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Logistics businesses need clarity on new post-Brexit regulations to keep the UK trading

Business group Logistics UK is urging government to prioritise the needs of the logistics industry, as Parliament continues to debate the Retained EU Law bill. As Kate Jennings, the group's policy director, explained, while regulatory simplification has its benefits, the scale of the task ahead of the government must not be underestimated if the UK's highly-interconnected supply chain is to be protected:

“Logistics underpins the whole economy and so is affected by changes to legislation relating to a wide range of areas, including employment, safety, the environment, competition and finance. With so many processes subject to potential change, there is a real risk of putting our sector into limbo.”

“We have demonstrated time and again over the past few years that logistics is agile and flexible – coping with challenges ranging from the Covid-19 pandemic to EU exit, IR35 reforms and the supply chain shocks caused by driver shortages and the impact of the war in Ukraine, as well as political uncertainty and rising inflation. Easing the regulations governing our sector could save costs, drive efficiency and competition. However, our members want clarification that change will not compromise standards and safety for staff and businesses, as well as the wider public.”

Logistics UK strengthens Board with three appointments

According to the government, more than 2,400 pieces of retained EU law are currently in scope under the proposed legislation. Ms Jennings is urging government to reassure logistics businesses that they will have time to adopt any new business practices or apply new regulations with no risk to the supply chain:

“As the government's own impact assessment recognises, businesses face uncertainty, familiarisation and implementation costs. With less than a year until the changes potentially come into force, we are urging government to work with our members to understand the



non-negotiable standards which our industry works to, and allow them time to implement any new processes and procedures, to ensure UK business can continue to trade effectively both domestically and internationally. Failure to plan means planning to fail.”

Logistics UK warns energy support plans risk greener future for industry

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform Bill) will create powers to reform or sunset retained EU law by December 2023 or 2026 at the latest. The

Department for Transport has the second highest number of pieces of law in scope.

Logistics UK is one of the UK's leading business groups, representing logistics businesses which are vital to keeping the UK trading, and more than seven million people directly employed in the making, selling and moving of goods. With COVID-19, Brexit, new technology and other disruptive forces driving change in the way goods move across borders and through the supply chain, logistics has never been more important to UK plc. Logistics UK supports, shapes and stands up for safe and efficient logistics, and is the only business group which represents the whole industry, with members from the road, rail, sea and air industries, as well as the buyers of freight services such as retailers and manufacturers whose businesses depend on the efficient movement of goods.



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Air Cargo closes 2022 near pre-pandemic levels

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released data for global air freight markets showing that 2022 full-year demand for air cargo took a significant step back from 2021 levels but was close to 2019 performance. According to the foremost industry association, African Air cargo demand decreased by 1.4% which was still the second best performance of all regions after the Latin American region.

Global full-year demand in 2022, measured in cargo tonne-kilometers (CTKs*), was down 8.0% compared to 2021 (-8.2% for international operations). Compared to 2019, it was down 1.6% (both global and international).

Capacity in 2022, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometers (ACTKs), was 3.0% above 2021 (+4.5% for international operations). Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID) levels, capacity declined by 8.2% (-9.0% for international operations).

December saw a softening in performance: global demand was 15.3% below 2021 levels (-15.8% for international operations). Monthly cargo demand tracked below 2021 levels from March 2022. Global capacity was 2.2% below 2021 levels (-0.5% for international operations). This was the tenth consecutive monthly contraction compared to 2021 performance.

2022 ended with mixed signals:

Global new export orders, a leading indicator of cargo demand, have stayed at the same level since October. For major economies, new export orders are shrinking except in Germany, the US, and Japan, where they grew.

Global goods trade decreased by 1.5% in November, down from a 3.4% increase in October.

The Consumer Price Index for G7 countries indicated inflation tracking at 6.8% for December. The 0.6 percentage point drop compared to November (7.4%) was the largest over the course of year. Inflation in producer (input) prices reduced to 12.7% in October, its lowest level so far in 2022.

"In the face of significant political and economic uncertainties, air cargo performance declined compared to the extraordinary levels of 2021. That brought air cargo demand to 1.6% below 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels. The continuing measures by key governments to fight inflation by cooling economies are expected to result in a further decline in

cargo volumes in 2023 to -5.6% compared to 2019. It will, however, take time for these measures to bite into cargo rates. So, the good news for air cargo is that average yields and total revenue for 2023 should remain well above what they were pre-pandemic. That should provide some respite in what is likely to be a challenging trading environment in the year ahead," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

2022 Regional Performance

African airlines reported a decrease in demand of 1.4% for global and international demand in 2022 compared to 2021 and an increase in capacity of 0.3% (-0.2% for international operations). Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID levels), demand was 8.3% above (+9.4% for international operations) and capacity was down 15.3% (-14.2% for international



operations). In December, airlines in the region posted a 10.0% decrease in demand for both global and international operations compared to 2021. Capacity grew 1.3% (+0.2% for international operations) during the same period.

Asia-Pacific airlines posted an 8.8% decrease in demand in 2022 compared to 2021 (-7.4% for international operations) and a capacity increase of 0.5% (+5.8% for international operations). Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID levels), demand was 7.8% below (-3.9% for international operations) and capacity was down 17.2% (-12.2% for international operations). In December, Asia-Pacific airlines recorded the worst performance of all regions, posting a 21.2% decrease in demand (-20.4% for international operations) compared to 2021. Capacity fell 3.9% (-1.4% for international operations) during the same period. Airlines in the region continue to be impacted by lower levels of trade and manufacturing activity and disruptions in supply chains due to China's rising COVID cases.

North American carriers reported a 5.1% decrease in demand in 2022 compared to 2021 (-6.3% for international operations) and a capacity increase of

4.2% (+4.9% for international operations). Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID levels), demand was 13.7% above (+12.7% for international operations) and capacity was up 8.2% (5.1% for international operations). In December, airlines in the region reported an 8.5% decrease in demand for both global and international operations, compared to 2021. Capacity fell 2.9% (+1.8% for international operations) during the same period.

European carriers posted the worst year-on-year performance of all regions, with an 11.5% decrease in demand in 2022 compared to 2021 (-11.8% for international operations). During the same period, airlines posted a capacity increase of 0.5% for both global and international operations. Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID levels), demand was 8.7% below (-9.1% for international operations) and capacity was down 16.5% (-17.3% for international operations). In December, airlines in the region posted a 17.4% decrease in demand (-17.9% for international operations) compared to 2021. Capacity fell 7.0% (-7.4% for international operations) during the same period. Airlines in the region continue to be most affected by the war in Ukraine.

Middle Eastern carriers reported a decrease of 10.7% for global and international demand in 2022 compared to 2021 and an increase in capacity of 4.3% (+4.5% for international operations). Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID levels), demand was 1.6% below for global and international operations and capacity was down 6.3% (-6.1% for international operations). In December airlines in the region posted a 14.4% decrease in demand for both global and international operations compared to 2021. Capacity increased 2.8% (+3.0% for international operations) during the same period.

Latin American carriers posted the strongest year-on-year performance of all regions, with an 13.1% increase in demand in 2022 compared to 2021 (+15.0% for international operations). During the same period, airlines posted a capacity increase of 27.1% (+27.8% for international operations). Compared to 2019 (pre-COVID levels), demand was 4.3% below (-2.6% for international operations) and capacity was down 14.3% (-10.8% for international operations). In December airlines in the region posted stagnant growth in demand (+2.3% for international operations) compared to 2021. Capacity grew 27.6% (+32.7% for international operations) during the same period.

Ethiopian Airlines to start operations from Karachi on March 26

The Ethiopian Airlines will commence operations from Karachi on March 26, said Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia in Islamabad.

In this critical time in history, it is important to bring the two countries together, Ambassador Abdula told media exclusively.

The pan-African airline is already flying to 130 destinations and will be an instrument to connect Pakistan with Africa, he said.

Mr Abdula, who is the first Ethiopian ambassador to Pakistan, has been endeavouring to enhance people-to-people contacts since his arrival.

In these hard times, he said, Pakistan like many other countries had its challenges, in trade and business related matters, and especially climate change that was wrecking havoc

The ambassador said the prospect of trade between the two countries was bright as the business community from both Pakistan and Ethiopia were eager to penetrate in each other's markets.

Export is a critical issue for Pakistan. We need to work with the government and other related institutions in a way to increase Pakistan's exports to the rest of the world. This is a right time for Pakistani businessmen to enter the market of Ethiopia, which is a gateway to entire Africa, with a total population of around 1.4 billion in 54 countries, said Mr Abdula, who has set a target to increase trade volume between Pakistan and Ethiopia from roughly \$80 million to \$200 million.

For this purpose, the ambassador was also facilitating a Pakistani business delegation flying to Ethiopia on March 5-10 to explore business, trade and investment opportunities.

The delegation comprised 100 plus members of the chambers of commerce and industry in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad and Sialkot.

We are calling it 'Exploring trade and investment opportunities in the emerging Africa Ethiopia'. It is a turning point in the histories of the two brotherly countries, said Mr Abdula.

Cheap energy, abundant skilled labour and a supportive government are some of the incentives vital for establishing businesses in Ethiopia, the fastest growing economy in the world in the last two consecutive decades, he said as he invited Pakistani businessmen to consider his country for enhancing trade.

Similarly, there is a huge demand for pharmaceutical products in Ethiopia, which imported roughly 80 per cent of pharmaceutical equipment from around the world and is an excellent market for Pakistani products.

Visit of the Pakistani business community to Ethiopia will open a new window of trade and investment opportunities for them in diverse sectors of economy including textile, pharmaceutical, rice, chemicals, steel and cement. Likewise, Pakistan could import coffee, tea, pulses, oil seeds and other agricultural products from Ethiopia.

FAA says pilots reported over 9,000 laser strikes in 2022



Federal Aviation Administration

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has warned people against pointing lasers at aircraft after 9,500 such incidents were reported by pilots in 2022. "High-powered laser pointers can incapacitate pilots flying airplanes with hundreds of passengers," the FAA said, appealing to manufacturers to put a warning on packaging against misuse. Although lasers can "seem like just a toy," according to acting FAA administrator Billy Nolen, "people need to be aware pointing a laser at an airplane is a federal crime." Almost 300 pilots have reported injury from such incidents since 2010, the FAA said, warning that it has the power.

United Kingdom to train Ukraine's pilots ahead of fighter deliveries



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that Ukrainian fighter pilots will be trained in the United Kingdom.

The announcement was made hours before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's visit to London on February 8, 2023.

The training of Ukrainian pilots in the UK will ensure that they are ready to fly NATO-standard fighter jets in the future.

"Since 2014, the UK has provided vital training to Ukrainian forces, allowing them to defend their country, protect their sovereignty and fight for their territory," Sunak declared in a statement. "I am proud that today we will expand that training from soldiers to marines and fighter jet pilots, ensuring Ukraine has a military able to defend its interests well into the future. It also underlines our commitment to not just provide military equipment for the short term, but a long-term pledge to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine for years to come."

While no final commitment to deliver western fighters has been made yet, several countries said they were open to providing Ukraine with new fighter jets, including but not limited to the F-16 Fighting Falcon. On January 24, 2022, Yuriy Ihnat, the spokesperson for the Air Forces Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, said that military pilots had been sent to the United States for training and that the fighter jets to be delivered had been identified.

Valuables left at airport returned to passengers

In couple of instances of lost and found at Lahore and Islamabad airports, possessions including jewelry, cash, etc. were handed over to passengers who forgot them at the airports. At Lahore's AIIAP a trolley bag was reunited with its owner Mr. Zeshan Sakhwat who earlier left it behind after exiting the airport. The bag contained valuables such as gold bangle (Malabar Gold and Diamonds), a gold chain / locket, branded wrist watches and other valuables. Similarly, an Afghan national Mr. Ghulam Sakhi travelled from Islamabad to Doha but left his pouch at FIA/immigration counter in the international departure. After confirming from the CCTV footage, pouch containing \$2500USD (PKR 664,159) was handed over to passenger's representative Mr Abdul Hakeem after he produced an authorization letter of collection duly verified by the passenger.

Gligit Airport holds mock joint security exercise

A joint mock security exercise was conducted at the Gilgit Airport. CAA, ASF, Rangers, Local Police and Key Point Police participated in the drill. The drill aimed to review and validate plans, procedures, clarify roles and responsibilities, and to identify resource gaps, if any. In a mockup scenario two miscreants attacked CIP lounge and took passengers hostage. Security forces successfully executed their action plan as per designated tier and roles in an evolving situation neutralizing the attack.





