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## **Flyadeal starts flights from Riyadh to Sialkot**

Chairman Sialkot International Airport Limited, Mr. Hassan Ali Bhatti, Vice Chairman, Mr. Waqas Afzal, CEO SIAL AVM Tanweer Ashraf Bhatti (R), and senior management welcomed the inaugural flight of flyadeal, marking a significant milestone in enhancing connectivity between Sialkot and Riyadh (Capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). The arrival was greeted by an official reception attended by the Top Brass of SIAL, ASF, airline representatives, and distinguished guests. This new route (Sialkot to Riyadh) is expected to strengthen business, trade, and people-to-people ties, reflecting SIAL's commitment to expanding international air travel options for its passengers.



## 12 China-Pakistan cooperation projects worth 235m yuan signed



international logistics, import-export trade and jewellery processing.

Nadeem Alam, President of the Hunza Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Gilgit-Baltistan, said that CPEC has laid a solid foundation for bilateral exchanges and he hoped that both sides can engage in practical cooperation in infrastructure investment, tourism, energy, and trade and investment process optimisation, creating a dynamic and efficient platform for economic and trade exchanges.

The 15th Kashgar-Central and South Asia Commodity Fair kicked off on August 15, attracting participants from 40 countries and regions, including Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Over the five-day event, 181 overseas enterprises and 1,120 domestic companies were showcasing a diverse array of products and promoting regional economic cooperation.

**1** 2 China-Pakistan cooperation projects, valuing at 235 million renminbi, were signed at the Pakistan-focused session of the 15th Kashgar-Central and South Asia Commodity Fair held in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Themed "Sharing Development Opportunities, Building CPEC Together," the event focused on key sectors including trade, logistics, agriculture, tourism, new energy and information technology. It provided a practical and efficient platform for cooperation, promoting the implementation and tangible results of an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) collaboration.

According to the organiser, Kashgar's economic and trade exchanges with Pakistan have been increasingly close, with trade volume steadily rising. In the first half of this year, trade between Kashgar and Pakistan increased 74% year-on-year.

Over 200 Kashgar-based foreign trade companies have actively engaged the Pakistani market, while 56 Pakistani enterprises have established a presence in Kashgar, thriving in sectors such as





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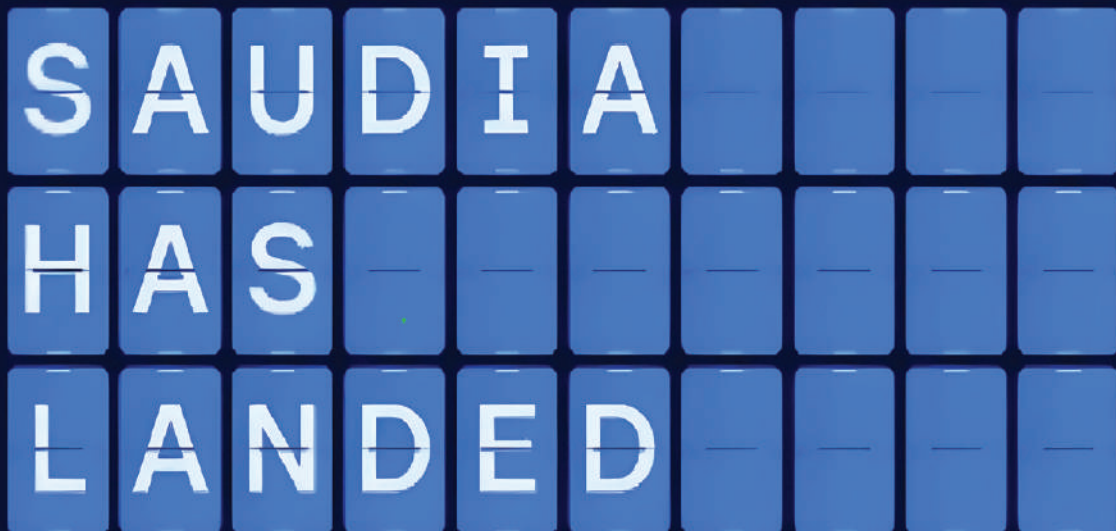
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## Pakistan Airports Authority celebrates 78th Independence Day with flag hoisting ceremonies nationwide

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) marked the nation's 78th Independence Day with flag hoisting ceremonies at airports across the country, with the main ceremony held at the PAA Headquarters in Karachi.

At the headquarters, a large number of PAA officers and staff were present, along with children dressed in national colors waving flags, as patriotic songs played in the background.

Director General PAA, Air Vice Marshal Zeeshan Saeed, SI(M), hoisted the national flag and saluted as the national anthem resonated across the premises. Addressing the gathering, the DG PAA congratulated everyone on Independence Day and paid rich tribute to the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He reminded participants that Pakistan was achieved after great sacrifices.

The DG PAA lauded the dedication of the PAA team for their hard work during the successful "Operation Bunyan Marsoos" in response to threats



emanating from the east. He reaffirmed that, by fulfilling its vision, mission, and core values, PAA is committed to playing its role in the nation's development.

Following the ceremony, the DG PAA mingled with employees and raised patriotic slogans, reflecting the collective resolve of the nation to work harder and remain ready for any sacrifice.





## PIA female cabin crew passing out ceremony held

The passing out ceremony of the 378<sup>th</sup> batch of female Flight Service Basic Training Course was held at the PIA Training Centre here on Monday, February 20.

A spokesman of the national flag carrier said that 14 newly inducted air-hostesses graduated on the occasion.

Mr. Bernd Hildenbrand, Chief Executive Officer PIA, was the chief guest and distributed certificates among the graduating air-hostesses.

While expressing his views on the occasion, Mr. Hildenbrand congratulated the airhostesses and asked them to ensure provision of best possible services and hospitality to PIA's passengers.

One of the graduating airhostesses, on behalf of the whole batch, said they would strive to bring a positive change in PIA's service, aiming to take the airline to greater heights.

The course was spread over 12 weeks during which training was imparted on various aspects of flight services. Senior PIA officials also attended the ceremony.

## Inaugural flight from Zahedan to Quetta



کوئٹہ سے ایران کیلئے فضائی سروس کا آغاز

The inaugural flight of Iran Air, launched by the Iranian government between Quetta and Zahedan, successfully operated on Friday 8 August.

An Airbus A-319 arrived at the Quetta International Airport at 09:15pm, and after a stay of over two hours, departed for Zahedan, the capital of Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province, at 11:30pm with 75 passengers onboard.

Initially, the Iran Air will operate one flight per week between Quetta and Zahedan, with the frequency potentially increasing based on passenger demand.

A ceremony was held at the Quetta airport to mark the occasion, which was attended by the counsel general and

officials of the Iranian Consulate in Quetta, a number of people from the business community and representatives from the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Quetta airport manager Waheed Shah, terminal manager Ismail Khoso, and the chief security officer of ASF were present to see off the passengers.

Last month, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistani pilgrims will be barred from travelling by road to Iran and Iraq for Arbaeen due to security concerns.

In his social media post, Naqvi said, 'After extensive consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Balochistan Government and security agencies, it has been decided that Zaireen will not be allowed to travel to Iraq and Iran by road for Arbaeen this year.

## Vision Air starts chartered cargo flights from SIAL

Vision Air International has commenced its chartered cargo flight operations. The inaugural flight of Vision Air International successfully arrived at Sialkot International Airport, marking a new chapter in air freight facilitation for the region. This development undoubtedly reflects SIAL's growing role as a premier cargo hub, connecting local/National trade to global markets.



PIA to resume UK flights from August 14 as government confirms Rs70 billion revival plan.

New buyer must invest over five years to upgrade fleet and stabilise finances.



## Pakistan Airports Authority holds e-Kacheri for Public feedback

**D**era Ghazi Khan Airport Runway Upgrade Scheduled to be Completed by December 2026.

Karachi, 15 August 2025 - The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) held its seventh e-Kacheri session, chaired by Deputy Director General Works & Development Mr. Sumair Saeed. Directors from SQMS, Engineering Services, Commercial & Estate, Human Resources, and Planning & Development, along with other senior officers, were present.

The interactive session, streamed live on PAA's official Facebook page, provided the public with a platform to share concerns, suggestions, and feedback regarding airport facilities and services across the country.

Participants raised issues ranging from passenger facilitation, food quality at airports, luggage handling, and flight delays, to suggestions for technological upgrades and operational improvements. Matters related to ATM availability, internet connectivity, and passenger processing were also discussed.

Deputy DG assured that passenger feedback is taken seriously, with relevant departments tasked to investigate and address concerns in coordination with stakeholders, including airlines and the agencies working at the airports. Agency (FIA). Updates were also shared on planned infrastructure upgrades, runway improvements, and discussions with service providers to enhance facilities.

He also informed that the runway at Dera Ghazi Khan Airport is being upgraded to accommodate A320 aircraft. Once completed in December 2026, passenger statistics indicate DG Khan is likely to become a financially viable destination for airlines.

Human resource-related queries included selection criteria for specialized roles, employee welfare, and internship programs. Concerns regarding contractor compliance with agreed terms were noted for necessary follow-up.

Mr. Sumair Saeed thanked all participants for their valuable input, stating, "Your feedback helps us serve you better and improve Pakistan's airport experience."

## Flights diverted after Ryanair Boeing 737 Pilot passes out mid-flight



**S**ome flights at Porto Airport (OPO) were diverted on August 10, 2025, after a Ryanair flight declared an emergency in which the captain passed out. The flight landed safely, and the captain received medical attention upon landing, but declined to be taken to the hospital.

The flight was operated by an Malta Air **Boeing 737** on behalf of Ryanair. The aircraft remained on the ground in Porto for about six hours, departing for its next flight a few hours late. All passengers had disembarked safely, and there were no reports of any further incidents.







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## PAA suffered Rs4bn shortfall after airspace closure to India, NA told

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) has lost Rs4.1 billion in just over two months after closing its airspace to Indian-registered aircraft, the Ministry of Defence informed the National Assembly on Friday 8 Aug.

The ministry said the shortfall, from April 24 to June 30, was in overflying revenue and was lower than the reported Rs8.5bn. The closure followed India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty on April 23.

From the very next day, Pakistan withdrew overflight permission for all Indian-registered aircraft and those operated, owned, or leased by Indian carriers.

The measure affected 100 to 150 Indian aircraft daily, cutting transit traffic by almost 20 per cent. In 2019, a similar closure led to an estimated Rs7.6bn (\$54m) revenue loss, compared to \$100m previously reported.

*Islamabad airport airspace to close daily for two hours until Aug 14*

The ministry apprised the parliament that such decisions, under the jurisdiction of the federal government, were issued through Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and carried strategic and diplomatic weight to safeguard civilians, protect infrastructure, and allow military planning.

### Sovereignty, defence

"While financial losses occur, sovereignty and national defence take precedence over economic considerations," the statement read.

The PAA's average daily overflight revenue in 2019, before tensions, was \$508,000, compared to \$760,000 in 2025.

The ministry made it clear that the amounts reflected "revenue shortfalls, not overall financial losses", and noted that overflight and aeronautical charges remained unchanged, demonstrating resilience and avoiding tariff hikes or government bailouts.

Pakistan's airspace is open to all except Indian airlines and aircraft till last week of August after the ban was extended twice on a monthly basis. Similarly, Pakistani carriers remain banned from Indian airspace. "When safeguarding sovereignty and security, no price is too high," the ministry reiterated.

### Islamabad flights

Separately, Islamabad International Airport's airspace will be closed daily for two hours until August 14 for operational reasons, according to NOTAM A0510/25. Departures and arrivals will be halted from ground level to FL210, affecting

flights to Lahore and northern areas.

The airspace will remain closed from 11am to 1pm.

