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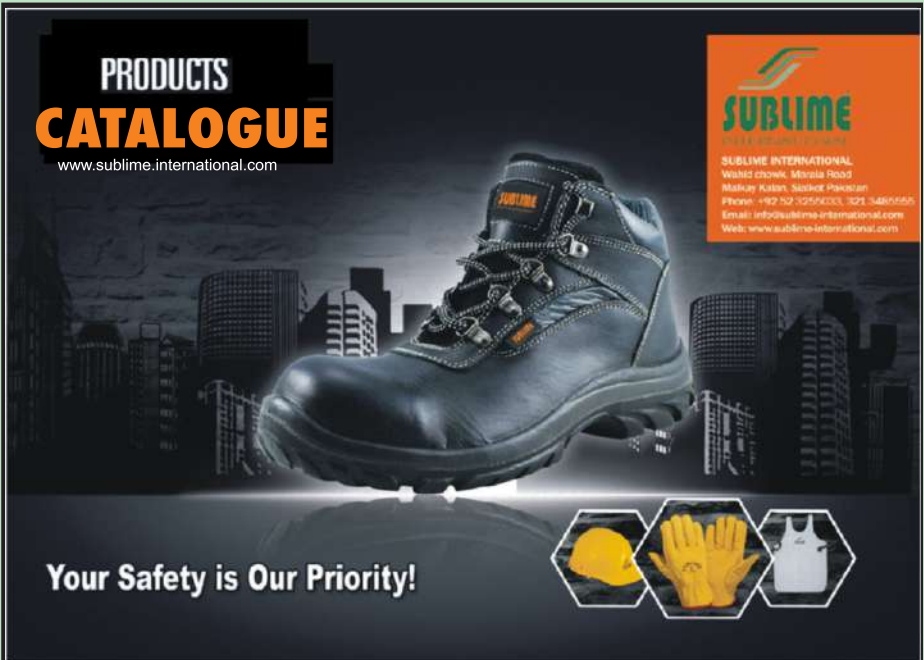
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HOAP sindh organized a grand ceremony to distribute of 5 years offer letter to its members held recently. Picture shows Mr. Jamal Khan Taraki Chairman HOAP, Mr. Furqan Abdul Qadir (Zanal vice chairman sindh, HOAP) along with others officials handing over the letters.

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Gwadar International

Airport obtains night landing license

The new airport is set to be completed in September 2023.



Gwadar International Airport has taken a significant step towards increasing air travel capacity with the launch of night landing operations. On Sunday, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) announced the approval, allowing flights to depart and arrive during night hours at Pakistan's largest airport.

Night Time Flying

The CAA's memo to all airlines and aviation companies issued instructions for night operations when the airport opens in September 2023. Although nighttime operations were approved, the CAA has prohibited overnight parking for commercial airlines and aviation companies at the airport. With that said, military aircraft and those connected to the Balochistan government are allowed to park at the facility.

When the airport becomes operational in September, it will welcome both domestic and international flights. It will replace the old Gwadar International Airport, a Pakistan flag carrier Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) hub. PIA connects GWD with its hub at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport (KHI) using ATR 42-500 aircraft.

While there will be passenger service from the new airport, it will mainly be used for cargo transportation.

The New Airport

For the past two decades, Dubai and Dubai International Airport (DXB) have dominated the air travel and tourism market in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Now, it is set to be challenged by Gwadar, located 310 miles (500km) away on the other side of the Gulf of Oman in Pakistan.

The new Gwadar International Airport (GWD) will be the largest in Pakistan. Construction has moved swiftly since the groundbreaking in March 2019, with the terminal set to be completed in June 2023. A Chinese government grant financed the airport as part of the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project; the Sultanate of Oman gave \$17.5 million for the airport project. The \$246 million facility is being built by a Chinese airport construction firm, Chinese Communication Construction Company (CCC), and will be operated and managed by the Pakistan Civil Aviation Administration (PCAA). The airport will be run under an "Open Skies" policy.

One of Multiple Development Projects In Gwadar

Gwadar will be Pakistan's largest airport by area at 4,300 acres, even though it only has 85,000 residents. Karachi Airport has 15 million residents; the newly constructed airport is 3,700 acres. The reason for such a large airport in a city with just 85,000 is to provide air connectivity for China's main investment in the region, the Gwadar Port.

The new airport is only a small part of the new endeavor in Gwadar. The city is in the midst of constructing a giant port which began 20 years ago, a free trade area similar to the Special Economic Zones of China, and a natural gas facility liquefying



facility that is floating on the Gulf of Oman and will be connected to the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline.

The \$56bn China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project increases the region's connectivity level. The airport will play a major role in increasing trade between Pakistan and China, transforming the region into an economic hub.

In September, the airport is expected to be inaugurated by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his state visit to Pakistan, demonstrating the importance of the development of the city of Gwadar by China and its hope to create a center for commerce and trade.



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'No fake pilots exist in Pakistan'

Refuting the former aviation minister's assertion about fake pilot licences, Senator Saleem Mandviwala said on Wednesday 24th May there were no fake pilots in Pakistan.

'I reiterate that no fake pilot exists, he said following a meeting of the subcommittee of the Senate Standing Committee on Aviation.

Former aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan had in June 2020 revealed in parliament that investigations found that more than 260 of the country's 860 active pilots had either fake licences or cheated in their exams.

In the meeting held at the Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Mandviwala, the cases of licence cancellations of PIA pilots were thoroughly reviewed.

The sub-committee was briefed on the issues by officials from the Ministry of Aviation, Civil Aviation Authority, PIA and FIA.

Senator Mandviwala said that 180 pilots have been reinstated, while the committee is reviewing the cases of the remaining 80 pilots, as many of them have been facing issues without any apparent reason.

During the meeting, the CAA director general said that some unfair practices were observed in pilot exams involving certain CAA officials and retired pilots.

Senator Mandviwala said that pilots' problems have persisted for the past three years and should have been resolved by now, which is why the national airline is also being affected.

The matter was brought up in the Standing Committee on Aviation, which led to the formation of a sub-committee.

The purpose of this committee is not to assign blame, but to formulate recommendations for resolving these issues in a constructive manner. This will not only address the problems faced by these pilots but also improve the performance of national airline. DG Civil Aviation said there were issues concerning the licences of 262 pilots, which caused problems at the international level as well.

There were problems with the examinations of these pilots, resulting in their work being halted.

Following the investigation, 180 pilots were cleared, while the remaining 82 pilots still faced issues. As per the cabinet's directive, 50 licences were cancelled, and in 32 cases, it was decided to suspend those who did not take the privileges for six months.

The Supreme Court was looking into the cases of pilots involved in fake degrees and had directed the ministry to take action against all instances of forgery.

The department conducted an inquiry and charged 68 pilots.

Senator Mandviwala directed that the details of those who have been discharged be provided, along with the reasons for their discharge.

The committee also raised concerns over the cancellation of all licences based on suspicion of fake ATPL licences.

The convenor questioned why CPL licences were cancelled when only the ATPL licences were found to be fraudulent. Senator Mandviwala suggested that if there were issues with the pilots' exams, they could be re-examined.

The CAA director general clarified that the pilots who were dismissed due to fake licences did not have security clearance, whereas the pilot in question had security clearance.

He said that the licences of 33 pilots have raised suspicions. Out of the 33 pilots, cases against 27 have been registered. No cases have been registered against the remaining six pilots, he said. A review board was established for a period of 30 days, which operated for two years during which pilots could appeal.

Senator Mandviwala suggested that the matter should be taken up with the FIA in order to develop a mechanism.

The committee was informed that 19 cases were presented to the review board, and 18 of them have been resolved. Three pilots were granted relief, while seven received partial relief.

PIA to Carry 65,000 Pilgrims to Saudi Arabia

The preHaj operation began across the country on Sunday 21st May with the first flight carrying 328 intending pilgrims from Karachi to Madina early in the morning.

The Pakistan International Airlines plans to carry 65,000 people to Saudi Arabia during the month-long Haj operation, which will end on June 22.

Senior government officials and those from the PIA were present at Karachi Airport to see off the pilgrims.

According to a PIA spokesperson, inaugural flights from Karachi, Islamabad and Faisalabad carried over 700 pilgrims on the first day of the operation.

Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malik, the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, was at the airport to see off the intending pilgrims who boarded the first flight from Islamabad for Madina.

Federal ministers Talha Mehmood and Shahzain Bugti, officials from PIA, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Religious Affairs were also present.

The airlines will use Boeing 777 and Airbus 320 aircraft for the operation, the spokesperson added.

This year, PIA will carry over 65,000 Haj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia through 320 flights. The post-Haj operation will run from July 2 to Aug 2, according to the spokesperson.

Flights will be operated from Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Quetta, Peshawar, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Sukkur and Rahim Yar Khan.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, 46,249 pilgrims will fly from Karachi this year, while the figure for last year was 24,998.

The first flight, of Serene Air, from Lahore carried 279 pilgrims to Madina while 149 pilgrims boarded the PIA flight from Faisalabad for Madina. At Faisalabad, the pilgrims were seen off, among others, by Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah.

Glimpses of Pilgrims departing off different airports from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia



Chairman SIAL along with others cutting the Cake on the occasion of departing off 1st Haj flight from SIAL to Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Khawaja Masood Akhtar Chairman SIAL addressing the Hujjaj-e-Kiram at SIAL.

Faisalabad International Airport's newly reconstructed runway goes into operation

Touchdown! First flight lands on the newly rebuilt runway at Faisalabad International Airport. Less than 24 hours after Quetta International's reconstructed runway received its inaugural flight, Faisalabad Airport's brand new four billion rupees runway became operational as well, marking another mile stone in CAA's quest to take connectivity to a whole new level. As colorful lights glowed, flashed and ran across the ground creating a mesmerizing effect, the plane lined up and made a smooth landing at around 10pm last night. The Captain was all praise for Civil Aviation Authority's efforts and said, they were delighted to be the first to operate using the revamped runway, and extended their sincere appreciation to the PCAA, and all other stakeholders involved in the operation. Airport Manager, Senior Air Traffic Control Officer, and Project Director along with their teams were present on this celebratory occasion. The rebuilt runway conforms to Aerodrome Reference Code 4D, able to receive aircrafts A310, B767 or aircrafts below this category. Later, while taking off from the same (03R/21L) runway PK 223's elated pilot described his experience on the radio saying, the strip has become amazing.

Faisalabad International Airport holds Airport emergency exercise-2023

The aim of the drill was to test preparedness of all the entities that would be involved in a real life emergency. Following the initial briefing in the domestic departure lounge attended by all the concerned Civil/Administrative Departments, including ASF, PAF, all GHAs, airlines, doctors, Rescue 1122,

Civil Defence, Edhi Ambulance, and all sectional heads of CAA FIAP, the drill started at 11:15am. A fire on the runway compound simulating plane crash was quickly put out by fire brigade and CAA fire vehicles completing the task within the deadline mentioned in the SOPs. At the same time responding to the emergency call CAA Medical team, 1122 rescue services, EOD team, and Edhi ambulance service were also scrambled. In the process, the passengers were safely evacuated from the coach, and after administering first aid, ambulances swiftly shifted casualties to the hospital. The drill was concluded at 11:45am after having completed all the stages successfully.



First flight lands on newly upgraded runway at Quetta International Airport

Today at 06:25am PK 325 from Islamabad landed in Quetta on an upgraded main runway (13L/31R) of Quetta International Airport. Airport Manager and Project Director were present along with their teams to witness the momentous event. Later, describing their landing to the Airport Manager during their meeting the pilots termed it smooth and beautiful; they also appreciated the visual aid Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPPI) lights and congratulated the PCAA teams for successfully completing the project. The main runway caters for aircrafts upto ICAO code 4E and is equipped with the latest technology Airfield Lighting System (ALS) for (Day & Night) operations. Quetta International Airport is now officially certified for all weather operations of wide body Aircrafts like Boeing 777 and equivalent. The project was completed with an estimated construction cost of Rs.5 Billion.



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Ethiopian Airlines wins best overall in africa Award at the 2023 APEX Passenger Choice Awards

As 'Best Overall in Africa' winner, Ethiopian has taken the accolade for 'Best Cabin Service', 'Best Entertainment', 'Best Food and Beverage', 'Best Seat Comfort' and 'Best Wi-Fi' in Africa.

Regarding the award, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said, "We are thrilled by the prestigious award we have won today. This award is special to us as our beloved customers voted for us. I would like to thank them for their vote of confidence in our services. We will continue exceeding expectations in delivering the highest quality and consistent services to our esteemed customers. This is a testimony to the hard work our employees have exerted to make sure our customers receive the quality services and care they deserve. I am indebted to all my Ethiopian colleagues who have shown their higher level of dedication and commitment to the satisfaction and safety of our customers. Congratulations to all Ethiopian families!"

"As the 2023 APEX Best Airline in Africa, Ethiopian Airlines has soared above the competition with its unparalleled commitment to customer satisfaction, innovative services, and its state-of-the-art fleet." APEX CEO Dr. Joe Leader on his part stated, "Watching Ethiopian Airlines' incredible growth as the largest airline in all of Africa underlines the airline's philosophy in being the new spirit of Africa with comfortable seats, delectable cuisine, and outstanding in-flight entertainment delivering an unforgettable journey to every passenger."

The APEX Passenger Choice Awards, which is one of the most prestigious in the industry, recognizes airlines in various regions for providing the best passenger experiences. Partnering with Triplt® from Concur®, the world's highest-rated travel-organizing app, anonymous passenger feedback gathered based on neutral, third-party passenger feedback and insights. Passengers from more than one million flights and nearly 600 airlines from around the world were given the opportunity to provide anonymous ratings in five subcategories: seat comfort, cabin service, food and beverage, entertainment, and Wi-Fi.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopian crowned the 2022 APEX Regional Passenger Choice Awards for 'Best Entertainment' and 'Best Cabin Service' in Africa last year. The airline has also won multiple reputable awards, including SKYTRAX and Business Travel Awards consecutively in the past years.

