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Air India Express adds more flights on MidEast routes

MUMBAI: Budget carrier Air India Express is increasing flights between Indian cities and the Mid-East as part of its winter 2026 schedule, operating up to 135 daily departures to the region.

The airline is adding frequencies on its core Mid-East network from hubs and focus cities, including Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai, Kochi, Kozhikode and Hyderabad.

The increases cover some of the busiest India-Mid-East corridors, including flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Dammam, Jeddah, Riyadh, Doha, Muscat, Kuwait City and Al Ain.

The flights will connect 23 Indian cities with 12 gateways across Bahrain, (**Cont. on page - 2**)

Russia to hire 70,000 Indian skilled workers this year

NEW DELHI: Russia has agreed to recruit around 70,000 skilled workers from India this year, primarily for employment in the construction and logistics sectors, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar informed a Parliamentary Consultative Committee.

The proposed recruitment is seen as a significant development in India-Russia economic and workforce co-operation, coming amid growing demand for skilled manpower in Russia. The initiative could open new overseas employment opportunities for Indian workers while strengthening the peo-

ple-to-people and economic links between the two countries.

According to the government, construction and



S Jaishankar

logistics are expected to account for a major share of the proposed recruitment. The movement of Indian workers is likely to

be facilitated through established channels, with emphasis on appropriate recruitment procedures and worker-related safeguards. The development also comes against the backdrop of expanding bilateral economic engagement between India and Russia. Increased labour mobility could complement trade and investment ties by addressing manpower shortages in sectors requiring trained and experienced workers.

For India, Russia's requirement represents a potentially important new destination for skilled (**Cont. on page - 2**)

IPEPCIL delegation to participate in 'TIME' RUSSIA-INDIA Business Forum at Kazan

MUMBAI: A high-level delegation of the Indian Personnel Export Promotion Council (IPEPCIL), comprising around 30 prominent MEA-OE approved overseas recruitment companies from India, will participate in the "TIME"-Russia-India Efficiency Business Forum being held in Kazan, Russia, on Oct 15-16, 2026.

The participation assumes significance in the backdrop of the growing India-Russia partnership in the area of international workforce mobility. The delegation will engage with Russian HR profes-

sionals, employers, industry representatives and other stakeholders to further strengthen institutional co-operation and explore new avenues for the mobilisation of Indian skilled, semi-skilled and professional manpower to Russia.

The India-Russia workforce mobility partnership has been gaining momentum following the initiatives undertaken by both the countries to facilitate greater economic and people-to-people engagement. With Russia witnessing workforce requirements across several

sectors, opportunities for Indian manpower are progressively expanding, re-



sulting in a growing and regular movement of Indian workers to the Russian Federation.

IPEPCIL, the Apex Body of RA Fraternity of MEA-OE approved overseas recruitment agencies, is committed to promoting

ethical, transparent, legal and responsible international recruitment, ensuring that workforce mobilisation takes place through authentic and regulated channels while respecting the laws, regulations and compliance requirements of both India and Russia.

The participation of such a large delegation of approved Indian recruitment companies at the Kazan Business Forum is expected to provide a valuable platform for direct B2B interaction between Indian recruitment agencies and

Russian employers and HR stakeholders. It will also help identify emerging manpower requirements, understand sector-specific skill needs and develop structured recruitment mechanisms for the benefit of employers as well as Indian workers.

Speaking on the initiative, IPEPCIL President VS Abdulkareem said that India and Russia have a strong foundation of bilateral relations and workforce mobility can become an important new dimension (**Cont. on page - 2**)

Saudi allows skilled expats to bring families during work visa process

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has introduced a significant change to its visa procedures, allowing eligible highly skilled expatriate workers to arrange entry visas for their immediate family members while their own employment

visa procedures are being completed.

The Ministry of Interior announced the measure in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (**Cont. on page - 6**)

MUMBAI: Passengers flying between the UAE and India on IndiGo could pay more for their tickets after the airline revised its fuel surcharge from Oct 6.

Travel agents said that the increase will not be the same for every passenger. While the fuel charge has gone up, the final ticket price also depends on the base fare, travel date, de-



mand and the number of seats available.

How much more could passengers pay? Travel agents estimate that the overall increase could be

around Dh200 per passenger on some journeys, although the exact amount will vary.

"The cost of travel could (**Cont. on page - 6**)

UAE-India IndiGo flights to cost more



Festive travel boom

India is a land of festivals. This is the time of the year when crores of Indians pack their bags for get-togethers with loved ones to celebrate a string of festivals or weddings or head to a tourist destination for rest and recreation. This festive time is expected to drive a significant increase in travel demand as people plan longer holidays by combining festivals, school vacations and personal leave. Instead of taking short breaks, travellers are increasingly planning trips lasting between five and nine days.

