Gulf Air Unveils New Falcon Gold Business Class Amenity Kit

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Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, has unveiled a new Falcon Gold Business Class amenity kit, developed in collaboration with PAYOT, the French skincare house, as part of the airline's continued improvement of the premium onboard experience.

Founded in Paris in 1920, PAYOT is one of France's original skincare houses, with a heritage rooted in scientific, dermatologically-tested formulations — making it a natural partner for an amenity kit designed around comfort and wellbeing at altitude.

The Gulf Air-branded amenity bag pairs a contemporary aesthetic with sustainable materials, complementing the Falcon Gold cabin and reflecting the airline's broader sustainability objectives.

Inside, Falcon Gold passengers will find a curated edit of travel essentials alongside PAYOT skincare, selected to support the skin through the demands of air travel.

The launch reflects Gulf Air's continued investment in product innovation and its commitment to delivering a differentiated premium travel experience, in line with the evolving expectations of its passengers.

LuLu Exchange Adopts Revamped 'eKey 2.0 in Partnership with Beyon Connect

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Beyon Connect, part of the Beyon Group, has announced the successful integration of LuLu Exchange Bahrain to the revamped eKey 2.0 ecosystem, enabling the financial services provider to launch its eKYC solution through Bahrain's Digital Authentication of National Identity platform, developed by Beyon Connect in partnership with the Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA).

Through the integration, LuLu Exchange digital customers can now complete identity verification digitally with greater speed, accuracy, and security in just a few simple steps, leading to a smoother, more convenient user experience.

The latest deployment further expands the growing adoption of the revamped eKey 2.0 across Bahrain, supporting organizations in delivering secure and seamless digital services while advancing the Kingdom's broader digital transformation agenda.

Richard Budel, Chief Executive Officer of Beyon Connect, said: "We are pleased to welcome LuLu Exchange to the growing eKey 2.0 ecosystem. Through our partnership with the iGA, Beyon Connect is enabling organizations across the Kingdom to integrate trusted digital identity authentication into their customer journeys, delivering faster, more secure onboarding experiences. LuLu Exchange's adoption of eKey 2.0 further demonstrates the growing momentum behind secure, government-backed digital identity authentication across Bahrain's financial sector."

Edison Fernandez, General Manager, LuLu Exchange Bahrain, said: "The revamped eKey 2.0 is one of the region's most advanced digital authentication of identity ecosystems and the integration of our services with the platform is a natural step in our journey. For our customers, it means that opening an account or sending money home becomes quicker and more convenient than ever, backed by the trust of a national framework. For us, it deepens a commitment we've held since day one to bring financial services that feel effortless, personal and secure."

Beyon Connect and LuLu Exchange are committed to supporting the Kingdom's digital transformation ambitions and the continued development of secure and accessible digital services. The eKYC solution is now live on the LuLu Money App, LuLu Exchange's digital platform, with the company set to extend the experience across more of its services in the months ahead.

EKK Advances Enterprise AI Adoption with Launch of EKK AI Studio

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Ebrahim Khalil Kanoo (EKK) has announced the launch of EKK AI Studio, a proprietary enterprise Generative AI platform developed by its Digital Solutions team to provide employees across the organisation with secure and streamlined access to advanced AI capabilities.

The launch represents another step in EKK's ongoing digital transformation journey, with the company continuing to explore how emerging technologies can enhance productivity, improve business processes, and support innovation across its diverse operations.

EKK AI Studio brings multiple leading Generative AI models together within a single secure platform, allowing employees to select the technology best suited to their specific requirements. The platform can support a wide range of everyday business activities, including drafting, summarising, research, analysis, and application development.

The initiative builds on the work of EKK's Digital Solutions team, which has been integrating AI capabilities into the company's technology development and internal operations. AI is already being incorporated into a number of the division's development projects, while further initiatives are underway to explore how the technology can enhance customer experiences across EKK's diverse business portfolio.

As part of its broader AI adoption strategy, Digital Solutions has also introduced Microsoft Copilot to managers and management teams, extending AI enabled productivity tools across EKK's existing Microsoft environment. These initiatives are designed to support more efficient workflows, collaboration, and decision making while helping employees make practical use of AI in their daily work.

Erkan Ayturk, Chief Technology Officer of EKK Technology, said: "EKK AI Studio reflects our commitment to keeping pace with the rapid development of technology and ensuring our people have access to the right tools to work more effectively. AI is becoming an increasingly important part of how businesses operate, and we want to ensure that EKK is well positioned to make the most of these capabilities while maintaining the appropriate standards around security and governance."

