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Thursday, November 13, 2025
Jumada I 22, 1447 AH

GULF TIMES
BUSINESS



NEW BENCHMARK: Page 2

GWC, QC+ to develop largest regional fine art storage and logistics hub in Ras Bufontas free zone







The roundtable took place during HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari's official visit to the UK. It focused on strengthening economic relations and exploring investment opportunities between the two countries.

Qatar and UK explore investment opportunities at London roundtable

QNA
London

HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari participated in a roundtable discussion between Qatar and the United Kingdom in London, attended by leading executives from the financial and professional services sectors.

The roundtable took place during the minister's official visit to the UK. It focused on strengthening economic relations and exploring investment opportunities between the two countries.

Discussions highlighted ways to mobilise Qatari capital to support growth initiatives in the UK, as well as opportunities for British investment in projects aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, promoting sustainable development and economic growth.

Participants also emphasised the importance of long-term institutional partnerships designed to mitigate risks and maximise returns, enhancing economic integration between Qatar and the UK while supporting innovative projects in the financial and services sectors.

Al-Kaabi meets South Korea's prime minister



HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi met with Kim Min-seok, Prime Minister of South Korea in Seoul yesterday. Discussions during the meeting dealt with energy relations and co-operation between Qatar and Korea and means to enhance them. Page 2

GCC Businesswomen Forum kicks off with focus on entrepreneurship, sustainable investment

The activities of the seventh edition of the 'GCC Businesswomen Forum' kicked off yesterday under the theme 'Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Investment' under the patronage and in the presence of Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani.

The two-day event was organised by the Federation of Gulf Co-operation Council Chambers (FGCCC), in co-operation with Qatar Chamber, and supported by the GCC General Secretariat, with QNB as the strategic partner. The opening ceremony was attended by HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi, FGCCC president Sheikh Faisal Abdullah al-Rawas, Federation of GCC Chambers secretary-general Saleh bin Hamad al-Sharqi, General Administration of Project Management general manager at the GCC General Secretariat Dina Abdul Rahman al-Mudaires, and Qatar Chamber board member Ibtihaj al-Ahmadani, who is also chairperson of the Qatari Businesswomen Forum. To Page 2



HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi looks on as Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani launches the 'Gulf Businesswomen Platform' in the presence of FGCCC president Sheikh Faisal Abdullah al-Rawas during the opening ceremony of the seventh edition of the 'GCC Businesswomen Forum' held in Doha yesterday.

Commercial Bank wins 'prestigious' awards at TAB Global Middle East and Africa Awards 2025

Commercial Bank has been recognised with prestigious awards at the TAB Global Middle East and Africa Awards 2025, reflecting its continued leadership in innovation, digital excellence, and customer-centric banking solutions.

Commercial Bank was named 'Best Transaction Bank in Qatar' and 'Best Regional Cash Management Bank in the Middle East', recognising its role in advancing corporate digitalisation and operational efficiency.

Through integrated platforms and intelligent liquidity solutions, the Bank helps businesses optimise performance and manage cash flows seamlessly across borders.

In retail banking, Commercial Bank received Best Home Loan Financing in Qatar and the Middle East, underscoring a customer-centric approach and a streamlined home-loan journey that simplifies access to financing and enhances convenience.

These accolades underscore Commercial Bank's continued excellence in delivering trusted, innovative, and customer-centric financial solutions that support Qatar's growing economy.

Fahad Badar, Executive General Manager and Chief Wholesale and International Banking Officer of Commercial Bank, said: "These awards are a testament to our commitment to supporting clients with innovative, secure, and technology-driven banking solutions that enable growth and resilience.

"Commercial Bank continues to set the standard for transaction banking in Qatar and across the region, combining expertise with next-generation digital capabilities to deliver value and efficiency for our clients."

Shahnawaz Rashid, Executive General Manager and Head of Retail Banking of Commercial Bank, said: "Our focus remains on simplifying and enhancing the customer journey through digital innovation. From home loan financing to everyday banking, our goal is to create intuitive, seamless, and accessible financial experiences that empower individuals and families to realise their ambitions."