China`s first homegrown jet makes maiden commercial flight

China's first domestically produced passenger jet made its maiden commercial flight on Sunday 28th May, a milestone event in the nation's decades-long effort to compete with Western rivals in the air.

Beijing hopes the C919 commercial jetliner will challenge foreign models like the Boeing 737 MAX and the Airbus A320, though many of its parts are sourced from abroad.

Its first homegrown jetliner with mass commercial potential would also cut the country's reliance on foreign technology as ties with the West deteriorate.

"In the future, most passengers will be able to choose to travel by large, domestically produced aircraft," state broadcaster CCTV said.

China Eastern Airlines flight MU9191 from Shanghai 'arrived smoothly' in Beijing just after 12:30pm, around 40 minutes ahead of schedule, according to CCTV.

Footage showed passengers filing out of the plane and into the terminal, before a few dozen staff and officials posed for photographs in a brief ceremony on the tarmac.

"[The flight] was extremely smooth, comfortable and memorable. I think I'll remember this fondly for some time to come," a male passenger told CCTV.

China has invested heavily in production of the homegrown jet as it seeks to become self-sufficient in key technologies.

The aircraft is manufactured by state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, but many of its parts including its engines are source from overseas.

From Monday 29th May, the C919

will operate on China Eastern's regular route between Shanghai and Chengdu, CCTV reported.

The first model of the narrow-body jet was formally handed over to China Eastern last year.

A passenger using lavatory accidentally locked pilots out of the flight deck



A Southwest pilot had to enter the cockpit from outside the Boeing 737.

A Southwest pilot was forced to enter through the cockpit Right side window after a passenger accidentally locked the flight deck door as he tried to use the lavatory during boarding on Thursday 25th May.

During the boarding process, while other Customers and Flight Attendants were onboard, a Customer opened the forward lavatory door and inadvertently pushed the Flight Deck door closed (which locked) while the Pilots scheduled to operate the flight were preparing to board the aircraft.

One of the Southwest pilots unlocked the door from a Flight Deck window, and the flight departed as scheduled.



Crew members check before the first commercial flights of passenger jet C919 from Shanghai's Hongqiao Airport, on Sunday 28 May.

Three years on, families of plane crash victims await justice

Despite a passage of three years to the crash of a Pakistan International Airlines plane near the Karachi airport that claimed lives of 97 passengers, victim families are still waiting for justice as the final investigation report into the incident is yet to be finalised.

On May 22, 2020 the A320 aircraft, PK-8303, had made a failed landing attempt on a runway at Karachi airport on its engines without lowering the landing gear and later crashed into houses in nearby Model Colony while trying to go around, killing 97 of the 99 passengers and crew members on board and one girl on the ground.

The federal government had formed an Aircraft Accident and Investigation Board (AAIB) to lead the probe which was later joined by investigators from Airbus, the manufacturer of the plane, US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and other experts.

While a preliminary report was released, the probe remains still inconclusive as the AAIB final report hasn't been completed yet.

'Neither the final investigation report into the crash is released, nor the departmental proceedings of the PIA and the Civil Aviation Authority were brought on record despite a passage of three years,' said Kashif Aman, whose mother Shahnaz Parveen was among the 97 victims of the crash.

'They want to break us [relatives of plane crash victims] but we will not back out. We demand that the government release the final investigation report and punish all those found responsible,' he added.

Victim families hold the CAA, the air traffic controller as well as district administration responsible for the crash and a considerable delay in firefighting efforts.

They questioned as to why the two survivors and families of those killed in the crash were paid similar compensation ie Rs10m each.

Mr Aman said that the victim families were not paid the amount in the head of luggage insurance and the aviation ministry had not taken any action

against the CAA and PIA for 'violating laws'.

Meanwhile, victim families remembered their loved ones on their third death anniversary.

Quran khwaniwas held at Usman Ghani Park in Model Colony near the site of the crash on Sunday 21 May.

PIA aircraft stopped in Malaysia for 'unpaid dues'

A Boeing 777 aircraft of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was stopped at Kuala Lumpur International Airport over a legal dispute.

The aircraft's leasing company had approached a local court on claims that the airline owed it \$4.5 million.

The claim has been disputed by the PIA, which stated that it owned the aircraft and the leasing company only owned one of the mounted engines.

PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan added that the actual dues stood at \$1.8m, which have been paid to the company.

The claim submitted by the company to seek the impounding order was 'incorrect' and PIA has engaged its legal team in Kuala Lumpur to contest the matter in court, the spokesperson added.

The passengers of the said flight have been accommodated on an alternative aircraft, while the disputed Boeing 777 will also operate as a normal commercial flight from Kuala Lumpur, the PIA spokesman concluded.

This is the second dispute that resulted in the seizure of a PIA aircraft in Malaysia.

In January 2021, another Boeing 777 was held back for two weeks over a case involving \$14 million in unpaid dues.



For a second time, a PIA Boeing 777 has been seized by Malaysian Authorities at Kuala Lumpur airport.

Scat Airlines announces to start flights between Pakistan and Kazakhstan

There has been a complete change in the aviation industry of Pakistan recently. For instance, the industry is fast changing with the closure of a few airlines and the entry of new players.

Scat Airlines has announced to operate direct flights between Pakistan and Kazakhstan connecting both countries as well other major cities of Europe, Central Asia, Russia and China. Zara Airways has also announced to operate flights to Pakistan. In a few months earlier, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic announced to close operations in Pakistan citing 'low yield operations'. On the other hand, Ethiopian Airlines has resumed operations in the country this month after a gap of 19 years.

Moreover, famous Wizz Air Abu Dhabi will soon begin flights to and from Pakistan as it has been given go-ahead by the federal government; the operation of flights from Pakistan would serve consumers who travel to UAE on a regular basis for business, leisure or fun.

Wizz Air Abu Dhabi is a low-cost airline and is a joint venture with state-owned ADQ (formerly, Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company, ADDH), which owns 51 percent with Wizz Air Holdings owning the remaining 49 percent. The carrier's first flight took off on the 19th of May 2004 from Katowice to London Luton and boasts a fleet of 153 ultramodern Airbus A320 family aircraft.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan has recently announced that direct flights would be operated between Pakistan and Baku soon to give a boost to tourism which is fast recovering owing to the lifting of restrictions imposed after the Covid-19 pandemic.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, currently, carriers are facing challenges in repatriating dollars because of the low foreign exchange reserves of the country.

Air carriers sell tickets in local currency but then they need to repatriate dollars to pay for expenses such as fuel and maintenance charges and certainly a delay in the process dents their financial balance; the volume of dollars withheld has spiked to \$290 million as of January.

ZARA AIRWAYS

**to start flight
operations from
Canada to Pakistan**



Zara Airways from Canada will be directly operating flights from Toronto to Pakistan (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad) and back to Toronto from August 2023.

This was revealed by the management of the airlines recently in a Press Conference at Avari Towers, Karachi. The owner/CEO of the airlines along with Ejaz Haroon Ex-MD PIA and advisor to Zara Airways, Country Manager of the airline and Air Comm. (R) Ishaq Khan. The airlines has appointed M/s KN Aviation as its GSA in Pakistan and awarded ground handling contract to Shaheen Airport Services (SAPS).

The GSA of the airline Mr. Mohsin A Dharsi also briefed the gathering that Zara Airways has a business Potential as only PIA operates direct flight from Pakistan to Canada. The CEO said that they plans to acquire two Boeing 777 aircrafts on dry lease.

'ZARA Airways' has shown interest to operate direct flights between the two countries and a request has formally been forwarded to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in Pakistan.

It was also revealed that flight operation would tentatively begin from August this year and three weekly flights will be scheduled from Toronto to Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad.

The details of the news story and has found out that Zara Airways named airline is non-existent at present.

Moreover, there has been no official confirmation or any website belonging to the airline to endorse the same. It is virtually an airline not have any website in current times.

Passengers traveling between Pakistan and Canada were relieved to read reports on media outlets that a Canadian airline is set to start operations in Pakistan.



Mr. S. Zafar Shah CEO Zara Airways flanked by other officials on the occasion of Press Conference held recently in Karachi.



Group Photo taken with CEO Zara Airways shows Capt. Saeed Khan, Mr. Mohsin Dharsi and others.



Prof. Safdar Sandal enjoying a party with friends at his residence, Berg-e-Sandal, Sialkot.

Biden endorses plan to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets

US President Joe Biden informed G7 leaders on Friday 19th May that Washington supports a joint effort with allies to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets, a senior administration official said, a key endorsement as Kyiv seeks to boost its air power against Russia's invading forces.

Training on the US-made jets will take place in Europe and will require months to complete, the official said. US officials have estimated the most expeditious time needed for training and delivery of F-16s at 18 months.

As the training takes place over the coming months, our coalition of countries participating in this effort will decide when to actually provide jets, how many we will provide, and who will provide them, the official said.

The official did not say which countries would be participating in the effort. The US hopes to begin the training, which will be conducted on fourth-generation fighters including F-16s, in the coming weeks, the official added.

Ukraine is seeking the jets, made by Lockheed Martin, as it presses on with its biggest advance for months against invading Russian troops before a planned counter-offensive.

Sanctions on hundreds of targets on Friday 19 May, US announced sanctions on more than 300 targets. The move, which targets Russia's sanctions evasion, future energy revenues and military-industrial supply chains, marks the latest sanctions and export controls targeting Moscow, which have already hit thousands of targets and imposed steep curbs on Russia. 'Today's actions will further tighten the vise on (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's ability to wage his barbaric invasion and will advance our global efforts to cut off Russian attempts to evade sanctions,' US Treasury Department Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.

In response to sanctions imposed by Washington, Russia said it banned entry to 500 Americans, including former president Barack Obama.

In response to the anti-Russian sanctions regularly imposed by the Biden administration... entry into the Russian Federation is closed for 500 Americans,' the foreign ministry said, adding that

Obama was among those on the list.

The US and Europe imposed financial penalties on Russia immediately following the start of the war last year and have steadily ratcheted up the pressure since then, targeting Putin and officials close to him, the financial sector and oligarchs.



A PICTURE released by Japan's foreign affairs ministry recently shows (left to right) Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, France's President Emmanuel Macron, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, European Council President Charles Michel, Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posing for a group photo as they travel by boat from Hiroshima to a nearby island during the G7 summit.

US to allow F16 Fighting Falcon jets to be sent to Ukraine



US President Joe Biden has confirmed that the US is to allow US made Lockheed Martin F16 Fighting Falcon jets to be given to Ukraine as well as training Ukrainian pilots to fly them.

President Biden made the announcement at the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan as world leaders meet to discuss trade and the ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine.

The move was welcomed by Ukraine along with the UK, Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.

President Biden don't confirm which F16 models or how many western countries would send but they are expected to be older F16 C models which the US will replace with new generation fighters.



A Turkish Air Force Lockheed Martin F16 Fighting Falcon

In a statement the US said it would "support a joint effort with our allies and partners to train Ukrainian pilots on fourth-generation fighter aircraft, including F-16s, to further strengthen and improve the capabilities of the Ukrainian Air Force"

Ukraine President Zelensky, who is at the G7 summit called it an historic decision.

Passenger detained in S. Korea after opening plane door mid-air

SEOUL: South Korean police on Friday detained a man who opened a door of an Asiana Airlines plane minutes before it was due to land in the city of Daegu, causing panic among the passengers, officials said.

The Airbus A321-200 plane landed safely at around 12:40pm (0340 GMT). It had set off from the holiday island of Jeju an hour earlier, the airport's flight schedule showed.

Nine passengers, all teenagers, were sent to hospital after suffering breathing issues, a Daegu fire department official said.

'I thought the plane was going to explode ... It looked like passengers next to the open door were fainting,' an unidentified 44-year-old passenger told the Yonhap News Agency.

The passenger said the cabin crew had made an inflight announcement asking if there were any doctors on board.

A video aired on television, reported to have been shot by a passenger, showed the moments before the landing, with a door open and wind rushing in as passengers sat nearby.

The transport ministry said in a statement police had taken into custody the man who had opened the door and authorities were investigating violations of aviation safety laws.

A transport ministry official said that authorities were looking into whether Asiana Airlines had followed protocols to manage emergency exits.

The official said it was possible to open the emergency exit when the aircraft was near the ground as the pressure inside and outside the cabin were similar.

The plane was two or three minutes away from landing when the male passenger sitting next to an emergency exit opened a cover and pulled a lever so the door opened with the plane about 200 metres (656 ft.) off the ground, an Asiana spokesperson said.

Saudi airports experience 42% passenger increase in Q1

The country is investing heavily in aviation infrastructure to boost passenger numbers and air traffic.



Saudi Arabia has witnessed a significant increase in footfall at its airports in the last few months, thanks to the travel rebound. The country is keen on welcoming back passengers and air traffic as part of its long-term vision of making the kingdom an attractive tourist destination in the coming years. To do this, Saudi Arabia is investing significantly in aviation infrastructure to compete with other aviation hubs in the Middle East.

Strong Rebound

Saudi airports are getting busier by the month, with the latest report issued by the General Authority of Civil Aviation revealing a 42% increase in passenger numbers in the first four months of this year compared to the same time period in 2022.

The total number of travelers that passed through the kingdom's airports in Q1 increased to 35.8 million from 25.3 million during the corresponding period in 2022. This is, in fact, more than the pre-pandemic period in 2019, when 33.7 million footfalls were recorded in Q1.

