

PIA formally handed over to Arif Habib-led consortium

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Dhaka: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has been officially handed over to the consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation, marking a major milestone in the government's ongoing privatization program.

The transaction documents were signed by representatives of the Government of Pakistan and the Arif Habib-led consortium, formally completing the transfer of the national flag carrier to private ownership.

Under the new arrangement, the consortium will assume responsibility for reviving PIA's operations, modernizing its fleet, and executing a turnaround strategy aimed at restoring profitability and competitiveness across domestic and international markets.

The new owners plan to expand PIA's fleet to 38 aircraft from the current 18 and recruit skilled personnel to support operational growth.

As part of the agreement, the consortium is barred from terminating employees for one year, during which existing staff will be evaluated based on performance.

The privatization follows the federal government's decision last month to sell a 75 percent stake in PIA for PKR 135 billion, equivalent to USD 482.5 million, as part of efforts to meet conditions set by the International Monetary Fund.

The ownership structure includes Arif Habib Corporation and Fatima Fertilizer Limited with a combined 25 percent stake, Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited with 25 percent, and another 25 percent jointly held by AKD Group, City Schools, and Lake City Holdings.

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