Lusail

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Tender No.: 44000082

Tender Title:
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Brief Description of Works:
LREDC requires provision of services for the following:
- Soft Landscape
- Irrigation Works

Tender Bond Value:
QAR 500,000 (valid for 150 days from Tender Closing Date) in the form of a Bank Guarantee (Cash Payment or Cheque not acceptable)

Bid Closing Date:
Wednesday 10 December 2025 not later than 12:00 hours local Doha time

Tender Collection Location:
Lusail Building, Site Offices, Documents Control Office

Tender Collection Date & Time:
Monday, 11 November 2025 between 08.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
(Except Friday & Saturday)

Tender Fee:
A payment of non-refundable tender fee in the amount of Five Thousand Qatari Riyals (QAR 5,000) to be deposited/TT into Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Co., Bank Account No. 0013-002643-046 (IBAN-QA55 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0026 4304 6) with QNB. Email a copy of the deposit/TT slip to Finance at arqd@qataridiar.com mentioning the tender no., Company's name & attach a copy of CR. Finance dept. shall then email back the receipt to be presented for collection of tender documents.

Required documents in order to collect the Tender Documents are as follows:
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- Company Authorization letter and ID of the person who will collect the tender document.
- Presentation of the receipt of the tender fee received from the Finance Department of Qatari Diar in Lusail Site Office.
- Completed Confidentially Agreement which shall be collected from the above-mentioned office or requested by email (procurementlocal@qataridiar.com).
- Tenderers shall provide a letter endorsed by a first-class bank in Qatar agreeing to furnish a Performance Bank Guarantee in amount of ten (10%) percent of the Initial Contract Price, if awarded the contract.

Minimum requirements to be eligible for obtaining the Tender Documents:
1. Minimum 6 years of relevant experience and expertise in providing similar Services within Qatar or the GCC.
2. The company shall have a valid Commercial Registration in Qatar and annual turnover should be a minimum of QAR 10,000,000 for each of the last 3 rears.

For further queries please communicate in writing to procurementlocal@qataridiar.com

BUSINESS



Mohammed bin Hassan al-Malki, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar, with Rakan bin Waddah Tarabzoni, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and Planning for International Economic Affairs of Saudi Arabia.



The Working Group of the Qatari-Saudi Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry meeting.

Qatari-Saudi co-ordination council committee on economy, trade and industry holds meeting in Riyadh

The Working Group of the Qatari-Saudi Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry, part of the Qatari-Saudi Co-ordination Council, held their meeting recently in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mohammed bin Hassan al-Malki, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar, and Rakan bin Waddah Tarabzoni, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and Planning for International Economic Affairs of Saudi Arabia. Senior officials from both countries also participated.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the strong relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and discussed ways to enhance economic, trade, and industrial co-operation to serve shared interests.

Discussions focused on mechanisms to facilitate import and export procedures, promote bilateral trade, and strengthen co-operation in key sectors.

The parties reviewed progress on joint initiatives, addressed existing challenges, and explored potential solutions.

In addition, the committee examined its strategic objectives and pathways to deepen economic integration and bilateral co-ordination, in line with the national visions of both countries.

Al-Kaabi meets KOGAS president and CEO



HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, who is also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, held talks with Choi Yeon-hye, President and CEO of Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) during a visit to South Korea. Discussions centred on enhancing bilateral co-operation and expanding business relations with one of the important buyers of Qatari LNG.

GWC and QC+ to develop largest regional fine art storage and logistics hub at Ras Bufontas free zone

QNA
Doha

Gulf Warehousing Company (GWC), Qatar's leading logistics and supply chain provider, and QC+, the Qatari strategy group that develops new pathways for value across hospitality, retail, tourism, and the wider cultural economy, have announced plans to develop a state-of-the-art hub in the Gulf Region for fine art storage and handling.

Located in a designated free zone (Ras Bufontas) in Doha, the facility will meet rising regional demand for art storage and logistics while contributing to Qatar's 2030 National Vision by expanding high-value economic activity in the creative and cultural industries.

Acting Group CEO of GWC Matthew Kearns, said: "With over 15 years of experience in fine art logistics and as the first Middle East-based company accredited by ICEFAT, GWC brings proven expertise to this partnership. Combined with Qatar's vision for cultural and economic diversification, this project represents a new benchmark for integrated art infrastructure and creative economy growth in the region."



The facility will meet rising regional demand for art storage and logistics while contributing to Qatar's 2030 National Vision

CEO of QC+ Kirstin Mearns, said: "The Gulf is no longer an emerging market for art. It is a global player, as demonstrated by the announcement of Art Basel Qatar. QC+ and GWC will use our combined expertise to provide innovative and industry-leading fine art logistics solutions. This collaboration reinforces Qatar's position as a global centre for culture and creativity, and for the commercial infrastructure that supports both."