On Friday 8 Aug. the temporary closure caused minor delays, with hundreds of passengers facing changes to their travel plans. The Federal

## Riyadh Air to launch London Heathrow flights in October on Boeing 787-9



Startup Riyadh Air is expected to begin flying to London Heathrow on October 26, which is the day northern carriers switch to winter schedules. The route from the Saudi capital is due to be announced shortly. It'll join Air Peace in being new at Heathrow.

Riyadh Air flights are due to run daily on the Boeing 787-9. According to Airport Coordination Limited, it will use slots obtained from British Airways via the bmi slot release procedure. It was stated that a 288-seat aircraft would be used. This means HZ-RXX, an 8.4-year-old ex-Oman Air aircraft, although this is meant to be a spare. If this aircraft is used, Riyadh Air will want it with a new frame, complete with its new cabin, as soon as possible.

### What's the appeal of Heathrow?

The official announcement is coming. Unless Riyadh Air reveals more than one route, Heathrow will be its first



destination. In time, the carrier will, of course, have a big network beyond the Saudi capital to feed its flights, to help with higher, more competitive frequencies, and to achieve higher loads. For this, its order book—of 787-9s, A350-1000s, and many A321neos—will be critical. A large Asian network is expected.

It doesn't have this network yet. Of

Investigation Agency (FIA) said all immigration counters were fully staffed and operational, processing 2,847 passengers from 12 international flights in three hours.

A sudden schedule change led to many passengers departing at the same time. FIA Immigration completed screening and clearance in line with regulations and pledged to maintain efficient services while continuing efforts against human trafficking and wanted suspects.

course, its Virgin atlantic and Delta Air Lines partnerships will help. Still, Riyadh-Heathrow is highly trafficked, high-yielding, and fast-growing. It is unusual for a market to be all three things. In the 12 months to May 2025, booking data shows that approximately 500,000 point-to-point passengers flew between the two airports.

When all passengers in all cabins are considered, an average fare of ~\$1,400 each way was paid (including a fuel surcharge). This reflected the high number of passengers who flew in premium classes from the large number of business and government travelers. Students and those visiting friends and relatives were also commonplace. In contrast, Heathrow-Jeddah—which has many pilgrims—is far lower-yielding, with its average fare being less than half that of Riyadh.

### Riyadh Air Would Be The 4th Airline On The Airport Pair

Given the nature of the market, it is unsurprising that Virgin began flying to Riyadh in March. Depending on Riyadh Air's exact relationship with Virgin, the pair should jointly have two daily frequencies.

British Airways returned to the Saudi capital in May 2009. While flights were initially sub-daily, they have mainly operated daily. Partly influenced by Virgin's arrival, frequencies have risen to a record 13 weekly, although they'll be reduced in the upcoming winter.

Then there's Saudia. While this airline may eventually focus instead on non-Riyadh markets, it currently operates up to 22 weekly flights between the Saudi capital and Heathrow. Like BA, its frequencies will also be lower in the winter. It'll run double daily, down by more than a third compared to last year. This could be partly related to Saudia's Virgin code share or the upcoming entry of Riyadh Air. Both Saudia and Riyadh Air are funded by Saudi wealth funds.



## After tragic accident, Air India ditches flights to Washington completely



*Air India provides statement on its decision, citing the unavailability of its 787-8 fleet due to retrofits and the continued airspace closure over Pakistan.*

**S**cheduling data from aviation analytics company Cirium reveals the carrier has removed Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) from its network from September 1, a decision the airline has since confirmed. Air India had previously penciled in up to five weekly services this winter and next summer.

**Air India To Stop Washington Flights Next Month.**

Air India will no longer be flying to Washington starting next month, citing "a combination of operational factors" driven by the lack of availability of its Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner fleet, which is undergoing an extensive retrofit program. The Indian carrier is currently operating three weekly services from Delhi Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL) to Washington Dulles via Vienna (VIE), which was set to rise to five peak weekly frequencies during the winter.

It doesn't appear that Air India is making any other changes to its US network, despite its recent international flight cuts. The airline implemented a cutback across its international network in the wake of the AI Flight 171 crash, although it has gradually been restoring service in phases. According to Air India CEO Campbell Wilson, the airline will have fully restored its international network by October 1.

Passengers booked to fly to Washington beyond September 1 will be contacted and offered full refunds, booking changes or alternative travel arrangements. As the airline notes, its customers can still reach Washington via four US airports it serves - Chicago O'Hare, New York JFK, Newark and San

Francisco - and then travel with one of its interline partners in Alaska Airlines, United Airlines, and Delta Air Lines. In a statement, Air India said,

"The suspension is primarily driven by the planned shortfall in Air India's fleet, as the airline commenced retrofitting 26 of its Boeing 787-8 aircraft last month. This extensive retrofit programme, aimed at significantly enhancing customer experience, necessitates a prolonged unavailability of multiple aircraft at any given time until at least end of 2026."

Air India has made considerable strides in the past few years since its takeover by Tata Group, but many lingering operational concerns remain. The AI Flight 171 tragedy has pushed these concerns to the forefront, among

which include poor maintenance procedures. An inspection of the airline's Boeing 737 and Boeing 787 fuel switches found no evidence of any problems, with the crash investigation now centered on the actions of one of the pilots.

A recent audit by the DGCA found over 50 safety violations at Air India over the past year, raising serious questions about its ability to operate safely. Of the 51 issues flagged, seven were labeled as "Level One," which is the most severe category, and another 44 were "Level Two."

## Amadeus signs agreement with Riyadh Air

**W**e're excited to announce a global distribution agreement with Riyadh Air, Saudi Arabia's new national carrier.

Through the Amadeus Travel Platform, Riyadh Air will connect to a worldwide network of travel sellers—reaching over 190 countries.

This marks a major step in Riyadh Air's journey toward modern, flexible, and customer-centric retailing. With plans to integrate the airline's #NDC content, travelers can look forward to more personalized and dynamic travel experiences.

Beyond technology, this partnership supports Riyadh Air's ambitious growth strategy and contributes to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, positioning the region as a global aviation and tourism hub.

In the photo: Maher Koubaa, EVP Travel Unit & Managing Director EMEA at Amadeus, and Vincent Coste, Chief Commercial Officer at Riyadh Air, marking the moment with a handshake.



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# Southwest Airlines Pilot arrested after failed sobriety test moments before flight



A pilot is feeling the heat after footage emerged of him being pulled out of the cockpit before a flight between Savannah and Chicago Midway. The footage, captured on January 15 but only released on Thursday, August 14, shows that pilot David Paul Allsop was asked to disembark the aircraft after there were suspicions of him being under the influence.

The video footage shows that the pilot, who resides in New Hampshire, was asked to exit the aircraft that was scheduled to operate WN 3772 between Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SAV) and Chicago Midway International Airport (MDW). The pilot was asked 'When was the last time you had a drink?'. Allsop responded ten hours ago, and claimed he had only 'had a few beers'. Which was claimed as 'three Miller Lite'.

## "Ten Hours Since My Last Drink"

The Boeing 737 was about to depart from Savannah Airport gate 2 at 06:00

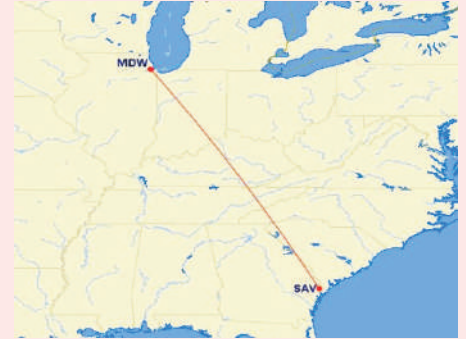
when two police officers requested to speak with the pilot. The pilot exited the aircraft onto the airbridge and was questioned by the officers, one of whom was wearing a body cam, and the footage captured the pilot looking sheepish. After Allsop was asked when he last consumed alcohol, the pilot responded 'About ten hours ago'. Allsop was quick to decline the officer's request for a field sobriety test, claiming there 'was no need'.

The police officer then responded that he could smell an odor that was consistent with alcohol, which then upset the pilot, and saw Allsop wipe his lips, and at that moment, a breath mint fell out of his mouth. Allsop reacted to this clumsily, attempting to pick up the mint off the air bridge floor. Following this moment, the pilot then consented to completing a field sobriety test. During this test, footage was captured of Allsop struggling to walk in a straight line as requested by the police officer.

Failing the sobriety test, the pilot was charged with driving under the influence and was stood down from flying for the rest of the day. Officer Josiah Best shared this statement in his report, as shared by NBC news.

"It is noteworthy that Mr. Allsop failed to follow the tip of my pen with his eyes as instructed; instead, he moved his head and neck during the test. Mr. Allsop swayed while holding his leg at a 45-degree angle."

## No Longer Flying For Southwest Airlines



Allsop's defense layer, David Chaiken, noted that the footage captured of Allsop shows no evidence of impairment and that the bodycam footage clearly shows that Allsop had committed no crime. Experts who have also reviewed the footage have claimed that the tests were not performed correctly, and standard procedures had not been followed.

Simple Flying reached out to Southwest for comment on the matter and received this response:

The Employee was removed from duty immediately after the alleged incident and no longer is employed by Southwest Airlines. Nothing is more important to Southwest than the Safety of our Customers and Employees.

The Federal Aviation Administration enforces [strict rules](#) for the consumption of alcohol before flying, with pilots required to wait a minimum of eight hours from their last drink to operating an aircraft. Blood alcohol concentration must remain below 0.04%.

## Southwest Airlines Operations At Savannah

Serving the city of Savannah, Georgia, the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport is located eight miles from the historic Savannah District. The airport is an operating base for ultra-low-cost carrier, Allegiant Air, and welcomes scheduled flights from most major US carriers, including Allegiant Air, American, Avelo, Breeze, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit Airlines, Sun Country, and United Airlines.

Southwest Airlines the world's largest low-cost carrier by fleet size (more than 800 aircraft), operates year-round services from Savannah to Baltimore, Chicago Midway, Dallas Love, Houston-Hobby, and Nashville. Seasonal flights are added during peak times to Denver and St. Louis.



## Pakistan, Saudi varsities develop surveillance drone



In a 'landmark achievement' for regional drone technology, two local and a Saudi universities have successfully designed, built and tested a hybrid autopilot vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drone for surveillance purposes.

It was a joint collaboration between King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia, National Textile University, Faisalabad, and Pak Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (PAFIASST), Haripur.

It also attracted engineers from eminent universities in Pakistan, namely Hassan Iftikhar (team lead from National Textile University/National Center of Composite Materials, GIKI Alumnus), Dr Naeemullah Khan (Deputy Director KAUST Academy/ GIKI graduate), Dr Sohail Malik (HOD Mechanical Department, PAFIASST), Dr Ayub Asghar (Director Advanced Textile Research Center, NTU), Sanam Khan (Project Engineer), Farhan Ali Shami (Air University Graduate).

Hassan Iftikhar (the team lead) announced on Saturday 9 August the maiden flight was completed successfully, achieving a significant milestone in the development of advanced UAV systems in the region. He said the project's hybrid autopilot technology enables seamless transition between vertical takeoff landing and efficient fixed-wing flight, making it suitable for longrange surveillance operations.

He said the team 'has the plans to transform this achievement into a joint business venture, converting it into light weight composite material, aiming to scale up production and introduce advanced surveillance drone solutions for security, environmental monitoring, disaster management and commercial applications for Saudi Arabia landscape.

Iftikhar said it was an electronic drone which can fly continuously for an hour. If a heavy battery is used it can fly for more than three hours. He said most of its parts were manufactured locally and some were imported from China.

He added this project will be expanded to introduce functionalities such as AI assisted decision making and solar-

assisted flight.

He said the drone technology worldwide is quite advanced and costly.

Our goal is to develop an affordable and low cost solution.

This innovation represents a new chapter in Pakistan-Saudi technological collaboration, combining engineering expertise and applied research to strengthen the region's presence in the global UAV industry,' he added.

## Swiss pilot takes big step closer to solar plane altitude record

Swiss pilot Raphael Domjan got within around a thousand metres of setting a new altitude record in a solarpowered plane on Sunday 10 Aug. as he chases the goal of breaking the 10,000 metres barrier.

