

January - March 2025



Caesars Xplore The Edge

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Latest News On Kuwait - 3 - 4

GCC News - 5

Aviation News - 6 - 8

International News - 10

International Politics - 11

Current Natural Disasters - 12

Health Tips - 13

Caesars Showcase - 15- 16

Useful Travel Tips - 17

Editorial - 18



PM Modi hails diaspora in Kuwait, says India has potential to become skill capital of world

On the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Kuwait in 43 years, Narendra Modi on Saturday (December 21, 2024) hailed the diaspora's contribution to global growth and said India has the potential to become the "skill capital of the world." Modi was addressing a large gathering of the Indian community at an event called 'Hala Modi' at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Sports Complex in the city on the first day of his two-day visit.

Earlier after arrival, Mr. Modi met with a 101-year-old former Indian Foreign Service officer, two Kuwaiti nationals who have translated and published iconic epics Ramayana and Mahabharata in Arabic, and visited a labour camp with a workforce of around 1,500 Indian nationals.

He also attended the inauguration of the Arabian Gulf Cup football tournament.

The last Indian Prime Minister to visit Kuwait was Indira Gandhi in 1981.

"Every year, hundreds of Indians come to Kuwait. You have added an Indian touch to Kuwaiti society. You have filled the canvas of Kuwait with the colours of Indian skills. You have mixed the essence of India's talent, technology, and tradition in Kuwait," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Modi expressed happiness about the presence of Indians from diverse corners of the country in the gulf nation and called it a "mini-Hindustan." India's StartUps, FinTech, smart technology and green technology can develop cutting-edge solutions for every need of Kuwait, he said.

"India is well-equipped to meet the world's demand for skilled talent ...India also has the potential to become the skill capital of the world," Mr. Modi emphasised and underlined that for many decades to come, India will remain the youngest country in the world.

Thanking the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his gracious invitation, Modi stated that it was after 43 years that an Indian Prime Minister was visiting Kuwait to strengthen and solidify the age-old friendship.

"The relationship between India and Kuwait is one of civilisation, the sea, affection, trade, and commerce. India and Kuwait are located on two shores of the Arabian Sea. It's not just diplomacy that connects us, but also the bonds of the heart," the Prime Minister said to a loud cheer from the gathering.

"Today, personally, this moment is very special for me. For you all, coming to India takes four hours, but for the prime minister of India, it took four decades," he told the Indian gathering.

The Prime Minister said that in the coming decades, India and Kuwait will become significant partners in prosperity.

"While the people of Kuwait are dedicated to building a 'New Kuwait', the people of India are striving to create a developed India by 2047 ...



Kuwait, through trade and innovation, wants to be a dynamic economy. India is also focusing on innovation and strengthening its economy,"

Mr. Modi said. "India has the skill, technology, innovation and manpower that 'New Kuwait' needs." The Prime Minister extended an invitation to diaspora members to participate in Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Maha Kumbh to be held in India in January 2025.

He then listed all the festivals to be celebrated across India in coming weeks and invited the diaspora to India for participating in those festivities and then "witness the Republic Day celebrations before returning." "There was a time when the legendary actor Dilip Kumar inaugurated the first Indian restaurant here.

But the true essence of Indian cuisines can only be experienced by visiting the country. So bring your Kuwaiti friends along!" More than 200 Indian associations in Kuwait actively organise socio-cultural and humanitarian initiatives, further reinforcing the ties between the two nations.

As the first programme of his visit to Kuwait, Mr. Modi visited the Gulf Spic Labour Camp in Mina Abdullah area of Kuwait with a workforce of around 1,500 Indian nationals.

He interacted with a cross-section of Indian workers from different states of India, enquired about their well-being, and also sat at a table with some of them when snacks were served.

Mr. Modi's visit comes months after over 45 Indians were killed in a devastating fire in a building housing foreign workers in southern Kuwait's Mangaf locality in June.

"The visit to the labour camp is symbolic of the importance attached by the Prime Minister to the

welfare of Indian workers abroad," an MEA statement said.

Indians constitute 21% (1 million) of the total population of Kuwait and 30 per cent of its workforce (approx 9 lakhs). Indian workers top the Private Sector as well as domestic sector (DSW) work force list, according to the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

Mr. Modi also met two Kuwait nationals, in a post on X, Mr. Modi complimented Abdullah Al Baroun and Abdul Lateef Al Neseef "for their efforts in translating and publishing these epics," and said, "Their initiative highlights the global popularity of Indian culture."

While Al Baroun translated both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Al Neseef managed their publication in Arabic, enabling a wider audience in the Arab world to engage with India's rich cultural heritage.

Upon his arrival at the hotel, Mr. Modi met with 101-year-old former IFS officer Mangal Sain Handa. "Delighted to have met Shri @MangalSainHanda Ji in Kuwait this afternoon. I admire his contribution to India and his passion for India's development," Modi posted on X along with photos.

In his departure statement, Mr. Modi said his talks with top Kuwaiti leadership would be an opportunity to chalk out a roadmap for a futuristic partnership between India and Kuwait.

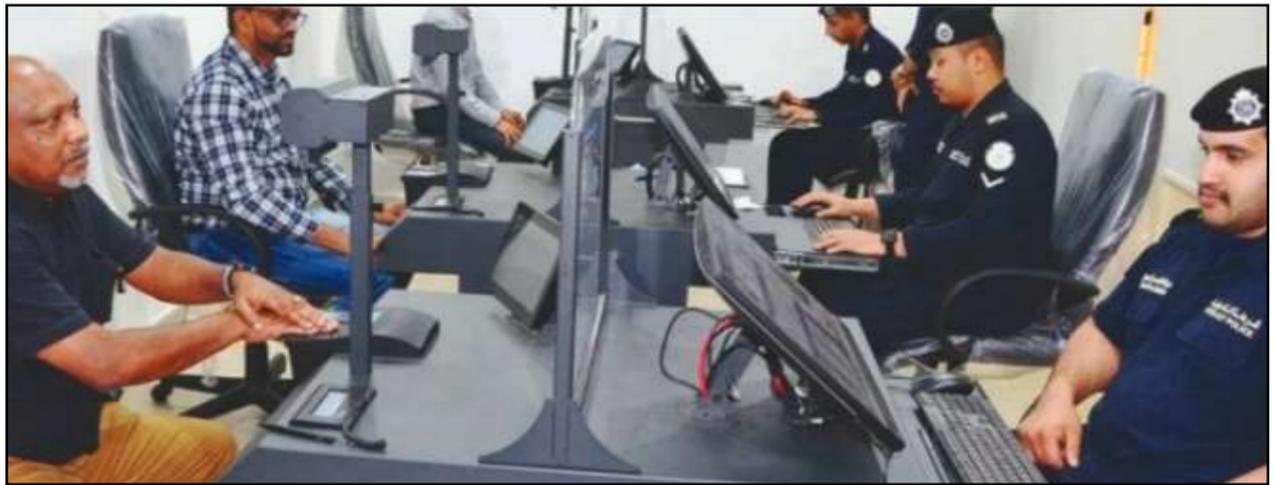
"We deeply value the historical connection with Kuwait that has been nurtured over generations. We are not just strong trade and energy partners but also have shared interest in peace, security, stability and prosperity in the West Asia region," he said.

New Courtesy: www.thehindu.com

Kuwait Expats Face Travel Ban Without Biometric Fingerprinting Compliance

The Ministry of Interior has announced that expats in Kuwait who have not completed the biometric fingerprinting process will be barred from traveling, starting January 1, 2025. Those who have failed to comply will face restrictions not only on entry and exit but also on government and banking transactions. These restrictions will remain in effect until the biometric fingerprinting is completed.

First Lieutenant Talal Al-Khalidi of the General Department of Criminal Evidence revealed during a radio interview that over 3.5 million citizens and expats have already undergone biometric fingerprinting. Among the targeted groups, approximately 956,000 citizens out of 972,253 have completed the process, while 16,000 remain pending. For expats, 2,504,000 out of 2,685,000 have complied, leaving 181,718 yet to complete their fingerprinting. Additionally, 66,000 out of 148,000 stateless individuals (Bedouns) have undergone the



process, while 82,000 are still pending.

To accommodate those who have not yet complied, the General Department of Criminal Evidence has established eight centers operating throughout the week, capable of handling up to 10,000 appointments

daily. The process takes less than three minutes and requires prior appointment booking via the designated application.

New Courtesy: www.arabtimesonline.com

Cabinet approves 15% tax on multinationals

Kuwait's Cabinet has approved a draft decree-law imposing a 15 percent tax on multinational companies operating in more than one country, in line with global tax standards. The new law aims to combat tax evasion and prevent the leakage of tax revenues to other jurisdictions. It is set to come into effect on January 1, 2025. The decision was made during the Cabinet's weekly meeting held on Tuesday, December 24, 2024, at Bayan Palace, chaired by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

As part of ongoing efforts to improve infrastructure and reduce waiting times for housing, Cabinet has tasked the Ministry of Public Works to coordinate with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare and other relevant entities to expedite the

completion of contracts for permanent sewage treatment plants. These plants will be built in residential cities, as well as in areas and neighborhoods currently under development or planned for future construction. This initiative aims to ensure the timely delivery of these critical infrastructure projects.