The Doha facility will provide museum-grade preservation, secure storage, and professional care for artworks and cultural assets, supported by a conservation laboratory, private and shared storage spaces, viewing rooms, and custom-bonded areas for art logistics and handling.

It will also include learning and collaboration zones designed to advance local expertise in art preservation and management. The facility will also benefit from its proximity to Hamad International Airport, a major international transit hub and one of the largest airports in the region, designed to handle a high volume of passenger traffic and cargo from around the world.

Ooredoo Qatar's AI-powered customer experience earns AI innovation award

Ooredoo Qatar has been recognised for its outstanding leadership in leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and data science to revolutionise customer experience at 'Teradata Possible 2025', an AI and data conference held in the US.

Ooredoo Qatar won the c in the 'AI for Customer Experience' category.

The company's advanced analytical capabilities and AI-powered customer engagement strategy have set a new benchmark in the telecommunications industry, earning it a top honour at the leading international AI and data conference.

At the heart of Ooredoo Qatar's achievement is its robust data ecosystem, built on Teradata Vantage Cloud and seamlessly integrated with Google Cloud Platform (GCP). By harnessing a powerful AI stack for use cases such as customer segmentation, predictive customer engagement, churn prediction, and sentiment analytics, Ooredoo Qatar has transformed its customer journeys into dynamic and personalised experiences.

Ooredoo Qatar's extensive use of data frameworks has enabled the organisation to understand its customers more deeply through behavioural analysis and to create personalised products.

By operationalising AI across the organisation's customer engagement strategy, Ooredoo Qatar continues to lead the way in delivering innovative, data-driven solutions that enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.



The award underscores Ooredoo's broader strategy to invest in AI and data analytics as a core component of its mission to redefine the future of telecommunications in Qatar

Domestic funds drag QSE 58 points; M-cap melts QR2.81bn

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Mirroring the regional trends, the Qatar Stock Exchange yesterday declined more than 58 points on the back of domestic institutions' selling pressure.

The transport, banks, industrials and consumer goods sectors witnessed higher than average net profit booking as the 20-stock Qatar Index shed 0.52% to 11,082.4 points, although it touched an intraday high of 11,145 points.

The Gulf individuals were seen increasingly bearish in the main market, whose year-to-date gains truncated to 4.84%.

More than 73% of the traded constituents were in the red in the main bourse, whose capitalisation melted QR2.81bn or 0.42% to QR662.8bn, mainly on small cap segments.

The foreign institutions' substantially weakened net buying had its influence on the main market, which saw as many as 0.02mn exchange traded funds (sponsored by AlRayan Bank and Doha Bank) valued at QR0.06mn trade across nine deals.

The Gulf funds' lower net buying had its effect on the main bourse, whose trade turnover and volumes were on the decline.

The Islamic index was seen declining slower than the other indices of the main market, which saw no trading of treasury bills.

The Arab retail investors' weakened net buying had its marginal impact on the main bourse, which saw no trading of sovereign bonds.

The Total Return Index shed 0.52%, the All Share Index by 0.53% and the All Islamic Index by 0.24% in the main market.

The Gulf individuals were seen increasingly bearish in the main market, whose year-to-date gains truncated to 4.84%

The transport sector index declined 0.83%, banks and financial services (0.76%), industrials (0.59%), consumer goods and services (0.53%), real estate (0.33%) and insurance (0.27%); while telecom gained 2.04%.

As many as 13 stocks gained, while 38 declined and one was unchanged.

Major shakers in the main market include Qatar General Insurance and Reinsurance, Widam Food, Qatar German Medical Devices, Inma Holding, Mannai Corporation, Qatar Islamic Bank, Doha Bank, Widam Food, Mannai Corporation, Gulf Warehousing and Nakilat.

Nevertheless, Vodafone Qatar, Ooredoo, Beema, Qamco and Ezdan were among the movers in the main bourse.

GCC Businesswomen Forum focuses on entrepreneurship and sustainable investment

From Page 1

Al-Ahmadani delivered the host country's address, affirming that Qatar's hosting of the forum reflects the wise leadership's commitment to empowering women and enhancing their role in economic and social development.

She highlighted that the forum focused on the importance of sustainable investment as a key approach adopted by Gulf businesswomen, combining economic growth with social responsibility, in line with the national development visions of GCC countries.

Al-Ahmadani emphasised that Gulf women entrepreneurs have proven their strong presence across various economic sectors through innovation and leadership, contributing effectively to economic diversification and sustainability.

