



WASHINGTON AVIATION SUMMARY

JULY 2026 EDITION

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The Kirstein & Young law firm specializes in representing U.S. and foreign airlines, airports, leasing companies, financial institutions and aviation-related companies before U.S. Government agencies, Congress, the courts and in commercial and financing matters.

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I. REGULATORY NEWS

1. Middle East Disruptions, High Fuel Prices Halve Airline Profitability.

Airlines are expected to achieve a combined total net profit of \$23 billion in 2026, said the International Air Transport Association (IATA), roughly half the previously projected \$41 billion and roughly half the \$45 billion net profit estimate for 2025. “All airline bottom lines are suffering from the rapid 70% rise in jet fuel prices,” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General. “Some of the additional cost is being recuperated by adjusting prices and improving efficiency, but it will not be sufficient to maintain profitability at the previous year’s level. Smaller carriers that started the year with weak balance sheets are certainly struggling. At the regional level, all are in the black but with sharply reduced financial performance, with the exception of the Middle East. The Gulf carriers face operational uncertainty following a near complete shutdown of airspace at the outbreak of the war. These carriers are doing an amazing job maintaining connectivity, but major financial impacts are unavoidable.”

2. IATA Holds 82nd AGM In Rio de Janeiro.

IATA held its 82nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Rio de Janeiro. In his report on the state of the industry, Willie Walsh said the jump in average jet fuel prices will add \$100 billion to the collective fuel bill this year. Among other remarks: Demand is holding up, even as airlines are raising fares and rates to cope, but growth will be slower, 2.1% for the passenger business and 0.7% for cargo. Polling suggests that 86% of travelers expect fares to track oil prices; 49% expect to spend more on travel this year than last; an additional 43% plan to spend the same. Fleets are less efficient than planned, because the aerospace supply chain “continues its failure to deliver aircraft and engines as promised.” The aircraft order backlog is over 18,000, and average fleet age reached a record 15.2 years. Being short over 5,000 more fuel efficient replacement aircraft than expected means missed efficiency gains, higher lease rates and increased maintenance costs. In total, supply chain failures cost airlines at least \$11 billion in 2025. Areas where we need better policy frameworks and more effective government action are regulation aligned with global standards, infrastructure, decarbonization policy. . . . Willie Walsh is leaving IATA to become CEO of IndiGo Airlines; a search is underway for the next Director General. Roberto Alvo, CEO of LATAM Airlines Group, began his one-year term as Chair of the IATA Board of Directors at the conclusion of the AGM. He succeeds Luis Gallego, CEO of International Airlines Group (IAG), who will continue to serve on the Board. Pegasus Airlines Chair Mehmet Tevfik Nane will succeed Alvo in June 2027. Xiamen Airlines will host the 83rd AGM

and World Air Transport Summit in Xiamen, on China's southeast coast, from May 30 to June 1, 2027. Zhao Dong is Chairman of Xiamen Airlines; Xie Bing is CEO and President.

3. U.S. Passenger Airlines Lose \$1 Billion In 1Q 2026.

U.S. scheduled passenger airlines reported a first-quarter 2026 after-tax net loss of \$966 million and a pre-tax operating profit of \$912 million, said the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), part of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Total operating revenue was \$63.4 billion, including fares: \$46.2 billion; baggage fees: \$1.9 billion; and reservation change fees: \$227 million. Total operating expenses were \$62.4 billion. . . . Average U.S. domestic air fare increased in 1Q to \$428, up 4.7% from the 4Q 2025 inflation-adjusted fare of \$409, based on sample of 40% of tickets sold. Figures include all fees and charges levied by carrier required for passenger to board, and taxes and fees levied by outside entity at time of purchase. Fees for optional services, such as baggage fees, seat upgrades, and selecting an assigned seat on the aircraft, are not included.

4. "Save a Life, Not a Bag" Campaign Launched.

A "Save a Life, Not a Bag" campaign was launched at the IATA AGM, as a response to the growing number of cases where travelers stop to collect their baggage or take photos during aircraft evacuations. Supported by regulators including the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the campaign reinforces what passengers must do when instructed to evacuate an airplane: follow crew instructions, leave all baggage behind, and move quickly to the nearest usable exit. An IATA-commissioned survey of recent air travelers found that 80% claimed to know what to do in an emergency evacuation; 61% correctly answered that they should leave all personal items and exit the aircraft; of 33% who said they had seen reports of people taking their baggage during an evacuation, 22% indicated they are likely to do the same; 18% know that aircraft evacuation procedures are designed around a 90-second safety benchmark, whereas 38% indicate it could be three minutes or more; one in ten passengers admitted they may still take baggage during an evacuation, or follow others who do, even when instructed not to; 60% say they would be less likely to take baggage if essential small items were already secured on their person. The survey was conducted in early April with sample sizes of 300+ recent flyers each in Singapore, U.S., UK and United Arab Emirates.