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A breakdown of these numbers reveals that of the 35.8 million passengers, domestic travelers made up 16.3 million, up from 15.3 million last year, while international passengers were 19.5 million, resulting in a massive 95.5% increase from 2022.



In the first four months of 2022, the kingdom saw 212,500 flights. This figure also improved for Q1 in 2023, increasing by 23.5% and reaching approximately 263,000 flights.

Investing In Aviation Infrastructure

Last year, Saudi Arabia revealed a plan for a six-runway mega airport in Riyadh aiming to represent a new age for Saudi aviation. The site will have six parallel runways and provide the capacity for 120 million passengers by 2030.

The ground will cover an area of 57 sq. km (22 sq. mi) and will also include 12 sq. km (4.6 sq. mi) of retail, logistics, support, residential and recreational facilities. More importantly, it will be the hub for Saudi Arabia's new airline Riyadh Air.

The kingdom also placed a significant aircraft order with Boeing recently for 39 Boeing 787-9 aircraft for Riyadh Air, with future options for an additional 33 more. Together with the planes for Suadiah, Boeing received a massive order for 121 Dreamliners for the two carriers.



Saudi Arabia also wants a large slice of the low-cost aviation sector, with big plans for its budget carrier flynas. Currently, the airline has more than 40 aircraft, and its ownership board has permitted it to grow orders to 250, potentially preparing it to become the largest low-cost carrier in the Middle East and North Africa.

All of this is part of the kingdom's larger 2030 vision, under which it wants to reduce its economic dependency on fuel and attract more tourist dollars by investing in aviation and related infrastructure.

The Airport Innovation Conference will take place on 4th September 2023 at the Radisson Hotel in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia by Cogent Solutions Event Management. This day-long summit will provide a platform for over 25 key industry speakers, decision-makers, and influencers to share their expertise through interactive Keynote Speeches, Panel Discussions and Case Studies. More than 200 Attendees are expected to attend this event from the primary industry, i.e. Civil Aviation Authorities, Ministry of Tourism, Airport Operators, Airport Planners, Air Traffic Control Teams, Airport Planners, Airport Infrastructure Management Companies, and others.

Fokker Services Group inaugurates new wide-body hangar



Roland van Dijk CEO Fokker Services Group

Fokker Services Group (FSG), an independent leader in aerospace services, has announced the inauguration of its new wide-body hangar in Hoogerheide, The Netherlands, honouring its commitment to customers, suppliers, employees and the local community. Boasting an impressive 87-meter long, 86-meter wide, and 27-meter high, this state-of-the-art facility can accommodate wide-body aircraft such as the A330, A350, B787 and B777, and will make a crucial contribution to the company's long-term objective as market demand for completion services continues to surge.

Fokker Services Group made sustainability a top priority in this project, resulting in a completely electrically powered new hangar and the installation of an environmentally friendly geothermal energy system. Furthermore, by the end of 2023 the company will have installed photovoltaic solar power capacity on the rooftop of the hangar, reducing the dependency on external energy sources. The design of the hangar was co-developed with Gaptex, a leader in modular architecture, using its patented lightweight system. These improvements will reduce the CO2 emissions from the construction by 75% compared to a conventional hangar.

This announcement took place during the European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE), Europe's leading event in on-demand aircraft. According to Roland van Dijk, CEO of Fokker Services Group: "We are in a relentless pursuit of global excellence with strong focus on sustainability, of which this new hangar is a key milestone. Our cutting-edge technology, engineering skills and centennial history are putting us in an uncontested position to become the partner of choice for the wide-body airframe maintenance and completions and conversions market".

flynas becomes 1st Saudi operator to link Jeddah & Riyadh to Cairo non-stop

The Saudi Arabian budget airline will launch direct services from Jeddah to



Cairo's Sphinx International Airport on June 16.

Saudi Arabian low-cost carrier flynas is set to launch two new direct services to Egypt in time for the Hajj pilgrimage season.

Into Egypt

Flights between Cairo's recently opened Sphinx International Airport (SPX) and Mecca Gateway Jeddah (JED) are scheduled to launch on June 16, while a second service from Cairo to Riyadh (RUH) will begin on July 1. Both routes offer 3x weekly direct flights, with Cairo becoming the fifth Egyptian destination for the budget airline.

On the new routes, Bander Almohanna, CEO and Managing Director of flynas, said,

"We are pleased to announce operating the direct flights between the Kingdom and Sphinx International Airport, especially while the launch of direct flights between Jeddah and Sphinx Airport comes ahead of the Hajj season for this year, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Egyptian and the Saudi Civil Aviation authorities for their persistent efforts to open up greater connectivity between the two brotherly countries."

The carrier currently operates over 100 weekly flights between Saudi Arabia and Cairo, with routes including Cairo's primary hub Cairo International Airport (CAI), Hurgada (HRG), Sohag (HMB),



and Sharm-el-Sheikh (SSH) from the airline's bases in Jeddah, Riyadh, and Dammam (DMM), as well as smaller airports Medina (MED) and AlUla (ULH).

Flynas will be the first Saudi operator to connect to the smaller Cairo Airport, though it will compete against Egyptair subsidiary Air Cairo on all routes. The expansion through the city is set to support flynas' growth plans across the market, providing low-cost links between the two countries.

Growth For Flynas

As of May 2023, the airline offers flights to over 70 domestic and international destinations across Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Flynas has continued its rapid expansion through the pandemic and is now eyeing cementing its position as the largest budget airline in the Middle East and North Africa by the end of the decade.

The airline currently operates at least one in six of all flights across Saudi Arabia,



with domestic travel accounting for roughly 70% of its weekly services; however, demand remains high for international visitors, including outbound Saudi tourists, religious passengers, and business travel.

According to aviation records, flynas currently operates 40 active aircraft, primarily comprised of Airbus A320 family aircraft, with two A330-300s for pilgrimage operations. Eight more aircraft, seven A320-200 and one A330, are currently listed as inactive. The carrier holds orders for 52 more Airbus aircraft; 41 A320neo jets, ten A321XLR, and one additional A330.

Riyadh is currently the airline's largest base of operations with over 30% of flynas flights operating to and from the country's capital city. Speaking at the Routes Europe 2023 conference earlier this month, the carrier confirmed it was eyeing the launch of a fourth base at a currently unnamed Saudi Arabian airport, potentially launching by the end of the year.

Airline stops selling emergency exit seats after door incident

South Korea's Asiana Airlines has stopped selling some emergency exit seats following an incident in which a passenger opened an aircraft door mid-air, the carrier said on Sunday.

A court in Daegu issued an arrest warrant for the man, surnamed Lee, for allegedly breaking aviation security laws, Yonhap news agency reported.

The incident took place aboard an A321-200 plane, which was carrying nearly 200 passengers as it approached the runway at Daegu International Airport, about 240 kilometres (150 miles) southeast of Seoul.

The aircraft landed safely but several people were hospitalised. There were no serious injuries or damage.

Starting on Sunday 28th May, the 31A and 26A emergency exit seats on its 14 A321-200 jets 11 of which have 26A as their emergency seat while the other three have 31A would no longer be offered for sale, the carrier said.

"As a safety precaution, this measure will apply even if the flights are full," it added.

A court issued an arrest warrant for Lee, Yonhap reported, citing "the seriousness of his case and the risk of flight". He had been detained by authorities in Daegu, and faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Lee had previously told Daegu police that he had wanted to get out of the plane because he was feeling "suffocated" inside the cabin. "I wanted to get off quickly," Lee told reporters before the warrant was issued.

"I'm very sorry to the kids," he added, referring to at least 48 elementary and middle school students who were on board.

He also had been under stress from being unemployed, authorities said.

A nearby passenger captured footage of wind blowing through the open door, with fabric seat-backs and passengers' hair fluttering wildly as several people shouted in shock.



'Logistics industry in Pakistan is highly competitive'

Ayaz Admani CEO, Seagold (Pvt) Ltd.



Ayaz Admani is a seasoned professional in logistics, freight forwarding and sales domains, having worked for a number of leading shipping firms in Pakistan. Currently, Ayaz is the Chief Executive Officer of Seagold Pvt. Ltd. and has been a part of the company since its inception. His journey in the company spans over 22 years. Under his leadership, Seagold has bagged numerous awards including Top Cargo Agent by Emirates Sky Cargo, Best Customer by Hapag-Lloyd and Best Agent by Turkish Airlines.

Here are some questions with Mr. Ayaz Admani and his views on this.

Q: Tell us about your company and the kind of business you deal in.

Ayaz Admani: Seagold Limited is a leading logistics and freight forwarding company based in Pakistan. The company offers a wide range of services including ocean freight, air freight, warehousing, and transportation solutions to customers in Pakistan and around the world through its international partners.

Seagold Limited has established itself as one of the top logistics companies in Pakistan, offering cost-effective and reliable logistics solutions to its customers. The company has a team of experienced professionals who are well-versed in the complexities of logistics and are committed to delivering quality services to customers.

The company's ocean freight services are designed to meet the needs of customers looking for cost-effective shipping solutions. We have established strong partnerships with major shipping lines, enabling us to offer competitive rates for ocean freight services. The

company's air freight services are also tailored to meet the needs of customers looking for fast and reliable air transportation solutions.

Seagold Limited's warehousing services provide customers with safe and secure storage facilities for their goods. The company has a network of warehouses strategically located throughout Pakistan, offering customers easy access to their goods. The company's transportation services are designed to provide customers with reliable and efficient transportation solutions, with a fleet of trucks and trailers to transport goods to their destination.

Q: Where does the logistics business stand today when the country is hit by a foreign exchange crisis? How long has it been in this state of uncertainty?

A: It is true that the prevailing economic conditions, including the foreign exchange crisis, have significantly impacted the logistics industry, affecting aspects such as transportation costs, import/export activities, and overall business operations.

The issues pertaining to foreign exchange started during the latter part of 2022 and are an ongoing complication that the relevant authorities are trying to sort on a priority basis. We are optimistic that a positive outcome will soon follow these efforts.

International trade is the backbone of the global economy and vital for our growth. I believe all stakeholders – the government, exporters, importers, financial institutions and others – are fully cognizant of this fact and are working both to lessen the negative impact of the crisis

and to re-establish the norm. We are hopeful that there will soon be an upturn in the economic situation which will also lead to an improvement in the logistics sector.

Q: How would you define the logistics industry in the country in terms of local and foreign players? Is there any interest from foreign investors?

A: Pakistan's logistics industry is a fairly mature industry, with several companies being in the business here for decades. In this highly competitive sector, Seagold has rapidly emerged as one of the market leaders, and I attribute this to our strong customer-centric approach, the comprehensive 'single window' range of services we offer, and to the use of technology in all our operations.

The logistics sector is a critical component of the economy, serving as a bridge between producers and consumers, and facilitating the movement of goods within the country, and also to and from other countries. The sector is made up of both local and foreign players with a mix of large and small companies.

Local players dominate the logistics industry in Pakistan with a number of large companies operating across the country. These companies offer a range of logistics services, including transportation, warehousing, and freight forwarding. There are also many smaller, regional logistics providers that operate in specific areas of the country.

Some foreign players are also present in the Pakistani logistics industry with focus on international freight forwarding and express courier services, although they also offer domestic services in some cases.

Overall, the logistics industry in Pakistan is highly competitive with companies competing on price, quality of service, and range of offerings. The industry is expected to continue to grow in the coming years, driven by increasing demand for logistics services due to economic growth and rising international trade.

Q: Apart from the foreign exchange crisis, what other factors are affecting the logistics business in the country?

A: There are several factors that can affect the logistics and international freight business in Pakistan, apart from the foreign exchange crisis. Poor infrastructure such as outdated roads, inadequate ports, and lack of proper transportation facilities can hinder the smooth movement of goods, leading to delays and increased costs. Political

unrest, instability, and conflicts can disrupt the supply chain and create uncertainties for international freight businesses. Stringent regulations and complicated bureaucratic procedures can delay the shipment of goods and increase costs for international freight companies. Security concerns and threats such as terrorism, piracy, and theft can pose risks to the safety of cargo and personnel involved in the transportation of goods.

The rapid pace of technological advancements can also create challenges for the logistics industry, as companies need to continuously adapt to new technologies to remain competitive. We in Seagold have paid great emphasis on keeping pace of technological developments and incorporating these into our business to stay ahead. Environmental factors like climate change and natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and storms can disrupt supply chains and lead to delays and losses for international freight companies.

Moreover, Intense market competition can create pressure on freight companies to reduce costs and offer competitive rates, leading to thin profit margins and increased challenges in maintaining sustainable growth

Q: What kind of margins do you operate at in normal circumstances, and how has the foreign exchange crisis and a government ban on imports impacted the margins of your company?

A: Operating margins for almost all freight forwarding companies in Pakistan are as per market dynamics. The impact of a foreign exchange crisis and government bans on imports can have varying effects on the margins. For instance:

During the foreign exchange crisis, currency values have become highly volatile. This has affected the margins as we often deal with international transactions. Currency depreciation has also increased the cost of imported goods thus effecting imports.

Government bans on imports significantly reduced trade volumes which resulted in increased competition amongst companies and lower freight rates. Lower rates can impact profit margins.

Q: How were you affected by the COVID pandemic, and did you recover from it in 2021-2022? Also, did you see increased activity in the sector during FY21-FY22 when exports reached the highest and imports also remained unabated?

