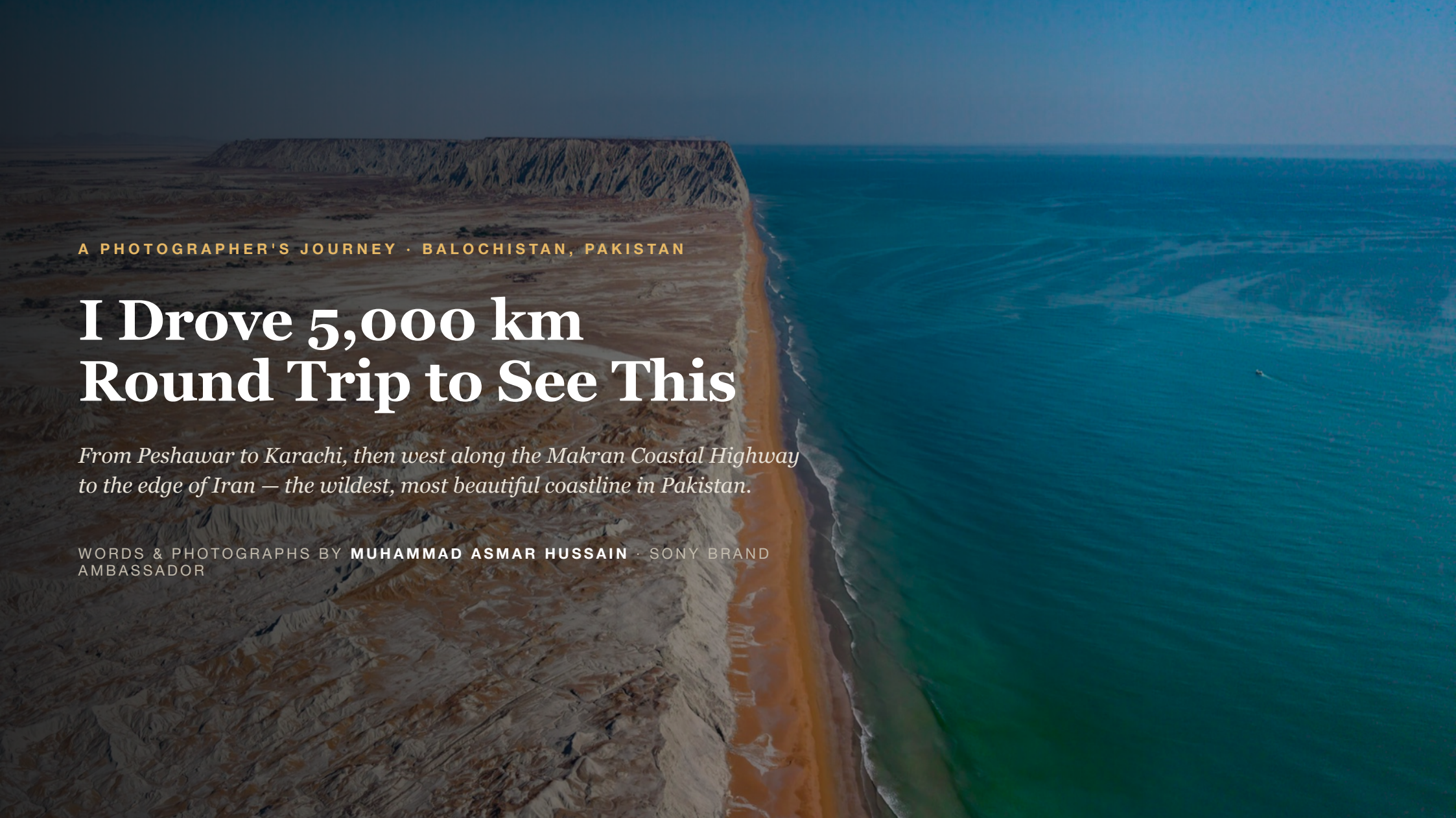


An aerial photograph of a dramatic coastline. On the left, a vast, arid, brownish-grey landscape leads to a prominent, flat-topped cliff that extends into the sea. The cliff face is textured with vertical erosion patterns. To the right of the cliff, a narrow strip of golden sand beach separates the land from the turquoise waters of the ocean. The water shows varying shades of blue and green, with some white foam from waves breaking near the shore. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

A PHOTOGRAPHER'S JOURNEY · BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

I Drove 5,000 km Round Trip to See This

*From Peshawar to Karachi, then west along the Makran Coastal Highway
to the edge of Iran — the wildest, most beautiful coastline in Pakistan.*

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MUHAMMAD ASMAR HUSSAIN** · SONY BRAND
AMBASSADOR

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Some journeys you measure in kilometres, and some in the light you were lucky enough to stand inside. This one was both — five thousand kilometres, from Peshawar down the length of Pakistan to Karachi, and then west along the **Makran Coastal Highway** until the road all but ran out at the Iranian border.