She also lauded the vital contributions of Gulf women working in both the public and private sectors, describing them as role models of dedication, creativity, and excellence who have enhanced institutional performance and strengthened the culture of teamwork.

Al-Rawas commended the pivotal role of Gulf women in driving economic and social development across GCC countries, highlighting that Gulf businesswomen have become leaders across various sectors, including banking, technology, real estate, and financial services, ranking among the most powerful businesswomen in the region.

He affirmed the federation's commitment to supporting women's economic empowerment through initiatives and programmes that strengthen their leadership in SMEs and expand their investments in promising sectors such as technology, renewable energy, tourism, and creative industries.

Al-Mudaires noted that the GCC Supreme Council, in its 41st session, reaffirmed the importance of supporting SMEs given their vital role in economic development and their contribution to building major global economies. Citing recent statistics, she said women represent over 40% of the government workforce and 38% in the private sector. They also hold about 49% of senior positions in the public sector and 31% in the private sector, and occupy up to 41% of diplomatic posts in some GCC states.

The forum also launched the 'Gulf Businesswomen Platform' as one of the federation's key initiatives. It aims to connect businesswomen across GCC countries through a unified interactive system that facilitates the exchange of experiences, expands Gulf women's investment base, and creates new partnership opportunities centred on the principles of the green economy and sustainability.

It also represents a strategic step toward empowering Gulf women in the private sector by providing an integrated digital environment that enhances communication and co-operation among business leaders and strengthens their presence on the regional and global investment map.

The forum's second day will feature three working sessions, including the success stories of Gulf businesswomen.

Ahlibank announcement



Ahlibank has announced that the nomination period for membership of the Board of Directors for the new term (2026-28) closed yesterday at 2:00pm (Doha time).

ICAI Doha hosts 'Investing Right: From Regulations to Real Estate' session

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) – Doha Chapter recently organised a CPE session titled 'Investing Right: From Regulations to Real Estate', bringing together 140 participants comprising finance and investment professionals.

The session was inaugurated by Doha Chapter chairperson Kishore Alex, who emphasised the chapter's commitment to equipping members with current knowledge on global financial and regulatory trends. The event featured two speakers who offered complementary perspectives on regulatory reforms and investment avenues.

BNW Developments chairman and founder Ankur Aggarwal shared expert insights on 'Real Estate Investment Opportunities in the GCC and India – Scope and Growth'. Drawing on his extensive real-estate experience, Aggarwal discussed key growth sectors, sustainable development trends, and regulatory enablers driving property markets across India and the Gulf. He also highlighted practical strategies for investors to evaluate projects, manage risk, and capitalise on the robust investment outlook in both regions.



The CPE session gathered 140 participants comprising finance and investment professionals.

Jomon K George, founder and managing partner, JVR & Associates and former chairman of SIRC of ICAI, delivered an in-depth presentation on 'India Update – FEMA, Taxation and ICAI Regulatory Developments'. He elaborated on India's macroeconomic strength, the new Income Tax Act 2025, non-resident taxation updates, the changing regulatory landscape under NFRA and BRSR, and the evolving expectations from the chartered accountant profession in the digital era. His session provided members with practical clarity on the cross-border compliance framework and its implications for Indian professionals abroad.

The event also featured a felicitation ceremony for the recently qualified chartered accountants from the September 2025 examination at the Doha examination centre. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by vice-chairperson Arun Somanath, who acknowledged the speakers, sponsors, and volunteers.

AI and innovation seen to enhance business continuity, resilience, says expert

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter



Engineer Abdullatif Ali al-Yafei (2nd from left), the president of the Business Continuity & Resilience Conference (BCRC), is joined by BCRC partners (from left) Hassan al-Emadi, Senior Director Business Accounts at Ooredoo Qatar; Nayaz Mohammed, Cyber and Digital Trust Partner at PwC; and Sarah Abdulla, general manager of the Qatar Businessmen Association (QBA), during yesterday's press conference. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

The fourth edition of the 'Business Continuity & Resilience Conference' (BCRC), slated for November 27 in Doha, is expected to will highlight the crucial role of risk management, business continuity, resilience, and crisis management in an era where the widespread adoption of smart solutions, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and predictive analytics is fundamentally transforming how organisations approach risk.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, BCRC president Abdullatif Ali al-Yafei announced the details of the conference in the presence of Hassan al-Emadi, Senior Director Business Accounts at Ooredoo Qatar; Nayaz Mohammed, Cyber and Digital Trust Partner at PwC; and Sarah Abdulla, general manager of the Qatar Businessmen Association (QBA).