5. IATA, IATP Support Airline Supply Chain Resilience.

IATA and the International Airlines Technical Pool (IATP) agreed to work together to help airlines address supply chain and technical operations

challenges. “By combining IATP’s technical pooling expertise with IATA’s technical expertise, we can help airlines access serviceable materials and strengthen maintenance resilience,” said IATA. IATP programs give airlines access to more than 6,600 parts across 350 stations, line maintenance support at more than 900 locations, and worldwide aircraft recovery coverage. IATA’s MRO SmartHub provides deeper analytics on materials availability, usage patterns, and parts shortages; it also helps airlines identify confirmed serviceable inventories from accredited suppliers, supporting more efficient materials planning and procurement workflows.

6. FAA, EASA Pledge Cooperation For New Era Of Aviation.

FAA and EASA “reaffirmed their commitment to advancing global aviation safety through deeper collaboration, transparency, and trust during a period of rapid technological innovation,” at their annual safety conference. They pledged to strengthen information exchange on safety oversight; advance Safety Management Systems (SMS); expand on collaborating and sharing operational data to support rulemaking; streamline approval processes for advanced aviation technologies and operations to harmonize certification pathways; accelerate safe integration of automated flight deck technologies; accelerate use of Portable Electronic Devices in the cockpit to transform operations with real-time data; modernize aircrew training and simulator capabilities to sustain pilot competence in automated environments; enhance information sharing and improve coordination on emerging safety risks from external challenges including cyber threats, conflict zones, GPS/GNSS interference and extreme weather; and support global aviation safety initiatives through collaboration with other regulatory authorities and organizations.

II. AIRPORTS

1. Earthquakes Damage Caracas Airport.

Venezuelan authorities closed Simón Bolívar International Airport near Caracas, as massive earthquakes caused severe damage. American Airlines suspended operations, after only recently resuming service; United and JetBlue were planning service. Around 1,500 flights reportedly were scheduled for June to domestic, regional and international destinations.

2. FAA Extends Flight Limits At New York Area Airports.

FAA extended flight limits at the three major New York City area airports: at Newark Liberty through Summer 2027 and at Kennedy and LaGuardia through late October 2028. . . . FAA is extending relief for airlines from minimum flight requirements at Kennedy, LaGuardia and Reagan Washington National through late 2027.

3. FAA Delivers 332 Grants To Airports In 43 States.

FAA delivered 332 grants, around \$523 million, to airports in 43 states through the Airport Infrastructure Grants program, to support runway rehabilitation, apron and taxiway improvements, terminal upgrades, and other airfield investments. Airports receiving funding include Dallas-Fort Worth (\$70 million) for runway rehabilitation; Charlotte/Douglas (\$46.9 million) for apron expansion; Miami International (\$41.9 million) for terminal reconstruction and fuel farm expansion; and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood (\$18.6 million) for new taxi lane construction.

4. Denver International CEO Phil Washington To Retire.

Denver International CEO Phil Washington will retire on August 1, after five years with the airport. Previously, he was CEO of Denver Regional Transportation District from 2009 to 2015, and CEO of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority from 2015 to 2021. Among many honors, he was named a White House Transportation Innovators Champion of Change by President Obama in 2012, and nominated to serve on FAA's Management Advisory Council in 2024. The Chicago native had a 24-year career with the U.S. Army; a disabled veteran, he was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal.

5. **Dallas Fort Worth Completes Terminal C Pier Expansion.**

American Airlines and Dallas-Fort Worth unveiled nine new electronic gates, marking completion of the Terminal C pier expansion. This is the first set of new and rebuilt gates to open under the airport's \$12 billion DFW Forward capital improvement program. Terminal C, which is being entirely rebuilt over the next several years, is the airport's busiest terminal and is exclusively utilized by American Airlines.

6. **Sea-Tac Opens C Concourse Expansion.**

Seattle-Tacoma International opened a \$400 million addition to the C Concourse, comprised of four new floors rising "from the former footprint of nonpublic space that primarily housed offices and tenant storage." With 145,000 square feet of new space, the atrium contains 10 dining and retail options, an airfield observation area and numerous amenities. Six SEA Sparks Incubator Program retail kiosks demonstrate limited-term small and micro businesses. Funding for the expansion came from Airport Development Fund and future revenue bonds.

