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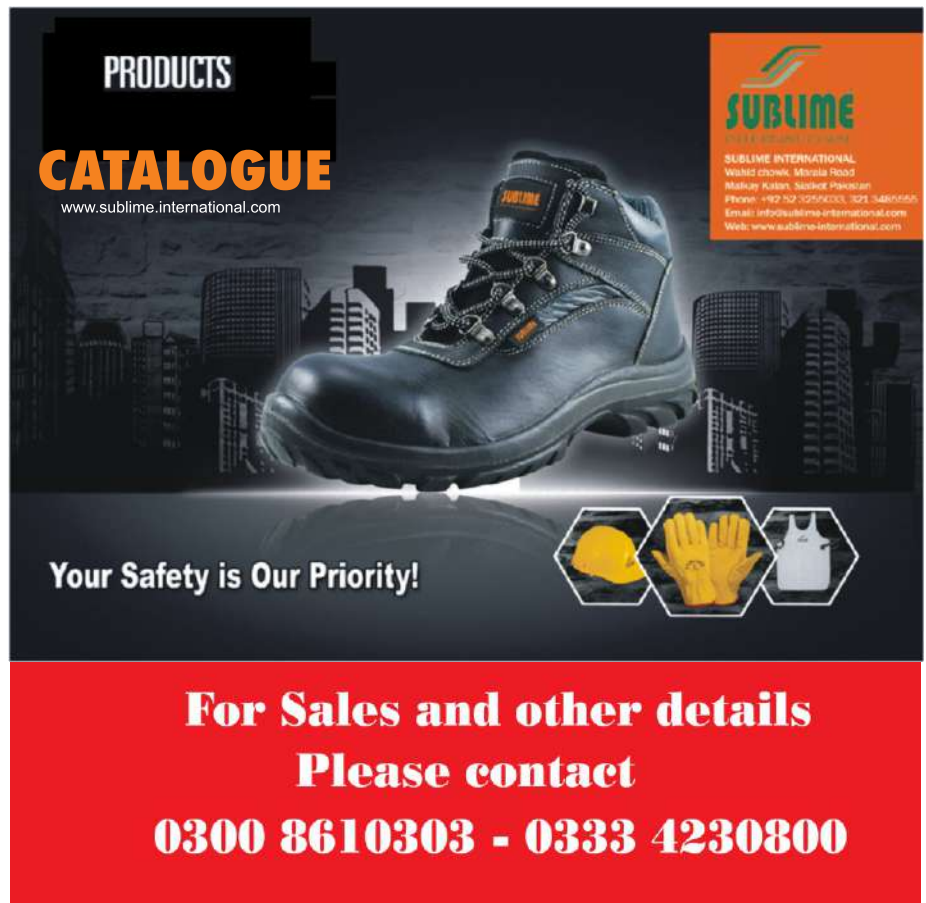
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06



First mother-daughter pilot duo makes aviation history.

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Displaced Palestinians, fleeing northern Gaza due to an Israeli military operation, move southward after Israeli forces ordered residents of Gaza City to evacuate to the south, in the central Gaza Strip on September 16, 2025

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enter into a mutual defence agreement

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have entered into a landmark mutual defence agreement, under which any aggression against one state will be considered an attack on both.

The 'Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement' was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman at the Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh on Wednesday Sep 17.

According to the text of the joint statement, issued simultaneously by Islamabad and Riyadh at the end of PM Shehbaz's day-long state visit, the pact "reflects the shared commitment of both nations to enhance their security and to achieving security and peace in the region and the world".

"[It] aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression," the statement said, without going into details.

Importantly, the text underscored that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both".

The timing of the accord, coming on the heels of an Arab summit that signalled a shift towards collective security — in the wake of Israel's attack on Qatar — hints that it is rooted in current world affairs and reflects the defence concerns of both countries.

Official Saudi media outlets also carried reports of the signing ceremony, but they offered no further details about the accord or its provisions.

A high-level delegation, including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Climate Change Minister Musadik Malik, PM's Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, accompanied PM Shehbaz.

Saudi F-15 fighter jets escorted the PM's plane after it entered the Kingdom's airspace, and a special ceremony was held at the royal palace ahead of Pakistani delegation's talks with the crown prince.

Upgrade in defence ties

The agreement marks the most significant upgrade in Pakistan-Saudi defence ties in decades. Cooperation between the two states dates back to 1967 and deepened after the 1979 Grand Mosque seizure, when Pakistani special forces helped Saudi troops reclaim Masjid al-Haram.

In 1982, the two sides institutionalised security ties through a Bilateral Security Cooperation Agreement that enabled Pakistani training, advisory support and deployments on Saudi soil. At



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman embrace after signing a joint defence accord.

times, as many as 20,000 Pakistani troops were stationed in the kingdom, and Saudi Arabia became a key purchaser of Pakistani-made arms.

In recent years, the partnership has gained urgency amid regional instability. In Feb, a meeting of the Joint Military Cooperation Committee in Riyadh pledged to expand training and exchanges.

The new pact formalises commitments that had long existed in

practice, creating what some analysts saw as a de facto joint defensive umbrella though finer details of the agreement were not made public.

For Pakistan, the agreement offers both strategic and economic benefits. It secures vital Saudi investment and funding at a time of fiscal strain, while reinforcing Islamabad's standing as a pan-Islamic security provider.

For Saudi Arabia, it strengthens defences against threats from Iran, Houthis militias and regional turbulence caused by Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza and aggression against other countries in the neighbourhood. The Israeli attack targeting Hamas delegation in Doha heightened the urgency for this agreement that had been under discussion for some time.

Pakistan's earlier defence alignments, such as Cold War-era agreements with the United States and those under Seato and Cento, have long since eroded.

Today, Islamabad's partnerships with China, Turkey and other Gulf states remain important but lack binding mutual defence clauses.

Against this backdrop, 17th Sept's signing represents Pakistan's most consequential formal defence





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commitment in decades, tying its security role inextricably to the evolving strategic architecture of the Gulf.

To celebrate the solemnisation of the defence accord with Saudi Arabia, the Capital Development Authority decked out prominent buildings in Islamabad with green lighting.

Buildings such as the Supreme Court, Islamabad High Court, Parliament House, Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's House, and the Diplomatic Enclave along Constitution Avenue, as well as prominent

hotels and commercial centres were emblazoned with emerald hues.

Digital channel launched

Earlier on Wednesday, PM Shehbaz also inaugurated 'Pakistan TV Digital', an English news channel aimed at delivering Pakistani voice to the world and offering the country's perspective on national and international developments, besides countering anti-Pakistan narratives and propaganda.

During the visit to the offices of *Pakistan TV Digital*, housed on the

premises of state-run *Pakistan Television (PTV)*, the prime minister unveiled a plaque to launch the news channel, which aims to enable Pakistan to communicate with the world, and deliver its perspective.

He said that the primary objective of launching this digital news channel was to provide authentic coverage, while effectively countering misinformation and propaganda about Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz also recorded his first interview for broadcast on *Pakistan TV Digital*, which is reportedly a subsidiary of PTV.

Chinese aviation giant rolls out red carpet for President Pakistan



Resident Asif Ali Zardari is pictured during a visit to the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, alongside his children Bilawal and Aseefa.

Raising the J-10 and JF-17 aircraft for strengthening Pakistan's aerial defence capabilities, President Asif Ali Zardari reaffirmed on Sunday 14 Sep. that Pakistan and China would continue to expand their collaboration in the field of defence production and aviation.

The president expressed this resolve during a visit to top Chinese aerospace and defence conglomerate, the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), which manufactures the I-10C aircraft.

According to the President's Secretariat, he is the first foreign head of state to visit the facility. He was accompanied by his children, PPP Chairman Bilawal and MNA Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari. During the visit, President Zardari met with the company's engineers and scientists and praised the Chinese-made aircraft's capabilities, which he said were amply demonstrated during the recent Maarka-i-Haq and Operation

BunyanumMarsoos against India.

The president lauded AVIC as a 'symbol of China's technological advancement and of the enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and China'.

He was briefed on AVIC's capabilities, including the J-10, the co-production of the JF-17 Thunder with Pakistan, the J-20 stealth fifth-generation fighter aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi and China's Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong also accompanied the president.

'High-speed train President Zardari also travelled from Chengdu to Mianyang via high-speed train. During the half-hour journey, he praised China's achievements in developing sustainable transport, calling its pollution-free electric propulsion and earthquake early warning technologies 'a marvel of railway engineering'.

He noted that such innovations offered 'valuable lessons for other countries including Pakistan'. Officials highlighted that China operates the world's largest high-speed rail network of over 45,000 kilometres, carrying more than 2 billion passengers annually on trains that run up to 350km per hour.

With trains running at up to 350km/h, the network links almost all major Chinese cities. China has built a standardised, dedicated passenger system that became a model of modern connectivity, they said.

Pakistan and China to launch flights to more destinations



Pakistan and China have agreed to encourage airlines from both countries to launch new direct flight routes and expand the number of existing flights.

The decision is part of the China-Pakistan Action Plan (2025- 2029), which was signed recently in Beijing.

The plan brief available with Wealth Pakistan identifies civil aviation as a key area of cooperation under the broader framework of people-to-people exchanges.

The document states that the two sides will strengthen civil aviation cooperation by supporting airlines in launching new routes and increasing frequencies of current ones. The initiative is designed to facilitate easier travel for business communities, students, tourists, and professionals between the two countries. The civil aviation cooperation is also interconnected with other areas of the action plan, such as cultural exchanges, education collaboration, tourism development, and trade facilitation. The enhanced air connectivity is expected to complement ongoing work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and regional integration efforts.

Officials from both sides emphasized that the expansion of direct flights would deepen people-to-people connectivity, reduce travel time, and create greater opportunities for bilateral engagement at multiple levels.



SIAL top brass meet the Provincial Minister of Punjab



On the special directions of the Honorable Chief Minister Punjab, a meeting was convened recently with the Provincial Minister for Communication & Works. A four member delegation of Sialkot International Airport led by Chairman Sialkot International Airport Mr Hassan Ali Bhatti, followed by Chief Executive Officer SIAL AVM Tanweer Ashraf Bhatti (R), Project Director Engr Ameer Sajjad Baig and Company Secretary Mr Jahangir Khan.

During the meeting, Chairman SIAL gave a detailed briefing and comprehensive presentation was shared with the Honourable Provincial Minister C&W on the recent flooding incident, outlining the main sources through which flood water entered the affected areas.

Highlighting the SIAL concerns a reasonable demand was also submitted to the worthy Minister.

The Provincial Minister C&W acknowledged the gravity of the matter and directed the relevant departments, particularly the Irrigation Department to take immediate and effective measures to mitigate the situation on a priority basis. This development reflects a positive step forward, and remain optimistic that swift and practical actions will soon be implemented to safeguard against such challenges in the future. The SIAL delegation led by Chairman Mr Hassan Ali Bhatti extends gratitude towards Honourable Provincial Minister C&W taking the matter into the consideration and directing the relevant for necessary action on priority. Chairman SIAL also

invited the honourable Provincial Minister C&W to Sialkot International Airport.

Uzbekistan Airways to increase flights to Pakistan

As part of efforts to deepen ties, enhance economic diplomacy and boost tourism cooperation, Uzbekistan Airways is increasing the number of regular flights between the two countries

The Uzbek embassy in Islamabad said on Wednesday 10 Sep. that Uzbekistan and Pakistan continued to strengthen their friendly relations and expand cooperation across multiple sectors. In this process, transport and logistics, particularly air connectivity, played a crucial role.

Starting October 28, the frequency of flights on 'Tashkent-Islamabad-Tashkent' route will be doubled, from once a week to two flights per week.

Currently, Uzbekistan Airways operated flights twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays on the 'Tashkent-Lahore-Tashkent' route, and once a week (on Saturdays) on the 'Tashkent-Islamabad-Tashkent' route. Due to consistently high demand, with flights running at full passenger capacity and tickets selling out several days in advance, the airline had decided to expand its flight schedule. The Embassy of Uzbekistan said increase in flight frequency would not only provide greater convenience for travelers but also foster closer trade and economic cooperation, encourage business partnerships and support more frequent exchanges between the two nations.

The embassy said these additional flights would also strengthen cultural and humanitarian ties between the brotherly peoples of Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

Furthermore, the expansion of flights offers significant advantages for international travelers.

Tashkent International Airport serves as a strategic transit hub, providing convenient connections from Pakistan to destinations across Europe, North America, and Asia. This made Uzbekistan Airways an attractive option for passengers seeking smooth and efficient travel to global destinations.

According to the Uzbek embassy, the regular expansion of flight frequencies was a strategic step for both Uzbekistan and Pakistan, reflecting the growing partnership between the two nations and taking bilateral relations to a new level of



Airspace ban on Indian aircraft extended

Pakistan has extended the closure of its airspace to Indian aircraft for another month, extending the restriction until 4:59am on October 24, according to a NOTAM (notice to airmen), issued by aviation authorities.

The notice maintains the ban on Indian airlines' passenger and military aircraft from flying through Pakistani airspace. It specifies that Indian-registered or leased aircraft are barred.

The airspace closure was first imposed on April 24, 2025. The ban has been extended multiple times since, with the previous extension set to expire on Sept 25. The reason cited for the initial ban and its subsequent extensions has been the 'ongoing tension between the two countries'. Mohammad Asghar

PIA to be privatised by November

A parliamentary committee 1st Sep. that Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited is expected to be privatised by November this year.

Briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Privatisation on the current status of the process, the Privatisation Commission secretary said that four companies were participating and would need to form consortiums with established

airlines to operate PIA. Two applicants had already been disqualified for not meeting standards.

