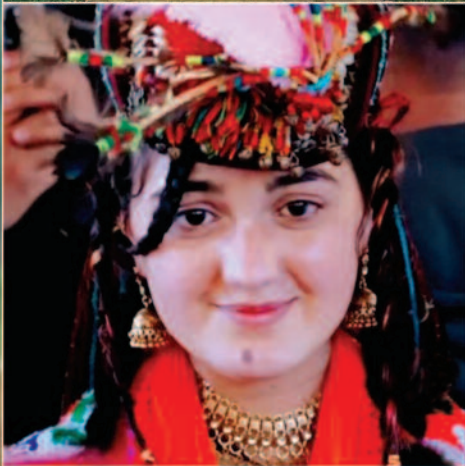
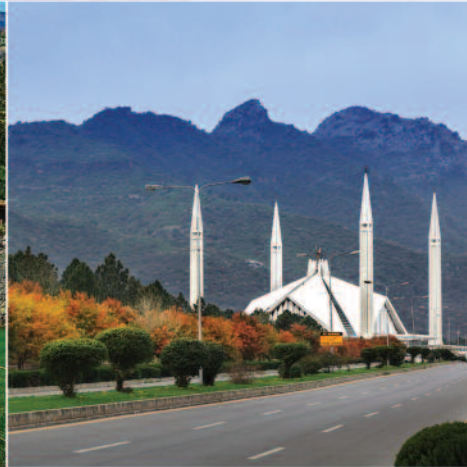


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Issue Monthly
 Price Rs. 500/=

Annual Subscription Pakistan Rs.5000/=
 Other Countries US\$100/=

Published from New Flyer International
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By Abdul Sattar Azad
 Phone 34615924
 Fax 34615924
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 Monthly Magazine of Aviation and Tourism
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Airlines asked to submit passenger details to curb mpox spread

The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has directed all incoming flights to submit a passenger manifest before arrival, as the country ramps up vigilance after the detection of the first mpox case.

After the WHO's warning regarding the disease on August 14, the National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) issued a national advisory to adopt preventive measures.

The government had tasked the PCAA to monitor flights arriving from countries where the disease has been reported to be present.

In a directive issued on Sunday, 18 August, the aviation regulator advised all airlines and ground handling service providers to take preventive measures against mpox.

"All the airlines are directed to ensure submission of [the] passenger manifest in advance for all international arriving flights to the Airport Health Establishment and Airport management at all international airports with immediate effect".

The document must include the point of origin for all arriving passengers, the PCAA said and directed the airlines to ensure compliance. The PCAA officials are also likely to hold a meeting with airline representatives on Monday, 19 August, to review the measures taken by the airports to screen the passengers for suspected mpox cases.

On Saturday, 17 August, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the officials to take strict measures to monitor and control the spread of the mpox, which has been declared a public health emergency of international concern by the WHO.

During a meeting, PM Shehbaz instructed officials to make screening processes at airports, seaports and borders more effective, the prime minister's office said in a statement. He directed the NCOC to monitor and review the situation on a daily basis. The federal and provincial administrations were asked to develop better coordination to curb the disease's spread and directed them to start an effective and comprehensive awareness campaign.

Tourism, Justice and Peace

Breaking Barriers and Amplifying the Voices of the Unheard

Each September on 27, the global tourism community turns its attention to the Center for Responsible Travel's (CREST) annual World Tourism Day Forum. This event, known for its unapologetically bold approach, convenes leaders from industry, government, civil society, and local communities to ideate solutions that address tourism's most pressing challenges. Tickets for the 2024 World Tourism Day Forum are on sale now.

This year's theme places tourism at the nexus of justice and peace, urging a deep and reflective examination of tourism's influence on migration, social equity, climate justice, diplomacy, and cultural preservation – among other topics. By disrupting the status quo, the 2024 Forum commits to fostering meaningful dialogue and actions that challenge prevailing norms and encourage cross-sector collaboration.

In a historic first, the 2024 World Tourism Day Forum will venture beyond its usual Washington, DC setting to

convene in Atlanta, Georgia from September 24-25, 2024. Selected for its pivotal role as a connecting place in global travel and its deep-rooted legacy in civil rights and social justice, Atlanta plays an important role in this year's event. Home to the world's busiest airport for over 25 years and a host city for the 1996 Olympics and the upcoming 2026 World Cup, Atlanta is truly the place where industry and community progress collide. And as a historic bastion of Black civil rights and culture, social justice and peace are ingrained in the city's DNA.

In partnership with RISE Travel Institute, CREST looks forward to welcoming you to this historic event.

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SIAL up & alert to tackle M-Pox-taking all precautionary measures

Sialkot International Airport is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all passengers, staff, and visitors amid the global concerns over the Monkeypox outbreak. In light of recent developments, the airport has implemented a series of stringent precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus and maintain a safe environment for everyone. Sialkot International Airport has started health screenings for all incoming passengers. Thermal scanners have been installed at all entry points to monitor body temperature, and medical teams are on standby to conduct further assessments if necessary. Passengers exhibiting symptoms consistent with Monkeypox will be promptly isolated and provided with the necessary medical attention.

The airport has intensified its cleaning and disinfection routines, with a focus on high-touch areas such as check-in counters, security checkpoints, restrooms, and boarding gates. Hand sanitizing boxes have been placed throughout the terminal, and passengers are encouraged to use them frequently. Additionally, all airport staff are equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE) and are trained to follow strict hygiene protocols.

To keep passengers informed, Sialkot International Airport has launched an awareness campaign across various platforms, including digital screens, social media, and in-flight announcements. The campaign provides critical information about Monkeypox, its symptoms, and preventive measures, ensuring that passengers are well-informed and can take appropriate precautions.

The airport is closely collaborating with national health authorities, including the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), to stay updated on the latest guidelines and recommendations. This partnership ensures that Sialkot International Airport remains at the forefront of implementing best practices to safeguard public health. Passengers are advised to stay informed about travel advisories and follow the guidance provided by health authorities. Anyone feeling unwell or exhibiting symptoms of Monkeypox is urged to postpone travel and seek medical advice. Sialkot International Airport remains dedicated to providing a safe and secure



travel experience for all. The health and safety of our passengers, staff, and community are our top priorities, and we

will continue to monitor the situation closely, adjusting our measures as necessary to respond to any developments.

SHC fines PIA for filing 'frivolous' applications

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has imposed a fine on the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (PIA) for filing frivolous applications seeking review of an earlier order.

Comprising Justice Muhammad Junaid Ghaffar and Justice Agha Faisal, the two-judge bench dismissed the review applications with costs of Rs25,000 each for being frivolous and devoid of merit, and directed the petitioner/applicant to deposit the same in the account of the SHC clinic.

The PIA had filed petitions in 2022, assailing respective interlocutory orders rendered by the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC) and the SHC had dismissed the same in November 2022.

Thereafter, the bench noted that the petitioner preferred review applications ostensibly beyond the pale of limitation in January 2023.

The dismissal of the petitions was inter alia predicated upon the observation that since the governing law, Industrial Relations Act (IRA) 2012, contained no provision of appeal in respect of interlocutory orders, thus the same could not be construed to automatically become assailable in writ jurisdiction, it added.

The lawyer for the applicant argued that Section 58(2) of IRA did contain a

provision to assail interlocutory orders and upon being requested to identify the relevant constituent in the provision, he submitted that a copy of the statute was not available therewith.

The bench then read out the relevant provision/statute to the lawyer, but he remained unable to identify any constituent therein to corroborate his argument.

It was further articulated that the absence of any provision for a statutory appeal provided entitlement to prefer a writ petition while such an argument was prima facie in conflict with his earlier submission, however, once again the counsel remained unable to substantiate his averment with any law, it added.

The bench also observed that the jurisdiction of the SHC in review proceedings was limited and the entire thrust of the arguments advanced by the counsel was directed towards merits of an already dismissed case and there was absolutely no effort to identify any mistake or error apparent on the face of the record or any other sufficient reason justifying a review of the order.

“It is thus the considered view of this Court that these applications are frivolous, devoid of merit, hence, were dismissed, with costs of Rs25,000 each to be deposited in the account of the Sindh High Court Clinic,” it concluded.

Pilot licence issue was not only reason behind PIA flights ` ban to EU: Senate committee told



Restriction on PIA flights to Europe was not imposed because of the pilot licence issue only, but also due to the warning issued to Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) about safety concerns a year ago.

This emerged during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Aviation chaired by Senator Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo in Parliament House on Monday, 12 August.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla informed the meeting that the restriction on the PIA flights to Europe was not only the result of the pilot licence issue, but a year before that the PCAA had received a warning about safety concerns. The secretary aviation confirmed that a warning had been received before the pilot licences issue.

The meeting was informed that the PCAA was equipped with a state of the art system for air traffic management and navigation system.

The committee meeting was convened to discuss ongoing issues plaguing the aviation industry.

Senator Sherry Rehman sought immediate attention to the “licence-gate” challenge and the ban on PIA from flying to the European Union (EU) for the last four years. She stressed the need for accountability and transparency in addressing both the issues which were independent of each other, but remained shockingly unaddressed and opaque.

She questioned why the civil aviation was allowed to conduct the exams for licences and put out a list of so-called fake

licences at the same time. The then minister for aviation, she added, made a speech that downed PIA and its trained pilots from a slump that they have never been able to recover from.

Senator Rehman also expressed concern over the lack of accountability and transparency in such a matter of grave national importance.

Despite four years of inquiry, she added, no one who was actually responsible had been held accountable for the grounding of the air fleet from flying to the EU, nor for the pilots’ issue.

Senator Rehman said accountability was crucial, adding if ordinary citizens were involved they would have been jailed by now.

She emphasised that parliament holds itself accountable, and the civil service must do the same but must understand that boilerplate presentations are no longer acceptable in the upper house of parliament, because most of us have a better acquaintance with the data and the hidden issues that have been pushed under the rug.

She said the report prepared regarding the European Union’s safety protocols be shared with the committee. She also asked the inquiry report regarding the ban on pilots be presented in the committee. The committee chair also agreed to a special session on the two issues.

The committee expressed dissatisfaction with the working of the CAA and the prolonged unresolved issues affecting the airlines. Members criticised

the director general of the CAA for failing to provide relief to pilots and described this period as a ‘dark era’ for Pakistan’s aviation industry. The secretary aviation assured the committee that the pilots’ issue will be resolved in two weeks.

The committee was informed that PIA still remains banned from flying to Europe due to international regulatory air safety concerns. However, the PIA chief executive officer informed the meeting that majority of the air safety concerns had already been addressed.

The director general Airport Security Force informed the committee that a new hi-tech 70kg weighing camera had been installed at Jinnah International Airport which had the ability to see an individual at a distance of 15km and can move on 360 degrees. Moreover, 28 hi-tech baggage scanning machines had been installed at airports while 39 more were in the pipeline.

The ASF chief also informed the meeting that baggage of all travelers were scanned, however, some VVIPs were exempted from body search. He said 24 ASF officials had been martyred so far, including 11 in Karachi in the line of duty.