7. **Private Luxury Terminals Open At Dallas, Miami.**

PS, established in 2017 as The Private Suite, opened terminals at Dallas-Fort Worth and Miami, offering travelers "luxurious lounges or designated Private Suites, chef-prepared food, spa services" and other amenities for a fee. PS MIA is located in the former Pan American Airways headquarters. Amina Belouizdad Porter, CEO of PS, said door-to-door transfers, transporting guests between aircraft and home or hotel, will begin later this year. PS also has terminals at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta and Los Angeles international.

8. **New Terminal Opens At Montreal Metropolitan.**

Montreal Metropolitan Airport opened a passenger terminal for commercial service, with Porter Airlines and Pascan Aviation offering domestic flights. Additional carriers are expected at what officials said will "become the airport of choice for direct flights operated exclusively using quieter, more fuel-efficient single-aisle aircraft." YHU Infrastructure, a partnership between Porter Aviation Holdings and Macquarie Asset Management, operates the new terminal, which has nine boarding bridges and a 900-seat waiting lounge. Located about 10 miles from downtown, the former Saint-Hubert Airport opened in 1927 and served as the city's main airport until commercial flights were moved to Dorval, site of Montréal-Trudeau International.

9. India's Noida International Begins Operations.

Noida International began commercial operations with an IndiGo arrival from Lucknow followed by departure to Bengaluru. A gateway to the Delhi National Capital Region and Western Uttar Pradesh, Noida initially will offer domestic routes, with international to come. Dedicated air cargo facilities, developed by Air India SATS (AISATS), provide initial handling capacity of 200,000 metric tons annually. Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (YIAPL), a Zurich Airport International subsidiary, was established for development, construction and operation of the greenfield project, and is responsible for implementation in partnership with the governments of Uttar Pradesh and India. The 40-year concession period began in 2021. The airport features one runway and one passenger terminal with capacity to serve 12 million passengers annually and plans to serve 70 million eventually. Other airports in the region are Indira Gandhi, in Delhi, and Hindon, in Ghaziabad.

10. Pittsburgh, San Diego Among World's Most Beautiful Airports.

Pittsburgh and San Diego Terminal 1 were among seven projects recognized for outstanding contemporary architecture and design in Prix Versailles' "World's Most Beautiful Airports List 2026." Others named are Guangzhou Baiyun Terminal 3, Guangzhou, China; Frankfurt Terminal 3, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi Terminal 2, Guwahati, India; Navi Mumbai Terminal 1, Navi Mumbai, India; and Techo, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

III. SECURITY AND DATA PRIVACY

1. TSA Amplifies Security Measures For FIFA World Cup.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) outlined security measures for global visitors to the FIFA World Cup 2026, co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, with 78 out of 104 matches taking place in 11 U.S. cities over 39 days. Procedures include TSA PreCheck® Touchless ID for hands-free identity verification; advanced on-person scanners to reduce false alarms and pat-downs; and computed tomography systems with AI-driven image analysis. Hundreds of canine teams are screening passengers, bags and cargo. National Deployment Officers at high-traffic airports assist with secure movements for VIPs in host cities. Personnel engage with local stakeholders on emergent transportation-related threats. Federal Air Marshal Service specialized ground-based operations teams support security for venues and transportation hubs, including Preventative Radiological/Nuclear Detection and Counter-Unmanned Aircraft System technology and personnel. Flying drones in prohibited areas will result in confiscation, fines and possible prosecution.

2. Travel Industry Urges DHS Secretary To Avoid Travel Chaos.

Airline, airport and other travel industry groups urged the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to avoid actions that would significantly reduce Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operations at U.S. airport ports of entry. They are responding to statements by DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin about plans to end the processing of international flights in sanctuary cities. “Any reduction in CBP operations at major U.S. gateway airports threatens to cause unnecessary chaos throughout the nation's air transportation system,” wrote the 19 cosigners of the letter. “International aviation networks are highly interconnected, and operational changes at a small number of gateway airports will quickly ripple across the country, negatively impacting travelers, cargo shipments, supply chains, and the communities that depend on those connections. Airports and airlines rely on stable, predictable federal inspection services to keep people and commerce moving safely and efficiently.”

