



# OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

## PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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Ambassador of India in Kuwait Dr Adarsh Swaika met with Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Yousef Al –Sabah, director-general of Coast Guard of Kuwait. Their discussions were focused on bilateral co-operation between the Coast Guard of India and Kuwait in the context of the recent MoU signed on defence co-operation.

## Trump reaffirms his support for H-1B visa

WASHINGTON: Despite US President Donald Trump’s anti outsider utterances and backing out from WHO, he has reaffirmed his stance to support the H-1B visa programme, which allows employers in the US to hire non-immigrant workers for speciality occupations, stating that the country needs “competent” and “great” individuals to come to the US and that this can be achieved through the H-1B visa programme.

Addressing the media at The White House, Trump emphasised his belief in the importance of attracting skilled individuals to the country, citing the H-1B visa programme as a key tool in facilitating this. He further argued that allowing “quality people” to come into the US further helps in bolstering the economy by supporting various industries.

The US President also pointed to the diverse range of roles covered by the programme noting that these individuals contribute to the growth of businesses.

“You got to get the best people...We have to have the quality people coming in... By doing that, we’re expanding businesses, and that takes care of everybody... But what I really do feel is that we have to let re-

(Cont. on page-2)

## Central Bank job vacancies open

MUMBAI: Central Bank of India has initiated the online application process for the recruitment of Zone Based Officers (ZBO).

Eligible candidates can submit their applications through the bank’s official website at centralbankofindia.co.in.

A total of 266 vacancies will be filled across various locations.

Steps to Apply for Central Bank of India ZBO recruitment 2025:

- 1)Visit the official website: centralbankofindia.co.in
- 2)Navigate to the “Career with us” tab and click on “Current Vacancies”.
- 3)Select the link for “Recruitment of Zone Based Officer in Junior Management Grade Scale-I on regular basis”.
- 4)Register by providing basic details log in with the registration number and password.
- 5) Complete the application form and upload necessary documents.
- 6)Pay the application fee and submit the form. Download and print the submitted form for future reference.



## UAE-India travel: Air India Express raises free check-in baggage allowances

DUBAI: Air India Express, a subsidiary of Air India, has launched a significant increase in free check-in baggage allowance on international flights to the MidEast and Singapore.

The airline said that travellers can now carry 30kg of check-in baggage and seven kg of cabin baggage. Moreover, parents travelling with infants have a total baggage allowance of up to 47kg. Also , Xpress Biz (Air India Express’ equivalent of Business Class seating) travellers benefit from an increase from 30kg to 40kg.

The airline operates about 450 weekly flights between India and the MidEast, connecting 19 Indian cities with 13 regional destinations. It operates 26 weekly flights connecting Singapore to three South Indian cities, Chennai, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli.

The airline has also launched initiatives for passengers who prefer travelling without baggage. Such travellers can opt for Xpress Lite, where the fares are lower than regular fares and include a complimentary +3kg cabin baggage allowance.

“Passengers who require check-in baggage later have the flexibility of pre-booking additional check-in baggage allowances at significantly dis-

(Cont. on page-2)







## Healthy economic outlook

**A**t a time when global growth is expected to remain stagnant at 2.7pc in 2025-26, India has emerged as the fastest growing economy with a steady growth projected at 6.7pc. This is the message in the Jan 2025 edition of World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report. Thus, India continues to outpace global peers and cement its position as a leader in economic resilience and progress.

World Bank says that India's services sector is set to witness sustained growth, while manufacturing activity is expected to strengthen aided by government initiatives to enhance logistics infrastructure and streamline tax reforms. The fiscal deficit in India is expected to shrink continuously, driven by growing tax revenues.

The report noted that this trend is anticipated to contribute to fiscal consolidation policies of the government. While fiscal deficits in most countries in South Asia are expected to remain generally tight, India stands out with its improving fiscal position.



Nevertheless, the report highlighted that region-wide fiscal deficits, excluding India, are projected to remain stable.

This is due to fiscal adjustments being offset by increased interest payments in Pakistan and infrastructure investments in Bangladesh.