Industry sources say hotel booking is expected to rise up to 15pc, room rates too to increase. According to Zee Business Research, India’s hotel and travel industry is gearing up for strong demand as the festive season gathers momentum, with bookings, occupancy levels and room rates expected to remain higher than last year.

The period between Oct and Dec is set to offer five long weekends, encouraging more people to take extended trips. Travel demand is likely to remain strong during Dussehra, Diwali, Chhath and the great Indian wedding season. Domestic tourism is also witnessing growing interest in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, as travellers increasingly look beyond traditional holiday destinations.

Search volumes for festive travel have increased by around 45pc month-on-month, indicating growing interest among travellers. During the first quarter, average room rates stood at around Rs 10,000 - Rs 10,200, while hotel occupancy remained at 69pc. Hotel bookings during the current festive season are expected to be around 15pc higher compared with last year, as per Zee Business Research. Room rates at large hotels and resorts are also estimated to be 10pc higher than the previous year, reflecting strong demand during the peak travel season.

The research also points to a shift in traveller preferences, with consumers increasingly spending on experiences rather than focusing only on sightseeing. Travel costs like flights and hotel stays continue to be important considerations when making travel plans and budgeting for holidays. Nevertheless, the increasing trend of taking long vacations and experience-based holidays will drive up the demand for hotels and travel businesses during the festive period.

This year is expected to see a strong festive quarter with advance bookings and increased expenditure on travelling. Apart from festive travel, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) is also driving demand for hotel rooms. Ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit in Delhi on Sept 12 and 13, luxury hotel demand in the capital had surged, with several premium properties reporting limited availability or sold-out rooms. Travel platform ixigo earlier said searches for five-star hotels in Delhi had risen 50pc while room rates had increased by more than 100pc week-on-week for the summit dates. Radisson Hotel Group had also said average room rates across its portfolio were pacing more than 25 pc higher year-on-year in Sept, with the BRICS Summit contributing to stronger demand.

The government has ruled out a cap on airfares during the festive season. At the start of the season, which extends from Sept to Jan, domestic air ticket prices are ruling above last year’s levels. Data shared by Cleartrip showed that average domestic airfares for Sept are 12–20pc higher compared with a year ago. No doubt, It is a boom time for the hospitality sector.

LIPSYNCH

“Travel makes one modest. You see what a tiny place you occupy in the world.”

— Gustave Flaubert

IPEPCIL delegation to participate in ‘TIME’ RUSSIA-INDIA...

(Cont. from page - 1)
sion of this longstanding partnership.

“The movement of Indian manpower to Russia is no longer an emerging possibility; it is developing into a significant and regular component of India–Russia economic co-operation. Our objective is to ensure that this mobility takes place through recognised, ethical and accountable recruitment channels, protecting the interests of both employers and workers while supporting the manpower requirements of the Russian economy.”

He further emphasised that MEA-OE approved recruitment agencies can play an important role in

building a trusted India–Russia workforce mobility ecosystem, given their experience, regulatory accountability and established networks with international employers.

IPEPCIL will also use the Kazan engagement to promote greater understanding among Russian stakeholders about India’s regulated overseas recruitment framework and the importance of working with authorised Indian recruitment agencies. The Council believes that stronger institutional co-operation between Indian recruitment agencies, Russian employers, HR organisations and relevant government stakeholders can create a safe, efficient

and sustainable workforce mobility corridor between the two countries.

The delegation’s participation at TIME Kazan is therefore expected to further consolidate the IPEPCIL–Russia engagement, build on the existing India–Russia cooperation in manpower mobility and open new opportunities for Indian talent across diverse sectors of the Russian economy.

IPEPCIL reiterates its commitment to supporting orderly, legal, safe, secure and mutually beneficial international workforce mobility, in the larger interests of Indian workers, Russian employers and the India–Russia strategic partnership.

DEFER PLAN FOR NOW, SAYS GOVT

IATA seeks transparency over Mumbai airport transition plan

MUMBAI: A day after the stakeholders’ meet on partial shifting of international flights at Mumbai airport, global airlines’ body IATA has said an agreement on a revised approach should be reached through consultation and emphasised that any measure impacting airline operations should be based on a transparent

demand-capacity assessment.

Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), which operates both Mumbai and Navi Mumbai airports, has asked airlines to cut 33pc of their international flights to Navi Mumbai airports or discontinue them by Oct 25, a proposal that has been opposed by the carriers.

