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PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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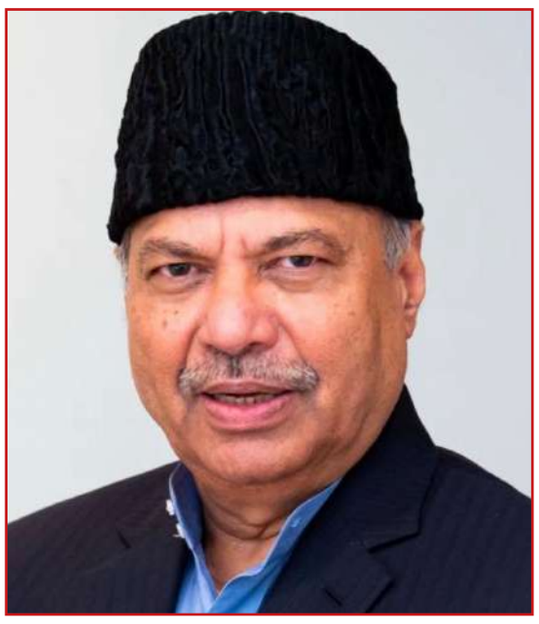
NRI industrialist Dr P Mohamed Ali appointed Chancellor of Oman's National University

MUSCAT: Prominent NRI industrialist Dr P Mohamed Ali, founder of the Galfar group, has been appointed as the new Chancellor of Oman's National University of Science and Technology, following the demise of the University's first Chancellor Dr Sheikh Salim Al Fannah Al Ammi.



Dr P Mohamed Ali

The decision was taken at a meeting of the university's directors, who noted Dr Ali's exceptional record in institution building and his extensive contributions to education and industry. Dr Ali, who has played a leading role in the growth of numerous institutions in India and abroad, has also been instrumental in expanding Oman's industrial landscape through the establishment of Galfar Engineering and Contracting, one of the region's largest infrastructure enterprises. Alongside his entrepreneurial success, he has made remarkable contributions in the fields of education and social service, establishing academic institutions and charitable ventures that have benefited communities across borders.

The National University of Science and Technology, which has earned national accreditation for quality and excellence among Omani universities, offers internationally benchmarked curricula across a wide range of disciplines, including medicine, pharmacy, engineering, technology, artificial intelligence and marine studies

Dr Ali is a visionary global entrepreneur and philanthropist who co-founded Galfar Engineering and Contracting in Oman in 1972. Originally a small construction firm, the organisation went on to become Oman's largest private sector company and largest employer. It has EPC capabilities in oil and gas, roads and bridges, civil and maritime infrastructure and utilities and service sectors.

Dr Ali was honoured with doctorate by the University of Glasgow. Recognising his achievements and contributions, Dr Ali was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2004. He was conferred with the prestigious "Oman Civil Order" by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, making him the only Indian recipient of such a prestigious award. The Institute of Directors, India, awarded the coveted "IOD Distinguished Fellowship Award – 2007" to Dr Ali.

As a well-renowned philanthropist, Dr Ali keeps betterment of the people at the core of everything he does. With the intrinsic value of "Business With A Human Face", he believes in creating infrastructure for developing human potential.

Canada's clampdown hits Indian students badly

OTTAWA: The clampdown on international students by Canada has hit Indian applicants the hardest. Indian students once made up the largest group of foreign students pursuing higher education in the country. However, approximately 74pc of Indian study permit applications in August this year were rejected by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), a sharp increase from the 32pc refusal rate reported in the same month in 2023.

Meanwhile, both governments have signalled a desire to restore normal relations amid ongoing scrutiny and new immigration controls.

In Aug this year, out of 4,515 applications filed by Indian students, only 1,196 were approved. The number of Indian student applications submitted fell

(Cont. on page - 6)

Cancel your air ticket within 48 hrs of booking, pay no charge

NEW DELHI: In a major move aimed at protecting flyers, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has proposed several measures regarding the refund of airline tickets. Key changes include an option to cancel tickets without any charges within 48 hours, a requirement for airlines to specify the refund amount in case of cancellation and the refund of charges such as the User Development Fee (UDF) if a ticket is not utilised. These measures follow numerous complaints from the public over unethical practices by airlines.

The DGCA has proposed that airlines must provide a "Look-in option" for 48 hours from the time of booking. "During this period, passengers can cancel or amend their ticket without additional charges, except for the normal prevailing fare for any revised flight," the draft stated.