Growth was spurred by public investment in infrastructure and rising household investments in real estate. A buoyant manufacturing sector grew by 9.9pc while services remained resilient, compensating for the underperformance in agriculture. Government initiatives have sought to boost the manufacturing sector by improving the business environment, enhancing logistics infrastructure, improving tax efficiency and rationalising tax rates.

Since the pandemic, urban unemployment has improved gradually, especially for female workers, falling from 14.3pc in FY21/22 to nine per cent in FY24/25. Unemployment among urban youth, however, remained elevated at 16.8pc in FY24/25.

In the medium term, growth is expected to remain positive, especially in the services sector, reaching seven per cent in FY24/25 and remaining strong through FY25/26 and FY26/27. Trade will play a critical role in creating jobs and boosting growth. While India has taken a series of initiatives to reduce trade costs and increase its competitiveness --- by formulating the National Logistics Policy and creating both physical and digital infrastructure --- its return to protectionist measures, particularly in tariff and non-tariff barriers has impacted the country's participation in international trade. A three-pronged approach -- further reducing trade costs, lowering trade barriers and deepening integration into global value chains --- can help India achieve its ambitious target of \$1 trillion for merchandise exports by 2030.

The labour market's improvement, expanding credit availability and easing inflation are likely to boost private consumption growth. "The services sector is expected to enjoy sustained expansion and manufacturing activity is anticipated to strengthen, supported by government initiatives to enhance logistics infrastructure and improve the business environment through tax reforms" said the report.

Investment growth in India is projected to remain steady, driven by rising private investment, healthy corporate balance sheets, and improved financing conditions. These factors are expected to further reinforce the country's economic resilience in the coming years.

Since publishing this WB report, Trump has assumed office in the US and he is threatening harsh tariff policy. Also, the ensuing Union budget can impact the economic prospects.

### LIPSYNCH

"Our necessities are few, but our wants are endless."

— A Chinese proverb

## RUPEE FALLS AGAINST DIRHAM

### Ideal time for NRIs to send remittances

**DUBAI:** For UAE's Indian expats, the rupee to dirham exchange rate remains extremely favorable as the end of month remittance activity comes into sight. The INR is at 23.51 to a dirham, slightly lower than the all-time low of

at which the rupee has gotten weaker.

Expats in UAE to remit or hold? Rupee falls past 86 to new record against US dollar. Rupee hits record low, worst drop in seven months as dollar surges

And the INR has been



23.59 from Jan 14.

In the first 20 days of Jan, the rupee has slid 1.1pc which is quite unprecedented. Yet, those Indian expats with remittance plans need to keep a close eye on a couple of details -- on Feb 1, India will be announcing its latest federal budget, and it could be that the government might make some moves to halt or at least slow down the rate

getting weaker: Since Nov 5, when Donald Trump was confirmed as having won the US Presidential election, the rupee dipped from 84.95 to a dollar to the lowest ever point of 86.64. That's a depreciation by a staggering 2.91pc in the space of just over 60 days.

Compare this with the 3.05pc decline in the rupee value in the whole

of 2023, while that in 2024 was by 3.6pc. "Since Sanjay Malhotra became the Governor at RBI, the rupee has become more volatile," said Arun John, Chief Market Analyst at Century Financial. "Under him, RBI is trying to guide the rupee to a market-determined exchange rate, which is a contrast to the policy of stability pursued under the previous governor Shaktikanta Das."

The Indian rupee declined against the US\$ by 2.12pc, the Philippines Peso by 0.07pc, pound sterling by 5.78pc and euro by 5.82pc - all since Nov 5 and Trump's election

This is what's showing up with the wild ride the rupee has had in recent days. And adding up to a bonanza for Indian expats in the UAE and Gulf. Multiple remittance platforms are helping remitters, offering limited-time offers of "no additional fees" in the coming days.

## Trump reaffirms his support for H-1B visa...

(Cont. from page-1)

ally competent people, great people, come into our country and we do that through the H-1B," Trump said.

