

Airlines exit Kuwait airport amid growing stagnation

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Dhaka: While airports across the Gulf continue to post record-breaking gains in passenger and cargo traffic, Kuwait International Airport is experiencing a period of stagnation.

The slowdown has prompted several international carriers to suspend operations, citing declining economic viability.

British Airways terminated its daily service to Kuwait in March, ending more than 60 years of continuous operations.

The decision followed similar exits by Germany's Lufthansa last September and the Netherlands' KLM shortly thereafter.

In total, 14 international airlines have withdrawn from Kuwait International Airport, even as they maintain or expand their presence at other major airports across the region.

Aviation analysts point to a combination of factors hampering Kuwait's competitiveness: increased jet fuel prices, intensifying competition from regional aviation giants, and persistent shortcomings in airport infrastructure and passenger services.

These challenges, observers say, have collectively diminished the airport's appeal to global carriers.

Kuwait International Airport recorded a 1 per cent decline in passenger traffic in 2024, falling to 15.4 million from 15.6 million the previous year.

In contrast, neighbouring airports experienced robust growth. Dubai International Airport rose 5.7 per cent to 92.3 million passengers, Doha climbed 14.8 per cent to 52.7 million, Riyadh increased 17.8 per cent to 37.6 million, and Abu Dhabi surged 25.3 per cent to 28.7 million travellers.

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