Self-described ecoexplorer Domjan, 53, flew the Solar Stratos electric plane to an altitude of 8,224 metres in a flight lasting around four and a half hours, his team told reporters, after he landed back at Sion airport in southwestern Switzerland.

The current altitude record for a solar plane stands at 9,235 metres, set in 2010 by the Solar Impulse experimental aeroplane, flown by Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg.

Domjan is aiming to get to 10,000 metres or beyond flying at the same altitude as airliners.

A warm-up flight on July 31 got to 6,589 metres the highest-ever for SolarStratos.

And an attempt on Friday 8 Aug. was cut short when the rising warm air thermals needed to boost the ascent failed to materialise, with Domjan turning back to preserve the charge in the batteries for Sunday 10 Aug., when the conditions looked more promising. Sunday's second attempt of the season set a new high altitude best for the two-seater Solar Stratos, which has high-spec solar panels covering its huge 24.8-metre wingspan.

The slow-charging plane will be left out in the sun to get the batteries back up to 100 percent for the next attempt. 'To be a pioneer, an adventurer, it means trying something you are not sure will succeed,' Domjan said.

We'll try and try until we go to 10,000 metres.

## Families of India's plane crash victims call for release of flight recorders

Families of the victims of June's deadly Air India crash demanded on Friday 8 Aug. the immediate release of the aircraft's two flight recorders, saying delays were eroding their trust in the investigation.

A total of 241 people on board the London-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner were killed when the plane crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad, in western India, on June 12. Another 19 people were killed on the ground.

A preliminary investigation report by India's aircraft accident investigation bureau said fuel to the jet's engines was [cut off](#) moments before impact.

The report did not offer any conclusions or apportion blame for the disaster, but indicated, based on the cockpit voice recording, that one pilot asked the other why he cut off fuel. The second pilot responded that he had not.

"We are formally demanding the immediate release of the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder — the black box," said Imtiaz Ali Sayed, a relative of several victims.

"These devices contain vital information that can reveal the truth behind this horrific tragedy," he said in a media statement.

Sayed, whose younger brother, his wife and their two children were killed in the crash, said he was speaking on behalf of 60 families "who share the same pain and unanswered questions".

"Every day without answers deepens the pain of our loss and erodes public trust in aviation safety," he said.

Some of the families are exploring legal action against Air India and Boeing, the plane's US manufacturer, their lawyer said. Mike Andrews of the US-based Beasley Allen Law Firm, representing 65 families from India and Britain, met relatives in Vadodara, south of Ahmedabad, on Friday 8 Aug. after visiting the crash site.

"Suppose the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder indicate that there is a defect with the aircraft ... in that case, the options are to bring a defective product or a product liability claim in the United States for those claims," he told reporters.



# Airbus A320 series poised to overtake Boeing 737 family as most-delivered commercial airliner



The Airbus A320 narrowbody series is on the verge of surpassing Boeing's best-selling 737 family to become the most-delivered commercial airliner in the world, according to data from the aviation analytics company Cirium, first reported by Bloomberg.

Launched as a direct challenger to Boeing's long-dominant 737, the A320 program has taken nearly four decades to reach this milestone. Now, the European aircraft manufacturer has finally caught up to its US rival.

As of early August 2025, Airbus had narrowed the gap to just 20 aircraft, with lifetime deliveries of 12,155 Airbus A320-family jets, according to Cirium data. At the current pace, that difference is expected to disappear as soon as September 2025.

In a linked in post Max Kingsley-Jones, head of advisory at Cirium Ascend Consultancy, noted that had delivered 12,175 Boeing 737s since the first -100 entered service with Lufthansa in December 1967. Airbus, meanwhile, handed over its first A320-100 to Air France in March 1988 and has since delivered 12,155 narrowbody aircraft. Kingsley-Jones added:

"But did anyone back then expect it could become number one – and on such high production volumes? I certainly didn't, and nor probably did Airbus Industrie..."

## A320 and 737 Dominate The World's Commercial Passenger Fleet

Together, the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 families account for nearly half of all passenger commercial narrowbody jets flying today. By 1988, when Airbus launched its new A320 narrowbody jet, Boeing had already established a strong lead, having delivered around 1,500 of its popular jets. But Airbus gained an edge by being the first to upgrade its Airbus A420 with new generation engines, creating the fuel-efficient "neo" variant that quickly became a favored choice among airlines.

Facing growing pressure to compete, Boeing introduced the 737 MAX series, which attempted to fit larger, more

powerful engines onto the aircraft's older design. This led to serious problems. The Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), which was introduced due to changes in the aircraft's aerodynamics caused by larger, more forward-mounted engines, malfunctioned, contributing to two fatal 737 MAX crashes that killed 346 people onboard.

As a result, the Boeing 737 MAX was grounded worldwide. Airlines stopped flying the aircraft, and it remained grounded until late 2020. The United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and other regulators required extensive software updates, pilot training, sensor upgrades, and wiring modifications before the aircraft could return to service. By late 2020, the Boeing 737 MAX was recertified, with new safety protocols in place. Countries around the globe gradually resumed commercial flights, including China, in early 2023.

## Setting The Airbus A320 Apart

To make the A320 stand out, Airbus took several steps when it launched the program. It adopted digital fly-by-wire controls, which were lighter than conventional hydraulic systems, and replaced the traditional central yoke with a side-stick for the pilot. This change freed up cockpit space, improved visibility of instruments, and offered a modern, ergonomic interface.

The A320's design included a taller landing gear, raising the aircraft higher off the ground than rivals like the Boeing 737. This allowed for larger engines, easier maintenance access, and more operational flexibility at airports with varied runway conditions.

## EasyJet completes huge rollout of new software in bid to improve efficiency

EasyJet said it has retrofitted the programme on all 54 of its A320 and A321 neo family planes.

EasyJet has completed the installation of new navigation software on 54 aircraft, designed to enhance collaboration with air

traffic control (ATC) and improve flight efficiency.

The UK's largest airline stated the Future Air Navigation System-C (FANS-C) shares real-time aircraft trajectory information with ATC providers, enabling more efficient route calculations.

This innovative system also allows controllers to relay instructions, such as "climb to 36,000 feet," via text rather than radio, thereby minimising misunderstandings and potential hold-ups.

EasyJet said it has retrofitted the programme on all 54 of its A320 and A321 neo family planes.

The carrier's new jets rolling off the Airbus assembly line are equipped with the technology as standard.

EasyJet has completed the installation of new navigation software on 54 aircraft to boost collaboration with air traffic control (ATC) staff (Alamy/PA)

EasyJet said the software has saved it 334 tonnes of fuel since it began using it in 2019.

It said last month French ATC disruption was responsible for the majority of its delays this summer.

David Morgan, chief operating officer at easyJet, said: "Technologies like FANS-C are not only essential for the modernisation of airspace, they will be critical in helping deliver meaningful reductions in fuel, carbon emissions and noise pollution.

"To maximise the potential of these technologies, it's critical that airspace reform is finally delivered, and this means more direct routes to help reduce congestion and delays.

"The UK Government has taken positive steps to redesign UK airspace – we now need those plans delivered swiftly here and across Europe so we can properly harness these technologies and capitalise on the environmental benefits they will deliver."

The Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority are establishing a group of aviation experts to work with UK airports on modernising airspace.

It is hoped this UK Airspace Design Service will launch by the end of the year.

A radar-related issue was blamed for a UK ATC failure by provider Nats on July 30 which forced the cancellation of more than 150 flights, disrupting thousands of passengers.

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## 777X uses the largest jet engines in the World, Why?



The larger fan diameter allows slower operation, more bypass airflow, and cooler core temperatures, which lower fuel burn and noise output.

The Boeing 777X has become a standout in modern aviation, not just for its size but for the sheer scale of its powerplants. The aircraft, set to operate from major hubs such as Dubai International Airport (DXB), features engines that are unprecedented in commercial service.

These engines, General Electric's GE9X, hold the title for the largest commercial turbofans ever built. Their massive diameter and advanced design are central to the 777X's ability to deliver long-range performance while meeting strict efficiency and noise requirements.

### Boeing 777X Engines

The Boeing 777X family, including the 777-8 and 777-9 variants, was designed to succeed the Boeing 777-300ER and compete directly with the Airbus A350.

### Advertisement

To meet operational demands, long range, high passenger capacity, and reduced emissions, Boeing required an engine with immense thrust, high fuel efficiency, and durability. The GE9X emerged as the only viable solution at launch.

This engine's fan diameter measures 134 inches (3.4 meters) larger than a

Boeing 737's fuselage and achieves a bypass ratio of 10:1.

With a certified thrust of up to 110,000 pounds, it enables fully loaded departures on ultra-long-haul sectors like Dubai to Los Angeles.

The design incorporates ceramic matrix composites (CMCs), carbon fiber fan blades, and 3D printed components, reducing weight and improving heat resistance.

According to Simple Flying, the GE9X also offers a 10% lower fuel burn compared to its predecessor, the GE90-115B.

### Reason for GE9X

The 777X's maximum takeoff weight

exceeds 775,000 lbs, requiring a thrust level above 100,000 lbf for reliable performance. A smaller engine would have needed higher rotational speeds, greater thermal stress, and a lower bypass ratio, reducing efficiency and service life.

The larger fan diameter allows slower operation, more bypass airflow, and cooler core temperatures, which lower fuel burn and noise output.

Exclusively selecting GE also simplified parts logistics for carriers like Emirates (EK), Qatar Airways (QR), and Lufthansa (LH), all of which operate large Boeing 777 fleets. However, this single-source approach means potential delays if GE9X production or maintenance issues arise.

GE9X Engine for Boeing 777-9;  
Photo: By Dan Nevill from Seattle |  
Wikimedia Commons

### Technological Advancements

Historically, the GE90-115B set benchmarks for power with its 128-inch fan, but the GE9X surpasses it with efficiency-focused upgrades.

The engine operates at a record pressure ratio of 60:1, uses CMC components capable of withstanding 1,300°C+, and integrates full authority digital engine control (FADEC) with predictive maintenance.

Compared to legacy engines such as Pratt & Whitney's JT9D or Rolls-Royce's Trent XWB, the GE9X leverages advanced manufacturing and materials to achieve lower weight, higher heat tolerance, and better combustion efficiency.

While future designs like the Rolls-Royce UltraFan may exceed the GE9X's fan size, the GE9X currently stands as the most advanced commercial jet engine in service.





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## Spike making 'significant progress' on its quiet Supersonic Business Jet



**S**pike Aerospace, an innovative aerospace company based in Boston, says that it is making significant progress in the development of its flagship supersonic business jet, the Spike S-512 Diplomat. Spike is moving to complete an enhanced study on the aircraft's technological features.

The Spike S-512 Diplomat promises to deliver faster, quieter, and more fuel-efficient supersonic travel over both land and water, possibly carrying passengers from New York JFK Airport to Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport (CDG) in under four hours and without the disruptive sonic boom.

Introducing Quieter Supersonic Travel

The Spike S-512 is expected to start flying in the late 2020s. Building on a strong technical foundation of research and development and multiple design iterations, Spike Aerospace is now completing an "enhanced study" to further refine the new supersonic business jet's aerodynamics, cabin configuration, and low-boom performance.

The goal of the enhanced study is to validate the S-512 Diplomat's ability to meet stringent noise requirements for overland supersonic flight. Spike Aerospace aims to "redefine long-distance travel for business and government leaders," allowing them to travel at supersonic speeds while enjoying the comfort and discretion of a private jet.

As the company prepares for its next phase, it is collaborating with highly experienced professionals from top aerospace companies, key industry stakeholders, and academic institutions to achieve accelerated design, certification planning, and market readiness. Spike Aerospace will also undergo a complete brand refresh, including redesigning its website to better showcase its technology, market vision, and development.