The Cabinet also reviewed a presentation by the Minister of State for Communications, Omar Al-Omar, on the progress of the framework agreement between the State of Kuwait and Google Cloud. The agreement covers various initiatives aimed at improving digital infrastructure. Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Al-Sabah, head of the supervisory committee, and committee member Mohammad Al-Rashed provided updates on the projects underway, noting

some challenges in their implementation. The Cabinet directed the relevant ministers and government entities to cooperate with the committee to resolve any obstacles and requested quarterly progress reports.

In terms of diplomatic initiatives, the Cabinet discussed recent agreements with India, including a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defense cooperation, an executive sports program for 2025–2028, and a cultural exchange program for 2025–2029. Additionally, the Cabinet reviewed a framework agreement to establish the International Solar Alliance, which aims to promote global solar energy cooperation.

New Courtesy: <https://kuwaittimes.com>

Kuwait launches long-awaited Ya Hala shopping festival

The Standing Committee for the Celebration of National Holidays and Occasions announced on Monday the organization of the Ya Hala Shopping Festival from January 21 to March 31, as part of the celebration of national holidays and events in the country.

This announcement was made during a ceremony held by the committee at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. The event was attended by Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, who is also the Chairman of the Permanent Committee for the Celebration of National Holidays and Events, along with Deputy Minister of Information Dr Nasser Muhaisen, Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry Ziad Al-Najim, Chairman of the Kuwait Shopping Festival Faisal Al-Shayji, representatives from participating companies and festival sponsors, and a number of interested and influential individuals.

70 days of festivities

The “Ya Hala” festival will feature 70 days of promotions, discounts, and giveaways from participating businesses, including malls, retail stores, e-commerce platforms, and more. Shoppers will receive one coupon for every KD 10 spent, giving them a chance to win from a total prize pool of over \$8 million, including 120 luxury cars.

The festival will also include various events such as drone shows, fireworks, and special hospitality for Gulf visitors, according to a KUNA report. In addition, it aims to showcase Kuwait's cultural heritage and highlight key landmarks.

In his speech during the ceremony, Dr Nasser Muhaisen, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information and Vice Chairman of the Standing

Committee, emphasized that the committee works diligently to provide comprehensive events, guided by expert teams, government bodies, and distinguished national talent. He highlighted the main objectives of the committee: promoting domestic tourism, supporting small businesses, creating new economic opportunities, and enhancing public-private collaboration.



Public-private partnership

Dr Muhaisen noted that, thanks to the support of Kuwait's leadership, the committee continues to work towards enhancing Kuwait's position as a leading commercial and cultural center in the region. Dr Muhaisen referenced the successful organization of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji Zain 26) as an example of the positive outcomes from public and private sector collaboration.

Dr Muhaisen pointed out that the Standing Committee

had received many outstanding initiatives and was carefully reviewing them to select the most suitable ones. These initiatives are being referred to the relevant authorities for further action in line with the applicable regulations. He also mentioned several initiatives that had already been selected for implementation, including the Ya Hala Shopping Festival, the Al-Mutlaa Views Festival, the Sports

Competition in Bnaider, and the Light City in Subiya, in addition to various activities organized by tourism projects and other state entities during this period.

Ziad Al-Najim, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, echoed support for national festivals, emphasizing their role in revitalizing the economy and attracting tourism. He praised the collaboration between the public and private sectors in driving successful initiatives.

New Courtesy: <https://kuwaittimes.com/>

Qatar, Antigua and Barbuda hold bilateral talks on civil aviation

A bilateral talks session between the civil aviation authorities of the State of Qatar and Antigua and Barbuda was held on Tuesday.

The Qatari side was headed by In Charge of Managing Qatar Civil Aviation Authority Mohamed bin Faleh Al Hajri, while the Antigua and Barbuda side was headed by Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investment HE Charles Fernandez.

The talks included discussing the terms of signing an agreement to open the airspace between the two countries, ways to enhance cooperation in the field of air transport, and exchanging views on several topics of common interest in the field of civil aviation.

New Courtesy: <https://www.zawya.com>



Kuwait launches new international telecommunication portal

KUWAIT Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced launching a new international corridor that connects Europe with the Gulf "Iraq route", in partnership with Zajil Telecom.

In a statement to KUNA on Wednesday, the authority said that the new route provides a full land

passing through Iraq.

On his part, the authority's acting president Abdullah Al-Ajmi said the "Iraq route" will enhance Kuwait's image as a regional pioneer in safe digital communication and will also support developing the country's infrastructure and economic growth. He noted that local telecommunication companies



alternative to marine route for faster connection, as marine routes service gets affected by maintenance work.

The cable has a capacity of 100 gb, which will be a trusted option for big companies and international service providers, the authority said, adding that it will allow a faster and safer transferring of information from Kuwait to Europe,

have already started using the new land route to provide faster service to their clients.

Launching the route was executed in cooperation with the Iraqi Informatics and Telecommunication Public Company (ITPC), he added.

New Courtesy: <https://www.zawya.com>

Kuwait's FM Assistant urges the participation of women in all sectors

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Assistant for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah emphasized on Monday the essence to enhance women leadership and empowerment across all sectors, especially the economic fields.

This statement made by Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah to KUNA, during her participation in the "World Businesswomen Forum and Exhibition in the Kingdom of Bahrain, under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa President of the Supreme Council for Women. Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah stated that the forum provides an opportunity for businesswomen to exchange expertise and ideas, fostering holistic and sustainable development across various sectors. She also praised the exceptional preparations and coordination of the forum by Bahraini businesswomen, expressing her gratitude to the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting the event.



Association President Ahlam Janahi stated during the opening that the event is not only a platform for commercial and professional exchange but also an opportunity for women from diverse backgrounds to share success stories. She emphasized that women's

role in the economy is more critical than ever.

The four-day event features an exhibition of participating corporations and discussion sessions on various topics.

New Courtesy: <https://www.zawya.com>

GCC IPO momentum to extend into 2025

The GCC equity markets witnessed a surge in IPO activity during 2024, with a record 53 companies making their debut on regional exchanges.



According to Kuwait-based Kamco Invest, while the aggregate GCC index experienced marginal growth for the second consecutive year, driven by external factors like geopolitical tensions, declining oil prices, and rising interest rates, the IPO market remained resilient.

The GCC IPO market demonstrated strong demand from local investors in 2024, with many offerings significantly oversubscribed. Companies in niche sectors like software, healthcare, and utilities, boasting strong fundamentals and attractive dividend yields, often outperformed. Government privatisation initiatives, notably in Saudi Arabia and Oman, continued to fuel IPO activity.

Saudi Arabia led the pack in terms of the number of IPOs, with 42 companies listing on the Nomu Parallel Market and the Main Market. However, the UAE maintained its dominance in terms of IPO proceeds, raising \$6.2 billion. Oman significantly contributed to the overall proceeds with the successful listing of two state-owned energy firms, OQ Exploration & Production and OQ Base Industries, raising a combined \$2.5bn.

Looking ahead to 2025, the region boasts a robust pipeline of potential IPOs, featuring high-profile companies such as Flynas and Tabby in Saudi Arabia and Etihad Airways and Dubai Holdings in the UAE.

Globally, IPO activity declined for the third consecutive year, with both the number of deals and proceeds decreasing. While the Americas and Europe, the Middle East, India and Africa (EMEIA) regions witnessed growth, the Asia Pacific region experienced a significant decline. The US emerged as the top market in terms of IPO proceeds, while India led in terms of the number of deals.

New Courtesy: <https://www.zawya.com>

Risks to commercial aviation within Russia

In a statement on January 9, EASA said it updated the CZIB, adding Russia and its four flight information regions (FIR) to the list of potentially dangerous airspaces for civil aircraft operators.

According to the European aviation authority, the decision was made in order to “ensure maximum flight safety amid Russia’s ongoing illegal invasion of Ukraine.” The new CZIB replaced and broadened the scope of a previous CZIB, which was issued following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, urging operators not to operate within the airspace of Ukraine.

Now, EASA has warned airlines about potentially flying above Russia, including its key cities, Moscow and Saint Petersburg, arguing that civil aircraft can be unintentionally targeted above Russia “due to possible civil-military coordination deficiencies, and the potential for misidentification.”



“In particular, the activation of Russian air defence systems, capable of operating at all altitudes, in response to Ukrainian missile and drone launches, which have extended deep inside Russian territory, may have a direct impact on flight operations at several locations, including major international airports.”

The agency noted that most incidents have occurred in airspace not closed by Russia during drone attacks

or activation of air defense systems, posing a risk to flight operations. Additional risks come from GPS spoofing and jamming, particularly around the conflict zone areas.