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

1. Southwest Taps Amazon As Cloud Provider.

Southwest is partnering with Amazon Web Services (AWS) as its preferred cloud provider to modernize its technology foundation and transition from a largely on-premises environment to a cloud-based, AI- and agent-enabled architecture by 2028. The airline says it “has operated a large footprint of on-premises systems with long modernization timelines,” historically, and will be able to “move faster and automate tasks in minutes that used to take hours.”

2. United Accelerates Widebody Starlink Wi-Fi Rollout.

United is accelerating the rollout of free Starlink Wi-Fi for MileagePlus members and expects it to be on nearly 60 widebody aircraft this year. More than 400 United planes have Starlink today, and the airline expects to have close to 1,000 by year-end. Starlink-enabled Boeing 777-200 aircraft will be available on routes between New York Newark, Washington D.C., Houston and San Francisco, and London, Frankfurt, Zurich, Paris, Amsterdam, Buenos Aires and Tokyo.

3. Starlink Wi-Fi Now Onboard Southwest Airlines.

Southwest began integrating Starlink into its fleet with a flight from Dallas to Albuquerque. Free Wi-Fi is offered to Rapid Rewards Members.

4. DOT Secretary Tries eVTOL Aircraft.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy flew in an electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft at BETA Technologies headquarters in Vermont. BETA is developing a conventional fixed-wing electric aircraft (ALIA CTOL) and the ALIA VTOL, and other technologies including charging infrastructure. FAA has a pilot program to begin testing advanced air mobility vehicles and their applications; eight selected projects span 26 states and partner with leading aircraft manufacturers, operators, and state entities.

V. **ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

1. **Fuel Bill For Global Airline Industry.**

The global average jet fuel price for week ending June 19 was \$119.17 per barrel, down -24.4% from prior month's average, and up +32.4% on prior year's average, according to the Jet Fuel Price Monitor, a joint IATA-Platts initiative.

2. **IATA: SAF Production Volumes Disappointing.**

Global sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production is expected to reach 2.4 million tonnes in 2026, representing 0.8% of aviation fuel use, at a cost to airlines of \$4.3 billion, estimates IATA. Five years after committing to achieve net zero by 2050, the path is growing more difficult with "ineffectively sequenced government policies and oil companies' manifest lack of interest," said Director General Willie Walsh. To accelerate the scale-up of SAF, IATA is calling for coordinated action to expand renewable energy supply to underpin SAF production and ensure sufficient feedstocks and clean energy are available; ensure open access to fuel infrastructure, including pipelines, storage, and airport fuel systems, to enable fair competition and efficient distribution; strengthen policy support through effective sequencing of production incentives and investment frameworks that provide certainty and reduce risk before any mandates are imposed; and enable a global SAF market with sufficient volumes at commercially viable prices. A book-and-claim system is essential to transform the SAF market from local to global by making it accessible to airlines and SAF producers regardless of their domicile. A global SAF market must also be supported by harmonized standards that create enduring rules and fair competition.

3. **American, Google Sign SAF Agreement.**

American Airlines and Google reached an agreement for SAF certificates (SAFc) that will "unlock 35 million gallons (132 million liters) of SAF over three years, resulting in nearly 300,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions reductions." American will purchase and take delivery of physical fuel for Chicago O'Hare through existing infrastructure, the SAF portion of which will be produced from waste feedstocks like used cooking oil. Google will receive environmental benefits to help address its emissions from employee business travel via the SAFc Registry. American has secured a new long-term SAF offtake with Valero Marketing and Supply. With its SAF tax credit, Illinois is strengthening its role as a global aviation hub, said Governor JB Pritzker.

4. AirPlant One In Moses Lake To Produce Commercial E-Jet Fuel.

Alaska Airlines and Microsoft joined Twelve to mark commercial operation of AirPlant One, the first commercial-scale facility in the United States to produce E-Jet fuel—a power-to-liquid (PtL), drop-in SAF made from CO₂ and renewable electricity—and E-Naphtha, a building block for everyday products. The opening of the Moses Lake, Washington facility proves that U.S. manufacturing “can produce fuels and chemicals by using abundant, onshore feedstocks—no upstream extraction required,” said Twelve. “Cost is anchored to long-term power contracts rather than commodity markets or OPEC decisions.” Microsoft supported the scale-up of AirPlant One through a strategic investment from its Climate Innovation Fund and an SAF offtake agreement. Alaska Star Ventures participated in Twelve's \$645 million funding round and intends to operate regular domestic PtL flights using E-Jet SAF manufactured at AirPlant One. On-spec fuel produced at AirPlant One is being delivered and sold for commercial aviation use. Twelve’s technology is designed to scale to additional production sites and airline partners, and fuel and chemical products.