This facility will not be available for flights departing in less than five days for domestic flights and 15 days for international flights when booked directly through the airline website. The option is not available beyond 48 hours from the initial booking, and passengers must pay any relevant cancellation fees for changes made afterward.

In a draft made public on its website, the DGCA stated: "While the government is committed not to interfere in the commercial practices of airlines, the volume of complaints necessitates affirmative action to safeguard the interests of the travelling public. The matter has been discussed in several meetings with airlines, with no improvement in the refund system. It is now considered that the onus rests

(Cont. on page - 2)

GST collection in Oct hits Rs 1.95-lakh-cr

NEW DELHI: The total collection of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in Oct rose by 4.6pc to Rs 1.95-lakh-crore, despite rate cuts implemented on Sept 22, according to data released by the Ministry of Finance . In the same month last year, collections stood at Rs 1.87-lakh- crore.

As per the mnistry data the Central GST (CGST) accounted for Rs 36,547 crore, State GST (SGST) Rs 45,134 crore, and Integrated GST (IGST) Rs 1,06,443 crore. Additionally, the government collected Rs 7,812 crore from cess. With the compensation cess eliminated under GST 2.0—except for sin goods—cess collections fell by over 30pc in Oct compared to Sept.

"Even after the GST 2.0 rate cuts, the 0.6pc growth in total net GST revenue reaffirms that the boost in consumption has, to some extent, balanced the revenue decline caused by the rate cuts. The current month's figures also reflect the release of pent-up consumption post-August 15, 2025, when the rate cuts were announced," said Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory Services.

The total gross GST collection rose by 3.6pc in Oct, from Rs 1.89 lakh crore in Sept. Refunds in October fell by six per cent to Rs 26,934 crore, down from Rs 28,657 crore in Sept. Despite the growth, the rate of increase nearly halved from Sept's four-

(Cont. on page - 2)

Setback to Trump

Zohran Mamdani, the 34-year-old democratic socialist of Indian-origin, defied all the odds in the Nov 4 election and marked a generational and ideological shift in America's largest city. Mamdani has caused one of the most deadly political upsets in New York's history by defeating heavyweights like former Governor Andrew Cuomo and Republican nominee Curtis Sliwa to become the city's youngest mayor in over a century and the first ever Muslim-American to hold this coveted post. Above, all Mamdani inflicted the severest setback for President Trump, whose policies have aleady turned bitter for Americens. Along with Mamdani, candidates across the party's ideological spectrum were elected in a vivid show of discontent with the president Trump and his policies. Shouting "Mamdani Mubarak!", New York's South Asians celebrate the victory of one of their own.

Editorial By EL Vaidyanathan

Mamdani entered the race last year with next to no name recognition, little money and no institutional party support. That alone makes his victory over former Governor Andrew Cuomo and Republican nominee Curtis Sliwa remarkable. But more than that, he represents the kind of politician that many in the Democratic Party's left have been seeking for years. He is young and charismatic, with his generation's natural comfort with social media. His ethnicity reflects the diversity of the party's base. He hasn't shied away from a political fight and has proudly espoused socialist causes --- such as free childcare, expanded public transportation and government intervention in free market systems.

Mamdani has also shown an ability to focus on the kind of core economic issues that have been a priority for working-class voters who have drifted from the Democratic Party of late. But he hasn't disavowed the left's cultural principles. Still, on Tuesday night in New York City, he was the winner.

By running against and defeating Cuomo, a former New York governor who is himself the son of a governor, he has vanquished the entrenched Democratic establishment viewed by many on the left as woefully out of touch with their party and their nation. Because of this, Mamdani's campaign for mayor has generated voluminous media attention, perhaps more than a municipal election, even one for America's largest city, deserves.

In another closely watched contest in Virginia, Democratic candidate Jay Jones won the race for state attorney general, defeating incumbent Republican candidate Jason Miyares. Voters in California also approved a measure to redraw political lines to favour Democrats, in response to similar efforts by conservative-led states in a nationwide battle for control of the US House of Representatives.

The redistricting measure, called Prop 50, was aimed at reconfiguring the state's voting districts to give Democrats better chances at taking five seats in the US House of Representatives from Republicans during next year's mid-term elections. Whether the measure will tip the balance of power in Washington remains unclear.

Mamdani's campaign has drawn significant national attention, including from US President Trump, who in the days before the vote threatened to withhold federal funds from New York if Mamdani won.