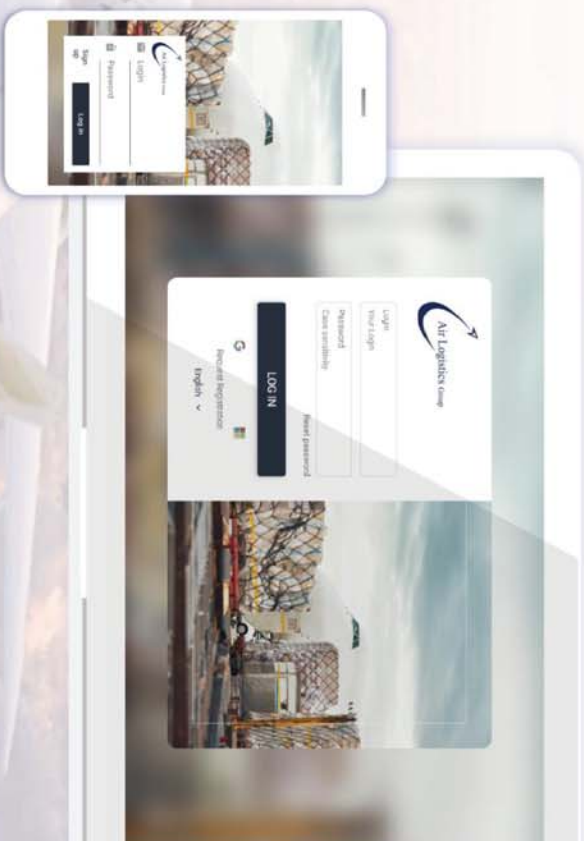
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International Airlines are returning to china en mass

As travel restrictions ease, China is once again becoming a destination for global aviation.

As we head into February 2023, major international airlines are resuming or ramping up their international flights to and from China following a complete relaxation of COVID-related restrictions for international flight operations.

After a long disruption due to the coronavirus pandemic, the country is once again becoming a destination for global aviation. The Chinese government has quickly recognized the importance of aviation to the country's economy recovery.

The return of international airlines to China has also resulted in an increase in tourism. With more people from around the world visiting China, it is estimated that the number of international visitors to the country could reach 100 million by the end of 2023. Here are the major airlines that have announced their plan to get back to China.

United Airlines

Recently, United Airlines' Shanghai-San Francisco roundtrip flight resumed non-stop operations. The new timetable already took effect on January 28th, canceling the technical stopover in Seoul, South Korea, and reducing the flight time from Shanghai to San Francisco by 2 hours and 20 minutes. The return flight time was similarly reduced by 1 hour and 35 minutes.

While saving flight time, it is also more convenient for passengers to transfer to other cities in the United States on the same day at San Francisco Airport. Popular destinations for same-day connections include Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Seattle, Denver, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York / Newark, and Washington.

The outbound flight UA858 departs from Shanghai at 20:25 local time on Monday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday and arrives in San Francisco at 15:35 local time. The return flight UA857 departs from San Francisco at 10:40 local time on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and arrives in Shanghai at 17:00 the next day. All flights are operated by Boeing 777-300ER, with 60 Polaris business cabin seats, 24 premium economy cabin seats, and 266 economy cabin seats. Find flights from Shanghai to San Francisco here.

Delta Air Lines

Delta Air Lines resumes direct flights between China and the United States from March 3rd, canceling the Seoul technical stopover. The routes are Shanghai Pudong to Seattle and Shanghai Pudong to Detroit.

Both routes will commence operations from March 3rd, with the Shanghai Pudong to Seattle route operated by the Airbus A330-900, departing from Shanghai on Thursdays and Sundays and returning from Seattle on Tuesdays and Fridays. The Shanghai Pudong to Detroit route is operated by the Airbus A350-900, departing from Shanghai on Wednesdays and Saturdays and returning from Detroit on Wednesdays and Sundays. The flight times will be adjusted slightly from March 12th.

Find flights from Shanghai to Seattle here and from Shanghai to Detroit here.

British Airways

British Airways has officially announced the resumption of direct passenger flights between the UK, Shanghai, and Beijing, with flights to Shanghai beginning on April 23rd and to Beijing beginning on June 3rd.

Tickets are now available on British Airways' official website. Flights between London Heathrow and Shanghai Pudong International Airport will operate daily with flight numbers BA168/BA169, with tickets from Shanghai to London starting at 8,792 RMB (\$1,295). Flights between London Heathrow and Beijing Daxing International Airport will operate four times weekly with flight numbers BA88/89, with tickets from Beijing to London starting at 9,662 RMB (\$1,423).

Find flights from Shanghai to London here and from Beijing to London here.

Virgin Atlantic

On February 2nd, Virgin Atlantic announced that it would resume daily flight services between London and Shanghai starting May 1st, 2023, with ticket prices starting at 6,149 RMB (\$906) per person (for a one-way economy class ticket from Shanghai to London).

Prior to this, due to the pandemic, Virgin Atlantic's London-Shanghai route was suspended for a total of 859 days before resuming. After restarting in May, it will mark the completion of Virgin Atlantic's global route restart. When the London-Shanghai route resumes, it will

maintain the same flight schedule as before the pandemic, operated by Boeing 787-9.

Find flights from Shanghai to London here

Air France

Following the announcement of travel restrictions being lifted by the relevant authorities in China, Air France is gradually increasing the number of flights between Paris Charles de Gaulle and Chinese destinations.

Air France currently operates flights to the following destinations in China:

Beijing (Beijing Capital International Airport), one flight per week - Find flights here

Shanghai (Shanghai Pudong International Airport), three flights per week starting February 3rd -

Find flights here

Hong Kong, resuming operations on January 9th, 2023, with three flights per week -

Find flights here

Starting July 1st, 2023, Air France plans to operate daily flights from Paris Charles de Gaulle to the destinations above. Flights to Shanghai will be operated by the Boeing 777-300ER, equipped with Air France's latest long-haul cabin with 369 seats (48 in business class, 48 in premium economy, and 273 in economy). Flights to Beijing and Hong Kong will be operated by the Boeing 787-9, with 279 seats (30 in business class, 21 in premium economy, and 228 in economy).

Japan Airlines

Starting from February 5th, Japan Airlines (JAL) will add a direct flight from Tokyo Haneda to Beijing, operating one flight per week on Sundays.

Find flights here.

Thai Airways

Following the successful resumption of flights from Guangzhou, Kunming, and Chengdu, Thai Airways' Beijing-Bangkok return flight will make a strong comeback on March 2nd, 2023, with three flights per week on 1/4/6. It will be operated by Airbus A350-900.

In addition, the frequency of Thai Airways Guangzhou-Bangkok, Kunming-Bangkok, and Chengdu-Bangkok flights will also increase from March 1st to March 25th, 2023, and the Shanghai-Bangkok

roundtrip is also planned to resume, pending final approval.

Find flights from Bangkok to Guangzhou, Kunming and Chengdu. Emirates

Starting in February, flights between Guangzhou and Shanghai operated by Emirates Airlines have significantly increased in frequency. On February 1st, the passenger service between Dubai and Guangzhou has been further increased to one flight per day. EK362/EK363 will be operated as a direct flight with the Emirates Airbus A380 flagship model, thus perfectly returning to its pre-pandemic level.

Find flights from Guangzhou to Dubai.

Starting from February 2nd, the Dubai-Shanghai route will be increased to four flights per week, operating a flight on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday (with a technical stop in Bangkok from Shanghai to Dubai) operated by a three-cabin version of the Boeing 777-300ER. Starting from March 1st, the Dubai-Shanghai roundtrip flights will further increase to one flight per day and will be changed to direct flight service. The Dubai-Beijing route will also resume on March 15th, with one flight per day.

Find flights from Shanghai to Dubai.

At that time, the number of flights operated by Emirates in the Chinese mainland market will reach 21 per week.

Egyptair

Egyptair recently announced that starting from February 13th (first increased flight) and February 22nd (second increased flight), the Guangzhou-Cairo route will be increased from one flight per week to three flights per week. Find flights here.

Kenya Airways

Kenya Airways has adjusted from February 18th to two flights a week from Guangzhou to Nairobi and back and from March 2nd to three flights a week from Guangzhou to Nairobi and major African destinations. Find flights here.

Are you visiting China this year, now that things have relaxed? Perhaps you're in China and planning a trip away for the first time post-COVID? Let us know your plans in the comments below.

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Lufthansa Cargo now operates world's first AeroSHARK modified freighter



Modification of Lufthansa Cargo's first 777F with AeroSHARK ©Lufthansa Cargo

As a result of new technology developed by Lufthansa Technik and BASF, Lufthansa Cargo is now operating a Boeing 777F with AeroSHARK technology which will reduce its fuel consumption by one percent. The technology was first used on a SWISS 777-300ER and this is the first instance of the new technology's use on a freighter aircraft.

The AeroSHARK modification was performed in mid-January as part of a scheduled maintenance layover for the freighter and was completed well within the time frame. The aircraft has now returned to active service and set off on its premiere flight from Frankfurt to Bangalore in India, before flying on to Chengdu in China.

AeroSHARK is a surface film that mimics the microscopic structure of shark skin. It consists of ribs around 50 micrometres in size – the so-called riblets. If the airflow on the fuselage and engine nacelles of the Boeing 777F is optimised in this way, significant fuel savings can be achieved. For Lufthansa Cargo's aircraft, Lufthansa Technik estimates fuel savings of about one percent. Extrapolated to Lufthansa Cargo's entire 777 fleet, this will result in annual savings of more than 4,000 metric tons of kerosene and nearly 13,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions.

Over time, the
A e r o S H A R K

modification will be incorporated within the entire Lufthansa Cargo 777 freighter fleet which will make these eleven aircraft more fuel-efficient and produce lower emissions. SWISS is also having its twelve Boeing 777-300ERs modified with AeroSHARK.

Last December, Lufthansa Technik obtained a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) for two types of Boeing 777, paving the way for the serial application of AeroSHARK to the 777 fleets of the launch customers.

PAF trainer aircraft crash-lands in Mardan

A trainer aircraft of Pakistan Air Force made an emergency landing here on Wednesday 8 Feb. in the agricultural fields located in Fazalabad area of Takht Bhai tehsil.

Local people of the area told media that they called the officials of Rescue-1122 when they saw the Pakistan Air Force trainer plane make an emergency landing in the agricultural fields.

They said people from the surrounding areas also rushed to the spot to offer help.

However, the Rescue-1122 staff said that they reached the spot after getting information about the incident and started their necessary operation.

They said that both the pilots of the aircraft were safe and evacuated by Pakistan Air Force officials.



People gather near the PAF aircraft after it made an emergency landing in Takht Bhai on the outskirts of Mardan on Wednesday Feb. 8.

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ICAO forecasts 'complete and sustainable recovery' and growth in 2023



ICAO is forecasting that air passenger demand in 2023 will rapidly recover to pre-pandemic levels on most routes by the first quarter and that growth of around 3 percent on 2019 figures will be achieved by year end.

"Assuring the safe, secure, and sustainable recovery of air services will be key to restoring aviation's ability to act as a catalyst for sustainable development at the local, national and global levels, and will consequently be vital to countries' recovery from the broader impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic," said ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano.

"The air passenger forecasts ICAO is announcing today build on the strong momentum toward recovery in 2022, as previously assessed by ICAO statistical analysis," said ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar. "Through ICAO, governments have reached agreements on goals toward zero accident fatalities by 2030 and zero carbon emissions by 2050 goals, and these will continue to play key roles in both guiding continued progress and in prioritising ICAO's implementation support initiatives."

The number of air passengers carried in 2022 increased by an estimated 47 percent compared to 2021, while revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) increased by around 70 percent over the same period, due mainly to the rapid recovery of most international routes. In terms of airlines' annual passenger revenues, keeping yield and exchange rates at 2019 levels, ICAO observed growth of an estimated 50 percent from 2021 to 2022.

In line with earlier ICAO predictions, the strong recovery in air passenger demand has resulted in 2022 passenger numbers reaching an estimated 74 percent of pre-pandemic levels, while passenger revenues are estimated to have reached around 68 percent of 2019 levels. The number of passenger aircraft in service in 2022 mirrors the overall traffic recovery, with current estimates suggesting 75 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

In 2022, aircraft orders and deliveries by major manufacturers Airbus and Boeing grew by 53 percent for orders and 20 percent for deliveries, compared to the

previous year. The number of orders in 2022 exceeded that seen since 2019, indicating the recovery of aircraft demand.

Current estimates for air cargo in 2022 reflect 2021 levels, while still showing marginal growth compared to the pre-pandemic level. The pace of growth for air cargo is however expected to be lower in 2023, given the slowing global economic growth, although long-term air

cargo growth remains in line with previously estimated trend indicating strong long-term growth.

Looking ahead, airlines are expected to return to operating profitability in the last quarter of 2023, after three consecutive years of losses. Air passenger demand in 2024 is expected to be stronger, at around 4 percent higher than 2019. In terms of Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), this translates to a growth of 0.7 percent over the 2019-2024 period. This forecasted recovery and growth for the world of civil aviation comes with the caveat that risks affecting international air transport do not escalate from current levels.

Love is in the air as married Delta Air Lines pilots command their first flights together



Brent and Kelly Knoblauch met when Kelly accepted an internship at Delta Air Lines in 2010. She said Brent was the first person she got to know at the company, and they've been more or less inseparable ever since.

"Every weekend we'd go travel," she said. "It was crazy, it was a really fun, exciting time."

Brent said that the two have grown their careers together since they married 10 years ago, and recently got to fly together professionally for the first time.

"Our careers have really stepped together," he said. "Last month was the first time we were able to sit in the same flight deck together."

Tell us your story: Mobility device lost or damaged by an airline? USA TODAY wants to hear about it

A modern love story

The Knoblauchs said a lot of pieces had to fall into place for them to fly together last month.

"It felt like a long time coming. The stars had to align. For the longest time, we were both in the right seat," Kelly said, referring to the flight deck position where pilots with the rank of first officer typically sit. "Then Brent went to the left seat," meaning he earned the rank of captain, "and I went to the training

department."

While Kelly has been flying Boeing 737s since she joined Delta, Brent moved around between fleets and only recently got assigned to the 737.

