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The photo shows Mr. Peter Anderson, COO AerCap, presenting a souvenir to Mr. Fazal Jilani, Chairman AirSial and Mr. Qaisar Iqbal Baryar Sr. Vice Chairman, Mr. Ameen Ahsan CEO, Mr. Tariq Amin COO AirSial, after signing the ceremony to acquire another Airbus A320 aircraft. It will elevate AirSials' fleet to 13 aircraft. The ceremony held at AerCap UAE office recently.

Pakistan Cargo Services team celebrates birthday of their Chairman Mr. Muhammad Yousaf at PCS Head office Sialkot.

PIA resumes direct flights to UK after five years

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Saturday Oct.25 resumed direct flights to Britain, after UK authorities had ended a five-year suspension imposed over aviation safety concerns, media reported.

Last month, the national carrier had received Third Country Operator approval for the UK. The development came after Britain's Department of Transport concluded that security arrangements in the country were "satisfactory and in line with international standards".

Flight operations to Manchester are resuming in the first phase, with plans to extend them to Birmingham and London in the second.

Speaking at a ceremony held at the Islamabad International Airport to mark the national flag carrier's inaugural flight from the capital to the UK, Defence and Aviation Minister Khawaja Asif said that the government was committed to making PIA a profitable institution so that it could support the economy instead of being a burden.

"After a long and difficult delay of five years, 25 Oct. Sat. the resumption of flights from Islamabad to Manchester is a feat we have achieved through our hard work and determination," the minister said.

"This success is not a coincidence, but a living testament of the government's priorities, strong leadership, and efforts," he added.

Mr Asif said that the country's image



suffered immensely when the national carrier faced international bans.

"We took it as a national challenge. The government, without wasting a single moment, empowered and provided resources to the country's aviation bodies," he continued.

"To meet the standards of the world's strictest aviation bodies, we completely restructured pilot training, the licensing system, aircraft maintenance, and safety protocols. It is a matter of great pride that we raised our standards to such a level that the European Union's Aviation Safety Agency [EASA] restored its confidence in the PIA."

The minister also expressed gratitude to the country's diplomats and staff based in Britain and Europe, saying that they "presented Pakistan's case effectively at a diplomatic level, provided evidence, and maintained continuous engagement" with the relevant authorities.

"I would especially like to thank the staff of the British High Commission in Pakistan and their team leader Jane Marriott," he said, adding that they also

played a part in accelerating the process and removing obstacles. "Their cooperation highlights the strong friendship between the two countries."

The minister directed the PIA management to ensure safety, punctuality and customer satisfaction.

"Let us vow today to make PIA reach the status it had once achieved."

In a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Mr Asif said the restoration of flights was part of a series of measures taken by the government for the restoration of national institutions, improvement of public facilities, and the promotion of Pakistan's image at the international level.

He wrote that the statement of the aviation minister [Ghulam Sarwar Khan] during the PTI era "caused damage to the reputation of our beloved country, the aviation sector, and the national airline PIA, which the current government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has rectified".

Meanwhile, Ms Marriott, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, wrote on a post on X: "A genuine joy to wave off the first flight by a Pakistani carrier to the UK in five years. Here's to more destinations and connections!"

PM felicitates nation

PM Shehbaz also felicitated the entire nation, especially the Pakistanis residing in the UK, on the commencement of PIA's direct flights from Islamabad to Manchester, read a press release issued from his office's media wing, the state-run APP reported.





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Oman Civil Aviation delegation visits Pakistan



A ten-member delegation from the Civil Aviation Authority of Oman (CAA Oman) led by Saleh Al Harthy, the Director General of Air Navigation, visited the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) Headquarters in Karachi. The delegation was received by Air Vice Marshal Zeeshan Saeed, Director General, Pakistan Airports Authority, who led the discussions alongside senior officials from the Communication and Navigation Services (CNS) Directorate.

During the meeting, both sides held detailed deliberations on strengthening bilateral cooperation in the areas of air

navigation, airport management, technical collaboration, and capacity-building. The discussions focused on sharing expertise, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing regional aviation connectivity between Pakistan and Oman.

As part of the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) and the Civil Aviation Authority of Oman (CAA Oman) concerning Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. The agreement is aimed at promoting joint exercises, improving response mechanisms, and fostering the exchange of technical knowledge in emergency

aviation operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Air Vice Marshal Zeeshan Saeed reaffirmed PAA's commitment to expanding international cooperation in the aviation sector. He emphasized that such engagements reflect Pakistan's resolve to adopt best international practices and enhance regional air safety and operational standards.

The visit of the Omani delegation signifies the growing partnership between Pakistan and the Sultanate of Oman in civil aviation, paving the way for future collaboration in various technical and operational domains.



PIA gearing up for direct US flights, says minister

After receiving approval to re-start flights to the United Kingdom, Pakistan is now preparing to resume direct air links with the United States, Aviation Minister Khawaja Asif said on Monday 20 Oct.

Speaking to a private TV channel, Mr Asif indicated progress in discussions with American aviation authorities.

“Hopefully, permission will be granted soon,” he said, adding that the government is working on meeting international standards and enhancing safety protocols, which could lead to expanded global routes.

A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) spokesman highlighted the significance of US routes for PIA, emphasising the strong demand for non-stop flights from Pakistanis living in North America.

According to an aviation expert, a team from the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had recently visited Pakistan to conduct a safety audit.

A positive outcome from these audits could result in PIA achieving Category 1 status from the FAA, which is crucial for the resumption of direct flights to the US.

PIA codeshare with Etihad

Meanwhile, PIA announced on Monday 20 Oct. it has entered into a codeshare agreement with UAE's Etihad Airways.

The partnership, set to take effect from Oct 31, will extend to cargo services and frequent flyer programmes.

“This agreement marks a milestone for PIA,” a spokesperson said, adding that it will encompass passenger flights as well. The arrangement will primarily benefit routes not directly serviced by PIA, allowing passengers access to Etihad's expansive network.

The codeshare is expected to enhance PIA's service offerings and contribute to increased revenue, the spokesperson noted.



PIA'S STAFF HAS BEEN RANKED AS THE SEVENTH BEST STAFF IN SOUTH ASIA

Uzbekistan Airways doubles flights to Pakistan



Profit

Uzbekistan airways doubles Pakistan flights to four weekly, strengthening Central-South Asia connectivity

The Uzbekistan Embassy in Islamabad on Monday 3 Nov announced the expansion of its flight operations to Pakistan, enhancing connectivity between the two countries and reducing travel time from Islamabad to Tashkent to just two hours.

“Direct flights have cut travel time significantly, especially when layovers in Dubai have been eliminated,” an official from the Uzbekistan Embassy told media.

Uzbekistan Airways, the national carrier of the Republic of Uzbekistan, now operates a total of four weekly flights between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, doubling the frequency of its Tashkent–Islamabad service while continuing its regular Tashkent–Lahore flights.

According to Uzbekistan Airways, the decision to expand services was driven by strong passenger demand, as previous Islamabad flights often operated at full capacity and tickets sold out days in advance.

“Tashkent–Islamabad–Tashkent” flights operate twice weekly, every Tuesday and Saturday, while “Tashkent–Lahore–Tashkent” flights operate twice weekly, every Wednesday and Friday.

The embassy said that with this expansion, Uzbekistan Airways has strengthened its role as a key bridge between Central and South Asia, offering Pakistani travelers greater choice, convenience, and connectivity to destinations across the world.

Flights from Tashkent to Islamabad take around two hours, providing a fast and efficient link between the two capitals.

One-way fares start at approximately \$200, while round-trip tickets are available from \$400, making this route one of the most affordable and time-saving options for business, education, and leisure travelers alike.

The embassy added that the “Tashkent–Lahore” route is equally attractive, with one-way fares from about \$200 and round-trip fares from \$400. All flights are operated on modern, comfortable aircraft, ensuring passengers enjoy world-class onboard service, professional crews, and the highest safety standards.

Tashkent International Airport, the airline's primary hub, is strategically positioned at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, offering passengers efficient connections and a comfortable travel experience.

Beyond direct travel between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, the airport serves as a strategic transit hub, connecting travelers to over 50 international destinations across Europe, North America, the Middle East, East Asia and Southeast Asia.

Passengers flying via Tashkent can enjoy smooth transit connections to major global cities including Istanbul, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York, Moscow, Dubai, Tokyo, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Baku, Astana, Batumi and many more.

According to the embassy, this extensive network makes Uzbekistan Airways an increasingly popular choice for Pakistani travelers seeking both regional and long-haul connections, combining competitive pricing with superior comfort and efficiency.

The embassy said that Uzbekistan and Pakistan share centuries-old historical, cultural and spiritual ties rooted in the heritage of the Silk Road and Islamic civilization. The enhanced air links will further strengthen tourism, trade and people-to-people exchanges between the two brotherly nations.

For Pakistani tourists, Uzbekistan offers a gateway to the legendary Silk Road cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand.

The embassy added that Uzbek visitors are increasingly drawn to Pakistan's diverse landscapes, historic landmarks and renowned hospitality.

Enhanced air links will make it easier for companies, students, and families to connect, while boosting mutual investment and tourism growth.

PIFFA-IATA Air Cargo Day 2025 marks a historic milestone for Pakistan's Air Freight Industry



Mr. M Jamil Ahmed Chairman PIFFA and Mr. Feroz Jamal Country Manager IATA in Pakistan addressing the audience on the occasion.

The Pakistan International Freight Forwarders Association (PIFFA), in collaboration with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), successfully organized the PIFFA-IATA Air Cargo Day 28 Oct. 2025 at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi. The landmark event brought together key national and international stakeholders from across the air cargo and logistics sector, attracting an audience of over 1,000 participants.

Distinguished guests in attendance included Mr. David Wee, Regional Cargo Manager – Asia Pacific, IATA; Mr. Azhar Azhari, Area Manager – South Asia, IATA; Mr. Feroze Jamall, Country Manager, IATA Pakistan; Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Senior Vice President, FPCCI, Mr. Wajid Ali, Chief Collector Customs; and Mr. Babar Badat, Former President, FIATA.

The event was graced by the presence of Mr. Muhammad Jamil Ahmed, Chairman PIFFA, Mr. Shiraz Qureshi, Senior Vice Chairman, Mr. Abdullah Hassan Vice Chairman, along with Executive Committee Members and former Chairmen of PIFFA from Karachi and as well as Punjab, whose vision and

leadership were instrumental in making this landmark industry gathering possible. Chairman Mr. Muhammad Jamil Ahmed also addressed the gathering, sharing valuable industry updates and insights.

The proceedings commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Shakeel Ahmed, Former Chairman, PIFFA, Executive Committee Member, FPCCI & PIFFA, and, who warmly greeted all participants and dignitaries and sponsors.