All said and done, Mamdani's victory is the culmination of a generational revolt. The young want a politics that speaks the truth and acts upon it.

LIPSYNCH

"A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on" ----**John F. Kennedy**

Central employees seeking VRS should serve notice

NEW DELHI: The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) has released guidelines on voluntary retirement and associated benefits for government employees who have opted for Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) under National Pension System (NPS).

Explaining about the rules for voluntary retirement, DoPPW says that Rule 13 of these regulations provides for voluntary retirement from service and entitled to voluntary retirement from government service in the case of a Central government servant who has selected the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) under the National Pension System (NPS).

Notice period duration for voluntary retirement: DoPPW says that the rule provides that at any time after a subscriber has completed 20 years' of regular service, he may, by giving a notice of not less than three months in writing to the appointing authority, retire from the service.

What if permission to exit is denied by appointing authority?

DoPPW explains that if the appointing authority does not explicitly refuse permission before the expiry of the notice period, the retirement will automatically take effect on the date specified of the said period.

What appointing authority should do when he receives notice from employee? The appointing authority, on receipt of such a request, may consider the request for reducing the period of notice of three months on merits. DoPPW says that if he is satisfied that the reducing of the period of notice will not cause any administrative inconvenience, the appointing authority may relax the requirement of notice of three months.

No withdrawal

Can an employee withdraw his voluntary retirement notice? As per the rule, a government official who has chosen to retire under this regulation and has given the requisite notice to the appointing authority is not permitted to withdraw his notice unless such authority specifically approves it. However, the request for withdrawal must be made at least 15 days before his anticipated retirement date.

Employees for whom above-mentioned VRS rules won't be applicable

DoPPW says that the above-mentioned rules won't apply for-

Employees retiring under the special voluntary retirement scheme of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) for surplus staff (as per O.M. No. 25013/6/2001-Estt. (A) dated Feb 28, 2002, and subsequent amendments), or Employees retiring for absorption in autonomous bodies or public sector undertakings (PSUs).

Pension entitlement for employees taking VRS before and after 25 years of service. The entitlement under the Unified Pension Scheme depends on the length of the qualifying service at the time of voluntary retirement:Before 25 years of service: The subscriber will be eligible for a pro-rata assured payout as specified under the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Operationalisation of Unified Pension Scheme Regulations, 2025. After 25 years of service: The subscriber will be entitled to the full assured payout under the same PFRDA registration.

Cancel your air ticket within 48 hrs of...

(Cont. from page - 1)

with the government to set minimum benchmarks for refund policies to address the growing dissatisfaction among passengers regarding refund procedures adopted by some airlines."

To prevent airlines from holding back ticket fares as credit for future travel, the DGCA clarified: "The option of holding the refund amount in a credit shell shall be at the passenger's discretion and not the default practice of the airline."

For credit card payments, refunds must be made within seven days to the cardholder's account. For cash transactions, refunds must be issued immediately at the airline office where the ticket was purchased.

GST collection in Oct hit...

(Cont. from page - 1)

month high of 9.1pc.The festive season and rate rationalisation significantly boosted consumer demand, particularly in sectors such as automobiles, FMCG and electronics, including rural and semi-urban areas. While most states saw a year-on-year decline in GST collections due to the rate cuts, states and union territories like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands recorded double-digit growth in collections.