"I like very competent people coming into our country, even if that involves them training and helping other people that may not have the qualifications they do. But I don't want to stop. And I'm not just talking about engineers. I'm talking about people at all levels. We want competent people coming into our country. And H-1B, I know the programme very well. I use the programme."

Trump's remarks highlight his administration's focus on attracting top talent from abroad, arguing that such individuals not only fill critical positions but also drive business expansion, which benefits the broader workforce.

Earlier in Dec, Trump

expressed his support for the H-1B visa programme and acknowledged frequently using it for his own properties, calling it a "great programme," according to a report by the New York Post.

Notably, during Trump's first term, the administration imposed restrictions on H-1B visas, citing concerns

over "abuse" and "economic strain." In 2016, Trump condemned the programme, describing it as a means for companies to replace American workers with lower-paid foreign employees.

Restrictions tightened further in 2020 in response to economic challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## UAE-India travel: Air...

(Cont. from page-1)

counted rates for 15 kg on domestic flights and 20 kg on international flights," the airline said in a statement. The airline has also rolled out a baggage allowance of 40 kg on international flights with Xpress Biz. "Xpress Biz passengers can enjoy recliner seats with an exceptional seat pitch of up to 58 inches, Xpress Ahead priority check-in, baggage and boarding services and

"Gourmair" hot meals," it said.

In addition to the free check-in cabbage allowance, the airline also offers a free cabin baggage allowance of up to two pieces of baggage with a combined weight of not more than 10 kg. Passengers may also carry one laptop, handbag, backpack or any other small bag with dimensions not larger than 40 cm x 30 cm x 10 cm, ensuring it fits under the seat in front.



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Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	86.93	86.07
British Pound	107.13	105.98
Euro	90.91	89.24
Japanese Yen	0.56	0.55
Swiss Franc (CHF)	96.32	94.49
Canadian Dollar	60.69	59.51
Australian Dollar	54.82	53.79
Norwegian Krone	7.74	7.59
Swedish Krona	7.94	7.78
New Zealand Dollar	49.43	48.56
Hong Kong Dollar	11.21	11.00
Kuwaiti Dinar	281.79	274.90
Singapore Dollar	64.48	63.19
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.29	22.85
United Arab Emirates	23.78	23.32

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AI Express to launch direct flights from Hindon to Bengaluru, Goa, Kolkata

**NEW DELHI:** Air India Express is set to launch direct flights to Bengaluru, Goa and Kolkata from Hindon Airport.

Air India Express will become the first airline to operate from two airports in the Delhi-NCR region, with the launch of its new flights from Hindon Airport starting March 1, 2025.

Air India Express has announced the addition of Hindon Airport in Ghaziabad to its growing network in a move to bolster connectivity within the National Capital Region (NCR). Air India Express flight schedule from Hindon

Airport  
Hindon to Bengaluru:  
Departure at 15:45, Ar-

rival at 15:15 (Daily except Saturday)  
Hindon to Goa: De-

parture at 16:40 (Daily except Saturday)  
Hindon to Kolkata:

Departure at 17:20, Arrival at 19:40 (Daily except Saturday)  
Kolkata to Hindon: Departure at 07:10, Arrival at 09:30 (Daily)  
The airline is offering competitive inaugural fares, starting at Rs 4,400 for Hindon-Kolkata, Rs 4,900 for Hindon-Goa and Goa-Hindon, Rs 5,500 for Kolkata-Hindon, Rs 6,000 for Bengaluru-Hindon and Rs 6,200 for Hindon-Bengaluru. Bookings for these new flights are already available through Air India Express' website, [airindiaexpress.com](http://airindiaexpress.com), as well as other major booking platforms.

