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## SPECIAL HALA EDITION

## Ramadan 2026: A Unique Journey of Faith, Community, and Cultural Expression

As the crescent moon ushers in Ramadan 2026, Muslims across the world prepare for one of the most sacred periods of the year. While the essence of Ramadan — fasting, prayer, and reflection — remains constant, this year brings several unique characteristics and trends that make Ramadan 2026 especially noteworthy.

Muslims believe that worship on this night carries a reward “better than a thousand months,” making it a focal point of collective devotion. The anticipation of Laylat al-Qadr encourages increased Qur’an recitation, night prayers (Qiyam al-Layl), and sincere supplication, heightening the spiritual intensity of the closing days of Ramadan.

3. Modern Cultural Expressions: In the Gulf region, Arabic fragrances are trending this Ramadan as cultural expressions that blend tradition with contemporary style during evening gatherings, prayers, and social events.

4. Ramadan Sales and Economy: In countries like Saudi Arabia, commercial and retail activities are embracing the spiritual season with extended Ramadan sales seasons, offering consumers flexibility and affordability while blending festive preparation with economic rhythm.

These cultural currents reveal how Ramadan 2026 is shaping both sacred and social spaces, enhancing the atmosphere of generosity, celebration, and preparation.

### Charity and Social Solidarity

Ramadan has always emphasized charity (sadaqah), empathy, and support for the vulnerable. For 2026, new guidance on charity rates, including Zakat al-Fitr, Fidyah, and Kaffarah, is being issued in some regions to streamline giving and ensure that those in need are well supported during and after Ramadan.

This reflects an ongoing trend toward organised charity that preserves the spiritual ethos of Ramadan while addressing real socio-economic needs within communities.

### Health, Routine, and Personal Discipline

Modern conversations about Ramadan now often include health considerations — ensuring balanced suhoor and iftar meals, staying hydrated, and adjusting daily routines for optimal physical and mental well-being. Combined with the moderate fasting hours in February-March 2026, this emphasis supports a Ramadan experience that nurtures both the body and spirit.

From a physiological perspective, intermittent fasting — such as during Ramadan — has also been discussed in secular wellness communities for benefits related to cellular renewal and metabolic health, though its primary significance remains spiritual.

### A Time for Renewal and Reflection

Above all, the specialty of Ramadan 2026 lies in how tradition meets the rhythms of modern life — a moment when global communities pause amidst daily pressures to focus on what matters most: gratitude, compassion, mindfulness, and human connection.



Drawing from spiritual significance, cultural expressions, community developments, and global dynamics, this edition of Ramadan embodies a blend of tradition and contemporary life.

### Timing and Spiritual Cadence

For 2026, Ramadan is expected to begin on the evening of February 18 or 19 and continue through March 19–20, depending on local moon sightings.

This period falls in late winter to early spring in much of the Northern Hemisphere, resulting in moderate fasting hours — generally between 11–13 hours daily in many regions.

The placement in the annual cycle, combined with weather patterns, makes this Ramadan particularly manageable for many: long enough to allow meaningful worship, but not as physically demanding as months with exceptionally long fasts. This balance invites deeper and more sustained spiritual engagement.

### Laylat al-Qadr and Heightened Worship

One of the most spiritually charged aspects of Ramadan is Laylat al-Qadr — the Night of Power — traditionally anticipated on the 27th night of Ramadan. For 2026, this is likely to fall around March 16–17.

### Renewed Sense of Community and Inclusivity

In recent years, Ramadan has continued evolving beyond purely ritual observance into community-driven experiences, especially among youth and diverse urban populations. In cities like London, inclusive initiatives blending faith, mental well-being, and social connection have thrived. These efforts — aimed at creating welcoming spaces across gender, culture, and identity lines — reflect a broader “Ramadan as community” ethos that inspired many last year and is likely to influence Ramadan 2026.

Such initiatives underscore the idea that Ramadan, while deeply personal, can also be a vibrant, collective experience that bridges divides and fosters empathy.

### Cultural Rhythms and Local Traditions

1. Adjusted Public Life: Governments in several countries, such as Kuwait, have announced shorter working hours for civil servants during Ramadan, reinforcing the month’s significance in daily life and allowing people more time for worship and family.

2. Mosque Preparations: About 1,700 mosques in Kuwait are undergoing renovations to welcome worshippers for Taraweeh prayers, making communal prayer both spiritually rich and logistically comfortable.

## Note to Valued Readers

Dear Valued Readers,

We hope this message finds you well.

We are writing to sincerely apologize for the delay in releasing our February edition of the e-magazine. We understand that many of you look forward to each issue, and we regret any inconvenience or disappointment this postponement may have caused.

The delay occurred primarily due to the inclusion of

the Hala February highlights, along with several other important updates that we believed were essential to share with you. As we worked to ensure that these additions were comprehensive, accurate, and thoughtfully presented, it became clear that we needed additional time to maintain the quality and standard you expect from us.

Rather than rushing the publication, we made the conscious decision to take the extra time necessary to

deliver a more complete and meaningful edition. Our goal has always been to provide you with content that is timely, relevant, and valuable — and we felt it was important not to compromise on that commitment.

We truly appreciate your patience, understanding, and continued support. Your engagement and feedback inspire us to continually improve and bring you the very best in each release.

Thank you for being a valued part of our community.

## Hala February Kuwait: A Month of National Pride, Culture, and Celebration

Every year, the State of Kuwait transforms into a vibrant landscape of color, music, and patriotism during Hala February — a month-long national celebration that unites citizens and residents in honoring the country’s historic milestones and cultural identity. More than just a festival, Hala February represents a powerful expression of Kuwaiti pride, resilience, and unity.

### The Historical Significance Behind Hala February

February holds deep historical meaning for Kuwait. The celebrations revolve around two important national occasions:

- National Day (February 25) – Commemorating Kuwait’s independence from British protection in 1961.
- Liberation Day (February 26) – Marking the liberation of Kuwait in 1991 following the Iraqi invasion.

These back-to-back historic milestones give February its special status in Kuwaiti history. Rather than limiting celebrations to just two days, Kuwait extended the festivities to span the entire month — creating what is now known as Hala February, a grand nationwide festival of patriotism and joy.

### A Festival of National Unity

Hala February is a celebration that transcends generations and communities. Kuwait’s population includes both citizens and a large expatriate community, and the festival brings everyone together under one shared spirit of appreciation for the country’s progress and peace.

Throughout the month, public spaces are adorned with Kuwaiti flags, decorative lights, and themed displays in national colors — red, green, white, and black. The streets, particularly along Gulf Road and major city avenues, come alive with families gathering to celebrate in festive atmospheres.

### Cultural Events and Traditional Performances

One of the most cherished aspects of Hala February is its focus on culture and heritage. Various institutions, cultural centers, and event organizers host programs that showcase Kuwait’s traditions and artistic expression.

Highlights often include:

- Traditional Kuwaiti folk dances such as Ardah
- Heritage exhibitions displaying Bedouin crafts and maritime history
- Poetry readings celebrating Kuwaiti identity
- Art galleries featuring local artists
- Theatre performances and cultural storytelling sessions

These events help younger generations connect with their roots while offering visitors a deeper understanding of Kuwait’s cultural richness.

### Concerts and Entertainment Spectacles

Music plays a central role in the Hala February atmosphere. Major concerts featuring prominent Arab artists are typically organized at large venues such as The Arena Kuwait and other entertainment hubs across the country.