VI. U.S. CONGRESS

1. Senate Hearing Examines Recent Close Calls.

The Senate Aviation Subcommittee held a hearing to examine recent near collisions and runway incursion incidents and efforts to strengthen safety. The hearing focused on implementation of safety technologies, runway safety programs, and FAA modernization efforts. Subcommittee Chair Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) said he intends to introduce the “Runway Surface Awareness and Focused, Effective Training and Technology Act (Runway SAFE-T Act),” which will focus on improving airport driver training and supporting technologies to reduce runway incursions and other surface safety incidents.

In his testimony, Airlines for America (A4A) President and CEO Chris Sununu described the importance of Safety Management Systems (SMS) and related programs, which help airlines identify and reduce risk, and inflight collision avoidance systems that are independent of ground-based air traffic control and reduce the likelihood of midair collisions. Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast In (ADS-B In) and related cockpit traffic-display capabilities may further enhance situational awareness in certain operating environments, said Sununu, but should be evaluated carefully with attention to certification requirements, integration with existing avionics and supply chain challenges. He urged Congress to prioritize returning to regular order in the annual appropriations process, particularly when it comes to funding FAA and TSA, and institute a system that will avoid future shutdown impact on travelers who have paid for these services and should not be impacted by governmental policy differences that are unrelated to the operation of the aviation system.

Todd Hauptli, President and CEO, American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) urged Congress to protect safety data that FAA and others share with airports from public disclosure under open records laws. “Allowing data sharing among stakeholders without fear of retribution is critical to ensuring the highest levels of safety.” He described AAAE training programs for airport workers and noted the need for examination and review of FAA requirements for initial and recurrent training to determine ways to improve consistency of airside driver training programs. He called for establishment of an FAA task force to develop recommendations on how to improve the consistency of movement-area driver training and basic skills while preserving flexibility to address airport-specific conditions and factors, and for developing legislation in this area. Regarding technology, such as FAA’s deployment of Airport Surface Detection Equipment, Model X (ASDE-X) and ADS-B Airport Surface Surveillance Capability (ASSC)

systems at 44 airports, and Surface Awareness Initiative (SAI) systems at 90 airports, he noted that some devices are not widely deployable given the need for driver and controller training; supply chain and bandwidth concerns; and lack of resources to procure, install, program, test and maintain them. Airports differ significantly in layout, traffic mix, tower hours, runway configurations, weather and low visibility operations, hot spots, construction activity, and vehicle access needs. “Given this complexity and the growing disconnect between available resources and investment needs for safety projects, capacity enhancements, terminal upgrades, and other critical projects, airports must have the ability through SMS and other assessments to evaluate and prioritize technology deployment and safety investments to ensure that each dollar goes toward its highest and best safety purpose.” He thanked Senators for introducing the “Air Traffic Situational Awareness Enhancement Act,” which authorizes funds for the acquisition, installation, and operation of Airborne Position Reference Tools (APRTs) at contract towers that lack Standard Terminal Automation Replacement Systems (STARS). The upgrade will allow controllers to use situational awareness displays to track aircraft and avoid potential accidents.

Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) President Jason Ambrosi called for action, given fatal commercial aviation accidents; i.e, the January 2025 midair collision near Reagan Washington National and the ground collision of a regional jet and a firefighting vehicle on a New York LaGuardia runway in March of this year. “There is no question that additional life-saving technology could have been deployed to either prevent or mitigate each accident. ALPA remains steadfast in our commitment to work with this Committee, including implementing the ROTOR Act’s core requirements.” ALPA says the House-passed ALERT Act takes meaningful steps but does not go far enough to close safety gaps, and supports incorporating the strongest components of both pieces of legislation. “The goal must be a final law that gives pilots the full picture when seconds count, strengthens real-time aircraft tracking, requires meaningful ADS-B In capabilities, and limits exemptions that could leave dangerous gaps in crowded airspace. As Congress works to reconcile the two bills, it must not settle for a partial fix.”

2. Hearing: Competition, Regulation in Airline Industry.

The House Judiciary Subcommittee held a hearing, “The 30,000 Foot View: Competition and Regulation in the U.S. Airline Industry.” Among his remarks, A4A’s Chris Sununu said greater financial stability achieved through consolidation has translated to employment stability. Remarkably, the industry did not see a single large-airline bankruptcy filing during the 13-year stretch from November 2011 (American) to November 2024 (Spirit). This more than triples the previous post-deregulation record of fewer than four years between

bankruptcies of a large U.S. mainline carrier. Regarding competition, he said the government should not micromanage or otherwise interfere with the competitive marketplace; rather it should allow the marketplace to respond to evolving consumer preferences.