We spent our first night on the coast at the **Khoj Resort on Hub Beach**, just past Karachi. The next morning the real journey began: the N-10, hugging the Arabian Sea for 700 kilometres through a landscape that feels less like a country and more like another planet.





Blue hour in the Hingol badlands. As the sun drops, the ridges turn to indigo and the sky to rose — one of the most otherworldly sights on the whole coast.



HINGOL NATIONAL PARK

The badlands where the road enters another world

A few hours west of Karachi the highway plunges into **Hingol National Park**, the largest in Pakistan. The mountains here are soft rock — mud and sandstone — carved by wind and rare rain into spires and fluted walls. Somewhere among them stand the **Princess of Hope** and the **Sphinx of Balochistan**, and the **Chandragup mud volcanoes** that bubble grey mud beside the pilgrims' road to the Hinglaj Mata temple.

KUND MALIR

Where the desert meets a turquoise sea

Then the badlands break open and there it is: the sea.

Kund Malir is the beach every photograph of this coast has promised — golden sand, water in impossible greens and blues, the desert mountains falling straight into the surf. I flew the drone at mid-morning, when the high sun turns the shallows to stained glass and a single truck on a kilometre of empty sand becomes the only thing in the frame.





PASNI & ASTOLA ISLAND

A fishing harbour and a twilight moon

Further west lies **Pasni**, a working fishing harbour and the launch point for **Astola Island**, Pakistan's largest offshore island — a protected sanctuary of green turtles, sea snakes and nesting birds. I lingered into the blue hour, when the tide pulled back over the black reef and the sky turned to plum and rose beneath a rising moon.

GWADAR

Cliffs, a deep-water port, and the finest sunsets on the coast

Gwadar is the beating heart of the modern Makran coast — a deep-water port on a hammerhead peninsula beneath the long ridge of **Koh-e-Batil**. We stayed up on the hill at **PC Gwadar**, the two great bays falling away on either side. Climb the western cliffs at evening and the Arabian Sea opens out gold to the horizon, silent but for the wind.





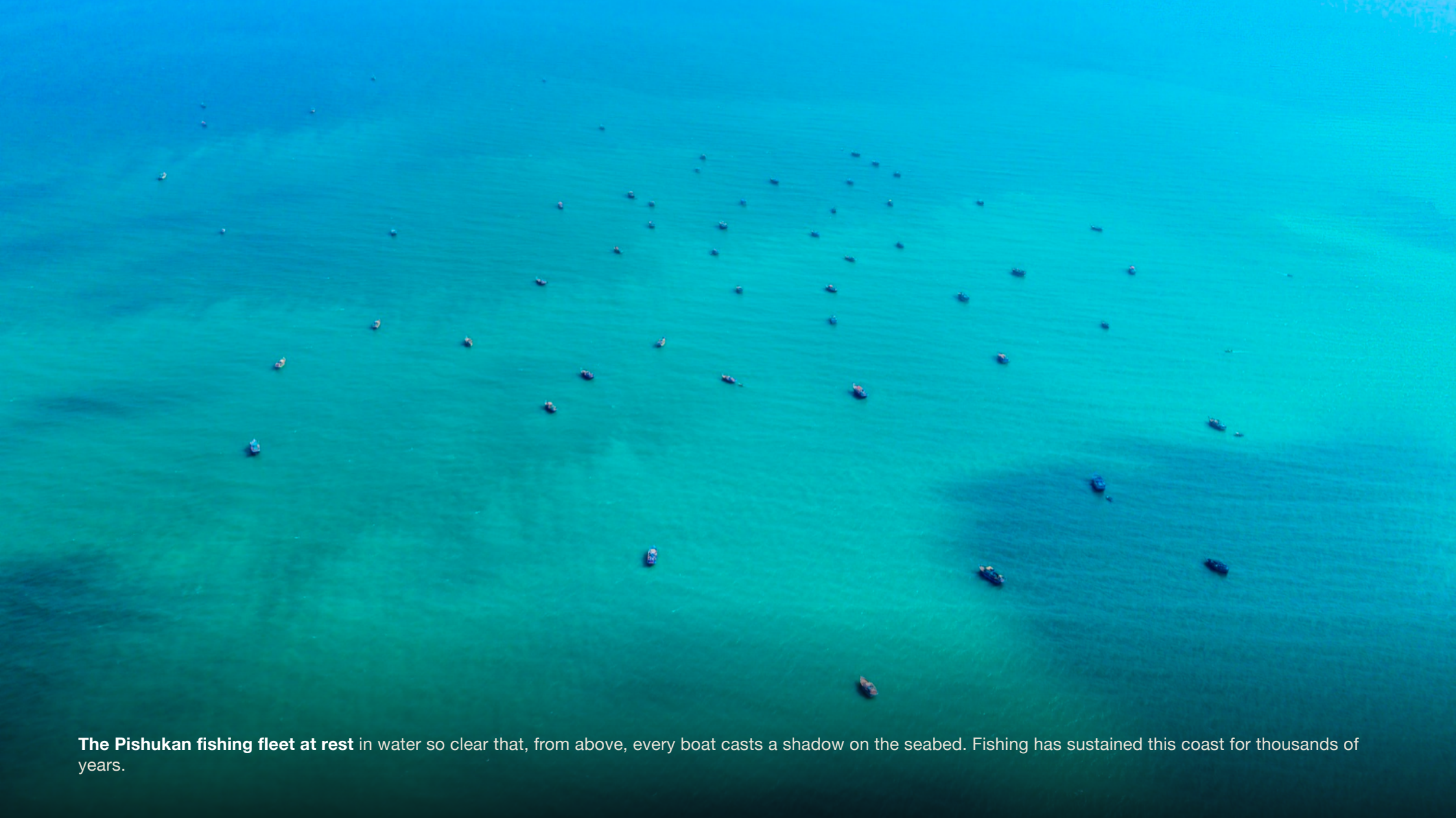
Sunset from the cliffs above Golden Beach, Gwadar. This is the light I drove five thousand kilometres for.