Also in attendance were senior officials from the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA), Pakistan Airport Authority (PAA), Pakistan Single Window (PSW), and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), reflecting the strong collaborative spirit within the air cargo and logistics sector.

Prominent participation came from leading international and local airlines including PIA, Emirates SkyCargo, Fly Dubai, Saudi Air, Gulf Air, Qatar Airways, Thai Airways, Turkish Air, Etihad Air, Air Sial, and Sri Lankan Airlines. Representatives from Security General Insurance Company Ltd. Shaheen Insurance Company Limited, Meezan Bank, and numerous freight forwarding and air cargo companies were also in

attendance.

The PIFFA-IATA Air Cargo Day 2025 served as a dynamic platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation within Pakistan's growing air cargo and logistics sector. The event focused on enhancing global connectivity, improving regulatory efficiency, and strengthening partnerships between airlines, freight forwarders, and logistics service providers.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PIFFA Mr. Muhammad Jamil Ahmed expressed his appreciation to IATA, industry stakeholders, and sponsors for their continued trust and partnership, emphasizing PIFFA's commitment to promoting professionalism and global standards within Pakistan's logistics industry.

The success of this event marks a new era of cooperation and industry advancement, reaffirming PIFFA's resolve to work hand in hand with IATA and all stakeholders to foster sustainable growth and modernization in Pakistan's air cargo sector.



Mr. Babar Badat and Mr. David WEE Regional Cargo Manager Asia-Pacific IATA addressing on the occasion.

Glimpses of PIFFA-IATA Air Crgo Day celebration



Govt moves to ease Port Qasim congestion with new unloading, berthing measures



The Ministry of Maritime Affairs has directed a series of measures to ease congestion at Port Qasim, including enforcing a first-come, first-served berthing policy, while urging improved coordination between the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) and port authorities.

The ministry has initiated measures to streamline sugar and cement handling operations at Port Qasim following reports of severe congestion caused by the slow discharge of sugar consignments, read a statement on Saturday 8 Nov.

A high-level meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry reviewed the situation and its impact on export activities, particularly cement and clinker shipments.

Addressing the meeting, Chaudhry underscored the need to enhance operational efficiency, align port management with national logistics priorities, and ensure smooth coordination among stakeholders.

The minister stressed the need for all ports to enhance their operational efficiency to ensure the smooth and timely discharge of consignments, noting that improving these operations is vital to prevent port congestion, which can cause delays, raise costs, and disrupt the supply chain.

Pakistan PNSC partners with Chinese firm to explore maritime investments.

The meeting was informed that sugar was being unloaded at a rate lower than the port capacity. The minister directed the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) to optimise sugar unloading operations in line with its

discharge capacity of around 4,000 to 4,500 tons per day.

The meeting also reviewed directives from the Prime Minister's Office, which included utilising Gwadar Port for up to 60% of sugar imports to ease the load on Karachi's terminals.

Participants also discussed berthing priorities and measures to prevent bottlenecks affecting the turnaround of export-bound ships.

It was agreed in the meeting that all vessels at Port Qasim and Karachi Port would be berthed strictly on a first-come, first-served basis, read the statement.

Both port authorities were tasked with enforcing the berthing policy and closely monitoring discharge performance, with penalties to be imposed in cases of unnecessary delays.

The federal minister directed all relevant agencies, including TCP and other state importers, to synchronise their freight movement plans with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs ahead of cargo arrivals.

Gerry's international host meeting with TAAP Council

Strengthening Industry Collaboration: TAAP Council Visits Gerry's International for Strategic Roadmap Session!

Karachi, October 31, 2025 — Gerry's International had the privilege of hosting the Travel Agents Association of Pakistan (TAAP) Council for a strategic meeting focused on developing a long-term roadmap for Pakistan's travel and aviation industry.

The session was chaired by Mr. Hanif Zakaria, Chief Operating Officer of Gerry's International, and featured a detailed presentation by Mr. Abrar Ahmad Khan, General Manager, who outlined key insights and a structured framework of issues and opportunities for the sector.

Discussions drew inspiration from the regional aviation industry's transformation, emphasizing how collaboration, unity, and coordinated action among travel agents, airlines, and regulatory bodies can drive sustainable growth. These lessons were highlighted as strategic pillars that Pakistan's industry can adapt to strengthen stakeholder engagement and competitiveness.

The proposed TAAP Strategic Framework—presented by Gerry's team—was unanimously endorsed by the TAAP Council. It will serve as a foundation to identify and prioritize actionable opportunities, quantify potential benefits, and accelerate progress through targeted initiatives.

As a gesture of partnership and support, Gerry's Group also announced the provision of a complimentary high-speed DSL internet connection for the TAAP Head Office, reinforcing the company's commitment to enabling digital connectivity and collaboration within the travel ecosystem.

"This partnership marks a meaningful step toward collective industry advancement. By aligning on shared goals, we can create greater value for the entire travel community in Pakistan,"

— Mr. Hanif Zakaria, COO, Gerry's International

The meeting concluded on an optimistic note, with productive dialogue, shared enthusiasm, and a renewed commitment to driving industry-wide progress. TAAP Council members appreciated Gerry's International's hospitality and forward-looking approach, marking this as the first official TAAP Council session hosted at Gerry's International.



Full-scale emergency exercise tests Islamabad airport's readiness

A large-scale airport emergency exercise, conducted in accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices, was held at Islamabad International Airport on Thursday 30 Oct. to assess the preparedness, coordination, and operational readiness of all emergency response agencies at the airport.

The Pakistan Airports Authority stated that the exercise simulated a major aircraft accident involving an Airbus A320, followed by a mock aviation fuel fire to make the scenario as close to a real-life incident as possible.

The objective was to test the airport's capability to manage a large-scale aircraft fire and evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency communication, decision-making and response coordination under pressure. The Rescue and Firefighting Services demonstrated exceptional efficiency by responding within the prescribed ICAO response time, swiftly controlling the blaze and initiating rescue and medical evacuation operations.

A key highlight of the exercise was the participation of Army Aviation's MI-17 helicopter, which conducted an aeromedical evacuation of a critically injured dummy patient to a healthcare facility.

The exercise was conducted under the supervision and command of Syed Aftab Ali Shah Gilani, Chief Operating Officer/APM, with CFRO Muhammad

Tariq serving as the Exercise Coordinator. Both officials emphasised that the success of AIRCON-25 demonstrates the airport's high level of operational readiness and adherence to ICAO safety standards.

The chief guest, Professor Muhammad Umar (SI, HI), Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Medical University, commended the professionalism, teamwork, and commitment shown by all stakeholders. He noted that such coordinated exercises strengthen national capacity to respond effectively to aviation emergencies and protect human lives.

Participating agencies included Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Airport Security Force (ASF), Army Aviation, Rescue 1122, Edhi Foundation, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Rawalpindi Teaching Hospital, Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, Cantonment General Hospital, Ground Handling Agencies, Airlines Operating Committee, Disaster Management Authority, and various government departments.

Govt to lease aircraft for Air Punjab

The Punjab government will soon acquire modern aircraft on lease for its airline named Air Punjab.

Presiding over a meeting here on Saturday 25 Oct., Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz directed to make the Air Punjab operational at the earliest.

She directed to expedite the completion of the phase-I of the Air Punjab project.

Acquire modern and comfortable aircraft on lease for the Air Punjab at the earliest. Initially, the flight route of Air

Punjab will be from Lahore to Islamabad,' she said.

The CM was given a detailed briefing on various aspects of the project. It was decided that the Lahore-Islamabad route would be one of the initial flight routes for Air Punjab. The meeting also reviewed the Murree Glass Train project. The CM directed relevant departments to take necessary measures for the Murree Glass Train initiative.

Major airports up for privatisation

The Board of Privatisation Commission on Friday 7 Nov. took key decisions regarding the divestment of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Ltd (PIACL) and the management of Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi international airports.

The meeting, chaired by the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation, approved the inclusion of AKD Group Holdings (Pvt) Ltd in the consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation Ltd (AHCL), following the consortium's request.

According to a press release, the inclusion complies with the conditions outlined in the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ). The AHCL consortium is among four pre-qualified bidders participating in the ongoing privatisation process of PIACL.

The board also recommended to the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCoP) the inclusion of Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi airports in the privatisation programme. Under the proposal, airport management will be offered on a long-term concession basis to improve operational efficiency and attract investment.

For the privatisation of House Building Finance Company Ltd (HBFCL), the board endorsed a reference price and finalised the terms of the Sale Purchase Agreement for submission to the CCoP.

The HBFCL transaction is being carried out through a negotiated sale to the Pakistan Mortgage Refinance Company Ltd (PMRCL), which has been pre-qualified as a bidder. The CCoP and the federal cabinet had earlier approved proceeding with a negotiated sale to a single pre-qualified bidder in July 2023. PMRCL's bid will be opened once the reference price is approved by the CCoP and ratified by the cabinet.



Pakistan Army Aviation's MI-17 helicopter conducts an aeromedical evacuation of a critically injured dummy patient to a healthcare facility during an emergency exercise at the Islamabad International Airport on Thursday 30 Oct.

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Inaugural flight of Iran Air at Quetta International Airport



Iran Air Flight 826 (A319), operating on the route Mashhad - Zahedan - Quetta, landed at Quetta International Airport night 31 Oct Friday to a grand Water Cannon Salute.

An inaugural ceremony was held at the State Lounge, graced by the Honourable Governor of Balochistan

Jaffar Khan Mandokhel as Chief Guest, alongside the Consul General of Iran and other distinguished guests. National anthems of both Pakistan and Iran were played to mark the occasion.

Iran Air Flight 826 will now operate once weekly (every Wednesday), arriving in Quetta at 9:30 PM.

PAA implements digital Payment system at the airports

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA), in line with the Government of Pakistan's directive and the State Bank of Pakistan's initiative, has commenced the implementation of digital payment systems across all airports in the country.

All commercial outlets and service providers operating at airports have been instructed to adopt digital payment mechanisms.

This step will help enhance passenger convenience, ensure transparent transactions, and promote a modern financial environment.

Passengers will continue to have the option to make cash payments; however, they are encouraged to use digital payment methods as much as possible.

PSW showcased at Air Cargo Day

PSW showcased the Airport Community System (ACS) at the Air Cargo Day event jointly hosted by International Air Transport association (IATA) and PIFFA, highlighting its role in driving the digitalization of Pakistan's air cargo ecosystem. The event brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from IATA Singapore, global aviation leaders, international speakers, airline dignitaries, air cargo agents, and industry innovators. PSW's ACS aims to streamline cargo handling, enhance transparency, and foster seamless coordination among all stakeholders through a unified digital platform, marking another step toward the modernization of Pakistan's cross-border trade and logistics infrastructure.