The meeting was also informed that Nawabshah airport that was affected and its light system damaged due to flooding was an alternative airport of Karachi. The CAA representative said Nawab Shah Airport had been made functional and can be used for landing of A320 aircraft. And Nawab Shah Airport was being made for landing of Boeing 777.

DG Health Sindh visits Karachi Airport

The Director General of Health Sindh, accompanied by the COO/Airport Manager JIAP and the Director of Airport Health Services, visited Jinnah International Airport to evaluate the screening protocols implemented for monkeypox.

The officials were briefed on the administration's commitment to rigorously applying the guidelines established by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC). They assessed the screening processes for all passengers arriving in Pakistan via international flights and examined the isolation room set up by the Border Health Services for travelers showing potential symptoms.

In this designated area, the travel history and symptoms of these individuals are evaluated, and if symptoms are detected, samples are collected for PCR testing, as reported to them. Senior officials expressed their satisfaction with the anti-monkeypox measures and the management practices in place at the airport.

PCAA appoints New DG & Dy DG

The appointment of the Director General of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority and the Director General of the Pakistan Airports Authority

been designated as the Director General of the Pakistan Airports Authority for the same duration. Both Nadir Shafi Dar and Air Vice Marshal Taimur Iqbal will



has been announced. Deputy Director General PCAA (Regulatory) Nadir Shafi Dar has been assigned the additional responsibility of Director General of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority for a period of ninety days.

Additionally, Air Vice Marshal Taimur Iqbal, the Additional Director General of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, has

undertake these supplementary roles until permanent appointments are made.

Their tenure will last for ninety days or until permanent positions are filled, whichever occurs first. Notably, Nadir Shafi Dar is recognized as the first regular career Director General of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, while Air Vice Marshal Taimur Iqbal holds the distinction of being the inaugural Director General of the Pakistan Airports Authority.

PIA cuts fares to Madina, Jeddah

Pakistan International Airlines has reduced the fares of its flights from Karachi to Jeddah and Madina by 30 per cent, the national carrier announced on Monday.

A PIA spokesman said that after the discount, the one-way ticket from Karachi to Jeddah and Madina would cost Rs 56,000, including taxes, and the return ticket Rs 88,000.

The discounted tickets will be available till August 31, the spokesperson said, adding that passengers would be able to travel to Madina and Jeddah on these tickets until Sept 30.

The discounted fares will be effective immediately.



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The evening began with a warm welcome by Somon Travel, followed by an insightful presentation on Tajikistan's tourism opportunities. Guests were treated to a captivating documentary showcasing the country's stunning landscapes and rich culture. The management of Gerry's International highlighted the strategic partnership between Somon Air and Gerry's International, emphasizing the connectivity between Tajikistan and Pakistan, and the exclusive services Gerry's Group offers, including a 24-hour visa processing service.

A special thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making this event a grand success! Your support and enthusiasm for promoting tourism in Tajikistan are greatly appreciated. Let's continue to work together to bring more such opportunities in the future!



PCAA holds 47th e-Kachery



The 47th e-Kachery, led by Additional DG CAA (AVM) Taimur Iqbal, was held at the PCAA Headquarters. Deputy DG Airports Sadiq Ur Rehman, Deputy DG Works and Development Sumair Saeed, Directors from various departments, and representatives from PEL, IT, and Vigilance were also present at the meeting. A wide range of complaints were addressed during the e-Kachery. These included issues such as ticket refund requests, delay in receiving mark sheet following the exam, requests for a CPL exam center in Lahore, concerns about the design of airports, infrastructure issues at Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore, and reports of bribery.

The Additional DG issued on-the-spot instructions wherever necessary and assured that all complaints would be followed up and addressed promptly. Regarding the construction of a domestic/international airport in Mirpur, AK, it was explained that such a project

requires significant planning and suitable land availability before construction can begin.

Plans to upgrade existing airports in Muzafarabad and Rawalakot were also mentioned to improve air travel services for the public. Question about PIA's flight between Karachi and Peshawar was clarified, stating that flight operations by airlines depend on financial viability of the route. Fly Jinnah currently offers regular flights on this route, it was informed. Various other grievances were raised, including sanitation issues at Faisalabad International Airport, inadequate facilities at Jinnah International Airport, and reports of unprofessional behavior at Bacha Khan International Airport in Peshawar.

The Additional DG CAA thanked participants for their feedback, acknowledging the importance of their input in improving processes and implementing necessary corrective measures.



PIA official who survived 1965 Cairo crash passes away



A former Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) official, who was among the last living survivors of the 1965 Cairo crash, passed away in London.

Salahuddin Siddique, 93, had retired in 1980 as general manager (public affairs) of the national flag carrier.

He was one of the people on board the ill-fated inaugural PIA flight from Karachi and London, which crashed near Cairo airport on May 20, 1965. The flight was supposed to stop over in Dhahran, Cairo and Geneva.

The plane had 128 passengers and crew on board, of whom only six had survived.

Mr Siddique had been living in London for a long time. According to family sources, he is survived by a son and a daughter. A PIA spokesperson, on behalf of the management of the national flag carrier, condoled with the bereaved family, saying PIA would always remember Mr Siddique's services.



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FAA issues first Artificial Intelligence Roadmap

The FAA has released the first iteration of its “Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence Safety Assurance,” a 31-page document outlining the U.S. air safety regulator’s approach to safely integrating novel AI technologies in aviation. In addition to making AI safe, the FAA also seeks to identify ways that AI can make the industry safer, according to the strategy document.

To come up with its AI roadmap, the FAA consulted with industry officials and other regulatory agencies, including the

One area where EASA and the FAA differ in their roadmaps is ethical considerations. The FAA’s document declares that “the treatment of the ethical use of AI is outside the scope of this roadmap,” and EASA wrote in its version that “the liability, ethical, social and societal dimension of AI should also be considered.” According to EASA, ethical guidelines are critical to ensuring AI trustworthiness and earning societal acceptance of AI in aviation and in general.



European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which published its first AI roadmap in 2020. EASA released a revised and expanded AI Roadmap 2.0 in May 2023, and this year the agency published a concept paper with new guidelines for companies that intend to certify AI systems.

In its version of the AI roadmap, the FAA introduces a list of core principles that will guide its development of AI safety assurance methods. For example, it recommends regulators leverage existing aviation safety requirements and take an incremental, safety-focused approach to implementing AI—starting with lower-risk applications such as pilot aides to reduce workload and crew sizes.

The document also spells out some key actions that must be taken to enable the safe use of AI as well as the use of AI for safety enhancements. These include collaborating with industry and government agencies, educating and training the FAA’s workforce on AI technology, and conducting ongoing research to evaluate the effectiveness of its safety assurance methods.

While the FAA’s roadmap does not offer any ethical guidance directly, the document refers to recent legislation that addresses the matter, including Executive Order 14110 (“Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence”), which President Joe Biden issued in October 2023.

“This roadmap is being developed within a broader, evolving national framework established for the safe, secure, and trustworthy development and use of AI, including in appropriate cases its adoption and regulation across the federal government,” the FAA document states.

EASA’s roadmap offers an anticipated timeline for various phases of AI adoption, starting with pilot assistance and human-AI teaming this decade, with fully autonomous commercial airliners hitting the market around 2050. The FAA’s roadmap, however, makes no speculations about the speed of AI’s adoption or the timing of any AI-related milestones.

Both the FAA and EASA treat their respective roadmaps as “living documents” that the agencies periodically update as AI technology advances.

Millions of pilgrims rally for Arbaeen



More than 21 million devotees took part in the Arbaeen pilgrimage in Iraq this year, which reached its peak on Sunday, 25 August, with attendees displaying their support for Gaza.

Arbaeen, which means forty in Arabic, marks the 40th day of mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. It is one of the world’s biggest religious gatherings and a major event for Shias, who are the majority in Iraq and Iran.

Karbala, where Imam Hussein and his brother Abbas are buried in two enormous mausoleums facing each other, is the centre of the Shia world during this time.

Pilgrims freely express their suffering, weeping and wailing in memory of Imam Hussein. This year, the events have included prominent displays of Palestinian flags by pilgrims, photographers reported, amid the conflict in Gaza.

“The total number of Arbaeen pilgrims... reached 21,480,525”, the institution that manages the Abbas mausoleum and is responsible for the count, said. Among them were about 3.5 million Iranian pilgrims, according to official figures reported in Tehran.

Mohammed al-Tamimi, a 32-year-old pilgrim said that the Palestinian flags waving among the pilgrims are “in support of our brothers in Palestine and in response to the Zionists, saying that Muslims stand as one against the Zionist actions and against the crimes taking place in Gaza.”

The Arbaeen celebrations, which always take place amid tight security, drew around 22 million pilgrims last year, according to official figures. Iran provided the most foreign visitors, with four million.

Global air cargo demand up 13.6 percent in July 2024, eighth month of double-digit growth: IATA

Total demand in the global air cargo market, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs), surged by 13.6 per cent compared to July 2023 levels, with international operations experiencing an even higher increase of 14.3 per cent, as per the data released by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for July 2024. This marks the eighth consecutive month of double-digit year-on-year growth, pushing overall levels to heights not seen since the record peaks of 2021.

Capacity, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres (ACTKs), also saw a notable rise, increasing by 8.3 per cent year-on-year, with international operations up by 10.1 per cent. This growth was primarily driven by a 12.8 per cent increase in international belly capacity, which benefitted from strong passenger markets, and a 6.9 per cent growth in international freighter capacity. Notably, the rise in belly capacity is the lowest in 40 months, while freighter capacity growth reached its highest since a significant jump in January 2024.

Willie Walsh, IATA's director general, commented on the results, stating, "Air cargo demand hit record highs year-to-date in July with strong growth across all regions. The air cargo business continues to benefit from growth in global trade, booming e-commerce, and capacity constraints on maritime shipping. With the peak season still to come, it is shaping up to be a very strong year for air cargo. And airlines have proven adept at navigating political and economic uncertainties to flexibly meet emerging demand trends."

July's operating environment presented a mixed picture. The Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for global manufacturing output indicated expansion at 50.2, while the global new export orders PMI remained below the contraction threshold at 49.4. Industrial production remained flat month-on-month, and global cross-border trade increased by 0.7 per cent. Inflation rates in major economies, including the US, Japan, and the EU, remained stable around 2.8 to 2.9 per cent, while China saw a slight rise to 0.6 per cent, the highest level in five months, IATA said in a press release.



Airlines in the Asia-Pacific region led the charge with a 17.6 per cent year-on-year demand growth, the strongest across all regions. Demand on the Within-Asia trade lane grew by 19.8 per cent, while Europe-Asia, Middle East-Asia, and Asia-Africa trade lanes recorded growths of 17.9 per cent, 15.9 per cent, and 15.4 per cent, respectively. Capacity in the region increased by 11.3 per cent. North American carriers experienced an 8.7 per cent year-on-year growth in demand, despite disruptions caused by Hurricane Beryl. The Asia-North America trade lane, the largest by volume, grew by 10.8 per cent, while North America-Europe saw a modest increase of 5.3 per cent. Capacity rose by 7.0 per cent.

