

This article is about Pakistan airport whose IATA Code is LHE.. For Lionsgate home video arm also known as LHE, see Lionsgate Home Entertainment.

Allama Iqbal International Airport (IATA: LHE, ICAO: OPLA) is the second largest civilian airport by traffic in Pakistan, serving Lahore, capital of Punjab and second-largest city of Pakistan. It also serves a large portion of the travellers from the other regions of Punjab province. Originally known as Lahore International Airport, it was renamed after the poet philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, one of the pioneers that led to the creation of Pakistan. The airport has three terminals: the Allama Iqbal terminal, the Hajj terminal and a cargo terminal. The airport is about 15 km from the centre of the city.[4]

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History[edit]

Post independence[edit]

At the time of the Independence of Pakistan, Walton Airport was the main airport of Lahore. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) acquired its first jet aircraft Boeing 720, Walton Airport was unable to handle the load of Boeing 720. The Government of Pakistan decided to build a brand new airport, which opened in 1962.[5] The airport had a specifically built runway and apron to handle aircraft up to the Boeing 747. This opened Lahore's gates to the world.[6] PIA initiated direct flights to Dubai and London via Karachi.[5]

Expansion[edit]

New Airport[edit]

Over the course of the next twenty-five years, the demand for air travel rose. The government had to build a bigger terminal to meet the growing needs of the region. In March 2003, a new terminal was inaugurated by President General Pervez Musharraf, originally commissioned by then ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The airport was named

Allama Iqbal International Airport and became the second largest airport in Pakistan after the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi. All flights were switched to the new airport and the old airport was passed onto the military. However, the government later reclaimed the airport from the military and developed it into a Hajj terminal.

The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority awarded the main contract to Airsys ATM, leader of a consortium with J&P Overseas Ltd, an international building and civil engineering contractor. Airsys ATM is a joint project from Thomson-CSF Airsys and Siemens, dedicated to air traffic management systems and airport development. The Airports Group in the UK was also awarded a \$70 million contract for airport systems construction. The project was implemented by a consortium of Joannou & Paraskevaides (J&P), responsible for civil and building works, and the Airports Group, responsible for the implementation of the system. Airsys ATM and Thales ATM were responsible for the fabrication and installation of the air bridges at the new terminal.

In 2008, the national flag carrier of the UAE, Etihad Airways, opened a dedicated aircraft line maintenance facility in Lahore. The facility is used for day-to-day technical line maintenance on Etihad aircraft, including hydraulic structural and instrument checks.[7] In October 2020, British Airways has resumed its direct flight operations to and from Lahore after 44 years.[8][9]

Future plans[edit]

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has planned the expansion of the terminal building and the number of gates will be increased from 7 to 22, with a corresponding increase in remote bays. This will increase the annual passenger capacity of Lahore Airport from 6 million to 20 million which will be sufficient to cater to the passenger load for the next 15 to 20 years.

The new design of the Lahore Airport Expansion Project has inspiration from the national flower of Pakistan, Jasmine or locally known as "Chambeli". The airport will have 4 arms similar to 4 platters of Jasmine flower. The original building has Mughal architectural features but the new airport will have a blend of Spanish and Mughal Architecture.

Gates in the main terminal building will be increased from seven to twenty-two. The present terminal building will not be demolished but will be expanded. The current parking area will be converted to arrival and departure lounges. Square lawn in front of the airport will be converted to a round shape 3-storey car parking area. It will be ensured that car parking space is sufficient to serve in the peak hours.

The design of the airport was developed by GilBartolomé Architects[10] from Spain, following a contract awarded to international Spanish Firm, TYSPA International,[11] which firm also worked on expanding the Madrid and São Paulo Airports. A Chinese firm, the China Construction Third Engineering Bureau, has been awarded the contract, worth US\$382 million (RMB 2.6 billion CNY), to carry out the construction work.[12] During the expansion of the airport, nearby road networks will also be improved, which will help to ease traffic congestion on the roads leading to Lahore Airport.

Structure[edit]

LHE is fitted with all the essentials for domestic and international flights. The information below is correct as of September 2020.[13]

Apron[edit]

7 air bridges with PSS & APSS facilities.

23 remote parking stands.

Runway[edit]

Two parallel runways one concrete the other asphalt.

Runway 36R/18L: 3,360 meters long, 46 meters wide. Max capacity: Boeing 747.

Runway 36L/18R: 2,743 meters long, 46 meters wide. Max capacity: Boeing 747.

Parallel taxi way for rapid entry/exit.

Instrument Landing System Category-II and ILS CAT-III on RWY 36R.[14]

Navigational Aids: DVOR/DME/TDME, NDB, OM, MM

Airport services[edit]

Pakistan State Oil provides fuel services to all airlines flying out of the airport. (Jet A-100)

Fire fighting and Rescue Services. Category: 9

FIDS systems located in the lounges and briefing concourses showing television programmes and flight information.

Airport Mosque, with five times daily and Jumma prayers, located outside the airport left-hand side of the terminal building.

CAA Porter services and Metro cab services are available.

