



In news from the Israel / Palestine war, Hamas proposes exchanging all Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners in "one go" during the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal, with the aim of reaching a permanent truce and a full Israeli pullout. Surely a very heartening news incase the discussion and plan come thro . Humanity demands an end to suffering for sure .

Along Ukraine's frontline, the war rages on. But global attention spanned thousands of miles away, as representatives from Russia and the US met in Saudi Arabia to discuss an end to the conflict. Uninvited to those talks, and in Turkey instead, was Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. He made it known he won't accept a deal made about Ukraine without Ukraine's involvement, and that he wouldn't recognise parts of Ukraine occupied by Russia. So nothing much in terms of peace on that front at the moment atleast .

At least 37 people have been injured after an asylum seeker drove at a crowd of people in Munich, police say. Among them a mother and her 2 year old child died. People had been gathering at a trade union rally when the car accelerated in their direction. An officer fired one shot at the suspect before he was arrested – he was injured, but sustained no gunshot wounds. Meanwhile Friedrich Merz, is set to become Germany's next chancellor after his opposition conservatives won the national election on 23rd Feb, Merz faces complex and lengthy coalition negotiations after the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) surged to a historic second place in a fractured vote after the collapse of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's unloved three-way alliance.

A Delta Air Lines jet flipped on its roof while landing at Toronto's Pearson Airport, but all 80 people on board survived and those hurt had relatively minor injuries. Snow blown by winds gusting to 40 mph (65 kph) swirled when the flight from Minneapolis carrying 76 passengers and four crew attempted to land at around 2:15 p.m. The plane landed and flipped upside down. All the passengers and crew were truly lucky to survive the accident..

Lets read on ...

Light Moments

Barry and Hannah, an old married couple, are sitting on the couch watching TV. Barry as always has been watching TV all day with bottles of beer lined. His wife had just joined him after completing the daily chores. On the show they were speaking about how to prepare in case of death etc. It talked about how some elderly need to be on breathing support and liquid diet thro IV. "Honey," says Barry, turning to his wife with a serious expression, "I want you to promise me, that if there ever comes a time that I am dependent on just machines and bottled fluid, that you will make sure to put an end to it."

"No problem darling ", said Hannah, and she promptly got up, turned off the TV, and poured his beer down the drain.

A surprised Barry asked his wife, " What was that for". " You just asked me", said his wife and went on to explain. " You are always watching TV and drinking your beer, that makes you too dependent on just machines and bottled fluid"

Food Trail – Massaman Curry, Thailand



Thai cuisine is a favourite to many. Prepared with cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, star anise, cumin, bay leaves, nutmeg and mace, Massaman curry is a mild, relatively rich curry of Thailand. Blended with the local spices, this tangy and not too spicy curry differs from the other regular curries of the nation and for all the right reasons. Instead of including the curry leaves in the cooking process Massaman curry uses spices and aromatics like cumin, lemongrass and galangal that helps in creating a delectable base for the dish.

Trade News

Shipping lines unlikely to make a quick return to Suez Canal

There is unlikely to be a quick shift from airfreight to ocean following the Israel-Hamas ceasefire that could also bring to an end a prolonged period of conflict on the Red Sea. The conflict that began in the last quarter of 2023 forced shipping lines to reroute away from the Suez Canal and prompted additional interest in airfreight due to increased transit times and costs for ocean shipping. Houthi rebels have now announced they will halt attacks on all non-Israeli vessels in the Red Sea.

Shippers will understandably be cautious about any return to the Suez Canal. It was also felt that “an immediate large scale return is highly unlikely”, firstly because there is still much to be done before safe passage is assured and established and secondly because establishing viable alternative passage took much effort and shippers may be reluctant to switch back. Diversions around the Cape of Good Hope are not what the industry wants, but the situation is stable and being managed, It took many months and extreme disruption to achieve this stability so carriers will be wary of heading back to the Red Sea too soon. Expectations are that there will be severe disruption in the immediate period following a return of ships to the Red Sea. Ships will not be where they are supposed to be and will arrive at ports much earlier (or later) than scheduled. If large numbers of ships arrive at ports at the same time, it will cause massive delays and congestion that ripple across ocean supply chains. The transition period will likely see some ships continue to sail around the Cape of Good Hope, while others travel through the Red Sea. Carriers will likely approach a transition in a phased way by gradually increasing the size of vessels, predicts Xeneta. The complexity of ocean container shipping networks means it could take 1-2 months for schedules to transition to ‘normal’ operating conditions through the Red Sea.

That said, if capacity increases and rates decrease then a strong case for shippers to move from air to sea may emerge. Risks will certainly persist for shipping in the Red Sea and Suez Canal, with the situation for Israeli ships, and therefore any ships travelling nearby, remaining volatile. It is too early to speculate on how the leading carriers will act. Carriers, including Maersk and Hapag Lloyd, are looking for certainty of safety before they consider shifting their operations back to the Suez Canal. Safety is paramount for shippers, over 100 vessels have been attacked since November 2023 and we should not expect to see container lines rush to return to the Suez Canal. Most carriers will wait to see how things develop and will need to be utterly convinced that the threat of attack has been eliminated before they consider a return to trans Suez transits. This timeline would take months rather than weeks, Say industry sources.

