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Artist impression - Inner Court Yard of New T3 Hotel

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President Mahama to cut sod for flagship airport project

By Dominick Andoh

President John Dramani Mahama is to break ground for the start of construction of a new multi-tiered, multi-purpose car park and airport hotels complex today, Thursday, August 27, 2026.

The project is part of a broader effort to upgrade facilities at the Accra International Airport as Ghana positions itself as a hub in West Africa and seeks to regain its US FAA Category 1 status.

The flagship airport project, which is part of the pool of projects being financed using proceeds from the Aviation Infrastructure Development Charge (AIDC) which came into effect in April 2026, will have a seven-storey car park, two hotels - a 250-room budget hotel and a 120-room luxury hotel to cater to transit passengers, including those on long layovers or disrupted flights, while also supporting Ghana's growing role as a connecting hub.

It will also include a pedestrian connector to the terminal, 2000+ Carpark bays, a shopping mall with a food court, retail spaces, office spaces for rental, and a sky lounge for entertainment.

For aviation aficionados, the project will have a sky observatory for the public to experience aircraft landings and take-offs in proximity.

The integrated approach, combining infrastructure, hospitality, and retail, signals a deliberate shift toward capturing high-value transit traffic, a key driver of airport competitiveness globally.

The August 27 ceremony will move the car park project from planning and preparatory work into its formal construction phase, giving renewed momentum to government plans to modernise Ghana's main international gateway.

FAA Category 1 on the cards

Ghana lost its Federal Aviation Administration Category 1 status years ago and is keen to reclaim it and have the Accra International Airport re-certified as a Category 1 airport by the US FAA.
The re-certification of the Accra International Airport as a Category 1 airport will allow Ghana-registered airlines to operate flights to and from the United States.

The improvement in aviation security with the deployment of 3D scanners at the Accra International Airport, refurbishment of Terminal 2, new connecting concourse, the new T3 Car park and enhanced facilities and security, and the consistent attainment of very high ICAO

aviation safety and security score over the last half decade, and the impending re-establishment of a new national airline, puts Ghana on the right track to regain its FAA Cat 1 status.

Relocation of T3 Car Park

The Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL), effective Monday, 20 July 2026, relocated the Terminal 3 Car Park to allow the contractor to take over the site for the construction of the new seven-storey multi-purpose car park and airport hotel complex
GACL announced the relocation in a public notice issued on 16 July 2026, explaining that the existing Terminal 3 parking area will close to airport users and stakeholders during the construction period.

To maintain parking services, GACL has completed the Terminal 3 Car Park Annex, which can accommodate more than 600 vehicles. The new facility will serve passengers, visitors and other airport users throughout the transition period.

Funding for new aviation projects
The AIDC came into effect in April as part of a government plan to mobilise about US$800 million over 10 years for airport infrastructure upgrades.

International passengers pay US$50 per trip, with lower rates applying to ECOWAS and other African routes. The levy is intended to support projects including the planned airside connecting concourse between Terminals 2 and 3, the new multi-purpose car park and hotel at Terminal 3, repurposing of Terminal 2 at Accra International Airport, redevelopment of Sunyani Airport, and other airport developments in Kumasi Airport.

The Ministry of Transport, working through the Ghana Airport Company Limited, has arranged advance financing for these projects.

EGYPTAIR and FC Barcelona sign a three-season partnership agreement

By Prince Offeh

EGYPTAIR has signed an agreement to become a 'Global Partner' of FC Barcelona until the 2028/29 season. Under the terms of the partnership, the Egyptian company will hold the status of 'Exclusive Official Airline Partner' of the men's first football team, basketball team and handball team. In addition, the latter team will wear the EGYPTAIR emblem on the front of their shirts during matches.

This milestone is part of EGYPTAIR's fleet expansion and international route network development plan, highlighting the company's commitment to improving its services and providing a superior travel experience.

For FC Barcelona, this new agreement represents an opportunity to expand the global reach of the Barça brand, connect with new markets and strengthen its position as one of the sports teams with the greatest international influence.

Statement from Marc Bruix, FC Barcelona's Global Sponsorship Director:

"Connecting FC Barcelona with EGYPTAIR, a benchmark for excellence and a company with a long history in international aviation, is a natural step in our expansion. This partnership reinforces our commitment to bringing Barça's values and excitement to our fans in the Middle East and Africa, where we have an extraordinary fan community."