"AI, machine learning, and predictive analytics are redefining how organisations manage risk and crises. These technologies empower companies to move beyond simply responding to crises and build proactive resilience. This is the new frontier of organisational resilience that we will explore together.

"Traditional business continuity management, resilience, and risk management, often reactive in nature, are no longer sufficient to meet these challenges. Instead, organisations must adopt smart, proactive, and adaptive strategies to leverage disruptions as opportunities for innovation and competitive advantage," al-Yafei pointed out.

He further explained, "AI and smart solutions are revolutionising risk management and operational resilience by enabling predictive risk intelligence that forecasts disruptions like cyber threats and supply chain issues for proactive mitigation, automated crisis response systems that enhance real-time decision-making while minimising downtime and errors, resilient Internet of Things (IoT) and AI-monitored infrastructure that ensures continuity across critical sectors, and advanced machine learning cybersecurity that rapidly detects and neutralises threats."

AI is rapidly taking over critical business functions, al-Yafei pointed out, saying "the game is becoming serious; this is no longer experimental." He also highlighted that numerous organisations are making substantial investments in smart solutions and AI, leading to a growing dependence on these technologies for critical functions and operations across all sectors.

"But what if the AI fails? This conference will aim to address hard questions and share practical approaches, and show ways to safeguard our business.

Some of these questions are how do you continue AI operations in the face of a cyberattack, and how do you deal with AI actors or business partners or customers that suddenly malfunction? These and more questions will be discussed during the conference," al-Yafei stressed.

QICDRC attends 6th full meeting of SIFoCC in New Delhi



Faisal Rashid al-Sahouti, QICDRC chief executive officer at the SIFoCC meeting in India.

The Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre (QICDRC) has participated in the recent 6th full meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC), held in New Delhi, India. The gathering brought together high-level delegations representing about 68 commercial courts from around the world, including chief justices, presidents of judicial councils, and senior judges.

This strong international presence reflects the increasingly important role of commercial courts in strengthening confidence in the rule of law and building stable, attractive legal and economic environments that support global investment.

Faisal Rashid al-Sahouti, QICDRC chief executive officer highlighted the key role played by it in supporting international judicial co-operation and advancing commercial justice systems.

SIFoCC serves as a leading platform for the exchange of expertise and best practices, and for strengthening collaboration among commercial courts worldwide — an effort that facilitates cross-border trade and enhances the efficiency and integrity of international judicial processes, according to him.

The meeting's sessions covered a wide range of pressing topics, including advancing international judicial convergence through the development of shared standards and practices to support the recognition and enforcement of commercial judgments across borders.

Discussions also explored the implementation of arbitration and mediation awards, as well as practical mechanisms for document exchange and witness hearings between different judicial systems. Participants examined issues relating to corporate legal responsibility in light of global challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, and the expansion of private finance, and the implications of these developments for commercial law.

In addition, the sessions addressed the use of artificial intelligence within judicial systems, underlining the importance of establishing clear ethical frameworks to safeguard judicial independence and uphold the principles of fair trial.

QICDRC had hosted the 5th full meeting of SIFoCC in Doha in April 2024, continuing Qatar's efforts to strengthen international judicial co-operation and promote professional dialogue among commercial courts.

That meeting underscored Qatar's position as a leading centre for commercial justice and a hub for the resolution of international business disputes.

Established in 2017 as a global judicial initiative, SIFoCC provides a unique platform for collaboration between commercial courts from diverse legal systems. With 68 member courts worldwide, the forum works to promote professional cooperation, exchange judicial expertise, and develop practical mechanisms for resolving cross-border commercial disputes — contributing to greater stability in global commerce and enhancing confidence in the legal frameworks that underpin the world economy.

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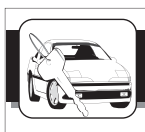
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The A220's engine problem that won't go away

By Alex Macheras



When Airbus acquired Bombardier's C Series programme in 2018 and rebranded it as the A220, the move instantly gave the aircraft new credibility. The jet represented a bold new direction in narrowbody design — a quiet, efficient, and passenger-friendly aircraft intended to bridge the gap between regional jets and larger single-aisle models like the A320. Airlines praised its fuel efficiency, its range, and the comfort it offered on short- and medium-haul routes.