Air Karachi operational opens office



Air Karachi, the country's newest airline, has officially opened its operations office at the Old Airport in Karachi on Friday 31 Oct. The ceremony was attended by prominent figures, including PIA CEO Amir Hayat, Director General Civil Aviation Nadir Shafiq, various diplomats, shareholders, and the airline's Board of Directors.

Secretary of Defense, Lieutenant General HI (M) Muhammad Ali (Retd), expressed his support for the airline, stating, "We aim to position Pakistan as envisioned by our founding leaders. The contributions of Karachi's business community are unmatched, helping raise Pakistan's global stature."

He also acknowledged the challenges of starting an airline, noting, "Launching an airline is no small feat. Some have come and gone, while others, like PIA, continue to thrive."

Air Karachi's Chairman, Hanif Gohar, shared that 42 businessmen had come together to launch the airline. He reflected on the long journey to make this dream a reality, having first applied for an airline license in 2009. "Today, our dream is being fulfilled, and we are proud to carry Karachi's name," Gohar said.

He also highlighted Karachi's business community's broader efforts in areas such as healthcare, education, and welfare. "Karachi's businessmen are at the heart of Pakistan's economy," he emphasized, adding, "Without them, the country's economic engine would grind to a halt."

Air Karachi's CEO, AVM (Retd) Syed Imran Majid, also shared that the airline had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PIA for Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services. Additionally, the airline is in the process of acquiring three A320 aircraft and is in discussions with other airlines.

European airlines agree to drop misleading climate claims

European airlines, including Lufthansa Air France, and KLM, have agreed to stop making misleading environmental claims about offsetting the carbon emissions from air travel, the European Commission said on Friday 7 Nov.

The pledge from 21 carriers will oblige them to clarify that the emissions of a specific flight cannot be “neutralised, offset, or directly reduced” by contributing to climate protection projects or alternative fuels — claims the EU, saying it amount to green washing.

“To avoid misleading consumers, airlines must refrain from using vague environmental language and ensure that any claims about future environmental performance are substantiated,” the commission said in a statement.

The announcement made in the run-up to next week's COP30 UN climate summit in Brazil stems from a consultation between airlines, the EU executive, and consumer protection groups.

Airlines also pledged to present carbon emission calculations clearly and transparently, and provide robust scientific evidence when claiming environmental improvements.

The carriers concerned are Air Baltic, Air Dolomiti, Air France, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings, EasyJet, Finnair, KLM, Lufthansa, Luxair, Norwegian, Ryanair, SAS, SWISS, TAP, Transavia France, Transavia CV, Volotea, Vueling, and Wizz Air.

The commitments follow a formal complaint lodged with the European Commission in June 2023 by consumer groups, which accused the aviation sector of misleading advertising practices.

The industry has begun to shift its messaging after a series of legal setbacks.

In March 2024, a Dutch court ruled against KLM in a greenwashing case, saying the airline misled consumers with vague claims about the sustainability of its flights.

A year later, a German court barred

Lufthansa from advertising carbon offsetting in a way deemed deceptive.

Air France no longer offers carbon offsets for flights. Instead, it suggests passengers contribute to the purchase of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

“There is room to change” in the way airlines communicate, said Diane Vitry, who heads up the aviation section of the NGO Transport & Environment.

Aviation accounts for around three per cent of global carbon emissions, but its overall contribution to climate change is higher because of the release of other greenhouse gases and condensation trails at high altitudes.

Airspace ban for India extended until Nov 25

Pakistan has extended the closure of its airspace to Indian aircraft for another month, until November 24, according to a

NOTAM (notice to airmen) issued by Pakistan Airports Authority on Wednesday 15 Oct.

‘Pakistani airspace will remain closed to Indian registered aircraft,’ the NOTAM said.

Neither aircraft owned or leased by Indian airlines nor Indian military flights are allowed to use Pakistan’s airspace, the authorities said. The ban on the use of airspace will be in effect from Oct 15 to Nov 24.

The restriction was imposed due to ongoing tensions between the two nations. Pakistan initially shut its airspace on India in April this year and it has maintained the closure ever since.

Earlier on Tuesday 14 Oct., amid escalating tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Pakistani authorities issued a Notam to restrict multiple air routes over its territory, for ‘operational reasons.’

Several routes were limited on Oct 15 and 16 between 7:30pm and 9:30pm each day. However, the restriction notice was withdrawn by Wednesday.





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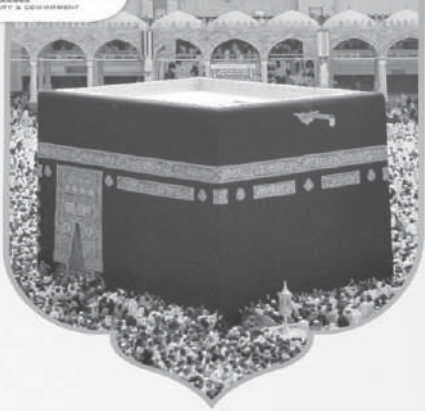
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GCC unified visa to be launched in 2026: Saudi minister

A single visa for six Gulf countries moves closer as Saudi Arabia confirms a 2026 launch

The Gulf's long-planned unified visas set to go live next year, marking the most significant step yet toward integrated regional travel and a more connected tourism economy across the GCC. The confirmation came from Saudi Minister of Tourism Ahmed Al-Khateeb, who said the initiative had reached a major milestone after four years of coordinated work among Gulf governments.

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Speaking at the Gulf Gateway Investment Forum in Manama, Al-Khateeb said the GCC is moving through a historic period of tourism expansion, supported by cultural depth, modern infrastructure and a consistently safe environment. He said these strengths are positioning the region among the world's leading destinations. "The Gulf Cooperation Council countries are witnessing a historic transformation in their tourism sectors, with tourism emerging as a key economic pillar alongside oil and trade," he said.

A single visa for six Gulf destinations

The unified entry permit, officially known as the GCC Grand Tours Visa, will allow travellers to visit the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman using a single application. The programme was formally approved in November 2023 at the meeting of GCC interior ministers in Oman and is widely viewed as a Schengen-style model designed for the Gulf.

Officials see it as a central piece of the region's economic diversification strategy, expected to attract international visitors who want multi-country itineraries without repeated paperwork, separate fees and varied entry rules. Early indications suggest the visa will be valid for tourism and family visits, with online applications only. Travellers are expected to be given the choice between access to a single country or all six, with validity ranging between one and three months. Costs are expected to be lower than securing individual visas for each destination.

Unified GCC Visa: What UAE travellers will pay compared to eVisa costs now.

Unified GCC Visa to change how



UAE residents travel and insure trips.

GCC unified tourist visa update: Schengen-style travel plan for 2025 revealed.

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Once launched, applicants will likely need a passport with at least six months of validity, accommodation details, a passport-size photo, proof of travel insurance, evidence of funds and a return or onward ticket. The full list will be published closer to launch. The application itself is expected to be straightforward, processed through an official online portal where travellers upload documents, pay the fee and receive their digital entry permit via email.

Preparing for higher mobility

Al-Khateeb said the Gulf's growing aviation footprint underscores the importance of easing mobility across the bloc. He noted that the region's four largest airlines carried nearly 150 million passengers last year, yet only 70 million travelled within the Gulf. He said this gap shows how much untapped demand remains for intra-GCC movement. "This gap represents a major opportunity to enhance connectivity and integration among GCC destinations," he said.

The region's push for a shared visa reflects a broader trend toward harmonised regulations and unified data systems. Policymakers see streamlined entry rules as a gateway to deeper collaboration in tourism infrastructure, hospitality investment and cross-border mobility. It also positions the Gulf to compete more effectively as a consolidated tourism zone rather than six separate markets with varied rules.

Al-Khateeb said the region's

transformation is being reinforced by its cultural heritage, expanding transport networks and secure environment, factors he believes will help the Gulf compete at scale. He said tourism is becoming an economic pillar that sits alongside oil, trade and logistics, driven by both investment and strong demand from regional and international travellers.

Saudi Arabia announces new amendments to Umrah visa rules

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has introduced new amendments to Umrah visa regulations, reducing the validity of the entry visa from three months to one month from the date of issuance. However, the validity period for stay after a pilgrim's arrival in the Kingdom remains unchanged at three months, according to sources quoted by *Al Arabiya*. The new policy will come into effect next week.

Saudi Arabia Umrah 2025: 5 key rules UAE residents must know.

Visa cancelled if unused after 30 days

Under the revised rules, the Umrah visa will be automatically cancelled 30 days after issuance if the pilgrim does not register to enter Saudi Arabia within that period. The move is intended to streamline visa management and ensure smooth entry processes for pilgrims.

Steps to manage growing pilgrim numbers

Ahmed Bajaeifer, adviser to the National Committee for Umrah and Visit, told *Al Arabiya* that the decision forms part of the ministry's preparations for an expected surge in Umrah pilgrims — particularly with the end of summer and cooler weather in Makkah and Madinah. The aim is to prevent overcrowding in the two holy cities.

All visa types now eligible for Umrah, says Saudi Hajj ministry

Record-breaking Umrah season

According to *Saudi Gazette*, more than four million Umrah visas have been issued to international pilgrims since the start of the new Umrah season in early June. This marks a record number within just five months, surpassing figures from previous seasons.

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Air Karachi rebranded



Air Karachi (Private) Limited ushered in a new chapter with the formal unveiling of its brand identity and the inauguration of its centralized maintenance and operations office at a high-profile Corporate on Nov 1st.

The ceremony was graced by the Honourable Chief Guest, Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali (Retd.), Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military); CEO PIAC Amir Hayat, Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military); AS-III Rear Admiral Amir Mehmood, Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military); AS-III AVM Nasir Jamaal Khattak, Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military); DGPCAA Nadir Shafi Dar; DG ASF Maj Gen Shoaib Akram, Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military); President FPCCI Atif Ikram; Coordinator to Secretary, Ministry of Defence Col. Tahir; DG NAB Karachi Shakeel Durrani; DIG Asfar Mehsar; DIG Noman Siddiqui; Commander ASF Brig.

Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Syed Imran Majid Ali, H.I. (M), Chief Executive Officer of Air Karachi, welcomed the guests and outlined the airline's ambition to enable safe, efficient, and value-driven air travel while catalysing employment and investment in Pakistan's aviation ecosystem.

Milestones announced

Air Karachi has received its Regular Public Transport (RPT) licence from the PCAA.

An MRO agreement has been signed with PIA, establishing a critical foundation for safe and reliable operations.

The brand logo—symbolising ambition, unity and excellence—was unveiled by Ms. Laiba Gohar, creative lead behind the identity.

Board of Directors

Mr. Muhammad Hanif Gohar — Chairman, Gohar Group of Companies

Mr. Bashir Jan Muhammad — Chairman/Director, Westbury Group of Companies

Mr. Zubair Tufail — Chairman & CEO, Tufail Chemicals Industries Ltd.