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"Kelly was able to teach me everything I had to learn," he said.

Flying to all 50 states: Avelo Airlines begins service from Delaware

Their first trip together in January took them from their home base in Atlanta to Panama City, Panama, back to Atlanta, and then on to Bradley airport outside of Hartford, Connecticut, and back home to Atlanta. Brent said that final flight wound up having to divert to Charleston, "not for marital issues, just for more gas."

"Kelly's a great pilot. ... She flew the plane, she took us to Charleston," he added. "It was an exercise in crew resource management."

The Knoblauchs said they alternated who was the pilot in charge on the legs of their trip, a common practice among two-person crews on multileg journeys at most airlines.

The Knoblauchs' advice for other working couples

Brent and Kelly said it can be hard to juggle a home life and career that takes them both away so often, but they've found a way to make it work.

Communication, both at home and on the job, is key, Kelly said, as well as "being able to snap into your role."

"Be who you are around anyone else. ... It was like flying with any other captain," she said of their first flight

Continued on page 17

Iran unveils underground base for fighter jets



A handout picture provided by the Iranian Army on Tuesday shows pilots posing next to a fighter jet during the unveiling of Iran's first underground military air base, at an undisclosed location.

Iran's army on Tuesday 7 Feb. unveiled its first underground base for fighter jets designed to withstand possible strikes by US bunker-busting bombs, state media reported.

The base — named Oghab 44 (“Eagle” in Persian) — can accommodate “all types of fighter jets and bombers, in addition to drones”, the official news agency IRNA said, released images and videos from inside the base.

IRNA said it was one of the country's most important air force bases, housing fighters equipped with long-range cruise missiles.

The exact location of the base was not revealed, but state media said it was “at the depth of hundreds of metres under the mountains”, and capable of withstanding “bombs by strategic US bombers”.

The latest unveiling comes the day before Iran marks Air Force Day, part of the build-up to the 44th anniversary on Saturday of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

State media on Tuesday 7 Feb. showed Iran's armed forces chief of staff Major General Mohammad Bagheri and the army's commander-in-chief Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi at the newly established base.

Oghab 44 is “one of numerous tactical underground air bases for the army's air force built in different areas of the country in recent years”, IRNA reported.

According to *Press TV*, Mr Mousavi, while speaking at the ceremony, said Oqab-44 is one of the “combined” bases of the IRIAF, meaning both manned and unmanned aircraft carry out missions from the tactical base.

Stressing that the IRIAF's “equipment has been upgraded from tactical to strategic in accordance with the threats and type of missions,” Mousavi said the new weapons and equipment installed on the fighters are state-of-the-art and projected for possible engagement with strategic targets.

It can prepare fighter jets to “counter

possible offensives” such as those practised by the US and Israel in their recent military drill, according to state media.

“Any attack on Iran from our enemies, including Israel, will see a response from our many air force bases including Eagle 44,” Mr Bagheri told state TV.

On the sidelines of the unveiling ceremony, the long-range air-launched cruise missile 'Asef' was also showcased, *Press TV* reported.

The missile is equipped with a

NIH to collect aircraft wastewater for Covid testing

While two years ago, long queues of passengers were observed at international airports to get themselves tested for Covid-19, the National Institute of Health (NIH) has decided to start a pilot project at the Islamabad airport to initially collect wastewater of airlines for Covid-19 genomic sequencing.

NIH is the pioneer of the project as two years ago its study on genomic sequencing through wastewater was published in an international journal and discussed across the globe. Now United States has also started considering genomic sequencing through wastewater.

Genomic sequencing is a process to decipher the genetic material found in an organism or virus. Sequences from specimens can be compared to help scientists track the spread of a virus, how it is changing and how those changes may affect public health.

According to a document of NIH, available with media, a volume of one litre of wastewater will be collected in a sterile sample bottle (jerrycan). The sample will be stored in four degrees Centigrade temperature until it would be transported to NIH within 24 hours. The sample will be transported to the department of virology the same day or overnight through a cold chain packaging system with cold packs in ice-bucket for further testing.

An official of NIH, requesting not to be quoted, said in early days of Covid-19 the institute had conducted a study on genomic sequencing of wastewater to detect different and new variants of the virus.

“Now we have spoken to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as the NIH has

warhead that features a high destructive and explosive power and can destroy heavy fortifications.

The Asef missile, which is manufactured by Iranian experts, is mounted on the Sukhoi 24 fighter jet.

Iran has mostly Russian MiG and Sukhoi fighter jets that date back to the Soviet era, as well as some Chinese aircraft, including the F-7.

Some American F-4 and F-5 fighter jets dating back to before the revolution are also part of its fleet.

Similarly, in May last year, the Iranian army had shared some details of an underground base for its military drones.

Iran's state media had reported that 100 drones were being kept in the heart of the Zagros mountains, including Ababil-5.

already procured high-tech equipment to do genomic sequencing. A decade ago, samples were sent abroad for genomic sequencing,” he said.

The official said it can become difficult and annoying to force passengers to wait in queues for a Covid-19 test.

“It will be easy to collect a sample of wastewater from a plane and test it. Moreover, according to studies, infected persons start excreting virus in urine much earlier than the appearance of symptoms. So such persons can be traced much earlier than they start transmitting the virus. Airlines can be directed to maintain a record that how many passengers went to the toilet,” he said.

“United States has also started working on the same project. In future, more airports can be included and the methodology can be used for detection of viruses of a number of other diseases,” he said.

Another official of the NIH said collecting wastewater was a method of surveillance and detecting virus without putting people into inconvenience.

“After detecting the virus, passengers can be traced and tested for the viruses or all the passengers can be advised to stay in quarantine for five days to avoid chances of spread of the virus,” he said.

The Covid-19 virus was detected in China in December 2019 and then it started spreading in other countries. Pakistan had closed its borders and took a number of steps to stop the transmission due to which the first case was reported in the last week of February 2020. On March 13, the first meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) was held to discuss the crisis which was later declared pandemic by World Health Organisation (WHO).

IATA calls out countries for requiring COVID tests before flights depart China



The director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said moves by countries like the US, Italy and some European countries to require pre-flight COVID tests for travellers coming from China was a step in the wrong direction.

Willie Walsh, IATA's director general, said "Several countries are introducing COVID-19 testing and other measures for travellers from China, even though the virus is already circulating widely within their borders. It is extremely disappointing to see this knee-jerk reinstatement of measures that have proven ineffective over the last three years. Research undertaken around the arrival of the Omicron variant concluded that putting barriers in the way of travel made no difference to the peak spread of infections. At most, restrictions delayed that peak by a few days. If a new variant emerges in any part of the world, the same situation would be expected. That's why governments should listen to the advice of experts, including the WHO, that advise against travel restrictions. We have the tools to manage COVID-19 without resorting to ineffective measures that cut off international connectivity, damage economies and destroy jobs. Governments must base their decisions on 'science facts' rather than 'science politics'."

Most recently, European Union member states recommended new restrictions on passengers traveling into the EU from China but stopped short of adding new rules for flights. A meeting of the EU's integrated political crisis

response group on Wednesday "strongly encourage" countries to adopt pre-departure COVID testing, encourage masking on flights and implement wastewater checks as a response to the rampant COVID outbreak in China,

No more passport stamps upon EU entry/exit

Passport holders from countries of the former Yugoslavia that are not part of the European Union will no longer have their travel document stamped at the airport upon entering or leaving member states of the block that are part of the Schengen Area. Known as the Entry/Exit System (EES), information on the entry and exit to the EU will be automatically recorded through a new automated system. The new system is linked to the upcoming European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), which is expected to be implemented in November. "EES will replace the current system of manual stamping of passports, which is time-consuming, does not provide reliable data on border crossings and does not allow a systematic detection of over-stayers", the EU Commission for Migration and Home Affairs said. The system will record specific data on travellers, including their name, fingerprints, facial image, travel document type, date and place of entry, date, and place of exit, as well as their stay period in the Schengen Area.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
KOSOVO MACEDONIA NEWSFLASH
SERBIA

No more passport washing when added to Schengen black list :)

REPLY

Anonymous10:41

"The system will record specific data on travellers, including their name, fingerprints, facial image, travel document type, date and place of entry, date, and place of exit, as well as their stay period in the Schengen Area." oš samo da skinemo gaće i to je to

REPLY

Anonymous10:43

Your passport already says all of that about you when the immigration officer scans it. This way at least you will save space in your passport if you are a frequent traveler.

What is shameful here exactly? This

according to a Bloomberg report.

China, for its part, still requires pre-departure testing for travellers coming into the country, but lashed out at countries that are requiring the same tests for travellers leaving China. China's foreign ministry spokeswoman warned earlier this week that the country would hit back at nations that placed COVID restrictions on its travellers for "political goals."

will be tremendous for me because my passport is chock full of stamps which starts to become a problem for me because I need to cross the EU/Schengen border 20+ times per year and every once in a while I get stuck at control since it's becoming more and more complicated for the border police to calculate how many days I have remaining in the Schengen Area. The entry system can't come soon enough for me and I'm sure there are other folks from ex YU who will benefit from it as well.

I was shocked when I saw the border police doing mental calculations to see how long I can stay. Going stamp by stamp, flipping pages, looking for them. Like what is the point of Schengen is entry/exit details are not shared between the countries.

Continued from page 15

Love is in the air as married Delta Air Lines

together.

Best cities for disabled travelers: These 3 U.S. destinations rank among them

Brent said it's also good to recognize differences in your partner and be ready to let them take the lead. "We agreed in thinking about some of this Valentine's Day topic, it's always a balance," he said. "Embrace that balance, and when the time comes, be spontaneous."

Kelly also took a moment to address a question that she said she's surprised to still get on almost every flight in 2023:

"A girl can be a pilot, and you can be a mom too. You can do both things," she said. "It works, and it's a lot of fun."

Travel advice from the pilots

The Knoblauchs said they try to pack as little as possible – almost always just a carry-on – for every trip, and that one of their must-have items is a small backpack that can be folded up in their other luggage.

Sabre appoints Mohaasin Irtaqa as Country Director - Pakistan

Sabre the leading software and technology company across the global travel industry, recently announced the appointment of Mr. Mohaasin Irtaqa as new Country Director - Pakistan.

Mr. Mohaasin Irtaqa brings with him a vast experience of travel technology as he is associated with the Pakistan industry since 1997.

Mr. Sam Wong, Country Manager Pakistan Sabre while welcoming Mr. Mohaasin Irtaqa said that Mr. Mohaasin is a well-known personality of Pakistan travel trade and it is hoped that Sabre Pakistan will positively benefit through his experience and industry knowledge.

During his career in the travel industry, Mr. Mohaasin has consistently challenged the status-quo to help the industry evolve and find the best path toward the future of travel even during tough times of Covid-19," said Mr. Sam



Wong.

This brilliant track record of delivering unique and effective sales solutions, customer support accompanied with impressive history of planning and executing marketing campaign

has made Mohaasin a valuable asset of the GDS industry. He is a well organized, creative, and a proven sales professional. His expertise is working with and across sales teams and well as external clients and agencies on creative, editorial, strategic, and tactical levels.

"It is with great pleasure that I announce that we now have Mr. Mohaasin Irtaqa as Country Director for the business. Mohaasin has a wealth of experience of nearly 20+ years into

leading teams in Pakistan and Central Asia." Mr. Sam added.

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

Exclusive Travel Agency Agreement



Exclusive Travel Agency Agreement signed between Wardah international Services (Pvt) Ltd. GSA for Iraqi Airways Pakistan & Azad Jumu Kashmir by Mr. Basil Ahmed Affendi (Chief Executive) and Bukhari Group through Vision Travels (Pvt) Ltd. by group Chairman, Mr. Rafique Khan, Director Sales and Operations Iraqi Airways Syed Nehal Akbar and top management of Bukhari group attended the same.

U.S. Urges Turkey to enforce sanctions against Russian Airlines



An Aeroflot Boeing 777-300ER approaches Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport in May 2021. (Photo: Flickr: Creative Commons (BY-SA) by Anna Zvereva)

The U.S. State Department has urged Turkey not to serve as a haven for illicit Russian assets or transactions amid reports that Turkish ground service provider Havas warned Russian airlines that it might stop supporting their Western-made aircraft. Sanctions imposed after the invasion of Ukraine prohibit third countries from allowing Russian-operated Boeing and Airbus jets to operate into their territory or access to services such as refueling and spare parts provision.

In a statement to AIN, the State Department noted Turkey's responsibilities as a member of NATO. "Turkey is a longstanding and valued NATO ally that has expressed strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russia's aggression," it said. "We urge countries to prevent exports of items that can be exploited by Russia in its illegal war against Ukraine. We have urged Turkey to not become a safe haven for illicit Russian assets or transactions. We will continue to do so."

On January 26, The Wall Street Journal reported that senior U.S. officials warned of the risk of jail time, fines, loss of export privileges, and other measures for Turkish individuals who provide services such as refueling and spare parts to U.S.-made airplanes flying to and from Russia and Belarus. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Thea Rozman Kendler delivered the message to Turkish officials during a December visit to Turkey, the officials said.

After suspending most of its international flights in March soon after the Ukraine invasion, Aeroflot resumed flying to Turkey in May, effectively giving Russians an air corridor to the West. According to flight records cited by the paper, Russia's S7, Azur Air, Utair, and Belarussian flag carrier Belavia also flew Western-made aircraft to Turkey last year.