European carriers saw a 13.7 per cent increase in demand. The Middle East-Europe trade lane was the standout performer, with a 32.2 per cent rise, continuing a streak of double-digit growth since September 2023. The Europe-Asia route grew by 17.9 per cent, and Within Europe saw a 15.5 per cent increase. Capacity grew by 7.6 per cent. Middle Eastern carriers reported a 14.7 per cent increase in demand, with the Middle East-Europe trade lane surging 32.2 per cent, outperforming the 15.9 per cent growth on the Middle East-Asia route. Capacity increased by 4.4 per cent.

Latin American carriers recorded an 11.1 per cent increase in demand. However, growth was partly hindered by flight

cancellations and airport closures due to Hurricane Beryl. Capacity rose by 9.4 per cent. African airlines saw the lowest growth, with a 6.2 per cent increase in demand, their lowest figure for 2024. The Africa-Asia market did better, with a 15.4 per cent rise. Capacity increased by 10.5 per cent.

Boeing delivers highest numbers of Boeing 737 Max in 6 years



Data from Boeing has revealed that the manufacturer has delivered the highest number of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft to China this year since 2018. The manufacturer hopes to maintain this delivery rate to clear the backlog of aircraft earmarked for China, which would help reduce its costs and raise cash.

Oman lifts travel ban on India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries



After nearly four months, the Civil Aviation Authority has confirmed that the travel ban on fully vaccinated passengers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other 18 countries that were red-listed has been lifted, the Civil Aviation Authority has announced on Monday, September 02.

The decision comes into force from 12 pm on September 1.

The decision to lift the ban is a huge relief for hundreds of expats who are stranded in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. However, they have to receive both the doses of coronavirus vaccine approved by the Sultanate and must carry the vaccine certificate with a QR code.

Passengers will have to do a PCR test 72-hours before travel and carry a negative COVID-19 certificate or they can do a PCR test upon arriving in Oman but must go into quarantine until they get the negative result certificate.

Following are the decision issued from CAA:

- The list of countries from which arrivals are prohibited from entering the territory of the Sultanate has been terminated.

- All Omani citizens, resident visa holders of Oman, those who do not require a visa to travel to Oman, and those who can obtain a visa upon arrival are allowed to enter the Sultanate in accordance with the pre-Covid system.

- All passengers arriving to the

Sultanate are required to present a COVID-19 vaccine certificate containing a QR code stating that they have received two doses of a vaccine approved in Oman, or in cases where a single dose is approved by the health authorities of the Sultanate, have received one dose of such vaccine. The last dose is required to have been received not less than 14 days ahead of estimated arrival time. The Ministry of Health publishes and updates the list of actions approved in Oman.

- All passengers arriving to the Sultanate that present a free travel negative result COVID-19 PCR test are exempted. The COVID-19 PCR test shall indicate the medical test result which can be validated and certified with a QR code and the test shall be conducted within 96 hours prior to the schedule time of arrival in the Sultanate for the international flights of more than eight hours duration including transit, 72 hours for shorter flights.

- All passengers arriving to the Sultanate without holding a negative Covid 19 PCR test (in accordance with paragraph number four of the circular) or subject to a COVID-19 PCR test upon arrival where after the traveller shall be required to enter mandatory quarantine with electronic tracking bracelet until a negative PCR test results is received. However, in case of a positive PCR test result, the passengers shall be required to undergo mandatory health isolation for 10 days starting from the test date. Except

that passengers who have recovered from COVID-19 but tested positive on arrival are exempted from health isolation providing they are able to submit proof that they have completed the prescribed isolation period in the country where they were infected before travelling to the Sultanate.

- Before boarding the aircraft, all passengers arriving to the Sultanate, including diplomats, are required to complete pre-registration via Tarassud + platform and to upload the vaccine certificate as well as a COVID-19 PCR certificate, both containing QR codes. If the passenger prefers to conduct the COVID-19 PCR test upon arrival, the passengers shall pay the prescribed fees where registering via Tarassud + platform before boarding the aircraft.

- Arriving passengers aged 18 and below are exempted from the requirements of the vaccine and COVID-19 PCR test. Patients with diseases that prevent them from receiving the vaccine according to an approved medical certificate are also exempted from presenting vaccine certificates

- The decision is effective starting at 12.00 pm (oman local time) on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, except that Omani citizens and their families who departed the Sultanate before the issuance of this Circular are exempted from vaccine requirement for a maximum of two months from the issuance of this Circular.



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Emirates will buy 5 Airbus A380s from lessor for \$200 million

Emirates and Doric Nimrod Air Two, a Guernsey, the United Kingdom (UK)-based company, have agreed to a deal that will see the airline purchasing five Airbus A380 aircraft from the aircraft lessor for \$40 million apiece.



Lease-end transactions

According to Doric Nimrod Air Two's filing on the London Stock Exchange (LSE), Emirates has agreed to purchase five A380 aircraft at the end of their respective lease agreements, which were expected to be between October 1 and November 30. The aircraft have belonged to Doric Nimrod Air Two and its special purpose vehicle (SPV), Doric Nimrod Air Two MSN 105, since Airbus delivered the quintet to Emirates.

The sale price of each aircraft was £30.71 million (\$40.69 million), for a total transaction value of £153.53 million (\$200.3 million). Following the closing of the transaction, the aircraft lessor plans to dissolve the company as soon as its shareholders receive payments, which the company expected to happen in Q1 2025.

Doric and Nimrod, whose SPV was also Doric Nimrod Air Two, were the to-be-dissolved company's asset manager and corporate and shareholder adviser, respectively.

Five A380s

According to ch-aviation data, the five A380s, namely manufacturer serial numbers (MSN) 105, 106, 107, 109, and 110, were registered as A6-EDX, A6-EDY,

A6-EDZ, A6-EEB, and A6-EEC, respectively.

Airbus delivered the aircraft between October 1, 2012, and November 30, 2012, with A6-EDX, A6-EDY, and A6-EDZ currently being stored or in maintenance, according to the site.

A6-EDX has not operated a flight in more than three years, Flightradar24 data showed, while A6-EDY and A6-EDZ landed at Dubai International Airport (DXB) have not operated a flight since their arrival at DXB in early August. Whether the pair of aircraft are currently undergoing their 12-year checks remains unclear.

However, Doric Nimrod Air Two's latest annual report pointed out that depending on the specific reactivation date of particular aircraft, Emirates could defer calendar-based maintenance checks until such time.

"This allows the airline to make use of the full maintenance interval once the operation of an aircraft resumes. One of the Group's Aircraft [A6-EDX – ed. note] is in deep storage condition and could be reactivated within months, if required."

The SPV had already sold two A380s, MSN 77 and MSN 90, registered as A6-EDP and A6-EDT, respectively, to Emirates. The DXB-based airline paid \$35 million for the pair.

Majority owned fleet

Ch-aviation also indicated that out of its 263 aircraft, Emirates directly owns 138 and leases 108, with the status of the remaining 17 being unknown.

Among its owned aircraft were one Airbus A340-500, 63 A380, one Airbus Corporate Jet ACJ319, two Boeing 777F, six 777-200LR, and 65 777-300ER. Barring the A340-400 and ACJ319, ch-aviation estimated that the value of Emirates' owned aircraft was \$7 billion.



Bad weather behind Raisi helicopter crash, probe report confirms

Iran's final investigation into the May helicopter crash that killed president Ebrahim Raisi has found it was caused by bad weather, the body investigating the case said on Sunday, 1st September.

The helicopter carrying 63-year-old Raisi and his entourage came down on a



fog-shrouded mountainside in northern Iran, killing the president and seven others, and triggering snap elections.

The main cause of the helicopter crash was the "complex climatic and atmospheric conditions of the region in the spring", the special board investigating the dimensions and causes of the helicopter accident said, according to state broadcaster IRIB.

The report added that "the sudden emergence of a thick mass of dense and rising fog" caused the helicopter's collision into the mountain. Iran's army in May similarly said it had found no evidence of criminal activity in the crash that also killed Raisi's foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

In August, Fars news agency cited the main causes of the May 19 crash as bad weather conditions and the helicopter's inability to ascend with two extra passengers against security protocols.

But the Iranian armed forces were quick to reject the finding saying, "what is mentioned on Fars news about the presence of two people in the helicopter against the security protocols... is completely false".

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FAA Directive on Boeing to potentially impact 18 million seats globally



The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recent directive requiring inspections of Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft is expected to potentially impact more than 18 million seats across around 64,000 flights worldwide over the next 30 days, according to data from Mabrian. Major airlines such as All Nippon Airways, Qatar Airways, American Airlines, United Airlines or Air Europa, among others will face significant challenges, potentially leading to global travel disruptions.

According to the global travel intelligence platform, Mabrian, more than 18 million seats in over 64,000 flights worldwide programmed for the next 30 days could be potentially affected by the mandatory inspections requested by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to 895 Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircrafts in operation worldwide, following a March incident involving a sudden mid-air plunge of a LATAM Airlines' Boeing 787-9, resulting in injuries to over 50 passengers.

The FAA announcement implies that inspections and corrective actions should be performed in the potentially loose or

non-functional rocker switch caps or switch canover assemblies on the back of the Captain's and First Officer's seats of certain Boeing 787-8, 9, and -10 airplanes, currently operating worldwide. This malfunction is allegedly behind five similar reports, two still under investigation.

Mabrian, part of The Data Appeal Company, anticipates the impact of this aircraft recall based on the analysis* of the scheduled flights and seats in programmed routes for the next month, of all Boeing 787 aircrafts affected by the FAA's Airworthiness Directive (AD), issued on August 20th, 2024.

Data shows that over 64,000 flights, equivalent to slightly more than 18 million seats, could be compromised; and 92% of such flights are scheduled in 787-8 and 787-9 models. In terms of availability, 58% of total seats affected are scheduled in 787-9 aircrafts, and over a third in 787-8 planes. "This mandatory inspection will not imply to land all planes at the same time, as airlines have 30 days to complete it and fix any malfunction, but it will pose a massive challenge in an already tight summer and post summer schedule, that could cause delays and cancellations

worldwide", says Carlos Cendra, Partner and Director of Marketing and Communications at Mabrian.

All Nippon and Qatar Airways, the most affected airlines.

The air carriers that should have to cushion a larger impact derived from this FAA's directive will be All Nippon Airways and Qatar Airways; as well as Hainan Airlines and Ethiopian Airlines.

Among the list of the airlines that should have to manage their schedules in the next month to attend this mandatory inspection there are relevant Asian carriers such as Japan Airlines, Singapore Airlines, and China Southern Airlines; or key airlines catering to Middle East and Asia long-haul routes, such as Etihad Airways and Turkish Airlines.

Moreover, world carriers that connect America and Europe, in particular, United Airlines, as well as American Airlines, Air Canada, LATAM Airlines, and Air Europa will also be forced to re-organize seats and flights in the coming 30 days.

* Sources: Mabrian travel intelligence: seats availability on scheduled flights (one-way) from August 20th to September 20th, 2024 in Boeing 787-8, 9, and -10 airplanes



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News in Pictures



Photo shows Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, Mr. Arshad Wali Muhammad (Director – Gerry’s International) and Olympian Arshad Nadeem at an inspiring evening held in Karachi, recently.