3. House Hearing On Essential Air Service.

The House Transportation Subcommittee held a hearing titled, “Connecting Rural America to the National Airspace System.” The 2024 FAA Reauthorization preserved the Essential Air Service (EAS) program, raising per passenger subsidy caps and prioritizing applications that restore lost or substantially reduced flights. Congress appropriated \$513.6 million for EAS in FY26. However, the Administration’s FY27 budget request is \$142 million, a \$371.2 million cut. The House Appropriations Committee currently is proposing an increase of almost \$25 million. . . . Rural communities lack needed connectivity, testified Regional Airline Association (RAA) President & CEO Faye Malarkey Black. While aggregate air service has improved, 193 airports had less service in May 2026 than in May 2019, with losses averaging 31%; 90 airports lost at least a quarter of their flights, 35 lost more than half, and 14 lost service entirely. On other issues, she urged Congress to extend risk-based reviews to mixed-traffic airports, equip contract towers with digital tools so controllers are not separating traffic by sight alone, and require radio communication near non-towered and limited-service airports with commercial traffic. . . . In its testimony, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) said small communities continue to face declining scheduled passenger air service. Pilot and maintenance workforce supply challenges, increased airline operating costs, and heightened airline expectations for revenue guarantees are contributing to changes in air service to small communities. Some of these factors also contributed to higher EAS subsidy costs, which increased about 31% from 2018 to 2023. Higher airline operating costs also limited the effect of Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP) grants that communities used to incentivize airlines to initiate air service. GAO said options to improve air service to small communities include increased aviation workforce supply and supporting other transportation modes, such as bus service, or new technologies, such as electric aircraft, that could lower airline operating costs.

VII. **BILATERAL AND STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS**

1. **State Dept. Tests Fee For Expedited Visa Interviews.**

The U.S. Department of State temporarily amended the Schedule of Fees for Consular Services to create a \$750 fee for an expedited B1/B2, business and tourism, nonimmigrant visa (NIV) interview appointment. The service will be offered July 1 through December 31 at limited overseas posts “to assess demand from applicants for visas who seek to bypass longer wait times for visa interviews,” and will be an optional addition to the standard NIV application fee. Comment period for the temporary rule ends July 9.

2. **Single African Air Transport Market Moves Forward.**

African Union Ministers adopted the Lomé Ministerial Declaration and Implementation Matrix, during the African Air Transport Convention and Expo 2026, marking a renewed commitment to accelerate implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market. The Declaration encourages stronger collaboration among airports, airlines, cargo operators, regulators, trade authorities, development partners and financial institutions to support sustainable route development, cargo infrastructure, market development, secondary city connectivity, data sharing and commercial partnerships. The Convention was organized by the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and hosted by the Republic of Togo.

VIII. EUROPE AND AFRICA

1. EU Air Passenger Rights Revisions Proposed.

The European Parliament released revised air passenger rights rules, which had not been updated since 2004. Among provisions, passenger has right to be reimbursed or re-routed in case of cancellation, and to claim compensation if a flight is delayed by more than three hours or cancelled less than 14 days before a flight, or if denied boarding. Airlines can avoid paying compensation if delay or cancellation was caused by events beyond their control, such as natural disasters, war, weather conditions, unruly passengers, or airport, air navigation or ground handling service provider strikes. In all cases air operators have a duty to take care of stranded passengers by providing refreshments every two hours of waiting time, a meal after three hours, and, if needed during long delays, an overnight stay of a maximum of three nights. A vote on the agreement is expected during the July plenary session. . . . The regulations (EU261) do “little to improve the passenger experience and nothing to shore-up European competitiveness,” said IATA, while welcoming the requirement that airports will have the responsibility to provide contingency support if disruptions overwhelm local accommodation, and the extended list of extraordinary circumstances which would be exempt from compensation. Looking ahead, “we must work with the Council and Parliament to ensure that the enforcement package does not make an already bad situation worse with additional regulatory burdens that the sector can ill afford. The aim should be practical, effective, and consistent implementation. And second, Europe’s imminent Aviation Strategy must address air traffic management deficiencies which are the root cause of many delays,” said Willie Walsh, IATA Director General.