This expansion makes Air India Express the first airline in India to operate from two airports within the same metropolitan region. The airline will operate from two airports in the NCR – Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL) and Hindon Airport (HDO), providing travellers with more options and enhanced convenience.



rival at 18:40 (Daily except Saturday)  
Bengaluru to Hindon:  
Departure at 12:40, Ar-

departure at 10:30, Arrival at 13:15 (Daily)  
Goa to Hindon: Departure at 14:00, Arriv-

Rs 4,900 for Hindon-Goa and Goa-Hindon, Rs 5,500 for Kolkata-Hindon, Rs 6,000 for Ben-

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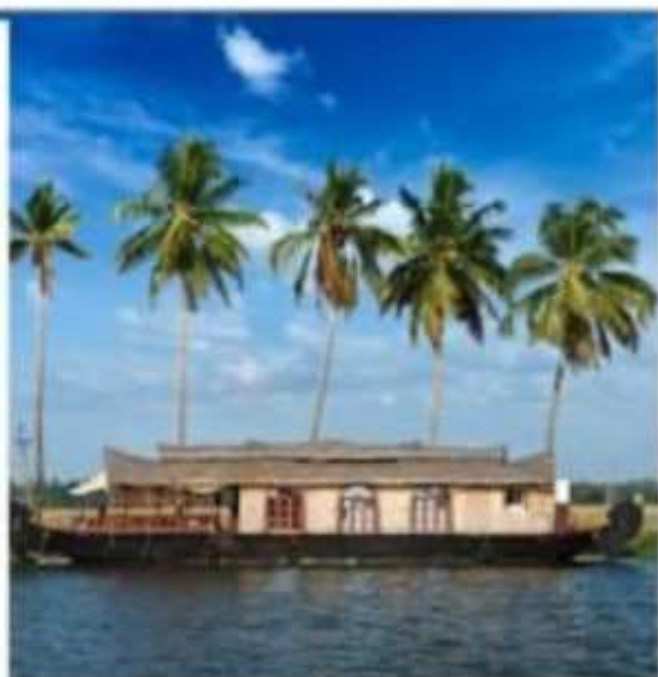
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# GULF FAQs

## Construction noise; what to do? Help! My employee has joined a rival company

I am an Abu Dhabi resident living in a rented accommodation. A building is being constructed near my home. Lately, I have been observing really loud construction noises coming from the building, even late into the night. Is this legal?

istered in Abu Dhabi need to obtain an environmental licence from the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi and comply with guidelines set for noise and air pollution. This is in accordance with Article 3 of the Abu Dhabi Decision No. 2 of 2024, which states: "The pro-

struction purposes, the noise limit should not exceed the maximum permissible limit. It is not allowed to carry out construction or operational work in residential areas beyond the time allowed by the authorities. "3. When conducting industrial, service, construction or other activities, the owner is obligated not to exceed the maximum permissible noise limits according to the type of land use on which his activity is practised and the affected areas.

4- It is prohibited to carry out construction or operational work in residential and other areas during certain times as determined by the Authority and the concerned authorities."

You may file a complaint through the official Abu Dhabi Municipality e-services website [www.tamm.abudhabi](http://www.tamm.abudhabi). You may also opt to register your complaint via Tamm's toll number: 800555 or through the website's chatbot by clicking the Tamm chatbot icon.

I am the owner of a company in UAEA month ago, one of my employees submitted his resignation and it came to my knowledge that he is working for a competing company in the same role that he worked for me. The other company was also in the same tower in which my company's headquarters is located. His employment contract states that he cannot work for a competitor for two years and in the event of doing so, he will be liable to pay me Dh50,000 in addition to appropriate compensation. Do I also have the right to file a lawsuit against the competing company that employed this person and demand compensation?

Subject to the provisions of Article (10) of Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 regarding the Regulation of Labour Relations, the following shall be observed in the application of the non-competition clause stipulated therein:

- The geographical scope of application of the clause.
- The term of the clause, provided that it does not exceed two years from the contract expiry date.

c) The nature of the work, such that it causes significant harm to the legitimate interests of the employer.

According to Article (12)/2 of Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022 on the Implementation of Federal Decree No. 33 of 2021, if a dispute arises over the non-competition clause and it is not settled amicably, the matter shall be referred to the judiciary and the burden of proving the alleged damage shall lie with the employer.