Custom and Immigration for international flights.

Cargo and luggage wrapping services.

Passenger assistance services (upon request).

ATMs provided by MCB and Habib Bank Limited. The MCB ATM is linked to MasterCard; the Habib Bank is linked to Visa and Mastercard. Both are linked to China UnionPay and to the domestic 1LINK, MNET and PayPak switches. Standard Chartered Bank also offers two offsite ATMs within 1 km radius of the airport.

Ground handling agents[edit]

Pakistan International Airlines.

Shaheen Airport Services (SAPS).

Royal Airport Services (RAS).

Gerry's DNATA Ground Handling & Cargo.

Additional[edit]

Airfield Restrictions: None

Airlines and destinations[edit]

Passenger[edit]

Airlines Destinations

Air Arabia Ras Al Khaimah

airblue Abu Dhabi, Dubai–International, Jeddah, Karachi, Ras Al Khaimah,Sharjah

AirSial Karachi[15]

British Airways London–Heathrow

China Southern Airlines Guangzhou,[16] Ürümqi

Emirates Dubai–International

Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi

FlyBaghdad Baghdad

Flynas Jeddah, Riyadh
 Gulf Air Bahrain
 Jazeera Airways Kuwait
 Kuwait Airways Kuwait
 Mahan Air Mashhad, Tehran–Imam Khomeini
 Malindo Air Kuala Lumpur–International
 Oman Air Muscat
 Pakistan International Airlines Abu Dhabi, Bahrain,[17] Baku, Beijing–Capital, Dammam,
 Doha, Dubai–International, Gassim, Gilgit, Islamabad, Jeddah, Karachi, London–Heathrow,
 Manchester, Medina, Muscat, Quetta, Riyadh, Salalah, Skardu, Toronto–Pearson
 Qatar Airways Doha
 Saudia Riyadh, Jeddah, Medina
 SaudiGulf Airlines Dammam
 Serene Air Karachi, Quetta, Dubai–International , Sharjah
 SriLankan Airlines Colombo–Bandaranaike
 Thai Airways Bangkok–Suvarnabhumi
 Turkish Airlines Istanbul
 Uzbekistan Airways Tashkent
 Virgin Atlantic London–Heathrow[18]
 Cargo[edit]

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Airlines Destinations
 DHL Aviation Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Bagram[19]
 FitsAir Colombo
 Maximus Air Cargo Abu Dhabi, Dubai–International
 MNG Airlines Abu Dhabi, Kabul
 Qatar Airways Cargo Doha
 SriLankan Cargo Colombo–Bandaranaike
 TCS Couriers Dubai–International, Karachi
 YTO Cargo Airlines Lanzhou[20]
 Statistics[edit]

The following table provides details of the major traffic flows out of Lahore in terms of passenger numbers, aircraft movements, cargo and mail. Note that the Civil Aviation Authority of Pakistan operates with fiscal years starting on July and ending in June of next year. The results were collected from the Civil Aviation Authority of Pakistan website.:^[21]
 Fiscal Year Aircraft movements Passengers (Intl & Domestic) Cargo handled (M. Tons) Mail handled (M. Tons)

2006	30,991	2,779,223	66,643	1,582
2007	29,298	3,018,220	75,816	1,713
2008	30,299	3,217,844	76,030	1,113
2009	24,804	3,506,262	84,798	1,739

2010 31,093 3,459,211 80,308 1,449
 2011 30,592 3,680,436 77,057 1,544
 2012 31,498 4,122,009 91,015 1,121
 2013 29,942 4,529,682 89,376 1,348
 2014 29,896 4,606,767 83,715 250
 2015 34,619 4,876,129 88,750 239
 2016 38,924 4,989,462 98,254 302
 2017 39,228 5,031,857 105,019 261
 2018 32,304 4,490,182 87,969 190

Busiest routes at Allama Iqbal International Airport (by number of flights weekly)

Rank City Country Number of flights Airlines

- 1 Karachi Pakistan 61 airblue, Pakistan International Airlines, Serene Air, AirSial
- 2 Jeddah Saudi Arabia 33 airblue, Pakistan International Airlines, Saudia
- 3 Dubai United Arab Emirates 26 airblue, Emirates, Pakistan International Airlines
- 4 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates 22 airblue, Etihad Airways, Pakistan International Airlines
- 5 Doha Qatar 21 Qatar Airways
- 6 Islamabad Pakistan 17 Pakistan International Airlines
- 7 Muscat Oman 16 Oman Air, Pakistan International Airlines
- 8 Dammam Saudi Arabia 12 Flynas, Pakistan International Airlines, SaudiGulf Airlines
- 9 Riyadh Saudi Arabia 10 Flynas, Pakistan International Airlines, Saudia
- 10 Kuwait City Kuwait 09 Jazeera Airways, Kuwait Airways

Awards and recognitions[edit]

Allama Iqbal International Airport was ranked the world's leading airport by Singapore Airlines in-service performance in 2006.[22]

See also[edit]

Airlines of Pakistan

List of airports in Pakistan

Shaheen Airport Services

Transport in Pakistan