“EASA recommends not to operate within the affected airspace of the Russian Federation located west of longitude 60° East at all altitudes and flight levels.”

New Courtesy: <https://simpleflying.com/>

How Emirates Is Becoming The 1st 'Autism Certified Airline'

Emirates announced that it has launched the process to become the world’s first ‘Autism Certified Airline (ACA),’ introducing new standards and services for customers with autism and sensory conditions throughout 2025 and beyond.

New services and standards

In a statement on January 9, Emirates announced that in 2025 and beyond, it will introduce new standards and services for passengers with autism and sensory conditions. This will ensure a more enjoyable and accessible travel experience.

For example, one such service is the digital aids known as sensory guides, which were developed as part of the audit conducted by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES)

The guides will empower customers to make informed decisions about the various environments they will encounter and plan according to their needs and preferences. They were created by conducting comprehensive facility audits across its locations in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE),



including Dubai International Airport (DXB), and its in-flight experience.

“Another development expected in 2025 will be the introduction of neurodiverse sensory products, for customers on Emirates flights - sensory fidget toys or aids that can encourage focus, help to reduce self-stimulatory behaviour and de-stress.”

By April 2024, the airline had already achieved a Certified Autism Center Designation for all four of its check-in facilities in Dubai, such as its dedicated hub in Terminal 3 at Dubai International. The airport was the first to receive the Certified Autism Center Designation in the world in December 2023.

New Courtesy: <https://simpleflying.com/>

IATA Director General Objects To EU Plans To Raise Airline Green Taxes

Willie Walsh, the Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), has called the European Union’s (EU) intentions to raise environmental taxes on airlines in the continent “bulls**t,” saying that this will not change the behavior of the worst polluters.

Polluter pays

Walsh’s comments came after the statements made by Wopke Hoekstra, the commissioner responsible for climate, net zero, and clean growth at the European Commission (EC), who told POLITICO that he thinks it is fair that the polluter pays principle will be applied to many of the EC’s new policies.

In response, Walsh told the publication that increasing taxes to address environmental concerns was “complete bulls**t.” The IATA executive questioned the move, saying that the money made from taxes would not help the industry reduce its environmental impact nor stop anyone from flying private jets, which, per passenger, are much worse in terms of their CO2 emissions.

According to a paper published by two US-based authors, “emissions per passenger are much higher for a private jet flight as compared to a commercial flight,” while CE Delft, a Dutch environmental consultancy, also concluded that flying privately has “significantly higher emissions per passenger kilometer than other modes of transport.”



Government overregulation

On multiple occasions, IATA and Walsh have pleaded with the European regulators to change their approach and increase their efforts to enable aviation to reduce its emissions, including through aiding the production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

On November 21, following the association’s Wings of Change Europe (WOCE) event, IATA issued a statement, reiterating its calls for the industry and governments to collaborate to draw up practical plans to make Europe’s aviation sector more competitive

and sustainable.

Walsh stated that Europe’s lawmakers have to understand that “its overregulation” is reducing the continent’s competitiveness on a global level, with the executive calling for a better approach to sustainability.

“Regulators need to understand that taxing people off planes will not reduce CO2. The planes will still fly, but we will be returning to the load factors of 20 or 30 years ago.”

New Courtesy: <https://simpleflying.com/>

India Eyes to Build 50 New Airports in Next 5 Years

According to reports, there are close to 140 airports in operation in India as of 2024.

Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu announced ambitious plans to construct 50 new airports within the next five years, with a strategic focus on establishing Delhi (DEL) as a major international aviation hub.

Speaking with ANI at the World Economic Forum 2025, Naidu emphasized India's commitment to expanding its aviation ecosystem through international partnerships and technological advancements.

The minister highlighted India's remarkable aviation sector growth, which has achieved an annual growth rate exceeding 10 percent over the past decade. India has already emerged as the third-largest domestic aviation network, attracting significant international interest from potential investors.

New Courtesy: <https://aviationa2z.com>



SpaceX Ship Explodes During Test Flight

An uncrewed vehicle operated by SpaceX exploded during a test flight on Thursday, temporarily disrupting air travel as pieces of it streaked across the sky. The seventh and latest SpaceX launch did not go as quite as planned Thursday due to an unexpected explosion of the Starship vessel's "upper stage," forcing flights to be diverted as debris plummeted through the sky over various islands.

The mishap comes after a promising start to what Elon Musk's company considers a "new generation" of the Starship spacecraft, which was designed to eventually carry astronauts to the moon



and beyond, lifting off into orbit. Addressing the explosion, Musk took to his social media platform, X, writing, "Preliminary indication is that we had an

oxygen/fuel leak in the cavity above the ship engine firewall that was large enough to build pressure in excess of the vent capacity." Musk promised fixes, adding that "nothing so far" warranted a delay in the next Starship launch.

SpaceX has designed the Starship launch system to be fully reusable and hopes to use it for deep-space exploration, heavy-lift launches and space tourism. The company has already sold two private trips around the moon on Starship, with NASA picking Starship to land its Artemis 3 astronauts on the moon by 2026.

New Courtesy: <https://www.reuters.com/>

South Korean Plane Crash Kills at Least 179

The flight, operated by South Korea's Jeju Air, had departed from Bangkok with 175 passengers and six crew members aboard. The deadliest air accident ever in South Korea, when an airliner belly-landed and skidded off the end of the runway, erupting in a fireball as it slammed into a wall at Muan



International Airport.

Jeju Air (089590.KS), opens new tab flight 7C2216, arriving from the Thai capital Bangkok with 175 passengers and six crew on board, was trying to land shortly after 9 a.m. (0000 GMT) at the airport in the south of the country, South Korea's transport ministry said.

NCLT orders liquidation of Go First Airways

NCLT has ordered the liquidation of GoAir after lenders' request as the airline, grounded since May 2023, failed to revive under insolvency laws. GoAir owes over Rs 6,521 crore to creditors like Central Bank of India and Deutsche Bank. Starting operations in 2005, it joins the list of defunct Indian airlines including Air Deccan and Kingfisher.

NCLT on Monday ordered liquidation of GoAir (Go First), following a request from lenders of the bankrupt airline. The Wadia Group airline had stopped flying in May 2023 when it filed a voluntary plea for insolvency. Attempts to revive it under

Spirit Airlines Is Filing for Bankruptcy. Here's Why

Spirit Airlines said Monday that it has filed for bankruptcy protection and will attempt to reboot as it struggles to recover from the pandemic-caused swoon in travel, stiffer competition from bigger carriers, and a failed attempt to sell the airline to JetBlue.

Spirit, the biggest U.S. budget airline, filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition after working out terms with bondholders. The airline has lost more than \$2.5 billion since the start of 2020 and faces looming debt

payments totaling more than \$1 billion in 2025 and 2026. Spirit told customers Monday they can book flights and use frequent-flyer points as they ordinarily would, and said employees and vendors would continue getting paid.

The airline said it received commitments for a \$350 million equity investment from existing bondholders and will convert \$795 million of their debt into stock in the restructured company. The bondholders will also extend a \$300 million loan that, combined with



The airline said it expects to continue operating

Spirit's remaining cash, will help the airline get through the restructuring.



India's bankruptcy laws did not materialise and lenders had sought to liquidate the company's assets in last Aug. GoAir owes over Rs 6,521 crore to

creditors, including Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, IDBI Bank and Deutsche Bank. Allowing the committee of creditors' application for Go First's liquidation, A NCLT comprising judicial member Mahendra Khandelwal and technical member Sanjeev Ranjan bench directed that Shailendra Ajmera, the airline's resolution professional, be relieved from that responsibility. Go First, which had started flying in 2005 around the same time as IndiGo and SpiceJet, flew for 18 years before it joined the long list of defunct Indian airlines that includes Air Deccan, Kingfisher and Jet Airways.

Missiles Are Now the Biggest Killer of Airline Passengers

Passenger flights are extraordinarily safe—except near conflicts, which are spreading

Accidental missile attacks on commercial airliners have become the leading cause of aviation fatalities in recent years (Warning: source paywalled; alternative source), driven by rising global conflicts and the proliferation of advanced anti-aircraft weaponry. Despite improvements in aviation safety overall, inconsistent risk assessments, political complexities, and rapid military escalations make protecting civilian flights in conflict zones increasingly difficult. The Wall Street Journal reports: The crash Wednesday of an Azerbaijan Airlines jetliner in Kazakhstan, if officially confirmed as a mid-air attack, would be the third major fatal downing of a passenger jet linked to armed conflict since 2014, according to the Flight Safety Foundation's Aviation Safety Network, a global database of accidents and incidents. The tally would bring to more than 500 the number of deaths from such attacks during that period. Preliminary results of Azerbaijan's investigation into the crash indicate the plane was hit by a Russian anti-aircraft missile, or shrapnel from it, said people briefed on the probe.