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British Pound	114.98	116.65
Euro	101	103.15
Japanese Yen	57.22	58.14
Swiss Franc (CHF)	108.34	110.77
Canadian Dollar	62.15	63.57
Australian Dollar	57.14	58.43
Norwegian Krone	8.53	8.78
Swedish Krona	9.12	9.38
New Zealand Dollar	49.6	50.7
Hong Kong Dollar	11.18	11.53
Kuwaiti Dinar	294.7109	283.4021
Singapore Dollar	67.14	68.68
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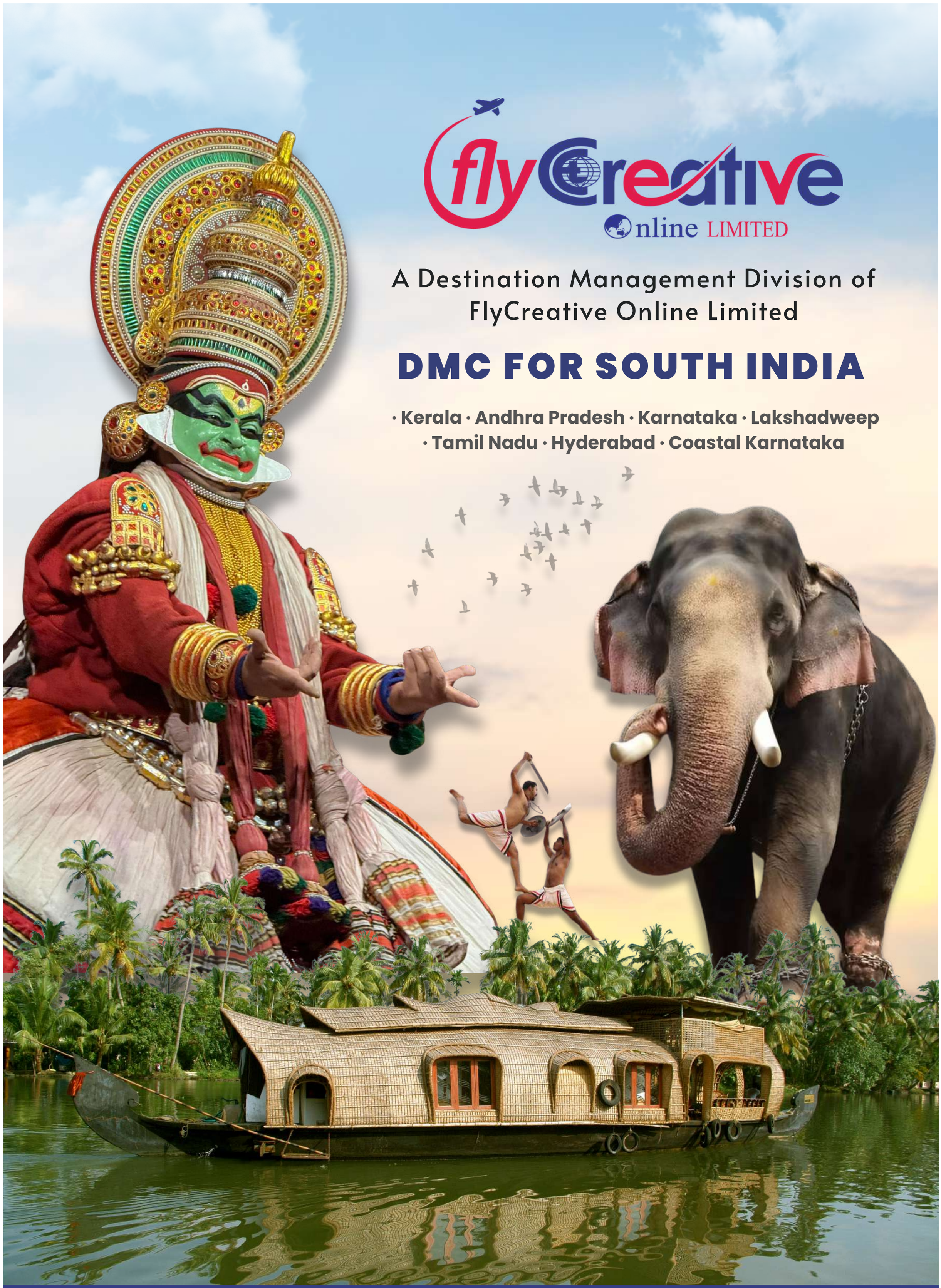
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GULF FAQs

Dubai judge talks on key tenant rights on rent, eviction and maintenance

Navigating rent disputes in Dubai just got easier. The Rental Dispute Centre (RDC) in Dubai is empowering tenants with clear legal protections, online complaint filing, and remote hearings, ensuring that whether it's a rent increase, maintenance issue or eviction threat, tenants can resolve disputes quickly and fairly.

"Tenants in Dubai have a range of protections under the law, including limits on rent increases, maintenance obligations and safeguards against eviction, said Dr Omar Bin Suwaidan Al Suwaidi, Senior First Instance Judge at the Rental Dispute Centre (RDC).

In an exclusive interview with a TV channel, Dr Al Suwaidi spoke about tenants' rights, highlighted common rental disputes and explained how the RDC operates. The aim is to inform residents especially newcomers about the legal protections and digital tools available to them when dealing with landlords.

Since the beginning of the year until the current month, the centre has completed 1,335 settlement agreements worth AED 231 million, highlighting the growing importance of awareness among residents, especially newcomers. "Tenants are generally more compliant than landlords. The Dubai law recognises the inherent power imbalance between property owners and tenants and sets out clear rules on rent, maintenance, and eviction," noted Dr Al Suwaidi.