Statement from Captain Ahmed Adel, Chairman of EGYPTAIR Holding Company:

"Sponsoring one of the world's most prestigious clubs — the reigning La Liga and Spanish Super cup champion — marks an unprecedented achievement in the history of our national carrier. Through this partnership, EGYPTAIR's 95 year legacy converges with FC Barcelona's global sporting leadership, opening new horizons for engagement with football fans across the globe. Our presence in Barcelona for the signing of the agreement highlights the shared vision of both parties to showcase EGYPTAIR's role in connecting cultures, civilizations, and people — a role that sports have long embodied throughout history."
About EGYPTAIR:

EGYPTAIR is Egypt's national flag carrier and one of the Middle East and Africa's longstanding airlines, established in 1932. Headquartered in Cairo, EGYPTAIR operates an expanding international and domestic network connecting Egypt with over 85 destinations across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and North America.

As a member of Star Alliance, the airline and its loyalty program EGYPTAIR Plus provide passengers with access to a broader global network and a range of travel benefits. EGYPTAIR is currently pursuing an ambitious transformation and growth strategy focused on network expansion, fleet modernization, enhanced passenger experience, digital transformation, strategic partnerships, and sustainability, reinforcing its position as a competitive global airline and a key gateway connecting Egypt to the world.

Travel disruption drives 2X growth in refund protection adoption this summer

As travel disruption reshapes traveller behaviour this summer, consumers are increasingly seeking greater flexibility and reassurance when booking their trips. New data from Protect Group, a leading provider of ancillary travel products, reveals that Refund Protect conversions for the company's travel partners have nearly doubled, increasing from 14% to 27%.

The trend highlights a growing appetite among travellers to protect their bookings against unexpected disruption. Across Europe, the UK recorded the strongest momentum, with travel and transport partners significantly outperforming the wider portfolio. While overall Refund Protect adoption across UK partners declined slightly, purchases within the travel and transport sector increased by 56%, demonstrating stronger demand for added protection among travellers booking travel-related services.

France also recorded positive momentum, with Refund Protect conversion increasing by 26%, highlighting continued interest in flexible booking options across key European markets.

"Travellers are becoming more intentional about managing travel risk. Rather than changing their plans altogether, more people are choosing to protect the parts of their journey where disruption could have the greatest financial impact. Whether it is airport delays, operational disruption or simply the desire for greater flexibility, travellers increasingly see protection as an important part of the booking journey rather than an optional extra," said Stephen Joyce, Global Strategy Lead – Travel & Tours at Protect Group.

Refund Protect: restoring confidence in the booking process.
The figures point to a clear shift in traveller priorities. Securing peace of mind has become a top priority for travellers planning summer trips. By protecting the parts of their journey that matter most, they are increasingly viewing Refund Protect as a natural and essential step in the checkout process.

"This reflects a structural shift in travellers' behaviour and in how consumers perceive the inherent risks of booking travel. We anticipate this trend will continue to intensify in the coming years, driven by growing travel complexity, evolving regulatory frameworks, stricter entry requirements, and a persistently volatile global outlook," said Joyce.

"As uncertainty continues to shape travel decisions, flexibility has become an expectation. Refund Protect, our flagship product, meets this need by reducing booking friction and giving travellers greater confidence to confirm their plans. Seamlessly integrated into the checkout flow of OTAs, airlines, hotels and ticketing platforms, it allows consumers to add refund protection to non-refundable bookings, providing financial peace of mind should unforeseen circumstances beyond their control disrupt their trip," Joyce concluded.

Unlike other refund services, Refund Protect offers a 100% refund of the booking value, helping travel brands increase consumer confidence, improve conversion rates, and strengthen customer satisfaction in an increasingly uncertain environment.

The AI Curse

By Stephen Holmes

In a county in northern Virginia, a family's electricity bill has doubled. A few miles away, a windowless building the size of a shopping mall hums through the night—yet another AI data center, consuming more power than the town it was built beside. The dispute will be conducted in the language of rate structures, zoning variances, and transmission corridors. But a non-technical political question drives it: Are the people who live in the county still needed by the people who constructed the building?

The question is not just about AI. It concerns the bargain on which modern democracy rests.

Democracy was never the gift of elites who discovered justice. Constitutions and elections are the visible machinery of limited government. But why did those with power accept limits at all? Rights were won by workers, women, soldiers, dissidents, and movements that made exclusion politically dangerous, and material dependence helped make those victories durable. When modern states needed armies of ordinary men rather than a warrior caste, they needed recruits, taxes, and sacrifice—and therefore some measure of consent. People asked to fight, pay, and suffer for a state will eventually ask what place they have in it.