The appropriate action to be taken against your ex-employee is to file a labour case, starting with a labour complaint against him to demand the Dh50,000 agreed upon with any other appropriate compensation. You may also include the competing company that employed him and demand appropriate compensation, taking into consideration that the burden of proving the alleged damage shall lie with the employer against both the employee and his new company.



### How do I complain?

In UAE, anyone involved in production, services or any activities that require machines, equipment, warning devices or loudspeakers must ensure that the noise levels do not exceed permissible limits. This is in accordance with the Federal Law No. (24) of 1999 Concerning the Protection and Development of the Environment.

Under Article (54), all parties and individuals undertaking the production or service or other activities especially when operating machines, equipment, warning devices and loudspeakers, shall not exceed the permissible limits for noise. The Executive Order shall indicate the permissible limits for the intensity and exposure time of noise.

The Decision of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi No. (2) of 2024 Concerning the Air Quality System in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi states that entities reg-

visions of this Law shall apply to all projects/facilities operating in the Emirate and whose work requires obtaining an environmental license from Authority for Air Protection".

Furthermore, the Abu Dhabi Municipality has also published the guidelines for developing an HSE plan for the building and construction sector wherein it is provided that the Health Safety and Environment (HSE) plan should also include measures to control noise.

Furthermore, Article 7 (1) and (2) of the Abu Dhabi Decision No. 2 of 2024 states the following: "1. The Authority shall monitor and evaluate noise levels periodically through its monitoring networks. 2. The concerned authorities in the Emirate, each according to its competence, in co-ordination with the Authority, shall take all necessary precautionary measures to ensure that the maximum permissible noise limits are not exceeded."

Additionally, Article 7(3) and (4) of the Abu Dhabi Decision No. 2 of 2024 states that for con-

## Are managers eligible for compensation for working during national holidays?

I have a managerial role at a company in mainland Dubai. I had to work over the National Day break. I understand I may not be eligible for compensatory offs, but is there anything I can get for working over the public holiday?

In the UAE, an employee is entitled to public holidays on the dates declared by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE). This is in accordance with Article 28(1) of the Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations which states: "The employee shall be entitled to official leave with full pay in public holidays determined by decision of the Cabinet."

If an employer engages an employee to work during public holidays, such employee should be granted compensatory holiday(s) for or be paid an additional salary for working on a public holiday(s) along with an extra supplement of 50pc of the basic salary. This is in accordance with Article 28(2) of the Employment Law, which states: "Should the work circumstances require that the employee be employed on holidays, the employee shall be compensated with a substitute rest day for each day worked or be paid his salary for normal working days plus a supplement of at least 50pc of his basic salary for that day."

Based on the aforementioned law provisions, you may be entitled to either compensatory leave or additional salary for working on public holidays even though you are in a managerial position with your employer. You may contact your employer to discuss your concerns and request to grant you either compensatory leave or additional salary for working on recently concluded National Day public holidays as the same is your right as an employee in the UAE. In case there is no amicable settlement between you and your employer, you may reach out to MoHRE for further assistance in the matter.



# Budget likely to raise major subsidies by eight per cent

**NEW DELHI:** India is likely to raise spending on food, fertiliser and cooking gas subsidies to Rs 4.1 trillion (\$47.41 billion) in the next fiscal year --- a moderate eight per cent year-on-year increase to cover higher food and energy costs.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the national budget on Feb 1, amid slowing growth in Asia's third-largest economy and rising global uncertainties.

The latest economic slowdown has been largely attributed to weakness in urban regions and investments from companies. The

rural economy where a large part of the major subsidies are deployed is showing signs of recovering and sustaining subsidies will be a key support. The govern-

ment has estimated its food subsidy bill to increase by about five per cent for the next fiscal year that starts on April 1 to nearly Rs 2.15 trillion (\$24.86 billion).

Higher rice purchases from farmers and rising storage costs are expected to push up next year's food subsidy. The budgeted outlay for food subsidies in the current

financial year ending March 31 is Rs 2.05 trillion (\$23.70 billion).

Subsidies, including food, fuel and fertilisers accounted for about eight per cent of the country's total annual spending of \$557 billion for the current fiscal year. The government is also expected to allocate nearly Rs 250 billion (\$2.89 billion) for subsidies towards cooking gas, up from Rs 119 billion (\$1.38 billion) in the current fiscal year.

