

PAKISTAN'S PREMIER MAGAZINE FOR TOURISM, HOSPITALITY, RESTAURANTS, AIRLINES, TRAVEL & FOOD INDUSTRY

# HOSPITALITY PLUS

VOL# 18 | ISSUE# 12 | DECEMBER 2023



## RISING PAKISTAN SIFC

SPECIAL INVESTMENT  
FACILITATION COUNCIL

### PAVING PAKISTAN'S PATH TO PROSPERITY



SCO's 'Year of Tourism 2023 Forum' in Urumqi,  
China promotes regional collaboration



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## FAREWELL 2023, EMBRACING RESPONSIBILITY TO MOVE TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE



As we bid adieu to 2023, let us reflect on the journey we've traversed within the realms of hospitality, tourism, food, travel, aviation, and allied sectors. The year bore witness to both triumphs and trials, successes intertwined with lessons learned. As we stand at the threshold of a new year, it's imperative to acknowledge the missteps of the past and pledge ourselves to a renewed commitment to responsibility.

In the dynamic tapestry of these sectors, 2023 revealed vulnerabilities, reminding us of the fragile equilibrium between progress and preservation. We encountered challenges that tested our resilience, from environmental concerns plaguing travel sustainability to the ethical dilemmas within the food industry. However, within these challenges lies an opportunity—an opportunity to rectify, rejuvenate, and recalibrate.

It's our collective responsibility to tread the path of conscientiousness in the forthcoming year. Each decision made within these sectors must be rooted in a deep commitment to sustainability, ethical practices, and inclusive growth. The hospitality realm, a tapestry woven with diverse threads, beckons us to embrace cultural diversity and inclusivity, ensuring that every guest feels welcomed and respected.

Tourism, the gateway to exploration and cultural exchange, demands a mindful approach—one that balances economic gains with environmental conservation and community welfare. Aviation, the facilitator of global connectivity, prompts us to innovate towards greener skies, reducing our carbon footprint while fostering safe and efficient travel.

Food, an art form connecting cultures, implores us to adopt ethical sourcing, minimize food wastage, and prioritize health and well-being. These sectors, interdependent and interconnected, require a concerted effort—a commitment to responsible practices that transcend individual endeavors.

Let us stride into 2024 with a steadfast commitment—an unwavering promise to rectify the mistakes of the past and forge ahead with responsibility as our guiding beacon. Each action, no matter how small, can catalyze transformative change within these sectors. Together, let's script a narrative of responsibility, moving towards progress, sustainability, and ethical stewardship for generations to come.

# SPECIAL INVESTMENT FACILITATION COUNCIL (SIFC)

## PAVING PAKISTAN'S PATH TO PROSPERITY



*SIFC's emergence marks a pivotal chapter in Pakistan's economic journey. It's not just a catalyst for investment but a beacon of hope for tourism revival and youth empowerment.*

In the heart of Pakistan's economic revitalization lies a groundbreaking initiative - the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Launched in June 2023 by the Pakistani government, this council stands as a beacon of hope, strategically designed to invigorate the nation's economy by luring foreign investments and breaking bureaucratic barriers that once hindered progress.

At the helm of SIFC stands the Prime Minister of Pakistan, a testament to the government's unwavering dedication to attracting investment. Comprised of provincial chief ministers, federal ministers, and the head of the army, this council orchestrates a synchronized effort across all tiers of governance and military prowess. Operating through three specialized committees - the Apex Committee, Executive Committee, and Implementation

Committee - SIFC channels focused efforts towards seamless investment facilitation.

The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) presents a transformative agenda aimed at reshaping Pakistan's economic landscape. Rooted in ambition and vision, SIFC's objectives converge to strengthen the nation's economic proficiency. Its foremost ambition is to catalyze an increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), setting an initial





**SIFC strategically focuses on pivotal sectors—agriculture, mining, information technology, and energy—endeavoring to unlock lucrative investment opportunities within these spheres.**



target of \$5 billion to elevate Pakistan's global standing and attract substantial international investment. Recognizing untapped potential, the council strategically focuses on pivotal sectors—defense production, agriculture, mining, information technology, and energy—endeavoring to unlock lucrative investment opportunities within these spheres.

SIFC champions efficiency through a streamlined investment process, leveraging a single-window platform to dismantle bureaucratic barriers, ultimately expediting investment and diminishing red tape.

Moreover, with a keen eye on growth, the

council is committed to nurturing an investor-friendly environment by systematically addressing regulatory hurdles and fortifying infrastructure, fostering a climate suitable for sustainable economic expansion.

The advent of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) marks a turning point moment in Pakistan's economic trajectory, initiating a transformative chapter in the nation's narrative.

This momentous debut has instigated a wave of increased investor confidence, drawing the attention of global investors who recognize Pakistan as an increasingly





welcoming and business-oriented investment destination. Moreover, SIFC's proactive measures have effectively streamlined and accelerated the approval process for major investment projects, catalyzing their swift implementation and paving the way for tangible progress.

Additionally, the council's concerted efforts in fostering collaboration and unity among provincial leaders have significantly bolstered inter-provincial cooperation, presenting a unified front that enhances Pakistan's attractiveness to investors, further fortifying the nation's position on the global economic stage.

“  
**The council is committed to nurturing an investor-friendly environment by systematically addressing regulatory hurdles and fortifying infrastructure, fostering a climate suitable for sustainable economic expansion.**  
 ”

While talking to Hospitality Plus, College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM) Founder/President & CEO Ahmad Shafiq said, “The SIFC initiative deserves appreciation for its monumental strides in economic revival, however, it holds a larger potential beyond direct investments.” He further said that tourism is a colossal revenue-generating avenue and we urge the authorities to leverage SIFC's influence to promote tourism vigorously.

Tourism is an untapped goldmine for Pakistan, and SIFC stands as a beacon for the revival and promotion of this sector, he further said and added that with the council's streamlined processes and commitment to an





“Tourism is an untapped goldmine for Pakistan, and SIFC stands as a beacon for the revival and promotion of this sector. With the council's streamlined processes and commitment to an investor-friendly environment, fostering tourism growth could significantly bolster Pakistan's economy”, says COTHM Founder/President & CEO Ahmad Shafiq

investor-friendly environment, fostering tourism growth could significantly bolster Pakistan's economy.

