



OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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India eligible for Saudi Package Visa

RIYADH: Planning a trip to Saudi Arabia? New visa package combines flights, hotels and e-visas for select international travellers.

As already reported by this publication, Saudi Arabia has launched a new Package Visa initiative, announcing the first six countries eligible for the scheme that allows travellers to obtain a tourist visa through a single integrated travel package. The programme aims to simplify the visitor journey by combining flights, accommodation and electronic visa services into one booking process. According to the ministry of tourism, the service is currently available

to travellers from India, Jordan, Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Mexico.

The minimum package price is SR 4,000 per adult for the first two days, with an additional SR1,000 for each extra day. The Package Visa allows visitors to arrange flights, licensed hotel accommodation and an electronic tourist visa through approved travel providers, eliminating the need to apply for a tourist visa separately.

HOW SAUDI'S PACKAGE VISA WORKS ?

The electronic visa is issued within 48 hours of completing the purchase of an approved travel package, removing

(Cont. on page - 2)



SEVEN-SECOND BAG SCREENING

Dubai Airports ready for summer travel rush

DUBAI: Dubai Customs has stepped up preparations for the peak summer travel season, rolling out a series of measures aimed at speeding up passenger processing and ensuring smoother journeys through the emirate's airports.

With three million passengers expected to pass through Dubai Airports during the first-half of July, it is now in one of the busiest travel periods of the year as residents head

overseas for summer holidays.

To handle the surge in travellers, Dubai Customs said it has enhanced its inspection systems using advanced technologies, with baggage taking just seven seconds to pass through the screening process. Dubai Customs operates 19 advanced baggage-screening systems and 77 detection and inspection systems across

(Cont. on page - 6)

Emirates to deploy airbus A380 on Dubai - Delhi route from October

DUBAI: Emirates has announced that it will begin operating its flagship Airbus A380 on the Dubai-Delhi route from Oct 25, further strengthening air connectivity between India and the UAE. With this move, Delhi becomes the third Indian city to receive regular scheduled services by the airline's iconic double-decker aircraft.



Airbus A380 is aimed at meeting growing passenger demand while offering increased seating capacity and Emirates' signature onboard experience.

The deployment underscores the airline's continued commitment to the Indian market, one of its largest international destinations.

The addition of Delhi to the A380 network is expected to provide travellers with greater comfort, enhanced premium cabin options, and improved connectivity through Emirates' Dubai hub to destinations across Europe, the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East.

TN's green energy project to create 2,670 jobs

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government has positioned the Vikram Solar MoU as a substantial strategic win for the state's industrial and clean energy ambitions, underlining its commitment to building a high value manufacturing ecosystem in southern Tamil Nadu.

By facilitating the proposed Rs 15,037 crore investment at SIPCOT Ganai Kondan Industrial Park in Tirunelveli, state authorities aim to catalyse a cluster that combines solar cell and module production with advanced battery energy storage manufacturing, thereby deepening

the local supply chain.

Officials highlighted the projected creation of 2,670 direct jobs and emphasised how those roles could multiply across the

(Cont. on page - 2)

HC notice to Centre on Rs 5000cr collected under ECR from NRIs

KOCHI: The Kerala High Court has issued a notice to the Centre on a petition filed by an expatriate businessman seeking the return of the deposit (ECR) of around Rs 5,000 crore collected from Indians who went abroad for work between 1983 and 2003 in the name of return ticket

money. The Central government has not taken any action to return the amount.

Mathukutty Kadon had filed a petition in the Kerala High Court. The Centre informed the High Court that it can verify the amount actually deposited in the

(Cont. on page - 2)

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Singapore: where innovation, nature and heritage create an unforgettable journey

By Prince Manjilil

Singapore may be one of the world's smallest countries, but it offers an extraordinary blend of futuristic architecture, lush green landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

Every corner of the Lion City reflects meticulous planning, making it one of Asia's most attractive destinations for leisure, business and family holidays.

A visit to the iconic Jewel Changi Airport is an attraction in itself. Home to the spectacular HSBC Rain Vortex - the world's tallest indoor waterfall - along with the Shiseido Forest Valley, shopping, dining and entertainment, the airport transforms the travel experience into a destination worth exploring.

