



# OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT



PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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## Over a million pilgrims begin Haj

**MECCA:** More than a million pilgrims joined Islam's most important rite under a beating sun as the Haj kicked off with the Saudi hosts scrambling to avoid any accident.

With temperatures expected to top 40 degrees Celsius, robed pilgrims slowly circled the Kaaba -- the black cube at the heart of Mecca's Grand Mosque which is Islam's holiest site. State media reported that others had begun arriving in the sprawling tent city of Mina on Mecca's outskirts where they will

stay overnight before the Haj's high-point-prayers on Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed is believed to have delivered his final sermon. About 1.4 million pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia ahead of the Haj, one of the five pillars of Islam that must be performed at least once by all Muslims with the means.

Authorities have ratcheted up heat protection measures such as extra shade to avoid a repeat of last year, when 1,301 people died as temperatures hit 51.8C.



Now pilgrims will perform the tawaf -- walking seven times around the Kaaba, which Muslims pray towards each day. Before entering Mecca, pilgrims must first enter a state of pu-

rity, called Ihram, which requires special dress and behaviour. Men don a seamless shroud-like white garment that emphasises unity among believers, regardless of their social status or

nationality. Women, in turn, wear loose dresses, also white, exposing just their faces and hands. Pilgrims arriving on buses had begun already trickling into Mina greeted by staff offering them coffee and dates. "I am so happy, it's such an amazing feeling," said Reem al-Shogre, a 35-year-old Saudi performing the pilgrimage for the first time.

Artificial intelligence technology will help process the deluge of data, including video from a new fleet of drones.

## Unified GCC visa to be launched soon

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is planning to implement a unified tourist visa, similar to the Schengen visa, allowing travel across all six member states: Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. This single visa would streamline travel and encourage tourism and business collaboration within the region.

The GCC Grand Tours Visa,

also known as the GCC Unified Visa, is a new visa initiative that gives non-nationals the option to visit one or all six Gulf nations using one visa. Introduced by the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries in a collaborative effort to promote tourism across the region, the unified GCC visa permits entry to one or all of the GCC member countries.

The GCC Grand Tourist visa

was officially approved by the GCC in 2023 and will be introduced in efforts to increase tourism to the GCC, by making it more convenient for non-nationals living in Gulf countries to explore other countries in the region without needing to obtain separate visas. The exact launch date has not yet (Cont. on page-2)

### KUWAIT ENVOY DR SWAIKA MEETS EDITOR



Ambassador of India in Kuwait Dr Adarsh Swaika had discussions with EmadJ, Bukhamseen, editor-in-chief of Annahar Arabic daily, on progress of the bilateral relations between India and Kuwait and India's approach and recent actions against cross-border terrorism.



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## HAPPY EID-UL ADHAA



## India shines at IATA meet

The three-day AGM of the influential International Air Transport Association (IATA), representing about 350 airlines, in New Delhi tried its best to mitigate various grievances of the industry, particularly the negative impact of Donald Trump's policies that have hit travel to the US and raised cost for travel in a cascading effect. Trump's bid to impose tariffs on the US' trading partners has upended commercial flows, with legal challenges against his plan adding to uncertainties. The volume of travel also is likely to suffer further with the tense atmosphere in the US, from Trump's plans to revoke foreign students' visas to reports of travellers being detained at US airports. As speakers pointed out at the AGM, any form of uncertainty will reduce traffic, particularly it will impact business travellers, the most profitable segment for the airlines. It may be recalled that in December last, IATA had forecast a record 5.2 billion air journeys in 2025 -- up 6.7pc from an already record 2024. It predicted carriers would generate \$36.6 billion in cumulative net profit, on revenue exceeding \$1 trillion. Alas, Trump's "Liberation Day" tariff blitz and his administration's stance on issues from immigration to education could throw a spanner in the works.

A study released this month by the World Travel and Tourism Council and Oxford Economics found that the US was on track to lose some \$12.5 billion in revenue from foreign tourists this year owing to worries about travelling to the country. The group, made up of leading travel firms, said this "represents a direct blow to the US economy overall, impacting communities jobs and businesses.