He said that while SIFC empowers economic growth, we advocate for an increased focus on youth skill development. Empowering the youth with relevant skills aligning with investor needs will not only fortify the workforce but also contribute significantly to Pakistan's prosperity, he added.

In conclusion, SIFC's emergence marks a pivotal chapter in Pakistan's economic journey. It's not just a catalyst for investment but a beacon of hope for tourism revival and youth empowerment. Let's harness this momentum to propel Pakistan towards a future teeming with economic promise and growth.



# PAKISTAN RECOGNIZED AS TOP PERFORMING TOURIST DESTINATION BY UNWTO IN 2023



World  
Tourism  
Barometer  
September 2023

## Best-performing destinations in January-July 2023\*

International tourist arrivals (% change over 2019)



Source: UNWTO,  
Data as of September 2023

\* Based on a sample of  
destinations with available  
data for the first 6 to 7 months  
of 2023

*The country welcomes a staggering 115% increase in foreign tourists compared to the previous year, marking a robust comeback post the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Pakistan's strides in tourism recovery and promotion have garnered global recognition, with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) acknowledging the nation's remarkable performance in its latest 2023 report.

The UNWTO's report highlights Pakistan's outstanding resurgence, leading the recovery graph at an impressive 92% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023. The country welcomed a staggering 115% increase in foreign tourists compared to the previous year, marking a

robust comeback post the Covid-19 pandemic. Forecasts suggest international tourist receipts may soar to USD 1.3 billion by the year-end, affirming Pakistan's resurgence as a thriving tourist destination.



“  
Engagements at events like World Travel Mart London, ITB Berlin, New York Travel and Adventure Show, Arabian Travel Mart Dubai, Seoul Travel Mart Korea, and Travel Mart in Vietnam facilitated robust B2B linkages, fostering a huge surge in foreign tourists visiting Pakistan in 2023.

among Pakistani diaspora, foreign travelers, and domestic tourists, inviting them to explore Pakistan's exotic destinations.

Wasi Shah, Minister of State on Tourism, extended heartfelt congratulations to PTDC and industry partners for this monumental achievement in 2023. Despite challenges, the government remains resolute in elevating the tourism sector's performance in 2024, aiming for an even stronger showcase of Pakistan's diverse and captivating tourist offerings.

This recognition by UNWTO reaffirms Pakistan's position as an emerging global tourist destination, reflecting the nation's commitment to revitalizing the tourism sector and beckoning travelers worldwide to explore its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.

In contrast, the broader Asia and Pacific Region achieved only 62% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023 due to slower international travel reopening. However, Pakistan's exceptional performance stands as a testament to the concerted efforts of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC). The PTDC's relentless endeavors to showcase Pakistan's tourist-friendly essence on global platforms and through social media have propelled the nation's tourism resurgence.

Aftab Rana, Managing Director of PTDC, emphasized the pivotal role played by PTDC, provincial tourist departments,

and private sector tour operators in participating in six major tourism events globally. Engagements at events like World Travel Mart London, ITB Berlin, New York Travel and Adventure Show, Arabian Travel Mart Dubai, Seoul Travel Mart Korea, and Travel Mart in Vietnam facilitated robust B2B linkages, fostering a 115% surge in foreign tourists visiting Pakistan in 2023. PTDC's strategic online B2B meetings further strengthened ties with foreign tour operators, amplifying Pakistan's global tourism appeal.

Furthermore, PTDC's launch of the new tourism brand "Salam Pakistan" in August 2023 has significantly bolstered interest



“  
The recognition by UNWTO reaffirms Pakistan's position as an emerging global tourist destination, reflecting the nation's commitment to revitalizing the tourism sector and beckoning travelers worldwide to explore its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.



# SCO'S 'YEAR OF TOURISM 2023 FORUM' IN URUMQI, CHINA

## PROMOTES REGIONAL COLLABORATION



The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Year of Tourism 2023 forum was held in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China from November 23 to 25, 2023.

The SCO Year of Tourism 2023 was the first thematic event held by the SCO Secretariat and the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China, as part of the SCO Year of Tourism.

Esteemed high-level delegations from the member-states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), alongside representatives from international and regional organizations, converged at this significant gathering. Notably, well-known figures from tourist associations in the region were also present, marking a pivotal initiative to promote tourism within the SCO region.

A distinguished delegation from Pakistan, led by Hammad Shamimi, Additional Secretary of the Cabinet Division, comprised key representatives including Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of PTDC, Ahmad Shafiq, Founder/President & CEO of COTHM, and Fareena Arshad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the SCO Secretariat.

The central aim of the forum was to bolster





tourism in the SCO region while fostering greater collaboration among member countries. Deliberations across various sessions centered on sharing best practices, strategizing for the sector's growth, and exploring avenues for socio-economic advancement through tourism development.

During the sidelines of the event, the Pakistani delegation engaged in productive dialogues with numerous delegation heads. Notably, discussions with Chinese counterparts were held to enhance bilateral tourism ties between China and Pakistan, reinforcing the commitment to strengthening mutual tourism interests.

The "Year of Tourism 2023 Forum" stands as a testament to the SCO's dedication to fostering regional partnerships and harnessing the potential of the tourism sector for the collective socio-economic prosperity of its member countries.

# EMBRACING THE FUTURE: EMERGING TRENDS IN HOSPITALITY

The hospitality industry is in a constant state of evolution, shaped by changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and global trends. In recent years, several emerging trends have been reshaping the landscape of hospitality, promising to redefine the way we experience and engage with accommodation, dining, and travel.

## 1. Technology Integration

One of the most prominent trends in the hospitality sector is the seamless integration of technology. From smart room controls and mobile check-ins to artificial intelligence-driven concierge services, technology is enhancing both the efficiency of operations and the overall guest experience. Hotels are investing in innovative solutions to personalize stays, predict guest preferences, and streamline processes, creating a more convenient and connected environment.

## 2. Sustainability as a Standard

Sustainability has evolved from a niche concern to a fundamental expectation in the hospitality industry. With increased awareness of environmental issues, travelers are actively seeking eco-friendly and socially responsible accommodations. Hotels are responding by implementing green practices, such as energy-efficient systems, waste reduction initiatives, and sourcing local, organic products. Sustainability is not just a trend but a growing necessity that shapes the industry's future.