"It adds to the worrying catalog of shootdowns now," said Andy Blackwell, an aviation risk adviser at security specialist ISARR and former head of security at Virgin Atlantic. "You've got the conventional threats, from terrorists and terrorist groups, but now you've got this accidental risk as well." No other cause of aviation fatalities on commercial airliners comes close to shootdowns over those years, according to ASN data. The deadliness of such attacks is a dramatic shift: In the preceding 10 years, there were no fatal shootdowns of scheduled commercial passenger flights, ASN data show. The trend highlights the difficulty -- if not impossibility -- of protecting civilian aviation in war zones, even for



rigorous aviation regulators, because of the politics of war. Early last century similar woes plagued sea travel, when belligerents targeted ocean transport.

Increasing civilian aviation deaths from war also reflect both a growing number of armed conflicts internationally and the increasing prevalence of powerful anti-aircraft weaponry. If a missile was indeed the cause of this week's disaster, it would mean that the three deadliest shootdowns of the past decade all involved apparently unintended targetings of passenger planes flying near conflict zones, by forces that had been primed to hit enemy military aircraft. Two of those incidents were linked to Russia: Wednesday's crash of an Embraer E190 with 67 people aboard, of whom 38 died, and the mid-air destruction in 2014 of a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 flying over a battle zone in Ukraine, on which all 298 people aboard died. The other major downing was the

mistaken shooting in 2020 by Iranian forces of a Ukraine International Airlines Boeing 737 departing Tehran, killing all 176 people onboard. Iran's missile defense systems had been on alert for a potential U.S. strike at the time.

Jetliners being accidentally blasted out of the sky has become the leading cause of commercial-aviation deaths over recent years, marking a new trend running counter to an otherwise improving safety picture.

The crash Wednesday of an Azerbaijan Airlines jetliner in Kazakhstan, if officially confirmed as a shootdown, would be the third major fatal downing of a passenger jet linked to armed conflict since 2014, according to the Flight Safety Foundation's Aviation Safety Network, a global database of accidents and incidents. The tally would bring to more than 500 the number of deaths from such attacks during that period.

Top 10 Global Airlines by Seat Capacity in 2025

In the ever-evolving aviation industry, seat capacity is one of the key insights to understand the reach, scale, and operational strength of an airline. As travel demand continues to grow in 2025, major airlines worldwide are expanding their networks and deploying larger and more modern aircraft to cater to millions of passengers.

Unsurprisingly, North America continues to lead the industry, with the four US airlines – American Airlines (AA), Delta Air Lines (DL), United Airlines (UA), and Southwest Airlines (WN) occupying the top four spots. These airlines leverage extensive domestic networks and robust international routes to connect key global destinations. Europe also maintains a strong presence, led by low-cost giant Ryanair (FR), which showcases the region's preference for affordable, high-frequency travel.

Meanwhile, the Asia-Pacific solidifies its role as a rising aviation hub with carriers like China Eastern (MU), China Southern (CZ), and IndiGo (6E), reflecting the rapid growth of air travel in the region. Latin America's LATAM Airlines (LA) and other major players across continents further contribute to the diversity and competition of the industry.

1. American Airlines: 66,290,461 Seats

American Airlines (AA) tops the list with an impressive seat capacity of over 66 million for Q1 2025.

2. Delta Air Lines: 57,113,088 Seats

With over 57 million seats on offer, Delta Air Lines (DL) secures second place. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, the airline operates out of the world's busiest airport – Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.



3. Southwest Airlines: 53,854,981 Seats

Southwest Airlines (WN), with a seat capacity exceeding 53 million, dominates the U.S. domestic travel market. Unlike legacy carriers, WN follows a point-to-point model, avoiding the conventional hub-and-spoke system.

4. United Airlines: 52,449,849 Seats

United Airlines (UA), with a capacity of over 52 million seats, capitalizes on its strategically located hubs across the U.S. These include Chicago O'Hare, Newark, and San Francisco, offering extensive connectivity domestically and internationally.

5. Ryanair: 42,192,736 Seats

Ryanair (FR) leads the European market with a capacity of over 42 million seats in the first quarter of 2025. Based in Dublin, the airline specializes in low-cost, high-frequency flights across Europe.

6. China Eastern Airlines: 38,153,720 Seats

Ranking sixth on the global stage, China Eastern Airlines (MU) leads the Asia-Pacific carriers offering over 38 million seats in Q1 2025. Headquartered in Shanghai, its primary hub is Shanghai Pudong

Airport, with secondary hubs in Beijing and Kunming.

7. China Southern Airlines: 37,757,186 Seats

China Southern Airlines (CZ), based in Guangzhou, follows closely with over 37 million seats. It operates from hubs in Guangzhou, Beijing Daxing, and Shenzhen, offering a strong domestic and international network.

8. IndiGo: 36,705,811 Seats

As India's largest and fastest-growing airline, IndiGo (6E) offers over 36 million seats, focusing primarily on domestic routes. Its key hubs include Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, connecting major Indian cities and regional airports.

9. Air China: 29,029,237 Seats

Air China (CA), with over 29 million seats, is China's flagship carrier. Operating from Beijing Capital International Airport, it connects major Chinese cities to global destinations.

10. LATAM Airlines: 26,139,608 Seats

LATAM Airlines (LA), the largest carrier in Latin America, offers over 26 million seats in Q1, 2025. With hubs in Sao Paulo, Santiago, and Lima, it connects South America to North America, Europe, and beyond.

The top 10 airlines by seat capacity in Q1 2025 showcase the global interconnectedness of the aviation industry. From North American giants dominating the list to Asia's rising influence and Europe's robust low-cost carriers, each airline plays a unique role in shaping global travel.

Content Courtesy: <https://aviationa2z.com>

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Donald Trump sworn in for second term vowing sweeping change

Former U.S. President and Republican Donald Trump made a forceful comeback as he won a second term in office, defeating Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, to become the 47th President of the United States. Republicans took control of the Senate, increasing their tally to at least 52 of the chamber's 100 seats.

With one hand raised in the air and the other on a Bible given to him by his mother, the 47th US president solemnly took the oath of office beneath the huge Rotunda of the US Capitol.

Republican Trump and outgoing Democratic President Joe Biden had earlier traveled by motorcade together to the Capitol, where the ceremony was being held indoors -- and with a much smaller crowd -- for the first time in decades due to frigid weather.

Earlier, they and their spouses met for a traditional tea at the White House.

"Welcome home," Biden said to Trump as he and First Lady Jill Biden greeted their successors at the front door to the presidential residence.

Trump, 78, was a political outsider at his first inauguration in 2017 as the 45th president, but this time around he is surrounded by America's wealthy and powerful.

The world's richest man, Elon Musk, Meta boss Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon chief Jeff Bezos and Google CEO Sundar Pichai all had prime seats in the Capitol alongside Trump's family and cabinet members.

Musk, who bankrolled Trump's election campaign to the tune of a quarter of a billion dollars and promotes



far-right policies on the X social network, will lead a cost-cutting drive in the new administration.

While Trump refused to attend Biden's 2021 inauguration after falsely claiming electoral fraud by the Democrat, this time Biden has been keen to restore the sense of tradition.

Biden joined former presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton at the Capitol. Former first ladies Hillary Clinton and Laura Bush were there but ex-first lady Michelle Obama pointedly stayed away.

New Courtesy : <https://www.newindianexpress.com>

International News

Tanzanian sample confirms WHO fears as Marburg disease found in remote region

Tanzania's president said Monday that one sample from a remote part of northern Tanzania tested positive for Marburg disease, a highly infectious virus which can be fatal in up to 88% of cases without treatment.

President Samia Suluhu spoke in Dar es Salaam, the commercial capital, alongside World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

WHO was the first to report on Jan. 14 of a suspected outbreak of Marburg that had killed eight people in Tanzania's Kagera region. Tanzanian health officials disputed the report hours later, saying tests on samples had returned negative results.

Suluhu said Monday that further tests had confirmed a case of Marburg. Twenty-five other samples were negative, she said.

Like Ebola, the Marburg virus originates in fruit bats and spreads between people through close contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals or with surfaces, such as contaminated bed sheets.

Symptoms include fever, muscle pains, diarrhea, vomiting and in some cases death from extreme blood loss. There is no authorized vaccine or treatment for Marburg.

New Courtesy : <https://abcnews.go.com/>

Tens of thousands ordered to evacuate as fires tear through Los Angeles area

Fierce wildfires are raging in the Los Angeles area, fuelled by powerful Santa Ana winds, sending residents fleeing from burning homes through flames, ferocious winds and towering clouds of smoke.

Fierce wildfires are raging in the Los Angeles area, fuelled by powerful Santa Ana winds, sending residents fleeing from burning homes through flames, ferocious winds and towering clouds of smoke. Thousands of firefighters were battling at least three separate blazes on Wednesday (January 8, 2025), from the Pacific Coast inland to Pasadena. One of the fires was the most destructive in the modern history of the city of LA.