IATA Director General Willie Walsh noted the existence of "some signs of fragility of consumer and business confidence with continued weakness in the US domestic market and a sharp fall in North American premium class travel". Air transport has for decades benefited from the removal of import taxes, rising living standards -- particularly in Asia -- and open borders, with the number of air trips tripling since 2000.

The terrible demand for new aircraft and the manufacturers' inability to keep the supply line rolling is putting more burden on carriers. But the saving grace is the falling oil prices owing to an anticipated slowdown in economic growth. That could help firms reduce their fuel bills -- representing between a quarter and a third of their operational costs -- by hundreds of millions of dollars. India is experiencing an explosive aviation growth, with the number of airports and passengers in the world's most populous nation doubling over the past decade under the Modi administration. The middle class, which benefited the most from liberal economic policies, is enjoying the fruits of aviation expansion.

India came out with flying colours with its domestic traffic registering a 10pc growth. IATA director general Willi Walsh described Indian aviation's growth in the last few year as a "phenomenal one". As Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly put it, Indian aviation sector offers a huge investment opportunity. India is investing in world class airports and the number of airports in India has increased to 162 frm 74. India is today world's third largest domestic aviation market.

### LIPSYNCH

"The only impossible journey is the one you never begin."  
 ----- A Chinese proverb

## Missing Indians rescued by Iran

**NEW DELHI:** The three Indian nationals who went missing in Iran last month have been successfully rescued, the Iranian embassy in India said, citing local media reports. The embassy confirmed on the social media platform X that Tehran police had freed the missing individuals. "Three missing Indian citizens freed by Tehran police. Local media in Iran say police have found and released three Indian men who had gone missing in Iran," the Iranian embassy posted.

All three individuals, identified as Jaspal Singh, Hushanpreet Singh, and Amritpal Singh, hail from Punjab and had disappeared shortly after landing in Tehran on May 1. According to the Iranian news agency Mehr, the men were on their way to Australia after being promised lucrative jobs by a local travel company. The trio was reportedly rescued following a police operation target-



The three Indians rescued by Iran

ing the hostage-takers. The Indian embassy had issued a statement following an approach by the family members of the missing men, who expressed serious concern over their relatives' sudden disappearance.

Ashok Kumar, the elder brother of Jaspal Singh, had told a TV channel that the fami-

lies had collectively paid over Rs 19 lakh to the agents. "Jaspal was first taken to Dubai on April 1 and kept there for a month. Amritpal and Hushanpreet also joined him in Dubai on April 25 after paying the full amount. They were then flown to Tehran in early May on separate flights," he said.

## Telugu medico dies in Vietnam road mishap

**HYDERABAD:** A tragic accident claimed the life of ArshidAshrith, a 21-year-old third-year MBBS student, in Can Tho City, Vietnam. Ashrith, son of cloth merchants Arshid Arjun and Pratimah from Kagaznagar town, was riding a motorcycle at high speed with a friend

when he lost control and crashed into a house wall.

The incident occurred in the early morning hours. Ashrith died at the scene, while the other who sustained serious injuries, is receiving treatment. Arrangements are underway to repatriate Ashrith's body to India.

## Unified GCC visa to be launched...

**(Cont. from page-1)** The GCC countries involved are currently finalising the logistics and regulatory framework for the visa and although the full details of the visa are not available, it is thought that the Unified GCC Tourist Visa will offer extended validity, allowing travel across multiple countries for longer periods. It is thought the visa will cover activities such as tourism and visiting family and friends.

You will need a valid passport from an approved country with at least six months of validity from the date of entry into the GCC region. You will also need to have several blank pages in your passport for exit and entry stamps.