When Senator Zeeshan Khanzada raised concerns over PIA's Rs650 billion debt, committee chairman Senator Dr Afnan Ullah Khan suggested that the airline's two hotels could be sold to offset liabilities.

When Senator Khanzada questioned the government's strategy of selling profitable companies in the first phase, the Privatisation Commission secretary replied that investors are naturally more interested in profitable entities. Even if such companies were given away for free, he argued, it would still be the right decision as they may not remain profitable in the future.

KU to offer four-year Aviation Technology degree in 2026

The University of Karachi is set to introduce a four-year degree in Aviation Technology and Management, offered under its Institute of Space Science and Technology, starting with the academic year 2026. The announcement of admissions will coincide with the university's updated entry policy.

The Academic Council, chaired by Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi, will convene on Thursday 11 Sep. to finalise the 2026 admission framework.

In a bid to streamline the process, the Admissions Committee is expediting the release of intermediate results, enabling applications to begin one month earlier — by late September — with entrance exams scheduled for October.

Last year, admission notices were issued in late October, and assessments were held in November.

Prof Dr Javed Iqbal, Chairman of the Institute of Space Science, told media that while the programme gained Academic Council approval last year, a delay in formal confirmation meant no students were admitted then.

He clarified that admissions will be equally divided into morning and evening shifts, and will be based on entrance test results. Candidates from pre-engineering backgrounds are eligible to apply.

Dr Iqbal further explained that the curriculum includes technical courses in aerospace alongside management modules, tailored to meet the needs of the aviation and airline sectors.

How Pilot's coffee grounded a United Airlines A321neo

Over the weekend, a United Airlines Airbus A321neo was briefly grounded after an incident involving a cup of coffee belonging to one of the aircraft's pilots. Reports online suggest that the modern narrowbody twinjet's departure was delayed by around three hours after the hot drink was spilled in the plane's cockpit.

While a trivial matter at face value, the complex electrical systems located on the flight deck of a modern airliner (and the potential damage that the unwanted presence of a liquid might cause) mean that safety has to come first in such situations. In the end, the flight in question was only delayed, rather than canceled, but, as it happens, this isn't the first time that coffee has caused disruption.

First mother-daughter pilots duo makes aviation history

In 2019, Captain Suzy Garrett and her daughter First Officer Donna Garrett made aviation history as the first mother and daughter to pilot a commercial flight together with SkyWest Airlines.

Suzy has been flying since 1989 and was one of the first women hired at SkyWest. Her daughter grew up inspired by both her parents' love of aviation, and eventually joined her in the cockpit.

Seeing them side by side at the controls is more than a family milestone, it is a reminder that dreams can be passed from one generation to the next. Their story continues to inspire women everywhere to take to the skies.

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FedEx deepens presence in Saudi Arabia amid trade growth

Investments include new air hub, freight forwarding operation and take over of shared facilities.



A FedEx Boeing 777 freighter receives a water-cannon salute upon arrival at King Khaled International Airport, marking the start of direct air service from Europe.

FedEx Corp. is strengthening its logistics capabilities in Saudi Arabia with new air connectivity from key markets in the West, full ownership of distribution facilities and investment in a new regional air hub in Riyadh to capitalize on the country's trade growth.

Other logistics companies, including express delivery rival DHL, are similarly making strategic commitments in Saudi Arabia and neighboring Middle East states.

FedEx recently announced the launch of its first dedicated all-cargo flight to Saudi Arabia from the United States and Europe, marking the first time an express delivery company has established a nonstop connection from the West to Saudi Arabia. The inaugural flight departed FedEx's hub in Paris and landed at King Khaled International Airport late Tuesday 2 Sep. morning local time.

The integrated parcel and logistics giant also plans to build a regional air hub at King Salman International Airport, currently under development in Riyadh and scheduled for completion in 2030, to serve Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. A company spokesperson also confirmed that FedEx recently secured a license to operate as a foreign air carrier to regional destinations.

In further investments, FedEx has taken full ownership of its customs clearance and pickup-and-delivery operations in Saudi Arabia after previously being required to operate with local joint venture partners, according to a separate announcement. The company now directly manages those functions,

supported by four gateway facilities and four delivery stations. Bloomberg reported that FedEx has also opened a regional office in Riyadh to oversee business in the region.

And the Memphis, Tennessee-based company has established a FedEx Logistics division in Saudi Arabia, offering freight forwarding services across all modes.

Company officials didn't disclose how much money is being invested to build out services and infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

FedEx's expansion comes amid Saudi Arabian economic growth and implementation of the government's ambitious economic development strategy aimed at diversifying the oil-based economy and expanding global trade opportunities. A growing manufacturing and logistics base is driving an increase in exports while the rise in online shopping, tourism and events, and infrastructure expansion have created a strong inbound market for business-to-consumer shipments.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, because of their location and ability to build modern freight infrastructure, are increasingly becoming global logistics hubs, connecting Asia, Europe and Africa. Saudi Arabia's logistics sector is projected to grow at a 6.5% annual rate and be valued at \$199 billion by 2030.

Saudi Arabia's real gross domestic product grew 3.4% in the first quarter and 3.9% in the second quarter. In 2024, GDP increased 1.3% largely due to a 4.3% increase in non-oil activities, according to government figures.



FedEx CEO Raj Subramaniam (center) is flanked by Saudi Transport and Logistics Minister Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser and Vice Minister Rumaih bin Mohammed Al-Rumaih. Richard Smith, head of FedEx International and Airline, is second from the right.

"Our recent investments underscore Saudi Arabia's role as a vital link in our global network, connecting major economies across Asia, Europe, and the Americas," said Richard Smith, chief operating officer for FedEx's international business, and CEO of its airline, in a news release. "By expanding in the Kingdom, we are broadening our network's reach and creating faster, more dependable trade routes. As global commerce evolves, Saudi Arabia's strategic position ensures we can move goods with both speed and scale to connect more people and possibilities."

Smith's presence, along with that of CEO Raj Subramaniam and other FedEx leaders, at ceremonies with high-ranking Saudi Arabian officials signaled the level of importance FedEx is giving to its commitments in Saudi Arabia.

Air cargo upgrade

FedEx said the new flight will operate six times per week from Paris, fed by traffic from the United States, using a Boeing 777 cargo jet with onward connections to Guangzhou and Shanghai, China. Shipments destined for northern Gulf states will be distributed via FedEx's Middle East road network or by regional air service. The direct connection means improved transit times for customers.

The dedicated freighter provides capacity for bulky, oversized, palletized, or heavy shipments, and is equipped to handle temperature-controlled and dangerous goods, FedEx said. The statement and morning flight schedule suggest the flights will operate as part of FedEx's new Orange network, which is designed for the heavy airfreight market with a deferred schedule that allows the carrier time to maximize density on the aircraft and go to secondary hubs that aren't as focused on express packages.

Saudi Arabia's air cargo sector is growing rapidly, with volumes reaching 920,000 tons in 2024 and projected to nearly triple to 2.45 million tons by 2033, according to Imarc.

DHL Group last month took a minority stake in a Saudi Arabian last-mile delivery company, part of a \$570 million investment for its express delivery, e-commerce, contract logistics and freight forwarding units over the next five years in Gulf Arab states.

Norway tests electric plane



THE electric plane during its test run from Stavanger to Bergen.

An electric plane took to the skies between the Norwegian airports Stavanger and Bergen on Thursday, 4 Sep. simulating a cargo flight for the first time in real-life conditions, Norwegian airlines operator Avinor said.

The small aircraft — an Alia built by US manufacturer Beta — flew the 160 kilometres in a test run by the Norwegian affiliate of the transport company Bristow.

The flight took 55 minutes and simulated a cargo flight route in south-eastern Norway.

"This is the first time an electric plane has taken the trade route between Stavanger and Bergen," one of Avinor's directors, Karianne Helland Strand, said.

"Everything went very well," she added.

The test flight — using visuals rather than instruments — is part of an evaluation of how well it could be integrated into air traffic and infrastructure on the ground.

The Norwegian regulatory authorities are closely linked to the tests to ensure that electric flights can launch commercially as soon as the technology is ready, which is expected between 2028 and 2030.

The test period began last month and will last until January.

"It's like the first real world test," pilot Jeremy Degagne said.

The plane's battery life allows journeys of up to 400 kilometres — enough for a return flight between Stavanger and Bergen.

"I don't have range anxiety because we plan to fly the aircraft within its limitations," said Degagne.

"In your electric car you might be like, oh I think I can make it 10 more kilometres to that charging station," he continued.

"And in the context of aviation, you wouldn't do that. We have the same

limitations of energy as a normal aircraft does for fuel."

In Aug 2019, Avinor's then-CEO Dag Falk-Petersen was forced to emergency land an electric plane he was piloting himself in southern Norway when an engine lost power.

Falk-Petersen was not injured during the incident, nor was a Norwegian minister, who was also on the plane.

Cambodia opens \$2bn Chinese-built airport



Airlines Boeing 737MAX8 gets a water cannon welcome upon its arrival at the newly built Techo International Airport, on the outskirts of Phnom Penh.

A \$2 billion Chinese-built airport in Cambodia opened its runways to the first planes on Tuesday 9 Sep., bringing hopes for a tourism revival but beset by accusations of land evictions.

Officials hope the facility — which replaces Phnom Penh's old airport as the capital's main aviation transport hub — will boost Cambodia's struggling tourism industry.

Built by a major state-owned Chinese construction firm, the Techo International Airport is a 2,600-hectare (10 square mile) behemoth jointly funded by the Cambodian government and the privately-owned Overseas Cambodian Investment Corporation (OCIC).

A water cannon display greeted the first jet — an Air Cambodia plane travelling from China — to land at the airport on Tuesday 9 Sep., and traditional Khmer dancers welcomed its 160 passengers as they disembarked.

Passengers rolled their suitcases past golden Buddhist statues and tall trees under the airport's steel grid-shell roof designed by award-winning British architects Foster and Partners.

It was "a great honour to be one of first passengers in the airport", said British passenger David Weare, who flew in on Singapore Airlines.

"What I can see, it looks amazing, it's fantastic.... I can't wait to get through and see what the rest of it is all like," he said.

Sinn Chanserey Vutha, spokesman for Cambodia's civil aviation regulator, told reporters that the first of three phases of development cost some \$2 billion.

Located 20 kilometres south of the capital, Techo airport will be able to handle up to 13 million passengers a year, and aims to reach 50 million by 2050.

The old Phnom Penh International Airport, operating since 1959, was closed for good on the eve of the new airport's debut.

PIA to cut flights from Lahore to Paris

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to temporarily reduce its flight operations to Paris by limiting flights from Lahore, citing low customer turnout.

PIA's Islamabad-Paris flight operations, however, will remain fully operational, a PIA spokesman said.

The PIA had launched direct flights from Lahore to Paris twice a week in June.

As part of the decision to limit the flights, the PIA's last flight from Lahore to Paris will operate on Sept 12, while the final flight from Lahore to Paris will depart on September 17.

On the other hand, the national flag carrier has started renovating two aircraft for the resumption of Manchester flights.

The aircraft withdrawn from the Lahore-Paris route will be transferred for renovation as part of the preparations for the resumption of United Kingdom (Manchester flights), the spokesperson said, adding that two aircraft are being renovated for the purpose.

The PIA is expecting "Third Country Operators" authorisation by mid-September, after which the airline will plan its flights for the UK.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency had [lifted](#) its ban on the PIA from operating in the bloc in November last year.

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Amazon Air extends third-party cargo services to Dominican Republic



Key Takeaways:

Amazon's (NASDAQ: AMZN) private cargo airline has launched its second international route as it approaches the one-year anniversary of its wholesale air cargo business selling excess capacity to third-party shippers.

On Wednesday 3 Sep., Miami-based cargo agent ALK Global Logistics announced it is booking customer shipments to and from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on Amazon Air Boeing 767-300 freighter aircraft. The Dominican Republic is the first market in the Caribbean served by Amazon Air Cargo, the wholesale business unit established in late September 2024 help fill aircraft with heavy shipments independent from Amazon's parcel ecosystem.

ALK Global Logistics was previously listed on Amazon Air Cargo's website as a partner, but prior to Wednesday 3 Sep., no details were available about what their contractual arrangement involved.

Amazon Air manages a fleet of about 100 passenger-to-cargo converted aircraft to support next-day and two-day package delivery for the Amazon marketplace. Amazon Air Cargo is the direct sales channel to logistics providers and other businesses seeking to move general cargo by air.

ALK is the fourth Amazon Air Cargo customer that has been publicly promoted, although the company's website lists a handful of other users. The flights connect Miami and Santo Domingo with seven weekly frequencies. Amazon outsources the flying to contractor 21 Air, according to flight activity on FlightRadar24.

Aerodom, the operator of Las

Américas International Airport (SDQ), is collaborating with ALK to fill the flights with cargo.

"This new route positions us at the forefront of logistics in the region, allowing exporters and importers to benefit from faster and more reliable solutions," said ALK Chief Executive Officer Alfonso Alemán, in a news release.

SDQ is the Dominican Republic's primary air cargo gateway and is experiencing an influx of e-commerce traffic. A new terminal is dedicated to express parcels and e-commerce shipments, with capacity for 4 million additional packages per year.

In the spring, Amazon began operating daily flights between Miami and Bogota, carrying e-commerce packages to Colombia and returning with shipments tendered by the cargo division of flag-carrier Avianca. Those flights are also operated by 21 Air.

Amazon engages all-cargo airlines to operate its fleet because it doesn't have an air operator's certificate.