According to media reports in Turkey, Havas has given notice to Russian carriers that it may soon suspend services. Neither the company nor French airports group

ADP, which owns Havas' parent TAV, responded to requests from AIN to comment on the situation.

Even in Russia, Aeroflot and other airlines have struggled to secure spare parts for their Western-made jets, prompting the transfer of the flag carrier's production facilities and human resources to local MRO provider A-Technics. Aeroflot began the process of transferring line stations, scheduled and unscheduled maintenance facilities, and component MRO in July, a month after A-Technics obtained a certificate for design and manufacture from Russian aviation regulator Rosaviatsiya.

In late September, Russian authorities extended the certificate, allowing A-Technics to design and authorize documentation for the structural repair of Western-built aircraft. Components in question include air conditioning systems, lighting equipment, windows, doors, braking devices, thrust reversers, fuselage skins, and fairings. The company also gained approval for developing documentation for production and modifications of Level III components such as parts of galleys, passenger cabins, and flight decks.

During its general assembly last October, ICAO passed a resolution "strongly condemning" Russia's infractions of the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Specifically, it cited Russia's move to place the airplanes, most owned by Western lessors and banks, under its own civil aviation register and, in turn, allow for their operation without valid airworthiness certificates.

Drones again disrupt flights at Dublin Airport



Dublin Airport again paused flights for around an hour at 7pm on February 6 after drones were seen operating close to the facility. Flights were diverted to nearby Belfast and to Shannon in Ireland's south-west, with one sent across the Irish Sea to Manchester. "The reckless and

irresponsible behaviour of those causing ongoing drone disruptions is unacceptable," the airport said in a statement. "Those found responsible will face prosecution," it warned. The outage was the third in four days after weekend interruptions saw eight Ryanair flights affected and other flights, from Amsterdam, Bucharest and Manchester, forced to land in Belfast.

Doha airport sets sights on passenger record

Qatar's main international airport aims to pass a record 40 million passengers this year as the Gulf state seeks to build on staging the World Cup to bolster its reputation, its tourism chief said on Sunday 5 Feb.

Hamad International Airport recorded 39.5 million passengers in 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic struck, and recently announced that with the World Cup in November and December, numbers had recovered to 35.7 million in 2022.

Tourism minister and Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar Al-Baker said capacity restrictions at the airport held back numbers last year.

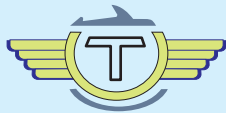
"If we did not have shortage of capacity we would have exceeded the 2019 figures," Baker told reporters on the sidelines of announcing a jewellery and watch show, the latest in a series of events aiming to draw international visitors. "I am not satisfied with 39.5 million passengers," he added.

"We are hoping that this year we will break a record in the numbers of passengers that will pass through Hamad. "Keep in mind that there is no more FIFA (World Cup) so crossing that record number will really be a big achievement and a lot of pressure on Qatar Tourism to bring people," he said.

The wealthy Gulf state is spending billions of dollars expanding capacity at Hamad airport to 70 million people a year and increasing Qatar Airways routes as it seeks to become a dominant player in international travel.

Arch-rival Dubai airport in the United Arab Emirates announced in November that it expected 64.3 million passengers in 2022.

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Emirates SkyCargo and Air Canada Cargo sign MoU to expand air cargo options internationally



Emirates SkyCargo and Air Canada Cargo have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide additional benefits to air cargo customers worldwide. The agreement builds on the strategic commercial partnership announced by both airlines in 2022. Nabil Sultan, Senior Vice President of Emirates Cargo Division, and Matty Casey, Chief Commercial Officer of Air Canada Cargo, signed the MoU at Emirates' headquarters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The MoU outlines several initiatives, including expanded interline cargo options and block space agreements, designed to provide more capacity on an integrated global network for both airlines' cargo customers. The enhancements are subject to regulatory approvals. SkyCargo will have access to over 60 Canadian destinations and more than 150 cities through Air Canada Cargo's network. In turn, Air Canada Cargo can access Emirates SkyCargo's high-frequency distribution network through scheduled passenger air operations to more than 140 international destinations.

"Emirates SkyCargo is committed to being a leading player in the global air cargo industry, providing our customers with the highest standards of products and services. Cooperating with Air Canada Cargo will offer added value to our customers through faster reach to new destinations in Canada through our Toronto and U.S. gateways," said Nabil Sultan, Senior Vice President, Emirates Cargo Division.

"This agreement allows both carriers to work more closely together to optimize our respective freighter and vessel capabilities on each of our extensive and complementary global networks. Customers will benefit from these additional synergies by having access to an even greater range of options, destinations and simplified handling

when shipping globally," said Matthieu Casey, Air Canada Cargo's chief commercial officer.

Qatar Airways to sponsor 2023 Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition



Qatar Airways has announced it will sponsor the 2023 edition of the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE), one of the longest-running and most anticipated events in Qatar's annual social calendar. The unique business-to-consumer event held annually in the Gulf region is expected to attract more than 30,000 visitors to Qatar from around the world.

DJWE this year will run for six days, starting 20 – 25 February at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre in Qatar, where visitors will marvel at the exquisite craftsmanship of over 500 globally admired jewellery and watch brands during the event.

Speaking at a press conference to announce this year's DJWE, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker said "Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition is just the beginning of a fabulous February with a unique calendar of events one after the other starting with the announcement of the 19th edition of the DJWE, one of the longest-running and most anticipated events in Qatar's annual programme of national events. Our aim is getting February off to a flying start announcing sponsorship deals designed to build on the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 legacy along with special holiday packages designed to promote destination Doha and celebrate Doha based events."

During the press conference, His Excellency, Mr. Akbar Al Baker highlighted some of the major events coming to Doha this year, starting with a Fabulous February calendar and introduced innovative packages to support

The Canadian cargo airline will use Air Canada's passenger flights' hold capacity and a fleet of Boeing 767Fs, while Emirates SkyCargo will provide additional capacity with 11 Boeing 777Fs from its fleet. Both airlines specialize in handling special cargo, including oil and gas drilling rigs, auto parts, and pharmaceuticals.

Emirates and Air Canada also recently introduced a passenger codeshare agreement covering 46 destinations and launched a loyalty program partnership.

tourism to Qatar with a number of world class events throughout 2023. Details will be available on the website along with promotional codes.

- Women's Tennis – The annual Qatar TotalEnergies Open takes place from 13 – 18 February featuring many of the world's best female tennis players.

- On 14 February, Valentine's Day, Egyptian singer Amr Diab will be at Nammos Beach Club at Al Maha Island for a special performance.

- Men's tennis – The annual Qatar ExxonMobil Open which takes place from 20 – 26 February attracting some of the top talent in the men's game.

- Then a beautiful tribute to Arabian horses takes place from 23 – 25 February when the Commercial Bank CHI Al Shaqab Presented by Longines 2023 featuring some of the best local and international equestrian athletes visits Doha.

- Leaving the best for last, later in the month of February, Qatar Airways will be co-hosting an exceptional event that is a prelude to the Qatar Formula 1 Grand Prix taking place in October, stay tuned for more exciting details in the coming days.

In line with Qatar's 2030 vision to achieve its goal of welcoming six million visitors a year by 2030, Qatar Airways extends its efforts to help shape Qatar's vision in developing its leisure and hospitality scene by attracting more tourists to Qatar. The airline has shown its support during the month of February by offering special promotional packages to all its passengers. Qatar Airways travellers can book any package to any destination globally and get 10% off the total package and \$100 off all flight + hotel packages per person per booking if their final destination is Doha.

The innovative packages are to support tourism to Qatar for a number of world class events throughout 2023. Details will be available on the website along with promotional codes.

Lufthansa celebrates new Cargo Temperature Tracking technology milestone

Perishable goods have now become trackable, who would have thought?

Fresh produce logistics within the air cargo industry has evolved significantly in recent years thanks to new technological advances. And Lufthansa Cargo is taking advantage of them, as the cargo carrier recently succeeded in achieving a new milestone in monitoring and providing optimal transport for fresh produce.

Are perishables becoming trackable?

Given their name, perishable goods have limited shelf life and do contribute a specific portion to global waste problems because expired, spoilt, and rotten goods are typically not what the customers wish to receive. And for cargo carriers, storing and transporting such precious freight can be challenging as it requires special expertise and detailed planning.

This is where technology comes in to make such situations more efficient. In partnership with Sensitech and Lobster Logistics Cloud, the German cargo carrier can use special sensors and GPS technology to identify fresh produce's exact location and ambient temperature. The duo of information makes monitoring fresh produce in the air and on the ground more seamless.

The overall safety of the perishables gets improved as potential problems get identified earlier for rectification. As the risks of losses declines with real-time monitoring, fresh product logistics maintain their sustainability. Andreas Tittel, Strategic Account Manager at Sensitech, further explains:

"The interaction of our innovative



temperature logger with Logistics Cloud's modern tracking platform enables notifications by the transported product in real-time, for example when specified parameters for temperature and humidity are reached. Together with Lufthansa Cargo's expertise, the customer can thus identify challenges at an early stage and act accordingly."

Get all the latest aviation news right here on Simple Flying!

Is advanced technology all it takes?

While the use of advanced technological developments certainly makes the whole process more efficient for Lufthansa Cargo, it still takes a village to make it all work, specifically a significant transport network for a quicker response to the potential problems identified by the real-time shipment tracking options.

Suppose possible critical parameters of perishable cargo are detected and reported. In that case, the customer can intervene in the transport at a certified fresh hub - such as the Lufthansa Cargo Perishable Center in Frankfurt - to protect the decayable product from further damage.

However, not every destination in the cargo carrier's network will have such facilities for customers to intervene at, so Lufthansa Cargo took it a step further by correcting flight routes for the shortest freight times possible to minimize the risk of losses further. Oliver Blum, Head of Airmail, Courier & Perishable Handling at Lufthansa Cargo, highlights:

"Our route network includes around 300 destinations in more than 100 countries. This enables us to plan optimized flight routes for short freight times. In combination with innovative real-time tracking, we have succeeded in topping our ambitions for a long shelf life of the goods once again. And in doing so, we have also further optimized sustainability in air freight. We are genuinely proud of this achievement."

Freight in Time launch new sea-to-air shipment service



Shipping without a reliable & knowledgeable partner can be overwhelming for many companies. Conscious of their clients' needs, Freight in Time have recently introduced a new sea-air shipment solution for their customers.

"Multimodal transport is a complex, delicate operation, hence the requirement of a supply chain partner that can customise solutions to allow smooth shipping from sea-to-air, and eventually to land, or vice versa," the company said in a press release.

Freightify secures \$12 million as it democratizes access to best prices for freight forwarders

The solution entails the cargo arriving by sea to Djibouti, before onward delivery by charter service through Ethiopian Airlines.

This shipment included telecom equipment, phones, and phone accessories for Freight in Time's largest client: Huawei Technologies.

"Our popular destinations are LOS, KAN, US, and JNB, but we ship to all global destinations. We ferry 30-36 tonnes of cargo on average monthly," the company added.



Single-pilot commercial flights on hold until at least 2030 EA SA



EASA has ruled out the prospect of flights with a single pilot until at least 2030 ©AirTeamImages

In response to pitches made by Airbus and Dassault Aviation for the right to operate the cruise phase of commercial flights with only one pilot in the cockpit, the European aviation regulator has ruled out the prospect of flights with a single pilot until at least 2030. However, the regulator is considering the possibility of allowing single-pilot elements of a flight by 2027.

Limitations would be set that bar pilots with existing medical conditions or insufficient flight hours from operating on their own at any time. The move to solo pilots relates more to long-haul flights where pilots would be able to take rest breaks without there having to be replacement pilots on board. This is in response to the aviation industry's problem with a current pilot shortage.

Andrea Boiardi of the EASA has stated that it is "absolutely not realistic" to expect commercial planes with only one pilot on board to be flown by 2030 as automation had not advanced far enough and solo flying required a level of safety equivalent to existing operations. In addition, Solo flying, even in cruise, needs approval from the United Nations' International Civil Aviation Organization, individual airlines and their pilot unions.

Boiardi made it clear that the most advanced planes would be suitable for solo flying during the cruise phase as they are equipped for a higher level of safety than required by minimum certification standards. Such planes would include the Airbus A350 and potentially the Boeing

787 and 777X. Even limited solo flying, however, is causing conflict among airlines and sparking public fears, while also creating a growing backlash among pilot groups such as the European Cockpit Association. "The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Transport Canada are very much aware of our position that two pilots on the flight deck is the most safe," said Tim Perry, Canada President of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA).

Sabre to share latest insights and present product highlights at ITB Berlin

Leaders from Sabre Corporation (NASDAQ: SABR) will take the stage at this year's ITB Berlin Convention to share insights on the latest trends and developments in the travel industry, the evolution of consumer expectations, and recent developments and innovations.

In an executive interview, Sabre Travel Solutions' chief product officer, Garry Wiseman, will share his perspective on travel from twenty years in technology roles outside the tourism industry (March 8 at 12:10 pm).

After the pandemic and amidst multifaceted challenges, the travel industry is settling into a new sense of normalcy. Yet, to paraphrase the philosopher Heraclitus, the only constant is change. Demand patterns are shifting, consumer expectations continue to evolve, and technology is developing rapidly. Garry Wiseman joined Sabre in 2022 as chief product officer after holding executive roles at some of the world's largest technology companies, including Dell, Microsoft, eBay, and Salesforce. In his session, Wiseman will share his perspective from twenty years in technology roles outside the travel industry. He will also discuss why he sees the travel industry having significantly more potential to leverage technology to deliver an enhanced, more personalized customer experience.