Why Choose the GCC Grand Tours Visa? The GCC Unified Tourist Visa "GCC Grand Tours" Visa is expected to be a convenient and efficient way for tourists to visit

multiple Gulf countries using a single visa. It is expected to have multiple advantages for both tourists and the participating countries. Tourists can enjoy the freedom to travel seamlessly across several GCC countries with a single visa. This eliminates the need for multiple applications and allows travellers to visit more of the Gulf region with fewer administrative difficulties. The ap-

plication process for the Grand Tours Visa will be completely online. Having a user-friendly online application process that allows tourists to apply for a visa to one country or all six countries in a few short minutes reduces the hassle and time typically involved in obtaining separate visas for each country.

Tourists can save money by choosing to apply for the unified visa.

## Air India enters into four new interline partnerships

**KOCHI:** Air India has entered into interline partnerships with four major airlines from emerging markets, significantly enhancing connectivity to Europe, particularly the Baltic region and parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The partnerships will provide Air India guests seamless travel options to 16 more destinations

across six countries in these regions. Conversely, Air India will provide convenient access to more than 30 Indian cities, including Kochi, to the customers of its four partner airlines.

Air India signed the interline agreements with airBaltic, Bulgaria Air, Cyprus Airways, and Uzbekistan Airways, on the sidelines of the IATA AGM in New Delhi.

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US Dollar	85.42	86.53
British Pound	115.68	117.34
Euro	97.18	99.24
Japanese Yen	0.60	0.61
Swiss Franc (CHF)	103.8	106.13
Canadian Dollar	62.17	63.58
Australian Dollar	55.23	56.44
Norwegian Krone	8.35	8.59
Swedish Krona	8.81	9.07
New Zealand Dollar	51.24	52.4
Hong Kong Dollar	10.75	11.08
Kuwaiti Dinar	288.1222	267.6475
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**Air India to operate Delhi-Manila non-stop flight after 12 years**

MUMBAI: Air India is all set to operate Delhi-Manila flights from Oct, connecting India and the Philippines with non-stop flights after 12 years. The announcement comes close on the heels of the Philippines making travel to the country visa-free for Indian tourists for up to 14 days, joining other Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Malaysia. Non-stop flights between India and the Philippines were last operated in 2013 by Philippine Airlines, when the carrier suspended the service due to low demand. But a lot has changed over the past 12 years, with significant growth in outbound travel from India and various countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, vying for Indian tourist footfalls.