In July, Air Premia, a passenger airline based in South Korea, entered into a transportation services agreement with Amazon Air Cargo under which it transfers belly cargo to Amazon at Honolulu airport for onward carriage to the continental United States. Those Amazon flights utilize Airbus A330-330 converted freighters operated by Hawaiian Airlines, which was acquired last year by Alaska Airlines. Once at U.S. hubs, the Air Premia shipments are relayed to 45 cities, including Atlanta and Houston, through the Amazon Air network.

Air Premia flies to Los Angeles,

Newark, New Jersey, and San Francisco and moves cargo, along with passengers, on its small fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft. The collaboration with Amazon Air expands its cargo transportation network across the United States.

Third-party logistics provider Kuehne+Nagel has also said it uses Amazon Air. Hong Kong-based subsidiary Apex Logistics transships cargo to the United States via Honolulu and Amazon Air.

The news about Amazon Air Cargo's expansion into the Caribbean came the same day Freight Waves reported that Maersk Air Cargo has begun flying for the first time to South America with Boeing 767-300s operated by Miami-based Amerijet.

Airbus reveals order for seven more Airbus A350-1000s

The agreement was formally listed on 22 August and brought Airbus's gross orders for this year to a round figure of 600.

Airbus's largest A350 variant has secured 69 orders this year, and the latest deal takes overall firm A350-1000 commitments to 361 – one in four of all passenger A350 orders.



Orders for the -1000 account for one in four firm passenger A350 commitments

August is normally a quiet month for the manufacturer.

It recorded lessor Avolon's agreement – revealed in July – for 90 aircraft, including 15 A330-900s, as well as two private customer orders, each for a single A320neo.

There were no cancellations which meant Airbus net orders for the first eight months of the year reached 504.

Airbus is still catching up on deliveries, listing a total of 434 aircraft handed over in 2025 compared with the 447 reached at the same point last year.

US Air Force takes delivery of most advanced Nuclear Bomber in the World



The United States Air Force (USAF) confirmed that its second B-21 Raider stealth bomber has successfully flown to Edwards Air Force Base (EDW) in California. This milestone expands the service's ability to conduct testing on the next-generation long-range bomber.

The new arrival allows the Air Force to move beyond initial flight performance checks and begin evaluating advanced mission systems and weapons integration.

US Air Force B-21 Delivery

The arrival of the second bomber marks a major step forward for the Air Force's flight test program. Officials noted that with two aircraft available, engineers and pilots can simultaneously assess different systems, accelerating the pace of development.

Air Force Secretary Troy Meink emphasized that the second aircraft "adds substantial momentum" to the campaign, highlighting that testing of mission-critical weapons and systems will now proceed at a faster rate.

Built by Northrop Grumman, the B-21 is promoted as the world's first sixth-generation aircraft, designed to carry both nuclear and conventional payloads while penetrating heavily defended airspace.

Until now, the B-21 program has primarily focused on initial flight stability and baseline performance. With a second unit in service, the testing will expand to mission profiles, weapons deployment, and electronic systems reliability.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Allvin noted that the additional aircraft "accelerates the path to fielding," stressing the importance of rapid modernization to maintain strategic deterrence.

Replacing Legacy Bombers

The B-21 Raider is set to replace two aging platforms: the B-1B Lancer and the B-2A Spirit. Over time, the Air Force envisions operating a fleet of at least 100 B-21s alongside 76 upgraded B-52J

Stratofortresses.

This approach ensures a two-bomber force capable of both conventional strike and nuclear deterrence missions, balancing legacy upgrades with next-generation stealth.

With two bombers now stationed at Edwards, maintenance personnel can begin advanced hands-on training. Crews will learn how to manage simultaneous repairs, test technical documentation, and refine sustainment processes.

This training is considered critical for preparing the B-21 to transition from testing into operational readiness. It also provides insight into how the Air Force can streamline logistics for long-term fleet management.

Infrastructure Investments at Future Bases

Looking ahead, the Air Force plans

significant construction projects in fiscal year 2026 at Ellsworth Air Force Base (RCA) in South Dakota, Whiteman Air Force Base (SZL) in Missouri, and Dyess Air Force Base (DYS) in Texas.

According to [Defence News](#), these bases have been designated as primary operating locations for the Raider fleet.

Gen. Allvin called the B-21 program "a cornerstone of strategic nuclear modernization," pointing to concurrent efforts in infrastructure, sustainment, and testing as proof of the urgency surrounding the project.

Bottom Line

The successful arrival of the second B-21 Raider at Edwards Air Force Base marks a new phase in the Air Force's modernization strategy.

By expanding testing capacity, enhancing maintenance training, and preparing bases for deployment, the service is moving closer to fielding a bomber designed to maintain air superiority and strategic deterrence for decades to come.

Asia's leading airport launches free city tours for transit passengers

Hong Kong International Airport has launched a free city tour for passengers with layovers exceeding seven hours in an effort to attract 5.5 million passengers a year.

Each day, up to 20 passengers can join one of the four-hour tours showcasing Hong Kong's cultural and scenic highlights, the *South China Morning Post* reported citing airport authority CEO Vivian Cheung Kar-fay.

The tour itineraries include the "Heritage and Local Lifestyle Citywalk," which provides guided walks to Wong Tai Sin Temple and Sham Shui Po's bustling markets, and the "Victoria & West Kowloon Waterfront Journey", featuring an evening to experience the city's harbor views.

Each route runs one tour per day, guided by a professional English-speaking tour leader, with full transportation included, *The Standard* reported.

Transit passengers must hold a valid visa or meet Hong Kong's entry requirements to participate.

Bookings can be made online ahead of arrival or at Trip.com's airport counter on a first-come, first-served basis.

About 50,000 travelers transit through Hong Kong daily, and 30% stay

more than seven hours.

The initiative aims to enhance the travel experience at Hong Kong International Airport, named "Asia's Leading Airport" at last year's World Travel Awards.



Filipino tourist, 35, dies in Hong Kong after taxi crash

A 35-year-old Filipino tourist died in Hong Kong on Tuesday after being struck by a taxi outside a hotel in the Tsunien Wan West district, the Philippine consulate General confirmed.



Filipino tourist dies after collapsing on Hong Kong Disneyland ride.

A 53-years-old Filipino tourist collapsed and died during a ride at Hong Kong Disneyland last month, prompting police to launch an investigation.



Singapore's Changi no longer world's best airport for immigration services

Hong Kong International Airport surpassed Singapore's Changi as world's best airport for immigration services this year following a passenger satisfaction survey done by British air transport rating organization Skytrax.



Cathay Pacific launches investigation after passenger alleges food poisoning onboard.

Hong Kong's carrier Cathay Pacific has initiated an investigation following a passenger's claim of suffering from food poisoning after consuming an in flight meal that contained raw fish.



Hong Kong beats Changi as Asia's leading airport

Hong Kong International Airport has surpassed Singapore's Changi Airport to be named "Asia's Leading Airport" at this year's World Travel Awards.

The 17-year-old who built a super drone and got \$23,000 from the Department of Defense



In a world where technology evolves at lightning speed, 17-year-old Cooper Taylor is proving that age is just a number when it comes to groundbreaking invention. With his creation of a **super drone** that blends affordability with advanced function, Cooper has attracted attention from the Department of Defense, earning a \$23,000 grant. His work shows how young visionaries can reshape industries and open new doors with pure creativity.

What sets Cooper's drone apart is its use of mostly **3D printed components** in the design of a vertical take-off and landing drone, also called VTOL. This approach doesn't just cut production costs dramatically—it solves major challenges linked to **machine efficiency** and accessibility. Traditional drones with similar capabilities often come with hefty price tags, sometimes thousands of dollars. Cooper's drone, priced at about one-fifth of those models, breaks the mold by making cutting-edge technology approachable.

How a young innovator brought his vision to life

—For 12 years he searched in vain for his €737 million in a landfill now a new series gives him a second chance

The household appliance we all own that consumes as much power as 65 refrigerators running at once

Cooper didn't just draw up plans—he rolled up his sleeves and created six full prototypes, handling everything from 3D printing the hardware to programming the drone's software and hand-soldering circuit boards. This hands-on dedication at such a young age shows an inspiring level of **passion** and technical prowess.

His hard work quickly earned recognition. At the Youth Science and Humanities Symposium, a prestigious event supported by important institutions,

Cooper received an \$8,000 scholarship. Shortly afterward, the U.S. Navy awarded him an additional \$15,000 grant, underscoring both the promise and real-world impact of his invention. Imagine how incredible it is for a teenager to receive such trust and backing based solely on his ingenuity.

Breaking barriers with affordable, high-tech design

Reflecting on my own childhood, I often took apart my gadgets just to see how they worked, sometimes breaking them but always learning. Cooper's story reignites that sense of curiosity and relentless determination. His achievement reminds us all: with enough passion and perseverance, it's possible to overcome even the most daunting obstacles.

By making a **high-tech** drone that's also **affordable**, Cooper is poised to revolutionize access to technology for a broad range of applications. Low-cost drones could dramatically impact fields like environmental monitoring, disaster response, and education—areas where expensive equipment often wasn't feasible. His work points toward an era where innovation no longer depends on steep costs.

What Cooper's story means for future creators

Jules Verne was right: scientists uncover an ocean hidden deep within Earth, reshaping our view of the planet

Scientists revive a worm that was frozen for 46,000 years

Cooper Taylor's journey is a powerful example of how the next generation is ready to step up and lead in the world of technology. It sends a clear message: you don't need to wait for adulthood or hefty financial backing to make a difference. Vision, determination, and skill can create opportunities that organizations and governments eagerly support.

Are you inspired by Cooper's accomplishment? Do you know other young inventors or innovations worth sharing? Stories like his invite us all to keep dreaming, experimenting, and pushing boundaries. I'd love to hear your thoughts—drop a comment below and share this incredible story with friends who might find inspiration in it. Who knows what amazing ideas might ignite next?

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Islamabad and Rawalpindi to be connected through high-speed rail in March next year

The federal government has initiated steps to launch a high-speed rail service between Islamabad and Rawalpindi, aiming to reduce travel time, ease traffic congestion and provide affordable transport to residents of the twin cities.

A high-level meeting chaired by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Railway Minister Hanif Abbasi was held at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) headquarters to finalise key aspects of the project, with the participation of Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and senior officials from the interior ministry, Pakistan Railways, CDA, Rawalpindi Commissioner's Office and law enforcement agencies.

According to a press release issued by the interior ministry, the rail link will connect Margalla Railway Station in Islamabad with Saddar Railway Station in Rawalpindi, covering the distance in just 20 minutes. The project is expected to be launched on March 23, with the first phase utilising the existing railway track. A second phase will extend the service to other parts of the federal capital.

Railway Minister Hanif Abbasi confirmed that the project would operate on the existing track and would require the procurement of modern Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs), expected to be imported from China or another country.

Railway ministry to provide and maintain track infrastructure, CDA to manage operations

He said the procurement process could take at least a month, and the formal PC-I of the project would be presented to the Planning Division soon.

To enhance connectivity, the CDA's electric buses will act as feeder services, facilitating easy access to Margalla Station. Metro buses already connected to the station will also support the initiative.

Under the agreed framework, the railways ministry will provide and maintain the track infrastructure, while the CDA will manage the rail operations. The framework agreement is set to be finalised and signed.

Participants agreed to import state-of-the-art trains to ensure a modern, efficient and comfortable commuting



Railway Minister Hanif Abbasi announces inclusive reforms for Women and Persons with Special Abilities during a meeting in Islamabad, Sept 15.

experience. The initiative aims to save time and fuel, reduce traffic pressure and provide a cost-effective public transport alternative.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the project reflected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision of public-centric development and modern infrastructure. "With its completion, thousands of citizens will have access to a quality travel facility," he stated.

Railway Minister Hanif Abbasi called it a milestone in public welfare, enabling swift and convenient travel for residents of both cities.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry described the initiative as a low-cost, high-speed transport option that will ease the growing burden on roads connecting Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The concept of a rail link between the twin cities dates back to the early 2000s during the tenure of former President Pervez Musharraf. Earlier proposals included running trains from Chaklala to Margalla Station or along the Islamabad Expressway. In 2014, even the construction of the elevated Metro Bus route between Saddar and Faizabad was partially aimed at supporting future rail connectivity.

Pakistan Railways to introduce reforms

Pakistan Railways announced inclusive reforms ensuring safety and dignity for Women and Persons with Special Abilities.

In a meeting, chaired by Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi at the Ministry of Railways, it was decided to enhance passenger facilities and ensure safety. The meeting placed special emphasis on the welfare of women and persons with special abilities.

The minister announced that gender-responsive protocols would be implemented across railway stations and trains to ensure a safe, dignified and peaceful travel environment for women passengers.

For this purpose, it was decided that awareness posters would be displayed inside railway stations and trains, regular announcements and awareness messages will be broadcast at stations, railway staff will be provided with gender sensitisation and specialised training and a comprehensive awareness campaign will be launched for women's safety.

In addition, it was decided that all upcoming refurbished trains will include designated seating for persons with special abilities, while wheelchairs will be ensured at major railway stations to facilitate their travel with dignity and ease.

On the occasion, Mr. Abbasi said: "Pakistan Railways considers all its passengers a valuable asset. These initiatives, particularly for women and persons with special abilities, reflect our commitment to providing a modern, inclusive, and passenger-friendly railway system."



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UAE's first homegrown cargo drones could make your deliveries faster and cheaper



The LODD facility has the potential to produce up to 50 drones per month.