The concert line-ups often include celebrated performers from across the Gulf and the wider Arab world, creating evenings filled with celebration, nostalgia, and modern entertainment. Families, youth, and music enthusiasts eagerly attend these shows, making them among the most anticipated highlights of the season.

In addition to concerts, family carnivals, amusement park events, fireworks displays, and themed entertainment nights add excitement throughout the



month.

### Retail Promotions and the Shopping Festival

Hala February is also known as one of Kuwait’s biggest retail seasons. Malls, hypermarkets, and retail outlets participate in extensive promotional campaigns offering discounts across fashion, electronics, household items, and more.

Major shopping destinations such as The Avenues and 360 Mall host themed decorations, raffles, and prize draws. Shoppers often have the chance to win cars, gold, travel packages, and gift vouchers during special Hala February campaigns.

The shopping festival component significantly boosts local commerce, making February one of the most commercially active months of the year.

### Family Traditions and Social Celebrations

Beyond official events, Hala February has developed unique social traditions. Families gather for picnics, drive along the coastline, and celebrate with patriotic music. Children often dress in national colors, wave flags, and participate in school programs dedicated to Kuwait’s history.

The festive mood extends to social media, where residents share greetings, memories, and expressions of gratitude for the nation’s prosperity and security.

### Economic and Tourism Impact

Hala February plays a key role in stimulating Kuwait’s economy. Retail sectors, hospitality businesses, entertainment venues, and tourism

services all experience increased activity during the month. Hotels see higher occupancy rates, restaurants host themed national menus, and travel agencies promote holiday packages aligned with the celebrations.

For visitors from neighboring GCC countries, February is an appealing time to visit Kuwait due to both the celebratory atmosphere and the pleasant winter climate.

### The Spirit of Resilience and Gratitude

At its heart, Hala February is more than shopping and entertainment — it is a reminder of Kuwait’s journey. Liberation Day in particular holds deep emotional significance, commemorating the strength and unity of the nation during challenging times.

Each year, the celebrations reaffirm Kuwait’s commitment to peace, development, and national solidarity. It is a time for reflection, gratitude, and optimism for the future.

### Conclusion

Hala February stands as one of Kuwait’s most beloved annual traditions — a month where history, culture, commerce, and community converge. From dazzling concerts and retail festivals to heartfelt patriotic tributes, the celebration captures the essence of Kuwaiti identity.

For residents and visitors alike, February in Kuwait is not just another month — it is a season of pride, joy, and national unity that continues to grow in scale and significance with each passing year.

## Kuwait launches DCO campaign to tackle online misinformation

Omar Al-Omar, Chairperson of Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) Council and Minister for Communication and Information Technology, announced Wednesday the launch of a DCO campaign to combat online misinformation, creating a platform for member states and partners to commit to concrete legislative and cooperative actions.

“This is only the beginning of a longer journey. Kuwait was proud to help place the issue of online misinformation at the center of the multilateral digital agenda,” he said, reaffirming Kuwait’s dedication to the work of the DCO and to strengthening international cooperation in the digital age.

The announcement came at the 5th General Assembly of the DCO, which kicked off in Kuwait on Wednesday, offering a key platform to unveil strategic initiatives and strengthen international partnerships. The conference brought together Ministers of Information Technology, Communications and Digital Economy from 16 member states, alongside guest-country ministers, ambassadors, and senior representatives of international organizations. It included the ceremonial handover of the DCO Presidency from Kuwait to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the next four years.

Al-Omar warned that misinformation poses serious risks to social cohesion and national security, noting that a significant share of identity-related



misinformation now threatens government systems worldwide. He added that online content integrity was prioritized as a key partnership initiative during Kuwait’s council presidency. Under Kuwait’s leadership, the DCO activated the Ministerial Committee on Online Misinformation and advanced practical tools and policy guidelines designed for real-world implementation, he said.

Secretary-General of DCO, Deemah Al Yahya, underscored the urgency of inclusive digital transformation and artificial intelligence governance, noting that Kuwait’s stewardship over the past year helped guide the organization at a critical moment for the global digital economy.

Recalling the founding of the DCO five years ago, Al Yahya said the organization was built on the conviction that the digital economy is too important to be shaped by a few and too critical to be left to chance, stressing that it must be developed

deliberately and inclusively.

She said the DCO has emerged as a platform of trust and dialogue, offering a practical model for countries to work together toward a more balanced, resilient and inclusive digital future. “Digital prosperity in the age of AI has never been more urgent, as it is already reshaping industries,” she said, warning that the gains of digital transformation remain uneven, with infrastructure, capital and skills concentrated among a limited number of countries and communities.

Pakistan’s Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Khawaja reaffirmed her country’s commitment to international digital cooperation. During its tenure as DCO president, Pakistan will focus on strengthening collaboration in areas such as digital public infrastructure, digital skills, artificial intelligence, data governance, cybersecurity and the ethical use of emerging technologies, she said.

In a recorded message, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres emphasized the critical role of digital cooperation in promoting stability amid growing geopolitical fragmentation, commending members for their focus on advancing inclusive prosperity in the age of AI. He said the UN will soon launch an independent scientific panel on AI to provide evidence-based assessments of the technology’s opportunities, risks and impacts.

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

## Grand Hypermarket Strengthens Kuwait Presence with Two New Stores in Riggae and Jleeb

Grand Hyper proudly marked a significant milestone with the inauguration of its 47th store in Riggae (2) and 48th store in Jleeb (2) to strengthen its market presence across Kuwait.

The Riggae (2) store is officially inaugurated by Mr Cherian - Chairman Tesla Engineering in the presence of Dr. Anvar Ameen Chelat-Managing Director of Regency Group and Mr.Amanullah - Managing Director - LAMCO Engineering.

The first sale conducted by Mr. Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director – Kuwait. The ceremony was held in the presence of Grand Hyper senior Management and the Staffs including Mr. Muhammed Suneer (CEO), Mr. Thehseer Ali (DRO), and Mr. Mohamed Aslam (COO).

The Jleeb (2) store is Jointly inaugurated by HE Shaikh Dawood Salman Al Sabah and Mr. Jassim Mohammed Khamees Al Sharrah, Chairman – Grand Hyper Kuwait in the presence of Dr. Anvar Ameen Chelat-Managing Director of Regency Group and Mr.Amanullah - Managing Director - LAMCO Engineering. The event is honored by the presence of esteemed dignitaries including Mr. Saad Mohammed Al Hamada, Mr. Mohammed Al Mutairi, Mr.Wasim Wahid - CEO Detroit, Mr.Cherian Cherian - Chairman Tesla Engineering and Mr. Amanullah MD Lamco Engineering along with the Management and staffs of Grand Hyper Kuwait including Mr.Ayyoob Kachery, Mr. Muhammed Suneer (CEO), Mr. Thehseer Ali (DRO), and Mr. Mohamed Aslam (COO),

This dual inauguration marks Grand Hyper Kuwait dedication to growing Kuwait economy and to the needs of its customers. This landmark achievement in Grand Hyper’s expansion journey, reaffirming its commitment to delivering exceptional value and enhanced shopping experiences to customers across Kuwait.

We sincerely thank Almighty God and Kuwait's Great Visionary Leadership and Wonderful People for creating this country as business and investors friendly environment.