A: Like the rest of the shipping

industry, we were also initially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to disruptions in global trade and supply chains. Lockdown measures and reduced consumer demand led to a decline in shipping volumes, especially for non-essential goods. However, the industry largely adapted by implementing safety protocols, prioritizing essential cargo, and adjusting routes. Additionally, e-commerce and medical supply and hospital related shipments increased, offsetting some of the losses. Essentially, it is always a question of forecasting future trends and developments accurately and in advance, and adapting to change and evolving in response to the evolving environment. This is what keeps any dynamic organization on the sustainable growth path, and helps it to mitigate negative impact in tough times.

Q: How do you maintain quality and control over logistics operations?

A: Maintaining quality and control over logistics operations requires a combination of effective planning, execution, and monitoring. We take some key steps to achieve this.

We set clear goals and objectives such as reducing costs, improving delivery times, or increasing customer satisfaction.

We maintain focus on choosing reliable logistics partners, such as carriers, agents, and ware houses etc. who have a proven track record of delivering high-quality services.

We use logistics technology systems such as Transportation Management Systems (TMS) and customized Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to streamline our operations and provide real-time visibility to improve performance.

We regularly monitor performance using key performance indicators (KPIs), such as on-time delivery, inventory accuracy, and customer satisfaction, using this data to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes to our logistics operation.

Where required, we have developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for our various logistics processes, including transportation and warehouse operations. SOPs ensure consistency and provide guidelines for employees to follow.

Also to be noted is the fact that we achieved ISO 9001, 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certification in 2017 and we are CTPAT (Customs Trade Partnership against Terrorism) compliant as well.

Q: Where do you see the economy headed? Do you foresee improvement in the business sentiments any time soon?

A: The direction of Pakistan's economy and business sentiments depend on various factors such as government policies, global economic conditions, domestic reforms, and geopolitical dynamics. We believe that as soon as political stability is restored, momentum will shift and things would rapidly improve in a very short span to time.

Q: What are your plans for the company over the next 5 years?

A: Seagold is a progressive company and our plans over the next five years vary depending on geopolitical conditions. Our vision is to be the leading freight forwarding company and so our plans for the next 5 years are focused on technological advancement, digital transformation, sustainable practices, expansion and collaborative partnerships.

With the fast paced technological advancement, we seek to embrace digital transformation. We shall focus on investing in technology and digital solutions to optimize operations, enhance efficiency, and improve customer experience. We also plan to enhance supply chain visibility by implementing tracking systems and real-time monitoring. This helps in proactive problem-solving, identifying bottlenecks, and streamlining operations

We also seek to embrace sustainable practices to adopt any advancement in technology. This may involve optimizing transportation routes, adopting green technologies, and exploring alternate energy sources.

We are on the lookout for opportunities to expand service offerings and enter new markets. This may involve providing value-added services such as inventory management, order fulfillment via a complete turnkey solution.

And we seek to collaborate and form strategic partnerships with other logistics providers or industry players to leverage complementary strengths, expand market reach, and enhance service capabilities.

Q: What are your views on CPEC?

A: CPEC has been moving at very slow pace these days and it has impacted several areas. The Economic projections and financial growth depend on various factors, including geopolitical developments, government policies, infrastructure progress, investment inflows, and market conditions.

CPEC has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to Pakistan.

Infrastructure Development:
Energy Infrastructure development
Industrialization and Special Economic Zones
Trade Expansion
Gwadar Port Development

The actual financial growth and its magnitude will depend on various factors, including effective implementation of projects, policy stability, security, and FDI.

AirSial Starts its flight from Pakistan to Muscat

AirSial launches its flight operations to Muscat, Oman from Pakistan on 8th June 2023. It operates seven flights a week, 3 flights from Lahore, 2 flights from Islamabad and two flight Sialkot to Muscat and back. The airlines uses A320 aircraft on this route.

AirSial, which has made a big name in the aviation industry in a short span of time has started the flights to the Oil-rich country.

In a bid to facilitate travelers, a private Pakistani carrier is introducing flights to Muscat, the capital of Oman. In this regard, Oman's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has given the go-ahead to AirSial to commence its operations from Pakistan.

Moreover, AirSial has also received the concurrence of the Civil Aviation Authority to operate flights connecting three major Pakistani cities to Muscat International Airport.

As part of the flight operation, AirSial will offer convenient and reliable travel option for Passengers taking off from Islamabad, Lahore, and Sialkot to Muscat. The operation has started from June 8th, 2023.

AirSial has revealed that from Islamabad, two weekly flights to Muscat have been scheduled, while Lahore will have three and Sialkot will offer two flights per week.

This development comes weeks after the airline launched international operations. In the initial phase announced in March, eight weekly flights were announced to be operated between Jeddah and Lahore as well as Islamabad.

'Total 68 flights would take off for Jeddah from Pakistan every month,' the carrier had stated and added that soon flights would start from Karachi, Sialkot and Multan for the Saudi city.

The Chairman of the company was of the view that after successful domestic operation, it was another feat that the firm was starting international operations and in days to come, the carrier would take passengers to other destinations and Gulf countries as well.

AirSial has been catering to domestic routes for around two and a half years, now it is being widely hailed by the masses for the in-flight services that it provides.



Group Photo taken on the occasion shows Mr. Fazal Jilani Chairman (Centre) with Mr. Ameen Ahsan Chief Executive Mr. Qaiser Iqbal Baryar Sr. Vice Chairman AirSial and other guests.



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Iraq unveils \$17bn transport project linking Europe and Mideast



A handout picture released by Iraq's Prime Minister's Media Office shows Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani attending a meeting with transport ministry representatives in Baghdad on May 27, 2023. Iraq presented an ambitious plan to turn itself into a regional transportation hub by developing its road and rail infrastructure, linking Europe with the Gulf and other Middle East countries.

Iraq on Saturday 27th May presented an ambitious plan to turn itself into a regional transportation hub by developing its road and rail infrastructure, linking Europe with the Middle East.

Once completed, the \$17 billion project known as the 'Route of Development' would span the length of the country, stretching 1,200 kilometres (745 miles) from the northern border with Turkey to the Gulf in the south.

Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani announced the project during a conference with transport ministry representatives from Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

'We see this project as a pillar of a sustainable non-oil economy, a link that serves Iraq's neighbours and the region, and a contribution to economic integration efforts, Sudani said.

While further discussions are required, any country that wishes 'will be able to carry out part of the project', the Iraqi parliament's transport committee said, adding the project could be completed in 'three to five years'.

'The Route of Development will boost interdependence between the countries of the region,' Turkey's ambassador to Baghdad Ali Riza Guney said, without elaborating on what role his country would play in the project.

War-ravaged and beset by rampant corruption, oil-rich Iraq suffers from dilapidated infrastructure.

Its roads, riddled with potholes and poorly maintained, are in terrible condition.

Those connecting Baghdad to the north cross areas where sporadic attacks are still carried out by remnants of the Islamic State group.

Sudani has prioritised the reconstruction of the country's road network, along with upgrading its failing electricity infrastructure. Developing the road and rail corridor would allow Iraq to capitalise on its geographical position,

with the aim of making the country a transportation hub for goods and people moving between the Gulf, Turkey and Europe.

Work has already started to increase capacity at the commercial port of Al-Faw, on the shores of the Gulf, where cargo is to be unloaded before it embarks on the new road and rail links.

The project also includes the construction of around 15 train stations along the route, including in the major cities of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, and up to the Turkish border.

The Gulf, largely bordered by Iran and Saudi Arabia, is a major shipping zone, especially for the transportation of hydrocarbons extracted by countries of the region.

Zyad al-Hashemi, an Iraqi consultant on international transport, cast doubt on the plan to develop the country into a transportation hub, saying it lacks 'fluidity'.

'Customers prefer to transport their goods directly from Asia to Europe, without going through a loading and unloading process, that would see containers moved between ships and road or rail, he said.

Transport is a key sector in the global economy and Iraq's announcement is the latest in other planned international mega-projects, including China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' announced in 2013 by its President Xi Jinping.

The planned works in that project would see 130 countries across Asia, Europe and Africa connected through land and sea infrastructure providing greater access to China.

Amadeus Ecosystem approach to lead transformation of hospitality sector

Traveller expectations have changed over the past four years – the hospitality industry of 2023 is not that of 2019.

These expectations are catalysts for change as today, personalisation tops the agenda, with consumers seeking customizable offers when it comes to booking travel.

Flexible and sustainable journeys and the support of modern digital tools to remove the friction from travel are also high on the traveller wish list.

As of May 6th, Amadeus Demand360 data reveals on-the-books global hotel occupancy for June has reached 32 per cent, trending above the 2022 and 2021 figures for the same month and standing just three points behind occupancy levels seen in 2019.

At the same time, leading destinations – including Rome and Paris in Europe, as well as Tokyo, Seoul and Singapore in Asia – are all seeing occupancies for June this year ahead of the same month in 2019, illustrating a robust, global recovery.

Global hotel average daily rates (ADR) are also above pre-pandemic levels, standing at US\$216 for June this year, compared to US\$184 in the same month of 2019.

Against this backdrop of growing numbers and high traveller expectations, the industry needs to be proactive and nimble in meeting evolving traveller needs.

Amadeus is positioned to lead the way, as it brings together content from hotels, mobility and travel protection into a single, unified whole.

This ecosystem approach enables travel providers and travel sellers to work together effectively – thus providing guests with memorable experiences while finding new ways to drive profitable demand and maximize industry growth.

Francisco Pérez-Lozao Rüter, president, Hospitality, Amadeus comments: "The travel industry has long benefitted from collaboration, and we see a real opportunity in combining content from key travel providers across hotels, mobility, and travel insurance to better meet the requirements of the travellers of today."

"Travelers want more options; they want them to be tailored to their preferences and they want the process to be frictionless."

He added: "To continue to drive demand across these sectors, providers need to be able to personalize their offering to maximize their revenues."

"For travel sellers, having access to this integrated content is a gamechanger."

At Amadeus, the traveller has always been at the heart of everything we do.

"An ecosystem approach will allow the industry to take steps towards the creation of end-to-end journeys that travellers want."

May 31st in International Flight Attendant Day, a celebration dedicated to members of the flight crew

Celebrating the work of cabin crew and flight attendants.



May 31st is 'International Flight Attendants Day,' a celebration for all flight attendants and cabin crew. It was first started by a Canadian flight attendant union to highlight the role of cabin crew and see them recognized for their hard work and dedication to their profession. It is also known as 'World Cabin Crew Appreciation Day.'

The Role

Although there is still a huge passenger misconception about the role of flight attendants, the aim is to educate that flight attendants are not there just to provide meals and drinks. They are there to ensure that a flight is safe, secure, and uneventful. Their priority is always the safety of the passengers, the crew, and the aircraft. Flight attendants are aviation professionals, sometimes referred to as the first responders of the sky. They are trained to deal with any situation that might occur, be it an unconscious passenger, a fire in the cabin, or an emergency landing on land or water.



Issues

Being a flight attendant is very demanding as well as physically and emotionally taxing. They work shifts and can be called upon to work any time of day or night. The hours are long, and they are on their feet most of the time. Cabin crew have to deal with jet lag and time zones and adapt to working unusual hours. They make sacrifices in their own lives missing special events with friends and family. Their lives are somewhat taken over by

their work and lifestyle.

Difficult times

The impact of 9/11 had a lasting effect on the aviation industry, and it never looked the same again. Then during the pandemic, many flight attendants and pilots lost the job they loved and found themselves lost in the new ordinary world. Job security became a thing of the past; aviation was grounded completely.



Now, passenger numbers are rising, and more than ever before, people are traveling. Unfortunately, disruptive and abusive passengers are on the rise, another issue that flight attendants have to deal with regularly. To make matters worse, salaries for flight attendants have dropped considerably in many parts of the world since the pandemic.

Daily life

Most flight attendants are passionate about their work and the aviation world and take great pride. However, they rarely get credit for what they do. A passenger may only see a smiling face and a uniform whilst they wait for a drink or a meal. They don't realize that flight attendants are always ready to jump into action in a split second. Cabin crew are constantly problem-solving and dealing with any given situation on the aircraft. They are fully committed to their work and are the brand ambassador for their airline.

Celebrate

This International Flight Attendants Day, let's celebrate this diverse workforce who endeavor to make the skies a safer and more secure place. It is also important to honor those who've paved the way for others to join the industry and those we've lost who sacrificed themselves during their duties. Let it be a day of recognition for all flight attendants all over the world and to acknowledge their achievements.

Girl Power: how indiGo's cabin crew are breaking stereotypes

Discovering the inspiring journey of IndiGo's female cabin crew members on the occasion of International Flight Attendant Day.



31st May is International Flight Attendant Day, dedicated to appreciating the invaluable contributions of flight attendants in the global aviation industry. They are the unsung heroes of the skies and an inalienable part of every passenger flight.

No matter what is going on in their personal lives, these dedicated professionals always greet and treat their guests with a smile. And today is the day to appreciate all their good work in making every flight a pleasant experience.

To make our readers truly appreciate flight attendants' efforts, Simple Flying had the chance to interview some impressive female cabin crew members at IndiGo, India's largest airline. These exceptional individuals have an inspiring story to tell, a story of how they made it despite all odds.

Join us as we delve into the captivating narratives of these inspiring women, witnessing firsthand their unwavering determination, resilience, and the transformative power of chasing one's aspirations against all odds.

But first, let's dive into how the day came into being.

The History

International Flight Attendant Day, also known in some countries as World Cabin Crew Day, is a relatively new concept, and widespread celebrations to mark the day can be tracked as early as



2015. A Canadian union first coined the term with the aim of highlighting cabin crew contributions to the operation of safe passenger flights.

Flight attendants in India

The Indian aviation industry is on a terrific growth trajectory in a post-pandemic world. Cabin crew, pilots, ground staff, and all other stakeholders are crucial in helping the industry realize its full potential.