In a quiet industrial facility on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, a team of engineers has been working in near-total secrecy for more than two years. Today, their project was finally revealed: the UAE's first homegrown civilian aircraft, a hybrid VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) cargo drone, and it doesn't look like anything you'd see at Dubai International Airport.

LODD, a UAE-based aviation start-up, has developed a VTOL cargo drone that could transform how goods move across the country and eventually, the region. Targeting a commercial launch in Q4 2026, expects to deploy around 50 aircraft in the country.

The unmanned aircraft can lift 250 kilograms of cargo, fly for up to 300 kilometres, and land almost anywhere without needing a runway. For consumers, that could mean cheaper and faster deliveries, whether it's e-commerce orders, medical supplies, or emergency shipments.

Also In This Package

Drone deliveries may soon lift off at UAE supermarkets



All you need to know about UAE's air taxi launch: A first for the Middle East



Construction begins for Dubai's DXV flying taxi station



UAE's first electric air taxi trial flight likely soon



A first for the Middle East

The company believes this is not just a breakthrough for logistics, but also a milestone for the UAE's innovation ecosystem.

"This is the first civilian aircraft of its kind to be designed and built in the UAE, and possibly in the entire Middle East," LODD's chief executive, Rashid Al Manai, explained. "It shows what's possible when we bring highly skilled people together with Emirati talent and invest in creating the right ecosystem."

The UAE has set ambitious goals to boost its logistics sector, and LODD is helping lead the way. "This project shows how we can bring global talent together with Emirati expertise to create advanced technology at home," Al Manai informed Gulf News. Years of investment in skilled people, infrastructure, and facilities have created an ecosystem capable of supporting such cutting-edge innovation.

Disrupting air cargo

Today, air cargo accounts for nearly 30 per cent of global trade by value, but moving goods by air remains expensive and slow, tied up in airports, customs clearances and multiple handovers.

Al Manai told Gulf News: "Time is the enemy in logistics. Every step where goods sit waiting is lost value." Their new aircraft, he explained, is designed to tackle that challenge. "With this technology, we can reduce the cost of air freight to almost a tenth of what it is today," he said. "It's faster, more flexible, and doesn't require the heavy infrastructure of traditional cargo aviation."

By flying directly from a warehouse or port to its destination, the drone cuts out many of the intermediate steps that make deliveries both costly and time-consuming.

When will it fly?

LODD has already built smaller prototypes to validate the software and systems. The full-scale aircraft is now moving into testing, with a clear roadmap:

Q2 2026: Qualification testing to be completed.

July 2026: Experimental operations to begin.

Q4 2026: Commercial launch, with revenue-generating services.

While the company plans to roll out around 50 aircraft in the UAE, it has the capacity to scale up quickly to meet demand. Its facility has the potential to produce up to 50 drones per year.

Beyond borders

While the aircraft's range is currently 300 km, the company sees opportunities beyond domestic deliveries. Cross-border operations will depend on regulatory approval, but the CEO is confident that once the benefits are proven, expansion will follow.

"Innovation always starts where regulation allows," Al Manai said. "We'll begin here in the UAE, and as the advantages become clear, we expect to see permissions for regional and international operations."

Why it matters

For Gulf consumers, the impact could be direct: cheaper shipping, faster e-commerce deliveries, and more reliable access to essential goods. For the UAE, it's another step in becoming a global hub for logistics and aviation innovation, adding to the country's already strong position in ports and air transport.

"Better logistics means a better quality of life," the CEO said. "And this aircraft is designed to deliver exactly that."

AirSial to acquire two more Airbus A320 aircraft

With immense pride, we confirm the acquisition of two additional, Airbus A320 aircraft through our landmark agreement with DAE Capital in Dubai said Mr. Fazal Jillani Chairman of AirSial. The prestigious signing ceremony was graced by the presence of Mr. Fazal Jillani - Chairman AirSial, Mr. Ameen Ahsan - CEO AirSial, Mr. Tariq Amin - COO AirSial, Mr. Azhar Qayyum - Director Engineering AirSial and Mr. Bilal Abbasi - GM CAMO AirSial, David Houlihan - President DAE Capital and James Carroll - Head of MEASA Sales DAE Capital.

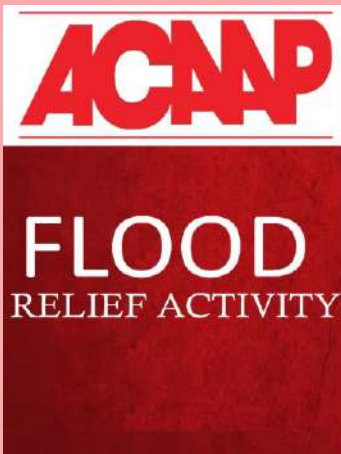
These jets will grace the AirSial fleet in Q2 - 2026, elevating its total to 12 Aircrafts. This milestone will allow it to expand its horizons and welcome more guests to experience its refined service as it soar to new heights.



AirSial signs an agreement with DAE Capital to acquire two more Airbus A320.



AirSial and Amadeus sign agreement: AirSial to deploy Amadeus Altea Departure Control System (DCS) to deliver an enhanced offering to passengers and Airlines benefits.



ACAAP Region B Sialkot has formed a flood relief committee to assist those affected by the flood. The photo features Mr. Amjad Fakhri and others posing with relief goods for distribution among the community.

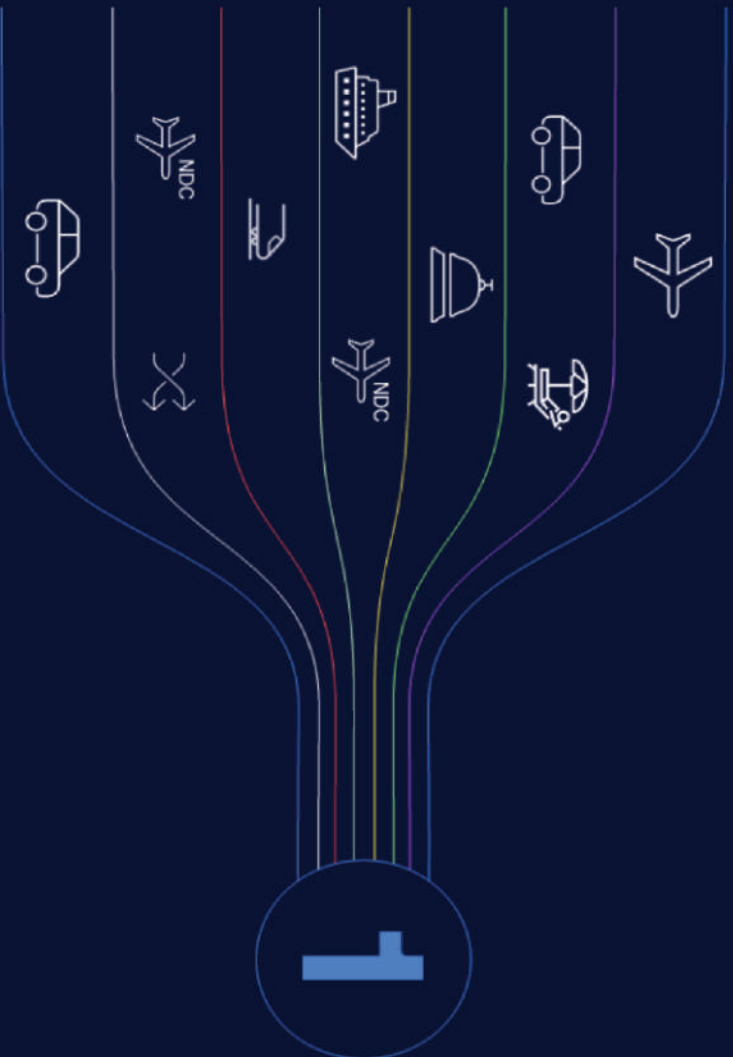
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Iran Airtour Airlines starts flight from Tehran to Islamabad

Iran Airtour Airlines has launched a new flight route from Tehran to Islamabad, operating once a week flight starting from September 9, 2025. This initiative aims to enhance connections between the two countries, fostering people-to-people interaction, religious tourism, and cultural exchange.

The inaugural flight was greeted with a water cannon salute upon its arrival in Islamabad. Ground handling services were provided by Shaheen Airport Services (SAPS), which has achieved a significant milestone by welcoming Iran Airtour Airlines. Capt. Saeed Khan, Head of the Commercial Department at SAPS, played a crucial role in facilitating the arrival of this new airline.



Message from the Chairman, PIFFA on Maritime Day



On behalf of the Pakistan International Freight Forwarders Association (PIFFA), I join the global maritime community in commemorating World Maritime Day 2025, celebrating on September 25 under the theme “Our Ocean – Our Obligation – Our Opportunity.”

Shipping remains the backbone of international trade, carrying more than 80% of the world's goods safely and efficiently across oceans. For a maritime nation like Pakistan, with its strategic location and vibrant port and logistics

sector, this day is a reminder of both our responsibility and our opportunity to contribute to sustainable shipping and global connectivity.

We at PIFFA reaffirm our commitment to promoting professional excellence, compliance with international standards, and sustainable practices in freight forwarding and logistics. Together with our partners, stakeholders, and seafarers, we strive to strengthen Pakistan's role in the global maritime supply chain.

As the IMO Headquarters and landmarks across the world are

illuminated in blue this evening, we too extend our solidarity by recognizing the invaluable contribution of seafarers and the maritime industry in shaping global trade, prosperity, and peace.

Let us work collectively to safeguard our oceans, embrace innovation, and ensure that maritime transport continues to be a source of opportunity for generations to come.

Muhammad Jamil Ahmed
Chairman - Pakistan International
Freight Forwarders Association
(PIFFA)



PIFFA-IATA

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ABOUT THE EVENT

Pakistan International Freight Forwarders Association (PIFFA), in collaboration with IATA, proudly presents **Air Cargo Day 2025** a premier networking and knowledge sharing platform for freight forwarders, airlines, regulators, logistics providers, and stakeholders from the global air cargo community.

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POINT OF CONTACT

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SIAL holds a meeting with GOC Sialkot

Mr Hassan Ali Bhatti (Chairman), Mr Waqas Afzal (Vice Chairman), esteemed Board Members, and AVM Tanweer Ashraf Bhatti (R) CEO of Sialkot International Airport Limited welcomed Maj General Imran Khan Baber, GOC 15 Div Sialkot. The visit was aimed at assuring full support from Pakistan Army in recovering from the flooding situation and resumed flight operations. CEO SIAL presented a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing flood state and measures adopted to ensure safety of humans & equipment deployed at the airport. The briefing was also attended by Assistant Commissioner Sambrial and other representatives of the Civil Administration.

The General Officer Commanding (in his closing remarks) emphasised the need of putting collective efforts in coordination with the District Administration for achieving an effective rehabilitation plan including short term, medium term and long term measures for saving this strategic asset from flooding in future.

PBBC delegation visit SIAL

Mr Hassan Ali Bhatti (Chairman), Mr Waqas Afzal (Vice Chairman), and AVM Tanweer Ashraf Bhatti (R), CEO of Sialkot International Airport Limited, met a 5-member delegation of Pakistan Britain Business Council led by Mr. Rashid Iqbal, CEO. During the meeting, it was resolved that SIAL and PBBC will continue to collaborate closely to implement the proposals of mutual interest as discussed during the meeting



A view of the SIAL meeting with GOC Sialkot.



Mr Hassan Ali Bhatti Chairman SIAL, presents a shield to Mr. Rashid Iqbal, CEO of PBBC during a meeting

China now fields five transition fifth generation fighter aircraft in services

The Chinese People's Liberation Army has for the first time unveiled all types of fifth generation fighter aircraft in service, with all five seen at a recent military parade on September 3 marking the 80th anniversary of Imperial Japan's Defeat in the Second World War. China in February 2017 became the second country after the United States to bring an indigenous fifth generation fighter into service, namely the J-20, with the aircraft having rapidly evolved over the past eight years as its stealth features and overall airframe design have been refined, new engines have been integrated, and avionics and been updated. The J-20 program has represented a major landmark for China's combat aviation sector, and for the first time in the jet era positioned a fighter from a country other than Russia or the United States as a leading contender for the title of the world's most capable in air-to-air combat. Although the J-20 was present at China's previous military parade in October 2019, not only were three distinct variants were involved in the latest parade, but an entirely new class of fifth generation fighter, the J-35, also made its debut.



J-20 Fifth Generation Fighters

The People's Liberation Army Air Force is currently procuring four types of fighter aircraft in parallel, namely the J-20 and the new J-35 fifth generation fighters, as well as the J-16 heavyweight and J-10C lightweight fourth generation fighters. It was previously uncertain if the J-35, a medium weight fighter intended to complement the larger and longer range J-20, would be procured by the Air Force, or whether it had been developed exclusively into an aircraft carrier based variant for the Navy, and an export variant. In early July it was confirmed that the J-35 has indeed been procured by the Air Force, providing the service with a high-low combination of stealth fighters, and making it the first in

the world to procure two different stealth fighter types in parallel. Less than two weeks after the J-35 was confirmed to have joined the Air Force, the first footage surfaced in mid-July confirming that an aircraft carrier based variant had joined the Navy.



Chinese PLA Navy J-35 Fighter

The latest parade on September 3 saw China unveil the unrivalled diversity of its stealth fighter fleet, with the first stealth fighter seen being a baseline J-20 powered by indigenous WS-10C engines. The aircraft was seen refuelling from a YY-20 tanker, a new asset in the inventory which is expected to significantly further extent the fighter class' already near unrivalled range. This was followed by a J-20S twin seat fighter, which is the only twin seat stealth fighter class in service anywhere in the world. The fighter variant was first unveiled in October 2021, and was more recently confirmed in July 2025 to have entered service. The twin seater was followed by modernised new variant of the J-20, referred to variously as the J-20A or J-20B, which can be distinguished by its much flatter cockpit canopy and distinctive low-profile appearance blending into its raised spine and a nose radome. This new stealthier variant is expected to integrate WS-15 next generation engines.