- Traci Mercer, senior vice president, Lodging, Ground & Sea, Sabre Travel Solutions, will join two panels: one on gender equity in tourism (March 8 at 2

pm), the other on the transformation of the tour operator business (March 7 at 3 pm).

- A panel, focused on total revenue and the future of retailing in the hospitality industry, will feature Frank Trampert, senior vice president & global managing director, Sabre Hospitality (March 7 at 1 pm). And
- Salman Syed, vice president, agency sales, EMEA, Sabre Travel Solutions, will participate in a panel on the role of technology in making corporate travel more sustainable (March 9 at 3 pm).

Sabre will also be present at ITB Berlin with two trade fair booths, one dedicated to its airline IT and travel distribution business, the other focused on hospitality IT.

In hall 5.1, booth 106 Sabre Travel Solutions will unveil a new, state-of-the-art tool for the leisure marketplace that makes it simpler and more efficient to shop, book and manage tour packages. Developed in partnership with German travel IT company, Peakwork, the solution is expected to be rolled out in Germany starting in the third quarter of 2023. Other highlights include the workflows in the point-of-sale tools Sabre Red 360 and GetThere for booking NDC-enabled content as well as accommodation through Sabre's Content Services for Lodging, a technology solution that integrates multiple sources of lodging content including from Sabre's GDS and aggregators. Also showcased will be Sabre Virtual Payments, a unique, secure, automated end-to-end virtual payment solution that is a key focus area for Sabre following the acquisition of Conferma Pay in 2022 and the strategic partnership with Mastercard.

In hall 9, booth 207, Sabre Hospitality will feature SynXis Retail Studio, an e-commerce and retailing solution, empowering hoteliers to manage, distribute and fulfill unlimited non-room and room offers to help drive brand differentiation, maximize revenue, and personalize the customer experience. Also featured will be Nuvola, a prominent provider of hotel service optimization and guest engagement software allowing hoteliers to connect their teams and elevate services, that was acquired by Sabre in 2022.

Virgin Atlantic to join SkyTeam, becoming first UK member airline

Virgin Atlantic, in a not entirely anticipated move, will be joining the SkyTeam alliance on March 2, 2023.

Although technically unaligned, Virgin Atlantic had already long counted Delta Airlines, a founder and one of the most prominent members of the SkyTeam alliance, as a major shareholder.

The American carrier holds 49% of Virgin Atlantic's shares, while the remaining 51% is in the hands of Richard Branson's Virgin Group.

Virgin Atlantic has also been part of a joint venture with Delta Airlines and Air France-KLM, another major component of the SkyTeam alliance, since 2019.

The four carriers cooperated closely on a number of matters, such as code-sharing, frequent flyer programs and integrated bookings. Also, and very importantly, Virgin Atlantic provided valuable access to a large number of slots at highly valued, access-restricted London-Heathrow (LHR), which serves as the main base for the British airline.

Virgin Atlantic and Delta had been working closely together in the lucrative North Atlantic for a very long time. Both carriers sought and obtained antitrust immunity from the US Department of Transportation back in 2013.

SITA's latest air transport IT insights report reveals accelerated digitalisation

Faced with increased disruptions, baggage mountains, and staff shortages, airports and airlines are ramping up their investment in technology to digitalise their operations and speed up the passenger journey by offering more self-service options. SITA's 2022 Air Transport IT Insights report reveals that with the post-pandemic recovery CIOs want to ensure operations are as agile and resilient as they are efficient, with IT solutions seen as central to their success.

This has spurred an acceleration of digitalisation, with airlines and airports looking to key technology solutions to fortify their operations against disruption while automating the passenger experience. The industry's IT spend is projected to continue its steady year-on-year growth trend since 2020 to support this push for digitalisation, with a full 96% of airlines and 93% of airports expecting their IT spend to stay the same or increase in 2023 compared to 2022. Last year airline and airport IT spend rose to an estimated 37 billion USD and 6.8 billion USD respectively.

"Air travel has recovered faster from the pandemic than anyone in the industry had initially expected, particularly in Europe and the US. While the recovery is welcome, airports and airlines have found themselves on the back foot with staff and resource shortages. This has put strain on operations, resulting in an increased risk of congestion, delays, cancellations and mishandled baggage. Digitalisation is seen as key to addressing these challenges, providing more scalability and flexibility," David Lavorel, CEO, SITA,

said.

Airlines are placing great emphasis on IT tools to manage irregular operations and provide the best passenger experience possible even amid staff shortages. Over the next three years, 90% or more of airlines are investing in IT service management enhancement and disruption warning systems, as well as business intelligence initiatives for aircraft turnaround management, passenger processing, and baggage processing. Business intelligence solutions are at the forefront of airport IT investment priorities too, with 93% or more planning business intelligence initiatives for asset management and flight operations by 2025.

The emphasis on agility, adaptability to disruption, and prompt communication with customers and stakeholders is clear; by 2025 half of airports are seeking to implement automated predictive alerts prior to flight disruption events as well as business intelligence initiatives to enable scaling of operations based on demand.

Streamlining the passenger journey with smart technologies

Both airlines and airports are investing in key technologies to smooth the passenger experience across every step of the journey, to help curb bottlenecks and in turn allow redistribution of key staff resource to focus on more complex tasks. Biometrics and self-service technologies are seeing major emphasis. Airlines have identified self-service technologies as key to helping manage irregular operations, and this remained their top investment priority in 2022, with touchless solutions and biometric ID management following closely.

To support effective baggage management and empower passengers following a period of significant disruption, a majority of airlines plan to provide real-time baggage tracking information to passengers by 2025. Airports are similarly prioritising self-service initiatives, placing strong emphasis on self check-in and self-bag drop, with 86% planning implementation by 2025.

Airports' implementation of a secure single biometric token across all touchpoints has surged from just 3% in 2021 to 39% in 2022, with over half planning implementation over the next three years. This signals a strong commitment to the next-generation travel experience where passengers can breeze through the airport using their face as their boarding pass.





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Importance of Travelling

Prof. Safdar Sandal

In the hustling bustling life, travelling is a great escape to get rid of a robotic life and learn something interesting every moment. Through vivid exposure, it reaches various experiences of life. Fortunately my business of export of Sports Goods, has been such that I had to travel extensively, especially in Europe, USA and the Middle East, to gain orders for my products from old as well as new customers and this enabled me to gain experiences which I would not have gained without travelling and these experiences related to all spheres of life, for instance washing my clothes, sometimes cooking by myself and walking by carrying heavy bags for miles, to save money from taxi-travel, if and when it was not necessary. I enjoyed profundity of all such experiences, living by my own-self alone with simplicity to do everything with own hands. It is rightly said that one learns more in travel than



from anything else. Travelling coupled with education plays its part (as it is rightly said 'sonay pa i s o h a g a'). Education so to say, serves as a wonderful guide in travelling. Both - travelling and education, augment each other to understand the world affairs more correctly, closely and comprehensively. Travel is an education in itself, as also taught by the sage people in history.

People travel for various purposes, such as enjoyment, education, employment and exploring the depth of the world. But a common benefit imparted by travelling is that it broadens the views and perceptions of mind and soul. It develops the understanding level and sharpens the ideas and thoughts,

regarding understanding various cultures intrinsically. In contrast, for some people, it provides a great opportunity to explore the beauty of nature and thus convert their negative thoughts to positive ones, by praising the magnificent scenery of nature. The mid night sun for example, is a natural phenomenon that occurs during the summer months from June to September, in places north of Arctic Circle including north of Norway, Sweden and Finland etc. and in the south of the Antarctic Circle. As it is known that the earth is not 100% round but has an oval shape and that "the earth is rotating at a titled axis relatively around the sun and since the earth's axis at Arctic (or Antarctic) is titled more towards the sun, the countries placed there get an appearance of the 'midnight sun'. This circle peaks in summer months and the sun emerges at mid-night from the horizon once again after having completely set



(Kiruna- in Swedish Lapland)



(Midnight Sun in Summer)



Why is it called the land of the midnight sun?



(back home: My grandson (writer's) and toy both look alike, readying for Murree to board a tourist train: harboring a journey for our future generation)



(Having a Bavarian lunch)



Moon was closest to earth on Jan-21

down and gives a red-burning light. It is charming to see the comeback of the sun in that hour, which is called 'midnight sun'. Only some precautions are taken, wearing a special glasses and that's all for the body. Nothing else to worry about!!

Similarly, some people find travelling as a medium to groom their personalities, enhance their confidence level and enrich their treasures of knowledge from whichever strata of society they may belong to. Travelling surely changes one's personality and makes him decent, intelligent, independent and self-confident. In short, travelling is not only beneficial for your physical health but also for your mental health. It enlarges longevity of your life-span and definitely improves your mental health. It gives you self-confidence as well as the power to stick firmly to your vision or perspective. It will not be wrong to say that in one way or another, it inhabits a new soul into your body.

Orbiting Earth near Arctic Ocean at the North Pole between Russia and Canada, the Moon comes so close to the Earth that it looks like it is about to crash into it. The moon completes this cycle in just 30 seconds and covers the sun for 5 seconds before disappearing immediately ... Enjoy nature's beauty-wonders ... One has to be extremely lucky to be there at that time. (My dear readers: if you would like me to send to you the 'Video' of this marvel of nature which I have been helped to capture; I can do so through the publisher cum owner of this magazine).

Lastly in my eagerness, once travelling in Sweden for selling my products viz. Ski gloves, Ice-hockey, Bandy gloves and all fitness articles produced here; and staying too long there,



(Symposium of Vienna-Austria)

I decided to go up to the north of Sweden in order to quench thirst of my knowledge. It is where many tourists go to see the wonders of nature; where the day's sun sets down in the evening time but after that during mid-night once again springs up for an hour or two depending on how north you are up on the globe of earth. This hour comes in summer-time and is called 'Mid-Summer Night-Sun'. People throng there to see the wonders of nature. I stayed for five days in the city Kiruna during my travel in the north of Sweden. My hotel room had been placed with heavy thick-dark curtains because when during the night the sun once again sprouts up in the sky with enough day-light, the curtains will help overcome the temporary light and restore darkness required for necessary-undisturbed sleep. I was told by the manager of the hotel in advance about this change over called 'Midnight Sun'. I had studied in the geography class of my school and now I was there to see it personally and experience it after 17 years. What a great luck it was for me to be there and practically visualize and experience what I had studied in Matriculation. The Hotel people of Kiruna had informed me beforehand upon my arrival about this and not to get panicked by this natural phenomena creating a most enjoyable atmosphere when the day-light returns in the mid of the night. The 'Midnight Sun' comes from April to August every year. 'Hollywood' had produced a romantic movie after Shakespeare's novel 'Midnight Sun' in 2018. The film I saw in a Cinema in Vienna, close to the 'Symposium of Vienna – Austria', in the company of my dear Viennese business friend, Thomas in 2019. An anxious and cautious life must continue gracefully for everybody.

(To be continued)

Thai beaches brace for Chinese deluge

Entrepreneurs on Thailand's holiday island of Phuket are bracing enthusiastically for the long-awaited return of Chinese tourists recently, hoping China's reopening and dismantling of its strict Covid-19 curbs can boost their flagging businesses.

In the year before the pandemic, nearly a third of Thailand's visitors were Chinese tourists, who once accounted for annual global spending of quarter of a trillion dollars on their travels.

"I'm so ready to welcome Chinese tourists because with them here it's good money," said speedboat driver Wittaya Yooyen, 56, who operates at Patong beach, the island's biggest draw.

"It's good that the Chinese are coming, and I'm not worried about Covid-19." His water sports business, which offers paragliding, water skiing and other activities, suffered heavy losses during the pandemic, when Thailand's strict entry conditions and long mandatory quarantine periods kept visitors at bay.

With tourism picking up widely in the region from pent up demand and the end of most travel curbs, Asia's holiday hotspots are welcoming the return of Chinese tourists, who are celebrating the Lunar New Year.

Thailand's government is expecting at least five million Chinese tourist arrivals this year, with 300,000 in the first quarter. Phuket is expected to get a much-needed payday from a Chinese influx, with the island typically attracting a quarter of Thailand annual arrivals.

With its economy almost entirely dependent on tourism, many Phuket businesses were crippled by the coronavirus. Some, like Mr. Good's Seafood restaurant in Patong, were forced to cut staff dramatically.

"When Chinese tour groups come, they order quite a lot, and I miss that momentum we used to have four years ago," said Rinnicha Vanichworachod, its assistant manager.

"We aren't ready to provide full service as we don't have enough staff.

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No progress on clearing 5,630 containers: KCCI



The delay in releasing containers stuck at ports carrying essential commodities and raw materials has not only hampering manufacturing activities but also creating shortages of all types of goods fuelling inflationary pressures.

As efforts are on to get 5,630 stuck-up containers released, the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has announced that the 18th “My Karachi — Oasis of Harmony Exhibition” would be held next month to show the world that the business community remains resilient and continues its battle for survival.

Addressing a press conference at KCCI on Wednesday 8 Feb., Businessmen Group (BMG) chairman Zubair Motiwalla said due to persistent economic and political instability only four countries — Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines — would participate in the expo to be started from March 3-5 in the Expo Centre.