A similar dynamic was apparent in industrial cities, which discovered that disease ignores class boundaries. Sewers, clean water, and quarantine laws reflected the recognition that a city's poor breathe on its rich. Elites paid for the well-being of people they did not love because they could not be well without them.

Likewise, Henry Ford's five-dollar day was not philanthropy. Mass production required mass consumption. Ford recognized the industrial order's larger truth: wages, consumption, and output held each other up.

In short, because the powerful could not prosper without the cooperation of ordinary people, they had reason to honor claims they would rather have ignored. AI raises the possibility that this bargain is weakening.

It is not disappearing, at least not yet—and perhaps never in the crude form the futurists imagine. The technology may augment more workers than it replaces and create occupations no one has yet named. But the political danger is not that every worker will be made redundant. To destroy the democratic bargain, AI does not have to make ordinary people useless. It has only to make elites less dependent on them.

The older dependencies have already thinned. Wars are increasingly fought by professionals, contractors, and drones, and decades of automation have produced a narrow social stratum that is deemed intensely valuable, a larger group that is made insecure, and a great many citizens who are told, in effect, that their contribution is optional.

Suppose the technology delivers much of what its promoters promise, allowing firms to replace rather than merely assist large numbers of workers. An automated economy would not thereby lose its customers;

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it could sustain demand through exports, government purchases, credit, or transfers to households. But a society in which most people receive a stipend drawn from wealth they neither own nor govern distributes political leverage very differently from one in which people earn wages, pay taxes, organize, and bargain over production. The latter is full of conflict, inequality, and exploitation—but it gives citizens bargaining power because they have something to withhold. A stipend-based society may be richer in goods but poorer in standing. It could preserve consumption while hollowing out citizenship.

Data centers are not oil wells. But the political economy resembles the "resource curse" long associated with rentier states: when decisive wealth is generated from assets requiring little ongoing contribution from the population, a narrow group of rulers and owners has less reason to bargain broadly. The old slogan was "no taxation without representation." But the darker converse is also true: when those who govern and those who own no longer depend on broad-based taxation, labor, or consent, representation begins to look less like a right than a cost they would prefer not to pay.

That is why the local politics of data centers is so important. The industry cannot manufacture everything it needs. It needs land, water, electricity, and local permission. Public resistance is already conspicuous. In a Gallup survey conducted in March, 71% of Americans opposed constructing a data center in their own area, including 48% who strongly opposed it. People may be uncertain about AI in the abstract, but they understand a higher power bill, a threatened water supply, and an industrial facility promising few permanent local jobs.