J-16D Leads two J-20s and Two J-35s in Formation

The modernised J-20 was followed by a pair of baseline J-20s, an accompanying J-16D electronic warfare plane, and a J-35 - three classes of tactical combat jet which are expected to operate together to make use of their highly

complementary capabilities. They were then followed by a formation which included the People's Liberation Army's fifth class of operational stealth fighter, the naval variant of the J-35, which flew in a formation alongside four J-15 carrier based combat jets, including a J-15DT electronic warfare variant. In total all three major J-20 variants, and both the land and carrier based variants of the J-35, participated in the show of force over Beijing. Significant questions have been raised regarding the future of China's fifth generation fighter programs due to the unveiling of two sixth generation fighter designs in December, both at fight prototype stages. A significant possibility remains that when these sixth generation fighters enter service, likely in the early 2030s, they will be considered more cost effective for many roles, resulting in major cuts to production of both the J-20 and the J-35.

Gerry's Group welcomes air Arabia's Regional Commercial Head

Gerry's Group was honored to welcome Moosa Ali, Regional Manager Commercial of Air Arabia, at the Gerry's Head Office.

The meeting was graciously attended by Group Managing Director, Akram Wali Muhammad, and Group Director, Arshad Wali Muhammad.

This visit further reinforced the longstanding partnership between Air Arabia and Gerry's Group, reaffirming its shared commitment to growth, innovation, and collaboration in the region.





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Karachi port deepens for bigger ships

Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited (KGTL), a joint venture of AD Ports Group and Kaheel Terminals, a UAE-based company, has launched an ambitious dredging programme at the East Wharf of the Port of Karachi. The initiative will deepen berths and navigation channels at KGTL, enabling the terminal to accommodate post-panamax vessels with a capacity of over 13,000 TEUs.

Simultaneously, KGTL's sister venture, Karachi Gateway Terminal Multipurpose Limited (KGTM), will enhance its bulk handling capability, allowing the accommodation of vessels up to 120,000 tonnes compared to the current 60,000 tonnes.

For Pakistan's exporters and importers, these upgrades will translate directly into tangible gains. Post-panamax vessels are larger ships that bring economies of scale, reducing per-unit freight costs and optimising foreign exchange expenditure on shipping. In turn, more competitive pricing will strengthen export volumes, particularly for industries such as cement, rice, and fertilisers.

The dredging project, scheduled for completion in early 2026, is also expected to improve operational efficiency. The turnaround time for a 60,000-tonne grain vessel is projected to drop from 12 days to just three, cutting port stays by days and boosting throughput significantly.

The Port of Karachi already handles approximately 60% of the nation's cargo, underscoring its central role in Pakistan's import-export activity.

By enhancing its capacity on major shipping lanes, Pakistan can position itself more effectively as a gateway for the "Middle Corridor," linking Central Asia with global markets.

However, experts caution that infrastructure upgrades alone will not guarantee efficiency unless operational bottlenecks are addressed. Karachi Port has long struggled with congestion, ageing equipment, and fragmented customs procedures. Unless improvements extend beyond the quayside to hinterland connectivity, trucking networks, and rail freight, much of the benefit from dredging could be diluted.

By deepening berths, the port will be better integrated into global shipping

routes, strengthening Pakistan's case as a South Asian maritime hub. Yet, regional competition is intensifying. Ports in India, Sri Lanka, and the Middle East are rapidly modernising, offering digitalised customs clearance, bonded logistics parks, and intermodal connectivity.

For Karachi to keep pace, parallel investments in automation, digital tracking, and customs reforms will be essential. Without these measures, even with deeper berths, shipping lines may favour alternative regional hubs that promise smoother operations and lower transaction costs.

The dredging project is fully funded by AD Ports Group under long-term concessions, 50 years for container handling and 25 years for bulk cargo. The investment signals confidence in Pakistan's maritime future at a time when foreign direct investment remains volatile. Yet, Pakistan's broader economic fragility could still cast shadows. Currency fluctuations, high energy costs, and political uncertainty risk undermining the competitiveness the project seeks to bolster.

Large-scale dredging projects also raise environmental and urban planning challenges. Sediment disposal, marine ecosystem disruption, and coastal erosion are concerns requiring careful management.



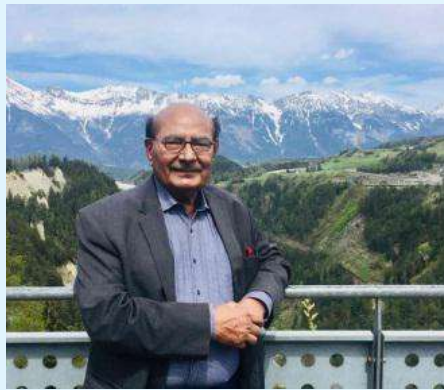
'Hindutva': Religious Fascism

"Whom the gods would destroy; they first make mad " .(A Hellenic proverb)

Prof. Safdar Sandal

Repercussions of the concept of 'Hindutva' in perspective of Hinduism which has locally been based on inheriting traditions, rooted at random in goodness, compassion, tolerance and non-violence; the ideology as a whole has been identified with a political core based on ideas to create divisions and for the purpose by promoting an agenda that can marginalize non-Hindu communities. It is a political and a social move which encompasses a rigid cultural justification of Hindu nationalism and a belief in establishing 'Hindu Hegemony and Superiority' over other communities within the bounds of India or outside of India. In its expansive role, 'Hindutva' believes in the existence of a collective Hindu culture or way of life which has to be shared and practiced by all peoples, no matter if they adhere to other religions or schools of thought. Hence the above quoted *Hellenic* proverb justifies itself *which please read once again*. 'Hindutva' has therefore been a narrow minded political ideology and it is meant to discriminate against all other sects or beliefs even within own Hinduism and Muslims at best at targets. They are treated as renegades. Lower castes of Hindus are also not excluded from this severe segregation and inhuman treatment in their society. They are in fact more badly treated than Muslims.

'Hindutva' in its present form started approximately 2.25 centuries ago by one V. D Savarka. Before him came Basu (1844-1910) who had shunned co-



existence with people of other faiths in the Indian sub-continent. They did not like to accept them in their self-created social order, called 'Hindutva'. The discriminative behavior and an unprecedented school of thought in known history was developed into 'Hindutva', meaning thereby a political ideology which encompassed cultural superiority of Hindu religion and belief of establishing 'Hindu Hegemony' in India or in foreign lands over all other peoples. The attitude contained religious hatred for other faiths, so far to say.

'Hindutva' ideology was outsourced from the 'European Fascism' of 1920's which had started with Benito Mussolini, dictator of Italy, who in the end, fled the scene but was captured and killed by his own people, in a village near Como. Fascism became still more violent under the rule of Adolf Hitler of Germany, who met a similar fate, like Mussolini. Both were friends when in power. This gambit assumed the form of an 'Ethno-Religious-

Fascism' (Hindutva) in India however has continued with the PM Narendra Modi. The founder for destroying humanism in India was a 'Subhas Chandra Bose'. During his sojourn in Italy and Germany in the times of Hitler and Mussolini, he borrowed the sinister ideology from Europe that brought about a change in the history of India too upon his return, by infusing 'Hindutva' in the hitherto normal Indian religious society.

The Vedic people known as Aryans, had mass-migrated from Eurasian states to the Indian subcontinent and developed a complex 'pantheon of gods' with rituals between 2000-1500 BCE. This region includes modern day countries such as Southern Russian provinces, Kazakhstan and Ukraine etc. From here the Aryans migrated southwards, to India, Iran and had also migrated to neighbouring southern Germany (Bavaria) to their west. The reason, I find many words or names which are still are common in day to day language especially; the names of mountains or valleys (like Kalam etc.). Adolf Hitler had shifted from his Bavarian town in Austria to the nearby capital city being Munich. I have been to the small town called 'Branau am Inn' in Austria where Hitler was born and brought up until he shifted to bordering Germany. The journey is 120.3 Km from 'Salzburg Hbf' to 'Brunnau am Inn' by train and then 50Km by a direct bus service to Munich. The journey is mentioned for desiring travellers.

It may be encountered that 'Hindutva' is different in thought and practice, than 'Hinduism'. Both possess though the same religion, but the later are more tolerant than 'Hindutva' believers who in fact practice a psychic-philosophy of Hindu religion. The later represent an extreme nature of a religion for imposing their belief of 'Hinduism' over other people. The scribe has witnessed and experienced both the ideologists during his extensive Middle Eastern and European tours where a large number of Hindu diaspora live. I have met with some extremely good Hindu families, who like to be friend with Pakistanis than with their own co-religionists. My impression is based on my own experiences and friendship formed during my travelling and is thus unbiased.



The term "Hindutva" is alternatively used to signify a variety of concepts such as core 'Hindu Nationalism', 'Hindu Supremacist Thinking' and 'Brahmanism' in today's India. 'Sandals' (the grandparents of the scribe) were 'Brahmans' of Kashmir valley, surrounded by high mountains and they grew and own 'Sandal Trees' in their land of Kashmir valley as their inherited family business from centuries. They were first called 'Sandalis' (also name of their village being 'Sandal' in the aforesaid valley. They have been a rich people because of the nature of their business of gowning Sandal-wood gardens and selling the precious wood, worldwide. They were reputed and still are a nice and polite people of Kashmir. As history goes, two Sandal brothers from the clan had got converted to Islam through permeation and conviction, some 350 – 400 years ago from today. We feel proud to be their grandchildren by 4 generations approximately. There are still Hindu Brahmins living in those valleys of Kashmir and are known as 'Hindu Pandits' and are famous for being a polite people. 'Hindutva' on the other hand has remained prominent in the wake of religious extremism, intolerance and violence

introduced to my brother as normally is done on such occasions. But what happened next was horrible and a very insulting situation. The new arrival – a Hindu guest refused to sit and dine with a Muslim man (being my brother) and his reaction was so furious and detestable, as told to me by my brother that he could hardly withstand it but tolerated as being the worst example that a Pakistani could absorb. The Hindu extremist guest anyway after this happening left the house in anger barbing insults, as he did not like to sit and dine with a Muslim man. My brother's anger over this unprecedented insult in his life can well be imagined. He was obviously and very much angry over this insult unprecedented in his long travelling life, but due to the intervention of the host and caring for the nicety of the situation, (my brother was well behaved); he tolerated and absorbed this unhappy insult for which the Hindu host and business friend acutely apologized by sitting down to touch the feet of my brother in apology. My brother 'Sarwar Sandal' has been one of the first travellers of Sialkot who brought orders of export for Sialkot's Sports Goods Industry and brought his company to unprecedented

relations. She is my wife's best overseas friend too as we both have visited them several times during my business travels abroad.

Mahatma Gandhi is one great example believing in Hindu Muslim unity and a person softened by Jinnah's proximity. Gandhi, founding father of modern India was assassinated by an ultra-nationalist Hindu. Gandhi had pleaded with Jinnah to make India a 'Confederation' of Pakistan and India instead of a separate 'Federation'. Owing to his sympathies expressed, a 'RSS' fanatic member with the name Nathuram Godse, accusing Gandhi for having favoured the political demands of Indian Muslims, murdered Gandhi. 'Hindutva' is the core ideology of the Sang Parivar (family of organizations) – a group comprising dozens of Hindu nationalist organizations in India which are extremely narrow minded and badly fanatic.

Replacing 'hardcore Hindutva' with soft core Hindu nationalism has changed its face in India. The 'Congress Party', India's main opposition, appears to have changed and subscribed to 'soft Hindutva'. It essentially shows that 'Hindutva' is currently representing the real politik in India. It was Indira Gandhi of the Congress party who instrumented the partition of Pakistan in 1971 and created another country out of it called 'Bangladesh'. Now it is again being speculated that the Congress party would also resort to 'Hindutva' politics in order to expand its Hindu vote-bank in the country – a war mongering mentality. 'Hindutva' appears to have become an important part of India's current national political scene.

The 'Swastika' is an ancient Hindu symbol, although its origin dates back to the Aryan race of central Asian states and mass migration of the Aryan people to India and to Europe especially in its Germanic regions. The –e-reason why the symbol of 'Swastika' was used by Hitler of Germany and by the people of India and Shehan Shah of Iran, too. The symbol has stayed in history and continued by people whether they were Hindus, Buddhists or Jains. The symbol of 'Swastika' has though been used with slight variations in all these civilizations. The 'Swastika' also emerged throughout ancient Greek symbols and Roman decorative art and it was present in the Koban culture of Russia, too. The meaning has been carried differently in different countries and on varying historical periods in these countries. In



against all religious and marginalized communities especially throughout the Modi-led BJP rule in India. During the late 1930s, the Congress Ministries in British India essentially displayed a sort of 'Hindu Chauvinism' which has been the core hallmark of Hindu nationalistic culture, as compared to other religions practiced in India.

(My elder brother Mr. Sarwar Sandal (late), founder of 'Loyal Sports (Pvt) Ltd. Sialkot, had told me once that during his visit of a Hindu customer made friend and based in Johannesburg, South Africa had invited him at his house for a dinner and unknowingly the host had also invited his another Indian friend in the respect of my brother. But when that friend came to the house and on the dining table and was

heights, as acknowledged by the business community of Sialkot, through his sheer hard work. My tributes to him; but at present my intention to recall this unhappy event is only to display the 'Hindutva' mentality in contrast to the common Hindus, who most of the time are like us, good natured Indian people, inheriting and sharing the same history, culture and habits, for we have lived together for over thousands of years and thus share the same values, barring those who plead 'Hindutva'.