Mr. Khalid Tawab — Chairman, Tawab Group of Companies

Mr. Imtiaz Hussain — Managing Director, Imtiaz Super Market

Mr. Mazhar Ali Nasir — Vice President, FPCCI & Chairman, Pakistan Ceramic Manufacturers Association

Mr. Fareed Alam — CEO, AKD Group

Mr. Omair Omerson — Director, FCM Travel Solutions Pakistan / Cosmos Travels (Pvt.) Ltd.

Mr. Ayaz Farooq — Founder & Chairman, Karachi Grill & Masala Wok; CEO, The Business Lounge

Riyadh Air starts flights to London



New Start-Up Airline Riyadh Air has Sunday 26 Oct. completed its first official flights with the airline touching down in London Heathrow, marking an important first step in the airlines place to become a global market leader.

The airline confirmed back at the start of the month that it would launch flights to London Heathrow as its inaugural service.

Flights will initially on sale to select groups and Riyadh Air employees. This phase is critical in ensuring unparalleled operational readiness ahead of receiving the first aircraft deliveries from Boeing.

The Flight departed Riyadh at 03:15am (RX401) with an early morning arrival time into London Heathrow at 07:30am, with the return departing London at 09:30am (RX402), and due to arrive back into Riyadh at 19:15pm local time.

PIA signs cargo partnership contract with Riyadh Air



Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has signed a strategic cargo partnership with Saudi Arabia's new carrier, Riyadh Air, effective October 29, aiming to expand global freight operations and boost revenue.

Under the agreement, cargo from Pakistan and London will be routed via Riyadh for onward distribution through both airlines' networks.

The collaboration enhances PIA's cargo footprint, meeting rising international demand for efficient air freight.

Already partnered with British Airways for 1,000 tonnes of UK cargo annually, PIA's deal with Riyadh Air marks a key step in diversifying logistics and ensuring sustainable growth in aviation cargo services.

PIA clears EU cargo audit license renewal

PIA Achieves Major Milestone: Clears EU Cargo Audit, License Renewed Till 2028

A major boost for Pakistan's national carrier — PIA has successfully passed the European Union cargo audit, conducted by OGADA.

With the renewed license, PIA can now carry cargo on flights to the UK and Europe. The audit covered Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad airports, with full cooperation from Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority.





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SAPS Commercial department demonstrates exceptional performance

SA P S Commercial Department headed by Captain Saeed Khan who has over 46 years of flying experience, having spent 16 years as a fighter pilot in the PAF. He has worked as a Captain for 07 different Commercial Airlines, including PIA, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Fly Egypt, United Airlines, Shaheen Airlines, Global Jet and Blue Sky Aviation in Dubai. In addition to his flying experience, he has over 38 years of Management Experience.



Capt. Saeed Khan Head of Commercial-SAPS.

SAPS Commercial Department was established in March 2021, the Commercial Department of Shaheen Airport Services (SAPS) has demonstrated exceptional, professionalism, and strategic vision, significantly enhancing SAPS's position as a premier Ground Handling Service provider in Pakistan. Under the dynamic leadership of Captain Saeed Khan, Head of Commercial – SAPS, the department continues to expand SAPS's client base, strengthen airline partnerships, and deliver sustainable Commercial growth.

Captain Saeed Khan brings a Expertise and Commercial insight that have been instrumental in achieving these milestones.

Working alongside a highly competent team — Mr. Kamran Jilani (Deputy Assistant Director – Contracts & Agreements) and Mr. Syed Zohaib Gilani (Deputy Assistant Director – Commercial) — the SAPS Commercial Department has earned an excellent reputation for its professional conduct, responsive coordination, and client-centric approach. Their collective efforts have translated into multiple successful collaborations with international and regional airlines, resulting in measurable commercial gains for SAPS.

New Partnerships by SAPS

Over the past few months, the SAPS Commercial Department has accomplished several key milestones that reflect its ability to combine business development with operational excellence.

Tianjin Air Cargo – handled by SAPS at Karachi Station

After the successful acquisition of SF

Airlines Cargo Flight business by SAPS Commercial Team for Lahore Station with 3-4 weekly flights, through a competitive tender process, SAPS successfully secured the Tianjin Air Cargo business for Karachi Station. The Chinese carrier commenced scheduled operations on 29th October 2025, with three weekly flights currently being handled by SAPS Karachi.



Mr. Kamran Jilani (Dy. Assist. Director contract & Agreement)

Mahan Air – handled by SAPS at Islamabad Station

The Commercial Department recently secured the Islamabad Station contract through a highly competitive bidding process.

SAPS's professional approach, transparent communication, and operational reliability were highly commended by Mahan Air Executives, Mahan Air commenced Tehran –Islamabad–Tehran Flights on 6th November 2025.



Iran Air Tour – handled by SAPS at Islamabad & Lahore Stations

After the successful acquisition of Iran Air Tour business by SAPS Commercial Department for Islamabad Station, effective from 9th September 2025, the SAPS Commercial Team

proactively encouraged the airline to explore Lahore Station due to its strong passenger market potential. Iran Air Tour launched operations for the Tehran–Lahore –Tehran route on 15th November 2025, citing SAPS's strategic insight and dedicated service as key factors in their decision.



Mr. Syed Zohaib Gilani (Dy. Asst. Director commercial)

The SAPS Commercial Department's success is built on a client-first approach, operational excellence, and long-term, trust-based partnerships. Through proactive engagement, clear communication, and deep understanding of airline needs, the team has earned widespread recognition for its Professionalism, Business Ethics, and effective Commercial Management, reinforcing SAPS's reputation as a reliable and forward-looking Ground Handling Agent.

Mahan Air commences flights to Islamabad Handled by SAPS

Islamabad - The inaugural flight of Mahan Air to Islamabad operated on Nov. 6 and was successfully departed from Islamabad International Airport (IIAP) for Tehran.

The ceremony marking the commencement of the service was organized by SAPS Management and attended by the Chief Operating

Officer/Airport Manager IIAP, Chief Security Officer, and senior officials and representatives from the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA), Airport Security Force (ASF), and SAPS.

All operational and facilitation arrangements were efficiently managed by the concerned teams of PAA and SAPS,

ensuring a smooth and timely departure in accordance with established standards and procedures.

The arriving flight carried 97 passengers, while 264 passengers departed on the outbound sector. Mahan Air will operate two weekly flights between Islamabad and Tehran.



Iran Airtour also starts flights to Lahore

Handled by Shaheen Airport Services

IRAN Airtour operated its inaugural flight which arrived at Lahore on Nov 15. Two months back it had started first flight to Islamabad also.

Iran Airtour Airlines had launched a new flight route from Tehran to Islamabad operating once a week flight started on 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. 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 airline.



SIAL holds Annual General Meeting



On 28th October 2025, Mr. Hassan Ali Bhatti, Chairman of Sialkot International Airport, presided over the Annual General Meeting 2025, during which key corporate matters and the annual performance were presented and discussed in the presence of esteemed shareholders.

SIAL New Terminal Building Committee meeting held



Under the convenership of Mr. Sohail Saeed Barlas, the SIAL New Terminal Building Committee held its meeting, bringing together esteemed members of the committee to review the progress and steer the project's direction. During the meeting, discussions focused on shaping a modern, passenger-friendly terminal that reflects the growing vision of Sialkot Airport and its future as a global gateway.

Sialkot International Airport holds Finance Committee meeting

The SIAL Finance Committee meeting was held under the convenership of Mr. Muhammad Tahir Butt. The meeting was attended by the esteemed members of the committee, wherein detailed deliberations regarding various financial matters and related affairs came under discussion.



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India and China resume air link after five years



Nonstop flights have restarted between India and China after a five-year suspension, reflecting a recent thaw in relations between the two most populous nations. IndiGo, the largest carrier in India, became the first carrier to resume India-China flights after months of planning, reconnecting Kolkata's thriving textile and jute industries with the wholesale markets of Guangzhou in southern China.

Flight 1703 departed from Kolkata on Sunday 26 Oct. evening, operated by an Airbus A320neo, and touched down at Guangzhou some three-and-a-half hours later. It is the first of what is expected to be a rush of new travel options between the two countries. Two additional nonstop routes will launch next month, and more are in the works as both Indian and Chinese airlines respond to the opportunity.

The First India-China Flight In Five Years



Back in 2019, approximately 1.25 million people traveled on nearly 2,600 nonstop flights between India and China, according to OAG. But the pandemic caused the initial shutdown of the air corridor, and then the bilateral relationship soured further following a military standoff in Eastern Ladakh, which has prevented the resumption of direct flights until now.

Over the course of this year, both governments have made efforts to normalize relations. Part of those discussions was an agreement to resume direct flights as soon as possible, including creating an updated Air Services

Agreement, as well as the opening bilateral visa programs that have been kept at near zero over recent years. This led IndiGo's CEO Pieter Elbers to say that his airline was "ready to go" with direct service to China "as soon as the bilateral arrangements are in place."

Sunday's flight is a culmination of those efforts. Airline staff lit brass oil lamps to mark the resumption of direct flights as 176 IndiGo passengers departed on the new daily nonstop service. One of those passengers, Krishna Goyal, told the ANI news agency he was traveling to China for business, and was delighted with the new route:

Relations between the Indian government and the Chinese government have improved significantly. I have been traveling to China since 2002, and we used to have to change two or three flights."

More New Routes About To Launch

IndiGo's new route from Kolkata to



Guangzhou will be followed very shortly by a second nonstop route to China starting next month. This will see the carrier operate its A320neos on a daily return flight from the Indian capital, New Delhi, to Guangzhou. The 2,266-mile (3,647 km) route will depart New Delhi at 21:45, arriving in Guangzhou at 04:40 the next morning, with a six-hour return leg departing at 05:50.

Meanwhile, China Eastern will be the first Chinese airline to fly nonstop to India since the pandemic. It will begin a nonstop service from its base at Shanghai Pudong International Airport to New Delhi on November 9th. It will operate the route three times weekly (Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays) using an Airbus A330-300. The airline used to operate this route daily before the pandemic, so frequencies will likely increase.

Other Carriers Are Making



Preparations

Prior to 2020, direct flights between China and India were limited but growing, with a total of nine routes by seven different carriers. As such, we can expect more operators from both countries to join the fray, and a number of them are already seeking regulatory approvals. China Southern had the highest market share on India-China flights in 2019 at 31%, and will likely resume its twice-daily flights to New Delhi as a starting point.

Meanwhile, Air China is expected to re-initiate its daily flights from Beijing to New Delhi and Mumbai, and, with Air India having previously flown daily from New Delhi to Shanghai, we can expect it to expand beyond that, thanks to recent fleet growth. As for Shandong Airlines, the carrier has filed for passenger routes from Kunming to New Delhi, which it previously operated four times weekly before the pandemic.