AirSial signs an agreement with BOC Aviation in Dubai to acquire two Airbus A320 aircraft, which are scheduled to join in early next year 2025, the AirSial fleet, will increase to 07 aircrafts. Photo shows Mr. Fazal Jilani with others on the occasion.



Mr. Muhammad Younus Chaudry an industrialist of Sialkot and Mr. Abdul Shakoor Mirza present a bouquet to Mr. Atiq ur Rehman on the occasion of his appointment as Chairman, Cargo Committee, SIAL.



Mr. M. Ilyas CEO, Xpress Aviation giving the key of new Toyota Yaris car to Mr. Kashif Nawaz GM, Global Network & Strategic Business, Xpress Group.



Ms. Nasheya Imran Peracha leads a transformative session for the remarkable female staff of Gul Group of Companies, paving the way for growth and excellence in every role.



Photo shows Mr. Qamar Sheikh, flanked by Mr. Jamil Sakrani of Supper Travels, Karachi and Cricketer Jalaluddin at Cafe Yasmin restaurant, Houston, USA, recently.



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'Heaven on Earth' A Land of Wonders, Pakistan (Prof. Safdar Sandal)



(Heaven an ordained place regarded in various religions as a fruitful abode; promised for those people who do good deeds in their worldly life. It is thus most revered by all peoples of the world. Sweet fruits are promised and the beauty of nature in heaven can only be imagined and aspired).

Best tourism time in beautifully scenic-rich Pakistan, especially in its Kashmir valley and in all northern parts of Pakistan which are lying in the lap of Himalayas, start in mid of June

fruits like paper skin walnuts, almonds, pistachio, raisins, cashew, chalgoza (commonly known as pine-nuts), dry grapes, dry dates and much more ... Do enjoy the bestowed land Pakistan. Its valleys are full of rich cultural heritage. These offer an unparalleled scenic beauty and inhabiting a very hospitable people, rich in their cultural and humane habits. Starting from home.

Tourists can approach 'Sialkot International Airport' and start their journey, beginning with Bajwat valley

Chenab from Kashmir, fall of river Tawi from Jammu and fall of Munaawar-Tawi from Kashmir. The site is hardly 8 to 10 kilometers from the city Sialkot itself and the mountains can be seen from the roof-tops of the houses in Sialkot or more clearly from open fields joining the city. Sialkot is rich as rightly being claimed by the social media and the information outlets, as a place of several activities. During my school/college days I used to



and continue till end of September every year. During this period, one can enjoy the weather, river falls and lush green valleys with nearly clear- roads of snow. Plenty of fruits all along present a heaven-like atmosphere. Profusely visiting tourists from all over Pakistan and from foreign lands enjoy to their fill. Fresh fruits, dry and wet, beautiful trees of apples, peaches, black currant, blackberry, custard apples, apricot, nectarines, grapes and more of dry

which is only a few miles away from the airport. Bajwat is an island between combed in waters coming from the adjoining overlooking Himalayan mountains, filled with lush green forests and forest-cows as well, besides other wild animals like boars etc. Bajwat is immediately roofed by nearby Himalayan beautiful Mountains. It is formed like an island, surrounded by rivers and rivulets. It is a place gemmed with fresh falls of river

study on rooftop of my house and enjoyed reading Wordsworth's or Persian poetry about nature and at the same time enjoying vicinity of the mountains, so clear that I could count the peaks even when sleeping; Isn't it worth remembering or cherishing the scene.

Sialkot is an ancient city of almost 4000 + years and offers a lot to see, e.g., well of Puran Baghat of 2200 years of age, studded with a romantic story, and a





Kalaam – Swat



Bajwat - Sialkot

temple. The site still exists, oft visited by the scribe, sometimes accompanied by important guests. Sialkot-Fort constructed by Raja Sal, founder of Sialkot region itself which consisted of the throne of Panday family from Srinagar. Buddhism has also

Sportswear of all types, Motor-bike Sport's equipment in leather, hand-woven Badges, Musical instruments of all kinds, Cutlery ware, Surgical instruments consisting of hundreds of items, Medical ware for hospitals used all over the world. To be

on river banks profusely. It is a land of waters coming down from the mountains, which make it very fertile for crops like rice, wheat and hundreds of delicious vegetables, fed with mountain waters



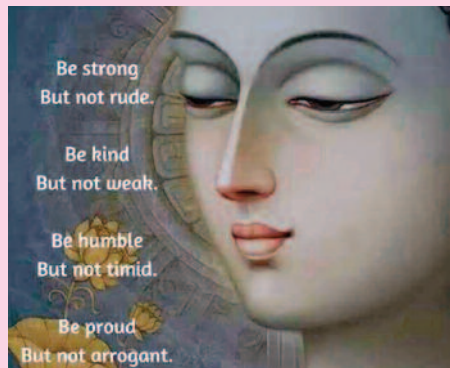
Well of 'Puran Baghat', Sialkot - 2200 years of age

been practiced in Sialkot some 2,300 years ago. Buddha had stayed in Sialkot for three months on his way to (now) northern Pakistan. Sialkot has a rich past and at present is known as third biggest industrial city of Pakistan, as well and is ranked first in doing-export business exclusively of sports goods mainly sent to the outside world especially its Soccer Balls, Sports gloves of all types, Sports Uniforms, Hockey sticks, leg guards, goal keeper gloves for cricket, hockey and other games, cricket and hockey balls, medicine balls,

honest, it is impossible to count or explain the items which Sialkot's genius people produce for local use and for the entire world. Accordingly it is rightly said that the residents have a higher standard of living due to their recorded per capita-income and consequently a higher education level too, recorded ever since the pre-partition era. Best quality wood like willow and cane etc. is used by the manufacturers of sports goods in Sialkot, a land surrounded by River Chenab and Ravi accompanied by numerous streams. These woods are grown

which bring along, the productive earth (mati).

'Sialkot International Airport' is becoming a key aviation hub in Pakistan, renowned for its cargo and passenger service, within 17 years of its working-age. It has played a major role in connecting the region with the rest of the world. 'SIAL' (name of the company handling the Airport) feels proud to announce a remarkable performance and achievement of having handled 5,000 metric tons of exports during the past 90 days, besides of



Budha who also stayed in Sialkot



'Berg e Sandal', Sialkot Cantt.(An outer & inner view)



Sacred 'Nanga Parbat' top

course, the bulk of exports which are normally carried out through Sea-Cargo, By air and Regular-Post-Parcel Service, plus through hundreds of private Air-Cargo service companies, who have their main offices in Sialkot. The city has world renowned trade organizations; from them the most prominent one is the "Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry" which has successfully imbued in its history of around 50 years, the virtue of honest working among its members being mostly the exporters. It has also patronized relatively and cooperated with other 'Trade Associations' existing in the city dealing with particular interests in items which their members handle. The exporters have established their own 'Dry Port Trust', one 'Export Processing Zone', the 'Sialkot International Airport' and a vastly growing 'International Airline-SIAL', all running under Public Private Ltd, ownership with contribution from private individuals.

The people of Sialkot are known for their courteous behavior, soft spoken language and a welcoming attitude. They have international guests coming to them very often who greatly admire their partners in business and do business with confidence. Despite this upbringing of the people, international travelling and versatility of their character, universal experiences in business and contacts with the entire world, the people of Sialkot still prefer to speak their native language (being Punjabi) besides being able to speak other languages, as compared to other cities of Pakistan who quickly resort to Urdu or even English, speaking in their houses with their children. I have some such experiences which I can share; thus leaving behind or better say sacrificing their mother tongue Punjabi at the cost of their cultural heritage. It is a social skirmish which has happened before too in the sub-continental history. Urdu has been revered without prejudice. It is derived from Punjabi which is a much older and a richer language. This is unacceptable and in fact it is a social or better say a linguistic crime being committed against our very rich Punjabi language and culture. Remember Bangladesh was created mainly due to the Bengali's love of their language (which had numerical strength), but was discarded and replaced by Urdu. People of Sialkot travel all over the world for their export business and for this reason they are well versed in foreign languages too, like German, French, Spanish or Italian besides English, of course, but they prefer to speak their own language when they return home. Abroad

they experience that people of any country never give up their language or even the 'dialect' of their city or region (like we have here too) at the preference of a language of not their own belonging. It is our moral weakness to put our home-spoken language away. We have all the great poets of a very rich Punjabi language whose words are much sweeter than other languages (who can match Baba Bulleh Shah, for instance).

With the backdrop of an industrial life, our land is rich in agricultural fertility where world famous Basmati rice (commonly known as Colonel Basmati Rice) is grown. Sialkot is surrounded by rivers, riverine, canals, mountain-fresh nullahs (streams) and has a population of a smiling people, good cultured, universally travelled and healthy in physic and a fertile mind. Among a large variety of vegetables are profusely grown potatoes, turnip and mushrooms and nearly all kinds of vegetables, one can imagine. It is neighbored by Jammu and Kashmir hills and all fertility comes from the mountain-waters. In history, Sialkot has also been the capital of Kashmir state too, at times, and the people in majority have a Kashmiri origin or parenthood. They happen to possess similar taste and a combination of similarities. Many families were divided in 1947-48, a disastrous pitfall.

From Raja Sal till today, Sialkot has a big list of educationists, soldiers, skilled workers, engineers and doctors. Only going through names of latest times are Allama Mohammad Iqbal (known as poet of the East), Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Moulana Zafar Ali Khan, Sabir Zafar and numerous others, of international repute. The ever-enthusiastic people of Sialkot and among them the Industrialist-cum exporter's class have built with their own money on self-help basis an International Airport 'SIAL' (thus honouring their Raja 'SAL', by naming after him and also established an Airlines with the same name 'Air SIAL'. Renowned 'Sialkot Chamber of Commerce', all other trade organizations and a 'Sialkot Dry Port Trust', Several colleges and a University, besides building roads, parks, schools and hospitals – all running on self-help basis on the pattern of Laissez faire movement, as was practiced in France and England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which meant that the government should not interfere with operation of the natural projects as sponsored by the private citizens of Sialkot. This is what the people of Sialkot have done and are still doing in building further projects for the public

welfare with their contribution of their hard-earned money. Bravo!! The people of this land of good international repute have contributed a lot to their country, for others to follow and to change the fate of the country.

Cricket bats made in the city Sialkot are produced by some very prominent factories and these bats are exported to the cricket playing countries in large numbers and they occupy the first place in the international matches. The position is the same for cricket balls and the entire cricket accessories. Soccer balls played in the 'World Cup' and all 'International Games' are produced in Sialkot. Our women folk are contributing as a prominent work force in the final finish up of the footballs, ready for export. Similarly there are produced surgical instruments in Sialkot, which are a lifesaving product. The surgical instruments are provided to the whole world, besides meeting the home-requirements. A unique feature of this fertile land is that there exists a garden of 'leeche' which claims to be the largest in the world. Similarly there is a garden of peaches which is spread over 400 acres of land in the Bajwat area. The rich soil of Sialkot produces the most delicious fruits and vegetables. A gift of nature and the talent of the people combined, present an international work scenario, rightly a pride of the people.