With the highest number of female pilots, India sets an example for women empowerment. Even when it comes to flight attendants, the country has a record of providing opportunities to women.

Certain Indian airlines like IndiGo take pride in employing an all-women cabin crew totaling around 8,000 members. Many of these hardworking professionals come from humble backgrounds and act as a beacon of hope for others aspiring to achieve a successful aviation career.

We asked three long-serving IndiGo FAs a few wide-ranging questions, delving into their experiences, insights, and perspectives from their years of service. Simple Flying had the opportunity to chat with Manisha Banerjee, Payal Chakraborty, and Debarati Banerjee, all hailing from the Eastern state of West Bengal. Manisha and Payal come from the small towns of Dum Dum and Cooch Behar, while Debarati is a resident of Kolkata. Here is what they had to say.

What was your motivation for joining the industry?

Payal: My seven years with the company will complete on May 17, and my motivation to join this industry is the type of exposure and independence it provides, and of course, there are additional perks of facing new challenges every day.

Debarati: I have completed seven years with the company. Seven years back I always wanted to join this industry as I wanted to explore the world; like every girl since childhood I would look at the crew walking at the airport and wish to

wear the uniform once. My dream finally came true in 2016 when I got a call from IndiGo to be a part of this fantastic company.

What are some challenges associated with being a flight attendant in India?

Manisha: While boarding, if there is an unhappy customer who is very upset with his personal life, we will make sure that person arrives at his destination with a happy face, we will make him happy with our warm welcome and customer service, and we will create a wow moment for him.

Payal: There are many challenges that I faced on a regular basis, but there is one which is worth mentioning. Once there was a pax who was sitting on 13F; while the boarding was getting finished, the pax started talking very loudly over the phone. Our crew tried hard to make him calm down, but he was not listening and losing his temper.



I was informed about this, and when I went to see the pax, then I realized he just lost someone, a very close relative. On understanding the situation, I offered water and spoke to him. He needed someone to listen to him, after which he was feeling better.

How do you maintain a work-life balance?

Debarati: Now that I am married and only my husband and I live together, it can be tough to leave when he comes in or vice versa. But when I'm feeling down, I remember my interview day, when I saw so many girls crying because it was their dream job, but they didn't get it. Every time I think of that day, I motivate myself to work hard and give my best. I knew since day one that if I joined, I might not be able to celebrate special occasions with my family. I feel bad seeing my friends

celebrate every occasion with family and friends while I am unable to, yet when I put on my uniform for my flight, I feel proud of myself. I adore it when my friends and family introduce me to individuals they know as IndiGo's lead cabin crew.

Manisha: There are days when you are a little upset, but when I'm in uniform, a professional comes along.

Payal: I feel that work-life balance is only possible if you have a supportive family and a great company to work for, and IndiGo is that company for me.

What are your thoughts about gender stereotypes in the aviation industry?

Payal: I believe hospitality comes from within, and there is basically no role that the gender plays.

Debarati: IndiGo promotes Girl Power, and the greatest way to demonstrate this is to have four ladies onboard after the doors close who can do anything and handle all of the difficulties onboard.

The Next Generation

Lastly, we also asked these ladies if they had some advice for people like them looking to get into the aviation industry as cabin crew members. With global aviation looking set for a historic bounce-back in travel demand, aviation can prove to be one of the most lucrative career options for up-and-coming professionals.

In particular, India is expected to be one of the fastest-growing markets with plenty of opportunities for new talent. Opportunities to get into the industry are already showing up, with major carriers like Air India and IndiGo hiring hundreds of new staff each month.

Our panelists had some advice for young women on the fence about a career in aviation:

Debarati: I can confidently recommend IndiGo to any young lady interested in becoming a cabin crew member. IndiGo is a very employee-friendly organization where we can express our problems without difficulty.



Emirates offering two-night hotel stays in Dubai for Business and First Class passengers



First and Business class passengers traveling on Emirates can now avail a two-night hotel stay in Dubai.

Starting May 22nd to June 11th, passengers purchasing an Emirates first and business class return ticket or an onward connection ticket from Dubai can enjoy a complimentary two-night stay at the five-star 25hours Hotel Dubai One Central.

This offer can be availed by passengers buying the tickets to travel between May 26th and August 31st. As per the airline website, the passengers wishing to utilize this offer must make the booking a minimum of 96 hours before arrival. Furthermore, passengers must be stopping over in Dubai for over 24 hours to be eligible for this offer.

The hotel is located next to the iconic Museum of the Future and is said to be inspired by the traditional Arabian culture and designs, albeit with a modern twist. The passengers can experience a variety of culinary experiences from the five in-house restaurants and bars within the hotel. For those wishing to relax, the hotel's Extra Hour Spa, with a unique rooftop sauna with a view of Dubai, is the perfect place to be.

Premium Economy and Economy passengers too

The special summer travel offer also extends to Emirates passengers traveling in Economy class and the carrier's new and popular Premium Economy class.



These passengers will be offered a complimentary one-night stay at the four-star Novotel World Trade Centre, Dubai.

Located at the Dubai World Trade Centre, at the heart of the city, the hotel emulates a homely yet luxurious feeling for all its guests and is situated in the heart of Dubai. With a place to relax by the pool and to enjoy live music performances at the bar, there is something for everyone staying at the hotel.

The Emirates experience

Emirates being one of the world's best airline has a lot of features to offer their passengers flying onboard their aircraft. Being the largest operator of Airbus A380-800 and the Boeing 777-300ER aircraft types, Emirates has some of the world's most recognizable and luxurious hard products.

On their A380s, passengers traveling in first class get to experience the carrier's luxurious suite-style seats, which come with a personal mini-bar, one of the largest IFE screens in the world, and a lavish



amount of space for passengers to unwind. However, perhaps the unique feature available for passengers to use is the onboard shower spa. This facility is exclusive for first class passengers, and Emirates is one of the only two airlines in the world to offer shower facilities.

Another key feature of the Emirates experience is the onboard lounge in the carrier's A380, which is accessible for first and business class passengers. This is a place where passengers can visit if they fancy a break from their seats to socialize with other passengers, with the added benefit of a drink and snack bar extensively stacked with snack choices for everyone.

Onboard the carrier's Boeing 777s, while the aircraft is smaller and does not have shower spas and onboard lounges, it still has the distinct touch of Emirates'

luxurious product branding. Most of the carrier's 777s have the same suite-style seats found on their A380s.

However, on select 777s, the carrier has a newer, game-changer, first class product that offers the world's only floor-to-ceiling, fully enclosed suites to offer passengers an unparalleled level of privacy. Furthermore, the passengers flying in the middle suites can experience virtual windows, which is another unique feature.

Dubai camel cloning caters to races, beauty pageants

DUBAI: Having led the world's first cloning of camels in 2009, Nisar Wani is now replicating a few dozen a year at a Dubai lab a big business in the Gulf region where camels are cherished and can earn huge sums in beauty and racing contests.

'We collect these eggs from the ovaries of slaughtered animals. We have to mature them in the lab for 24 hours before they reach the stage where we can use them for the cloning process,' Wani said.

Reproductive cloning of animals uses a process called somatic cell nuclear transfer.

DNA is removed from a camel egg cell and replaced with DNA from a frozen body cell of a camel prized for some quality such as speed or beauty. The egg then develops into an embryo with no sperm needed.

Animal cloning is, however, time-consuming with low success rates.

'From a hundred embryos that we transfer, we can have five to ten pregnancies, and sometimes maybe three to six babies born,' said Wani, originally a veterinarian who has a PhD in animal reproduction.

The Reproductive Biotechnology Centre in Dubai works to preserve the cells of and reproduce elite racing camels, beauty contest winners, milking camels and prized males, Wani said.

It also uses interspecies cloning technology to preserve threatened species.



Dr. Nizar Ahmd Wani kisses a surrogate camel at a farm of the Reproductive Biotechnology Centre.



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Chauvinism or Chivalry But Humanism (Prof Safdar Sandal)



Humanism is the first ethics with which a child is born by nature, which had prompted Aristotle to say that “man is good by nature”. And if it is with a baby girl, more tender and affectionate love is showered on her by parents and by members of the family in a decent society. I can quote here European parents who feel more happy on the birth of a daughter, because she is the person who visits and looks after her them until their senile age, whereas the boys in the western society are a happy go lucky fellow, not caring much for their old or young parents and getting engaged with spouses more particularly, in quite an early age than having gained sobriety in age. The baby girl and a woman later to become ought to enjoy this preferred status and respect all her life which she so profusely deserves in our houses. Besides they become a source of procreation and a symbol of continuity of mankind and respect in day to day life. She is a person who is supposed to be honored in all situations, prima facie, without any reservations.

In the recent political turmoil in the country pitifully, a graceful woman walked on a road in Lahore to join the protest which in her justifiable consideration was her right. During the protest, she happened to throw off her dupatta (head covering) towards the law enforcers as sign of her sentimental protest and that was her right.. She intended to show to the law enforcement personal, that by doing so; she was only protesting vigorously under the circumstances and yet not violating democratic rights allowed to her by the constitutional democracy, primarily in the country..

But one of the law enforcers apparently as allowed by the administration came out to show his chauvinism to her, dragged her by her hair and pulled her across the road; towards the rank and file, in a mob of males predominantly. Some men protesting on the other end ran to her rescue and thankfully succeeded for her not to be taken away in the standby police van.. She later tweeted about the ordeal. Admittedly, people of Lahore, the centre



(A witch does not heal' it just eats Kaleja-liver ,lungs, heart, stomach etc, (She can't be a wife) & (A caring woman healer, can be a nurse or a wife)

of country's democracy are historically daring enough to hold such bold protests against any administration, right from the 'British Raj' until today, as they are an educated people, sophisticated in their lifestyle, politically conscious, vociferous in expressing their opinions and quiet distinguishable in their demeanour, as compared to the people of other cities neighbouring close to Lahore, including my own .. to my qualms indeed. !!

(But I feel happy for having received my education—done my Post-Graduation in political Science and Graduation in Psychology from 'Government College of Lahore' (in the early 1960s – a renowned centre of learning in the sub-continent, from over one and half century. Old students from this College and now University including myself are entitled for having earned the prestigious title of being known as 'Old Ravians').

But wait .. I have no intention of putting forth any self-aggrandizement!! What we saw in the same protest as stated above was also a ray of hope for me, a silver lining in the clouds of shame. We saw another female protester desperately trying to jump in from a distance and save the doomed lady while her male partner held her back for safety, apparently quite in a struggle, for she did not appear to stop or settle down in her protesting emotion. The woman's self-sustained humane-natural response function, to the mistreatment meted out to her, needed to be cloned or perhaps injected in the



Pakistani society. This is the positive side of the instinctive human behavior, a subject of psychology of which I have been a student and am feeling the impulse to write so ..

To instill something so simple and natural seems to be a far cry, because we have digressed a little too far. To us all inspiration is still handy and in some cases, stored in our memories like sweets in a box -- the beauty of each one of it charming and magnificent. The former handy inspiration on chivalry and gentleness towards women is Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) domain, as he is considered to be the best and first teacher of the world in Human behavior): standing up for women out of respect. Whenever his daughter Fatima used to arrive, Prophet Muhammad would stand up, greet her, and ask her to sit next to him and before him. When the Prophet used to leave for a travel, his daughter Fatimah was the last person he would say a farewell to, and she was the first one whom he visited upon his



*The “Tower of Pakistan”
1940 - Minar e Pakistan in Lahore.*

return. To close the loop and essentially to provoke thought on the law enforcers gone berserk with a woman:- even if we are not sure, if she is our champion in this story, but we must be cent per cent sure that the woman with her unsettling natural response to the mistreatment surely is.. My study is apolitical and should be treated as such ..

The woman who reminds us of this time tested and as quoted by the 'Statesman, Thomas Jafferson':s "In matters of style, swim with the current .. In matters of principle, stand like a rock". A lesson to be ..

That's not all folks in the recent upheaval of nationwide political protests; we saw disturbing mistreatment towards women. From harassment of a disabled girl to chivalry in a Muslim nation of which I feel sorry to be a shameful part? Or is it not a case of Chauvinism of which our men have been used to in history.. Beat their wives nearly every day in the houses, feeling that they were superior in gender and thus entitled to do it in our male chauvinistic society, not caring for gender parity granted by the Providence, which is called humanism.

We have lost all sense of proportion between chivalry, and sanity---to say the least. To maximum chivalry has tuned into male-chauvinism by mistreating with them. We can't be a lost cause? It's time to dust off the code of conduct from the shelves of our conscience and see to it. Introspection is arguably the best way to go. We need to see what it is that we are doing wrong. We need to see what in our conduct is unbecoming of a decent human. In the process we would know how easy it is just to be courteous and kind. Let me leave you with this quote: "The healer doesn't go around telling people that they are healers. They just are. The witch does' not hope over the hedge to prove she's a witch. She just hopes. The medicine man doesn't explain why the medicine cures. It just does. The Shaman doesn't claim to connect heaven and earth. It just happens. The way you alchemize a soulless world into a sacred world is to treat everyone as if they are sacred until the sacred in them remembers".

Lastly we were taught in 'Political Science' about democracy, rights of one man are the duties of the other, freedom of expression and assembly. Islam taught 'Ijma' (concensus of opinon). It was against totalitarian or dictatorial system which Islam strictly opposed. May Allah grant us the ability to follow the path of truthfulness as ordained by our 'deen'. Before closing I may remind again that my article is apolitical and purely aademic. Adieu !!

