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Now, 30-day free e-visa for Russian tourists

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced that India would soon offer a 30-day free e-visa to Russian tourists.

He made the announcement at a joint press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the conclusion of the 23rd India-Russia annual summit. "I am pleased to announce that we will soon be starting a free 30-day e-tourist visa and a 30-day group tourist visa. Manpower mobility will create new opportunities for the people of both countries. We will be working together on vocational education, skilling, and training," PM Modi said.

He said India aims to strengthen people-to-people ties and boost tourism between India and Russia. A joint statement issued

after the talks said the two sides agreed that cultural interaction and people to people exchanges are an important component of the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. They appreciated the participation in major international cultural fora, book fairs, festivals and art competitions organised in both countries and welcomed the holding on a parity basis, of Cultural Exchange Festivals in their countries, aimed at the fullest demonstration of Indian and Russian culture.

The two sides appreciated the steady increase in tourist exchanges between Russia and India and welcomed the simplification of visa formalities, including the introduction of e-Visa by both countries. They agreed to continue the

work on further simplification of the visa regime in future. The two sides noted with appreciation the enhanced exchanges and contacts between the experts, think-tanks and institutes of India and Russia. Over the years, this track of dialogue has promoted increased mutual understanding between Indian and Russian strategic and policy-making circles and businesses so as to further strengthen the strategic partnership.

RS 160 CR REFUNDS PROCESSED Flight delays persist for seventh day, advisory warns of continued disorder

NEW DELHI: Flight operations by IndiGo remained disrupted on Monday as well, with delays and cancellations continuing across several airports as the country's largest airline struggled to restore normal schedules after a week-long aviation crisis. Delhi airport issued an advisory cautioning passengers that IndiGo services may continue to face operational issues through the day, urging flyers to check

flight status before reaching the terminal.

The ongoing disruption, now in its seventh day, has affected thousands of passengers nationwide and forced regulatory and ministerial intervention, including fare caps and directives on refunds.

IndiGo cancelled more than 650 flights on Sunday, a reduction from over 1,000 cancellations reported two days earlier.

(Cont. on page - 2)

Centre caps airline fares; maximum price Rs 18,000 per economy ticket

NEW DELHI: The ministry of civil aviation has stepped in to address the greed of some airlines exploiting the IndiGo mess as fares went beyond eight times on some sectors. It imposed strict caps on do-

mestic fares with the maximum of Rs 18,000 for an economy class ticket.

Later the Director General of Civil Aviation slapped a show-cause notice on IndiGo's CEO to respond within 24 hours why

action should not be taken against him for the massive chaos.

The ministry also directed IndiGo to clear all pending passenger refunds for all cancelled or disrupted flights within a day. The fare cap of Rs 7,500-18,000 prescribed by the ministry was still on the higher side, with fliers being made to pay for the needless chaos. These caps will remain in place "until fares stabilise or till further review", the ministry said.

The caps exclude levies like User Development Fee, Passenger Development Fee and other taxes. They do not cover Business class tickets and flights operated under the regional connectivity scheme (UDAN), the order stated.

As for refunding, the ministry cautioned that any delay or non-compliance by Indigo would invite immediate regulatory action. The system of automatic refunds will remain active until operations stabilise completely.

Indigo quickly responded-

(Cont. on page - 2)

Over 8,700 delegates registered for Pravasi Rajasthani Divas

JAIPUR: Preparations for the ensuing Pravasi Rajasthani Divas, scheduled for Dec 10, are in their final stages and Royal Rajasthan is gearing up to welcome distinguished guests.

There is tremendous enthusiasm among Non-Resident Rajasthanis and industrialists from India and abroad for attending the event. So far, more than 8,700 people have registered for the programme.