Reverting to the 'Mount Kailash' it is a belief of some sediments of the Kailash society that the Mount acts as a bridge between Heaven and Earth. One, who crosses the mysterious mountain-passes, enters the heaven. There is supposed to be a mythical pass for this effort. The mountain can hear the voice of the pilgrims who successfully pass through the pass and then can talk to them. The pilgrims do not return as they enter the 'Heaven from Earth'. It is an entrance to their paradise called 'Shambhala'. Even the visit of the Kailash Mountain makes people happier. All sounds enchanting and endlessly attractive. The pilgrims, who successfully cross the natural paths beside the 'Kailashi Sacred Mountain', enter the Heavens (or Paradise, called 'Shambalha'). They don't come back. They can speak with God and God speaks with them. It is their permanent abode in life hereafter. Even the people who are sitting before in the plateau or the open ground before the mountain become happy, by having been seated there. It is a Charisma from their God and much more in their theology. To learn all this, one has to go there and see the wonders of the world and the 'Beautiful Nature'.



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CPEC termed lifeline for Pakistan economy

Politicians belonging to the ruling coalition as well as the opposition reaffirmed unwavering support to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project on Wednesday, terming it a lifeline for the country's economy.

The speakers made this observation at a multiparty moot held at Pakistan-China Institute on Wednesday, August 28.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, chairman of the institute, termed ties with China central to Pakistan's future, saying CPEC has the potential to bring progress and prosperity.

The event brought together leaders from eight political parties, including the PML-N, PPP, PTI, MQM and JUI-F.

Senator Mushahid highlighted the Communist Party of China's (CPC) pivotal role in the country's journey of reform and modernisation, adding that it is the world's biggest political party with 100 million members.

The senator listed five reasons behind China's success story in a short time: quality of leadership, ability to do course correction, continuity of policy, learning from others, and peaceful foreign policy.

Senator Sherry Rehman noted that China had played a crucial role in development of the Global South, and that CPEC had created numerous investment opportunities in Pakistan.

She praised Beijing's Global Security Initiative, calling it a commendable effort that will ensure global peace.

The PPP senator also highlighted China's role in clean energy development under CPEC as a significant contribution to sustainable development in Pakistan and the region. Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, an MNA from the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, underscored the enduring strength of Pakistan-China relations, lauding President Xi Jinping's role in his country's march to progress.

"XI's leadership has been instrumental in driving China's remarkable progress on the global stage."

Saadia Khaqan Abbasi commended China's leadership for ushering in technological advancement, human development and labour productivity. "The focus on security and development is a unique selling point for China," she added.

PTI Senator Shibli Faraz, who is also

Leader of the Opposition in the upper house, recounted China's development story as a role model for the world.

He described the BRI as a symbol of shared development and prosperity. "CPEC stands as a beacon of hope for Pakistanis, symbolising the transformative impact of our strong bilateral relationship."



Senator Afrasiab Khattak of the National Democratic Movement said the Communist Party of China is more than just a political party; it is a popular ruling force that has steered China towards unprecedented development. "Pakistan must learn from China, do a course correction and become a frontline state in economic development, focusing on geoeconomics rather than being a frontline state in conflicts."

Senator Jan Muhammad Jamali said Balochistan's future is inextricably interconnected with the country's development goals and the past must not "impede CPEC at any cost".

Shezra Mansab Ali, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reaffirmed Islamabad's unwavering support for the One-China policy and respect for China's unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty. "China has consistently supported Pakistan on core issues, including the Kashmir dispute."

Senator Jan Muhammad Buledi, a leader of the National Party, emphasised the importance of enhancing collaboration between Balochistan's universities and

their Chinese counterparts.

Senator Abdul Qadir, a leader of the Balochistan Awami Party, pinpointed the wealth of knowledge and experience that Pakistan can gain from China's success story. "Pakistan can learn a great deal from China's experience, especially in areas like economic development, infrastructure, and governance."

MQM's Taha Ahmed highlighted the strategic importance of Karachi as Pakistan's business hub thanks to its proximity to CPEC. "Karachi is not only the country's business hub but also holds critical importance due to its close ties with the CPEC route," Taha Khan stated.

Senator Ali Zafar of the PTI praised the Communist Party of China for maintaining continuity of policy and for its principle of "seeking truth from fact".

Yang Nuo, Minister-Counsellor at the Chinese embassy in Islamabad, emphasised the importance of the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee held last month, describing it as a trailblazer for China's future. "This session serves as a blueprint for further reforms in China, setting the stage for continued progress and development."

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, in his closing remarks highlighted China's consensus-oriented decision-making process. "In China, decisions are made through a consensus-driven approach, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered, which contributes to their effective governance," he observed.



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Pakistan, Turkiye agree to remove trade barriers

After enforcing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), a high-level Turkish business delegation arrived on Thursday, 08 August, to explore investment opportunities and remove barriers to increasing bilateral investment.

The Turkish business delegation is in Islamabad, led by Trade Minister Prof Dr Omer Bolat, and has met with Federal

Erdogan's shared commitment to strengthening bilateral ties, with a particular focus on increasing trade and investment. He identified key sectors for potential investment, including services, health, education, medicine, and fashion.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb acknowledged the significance of historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Turkiye and



Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb receives Trade Minister of Turkiye Omer Bolat on Thursday, 08 August.

Minister for Board of Investment, Privatisation, and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to discuss potential investment prospects.

Minister Bolat proposed measures to facilitate investment for Turkish companies to enhance investor confidence and recommended increasing flight connectivity between Pakistan and Turkiye to support greater economic exchange. He said the economic, business and bilateral ties are going to be a new beginning, as Turkiye will also ensure all possible cooperation in all circumstances.

Turkish business leaders proposed increasing bilateral investment in various sectors, including infrastructure. Representatives of Pakistan's main commercial institutions welcomed Turkiye's proposals and said that Turkiye can develop better with its modern machinery and Pakistan with its raw materials.

In a meeting with the finance minister, Mr Bolat highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President

provided an update on Pakistan's improving economic fundamentals, including a stable currency, foreign exchange reserves exceeding \$9 billion, and declining inflation rates.

He informed Mr Bolat of a recent staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund to ensure long-term stability. He outlined ongoing reforms in taxation, energy sector and state-owned enterprises. The minister also highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in streamlining investment processes and attracting foreign direct investment.

Both ministers reiterated their dedication to strengthening bilateral relations and expanding trade volume. Mr Aurangzeb assured Minister Bolat of the Pakistan's commitment to supporting investors by streamlining regulations supporting ease of doing business.

Meanwhile, Mr Bolat and Privatisation Minister Abdul Aleem Khan co-chaired a Round Table Business Conference. Deputy Trade Minister of Turkiye Mustafa Tuzcu, the Ambassador to Pakistan, Mehmet Pacaci, and the

presidents of various trade chambers of Turkiye were also present. At the same time, prominent business community figures from Pakistan joined this session.

While addressing the conference, Mr Aleem said that the two countries have already signed economic and joint business agreements. He added that Pakistan wants to promote bilateral investment and business ties in various fields with Turkiye because now is a prime time to increase the economic activities between Turkey and Pakistan. Mr Khan welcomed the business community's interest in Turkiye and said that it would benefit both countries and that all possible support would be provided.

Advisory board okays sugar export to Tajikistan

The Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) on Tuesday, 13 August, approved the export of 40,000 tonnes of sugar to Tajikistan.

The Trade Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) will make arrangements for this shipment after approval from the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.

The meeting, chaired by Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, informed the participants that the country had 2.852 million tonnes of sugar stocks, more than sufficient to meet local demand.

The Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) representatives informed the meeting that 1.5 million tonnes of surplus sugar were available, which should be exported to support the industry and earn revenue to meet growers' financial obligations.

The minister directed provincial cane commissioners and the Federal Board of Revenue to carry out stock reconciliation and present the report at the next board meeting. The PSMA representatives stated that there had been no increase in the ex-mills price of sugar and it had nothing to do with the retail price of the commodity. They urged the government to take steps to maintain the retail price through the district administration.

Textile and clothing exports shrink in July



Textile exports have not shown growth in the last two years despite a \$25bn installed capacity.

Textile and clothing exports contracted by 3.09 per cent in the first month of FY25, indicating that the sector may struggle to compete with regional rivals due to the implementation of harsh taxation measures in the current fiscal year.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data issued on Thursday, 15 August, the impact of the new tax measures and the highest-ever energy costs is evident in the July export results.

The decline in exports of textiles and clothing, which had the largest share of over 60pc in total exports for the second consecutive month after a negative growth of 0.93pc in June, was due to the government's announcement of export-biased measures in its recent budget, which the top textile exporters opposed.

The exports rebounded significantly in May, growing by double digits after slowing in the previous two months.

Textile and clothing exports have stayed the same in the last two years despite having a \$25 billion installed capacity. According to textile exporters, exports from the same sectors have been static for the past two years due to

structural issues.

In absolute terms, the textile and clothing exports fell to \$1.27bn in July from \$1.31bn over the corresponding month of last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports dipped 10.13pc.

The government has introduced various measures, including increasing the tax rate on exporters' personal income in 2024-25. The impact of these measures will be visible in the coming months. The PBS data showed exports of readymade garments rose 7.57pc by value in July and 8.47pc by quantity, while knitwear dipped 1.88pc by value and 6.37pc by quantity. Bedwear posted a negative growth of 1.20pc in value and a growth of 4.07pc in quantity.

Towel exports dipped 3.67pc in value and 2pc in quantity in July, whereas cotton cloth went down by 0.56pc in value and 4.72pc in quantity, respectively.

Yarn exports dipped by over 42.54pc in July over the same month last year. The exports of made-up articles, excluding towels, declined by 5.84pc, and tents, canvas and tarpaulin went up by 14.22pc in July from a year ago.

The import of synthetic fibre posted a negative growth of 33.23pc in July and that of synthetic and artificial silk yarn by 17.68pc.

However, other textile items increased by 53.20pc during the year under review. The import of raw cotton declined by 20.60pc in July. However, the import of second-hand clothes posted a growth of 13.47pc. In July, total exports increased by 11.75pc to \$2.31bn, up from \$2.06bn in the same month last year.

Oil imports increased by 60pc to \$1.26bn in July from \$0.791bn a year ago. The imports of petroleum products surged 39.94pc in value and 36.89pc in quantity. Crude oil imports increased by 626pc in quantity while the value increased by 687pc.

Mobile phone imports dipped 5.30pc in July, representing the largest share of overall machinery. Other mobile apparatus grew 69.45pc during the month under review. The decrease in mobile phone imports will be a significant development in the government's efforts to secure foreign exchange for the country.

Indus Motor begins export of vehicles

Indus Motor Company (IMC) announced the milestone achievement of exporting vehicles manufactured in Pakistan during a ceremony held at the company's manufacturing facility at Port Qasim Authority on Wednesday, 31 July.

The company revealed plans to export the Toyota Fortuner, Hilux and Corolla Cross models to Oceanian countries.

In a notice to the stock exchange, IMC tempered expectations by noting that the "financial benefits from this export activity are minimal" and that "the impact on our overall business remains insignificant and immaterial".

Commenting on the achievement, Indus Motor Company CEO Ali Asghar Jamali attributed this success to the vision of former chairman Ali Suleman Habib. "Once, Toyota had asked its partners in all the countries it was operating in about their dreams. Ali Habib said it was his dream for Pakistan to become an exporter of vehicles. That dream has now become a reality," he stated.