Air India Express adds more...

(Cont. from page - 1)
Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE through 88 non-stop city-pair routes. The expansion reinforces the airline’s position as one of the largest operators on the India-MidEast corridor.

The MidEast remains the largest component of the airline’s international network. This winter, that network will offer up to 150 daily international departures to 99 destinations worldwide. The MidEast is home to one of the world’s largest overseas Indian communities. In the UAE, there are more than four million Indian citizens living and working across

various walks of life.

Air India Express said the expanded schedule is designed to improve connectivity and choice for guests travelling for work, family and leisure. The airline is also investing in fleet modernisation, with retrofitted aircraft deployed on several MidEast routes this winter.

The MidEast expansion is part of Air India Express’ largest-ever winter schedule, which runs until March 27, 2027. The airline is also adding capacity at its Bengaluru and Delhi hubs, launching new domestic routes and deploying retrofitted aircraft across the network.

This comes against the backdrop of AAHL set to start renovation of the existing Terminal 1 (T1) at the Mumbai airport from Jan 2027.Amid the differences between AAHL and airlines, the civil aviation ministry suggested that the airport operator delay the proposed partial shifting of international flights from Mumbai to Navi Mumbai airport, and discussions will be held on Oct 13 to chart out the transition plan.

In a statement, the In- (Cont. on page - 6)

Russia to hire 70,000 Indian...

(Cont. from page - 1)
manpower, particularly at a time when overseas employment opportunities are being diversified across different markets. The proposed deployment of 70,000 Indian skilled workers is therefore expected to add a new dimension to India-Russia relations, while providing Indian professionals and skilled workers with opportunities in the international employment market.

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British Pound	127.12	128.97
Euro	107.43	109.73
Japanese Yen	60.62	61.59
Swiss Franc (CHF)	114.71	117.27
Canadian Dollar	67.22	68.74
Australian Dollar	66.69	68.18
Norwegian Krone	9.92	10.22
Swedish Krona	9.47	9.75
New Zealand Dollar	53.52	54.71
Hong Kong Dollar	12.08	12.45
Kuwaiti Dinar	318.8322	305.4107
Singapore Dollar	74.74	76.44
Saudi Arabian Riyal	25.25	26.04
U A E Dirham	25.87	26.61

Tech jobs in India rise 17pc

NEW DELHI: India's technology job market is showing sustained signs of recovery, with active tech openings reaching 1.23 lakh in Oct 2026, the highest level in 18 months, according to Xpheno's Active Tech Jobs Outlook-India.

The latest reading shows a continuation of the re-

centrated among experienced professionals, with mid-senior roles accounting for more than half of all active tech openings.

IT services companies remain the largest source of technology hiring in the country. The cohort recorded 66,000 active openings in Oct, a 16pc

Services cohort is being driven by a combination of demand in AI engineering roles, analyst roles and technical lead roles.

The active talent pool across these roles in a cohort of top-6 IT service bellwethers has grown between 14pc and 22p over the last two quarters, showing sustained onboarding of talent," Karanth explains. The IT services cohort has, therefore, emerged as the principal force behind the recovery in technology hiring.

Global Capability Centres, or GCCs, accounted for 18,000 active technology openings in Oct. The number remained flat compared with Sept, it was 64pc higher than a year earlier. GCC technology hiring represented about 15pc of total active tech demand. The numbers suggest that GCC hiring continues to have a strong structural presence in India's technology market even as month-on-month growth has paused.



covery that began after the market hit a record low in June 2026. Active tech demand increased five per cent month-on-month from Sept and was up 17pc year-on-year from Oct 2025. The report shows that the recovery is being led primarily by IT services, while demand from Global Capability Centres remains strong on a yearly basis. Hiring is also con-

increase from Sept and a sharp 57pc rise from Oct 2025. The latest figure is also a new 18-month high for the IT services cohort. The increase in demand is being supported by hiring across areas such as AI engineering, analyst roles and technical leadership, according to Kamal Karanth, co-founder of Xpheno.

"Talent action in the IT

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GULF FAQs

Can employees reject inter-emirate transfers if transport isn't covered?

I currently live and work in Sharjah. My boss recently informed me that I am being transferred to the company's headquarters in Dubai. My commuting costs will obviously increase significantly, but my boss says all other terms and conditions of my employment contract will remain unchanged. Do I have any grounds to contest the transfer?

