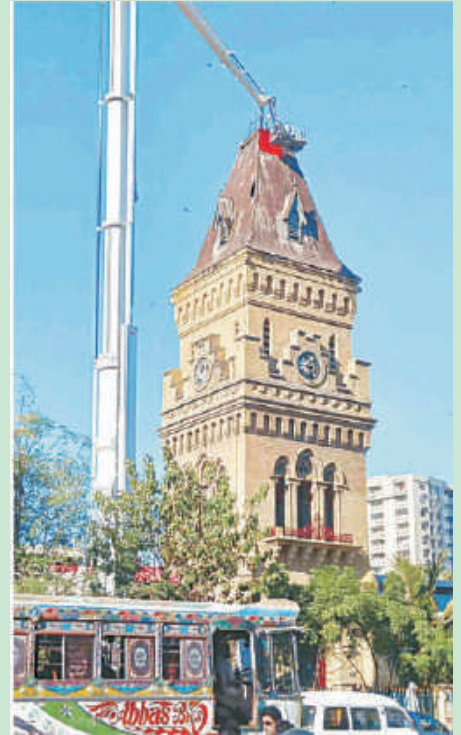
He said that all major cities of the world had modern public transport system, including the BRT service. The Sindh government was endeavouring to bring a modern public transport system in Karachi.

In response to a question, he said that all federal institutions, including the Cantonment Board Malir, had taken ownership of the Red Line project and were extending full support in its construction.

He said that all encroachments in the corridor of the Red Line project would be removed and local administration had been given a week to remove all encroachments.

Commenting on former prime minister Imran Khan's announcement that all lawmaker belonging to his party would resign from every assembly, he said that it was an attempt to divert the attention of people from real issues.

He added that Imran Khan staged the long march for getting a date for the next general election, but he ended up with the announcement of resignation. He said if he was serious, the former prime minister would have asked President Arif Alvi to resign first.



Workers in a snorkel paint the steeply pitched roof of the iconic clock tower of Empress Market recently. The KMC is renovating the British-era marketplace, which was in a state of disrepair since long.



Labourers pluck ripe kinnow from trees at Sillanwali Road. Sargodha is sometimes called the 'California of Pakistan' for having the second-largest kinnow production field in the world. According to a 2020 report, the district produces more than 60 pc of the country's total output of the citrus fruit. The juicy fruit has carved a huge market for itself all over the world due to its exotic taste and larger size compared to the Turkish and Moroccan varieties.



A view of the Chumik RCC Bridge near Sarfaranga cold desert in Skardu



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