## 3. Rise of Boutique and Niche Offerings

While major hotel chains continue to thrive, there is a notable surge in the popularity of boutique and niche accommodations. Travelers are seeking unique and personalized experiences, prompting





the rise of smaller, independent hotels that offer distinct themes, designs, and atmospheres. This shift reflects a desire for authenticity and a departure from standardized, cookie-cutter accommodations.

## 4. Contactless Experiences

The global pandemic accelerated the adoption of contactless technologies in the hospitality sector. From touchless check-ins to digital room keys and mobile payments, minimizing physical contact has become a priority. This trend not only addresses health concerns but also aligns with the growing preference for streamlined and efficient services that cater to the on-the-go lifestyle of modern travelers.

## 5. Personalization through Data Analytics

The vast amount of data generated by guests' interactions with hotels is becoming a valuable resource for personalization. Through data analytics, hotels can anticipate guest needs, preferences, and behaviors, allowing for highly personalized services. From recommending personalized amenities to curating targeted promotions, this data-driven approach enhances guest satisfaction and loyalty.

## 6. Wellness and Well-being Focus

Wellness is no longer limited to spa services; it has become a holistic approach to hospitality. Travelers are prioritizing well-being, and hotels are responding by offering fitness programs, healthy dining options, and wellness amenities. Some establishments are even integrating wellness technologies, such as circadian lighting and air purification systems, to create an environment that promotes health and rejuvenation.


## 7. Remote Work Integration

With the rise of remote work, hotels are adapting to cater to the needs of the "workcation" trend. Offering comfortable workspaces, high-speed internet, and business-friendly amenities, hotels are becoming temporary offices for those who wish to combine work and leisure. This trend reflects a shift in how people view travel, seeking destinations that provide a balance between professional responsibilities and relaxation.

In conclusion, the hospitality industry is undergoing a transformative period, marked by technological advancements, a focus on sustainability, and a shift toward personalized and unique experiences. As travelers' expectations continue to evolve, successful establishments will be those that embrace these emerging trends, staying ahead of the curve to provide memorable and relevant experiences in the ever-changing world of hospitality.

# ROOM SERVICE RULES: ENHANCING THE GUEST EXPERIENCE



A background image of a hotel room. In the foreground, there is a table with a white tablecloth and a pink patterned runner. On the table, there is a white paper bag filled with golden-brown fried food, possibly fries or chicken. In the background, there is a bed with white linens and a wooden headboard.

**R**oom service is a quintessential aspect of hospitality that bridges the gap between comfort and convenience for guests. It's a personalized service that demands attention to detail, efficiency, and a keen understanding of guest preferences. Establishing and maintaining effective room service rules is essential for ensuring a seamless and delightful experience for every guest.

### **Promptness is Paramount:**

Time is of the essence when it comes to room service. Guests anticipate timely delivery of their orders, whether it's a morning coffee or a late-night snack. Establish clear guidelines for order processing and delivery times to ensure promptness without compromising on quality.

### **Menu Clarity and Options:**

A comprehensive, easy-to-understand menu is crucial. Provide diverse options catering to different dietary preferences, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and other special dietary requirements. Clearly state menu items, descriptions, prices, and available hours to avoid confusion.

### **Training and Standards:**

Well-trained staff is the backbone of efficient room service. Equip your team with proper training on menu knowledge, order-taking etiquette, handling special requests, and maintaining professionalism during interactions. Set standards for

presentation, timing, and service etiquette to maintain consistency.

**Accuracy and Attention to Detail:** Accuracy in order-taking is non-negotiable. Double-check orders to ensure they match the guest's request. Pay attention to specific instructions regarding condiments, cooking preferences, allergies, and additional requests to enhance the guest's experience.

### **Presentation and Packaging:**

Food presentation matters, even in room service. Ensure that meals are plated or packaged attractively, maintaining their freshness and visual appeal. Use spill-proof and secure packaging to prevent leaks or spills during delivery.

### **Communication is Key:**

Foster clear communication channels between the kitchen, service staff, and guests. Confirm orders with guests, notify them of any delays, and provide accurate delivery times to manage expectations effectively.

**Respect Privacy and Discretion:** Always prioritize the guest's privacy and comfort. Knock and wait for acknowledgment before entering the room. Be discreet in conversations and maintain a professional demeanor to ensure guests feel comfortable during their stay.

### **Hygiene and Sanitation:**

Maintain stringent hygiene standards in food preparation, handling, and delivery. Regularly sanitize trays, utensils, and delivery carts. Encourage staff to adhere to proper hand hygiene and use appropriate protective gear while handling and serving food.

### **Billing Transparency:**

Clearly outline prices on the menu,

including any additional charges like service fees or taxes. Ensure that the billing process is transparent and accurate to avoid discrepancies or surprises for guests upon checkout.

### **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:**

Encourage guests to provide feedback on their room service experience. Use this feedback to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary changes to enhance service quality continually.

In short, impeccable room service is a cornerstone of a memorable guest experience. By adhering to these room service rules, hotels and hospitality establishments in Pakistan can elevate their service standards, delight guests, and establish a reputation for exceptional hospitality. Constantly evolving and adapting these guidelines to meet guest expectations will ensure a consistent and unparalleled room service experience.

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**ACKNOWLEDGES**  
COTHM'S COMMITMENT TO

# SKILL-BASED EDUCATION

College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM) received an esteemed visit from Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Chairman Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol, accompanied by his Executive Committee Members Malik Khalid, Shaban Akhtar, Zeeshan Sohail Malik, Naeem Hanif, Sheikh Sajjad Afzal, Ahsan Shahid, and PIAF Secretary Abdus Saboor Sheikh on December 5, 2023.

Welcomed by COTHM's Founder/President & CEO Ahmad Shafiq, the distinguished guests were treated to an enlightening orientation tour of the college, showcasing its state-of-the-art facilities and innovative skill-based educational programs.

Expressing admiration for COTHM's unwavering dedication to skill-based education, Chairman Faheem Ur

Rehman Saigol commended the institution's pivotal role in shaping future leaders in the hospitality and tourism industry. He engaged with students, lauding their choice of a career pathway aligned with their aspirations and future goals.

The visit served as a testament to the ongoing collaboration between industry leaders and educational institutions, fostering a symbiotic relationship aimed at nurturing a skilled workforce prepared to excel in the dynamic landscape of Pakistan's professional arena.