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## Sixteen killed in fiery bus and truck crash in southern Yemen

Sixteen people were killed on Tuesday after a heavy truck collided head-on with a passenger minibus on a road linking Al Mahfad district and the Lahmar area, east of Abyan governorate in southern Yemen, local medical reported.

Eyewitnesses said the minibus burst into flames moments after the impact, leading to its complete destruction. Among the dead were a woman and her child.

Medical officials at Lawdar Hospital, where the bodies were taken, said 11 of the victims were severely burned, with some remains so badly charred that identification proved difficult. Authorities managed to rescue only one survivor from the vehicle.

Emergency teams said the fire spread rapidly,



reportedly fuelled by a leak from the lorry following the collision. Civil defence units were dispatched to the scene but faced challenges in containing the blaze due to its intensity and the wide area affected.

Rescue efforts focused on searching for potential survivors and securing the road to prevent further accidents.

The crash is among the deadliest road incidents recorded in Abyan governorate this year, prompting renewed public concern over road safety, particularly on remote routes used by heavy vehicles and passenger buses.

Local authorities have called for a review of safety measures and stricter enforcement of regulations governing heavy transport vehicles to help prevent similar tragedies.

News Courtesy: gulfnews.com

## Saudi Arabia reverses restriction, allows foreign companies in government projects

Saudi Arabia has reversed its previous restriction and now permits government entities to contract with international companies and institutions that do not have a regional headquarters in the Kingdom.

The move is designed to maintain spending efficiency while ensuring timely execution of strategic projects.

The Local Content and Government Procurement Authority has informed relevant entities about submitting exception requests through the digital Etimad Platform.

This balances compliance with the “regional headquarters relocation” rule, introduced in early 2024, with practical project requirements demanding specialised technical expertise or financial competitiveness.

Under the earlier government decision, contracting with any foreign company whose regional headquarters was outside Saudi Arabia was suspended from early 2024. The directive applied to all government entities, institutions, funds, and affiliated authorities.

Authorities have clarified the rules for contracting with foreign companies lacking a regional HQ. Government entities can submit requests to a competent committee for exceptions on specific projects, groups of projects, or defined time periods, provided the request is made before launching a tender or direct contracting procedure.

Two circulars issued by the authority detail the



submission process and the handling of contractual cases under these controls.

The exception service is available for tenders issued through the Etimad platform, the Ministry of Finance’s official digital gateway for budget, contract, and procurement management.

Tenders launched before the rollout or outside the platform continue under previous submission mechanisms. Etimad supports transparency, efficiency, and digital transformation in government operations.

The rules do not bar foreign companies or related parties from participating in public tenders, but acceptance of bids is limited to two scenarios:

- Only one technically compliant bid is submitted.
- The bid is the best offer following evaluation, priced at least 25% lower than the next competitor.

Projects valued at SAR 1 million or less are exempt from these controls.

News Courtesy: gulfnews.com

## ADNOC Drilling targets market share gains in Oman and Kuwait



ADNOC Drilling is positioning Oman and Kuwait at the centre of its next growth phase, with management highlighting strong opportunities to capture market share through joint ventures, technology acquisitions and expansion of oilfield services capabilities.

Speaking during a media roundtable and in an exclusive interview, Chief Financial Officer Youssef Salem said the company’s immediate priorities remain focused on scaling technology platforms and deepening its regional footprint.

“So the top priority is to continue to do more under Enersol, on top of the four deals we’ve done, because that’s effectively acquiring more technologies to

expand that project portfolio,” he said. “Priority number two is to use it to grab more market share in Oman and Kuwait and everything we do in general is always joint ventures.”

Management sees both markets offering large and stable growth prospects supported by rising production capacity and expanding drilling activity.

Salem said Kuwait is entering a major expansion cycle, with production capacity set to rise toward four million barrels per day while new offshore developments and unconventional exploration are also advancing.

“Kuwait is ramping up from three to four million barrels per day of capacity. It also has one of the largest onshore rig fleets in the region, more than 200 rigs,” he said. “So it’s a great opportunity all around.”

Oman presents similar potential, with a well-developed upstream sector supported by a mix of national and international operators.

“Oman has a very well developed industry, close to 100 onshore rigs in the country and multiple operating companies,” Salem said. “So both markets for us provide a huge expansion opportunity.”

Technology adoption remains central to ADNOC

Drilling’s operational strategy, helping the company improve productivity while maintaining cost leadership across the region.

Salem said automation and artificial intelligence are increasingly embedded in drilling operations, contributing to faster well delivery and stronger financial performance.

“If you look at 2025, we were almost 10% ahead of schedule overall in terms of the number of wells drilled and drilling time,” he said. “A lot of that is about technology, autonomous drilling utilising AI allows you to be more efficient.”

The company’s return on equity reached 35% last year, supported by cost optimisation measures and automation across operations.

The expansion of oilfield services has played a key role in driving ADNOC Drilling’s record financial performance, with the segment emerging as the fastest growing part of the business.

Emri Zeineldin, Senior Vice President of Oilfield Services, said the division has grown into a major contributor to both operational efficiency and national capability development.

News Courtesy: gulfnews.com



# 14

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## CEBU PACIFIC NAMED ASIA'S LOW-COST AIRLINE OF THE YEAR BY CAPA

Cebu Pacific (PSE: CEB), the Philippines' leading carrier, has been recognized as Asia's Low-Cost Airline of the Year by the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA), a global authority in aviation research and analysis.

The award highlights CEB's strong business performance and its continued drive to make air travel affordable and accessible for everyone. CAPA's annual recognition honors the airline that demonstrates outstanding strategic leadership, innovation, and lasting industry impact, setting the standard for low-cost carriers across the region.

"We are deeply honored to receive this award from CAPA. It recognizes the passion and commitment of every Cebu Pacific employee who works hard each day to make flying safe, affordable, and accessible for our passengers," said Mike Szucs, CEB Chief Executive Officer. "As we expand our reach, our purpose remains clear—to connect people and communities, and to help fuel tourism and economic growth across the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific."

The CAPA Awards for Excellence are not driven by customer surveys or sponsorship. They are



independently researched by an international panel of

judges and analysts.

CEB stood out for its record-breaking passenger growth and strong financial performance. From January to September 2025, CEB has flown nearly 20 million passengers, a 13.9% increase from 17.5 million in 2024. Domestic passengers grew 12.7% to 14.9 million, while international passengers grew 17.7% to 5.1 million. The seat load factor averaged 84.8% for the period, while overall capacity in seats went up by 14% to 23.5 million.

The airline's success stems from its low-cost model, which has transformed air travel in the Philippines by expanding connectivity, opening new routes, and keeping fares affordable for more travelers. To meet growing demand, CEB has also invested heavily in its fleet and network expansion, including a record-breaking order for up to 152 Airbus A321neo aircraft—the largest in Philippine aviation history.

Cebu Pacific now flies to 37 domestic and 26 international destinations across Asia, Australia, and the Middle East, further expanding its network and leadership in the Asia-Pacific as it continues to make air travel more accessible to everyone.

## CEBU PACIFIC NAMED AMONG PHILIPPINES' BEST PLACES TO WORK

Cebu Pacific (PSE: CEB), the Philippines' leading carrier, closed the year with recognition for its people-first workplace culture, earning Silver at the 2025 BusinessWorld Best Places to Work Awards.

CEB received two Silver distinctions: one for overall performance and another for strong results across key workplace areas, including inclusion, support for persons with disabilities, age diversity, and employee wellbeing. It was the only local carrier recognized in this year's awards.