Chief Secretary V Srinivas and Additional Chief Secretary (ACS-Industry) Shikhar Agarwal reviewed the preparations at the Jaipur Entertainment and Convention Center (JECC), Sitapura. During their visit, they inspected the main



**PRAVASI
RAJASTHANI
DIVAS**
10 DEC 2025 • JAIPUR

ceremony area, halls designated for sectoral sessions and the "Progress Path" being developed to showcase the achievements of the state government. The Chief Secretary directed officials to complete all remaining work within the next 48 hours.

The Chief Secretary said the preparations for this historic event were being carried out in accordance with the chief minister's

vision. The chief minister is continuously reviewing progress and personally interacting with Non-Resident Rajasthanis to invite them. ACS (Industries) Agarwal stated that the primary objective of the event is to reconnect Non-Resident Rajasthanis with their roots and ensure their participation in the state's development. He said a new policy has also been formulated to ad-

dress challenges faced in this process. Commissioner, Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP), Suresh Kumar Ola, informed that, as per chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma's directions, the venue has been designed to reflect Rajasthan's culture and heritage, so that Non-Resident Rajasthanis feel a sense of belonging and take back fond memories.

Given the possibility that guests may wish to explore Jaipur's tourist attractions, extensive arrangements have been made. As many as 50 officers of the Rajasthan Administrative Service (RAS) have been appointed as nodal protocol officers to receive and assist delegates.

Hyundai's TN shipyard project to provide 55,000 jobs

MADURAI: In a major boost to India's shipbuilding sector and to Tamil Nadu as an investment destination, South Korea's HD Hyundai, one of the world's largest ship manufacturers, plans to build a shipyard in the coastal district of Thoothukudi. While there is no official confirmation on the investment, sources said it could be over \$2 billion. It will generate employment for 55,000 people.

The initiative was initially referred within HD Hyundai as "SMITH Proj-

ect" — Shipbuilding Make in India Together with Hyundai — for co-operation with India.

"But today, standing here in Tamil Nadu, I be-



HD HYUNDAI

lieve it is time to say: Shipbuilding "Make in Tamil Nadu" with Hyundai," said Hannae Choi, Vice President and Head of the Corporate Planning Division at HD Korea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering (HD KSOE), a key part of

the HD Hyundai group. He was speaking at the Tamil Nadu Investment Conclave - 2025 in Madurai on Sunday.

A team of HD KSOE offi-

cials led by Choi signed an MoU with Guidance Tamil Nadu MD Darez Ahmed, in the presence of Chief Minister MK Stalin.

With this MoU, Hyundai will join two Indian majors — Cochin Shipyard and Mazagaon Dock

Shipbuilders — that have committed to establish two greenfield commercial shipyards in Thoothukudi, with a combined investment of 30,000 crore and are expected to generate employment for 55,000 people.

Speaking at the summit, Choi said this year Hyundai reached a historic milestone by delivering a cumulative total of 5,000 vessels since the compa-

ny's founding — a record rarely matched in global shipbuilding. "We also operate shipyards in Vietnam, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia. And now, we are here in India — a nation full of energy and talent, with limitless potential, a nation rising with confidence and purpose and a nation that has chosen Hyundai as a partner. That is why we are here in India," he said.

Canada Forum calls for dual citizenship for overseas Indians

NEW DELHI: IndUS Canada Forum, representing 79 organisations of the Indian diaspora across the US and Canada, has renewed its appeal to the government of India to introduce dual citizenship or significantly enhance the rights under the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) scheme. Vikram Bajwa, who leads the forum, emphasised that dual citizenship is not merely an administrative reform, but a transformative step capable of elevating India's global stature.

Addressing a press conference, Bajwa referred the latest data released by the Ministry of External Affairs, and said that over 80 lakh overseas Indians re-

side in the US and Canada and formed one of India's strongest strategic assets. Yet, without the rights, security and long-term stability that dual citizenship provides, India is unable to fully benefit from their financial strength, professional capabilities and global influence.