Emin Sadiyev, Head of Digital Solutions, added: "Our team has been developing and working with AI for some time, and EKK AI Studio brings these capabilities together in a practical and accessible way for employees across the organisation. The platform gives our teams the flexibility to explore different AI models and identify how they can be applied to their day to day work and ongoing technology initiatives."

The launch of EKK AI Studio reflects EKK's continued investment in technology and innovation, as the company looks to equip its workforce with the tools and capabilities needed to adapt to an increasingly AI driven business environment.

Oil prices rise as renewed US-Iran tensions threaten Strait of Hormuz

Oil prices rose sharply on Monday as renewed military action between the United States and Iran increased concerns over crude supplies and shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude futures climbed more than 2%, rising above $90 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) also gained. Brent was reported at around $90.45 a barrel, while WTI stood at about $85.71.

The gains followed US strikes on Iranian launchers on Larak Island, near the Strait of Hormuz. Iran later reported retaliatory attacks against US military bases in Jordan, raising concerns that the conflict could further disrupt energy shipments.

The Strait of Hormuz remains a key focus for oil markets as it normally carries around one-fifth of global oil supplies. Shipping activity through the waterway has already fallen sharply.

Oil prices had dropped more than 4% last week amid hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough and the possible reopening of the strategic waterway. The renewed escalation has since restored a geopolitical risk premium to crude prices.

Analysts say prices will depend heavily on the duration of shipping disruptions. JPMorgan estimates that each additional month could add around $7–$8 a barrel to Brent, while prolonged disruption could push prices as high as $120.

Higher crude prices could increase fuel, transport and production costs for consumers and energy-importing economies.

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company Announces the Promotion of a Key Executive

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Mr. Rajesh Babu, Chief Underwriting Officer - Bahrain Operations

Mr. Mohamed Al Maraj, General Manager

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company B.S.C. (BKIC) is pleased to announce the promotion of Mr. Rajesh Babu to the position of Chief Underwriting Officer - Bahrain Operations, effective 1st September 2026. This key advancement reflects the Company's ongoing commitment to nurturing internal leadership, leveraging exceptional in-house talent, and driving technical excellence across its regional operations.

Mr. Rajesh Babu has been an integral part of Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company (BKIC) for the past three years, serving as Senior Manager of General Insurance. With over 21 years of extensive technical and leadership experience in the regional insurance and reinsurance sectors, Mr. Rajesh is a highly accomplished professional with a strong track record in underwriting, portfolio management and reinsurance. He holds several distinguished professional credentials, including the Advanced Diploma in Insurance (ACII) and the title of Chartered Insurer from the Chartered Insurance Institute, UK, alongside a Fellowship (FIII) from the Insurance Institute of India.

Simultaneously, the Company announces that Mr. Manoj Badoni, the outgoing Chief Underwriting Officer - Bahrain Operations, will continue his association with Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company in the capacity of an Advisor to the CEO. This strategic arrangement ensures that the company will continue to benefit from Mr. Badoni's extensive industry experience, technical expertise, and deep industry relationships to maintain a seamless operational transition and support ongoing strategic projects.

On this occasion, Mr. Mohamed Al Maraj, General Manager, stated: We are pleased to promote Rajesh to the role of Chief Underwriting Officer - Bahrain Operations. His initial joining of BKIC and this subsequent promotion are key elements of the company's structured succession plan. Over his past three years with us, Rajesh has not only demonstrated outstanding technical expertise and underwriting discipline but has also successfully met and established strong, trusted relationships with our clients. This promotion represents a planned and smooth handover of responsibilities, and we are highly confident in his ability to steer our portfolio in Bahrain to new heights."

"I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Manoj Badoni for his years of outstanding leadership as Chief Underwriting Officer - Bahrain Operations. We are delighted that Manoj will remain with the company as an Advisor to the CEO. His continued guidance and transition support are invaluable to maintaining our market leadership and ensuring that our underwriting practices remain robust, stable, and highly competitive."

Commenting on his promotion, Mr. Rajesh Babu said: "I am deeply honored and grateful to the Board of Directors and our Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Abdulla Sultan, for placing their trust and confidence in me. Having worked closely with the remarkable team at BKIC for the last three years, I look forward to taking on this new responsibility and collaborating with our partners and reinsurers to deliver sustainable growth, sound risk management, and exceptional value to our stakeholders."

For over five decades, Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company has maintained its dedication to nurturing its people and fostering a culture of continuous development. This commitment remains at the core of the Company's success and its ability to deliver exceptional service to clients and partners.

The Company extends its warmest congratulations to Mr. Rajesh Babu on his well-deserved promotion, and its deep appreciation to Mr. Manoj Badoni for his ongoing commitment and guidance.