But behind the success story, one problem has persisted since the aircraft's earliest days: The Pratt & Whitney PW1500G engine. What began as an engineering breakthrough has turned into one of the longest-running maintenance and reliability challenges in modern commercial aviation, affecting dozens of airlines and forcing repeated groundings across the global fleet.

The issue came to a head again this month when Swiss International Air Lines announced it would ground its entire A220-100 fleet following renewed engine problems. It's a familiar story for operators of the aircraft, and one that continues to shape schedules, capacity, and costs.

At the heart of the issue lies the Pratt & Whitney geared turbofan, or GTF, the family of engines that powers not only the A220 but also the Airbus A320neo and Embraer E2 series. The technology was revolutionary when it was introduced. By adding a gearbox between the fan and the turbine, Pratt allowed each section to spin at its optimal speed, significantly improving fuel burn and reducing noise. The results were impressive — double-digit efficiency gains and quieter operations — but the real-world reliability of the engine has never caught up with its ambition. The PW1500G has suffered a range of durability and materials issues, from premature wear on turbine components to microscopic contamination in powdered-metal parts. These are not theoretical concerns: They translate into repeated removals, lengthy inspections, and severe shortages of serviceable engines.

Swiss, the A220's launch operator, has dealt with the problem since 2019, when several inflight engine shutdowns triggered emergency inspections. Pratt & Whitney introduced a series of technical fixes and software updates that temporarily eased the issue, but the underlying reliability concerns have never been fully resolved.

Other carriers have fared no better. AirBaltic, which operates one of the largest A220 fleets in the world, has had to lease aircraft from other airlines to cover cancelled flights. Delta Air Lines and Air Canada have reported schedule disruptions due to engine maintenance. Korean Air and EgyptAir have also faced extended groundings. For some operators, as many as 30-40% of their aircraft have been unavailable at any one time.

The roots of the problem go back to manufacturing. In 2023, Pratt & Whitney disclosed that a powdered-metal contamination had affected the production of certain engine components across its entire GTF family. The discovery meant that hundreds of engines — possibly more than 1,200 — would require detailed inspection or overhaul between 2024 and 2026. Each inspection involves partial disassembly and advanced testing, a process that can take months per engine. With global maintenance capacity already constrained, the backlog has become a major operational bottleneck.

For airlines, the consequences are tangible. Grounded aircraft mean lost revenue, disrupted schedules, and higher leasing costs as carriers scramble to source replacement capacity. Swiss's decision to temporarily suspend operations of one variant was the most public example yet, but across the industry, the pressure is mounting. AirBaltic's chief executive has described the situation as "an operational crisis that no airline can plan for."

Pratt & Whitney, now part of RTX, maintains that the long-term fix is underway. The company says new-build engines incorporate redesigned parts that eliminate the metallurgical defect, and that repair capacity is expanding through additional maintenance partners. It has allocated billions of dollars to compensate airlines and accelerate repairs. Yet the recovery timeline remains long. By its own estimates, most of the affected engines will not be fully cycled through inspection and rebuild until at least 2026.

The problem is not only technical but logistical. Global engine-maintenance facilities are already operating at full capacity, and spare engines are scarce. Many airlines are keeping aircraft grounded for lack of available replacements. Engine turn times that once took 60 days can now stretch to 200 or more. For carriers with smaller fleets, the financial and operational strain is acute.

The A220's predicament is a reminder of how dependent modern aircraft programmes are on their engine suppliers. Unlike the A320neo, which can be fitted with either Pratt & Whitney or CFM engines, the A220 was designed exclusively around the PW1500G. That decision simplified certification but has left operators without alternatives. The aircraft's performance is outstanding — when it flies.

Airbus remains publicly confident in the A220's long-term prospects. The manufacturer continues to secure new orders, particularly from North American and European carriers looking for efficient replacements for ageing regional and short-haul jets. Production rates are being increased, and airlines continue to praise the jet's economics when operational. But every grounding chips away at that confidence. Airbus can build and deliver aircraft, but the engines that power them are Pratt's responsibility, and the A220's success now depends on how quickly the engine maker can deliver lasting stability.

For Pratt & Whitney, the reputational cost has been significant. The geared-turbofan concept remains an engineering achievement, but the recurring maintenance issues have eroded trust among airlines. The company has been forced to spend heavily on warranty claims, compensation, and production adjustments. Investors and analysts have questioned whether the cost of fixing the GTF family could exceed its long-term profit potential.

The industry, meanwhile, is learning a wider lesson about risk concentration. Aircraft today are designed with remarkable efficiency, but that efficiency comes at the price of integration. When a single supplier encounters systemic issues, the ripple effect is global.