Tens of thousands of people have been notified by authorities to evacuate their homes because of the multiple fires burning in the Los Angeles region. Officials say at least five people have died in the wildfires. American actor and comedian Billy Crystal and wife lost their home of 45 years in Palisades fire. The couple released a statement confirming their home was among the hundreds



burned in fires in and around Los Angeles.

Mandy Moore, Cary Elwes and Paris Hilton are among the stars who have lost homes in the blazes. Many others are among the tens of thousands who have evacuated due to the flames, with some still

awaiting word on the fate of their homes.

Tens of thousands of people have been notified by authorities to evacuate their homes because of the multiple fires burning in the Los Angeles region.

New Courtesy : <https://www.thehindu.com>

Canada ends fast-track visa programme for international students, Indians to be affected

Canada has announced it is ending the fast-track visa program for international students known as the Student Direct Stream (SDS). This policy change took effect immediately on Friday and is expected to affect thousands of students from various countries, including a large number from India. The SDS program, introduced in 2018, allowed students from specific countries to apply for study permits with a shorter processing time, usually within 20 business days. Without SDS, students may now face wait times of up to eight weeks or longer, depending on the application load and processing timelines.

Over the years, it has grown in popularity among Indian students in particular, as India is currently the largest source of international students in Canada. If reports are to go by, there are

approximately 427,000 Indian students currently studying in Canada.



Canadian immigration authorities, however, stated that all students who have applied under the SDS and a similar program for Nigerian students, called the Nigerian Student Express (NSE), would

still have their applications processed if submitted before the Friday deadline. Those who have applied after the deadline will now have to go through the standard application process.

Not only are students facing delays in processing times, but they are also likely to encounter an increase in competition, as there will be fewer student permit approvals in the coming years. Additionally, as Canada shifts its immigration priorities, it will be admitting around 3,95,000 permanent residents by 2025, nearly 20% less than the 4,85,000 projected for this year. Temporary resident numbers, which include students and foreign workers, are also expected to drop from 8,00,000 this year to around 4,46,000 by 2025.

New Courtesy : <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Oil is no longer an energy security challenge as critical minerals take center stage, Saudi minister says

The energy minister of Saudi Arabia – the Gulf Kingdom whose wealth and power rests disproportionately on its vast petroleum reserves – believes that oil is no longer an energy security challenge.

Instead, he said, the coming battle will be for entirely different materials buried under the ground: critical minerals.

“Oil is no longer an energy security challenge – it’s going to be gas, electricity, predominantly minerals,” Saudi Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman told attendees at the annual Future Minerals Forum in Riyadh.

“Today some of these countries, they have, as a country, 50% of the ownership of some of these required minerals and critical minerals ... countries are racing to access critical minerals and secure their own supply chain. Rushing to secure access to resources will ultimately lead to higher emissions, higher metals costs and higher energy prices.”

The energy minister was referring to minerals critical to the energy transition and advanced technologies –

including lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, manganese and other rare earth elements crucial for making things like electric vehicles, batteries, renewable energy technology, computers, and household goods.



China currently controls roughly 60% of the world’s production of rare earth minerals and materials, according to a recent report by Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy. That has many countries, particularly those in the West, concerned, as these resources become ever more important to national security and economic stability.

“More AI [artificial intelligence] and data centers means more energy,” Bin Salman said. “You’ll have AI, data centers, mining, crypto mining ... can you

imagine what will happen to energy demand? Can you imagine the race between mining to create energy, and energy to create mining and the growth of these economies?” the energy minister asked.

“I really don’t like the idea of being the energy minister at that time.”

Electricity demand around the world is surging, fueled by the rising demand for data centers required to power AI, factories, electric vehicles, and hotter and longer summers. A recent energy department memo cited in numerous press reports projected that U.S. power grids could see as much as 25 gigawatts of new data center demand by 2030.

Critical minerals and rare earth metals are also essential for renewable technology like solar panels and wind turbines, which are central to many countries’ efforts toward an energy transition away from fossil fuels. China refines 95% of the world’s manganese — a chemical element used in batteries and steel manufacturing — despite mining less than 10% of its global supply.

New Courtesy: <https://www.cnbc.com/>

Putin apologizes to Azerbaijan over ‘tragic’ plane crash

Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized to the president of Azerbaijan for the crash of the civilian airliner that killed 38 people, the Kremlin said Saturday, stopping short of admitting responsibility.

“Vladimir Putin apologized for the fact that the tragic incident occurred in Russian airspace,” the Kremlin said.

The airliner had “repeatedly attempted to land” at the Grozny airport, Putin told Ilham Aliyev, which at the time was being “attacked by Ukrainian combat drones.”

Russian air defense systems “repelled these attacks,” Putin said.

He did not say if the plane was hit by Russian air defenses but the Kremlin said that an investigation was underway and civilian and military specialists



were being interrogated.

The Azerbaijan Airlines plane crash-landed near the city of Aktau in Kazakhstan on Christmas day, killing 38 of the 67 people on board.

According to a readout by Aliyev’s office, the Azerbaijan president told Putin of the evidence suggesting “external physical and technical

interference,” specifying that it happened in Russian airspace.

Aliyev mentioned multiple holes in the airplane’s fuselage, injuries sustained by passengers and crew “due to foreign particles penetrating the cabin mid-flight,” and testimonies from surviving passengers and crew, some of whom had said they felt explosions before the plane went down.

Two U.S. military officials told NBC News on Friday that the plane may have been hit by Russian missiles, saying they had intelligence indicating that Russians may have misidentified the plane and shot it down.

The intelligence suggested that Russians believed the airliner was a drone, partly because of an irregular flight pattern, the officials said.

New Courtesy: <https://www.cnbc.com/>

European Union won’t allow attacks on borders, French minister says after Trump’s Greenland comments



The European Union will not tolerate attacks within its borders, France’s foreign minister said on Wednesday in the wake of President-elect Donald Trump’s reiterations that bringing Greenland under U.S. control is a “necessity.”

In an interview with radio station France Inter, Jean-Noël Barrot said the bloc’s 27 member states would never accept any attempts to assault EU territory.

Greenland is an autonomous Danish territory, making it an Overseas Country and Territory, or OCT, associated with the EU.

“There is no question that the European Union would let another nation of the world, whoever it may — and I would even say, starting with Russia — to attack its sovereign borders,” Barrot said, according to a CNBC translation. “We are a strong continent,

we need to further strengthen ourselves.”

CNBC has reached out to the European Union for comment.

Barrot added that he did not believe Washington would launch a physical attack on Greenland.

“If you’re asking me whether I think the United States will invade Greenland, the answer is no,” he explained. “But have we entered into an era that sees survival of the fittest? The answer is yes.”

Also on Wednesday, a German government spokesperson also said that Berlin has taken note of Trump’s comments about Greenland.

“As always, the honourable principle of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Accords applies, namely that borders must not be moved by force Germany says borders must not be moved by force after Trump statement,” they said at a regular news conference, according to Reuters.

While France and Germany have made it plain they stand against the notion of Denmark conceding Greenland to the U.S., one country in the region appears to be backing the president-elect. In Russia, Trump’s position on Greenland has garnered positive media coverage, with pro-Kremlin

commentators saying it validated Moscow’s so-called special military operation in Ukraine.

The comments out of France and Germany come ahead of a meeting between Greenland’s prime minister, Múte Egede, and the Danish king in Copenhagen, scheduled to take place at 2 p.m. Danish time. No talks agenda was supplied, but the meeting is being held in the same week that King Frederik updated his royal coat of arms to incorporate details representing Greenland.

The changes were made after renewed calls from the incoming U.S. president that America should bring Greenland, an arctic island with a population of more than 56,000, under U.S. control.

Last month, Trump said on his Truth Social platform that “ownership” of Greenland was crucial for U.S. national and economic security. He first floated the idea of purchasing Greenland from Denmark in 2019, during his first term as president — a notion that was firmly rebuffed by the territory’s leadership.

Danish and Greenlandic leaders have again rejected the notion that the island could join the U.S. under a second Trump administration, with Egede reiterating last month, “We are not for sale.”

New Courtesy: <https://www.cnbc.com/>

Current Natural Disasters

Major snowstorm hits the USA

The central and eastern parts of the USA have been facing a dangerous winter storm since 5 January 2025, accompanied by heavy snow, freezing rain and bitter cold.

Weather forecasts predict temperatures as low as -18° C, with gusty winds in some areas.

Five deaths have been reported so far in the States of Missouri and Kansas. The capital, Washington, is also covered in snow.

More than 50 million people have been affected by the disaster, with almost 200 000 still without power.

The snow combined with the cold weather has led to power outages and poor traffic conditions. Air traffic was equally affected, as thousands of flights were



either cancelled or delayed. The severe storm also resulted in school closures and road accidents.