Pursuant to your queries, the provisions of the UAE employment law and the subsequent resolutions are applicable. An employment contract must clearly state the key terms of employment, including the employer and employee's details, job and qualifications, start date, workplace, working hours, salary and benefits, leave, probation period, contract duration, notice period, and termination terms. This is in accordance with the Article

10 (1) of the Cabinet Resolution no. (1) OF 2022 on the implementation of Federal Decree-Law NO. (33) OF 2021 Regarding the Regulation of Labour Relations,

"1. The employment contract should include the name and address of the employer, the name, nationality and date of birth of the worker, proof of his identity, his qualification,

the job or occupation, the date of work commencement, the workplace, the working hours, the rest days, the probationary period, if any, the term of the contract, the wage agreed upon including the benefits and allowances, the annual leave entitlements, the notice period, the procedures for terminating the employment contract and any other data determined

by the ministry in order to regulate the relationship between both parties."

Further, Article 12 (3) of the Federal Decree by Law No. (33) of 2021 Regulating Labor Relations provides that where an employee is required to change his place of residence in order to undertake different work, an employer is required to bear the resulting financial costs, including relocation and residence costs.

3. If performing the work that is not agreed upon in the employment contract requires that the Worker changes his place of residence, the Employer must bear all the financial costs resulting therefrom, including the costs of the worker's displacement and residence."

In accordance with the aforementioned provisions of the law, if your employment contract expressly provides your employer the

right to assign you to another workplace or emirate such as Dubai, and you have agreed to such provision, then you may not have merit to object to the transfer solely on the basis of increased commuting or transportation costs. However, you may discuss the increase in transportation costs and aim to amicably resolve this with your employer.

In the event that a dispute arises concerning an employee's contractual rights, an employee may submit a complaint to the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization which may seek to resolve the dispute amicably and, where an amicable settlement cannot be reached, refer the matter to the competent court in accordance with the applicable procedures.

APPLICABLE LAWS: Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations. Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022 on the Implementation of Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021.



Can UAE employees start business while having job?

I work for a mainland company in Dubai. If I want to start my own business while continuing in my current role, what rules must I follow? Will conflict-of-interest risks come?

Pursuant to your queries, it is assumed that you are employed by a Dubai mainland company, which means the provisions of the UAE employment law and the subsequent cabinet resolution are applicable.

An employee may establish a new entity or become a partner or shareholder in an existing entity in the UAE, provided that the employer issues a NOC permitting the employee to do so. Further, if the business you intend to start

and if the nature of work in your current role with your current employer is similar, then the business you intend to start shall be in competition with the business of your employer. This may restrict you from being in business activity which is similar to your employer if your signed employment contract includes the non-competition clause.

This is in accordance with Article 10(1) of the Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations (the "Employment Law"), which states: "Where the employee performs a work which gives him access to employer's customers or business secrets, the employer may make a provision in the employment

contract that the employee shall not compete with or be engaged in any business which competes with him in the same sector after the expiry of the contract. Such clause shall specify the place, time and type of work to the extent necessary to protect the legitimate business interests, and the non-competition period shall not exceed two years after the expiration of the contract."

However, the non-competition clause in your employment may not be applicable once you leave the employment, provided you and your employer has agreed in writing that non-competition between you and your employer does not apply upon the end of your current em-

ployment contract. This is in accordance with Article 12 (4) of the Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022 Concerning the Executive Regulations of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations (the "Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022 on Employment Relations"), which states, "It shall be permissible to agree in writing on the non-performance of the non-competition clause after the end of the employment contract."

Further, the provisions of non-competition may be exempted as mentioned in Article 12 (5) of the Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022 on Employment Relations, which states: "An employee shall be exempt-

ed from the non-compete clause provided for in Article (10) of the Employment Law under the following conditions:

a. If the employee or the new employer pays compensation not exceeding three months of the employee's wage agreed upon in the last contract to the former employer, and the former employer's written consent thereto is required.

b. If the contract is terminated during the probationary period.

c. Any professional categories according to the needs of the employment market in the UAE, as determined by decision of the ministry under the employment classification approved by the cabinet."

MP enters adventure tourism

BHOPAL: The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board and Royal Enfield have formally begun a two-year strategic partnership aimed at promoting experience-led and responsible tourism and developing new adventure tourism experiences across the state.

Marking the beginning of the partnership for 2026–



2028, a 1,520-km, 10-day motorcycle expedition was flagged off from Bhopal by Abhay Arvind Bedekar, additional managing director, MP Tourism Board. The expedition will take 22 riders through Pachmarhi, Pench, Kanha, Bandhavgarh and Panna, offering them an immersive experience of MP's natural landscapes, forests, heritage and local culture.

Joint director, MP Tourism Board, Santosh Srivastava, and director, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IG-

RMS), Amitabh Pandey, along with senior officials from the tourism board and Royal Enfield, were also present at the flag-off.