Landlords are required to notify tenants 90 days before a contract ends if they intend to raise rent. If the tenant disagrees, they can file a complaint with the RDC, where the case is reviewed against the Dubai rental index. "Even if the landlord wants to increase rent, the maximum allowable rise is 20pc . The law ensures tenants are not subjected to arbitrary hikes," Dr Al Suwaidi explained.

The RDC provides a streamlined complaint system, allowing tenants to submit disputes online without visiting the centre. "All services are digital. Landlords and tenants can attend online hearings, submit documents and track the status of their cases from anywhere in the world," Dr Al Suwaidi said. This is particularly beneficial for non-resident landlords . He said that cases typically take one to two weeks to resolve, making the system fast and efficient. To file a complaint, tenants must keep a copy of the lease contract, including terms and conditions, and payment receipts.

Landlords are legally responsible for ensuring that properties meet municipal standards and are fully maintained during tenancy. "Some landlords outsource maintenance to third-party companies, but if the tenant reports an issue and it remains unresolved, the RDC can issue orders requiring the landlord to act," Dr Al Suwaidi said.

Tenants should be cautious about clauses in contracts that assign maintenance responsibilities to them. "Legally, maintenance is the landlord's responsibility. Tenants should not sign contracts that contradict their rights," he warned.

Man fined Dh20,000 for posting woman's photos online without consent

In a world where sharing online has become more of a daily habit, the UAE continues to treat privacy as a sacred value protected by some of the region's toughest laws. Breaching a woman's online privacy earlier this month has led a court in Abu Dhabi, to order a man to pay her Dh20,000 in compensation. The court has found the defendant guilty of publishing photos and videos of the plaintiff on social media without her consent.

The ruling by the Abu Dhabi Family, Civil and Administrative Claims Court was issued on Oct 16, 2025, after reviewing the criminal and civil aspects of the case. According to court documents, the woman filed the lawsuit after the defendant posted images and video clips of her on a social media platform, causing her emotional distress and damaging her reputation.

A criminal complaint was previously filed against the man, who was convicted by the Dhabi Criminal Court of breaching the woman's online privacy. The conviction was upheld by the Court of Appeal in March and became final after no further appeal was filed. The civil court said that the violation of privacy amounted to a wrongful act that caused both moral and psychological harm to the woman. However, it said the compensation must be proportionate to the extent of the damage suffered.

In its reasoning, the court said that while the plaintiff had sought Dh50,000 in damages for harm to her honour and reputation, the evidence did not show significant financial loss or long-term social repercussions. Therefore, it found that Dh20,000 was sufficient to compensate for the emotional pain, distress and reputational damage resulting from the violation. In its decision, the court relied Law, which states as follows: "Any harm done to another obliges the person who caused it — even if not legally competent — to provide compensation for the damage." This means that any person who causes harm to another, whether intentionally or unintentionally, is obligated to compensate the other party.

UAE's strict stance on protecting personal privacy and highlights that publishing photos or videos of others without consent can lead to both criminal punishment and financial liability. In the UAE, sharing personal data, images, voice notes, private messages or screenshots without consent may result in criminal charges. Even if the other party isn't directly named, if their identity can be inferred from context or known associations, a violation may have occurred.

Air India introduces flexible contract model for pilots

NEW DELHI: Air India rolls out a "Flexi Contract for Pilots," a new work model that lets flight crew choose shorter duty patterns while keeping operations running smoothly. The airline says the plan aims to match pilots' preferences with roster needs and focuses on work-life balance without hurting efficiency.

Under the policy, Line Pilots and Line Training Captains on A320, B777 and A350 fleets are eligible. Junior First Officers, Type Rating Instructors and Direct Entry pilots are not. The contract offers two fixed patterns: for wide-body aircraft, 15 days on and 15 days off; for narrow-body aircraft, 20 days on and 10 days off. Annual leave aligns with these rosters--eight privilege and four sick leaves for wide-body pilots, and 12 privilege plus six sick leaves for narrow-body colleagues. The contract tenure will be 12 months, which can be extended at the company's discretion. After the contract ends, pilots return to their original terms.