Mr Jamali underscored the need for long-term policies and the development of local input sources to bolster the auto sector. He humorously added that the "carrot approach" is far more effective than the "stick approach" when it comes to incentivising the industry.

Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain emphasised, "We are proud to see Indus Motor, one of Pakistan's renowned companies, contributing towards exports. The government's Automotive Industry Development and Export Policy 2021-26 policy aims to boost the automotive sector by encouraging the export of localised parts and vehicles.

"IMC's proactive approach to leading from the front sets a benchmark for others in the industry. We are committed to supporting the auto industry in every possible way."

Meanwhile, during a visit to Pak Suzuki Motor Company Ltd (PSMCL) on Wednesday, the minister assured the management that the compliance issue of United Nations regulations would be resolved shortly.

Mr Rana highlighted the government's commitment to supporting Pakistan's automotive industry through policy alignment, export promotion, and addressing industry challenges to foster sustainable growth and competitiveness.

PSMCL management informed the

minister that the majority of Suzuki models and versions are already in compliance with the UN regulations, marking the company's commitment to safety, environmental responsibility, and adherence to global standards.

The remaining models and versions are still undergoing modifications or replacements to ensure full compliance by the end of June 2025, PSMCL said.

Chief Executive Hiroshi Kawamura

pointed out three significant milestones: the commencement of Suzuki vehicle exports from Pakistan to Bangladesh and Afghanistan, the production of its 2.5 millionth vehicle in Pakistan, and the inauguration of the new Suzuki Vendor Cluster Area to expand its network of local suppliers.

Strategic land allocation to new vendors aims to enhance efficiency and reduce costs through localised supply chain management.

Exports rise 12pc in July

Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 11.83 per cent to \$2.31 billion in the first month of the new fiscal year from \$2.06bn in the corresponding month last year, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Thursday, August 1st.

On a month-on-month basis, exports saw a decline of 9.77pc from June.

In FY24, exports rose 10.54pc to \$30.64bn from \$27.72bn in the preceding year. Exports increased steadily from July 2023 until they turned negative in January. This negative trend persisted until April. After a temporary setback, growth regained momentum in May and continued into June.

The country witnessed its highest-ever exports in 2021-22, reaching a staggering \$31.78bn. However, the following year saw a decline, with exports dropping to

\$27.54bn.

Exporter associations have cautioned the government about the potential negative impact of the tax measures outlined in the budget 2024-25. They believe these steps could result in a decline in the country's export earnings.

According to the PBS data, imports recorded a growth of 15.30pc to \$4.25bn in July from \$3.69bn in the same month last year. However, on month-on-month, the imports declined 14.27pc.

In FY24, imports fell by 0.84pc to \$54.73bn compared to \$55.19bn in FY23.

The trade deficit in July widened by 19.71pc to \$1.95bn from \$1.63bn over the last year.

In FY24, the trade gap narrowed to \$24.08bn in FY24 from \$27.47bn over the preceding year.



A group of young students attend Independence Day celebrations at the Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum, on Wednesday, 14 August.

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Tourism potential in Pakistan

At a time when tourism has emerged as a major sector of the global economy, many nations have invested heavily in the industry to contribute to their GDP and also create employment. For Pakistan, too, tourism has the potential to not only bring socioeconomic dividends, but also improve the country's image. In fact, there are very few countries in the world that can match Pakistan's combined potential for mountain, religious, heritage, and coastal tourism.

Of the many facets distinguishing Pakistan are its mighty mountains, that have attracted adventure tourists from around the world. Home to the meeting point of the Himalayas, the Karakoram, and the Hindu Kush, the northern areas of Pakistan are an authentic destination for mountain lovers. Of the 14 peaks above 8,000 metres, five are in Pakistan: K-2 (8,611m), Nanga Parbat (8,126m), Broad Peak (8,047m), Gasherbrum-I (8,068m), and Gasherbrum-II (8,035m). According to the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Pakistan is home to 108 peaks above 7,000 metres and an equal number above 6,000 metres. This spectacular landscape is complemented by extensive glacier systems, gorgeous ridges, fabled lakes, picturesque passes, and high-altitude meadows.

The territories of Pakistan have also been the bastion of major religions. Buddhist holy places in the Gandhara region — Mardan, Taxila, Swat, and Takht-i-Bahi — attract tourists from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan etc. Eighty per cent of the Sikh religion's holy sites are situated in Pakistan, notably Nankana Sahib, Punja Sahib, and Kartarpur Sahib. Each year, thousands of Sikh yatries visit these gurdwaras. Likewise, several temples in the country are revered by Hindus, including Hinglaj Mata in Balochistan, Katas Raj in Chakwal, and Hanuman mandir in Karachi. The Sufi culture of Pakistan also attracts spiritual pilgrims, particularly to the shrines of Data Ganj Baksh, Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

Pakistan is the proud inheritor of great civilisations.

Pakistan is also the proud inheritor of great civilisations, including Mehrgarh, and Indus Valley sites at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Prof Michael Jansen, who

studied and wrote about Mohenjodaro, was convinced that this site alone can change Pakistan's image from a terrorism-afflicted country to a bastion of proud heritage. Pakistan's coastline also offers vast opportunities for tourism because of its sandy beaches, boating basins, beach huts and restaurants.

Yet, despite this evident potential, Pakistanis wonder why the country is not able to benefit from this rich national resource. In the Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 of the World Economic Forum, Pakistan ranks 101st out of 119 countries. (The US is at first place, while China is at nine, India 39 and Sri Lanka 76). Several reasons can be attributed to Pakistan's low standing in the tourism index.

Firstly, there appears to be no comprehensive national tourism policy framework. There are media reports that the PTDC has developed a five-year plan for 2024-2029 to promote international and domestic tourism, but it is not clear if this has been approved. In any policy framework, the government's role should be confined to being a legislator of policies, and facilitator, regulator, and provider of services allied to tourism, while the private sector should be encouraged to create and manage tourist places. The prevailing provincial governance structures for tourism need to be revamped with enhanced coordination with the federal government.

Secondly, accurate statistics are not available, because of which planning is either not possible or is flawed. Thirdly, ownership of the local people for tourist sites is important. Only functional local governments can engender community participation in preserving and maintaining this resource treasure, which has suffered from years of neglect by federal and provincial governments. Fourthly, a tourist expects to receive visa facilitation, reliable air connections and safe road access to tourist destinations, decent transport, boarding and lodging, entertainment facilities, internet connectivity, and a safe security environment. Fifthly, nothing puts off a tourist more than the garbage around tourist sites. There should be dedicated departments in local governments to ensure cleanliness. Last but not least, there should be institutions for technical training of local tourist guides.

Of late, one hears of the intent of the government to encourage tourism as a revenue-generating industry. The private sector is also taking initiatives to promote tourism. Conferences are being held all across Pakistan to evolve concrete recommendations on how best to promote the tourism industry of Pakistan. Amidst the prevailing economic crunch, we need every hand on deck to help improve the economic life of the country. The writer is a former foreign secretary, and chairman Sanober Institute Islamabad.



A view of the gabion wall constructed on both sides of the river by GLOF-II project of UNDP to protect the local population and hotels in Paloga area of the scenic Kalam valley.

Sindh `s rich culture, heritage celebrated

An exhibition was organised on Saturday, 31 August, to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Sindh and to showcase Sindhi handicrafts as well as highlight the province's tradition and creativity of its people.

The event, organised by the Karachi Council of Foreign Relations (KCFR) at a local hotel and attended by men, women, and children, featured a number of items, including hand-knitted goods, exquisite shawls and bangles, all brought together under one roof.

"I design these bangles at home, with the factory operating from my rooftop. I personally choose the colours and designs, drawing inspiration from Sindhi culture. I've come all the way from Hyderabad to showcase the hard work my craftsmen and I put into these creations. Bangles have been a significant part of our culture, and I'm proud to play a small role in preserving this tradition," said Dilshad Ahmed, who was displaying a stunning array of Hyderabad bangles, rich in colour and creativity. Women were very excited to see the bangles.

The left side of the ballroom featured stalls dedicated to garments, beautifully handcrafted by women from Khairpur and other regions of Sindh. The vibrant reds, oranges, and pinks of the ajraks, along with the stunning hand-painted prints, captivated the visitors. The block-printed cotton unstitched dresses especially caught the attention of women and were a big hit at the event. Outside the ballroom, a stall displaying dresses and handmade jewellery was set up by Panah, a trust dedicated to providing shelter and support to women who are survivors of domestic and societal injustices. Panah empowers these women to

pursue socio-economic independence.

"We supply this material to underprivileged women in Khairpur, who are then compensated for their work. This approach helps them achieve financial independence and ensures their long-term sustainability," Najia Siddiqui, a representative of the organisation, told media.

A teenage businesswoman named Khushi was also there with bright eyes and a beautiful collection of jewellery inspired by K-pop and Sindhi culture. This was by far the most unique stall of the exhibition.

"I am very much interested in experimenting with jewellery and this exhibition popped up at a very good time. These bracelets I have made are inspired by the media I consume and also the culture we're representing here," she said.

The chief guest of the event was Saeed Ghani, minister for local government, housing town planning, public health engineering and rural development. He appreciated the efforts of KFCR, particularly of Miss Nadira Punjwani, chairperson of the organisation for making an effort towards bringing cultures in the city closer.

"Sindhi culture is a rich one, playing an important role in keeping the country together. Our perception is not that good in front of the world already so events like these are not only improving our image at national level but also on international level. The religious hatred, the caste differences, the differences on the basis of race, these factors are not contributing effectively towards the economy and the image of the country itself, hence, we should all work together in harmony to see a better Pakistan," Mr Ghani remarked.

Bhitai `s three-day urs celebrations end

The three-day celebrations of great Sufi Saint Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's urs at his shrine in Bhitshah drew to an end on Thursday, 22 August, with Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah laying a chaddar and floral wreath on his grave.



A singer presents Shah Latif Bhitai's kalam on the concluding day of the urs.

Speaking to the devotees and other visitors to the shrine, Mr Shah paid homage to the saint and said that Shah Bhitai always used to pray for the wellbeing of humankind around the world. "Like him, we also pray here at his shrine for God's blessing on Sindh, Pakistan and the entire world," he said.

The CM said that as long as prayers of Shah Bhitai and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar remained with Sindh, it would remain unharmed.

"Sindh is the land of saints and Sufis," he said. Later, while giving away 'Latif Award' to best performers in various fields at a ceremony, CM Shah said it was a matter of pride for him to attend the concluding ceremony of the urs. He said Shah Bhitai preached love, brotherhood and peace for world. "Violation of rights is being committed in Palestine and Kashmir; I urge the United Nations to understand the message of peace emanating from Sindh," he remarked.

The best ragi award was given away to Syed Sajjad Hussain Shah Latifi, best suhgar award to Gul Hassan Gul, best researcher award to Dr Nawaz Ali Shog, best instrument player award to Jai Ram Jogi, best dholak nawaz award to Mohammad Ramzan and best singer award to Faqir Manjhi. Matiari Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Yusuf Sheikh and SSP Syed Asghar Shah were also given the award for best urs arrangements.