Under the two-year partnership, the MP Tourism Board and Royal Enfield will work on developing curated motorcycle routes across the state, with a focus on off-road trails, heritage rides and scenic landscapes. The initiative seeks to connect established tourism destinations with lesser-explored and remote attractions, while creating opportunities for local employment and livelihoods.

IATA seeks transparency over...

(Cont. from page - 2)

ternational Air Transport Association (IATA) thanked the ministry "for its intervention, and welcome its decision that the airport operator defer its current proposal and re-engage with all stakeholders before returning with a revised and collaborative transition approach for T1 redevelopment".

IATA's Head of Corporate Communications Albert Tjoeng said the key thing is to reach an agreement on the revised approach among all parties -- MIAL and airlines operating at Mumbai Airport -- through consultation.

"The discussion now provides an opportunity for stakeholders using the airport to review the underlying capacity requirements, understand the basis of any proposed capacity reduction, examine alternatives that may mitigate such reductions, and work collaboratively on a transition plan that protects passenger interests, airline operations and the international connectivity of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region," he said in the statement.

IATA represents more than 370 airlines, including Indian carriers. Mumbai International Airport,

one of the busiest in the country, has two terminals -- T1 and T2. While T1 is used for domestic operations, international flights operate from T2. The vacated international departure slots at T2 will be used to facilitate the transition of domestic traffic from T1

UAE-India IndiGo flights...

(Cont. from page - 1)

increase by around Dh200 per passenger. For a family of four, that would mean an additional Dh800," said Bharath Aidasani, managing Partner at Pluto Travels.

For passengers travelling alone, the increase may not look very high. But for families buying several tickets, the extra cost can quickly add up. Why will the increase be different for every passenger? Airline ticket prices change constantly. Even passengers travelling on the same route can see different fares depending on when

they book and how many seats are left.

"For UAE-India routes, the fuel component has increased, but what the passenger finally pays can be different because the base fare also keeps changing. The fuel surcharge is fixed, but the final ticket price can still vary because the base fare changes depending on the route, travel date and demand," said Taha Siddique, manager at Siddique Travels. "That is why two passengers booking the same route on different days can see very different prices," he added.

(Cont. from page - 1)

velopment. The initiative is aimed at improving the quality of life for expatriate residents and making the relocation process smoother for skilled professionals.

Under the new arrangement, eligible family members include spouses, sons below 25 years of age and unmarried daughters. Their entry visas can be processed concurrently with the employment visa of the skilled expatriate head of the household, provided all required conditions and application procedures are fulfilled.

The change is particularly significant for professionals relocating to Saudi Arabia, as families may no longer have to wait until the worker completes the entire work-visa process before beginning their own entry-visa procedures.

However, the new measure does not automatical-



FLY91 touches down at NMIA

NAVI MUMBAI: Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) marked another milestone in the expansion of its domestic network with the arrival of a ceremonial flight by Goa-headquartered regional airline FLY91.

The flight operated by an all-women crew, marked FLY91's first touch-down at NMIA and was welcomed with a traditional water cannon salute.

The new services will add direct links between Navi Mumbai and destinations across Maharashtra, the west coast and the Lakshadweep Islands, giving passengers more options for leisure, business and

regional travel. The routes also strengthen NMIA's links with emerging domestic markets and reinforce its role as a gateway for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Navi Mumbai will be FLY91's 14th destination and fifth destination in Maharashtra, with scheduled services connecting the airport to Sindhudurg, Jalgaon, Goa (GOX) and Agatti in the Lakshadweep Islands as part of its winter schedule.

Manoj Chacko, Founder, MD, said: "We are incredibly proud that FLY91's aircraft has touched-down on Navi Mumbai, the gateway to India's financial capital, for the first time."

Saudi allows skilled expats to bring...



ly grant residence status to family members. Once they enter Saudi Arabia, their residence-permit procedures must still be completed in accordance with the Kingdom's applicable laws and regulations.

The announcement does not specify a general salary threshold or provide a detailed list of occupations qualifying as "highly skilled". Applicants will therefore need to meet the applicable eligibility requirements.

The move is expected to make Saudi Arabia more attractive to international skilled professionals by re-

ducing administrative delays associated with family relocation and supporting the Kingdom's wider efforts to improve living conditions for expatriate residents.

For Indian professionals heading to Saudi Arabia for skilled employment, the measure could offer a significant practical benefit by allowing eligible families to plan their relocation alongside the worker's employment visa process, rather than waiting for the worker to complete the initial procedures before starting the family-entry process.