2. Lufthansa, ANA Add ITA Airways To Europe Japan JV.

Lufthansa Group and All Nippon Airways will expand their strategic Europe Japan Joint Venture with inclusion of ITA Airways in autumn 2026. The Italian airline’s entry will include its European network, including Italy domestic, the Maghreb, and the route between Rome Fiumicino and Tokyo Haneda. This complements the current ANA Tokyo Haneda-Milan Malpensa connection.

3. Air France-KLM Set On Mergers, Acquisitions.

Air France-KLM signed a credit line for €1.2 billion with several banks to refinance existing debt and fund mergers and acquisitions. “We aim to create a European global champion, connecting the entire continent, from North to South to the rest of the world,” said Group CEO Benjamin Smith, at the Paris Air

Forum, noting a focus on progressing toward a majority stake in SAS and preparing a binding offer for TAP Air Portugal.

4. **Ryanair Changes Family Fee Policy.**

After the UK Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced it was probing whether Ryanair's family seating policy violated consumer law, since in certain cases it charges around £8 each way to reserve a seat for a child, the carrier said it would change course. "Under our revised family seating policy, families may have to wait until after they have checked in to find out their seat allocation and are more likely to be seated at the rear of the cabin but at least the CMA will be able to claim they have done something for consumers," said CEO Michael O'Leary. . . . In other news, Ryanair extended O'Leary's contract for six years, until April 2032, with "a modest annual salary and a capped annual bonus" and a new one-off option to purchase 10 million shares.

5. **Asiana To Leave Star Alliance Before Korean Air Merger.**

See Section IX, item 3.

6. **Philippine Airlines To Join oneworld.**

See Section IX, item 4.

IX. ASIA/PACIFIC AND MIDDLE EAST

1. Delta Begins Hong Kong-Los Angeles Flights.

Delta marked its return to Hong Kong with daily Airbus A350-900 nonstops from Los Angeles, featuring Delta One Suites, Delta Premium Select, Delta Comfort and Delta Main.

2. Southwest Begins Interline Partnership With Singapore Airlines.

Southwest Airlines and Singapore Airlines have formed an interline partnership, offering single-ticket journeys to and from the United States. SIA Group, which includes Singapore Airlines and Scoot, flies to 130 destinations in 35 countries and territories, and between its global hub, Singapore Changi, and three U.S. airports served by Southwest—Los Angeles, Seattle and San Francisco. Southwest now has eight active partnerships with overseas carriers connecting travel between its network and destinations in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

3. Asiana To Leave Star Alliance Before Korean Air Merger.

South Korea's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport approved Korean Air's integration with Asiana Airlines, to be completed in December. Korean Air is a SkyTeam member, so Asiana will formally leave Star Alliance on December 16, after which Star will have 14 members that operate 1,900 direct flights each month from Seoul Incheon to 29 destinations.

4. Philippine Airlines To Join oneworld.

Philippine Airlines will become oneworld's 16th member airline, having signed a Memorandum of Understanding at IATA's AGM. The flag carrier operates scheduled nonstops from Manila and Cebu to 29 destinations across the Philippines and 40 in Asia, North America, Australia and the Middle East.

5. AirAsia X Declares Commitment To Philippines AirAsia.

AirAsia X (AirAsia Group) denied media reports that operations of Philippines AirAsia were grounded, saying all flights and services continued as scheduled, subject to weather and other standard factors affecting airline operations. "AirAsia carries almost seven million guests in the Philippines annually and our commitment to the Philippines is absolute," said Tony Fernandes, Co-founder and Advisor of AirAsia Group. "Looking ahead, we are incredibly invested in the development of new airport infrastructure across the country, including in Ninoy Aquino International and Mactan-Cebu. . . . As we expand our fleet and aircraft

orderbook to become the first narrowbody global low-cost network carrier, we intend to deploy more aircraft into our operations in the Philippines.”

6. **India Approves \$1 Billion Support For Airlines.**

India approved a \$1 billion support package for airlines to ease the impact of high fuel costs resulting from the Iran war. The payment will help protect and sustain domestic and international air connectivity, ensuring continuity of air services, the government said.

7. **Qatar Returns To Philadelphia With Daily Flights.**

Qatar Airways will resume daily flights from Doha to Philadelphia on August 1, operating Airbus A350-900 aircraft. Qatar will also operate this summer to Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York Kennedy, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington Dulles, as well as Montreal and Toronto.