What is certain is that the balance of power between Indian and Chinese carriers will shift from what it was. When there were last nonstop flights between the two countries, Chinese carriers dominated the market. They generally utilized larger aircraft and operated at greater frequencies, resulting in a share of more than 80% of the 125,000 available seats per month.

Now, IndiGo is more than twice its size than back then, and has been focusing heavily on international expansion. With some 950 aircraft set to be delivered over the next decade, it is well-positioned to provide extensive connections between the world's two most populous countries. Air India is now privatized and well-capitalized, and is also building the capacity to establish trunk routes as well as connect secondary cities in both nations.

Gmunden, Gilgit Baltistan and Naran-Ideal for Trout farming

Prof. Safdar Sandal



The first time when I visited Gmunden (Austria) in connection with my export of Ski gloves business, it was in 1975 and I had boarded a small train from Salzburg (Hauptbahnhof), 2nd important town of Austria. The train consisted of three

consisted of one main bazar, a few stores which were all closed by that time. Another story that began with me was that all hotels in the town were fully booked or let me say, were virtually closed. I walked around the small streets then, inside the town and at last found one 'Pension' (a

help me. But soon later, seeing me as a foreigner from a distant far- eastern land unimaginable for her at that hour and acutely hungry too, she did open the kitchen for me, sympathetically. In order to ease her work at that odd hour, on my part, I also decided to eat something little



My beautiful Pakistan



bogies as it had to travel in the mountainous area of 'Alps' surrounding Gmunden and similar numerous other towns of Austria, too. Another reason that it consisted of three bogies was that it did not have many passengers and that it had to travel on a rail track meandering in the hilly-track of the Gmunden valley. I was charmed by the scenic beauty of this small town engulfed in the Alps Mountains and finally reached the city by the time when the clock tower in the city center had struck on twelve PM. The small city

house-cum hotel) which was ready to be closed too. A kind lady appeared on the scene and she was courteous enough to have agreed to give me a room despite her closure time, which I badly needed at that hour and I showed my warmth courtesy.

It was a grace for me to have lived there in the beautiful place. After settling a little bit, I asked the house lady that I wanted to eat something as I had eaten nothing all that long evening and an unending night journey. She replied to me that the kitchen is closed and she cannot

and thus asked that lady: " She may only serve me a 'snack' (I meant something little to eat) ; she knew a very few words of English (her's language was Austrian-German) and definitely might have heard the word 'snack' for the first time in her life and wondering that since I was a traveller from a far- eastern land; replied me astonishingly : "Oh no we have no 'snakes' in our kitchen to serve you", she replied me worriedly by shrugging her shoulders and said .. but we can only serve fish to you instead, the specialty of the town.



Quite confidently, she proposed to me now that she could serve me 'forelle' fish to which I agreed. And then she took me to her kitchen and to a large-glassy-aquarium where 20 to 25 fishes were swimming in the big jarred waterpond. So these were the 'Trout' fish I saw and she showed me, calling these in German language as 'forelle' which I did not know before and I had seen this fish for the first time in life. Although I had been used to angling fish in Chenab-affiliated rivulets, running near my town Sialkot which lies in the foot of Kashmir Mountains. I agreed to eat the 'forelle' as there was no other choice. Rather on the contrary, I was quite amused by all this which was a maiden experience for me.

She then took a 'hand-net' lying beside the pond and tried to catch a fish for me. I was stunned for the moment and asked her would I have to eat this live fish!! . But then silently I decided, inside me that this fresh meal would serve the purpose and that too, healthily. . She asked me to see and tell her which one of the fish I would like to eat. I had to select one by a half-hearted choice because of a unique experience and pointing to a fish swimming close to me I said ok .."This one would serve the purpose". She caught that

fish through her hand-net and took to the cooking counter in the kitchen without asking me any more questions. After fifteen/ twenty minutes, she brought that fish in a cooked form and it was looking to me as a whole raw form fish, with eyes, mouth and tail intact and now lying on a plate and on a table for me. The fish looked the same as I had seen it in the pond, but surely fried now. She had cooked it in her own way without asking me any more questions. I ate the fish with the full flavor coming out of it as it was inside the pond and then could go to sleep. It was the 'Trout Fish', my first ever meal of it and very delicious. The next day I again ate the Trout fish but in a barbeque way. Trout fish lives or survives only in snow melted water and these were naturally brought from the river passing by Gmunden with a lake alongside too, to where I have had the opportunity to spend the next day being Sunday, boating and swimming in the lake. Trout fish contains richest of all vitamin-properties. It is No.1 in this regard so to say, and also the most expensive one among the fishes.

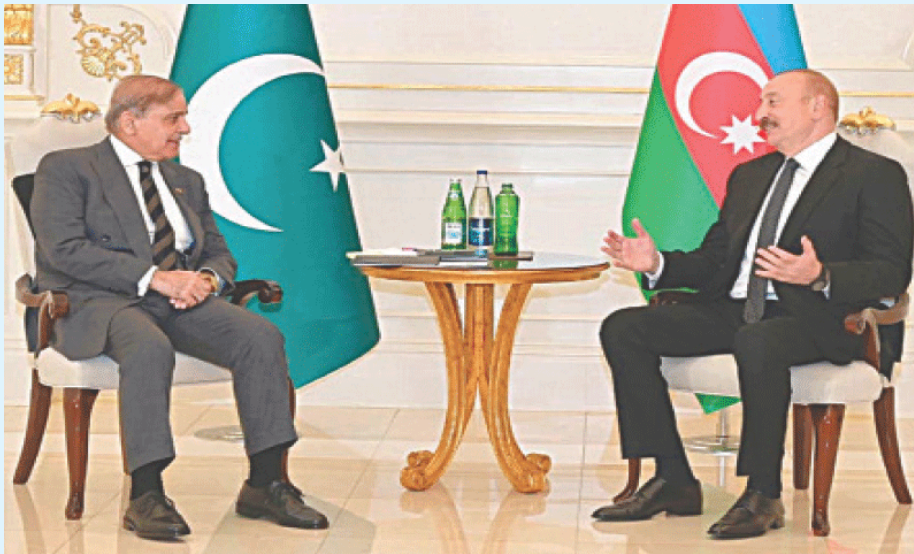
The specie 'forelle' (or trout) has been brought to Pakistan and cultivated in large numbers in vast Himalayan mountain rivers, lakes and streams engulfing

northern Pakistan in profundity. Every time when I go to Narran, Swat or Gilgit Baltistan with family or friends, I eat this fish and also remember my maiden experience of having a 'snack' at Gmunden of the trout fish. Some pictures as above may entertain the readers adding to their knowledge.!!

Training of Pakistani farmers and transfer of technology in this regard can bring about a revolution in the trout farming in the rich areas of Pakistan, which are a heaven for trout fish farms or streams running down the mountains. There are hundreds of places in northern areas of Pakistan including Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir , Swat (or KP) wherever trout fish is found and can further be developed with the help of Chinese experts and a transfer of technology can bring about a revolution in the trout farming , earning huge revenues for the state wallet, besides providing fun and holiday making for the Pakistani people (families or friends) and inviting an enchanting foreign tourism and offering a richest of foods to tourists, besides bestowing an unforgettable pleasure in this heaven of beautiful mountains and valleys richly filled with flowing streams .



Islamabad, Baku vow to cement trade, defence ties



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Friday 7 Nov. reiterated their resolve to further cement their cooperation in the fields of trade and investments, energy, connectivity and defence.

The two sides made the pledge during a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev in Baku. PM Shehbaz is currently in Azerbaijan to attend the celebration ceremony of Azerbaijan's victory day.

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir was also present during the meeting.

"The two leaders reviewed the whole range of bilateral relationship and agreed to further strengthen their multi-layered cooperation in the fields of trade and investments, energy, connectivity and defence," says a press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office on Friday 7 Nov.

During the meeting held at Presidential Palace, the PM thanked the President Aliyev for extending invitation to attend the celebration of the Victory Day of Azerbaijan.

The prime minister felicitated the government and people of Azerbaijan on the victory day which is observed to commemorate the victory in the 44-day-long Karabakh Liberation War against

Armenia. He extended an invitation to the president of Azerbaijan to visit Pakistan at his earlier convenience, which the latter accepted.

Pakistan-Iran cooperation

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Iran on Friday 7 Nov. vowed to enhance cooperation to eradicate terrorism in the two states and reiterated their firm commitment for peaceful means of dialogue and diplomacy for resolution of all outstanding disputes around the world.

The two sides also expressed eagerness to foster cooperation with each other in the fields of mutual interest including economic development and bilateral trade.

The commitments were made when Iranian Speaker Dr Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf called on PM Shehbaz, the PM Office said.

"Both countries condemn state-sponsored terrorism and have always supported each other in the wake of unilateral aggression against their sovereign states," the press release quoted the PM as saying.

The prime minister said Pakistan and Iran had unfortunately been victims of terrorism and thus firmly shared the resolve of global peace, prosperity and positive cooperation in the region. "Pakistan and Iran are determined to work in cohesion and cooperation for the unity of Muslim Ummah," he added.

Provinces asked to help achieve meat export target



Commerce Minister Jam Kamal has urged KP and Balochistan authorities to streamline efforts for \$200m meat exports to Malaysia.

Commerce Minister Jam Kamal has directed all relevant stakeholders to coordinate with the governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to achieve a \$200 million target in meat exports to Malaysia.

The directive came during the third meeting to formalise Pakistan's meat exports to the Malaysian market, attended by Food Security Minister Tanvir Hussain and SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan.

An official statement said the minister emphasised strengthening the meat export sector and ensuring competitive pricing. He also instructed the formation of a working group to submit a final report within a week, with input from provincial governments and private-sector participants.

The committee reviewed strategies for buffalo and cow meat exports, focusing on supply chain logistics, cost competitiveness, and quality standards. Discussions covered CNF (Cost & Freight) pricing, a comparative analysis with Indian exports, and measures to maintain Pakistan's edge while meeting Malaysian market requirements.

Officials highlighted the importance of selecting buffaloes aged 14-18 months to address challenges such as price fluctuations, incentives for exporters, and operational efficiency improvements at farms and slaughterhouses.

The committee recommended fostering long-term cooperation with Malaysia through a mix of government support and active private-sector engagement.

Islamabad-Istanbul freight train to be revived by year-end

The government has decided to revive the Islamabad–Tehran–Istanbul (ITI) freight train from December 31, subject to the finalisation of ongoing discussions regarding tradable goods and the resolution of administrative, logistical, and operational issues.

The government is also set to sign an agreement soon to connect Pakistan with Kazakhstan through a rail network via Chaman, according to Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi.

“We wanted to revive the ITI train earlier, but it was delayed because of the war in the region involving Israel. Now, we plan to resume ITI train operations from December, depending on the finalisation of trade arrangements — what will be exported and imported between Turkiye and Pakistan. The trade ministers are working on it,” Mr Abbasi told journalists at a press conference at the Pakistan Railways (PR) Headquarters on Sunday 26 Oct.