PISHUKAN

A hammerhead mountain over the sea

West of Gwadar the highway reaches **Pishukan** — a fishing town and a long, quiet beach sheltered beneath a dramatic flat-topped headland, a hammerhead peninsula that juts into the sea and glows rose-gold at dusk. From the air the bay reads as four clean bands of colour: desert, cliff, sand and turquoise water.



The Pishukan fishing fleet at rest in water so clear that, from above, every boat casts a shadow on the seabed. Fishing has sustained this coast for thousands of years.

GANZ BEACH

Where the badlands run into the sea

A little further on lies **Ganz Beach**, where orange and white eroded badlands run straight into the deep blue of the Arabian Sea. Low pale cliffs stand over the water like the ramparts of a fort, and from their edge the sea opens out to the horizon — one of the most striking meetings of desert and ocean on the entire coast.





JIWANI

To the edge of Iran

The road ends at **Jiwani**, a small windblown town on Gwadar Bay just fifteen kilometres from the Iranian border at Gabd — the very edge of the Pakistani coast, where the highway effectively runs out and the frontier begins. Jiwani holds some of the healthiest mangrove forests on the coast, and on its headland the ruins of a British WWII airfield still stand.



A coastal river bends through the badlands at last light, the wild interior of Balochistan glowing behind the sea on the road back from the border.

PLAN YOUR TRIP

The Makran Coastal Highway road trip

BEST TIME

October to March — mild, dry and clear. Summer (May–August) is brutally hot with cyclone risk.

HOW LONG

6–8 days to see Hingol, shoot the beaches at good light and reach Jiwani.

WHERE WE STAYED

Khoj Resort on Hub Beach (first night out of Karachi) and PC Gwadar — the Pearl-Continental on the hilltop above the town.

THE ROUTE

Karachi → Kund Malir / Hingol (~4 hrs) → Ormara → Pasni → Gwadar (a full day more) → Pishukan, Golden Beach, Ganz → Jiwani (~2 hrs past Gwadar). From Peshawar, add the long haul through Sindh — my full round trip came to almost **5,000 km**.

PERMITS & SAFETY

Balochistan has security checkpoints and some areas need an NOC arranged in advance. Travel by day, carry extra fuel and water, and go with someone who knows the coast.

THE COAST IS WORTH THE DISTANCE

Five thousand kilometres is a long way to drive for light on rock and water. It was worth every one of them.

FROM THE FIELD

Photography tips

- Shoot the **badlands at sunrise and sunset** — flat midday light kills the texture in the eroded rock.
- Midday is best for the **water** — the high sun is what turns the shallows that electric turquoise.
- Bring a **drone** if you legally can. This coast was made to be seen from above.
- A **tripod and ND filter** unlock the long-exposure sea; pack a wide lens for the cliffs and a telephoto for the badland ridges.

Muhammad Asmar Hussain is an award-winning Pakistani landscape photographer and a Sony Brand Ambassador, featured by National Geographic and exhibited in galleries across 15 countries. Every photograph in this essay is available as a hand-signed fine-art print, and he leads private photography tours across Pakistan.

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