Resurgence Of Supersonic Passenger Flights

Travelers have long been fascinated by supersonic commercial travel, but it has not been a reality since the retirement of Concorde in 2003. However, supersonic travel could make a comeback,

with many aerospace companies researching and developing various models. While Boom Supersonic, which has also made headlines in the last few years, is working on a commercial passenger aircraft, Spike Aerospace is targeting the business aviation segment.

According to Spike Aerospace, the S-512 Diplomat is uniquely positioned to meet the demand for faster, more efficient flying in the business aviation market, while addressing community concerns over noise and environmental impact. While Concorde proved to be a technological marvel, it was banned from performing supersonic flights over land due to concerns about noise and environmental impact.

The new low-boom business jet is designed to fly quietly over land and water and reduce international travel times by up to 50%. Using advanced engineering, Spike will reduce the S-512's noise signature "to a mere soft thump," nearly eliminating the boom. The Spike S-512 Diplomat will be capable of achieving a cruising speed of Mach 1.6 (1,100 mph), with a very low sonic boom of less than 75 PLdB.

The aircraft's fuselage will be insulated from the outside engine and wind noise, giving S-512 passengers a quieter and more comfortable experience. The aircraft will be able to carry up to 18 passengers. It will cut travel times by half, flying New York-London in 3.3 hours, New York-Los Angeles in 3.1 hours, London-Dubai in 3.2 hours, Dubai-Hong Kong in 3.5 hours, and Singapore-Sydney in 3.7 hours.

With the company now further refining cabin configurations, it is unclear if it will stick to the exact same layouts as previously announced. However, it plans to introduce an innovative multiplex digital cabin. The small cabin windows will be replaced with Multiplex Digital Screens, offering panoramic views and full-length, high-definition displays.

Meanwhile, another quiet supersonic aircraft, the Lockheed Martin X-59 Quesst, is also under development for NASA's Low-Boom Flight Demonstrator project. Furthermore, Colorado-based Boom Technology is also plotting the comeback of commercial passenger supersonic travel with the development of the Boom Overture. The aircraft is designed to cruise at Mach 1.7 (1,122 mph) and carry 64 to 80 passengers. The aircraft has already garnered interest from commercial airlines, including United Airlines and American Airlines.

## Turkish Airlines team visits Faisalabad International Airport



**T**urkish Airlines Cargo Director for Pakistan, Middle East & Afghanistan Serkan Sonmez with his team visited Faisalabad International Airport and Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) to discuss matters of mutual interest. Meetings agreed that considerable load of passengers and cargo is available for operating flights to & from the city of Faisalabad.

## Dubai first city in the world to launch a commercial Air Taxi service



Dubai's vision of an aerial commute is no longer science fiction. If all goes according to plan, passengers will be soaring above the city in electric flying taxis by 2026, marking a global first in the evolution of urban mobility.

"Dubai is all set to become the first city in the world to launch a commercial air taxi service, following successful full-scale test flights completed by US-based Joby Aviation," said Ahmed Hashim Bahrozian, CEO of the Public Transport Agency of the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA). "We aim to be the first city in the world to launch a commercial air taxi service. This is not just a trial. This is a real transport mode that will be integrated into Dubai's infrastructure," said Bahrozian.

## Government of Pakistan Confers Sitara-e-Imtiaz on Arshad Wali Muhammad

The Government of Pakistan has officially announced the conferment of the Sitara-e-Imtiaz, one of the nation's highest civil awards, upon Arshad Wali Muhammad, Group Director of Gerry's Group and Former Minister for Tourism, Environment, Climate Change and Coastal Development in the Caretaker Government of Sindh, Pakistan (2023–24). This prestigious honor has been awarded in recognition of Mr. Wali Muhammad's exceptional achievements, professional excellence, philanthropy, and contributions across his respective fields.

As Minister for Tourism in the caretaker government, Mr. Wali Muhammad worked to highlight Sindh's cultural heritage, historic landmarks, and coastal potential, launching initiatives that



promoted eco-tourism, local community engagement, and international visibility for Sindh as a tourist destination. His

tenure emphasized the importance of sustainable tourism development and responsible stewardship, positioning Sindh as a province rich in history, natural beauty, and opportunities for global travelers.

His leadership has also been instrumental in strengthening Pakistan's aviation, travel, and tourism sectors. As Group Director of Gerry's Group—Pakistan's largest aviation and travel services company—he has played a pivotal role in advancing the country's global connectivity, promoting aviation technology in Pakistan, and driving economic growth.

The Sitara-e-Imtiaz will be formally conferred at an official ceremony in Islamabad as part of Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations.



*Mr. Abdul Rasheed (SAPS DGR Instructor) presenting a Gift to Qalbe Abbas Naqvi (Zonal Secretary) for managing two badges of DGR Course at Zonal ACAAP office Sialkot from 30-07-2025 to 04-08-2025 (21 students) and 2nd badge from 05-08-2025 to 09-08-2025 (19 students)*



## Saqib Majeed Sheikh, Director of Rapid Cargo speaks about cargo business in Pakistan

### Please illustrate your Company's Profile:

The idea behind establishment of Rapid Cargo Group is strive to become leading providers of global logistics solutions. The group has a unique combination of young, energetic, highly motivated personnel and very experienced professionals to provide logistic oriented services with diligence and punctuality in a truly professional manner in the fields of cargo general sales and booking, chartering and integrated logistics services both domestically and internationally.

*The Group renders the following specialized services;*

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**Cargo Consultation & Documentation Service**

Import & Export Consolidation & Custom Clearance Services

Inland Trucking Services

Project Cargo Handling

**Q. Please share with us your professional & educational journey in a nutshell?**

**A:** Saqib Majeed: I came from a business-oriented family, with my father, Sh. Abdul Majeed, starting his entrepreneurial journey in 1962. I excelled academically, securing first place in Intermediate exams in my district (Sialkot) in the 1989. I graduated from Govt. College Lahore, where I earned the honor of being a proud Ravian. I then pursued my ACMA from the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants in Lahore. Since 1991, I have worked in the freight forwarding industry, formally joining Rapid Cargo in 1994 as part of our family business. I am grateful to my parents and two elder brothers, Amer Majeed Sheikh and Asim Majeed Sheikh, for their unwavering support. Over the years, I've gained valuable experience in the business and cultural landscapes of major commercial hubs across Pakistan.

**Q: Pakistan is passing through testing times, how to turn around Pakistan's economy?**

**A:** The key to turning around Pakistan's economy lies in ensuring political stability. Economic instability often stems from political instability, so resolving this is paramount. We need to support domestic industries and



prioritize national products. The introduction of flexible monetary policies, attractive interest rates, and a push for foreign direct investment (FDI) are essential. Additionally, we must focus on expanding the IT sector, which is rapidly growing. A tax reduction, streamlined government administration, and the promotion of digitalization and e-payments would also create a more conducive business environment.

**Q. What is Rapid Cargo's vision, mission and core values?**

**A: Vision:** At Rapid Cargo, our vision is to drive positive environmental change and contribute to the planet's sustainability, ensuring a better world for future generations. As a compliance-

focused company, we are committed to corporate social responsibility and promoting a greener economy. Through our 'Plant a Tree for Every Shipment' initiative, we actively work to reduce our carbon footprint and make a lasting impact on global environmental health.

**Mission:** To excel in freight forwarding through innovation, digitalization, and a commitment to service excellence.

**Core Values:** Integrity, teamwork, and the ultimate satisfaction of our customers are at the heart of everything we do.

**Q: What are the key challenges & opportunities in your industry?**

**A:** The key challenges include a shortage of skilled professionals in the freight forwarding sector, limited

logistics options out of Pakistan, and the unpredictability caused by frequent policy changes. Additionally, infrastructure weaknesses pose significant hurdles. However, the opportunities are vast. Pakistan's strategic location can help us capitalize on expanding regional trade, and the logistics industry holds immense potential for growth. With the right investments and planning, the logistics sector can thrive.

**Q: Any remarkable recognition or achievements by Rapid Cargo?**

**A:** Since our inception in 1991, Rapid Cargo has expanded its network across Pakistan, with an overseas office in Manchester, UK. We have represented major aviation industry players like Lufthansa, Air Transat, and Air Moldova. Additionally, our company has diversified into value-added services, such as temperature-controlled shipments, specialized transportation (Defence and radioactive materials), pet shipping, project handling, and home/office relocations. We are consistently recognized as a leader in freight forwarding and have earned numerous industry awards, including Top Airline and Shipping Line accolades. Additionally, we are going to launch an innovative pet care mobile app and veterinary clinic management system, designed to help pet owners seamlessly address their pets' logistics and healthcare needs.

**Q: What are the leadership characteristics of a CEO you like to see in the new generation?**

**A:** A visionary CEO must be innovative, patient, and adaptable to navigate evolving trends. They should also have strong team management skills, emotional intelligence, and a commitment to ensuring the safety and security of employees, clients, and stakeholders.

**Q: A CEO's success largely depends upon a team. What are the three characteristics of a team?**

**A:** A winning team is built on finding the right talent, fostering collaboration, and promoting effective communication. Successful teams work together to solve problems and develop multiple solutions. Ownership of tasks and clear responsibilities are also critical for achieving success.

**Q: What are the key challenges of Human Resource and the three behaviors you look for while hiring at Rapid Cargo?**

**A:** The key challenges in human resources include retaining top talent, upskilling employees continuously, and fostering a team-oriented culture. When

hiring, I look for candidates who are ethical, adaptable, and customer-centric in their approach.

**Q: What is your strategy for diversity and inclusion at Rapid Cargo?**

**A:** Our strategy focuses on promoting diversity across all facets of the business, including fleet management, transportation to CIS countries, e-commerce, and digital customer services. We actively seek to create an inclusive environment through our technological advancements and employee engagement initiatives.

**Q: Where do you see Rapid Cargo five years down the road?**

**A:** In the next five years, I envision Rapid Cargo exploring new trade corridors, attracting foreign investment to Pakistan, leveraging advanced digital solutions to enhance customer experiences, and forging impactful strategic alliances to expand our market footprint. These initiatives will not only strengthen our position as an industry leader but also drive long-term growth and contribute to regional economic development.

**Q: Why is Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.) important for CEOs, especially in testing times?**

**A:** Emotional intelligence is crucial for CEOs, especially during challenging times, as it allows them to remain calm, make sound decisions, and connect with their teams. E.Q. fosters trust and understanding, empowering leaders to navigate through crisis while maintaining clarity and focus. It is equally important to complement emotional intelligence with spiritual intelligence for holistic leadership.

A business speaks the language of digits. To what extent a CEO should be finance-savvy?

A CEO must be deeply familiar with the financial aspects of the business to drive profitability. *The three key numbers to focus on are:*

*Profitability:* the ultimate measure of success.

*Cash Flow:* ensuring liquidity and operational continuity.

*Operational Efficiency:* streamlining operations to ensure consistent and repeat business.

**Q. In the age of AI & ChatGPT, what is your strategy for digital transformation?**

**A.** AI and ChatGPT are not threats; they are tools to enhance human efficiency. Our strategy involves developing custom software solutions integrated with AI to automate pricing and costing in freight forwarding. We leverage AI, data analytics, and automation to

improve logistics, streamline operations, and enhance customer experiences.

**Q” What's the toughest decision you've ever made, and what did you learn from it?**

**A:** The toughest decisions include navigating through the impact of September 11, the 2009 and 2016 recessions, and managing operations remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. I learned the importance of adaptability, team cohesion, and the need to maintain morale and focus during crises.

**Q: Who is your inspirational role model?**

**A:** Nelson Mandela inspires me for his political vision and leadership with empathy, while Mahathir Mohamad is a business and economic role model, known for his strategic vision and leadership during times of adversity.

**Q.Coping strategy to manage your anger and stress?**

**A.** "I manage stress and anger through mental and physical exercises, practicing patience (SABAR), and relying on faith in Allah's promises." Staying grounded and focusing on long-term goals helps me maintain composure during challenging times.