Record 44 million roses shipped by Bengaluru airport this Valentine's season

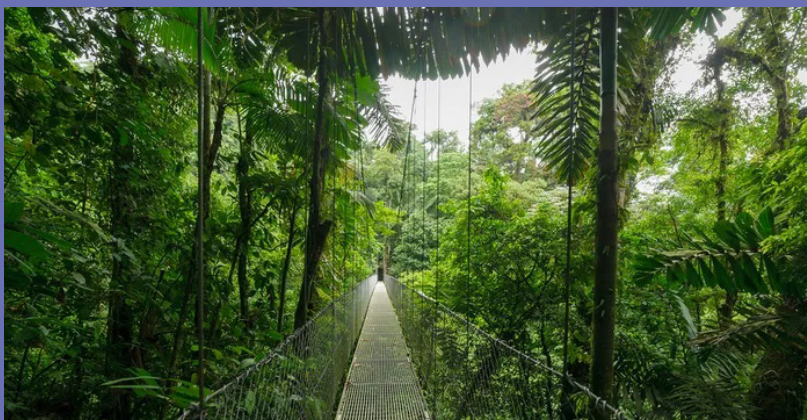
An unprecedented demand for fresh roses this Valentine's season has resulted in the Bengaluru Airport processing 44 million rose stems – weighing 1,649 metric tonnes (MT) – for 22 international and 38 domestic destinations. "This marks a remarkable 50% year-on-year surge in stem processing, and a 35% increase in tonnage, reaffirming Bengaluru airport's status as India's no. 1 airport for perishable exports for the fourth consecutive year," BIAL said in a statement. The demand has been very strong, coming from the middle east and as far as New Zealand.

"With global demand at an all-time high, international rose shipments saw a 51 percent increase in tonnage and an 86 percent rise in stem count. Key destinations included Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Sharjah, Kuwait, Auckland, Amman, Manila, Riyadh, Colombo, and Abu Dhabi. Domestically, 1,344 MT of roses were transported, marking a 32 percent increase, with major shipments heading to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Bagdogra, Udaipur, Ahmedabad, Agartala, and Chandigarh," BIAL said.

This year, Bengaluru airport has expanded its 'floral footprint' by adding new destinations such as Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Beirut, Tokyo, Bahrain, and Dammam. "The journey of a rose doesn't end at harvest—it must reach its destination in perfect bloom, no matter how far it travels. At Bengaluru airport, ensuring freshness, speed, and temperature precision is paramount. The state-of-the-art cool-port facility, equipped with real-time tracking and advanced cold chain technology, safeguards every shipment, proactively managing temperature fluctuations for seamless storage, handling, and transport," BIAL added.

The airport claimed it has ensured less wastage and quicker dispatch, at a time when the demand has peaked. "With faster turnaround times, enhanced security, and minimal wastage, Bengaluru airport ensures that every bloom reaches its destination at peak freshness, meeting the soaring Valentine's Day demand and keeping the spirit of love alive across the globe," the airport said.

Travel Diaries – Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Costa Rica



The Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve was established in 1972 and initially covered some 810 acres (328 ha) of forested land. Nowadays, its protective reach extends over 35,089 acres (14,200 ha) and encompasses eight life zones atop the Continental Divide. There are over 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds, and 1,200 species of amphibians and reptiles living

living within its bounds. It's one of the few remaining habitats that support all six species of the cat family – jaguars, ocelots, pumas, oncillas, margays, and jaguarundis – as well as the endangered three-wattled bellbird and resplendent quetzal. Over 8 miles (13 km) of trails are available for visitors to explore on their own or with a guide. Monteverde is located at only 3 hours away from San Jose Costa Rica

Off Beat News – Monte Napoleone becomes world’s most expensive shopping street



Milan’s Via Monte Napoleone, the 350 metre-long street has just been named the world’s most expensive shopping street, beating New York’s Fifth Avenue, London’s New Bond Street and Paris’s Champs-Élysées, and becoming the first European city to top the list in 34 years.

According to the latest Main Streets Across the World report, by the real estate group Cushman & Wakefield,

the change “reflects robust rental growth on the Italian street, exceeding 30% in the last two years, further bolstered this year by the euro’s appreciation against the US dollar”.

Rent on the street, which ranked second last year behind Fifth Avenue, can reach as high as €20,000 (£17,000) a square metre annually. Not only is this short street a magnet for tourists interested only in window shopping, but it also attracts some of the wealthiest people around the globe, many of who spend at least 2,500 euros (\$2,600) per purchase, the highest average receipt in the world.

Luxury tourism in Milan has been booming in recent years, thanks to several posh events, such as two fashion weeks and Design Week, and the Italian city has also been able to lure in wealthy permanent residents with the help of generous tax incentives. Luxury brands followed suit, competing fiercely over the best locations for physical stores. And there’s no better place to be in Milan than Montenapoleone Street. An important advantage of Via Montenapoleone over other famous shopping streets around the world is its relatively small size. It’s less than a quarter mile long, which means that retail space is very limited and therefore very expensive. Buildings on the world’s priciest street can sell for billions of dollars, and only the biggest fashion brands can afford the rent.

Thought for the month...

Some life lessons that we can value ...

Sometimes life doesn’t give you what you want, not because you don’t deserve it, but because you deserve so much more...

- Team Sevenseas - India