The fertiliser subsidy for the next financial year is likely to be retained at the current year's level of Rs 1.7 trillion (\$19.66 billion).



## EPFO adds nearly 15 lakh new members

**NEW DELHI:** The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has released provisional payroll data for Nov 2024, revealing a net addition of 14.63 lakh members.

An increase of 9.07pc has been registered in net member addition during the current month compared with the previous month of Oct 2024.

Further, the year on year analysis reveals a growth of 4.88pc in net member additions compared with Nov 2023, signifying increased employment opportunities and heightened awareness of employee benefits, bolstered by EPFO's effective outreach initiatives.

According to an official release, EPFO enrolled around 8.74 lakh new members in Nov 2024. The new members' addition shows an increase of 16.58pc compared with the previous month of Oct 2024. Further, year on year analysis reveals a growth of 18.80pc in the new members addition from the previous year in Nov 2023.

This surge in new memberships can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits and EPFO's successful outreach programmes.

## LN Mittal tops HSBC list as wealthiest NRI

**LONDON:**Chairman of ArcelorMittal LN Mittal tops the HSBC Hurun Global Indians List 2024 with an estimated wealth of Rs 1,84,500 crore.

The list has spotlighted the powerful impact of NRIs on the global economic landscape, featuring at least 101 NRIs from around the world.

Gopichand Hinduja, Chairman of the Hinduja Group, came at the second place with his

diversified empire spanning industries from automotive to healthcare. With a fortune of Rs 1,78,600 crore, Hinduja's strategic foresight continues to steer the Group's growth on the global stage.

Anil Agarwal and family of Vedanta Resources with a fortune of Rs 1,11,500 crore, were at the fourth place. Jay Chaudhry with a worth of Rs 1,02,700 crore from Zscaler and Sri Prakash Lohia from In-

dorama Rs 74,200 crore were the others in the hierarchy.

Notably, in the overall list, LN Mittal ranks eleventh in the 2024 Hurun India Rich List. The 2024 Hurun India Rich List revealed that the US remains the top destination for these NRIs, with 46 entrants followed by the UAE and the UK.It mentioned that 79pc of these top achievers have built their fortunes from scratch.

## India's coffee exports surge to \$1.29b

**NEW DELHI:** India, now the seventh-largest coffee producer globally, achieved exports worth \$1.29 billion in FY 2023-24, nearly double the \$719.42 million recorded in 2020-21. In the first-half of Jan 2025 alone, the country exported over 9,300 tonnes of coffee, with Italy, Belgium and Russia among the top buyers.

The growing global demand for India's coffee, known for its rich

and unique flavors, has driven this remarkable growth. Approximately three-fourths of India's coffee production comprises Arabica and Robusta beans, primarily exported as unroasted beans. However, there is a rising demand for value-added products like roasted and instant coffee, further boosting exports.

Domestically, coffee consumption in India is also on the rise, driven by caf  culture, increas-

ing disposable incomes, and a growing preference for coffee over tea. Consumption has grown from 84,000 tonnes in 2012 to 91,000 tonnes in 2023, highlighting a broader shift in beverage preferences in both urban and rural areas. India's coffee is predominantly cultivated in the ecologically rich Western and Eastern Ghats, renowned for their biodiversity. Karnataka leads coffee production, contributing 248,020 MT

in 2022-23, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu. These shaded plantations not only sustain the coffee industry but also play a vital role in preserving ecological balance in these biodiversity hotspots. To meet growing domestic and international demand, the Coffee Board of India has introduced several initiatives under the Integrated Coffee Development Project (ICDP). These include improving yields, expanding culti-

vation to non-traditional regions, and promoting sustainable coffee farming practices. Such measures aim to boost productivity and enhance the global competitiveness of Indian coffee. A shining example of this success is seen in Araku Valley, where nearly 1.5 lakh tribal families, supported by the Coffee Board and the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), have increased coffee production by 20pc.