8. **Riyadh Air Wins DOT Approval For U.S. Operations.**

Riyadh Air received DOT approval to operate service to the U.S. The Saudi startup achieved IATA membership following completion of inaugural flights to London and Jeddah, which, said CEO Tony Douglas “gives us a seat at the table alongside global airline peers who have been members since the organization’s inception in 1945.” Riyadh Air received its first three Boeing 787 Dreamliners; initial routes include Cairo, Dubai, Jeddah, Madrid and Manchester, with plans to fly to more than 100 destinations by 2030 as aircraft deliveries accelerate.

9. **EgyptAir Begins Direct Cairo-Chicago Service.**

EgyptAir launched three weekly Airbus A350-900 flights from Cairo to Chicago, its second direct U.S. destination following the introduction of Los Angeles this year.

X. AMERICAS

1. American Adds Service From Miami To Venezuela, Haiti.

American plans to launch daily flights from Miami to Maracaibo, Venezuela on July 14, and to Cap-Haitien in Haiti on November 1. Flights to Maracaibo will operate with Embraer 175 aircraft, and to Cap-Haitien with Boeing 737s. American earlier resumed service to Venezuela with two daily flights from Miami to Caracas.

2. Shane Tackett Promoted To Alaska Airlines President.

Alaska Airlines Chief Financial Officer Shane Tackett has been promoted to President and will hold both titles. He has been with the company for more than 25 years. He reports to Ben Minicucci, CEO and President of Alaska Air Group and CEO of Alaska Airlines. . . . Alaska broke ground on a new hangar at Portland International, adding 125,000 square feet for maintenance of Alaska and Hawaiian mainline fleets, enabling work on up to three narrowbody or two widebody aircraft at one time, and 60,000 square feet of space for offices, engine, machine and sheet metal shops and support areas. . . . Flight attendants at Alaska regional subsidiary Horizon Air voted to authorize a strike. They filed for federal mediation in January 2025 and seek “living wage pay increases, increased pay for time at work including while boarding the plane, better benefits, and work rule improvements,” said Association of Flight Attendants-CWA. Horizon operates daily flights to nearly 50 destinations.

3. JetBlue To Launch Fort Lauderdale-Caracas Service.

JetBlue intends to launch nonstop Airbus A320 service between Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood and Caracas this year, subject to receipt of government approval and completion of applicable processes to operate in Venezuela. . . . New York’s Hometown Airline® will close its flight attendant base at Newark Liberty and tech operations bases there and at LaGuardia this fall, as it seeks to reduce costs. “We are much, much smaller at LaGuardia than we were four years ago because it’s a \$40 [enplanement fee] airport for us,” said President Marty St. George and COO Warren Christie. Fort Lauderdale service will increase to 150 daily flights.

4. FedEx Pilots Ratify New Collective Bargaining Agreement.

FedEx pilots voted in favor of a new collective bargaining agreement, following a nearly five-year negotiation process. The contract takes effect on June 29 and becomes amendable in December 2030. It addresses compensation, retirement, scheduling, work rules and job protections.

5. **Business Travel Spending Reached \$538.5 Billion In U.S. In 2024.**

Business travel within and to the United States in 2024 generated \$623.8 billion in total gross domestic product impact, according to a study released by Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). Business travel spending in U.S. destinations reached a record \$538.5 billion (up 7.5% from 2023) and included \$270 billion for domestic travel and \$50.7 billion for international inbound travel. Meetings, conventions and events drove \$217.8 billion, 40.4% of total spending “and highlighting the expanding role of in-person group meetings.” Spending is concentrated in major economic hubs—the top five states are California (\$40.6 billion), New York (\$30.2 billion), Florida (\$26.2 billion), Texas (\$23.7 billion) and Illinois (\$13.3 billion). The top 10 states account for 57% of total. “While 2024 marked a strong year for business travel and its economic impact, 2025 and 2026 have presented new and complex challenges shaped by rising geopolitical tensions, cost pressures and cross-border uncertainties,” said GBTA.

6. **Delta Begins Hong Kong-Los Angeles Flights.**

See Section IX, item 1.

7. **Southwest Begins Interline Partnership With Singapore Airlines.**

See Section IX, item 2.

8. **Asiana To Leave Star Alliance Before Korean Air Merger.**

See Section IX, item 3.

9. **Philippine Airlines To Join oneworld.**

See Section IX, item 4.

10. **Qatar Returns To Philadelphia With Daily Flights.**

See Section IX, item 7.

11. **Riyadh Air Wins DOT Approval For U.S. Operations.**

See Section IX, item 8.

12. **EgyptAir Begins Direct Cairo-Chicago Service.**

See Section IX, item 9.