Just now I have received a 'Good Day' welfare call from my Hindu 'bhabhi', residing in a small town of Germany. Her husband was my best friend who died in year 2021 and I call his wife as my 'bhabhi'. We both have family-like

Indian part of the world, the symbol stands for peace and progress brought forward by the Aryans of central Asian countries whose mass migration persisted between four to five thousand years ago. They settled only in the northern parts of India, of which it can safely be boasted that people of Pakistan are descendants of Aryan race. The symbol and its varying ideology however did not travel to the Arabian Peninsula; the reason it did not become part of Arabian culture and remained alien to them and to Pakistanis likewise.

Bharatya Janta Party (BJP), which originally as a political wing of RSS, officially adopted the 'Hindutva' ideology in 1989. Ever since then, it has diligently been pursuing radical Hindu nationalist politics in India. Within 3 years after formally adhering to 'Hindutva' ideology, BJP along with other Hindu nationalist parties in India, succeeded in mobilizing the Hindu nationalist parties, succeeded in mobilizing the Hindu extremists to demolish the historical 'Babri Masjid' in Ayudhya in 1992, an act which has beastly destroyed the claimed 'Secular' state and 'Swastika' culture into an aboriginal devastating status and no less than Modi himself, who is organizing and patronizing the devastation of a peaceful

society. It is definitely a shameful act for any head of a state or province to destroy peaceful culture. The act ignited the fury of Muslims living in India and defamed worldwide the Hindu mentality and the act which is the best antonym of the word 'secular' best practiced in Western Europe. Though BJP has become a mainstream political force in India; it has not succeeded in rising above its narrow nationalist politics in the country and probably it is one country in the whole of modern civilized world which heinously discriminates the Muslims like their 'low-caste' Hindus. We the Pakistanis, though living in our free land are still being haunted by the brute Hindu devil and the constant wars that are fought regularly against our country. Pitiably there were only two alternatives (in 1947-48-49 separation wars) either to become independent or failing which to remain 2nd class citizens due to Hindu-brute-majority overruling. Can there any sane element to provide solution to the catastrophic situation caused by this configuration of Indian society. Luckily the people of Pakistan have always emerged as victors in the past as well as current history.

As a matter of fact, communal disharmony has been a chronic problem in the Indian sub-continent and has been the cause of foreign invasions. The multi

communal, multi ethnic and multi linguistic character of India has been a major challenge governing this region. The 'Two Nation Theory' ultimately led to the partition of India in 1947. The Bengal nationalism further caused Pakistan to be divided in 1971, although there has been a fresh repair. There have also been communal riots at the time of Partition killing hundreds of thousands on both sides of the Radcliffe line. The mischievous Radcliffe Award had dishonestly allotted certain states to India which on principle were supposed to be given to Pakistan because the states had Muslim majority and proximity to Pakistan. It was claimed that Radcliffe had been influenced by the Nehru family with whom he had better relations and naturally was inimical to the Muslim rights, besides the British Colonial practice to leave behind areas which remain a bone of contention for all times. The much acclaimed 'divide and rule' policy of the leaving Colonial Powers was fully followed and implemented from which we are still suffering through bloodshed and instability and disharmony.

The slogans of "Hindutva" leading to 'Akhand Bharat' and of Judaism to "Greater Israel" are bound to vanish with the changing progressive world. This is a 'Writing on the Wall'. The process is underway at the time of this writing.

Pakistan eyes \$3 billion exports to Bangladesh as ties improve

FPCCI described Bangladesh as a "global textile and apparel powerhouse," and a prime market for Pakistani dyestuffs and textile chemicals

Flags of Pakistan and Bangladesh.
Photo: Collected

Pakistan's top business chamber has set its sights on increasing exports to Bangladesh to \$3 billion over the next few years, as the two South Asian neighbours look to strengthen trade and rebuild relations after decades of strained ties.

According to an Arab News report, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) outlined the target during the 48th DyeChem Bangladesh 2025 Expo in Dhaka, one of the region's leading trade exhibitions for textile and chemical industries.

FPCCI Senior Vice President Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, alongside Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider, inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion at the event.

"Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP



FPCCI, has stated that Pakistan's exports to Bangladesh can be enhanced to \$3 billion within a couple of years from the current export volume of approximately \$800 million," the FPCCI said in a statement.

"Whereas medium-term export potential to Bangladesh stands at \$5-7 billion."

Highlighting the opportunity, the FPCCI described Bangladesh as a "global textile and apparel powerhouse," and a prime market for Pakistani dyestuffs and textile chemicals.

"The 48th DyeChem Bangladesh 2025 Expo provides a direct pathway to connect with a \$47 billion textile and

apparel industry that continues to grow year after year," Magoon said, according to the FPCCI.

High Commissioner Haider, meanwhile, pledged full support to Pakistani exporters entering the Bangladeshi market.

The push for greater trade comes as Pakistan and Bangladesh take steps to rebuild political and economic relations. Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar visited Dhaka in August, in what was seen as a breakthrough trip to reset ties.

Islamabad has sought closer engagement with Dhaka since the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a student-led uprising in August 2024, which shifted Bangladesh's foreign policy priorities.

Tensions between Bangladesh and India have grown following New Delhi's decision to grant Hasina asylum after she fled the country. In contrast, Pakistan and Bangladesh launched direct sea trade last year and expanded government-to-government commerce earlier this year.

Transport routes, logistical infrastructure top priority for Kazakhstan



Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar holds a meeting with his Kazakh counterpart Murat Nurtleu.

Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu said on Tuesday 9 Sep. that developing transport and logistics infrastructure was a top priority for Astana as his country and Pakistan sought to **deepen** trade and connectivity ahead of a landmark Kazakh presidential visit to Pakistan in November — the first in almost 22 years.

Mr Nurtleu, leading a high-level 13-member delegation including Kazakhstan's trade and transport ministers, was on a two-day **official visit** to Islamabad to lay the groundwork for President Kassym Jomart-Tokayev's planned trip later this year.

During bilateral talks at the Foreign Office, “special emphasis was placed on enhancing transport connectivity and improving the efficiency of transit logistics”, the Kazakh foreign ministry said in a statement.

Mr Nurtleu echoed the priority in meetings with Pakistani business executives, saying Kazakhstan aimed to construct a railway through Afghanistan that would link Eurasian and Central Asian markets with Pakistan, providing access to the Persian Gulf, Africa and Southeast Asia.

He held focused discussions with Pakistan's National Logistics Corporation and courier company TCS on developing cooperation in the logistics sector. The Kazakh side proposed creating a joint Kazakh-Pakistani transport and logistics consortium involving key operators from both countries.

Islamabad, Astana agree practical steps needed to boost trade to \$1bn

Both foreign ministers — Mr Nurtleu and Pakistan's Ishaq Dar — agreed that practical steps were needed to increase trade turnover to \$1 billion in the coming years.

Current bilateral trade stands at around \$239 million. The expectation for an increase in trade volume is driven by initiatives like the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Transit Trade Agreement, which is expected to be signed soon. The agreement is expected to enhance regional connectivity and facilitate trade flows between Central Asia and South Asia.

“Pakistan is fully committed towards enhancing regional connectivity and shared prosperity by facilitating global trade of Central Asian Republics through Pakistan,” Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan said during separate talks with Kazakhstan's Minister of Trade and Integration Arman Shakkaliyev.

Mr Shakkaliyev identified agriculture, leather, small and medium enterprises, and information technology as key sectors for cooperation, while Pakistan offered access to its ports and advanced leather processing industry.

The Pakistani side, during the trade meeting, offered collaboration in technology transfer, training and joint ventures. It was agreed to connect the Kazakhstan Leather Association with the Pakistan Tannery Association to formalise this partnership.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a meeting with Mr Nurtleu, expressed Pakistan's “keen desire in enhancing bilateral trade, investment, connectivity (through air, rail and road) and people-to-people exchanges with Kazakhstan”.

He said Islamabad was ready to dispatch a delegation to Astana to finalise memorandums of understanding and agreements ahead of Mr Tokayev's visit.

Following the delegation-level talks at the Foreign Office, the two foreign ministers signed the Action Plan of Cooperation 2025-26 between their ministries, establishing a roadmap for deeper ties in politics, trade, economy, defence, science and technology, culture, tourism, humanitarian assistance and consular services.

The plan institutionalises regular consultations and underscores both countries' resolve to strengthen cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels.

“The adoption of the Action Plan is a significant milestone that reflects the robust political will of the leadership of Pakistan and Kazakhstan to elevate

bilateral relations to a new level of dynamism,” the FO said in a statement.

The Kazakh foreign ministry said the plan would serve as an important tool for the “consistent implementation of the agreements reached”.

Before the high-level talks, Mr Nurtleu's delegation met with Pakistan's ministers of communications, railways and commerce, and attended meetings of joint working groups on information technology and agriculture. The delegation also visited the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park to explore IT cooperation.

High-level exchanges between the two countries have been infrequent, with the last Kazakh presidential visit in 2003 and former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif travelling to Kazakhstan in 2015, though the two sides have been meeting on the sidelines of multilateral events.

PM Shehbaz and the Kazakh president recently met on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in China.

Both countries now aim to deepen ties in agriculture, logistics, pharmaceuticals and IT, while leveraging Pakistan's ports to boost Central Asian connectivity.

Meat exporters to get concessions at seaports: minister

Meat exporters will soon be given concessions at seaports to make the livestock sector globally competitive, said Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Sunday 24 Aug.

He was addressing a ceremony in Toba to hand over motorcycles to 74 Punjab veterinary department's para-veterinary staffers.

He said the livestock sector was the backbone of the national economy. He said that meat exporters would get concessions in charges on Pakistani seaports, reducing costs and enhancing competitiveness. “This will enable Pakistan's meat industry to compete at the international level,” he added.

Faisalabad Division Livestock Director Dr Syed Nadeem Badar, Additional Director Dr Hina Zafar, and deputy directors Dr Muhammad Habib Sultan, Dr Syed Zeeshan Khalid Gillani, Dr Arshad Randhawa, Dr Hina Kausar and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu were also present.



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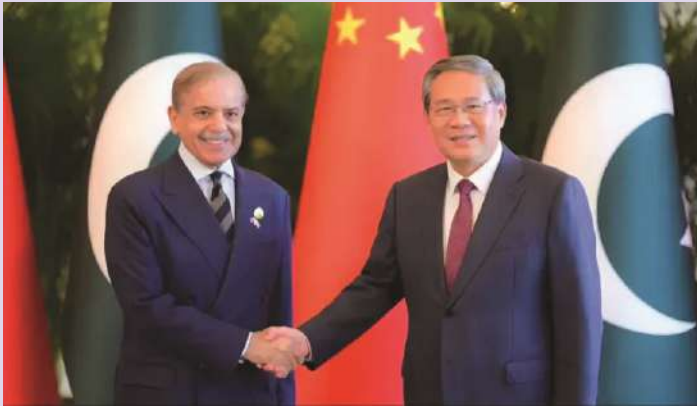
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Accords worth \$8.5bn signed during PM's China visit



Pakistan and China on Thursday 4 Sep. vowed to further cement bilateral trade and strategic ties, as both sides inked 21 different MoUs and joint ventures worth around \$8.5 billion, besides formally launching the second phase(CPEC) project.

The MoUs were signed between the two countries with regard to cooperation in the development of CPEC 2.0, science and technology, IT, media, investment, agriculture, etc.

On the last day of his visit to China, PM Shehbaz Sharif met his counterpart, Premier Li Qiang, and attended an investors' conference.

According to the PM Office, PM Shehbaz and his Chinese counterpart reaffirmed to work together in a meeting that the former termed "most productive".

"Both sides also agreed to continue working closely on the next phase of upgraded CPEC 2.0, with its five new corridors," an official statement said.

During the meeting, the prime minister highlighted the "significant contribution" of the CPEC to Pakistan's socio-economic development in the past decade. He also stressed the need for early implementation of the Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway project, the Karakoram Highway realignment and operationalisation of the Gwadar Port.

"I also invited Chinese companies to enhance their investment footprint in Pakistan," the PM wrote on X, adding that the leaders' agreement on advancing cooperation in information technology, agriculture, minerals, textiles and industry.

PM Shehbaz also shared Pakistan's intent to float Panda Bonds, a type of debt security issued by foreign entities denominated in Chinese yuan (RMB), in the Chinese capital market soon.

He later met Chinese Minister for Information Technology and Industry Li

Lecheng and reiterated Pakistan's vision of deepening bilateral cooperation with China in industries, agriculture, trade, ICT, mining and minerals.

Investors' conference

Both countries have also agreed to deepen security and defence cooperation, and

will work together to crack down on terrorism, the Xinhua news agency reported, citing a joint action plan agreed by the two countries.

PM Shehbaz later termed the security of Chinese businesses "paramount" to Pakistan, inviting investment into the country under the banner of CPEC-2.0.

Addressing Chinese business leaders at the Pak-China B2B conference, PM Shehbaz said, "I want to make it clear before this assembly of great leaders that the security of Chinese brothers and sisters in Pakistan is paramount for all of us."

Govt satisfied with Pakistan's export performance

The commerce ministry said on Thursday 11 Sep. that Pakistan's exports held steady at \$5.11 billion during the first two months of FY26 despite a difficult global trade environment, with growth in key sectors and regional markets.