Seniority

Air India states that selection is made through an Expression of Interest process, with seniority and operational needs guiding the final list. An exit needs three months' notice. If a pilot is selected for a fleet or command upgrade, the pilot returns to the original contract from the start of training; if an upgrade is refused, the existing career policy on freezes applies. The company may also revert a pilot to the old contract if required, and this does not change pay terms that applied before switching to flexi terms.

Pay follows a calculator shared with crew, with minimum monthly availability set at 12 days for wide-body and 15 days for narrow-body to receive 40 hours of pay under the new structure. Flying above 40 hours is paid at the same rate as on the original contract. Trainer, wide-body, deadhead and layover allowances stay protected. Car lease and NPS EMIs are adjusted against flexi salary components. On off-days, pilots remain exclusively engaged with the airline and are not permitted to take on outside work.

Leave bidding under the flexi track runs on an ad-hoc system, and previous bids are forfeited. Total bid points during the tenure are 20 for wide-body and 30 for narrow-body. Loss of Licence coverage continues, including on off-days. Medical insurance remains unchanged. Seniority is protected, and base and merit/de-merit processes remain as per the current policy. When pilots revert to the old contract, they join the next regular leave-bidding cycle. The process runs in two cycles, one beginning in January 2025 and the other in March 2025. Slots are allocated by seniority. According to the plan, commanders have 50 A320 slots at Bengaluru, Delhi and Hyderabad, 30 B777 slots at Mumbai and Bengaluru, and 20 A350 slots at Delhi.

First officers have 20 A320 slots at Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad, 70 B777 slots at Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, and A350 slots to be announced for Delhi.

Riyadh Season 2025 surpasses more than two million visitors

RIYADH: Riyadh Season 2025 has welcomed more than two million visitors since its launch on Oct. 10, the chairman of the General Entertainment Authority, TurkiAlalshikh, announced.

The milestone underscores the festival's growing global prominence as one of the world's leading entertainment events, he added.

Since opening, the season has staged a number of major international attractions, including the Kings Cup MENA, which gathered top content creators and influencers from across the Middle East and North Africa and Power Slap 17, featuring global stars of the sport.

Visitors have also flocked to new and returning zones such as Al-Suwaidi Park and The Groves, both offering high-end experiences.

The season has further expanded its cultural and commercial appeal with international exhibitions including Ana Arabia and Jewellery Salon.

Gold gains further

MUMBAI: Gold rose significantly from its one-week low on Thursday amid dollar decline, increased safe-haven buying and fresh demand ahead of the peak wedding season. The rise came even as headwinds from stronger-than-expected US jobs data dampened expectations for another Federal Reserve rate cut this year. The price of 10 gms of 24-carat gold was Rs 1,20,100 during intra-day trading, according to data published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).

Goa prepares for tourist season

PANAJI: In a move to tighten safety protocols ahead of the upcoming tourist season, SDPO Porvorim Vishwesh Karpe and PI Calangute Paresh Naik convened a meeting with hotel and guesthouse owners.

Around 150 stakeholders from the hospitality sector attended the session, where police officials emphasised the need for strict adherence to safety regulations — including installation of CCTV cameras, proper guest check-in procedures, valid business licences and staff verification through the Goa Police mobile app.

Officers also directed establishments to enforce sound limit norms, curb drug and tobacco use on their premises and avoid engaging touts to solicit customers. Urging full co-operation from all accommodation providers, police officials said the collective effort was vital to maintaining Goa's reputation as a safe and tourist-friendly destination during the peak season.

Canada's clampdown hits Indian students badly

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from 20,900 in Aug 2023 to 4,515 this year. The surge in rejections is closely tied to Canada's broader immigration policy overhaul, which targets fraud and seeks to control international student numbers.

In 2023, authorities uncovered 1,550 fraudulent study permit applications, mostly from India, and more than 14,000 potentially fake documents were flagged due to enhanced verification. Ottawa has proposed new powers to cancel groups of temporary visas over fraud concerns (Bill C-12). India and Bangladesh were described as "country-specific challenges" in internal documents. This is impacting Canadian universities: for example, the University of Waterloo has seen its enrollment of Indian students drop by two-thirds over about three years. Similar declines have been reported at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

Universities say visa caps and increased scrutiny have affected campus diversity.

This year, the international student cap was lowered to 437,000 permits, a 10pc reduction from last year's 485,000 and a 35pc cut from prior peak levels.

Visa allocations to Indian applicants were projected to fall by 31pc. In the first-half of this year alone, nearly 90,000 fewer permits were issued compared with the last year, with Indian applications and approvals dropping sharply.

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