Bajwa highlighted that

countries such as Israel, Canada, UK, Australia and even Pakistan have long leveraged dual citizenship to expand their diplomatic reach and economic momentum. "If these nations can empower their diaspora for national growth, why should India restrict itself to only a lifelong visa under OCI?" he asked.

Govt asks IndiGo to submit staggered pilot hiring plan

NEW DELHI: The central government has directed IndiGo to stabilise operations and prepare a staggered recruitment plan as flight disruptions continue under India's revised Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL).

The central government

has directed IndiGo to stabilise operations and prepare a staggered recruitment plan as flight disruptions continue under India's revised FDTL. The airline's operational review meet indicated a need for more cockpit crew. After days of wide-

spread flight cancellations, the Centre swung into action as it asked IndiGo to bring about stability in its network and draw up a staggered pilot recruitment plan.

Consequently, IndiGo's senior management met officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Minis-

try of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to apprise them of the situation and the mitigation efforts under way. The minister, statement said, took a meeting of senior officers of Airport Authority of India and instructed AAI to inform all airport directors that they should constantly monitor the situation

(Cont. on page - 6)

Flight delays persist for seventh day...

(Cont. from page - 1) er, but services have yet to fully stabilise.

Officials said the airline has processed ticket refunds amounting to Rs 610 crore for affected passengers. In addition, around 3,000 pieces of baggage have been delivered to stranded travellers across the country as of Saturday, Dec 6.

The civil aviation ministry earlier issued a firm directive to ensure quick refunds, after complaints from passengers unable to travel or retrieve their luggage. The Directorate

General of Civil Aviation on Sunday granted an extension to IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers and Manager Isidro Porqueras to respond to separate show-cause notices issued over the disruptions. Both have been given time until 6 pm on Monday to submit their replies.

Crew shortage

According to the airline, the crisis was triggered primarily by a shortage of cockpit crew after the full enforcement of Flight Duty Time Limitations norms governing pilot rest. The sudden implementation

led to large-scale cancellations and congestion at major airports, prompting the government to step in and temporarily stay the rule.

The airline has indicated that it expects operations to return to normal by Dec 10 as it works through the backlog and examines the root causes, which it says involve multiple factors. Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu has stated that responsibility for the disruption lies with the airline, noting that the direction on pilot duty limits had been issued a year ago.

Centre caps airline fares...

(Cont. from page - 1) ed with a "No questions asked. All refunds for your cancellations will be processed automatically to your original mode of payment." The airline also announced full waiver on all cancellations/reschedule requests of bookings made between Dec 5 and Dec 15.

In another directive, the ministry directed IndiGo to ensure that all baggage that was separated from passengers due to cancellations or delays be traced

and delivered to each passenger's residential or chosen address within 48 hours. IndiGo for the first time obliquely quantified the day's cancellations around 800. "By the end of day, we would have operated over 1,500 flights. With regards to destinations, over 95pc of network connectivity has already been re-established as we are able to operate to 135 out of the existing 138 destinations in operations. There is a recovery," IndiGo said.

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Canadian Dollar	64.48	65.93
Australian Dollar	59.3	60.59
Norwegian Krone	8.76	9.02
Swedish Krona	9.43	9.7
New Zealand Dollar	51.53	52.69
Hong Kong Dollar	11.36	11.71
Kuwaiti Dinar	299.5835	282.6156
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Lulu slices 2000kg cake for UAE National Day celebrations



A 2,000 kg cake stole the spotlight at LuLu Hypermarket in Al Ain as the UAE celebrated its 54th Eid Al Etihad (National Day)

AL AIN: A show-stopping 2,000kg cake stole the spotlight at LuLu Hypermarket in Al Ain as the UAE celebrated its 54th Eid Al Etihad.

The grand event at the Al Kuwaitat branch drew officials from Al Ain Municipality and Al Ain Police, along with families and residents eager to join the festivities.

The colossal cake, a three-layered vanilla fresh cream masterpiece crowned with cherries and fresh fruits, was crafted over three days under the expert supervision of LuLu's regional chef Riyas Hamza and his dedicated team of 13 skilled chefs.