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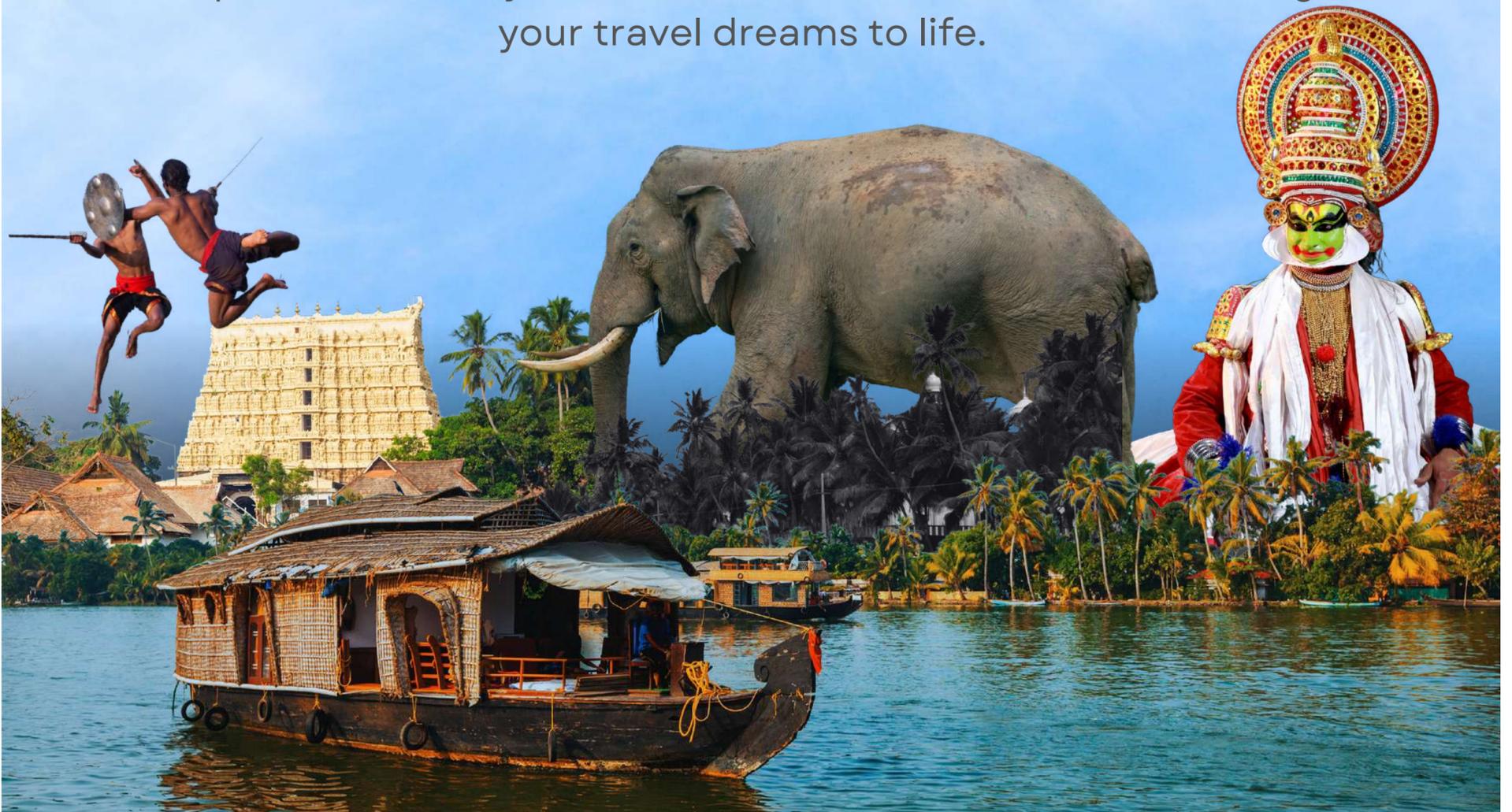
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# GULF FAQs

## Power of Attorney, most important document in UAE

I am an NRI living in UAE and please give me basic details of Power of Attorney (POA). What are the uses of POA?

Whether you're handling day-to-day matters, managing property, dealing with vehicle transactions or running a business, staying in control isn't always easy, especially when you're not physically present. That's where one powerful legal document can make all the difference: the Power of Attorney.

In the UAE, even your closest family members, including your spouse, cannot legally manage your affairs without formal authorisation. That's why having a Power of Attorney (POA) in the UAE is crucial.

**What exactly can a POA do?**

A Power of Attorney (POA) is an essential legal tool that empowers a trusted person to act on your behalf across a wide range of matters. This includes personal affairs such as family sponsor-

ships and visa processing, overseeing financial transactions, handling business operations and representing you in legal matters. When you are unavailable, a POA ensures that your affairs continue to be managed efficiently and lawfully, removing unnecessary delays and providing peace of mind by allowing your trusted representative to make timely decisions on your behalf.

Unlike common misconceptions, POAs are not limited to business owners or elderly individuals. They apply to all adults of legal age in the UAE who wish to protect their interests while managing personal, financial, or legal matters during their absence.

**Why every UAE resident should consider a POA?**

In a country like the UAE, where many residents are expatriates and legal matters are governed by a codified system, the POA is a must. It saves precious



time, avoids legal delays and allows trusted individuals to handle affairs without interruption. Power of Attorney stays valid for the time it's set for, and can be revoked at any time, giving you control and flexibility.

"A POA isn't about reacting to crises, it's about being prepared. It ensures timely decision-making and uninterrupted continuity in both personal and commercial matters," said Muhammad Tariq, managing partner at Legal Inz.

From routine transactions to major life decisions, a POA ensures that your affairs are handled smoothly, even when you

can't be there in person. Whether you're a UAE resident, business owner, investor or simply someone who values peace of mind, being legally prepared is no longer optional - it's essential.