Last year's expo was attended by businessmen from 12 countries.

“Preparations are in full swing for staging the exhibition aimed at promoting Karachi's positive image besides expecting up to one million visitors. It will be held in all six halls comprising 350 stalls, he added.

Answering a question, Mr Motiwalla said the stuck-up boxes have yet not been released despite commitments made by the representatives of the shipping lines and terminal operators at a meeting held at the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) two weeks back in presence of the maritime minister, secretary commerce, KPT chairman and senior officials of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

He said that despite assurances for maximum relief on demurrage/detention charges, no announcement has so far been

made in this regard, triggering a lot of anxiety among businessmen and industrialists.

He regretted that said due to delays in resolving the issue, the cost of imported consignments has surged due to

extraordinary demurrage/detention charges to such an extent thus surpassing the actual value of goods inside the containers in many cases, making it unfeasible for the importers to get the consignments cleared.

Pakistan needs export-led growth to eliminate poverty, says expert

Talks on how to improve Pakistan's economy and the country's world view by economist Kazim Saeed and geopolitical expert Salim Aziz, respectively, were held here on Friday 27 Jan. evening.

The event was organised by the Concerned Citizens Alliance in collaboration with the Pakistan Medical Association at PMA House.

Mr Saeed's presentation was focused on his book *Dou Pakistan: Har Pakistani Gharanay Tak Khushhali*. He was of the view that financial issues haven't yet been part of our national discourse the way they merit.

He told the very small number of people that had turned up for the event that there are two aspects to his thesis: ways to eliminate poverty and a rapid economic development. In that context he gave the example of China. He claimed that during Den Xiaoping's rule, China made the target that from 1980 to 2000 they would increase its GDP four times. Not just that, it went up six times.

Similarly, during Mahathir Mohamad's rule in Malaysia, the target set from 1990 to 2020 was eight times increase in the GDP. They came pretty close to it. He said Pakistan needed to have a target of eight times from 2017 to 2047.

Mr Saeed, a public policy expert, then highlighted the structure of Pakistan's economy. After touching upon the low per capita expenditure in a Pakistani household, he said in order to eliminate poverty export-led growth is required. Pakistan is an agricultural superpower. The greater economic value is in hi-tech.

“Even in the 21st century, Pakistan's productive capacity is concentrated in low-tech. Eliminating poverty requires that we take the economy up the productive ladder. In the 21st century countries that create new knowledge are the winners. Eliminating poverty will not be by growth alone because there are two Pakistans, one is inside the castle in which

every 100 women have 270 children in their lifetimes, and the other is outside the castle in which every 100 women have 420 children in their lifetimes,” he said.

The geopolitical expert Aziz spoke on 'Understanding Pakistan's World View'. Most part of his presentation was pre-recorded which kept interrupting due to some technical fault.

He began by giving a historical perspective of things, telling the audience that as a child he used to read atlases. He stated that Pakistan's biggest problem is its foreign policy. He then introduced the audience with a German word 'weltanschauung', meaning the view of an individual of a group based on geography.

Mr Aziz going back in history talked about the North Atlantic part of the world and then about the Silk Route. Moving forward, he argued that the conflict between Russia and Britain resulted in the Great Game. Dr James Burns (Karachi's Burns Road is named after him) was a court physician of Sindh's rulers. His brother Alexander was given the task to navigate the region by travelling across the River Indus. It was a reconnaissance mission for which he used the excuse of taking the gift of a horse for Maharaja Ranjit Singh from Britain's king. When he succeeded in navigating the area he told his bosses that there wasn't a single hindrance (aik rukawat bhi nahin hai) which set off the alarm bells for British rulers. Thus began the first Anglo-Afghan war, followed by the Battle of Miani in 1843 and a couple of other wars in the region.

Crossing to the next phase, Mr Aziz shed light on the Baghdad Pact and Cento, followed by the Arab-Israel war and the OIC Summit, and the subsequent removal of the Shah of Iran and Z A Bhutto.

He emphasised that the region where Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan are located is the centre of the old world and connectivity between them is needed.

SBP moves to ensure export proceeds realised in time

For ensuring the timely realisation of export proceeds, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has decided to initiate necessary action in all those cases where full or partial proceeds are not realised within the prescribed period.

In a circular issued on Tuesday, the central bank directed banks [authorised dealers] to adopt the following procedure at the time of conversion of export proceeds into rupees.

The banks will compare the weighted average buying rate published by SBP on the date of realisation (i.e. rate-A) with the same rate published by on the last day of the prescribed period, after addition of the grace period (i.e. rate B).

In case rate-A is higher than rate-B, the banks will convert the export proceeds at rate-A, but pay the export proceeds at rate-B to the exporter and will keep the difference amount in a separate account opened by them for the purpose.

A consolidated statement regarding all such differences collected will be submitted by principal offices of the banks to the director Foreign Exchange Operations Department (FEOD), SBP-BSC on weekly basis.

Banks will deposit the said difference with SBP or refund the same to the exporter.

These instructions will not be applicable in cases of export bills or export receivables that are discounted by the exporter to the banks.

These instructions will come into effect as of March 1, 2023,' said the SBP circular.-Staff Reporter

Why Should I Be Hungry

By: Zinat Iqbal

Salman come and have your lunch” shouted his mom from the door of their hut in the Katchi abadi. He was playing marbles with his friends of adversary. His mother was thin, a widow who lived in a slum of Karachi. Her husband died when Salman was 6 years of age. He was 10 now in the adolescent phase. She worked hard as a domestic servant in the city. Their slum was outside the city. Salman knew that she always kept the meat for him. If Salman asked her to have it she would say she had eaten at Begum Saheba's. But Salman, although not so old, knew in his heart of hearts that his mom was laying. He knew that she saved as much food as she could for him, of the little that they had. He entered his hut with his friend, his mom looked up as if to say, there is not enough for the both of us. But she told Rahman to come in. So Rahman and Salman sat together and ate the dried bread with curry.

One day Rahman told Salman that a guest to the slum whom he called, Ustadji, had given him 5 rupees, which was a lot of money for Rahman. He asked Salman to come with him to meet Ustadji. Ustadji seemed to be a nice person. He gave Salman Rs. 5; only nice persons gave money, just like that, thought Salman.

Upon enquiring Salman found out that Ustadji lived in the city. He told Salman that he had a big house and he, Salman could come and stay with him. He would receive Rs. 500 per month.

Salman convinced his mom to let him go. He wanted to help his mom by earning some money to give her.

They sat in a taxi, which wound through roads that Salman had not seen in a lifetime. After an hour or so, the taxi stopped outside a building. Ustadji stepped outside and asked Salman to follow. A boy about 14 years of age came to Ustadji. He enquired about who Salman was. Ustadji asked him to take Salman to his room.

There Salman saw a quilted robe and Kashkoll A pair of crutches were propped up against the wall.

Many cases of children being deliberately mutilated and disabled by their inhuman Ustadji's for the purpose of beggary have been reported. A substantial amount of takings from these poor and innocent child-beggars fill the purses of their cruel tormentors.

After a couple of days, Salman found himself on the streets with the boy who shared his room, begging for money. He had to report to Ustadji in the evening, declaring the amount of money he had collected to him.

It is facts that a vast majority of beggars are able bodied and have taken to this lucrative profession as a means of making some easy money. Well, meaning people give alms to them on Fridays in particular and during Ramazan. But they don't realize that by doing so, they are not really implementing the spirit behind the concept of charity. No doubt, some of the destitute need our help, but by giving alms to them we are really encouraging them to become lazy and to harass people.

Salman hated this job, but what could he do. He missed his mom and Rahman very much. But what could he do. Ustadji kept giving excuses for not sending him home. Salman did not know how to find his way home. At night he cried himself to sleep. Take this money. Ustadji gave him Rs. 10 as a bonus whenever he was in a good mood.

One day, Salman set out early. In the midst of the crowd, he thought he saw Begum Saheba. She lived in the city. He ran like a bullet towards her. With wet eyes he told her his story. She said she would take him to his mom. She gave him some clothes to wear and made sure he had a bath.

He hugged his mom and would not leave her. He hugged Rahman and thanked Begum Saheba, profoundly. He would skip a meal, even three and live on an empty stomach as long as he could be with his mom and Rahman

One wonders where the crores of rupees which the government annually collects as zakat goes. Of course the bulk of the amount should be given as annual aid to the poor whether they live in slums or are beggars.



Erika Sedlacek balances on a rope 510 metres long and 114 metres above the ground.

Thousands pound Seaview road in ultimate show of endurance

The NBP Commissioner Karachi Marathon 4 brought out the entire city, or so it seemed, to Nishan-i-Pakistan on Abdul Sattar Edhi Avenue better known as Seaview Road here on Sunday Jan. 29 morning.

It was not about who participated in the marathon? It was more like who didn't participate in it? Numerous categories pulled in numerous runners but quite frankly there were also some who ran despite having no category to their kind.

For instance, this race for human beings also had animals running. Haider Ilahi and Saad Farooq, two brothers running in the marathon, had come with their one-year-old pet German shepherd dog Saya, who they said followed them everywhere like their shadow. When asked what they would do if Saya grew tired, there was a unanimous shaking of heads. "Saya doesn't ever get tired."

There were parents with their children and the entire family was running. Sikander Ali was there with better half Noor Jehan and daughter Maiida Nehel. "My father was running and he dragged along me and Ammi too," laughed the daughter. "I'm sure I'm not going to win anything but then we are here to have fun," she added.

Nisar Ahmed, a watchman at the NED University, had brought with him his younger brother Jinsaar Ali and children Saira Batool, Hasan Nisar and Mohsin Nisar. All were running and had registered in their respective categories.

There were little kids, too, running in the Fun Category for children. They only had to run one kilometre, but then there were also some who opted for the 7.5 meters category.

There were participants in the differently-abled persons' category also. Some of them were in sports wheelchairs and others gesturing to each other in sign language. There were also members of the armed forces all in tip-top shape.

Speaking of tip-top shape there were several boxers and karatekas, too. Noushad Fateh, an international boxer, had brought with him several of his boxer students, including national champion Maaz Khan. "Running is part of our daily routine so we thought why not run in the marathon too," said Noushad.

Among the over-50 veterans' category were Lala Hikmatullah, who came third in last year's marathon. This year he was running 7.5km. There was also Dawn staffer Tahir Siddiqui, who had fever for the last three days, but was



(Top) Amateur runners from all walks of life and professional athletes run in Karachi Marathon held on Seaview Road on Jan. 29 Sunday. (Bottom from left to right) Wheelchair users, foreigners and local schoolgirls also take part in the race.

determined to run and was running 12km. "I've been running 10km in all the previous three marathons and I don't want to break my momentum," he said. Both Lala and Tahir won in their respective categories later.

There was a cancer survivor, Dilshad Hasnain, running in the women over-50 category. She said that she has had surgeries and been in the ICU, too, but her children helped her come back to life and get her interested in running. Dilshad, later also finished first in her category.

There were also some 40 or so persons all dressed in red chanting "Long Live Pakistan-Indonesia Friendship" slogans. They were an Indonesian team led by Ambassador Malik Kaleem Awan. "We were invited and are only doing an exhibition round this time," said the ambassador. But the race did have many other international participants, Japan, Indonesia, South Africa, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, etc, who ran and also won cash prizes and medals.

Registration for the marathon was done on the spot and was free though their were huge cash prizes for all the categories of the race.

There was the men's and women's categories subdivided into under-30, over-30, over-50 and then broken down further into 7.5 kilometres and 12 kilometres. There were also categories for differently-abled and special persons and children.

And in each category the first prize was Rs50,000, second Rs30,000 and third Rs20,000 along with gold, silver and bronze medals, trophies and certificates.

Registration for all categories opened two hours prior to the race with each participant also given a jersey. While registration was under way, there were various entertainers, including dhamal dancers and Makrani dancers, indigenous dancers, the police band and several other musicians offering excellent entertainment.

The commissioner of Karachi Mohammed Iqbal Memon said that everyone participating in the marathon deserved applause. "The marathon is meant to bring the citizens of Karachi together," he said. "Healthy activities such as these energize the youth and build confidence in them to take ownership of the city. We aim to engage and empower the community through such activities for the promotion of healthy activities across the city. The event has strengthened the efforts to promote peace in the city," he added.

Several dignitaries also attended the event, including Barrister Murtaza Wahab, adviser to chief minister of Sindh. He said that he was happy to see so much international participation and many winners among them also.

Dr Mohammed Sohail Rajput, chief secretary of Sindh, was the chief guest on the occasion. "I hope to see this marathon growing to the 42 kilometre marathon," he said. "We should also try and add heritage sites in the route next time," he added.

The winners were awarded cash prizes and gold medals by Rehmat Ali Hasnie, President and CEO of the National Bank of Pakistan.

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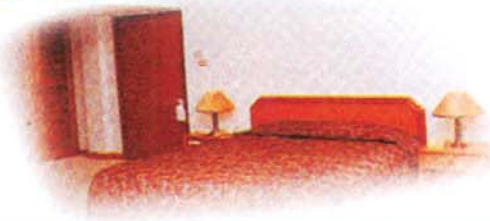
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Gandhara festival kicks off with fanfare in Taxila

Live performances by a Swiss artist, Buddhist folk singers from Sindh, legendary folk singer Sain Zahoor and dhamal with dholl by local artists enthralled participants of the first Gandhara festival that opened at Gandhara art village near Taxila on Sunday 29 Jan.