"At Cebu Pacific, we focus on building systems and practices that allow our people to perform at their best—safely, inclusively, and with the support they need. Aviation is a demanding environment, so we invest in policies, leadership, and workplace initiatives that enable our teams to do their jobs well and sustainably. This recognition affirms that our approach is working, and we will continue strengthening it as the company grows," said Felix Lopez, CEB Chief Human Resources Officer.

The recognition is based on an independent employee engagement survey conducted by BusinessWorld in partnership with global employee experience platform WorkL. Organizations are assessed across six key drivers of engagement: Reward and Recognition, Instilling Pride, Information Sharing, Empowerment, Wellbeing, and Job Satisfaction.

This latest honor builds on CEB's growing list of



workplace milestones. In 2024, the airline earned the Great Place To Work® Certification, becoming the first carrier in Southeast Asia to receive the distinction. This year, it was also included in Forbes' World's Best Employers and named among the Philippines' Best Employers by the Philippine Daily

Inquirer.

As CEB continues to expand its network to over 60 domestic and international destinations, the airline remains focused on strengthening a workplace culture that supports its people.

## First Time In 14 Years: 3 European Airlines Plan Australia Flights In 2026

On a typical day last year, 14,000 people flew between Europe and Australia. Naturally, most passengers connected to another flight en route, particularly with Emirates, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, and Cathay Pacific. On the Australian side, Qantas operated on a nonstop and one-stop basis. From Europe, two carriers had flights, both stopping en route.

Things will be quite different in 2026. Three European airlines will operate: British Airways, Finnair, and Turkish Airlines. Due to Istanbul Airport being on the European side of the Bosphorus, Turkish Airlines counts as European. A trio of carriers last operated in 2012, when BA coexisted with Air Austral (considered French) and Virgin Atlantic. Air Austral had a one-stop, same-plane, same-flight-number service from Paris Orly to Sydney via Réunion, which is a French department in the Indian



Ocean.

In December, Finland's flag carrier revealed it'd fly to Australia. In an extraordinary development, it will take off from Helsinki to Melbourne via Bangkok, with fifth freedom traffic rights between the capitals of Thailand and the state of Victoria.

It would be reasonable to assume that this never-before-served market would be flown three times a week. After all, that's a perfectly usual initial

frequency for brand-new long-haul markets. But not so. Finnair will operate daily on its flagship equipment, the Airbus A350-900, with Cirium Diio data showing that both the 278-seat and 321-seat configurations will be used.

The historic first flight will lift off from Europe on October 25, with the very long route starting in time for the all-important summer Down Under and Christmas, both helping with demand and fares. It'll be needed, as the demand between Helsinki and Melbourne is minimal.

Of course, it'll target passengers connecting from multiple cities in the Baltics and Scandinavia, in particular. It'll also capture some passengers who connect elsewhere in Australia (or to New Zealand) with partner Qantas. But notably, it is, to a degree, about extending its Bangkok flights to Melbourne.

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

## INDIGO AND NOBERO JOIN HANDS; MAKE SHOPPING MORE REWARDING FOR TRAVELERS

IndiGo, India's preferred airline, and Nobero, the traveller brand from the house of TMRW, today announced a strategic partnership under the IndiGo BluChip loyalty program, unlocking more value for customers across lifestyle shopping and travel. This first-of-its-kind collaboration allows IndiGo BluChip members to earn 1 IndiGo BluChip for every ₹100 spent on any Nobero product. By seamlessly connecting fashion and travel, the partnership transforms everyday apparel purchases into flight rewards, offering customers greater convenience and tangible benefits. Designed to enhance the travel experience both on the ground and in the air, the partnership brings together Nobero's apparel designed for the Modern Traveller who is always on the go, and IndiGo BluChip's rapidly expanding loyalty ecosystem.

Customers can now enjoy a rewarding journey that begins with their wardrobe and extends to IndiGo's extensive flight network. The partnership is valid for three years, effective immediately, reinforcing IndiGo's commitment to building meaningful alliances that enrich customer experiences. Neetan Chopra, Chief Digital and Information Officer, IndiGo, said: "At IndiGo, we are committed to creating a compelling value proposition that aligns with our customers' expectations, while recognizing and rewarding their continued loyalty. We are thrilled to partner with Nobero and are confident that this collaboration will enrich our customers' shopping and travel experiences with meaningful, easy-to-redeem benefits. Says Karthik Venkat and Bala Satish, Co-Founders, Nobero, "Our vision has always been to elevate the modern traveller's journey. Partnering with IndiGo BluChip allows us to extend that value even further by rewarding customers not just with exceptional products but also with meaningful loyalty benefits. This collaboration marks a significant step in building an enriched travel lifestyle community." Why This Partnership Matters

- **Seamless Value:** Customers earn IndiGo BluChips with every purchase on the Nobero website
- **Strengthened Travel Lifestyle:** Aligns with Nobero's mission of creating products designed for modern, on-the-move consumers.

Customers can start earning IndiGo BluChips immediately by shopping at Nobero's official website. IndiGo BluChips will automatically be credited to their registered IndiGo BluChip accounts after



purchase validation. About IndiGo IndiGo is India's preferred and amongst the fastest growing carriers in the world. IndiGo has a simple philosophy: offer fares that are affordable, flights that are on time, and provide a courteous and hassle-free travel experience across its unparalleled network. With its fleet of 400+ aircraft, the airline operates around 2200+ daily flights, connecting 95+ domestic and 40+ international destinations and welcomed over 118 million customers in FY25. IndiGo was also named the 'Best Airline in India and South Asia' by Skytrax at the World Airline Awards 2025. For more information, please visit <http://www.goindigo.in/> or download our mobile app. Facebook | X | Instagram About Nobero Established in 2020, Nobero.com quickly identified that millennials needed comfortable clothes that will be stylish.

The pandemic blurred the lines between indoors and outdoors and there was a gap in the market, and Travel wear emerged as a category. Not only was Nobero quick to capitalize on this need; they evolved it further to create the Fashleisure category. Fashleisure as a coined name is trademarked by the brand where fashion meets comfort ensuring the consumer does not have to sacrifice comfort for fashion and vice versa. From statement t-shirts to versatile joggers, Nobero tapped into the psyche of

the modern social explorer. Cozy sweatshirts and travel-inspired printed hoodies ensure that the social traveller is always on point, both with his attitude and style. As a fashion brand targeting a community of individuals who have a penchant for pursuing their passions, the focus was on elevating the apparel. About TMRW TMRW is a tech-led 'House of Brands' venture from the Aditya Birla Group. With a focus on fashion and lifestyle, the company's strategic vision entails crafting a leading House of Brands enterprise, exceeding the \$1 billion benchmark, within the next 5-7 years.

Functioning as both a coach and a catalyst, TMRW assumes the pivotal role of nurturing these brand founders and teams, steering them toward becoming the next generation of revered, consumer-adored brands. TMRW's competitive edge derives from an extraordinary amalgamation of expertise in category and brand cultivation, blended seamlessly with cutting-edge digital-first & technology capabilities with an experienced founding team. TMRW is focused on building large, enduring brands and deploying a balanced growth path with strong fundamentals and unit-economics. Currently, the TMRW portfolio consists of casual wear, streetwear & Fashleisure along with expression wear and kids wear categories.