Nature lovers are captivated by the world-famous Gardens by the Bay, where the towering Supertrees, climate-controlled conservatories and dazzling Garden Rhapsody light show create a magical experience. The attraction showcases Singapore's commitment to sustainability while offering visitors breathtaking views of the city skyline.

For those interested in history and Chinese folklore, Haw Par Villa --- originally built by philanthropists Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par, founders of the Tiger Balm empire -- offers a fascinating journey through mytholo-



Jewel Changi Airport



Gardens by the Bay

gy, legends and traditional moral tales. Its unique sculptures and colourful

HC notice to Centre on...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)
ECR and submit an affidavit on Oct 29. The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, a scheme that deposits money since its inception in 2003, has been discontinued. However, how much money has been collected so far and how much has been deposited? The information is lacking.

The petition points out that information such as whether the amount has been returned and how much money the govern-

dioramas make it one of Singapore's most distinctive cultural landmarks.

ment currently has not been made available to the public. In 2006, the central government had replied to a question raised in parliament by the then MP TK Hamza that approximately Rs 5,000 crore was lying as "dead money" under this item.

TN's green energy...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)

local economy through indirect employment in logistics, construction, and ancillary manufacturing.

Officials present at the signing --- including Chief Minister Joseph Vijay, Industries Minister Keertana and Chief Secretary M Saikumar --- stressed the government's readiness to fast-track clearances, co-ordinate land allotments, ensure utility connectivity and align incentives so the project can move swiftly from MoU to implementation.



Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par



Esplanade

Another architectural masterpiece is the Esplanade --- Theatres on the Bay, affectionately known as the "Durian" because of its spiky exterior.

Overlooking Marina Bay, this world-class performing arts centre hosts concerts, theatre productions, exhibitions and international cultural events throughout the year, adding vibrancy to Singapore's arts scene.

With its seamless public transport, spotless streets, multicultural cuisine and world-renowned attractions, Singapore continues to set global standards in tourism. Whether exploring futuristic gardens, cultural landmarks or architectural marvels, visitors leave with unforgettable memories of a nation that beautifully balances tradition with innovation.

India eligible for Saudi...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)
the need to visit a Saudi embassy or submit a standalone visa application.

Travellers must select an approved package through an authorised travel agency, complete payment digitally and receive their visa, travel insurance and travel documents by email. The ministry of tourism has so far accredited two providers --- Reserval and

Almosafer --- to offer the service. The single-entry tourist visa is valid for three months, allowing visitors to stay in the Kingdom for a minimum of two days and a maximum of 88 days.

Each package must include: A confirmed round-trip flight. Accommodation at a ministry of tourism-licensed hotel rated four stars or above.



Flynas launches 'Saudi Experiences' platform with Saudi Tourism

RIYADH: Tourism industry in Saudi Arabia has taken a digital turn as flynas introduces Saudi Experiences in collaboration with Saudi Tourism Authority (STA). It has been introduced to revolutionise the way people explore, plan and make bookings for their experiences in the Kingdom and also to help the local tourism business owners and suppliers.

It provides a digital marketplace to the tourists and locals to explore various culture-based attractions, adventure experiences, guided tours and regional experiences. Having over 150 bookable activities from over 15 regions of Saudi Arabia at the time of its introduction, the platform aims at making Saudi Arabia a premier tourist destination around the world.

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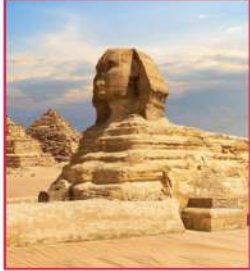
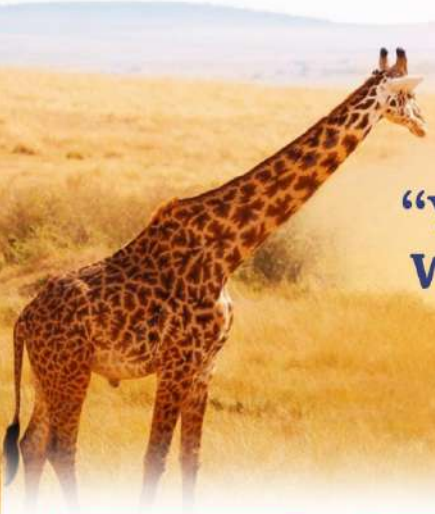
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Euro	108.03	110.29
Japanese Yen	58.67	59.58
Swiss Franc (CHF)	116.92	119.43
Canadian Dollar	66.84	68.32
Australian Dollar	65.69	67.1
Norwegian Krone	9.6	9.88
Swedish Krona	9.7	9.98
New Zealand Dollar	54.47	55.69
Hong Kong Dollar	11.97	12.34
Kuwaiti Dinar	315.033	295.3253
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Indian diaspora in US targeted by scammers posing as diplomats