COTHM remains committed to its mission of empowering individuals through quality education, and such interactions with industry stalwarts reaffirm its dedication to excellence and innovation in the field of hospitality and tourism education.



# BAKU HOSTS 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF TOURISM SPECIALIZED EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF ECO MEMBER STATES



*COTHM COO Zaheer Ahmad represents Pakistan at the event and brings forth the rich Pakistani perspective, amplifying the significance of country's contributions in the realm of tourism education and innovation.*

In a landmark collaboration between Azerbaijan's State Tourism Agency, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Baku hosted the pioneering assembly of the Tourism Specialized Education Institutions of the ECO Member States. The event was attended by academicians and experts from the ECO member countries, including Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as the ECO

delegation headed by ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri.

College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM) Chief Operating Officer (COO) Zaheer Ahmad represented Pakistan at the event and brought forth the rich Pakistani perspective, amplifying the significance of country's contributions in the realm of tourism education and innovation.

Chairman Fuad Naghiyev, illuminating Azerbaijan's unwavering commitment to

cooperative endeavors with OIC nations, underscored tourism as a linchpin in Azerbaijan's non-oil economy. Emphasizing the nation's aspiration to evolve into a premier tourist destination, Naghiyev highlighted tourists' deep admiration for Azerbaijan's multifaceted allure encompassing history, culture, heritage, nature, cuisine, and hospitality. He underscored the pivotal role of human resource development, highlighting the operation of three higher education institutions under Azerbaijan's State



Tourism Agency and the overarching presence of tourism education across 17 higher education institutions in the country.

Secretary General Khusrav Noziri echoed the significance of this inaugural meeting, stressing the pivotal role outlined in the Baku Declaration, emphasizing the expansion of cooperation among member states. Noziri extended heartfelt congratulations to all members, underscoring the pivotal nature of continuous engagement.

Amidst these deliberations, an important segment was COTHM's COO's active participation in the panel discussion on "Innovation and Technology: Emerging Trends in Tourism Education." Presenting the dynamic Pakistani perspective, the COO illuminated Pakistan's invaluable contributions to the global discourse on tourism education and innovation, enriching the dialogue with insights and experiences from Pakistan's vibrant tourism landscape.

This collaborative initiative not only highlighted Azerbaijan's dedication to fostering global partnerships in the tourism education sphere but also showcased the pivotal role of Pakistani expertise and perspectives in shaping the future of tourism education and innovation on an international stage.



**The event was attended by academicians and experts from the ECO member countries, including Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.**





**Cheezious**  
Spreading Cheezy Khushiyan

# CHEEZIOUS EXPANDS ITS REACH WITH **GRAND OPENING** OF NEW BRANCH IN **GULSHAN E RAVI, LAHORE**



*The grand opening ceremony was graced by esteemed personalities from various fields, including motivational speaker Qasim Ali Shah, COTHM Founder/President and CEO Ahmad Shafiq, and Eat Sleep Repeat Founder Shabeeh Shah, among other dignitaries.*

Cheezious, the proud Pakistani fast food brand renowned for its delectable offerings, proudly unveiled its newest branch in the vibrant locality of Gulshan e Ravi, Lahore. The grand opening ceremony was graced by esteemed personalities from various fields, including motivational speaker Qasim Ali Shah, COTHM Founder/President and CEO Ahmad Shafiq, and Eat Sleep Repeat Founder Shabeeh Shah, among other dignitaries.

The ceremony, marked by enthusiasm and anticipation, witnessed the esteemed Qasim Ali Shah inaugurating the new branch alongside distinguished guests and Cheezious CEO Imran Ijaz, accompanied

by the brand's dedicated team members.

A multitude of guests joined the celebration, immersing themselves in the rich flavors and delightful fast food delicacies that Cheezious is renowned for. The event served as a testament to Cheezious' commitment to providing a memorable culinary experience to its patrons.

During his address at the inauguration, Qasim Ali Shah commended Cheezious CEO Imran Ijaz for his unwavering dedication and relentless efforts in maintaining the brand's reputation for delivering quality food and exceptional service at affordable prices. He emphasized

the importance of such ventures in contributing to the culinary landscape of Pakistan.

Ahmad Shafiq, the Founder/President and CEO of COTHM, extended his appreciation to Cheezious for consistently upholding high standards in food quality and for significantly contributing to providing substantial employment opportunities to the Pakistani youth.

The opening of the Gulshan e Ravi branch stands as a testament to Cheezious' commitment to expansion while maintaining its core values of quality, affordability, and community engagement.





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# INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY CELEBRATED AT COTHM



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GROUP OF COLLEGES



*The highlight of the celebration was the inauguration of COTHM Travel Solutions (CTS), a visionary travel company poised to redefine the travel landscape in Pakistan and worldwide.*

The spirit of innovation and industry expertise took flight at COTHM Jail Road Campus as the institution commemorated International Civil Aviation Day. The event served as a dynamic platform to underscore the pivotal role of the civil aviation and airline industries in fostering social and economic progress.