## \$7,500 Per Hour: The Massive Cost For Gulf Airlines Avoiding Iranian Airspace

Airlines operating across the Middle East are reviewing flight paths and contingency plans as tensions between the United States and Iran intensify near key Gulf airspace. Recent military activity and warnings tied to exercises in Iranian territory have prompted aviation authorities to issue advisories affecting commercial routes in the region. Carriers that typically transit Iranian and nearby airspace are preparing for possible reroutes, delays, or short-notice adjustments. The situation has raised renewed concerns over operational safety and rising costs for international airlines.

The developments follow heightened military positioning and diplomatic strain between Washington and Tehran, particularly around strategic waterways that serve as vital corridors for global air traffic. With the Gulf acting as a crossroads between Europe, Asia, and Africa, even limited restrictions could have ripple effects across long-haul networks. Airlines are closely monitoring official notices while evaluating how extended diversions could impact fuel burn, crew scheduling, and aircraft utilization.

Airspace advisories issued in connection with Iranian



military exercises have led several airlines to reassess routes over southern Iran and the Gulf region. The affected zones include corridors frequently used by long-haul services linking Europe with Asia, as well as flights connecting Gulf hubs with North America. While no widespread closures have been announced, precautionary planning is underway should conditions deteriorate further. Airlines typically respond to such scenarios by extending flight paths to avoid sensitive airspace. Such re-routes, typically up to two or three hours on wide-body aircraft, could set airlines back an additional \$6,000 to \$7,500 per flight hour in costs, according to The National.

Operationally, even modest detours can significantly

increase fuel consumption and flying time, particularly for widebody aircraft operating ultra-long-haul sectors. Additional flight hours also translate into higher crew costs and tighter aircraft rotations, potentially impacting onward connections. Industry analysts note that extended disruptions could pressure already thin margins, especially if fuel prices fluctuate alongside geopolitical uncertainty. Ernest Arvai, aviation analyst at US-based AirInsight, said, "The loss of revenue from flight cancellations or delays, and from higher operating costs for additional time, fuel, crews and lower load factors, if passengers prefer to avoid the region during a conflict."

The Gulf region's airspace is among the busiest in the world, with aircraft constantly transiting between major global hubs. Recent heightened tensions between the United States and Iran have already prompted several international carriers to suspend or reroute services as a precaution. Among those affected are Air France and KLM, which have paused select Middle East operations, alongside British Airways (temporary Bahrain halt).

News Courtesy: simpleflying.com

## OMAN AIR ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECT FLIGHTS TO RWANDA, STRENGTHENING CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN OMAN AND AFRICA

OMAN AIR (11JAN2026) : Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the launch of direct flights to Kigali, Rwanda, marking a significant step in strengthening air connectivity between Oman and the African continent. The new route was announced during a formal signing ceremony hosted by His Excellency Saeed Al Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in Muscat, during the official visit of Hon. Amb. Uwihanganye Jean de Dieu, Rwanda Minister of State for Infrastructure; Hon. Amb. Olivier Nduhungirehe, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda and Yusuf Murangwa, Minister of Finance & Economic Planning.

The Muscat-Kigali service will act as an important facilitator of the growing relationship between Oman and Rwanda, one of East Africa's leading emerging destinations for both tourism and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions). It will also provide travellers with greater choice and connectivity between the Middle East and Africa, and onwards across Oman Air's vast network throughout India, Asia Pacific, and Europe.

His Excellency Saeed Al Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of the Sultanate of Oman, said, "The launch of direct flights between Muscat and Kigali reflects Oman's commitment to strengthening international connectivity in support of trade, investment and economic cooperation. Air transport plays a vital role in enabling closer ties between nations, and this new route will support the continued development of relations between Oman and Rwanda, while enhancing Oman's position as a key regional aviation hub."

Hon. Amb. Uwihanganye Jean de Dieu, Rwanda Minister of State for Infrastructure, added, "Rwanda's vision is to foster direct connectivity to enable growing cooperation between States which is the objective for establishing Kigali as an international hub for aviation, economic and social activities. The Government of Rwanda welcomes Oman Air flights

between Kigali and Muscat. This complements our continued commitment for developing deep cooperation with States, bring the world to Rwanda and take Rwanda to the world."

Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe."

Oman Air has actively expanded its network throughout 2025 with even more destinations



Con Korfiatis, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Oman Air, also commented, "We continue to focus on expanding our network in markets with strong demand and long-term potential. The launch of services to Kigali supports closer engagement between Oman and Rwanda, unlocks the growing tourism potential of both countries, and allows us to connect guests seamlessly between Africa and our wider network. We look forward to welcoming even more guests on board and giving them the chance to experience our award-winning service and warm, Omani hospitality."

Ahmed Al Amry, CEO of Oman Airports, added, "The introduction of direct flights to Kigali further strengthens Muscat International Airport's role as a gateway connecting Oman with key global markets. As passenger demand continues to grow, we remain focused on supporting network expansion that enhances connectivity, delivers a high-quality airport experience, and enables seamless travel between

anticipated for 2026, as it continues to target key strategic regions and meet growing demand. Recent and upcoming launches include destinations in Europe such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen, the Middle East including Baghdad and Taif, and the Far East with services to Singapore starting July 2026.

Oman and Rwanda have shared diplomatic relations for over 28 years as well as a long-established trade relationship. Rwanda's tourism and business travel market has expanded steadily in recent years with growing demand for the country's eco-tourism and premium travel offerings. Kigali has also positioned itself as a regional hub for conferences and investment, supported by government-led initiatives to attract international events.

Oman Air flights to Kigali are scheduled to commence in June 2026, subject to regulatory approvals. Further details regarding schedules and frequencies will be announced in due course.

## AIR INDIA AND SINGAPORE AIRLINES SIGN COMMERCIAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT; WORK TOWARDS JOINT BUSINESS AGREEMENT

Air India and Singapore Airlines (SIA) have signed a commercial cooperation framework agreement, which will pave the way for them to deepen their long-standing partnership through definitive joint business agreements. This strengthened collaboration allows the airlines to explore ways to improve connectivity between Singapore and India, delivering greater choice and benefits for customers.

The agreement was signed in Mumbai on 16th January 2026 by Air India Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Campbell Wilson, and SIA Chief Executive Officer, Goh Choon Phong. Subject to regulatory approvals and the signing of definitive joint business agreements, the airlines aim to expand and enhance the product and service offerings, enabling seamless connections and more route options, and allowing customers to book flights across both airlines under a single unified journey. This partnership also envisages a closer coordination of flight schedules between Air India and SIA to improve convenience for customers.

It could also expand to include greater cross-participation in the airlines' corporate travel programmes to improve offerings to business travellers. The airlines will explore plans to progressively enhance privileges beyond the current



Star Alliance benefits for members of Air India's Maharaja Club and SIA's KrisFlyer frequent flyer programmes. Further details will be announced as the plans are finalised.

Air India and SIA also plan to explore opportunities to broaden the scope of their cooperation in select markets, beyond Singapore and India, subject to regulatory approvals. This would meet the growing demand for global connectivity, support traffic flow through both carriers' hubs, and strengthen the air travel markets of both India and Singapore.

Today, the airlines codeshare on 61 points in 20 countries and territories. This follows the October 2024 expansion of their codeshare partnership, which added 51 international and domestic destinations

across both networks.