Lahooti festival helps reclaim indigenous culture

A galaxy of literati, scholars and folk artists joined the 10th year celebration of 'Lahooti Melo 2023' on the lawns of the local press clubs and highlighted the importance of the annual event. The two-day festival ended here the other day.

Speakers told the audience that Lahooti Melo not only promoted diversity but also helped reclaim the true indigenous culture, Sindhi literature and folk and mystic music of decades-old legacy of this region. They shed light on how the festival has been a success story for people.

The festival's inaugural session was marked by presence of eminent figures like writer Jami Chandio and journalist Wusatullah Khan, besides DIG Pir Mohammad Shah, Thar's celebrated folk singer Mai Dhaee, water expert Dr Hassan Abbas and others.

The session was moderated by Lahooti's founder Saif Samejo.

Jami Chandio described Lahooti festival's 10-year journey as a phenomenal success story which started at a time when country was hit by extremism. He said the festival helped mobilise youth and produced quality music while linking it with virtues and values. Lahooti created space for social analyses and enlightened discourse. He observed that Lahooti has given a ray of hope in this suffocating environment coupled with bad governance in the country. The festival has emerged as a unique opportunity blended with music and values, he observed.

Elderly Mai Dhaee presented her famous folksong and barely uttered a few words in her Dhatki language, wishing success to festival's organisers and saying that all of them were humble souls.

Faqir Zulfikar performed on 'dorindo' an earthen musical object that is used like a flute.

Bhagat Bhoro Lal who was also discovered by Lahooti in the last one decade attributed his popularity to Lahooti. 'We used to perform at shrines and then came to Lahooti that shot us to prominence,' he acknowledged smilingly.

A musician from US, Mr Victorian said that his concept about Pakistan changed when he visited the country. He said he loved interaction here and found many things about Pakistan's unique poetry, especially of this region. 'We live to tell stories and it is an honour to be here,' he said.

The country head of a German organisation that supports Lahooti festival, Ms Birgit Lamm, said that she

found diversity in this show and had fallen in love with. 'There are colourful people in Lahooti; such events offer an opportunity to understand each other,' she said.

Eminent water expert Dr Hassan Abbas called for synchronising Pakistan's development model with culture of Indus river and give up all those things that are conflict with it.

'We need to synchronise our development model with this groundwater. Our river is telling us something different whereas our incomplete development model is taking us to elsewhere,' he said.

Sindh Language Authority (SLA) chairman Dr Ishaq Samejo praised Lahooti for mainstream indigenous music and Indus civilisation. He said that this festival also promoted Sindhi language.

In memory of Ajmal Sawand Moderator Saif Samejo did not miss the opportunity to remember the young scholar, Prof Dr Ajmal Sawand, murdered in cold blood in upper Sindh Kandhkot district in an old enmity between his community and the Sundrani clan.

Samejo opened a discussion at the session with Ajmal Sawand's elder brother Dr Tariq Sawand, who narrating how his younger brother was killed by over half a dozen armed men when he was coming to Sukkur after visiting his community fellows in Kandhkot.

'He was a humble soul and sufi, and was among those four persons in Pakistan who got a doctorate degree in artificial intelligence. It pains whenever I share his story,' Dr Tariq said.

Senior journalist Wusatullah Khan recalled Ajmal by reading his column on Sawand Usko marna hi tha amidst applause. Ani Choying Drolma, a visiting Nepalese musician and rights activist, like Wusatullah Khan, presented a sad song in Nepalese to express her sentiments on the murder of Sawand. She translated the song into English. As the poetry goes: 'Tell me why did you needlessly take life life which can't be your's'.

DIG Pir Mohammad Shah, who hails from upper Sindh, said. Unless state enforced its writ, things would remain unresolved, he added. 'You can't treat cancer with a disprins. And when justice is delayed people lost trust in system and they either take law into their hands or turn to jirga systems.

So, we as a society not only have to condemn it, but resist it as well,' he said.



FOREIGN artist Sabrina Terence performs on stage on the concluding day of Lahooti Melo.



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CPEC will be Extended to Afghanistan as trilateral cooperation set to deepen

The foreign ministers of Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen trilateral cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and jointly extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

Following the trilateral dialogue, the three sides issued a joint statement, expressing their determination to leverage Afghanistan's potential as a hub for regional connectivity.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang of China, and Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi of Afghanistan participated in the dialogue representing their respective countries. During the meeting, the three foreign ministers emphasised the significance of ongoing projects such as CASA-1000, TAPI, and Trans-Afghan Railways, highlighting their potential to boost regional connectivity and promote economic development and prosperity in the region.

The three parties emphasised the need to advance 'hard connectivity' in infrastructure and 'soft connectivity' in norms and standards. They agreed to explore measures to facilitate the movement of people and trade activities. They also decided to boost transit trade through the Gwadar Port.

The foreign ministers acknowledged that a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan is in the best interest of the region. They emphasised the critical role of trilateral cooperation in promoting this objective.

The three sides agreed to further deepen and expand their cooperation in the domains of security, development, and politics, guided by the principles of mutual respect, equal-footed consultation, and mutual benefit.

The three parties highlighted the importance of addressing security challenges that pose a significant threat to regional and global security, and directly impacting the stability and economic prosperity of the entire region. They agreed to coordinate on security matters, including organised crime, drug smuggling and others. They called upon the international community to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and provide the necessary supplies, equipment, and technical assistance to relevant countries in this regard.

The three sides stressed the importance of preventing any individual,

group, or party, including the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), from using their territories to harm or threaten regional security and interests or carry out terrorist activities.

They also stressed the need to avoid interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs and instead focus on promoting peace, stability, and reconstruction in the country.

Highlighting the need to boost economic activity in Afghanistan, the ministers emphasised the significance of exploring feasible pathways towards reviving the Afghan economy. As a step towards this goal, they agreed to consider additional support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and exploring trilateral investment opportunities that promote industrialisation and job creation.

Expressing the solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, they stressed the crucial need for sustained and urgent humanitarian support, including bridging funding gaps for humanitarian operations.

They underlined that humanitarian support for the people of Afghanistan should not be linked to any political considerations.

They expressed satisfaction with the current trilateral cooperation and agreed to carry out exchange and training programmes, as well as strengthen people-to-people exchanges by implementing trilateral programs in line with the List of China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Practical Cooperation Projects adopted by the foreign ministers during this dialogue.

The three sides reiterated their cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as economic development, capacity building and improving livelihoods.

The ministers agreed to enhance cooperation in agriculture, trade, energy, capacity building and border management.

The ministers also urged the international community to engage constructively with Afghanistan, acknowledging the efforts made under various mechanisms and formats, including the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, to promote dialogue and constructive engagement with the Afghan Interim Government.

The ministers also urged the international community to provide assistance to Afghanistan in countering narcotics effectively and developing alternative crops to enhance its capacity for independent and sustainable

development. They called on the relevant countries to lift their unilateral sanctions against Afghanistan, return assets overseas for the benefit of the Afghan people, and create opportunities for economic development and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Taking note of the Afghan Interim Government's repeated assurances to respect and protect women's rights and interests, they called on the international community to support the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan and to help Afghanistan improve governance and strengthen capacity building to effectively protect the basic rights and interests of all segments of Afghan society, including women and children.

The ministers expressed gratitude to neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan, for hosting millions of Afghan refugees and providing them with generous hospitality. They called on the international community to provide necessary support and assistance to these countries and Afghanistan for the dignified return and reintegration of refugees into Afghan society.

The three sides emphasised their commitment to continuing the trilateral cooperation mechanism, including the Director-General Level Practical Cooperation Dialogue, and to forging closer, good-neighbourly relations and partnerships.

Russian cargo vessel arrives at KPT

Before the arrival of Russian crude oil, a container vessel Crystal St Petersburg on its maiden call reached Karachi Port in just 21 days.

The vessel took berth at Karachi International Container Terminal (KICT) on Thursday 25th May.

Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Faisal Sabzwari welcomed the vessel along with Karachi Port Trust (KPT) chairman Syedain Raza Zaidi and Consul General of Russia Andrey Viktorovich Fedorov.

According to KPT's press release, Mr Sabzwari termed the occasion a landmark achievement of the government which has given the trading community to have direct access to Russian markets.

He said that it would open up exports of Pakistani goods to Russia directly. Similarly, it will also be beneficial to Russia and would entail strong business ties with Russia as well as the Central Asian States.

As per media reports, the first shipment of discounted Russian crude oil would arrive in Pakistan via Oman by small ships in early June under a deal struck between Pakistan and Moscow in April.

PM seeks ideas to lift falling exports

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday 26th May sought support from business people to overcome multiple challenges and asked exporters to come up with innovative and unique ideas to boost exports.

He pointed out that despite financial challenges and other difficulties, the government was committed to providing genuine support to all the export sectors, including textile, leather and sports, to help increase the country's export volume.



'Despite various challenges, we have very robust, very futuristic, and extremely hardworking entrepreneurs that have gradually built Pakistan's export culture,' he said while speaking at a ceremony at a textile exhibition in Karachi.

He said that with genuine government support combined with the entrepreneurs' extraordinary intellect and hard work, the provision of quality export goods to foreign customers would be ensured.

Welcoming foreign delegates, Mr Sharif said he was happy to learn that over 400 foreign delegates from 60 countries were visiting on the occasion showed Pakistan was a valuable destination for foreign guests, buyers and traders. He also appreciated the industrialists, exporters and experts who had contributed immensely to promoting Pakistan's textile and leather exports.

He said Pakistan's industry had now been transformed and converted to air-jet looms, ginning, spinning and weaving.

He said the commerce ministry team had done a commendable job by arranging this expo, which he hoped would help promote the country's exports.

The premier said the textile sector accounted for 60 per cent of the country's exports and employed 40pc of the labour force. 'It is no doubt one of the largest sectors of Pakistan's economy,' he added.

Later, in a meeting with business people and investors, he said Pakistan was faced with multiple challenges and the economy could only make progress in the presence of political stability.

Minister for barter trade with Ethiopia

Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar has announced that Pakistan is set to launch a business to business barter trade policy and encouraged Ethiopian entrepreneurs to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance trade ties with Pakistan.

The minister was speaking at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) alongside Ethiopia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Misganu Arega.

Mr Qamar emphasised the importance of the private sectors of both countries finalising business contracts and signing deals. He also highlighted the significance of the barter trade system to enhance the volume of bilateral trade.

The minister commended the initiative of establishing a direct flight from Addis Ababa to Karachi, as it would greatly contribute to enhancing connectivity and fostering stronger

relations between the two nations.

Mr Qamar highlighted Pakistan's potential as a market for foreign sectors and encouraged the Ethiopian business delegation to explore joint ventures and investments in Pakistan. He emphasised that Pakistan's Lool (Africa) policy aimed at strengthening business relations with the entire African continent.

MoUs to facilitate cherry exports to China signed

Eleven members of a business delegation from China returned home on Sunday 21st May, while three others will fly from Islamabad, after a successful visit to Gilgit-Baltistan where they signed several MoUs with officials, businessmen and representatives of chambers of commerce to facilitate cherry trade.

The 14-member delegation of Chinese businessmen had arrived in Gilgit-Baltistan last week for a four-day visit to explore the potential of importing cherries from Pakistan. The delegation visited cherry orchards, packing units and cold storage facilities to inspect the local cherry production and assess the potential for importing cherries to Chinese markets.

All these activities were conducted in accordance with the newly signed protocol between the two countries.

Special assistant to the GB chief minister on information technology, Mohammad Ali Quaid, told media that the delegation visited GB to check the quality of local cherries, the water treatment process, cold storage facilities, and packaging procedures.

He explained that the export of cherries from Pakistan to China had not yet started.

Earlier, the ministry signed a protocol agreement with Chinese Customs outlining the phytosanitary requirements for exporting fresh cherries to China. Mr Quaid disclosed that another delegation from the Chinese quarantine department has planned a visit to GB.

Once the Chinese officials fulfil the necessary SOPs, the import of cherries from Pakistan would be allowed.

Mohammad Raziq, president of the Hunza Chamber of Commerce, told media that the purpose of the visit was quality assessment of the entire process from cherry production to packaging.

However, Mr Raziq explained that cherries from Gilgit-Baltistan would be exported from Pakistan if Chinese quarantine authorities gave the go-ahead.

Shehbaz, Raisi to open border market, transmission line

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi will jointly inaugurate MandPishin border sustenance marketplace and Polan-Gabd electricity transmission line at the MandPishin border crossing point on Thursday (today).

‘One of the six border markets to be constructed along the PakIran common border, the MandPishin border sustenance marketplace will provide a thriving platform for increasing cross-border trade, fostering economic growth and opening up new avenues of opportunity for local businesses.

‘The Polan-Gabd electricity transmission line plays a pivotal role in meeting the energy needs of the region, including households and businesses, by bringing in additional 100MW electricity from Iran,’ said a statement issued by the Foreign Office.

It said the joint inauguration has a manifestation of the strong commitment of Pakistan and Iran to uplift welfare of the residents of the provinces of Balochistan and Sistan-Baluchestan. ‘It also serves as a significant stride forward in relationship between the two countries,’ the FO noted.

Pakistan and Iran share a 959km-long border that begins at Koh-i-Malik Salih mountain and ends at Gwadar Bay in the Gulf of Oman. The trade volume between the two countries currently stands at around \$2 billion.

Iran exports around 100 megawatts of electricity to the border areas of Pakistan. The inauguration of the Mand-Pishin border sustenance marketplace was discussed last week during a meeting between Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar and Chairman of the Commission of National Security and Foreign Policy of Iran Vahid Jalalzadeh.

‘This border crossing, to be inaugurated by the prime minister of Pakistan and the president of Iran, holds immense significance in promoting trade and connectivity between the two countries,’ the commerce ministry said in a statement issued after the meeting.