New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>

Powerful earthquake hits Tibet region

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New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>

Cyclone Chido kills 94 in Mozambique

After wreaking havoc on Mayotte, tropical cyclone Chido made its way to Mozambique on 15 December 2024.

The death toll as of 22 December stood at 94, with 670 injured and over 110 000 homes destroyed. In Mayotte, authorities reported 35 deaths and 2 500 injuries.

The tropical storm then moved on to Malawi, claiming the lives of 13 people and injuring almost 30 others.

New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>



Cyclone Chido in Mayotte: 650 to 800 million EUR in insured losses

Tropical cyclone Chido hit Mayotte, a French overseas department, on 14 December 2024, with winds gusting to over 220km/h. It was the most destructive cyclone to hit the region since 1934.

The natural disaster claimed several lives and caused extensive material damage.

According to France Assureurs, several schools and

homes were destroyed, leaving 100 000 residents - a third of the population - homeless.

Caisse Centrale de Réassurance (CCR) is expecting insured losses between 650 and 800 million EUR (675 to 831 million USD). At least 50% of this cost will be borne by CCR.

New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>



Super typhoon Man-yi wreaks havoc in the Philippines

Super typhoon Man-yi hit the Philippines on Saturday 16 November 2024, packing peak winds of 325km/h and causing 14 meter-high waves.

This was the sixth major storm to hit the archipelago in a single month.

The disaster resulted in substantial material damage, with trees uprooted and roofs ripped off. No casualties were reported, as residents followed evacuation instructions.

More than 650 000 people were forced to leave their



homes as the super typhoon, considered catastrophic and extremely dangerous, approached.

New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>

Taiwan hit by super typhoon Kong-rey

Typhoon Kong-rey, accompanied by 184km/h winds, torrential rain and ten-meter waves, hit the island of Taiwan on 31 October 2024.

The provisional toll is two dead and more than 500 injured.

In anticipation of the storm, local authorities declared the 31st of October a day off. Offices and schools were closed, 298 international flights and all domestic flights were cancelled, and ferry operations were suspended.

Around 35 000 soldiers have been deployed to take part in rescue operations. Evacuations have been ordered in eight counties and towns.

The disaster caused flooding, landslides, power outages and extensive damage to infrastructure.



Meteorologists are forecasting destructive winds and over a meter of rain by 1 November.

Kong-rey is considered to be the region's most powerful typhoon in 30 years.

New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>

Floods in Spain: at least 217 dead

On 29 October 2024, torrential rains hit southern and eastern Spain, causing deadly floods. Provisional figures put the death toll at 217.

The Valencia region was particularly affected by the disaster. Heavy rainfall also hit Andalusia, where several rivers overflowed, as well as the Castilla-La Mancha region, located between Madrid and Valencia. Many roads were blocked, schools closed and flights cancelled.

New Courtesy: <https://www.atlas-mag.net>



Living to 100 and beyond: the right genes plus a healthy lifestyle

What is it that lets some people live to age 100 and beyond? A new study from the ongoing New England Centenarian Study suggests that protective genes may make a big contribution.

In what the researchers describe as the first study of its kind, they analyzed and deciphered the entire genetic codes of a man and a woman who lived past the age of 114. The two so-called supercentenarians had:

DNA that appeared to be very similar to people who did not have long lives

about the same number of gene variants linked to increased disease risk as seen in people from the general population whose genomes have been sequenced

more than 50 possible longevity-associated variants in genes, some of which were unexpected and had not been seen before.

The researchers hypothesize that the genes linked with long life may somehow offset the disease-linked genes. This might then allow an extended lifespan. The results were reported in the journal *Frontiers in Genetics*.

Taking control

At the beginning of the 20th century, the average life expectancy at birth in the United States was just under 50 years. Today, the average newborn can expect to reach 80 years. This great leap forward has little or nothing to do with genes, and everything to do with advances in public health and healthy lifestyles.

During the first 75 years of life, genes have a relatively small influence on longevity, accounting for



only 20% to 25% of the reasons that you make it to that age. Not smoking, eating healthfully, getting plenty of exercise, and limiting alcohol matter the most.

Once you hit your mid-80s, genes matter more and more. And once you reach your 90s, how much longer you are likely to live was largely determined the day your father's sperm fertilized your mother's

egg.

There's no need to have your DNA sequenced yet to determine what genes you carry. It won't change what you need to do now. You have the power to change many things that influence your health and how long you live. Here are 10 steps that will help you have the longest, healthiest life possible:

- Don't smoke.
- Be physically active every day.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in whole grains, lean protein, vegetables, and fruits. Reduce or avoid unhealthy saturated fats and trans fats. Instead, use healthier monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.
- Be sure to get enough vitamin D and calcium.
- Maintain a healthy weight and body shape.
- Challenge your mind.
- Build a strong social network.
- Protect your sight, hearing and general health by following preventive care guidelines.
- Floss, brush, and see a dentist regularly. Poor oral health may have many effects. It can lead to poor nutrition, pain and possibly even a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Discuss with your doctor whether you need any medicine to help you stay healthy. These might include medicines to control high blood pressure, treat osteoporosis or lower cholesterol, for example.

Content Courtesy: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/>

7 ways to maintain a healthy body the key to a happy and productive life

Health is an asset that needs to be maintained properly so that we can live life optimally. Maintaining a healthy body is very important because health has a direct impact on a person's quality of life.

1. Practice Balanced Diet Habits

Eating a balanced diet with adequate nutrients is the key to maintaining a healthy body. The body needs various types of nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, protein, fat, carbohydrates, fiber, and water, to perform its biological functions. A balanced diet ensures that the body receives all the nutrients it needs for optimal growth, cell repair and organ function.

2. Exercise Regularly

Regular physical activity has many benefits, such as improving heart health, controlling weight, and strengthening muscles. Exercise can improve physical fitness and endurance. For example, by increasing cardiopulmonary capacity, one can go about their daily activities more efficiently and without getting tired easily. Cardiopulmonary itself comes from the terms of cardio and pulmonary, which the two are main aspects of the human body system, namely the heart and breathing.

3. Get Enough Sleep

Adequate sleep is the key to recovering the body after daily activities. Sleep is the time when the body performs physical recovery, repairs damaged cells, and facilitates growth. Growth hormones are released optimally during the deep sleep phase.

4. Avoid Smoking and Excessive Alcohol Consumption

Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can increase the risk of many serious diseases, including heart disease, cancer and liver disorders.

Smoking tobacco has a significant negative impact on

health. Some of the health impacts that can arise include lung disease, where smoking is the leading cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease



(COPD) and lung cancer. It can lead to chronic respiratory distress and a high risk of death.

5. Maintain Mental Health

Physical health is inseparable from mental health, both are intertwined and affect each other. Mental health disorders can negatively affect physical health, and conversely, poor physical condition can also affect one's mental well-being.

For example, prolonged stress issues can lead to various mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. At the same time, stress can also increase the risk of physical ailments such as heart disease, diabetes and digestive disorders.

6. Maintain Body Hygiene

Keeping your body clean is also an important step in maintaining overall health. Body hygiene helps preventing the spread of disease, preserves the skin,

and provides a feeling of freshness.

Regular handwashing, regular bathing, and dental hygiene are simple, yet effective steps in avoiding the spread of disease and maintaining overall body health.

7. Drink Enough Water

Drinking enough water is very important to maintain a healthy body. Water plays a vital role in various bodily functions, including maintaining fluid balance, aiding digestion, regulating body temperature, and supporting the function of important organs.

Physical health is not only an important aspect for the individual, but it also has an impact on the surrounding environment and society.

Content Courtesy: <https://www.felixhospital.com>



Ever wanted to travel like a royal? Imagine exploring India's beauty while enjoying royal hospitality.

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Gulf Madhyamam celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 2024

Gulf Madhyamam, a prominent Malayalam newspaper catering to expatriates in the Gulf region, celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 2024. The event, held in Kuwait, was inaugurated by Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait.

During the Gulf Madhyamam Silver Jubilee celebration in Kuwait, Mr. S.P. Nawas, the Circulation In-Charge, presented a memento to Mr. P.N.J. Kumar, the CEO of Caesars Travel Group, in recognition of his significant contributions to the travel industry. This gesture highlighted the strong partnership between Gulf Madhyamam and Caesars Travel Group, underscoring their shared commitment to serving the expatriate community in the Gulf region.

The event also featured discussions on the role of media in shaping modern Kerala and the experiences of the Malayali diaspora, with notable participants including O. Abdurahman, Group Editor of Madhyamam, and filmmaker Madhu Pal. The evening concluded with a musical performance by playback singer Sithara Krishnakumar.



Drukair's First Paro-Dubai-Paro Flight: A Celebration in the Skies



Drukair's inaugural flight between Paro and Dubai was filled with joy and celebration both ways. Upon arrival, passengers were warmly welcomed with a traditional khadar offering, symbolizing an auspicious start to this new journey. Onboard passengers joined in a memorable

cake-cutting ceremony and were presented with special tokens to mark this occasion. This significant addition marks an important expansion of our network. We look forward to welcoming you on board as we embark on this new journey together.