Visitors admire the handicraft at one of the stalls in the exhibition, on Saturday, 31 August.



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The flight of Arshad

Five years ago, if someone had said that a Pakistani would win a medal in athletics at the Olympics, people would have laughed at him or her, and probably advised the predictor to consult a psychiatrist.

And if someone had thought at that time that a Pakistani athlete would create a new record at the Olympics, people would have seriously thought about having him or her committed to a mental health facility.

But it all actually happened on August 8, 2024. That was the day when, standing tall at 6'3", Arshad Nadeem, Pakistan's Olympic hope from Mian Channu, achieved both dreams with a single javelin throw at the Stade de France in Paris.

Arshad's achievement is the greatest in Pakistan's sports history. It has superseded all the previous team or individual successes of Pakistan — hockey golds at the Olympics, hockey and cricket World Cup victories, squash victories at the British Open or World Open, etc.

A country's standing in sports among the world's nations is measured by its position in the latest Olympics' medal tally. Moreover, athletics has always been the showpiece event of the Olympics, which is also the most followed. Even the preliminaries are held at the main stadium. The Stade de France was always full, not just for the finals in the evenings, but also for the preliminaries, held in the first part of the day.

Before the 2024 Olympics, Pakistan had won 10 Olympic medals — three gold (all in hockey), three silver (all in hockey) and four bronze (two in hockey, one in wrestling, and one in boxing). The last medal (bronze) came in 1992, while the last gold was garnered in 1984. Arshad presented the nation with its first individual Olympic gold.

At the 2024 Paris Olympics, it was the only gold won by the Saarc countries, which comprise one-fourth of the world's population. Of the 206 nations at the Olympics, 115 failed to win a single medal. With this one gold, Pakistan finished 62nd among the medals rankings.

It was in December 2019 when Arshad

suddenly became the nation's hope in athletics. With a sensational throw of 86.29 metres at the South Asian Games, he not only qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, but also became a medal contender. At the 2020



Arshad Nadeem

Tokyo Olympics, held in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a not-fully fit Arshad finished fifth, the best position ever by a Pakistani in athletics at the Olympics.

Then his persistent battle with injuries started. His preparations for the 2022 World Athletics Championships were affected due to an elbow and knee injury and hopes for a medal were dashed as he again finished fifth. Still, he was the first Pakistani in a World Athletics final.

Just a couple of weeks later, Arshad delivered his finest performance till then. At the 2022 Commonwealth Games, he obtained Pakistan's first athletics gold in the games in 60 years. His incredible throw of 90.18 metres was his personal best and a new Commonwealth record. And he did this despite the injuries. Finally, he opted for surgery in December 2022. A well-known British-Pakistani surgeon, Dr Ali Sher Bajwa, successfully operated on his knee and a South African surgeon on his elbow.

After a rehab period, Arshad appeared in the nationals. But his other knee caused trouble and he had to skip the Asian Athletics Championships in July 2023. Soon fit again, he had his second mega success in August 2023, with a silver medal at the 2023 World Athletics.

It was the country's maiden medal at the World Athletics meet, just 35 cm behind India's Neeraj Chopra. Cometh the Asian

Games in September 2023, Arshad withdrew just a day before the competition, as his knee injury recurred. All this raised doubts about the nation's sole medal hope; would he be fit for the 2024 Olympics?

This scribe has remained in touch with Salman Iqbal Butt, Arshad's coach since 2021 and who has worked with missionary zeal. About his injuries, Salman said at the time, "Yes, it is quite alarming. But we will be very cautious. Arshad will train in Lahore with his performance and fitness closely monitored. We will also remain in touch with his former coaches, who trained him in South Africa and Germany. Dr Ali Sher Bajwa will also be kept in the loop."

Incidentally, Dr Bajwa not only operated on Arshad's knee but remained

with him during his training period, foregoing his other assignments abroad. His fitness improved and Arshad was sent to South Africa for a month of training in May/June of this year. The Diamond League is World Athletics' annual lucrative series of elite competitions, where top athletes are invited. Because of the fitness issues and giving priority to the title events, Arshad hadn't figured in any of its previous editions. Plus, he had been absent from all competitions for almost a year.

A month before the Olympics, Arshad appeared in a Diamond League meet for the first time, on July 7. Importantly, it was held in Paris, the host city for the 2024 Olympics. With his last throw of 84.21m, he finished fourth. The winner's distance was 85.91m.

At the Olympics on August 6, he easily qualified for the final round, with his first throw of 86.59 (84m was required for automatic qualification). He was fourth among the qualifiers, with Chopra topping with 89.34. Thus the Indian, the reigning Olympic and World Champion, was most people's favourite for the gold medal.

Chopra is not a member of the 90-metre club, while Arshad is. In his post-qualification presser, Arshad appeared confident. "Normally my first throw is in the 70s. I was surprised by the 86-plus," he said.

On August 8, both Chopra and Arshad

started with no throws. Next, history was created. Arshad Nadeem's second throw left the 75,000 people in the stadium and hundreds of millions of TV viewers gasping. His 92.97m bettered the existing Olympic record by more than two metres. The competition was virtually over.

Chopra's second throw was 89.45m, the sixth farthest in Olympics history. But after that, Chopra completely lost the plot. His remaining four attempts were all no-throws; with him faulting across the line. No one else touched 90m. With the Olympic gold already secured, Arshad could have foregone his sixth (last) throw. But he put all effort behind it, and it was another huge throw. The 91.79m throw was the second farthest in Olympics history, only behind his own earlier effort.

A lot has been said about the support or lack of support extended to Arshad and the record should be set straight. His department, Wapda, recruited him in 2015 in grade 11. He got promotions with successes at the national and international levels. He is now in grade 18. After the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the Pakistan Olympic Association secured an elite athlete scholarship from the International Olympic Committee, worth a monthly Rs0.25 million, for four years.

As per the Government of Pakistan's policy, Arshad was rewarded Rs5 million each for the Commonwealth gold and the World Athletics' silver medals. The Athletics Federation of Pakistan arranged foreign training sessions for him, while the government of Pakistan — through the Pakistan Sports Board — funded his participation in major international events, while also taking care of his medical expenses. He also has sponsorships from the private sector.

The man who has made the entire nation happy and proud is now deservedly being lavished with prizes in cash and kind, conferred with the second highest state honour — the Hilal-i-Imtiaz — and has had his feat commemorated with a special stamp as well. It is only right that Pakistan's greatest sports accomplishment should be immortalised like Indian athlete Milkha Singh's has been, with the biopic Bhaag Milkha Bhaag. Arshad's achievements and struggle provide an ideal script.

India celebrates its national day of sports on August 29, commemorating the birthday of hockey legend Dhyan Chand. August 8 should also be declared as the national sports day of Pakistan, to commemorate Arshad Nadeem's stupendous feat.

The writer is a freelance sports journalist based in Lahore.

Arts Council to host World Culture Festival next month

More than 150 artists representing 34 countries, including India and Palestine, will take part in the Arts Council's first edition of World Culture Festival

Pakistan," he said.

Mr Shah said the event is called World Culture Festival and the council will collaborate with a lot of international artists during the 35 days.



Arts Council President Ahmed Shah (centre) speaks at the event, on Saturday, August 18.

Karachi, which will take place from Sept 26 to Oct 30.

Speaking at a press conference here on Saturday, August 18, Arts Council President Ahmed Shah said it is an ambitious project on which work began some six months back. Last year, the council arranged an international theatre festival participated by seven countries.

"I have been to World Culture Summit in the UAE three times and I used to think of doing something like that in my country. Now in our World Culture Festival, artists from 40 countries will participate, 34 countries have already confirmed their participation. I had planned from the beginning that we would not invite artists from just one continent. Therefore, all continents will be represented in the event, from Africa to Australia and from Europe to South America.

"Two groups from India are also coming. Some of the countries whose presence is confirmed are Rwanda, Congo, Egypt, Australia, India, the US, South Africa, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, the UAE, Palestine, France and

There will be theatrical performances, dance, music, workshops for students, talks and panel discussions on important topics pertaining to culture.

"We have also asked the foreign groups to engage in outreach programmes in Karachi's educational institutions and underprivileged areas," he said. He said the impression that Pakistan is a dangerous country will be dispelled by the festival because artists from the so-called cultured countries are coming to our country. He added Pakistan's own culture, music, theatre, classical, folk and dance will be on display in front of the whole world.

Writer Anwar Maqsood said whatever Ahmed Shah dreams about comes true. "This event is also a dream. We have not been happy in the last 77 years, but perhaps we will feel happy in the 35 days that the festival will last. I'm glad that groups from Jaipur and Mumbai will be here, too."

Head of the council's Theatre Department Khalid Ahmed said the festival is a huge event and facing its challenges will not be easy. He added it's an opportunity for students and lovers of art to learn from.



Karachi bathed in hues of green on 77th anniversary of independence



Celebrations for Pakistan's 77 years of independence started on the eve of August 14 as one could hear national songs echoing in the air, someone or other was playing some inspiring song or the other on a loudspeaker. That along with the many decorative green and white lights tugged at the heartstrings.

The next morning as numerous Pakistan flags fluttered in Karachi's sea breeze, the day began with a 21-gun salute.

Special prayers were offered in mosques for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan.

Still, many celebrations throughout the day also led to traffic havoc with the chaos reaching its climax in the evening when celebration along with a big concert started at Governor House.

All roads leading to Governor House were blocked because of massive traffic jams despite the traffic police's carrying out special arrangements.

Governor House had arranged a special treat for citizens in the form of a concert by famous singer and musician Atif Aslam. The highlight of the concert was the appearance of Olympics Gold medallist Arshad Nadeem, who was also awarded by Governor Kamran Tessori.

There were also many awards and gifts to be distributed among the people, who braved terrible traffic jams to attend the programme. Mismanagement also marred the event after security officials restricted the people's movement. Many visitors, who went inside Governor House to see the concert became stuck and were unable to come out due to massive crowd and tight security.

Those who were standing outside were unable to go inside while those who were inside were unable to come out of the premises due to closure of passages due to security.

Similarly, all roads leading to the Mazar-i-Quaid also experienced traffic jams as did Sharea Faisal where various political parties were holding rallies.

Change of guards at Quaid's Mazar Earlier in the day, an inspiring change of guard ceremony was held at the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah



Governor Kamran Tessori and Olympian Arshad Nadeem wave to the audience, on Wednesday, 14 Aug.

where the smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Naval Academy cadets assumed guard duties with traditional zeal.

Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy, Commodore Mohammad Khalid graced the occasion as the chief guest while Lieutenant Commander Ahmed Hasan performed the duties of parade commander.

The Corps Commander Karachi, Lieutenant General Babar Iftikhar, offered fatiha and laid a wreath at the Mazar-i-Quaid. He was accompanied by senior military officers.

He also wrote his remarks in the visitors' book.

CM, Governor visit Mazar-i-Quaid Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Governor Kamran Tessori arrived at the mazar for the flag-hoisting ceremony. Speaking to journalists, they extended their heartfelt congratulations to the nation on Independence Day.

The national flag-hoisting ceremony was attended by diplomats of different countries, members of civil society and people of different walks of life.