WASHINGTON: Indian diplomatic missions in the US are witnessing a sharp rise in complaints from members of the Indian diaspora who are being targeted by fraudsters posing as embassy and consulate officials. According to the report, Indian missions receive several complaints every week from people who receive fraudulent calls from scammers using spoofed US phone numbers to impersonate diplomats.

The callers allegedly demand money for expediting travel documents or falsely claim that the victim’s India-based mobile number has been linked to criminal or terrorist activities.

Officials told newspaper that the issue has persisted for the past seven to eight months, with embassy staff spending considerable time responding to complaints and assisting victims. In response, Indian missions have issued advisories and urged the diaspora to remain cautious when receiving unsolicited calls claiming to be from diplomatic officials.

Several Indian-Americans have also shared their experiences on Reddit, describing convincing scams in which callers claimed to represent the Indian consulate or embassy. In one instance, a victim was told that a SIM card issued in their name had been used for fraudulent activities

and was pressured to pay money to resolve a fabricated police investigation.

According to the report, government data shows complaints involving Indian-Americans in the US surged from just eight cases in 2024 to 613 in 2025. Experts attributed the rise to advancements in Artificial Intelligence, voice cloning and caller ID spoofing, which have made impersonation scams increasingly sophisticated.

The Indian embassy in Washington stated that it is working with US authorities, issuing public advisories and reminding the diaspora that embassy officials never seek money or sensitive personal information over the phone.

Air India ranks fourth globally in June on-time performance

MUMBAI: Air India has emerged as the fourth most punctual airline globally in June, according to Cirium’s prestigious On-Time Performance (OTP) rankings.

The Tata Group-owned carrier recorded an on-time arrival rate of 86.85 pc across 15,135 flights during the month.

Saudi Arabia’s Saudia topped the rankings, followed by Korean Air and Aeromexico, while Singapore Airlines secured the fifth position.

Air India’s performance marked a significant improvement in schedule reliability as the airline continues efforts to strengthen operational efficiency.

The airline said the ranking reflects the impact of sustained investments in operational resilience, improved network planning and enhanced execution across its domestic and international services.

The improved punctuality comes as Air India continues its broader transformation programme under Tata ownership, focusing on modernising its fleet and improving customer experience. As part of its fleet restructuring strategy, Air India has appointed UK-based aircraft marketing and asset management firm Skytech-AIC to oversee the sale of six Airbus A319 aircraft.

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GULF FAQs

How Dubai's new 'Flexi Rent' scheme works?

Can you please explain how Dubai's new Flexi Rent works?

As demand for flexible rent surges across the Emirate, the DLD's new framework gives landlords the tools and the incentive to make monthly payments the new standard.

Paying your rent in Dubai will become easier, with more flexible payment options. In a major shift for the emirate's real estate market, the Dubai Land Department (DLD) recently launched the "Flexi Rent" programme. This initiative allows residents to bypass heavy upfront costs by spreading their rent across monthly instalments and other flexible payment

structures.

The traditional model, requiring tenants to pay annual rent in one to four bulk cheques, is increasingly at odds with modern financial habits. Demand for flexible payment terms has surged across the Emirate. Rajneel Kumar, co-founder and COO of Rentify, a UAE-based proptech firm designed to replace cheque-heavy systems, notes that consumer expectations have fundamentally changed.

"Demand for monthly rentals has grown considerably," Kumar says. "Over 70pc of tenants on our platform opt for monthly payments; for many, it has become a deciding factor

in which property they choose. The traditional cheque model no longer reflects how people manage their finances."

This trend is backed by broader data. In 2025, a Visa study indicated a clear shift in consumer behaviour, with UAE residents actively ditching physical cheques in favour of direct debits and digital alternatives when settling rent. Demand for monthly rentals has grown considerably --- over 70pc of tenants on our platform opt for



monthly payments and for many, it's become a deciding factor in which property they choose. The traditional cheque model no longer reflects how people manage their finances.