The inaugural flight was celebrated with great enthusiasm, featuring a water cannon salute upon arrival in Dubai and a traditional Bhutanese cultural reception. The launch event saw the participation of dignitaries, airline officials, and representatives of the travel and tourism industry from both nations.

The introduction of this route is a testament to the strengthening ties between Bhutan and the UAE, fostering opportunities for tourism, trade, and cultural exchange. With Dubai serving as a major global hub, this direct flight opens Bhutan to a broader international audience, encouraging eco-tourism and highlighting Bhutan's commitment to sustainable development.

The Paro-Dubai-Paro route is expected to strengthen Bhutan's tourism industry, further supporting its Gross National Happiness philosophy by ensuring tourism growth aligns with the country's cultural and environmental preservation.

This milestone celebrates not just a flight but the merging of cultures, landscapes, and opportunities between Bhutan and the UAE.

Oman Air Shines Bright with Prestigious Industry Accolades

Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, is thrilled to announce a remarkable achievement, earning two of the aviation industry's most prestigious honors:

1. APEX WORLD CLASS™ by YATES+ Award
2. APEX WORLD CLASS™ by YATES+ Status for the Business Class Lounge at Muscat International Airport

These accolades reflect Oman Air's unwavering commitment to excellence and its dedication to providing passengers with an unparalleled travel experience.

APEX WORLD CLASS™ by YATES+ Award

The APEX WORLD CLASS™ by YATES+ Award recognizes airlines that excel in delivering the highest standards of safety, service, sustainability, and passenger experience. Oman Air's ability to meet and exceed these criteria showcases its position as a leader in the global aviation industry.

APEX WORLD CLASS™ Business Class Lounge

The Business Class Lounge at Muscat International Airport offers an oasis of luxury and comfort, providing travelers with world-class facilities,



gourmet dining, and serene spaces for relaxation. Receiving the APEX WORLD CLASS™ status underscores Oman Air's dedication to redefining the airport experience for its premium passengers.

A Testament to Excellence

The awards are a significant milestone, affirming Oman Air's reputation as a carrier that prioritizes passenger satisfaction, innovative service, and operational excellence. The airline remains committed to setting benchmarks in aviation, promising travelers

an exceptional journey, whether in the skies or on the ground.

A Word from Oman Air

The airline has expressed gratitude to its dedicated employees and loyal customers who have contributed to this success. These achievements reflect Oman Air's vision of connecting the world to Oman with unparalleled service and hospitality. With these honors, Oman Air reinforces its position as a symbol of Omani pride and a leader in global aviation.

Cruise Center Kuwait treats agents and clients to exclusive night

Cruise Center, the popular platform representing world's leading luxury cruise companies made an event for the trade on 21st November at Crown Plaza hotel. The Al Baraka Grand Ball Room of Crown Plaza was crowded with more than 200 leading and prominent personalities from travel and leisure companies.

Cruise Center, a dedicated Cruise platform since 2011, first of its kind in Kuwait at that point in time was the hub for all Cruise holidays and they made a detailed presentation of all leading cruises representing by them during the program. The event showcased all the updates such as Launching new ships from various Cruise companies and their new



destinations.

“Holiday Cruising has become one of the fast-growing sectors in Tourism Industry and at Cruise Center, we have the key role in contributing a good share to this industry since its inception in Kuwait. Needless to say, that the great support that the travel and leisure companies given to Cruise Center has helped us to get many accolades from various Cruise companies as one of their top sales promoters and that's the reason, we have made this trade event by inviting our partners as a token appreciation for their support and cooperation extended to Cruise Center” said by P.N.J. Kumar, CEO of Caesars Travel Group.

The outgoing manager, Bijoy shared his long-term experience with Cruise Center while addressing

the gathering and introduced the new Manager, Jyothi who made a commitment with all sorts of supports to the trade partners while addressing the guests. Later, the entire team of Cruise Center was introduced to the guests. There was full of surprises by Quiz and raffles during the program and the winners were gifted with free sailings on various cruises and ship models.

While concluding the program, Cruise Center given a myriad of options to the guests to offer the next vacation to their valued clients by contacting

Cruise Center office at Al Nafisi Tower (Ground Floor) of Abdulla Al Mubarak Street (Near Mirqab).

Tel contacts: 2414340/22404075/22454301,

Email: info@cruisecenter-kw.com

Oman Air Celebrates 30 Years of Successful Operations in Kuwait



Oman Air marked a momentous occasion as it celebrated 30 years of successful operations in Kuwait. The event, hosted in collaboration with Caesars International Travel, the airline's General Sales Agent (GSA) in Kuwait, was a joyous gathering that underscored the strong partnership and shared achievements over three decades.

The highlight of the celebration was a ceremonial cake-cutting, symbolizing Oman Air's journey of growth and success in the Kuwaiti market. Senior officials from Oman Air and Caesars International Travel, along with travel partners, industry leaders, and loyal customers, joined the festivities to commemorate this milestone.

Speaking at the event, representatives from

Oman Air and Caesars International Travel expressed their gratitude to trade partners and passengers for their unwavering support. They emphasized the airline's dedication to providing exceptional service, fostering connections, and promoting tourism and trade between Oman and Kuwait.

Since launching operations in Kuwait in 1994, Oman Air has achieved significant milestones, that includes expanding flight frequencies to meet growing demand. Enhancing in-flight services with state-of-the-art aircraft and amenities. Establishing a strong reputation for reliability and customer satisfaction.

As Oman Air's GSA in Kuwait, Caesars International Travel has played a vital role in the airline's success by facilitating seamless ticketing and customer

support. Promoting Oman Air's services through innovative marketing strategies. Strengthening relationships with travel agencies and corporate clients.

The event concluded with a shared vision of continued collaboration and success. Both Oman Air and Caesars International Travel reaffirmed their commitment to delivering unparalleled travel experiences and further strengthening ties between Oman and Kuwait.

The celebration was not just a reflection of past achievements but a promise of a brighter future, with Oman Air poised to reach new heights in the years to come.

15 simple travel safety tips everyone should know

Learn 15 easy ways to stay safe from scams, theft, and other common safety concerns while traveling. Everyone should know these simple travel safety tips that can be used anywhere.

From drive-by purse snatchers to identity thieves to much more dangerous criminals like kidnappers and sex traffickers, there's always some story in the news about someone taking advantage of travelers.

So far in my travels, I've never had any serious problems, thank goodness, and the vast majority of travelers will never fall victim to anything more serious than pick-pocketing. Even so, I always keep these safety practices in mind when I travel, and I recommend you do, too.

If you're planning your next trip and wondering how to travel safely, look no further than these 15 simple and straightforward travel safety tips for your ultimate safe travel guide.

1. Don't wear flashy jewelry

Wearing expensive, flashy jewelry is one sure way to make yourself an obvious target for robbery. Leave it at home, friends, especially if you plan to travel to crowded areas!



2. Drink responsibly

This has to be one of the most important safety tips for travelers.

Lots of people enjoy exploring the local nightlife while traveling, and there's nothing wrong with that. But keep in mind that it's even more important than ever to drink responsibly when you're traveling.

When you're away from home you're more likely to get lost or end up in a dangerous neighborhood, and being obviously drunk makes you an easy target for scams, robbery, or worse.

Oh, and ladies, never forget the golden rule of safe drinking in public: keep an eye on your drink at all times!

3. Be smart about your money

Any solid resource of travel safety information will tell you that it's never a good idea to carry huge amounts of cash. Instead, open an account with an international bank or credit card company so you can use local ATMs. If you absolutely must withdraw large amounts of cash at once, leave the bulk of it locked up safely in your hotel or hostel and carry only what you'll need for the day.

When using ATMs, try to use only those that are attached to banks as these are less likely to have been tampered with by scammers.

Never keep all of your money in one place. Keep cash and credit cards in two or three different places so that if one of your stashes is stolen you aren't left completely empty-handed.

4. Be aware of popular scams

Research the place you're visiting to see what the local scammers are up to. Scams range from RFID

scanners to ploys using children to play on your sympathy. You'll be less likely to fall for these scams if you've heard about them ahead of time.

5. Know the phone number for emergency services

Be sure to look up the emergency services number for your destination, even before you get there. It's also a good idea to look up the number for your country's nearest embassy before you leave. Write them down or save them in your phone so you'll have quick access to them in the event of an emergency.

6. Use the right bag

Cross-body bags are safer than shoulder or hand bags and can prevent people from grabbing your bag as they run or drive by. There are tons of bags made specifically for travelers with features such as slash-proof straps, RFID blockers, and locking zippers. Invest in a good bag that suits your needs and preferences.