**Q.Define success and happiness in three key words or phrases?**

**A.** *Nelson Mandela wisely stated, "Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."* This powerful quote emphasizes the importance of resilience and determination in the face of adversity. I firmly believe that true success is built on consistency, perseverance, and the ability to rise after each setback. Similarly, happiness is not just a fleeting emotion but a state of contentment, rooted in gratitude and continuous personal growth. It's about embracing challenges, learning from them, and evolving into a stronger, more fulfilled version of ourselves.

**Q: Your favorite book on professional development that you would recommend?**

**A:** *"Leaders Eat Last"* by Simon Sinek is a book I highly recommend, as it aligns closely with my values of leadership. It emphasizes putting people first and fostering trust within a team, a principle I strongly believe in.

**Q. Any message of optimism to the younger generation of CEOs, and business leaders?**

**A.** Stay committed to hard work, avoid shortcuts, and work smart. Build your team, stay strong, and remain motivated. Help your peers along the way, and never lose sight of your longterm vision.





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## Hiroshima marks 80 years as US-Russia nuclear tensions rise



MAYOR Kazumi Matsui and a representative of bereaved families place a list of victims on the cenotaph at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

Japan marked 80 years since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on Wednesday 6 Aug. with a ceremony reminding the world of the horrors unleashed, as sabre-rattling between the United States and Russia keeps the nuclear “Doomsday Clock” close to midnight.

A silent prayer was held at 8:15am, the moment when US aircraft Enola Gay dropped “Little Boy” over the western Japanese city on Aug 6, 1945. On a sweltering morning, hundreds of black-clad officials, students and survivors laid flowers at the memorial cenotaph, with the ruins of a domed building in the background, a stark reminder of the horrors that unfolded.

In a speech, Hiroshima mayor Kazumi Matsui warned of “an accelerating trend toward military buildup around the world”, against the backdrop of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the chaos in the Middle East. “These developments flagrantly disregard the lessons the international community should have learned from the tragedies of history,” he said.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said it was Japan’s mission “to take the lead... toward a world without nuclear weapons”. The final death toll of the Hiroshima attack would hit around 140,000 people, killed not just by the colossal blast and the ball of fire, but also later by the radiation.

Three days after “Little Boy”, on Aug 9, another atomic bomb killed 74,000 people in Nagasaki. Imperial Japan surrendered on Aug 15, bringing an end to World War II.

Today, Hiroshima is a thriving metropolis of 1.2 million but the attacks live on in the memories of many. On the eve of the ceremony, people began lining

up to pay their respects to the victims in front of the cenotaph. Before dawn on Wednesday, 6 Aug. families who lost loved ones in the attack also came to pray.

**HIROSHIMA:** A man pushes a paper lantern onto the Motoyasu river to mark the 80th anniversary of the world’s first use of a nuclear weapon, in front of the Atomic Bomb Dome.

Yoshie Yokoyama, 96, who arrived in a wheelchair with her grandson, told reporters that her parents and grandparents were bomb victims. “My grandfather died soon after the bombing, while my father and mother both died after developing cancer. My parents-in-law also died, so my husband couldn’t see them again when he came back from battlefields after the war. “People are still suffering,” she added. Wednesday’s ceremony was set to include a record of around 120 countries and regions including, for the first time, Taiwanese and Palestinian representatives.

The United States — which has never formally apologised for the bombings — was represented by its ambassador to Japan. Russia and China were absent. Nihon Hidankyo, the grassroots organisation that last year won the Nobel Peace Prize, is representing the dwindling number of survivors, known as hibakusha.

As of March, there were 99,130 hibakusha, according to the Japanese health ministry, with the average age of 86. “I want foreign envoys to visit the peace memorial museum and understand what happened,” the group’s co-chair Toshiyuki Mimaki told local media ahead of the commemorations.

Pope Leo XIV said in a statement that “in our time of mounting global tensions and conflicts”, Hiroshima and Nagasaki remained “living reminders of the profound horrors wrought by nuclear weapons”.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that “the very weapons that brought such devastation to Hiroshima and Nagasaki are once again being treated as tools of coercion”.

## Nagasaki marks 80 years since atomic bombing



Thousands bowed their heads in prayer in Nagasaki on Saturday 9 Aug. to mark the 80th anniversary of the city’s atomic bombing, as the mayor warned that current global conflicts could push the world again into nuclear war.

The western Japanese city was levelled on Aug 9, 1945, when the United States dropped a 10,000-pound plutonium-239 bomb, nicknamed “Fat Man”, instantly killing some 27,000 of the city’s estimated 200,000 people. By the end of 1945, the death toll from acute radiation exposure had reached about 70,000.

Nagasaki’s destruction came three days after a US uranium-235 bomb destroyed Hiroshima. Japan surrendered on Aug 15, ending World War Two. After a moment of silence at 11:02am, marking the time of the blast, Mayor Shiro Suzuki called on leaders to return to the principles of the UN Charter and show a concrete path towards abolishing nuclear weapons, warning that delay was “no longer permissible”. “This is a crisis of human survival that is closing in on each and every one of us,” Suzuki told the crowd, estimated by Japanese media at 2,700. He quoted the testimony of a survivor to illustrate the reality of a nuclear attack: “Around me were people whose eyeballs had popped out... Bodies were strewn about like stones.” “Is it not this ‘global citizen’ perspective that will serve as the driving force behind stitching back together our fragmented world?” Suzuki asked, calling for a solution based on mutual understanding and solidarity.

The US military is believed to have chosen Nagasaki as a target due to its significance as a major industrial and port city. The city’s geographical features, including its hilly terrain, were also thought to concentrate the blast.



## SCCI holds a meeting with DG NLC

On August 7, 2025, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Senior Vice President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), chaired a high-level meeting with Major General Farrukh Shahzad Rao, Director General of NLC, Mr. Farrukh E Alam, Vice Chairman of DP World along with Mr. Abdulla Yaqoob Al Sayed Ahmad Al Hashmi, Head of Traders Market at DP World. Representatives from NLC were also present during the meeting.

The central focus of the discussion was the proposal to establish a “Pakistan Mart” in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) —envisioned as trade hub and a dedicated exhibition platform for showcasing Pakistani products. The concept was modeled after the success of Dragon Mart (by China) and the upcoming Bharat Mart (by India), both serving as international hubs to promote national exports in the Gulf region and re-export around the world. The delegation emphasized that the establishment of a Pakistan Mart would



not only strengthen Pakistan's export footprint in the Middle East but also provide a permanent commercial presence

in the UAE, enabling year-round trade, business networking, and promotional opportunities for Pakistani enterprises.

## Public Sidewalks

Prof. Safdar Sandal

I have not been to New Zealand but to Greece yes, several times. The lemon trees on sidewalks look very beautiful in Athens and these make the atmosphere healthy too. On the outside wall of my house in Sialkot Cantonment

(Pakistan) the 'Cantonment Board' leaves 8 to 10 feet wide areas joining the houses and the road, enabling residents to

grow any kind of plants and the high quality of green grass for the sake of beauty of the house which grace to the residential area. Annual competitions are held and awards given by the Board to the residents who feel as jovial gardening competitors and then they take pride in these priceless awards for the whole year and for their whole life.

So I have grown date palms and figs trees, besides flowers. Right now I am also

seeing them from my bedroom while writing these lines. I am fond of growing all kinds of fruit trees inside my spacious house-garden too; my favourite hobby. So, I have very much liked the Picture of New Zealand as above (never mind even if it is AI). For me it is idealistic. To anybody interested I can send pictures on WhatsApp or email of my living (not AI)

Wishing Happy Living for all people..



In New Zealand, fruit trees are grown along public sidewalks, allowing anyone to pick and enjoy fresh fruit at no cost.



Burg-e-Sandal -Sialkot - Pakistan



## Iran can join China-Pakistan Silk Road: Pezeshkian



Iranian president emphasises existing strong trade relations between two nations, hopes for enhancing these ties further during his trip. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receives the President of Iran HE Dr Mahmoud Pezeshkian and his delegation upon their arrival to Islamabad on their two days official visit to Pakistan, August 2, 2025.

President Masoud Pezeshkian Saturday 2 Aug. outlined plans to deepen cooperation with Pakistan in border trade, markets and transport, highlighting the potential for Iran to connect to the Silk Road currently being developed between China and Pakistan, Iran's Mehr News Agency reported.

According to official website of Iranian Presidency, the president was speaking to the media in Tehran during a briefing before embarking on an official visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where he also mentioned developing border trade via land, air and sea with Pakistan as one of the priorities of this trip, adding, "Through Pakistan, we can connect to the Silk Road between China and Pakistan, and this road can connect to Europe through Iran."

He said, "Currently, there are very good trade relations between the two countries, and during this trip, we will work to elevate these relations to the targeted amount, which is close to \$10 billion."

President Pezeshkian emphasized the existing strong trade relations between the two nations and expressed optimism about enhancing these ties further during his trip.

The president also highlighted the deep-rooted and warm relationship that has developed between Iran and Pakistan since the latter's establishment, noting that this partnership spans various sectors, including economic, scientific, cultural, industrial and border cooperation. He also acknowledged the ideological bond shared between both peoples.

Reflecting on regional challenges, Pezeshkian pointed out Pakistan's strong condemnation of the recent aggression by the Zionist regime and the United States against Iran. He praised the Pakistani parliament for its support of Iran's territorial integrity and reiterated the importance of solidarity among Islamic nations.

In conclusion, he addressed the challenges posed by external forces attempting to create divisions among Islamic countries. He affirmed Iran's commitment to fostering cohesion with Pakistan. Later, Iranian President Masoud Peshkeshian arrived in Pakistan on a two-day state visit. His plane landed at Lahore airport where he was given a grand welcome. He was presented with bouquets by children at the airport.

The president was warmly welcomed by PMLN President Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, after which the three personalities left the airport in the same vehicle.

The Allama Iqbal International Airport was decorated with the flags of Pakistan and Iran. Pezeshkian was accompanied by a delegation of several ministers and high-ranking officials, including Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Later, President Pezeshkian visited the mausoleum of the Poet of the East Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal to pay tribute to his legacy. He was accompanied by Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb and Provincial Information Minister Uzma Bokhari.

During the solemn ceremony, President Pezeshkian laid a wreath at the grave and offered Fateha, led by Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and Khateeb of Badshahi Masjid Maulana Abdul Khahir Azad. The Iranian president also penned heartfelt remarks in the visitors book, expressing admiration for Allama Iqbal's visionary contributions to Islamic philosophy and the Pakistan Movement.

Later, Pezeshkian arrived in Islamabad where he was received by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar at the Nur Khan airbase.

Dr Pezeshkian will meet President Asif Ali Zardari and also hold delegation-level talks with the prime minister and his cabinet ministers.

A 21-gun salute was accorded to President Dr Pezeshkian on his arrival, and two children dressed in traditional attire, presented bouquets to him. The Foreign Office in a statement said, "This marks Dr Pezeshkian's first official visit to Pakistan as President of Iran." It may be recalled that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last visited Iran on May 26, 2025. The visit is expected to further strengthen the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran.



## **Pakistan plans \$10 Billion Railway Track to connect with central Asia**

**F**ederal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi said that major projects of including digitalization of Pakistan Railways, its upgradation and outsourcing would be completed this year whereas Faisalabad Railway Station would be upgraded to modern international standards within next 45 days.

Speaking to the media during his visit to Faisalabad Railway Station here on Saturday 9 August, he said that a \$10 billion project for 850-kilometer track from Kohat to Mazar-i-Sharif and a 75-kilometer extension to Uzbekistan would also be undertaken.

Abbasi said under prime minister's vision, both short- and long-term projects are underway across the country to modernize rail operations, promote regional connectivity and provide world-class facilities to the passengers.

He said that under the digitalization drive, the ticketing system has been fully automated while the train tracking system is operational and ATM machines have been installed at major stations.