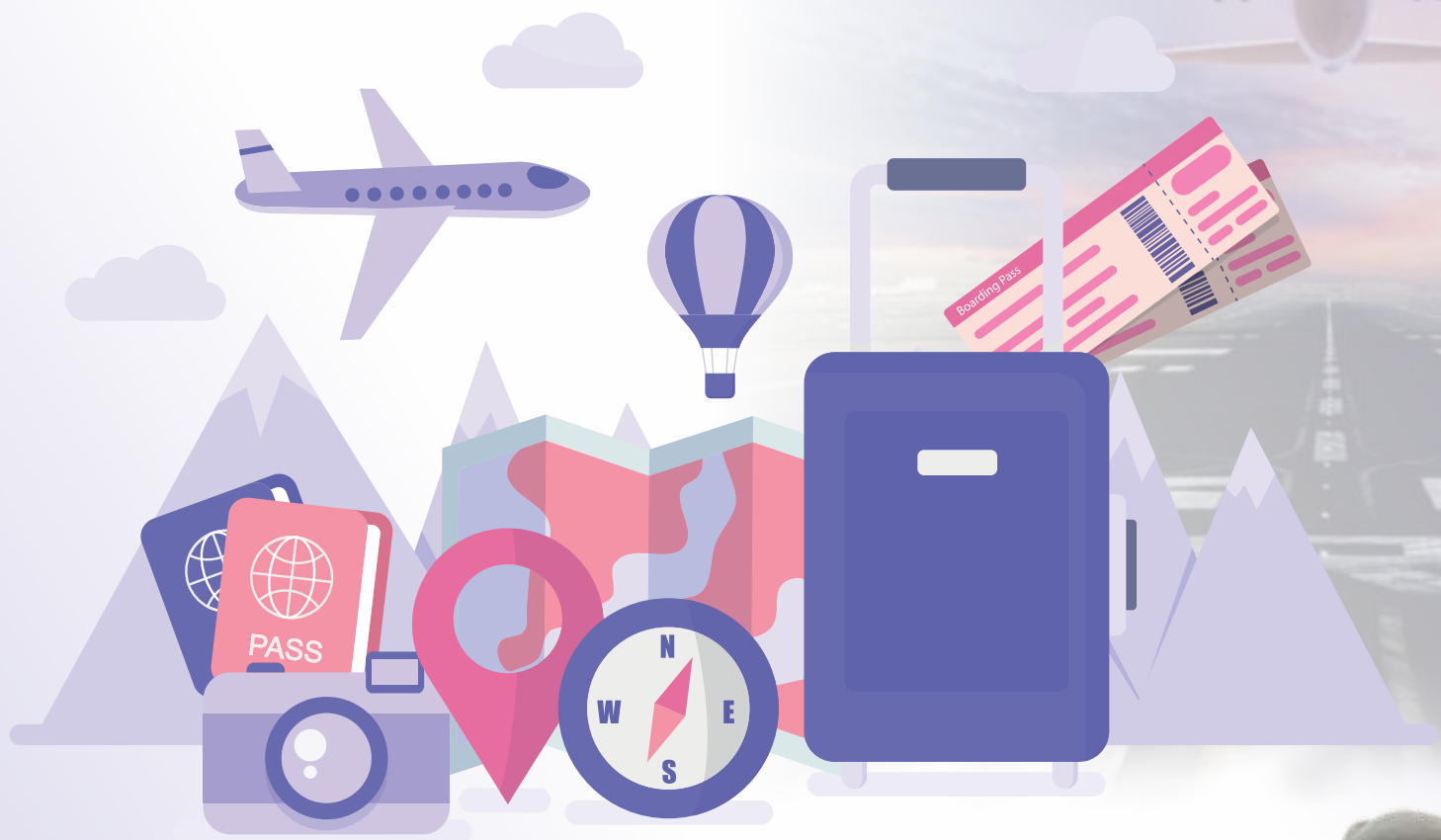
The highlight of the celebration was the inauguration of COTHM Travel Solutions

(CTS), a visionary travel company poised to redefine the travel landscape in Pakistan and worldwide. Amidst this auspicious occasion, the talented students specializing in Travel & Airline Management showcased their ingenuity through remarkable airport and travel management company models. These displays not only demonstrated their creative prowess but also mirrored their dedication to mastering the intricacies of the industry.

The event witnessed the esteemed presence of industrial experts, whose discerning eyes evaluated the models, commending the students for their outstanding efforts and innovative approaches. Among the distinguished guests were COTHM Founder/President & CEO, Ahmad Shafiq, and COTHM COO, Zaheer Ahmad, whose support and encouragement further amplified the significance of this occasion.



# 10 ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR FLYING FOR THE FIRST TIME



**F**or first-time flyers, the whole experience of flying can seem a bit daunting. From booking your ticket, and packing your bags, to navigating through the airport, there's a lot to consider. But don't worry, this comprehensive guide, brought to you by AirAdvisor, is here to help. We've assembled the top 10 essential tips to make your first-time flying experience as smooth as possible.

## 1. Pick the cheapest days to fly

Knowing the best days to fly can significantly impact your travel budget. Generally, the middle of the week offers the cheapest airfares. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, in particular, are often less expensive than the rest of the week. This is because business travellers typically fly at

the start or end of the week, and airlines tend to lower fares on less popular days to fill their planes.

## 2. Pick your seat

Selecting your seat is more than just a formality; it can greatly influence your comfort and experience onboard. If you're someone who enjoys views or likes a bit more elbow room, window seats might be the perfect choice for you. On the other hand, aisle seats provide easier access to the lavatories and exit, which can be advantageous, especially on longer flights. When booking your ticket, most airlines will give you the option to choose your seat. You can often do this via an interactive seating map that shows the layout of the aircraft. Some airlines may charge extra for certain seats, such as those with additional legroom or those located in the front of the

cabin, so keep this in mind when making your selection.

## 3. Check-in online

Online check-in is a fantastic tool for all air travellers, including first-time flyers. Most airlines provide this service, allowing you to check in for your flight via their website or mobile app before arriving at the airport.

Online check-in usually opens 24 hours before the flight departure and closes around an hour before domestic flights and 90 minutes before an international flight. During this process, you'll confirm

your attendance on the flight and often have the chance to choose a seat.

#### 4. Adhere to the baggage rules

Each airline has specific regulations regarding what you can bring onboard and how much it should weigh. Typically, airlines allow one piece of carry-on luggage and one personal item, such as a purse or laptop bag. The size and weight limitations for these items vary by airline, so be sure to check the rules of the airline you're flying with.

As for checked baggage, airlines also have specific weight and size restrictions. Exceeding these can result in hefty fees, so it's essential to weigh your luggage before arriving at the airport.

#### 5. Dress comfortably

Choosing the right attire for your flight, especially if it's a long-haul journey, can make a world of difference in your comfort level. Your in-flight outfit should strike the perfect balance between comfort and practicality.

#### 6. Bring in-flight accessories

When preparing for your flight, especially if it's a long-haul trip, it's important to ensure your comfort. A few carefully selected in-flight accessories can greatly enhance your overall experience.

For instance, noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds are invaluable for blocking out the ambient noise of the aircraft and creating a more peaceful journey. If you're hoping to sleep during the flight, a travel pillow and an eye mask can go a long way towards helping you get some rest.

Additionally, a portable power bank can ensure your electronic devices, like your phone or tablet, remain charged throughout the flight. This is particularly important if you plan to use your device for entertainment during the flight, such as for watching movies or reading.