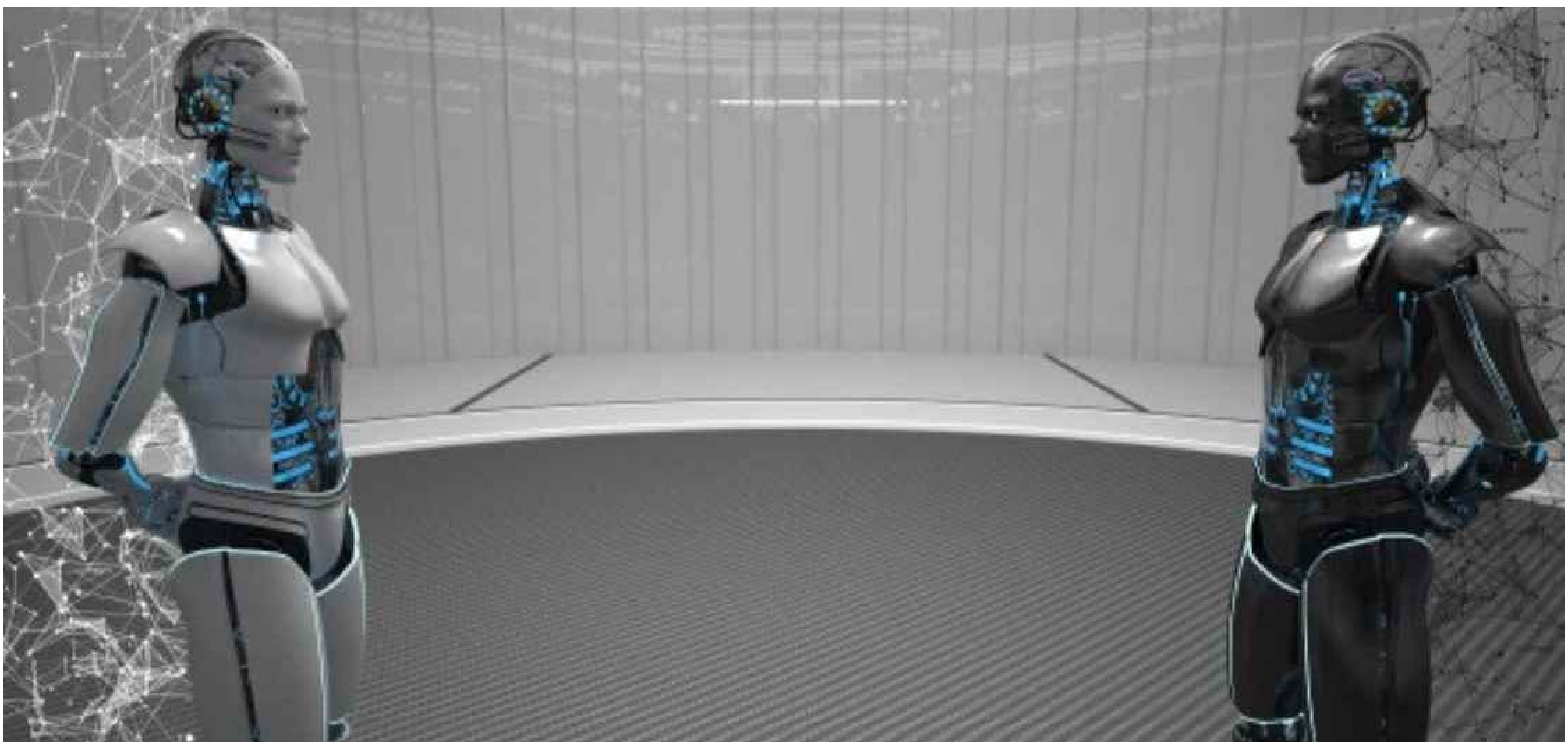
Local permission is more than obstruction. It is one of the last forms of leverage available to citizens in an economy organized around assets they do not own and systems they cannot inspect. It is also why the uneasy alliance between Silicon Valley and the populist right is splitting at the substation rather than on the talk shows.

But local permission is leverage only so long as it must be asked for. A government sufficiently committed to the industry has other instruments—eminent domain, federal preemption of local siting authority, emergency authority over the grid—and US history is not reassuring about what befalls communities that hold land the powerful want and supply nothing the powerful need.

The answer is neither to halt the technology nor to romanticize the industrial order it may replace. That bargain was never fair enough. But if labor ceases to be the principal basis on which ordinary citizens claim a share of national wealth, citizenship will need another foundation—beginning with treating automated wealth as a public problem rather than a private achievement. That could mean public claims on the gains from automation, through taxation and through democratic control of the infrastructure on which AI depends.

The underlying arithmetic is simple. Every sanction that ordinary citizens have ever possessed—the ability to withhold labor, taxes, sons, or votes—presupposes someone who needs what you can withhold. Where there is no need, there is no leverage. Rights that no longer have a price do not vanish; they become favors, held at the pleasure of those who grant them.

For now, the citizens of northern Virginia still possess one thing the industry cannot code into existence: their permission. The question is whether they will use that leverage merely to say no or to demand a new bargain. The owners of the machines may come to need fewer workers. Will they be allowed to need fewer citizens?



Stephen Holmes, Professor of Law at New York University School of Law and the Richard Holbrooke Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, is the co-author (with Ivan Krastev) of The Light that Failed: A Reckoning (Penguin Books, 2019).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Aviation Insight With Crawley

Airline Mergers Or Take-Over In The Aviation Industry (A Regulatory Perspective)

By Ing. Benjamin Owusu

What is an Airline Merger?

An airline merger combines two or more airline companies into a single business (or single organisation) under one State Authority Operating Certificate (Air Operator Certificate - AOC). This means that each airline must have a valid Air Operator Certificate (AOC) prior to the merging process.

What is a Direct Merger?