Mr Campbell Wilson, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Air India, said: "Air India remains committed to expanding its global footprint, both by adding new aircraft to our own fleet and by forging stronger commercial partnerships, especially with our fellow Star Alliance member carriers. We are pleased to take our valued, long-term relationship with Singapore Airlines to the next level through this new commercial cooperation understanding, which establishes a clear and structured platform for both airlines to explore and define future areas of closer collaboration. With this measured approach, we aim to lay a strong foundation for sustainable, long-term value creation for our customers and other stakeholders."

Mr Goh Choon Phong, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Airlines, said: "This agreement between Singapore Airlines and Air India is a natural evolution of our successful partnership, creating genuine value and delivering enhanced benefits to customers. It is a strategic, win-win collaboration that will strengthen connectivity between Singapore and India, support the growth of air travel and tourism in both countries, and deepen their long-standing business and people-to-people ties."

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## U.S. and South Korean Militaries will have joint drills in March as tensions with North Korea escalate

The U.S. and South Korean Militaries said on Wednesday (February 25, 2026) they will conduct their annual springtime exercises next month to bolster their countries' combined defence capabilities against a backdrop of a deepening diplomatic freeze with nuclear-armed North Korea.

North Korea has long described the allies' joint exercises as invasion rehearsals and used them as a pretext to dial up its own Military demonstrations and weapons testing activity. The allies say the drills are defensive in nature.

The announcement came as North Korea is holding a major political conference where authoritarian leader Kim Jong Un is expected to outline his key domestic, foreign policy and Military goals for the next five years. North Korean state media have not so far reported any direct comments by Mr. Kim on relations with Washington and Seoul at the ruling Workers' Party congress, which began last week.

Based on recent public comments, experts say Mr. Kim could use the congress to further entrench his hard-line stance toward South Korea, reiterate calls for Washington to drop its demand for denuclearisation as a precondition for renewed talks, and announce steps to simultaneously strengthen and integrate his nuclear and conventional forces.



Freedom Shield is one of two "command post" exercises that the allies conduct each year; the other is Ulchi Freedom Shield, held in August. The drills are largely computer-simulated and designed to test the allies' joint operational capabilities while incorporating evolving war scenarios and security challenges.

As usual, the March drill will be accompanied by a

field training program called Warrior Shield to enhance "training realism and combat readiness," Col. Ryan Donald, public affairs director of U.S. Forces Korea, told a news conference.

South Korean and U.S. officials have not said how many troops will participate. The exercises typically involve thousands.

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

## Trump says he has told big tech companies to build their own power plants

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday (February 24, 2026) during his State of the Union address that his administration has told major technology companies they must build their own power plants for their data centers, a measure meant to protect consumers from rising bills.

The announcement comes amid growing local opposition to energy-hungry data center projects around the country blamed for a jump in electricity costs.

"Tonight, I'm pleased to announce that I have negotiated the new rate payer protection pledge. You know what that is? We're telling the major tech companies that they have the obligation to provide for their own power needs," he said.

We have an old grid. It could never handle the kind of numbers, the amount of electricity that's needed. So I'm telling them, they can build their own plant.



They're going to produce their own electricity. It will ensure the company's ability to get electricity, while at the same time, lowering prices of electricity for you," he said.

He did not name the companies involved or provide details on how the plan would be implemented or enforced. The White House is expected to host companies in early March to formalise the effort,

according to two sources familiar with the plan.

The Trump administration supports efforts to advance artificial intelligence in competition with China, but the impacts of the rapid proliferation of AI data centers on power prices have become a potential vulnerability for Republicans ahead of the November midterm elections.

PJM Interconnection, the largest power grid operator in the U.S., last month unveiled a plan in which new large power users would either bring their own new generation to the grid or limit their usage when the system is stretched.

Companies such as Anthropic and Microsoft have also voluntarily announced initiatives to limit the impact of data centers on consumer energy prices.

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

## Severe floods in southeast Brazil kill at least 25 and force hundreds to evacuate



Severe floods in southeastern Brazil have killed at least 25 people and left dozens missing in the state of Minas Gerais, officials said on Tuesday (February 24, 2026). Meteorologists warned that more rain is expected in the region in the next few days.

The torrential rains began on Monday (February 23) in the cities of Juiz de Fora and Uba, about 310

kilometres (192 miles) north of Rio de Janeiro, forcing about 440 residents to evacuate their homes.

Minas Gerais' fire department says it is searching for 43 people who went missing since late on Monday. A video shared by the department showed flooded streets in Juiz de Fora and Uba, where a river veered off its course.

Officials have warned residents to stay away from areas that could be prone to mudslides.

Juiz de Fora is a city of 5.6 lakh residents, while neighbouring Uba has 1.07 lakh, according to Brazil's statistics agency.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on his social media channels that security forces are working on the rescue and providing immediate assistance to the population affected by the rain.

Brazil's meteorology institute Inmet said in a statement that more rain is forecast for the region, which lies close to hills, valleys and slopes.

Juiz de Fora City Hall said in a statement the city experienced double the rain expected for February. Mayor Margarida Salomao said earlier at least 20 landslides were reported.

Firefighter Demetrius Bastos Goulart, 47, said rescue efforts will be slow and lengthy.

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

## Health Tips for 2026

Start the new year with the evergreen resolution to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Here are 10 practical health tips to help you start off towards healthy living in 2025.

### 1. Eat a healthy diet

Eat a combination of different foods, including fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains. Adults should eat at least five portions (400g) of fruit and vegetables per day. You can improve your intake of fruits and vegetables by always including veggies in your meal; eating fresh fruit and vegetables as snacks; eating a variety of fruits and vegetables; and eating them in season. By eating healthy, you will reduce your risk of malnutrition and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

### 2. Consume less salt and sugar

Reduce your salt intake to 5g per day, equivalent to about one teaspoon. It's easier to do this by limiting the amount of salt, soy sauce, fish sauce and other high-sodium condiments when preparing meals; removing salt, seasonings and condiments from your meal table; avoiding salty snacks; and choosing low-sodium products.

On the other hand, consuming excessive amounts of sugars increases the risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain. In both adults and children, the intake of free sugars should be reduced. WHO recommends consuming less than 5% of total energy intake for additional health benefits. You can reduce your sugar intake by limiting the consumption of sugary snacks, candies and sugar-sweetened beverages.

### 3. Reduce intake of harmful fats

Fats consumed should be less than 30% of your total energy intake. This will help prevent unhealthy weight gain and NCDs. There are different types of fats, but unsaturated fats are preferable over saturated fats and trans-fats. WHO recommends reducing saturated fats to less than 10% of total energy intake; reducing trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake; and replacing both saturated fats and trans-fats with unsaturated fats.

The preferable unsaturated fats are found in fish, avocado and nuts, and in sunflower, soybean, canola and olive oils; saturated fats are found in fatty meat, butter, palm and coconut oil, cream, cheese, ghee and lard; and trans-fats are found in baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods, such as frozen pizza, cookies, biscuits, and cooking oils and spreads.

### 4. Don't smoke

Smoking tobacco causes NCDs such as lung disease, heart disease and stroke. Tobacco kills not only the direct smokers but even non-smokers through second-hand exposure.

If you are currently a smoker, it's not too late to quit. Once you do, you will experience immediate and long-term health benefits. If you are not a smoker, that's great! Do not start smoking and fight for your right to breathe tobacco-smoke-free air.