Under the first phase of the framework, participating landlords and property management companies will offer tailored payment plans ranging from monthly and quarterly schedules to semi-annual options.

In some cases, schedules can be extended up to 12 months, allowing salaried professionals to align their biggest living expense directly with their monthly income.

Existing tenants under active contracts can also benefit. Residents currently tied to traditional multi-cheque agreements can approach participating landlords to see if their contracts can be reframed under the new flexible terms. Beyond spreading the cost, the programme introduces several financial incentives to ease the burden on tenants. Depending on the landlord, these may include:

*Grace periods at the start of tenancies. Waived administrative fees typically levied on delayed cheques.

*Frozen rental rates or promotional offers to encourage adoption.

Payments will be processed through credit cards, debit cards and

automated direct debits, alongside traditional cheques for those who still prefer them. To support the rollout, DLD signed co-operation agreements with 12 major real estate companies, including Wasl Properties, Deyaar Property Management, Driven Properties and Harbour Real Estate, with plans to expand the programme gradually across Dubai's wider market.

Ali Sharif Al Marzooqi, Vice President, Property and Community Management at Deyaar Development PJSC, explained that one of the biggest challenges tenants face today is not necessarily the cost of rent itself, but the requirement to make large upfront payments.

"The initiative can improve cash flow management, reduce the financial burden associated with relocating and make quality housing more accessible to a wider range of tenants.

It also offers greater flexibility for professionals, families and newcomers who may prefer to spread their rental payments throughout the year rather than commit to a limited number of large cheque payments." In response to growing demand from tenants seeking flexible payment solutions when selecting a home, the company has introduced alternatives to traditional cheque payments.

Free Dubai govt courses to help your skills

Can you please explain the salient features of Dubai govt courses?

If you want to strengthen your CV, develop new workplace skills or prepare for an AI-driven job market, Dubai offers several free training programmes for residents and professionals. From thousands of LinkedIn Learning courses to AI prompt engineering certification, here are two Dubai government initiatives worth exploring.

1. Get free access to more than 24,000 LinkedIn Learning courses: Launched by the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) in partnership with LinkedIn, the e-Learning Initiative provides eligible creative professionals with free access to over 24,000 expert-led online courses.

Now in its seventh edition, the programme aims to help Dubai's creative workforce stay competitive as industries increasingly adopt AI and digital technologies. This year's programme offers 2,000 licences for entrepreneurs and creatives.

What can you learn? Courses cover a wide range of subjects, including: Entrepreneurship, Career development, Generative AI, Design,

Photography, Animation and digital media, Writing,

Production, Performing arts, Business and administrative skills.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on using generative AI to devel-

op ideas, improve productivity and turn creative concepts into scalable projects. Who can apply? Applications are open to Dubai-based professionals working in: Animation and digital media, Art, Cinematography, Creative industries, Design,

Performing arts, Photography, Production, Writing.

To apply, complete the online registration form on Dubai Culture's website. After submitting your details and selecting your professional category, you will receive confirmation that your application is under review before approval.

2. Learn AI prompt engineering for free:

If you want to build AI skills, Dubai's One Million Prompts initiative offers free online training in prompt engineering. Launched in 2025, the programme aims to equip one million people with practical AI prompting skills over three years through interactive, hands-on lessons.

What you will learn?: The course teaches participants how to: Create effective AI prompts, Improve productivity using AI tools, Explore creative uses of artificial intelligence, Apply AI across industries, including marketing, design and data analysis. The programme consists of four one-hour online modules, making it suitable for beginners as well as professionals looking to expand their AI knowledge.

SC asks govt to place airfare regulation rules before it

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Central government to place before it a copy of the rules framed to regulate airfares in India (S Laxmi Narayanan Versus Union of India)

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing a petition seeking regulatory guidelines to control unpredictable fluctuations in airfare. The Court passed



Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta

today's order after the Central government said that rules in this regard have already been framed.

Dubai Airports ready...

(Cont. from page - 1) the various halls and terminals at Dubai's airports.