**How to make your POA legally effective?**

A Power of Attorney in the UAE must adhere to a strict legal format and any error can make the document invalid or unusable when it matters most. That's why legal experts recommend professional drafting and notarisation. For over a decade, Legal Inz has been a trusted name for Power of Attorney services in the UAE. The firm offers complete POA

solutions tailored to individual needs and circumstances. Whether you're residing in the UAE or living abroad, the entire process, including drafting and notarisation, can be done 100pc remotely, offering convenience, legal accuracy, with affordability at the core.

Legal Inz has built a reputation for delivering POAs that are legally sound and practical for a wide range of personal and professional needs, while also being convenient for individuals who travel frequently or manage cross-border responsibilities. With the right POA, your affairs continue smoothly without unnecessary delays or legal complications. A POA isn't about giving up control, it's about keeping control, no matter where you are.

To get your Power of Attorney in the UAE, consult a POA expert today and empower someone you trust to act on your behalf when you can't.

## Can employer demand police clearance certificate from new employee?

I have been offered a job in a Dubai-based company, but I have been told that I may be required to produce a police clearance certificate. Is this legal/normal? What does the police clearance assess and what is the procedure to get one?

An employer in Dubai, or UAE, may request a Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) as part of their pre-employment screening process. Such a request is made to ensure that a prospective employee does not have any criminal record.

However, there is no specific federal legislation presently in force explicitly mandating the submission of PCC for



employment. The PCC serves to verify whether the applicant has any criminal convictions or ongoing investigations. PCC may be a requirement depending on the employer's internal HR/hiring policies and the nature of the position.

Furthermore, to obtain a PCC, you may apply through the Dubai Police

official website and app or the official website of the Ministry of Interior, UAE. You may need to provide valid identification documents such as a passport, Emirates ID, fingerprints and payment of relevant fees. Under the service of PCC, you can apply for a certificate confirming an individual's good conduct.

## Divorce and sponsorship

My children and I live in Dubai under my husband's sponsorship. If we decide to get divorced, will my husband be required to continue sponsoring our residency in the UAE? What rights do I have in this situation, especially since I am a homemaker?

As you're a foreigner living in the UAE on your husband's sponsorship, the provisions of Cabinet Resolution No. 65 of 2022 Issuing the Executive Regulations of Federal Law by Decree No. 29 of 2021 Concerning the Entry and Residence of Foreigners (the "Cabinet Resolution No. 65 of 2022") are applicable. In the UAE, if a woman gets divorced while

living in the country on her husband's sponsorship, she is entitled to apply for a one-year extension of her UAE residency visa. This extension starts from the official date of the divorce.

Furthermore, the benefit of this visa extension also extends to the children from the marriage, provided they were previously under the father's sponsorship at the time of the divorce. It's important to note that divorce in the UAE also involves matters such as child custody, alimony and child maintenance, in accordance with the prevailing personal laws of the UAE or UAE Federal Law No. 28 of 2005.

# Indian aviation will grow faster than China : IATA DG Willie Walsh

**NEW DELHI:** India's domestic aviation market will grow at a faster pace than China with fleet expansion and the development of new airports, International Air Transport Association's Director General Willie Walsh has said.

"If you look at the domestic markets from 2020 to 2024 both India and China have grown at the same pace -- CAGR of 11.2pc but going forward I think the rate of growth in India will be higher than that of Chi-



na. China will still grow very strongly but I believe number one growth economy from an aviation point of view will be India," Walsh said at

the conclusion of IATA's annual general meeting event in Delhi.

While India which is third largest domestic air traffic market (US is

number one), is a long way behind China, will see a lot of growth with the expansion of fleet and network by airlines like IndiGo and construction of new airports, Walsh said.

Walsh said that simple and clear tax regime in India will also help the country to address its growth potential. "Issues related to taxation need to be addressed for India to fully exploit its potential and translate its vision into reality," he remarked.

IATA Director General also called for a greater dialogue between airlines and airports on development of efficient and affordable airports.