This is the simplest merger in concept in the aviation industry. In a direct merger, there are two airlines, say Airline A and Airline B. One of the airlines (Airline B) is the merged organisation and the other airline (Airline A) is the surviving organisation. At the end of the merging process, when the direct merger becomes effective, Airline B merges with and into Airline A, and Airline B ceases to exist. Airline A, the surviving organisation succeeds the assets, rights, liabilities, and obligations of Airline B by State Law and Aviation Regulations. The shareholders of Airline B will receive shares of stock of Airline A and join Airline A's shareholders as the owners of Airline A as the surviving Airline.

During the transition phase of the merging process, each airline (A and B) must operate with their own valid AOC, and they would be regulated independently by the State Authority. The airlines are not required to mix flight and cabin crew, maintenance teams (Engineers and Technicians plus supporting staff) and dispatch procedures until the State Authority approves the unified manuals as per a reminder checklist and training programs.

The State Authority requires a lengthy, six-phase process to combine the two Airlines A and B, potentially thousands of employees, different corporate cultures and perhaps different types of airplanes and styles of operations. As already mentioned, each airline continues to operate separately under its own AOC until the merged airline receives its single AOC.

The six-phase process are:

Phase One – Notification to the State Authority and the staff of both Airlines A and B.

Phase Two – Review of the Proposed Transition Plan and preparation of the issuance of Single Operations Specifications.

Phase Three – Submission of Documents and Manuals to the State Authority.

Phase Four – Demonstrations and Inspections by State Authority of competency.

Phase Five – Approvals or Denials by the State Authority

Phase Six – Issuance of Single Operating Certificate (SOC).

Note that, it is the State Authority responsibility to issue an Advisory Circular (AC) on Air Operator Merger or Take – Over Procedures to the applicants.

Historical Overview of Airline Mergers both Successful and Unsuccessful

Recent aviation industry revealed successful merger concepts between major airlines like American Airlines and US Airways, Delta Airlines and Northwest Airlines, United Airlines and Continental Airlines, Southwest Airlines and AirTran Airways, British Airways and Iberia, while historical consolidation has left the market heavily dominated by top carriers.

There have also been unsuccessful merger concepts between Ryanair

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and Aer Lingus, Alitalia and Etihad Airways, Frontier Airlines and Spirit Airlines, etc.

Year Airlines Region
Deal Value Outcome/Status
1 2004 Air France
+
KLM Europe$ 960 Million
Successful

(Holding Company), both have independent AOCs as well.

2 2005 America West Airlines
+
US Airways North America
$1.5 Billion Successful.
The merged airlines retained the US Airways name to preserve market recognition.
3 2008 Delta Airlines +
Northwest Airlines North America $2.8 Billion
Successful.
The merged airlines retained the Delta Airlines name, to lay the foundation for its current position as one of the most financially stable airlines with significant global reach
4 2010 United Airlines
+
Continental Airlines North America $3.1 Billion
Moderately Successful.
The merger was a response to growing competition from other airline giants like Delta Airlines and American Airlines.
5 2011 Southwest Airlines
+
AirTran Airways North America $1.4 Billion
Successful.

This was to allow Southwest to expand into key markets like Atlanta and international routes in the Caribbean and Mexico.
6 2011 British Airways
+
Iberia Europe$ 8.6 Billion
Successful.
This was combined under International Airlines Group (IAG) to improve competitiveness in a highly fragmented European Market.
7 2013 American Airlines
+
US Airways North America
$11 Billion Successful.
The merged airlines retain the American Airlines name and improved stability and strengthened the ability to compete with global carriers.
8 2016 Alaska Airlines
+
Virgin America North America $2.6 Billion
Successful.
The merged airlines retain the Alaska Airlines name after beating competing bid from JetBlue.