He said that in collaboration with Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz, WiFi services are being introduced at 40 railway stations across the province. The initiative has started from Lahore and would soon extend to Faisalabad, Karachi, Hyderabad and other cities, he added.

He said that outsourcing process would be completed by September 30, covering nine to eleven passenger trains, freight trains, rest houses, special saloons, hospitals, schools and other facilities to improve service quality and increase revenue of Pakistan Railways.

He said that special saloons previously reserved for government officials have now been opened for the general public for rent at reasonable rates.

He said that the cleanliness system has been modernized while the solid waste management companies have taken over responsibilities at Rawalpindi's three stations, Khanewal, Multan, Raiwind, Okara and Lahore's three stations. The agreements for other cities are also being finalized, he said, adding that all provincial food authorities have been granted direct access to stations for monitoring and ensuring provision of quality food to the train passengers.

He announced that modern Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains would



operate on various routes including Lahore to Faisalabad, Narowal, Kasur and others with a capacity of 650 passengers each and it would also be expandable as required.

He said that the Punjab government is spending Rs. 50 billion on railway uplift projects including upgradation of eight routes such as Lahore–Faisalabad, Lahore–Narowal, Lahore–KotAddu and Lahore–Kasur. Similarly, Rs. 250 billion has been allocated for a new double track and modern signaling system between Lahore and Rawalpindi which would reduce travel time up to 2-2.5 hours between the two cities, he added.

Hanif Abbasi said that work on a linear park from Shahdara to Raiwind has begun at a cost of Rs. 2.35 billion. Other projects include the uplift of Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Taxila stations and upgradation of 50-kilometer Sheikh Zayed to Kuchlak section in Balochistan.

Under an agreement with Sindh

government, Rohri Railway Station would be upgraded on the Lahore model while a modern Karachi station is expected to be inaugurated on September 10, he added.

He said that feasibility study for 250-kilometer Sibi–Rohri section and 480-kilometer Rohri–Karachi track would be completed during next couple of months while its construction is expected to start by June next year.

He further said that Thar Coal track is planned for completion by next April, reducing electricity generation costs from Rs. 15 to Rs. 4 per unit whereas the RekoDiq railway link would be completed by 2028 to modernize mineral transportation.

The minister said that under Track Access Fee policy, the private sector has been allowed to operate its own wagons and trains to encourage competition and provide better and more affordable services.

He announced that Faisalabad Railway Station's complete transformation would be carried out with the cooperation of local industrialists and traders while Gujranwala Station's uplift would be personally funded by Aleem Khan.

Citing Lahore Railway Station's record-time modernization, he expressed determination to bring the same quality across all stations in the country.

Upgradation of Faisalabad Station would directly benefit 8,000 to 10,000 passengers daily in addition to further strengthening position of this city as an industrial and commercial hub, he added.

## **Pakistan, China committed to next phase of CPEC**

**F**ederal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal in a meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong discussed the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), reaffirming the resolve to strengthen industrial and business-to-business cooperation.

The minister noted that during Mr Sun's past diplomatic tenure in Pakistan, "we transformed the CPEC from a paper plan into a multibillion-dollar reality".

"China's development model remains a source of inspiration for Pakistan. Learning from China's experience, Pakistan is moving toward building an export-oriented and technology-driven economy," he said.

Mr Iqbal added that the government's "Five Es" framework, part of the URAAN

Pakistan initiative, is fully aligned with the vision for the next phase of CPEC, which will have industrial and technological sectors as its key pillars.

"The people of Pakistan take pride in the everlasting friendship with the leadership and people of China," Mr Iqbal said, while also appreciating the country's support during recent regional tensions.

Mr Iqbal stressed that developing a skilled, educated workforce and promoting business-to-business collaboration is a focus for next stage of the multi-billion-dollar project.

Mr Sun reaffirmed China's strong commitment to enhancing cooperation with Pakistan across various sectors.

He said Pakistan's "Five Es" framework offers a promising path toward economic stability and self-reliance.

## Gwadar, SEZs govt's top priority, minister assures Chinese diplomat

**F**ederal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said Pakistan is fully committed to utilising Gwadar Port's capacity as development of the port city and the establishment of Special Economic Zones remain federal government's top priorities.

The federal minister expressed these views in a meeting with Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong on Sunday 27 July.

The two sides discussed the progress of ongoing CPEC projects and preparations for the upcoming Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting, where key decisions are expected to further strengthen bilateral relations.

Mr Iqbal said after the successful completion of the first phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the second phase focuses on industrial cooperation, agriculture, information technology, and social development.

He emphasised connecting CPEC to Central Asian states to boost regional economic stability and economic cooperation. He said there exists vast potential for mineral exploration in and around Gwadar.

With the development of modern infrastructure, its mineral resources can be fully capitalized, he added.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to improving and ensuring the security of CPEC projects.

He also discussed continued collaboration with China in the agriculture sector and noted that agriculture graduates trained in China will play a vital role in helping Pakistan address impacts of climate change.

The minister also discussed establishment of Pakistan Space Centre and said China will play a pivotal role in ensuring the timely completion of this project of strategic importance.

Ambassador Jiang Zaidong reaffirmed China's commitment to supporting Pakistan's development efforts. He assured that bilateral cooperation will continue to expand in the coming years.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and senior officials from the two countries also attended the meeting. He said there exists vast potential for mineral exploration in and around Gwadar.

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## Pakistan TOMCL enters into Tajikistan with \$3.24mn export deal



The company added that the strategic breakthrough marks its continued expansion into high-potential emerging markets and "its strengthening position as a leading halal meat exporter from Pakistan".

TOMCL becomes first Pakistani listed firm to export beef casings to Europe. Incorporated in Pakistan as a private limited company in 2010, TOMCL is engaged in the processing and sale of halal meat and allied products. It is also one of the leading exporters of red meat and meat by-products.

Middle Eastern countries are TOMCL's major export market.

However, the company has added pet food raw materials to its portfolio, enabling it to tap the US and Europe as well. The company also has significant business in the Far East, the Commonwealth of Independent States and South Asian markets.

In 2021, the Chinese customs authorities approved TOMCL to export heat-treated beef to China.

It also claims to be the first Pakistani company to initiate the export of vacuum-packed fresh beef meat and the only company in the region owning the technology to vacuum pack or blast freeze mutton and quarter beef carcasses.

**T**he Organic Meat Company Limited (TOMCL), a Pakistani meat processor, announced on Monday 4 Aug. that it has secured confirmed export orders valued at \$3.24 million to be executed over the current financial year.

The listed company shared the development in a notice to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday 4 Aug.

TOMCL further said that it had commenced production and exports of frozen boneless beef tailored to meet Tajikistan's specific import requirements and regulatory standards.

"TOMCL is pleased to announce its successful entry into a new international market within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region – Tajikistan," the notice read.





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## Trump's tariff hike pushes US duties to century high



*An aerial view of shipping containers at the Port of Baltimore on Thursday 7 Aug. The new US tariffs are part of a broader trade agenda that includes sector-specific duties on semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, vehicles, steel, aluminium, copper, and lumber.*

**U**S President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff hike on imports from dozens of countries took effect on Thursday 7 Aug., pushing the average US import duty to its highest level in a century and prompting key trade partners — such as India, Brazil, and Switzerland — to urgently seek exemptions.

The US Customs and Border Protection began collecting the new duties — ranging from 10pc to 50pc — at 12:01am EDT (0401 GMT), following weeks of suspense over final rates and frantic negotiations with governments hoping to reduce their exposure.

The revised rates form part of Trump's broader strategy to reduce the US trade deficit, support domestic manufacturing, and exert pressure on countries purchasing Russian oil. However, critics warn of supply chain disruptions, inflationary pressures, and retaliation from affected nations.

Trump's so-called "Liberation Day" tariffs were first proposed in April but have since undergone several revisions. Under the latest measures, tariffs have risen to 50pc on goods from Brazil, 39pc from Switzerland, 35pc from Canada, and 25pc from India. On Wednesday, Trump added another 25pc on Indian imports over its continued oil trade with Russia, raising the effective rate to 50pc.

*Sparks defiance and concern among close trade partners*

"Billions of dollars, largely from countries that have taken advantage of the United States for many years, laughing all the way, will start flowing into the USA," Trump posted on Truth Social, hours before the tariffs took effect.

Tariffs are levied on importers, with increased costs typically passed on to consumers. Trump's top trade negotiator, Jamieson Greer, defended the policy in a New York Times column, arguing that

international trade rules "cannot be a suicide pact," and said the new duties represent "bold leadership" to rebalance global trade dynamics.

So far, eight major trade partners — accounting for around 40pc of US trade — have reached framework deals with Washington, securing lower base tariff rates. These include the EU, Japan, and South Korea. The UK secured a 10pc rate, while Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Philippines received concessions lowering duties to 19pc-20pc.

Countries facing higher tariffs, however, continue to scramble. Switzerland's President Karin Keller-Sutter returned home empty-handed from

an 11th-hour visit to Washington. South Africa's last-minute effort to revise its offer also failed, though talks are ongoing. Vietnam said it would continue negotiations to reduce its current 20pc tariff, previously set at 46pc.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva told Reuters he would not "humiliate" himself by seeking a call with Trump, but confirmed cabinet-level talks to reduce Brazil's 50pc rate would continue. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also refused to make concessions, citing domestic farmers' interests. The pressure, however, has reinforced India's commitment to its "strategic partnership" with Russia, with President Vladimir Putin expected to visit later this year.

Lula also hinted at a joint response from BRICS countries. "I will speak to the leaders of India and China," he said, as Trump has repeatedly criticised the bloc and threatened another 10pc tariff on BRICS imports.

## Gwadar Port Authority, Chinese firm agree to boost investments

**T**he Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and a Chinese company agreed to boost investments at the port, the maritime affairs ministry said on Tuesday 5 Aug.

Pakistan recently increased efforts on the commercialisation of the Gwadar Port, which was built more than a decade ago but remains a non-starter. In January, the government sought the private sector's support in routing their cargoes through the port, seeking detailed proposals to enhance trade.

"China's Xinning Enterprise have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Gwadar Port Authority to stimulate major industrial and commercial investments at Gwadar Port and its Free Zone, underscoring Gwadar's growing role as a key regional hub for trade and economic activity," the maritime affairs ministry said in a press release.

The ministry said that the LoI, which outlines plans for diverse ventures, was signed between Xinning Enterprise's Yi Jiang and maritime affairs ministry's additional secretary Umer Zaffar Shaikh, while GPA Chairman Noorul Haq Baloch attended the event online.

"These ventures include developing Gwadar Port as a regional transshipment centre, launching new industrial projects, optimising existing facilities within the Gwadar Free Zone, and relocating industries," the press release read.

It further said that the Chinese business delegation met with Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry to discuss ways to boost

the performance of the Gwadar Port.

While lauding the partnership as a "significant milestone in strengthening Gwadar's strategic importance", Chaudhry highlighted Xinning Enterprise's potential to "boost the port's capacity, attract foreign investment, and contribute to the broader economic development of the region".

"Both parties committed to adhering to Pakistan's legal and regulatory framework governing Gwadar's port and Free Zone operations," the ministry stated, "They also pledged continued good-faith discussions to identify investment opportunities, finalise operational details, and establish mechanisms for cooperation."

Chaudhry also reiterated "the government's commitment to transforming Gwadar into a global maritime gateway and industrial powerhouse" and said that such collaborations will accelerate Pakistan's maritime and economic ambitions, the ministry added.

On July 1, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs [announced](#) an ambitious plan to expand Gwadar Port's operational capacity by introducing additional shipping lines and launching a ferry service connecting Pakistan with Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Subsequently, five private companies proposed routes for the ferry service.

The move is expected to provide an affordable, direct maritime link for passengers and cargo, particularly benefiting expatriate communities and cross-border traders.