A large number of local artists, sculptors and stone carvers have also established stalls at the venue. The event showcases a fusion of traditional Pakistani and Swiss music with performances by renowned artists from both the nations, including Wajih Nizami, Markus Hauser and Loris Peloso.

Addressing the event, Director General Punjab Arts Council Mohammad Mehboob Alam said the promotion of culture was the top priority of the government and the recent approval of the first cultural policy of the province was a testament to the efforts of the Punjab Arts Council. He added that Punjab Arts Council will organise festivals on Harappa, Sindhi and Hakra culture of Cholistan along with Gandhara. He said that cultural fares will also be organised in all other districts of Punjab.

Zaildar Ahsan Shah, Chairman Pakistan-Romania Friendship Association, said Pakistan was home to diversified cultural heritage spanning over a period of thousands of years with the rich legacy of Gandhara art which was the cradle of Gandhara civilisation.

He was of the view that such events would play a key role not only in the promotion of local art but also in promotion of the soft image of the country. He said in the world districts or cities mostly have one site or cultural or historical importance but Taxila was blessed with more than 30 ancient cities of cultural importance, all on Unesco world cultural heritage list.

Dr Bashah Sardar, Professor at the Department of Pakistan Studies, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, said that Pakistan was home to the glorious Gandhara civilisation and the Gandhara Buddhist civilisation. He said Panini, the great Sanskrit grammarian and author of a famous book on Sanskrit grammar, used to teach here while Ashtadhyayi lived and taught at Taxila University. Charaka, a physician considered the father of Indian medicine because of his contribution to the development of Ayurveda, was also an alumnus. While the most influential teacher from the university was Acharya Chanakya, also known as Kautilya, the



A foreigner dances with folk performers at Gandhara festival in Taxila on Sunday 29 Jan.

legendary political philosopher, thinker and royal adviser.

Chief guest, Khalid Tamour Akbar, the executive director Pakistan Research Centre for a Community with Shared Future, said Taxila was once the cradle of the Gandhara civilisation, famous as a centre of learning for sculpture and art, architecture, education, medicine and religion, and home to one of the oldest recognised universities in the world. Today Taxila is on the same geo-strategic importance on which it was in the past. He said Taxila was on the silk route in the past and now on the CPEC route and its strategic importance is also the same like its cultural importance and such events would boost its rich cultural heritage.

Modern methods recommended to save Mohenjo Daro from weather ravages

Experts at the concluding session of a week-long workshop on Mohenjo Daro rehabilitation have stressed the need for adopting modern methodologies to protect the ancient site against onslaught of climate change.

The workshop titled "Conservation issues and possible methodologies for rehabilitation of Mohenjo Daro site" which was organised at the ancient site by the culture, tourism and antiquities department in collaboration with Unesco ran from Jan 15 to 22 and ended on Sunday evening 22 Jan.

Thierry Joffroy, the Unesco expert on conservation, who had made the second trip to the site after massive rain caused damage to the international heritage, completed his mission and he now and his colleagues would submit their report to the UN agency's headquarters, said sources privy to the workshop on Monday 23 Jan.

He had visited Mohenjo Daro a few months back and submitted recommendations to the governmental agencies concerned after staying at the site for some time, said the sources, adding the workshop was held in the light of his recommendations.

Mr Joffroy, his team member Cristina Menegazzi, who was an expert on culture and heritage based in Unesco Islamabad office; Dr Syed Shakir Ali Shah, director, and Ali Hyder Gadhi, senior conservationist of Mohenjo Daro, conducted the workshop. The first session focused on quality of raw materials and building materials to be used in the rehabilitation of heritage sites followed by a session on drainage and canals. The

third session held on Tuesday 24 Jan. covered 'capping' followed by 'underpinning' and salt action on the structures.

The participants discussed during the workshop the issue of places 'at risk' and repair works. The Sunday's concluding session dealt with overall planning, works, research, training and publications, said the sources.

Kaneez Umme Farwa of the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning of Aror University, Sukkur; Sana Gul Channa and Kamran Siraj of the heritage department, Mishaal Abbasi, a student of anthropology and archaeology department at Sindh University, and Munteha Mahar, a student of architecture department at the Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro, commented on salt action on structures and superficial layer of the bricks.

The workshop ended with suggestion for the government to put in place modern methodologies to protect the site against the onslaught of climate change. In the wake of unprecedented rains, the site's DK had been closed to visitors and tourists because the department intended to undertake its conservation and preservation work, said the sources.

The sources disclosed that of all 39 piezometers, which measured groundwater level, installed in and around Mohenjo Daro only one installed in the frontal part of a garden at the site was functioning while the rest had either developed faults or buried under dust over time. The authorities were left with the only one meter to take groundwater measurements, they said, adding that meter put the current groundwater level at 12 feet.

Women-only bus service



THE 'Pink Bus', part of a fleet which run on city roads.

The Sindh government on Thursday Jan. 26 announced the launch of a women-only bus service in Karachi in Feb. "to address the commuting problems of working women".

In a statement issued here, the Sindh transport department said that the decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Information, Transport and Mass Transit Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon.

"The Pink Peoples' Bus Service will be launched on February 1," the statement said quoting the minister.

The bus route would cover Model Colony to Mereweather Tower via Sharea Faisal.

The new bus service will operate every 20 minutes in morning and evening during office hours; and after every hour during normal hours.

"The Pakistan Peoples Party is moving fast towards fulfilling its promises made with the people of Karachi," the statement quoted the minister as saying.

The meeting, meanwhile, also reviewed the operations of Peoples Bus Service in Sukkur, Larkana, Hyderabad and the launch of remaining routes, including route Nos 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Karachi.

The minister ordered that the operations of the Peoples Bus Service would be started in Sukkur by January 29.

"The minister also directed the Managing Director of Sindh Mass Transit Authority to visit the remaining routes of the Peoples Bus Service in Karachi and inspect the ongoing repair work of the routes," it added.

"He said that operations of peoples bus service should be started on routes 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Karachi as soon as possible, so that more and more citizens of Karachi should have access to modern public transport facility.

Secretary of transport Abdul Haleem Sheikh, Managing Director Sindh Mass Transit Authority Zubair Chana, Operations Manager NRTC Abdul Shakoor attended the meeting."

Pink isn't just a colour, it's a bus!

The theme was pink and the slogan 'women empowerment' as the Sindh Mass Transit Authority succeeded in making all the women in the city smile by inaugurating a safe, convenient, affordable and comfortable Pink Peoples' Bus Service at Frere Hall here on Wednesday Feb. 1st.

Initially eight buses have been introduced that will operate on a single route from Model Colony, Malir to Tower via Sharea Faisal from 7am till 10pm. During peak hours in the morning and evening, the dedicated bus service will operate every 20 minutes and every hour during the rest of the day. It will best facilitate commute for college and university students and office-going women and the fare is only Rs50.

Sohaib Shafiq, the project director of the Pink Bus Service, said that keeping the safety of women in mind there are cameras installed inside the bus, which also has women conductors.

Celebrating the introduction of the bus service with other women of the city were also several celebrity women. Oscar winner Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy said that it was an excellent initiative by the Sindh government. "Public transportation for women is very important in all big cities, particularly cities where women are encouraged to build careers. Today is an excellent day for the women of Karachi," she said.

Women-only service inaugurated; women will be able to ride pink buses without paying fare till Feb 7

Architect and researcher Marvi Mazhar said that the bus service was a great communicative way for the urban planning of the city. "I also ask that the government start a pink boat service for women to commute between islands and also expand this bus service to other cities," she said.

Actor Ushna Shah said making commute easy for women would go a long way in helping the country's economy. "Girls will feel safe enough to go to their school, college and universities. If they feel safe enough to work then that's just excellent for our economy. So this one little step for women will be a giant step for all Pakistanis," she said.

Pakistan Peoples Party leader



(clockwise) Minister Sharjeel Memon inaugurates the women-only bus service alongside govt officials and civil society members on Wednesday Feb. 1st. A group of passengers rides the bus and a fleet of buses is adorned with balloons at Frere Hall.

Sharmila Farooqui recalled the time when the late prime minister Benazir Bhutto was alive. "She helped found the first women's police station, then the First Women's Bank. PPP has always thought about women's rights and the empowerment of women," she said and congratulated her leadership.

Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani said that the bus service was badly needed. "So many of our daughters use public transport to get to their places of study or work even though they are not comfortable or safe in them. But now these buses will be like a game changer for them," he said. "They'll be comfortable and they'll be confident as they go about their way," he added.

Sindh Information and Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said: "If you have strong women, you have strong homes and strong families. So we cannot neglect our mothers, sisters and daughters. It's the government's responsibility to come up with policies to provide a safe environment to women so that they feel safe to step out of their homes and work alongside men," he said.

He also said that although the bus has male drivers for now, he has asked the NRTC to train women to drive the bus.

"We have women driving huge dumper trucks in Tharparkar so these, too, can have women driving them. As soon as we get trained women drivers, they will be replaced with the male drivers," he said.

Finally, the minister also announced that women will be allowed to ride on the Pink Bus for free, without having to pay any fare, for its first seven-day operation in the city, till Feb 7.

Later, it was a treat for all the guests at the inauguration to watch Sharmila Farooqui settle in the driver's seat of one of the pink buses and drive it at the conclusion of the ceremony.



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Vested interests leave Safari Park Karachi in pitiful state



Political tussles between vested interests have left the city's iconic Safari Park Karachi in an appalling state, a recent visit to the public recreational facility showed.

Recently, the park, where some mammalian species, including elephants, are housed, is covered in dust and stands barren as its green cover has significantly shrunk and deteriorated while the place no longer offers any facility to people visiting the area.

Wild vegetation covers almost all zoo enclosures, which are now empty and being used as dumps for solid waste.

Speaking to media, visitors expressed their shock and dismay over Safari Park's conditions.

"My children are disappointed; they were expecting to see elephants and other animals from close range. But, what we see here are a few tortoises and birds," shared a visitor, adding that almost all cages were empty.

Some families were also found looking for snack shops as all canteens in the main area had been closed down.

"What we do now? I am told that tuck shops are located away in the playing area for children," said another visitor, adding that public toilets were broken and without water.

Amid this deterioration, it's surprising to see a Dino Safari Park being developed on the premises.

Construction is also underway to give away park's space to commercial eateries.

Sources blamed official apathy and vested interests for Safari's poor condition.

They believed that unless qualified staff was hired and an independent expert committee was allowed to manage affairs of the facilities housing captive animals in the city, there was no hope for betterment.

They also criticised the government's attempts to commercialize the facility.

Responding to a question about the park's pitiable state, a senior director of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation

explained that the situation would gradually improve after contractors under an agreement would be allowed to run the park facilities, including snack shops.

"These services were earlier being operated by contractors, but KMC's financial condition turned so poor that we couldn't even bear expenses for carrying out the annual bidding process and the department was forced to take over these facilities," he said.

In recent weeks, he pointed out, the Karachi administrator had directed the KMC to lift the entry fee and return to the process to allow contractors to run the facilities.

He agreed that the park had been neglected due to multiple reasons.

"One major handicap has been an

acute shortage of staff that has only become grave over the years. There hasn't been any appointment for over a decade and we are now left with 15 to 20 staff members as the majority of employees have retired. In fact, we won't have any sweeper next year, if no one is hired for this job.

"Besides, the park has an obsolete water and sewerage system that couldn't be upgraded in time. Its area is now in depression due to road construction and development works around the park, creating tasks more challenging," he said.

When asked to explain the government's decision to spend huge amounts on artificial recreation like Dino Safari Park and not on animal welfare and their upkeep, he said: "The Dino Safari Park is solely the local government's project. The KMC will hand over this facility soon. Personally, I would have gone for an animal welfare project or one which allows induction of new animals to the facility."

Protest over mysterious chopping of 'Allah Rakha



Allah Rakha, around an eight-decade-old banyan tree, along with other trees on the campus of Government Associates College, Lake Road, Lahore was chopped down on Saturday Jan. 28.

According to legend, the banyan tree was named by Maulana Abdul Haq Abbas, the founder of Anjuman Madrasatul Banat, which has managed a number of educational institutions from the pre-Partition era, when he relocated here from India in August 1947 with a busload of students from Jalandhar. He found a small sapling of pilkhan tree (banyan family) badly damaged during looting and burning, which also damaged the nearby building and the furniture lying there, says Anjuman's president Dr Amin U Khan, also a grandson of Maulana Abbas.

He says Maulana Abbas tried to restore the tree and put a brick fence around it with the help of students praying,

if the sapling survived, they would call it Allah Rakha.

The tree not only survived, but also grew to have girths of more than three meters and a crown diameter of around ten meters. It was providing shelter to about 350 house sparrows, which were counted every year by the Good Citizens Society, and shelter to students during the summer. It has eighty years of carbon sequestered in its stem.

The area people allege that the principal of the government-run college quietly decided to sell the tree on a holiday. They say as they learnt about the 'tree-chopping spree' they protested and managed to save one branch of Allah Rakha.

They hope that with the help of friends, they will be able to preserve Allah Rakha for a long time.

Anjuman Madrasatul Banat administrator Ilyas Shah says he has also submitted a written complaint with the police because the college authorities cannot change anything, including the landscape, on the campus because the ownership of the premises lies with the Supreme Court.

