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NEWSFLASH - MARCH 2017

BOTSWANA BORDER POST CLOSED

The Zanzibar border post on the Botswana side of the Limpopo River has been closed due to flooding of the bridge. Travellers to and from Botswana are advised to use the Platjan border in Limpopo.

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES UPDATES BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Ethiopian Airlines has updated its baggage policy from Johannesburg to Lagos and Abuja. Economy-class passengers are now allowed three pieces each weighing 23kg and business-class passengers are allowed three pieces weighing 32kg per bag. This new allowance is a promotion and is valid for ticket sales and travel until the 31st of March.

BIRD FLU HITS CHINA

The World Health Organisation has confirmed that there are 110 new cases of bird flu in China of these 106 were reported in mainland China three in Hong Kong and one in Macao. The WHO has advised travellers to China to wash their hands often. Travellers should follow good food safety and good food hygiene practices. It also says travellers should avoid farms contact with animals in live animal markets entering areas where animals may be slaughtered or contact with any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with animal faeces.

US TRAVEL BAN TEMPORARILY REVERSED

Citizens of Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen with valid visas may now travel to the United

States after the US District Court in Washington State issued an order to provisionally over rule the travel ban. Previously the valid visas of nationals from these countries had been revoked. According to the US Department of State the provisional revocation has been lifted and those visas are now valid for travel to the United States if the holder is otherwise eligible. Individuals whose visas have expired or were physically cancelled must apply for a new visa at a US embassy.

THAILAND CHANGES VISA EXEMPTION RULES

Thailand has changed its visa 30-day visa exemption rule for travellers entering at border posts from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Malaysia. Travellers who have not obtained a visa prior to travel will only be allowed to stay 15 days. Travellers will also be limited to two entries by land in a calendar year. The change is believed to have been introduced to prevent tourists from extending their stay in Thailand by briefly visiting neighbouring countries and qualifying for another visa-exemption period when they return. Those who want to re-enter more than twice must obtain a Thai visa in advance of their visit.

ARILINK LAUNCHES CT - PIETERMARITZBURG ROUTE

Airlink launched a Cape Town-Pietermaritzburg flight. Flight SA8721 operates Monday to Saturday departing Pietermaritzburg at 07h00 and arriving in Cape Town at 09h10. Flight SA8724 departs from Cape Town Monday to Friday and on Sundays at 17h35 and arrives in Pietermaritzburg at 19h30.

AIRLINES SUSPENDS ABUJA FLIGHTS.

South African Airways, British Airways, Lufthansa and Air France have suspended all flights to and from Abuja's Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (ABV). ABV will be closed for six weeks between the 8th of March and the 18th of April due to runway repairs and upgrades.

NIGERIAN CARRIER SUSPENDS JNB FLIGHTS

Nigeria's Arik Air has announced it has suspended its Johannesburg and London routes with immediate effect. The airline said arrangements are being made to refund all international passengers affected by this decision.

KENYA AIRWAYS LAUNCH DIRECT FLIGHTS TO VIC FALLS

Kenya Airways will operate flights from Nairobi and Kenya to Victoria Falls and Zimbabwe, effective of the 18th of May 2017. The service will be linked to the airline's existing services to Cape Town. The airline will operate three flights with services on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

WEEK LONG BRITISH AIRWAYS STIKE TO SET

British Airways cabin crew have announced a further round of strikes. Members of Unite working as cabin crew for the airline's mixed fleet will walk out for seven days from 00h01 on Friday the 3rd of March to 23h59 on Thursday the 9th of March. While contingency plans will likely be in place delays and cancellations are inevitable.