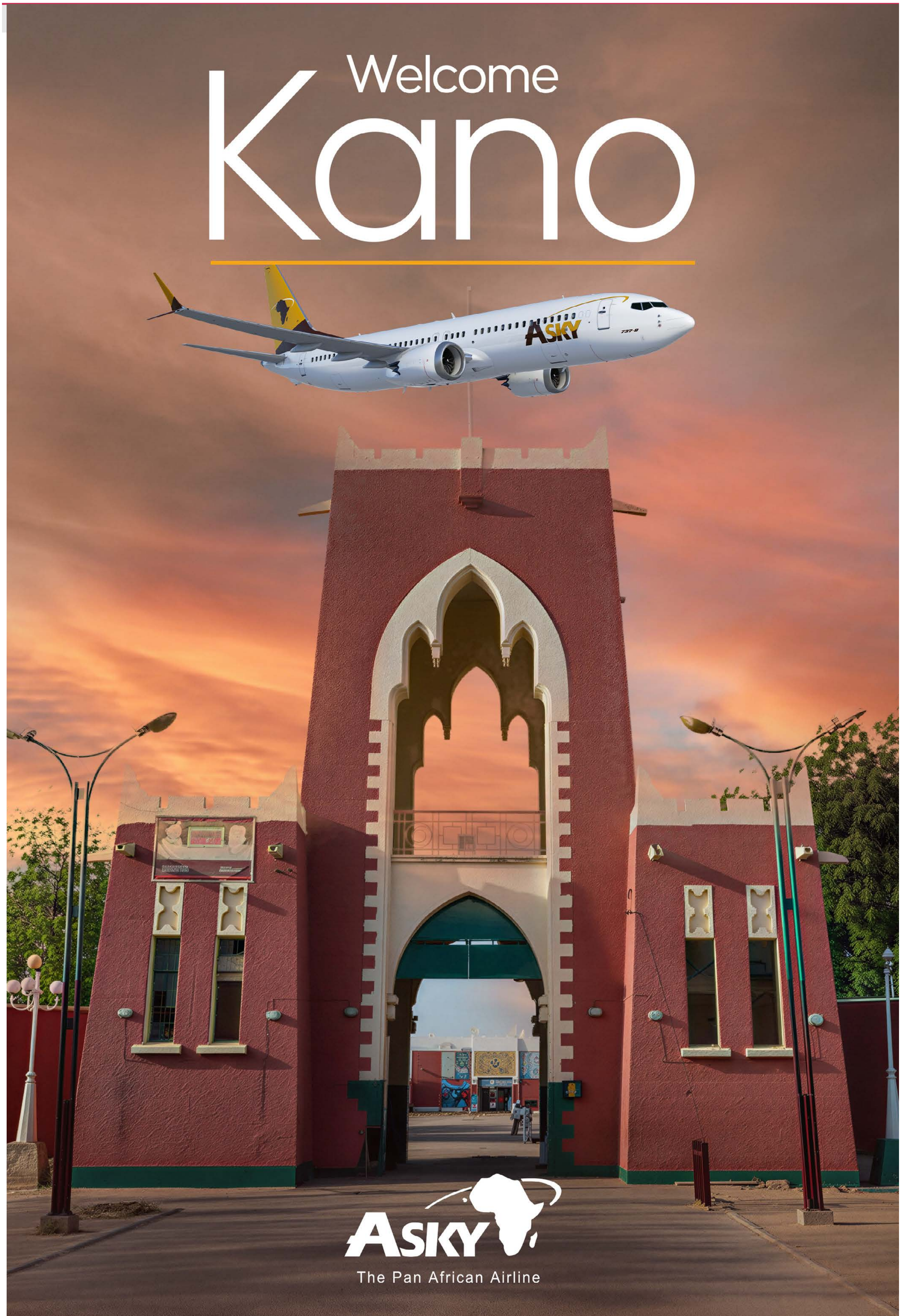
Year Airlines Region
Deal Value Outcome/Status
1 2014 Alitalia
+
Etihad Airways Europe€ 1.76 Million Unsuccessful.
Etihad Airways acquired 49% stake in Alitalia operations. Unfortunately, the investment failed because Alitalia declared bankruptcy due to operational inefficiencies in 2017.
2 2022 Frontier Airlines
+
Spirit Airlines North America $6.6 Billion
(Attempted) Unsuccessful
(Proposed and terminated).
JetBlue made a counter-offer to Spirit Airlines and the deal was blocked by a Federal Judge.
3 2024 JetBlue Airlines
+
Spirit Airlines North America
$3.8 Billion Unsuccessful.
Blocked by Regulators due to antitrust concerns.

Conclusion:

The airline industry has witnessed a significant wave of mergers over the past few decades. While some deals were successful others too were not successful due to adverse reasons. Strategic decisions around aviation market consolidation, route expansion, and operational collaborations will continue to drive merger activity in this sector as airlines navigate an increasingly competitive and globalised market.

In conclusion, not every merger looked the same; In North America, merger deals often became one airline (Single Unified Airline), while in Europe, two merger deals are kept under one holding company with two brands (Multi-Brand Holding Companies).

By Ing. Benjamin Owusu
CEO-CRAWLEY AVIATION CONSULT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