7. Bring travel locks and use them

You can save a few bucks by coming prepared with your own lock if you plan to stay in a hostel. Even if you're not staying in a hostel, having a travel lock that can secure your bag to your seat or chair while dining or in transit will help keep your valuables safe from theft.

8. Keep digital copies of important documents

When traveling, your passport may be the most valuable thing you carry. In the event of a stolen passport, having a digital copy will help make the process of getting a replacement easier.



You may also like: The greatest travel hacking guide you need for a stress-free trip

9. Try to blend in

Tourists tend to carry larger amounts of cash and valuables and are more vulnerable to scams. Try to avoid being an obvious tourist.

Dress as the locals do, don't stop abruptly in the middle of busy streets to take photos, and even when you're lost try not to make it apparent. If you need to ask for directions or consult a map, step inside a shop or cafe to do so.

10. Use reputable transportation companies

Research which taxi companies are reputable before you arrive in a place, and use only those. If you're ride-sharing using an app like Uber or Lyft, double check your driver's vehicle information and verify their name before you get in the car with them.

11. Check in with friends and family often

Before you leave let someone know your itinerary, and update them to any changes of plans. Make a habit of checking in with a close friend or family member back home at the end of each day.



I know this can seem like a hassle, but ultimately it's better to be safe than sorry. If something terrible were to happen, you'll get help faster if someone knows where you were supposed to be that day.

12. Ask locals for advice

When you check in at a hotel or hostel, ask for recommendations about which neighborhoods are safe and which are not so safe and mark places to avoid on your map.

13. Use apps for emergency alerts

There are a variety of apps out there aimed to provide safety travel information and help travelers safe.

Sitata is a great app that alerts users to potential dangers or disruptions to travel in real time. It also includes tips for avoiding the latest scams and helps users locate nearby hospitals.

Smart Traveler is the official U.S. State Department app for travelers. There are many useful features, including notifications for travel advisories and alerts and locations of U.S. embassies. I'm sure there are similar apps for citizens of other countries, but I was unable to find any information about them online.

14. Stay aware of your surroundings

You should always pay attention to what's going on around you, whether you are in a crowded tourist spot or walking down an empty street.

Would-be offenders often seek out people who are distracted or disengaged from their surroundings to target. This is particularly important for solo travelers, especially solo female travelers.

15. Trust your instincts

If someone or some place is making you uncomfortable, there's mostly likely a reason. Often our subconscious picks up on things that we aren't consciously aware of, and that's where our "gut feelings" come from. Listen to those feelings. They will help you stay safe.

Now that you're armed with these simple safety tips for traveling, it's time to get out and explore the world!

Happy and safe travels, everyone!

Content Courtesy : <https://www.worldpackers.com>

Editorial

FAKE FLIGHT TICKETS

The increase in creating fake flight tickets has become a growing concern in the travel world. These online tools are designed to produce manipulated documents that are strikingly similar to real airline tickets. It is very common during these days that passengers are holding such manipulated fake tickets, approaching airports but unfortunately, denied check-in due to holding no confirmation or seats as these are fake tickets which most of the passengers are not aware of. They are cheated either by the non-established travel agents/staff or middlemen those in the pretext of helping them to get their tickets, acting as a sincere supporting hand. Ultimately, the passengers are losing their hard-earned money and moreover, their entire travel plans are also affected. They are forced to buy new tickets, sometimes with a higher rate due to the non-availability of lower fares and closer to the departure travel dates and penalize them to spend additional money apart from the money paid to get the previous fake tickets which are no way refundable from the concerned travel agents as they have no record on such tickets. As per the Kuwait airport airline authorities, they are daily facing such problems that passengers are approaching the check-in counters with fake tickets and these tickets are either fabricated from the computer as typical original tickets or just making reservation and passing the same to passengers as original tickets, collecting the money from them, then cancel the booking which means, no confirmed ticket has been issued and not even a live booking in the system.

This should be taken as seriously as there are many accusations against travel agents as passengers are having a wrong notion that this has been knowingly done by the travel agents. This creates distrust within the travel industry and makes it harder for customers to feel confident about their travel arrangements. Up to a certain extent, few of the unprofessional travel agents are also involved in it, but it depends on the type of agents you are approaching and operating in this field as many of them like seasonal agents whose credibility is always a question mark? That's the reason, Know Your Source is important to consider where you bought your ticket. Reputable booking platforms are far less likely to sell fake tickets compared to lesser-known agencies or individual sellers.

One of the main reasons caused to create such fake tickets are the shift towards electronic tickets further complicates the landscape for travelers relying on fake documentation as it is so easy that anyone can do it.

How to escape from such fake tickets that the passengers should be aware of? As travel becomes increasingly digitized, the challenge of fake tickets are growing too, therefore, it is very important to educate the passengers for not to get into such wrong strings as there is a racket working behind this field to cheat them. Distinguishing between a genuine ticket and a fake one is becoming increasingly tricky, but there are some telltale signs to look out for, as follows: -

1. Never approach any freelancer/middlemen for your airline tickets
2. These freelancers/middlemen may offer you tickets worth of huge discounts compared to the prevailing market fare but don't fall into these traps as you should understand that offering such huge discounts itself is a trap to grab your money. Normally, there may have a narrow difference in fares between travel agents but never can have such huge discounts which itself an alert to you as knowing these discounts, there might be a desire to cut costs or secure travel arrangements but using these fraudulent documents can land you in



serious legal trouble

3. Once you made a reservation with a travel agent, please make sure to get the customized ticket copy from the travel agent (always the ticket copy should be having the monogram of the travel agent with complete address)
4. Always noticed that those in mind to cheat you will put their own or someone's contact numbers in the fake booking/tickets which should not be allowed, therefore, you should see through your contact number should be inserted in the booking
5. Make sure that the travel agent staff who issued the ticket should mention the airline telephone number on the ticket and booking reference (PNR) which you should counter check with the airline whether the booking is active or not? You should do it on the same day that the ticket has been purchased or latest by the next day as this will make you comfortable that you got a live and confirmed booking for your travel. Don't call the airline on your closer date of travel as you may find it difficult in case of any last minute hassles
6. When you call the airline, please make sure of confirming two things from them, 1) the booking is confirmed or not? 2) and the ticket/s are issued? Travelers can also verify the legitimacy of your ticket using the PNR on the airline's official website rather than calling them as most of the time, it is difficult to get their lines. Many airlines utilize dynamic QR codes on their e-tickets. These codes change frequently and are linked to a specific flight itinerary, making it nearly impossible for counterfeiters to copy
7. There is another option called, ****Mobile App Verification****: Many airlines mobile apps offer real-time ticket verification features. You can simply scan your ticket against the airline's database, giving you peace of mind before heading to the airport
8. Never and ever, you should not give the ticket's money to a middleman/freelancer or a travel agent staff. A travel agent staff may also play behind you to cheat and that's the reason, we repeat, don't pay the money to the staff rather than directly to the travel agency if there is an official Cashier appointed by them or to the concerned authorities
9. If you have the option to physically present to take the ticket from the travel agent, you should get a receipt for the money paid and that's should be your document or evidence against the settlement of ticket, otherwise, you have no claim towards the money paid. The Kuwait Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) also strictly adhere to all travel agents to issue Receipts to

passengers against buying tickets in order to avoid any fraudulent activities and the passengers also to insist to get such receipts from travel agents

10. If you are not in a position to visit the travel agent for taking the ticket, you can ask for the ticket copy through what's app or e-mail along with the payment link details to settle the money
11. Here also, you should not send the money to a personal account of any staff or middlemen other than the travel agent account
12. Next step is to check with your account to make sure whether money has been transferred to the travel agent
13. Finally, you confirm with your account that the money has been transferred to the travel agent, then contact them to send you a copy of the receipt against the money you settled for your records (If possible, collect the original receipt)

If you would be able complete the above cycle, you can avoid up to a certain extent of unknowingly purchasing fake tickets which makes you to suffer substantial financial losses, often being denied boarding, losing your money and finally, your entire travel plans are affected. In addition to it, you have to spend an additional amount for buying new tickets to travel.

Not only the airline fake tickets but Visa applications are also often subject to scrutiny, and using fake flight documents could result in a permanent denial of entry to a country. This is not just a minor inconvenience; it could affect future travel plans to other nations that share immigration information. Additionally, many travel insurance policies explicitly exclude coverage for losses incurred due to illegal activities, including using fake tickets. So, not only could you face legal trouble, but you might also be left to bear the financial burden of any problems that arise from using these fraudulent documents.

At Caesars Travel Group, ****Spread the Word**** launching public awareness campaigns to warn travelers about the dangers of buying tickets from unofficial sources. These campaigns are emphasizing the importance of "How to Avoid Travel Scams, buying fake tickets etc.". We have explained you the above details as the ease of creating and distributing fake tickets are increasing like anything, therefore, it is essential for travelers to exercise caution and to follow the above guidelines in order to avoid the financial burden of any problems that arise from using these fraudulent documents and protect your travel as safe as possible.

Mantra



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