The GTF's problems have affected hundreds of aircraft across multiple manufacturers, and the shortage of spare engines has highlighted how dependent airlines are on a few industrial bottlenecks.

The A220 itself remains one of the most advanced aircraft in the skies — quiet, efficient, and well-liked by passengers. Its operational troubles are not of Airbus's making, nor of the airlines that operate it. They stem from an ambitious engine design that has yet to achieve the reliability modern commercial aviation demands.

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From passports to faces: Global shift towards biometric air travel

By Pratap John



A Credential Authentication Technology identity verification machine at a Transportation Security Administration security checkpoint at Baltimore-Washington Airport. The use of biometrics at airports — such as facial recognition, iris scans or fingerprint verification — is increasingly widespread and delivers significant benefits for passengers, airports and airlines globally.

The use of biometrics at airports — such as facial recognition, iris scans or fingerprint verification — is increasingly widespread and delivers significant benefits for passengers, airports and airlines globally.

That said, there are also important caveats and challenges to consider, industry analysts say. Recently, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) noted that biometric adoption is accelerating globally, highlighting the key findings of its 2025 Global Passenger Survey (GPS).

The use of biometrics and digital identity is expanding to enable more seamless airport processing, and travellers like it, IATA said. Its utilisation (at airports) is expanding, and passenger satisfaction with biometrics has reached its highest level yet.

The IATA survey revealed that half of passengers (50%) have used biometrics at some point in their airport journey, up from 46% in 2024.

Usage is most common at security (44%), exit immigration (41%), and entry immigration (35%). Notably, biometric use has risen by nearly 20 percentage points since 2022.

Passengers who have used biometrics report high levels of satisfaction with 85% saying they are happy with the experience.

74% of travellers say they would be willing to share their biometric information if it means they can skip showing a passport or boarding pass at checkpoints like check-in, security, border control, and boarding.

Privacy remains a concern, but there is room to build trust; 42% of passengers who are currently unwilling to share their biometric info say they would reconsider if data privacy was assured.

IATA's Senior Vice-President (Operations, Safety and Security) Nick Careen noted: "Passengers are already using biometrics for different stages of their journey, from check-in to boarding. But to make the international travel experience fully digital, governments need to start issuing digital passports and enable their secure recognition across borders.

"When that becomes common practice, travellers, governments, and airlines will all see the benefits of digital identity with an experience that is even more convenient, efficient, and secure."

Biometric systems have seen to enable faster, smoother processing and enhanced security and identity assurance, resulting in improved overall travel experience.

They facilitate identity verification in seconds rather than minutes, reducing wait times at check-in, security screening, immigration and boarding.

Some airports report up to 30% faster processing due to biometric self-service and fewer manual document checks.

Because passengers don't always need to present a passport/boarding pass at every step (once enrolled), the journey feels more seamless and less stressful, industry analysts say.

Biometric data (face, iris, fingerprint) is unique to each person, making impersonation, document fraud or identity theft harder compared to relying solely on passports or IDs.

By matching a traveller's presence through multiple airport touch-points (check-in, bag-drop, and boarding), airports can maintain a higher integrity of identity verification.

For many travellers, biometrics create a more convenient, "touchless" experience that aligns well with modern expectations.

During crowded or peak times, reduced queues and friction make travel less tiring, especially for frequent flyers, families, or those with mobility issues.

There is also the potential benefit of more dwell time in retail or food and beverage zones, when processing is faster — meaning better airport experience overall!

That said, using biometric data involves personal information that is sensitive. There are concerns over how it's stored, how long it's retained, who has access and how it's used.

Also, some travellers may feel uneasy about enrolment, opting in/out, or that biometric data might be used for purposes beyond border or airport control.

While long term benefits often outweigh costs, the initial setup of biometric infrastructure (cameras, kiosks, software and integration) is significant.

Analysts say achieving "end-to-end" biometric coverage (check-in, bag drop, security, immigration, and boarding) is more complex than just a single touch-point!

■ *Pratap John is Business Editor at Gulf Times.*
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Beyond the Tarmac

Garuda's fleet growth at risk as Danantara trims funding

Bloomberg
Jakarta

Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund Danantara is reducing its financial support for flag carrier PT Garuda Indonesia, putting in doubt the distressed airline's ability to refresh its fleet.