## PM calls for robust action plan to boost tourism



**Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on tourism in Pakistan, in Islamabad on Aug 8, 2025.**

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday 8 Aug. called for the formulation of a comprehensive and actionable plan to enhance both domestic and international tourism in Pakistan, emphasising the country's vast untapped tourism potential.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting on tourism, directed authorities to swiftly draft an action plan to promote tourism in Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

"Pakistan is immensely blessed by nature," he said. "From snow-covered mountains and lush forests to rivers, deserts, and a vibrant coastline, our country holds a unique and significant place in the world."

PM Shehbaz said the country is home to one of the world's oldest civilisations and that its heritage must be showcased to the world through better infrastructure and hospitality.

He stressed the importance of attracting tourists to scenic regions with modern infrastructure, efficient transport and high-standard recreational facilities.

*Urges climate-conscious development of infrastructure to attract tourists*

The premier instructed relevant ministries to develop practical, short-term tourism projects and called for a strategic plan to build top-quality hotels and resorts in northern regions.

He advised that all new construction must consider the impacts of climate change to ensure environmentally sustainable development.

PM Shehbaz also requested a detailed briefing on revitalising the National Tourism Coordination Board to support national-level coordination.

During the meeting, the prime minister's coordinator on tourism, Sardar

Yasir Ilyas, outlined several proposals to elevate Pakistan's tourism sector.

The initiatives aim to increase the number of foreign tourists, develop 20 new tourist destinations and make tourism a significant contributor to the GDP.

The plans also include leveraging the potential of religious and medical tourism.

It was announced that a National Tourism Expo and Investment Conference will be held soon in Islamabad to attract investors.

The meeting also reviewed recent tourism initiatives, including the successful Mango Festival 2025 held in Multan in collaboration with Nawaz Sharif Agricultural University.

## Romania offers Constanta Port as gateway for Pakistani exports to Europe

Romania has proposed the use of its Port of Constanța to provide Pakistan direct access to European markets via the Black Sea and Danube River. The initiative was welcomed by Islamabad, calling it a viable step toward diversifying Pakistan's export

logistics.

The development came during a meeting between Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Romanian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dan Stoenescu, during which they discussed enhancing cooperation in trade, logistics, defence, energy, and culture, read a statement released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Both sides discussed boosting agri-trade, meat exports, and potential cooperation in pharmaceuticals, surgical goods, fans, and green energy.

"On energy, Romania expressed readiness to support Pakistan's shift to green energy, offering technology in solar and wind power," read the statement.

Acknowledging Pakistan's competitive edge in several sectors, Romania expressed interest in deeper industrial collaboration.

Jam Kamal apprised the Romanian envoy that the government has started reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

"This offers lucrative incentives for Romanian companies to invest in Pakistan through JVs," he said.

Ambassador Stoenescu acknowledged the remarkable growth of Pakistan's IT industry and commended the talent and capabilities of Pakistani professionals in this sector.

He noted that Romania offers significant opportunities for Pakistani tech professionals and expressed willingness to facilitate such exchanges.

Meanwhile, the commerce minister highlighted the policy initiatives undertaken by the government to promote the IT sector. Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the technology sector.

During the meeting, cultural diplomacy and community integration were also addressed, with calls to improve connectivity and visa facilitation.





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## Fast-track tourism projects in key regions: PM orders immediate launch



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday 8 Aug. directed the immediate launch of implementable, fast-track tourism projects in key regions including Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Islamabad, aimed at delivering early results and positioning Pakistan's tourism sector as a major driver of economic growth.

Chairing a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, the premier lauded the "timely and practical" vision presented by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, the PM's National Coordinator on Tourism, who unveiled a comprehensive roadmap for transforming the country into a regional hub for religious, medical, and leisure tourism.

Sardar Yasir highlighted Pakistan's diverse natural and cultural assets — from snow-capped mountains and ancient civilisations to deserts, forests, rivers, and a vast coastline — as untapped opportunities for economic revival.

PM Shehbaz unveils bold vision to promote tourism.

He revealed that 20 new tourist destinations have been identified for phased development and proposed hosting a National Tourism Expo and Investment Conference in Islamabad to attract stakeholders from across the industry.

The meeting was attended by key federal cabinet members and senior officials, including Minister for Economic Affairs Ahsan Khan Cheema, IT and Telecom Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi, Culture and Heritage Minister Aurangzeb Khichi, Adviser on Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah, Special Assistant Huzefa Rehman, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, and Principal Secretary Dr Tauqir Shah.

## Govt wants two more sites on World Heritage List

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has proposed the inclusion of Jamal Garhi and Barikot in the World Heritage List.

The proposal was discussed during a meeting between a Unesco delegation and officials of the culture, tourism and archaeology department, according to a statement issued here on Wednesday 30 July.

The meeting aimed to discuss potential additions to the World Heritage List from the province, particularly focusing on Takht Bhai.

The meeting was attended by Dr Abdul Samad, secretary culture, tourism, archaeology & museums department and Unesco representatives Ms Kristina and Dr Luca Maria Olivieri.

The Unesco officials informed the meeting that it was revising its World Heritage List and offered full support if the KP government wished to propose new sites or modify existing entries.

In response, Dr Samad expressed the provincial government's keen interest in nominating two significant sites — Jamal Garhi and Barikot — which meet all the necessary criteria for inclusion.

Dr Samad said the archaeology department had taken extensive measures regarding the preservation of Takht Bhai heritage site, which was one of Pakistan's most visited heritage sites, attracting 2,000-3,000 visitors monthly and up to 20,000 during Eid holidays.

"We plan to expand the buffer zone, construct an international-standard boundary wall, and establish a small museum and tuck shop." He said, adding a topographic survey of Takht Bhai had been completed, marking a unique achievement in Pakistan's heritage documentation.

He informed the delegates that Rani Gat's preservation had also been done and 2,000 kanals of land had been acquired for a buffer zone to ensure long-term preservation and safety.

The Unesco delegates commended the initiatives and assured that KP's efforts would be highlighted in an upcoming Unesco seminar.

This collaboration underscores KP government's commitment to safeguarding its rich cultural heritage while seeking global recognition for its

historic landmarks.

Takht Bhai is a well-preserved Buddhist monastic complex dating back to the 1st century CE. Jamal Garhi and Barikot are ancient archaeological sites with significant historical value. Unesco's World Heritage List recognises sites of outstanding universal value.

## Pakistan, UAE start visa waiver 'at every airport'

The visa waiver for diplomatic and official Pakistani passport holders entering the United Arab Emirates has been activated at all airports, a month after Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan had signed an MoU for the exemption.

Mr Dar made this announcement on Sunday 27 July, explaining that Pakistan and the UAE had agreed on multiple visa waivers for diplomatic and official Pakistani passports, and vice versa.

In a post on X, the deputy premier hailed the decision between 'our two brotherly countries'.

I have been informed by the UAE authorities that the visa waiver for diplomatic and official Pakistani passports entering the United Arab Emirates has been activated, effective July 25, 2025, at all UAE airports,' he wrote.

We agreed [on] mutual visa waivers on diplomatic and official passports between our two brotherly countries and we both signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to make this arrangement effective and operative after 30 days of the signing,' he added.

According to Mr Dar, reciprocal arrangements have also been activated for Emirati nationals at all Pakistani airports.

Earlier this month, UAE's Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan assured 'full support' in expediting visas for Pakistani citizens.

His statement came during a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Mohsin Naqvi.

## Marka-i-Haq and Independence Day, celebration ceremony held in Islamabad



Participants line up in a formation depicting the word 'Azaadi' (freedom) during a grand ceremony to mark Marka-i-Haq and Independence Day, held at Islamabad's sports complex

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday 14 Aug. invited all political parties of the country to become part of 'Misaq-i-Istehkam-i-Pakistan', to lay the basis for the greater national interest so the whole world could see that “differences have their own place but we are all one for the sake of our beloved Pakistan”.

Speaking at a special ceremony held at the Islamabad Sports Complex, attended by senior civil and military leaders, he said the time has come for us to move beyond political division, personal interest and empty slogans to adopt collective thinking for Pakistan.

The prime minister said the country would not give space to another 'fitna' after the many sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, adding that everyone had the right to protest, to criticise and to conduct politics but not to riot and vandalise, to defame and curse and to rebel against the state.

The prime minister subsequently unveiled the digital model of the Marka-i-Haq Monument.

The countdown to midnight and Aug 14 culminated in a spectacular fireworks display in the capital's sky while the national anthem was played.

Parades were taken out by the different branches of the armed forces. Military personnel from Turkiye and Azerbaijan were also featured in the parade.

### Messages

In his message on the eve of Independence Day, President Asif Ali Zardari celebrated the country's landmark victory in Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, saying it was a demonstration of unshakable national will, professional excellence, and united purpose. “Faced with unjustified Indian aggression, Pakistan responded with clarity, courage and restraint,” he said.

Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani has urged all parliamentarians and people at large to rise above political affiliations and contribute selflessly towards the progress, prosperity, and stability of the country.

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said freedom is a blessing, one for which no gratitude can ever be enough, and whose protection is a shared responsibility of every citizen.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said civil and military institutions are working together to restore peace and order in the province, ensuring the protection of life and property.

Addressing a function in Gwadar in connection with the Independence Day, Mr Bugti emphasised the need to bridge the gap between the state and the people through realistic planning of development projects, ensuring merit-based employment, and improving governance standards.

## Colours of Pakistan independence showcased



DANCERS from PNCA perform on stage during Independence Day celebrations at the Expo 2025 Osaka.



People unfurl a kilometre-long Pakistani flag in front of the Balahisar fort during Independence Day celebrations Peshawar.



People gather around the Minar-i-Pakistan monument to watch a midnight fireworks display, as part of Independence Day celebrations.

## Sindh celebrates Independence Day with traditional zeal



A large number of people, including schoolchildren, attend the main 14 August function held at the Mazar-i-Quaid Karachi.



## Role of mangoes in cultural engagement, diplomacy celebrated



*An experienced butler knows how to present mangoes with elegance and finesse.*

The ministry of foreign affairs and the All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters, Importers and Merchants Association in collaboration with Karachi Marriott Hotel hosted the 'Mango Festival 2025' at the hotel's Grand Ballroom here recently.

While reflecting Pakistan's commitment to soft diplomacy, economic growth through agribusiness, and the power of cultural exchange, all under the banner of a fruit that continues to unite and delight, the festival showcased export varieties of some 15 mangoes, including Sindhri, Ratay Wala, Bali Wala, Lal Badshah, Anwar Ratol, Fajri, desi mango and several types of Chaunsa along with sweet and savory delicacies with mango as the main ingredient.

The guests were also welcomed with a choice of mango juice or mango milkshake and mango ice cream.

Held primarily to showcase Pakistan's famous mango varieties and foster cultural and diplomatic engagement through the country's most celebrated fruit, the festival also highlighted some noteworthy facts about mango cultivation in Pakistan.

There are some 250 varieties of mangoes grown in Pakistan which are exported to more than 50 countries. We are the sixth largest producer of mangoes in the world and the fourth largest exporter.

The fruit, or rather, 'king of fruits' was first introduced in different parts of the world in the 1960s by Pakistani diplomats, in fact it is Pakistani mangoes that have given rise to the term 'Mango diplomacy'.

Some of the biggest importers of Pakistani mangoes include China, the UAE, the UK, Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Libya,

Uzbekistan, Qatar and Germany. Today Pakistan produces 3.5 per cent of the global supply of mangoes. In fact, mangoes are one of the major exports of Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, the chief guest, said that he learnt from consul generals of various countries

attending the Mango Festival that Pakistani mangoes are very expensive in their countries. "The consul general of Turkiye informed me that a mango costs eight Euro each in his country. Similarly, the consul general of Russia told me that a mango is even costlier than that in Russia. So I think growing mangoes in Pakistan can make Pakistanis very rich," he said. "Perhaps the mango may be a common seasonal fruit for you but you should understand its worth internationally. This fact is not to be taken for granted. Mangoes bring a good business opportunity for exporting for you," he pointed out.