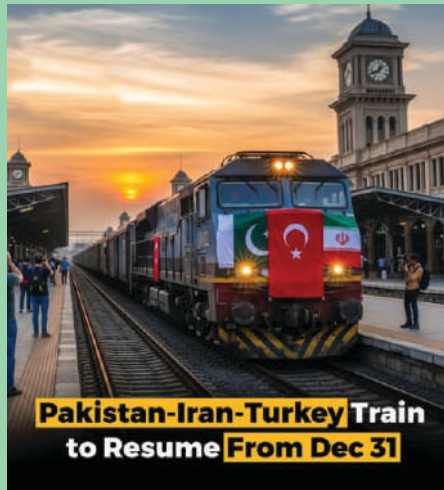
“There are some other issues as well, which will also be addressed. However, our main focus is to resume the ITI train service from December 31,” he added.

The ITI train service was revived on December 21, 2021, after nearly a decade, with trains reaching Turkiye in January 2022. It operated until August that year, with goods transferred to wagons compatible with Iranian and Turkish rail gauges.

The ITI operation was suspended again due to various administrative and operational issues. Although the government planned to revive it in 2023, the effort was hindered by the devastating floods that year, despite the restoration of the rail link between Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan in April 2023.

Additionally, the main Turkish freight forwarder associated with the ITI operations refused to work with Pakistani freight companies due to delayed payments, but later agreed to resume operations directly with Pakistan Railways, the concerned PR officials showed little interest in resolving key issues. This delay hampered efforts to strengthen bilateral trade with Turkiye.

Major issues included a lack of service quality — such as delays in departures and arrivals, inefficient loading and unloading, slow customs clearance,



and weak security measures. The high tariff and freight charges were also considered unaffordable for the business community. Consequently, operations slowed significantly in July 2022 and came to a complete halt in August after floods in Balochistan and Sindh submerged railway tracks and caused the collapse of the 140-year-old Hirok Bridge, the only link connecting Quetta with Dozan and beyond.

Speaking about regional connectivity, the minister said that an agreement with Uzbekistan had already been signed, while another with Kazakhstan would soon follow. “We have a rail track up to Chaman, from where we can access Kazakhstan, other Central Asian states, Russia, and eventually Europe,” he said.

Mr Abbasi revealed that the rehabilitation of the 500-kilometre Rohri–Karachi track is being planned with Asian Development Bank funding. Investments are also being arranged for the Rohri–Peshawar section. “The groundbreaking for the Rohri–Karachi track rehabilitation is expected to take place in July next year,” he added.

He said the Karachi Railway Station had been modernised and expanded to double the size of the Lahore Station. The upgraded Shalimar Express is expected to be launched on November 7, followed by the Awam, Allama Iqbal, and Rehman Baba Express trains in the coming months.

Mr Abbasi said PR had earned an additional Rs4.5bn through the outsourcing of luggage vans and express cargo trains.

Daweeo Express hosts function in Lahore



We celebrated a grand and memorable evening at Hotel Pearl Continental, Lahore, marking another milestone in our journey of excellence, said Mr. Sajid Khan Batoor.

The night came alive with a mesmerizing musical performance by world-renowned singer Humaira Arshad, adding charm and energy to the celebrations.

The event was graced by distinguished guests and industry leaders, including:

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Mr. Khawaja Faisal Shahzad, Director Faisal Movers

Mr. Abid Shah, GM Leopards

Prof. Dr. Abaseen Yousafzai, Presidential Award-winning poet, writer & researcher

Mr. Mujahid Chatta, Chairman, Liberty Power Plant

Mr. Sohail Pervez, CCO UPS Pakistan

All Vice Presidents, Presidents, General Managers, Senior Managers of Daweeo Pakistan, and our Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Syed Mazhar Iqbal.

“We were deeply honored by the participation of our valued business partners and dedicated teams from across the country who made this event truly spectacular,” concluded Mr. Sajid Batoor Sr. VP Daweeo Express Pakistan.



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Month-long Torkham border closure inflicts \$4.5 billion trade losses



The newly-constructed Torkham customs terminal presents a deserted look.

The month-long closure of Torkham border crossing has caused a cumulative loss of over \$45 million and another Rs16.5 billion in terms of exports and imports respectively through Pakistan's trade with Afghanistan.

Sources among official and trading circles told media that Pakistan had already lost over 65 per cent of the Afghan market to Iran, some Central Asian States, Turkiye and even India due to hostile and aggressive trade policies dictated by security issues since the installation of the Taliban regime in Kabul in August 2021.

They said that while big time Pakistan and Afghan exporters had lifted their capital from the export-import business between the two neighbouring countries due to the repeated border closure and a hostile environment for traders and investors, the month-long closure of all border points had seriously dented the confidence of remaining "bunch" of small traders.

The sources said that while the uncertain situation had also dealt a severe blow to the burgeoning local manufacturing industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the border closure had seriously impacted manufacture of hundreds of daily items in Punjab and Sindh, which were exported to Afghanistan under the head of the miscellaneous items daily prior to the closure of the border.

They said that Afghanistan was currently importing cement, garments, shoes and slippers, a variety of edibles including different vegetables, fresh fruits, fish, chicken and other poultry items, animal feed and confectionery

items.

The sources said that the prolonged border closure had negatively impacted the potato and banana exports, while the kinnow export was also in doldrums if immediate steps were not taken to ease border tensions.

Qari Nazeem Gul, an exporter and clearing agent, told media that even before the border tensions began, at least markets in Kabul and Jalalabad were flooded with Iranian, Turkish and Central Asian products with Iran grabbing the major share of its exports to Afghanistan.

He said that Afghan traders were more interested and comfortable in doing trade with Iran instead of Pakistan as Iran was offering them more relaxations in acquisition of visas and custom duties.

"We are now hugely disheartened with the current pattern of complicated business with Afghanistan with most of the local traders now developing a hatred for the said trade due to continuous security and political issues between the two neighbouring countries," he said.

Equally concerned was Mujeebullah Shinwari, who heads the Torkham customs clearing agents association.

"We've long been advocating for a trader-friendly policy by the government with special focus on alienating bilateral trade from security and political issues with Afghanistan," he said.

Mr Shinwari said that the volume of Pakistan's trade with Afghanistan had dropped from \$2.5 billion in the years from 2012 to 2016 to a mere \$800 to 900 million dollars on an annual basis.

"Gone are the times when 1000-1200 shipping containers loaded with multiple export items would cross over to

Afghanistan on a daily basis, as we now have 250-300 containers left in the export field on a daily basis," he said.

The customs clearing agents' leader said that the suspension of bilateral trade was also harming revenue generation through tax collection under various heads that was up till now a handsome amount for the national exchequer.

He said that the current volatile and uncertain situation had deeply affected the small-time businessmen, traders and even shopkeepers in local markets as a large number of people affiliated with different trading fields had lost their legitimate earnings.

Mr Shinwari said that the local trading and transport community had never experienced such a long closure of the border with a majority of the vehicle owners who got stranded due to sudden closure of Torkham on October 12 were now contemplating to switch over to other less profitable business venture in order to cover for the month-long financial losses.

He suggested the formation of an all-powerful jirga of leading tribal elders, politicians and traders to hold meaningful dialogue with officials of both the countries to find a mutually agreed formula for reopening of all borders points for trading and thus, saving business communities of both countries from further financial losses.

Meanwhile, Israr Shinwari, head of a local youth organisation, has demanded the immediate reopening of the Torkham border through a powerful jirga mediating between the two countries.

During a meeting in Landi Kotal on Monday 10 Nov., he said that the Pak-Afghan border points should be kept open in all circumstances, with a special focus on promoting trade between the two countries.

Mr Shinwari, however, warned a series of protest demonstrations would be staged if their legitimate demands weren't met.



Women of Miao ethnic group pose for a photograph during a spring festival in south-western China's Guizhou province.

PTDC Participates in WTM London 2025

Pakistan Shines on the Global Tourism Stage at WTM London 2025.

Pakistan is proudly showcasing its breathtaking landscapes, vibrant culture, and warm hospitality at the World Travel Market (WTM) London 2025 one of the world's largest and most prestigious international tourism exhibitions, held at the ExCel Exhibition Centre, London.

The Pakistan Pavilion was jointly inaugurated, by Sardar Yasir; National Coordinator to Prime Minister on Tourism and H.E Dr Faisal Ambassador of Pakistan to UK, in a vibrant ceremony attended by high-level dignitaries tourism professionals, and international media representatives. The 32-member Pakistani delegation, representing both the public and private sectors, is led by Mr. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism.

The Pakistan Pavilion (Stand No. N9-520) has become a hub of attraction with its stunning visuals, high-definition videos, and dynamic B2B networking sessions that promote Pakistan as an emerging destination for adventure, culture, and eco-tourism.

PTDC participats firstever in BTTF

Pakistan proudly marked its first-ever participation in the Bangladesh Travel & Tourism Fair (BTTF) 2025 held from 30th October to 1st November — a true milestone in strengthening regional tourism, cultural connections and shared heritage.

Our vibrant joint pavilion became a center of attraction for the people of Bangladesh showcasing Pakistan's diverse landscapes, culture and hospitality. With our new easy online visa policy and direct flight connectivity between Dhaka and Islamabad, Pakistan is emerging as an exciting destination for travelers from Bangladesh's middle and high-income segments.

Together our collaborative tourism initiatives will continue to foster strong people-to-people connections between the two brotherly countries.





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US envoy visits Golra railway station

United States Acting Ambassador Natalie A. Baker on Sunday 9 Nov. visited Golra Railway Station and Railway Museum.

She was accompanied by senior officials of the US embassy. On the occasion, Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi welcomed the special guest and took her on a detailed tour of Golra Station, Quaid-i-Azam Saloon and the Historical Railway Museum.

The federal minister apprised Natalie A. Baker about the historical, cultural and artistic significance of Golra Railway Station.

He said the station was established in 1882, when it was built as an important junction connecting Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi by railway during the British Raj. The colonial style of architecture, stone building and strong structure of the station are a wonderful manifestation of the railway engineering of that era.

Mr Abbasi said Golra Railway Station was not only one of the oldest and most beautiful railway stations in the subcontinent but also a symbol of Pakistan's cultural heritage and historical continuity.

He further said Pakistan Railways was upgrading this historic site on modern lines so that it could become a centre for promotion of historical heritage and tourism.

During the visit, Natalie Baker showed keen interest in the 19th and 20th

century American-made railway machinery and locomotive equipment kept at the railway museum.

She said these rare items were a beautiful reminder of the technical cooperation and historical ties between Pakistan and the United States.