Dubai Customs also reminded passengers to check its Traveller Guide, which explains the items permitted for entry into the UAE, customs exemption conditions and other travel-related requirements. The authority also reminded travellers that they can

bring gifts into the country duty-free up to a value of Dh 3,000, provided they meet the applicable customs regulations. Dubai Customs said the latest measures are part of its efforts to enhance passenger services while maintaining high standards of security and facilitating seamless travel during the busy summer season.

They are expected to be placed before both houses of the parliament within 30 days, the government said. The bench then directed that a copy of the rules be placed before it in two weeks.

"Considering the submissions, we grant two weeks' time to place before this court the rules which have been framed, irrespective of whether they have been placed before parliament or not, in sealed cover. List on August 3," the Court ordered.

The petition before the

court was filed seeking directions to the Union government and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to frame binding rules on airfare pricing, cap surge pricing, regulate baggage and extra charges, fix cancellation and refund norms and create an independent aviation regulator with powers to protect consumers. During the earlier hearing

of the case on Jan 21, the top court had flagged what it called exploitative pricing by airlines especially during festivals and major events like the Kumbh Mela.

"Look at the exploitation you did during Kumbh," Justice Mehta had remarked during the hearing. "Not only Kumbh, but every festival," Justice Nath added. "Take the statistics for these two towns, Prayagraj and Jodhpur, the flight fares are three times the flight fares before the festivals," Justice Mehta had further observed.

Vijayawada airport panel wants Emirates flights

VIJAYAWADA: The Airport Advisory Committee (AAC) has set a strict deadline of Dasara (in Oct) or a maximum of Nov 2026 to complete and operationalise the long-pending new terminal building at the Vijayawada International Airport in Gannavaram. The high-level review meeting,

chaired by Machilipatnam MP and AAC Chairman Vallabhaneni Balashowry along with Vijayawada MP and Co-chairman Kesineni Sivanath, focused heavily on international flight expansion, upgrading domestic connectivity and improving fast-track road infrastructure to capital Amaravati.

Why NRIs in UAE are buying gold Jewellery before flying home?

DUBAI: With the summer vacation in full swing and large number of Indian expats travelling home, a familiar trend is emerging in gold souks across Dubai and Sharjah. Many residents are stocking up on jewellery before their flights home.

According to experts, buying gold in the UAE can be up to 13pc cheaper than in India. While the exact savings vary by retailer and product type, most experts agree the UAE offers a significant price advantage over India, causing many savvy shoppers to seize the opportunity to buy while they can.

Thanveer CP, Founder and Chairman of Arakkal Gold & Diamonds, has witnessed the surge firsthand. "If you are looking at gold

jewellery prices, it is about eight to 10pc cheaper when buying from the UAE," he said. "We have had a lot of people coming in to our store and buying jewellery before going back."

But these are not impulse purchases. According to Thanveer, buyers are usually strategic. "Mostly they tend to buy jewellery without any stones, or they go for very simple designs because they want to take it to India and exchange," he explained. Plain gold chains are particularly popular, as they can be easily traded in at Indian jewellery stores without the complications that come with intricate or stone-studded designs.

The price gap stems from a combination of factors, including the UAE's

zero import duty on gold and lower making charges compared with India, where customs duties and taxes significantly increase retail prices. Thanveer added that in the case of customers buying gold bars or coins, savings could go up to 13pc but these could be taxable when transporting to India.

For expatriates, this means significant savings, especially during wedding seasons or family visits when gifting gold is customary. A single purchase can save hundreds of dirhams, making the trip to the gold souk a practical addition to any travel checklist. Amina Mohamad Ali, MD of MFar Jewellers, estimates the savings at around 13pc — a figure that resonates strongly with budget-con-



scious travellers. "We have steady purchases from expats," she said. "Many retailers are running 'back to home' offers." Her own store is capitalising on the demand with promotions.

"We are running offers of either very low or 50pc discount in making charges on selected designs," she said. "We are also offering 50pc off on diamond jewellery, plus a free branded watch on purchases of Dh5,000 worth of diamond

jewellery until July 31."

The trend of buying gold in the UAE before travelling to India is not new, but it has intensified as travel resumes and gold prices remain favourable in the aftermath of the US-Israel-Iran war.

Additionally, earlier this year, India relaxed its baggage rules to allow eligible passengers who have lived abroad for more than one year to bring more jewellery duty-free.