The CM and the governor interacted with the schoolchildren who were present there and sang the national anthem with the children.

Meanwhile, another flag-hoisting ceremony was also held at the Sindh Assembly building.

Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah, along with MPAs and the opposition leader, performed the flag hoisting.

There were flag-hoisting ceremonies, singing of national songs, tableaux performances, tree plantation drives at a number of educational institutions, including schools, colleges and universities.

Events were held at the Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi University, Dow University of Health Sciences and others.

The KU Music Society released a national song, its eighth, 'Hum Hi Tu Pakistan Hain' for the audience while the KU Theatre Society presented a drama, and the KU Debate and Dialogue Society arranged speech and quiz competitions.

The National Highways & Motorways Police South Zone, Pakistan Railways, the Karachi Press Club also celebrated the day with great national spirit and enthusiasm.

Many individuals and organisations planted plants and tree saplings on Independence Day. The residents of Defence and Clifton donated hundreds and thousands of plants and tree saplings on the occasion, which people took away to plant in their lawns and other places.

The MQM-P also held a programme at Kidney Hill Park to mark Independence Day.



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Bulleh Shah Urs: officials struggle to deal with devotees' influx

A large number of devotees, against the officials' expectations, thronged the shrine of Punjabi classic poet Baba Bulleh Shah whose three-day Urs concluded on Sunday, 1st

September at Kasur, forcing the district administration and religious affairs committee to intervene and stop some events to remove the overwhelming number of visitors from the premises.



The uncontrolled devotees broke the gate and iron fences that made them move in a queue at the entrance point to the shrine at the Tehsildar Chowk. They entered the premises, making the law enforcers helpless. The entrance passage was not enough to accommodate the rush of pilgrims.

A large number of women devotees were also present at the shrine to pay homage to the poet. They also tied threads of different colours with the windows of the shrine, seeking blessings for the fulfilment of their wishes. Dhamal on the drumbeats, singing of poetry of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah at various points on the compound of the shrine added colour to the Urs celebrations and they remained a major attraction for the devotees.

Swings, well of death, sweets and toy shops installed along Shahbaz Khan Road were the source of attraction for children. Scores of devotees in the form of processions also reached the shrine to lay colourful chadars on the grave of Bulleh Shah and offer prayers for his soul.

The Bulleh Shah Conference held its 34th annual edition on Saturday, 31 Aug, that lasted till dawn on Sunday 1st September.

The programme was attended by PPP

stalwarts Qamar Zaman Qaira and Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed. Poets and scholars from various parts of the country participated in the conference and shed light on the facets of the poetry of the Sufi

poet. Scholars presented their search papers on the poetry and explained the vastness of its themes. The conference was also a platform for other poets to present their own poetry.

The Urs was also an event for local political figures, journalists and other notables to fix giant panaflexes on Shahbaz Khan Road and Railway Road near the shrine. The Urs concluded after prayers at the end of Mehfil-e-Sama held in the courtyard of the shrine on Sunday, 1st September night.

Ethiopian embassy spearheads clean-up drive on Margalla Hills

Ambassador of Ethiopia Dr Jemal Beker on Saturday, 31 August spearheaded a clean-up drive at the Trail 5 in Islamabad, aimed at ridding the Margalla Hills of trash that poses a serious threat to the wildlife in the National Park.

The drive, jointly organised by the Ethiopian embassy, GhoomLay and Studio One, was launched as a part of the Ethio-

Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy initiative of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr Abiy Ahmed.

Individuals from the all walks of life including government officials, diplomatic community, civil society, youth and media participated in the clean-up drive, which sought to strengthen Ethio-Pakistan relations by pursuing joint efforts for a better



future for both the countries.

Talking to the media on the occasion, Dr Jemal Beker said the purpose of the gathering was to send the message that mass mobilisation of humans and financial resources were important solutions to solve contemporary challenges such as climate change.

He said: "Ethiopia is building a green economy by planting more than 40.5 billion seedlings of fruits, vegetable and fodder in the last five years that has created jobs and ensured food security in Ethiopia. The record-breaking plantation was undertaken under the Green Legacy Initiative which was inspired from Medemer philosophy of Ethiopian Prime Minister which advocated for mass mobilisation and alignment of the resources".

"We have launched this Green Legacy Initiative in Pakistan as I personally went to all the cities of Pakistan and mobilising all segments of the society to mitigate the serious threat of climate change," he said, urging the youth to be on forefront for such an important cause. He expressed his gratitude to the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, GhoomLay, and Studio One for partnering with the Ethiopian embassy on the humanitarian initiative.

Mr Beker also lauded the government of Pakistan's commitment for working with Ethiopia to enhance bilateral regional and multilateral cooperation between the two countries in various areas such as economy, education, health, climate change, culture and technology transfer. Chief Executive Officer of GhoomLay (Pvt) Limited Mohammad Haris thanked the Ethiopian embassy for partnering with his organisation and others to clean the Trail 5 Margalla Hills. He reiterated the commitment to continue initiatives for protecting environment in the federal capital and other cities.



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Joint venture proposed as best transaction structure for PIA's Roosevelt Hotel



Aleem Khan stresses the need to unburden the national exchequer of loss-making entities through privatisation.

The board of the Privatisation Commission recommended a joint venture as the most suitable transaction structure for the Roosevelt Hotel, owned by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) in New York, during its meeting on Wednesday, 21 August.

The recommendation is in line with the Transaction Structure Report submitted by the financial adviser for the transaction, Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc. (JLL), to the Privatisation Commission.

The consortium of Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc. was appointed as the Financial Advisory Consortium (FAC) for the Roosevelt Hotel transaction in November last year, with the Financial Services Agreement (FASA) being signed in February this year.

As part of its deliverables, the FAC was tasked with submitting a Transaction Structure Report, suggesting alternative transaction structure options for the mixed-use development of the Roosevelt Hotel. The report considered and evaluated options, including outright sale, joint venture development, and long-term lease.

Based on its analysis and experience in the New York real estate market, JLL recommended the joint venture as the most suitable transaction structure to maximise the expected proceeds and value for the government of Pakistan.

Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan, who chaired the board meeting,

commended JLL for compiling a comprehensive transaction structure report and hoped that the government would secure the best deal for the Roosevelt Hotel transaction.

A Privatisation Commission press release issued after the meeting detailed several significant decisions concerning the ongoing privatisation process of various government institutions.

The board unanimously approved financial and technical aspects, including the appointment of financial advisers for

PIA, Discos, and the Roosevelt Hotel, among others.

The board also approved the selection of six firms as prequalified financial advisers for the privatisation programme. These firms include Citigroup Global Markets Ltd of the UK, J.P. Morgan, Alvarez and Marsal of UAE, EY Consulting LLC of Dubai, PWC-A.F. Ferguson and Company, and BDO Ebrahim and Company Pakistan. This prequalification will enable the Privatisation Commission to engage financial advisers promptly for upcoming transactions.

Minister Aleem Khan expressed his satisfaction with the performance of the Privatisation Commission Board, noting that the inclusion of "world-class" financial advisers is a positive step forward.

He emphasised the need to relieve the national exchequer from the burden of loss-making institutions through privatisation, stressing the importance of transparency in this sector.

"We have to make better, solid and lasting decisions in the wider national interest," he said, adding that any institution that meets the criteria and follows the rules and regulations must be given a chance to take part in the privatisation process.



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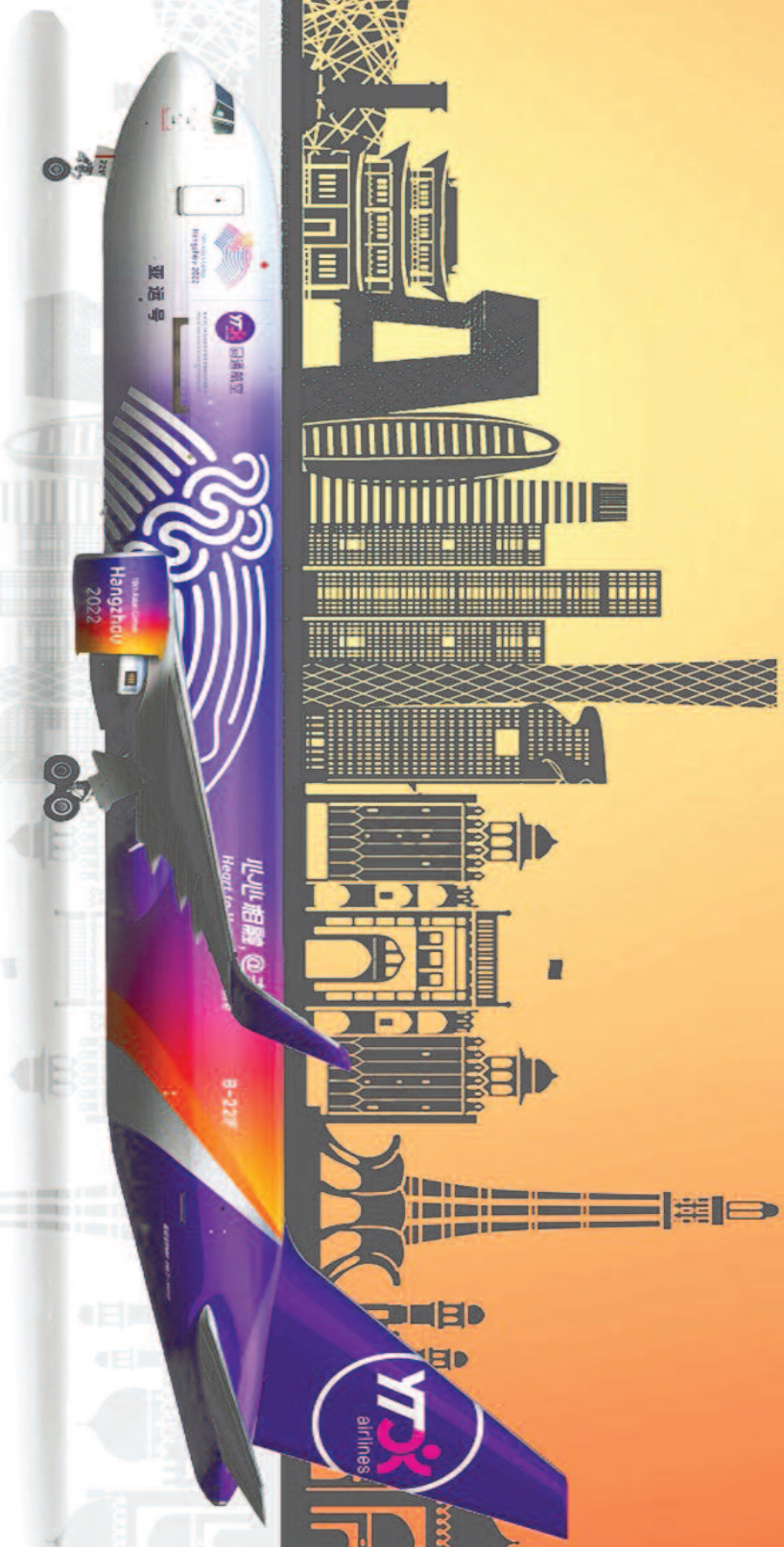
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