Railway Minister Hanif Abbasi gave the chief guest a detailed briefing on the reform measures, modernisation and digital upgradation introduced in the railway sector during his tenure as minister.

Natalie A. Baker, while appreciating the vision, commitment and ongoing reform, said the historical beauty, cultural attraction and heritage of Golra Railway Station offered a glimpse of Pakistan's glorious past and creative future.

US visa seekers with health issues may face rejection

VISAS of foreigners seeking residence in the US will face the possibility of rejection if the applicants have certain medical conditions, including diabetes or obesity, according to US-based news outlet KFF Health News.

Citing a new directive from the Trump administration, the publication reported this on Thursday 6 Nov.

According to the outlet, this new

directive was outlined in a cable issued by the US State Department to embassy and consular officials.

It 'directs visa officers to deem applicants ineligible to enter the US for several new reasons, including age or the likelihood they might rely on public benefits', KFF reported.

'The guidance says that such people could become a 'public charge' a potential drain on US resources because of their health issues or age,' the report said.

'You must consider an applicant's health,' the cable read, according to KFF. It added: 'Certain medical conditions including, but not limited to, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, cancers, diabetes, metabolic diseases, neurological diseases, and mental health conditions can require hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of care. According to KFF, the cable also encouraged visa officers to consider conditions like obesity which it noted could cause asthma, sleep apnea and high blood pressure while assessing whether an immigrant could become a public charge and should therefore be denied entry into the US.

'All of these can require expensive, long-term care,' the cable read, additionally directing visa officers to determine if applicants had the means to pay for medical treatment without financial assistance from the US government.

KFF reported that the instruction also directed visa officers to consider the health of the applicant's family members, including children or older parents.

Tommy Pigott, the US State Department's principal deputy spokesperson, also said in a statement: 'It's no secret the Trump administration is putting the interests of the American people first. This includes enforcing policies that ensure our immigration system is not a burden on the American taxpayer.

Separately, the official told reporters that the decision to issue a visa had always been at the discretion of an officer.

Of Hcers are not being instructed to reject an applicant because they have a certain medical condition, but to consider the 'overall impact' if someone would be unlikely to be able to pay for their own medical care, they clarified.

It's addressed on an individual, case-by-case basis,' the official added. - Monitoring Desk



Sikh pilgrims return to Gurdwara Punja Sahib after border reopening

The Sikh temple at Gurdwara Punja Sahib on Friday 7 Nov. echoed with slogans by Indian devotees as they crossed into Pakistan for the first time since deadly May clashes had closed the land border between the two countries.

Over 2, 000 Indian Sikh pilgrims arrived here to offer their rituals in connection with the 556 birth celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak - the founder of the Sikh religion.

Thousands of devotees, barefoot in reverence for sanctity of the land that is the birthplace of the founder of their religion, poured into the temple. Men dressed in orange robes and swords in their belts along with women and children dressed in colourful attire came to offer their religious rituals, including Akhand Paath (uninterrupted recitation of scriptures), Matha Tekna (bowing before the shrine), sacred bathing and Shabad Kirtan (devotional singing).

The rituals began early in the morning on Friday when hundreds of pilgrims bathed in the gurdwara's holy pond. The gurdwara was lit up and decorated with flowers, banners, flags and posters depicting Sikh rituals. Several congregations were held to recall Baba Guru Nanak's message of peace, love and brotherhood. Special prayers were offered, and hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib were sung. Pilgrims pledged to comply with the teachings of the guru.

Free sweets and langar, community lunches were also offered. Men, women and children participated in the karseva as service to the community in which they prepared food and distributed it in the Guru ka Langar.

Prominent Sikh leaders, including Jathedar Akal Takht Kuldeep Singh Gurgaj, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee leader Bibi Gurinder Kaur and Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee leader Ravinder Singh Sweeta were among those who arrived from India to attend the celebrations. A significant number of Sikh pilgrims from around the world, including United States, Canada and Australia, as well as different parts of Pakistan, are participating in the religious festivities.

Tarnjeet Kaur, 62, from Amritsar termed her visit to the Sikh temple in



Indian Sikh pilgrims perform their rituals at Punja Sahib in Hassanabdal on Friday 7 Nov.

Hassanabdal a turning point in her life as it was her last wish to touch the stone imprint with the founder of her religion.

"It seems I am in my dreams as a few weeks ago it seemed impossible for us to visit Pakistan as deadly clashes in May had closed the land border between two countries suspending previous two important pilgrimages in the month of June."

Bibi Gurinder Kaur, leader of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, expressed deep reverence for the sacred sites in Pakistan. "This land

holds the spirit of our Guru. For us, it is as holy as Makkah and Madina are to Muslims," she said.

Kuldeep Singh Gurgaj, group leader of Akal Takht, praised Pakistan's efforts in preserving Sikh religious sites.

"We are always received with respect and love. The care shown to our holy places is deeply appreciated," he noted. "We are grateful to the Pakistani government, particularly the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) for making arrangements for the protection of Gurdwaras in Pakistan," he said.

Dr Sardar Balvinder Singh urged for the opening of Kartarpur corridor as now pilgrimage relations between two countries normalised. "Pakistan is the only country where the government spends millions annually on Sikh gurdwaras' decoration," said Permeet Kaur from Ludhiana. She said she was overjoyed to see the upkeep of their worship places and facilities provided to the Sikh community in Pakistan.



Sikh devotees gather around a bus carrying the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book, during a religious procession on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, in Nankana Sahib, recently A day earlier, Pakistan welcomed jubilant Sikh pilgrims from India, in the first major crossing since deadly clashes in May closed the land border between the nuclear-rmed neighbours.

Pakistan, S. Arabia ink Haj deal, vow to boost defence ties

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have formally signed an agreement outlining arrangements and facilities for pilgrims participating in Haj 2026, while the nations' top military officials met separately to strengthen defence cooperation.

The Haj agreement was inked in Jeddah by Federal Secretary for Religious Affairs, Dr Syed Atta-ur-Rehman, and Saudi Deputy Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Dr Abdul Fattah bin Sulaiman Al-Mashat.

Expressing deep appreciation for the Kingdom's continued cooperation, Mr Rehman thanked the Saudi government for its excellent facilities and warm hospitality extended to Pakistani pilgrims each year.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to ensuring high-quality services for next year's Haj and said the Ministry of Religious Affairs would complete all preparations in a timely and efficient manner, in line with Saudi guidelines.

Mr Rehman added that Pakistan aims to replicate and enhance the successful arrangements from the previous Hajj season.

The conference of Birds enthral audience

The 12th century poet Fariduddin Attar's allegorical work Manteq al-Tayer (conference of birds) is about the quest of the birds for a mythical figure. The species is to do with flight and being airborne, therefore there is no surprise in the fact that a dance group Anikaya chose to name their act The Conference of Birds which was performed as part of the ongoing World Culture Festival (WCF) on Friday 7 Nov. evening. It entertained, enthralled and inspired the audience in equal measure.

Anikaya is a group founded by Wendy Jehlen which believes there are no boundaries when it comes to people and

culture. Their performance highlighted this inclusive approach to life and art. The performance on Friday 7 Nov. was a unique interpretation of the epic poem where the dancers applied contemporary tales of displacement and alienation to the main idea of the 12th century poem.

Jehlen directed and choreographed the performance in which artists representing half a dozen nationalities took part. Their movements to the beat of the music set for the act and their gestures were totally in sync with the thematic thread of the stories they were telling. The ambient lighting and somber music were not there merely to embellish the play; they were used as characters just as the artists (boys and girls) who danced as veritable narrators of the conference of birds.

Sikhs visit Bhagat Singh Gallery Lahore

A delegation of Sikh pilgrims from the UK and Canada visited the recently-restored and renovated Poonch House and Bhagat Singh Gallery here on Friday 7 Nov.

A Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) guide briefed the delegation members about the history of the Poonch House, built in 1849, which has now been fully restored by the Punjab government.

The delegation members also visited the Bhagat Singh Gallery, where the last part of the trial against the freedom fighter was conducted in 1931. They were given a briefing on Bhagat's life, struggle, court trial, jail sentence and his belongings. They were also shown a replica of the courtroom, where the trial was conducted.

The visitors appreciated the Punjab industries and tourism departments for wonderful preservation of the building and establishing an informative gallery and court, which depicted the life of the hero, who fought against the Britishers.

A woman visitor said she found it very interesting to visit the Poonch House and the courtroom where Bhagat's trial was conducted. "It has been preserved well," she said.

The pilgrims also watched a documentary on the monument's restoration, importance and Bhagat Singh's struggle against the colonial rulers.



Artists, representing six countries perform an act titled. The Conference of Birds as part of the World Culture Festival at the Arts council recently.

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Modern railcar launched on Lahore-Pindi route



The Pakistan Railways (PR) on Monday 3 Nov. launched operation of upgraded railcar (Subak Raftar) train on Lahore-Rawalpindi-Lahore route and pledged to start a modern version of the Shalimar Express on the Lahore-Karachi-Lahore (via Faisalabad) route.

The upgraded rake (a complete set of wagons) of the railcar was inaugurated by Railways Chief Executive Officer Amir Ali Baloch who launched the train for Rawalpindi from the Lahore Railway Station along with other senior officers.

"We are making all-out efforts to improve our service for passengers by providing the passengers with modern facilities at the railway stations as well as during their journey. It will give comfort to the passengers," the CEO said while speaking to the officers and passengers on the occasion.

"The upgraded Shalimar Express would also start operating within this week," he added.

Upgraded Shalimar Express to be launched from Lahore to Karachi within a week

Later, speaking to media, Mr Baloch said the upgraded railcar would be available for the passengers from Lahore and Rawalpindi for four timings. According to him, there are a total of four rakes of the train, departing at four different timings both from Lahore and Islamabad on a daily basis.

"Three modern rakes of the train are ready while the fourth one would also be included in the new rake fleet in the next couple of days," he clarified, adding that upgraded train rakes had been provided by GEU-20 (American) locomotives.

He further said that each modern rake was equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including hygienic food (sandwich, juice, water etc) from a known food chain through trolley service, mobile charging ports, clean washrooms/toilets, security, dining room and other facilities.

"Each upgraded rake consists of nine passenger coaches, including four of economy class and five of AC standard, AC business and parlor car," Mr Baloch said, claiming that no one in the road transport business could provide such facilities as the PR was providing at a reasonable fare.

Punjab, Turkiye agree on joint tourism initiatives

Calling for joint initiatives in tourism, archaeology and museum development, the Punjab and Turkish governments have agreed to launch joint initiatives to open new avenues for cultural diplomacy and mutual learning.

This consensus was reached in a meeting between Punjab Tourism Secretary Dr Ehsan Bhutta and Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Prof Dr Numan Kurtulmuş at Lahore Museum on Wednesday 15 Oct.

Prof Kurtulmuş also expressed his desire to enhance bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey in the fields of hospitality, cultural exchange and tourism promotion.