‘The opening of this border is expected to facilitate smooth movement of goods and people, further enhancing economic cooperation.’ it said.

The commerce minister had emphasised the importance of opening new border markets and implementing a barter trade system to facilitate greater

commercial exchange. These measures, he believed, would contribute to a significant surge in trade volume between Iran and Pakistan.

Mr Qamar also stressed the importance of expediting the longdelayed Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline.

Discussions to build the pipeline began in 1995, but it has not yet been completed, mainly due to lack of funds in Pakistan and complications posed by US sanctions over Iran’s nuclear activities.

‘The minister stressed the importance of expediting the project, as it holds immense potential for energy cooperation between the two countries,’ the statement said.

‘He pledged his commitment to resolve any obstacles and move forward with the pipeline, which would bring substantial benefits to both nations.

Govt paves ‘Road to Makkah’ for Haj, Umrah pilgrims

Islamabad and Riyadh signed an agreement on Wednesday 17th May to initiate the ‘Road to Makkah’ project, aimed at simplifying the immigration process for Pakistanis travelling to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj and Umrah.

Under the agreement, intending pilgrims would be provided with immigration facilities in Pakistan and

would be exempted from the process at Saudi airports.

The service would initially be available at Islamabad International Airport, where around 26,000 pilgrims would benefit from the facility, the Prime Minister’s House (PMO) said. It will later be extended to Karachi and Lahore airports.

The agreement was signed at the PMO by Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Dr Nasir Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Dawood.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Ambassador in Islamabad Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki witnessed the ceremony.

Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Talha Mahmood, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi also attended.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia also signed the joint minutes of a meeting in which they had discussed the issuance of Pakistani passports to the Burmese Muslims residing in Saudi Arabia. According to details, the passports of Burmese Muslims were not renewed after 2012, which created some difficulties for them in the kingdom.

Under the arrangement, these people and their children would be issued passports to improve their legal status in Saudi Arabia.

As per the discussion, a bilateral committee would be formed comprising the representatives of Saudi Arabia and the interior ministry to work out early issuance of the documents to the Burmese Muslims.

Following the ceremony, the prime minister presented a souvenir to the Saudi dignitary, who also reciprocated the gesture by presenting a memento to Mr Sharif.



Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif witnesses the signing of the ‘Road to Makkah’ project agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan on Wednesday 17th May.

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Committee formed on Murree's master plan after over a year

After one-and-a-half years, the divisional administration woke up from deep slumber and started work on preparing a master plan for the hill station of Murree.

After the tragedy of January 2022 in which 23 tourists died in their vehicles trapped in heavy snow in Murree, a high-level inquiry committee was constituted which found negligence of officials and government departments in it.

Later, 15 senior officials, including the then commissioner Rawalpindi, deputy commissioner, city police officer and other officials were removed.

The committee recommended a conducive environment for tourists in the hill station. The committee had said Murree might be upgraded to the status of a district. A comprehensive master plan for the hill station may also be prepared and implemented for the future development and promotion of the tourism destination.

Strict building code regulations should be developed and implemented, land use control should be enforced strictly and illegal buildings and structures must be demolished forth with.

A modern early warning system may be established with the Met Department in Murree to warn officials, tourists and travelers.

Moreover, the committee had suggested that the Department of Tourist Services may be strengthened by appropriate human and physical resources.

The regulatory framework for various tourist and allied services may be developed and implemented.

Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench had also directed the administration to make a comprehensive master plan for the hill station and implement building bylaws to save the environment of the area.

Divisional Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha presided over a meeting to review the implementation of the Murree contingency plan in the light of the high court directive. He said all departments should ensure the implementation of the court's decision so that there was no room left for any such tragedy in future.

The commissioner formed a

committee headed by Local Government Project Management Unit (PMU) and directed that the master plan of Murree should be finalised as soon as possible.

He directed the director development to visit Murree along with the executive engineer buildings and submit proposals for two suitable sites for parking plazas to be constructed there in the next meeting.

He said that the progress on the three bypasses for Murree Dadhyal, Bustan Mor and Bansara Gali to Kali Mitti should also be updated in the next meeting. The national park of Murree and Kotli Sattian should be made a centre of tourists and the Forest Department should plant trees there. He directed that the Forest

Department should launch a strategic tree plantation campaign in Murree. The commissioner said while finalising the arrangements special emphasis should be given on the convenience and ease of mobility of the local people.

The Meteorological department should send timely forecast to the concerned departments and all the departments should develop close liaison with each other.

For the convenience of tourists, information, warning boards and up-to-date information should be displayed at various places, and precautionary measures should be taken to discourage people from unnecessary travel in time of emergency.

Additional Commissioner (Coordination) Syed Nazarat Ali, Director Development Nazia Sudhan and officials of other departments also attended the meeting.

Dead blue whale sighted near Jiwani



A giant blue whale has been found dead in Balochistan's waters near the coast of Jiwani in Gwadar district.

The carcass was found by local fishermen on Friday 26th May morning.

The dead whale was swept close to the shore of Bandri near Jiwani due to high waves, officials of the fisheries department said.

According to the WWF senior researcher Sudhir Baloch, the blue whale was 42 feet long, weighing more than 20 tonnes.

WWF Technical Advisor Muhammad Muazzam Khan Durrani said the blue whale was one of the rarest aquatic creatures and added that the reasons for

death were being ascertained.

'The body of the whale was taken into custody by the WWF team and DNA samples have been collected for analysis,' he said.

While people were calling it a rare occurrence, Abdul Rahim Baloch, a marine life expert said the blue whale is a marine mammal that has been frequently sighted off the coast of Makran.

Mr Baloch said the animal has a confirmed maximum length of 29.9 metres and a weight of up to 199 tonnes. The Gwadar Development Authority plans to preserve the remains of the dead whale.

British royal family won't return remains of Ethiopian prince

Buckingham Palace on Tuesday 23rd May said it has declined a request from the family of a 19th century Ethiopian prince to repatriate his remains.

Prince Alemayehu was captured aged seven by the British Army and taken to England in 1868, arriving as an orphan after his mother died en route.

He spent the next decade in Britain, and was looked upon kindly by Queen Victoria, who arranged for his education before his death aged 18 in 1879 from pneumonia.

At the reported request of Queen Victoria, he was entombed in the catacombs of St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, the royal residence west of London.

Ethiopian leaders have previously asked the British royal family for his remains to be returned to his homeland, and his family told the BBC recently that they too had requested the repatriation.

'We want his remains back as a family and as Ethiopians because that is not the country he was born in, Fasil Minas, one of his descendants, told the British broadcaster. He said 'it was not right' for the prince to remain buried in the UK. But in a statement, Buckingham Palace said it regretted that due to the need to 'preserve the dignity' of others buried at the chapel it had not been possible to agree to the request.

Buddha Purnima celebrated at Islamabad Museum

The Prime Minister's Task Force on Gandhara Tourism on Friday 26th May celebrated religious teacher Buddha's birth anniversary to pay tributes to him and enlighten his life's legacy. The day is known as Buddha Purnima.

The event, held at the Islamabad Museum, was attended by officials, art lovers and other dignitaries, according to

a press release.

Visualising the immense potential of tourism around the Gandhara civilisation, the force is making all-out efforts to promote Gandhara tourism in the country, under the chairmanship of Minister of State Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani.

Pakistan is home to a multitude of heritage sites, monuments and historic buildings which demonstrate the diverse layers of the history of this region.

The rich Gandhara heritage of Pakistan is an iconic phenomenon in the entire world as Gandhara art is a great and major attraction for Buddhists from all over the world.

Gandhara, which is located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, has emerged as a centre of Buddhist learning, art, culture and plays a significant role in the history of Buddhism.

Buddhism's teachings have transcended borders and cultures, promoting compassion, mindfulness, and inner peace.

Under King Ashoka's patronage, Gandhara became a hub of monasteries, stupas, and educational institutions, attracting scholars and artists. The unique Gandharan art style blended diverse cultural influences, conveying the essence of Buddhism to people of various backgrounds.

Archaeological sites such as Takht-i-Bai and Taxila are showcasing remarkable Buddhist artefacts, representing the region's rich legacy.

Furthermore, Gandhara was a centre of intellectual discourse with scholars engaging in profound debates and contributing to the expansion of Buddhist philosophy.

It is worth mentioning here that the force had already directed relevant departments to compile a report on provincial rich heritage sites of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, particularly in KP to promote tourism in the country.

Buddhism research centre to be established at QAU

Islamabad Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) and Fo Guang Shan Education Centre, Malaysia have signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) under which a joint Humanistic Buddhism

Research Centre would be established at the QAU.

The MoA was signed by esteemed representatives including Quaid-i-Azam University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Niaz Ahmed Akhtar and Prof Dr Ghani-ur-Rahman from the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilisations, according to a press release issued by the university on Wednesday.

The Fo Guang Shan Education Centre was represented by the head of the President's Office Chang Yin Liang (Ven You Deng), and the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Malaya, Prof Dr Danny Wong Tze Ken.

The agreement will promote and facilitate academic and research collaboration between the two institutions, focusing on humanities, culture, and history, as well as research on the teachings of Buddha and humanistic Buddhism.

While addressing participants, the vice chancellor said that Gandhara civilisation thrived in the region and profoundly influenced the art, culture, and religion of the area and beyond.

This partnership and establishment of the Humanistic Buddhism Research Centre at Quaid-i-Azam University would promote interfaith dialogue and help us to understand the history of the region he added.

The ceremony was also attended by Dr Fasiha Ijlal, president, Silk Road Centre, Dr Ijlal Hussain, vice president Silk Road Centre, Leong Kam Fong from Fo Guang Shan Education Centre, Dr Firuza Begham Binti Mustafa, deputy dean (Faculty Arts and Social Sciences, University Malaya), Prof Dr Mohammad Idrees, dean, Faculty of Social Sciences (QAU), Prof Dr Shahid Hameed, dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences (QAU), Prof Dr Sarwat Jahan, dean, Faculty of Biological Sciences (QAU), Prof Dr Tasawar Hayat, member syndicate (QAU), Dr Salma Malik, director (QAU) and Dr Raja Qaiser Ahmed, registrar (QAU).



OBJECTS are display at the Saqqara necropolis where archaeologists unearthed two human and animal embalming workshops as well as two tombs.



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Pakistan, Belarus sign visa waiver agreement for red, blue passport holders

Pakistan and Belarus on Tuesday 30th May signed a landmark visa waiver agreement for red and blue passport holders.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, while speaking at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleinik, said one key outcome of the visit was the signing of an agreement between the two countries on abolition of visas for holders of diplomatic and official passport holders.

'This landmark agreement will facilitate travel and exchanges between our two countries', he remarked. He said an agreement was also signed between the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Belarus Institute of Strategic Research. He noted that such agreements facilitate exchanges and research and lay foundation of stronger academic cooperation.

Describing his discussions with the visiting dignitary as fruitful, he said these covered wide-ranging areas of mutual interest. 'Our long term goals for Pakistan, Belarus relationship include strengthening economic ties, expanding trade and investment, fostering scientific collaboration, promoting cultural exchanges and deepen people to people contacts', he said, He said Pakistan aspires to build a comprehensive and mutually beneficial partnership with Belarus that contributes to the prosperity and well being of the two nations.

The foreign minister said Pakistan was committed to maintaining high level engagements and exchange of visits with Belarus to further strengthen the bilateral relationship.

The foreign minister of Belarus said: 'We see Pakistan as a very valuable and reliable partner in South Asia and the Muslim world'.

Stressing that this was the clear and consistent position of his country, he said, adding Belarus will always be a friendly partner of Pakistan. 'We respect the right of countries to choose their path of development and oppose interference in the internal affairs as well as pressure and coercion in international relations', he remarked.

Despite geographical and global

changes, it was the desire of the two countries to build on the mutually beneficial ties.

He said they were considering further investment in Pakistan by setting up vehicles and tractor manufacturing factory. He said Belarus like many countries was defending sovereignty and facing illegal pressure of the sanctions.

Meanwhile, a joint statement issued by the Foreign Office said: 'During his two day official visit, Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, in addition to holding comprehensive delegation-level bilateral talks.

During their meeting, the two foreign ministers had a wide-ranging and substantive discussion on a variety of topics including political, economic, technological, cultural, educational and multilateral cooperation in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding.

The two sides agreed to take practical measures to translate the mutual goodwill between the two governments and their peoples into tangible cooperation in different fields.

The ministers expressed satisfaction with the friendly relations based on mutual respect, friendship and trust established between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and highly appreciated the bilateral meetings and interaction at the highest and high levels that have taken place in recent years.

The ministers expressed their interest in strengthening cooperation within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the United Nations and other International Organisations on matters of mutual interest, and reaffirmed their readiness to mutually support each other.

Taking into consideration, that Feb 3, 2024 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Pakistan, the ministers welcomed the intention to develop a plan of joint events dedicated to the anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Ethiopia opens embassy in Islamabad

Ambassador Misganu Arega, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, on Thursday 11th May inaugurated the embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Islamabad.

Ambassador Arega and Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, cut the ribbon together and announced the embassy open.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Ambassador Arega said opening of the Ethiopian embassy in Islamabad marked a new history in the diplomatic, political, economic and social cooperation between the two countries.

He also noted that the embassy had achieved remarkable progress in a short period in advancing the two countries cooperation in a number of fields.

Apart from bilateral relations, Ambassador Misganu said Ethiopia considered Pakistan as a strategic partner in international issues such as climate change, immigration, security and terrorism.