#### 7. Bring your own food

Depending on the length of your flight and the specific services provided by your airline, in-flight meals may not always be available. And even when they are, you might prefer to bring your own food, either for dietary reasons, to save money, or simply because you prefer the taste of your own meals. You can bring many types of food through TSA checkpoints, including sandwiches, fruit, cheese, and even chocolate, among other options.

#### 8. Arrive at the airport early

First-time flyers often experience stress related to the fear of missing their flight. To alleviate this anxiety, it's highly recommended to arrive at the airport well in advance of your scheduled departure time. For domestic flights, it's generally suggested to arrive at least 2 hours early. For international flights, a minimum of 3 or 4 hours early is advised. Arriving early ensures you have sufficient time to check in, go through security, find your gate, and even grab a bite to eat or do some shopping before your flight.

#### 9. Check what documents you need

The documents required for travel can vary depending on the type of flight (domestic or international) and where you're flying from and to. Ensuring you have the correct documents is critical for a smooth journey.

Remember to always check the specific requirements of your airline and the immigration policies of your destination country. Additionally, ensure your documents are valid not only for your dates of travel but also for a period after you return, as many countries require your passport to be valid for several months beyond your visit.

#### 10. Be prepared for going through security

Passing through airport security can be one of the most stressful parts of flying, especially if you've never been through airport security before. However, with some preparation and knowledge, you can streamline the process significantly.

Before you reach the security checkpoint, have your travel documents and identification ready. This typically means your boarding pass and passport or ID. Upon clearing security, you'll enter the departure lounge. This is a place to unwind, grab a bite, shop, or make your way to your boarding gate. Don't forget to keep an eye on flight information screens for updates about your flight or gate changes.



# COTHM KARACHI HOLDS 8TH ANNUAL

## CONVOCATION

### TITLED 'BEYOND THE STARS'



College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM) Karachi recently arranged its 8th Annual Convocation titled "Beyond the Stars" at NED University, Karachi. The ceremony witnessed the graduation of more than 250 talented individuals in culinary arts, hospitality, travel, and tourism.

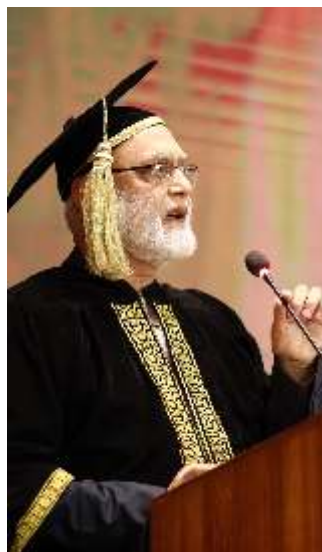
The event was graced by the esteemed presence of Professor Dr. Hafeez ur Rehman, President of Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, who served as the Chief Guest for the occasion. The Consul General of Malaysia in Karachi, Herman Hardynata and Ahmad Shafiq, Founder/President & CEO of COTHM Pakistan & Dubai also attended the event and congratulated the graduates for their exceptional skills and commitment throughout their educational journey and served a deserving tribute to their hard work and determination.

Dr. Hafeez Ur Rehman, President of Alkhidmat Foundation, addressed the students and announced that Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan has decided to build an international city in Islamabad. The aim is to give this city an international medical tourism grade to encourage Pakistani foreigners to give charity to their country, and the funds raised will help those in need in Pakistan. He also stated that Ahmad Shafiq's motive is to provide direction to the youth, not based solely on degrees but skill, with a greater horizon to uplift their society.

Moreover, Alkhidmat Foundation is currently running the 'Bano Qabil IT Program' in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, and worldwide to provide entrepreneurial skills and small start-up opportunities to the youth. Alkhidmat Foundation is planning to collaborate with COTHM in the future for hotel management courses as well.

In the end, Dr. Hafeez Ur Rehman congratulated the students and their parents on their achievements and wished them the best of luck for their future.

COTHM Pakistan & Dubai Founder/President & CEO Ahmad



Shafiq, and Master Franchise of COTHM Sindh & Balochistan Executive Director Sabir Ahmed, also expressed gratitude to the students for excellence in culinary arts, hospitality, and travel & tourism in their speeches enhancing the gloriousness of the event.

The event concluded with an awards and degrees distribution ceremony to the teachers and students as a token of appreciation and encouragement.







By Paige Bennett

## CLEVER WAYS TO USE



# PEELS INSTEAD OF THROWING THEM OUT

**Y**ou might be surprised to find there are many uses for your food scraps, especially fruit peels.

We instinctively toss out the protective coating of our oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and bananas after we get what we need from them: juice, zest, or the delicious fruit itself. But rather than tossing these scraps in the trash, you can use them up.

We rounded up some ways that you can use the whole fruit — even the peel — to truly get the most out of your purchase.

### **Make your home sparkle with lemon peels**

Thanks to their high concentration of citric acid and their refreshing scent, lemon peels are perfect for getting your kitchen and bathroom squeaky clean, according to DIY Natural.

Rub lemon peels along faucets, shower doors, and sinks, then rinse.



Toss smaller pieces of peel into a garbage disposal and run it to deodorize your kitchen sink, or toss a few rinds into the bottom of your trash can to freshen it up.

## Brighten up shoes and plants with banana peels

You don't have to spend extra money to take advantage of avocado's moisturizing properties.

Just rub the inside of the peel on your skin, leave it on for about five minutes, and then rinse. As *Women's Health* magazine explained, rubbing the inside of the peel on your body can help exfoliate your skin.



## Turn orange peels into candy and syrup

Rather than buying sugar-covered gummies from the store when you have an aching sweet tooth, try making your own treats with leftover



orange peels.

Here's a simple recipe for candied oranges from the experts at Food Network. The recipe also makes a sweet syrup for tea — win, win.

There are also some chef-approved marmalade recipes that utilize the entire orange, including the peel.

## Brighten up shoes and plants with banana peels



They may have a reputation for tripping people up, but banana peels are actually quite useful.

Rub the inside of a banana peel on scuffed shoes or on the leaves of dull houseplants and then wipe clean with a cloth. This can help shine your shoes or give your plant a boost because bananas are high in potassium — a key ingredient in shoe polish and a welcome nutrient for plants, according to Prevention.

