

## Ombudsman's team inspects arrangements at Islamabad airport

**By our correspondent**

ISLAMABAD: Following numerous complaints from domestic and international passengers regarding Islamabad International Airport, a federal ombudsman inspection team visited the airport on Wednesday to evaluate the performance of airport personnel and address procedural issues, particularly the functioning of the joint search counters.

The ombudsman formed an inspection team in response to the complaints received from passengers at Islamabad International Airport.

The team conducted the visit to assess the effectiveness of the airport personnel and investigate procedural matters, with a specific focus on the joint search counters.

Consultations were held with representatives from the Airport Security Force (ASF), Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), and Customs. It was observed that, given the available resources, the assigned tasks were being satisfactorily carried out by these entities.

The input provided by these agencies for enhancing the mechanisms was duly noted for further action by the respective authorities.

The inspection team also visited the national and international lounges, the CIP (commercially important person) lounges, the baggage claim area, immigration

counters, health services, the airport security office, and other relevant agency counters.

The team directed the installation of CCTV cameras at the joint search desks of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), ANF, ASF, and Customs.

Furthermore, instructions were given to the administrative staff to display billboards at all counters, providing information in Urdu and English regarding prohibited items. The federal ombudsman had received complaints of unlawful solicitation of money from passengers. The inspection team directed the airport management to conduct an inquiry into these activities and submit a report accordingly.

The team also noticed the absence of a representative from the ministry of religious affairs and directed the ministry concerned to ensure the presence of their representative at the One Window Facilitation Desk (OWFD) during Hajj flights.

It was also brought to the team's attention that the check-in staff was requesting passengers to provide a printed copy of their e-reservations. To address this issue, it was decided that the airport management would install a printer at the counter to facilitate passengers. Additionally, the team recommended the inclusion of a pamphlet, displaying a list of prohibited items, to be

attached to tickets and displayed on screens throughout the airport for passenger convenience.

The team also acknowledged the unavailability of the "Visa Protection Stamp," which is necessary for the convenience of traveling immigrants. They directed for its immediate availability.

The team visited the One Window Facilitation Desk (OWFD), established under the federal ombudsman's direction, to assist overseas Pakistanis. The desk includes representatives from all 12 Federal Agencies who are present round-the-clock to address and resolve passenger complaints on the spot.

Airport officials informed the team that, as per the ombudsman's directive, separate counters for senior citizens, females, and diplomats have been designated during the check-in and visa control processes.

Most complaints from overseas Pakistani immigrants were related to mishandling and loss of baggage, delays in passport control, and unnecessary harassment by the narcotics control officials stationed at the airport.

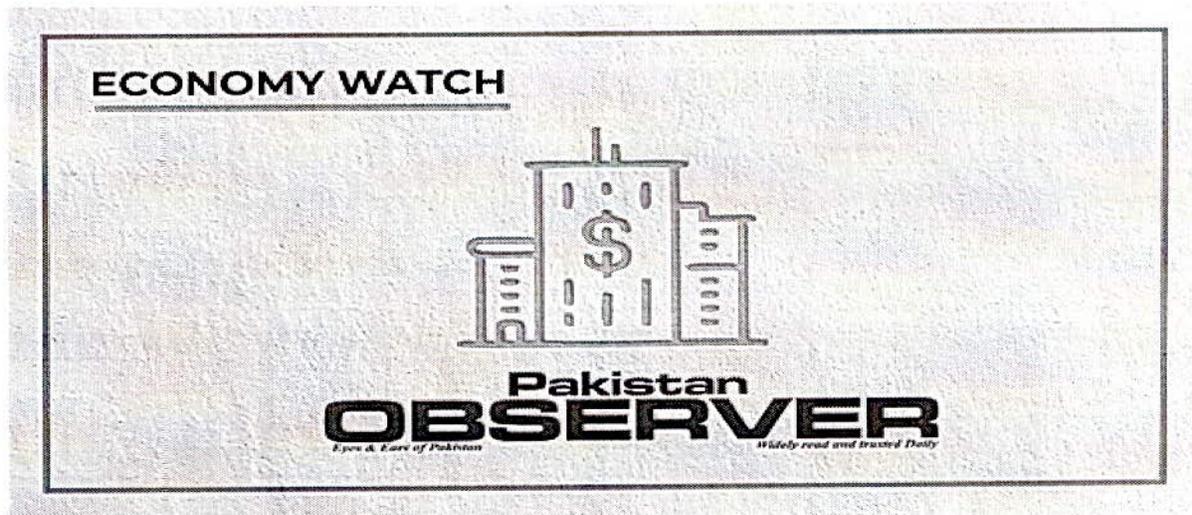
At the conclusion of the visit, a joint meeting was held with the heads of all relevant agencies to finalise recommendations aimed at facilitating overseas Pakistanis.

The inspection team would submit a report to the federal ombudsman on Friday.

# Ombudsman's team inspect facilities for expats at Islamabad Airport

By  
**News desk**

June 16, 2023



The team visited the airport on Thursday to assess the functioning of the personnel deputed at the airport as well as to look into the procedural issues, especially working of the joint search counters.

Consultations were held with the ASF, ANF and Customs representatives. It was observed that within the resources available, the task assigned to them was being carried out satisfactorily. Their input for improving the mechanism was noted for further action by the concerned authorities.

Inspection Team also visited National and International and CIP lounges, baggage claim area, immigration counters, health services, Airport Security office, and other related agencies counters.

The team directed to install CCTV cameras at joint search desks of the FIA, ANF, ASF and Customs.

The directions for displaying bill boards disseminating information for passengers in Urdu and English regarding prohibited items be displayed at all counters were passed to administrative staff. The Wafaqi Mohtasib received some complaints of demanding unlawful money from the passengers. The inspection team directed the airport management to conduct inquiry against such elements involved in this activity and submit report accordingly. The team also observed the absence of representative of Ministry of Religious Affairs and directed the concerned Ministry to make their representative available at OWFD during Haj flights.

It was also brought into the notice of inspection team that the check-in staff was asking for the printed copy of the E- reservation for which it was decided that the Airport Management will install printer at the counter to facilitate the passengers. It was also recommended by the team that a pamphlet showing the list of prohibited items be attached with ticket and the same may also be displayed on screens at the airport, to facilitate passengers.