This development was revealed during a high-level meeting to review Pakistan's trade performance during the first two months of the current financial year 2025–26.

The meeting noted that Pakistan's exports remained stable at \$5.11 billion, while the textile and apparel sector remained the mainstay of exports with a 10% increase, reaffirming its role as a backbone of Pakistan's export economy, read a statement.

Encouragingly, Pakistan's exports to Africa grew by 9% and to South Asia by 7%, while stable performance was recorded in North America and the EU. "These gains underscore the ministry's ongoing efforts to expand into new markets while consolidating traditional ones," the MoC said.

During the meeting, it was observed

He invited them to "come forward and change the landscape of progress and welfare" for both China and Pakistan.

Noting delays in the formal launch of CPEC-2.0, PM Shehbaz assured the potential investors that "Pakistan will not tolerate even a second's delay" in facilitating Chinese companies.

He acknowledged that there were delays, and things had not "moved forward as per Chinese standards"; however, he stressed that Pakistan's doors remained open to Chinese investors, adding that "we will not keep them waiting even for a second".

"I am here speaking to you first as the chief executive officer of Pakistan and then as the prime minister," he added.

The prime minister also held a series of high-level meetings with senior executives of China's leading enterprises in Beijing.

He also invited Chinese companies to consider Pakistan as their preferred investment destination, particularly for relocating industries into special economic zones, saying that the country offered a "unique comparative advantage" with a large pool of skilled and cost-effective labour, competitive input costs and strategic connectivity to regional and global markets.

After wrapping up his six-day visit, PM Shehbaz subsequently returned to Pakistan on Thursday 4 Sep. night.

that imports were mainly driven by higher requirements for energy, raw materials, and food items, indicating growing domestic economic activity.

The commerce minister emphasised that this trend provides opportunities for import substitution and investment in local manufacturing under the government's "Make in Pakistan" initiative.

The Minister for Commerce directed authorities to diversify export products and markets with a focus on high-value and non-traditional sectors. He called for the development of import substitution strategies to reduce reliance on food and energy imports.

He also urged to strengthen export competitiveness and integration into global value chains, and expedite measures for value addition in textiles, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors.

Jam Kamal commended exporters for sustaining resilience and reiterated the government's commitment to facilitating the business community, securing new market access, and ensuring sustainable trade growth.

Govt finalising five-year policy to boost textile exports

Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan on Friday 29 Aug. said the government is finalising a five-year Textiles and Apparel Policy aimed at making the sector regionally competitive, removing trade barriers and ensuring sustainable export growth.

He added that a National Industrial Policy was also in the works to strengthen long-term export prospects and position Pakistan's manufacturing sector for global integration. Both initiatives are designed to enhance competitiveness and address longstanding inefficiencies.

The minister was speaking at a meeting with leading industrialists, including Kohinoor Mills CEO Aamir Fayyaz Sheikh, Aptma Chairman Kamran Arshad, Fazal Cloth CEO Rehman Naseem, and Aptma Executive Director Shahid Sattar. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan also attended.

According to an official statement, the commerce minister said the Textiles and Apparel Policy will focus on reducing manufacturing costs, improving productivity, promoting research and development, diversifying markets and products, and increasing Pakistan's share in global trade.

He stressed that export growth must be Pakistan's priority and assured stakeholders that policy decisions would be made in consultation with industry representatives. For the first time, he said, the government and industry were aligned in their determination to revive and expand exports.

Mr Jam also welcomed Aptma's proposal to study the policies of regional competitors. Sharing insights from his recent visit to Dhaka, he noted Bangladesh's success in industrial growth and readymade garment exports.

Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar said the National Industrial Policy would go beyond a few sectors to cover the entire industrial landscape. It would address energy, tariffs and taxation, financing, and economic zones, while also facilitating Greenfield projects, introducing land-lease models under public-private partnerships, and establishing a one-window facility for investors.

He added that under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the new policy would inject momentum into industrial growth nationwide.

Industry's concerns

The Aptma delegation urged the government to eliminate structural

inefficiencies and create an enabling environment to boost competitiveness of export sectors.

The meeting concluded on a note of optimism, with both sides expressing confidence in boosting exports through sustainable policy support and collaborative efforts.

Gwadar Port access deal with Kazakhstan likely

Pakistan and Kazakhstan are likely to sign a Gwadar Port access deal during the visit of Kazakhstan president in November this year.

Sources told The Express Tribune that a high-level delegation of Kazakhstan was due in Islamabad in the second week of September to finalise arrangements for an agreement on Gwadar Port access to the Central Asian states. They said that Kazakhstan intends to set up a goods terminal at Karachi Port for exports to the European Union member countries and the United States.

However, Pakistan would like to see Kazakhstan establish a terminal at Gwadar Port. During the upcoming dialogue between the two countries, officials will also explore prospects of forging road and rail linkages. Pakistan wants to form a consortium with the Central Asian states for developing the maritime sector.

Meanwhile, according to a statement, a key meeting was held between Kazakhstan Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Tuesday 2 Sep. Both sides showed strong interest in expanding cooperation in the maritime sector.

The federal minister suggested initiating joint ventures at Karachi and

Gwadar ports and highlighted the potential of forming partnerships in the Gwadar Free Zone. These efforts are intended to utilise Pakistan's strategic port infrastructure to enhance trade access for Kazakhstan, a landlocked nation seeking wider maritime connectivity.

The ambassador welcomed the initiatives, saying that Kazakhstan was eager to use Pakistani ports as transit hubs not only for Astana but also for the broader Central Asian region. He shared that a ministerial-level delegation, led by Kazakhstan's communication minister who also oversees maritime affairs, was scheduled to come to Pakistan soon. It will hold in-depth discussions to explore further cooperation in maritime trade and logistics.

The federal minister outlined the critical role of Pakistani ports as gateways offering Kazakhstan and other landlocked Central Asian nations access to markets in the Persian Gulf, Africa and Southeast Asia. He underscored the maritime sector's dedication to become a regional trade hub by adopting innovative approaches and reinforcing international partnerships.

The upcoming visit of the Kazakh delegation is expected to accelerate progress on joint ventures and trade facilitation and strengthen ties through maritime infrastructure development, logistics and the blue economy.



Flood water submerges residential areas and farmlands at Jalalpur Pirwala Punjab.



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Turkiye bars Israeli ships, flights from its territory

Turkiye's top diplomat has said Ankara has closed its ports and airspace to Israeli ships and planes.

"We have closed our ports to Israeli ships. We do not allow Turkish ships to go to Israeli ports.... We do not allow container ships carrying weapons and ammunition to Israel to enter our ports, nor do we allow their aircraft to enter our airspace," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told lawmakers in a televised address on Friday 29 Aug.

Asked for clarification about the minister's remarks, a Turkish diplomatic source said its airspace was "closed to all aircraft carrying weapons (to Israel) and to Israel's official flights".

It was not immediately clear when the airspace restrictions were put in place.

Hamas calls on 'free nations' to sever all ties with Israel

Turkiye refused to let the Israeli president's plane cross its airspace in November, forcing him to cancel a planned visit to the COP29 climate conference in Azerbaijan. And in May, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancelled a visit to Baku after Ankara reportedly refused overflight rights.

Turkiye has been one of the harshest critics of Israel over its ongoing war on Gaza, accusing it of committing "genocide" in the Palestinian territory.

Israel's biggest shipping firm ZIM said it had been informed that under new regulations passed by Ankara on August 22, "vessels that are either owned, managed or operated by an entity related to Israel will not be permitted to berth in Turkish ports".

Fidan's remarks were the first public acknowledgement of the ban.

Meanwhile, Palestinian group Hamas has urged governments across the world to 'escalate punitive measures'. "We urge Turkiye, as well as Arab and Islamic countries and the free nations of the world, to escalate punitive measures against" Israel, Hamas said in a statement.

It called on countries to "sever all relations with it, and work to isolate it — so as to compel it to halt the genocide and destruction of Gaza".

Kabul praises Beijing's move to link Afghanistan with CPEC



The Islamic Emirate welcomes China's agreement to include Afghanistan in the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

While there are many challenges in economic and trade relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan recently expressed hope about joint projects between the two countries. He said that with China's support, trade and transit relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan will improve rapidly.

Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, stated that China has agreed in principle to include Afghanistan in CPEC. He said this agreement is part of trilateral discussions between Islamabad, Kabul, and Beijing, the details of which are currently being finalized.

Regarding this, Ishaq Dar said: "In the bilateral meeting held in China on May 20, I requested China to include Afghanistan in this project. We had proposed two specific projects: one was the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan railway line, and the other the Peshawar-Kabul highway, to which the Chinese side basically agreed."

Afghanistan's Ministry of Economy has also praised China's initiative to connect Afghanistan to the economic corridor, stressing that this will contribute to the country's economic development.

Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy, said: "China's initiative to connect Afghanistan with this project is a beneficial step for Afghanistan. We believe that through joint efforts we can ensure regional economic growth and development."vMeanwhile, economic experts say that if Pakistan fulfills its trade and economic commitments with Afghanistan, the existing problems between the two countries will be resolved. Otherwise, regional projects such as CPEC, Afghan Transit, and others will not have any significant impact on improving bilateral relations.

Economic affairs analyst Mir ShakirYaqubi said: "If Pakistan fulfills its commitments, relations will expand

through these projects. But no matter how many major projects and agreements there are, if Pakistan's intentions are not genuine, changes will inevitably occur."

Currently, alongside Afghanistan's planned connection with CPEC, other joint projects such as the Afghan Transit transport project, CASA-1000 energy project, TAPI and TAP projects have also been practically launched. According to economic experts, the implementation of these projects will significantly strengthen economic ties between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and neighboring countries.

Exports to nine regional states rise

Exports to nine regional countries grew by 5.10 per cent in the first month of the current fiscal year compared to the same period last year, driven largely by increases in shipments to China, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

This growth is attributed to recent shifts in the regional political landscape, though trade relations with these nations have been strained in recent years due to restrictive government policies. According to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan, exports to Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives totalled \$357.01 million in July, up from \$339.68m in the corresponding month last year. For the FY25, exports to regional countries rose modestly by 1.49pc to \$4.401bn, up from \$4.336bn in FY24.

China remains Pakistan's largest regional trading partner, accounting for 60pc of total regional exports. Shipments to China increased by 24.70pc in July, reaching \$199.65m, compared to \$160.10m in the same month of the previous year. However, the exports declined by 8.6pc in FY25, falling to \$2.476bn from \$2.709bn the preceding year.

Imports from China also saw an increase, rising by 14.68pc to \$1.695bn in July from \$1.478bn in the same period last year. For FY25, imports from China grew by 20.79pc to \$16.312bn from \$13.504bn.

Exports to Afghanistan, traditionally one of Pakistan's top trading partners, dropped significantly by 38.23pc to \$54.39 million in July FY26, compared to \$88.06m last year. While Afghanistan was once the second-largest export destination for Pakistan, this drop is partly due to shifting trade dynamics and the lack of official data on trade through land routes.

Exports to Iran were non-existent via official channels in July FY26, as most trade with Tehran occurs informally through border areas in Balochistan, often in the form of barter. Similarly, exports to India remained minimal, at just \$1.15m, with trade often routed through third-party markets like Dubai and Singapore, adding to costs.

Astore Markhor hunting permit sold for world record fee

The Gilgit-Baltistan Wildlife and Parks Department auctioned hunting permits for 118 animals on Wednesday 3 Sep. for the 2025–26 trophy hunting season, with the highest bid reaching an unprecedented \$370,000 for an Astore markhor.

The auction was held at the Forest, Parks, and Wildlife Complex in Gilgit, where outfitters and hunters competed for permits. The department offered licenses for four Astore markhors, 100 Himalayan ibex, and 14 blue sheep.

The \$370,000 winning bid for the markhor permit, placed by Shikar Safaris owner Raja Farhad Maqpoon, is now the highest recorded for a single hunting permit in both Pakistan and the world, according to officials. The permit grants hunting rights in the Nanga Parbat conservancy area.

“This is a record for the highest markhor hunting permit bid ever,” said GB Conservator for Parks and Wildlife Khadim Abbas. He noted that the previous record stood at \$271,000, set last year in Chitral by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department.

Other markhor permits sold for \$286,000, \$270,000, and \$240,000. For the blue sheep, the top permit fetched \$40,000, while the highest bid for a Himalayan ibex reached \$13,000. Both were secured by M. Ali Nagri of Markhor Safaris.

The department increased base prices

this year to reflect rising demand. The starting price for a markhor was raised from \$150,000 to \$200,000, while base prices for blue sheep and Himalayan ibex

were set at \$30,000 and \$10,000, respectively. Last year, the highest bid for a markhor was \$161,000, less than half of this year's record.

Business tycoon, renowned philanthropist Rafiq M. Habib passes away at 88

Prominent business tycoon and renowned philanthropist Rafiq M. Habib passed away aged 88 in Dubai on Wednesday 3 Sep.

Rafiq was the former head of the House of Habib conglomerate, Habib University's chancellor, and a member of Stile company's board of directors. He was also the chairman of the Habib University Foundation.

“With profound sorrow, Habib University mourns the passing of its founding chancellor, Rafiq M. Habib (1937-2025), and honours his enduring legacy,” Habib University said in a post on Instagram.

Remembering him, the varsity said: “A man whose calm resolve and deep integrity shaped every step of this journey, Rafiq *sahab* was the moral and visionary force behind the creation of Habib University.

“His belief that education must serve the greater good continues to guide our mission. His legacy lives on in the institution he helped build and the generations it will continue to empower.”