Ms Khar said Ethiopia and Pakistan had common economic and development challenges that needed the two countries' cooperation to overcome them. The state minister also stressed that the opening of Ethiopian embassy in Islamabad would have vital role in boosting Pakistan's relations with Africa.

Jemal Beker Abdula, who is the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia in Pakistan, said the establishment of the embassy in Islamabad showed that the Ethiopia government wanted to deepen its relations with Pakistan. He also extended his appreciation to the government of Pakistan for its unreserved support to realise the opening of the embassy.

Ethiopia and Pakistan established their bilateral diplomatic relations in 1950s, he said, adding the major initiatives including inauguration of Ethiopian Airlines and the embassy in Pakistan and visit of over 70 Pakistani businessmen to Ethiopia had changed the landscape of bilateral relations altogether.

PIA gets nod for Roosevelt Hotel rental deal

The government on Wednesday 10th May allowed the Pakistan International Airlines Investment Ltd (PIA-IL) to sign an agreement with the New York City Government (NYCG) for the utilisation of Roosevelt Hotel on rental for three years after reaching a settlement deal with the hotel union.

The decision was taken at a special meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet that also allowed two supplementary grants worth Rs153 million as legal expenses in a water dispute with India and Rs4 billion local currency cover to secure disbursement of equivalent loan from the World Bank. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar presided over the meeting.

Based on a briefing and summary of the Ministry of Aviation on challenges and re-opening of Roosevelt Hotel, New York, the ECC 'approved the execution of settlement agreement with the hotel union and the New York City Government', said an announcement, adding that it further gave nod for withdrawal of pending lawsuits by the Roosevelt Hotel with the hotel union and the City of New York pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreement with the union.

The ECC also directed the PIAL, on the request of the Aviation Ministry, to engage and share its business plan with the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) regarding the rollover of a \$142m loan for

another two years i.e. until Dec 31, 2024.

The meeting was informed that a four-member negotiating committee constituted by the ECC on April 28 led by the Secretary Aviation Division had a final round of negotiations with the NYCG and the staff union of Roosevelt Hotel Co (RHC) for utilisation of the 1,025 hotel rooms for a period of three years for Immigrant Housing Business by the NYCG.

The resultant agreements (with NYCG and the staff union) have already been cleared by the PIA-IL board of directors on May 8. The board had sought ECC's concurrence before signing a settlement agreement with the union and the NYCG. Over three years, the Pakistan-owned Roosevelt Hotel would thus get about \$19m in net cash flows against its 1,025 rooms instead of incurring over \$160m carrying costs for the same period.

The offer envisaged a 14-month guaranteed period along with a 4-month termination notice period (minimum of 18 months). The contract is to commence on May 15 and entails per night rent for each room at \$200 for the first year, \$205 for the second year and \$210 for the third year. The New York City government will cover the taxes etc and make a payment of \$1.74m monthly rent on the first of each month in advance.

Grand Opening of PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza: Unveiling a haven of comfort and serenity amidst the majestic mountains of Hunza.

On the 27th of May, the grand opening of PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza took place in the beautiful valley of Hunza, surrounded by the snow-capped mountains. The event was attended by Mr. and Mrs. Murtaza Hashwani, CEO of PSL and Deputy Chairman, Hashoo Group, Senior Minister of Gilgit Baltistan Col. Ubaidullah Baig, Rani Atiqa Sahiba of Hunza, Shehryar Khan, Mir of Hunza, Owners Mr. Ayaz Kalani, Mr. Mehboob Ali Bhulani, Mr. Fida Ali Sawani and Mr. Nizarshah, local dignitaries, Hashoo Group executives and guests from all over Pakistan.

The brand PC Legacy is a new chain of four-star hotels by Hashoo Group, which already owns and operates Pearl-Continental Hotels and Hotel One across Pakistan. PC Legacy will bridge the gap for travellers between five-star and select-service hotels. Situated in one of the world's most picturesque locations, and overlooking Rakaposhi, PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza offers breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the magnificence of nature. The hotel features 57 meticulously designed rooms and suites, state-of-the-art facilities, and a range of dining options, promising a truly remarkable stay.

The breathtaking ceremony took place in the idyllic outdoors of the hotel, with an unobstructed view of the enchanting Rakaposhi mountain. The CEO of Hashoo Group, Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, a pioneering force in the Pakistani hospitality sector, unveiled the PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza and addressed the guests, reflecting upon the journey that led to the creation of PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza. "It gives us immense pride to declare that we have already attained a remarkable 40% representation of female employees at PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza, and we are dedicated to elevating this figure to 50%.



This distinction makes us the first hotel in Pakistan to achieve such a significant proportion of women in our workforce” he added.

The afternoon was filled with moments of inspiration. Ms. Samreen Kalani, Mr. Faisal Sawani, Sheryaar Mohammad and Salman Mehboob Ali shared their views, emphasizing the collaboration and shared vision behind this exceptional venture. Their words resonated with the audience, underscoring their commitment to providing unparalleled luxury and service, as well as giving back to the community. The Senior Minister, Col. Ubaidullah Baig's attendance highlighted the significance of this landmark occasion, symbolizing the importance of the region as a prime destination for tourism and development.

Adding to the enchantment of the evening, the internationally acclaimed “Gurgu”, a group of musicians from Lief Larson Music Centre, Hunza, along with Mr. Niaz Baltistani, a renowned singer from Gilgit-Baltistan took the centre stage, captivating the guests with a mesmerizing performance. The melodic tunes echoed through the mountains, creating an unforgettable ambiance that perfectly complemented the surroundings.

Embarking on this exciting new chapter, PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza aims to redefine the standards of luxury hospitality in the region. Travellers from around the world are invited to embark on an extraordinary journey of relaxation, rejuvenation, and discovery, while indulging in the unparalleled beauty and tranquility that this remarkable destination offers.

Egypt unveils ancient mummification workshops and tombs

Archaeologists in Egypt have unearthed two human and animal embalming workshops, as well as two tombs, discovered in the Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo, the government said recently.

The vast burial site, at the ancient Egyptian capital Memphis, is a Unesco

World Heritage site and home to more than a dozen pyramids, animal graves and old Coptic Christian monasteries.

Mostafa Waziri, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, told reporters the embalming workshops, where humans and animals were mummified, 'date back to the 30th dynasty' which reigned around 2,400 years ago.

Researchers 'found several rooms equipped with stony beds where the deceased lay down for mummification', Egypt's tourism and antiquities ministry said.

Each bed ended in gutters to facilitate the mummification process, with a collection of clay pots nearby to hold entrails and organs, as well as a collection of instruments and ritual vessels.

Early studies of the other workshop suggest it was used for the 'mummification of sacred animals'. The discovery also includes the tombs of two priests dating back to the 24th and 14th centuries BC, respectively.

The first belonged to Ne Hesut Ba, who served the fifth dynasty as the head of scribes and priest of the gods Horus and Maat.

The tomb walls are decorated with depictions of 'daily life, agriculture and hunting scenes', said Mohamed Youssef, director of the Saqqara archaeological site.

The second tomb, that of a priest named Men Kheber, was carved in rock and features depictions of the deceased himself on the tomb walls, as well as in a one-metre-long (three foot) alabaster statue, Youssef told reporters.

Egypt has unveiled a string of major archaeological discoveries in recent years.

Critics say the flurry of excavations has prioritised finds shown to grab media attention over hard academic research.

The discoveries have been a key component of Egypt's attempts to revive its vital tourism industry amid a severe economic crisis.

The government recently launched a strategy 'aiming for a rapid increase in inbound tourism' at a rate of 25-30 per cent a year, Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa said at the site on Saturday.

Egypt aims to draw in 30 million tourists a year by 2028, up from 13 million before the Covid pandemic.

The crowning jewel of the government's strategy is the long-delayed inauguration of the Grand Egyptian Museum at the foot of the pyramids in Giza.

Long-lost siblings reunite after 75 years at Kartarpur

NAROWAL: In a heartwarming event, a man and his sister who were separated 75 years ago finally reunited in Kartarpur, thanks to the power of social media.

Mahendra Kaur, 81, accompanied by her family members, made the journey from India to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur via the Kartarpur Corridor. Similarly, 78-year-old Sheikh Abdul Aziz arrived in Kartarpur with his family from Azad Kashmir.

The Kartarpur Corridor, famously known as the Corridor of Love, Peace, and Reunification, brought together these long-lost siblings, both originally from prepartitioned India. Overwhelmed with emotion, they embraced each other, expressing profound sadness over the loss of their parents.

During the partition in 1947, the family of Sardar Bhajan Singh, who resided in Indian Punjab, was tragically torn apart. Following the Partition, Aziz relocated to Azad Kashmir while his other family members remained in India. Aziz shared that he spent years in distress after being separated from his family.

He tirelessly searched for them but couldn't find any leads. He married at a young age but always carried the longing to reunite with his estranged family, including his parents and other relatives.

The family members revealed that they came across a post on social media detailing the separation of a man and his sister during the partition.

The two families connected through this post and discovered that Mahendra and Aziz were indeed the estranged siblings.

Overwhelmed with joy, Mahendra Kaur repeatedly hugged her brother and kissed his hands. In light of this joyful occasion, the Kartarpur administration adorned both families with garlands and distributed sweets.

The families visited Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur together, sitting side by side and sharing a meal. They also exchanged gifts as a symbol of their reunion.

Mahendra expressed her gratitude for the Kartarpur Corridor project, praising the government of Pakistan.



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Beauties of nature find haven in Clifton urban forest

You turn towards the Clifton Urban Forest Karachi and you run into the man responsible for growing this jungle, or rather jungle mein mangal (feast in the forest), briskly marching off somewhere. He doesn't look happy. He has just been informed about someone trying to trap the flamingos in his artificially created lagoon.

'The lagoon these days is attracting both the migrating greater flamingos and lesser flamingos. The greater flamingos, which are some five-and-a-half feet tall, need a bit of running space before taking off, like an aeroplane. And here we have the kidnappers, who spread kite strings in their strides, to make their long and thin legs buckle as they catch them,' said Masood Lohar, the man behind the urban forest.

'I keep getting phone calls from odd people offering me money to get them a pair of flamingos because they want to keep exotic animals at their place. That day I even found a poacher here,' Lohar shared, shaking his head in disbelief.

'We have been seeing some 120 species of migrating birds and nesting birds, insects and animals here on this 220 acres of land that we have turned into an urban forest with an artificial lagoon and mudflats. This is now the largest biodiversity rich lagoon in Pakistan,' he said.

From moving here two-and-a-half years ago and living in a little blue camper's tent among the lizards and snakes and surrounded by a garbage dump that he dug up as deep as he could to clean, Lohar seems to be doing a little better now on the home front. He has built a little office with an adjoining bedroom.

'I still live here,' he said, pointing to his bedroom behind the office. 'The day I leave, I know my own men will be selling the rare birds to the highest bidders,' he added. The Clifton Urban Forest, started on Jan 8, 2021 in close coordination with the Sindh government, is a community based voluntary initiative of Masood Lohar, the former head of UNDP-GEF SGP, from the platform of Sindh Radiant Organisation (SRO) to restore ecosystem, create urban resilience and conserve the marine ecosystem of Karachi.

It has now become a successful model of ecosystem restoration and covers Sustainable Development Goals such as eliminating hunger, providing

good health and well-being, building sustainable cities and communities, taking climate action, helping life below water and life on land.

Lohar has really created what he had set out to do. Back in 2021, when he was living in the tent while clean up work and planting saplings was going on here, he had counted 42 different bird species and noticed three types of lizards. Today, he talks about moorhens, cavendish plovers, lesser sand plovers, swallows, little stilts and black stilts. He tells you about the 12 species of butternies, three species of honeybees and the lots of beetles, all marvels of biodiversity. 'You won't even find so many species at Haleji Lake,' he beamed.

'A bird photographer also spotted and photographed two internationally near threatened birds, the black tailed godwit and the Eurasian curlew and also made a record of the first-ever sighting of the crab plover in the lagoon,' he shared.

In the 26 to 27 months that he has been here, Lohar has planted some 700,000 trees here of some 83 species, which include mangroves, water lilies and lotus out in the open sea to create the artificial lagoon and mudflats.

He takes you to his forest with all the trees, bushes and long grass allowed to grow wildly. 'Watch me walk in the grass,' he says. So many insects fly up or hop out of his way as some bigger insect like the cricket or praying mantis gobble up the smaller insects. 'It is not a park, it is wilderness with a food chain. The insects in the garden are food for the bigger

insects and lizards here. We have bee-eating birds nesting here, too,' he informed.

Most conversations with Lohar are about his lovely neighbours. 'We have three types of lizards including the monitor lizard and the skink lizard. See this climber here, our honey bees love it,' he added, while also telling you about some 'nice non venomous snakes' that come to visit his office and bedroom quite often.

The forest opens into a beautiful lagoon, which connects you to the Arabian Sea. You hear chirping, you hear croaks, you hear whistles. You can see the horizon meet the ebbing tides. And that's where you see the pink and white flamingos. There are also plenty of ducks afloat on the gentle waves.

The flamingos require shallow water, the ducks deep water. We have provided for both,' Lohar explained.

Although flamingos are indigenous birds, migratory flamingos are also arriving here from India on their way back to Europe, a rare occurrence as this place had pretty much done away with its ecosystem and biodiversity thanks to so much reclamation around the coastal areas and pollution. 'Do you know, this place, from Teen Talwar to Do Talwar and the Mai Kolachi Bypass used to be the largest lagoon with the largest lake? We built over it and finished it all. Now this urban forest is returning to nature only a little bit of what we stole from it,' he concluded.



MASOOD Lohar, the main behind the urban forest, in sync with nature he recreated around himself.



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