Civil society has decided to hold a protest demonstration on Monday against the chopping of the historic tree.

Women drive fast train to Makkah as Saudi workforce evolves



RANEEM Azzouz, a train conductor, drives the high-speed train ferrying pilgrims between Madina and Makkah

Driver Tharaa Ali takes her seat at the helm of a high-speed train ferrying pilgrims to Makkah, a beneficiary of conservative Saudi Arabia's bid to employ its booming female workforce.

Saudi women only gained the right to drive in 2018, and until recently 25-year-old Ms Ali's transportation experience was limited to cruising around her native Jeddah in the family sedan.

But last year she joined some 28,000 applicants vying for just 32 slots for women drivers on the Haramain High Speed Railway, which plies the 450-kilometre route between the holy cities of Makkah and Medina at speeds of up to 300 kilometres per hour.

To her astonishment, the former English teacher was among the lucky few selected, and she completed her first trip last month.

"The first day working here was like a dream for me — entering the train, entering the cabin," she told.

"When you are in the cabin, you see things heading towards you at a very high speed. A feeling of fear and dread came over me, but thank God, with time and intensive training, I became confident in myself." The proportion of Saudi women in the workforce has more than doubled since 2016, from 17 per cent to 37 per cent.

The statistic feeds a narrative of expanding women's rights under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, even amid ramped-up repression of activists, making it a reliable applause line at events like the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Yet unemployment among Saudi women is high — 20.5pc last year, compared to 4.3pc for Saudi men.

That figure, much like the flood of applicants for the driver positions, highlights an urgent task facing Saudi policymakers: creating jobs for all the women newly interested in participating in a changing economy.

"The challenge has shifted," said Saudi economist Meshal Alkhowaiter,

"from encouraging women to join the workforce, to creating a sufficient number of jobs to employ the thousands of Saudi women entering the workforce every quarter."

Winning over sceptics

Saudi women have traditionally thrived in select fields like education and medicine.

Yet rules introduced in recent years barring workplace gender discrimination and easing dress code restrictions have created new opportunities.

That includes positions as waiters, baristas and hotel receptionists that were previously dominated by foreigners, a boon to the government's "Saudisation" agenda.

Social mores don't always keep up with changing regulations, however, something the women train drivers have seen firsthand.

Raneem Azzouz, a recent recruit, said that at the end of one trip to Medina, a woman passenger explained that she didn't believe women could do the job until she saw it with her own eyes.

"She said, "Frankly, when I saw the [job] advertisement, I was totally against it. I said that if my daughter was going to drive me, I wouldn't ride with her", Ms Azzouz recalled.

With the journey safely completed, the woman gushed that Ms Azzouz had "proved herself" and that she "didn't feel any difference".

The women drivers are "highly qualified and proved their worth during training," said Rayan al-Harbi, executive vice president of the Saudi Railway Company.

"This is evidence that Saudi women have full capacity when they are empowered to perform tasks like their brothers."

Not everyone is convinced

Mohammed Issa, an Emirati civil servant who recently rode the high-speed train to Jeddah airport, said women should focus on homemaking.

"If the woman devotes herself to her home, there is no doubt that it will be a successful family," he said.

"But if the woman is absent from home, and work certainly keeps her away from the home, who will play her role?"

Such statements appear to represent a minority view among Saudis, said Sussan Saikali of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"There have been some comments from men claiming that women are now

taking their jobs, but those comments are few and far between," she said.

"We can't expect a whole population to support every policy in the country," said Najah Alotaibi, associate fellow at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies. "But the majority of people are supportive of change."

Ancient Jerusalem hand imprint baffles Israeli experts



A handout picture provided by the Israel Antiquities Authority shows a hand imprint that was discovered carved into a 1,000-year-old dry moat which surrounded Jerusalem's old quarter.

Israeli archaeologists said on Wednesday 25 Jan. they were trying to uncover the meaning of a recently 25 Jan. discovered hand imprint carved into the stone wall of an ancient moat outside Jerusalem's old quarter.

The imprint, which may have been made as a "prank", was found in a thousand-year-old moat exposed during works to expand a road in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem near Herod's Gate, Israel's antiquities department said.

The massive moat was hewn into the stone around the entire old city, stretching 10 metres across and between two to seven metres deep and, unlike typical European ones, not filled with water.

According to Israeli officials, Crusaders needed five weeks in 1099 to cross it and breach the city's walls and defences.

While the moat's function was clear, the hand's meaning was elusive.

"It's a mystery, we tried to solve it," excavation director Zubair Adawi said in a statement. Archaeologists remained uncertain who carved the hand into the rock or its significance.

The moat and hand have been covered to enable the continued infrastructure works just below the walls that currently surround the city, built in the 16th century by Suleiman the Magnificent.

Colourful ceremony held to celebrate Chinese New Year



Visitors enjoy rational music during an exhibition at the China Window, Peshawar, on Sunday to mark the Chinese New Year.

The Chinese Cultural Centre's China Window organised a ceremony on Sunday 22 Jan. to celebrate the country's New Year.

A large number of senior politicians, government officials and social figures participated in the colourful ceremony, according to a statement issued here.

Prominent among the participants were former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, secretary higher education Dawood Khan, Senator Haji Hidayatullah, former MPA Samar Haroon Bilour and President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Ishaq

Speaking on this occasion, Mr Jhagra said PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had played very important role in strengthening Pakistan-China friendship.

Other speakers said sharing happiness on the occasion of Chinese New Year had sent a message of friendship, affection and love to the people of China. They said people of China organised events all over the world on the New Year, and that series of events in Peshawar was undoubtedly a clear example of friendship between the peoples of two countries.

They expressed hope that the Chinese New Year would be a year of China's progress, achievements and stability, and would further strengthen friendship between the two countries. Traditional music of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and China was also played and documentaries on Pakistan-China friendship and New Year were also

Business tycoon Byram Dinshawji Avari passes away



A YOUNG Byram D. Avari with wife Goshpi Avari.

Asian Games double gold medallist sailor, hotelier, business tycoon, politician and honorary consul of Canada, Byram Dinshawji Avari, passed away after a brief illness in Karachi on Sunday 22 Jan. He was 81.

Known better as a hotelier, business tycoon and politician, who represented his community of Zoarastrians in the National Assembly of Pakistan for a number of years, he was also the Chairman of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman. The Avari monogram of a yacht carried the biggest clue to something he held very dear to his heart. As a champion sailor, Mr Avari was not just the Commodore of the Karachi Yacht Club, a position he held in 1976 and 1980, but he was also a gold medallist in sailing.

He bagged his first gold medal in enterprise class yachting first at the 1978 Asian Games held in Bangkok with fellow sailor Munir Sadiq and then for a second time in the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi with none other than his own wife Goshpi, who he had coached himself.

Mr Avari was also the recipient of the President's Pride of Performance award for sports in 1982.

A good swimmer, too, Mr Avari as a kid could only be found whiling away his free time in the Beach Luxury Hotel swimming pool. To get him out of there, his father, Dinshawji Avari, who had built the hotel, often had to bribe him with biryani, his son's favourite dish. The family used to live right there in Khorshed Villa inside the hotel's compound.

Taking over the family business from his father, Mr Avari also turned his

attention to politics.

He became a member of the National Assembly a number of times, and played a significant role in highlighting some crucial social issues about minority rights. But later, he decided to withdraw from politics.

Following that he turned his attention to his hotel business. He was the chairman of the Avari Group of Companies operated by himself with his sons, the eldest of whom he had named after his father.

The group owns and operates the Avari Hotels chain, which include five-star deluxe hotels in Karachi and Lahore and the beloved and historical Beach Luxury Hotel. The group also manages hotels in the United Arab Emirates and Canada.

A kind-hearted soul, Mr Avari had several times allowed use of his hotel halls for free along with free catering whenever there was a need for a good cause.

Mr Avari had been in hospital for the last 20 days for an intestinal infection. He was responding quite well to medication, too, until the last week when his infection levels went up.

He leaves behind his wife and sailing partner Goshpi Avari, two sons Dinshaw and Xerxes and a daughter Zeena.

As the news of his passing became known, condolences and tributes started pouring in from all over. While expressing his grief at his passing, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said Mr Avari was a humble human being, whose work for the country and for his community would always be remembered.

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All eyes on the goal

Goals change the course of matches, but there are some that have the potential to change a landscape, alter the course of history and shape the future.

Maria Khan's stunning free-kick for Pakistan against hosts Saudi Arabia in their Four-Nations Cup match last month could do just that for women's football in the country.

It's been all the rave; Maria has become an overnight sensation. Clips of her goal have been widely shared on social media, the attention it has received has brought the women's game in Pakistan into the spotlight and put sharp focus on what the team can achieve.

Trailing 1-0 to Saudi Arabia in their third and final game of the round-robin tournament at the Saud Bin Jalawi Stadium in Al Khobar City, Pakistan received a free kick wide on the right with 25 minutes left to play.

Up stepped their captain with the goal in her sights and she wrapped her left foot around it. As the ball swerved in the air, the Saudi goalkeeper misjudged the flight and, although she did get a hand to it, she couldn't prevent it from going in. It was Maria's moment. It was Pakistan's moment; the goal seeing them finish runners-up to the Saudis with the 1-1 draw.

For a side that was only playing its second tournament after an eight-year exile from international football which ended in September last year, there is renewed hope that more good things are in the offing.

Pakistan could've done better in Saudi Arabia if they had every member of their squad available. Nadia Khan, the England-based striker who'd emerged as Pakistan's breakout star at September's SAFF Women's Championship — the national team's first international tournament since 2014 — was one of three players who weren't allowed to play because they didn't have Pakistan passports.

Nadia's National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis allowed her to feature at the South Asian event but the rules set by the global football body FIFA mean players need to have a passport and the Saudis were abiding by them for the tournament they had organised. The FIFA-appointed Pakistan Football Federation Normalisation Committee, which is running the sport in the country, later admitted that they knew that the players didn't fulfil the eligibility criteria.

"The players had applied for passports, but they didn't come in time

before the departure," PFF Normalisation Committee chairman Haroon Malik told reporters two days after the team returned from Saudi Arabia.

"We took them along because they were impact players and even if they'd received their passports for the last game, it would've made a difference. We could've won the tournament."

The team's coach Adeel Rizki struck a similar chord. "Players like Nadia can make a huge difference but, even though she didn't play, her presence in the training sessions helped the others and kept the morale high in the camp," he told Eos.

The tournament in Saudi Arabia came after an extensive five-week camp for the national team. Both the men's and women's teams have been high on the agenda for the PFF Normalisation Committee since it regained control of the PFF headquarters at the end of June last year, when a 15-month suspension on Pakistan was lifted by FIFA.

That suspension had come after the PFF Normalisation Committee was thrown out of office by a group of officials led by Ashfaq Hussain Shah. Shah was elected as the PFF president in polls held



Pakistan women's football team, which finished second in the Four-Nations Cup

by the Supreme Court in December 2018, which were not accepted by FIFA. It was due to the bitter wrangle over control of the PFF that prompted the world's football governing body to install a Normalisation Committee in September 2019.

Maria came into national reckoning after her strong performances in the National Women's Championship in 2020 — the first domestic tournament organised by the PFF Normalisation Committee, which was initially led by Humza Khan.

A change at the helm of the Normalisation Committee, as well as its members, came in January 2021 and the Women's Championship was reaching its final strait when the takeover of the PFF headquarters saw the tournament suspended, never to resume.

But it was the women players who led Pakistan's international return once the

suspension was lifted. Having lost to India and Bangladesh in their opening two matches of the SAFF Women's Championship, Pakistan claimed a record win in their final game; thrashing Maldives 7-0 to go out on a high with Nadia scoring four times.

The tournament in Nepal also signalled a changing of the guard in the women's game in the country. With Adeel looking at introducing new blood and overhauling the team, stalwarts like striker Hajra Khan and goalkeeper Mahpara Shahid were not called up to the camp for the Four-Nations Cup.

There was some controversy attached to it too. After the SAFF Women's Championship, some players had written to Haroon, raising questions over Adeel's demanding nature as a coach and accused him of nepotism by selecting his favourite players.

Of those who'd raised the issue, only one was called up to the training camp for the Saudi Arabia tournament. "Adeel knows the limits of each player but, of course, he demands everyone to get even better," Pakistan midfielder Suha Hirani, who plays for Karachi City FC where Adeel is the coach, told Eos.

Suha, who featured in all three games at the Four-Nations Cup where Pakistan opened with a 2-1 win over Mauritius before losing 1-0 to Comoros, is very much looking forward to the future. But it remains to be seen whether Adeel stays on as the head coach.

The national team's next assignment is the Olympics qualifiers in April, where they've been drawn with the Philippines, Hong Kong and Tajikistan in Group 'E'. The qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Games will require an A-licence coach to be on the bench, while Adeel holds a B-licence.

Adeel's appointment has come under intense scrutiny but the players — those who have been selected — have shown a united front in the face of adversity. The ones who are based in Pakistan might not see domestic action or a consistent source of earning until the women's league, which has been proposed, kicks off.

But with the PFF Normalisation Committee promoting equal pay among the men's and women's teams during camps and international assignments, there is still something to live on and they can foresee a future as professional footballers.

Maria's goal has seen women's football in the country become a talking point. With more eyeballs and more attention, the hope is that it will continue to grow.



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