## Try making a grapefruit-rind tea.

Grapefruit has long been celebrated for its supposed health benefits, which include things like helping to lower cholesterol and lower blood pressure, according to Health.com.

Plus the rind of a grapefruit can be used to create a tea that is rich in fiber.

To make tea from grapefruit peels, simply add a minced grapefruit peel to boiling water and let it simmer for 15 minutes, then sweeten to taste with honey.

## Make a rich compost with all of your peels

A compost bin is a great way to fight food waste. Justin Sullivan/Getty If you still find yourself with leftover fruit peels, don't toss them in the garbage can. Add them to your compost bin to enrich soil for gardening and fight food waste.



# INTERNATIONAL Cake DAY

CELEBRATIONS AT COTHM  
PROVE TO BE A

# SWEET SUCCESS

The celebration of International Cake Day reached its zenith at COTHM, where a large number of seasoned pastry chefs and budding baking enthusiasts congregated. Nestle Professional took the helm as the title sponsor, adding their expertise to the delectable affair. Paola's Cosa Nostra, esteemed in the industry, joined as an invaluable industry partner, elevating the event to new heights.

The event was a canvas for creativity, as participants delved into four distinct categories: Butter Cream Cake, Fondant Cake, Gravity Cake, and Wedding Cake. Each category brought forth a symphony of flavors, textures, and innovative designs that captivated onlookers and judges alike.

Nestle Professional's support ensured top-notch ingredients, while Paola's Cosa Nostra shared invaluable insights, enhancing the participants' craftsmanship.

The competition was fierce yet collaborative, fostering a vibrant atmosphere of learning and camaraderie. From intricate designs to gravity-defying structures, the cakes showcased an unparalleled level of artistry and skill.

The crowning moments arrived with the judging panel's deliberation, recognizing exceptional talent and creativity across categories. The event concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, leaving a sweet impression on attendees and setting a high bar for future celebrations of the International Cake Day.







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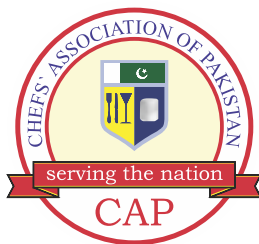


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# INDUSTRY

## PRESIDENT STRESSES LONG-TERM PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

1



**P**resident Dr. Arif Alvi has said there is a dire need for long-term planning to boost the tourism industry sustainably and attract the foreign investment. He was addressing 3rd Sustainable Mountain Sports Tourism Conference 2023 in Islamabad. The president said improvement of roads,

good management and clean environment play pivotal role in attracting the attention of foreign tourists. He said it is the need of the hour to provide more facilities to the tourism industry and sports especially mountaineering could also be a source of revenue. Dr Arif Alvi said Pakistan is home to some of

the world's most fascinating tourist attractions such as the highest mountain peaks, stunning coastlines, ancient civilizations and a rich cultural heritage. The president emphasized to harness the potential of sustainable tourism development by focusing on green investments for a better and more viable future.

## LRA PROTESTS AGAINST WEEKEND CLOSURES AND TIME CONSTRAINTS

2



**T**he Lahore Restaurant Association (LRA) staged a resolute protest, drawing a substantial gathering of restaurants and their teams, rallying against weekend closures and time constraints imposed on their operations. The protest, spearheaded by LRA Chairman Kamran Sheikh, President Nnisar Chaudhry, and executive members Ammar Mohsin, Raza

Ahmad, Adnan Ilyas, and Asad Niazi, resonated with a unified demand for governmental reconsideration. Expressing solidarity, the protesters emphasized that restaurants bear no responsibility for the smog issue plaguing the region, appealing for the autonomy to operate freely. The demonstration aimed to bring attention to the adverse impact of

stringent regulations on the hospitality sector's livelihood. Amid chants and placards, the LRA urged the Government of Punjab to alleviate constraints, enabling restaurants to function unrestrictedly.



# HIGHLIGHTS



## FORMER PTDC MD MASOOD ALI KHAN COMMENDS PTDC'S INITIATIVES

3



During a visit to the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Headquarters in Islamabad, former Managing Director Masood Ali Khan extended appreciation towards the ongoing initiatives and dedicated efforts of PTDC under the leadership of current MD Aftab ur Rehman Rana. Joined by PTDC Member Board of Directors Ahmad Shafiq and other esteemed officials, Masood Ali Khan was

warmly welcomed and briefed about PTDC's recent endeavors.

Expressing his admiration for the progressive steps taken by PTDC, Masood Ali Khan lauded the dedication and commitment exhibited by the entire PTDC team in developing a vibrant tourism sector.

In response to the warm reception and insights shared during his visit, Masood Ali Khan conveyed his appreciation for PTDC's

endeavors, acknowledging the positive impact they have had on Pakistan's tourism industry.

On the occasion, Ahmad Shafiq, a Member of PTDC's Board of Directors, shared similar sentiments, emphasizing the collective efforts required to sustainably promote Pakistan's diverse tourism potential.

## 'PUNJAB GOVT DETERMINED TO PROMOTE TOURISM, TRYING TO CREATE DESTINATIONS'

4



Pakistan's Ambassador to Morocco, Sami Malik called on Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Lahore. During the meeting, measures for promotion of trade relations with Morocco and tourism opportunities came under discussion.

Mohsin Naqvi said provincial government is determined to promote tourism and trying to create tourist destinations. He also said that tourism in Pakistan and Punjab specially can be boosted with the help of international support and interest.

He also said that Punjab government will

support any initiative taken for the uplift of tourism in the region.

He said that Pakistan is a peaceful country and Punjab represents the beautiful image of Pakistan worldwide.



# INDUSTRY

## PTDC ORGANIZES 'SALAM PAKISTAN' DOCUMENTARY FILM COMPETITION

5



The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) organized 'Salam Pakistan' short tourism documentary film and photography competitions on December 11 in connection with International Mountain Day. Reportedly, PTDC MD Aftab ur Rehman

Rana urged the filmmakers and storytellers to capture the essence of Pakistan's diverse and stunning landscapes, as Pakistan is amazing and rich with tourism potential. Talking on the occasion, he added that "four to five-minute documentaries and photography competitions on the topics of

culture and mountain heritage, mountain people and their lifestyles, fascinating mountain scenery, mountain adventure, and sports were made a part of the event." He further said that all the participants did a great job and presented the true and real colours of Pakistan through their lenses.