According to Habib University's website, Rafiq was a trustee of “several welfare projects”, including education, healthcare, relief and rehabilitation.

Rafiq actively participated in social



welfare programmes and had been part of “several welfare institutions covering a wide range of social activities, education being the prime focus, where the family runs its own schools and supports other schools presently imparting high quality primary education to over 8,000 children”, Stiles noted.

Rafiq had a “wide business experience” in the insurance and banking industry, and promoted many companies, including Indus Motor Company Limited.

“He is a Rotarian, an effective major donor, supports Polio Plus programme and actively promotes street schools, home schools, etc,” Stiles added.

The businessman remained as a consultant for Habib Bank AG Zurich, which has Habib Metropolitan Bank as its subsidiary in Pakistan.

He also served for several years on the Board of Directors of Philips Electrical Company of Pakistan Ltd and was the first chairman on Standard Chartered Bank's advisory board in the country.

Wasif Rizvi, the president of Habib University, termed Rafiq a “towering figure of vision, humility, and steadfast service, whose leadership and generosity laid the very foundations” of the varsity.

“Rafiq *sahib* was the visionary in the legendary Habib family to imagine a world-class institution of higher learning being founded in Karachi,” Rizvi wrote in a statement.

“His generosity was never about recognition, it was an act of devotion to knowledge, to service, and to the belief that education is the noblest inheritance one can give to society.”



Buried beneath: archaeological discoveries of historic water systems



Rome: Aqueducts, Sewers, and Public Baths

The Roman Empire took water management to unprecedented heights. Rome itself was supplied by eleven aqueducts stretching across miles of countryside, carrying fresh water into the city through precisely engineered arches, tunnels, and channels. These aqueducts provided water not just for drinking, but for fountains, latrines, public baths, and even private homes of the wealthy.

The Cloaca Maxima, Rome's grand sewer system, was initially constructed to drain marshland but later became a crucial channel for wastewater. It remains partially functional even today, a testament to Roman engineering. Excavations around the city reveal an impressive layering of infrastructure—sometimes new aqueducts and drains were built over older ones, creating a historical palimpsest of water technology.

Public baths, supplied by aqueducts and emptied through sewers, were central to Roman life. Archaeological digs at Pompeii and Herculaneum preserved bathhouses, fountains, and piping systems that show how integrated water was to urban leisure and social life. Water, therefore, was not just about survival but about status, culture, and identity.

When Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE, it buried Pompeii under volcanic ash, accidentally preserving an entire Roman city. Excavations there have revealed



Sacred & Ritual Uses – Plumbing in Temples, Baths, and Ceremonial Sites.

unparalleled details about household plumbing. Archaeologists discovered lead pipes (fistulae) supplying water directly into homes, sometimes adorned with inscriptions identifying the craftsman or the patron.

Pompeii's fountains, street-side water taps, and elaborate bathhouses illustrate a society where water flowed into both public and private spaces with remarkable efficiency. However, the city also highlights disparities: while wealthier

Water is the silent force that has shaped civilizations. While grand monuments, temples, and palaces capture our imagination, the true lifeblood of societies often lies buried beneath our feet. Archaeological excavations across the globe have revealed that ancient cities were not only centers of politics, religion, and culture, but also marvels of engineering when it came to water management. Beneath the soil, crumbled ruins, and forgotten streets exist the arteries of history: aqueducts, sewers, cisterns, wells, and reservoirs.

Studying these hidden water systems has opened an entirely new dimension in archaeology. Far from being mundane infrastructure, they reveal how societies understood cleanliness, religion, public health, and even social hierarchy. Every excavation that uncovers ancient plumbing or water storage offers a window into daily life and the priorities of civilizations long gone.

From the advanced drainage of Mohenjo-Daro to the monumental aqueducts of Rome, and from sacred temple baths to ingenious underground cisterns, buried water systems remind us of the ingenuity of our ancestors. They challenge the assumption that technological sophistication is unique to modern societies and prove that human creativity in managing life's essential resource is as old as civilization itself.

Urban Excavations – Discovering Water Systems in Mohenjo-Daro, Roman Cities, and Pompeii

One of the most remarkable aspects of archaeological water studies is how widespread and advanced these systems were across different civilizations, continents, and eras.

Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley Civilization, flourishing around 2500 BCE, is one of the earliest known urban cultures to showcase a sophisticated system of water management. Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro in present-day Pakistan revealed a city with meticulous planning. Streets were laid out in grid patterns, and alongside them ran covered drains that



connected to larger sewage channels.

Each house often had its own private bathing area connected to these drains, suggesting that sanitation was not only a communal concern but also an individual right. Archaeologists uncovered brick-lined wells scattered throughout the city, demonstrating that access to water was carefully distributed. Unlike later civilizations where water distribution sometimes reflected social stratification, the Indus system hints at a surprisingly egalitarian urban planning philosophy.

The sheer scale of coordination needed to build and maintain such infrastructure indicates a highly organized civic administration. Mohenjo-Daro's sewer system rivals some modern towns, proving that cleanliness and water accessibility were core values even 4,000 years ago.

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homes had direct water connections, poorer households depended on public fountains. This duality helps modern scholars understand how social class influenced access to resources.

Water is not only essential for life but also deeply symbolic. Archaeological discoveries show that ancient societies infused water systems with spiritual and ritual significance.

Mesopotamian and Egyptian Temples

In Mesopotamia, temple complexes often included sacred courtyards with channels designed to carry water for ritual purification. The association of water with divinity and cleansing was central to the region's spiritual worldview. Similarly, Egyptian temples included sacred lakes where priests performed purification rituals before ceremonies. Excavations of temple ruins reveal carefully engineered basins and channels designed to hold and circulate water.

Greek and Roman Bathing as Ritual

Greek and Roman baths were not merely about hygiene—they were social, cultural, and sometimes spiritual experiences. Bathing involved a sequence of rooms with varying water temperatures, reflecting ideas of bodily purification. Archaeological remains of sanctuaries often include water systems designed for ritual cleansing, confirming that the line between practical plumbing and sacred symbolism was often blurred.

Hindu Stepwells and Ritual Bathing

In the Indian subcontinent, stepwells and bathing ghats show how water systems were intertwined with spirituality. Archaeological studies of sites like the Chand Baori stepwell reveal how architecture and water management combined to create both functional and sacred spaces. Ritual bathing in rivers, tanks, and temple wells highlights how access to water was considered essential for spiritual health.

Mesoamerican Ceremonial Water Systems

The Maya civilization constructed sophisticated water management systems, including underground reservoirs known as chultuns. Some of these were directly linked to sacred rituals. Archaeological findings suggest that water was not just stored but also sanctified, with offerings often deposited in reservoirs and cenotes (natural sinkholes). The famous Sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza contained artifacts and human remains, indicating its role as a ritual site.

Engineering Ingenuity – Tunnels, Cisterns, and Underground Reservoirs

The creativity of ancient engineers in channeling, storing, and preserving water continues to astonish archaeologists.

Qanats of Persia

One of the most ingenious systems is the qanat, developed in ancient Persia. These underground channels tapped into aquifers and gently sloped downhill, bringing water to the surface without pumps. Qanats extended for miles and were constructed with vertical shafts for ventilation and maintenance. Archaeological evidence shows they sustained cities, agriculture, and trade routes across arid landscapes for centuries.

Cisterns of Jerusalem and Istanbul

Excavations in Jerusalem reveal massive underground cisterns carved into bedrock, designed to store rainwater and supply the



Pompeii: Everyday Plumbing Frozen in Time

city during sieges. Similarly, the Byzantine city of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) boasted the monumental Basilica Cistern, supported by hundreds of stone columns. Built in the 6th century, this vast underground reservoir highlights how water engineering was essential to urban survival.

Nabatean Desert Mastery

The Nabateans, builders of Petra in Jordan, turned a desert into a thriving city through water ingenuity. Archaeologists have uncovered channels, dams, and cisterns that captured flash floods and redirected them into storage reservoirs. Their ability to control scarce water resources enabled them to flourish in one of the harshest environments on Earth.

Minoan Plumbing on Crete

On the island of Crete, the Minoan civilization constructed some of the earliest known pressurized water systems. Excavations at the Palace of Knossos revealed terracotta pipes capable of supplying water under pressure, allowing for fountains and flushing toilets. This combination of practicality and luxury shows that water engineering was central to their urban identity.

Preservation Issues – Protecting Delicate Water System Remains

While archaeological discoveries of water systems are breathtaking, they are also fragile. Protecting these remains is a constant challenge for archaeologists, conservators, and heritage organizations.

Natural Decay and Environmental Threats

Many ancient water systems were built of perishable materials such as wood, clay, or unbaked brick. Exposure to modern air, moisture, and pollution accelerates their decay once excavated. Underground structures such as cisterns are particularly vulnerable to collapse when not properly supported.

Urban Development Pressures

Modern urbanization often threatens archaeological sites. Expanding cities sometimes build directly over ancient remains, destroying valuable evidence. For instance, rapid development in regions of the Middle East and South Asia risks covering or damaging ancient water infrastructure before it can be studied.

Conservation Efforts

Archaeologists employ various methods to preserve delicate remains. Some sites are reburied after documentation to protect them from weathering, while others are reinforced and turned into public heritage attractions. Advances in 3D scanning and digital modeling allow researchers to record details without physically disturbing fragile structures. In cases where plumbing expertise is needed to understand water flow, collaborations with modern plomberie expert teams can bridge ancient techniques with contemporary knowledge.

How Buried Water Systems Redefine Our Understanding of Ancient Life

The study of buried water systems has redefined our perception of ancient



civilizations. Far from being primitive, our ancestors displayed remarkable foresight, creativity, and technical skill in managing water.

The sewers of Mohenjo-Daro remind us that sanitation has been central to human well-being for millennia. The aqueducts of Rome showcase an empire's ambition to harness natural resources on a monumental scale. The sacred reservoirs of the Maya and the ritual baths of Greece demonstrate water's role beyond utility—as a medium of culture and spirituality.

Moreover, the ingenuity of ancient engineers in deserts, mountains, and



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islands proves that water management was often the key factor that allowed cities to rise, flourish, and endure. Today, these buried systems continue to influence modern urban planning, environmental sustainability, and even religious practices.

Preserving these fragile remains is not merely about saving stones and pipes—it is about protecting the legacy of human resilience and adaptation. As archaeologists continue to uncover hidden aqueducts, cisterns, and sewers beneath ancient cities, we are reminded that water is not only essential to survival but also deeply entwined with culture, faith, and identity.

In the end, what lies buried beneath tells us as much about humanity as what rises above. By studying ancient water systems, we do not just uncover plumbing—we rediscover the very foundations of civilization.

Sujain Thomas is a passionate freelance writer with a deep love for uncovering the past. Fascinated by archaeology, history, and the hidden stories of ancient civilizations, she enjoys bringing timeless knowledge to life through her writing. When she isn't exploring historical topics, Sujain is often reading, traveling to heritage sites, or researching the cultural roots of modern life. She also contributes to resources like *Plomberie 5 Etoiles* that highlight expertise in modern plumbing and water systems.

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Swiss duo finds home in Pakistan's mountains



Two Swiss tourists, David Sieber and Natasha Heller, have pedalled their way to Pakistan on bicycles, completing a remarkable journey across continents that they describe as "a dream come true."

The couple, who began their adventure in Switzerland, said their cycling expedition offered them an unmatched opportunity to experience Pakistan's landscapes, culture, and people at a slower, more intimate pace.

"Cycling through Pakistan's valleys and mountain passes feels like living in a dream," Natasha said. "The scenery is magical and in many ways reminds us of Switzerland — but on a much grander scale."

Unlike conventional tourists, the pair chose bicycles deliberately, riding through multiple countries before entering Pakistan. Along the way, they said they were constantly welcomed into homes, offered meals, and even assisted with bicycle repairs by locals. "Hospitality here comes from the heart," Natasha added.

They also praised the government's pro-tourism policies and streamlined visa system. "We were pleasantly surprised at how quickly our visas were processed," Natasha noted. David added that such facilitation gives Pakistan an edge in attracting more international visitors.

Food and culture proved equally

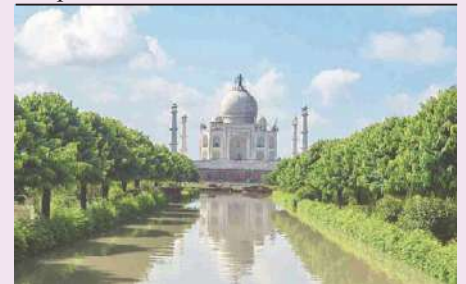
memorable for the couple. "Every region has its own flavours — from Lahore's street food to Hunza's traditional meals," Natasha said. David described sharing meals with families as "an unforgettable cultural experience."

On security, the travellers said they felt safe throughout their trip, though they acknowledged that occasional police escorts should be handled with sensitivity. "Tourists should feel protected, but also welcome," David said. Natasha stressed that global perceptions of Pakistan as unsafe are misleading: "We've only experienced kindness, care, and support."

They were especially struck by Pakistan's mountains. "Switzerland is famous for its peaks, but Pakistan's Karakoram and Himalayas are beyond imagination," David remarked. Natasha added that the ranges carry "a raw, living history and resilience that make them feel alive."

The couple also appreciated improvements in infrastructure and the vibrant growth of local tourism. "It was heartening to see so many Pakistani families exploring their own country," Natasha said.

For David and Natasha, their journey through Pakistan has been more than travel — it has been a cultural bridge built one pedal stroke at a time.



A flooded garden on the banks of the River Yamuna, against the backdrop of Taj Mahal, after heavy rains.

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