**Mango festival showcases more than 200 varieties**

Over 200 varieties of mangoes were showcased at the MNS University of Agriculture, Multan Mango Festival 2025, on Saturday 2 August.

National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority Chairperson Prof Dr Asif Ali along with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali inaugurated the festival.

The festival highlighted various aspects of mango cultivation, research, production, value addition, marketing, and export.

A large number of scientists, agricultural experts, mango farmers,

industry representatives, students, women, and families participated in the event.

VC Prof Ali said mango was one of Pakistan's most important fruit crops and the university was working to promote scientific research, hands-on training, and modern technologies for the development of the mango sector.

He said that research was ongoing in areas such as the impact of climate change on mango, nursery management, pest control, and yield improvement.

He said that the 'Mango Small Tree System' of the university was popular among farmers as it required less space for increased production.

He also said that pests could now be identified and controlled in time through the 'Smart Trap System', while the 'Protein Bait System' proved effective in managing mango fruit flies.

He said that efforts like online mango marketing, dried mango export and the packaging and branding had greatly improved global access for Pakistani mangoes.

Chief guest Prof Dr Asif Ali appreciated the university's efforts in making the festival known internationally and helping Pakistani mangoes reach global markets.

He emphasised that value addition, cold chain management, and smart packaging could further increase mango exports.

He also stressed that farmers, researchers, and industry players needed to work together to meet international standards. He said that such festivals could enhance both mango production and exports, strengthening Pakistan's economy.

Prof Dr Amanullah Malik said that tackling challenges in mango farming required collaboration among young researchers, agricultural experts, and orchard managers.

Chief Organiser Prof Dr Mubashir Mehdi said that all stakeholders of the industry had come together on one platform and it was not just an exhibition but a valuable opportunity for knowledge-sharing through research, experiments, and practical observations.

The festival conducted several activities, including drawing competition for children, nutrition session for women, mango-eating contests, qawwali night and poetry session featuring local poets.

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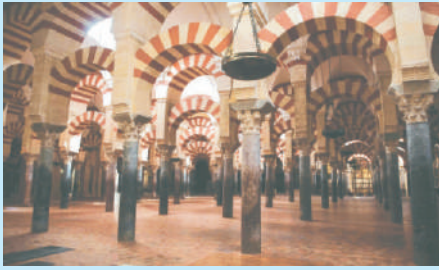
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## Historic Cordoba site reopens after blaze



A view of the Cordoba mosque in an area affected by a fire that broke out on Friday 8 Aug

A fire at a historic mosque-turned-cathedral in Cordoba in southern Spain caused only “very localised damage,” the city's mayor said on Saturday 9 Aug. as the site reopened to the public.

The spectacular blaze broke out on Friday 8 Aug. at about 9pm, raising fears for the early medieval architectural gem and evoking memories of the 2019 fire that ravaged Notre Dame cathedral in Paris.

Widely shared videos had shown flames and smoke billowing from inside the major tourist attraction, which is considered a jewel of Islamic architecture and is visited by two million people per year.

“There is some damage, significant damage, but it is very, very localised,” the mayor of Cordoba, Jose Maria Bellido, told reporters outside the site which opened to the public as usual in the morning. Most of the wreckage is concentrated in a chapel where the fire broke out, whose roof “completely collapsed” due to the flames and the weight of the water used to put them out, he added in an interview with Spanish public television.

Two adjoining chapels suffered “collateral damage”, mainly from the smoke, to altarpieces and other works of art, the mayor said.

He estimated that the fire damaged just 50 to 60 square metres of the vast interior of the building, which stands in the centre of Cordoba, surrounded by the old Jewish and Muslim quarters.

“Fortunately yesterday a catastrophe was avoided that could have meant losing the entire mosque-cathedral,” he said.

Several fire engines and police lined a street near the building on Saturday 9 Aug. as people gathered to look at the building,

according to a photographer at the scene. The fire-damaged section, known as the Almanzor nave, was cordoned off with waist-high barriers.

### Annual fire drills

A total of 35 firefighters worked throughout the night to monitor the area and cool the walls after the blaze was extinguished, the head of Cordoba's

firefighting service, Daniel Munoz, said. Firefighters have held annual drills at the building since it was last hit by a fire in 2001 and this made it easier for crews to quickly contain the blaze, he added.

“That allowed them to know all the entrances, the hallways, where they could hook up their hoses,” he said. Forensics police were at the scene to try to determine the cause of the fire.

ABC and other newspapers reported that a mechanical sweeping machine had caught fire in the site.

## Pakistan approves first ferry service licence

While a large number of pilgrims en route to Iraq have been stranded due to a sudden [ban](#) on land travel to Iran, the government has approved the first ferry service licence.

Applications by ferry operators have been pending since 2017 -18. Taking a fast-track route, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs on Monday 4 Aug. approved the first ferry service licence to an international ferry operator.

The UK-based company — ‘Sea Keeper’— will operate ferry routes connecting Pakistan with Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The government is under serious pressure from around one million pilgrims who attend Arbaeen (Chehlum of Imam Hussain) in Karbala, as land travel to Iran has been stopped without any notice recently.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has led the move by fast-track approval to ferry service operators who had filed applications in 2017 and 2018.

The minister emphasised that ferry service will not only provide the pilgrims going to Iraq and Iran a safe and secure travel but it also provides an opportunity for boosting regional connectivity as well as economic activity via sea routes.

“Initial operations will commence from the ports of Karachi and Gwadar using modern ferry vessels equipped with

essential amenities to ensure safe, affordable travel. Expansion of routes and port calls is planned based on demand and bilateral agreements”, the minister said in a statement.

This ferry service launch forms part of Pakistan's broader strategy to develop its blue economy, improve trade logistics, and promote maritime tourism, reflecting a renewed commitment to sustainable regional sea transport infrastructure, the minister stated.

Sources in the Ministry of Maritime Affairs confirmed that more ferry services licences are expected to be issued in near future as the licence committee was scrutinising the cases.

The Licensing Committee comprises officials from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and representatives from the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) and port and shipping authorities.

The PNSC will be the regulator of ferry companies ensuring the technical aspect of ships and their services.

Meanwhile, a senior official of Karachi Port Trust told media that the ferry terminal has already been established at the Karachi port.

Once the relevant formalities are notified, the terminal will be handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for immigration and passport duties.

Other relevant departments, including Customs and security agencies, will also deploy staff at the ferry terminals in both Karachi and Gwadar.



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## 32 climbers summit K2

**T**hirty-two climbers from various countries summited K2 (8,611m), the world's second highest peak, while a Chinese mountaineer died after being hit by falling rocks while descending.

Karrar Haidri, vice president Alpine Club of Pakistan, said in statement that the Chinese mountaineer, Guan Jing, died on Tuesday 12 Aug. night after she was hit by falling rocks while descending from K2.

The incident occurred on the Abruzzi Spur route between Camp I and Advanced Base Camp a section notorious for frequent rock falls.

Guan reached the summit on Monday 11 Aug. with a group of climbers before beginning her descent.

Recovery efforts for her body are ongoing, while other climbers who also summited K2 that day are now returning safely to the base camp.

In total, more than 30 climbers reached the top of K2 on Monday 11 Aug. Climbing Karakoram Range mountains this year became challenging for climbers as less snow, rockfalls and avalanche stopped climbers' progress.

Earlier, 30 climbers from Elite Exped, Imagine Nepal, Seven Summit Treks and Alpinist Climber Expedition teams successfully summited K2 on Monday 11 Aug. morning.

The joint team reached the summit of K2 include Tao Hu from China, Eduard Kubatov from Kyrgyz Republic, Gulnur Tumbat from the US, Zhang Qingliang, Li Na from China, Pasang Tenje Sherpa, Mingma Jangbu Sherpa, Pasang Sherpa, Sona Sherpa and Pasang Nurbu Sherpa from Nepal.

Fifteen climbers from Imagine Nepal reached the summit of K2, achieving a 100 per cent success rate this season.

In a statement, Imagine Nepal said summiting in August is rare as the climbing window is generally in July. It said the 2025 season faced significant challenges from the jet stream, with high winds limiting opportunities and forcing prolonged waits at the base camp.

Led by Mingma G, the Imagine Nepal K2 Expedition team departed Base Camp on Aug 5 and reached the summit on Monday 11 August.

The summiters included Mingma G from Nepal, Jangbu Sherpa from US,

Pema Chhiri Sherpa, Aangdu Sherpa, Kami Sherpa, Lakpa Sherpa, Lakpa Tamang Sherpa, and Lhakpa Nuru Sherpa from Nepal, Sohail Sakhi from Pakistan, Liu Mihe, Dilixiati Ailikuti, Li Jiang, Guan Jing, and Hu Yinghong from China, Maria Alexandra Danila from Romania.

Mingma G completed his sixth successful K2 summit.

## Pakistan, Iraq sign MoU for ferry service

**I**n a move aimed at enhancing religious tourism and bilateral trade, Pakistan and Iraq have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch a ferry service between Gwadar Port and Umm Qasr Port.

The agreement was formalised during a meeting between Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and a three-member delegation from the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad, led by Deputy Head of Mission Abdulqadir Sulyman Alhimiri.

Describing the MoU as "a new chapter" in bilateral relations, Mr Chaudhry emphasised the significance of developing maritime passenger and cargo links.

"The ferry connection can leverage our shared cultural and religious bonds while unlocking new business opportunities," he said, underscoring the potential for increased port activity and supply chain development under Pakistan's blue economy strategy.

The ferry service is particularly expected to benefit Pakistani pilgrims travelling to Iraq for religious observances, including Arbreen — the Chehlum of Imam Hussain. With the government recently banning land travel to Iran, which was previously used as a transit route, the new sea connection offers a viable alternative. Each year, around one million Pakistani pilgrims visit the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala during Arbreen.

The minister informed the delegation that Pakistan is also working to set up ferry routes with Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

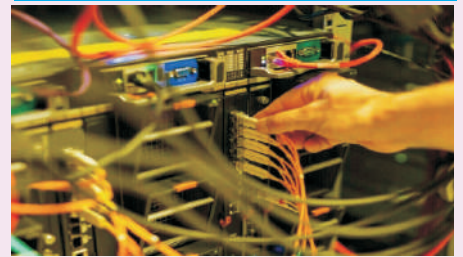
In the meeting, Mr Chaudhry proposed expanding bilateral trade by boosting Pakistani exports of medicines,

meat and rice to Iraq, while increasing the import of Iraqi oil into Pakistan. He pointed out that Pakistan could also meet Iraq's demand for potassium sulphate, citing an existing manufacturing facility in the Gwadar Free Zone.

Trade figures for fiscal year 2024 show that Pakistan exported goods worth \$54.29 million to Iraq, while importing petroleum products worth \$145.46m.

The minister further sought Iraq's support for Pakistan's upcoming bid in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) elections. Mr Alhimiri assured Iraq's backing in this regard.

## Here's why internet is slow across Pakistan



**I**nternet users across Pakistan are currently experiencing slowdowns and service disruptions, with multiple Internet Service Providers (ISPs), including Nayatel and PTCL, confirming widespread connectivity issues.

According to an email issued by Nayatel's Technical Assistance Center, the disruptions come from multiple issues affecting both international traffic and access to several key services:

**Eastbound Internet Traffic:** Slower speeds and unstable connections are linked to one of Nayatel's upstream providers, affecting international traffic routes.

**Microsoft Services Outage:** Apps such as Outlook, Microsoft Teams, and OneDrive are also experiencing nationwide outages.

**Cloudflare Hosted Services:** Several websites and applications that rely on Cloudflare's infrastructure are either slow or completely unreachable.

Nayatel also clarified that these issues are separate but still overlapping, which has made the problem worse for users across the country. Other ISPs have also reported similar issues, indicating that the disruptions are not isolated to a single provider.

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