

Bahrain climbs to 61st position on 2023 passport index ranking

Five places better than first quarter of 2022, according to Henley Passport Index rating

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Bahrain has moved up five places on the global passport rankings for the first quarter of 2023, according to the latest Henley Passport Index rating.

The Kingdom now ranks 61st on the list of the strongest passports in the world, improving the 66th position it held last year.

In 2021, Bahrain ranked 69th, which means that the country has now climbed eight positions since then. Currently, the Bahrainis have visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to 87 destinations around the world.

The Henley Passport Index is the original and most authoritative passport index, with historical data spanning 18 years. The index and its contests are based on data provided by the International Air Transport Authority (IATA), supplemented, enhanced, and updated using extensive in-house research and open-source online data.

It ranks the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa. The index consists of 199 different passports, as well as 227 different travel



COUNTRY	RANK	ACCESS
Japan	1	193
Singapore	1	193
South Korea	2	192
Germany	3	191
Spain	3	191
Finland	4	190
Italy	4	190
Luxembourg	4	190
Austria	5	189
Denmark	5	189

Bahrain	61	87
Fiji	61	87
Guyana	61	87
Botswana	62	86
Jamaica	62	86
Oman	63	82
Papua New Gui...	63	82
Saudi Arabia	63	82
United Arab Emi...	16	178
Romania	17	176
Bulgaria	18	175
Chile	18	175

destinations.

Saudi Arabia takes the 63rd rank on the index with Oman and Papua New

Guinea. Saudi, Oman, and Papua New Guinea passport holders have visa-free access to 82 destinations around the

world.

According to the Henley Passport Index rating, the UAE fell one spot in the rankings after holding the 15th position last year. It currently holds the 16th position, having visa-free access to 178 destinations globally.

Reported previously by The Daily Tribune, the 15th position held previously by the UAE was the highest position yet achieved for the Arab nation throughout the index's history.

Who ranks at the top?

Japan and Singapore remarkably topped the index, allowing both Japanese and Singaporeans to visit 193 destinations out of 227 around the world without a prior visa.

This allows them to access 85 percent of the world without a prior visa, according to data from the International Air Transport Association and Henley & Partners.

Best passports

What are the best passports to hold in 2023, according to the Henley Passport Index?

According to the Henley & Partners,

Global Ranking Index, Japan and Singapore tie in 1st (193 destinations), South Korea places 2nd (192 destinations), and Germany and Spain place 3rd (191 destinations).

Finland, Italy, and Luxembourg place 4th (190 destinations), Austria, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands place 5th (189 destinations), and France, Ireland, Portugal, and the UK place 6th (188 destinations).

Belgium, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, and the US place 7th (187 destinations), Australia, Canada, Greece, and Malta place 8th (186 destinations), Hungary and Poland place 9th (185 destinations), and Lithuania and Slovakia place 10th (184 destinations).

Analysts anticipate that Kuwait and Qatar will sign a visa-free deal with the EU this year, a move that could dramatically enhance both countries' Henley Passport Index scores, as Kuwait scores a 57 (97 destinations) and Qatar scores a 56 (100 destinations).

Henley & Partners also reported that whilst Asian countries continue to dominate the very top of the index, the growing strength of Gulf countries passports has been identified as a key trend in the coming year.

Over 200 government workers complete Cloud Training Program

iGA-Microsoft partnership

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The Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA), in partnership with Microsoft, has conducted a capacity-building training program to train employees from the governmental entities on Microsoft cloud computing services launched in February 2022.

This came as part of the agreement between iGA and Microsoft as one of the cloud-technology leaders.

The training program aims at improving the efficiency of the national ICT skills in cloud services in line with the national strategic directions.

iGA Operations and Governance Deputy CE Dr Khalid Ahmed Al Mutawa praised the cooperation with Microsoft in completing the training of more than 200 governmental employees during the year 2022.

He stressed that investing in the development of Kingdom national competencies is one of the most important priorities at this stage.

He reaffirmed that the ultimate benefit is to upscale the employees skills with knowledge and professional certificates that will be reflected on the quality of public service delivery.

Drug smuggler death sentence is commuted to life in prison

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The High Appeals Court has commuted a Bahraini man's death sentence to life in prison for his role in smuggling 50kg of hashish into Bahrain.

The defendant brought the drugs from Iran intending to peddle them in Bahrain.

The case involves five defendants. A woman in her fifties was first arrested for attempting to bring drugs into the Kingdom. Two other women and two men were also implicated in the case.

After discovering that a shipment included drugs, the anti-drugs department of the Ministry of Interior assigned an undercover agent, posing as a delivery man, to hand the shipment to the woman. She was then arrested as part of a sting operation. The shipment

arrived in the Kingdom from a country in South America.

The drugs were concealed inside plates in an attempt to avoid detection.

They were discovered after being scanned by an X-ray machine by a customs official. They turned out to be cocaine. The woman was detained as a result.

Investigations led to the arrest of the second suspect, a man, who was found to have helped the woman in distributing the drugs.

He was arrested in a sting operation involving the first woman who called him and requested him to hand her BD400 for selling drugs to him earlier. They agreed to meet at her

house, and he was arrested upon his arrival.

He told prosecutors he was receiving the drugs from the third defendant, a woman, and he offered to help police arrest her red-handed. He called her to buy a half kilogram of hashish for BD1,300.

They agreed to meet at her house. She told him that her friend, the fourth defendant, would come and bring the drugs with him. Both were busted, and the fourth defendant told police he was getting the drugs from the fifth defendant.

The latter raised many suspicions after he was arrested in a sting operation with the help of the fourth defendant, as he managed to meet the fourth

defendant's request for one kilogram of hashish at a value of BD3,000.

He admitted to receiving the drugs from an Iranian man who was planning to bring to Bahrain 50 kilograms of hashish. He informed the police that the Iranian man would leave the drugs in the sea.

Police headed to the coordinates the fifth defendant provided and seized the drugs.

As a result, he was handed down the capital penalty. At the same time, the second, third and fourth defendants were acquitted for their role in arresting the fifth defendant, who was the mastermind of bringing the drugs into the Kingdom.

Meanwhile, the first defendant was sentenced to six months in prison and was fined BD100.



Bahrain-US security cooperation



Interior Minister, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, received yesterday Commander of the US Naval Forces Central Command, US 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces, Vice-Admiral Brad Cooper. Interior Ministry Undersecretary for Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs attended the meeting. The Interior Minister welcomed the US official, hailing security cooperation and exchange of expertise within the strategic and strong ties between the two countries. Security cooperation to promote joint operations was reviewed during the meeting.

Pinoy Market' hailed as a big success

Various Philippine food products on display

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The Philippine Embassy has hailed the success of "Pinoy Market", which featured various Philippine food products from 25 to 28 January 2023.

The event, held in collaboration with Carrefour and the Oasis Mall in Juffair, is part of the Embassy's efforts to promote Filipino products to consumers in Bahrain.

It was officially opened on 25 January 2023 during a ribbon-cutting ceremony officiated by Honorable Anne Jalando-on Louis, Charge d'Affaires, a.i., and Mr Mohammad Ismail Khatib, General Manager of Carrefour Bahrain City Center.

Louis thanked Mr Khatib for collaborating with the Embassy on the Pinoy Market and invited the Carrefour team to expand their list of Filipino products by sourcing additional items from Philippine suppliers.

The Carrefour Pinoy Market is one of the promotional activities held at the Oasis Mall. The Philippine Festival is organized by the Embassy, in cooperation with the Mall and Brand Sync, a Filipino-owned events company.