### 5. Be active

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. This includes exercise and activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling, and engaging in recreational pursuits. The amount of physical activity you need depends on your age group but adults aged 18-64 years should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week. Increase moderate-intensity physical activity to 300 minutes per week for additional health benefits.

### 6. Check your blood pressure regularly

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is called a



“silent killer”. This is because many people who have hypertension may not be aware of the problem as it may not have any symptoms. If left uncontrolled, hypertension can lead to heart, brain, kidney and other diseases. Have your blood pressure checked regularly by a health worker so you know your numbers. If your blood pressure is high, get the advice of a health worker. This is vital in the prevention and control of hypertension.

### 7. Follow traffic laws

Road crashes claim over one million lives around the world and millions more are injured. Road traffic injuries are preventable through a variety of measures implemented by the government such as strong legislation and enforcement, safer infrastructure and vehicle standards, and improved post-crash care. You yourself can also prevent road crashes by ensuring that you follow traffic laws such as using the seatbelt for adults and child restraint for your kids, wearing a helmet when riding a motorcycle or bicycle, not drinking and driving, and not using your mobile phone while driving.

### 8. Take antibiotics only as prescribed

Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest public

health threats in our generation. When antibiotics lose their power, bacterial infections become harder to treat, leading to higher medical costs, prolonged hospital stays, and increased mortality. Antibiotics are losing their power because of misuse and overuse in humans and animals. Make sure you only take antibiotics if prescribed by a qualified health professional. And once prescribed, complete the treatment days as instructed. Never share antibiotics.

### 9. Clean your hands properly

Hand hygiene is critical not only for health workers but for everyone. Clean hands can prevent the spread of infectious illnesses. You should handwash using soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled or handrub using an alcohol-based product.

### 10. Have regular check-ups

Regular check-ups can help find health problems before they start. Health professionals can help find and diagnose health issues early, when your chances for treatment and cure are better. Go to your nearest health facility to check out the health services, screenings and treatment that are accessible to you.

## PHOTO OF THIS EDITION



CLICKED BY: RAJESH KARTHA  
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**Caesars Travel Group Honored by Jazeera Airways on 20th Anniversary Caesars Showcase**

In a special celebration marking 20 years of flying, Jazeera Airways honored its key partners and collaborators during an exclusive partner recognition

and tourism landscape. Jazeera Airways Chairman Marwan Boodai and CEO Barathan Pasupathi led the ceremony, acknowledging the crucial role of partners

Expressing his gratitude, Mr. Kumar highlighted the strength of the partnership and praised the continued cooperation between the two organisations. Caesars



event held in Kuwait. Among the distinguished partners recognized was Caesars Travel Group, a longstanding travel services provider and General Sales Agent (GSA) in the region.

The anniversary event brought together senior representatives from government authorities, industry suppliers, travel agencies, and service providers to reflect on two decades of growth and strategic partnerships that have helped shape Kuwait's aviation

in the airline's success.

At the event, Caesars Travel Group was presented with a 20th Anniversary award in recognition of its support and service to Jazeera Airways over the years. As part of the celebration, Mr. P.N.J. Kumar, CEO of Caesars Travel Group, received a special memento from Jazeera Airways leadership, symbolizing the company's valued contribution to the airline's journey and mutually beneficial collaboration.

Travel Group has maintained a strong presence in air travel services in Kuwait since its founding in 1992 and represents several major international airlines and travel brands in the region.

The recognition underlines Caesars Travel Group's commitment to excellence in travel services and its role in supporting the growth and success of Jazeera Airways - especially as the airline embarks on its next decade of expansion and innovation

**NOTTAM INTL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL DIRECTOR VISITED CAESARS TRAVEL GROUP HEAD OFFICE**



CA Vinod Valooparambil, Director of the Nottam International Short Film Festival Kuwait (NISFFK), recently paid a courtesy visit to Mr. P.N.J. Kumar, CEO of Caesars Travel Group (Kuwait and India), to personally express his appreciation for the continued encouragement and support extended by the Caesars Group towards the festival.

During the meeting, CA Vinod Valooparambil acknowledged the valuable role played by Caesars Travel Group in supporting cultural initiatives that promote creativity, storytelling, and community engagement. As a gesture of gratitude, a memento was presented to Mr. Kumar, symbolising the festival's appreciation for the group's consistent backing and belief in the arts.

The Nottam International Short Film Festival,

organised by the Kerala Association Kuwait, is held in fond memory of Shri Kaniyapuram Ramachandran, a highly respected figure in Kerala's cultural and political landscape. What began as a heartfelt tribute has, over the years, evolved into a significant international platform for short cinema, nurturing emerging talent and providing a voice to young and independent filmmakers.

Nottam has earned recognition for showcasing socially relevant and thought-provoking narratives, reflecting real-world issues and human experiences through the powerful medium of short films. The festival has consistently encouraged creative expression while fostering meaningful dialogue among audiences from diverse backgrounds.

With the successful completion of its 12th edition in

2025, NISFFK continues to strengthen cultural bonds within the global Malayali community, especially among expatriates in Kuwait. The festival stands as a celebration of short cinema's ability to inspire change, reflect society, and connect people across borders.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. P.N.J. Kumar reaffirmed Caesars Travel Group's commitment to supporting cultural and community-driven initiatives, noting that platforms like Nottam play a vital role in preserving artistic expression and nurturing future talent.

The interaction highlighted the shared vision of both organisations in promoting culture, creativity, and social responsibility, reinforcing the importance of sustained corporate support for meaningful artistic endeavours.



In a remarkable achievement that underscores its leadership in the travel industry, Caesars Travel Group has once again been honored at the prestigious MALT Excellence Awards 2026, clinching the highly coveted title of “Best Corporate Travel Strategy of the Year” — marking a significant milestone in the company’s continued legacy of excellence.

**A Prestigious Recognition in the Heart of the Middle East**

The MALT Excellence Awards is widely regarded as one of the Middle East’s most respected accolades in travel, tourism, and business travel services. Organized annually by QnA International as part of the Meetings Arabia & Luxury Travel (MALT) Congress, the awards honor organizations that demonstrate outstanding performance, strategic innovation, and impactful contributions to travel and tourism across the Gulf and the broader Middle East.

The 2025 ceremony — held on 20 February at the Conrad Etihad Towers in Abu Dhabi — brought together industry leaders, decision-makers, travel professionals, and global travel partners to celebrate excellence across multiple categories.

Caesars Travel Group’s recognition for “Best Corporate Travel Strategy of the Year” in 2025 reflects its consistent dedication to excellence, innovation, and customer-centric travel solutions. This award is particularly notable as it marks the third consecutive year that the company has been honored at the MALT Excellence Awards, reinforcing its reputation as a premier travel services provider in the

region.

Over the past several years, Caesars Travel Group has established itself as a leading force within the travel and tourism sector, earning multiple high-profile accolades:

- Top Organization in Travel in the GCC (2023)
- MICE & Travel Team of the Year (2024)
- TMC of the Year – MICE (2024)
- Best Corporate Travel Strategy of the Year (2025)

These recognitions bear testament not only to the group’s operational strength but also to its strategic vision in navigating the dynamic needs of corporate and leisure travel markets.

Winning at the MALT Excellence Awards — a platform that attracts leading travel suppliers, corporate buyers, luxury specialists, and global destination partners — signals that Caesars Travel Group stands at the forefront of industry innovation. It highlights the company’s role in shaping corporate travel trends, delivering bespoke travel solutions, and setting new benchmarks for service standards in the Gulf region.