## AZERBAIJANI AMBASSADOR EXPLORES COLLABORATIVE AVENUES IN PAKISTAN'S TOURISM AND CULINARY SPHERES

6



Azerbaijani Ambassador to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, engaged in discussions with key stakeholders in Pakistan's tourism and hospitality industry. The meeting, graced by notable figures including COTHM Founder/President and CEO Ahmad Shafiq, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Managing Director Aftab ur Rehman Rana and international businessman Azhar Pasha,

marked a promising stride towards bilateral collaboration and cross-cultural exchange. One of the key highlights of the dialogue revolved around the prospects of establishing a branch of the College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM) in Azerbaijan. The participants talked about inviting Azerbaijan's Chefs Association to the forthcoming 'Pakistan International Culinary Championship - 2024,' jointly organized by

COTHM and the Chefs Association of Pakistan (CAP). The ambassador graciously accepted the invitation and hoped that the PICC-2024 would serve as a platform for fostering cultural exchange and showcasing gastronomic prowess of different nations. In the meeting, MD, PTDC underscored the significance of collaborative efforts in aligning both nations' interests within the tourism sector.

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# INTERNATIONAL FAST FOOD DAY CELEBRATIONS AT COTHM

International Fast Food Day was celebrated at the College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM) New Garden Town campus with great enthusiasm. The event aimed to showcase the creativity and skills of students from the Department of Culinary Arts and the Department of Baking & Patisserie through a fast food making competition. Powered by Young's Food, and supported by KnN's and Dawn Bread as product partners, the event was a collaborative effort to promote culinary excellence among the students.

The fast food making competition witnessed an array of remarkable creations by the competing students. Participants demonstrated their culinary skills by preparing unique and delicious fast food items within a given timeframe. Some of the standout dishes included innovative burger variations, gourmet fries, creative sandwich compositions, and fusion-inspired wraps, showcasing a blend of international flavors and local influences.

The judges evaluated the dishes based on taste, presentation, creativity, and adherence to fast food culture. The competition fostered healthy competition among the participants, encouraging them to push the boundaries of traditional fast food offerings.

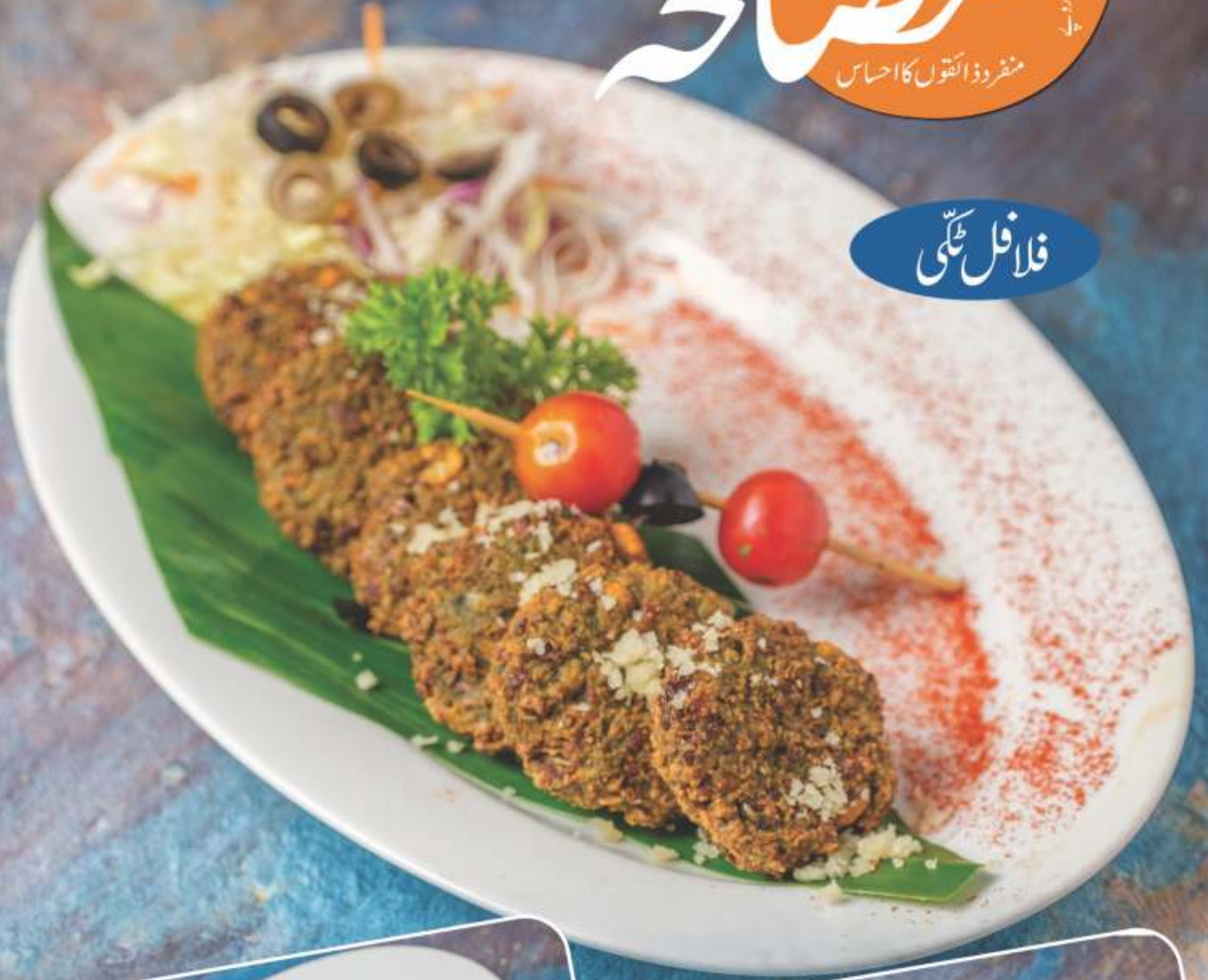
The success of the event was made possible by the generous support and title sponsorship of Young's Food, a leading brand in the food industry. Additionally, KnN's and Dawn Bread contributed as product partners, providing quality ingredients that enhanced the creativity and taste of the dishes prepared during the competition.







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
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