Garuda will now receive 23.7tn rupiah ($1.4bn) from PT Danantara Asset Management, an arm of the wealth fund, through a private placement, which comprises a cash injection and a loan conversion, according to an exchange filing. The airline was supposed to obtain $1.8bn under a plan drawn up last month.

In addition to covering finance expenses and providing working capital, Danantara Asset would have helped with fleet expansion. However, Danantara Asset notified Garuda that "there is also an adjustment to the planned use of funds, which no longer includes fleet expansion," the airline said in a separate statement.

The carrier has struggled financially since the Covid-19 pandemic and has grounded an increasing number of planes because of difficulties making maintenance payments. The number of idled jets operated by the company and subsidiary low-cost carrier PT Citilink Indonesia rose to 51 as of June, nearly 40% of the group's total fleet, and up from 33 a year ago. Leasing new planes comes with high price tags amid a dearth of available aircraft and a global surge in travel. The carrier earlier this year paid twice as much to lease a Boeing Co 737 Max jet than it does for older 737 jets.

Garuda should focus on getting some of its grounded planes flying again, said Gerry Soejatman, a Jakarta-based independent aviation analyst. "Ordering new planes for early delivery is going to be very expensive, and probably less prudent financially," he said. "It is better to see the grounded jets being put back into service or returned to lessors before Garuda place big aircraft orders."



Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund Danantara is reducing its financial support for flag carrier PT Garuda Indonesia, putting in doubt the distressed airline's ability to refresh its fleet

Some airline CEOs pushed Trump officials to justify flight cuts

Bloomberg
New York

Days before US government-mandated flight cuts went into effect across domestic carriers, some airline executives privately pressed for more information on whether the safety data justified the Trump administration's measures.

On a November 5 call with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Bryan Bedford, some airline leaders asked if the agency was seeing risks that the carriers might not have been aware of, according to people familiar with the matter.

Bedford, a former aviation executive, shot down any concerns over a plan to cut 10% of flights across 40 major airports, saying it was the FAA's decision — not airlines' — and that the reductions weren't negotiable, said the people, who weren't authorised to speak publicly on the discussions.

What ensued was an injection of chaos into an already strained US airline network.

The flight restrictions, since compounded by foul weather and other system constraints, have forced carriers to cancel thousands of flights in recent days. The impact is expected to reverberate even after lawmakers forged a pact to work toward an end to the longest government shutdown in US history.

Although the Senate passed a temporary funding measure on Monday that may soon resolve the 41-day government shutdown, it's unclear how quickly any deal would translate into a substantial easing of the disruptions.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has said the government won't reverse its flight cuts until air traffic controllers who haven't been showing up to work are back at their facilities.

More than 5mn airline passengers have been affected since the shutdown started, according to Airlines for America, a trade group representing the largest carriers.



Travellers look at an arrivals and departures board at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Days before US government-mandated flight cuts went into effect across domestic carriers, some airline executives privately pressed for more information on whether the safety data justified the Trump administration's measures.

Alaska Air Group Chief Executive Officer Ben Minicucci was among the most vocal in asking for more data to justify the need for the cuts, the people said. Smaller airlines have had a harder time absorbing the reductions than larger carriers, which tend to have more flexibility in their networks. In many cases, the restrictions have hit regional flights or less-critical routes. To be sure, people familiar with the November 5 call said many of the airline executives were willing to accommodate the orders because they were already seeing an uptick of flight disruptions due to air traffic controller shortages. The safety risks were heightened, given the increased spotlight on dangerous near-misses and deadly crashes earlier this year.

That included a midair collision between an American Airlines Group regional jet and a US Army helicopter in January, which resulted in safety investigators and lawmakers lambasting the FAA for not using their data more proactively to respond to risks in the airspace around Washington.

Many of the executives were also being careful: Politically, speaking out against a directive from President Donald Trump could draw an unwanted rebuke or pressure from the White House. A representative for Alaska Air confirmed the airline participated in the call but disputed Bloomberg's characterisation of its comments, without elaborating.

The company referred further questions to Airlines for America, which said "safety is always our shared top priority, and Americans should have increased confidence in our airspace because the FAA has taken these measures," according to a statement from CEO Chris Sununu.

"As our safety regulator, when the FAA says they have concerns heading into a busy travel period like Thanksgiving, airlines will do whatever is necessary to ensure the system can continue to operate safely," said Sununu, the former Republican governor of New Hampshire.

Representatives for Southwest Airlines Co and JetBlue Airways Corp didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

American, Delta Air Lines Inc and United Airlines Holdings Inc declined to comment.