"Many airports around the world and I am not just picking on India here don't fully understand the needs of airlines. What we get is development which is not appropriate for the airlines which have to operate at airports that are more expensive than what airlines believe they should be," he remarked.



## AI chief visualises strong growth in its business

**NEW DELHI:** Air India sees huge upside in passenger as well as cargo segments and is always open for partnerships, its chief Campbell Wilson said as the full service airline works to upgrade its aircraft, improve service quality and expand networks.

The loss-making Air India, being piloted by the Tata Group since its take over in Jan 2022, is undergoing the ambitious five-year transformation plan "Vihaan.AI" that commenced in 2022, with Wilson saying he is very happy with the trajectory, notwithstanding that there is more work to do.

The Air India CEO and MD said the airline "just learns to adapt and move on" when there are external factors such as supply chain and airspace issues.

"When you are trying to do a turnaround, there are so many things that require us to act to prove ourselves... the objective is very very clear and hasn't changed in the slightest, the opportunity hasn't changed in the

slightest, in fact if anything it has got clearer at the scale of the opportunity," he said.

The airline sees a huge upside on the passenger as well as cargo business sides, Wilson said, adding that since privatisation, the cargo revenues have increased more than three times. The passenger revenues have more than doubled during the same period.

"Again, huge upside, non-stop service into key points around the world, more focus on cargo, better systems, more consistent product delivery, all of these things mean we are a much more credible player in the cargo space. (There is) significant upside opportunity," he noted.

Currently, Air India has a fleet of 191 planes, including 64 wide-bodies and 127 narrow bodies.

When asked whether Air India will also be looking at a partnership with upcoming Riyadh Air, he said there is an air about India. "Everyone wants a partnership with India and so we are talking to many many people".

## SuiHub MENA, VARA to strengthen Dubai's virtual asset ecosystem

**DUBAI:** SuiHub MENA and the Dubai Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (VARA) are teaming up to help shape the future of web3 in Dubai.

The two have signed a collaboration agreement that will focus on supporting startups, developing local talent and sharing insights that can help grow the virtual asset space in the region.

This collaboration represents a shared vision to make Dubai a global hotspot for virtual asset innovation. VARA, established in 2022, oversees the regulation and supervision of virtual assets in the Emirate. SuiHub MENA, backed by the Sui Foundation, is committed to supporting builders and developers in the web3 ecosystem. Together, they will engage in activities that simplify compliance processes for startups, provide advisory support and generate insights to guide future virtual asset policies in the region.

The partnership includes several initiatives, amongst others:

- Regulatory and licensing educational support: Jointly hosted workshops and guidance for startups navigating Dubai's licensing regime, including advisory

sessions and educational materials to guide founders and participants.

- Ecosystem Development: VARA will support SuiHub MENA's flagship innovation centre based in Dubai through roundtables and strategic engagements

contributions.

In addition to joint events and resources for founders, SuiHub MENA will facilitate introductions between VARA and ecosystem projects while contributing insights for economic policy development. Both organisations will explore co-authored research and publications focused on the industry's evolution.

"At SuiHub MENA, we believe in building strategic and supportive collaborations between regulators and founders." shared Kristof Lukovich, CEO of SuiHub MENA.

"Our collaboration with VARA is a significant forward and aligns with SuiHub MENA's positive commitment to helping to shape a global benchmark for virtual asset innovation, regulatory clarity and sustainable growth here in the region."

(To learn more about SuiHub MENA's initiatives and partnership opportunities, visit [suihub.org](https://suihub.org).

Contact: [dina@suihub.org](mailto:dina@suihub.org))



From left: Dr. Kostas Chalkias, Co-founder & Chief Cryptographer at Mysten Labs and Matthew White, CEO of VARA.

with government stakeholders, as well as a joint exploration of research opportunities.

- Talent Development: Co-created programmes aimed at expanding local technical expertise aligned with the regulatory needs of the market.

- Economic Data Analysis: Sharing of anonymised data to assess the sector's growth and its impact on employment, investment and economic