He emphasised that cultural institutions like the Lahore Museum play a pivotal role in strengthening people-to-people ties between the two brotherly nations.

Dr Bhutta briefed the guest on the museum's rich history, unique artefacts, and diverse galleries that vividly portray Punjab's vibrant cultural legacy.

He said the speaker and Turkish consul general had called for arranging meetings with travel agencies and guides of Pakistan to have MoUs in this sector.

The secretary said the Punjab government had allocated substantial funds for the rehabilitation and restoration of historical sites across the province. He said Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman had also shown keen interest in the preservation of heritage and was personally monitoring initiatives aimed at protecting and promoting Punjab's historical identity.

Dr Bhutta said Pakistan and Turkey shared deep-rooted historical and cultural bonds, and the Punjab government was eager to collaborate with Turkish institutions in heritage preservation, tourism development, and museum modernisation. He said such visits not only promote goodwill but also pave the way for future partnerships in research, conservation and capacity-building initiatives.

Lahore Museum Director Nabila Irfan and other senior officers attended the meeting.

Railways told to install jammers to protect passengers from attacks

A parliamentary committee on Friday 17 Oct. asked Pakistan Railways to strengthen regular patrolling on sensitive routes and install three jammers in each train to protect passengers from terrorist attacks on trains.

The National Assembly Standing Committee's decision came following a briefing given by Pakistan Railways' officials to the committee about the October 7 attack on the Jaffer Express.

The officials said that Jaffer Express was targeted with an improvised explosives device on October 7 near Sultan Kot Railways Station in Sindh.

The blast derailed five bogies and damaged the track. Seven passengers, including Pakistan Railways employees, suffered injuries.

The standing committee, chaired by Ramesh Lal in the absence of the chairman, heard updates on the Jaffer Express train blast, encroachments of railways lands and Karachi-Pipri freight corridor project.

Briefing the committee on the freight corridor project, the secretary of Pakistan Railways said the project would start from Keamari, linking Karachi Port to Pipri. On this route, he said, two new railway lines will be laid to connect it with Motorway M-9.

The committee also discussed various aspects of the project. The panel was informed that the terminal will initially operate on a small scale, and the first phase is expected to be completed within six months.

The committee was further informed that 17 freight trains will operate on a daily basis and the project will cost \$400 million.

Divisional Superintendent of Pakistan Railways in Sukkur briefed the committee about encroachments on PR land in Sukkur.

He said that 16,458 acres of land were under operational use, 3,253.233 acres under encroachment, and 457 acres occupied by land grabbers.



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Azerbaijan hosts Tourism road show in Pakistan



TDAP continues to champion tourism as a key driver of trade and services exports.

The Azerbaijan Tourism Board concluded its roadshows across Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad with a closing ceremony in the capital, led by Mr. Florian Sengtschmid, Chief Executive Officer, Azerbaijan Tourism Board.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, National Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Tourism, graced the occasion as Chief Guest, underscoring that with Pakistan's tourism potential estimated at US \$30-40 billion, the sector offers vast opportunities for tour operators, hospitality providers, investors, and allied services.

He noted that initiatives like these build regional and bilateral momentum, unlocking new tourism corridors and niche markets-from cultural and adventure to faith-based travel-while reinforcing tourism's role as a powerful engine of trade, connectivity, and exports.

Rafia Syed, Director General (Services Division), TDAP, echoed these views, emphasizing that tourism is not merely recreation-it is trade, culture, and export opportunity. She invited the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, which participated in Pakistan Travel Mart 2025, to return for PTM 2026, being organized by TDAP in collaboration with Team PTM, as its flagship platform for tourism promotion and services exports. Team PTM, led by Mr. Ali Hamdani, is spearheading preparations for the 2026 edition, to be held in Karachi (3-5 April) followed by roadshows in Lahore (7-8 April 2026).

The event reaffirmed the deep cultural and economic ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan and the shared commitment to advancing tourism diplomacy, regional connectivity, and services exports.

With Pakistan's tourism potential at \$40 billion, the momentum is real and the opportunity is now!

FIFA hopes 2026 World Cup cities will be 'ready' for games

FIFA said on Wednesday 15 Oct. it hoped all 16 host cities will be 'ready' to stage games at the 2026 World Cup finals after US President Donald Trump suggested matches could be moved for security reasons.

We hope every one of our 16 host cities will be ready to successfully host and fulfil all necessary requirements,` a FIFA spokesperson said. `Safety and security are the top priorities at all FIFA events worldwide.

The spokesperson however added that: `Safety and security are obviously the governments` responsibility, and they decide what is in the best interest for public safety.

Trump said on Tuesday 14 Oct. that FIFA president Gianni Infantino would support moving World Cup games from US cities if necessary.

In September, Trump raised the possibility of moving matches amid his crackdown on Democratic-run cities.

If somebody is doing a bad job and if I feel there`s unsafe conditions, I would call Gianni, the head of FIFA, who`s phenomenal, and I would say, let`s move it to another location.

And he would do that,` Trump told reporters at the White House

when asked if games could be moved from Boston, one of the host cities.

`Very easily he would do it, Trump added.

The US president suggested that, if necessary, events for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics could also be moved.

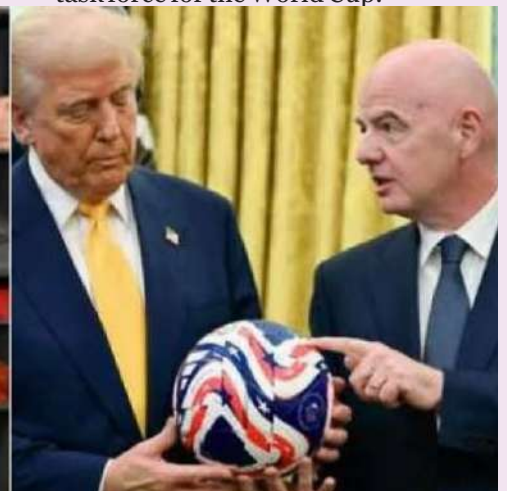
Republican Trump`s administration has deployed national guard troops to Democratic-run US cities this year over the objections of local and state leaders, saying they are needed to counter crime and left-wing activism.

Boston is scheduled to host seven games at next year`s World Cup. San Francisco and Seattle are both hosting six matches each at the tournament while Los Angeles is hosting eight.

The United States is staging the World Cup jointly with Mexico and Canada, but will be hosting the bulk of the games in the tournament, which has been expanded to include 48 teams.

Eleven of the 16 host cities are in the United States for the June 11 to July 19 tournament.

Trump earlier this year appointed himself as chairman of a White House task force for the World Cup.



Khawaja Masood Akhtar, the CEO of Forward Sports in Sialkot, holds the official FIFA World Cup 2026 ball, named Trionda. His company, Forward Sports, has also manufactured the official balls for the FIFA World Cups in 2014, 2018, and 2022. Sialkot is famous for its sports goods and produces 83% of the world's soccer balls.

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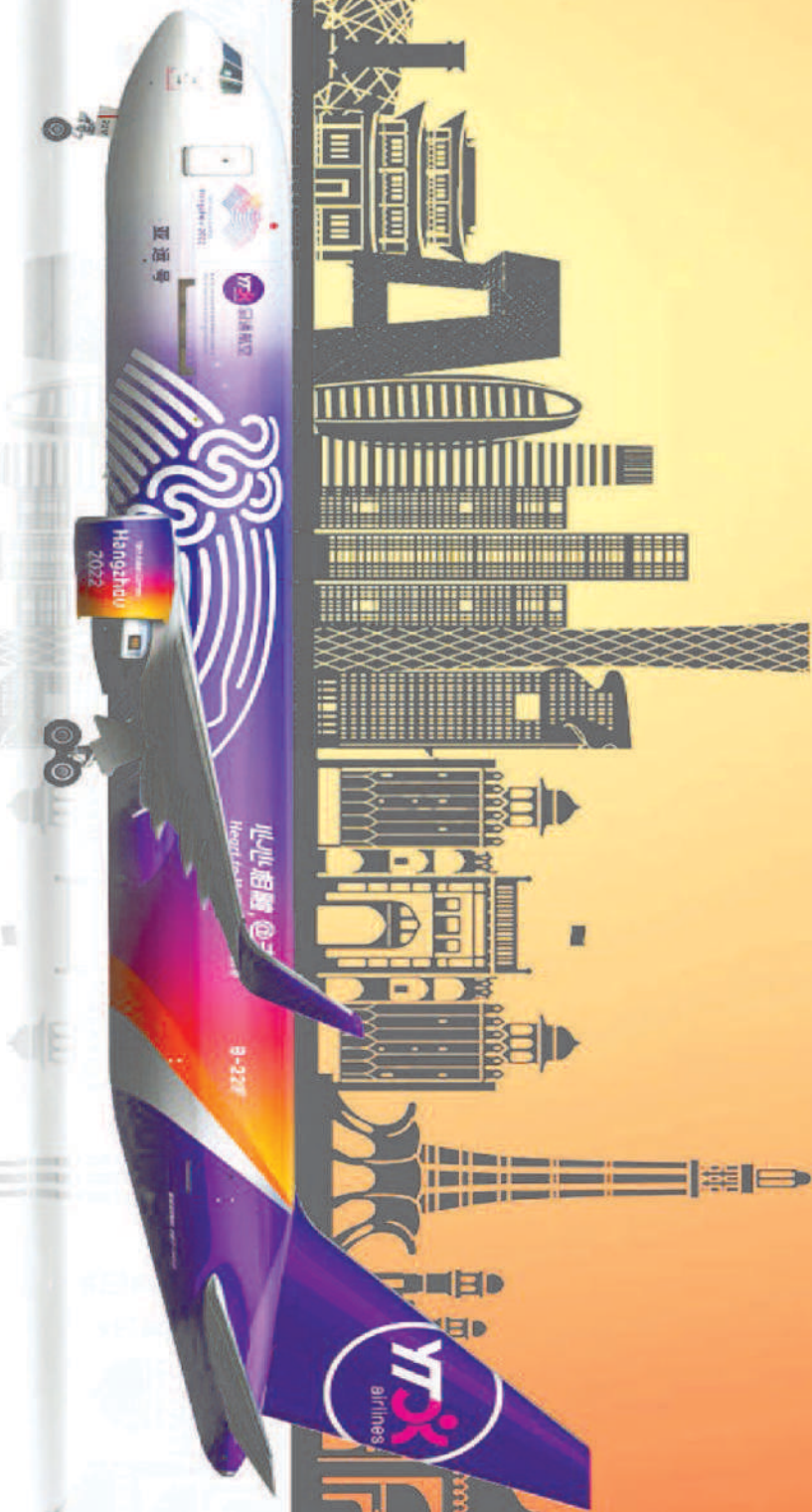
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