On receiving the award, Kishore Vasudevan, Director of Caesars Travel Group, expressed his heartfelt appreciation, noting that the recognition reflects the team’s dedication to delivering excellence and exceeding client expectations. Likewise, P.N.J.

Kumar, CEO of Caesars Travel Group, described the achievement as an affirmation of the company’s sustained commitment to quality, innovation, and professional integrity in the travel sector.

Their comments underscored that such accolades are inspired by the trust and confidence placed in the company by its clients — a relationship built on reliability, consistency, and exceptional service delivery.

The company’s success at the MALT Excellence Awards also aligns with broader trends in regional tourism and business travel. As Kuwait continues to expand its tourism infrastructure and promotes itself as a strategic destination within the GCC, industry pioneers like Caesars Travel Group play a vital role in supporting that vision through advanced corporate travel solutions, innovative travel experiences, and collaborative initiatives with global travel partners.

**Conclusion: A Celebration of Vision and Leadership**

The 2026 MALT Excellence Awards have once again placed a spotlight on the finest accomplishments within the travel industry — and Caesars Travel Group’s latest award stands as a compelling testament to its strategic prowess, operational excellence, and unwavering focus on client satisfaction.

In an evolving travel landscape, this achievement not only celebrates past accomplishments but also sets a promising precedent for future innovation and leadership — both for Caesars Travel Group and the Middle East’s thriving travel and tourism ecosystem.

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Editorial

Cruise Holidays: The Ultimate Way to Explore the World in Comfort

Cruise holidays have evolved into one of the most exciting and effortless ways to travel the world. For modern tourists seeking relaxation, adventure, entertainment, and cultural discovery all in one journey, cruising offers a seamless experience that combines transportation, accommodation, dining, and exploration into a single unforgettable vacation.

Unlike traditional holidays that require multiple hotel bookings, flights, transfers, and constant packing and unpacking, a cruise allows travelers to settle into their cabin once and wake up in a new destination almost every day. The ship becomes your floating resort, carrying you across oceans, seas, and rivers while you enjoy world-class hospitality.

The global cruise industry is led by major operators such as Carnival Corporation & plc and Royal Caribbean Group, whose fleets sail to virtually every corner of the world. Brands like Royal Caribbean International are known for their innovative mega-ships filled with entertainment venues, fine dining restaurants, and thrilling attractions, while luxury lines such as Regent Seven Seas Cruises focus on personalized service, spacious suites, and all-inclusive experiences. This variety ensures that every traveler, from budget-conscious families to luxury seekers, can find a cruise that matches their style and expectations.

One of the greatest appeals of cruise holidays is the diversity of destinations available. Travelers can sail through the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, explore the historical ports of the Mediterranean, witness glaciers in Alaska, or embark on cultural journeys through Northern Europe. Popular embarkation hubs like Miami, Barcelona, and Dubai serve as gateways to these incredible itineraries. Each region offers its own character, cuisine, landscapes, and cultural experiences, allowing tourists to immerse themselves in multiple destinations within a single vacation.

Onboard life is designed to cater to every mood and preference. During the day, guests may relax by the pool, indulge in spa treatments, participate in fitness classes, or attend enrichment lectures. Evenings transform ships into vibrant entertainment hubs featuring live performances, themed parties, gourmet dining, and panoramic lounges overlooking the sea. Modern cruise ships are essentially floating cities equipped with shopping boutiques, theaters, specialty restaurants, and family activity zones.

Cruise holidays are particularly attractive to families and multi-generational travelers. The variety of onboard activities ensures that children, teenagers, parents, and grandparents all find something enjoyable. While children engage in supervised programs and interactive play areas, adults can unwind with fine dining, wine tastings, or sunset cocktails on deck. This balance of independence and shared experiences makes cruising a convenient and inclusive vacation choice.

Beyond leisure, cruise tourism significantly contributes to local economies. When ships dock, passengers explore ports, dine in local restaurants, book shore excursions, and shop for regional products. Destinations benefit from tourism spending, job creation, and increased international visibility. As a result, many countries actively invest in port infrastructure to attract cruise lines and enhance visitor experiences.

Sustainability has become an increasingly important focus within the cruise sector. Leading companies are investing in cleaner fuel technologies, advanced waste management systems, and energy-efficient ship designs to reduce environmental impact. The industry recognizes the importance of protecting oceans and coastal communities to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy cruise travel responsibly.



The resilience of cruise tourism has also been evident in recent years. Despite global challenges, the industry has adapted with enhanced health protocols, digital innovations, and renewed commitment to passenger safety. Travelers are returning to the seas with greater confidence, drawn by the value, convenience, and unique experiences that cruising provides.

A cruise holiday is more than just a vacation; it is a journey that blends discovery with comfort. It allows tourists to explore diverse cultures, landscapes, and cuisines while enjoying the consistent service and luxury of a world-class resort at sea. Whether seeking adventure, romance, family bonding, or pure relaxation, cruise holidays continue to redefine the way people experience travel across the globe.

Cruise holidays have become one of the most rewarding and stress-free ways to explore the world. For travelers who dream of visiting multiple destinations without the inconvenience of constant airport transfers, hotel changes, and complex planning, cruising offers a perfectly packaged solution. It combines transport, accommodation, fine dining, entertainment, and sightseeing into one seamless experience, allowing tourists to focus purely on enjoyment.

Over the past two decades, the cruise industry has undergone a remarkable transformation. What was once perceived as a niche holiday option for a limited audience has evolved into a global travel phenomenon. Major industry leaders such as Carnival Corporation & plc and Royal Caribbean Group have expanded their fleets dramatically, introducing technologically advanced ships that rival luxury resorts on land. Their brands, including Royal Caribbean International, have redefined onboard entertainment with world-class shows, innovative attractions, and diverse culinary concepts, while premium and ultra-luxury lines such as Regent Seven

Seas Cruises focus on exclusivity, personalized service, and immersive destination experiences.

One of the most compelling aspects of cruise holidays is the opportunity to experience several countries or cities within a single itinerary. Imagine enjoying breakfast while sailing into a historic Mediterranean port, spending the afternoon exploring ancient architecture and local markets, and returning to your ship in the evening for a gourmet dinner overlooking the sea. This effortless movement between destinations makes cruising particularly attractive for travelers who want to maximize their time and exposure to different cultures.

Global cruise hubs such as Miami, Barcelona, and Dubai connect passengers to diverse itineraries across the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Northern Europe, Alaska, and the Arabian Gulf. Each region offers a distinct atmosphere. Caribbean cruises are known for their relaxed beaches and vibrant island culture, Mediterranean voyages showcase history and art spanning thousands of years, and Northern European sailings reveal dramatic fjords and scenic coastlines.

Life onboard a modern cruise ship is designed to suit every traveler's pace. Mornings can begin with sunrise yoga on deck or a leisurely breakfast with panoramic ocean views. Throughout the day, guests may choose from spa treatments, cooking classes, live music, cultural workshops, or simply relaxing by the pool. Evenings bring a different energy, with theater productions, live bands, themed parties, and elegant dining experiences. For many travelers, the ship itself becomes as memorable as the destinations visited.

Ultimately, a cruise holiday is about freedom and discovery. It allows tourists to wake up in a new destination, experience diverse cultures, savor international cuisines, and return each evening to the comfort of a familiar, welcoming environment.

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