Every detail was carefully perfected, turning the cake into a true culinary spec-

tacle. As the cake-cutting ceremony commenced, the air buzzed with excitement and cheers. Guests were treated not just to a feast for the eyes but also a taste of community spirit, as slices were generously shared with attendees. Smiles, selfies, and festive cheer filled the hypermarket, making it a memorable celebration for all.

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GULF FAQs

Can hospitals refuse emergency treatment if patient lacks insurance?

My baby has a basic health insurance plan, but I often worry about emergencies. There is a hospital near our home that is not covered under his policy. In a medical emergency, can the hospital refuse to treat him because his insurance?

In a medical emergency, the insurance company must cover the cost of treatment even if the hospital is outside the insurer's approved network. The insurer cannot deny payment simply because

the hospital is "out of network."

"Their obligation continues until the patient is stabilised and no longer in danger. This is in accordance with Article 13 (2) of the Law No. (11) of 2013 Concerning Health Insurance in the Emirate of Dubai (the "Dubai Health Insurance Law". "An Insurance company must:

*pay the cost of the health benefits provided by a health service provider that is not part of the health service provider network in an emergency case until

the beneficiary's life is no longer threatened." Furthermore, medical service providers are obligated to immediately provide medical services to any patient, regardless of whether the patient's insurance is accepted. Medical services providers cannot refuse emergency treatment due to insurance network issues. This is in accordance with Article 15 (7) of the Dubai Health Insurance Law.

A health service provider must:

* Without prejudice to



his right to have recourse against the coverage provider for payment of the cost of the health services, provide medical services to beneficiaries in emergency cases until the beneficiary's life is no longer threatened, even if he is not part of the health service pro-

vider network."

Based on the aforementioned provision of the law, all medical service providers in Dubai are required to provide emergency treatment whenever a patient's life or health is under threat or in the event of a medical emergency.

Delayed car insurance compensation, what to do?

Four months ago, my car was involved in an accident and was deemed a "total loss" by the insurance company. Two months ago, they offered me a compensation of Dh20,000, but I have not yet received the payment. Given this delay, can I claim additional compensation?

In response to your query, the provisions of insurance authority decision and the unified motor vehicle insurance policy against loss and damage issued by Central Bank of UAE are applicable. In the UAE, in the event of an accident, the damaged vehicle must be replaced if it is deemed a total loss, unless a request is made by the insured to receive the equivalent amount in cash. In this case, the insured's request should be taken into consideration by the company. This is in accordance with the Chapter-2, Article 2 (c) of the Unified Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy Against Loss and Damage issued pursuant to the Regulation of Unified Motor Vehicle Insur-

ance Policies according to Insurance Authority Board of Directors' Decision No. (25) of 2016:

Obligations of the Insurance Company:

* Upon the occurrence of an accident, the Company shall:

* Replace the damaged motor vehicle in case of a total loss, unless the Insured requests the compa-

ny to pay them the amount in cash. In this case, the company shall respond to the Insured's request." Furthermore, in case of the total loss of the motor vehicle, an insurance company should pay the compensation within 15 days from the date of completion of the claim documents. If an insurance company delays settling the claim for more than



15 days from receiving the required claim documents, without providing satisfactory reasons to both the injured party and the Authority, the insurance company may compensate the beneficiary for any costs incurred due to such delay. This is in accordance with the Article-7 of the Insurance Authority Board of Directors' Decision No. 25

of 2016 Pertinent to Regulation of the Unified Motor Vehicle Insurance Policies.

In case of total loss of the motor vehicle, the company shall:

1) Promptly pay the amount of compensation, as the case may be, according to the relevant policy within a period not exceeding fifteen days from the date of completion of the claim documents.

2) If the company delays settlement of the claim for more than 15 days from the date of receipt of the completed claim documents without giving convincing justifications to the injured party and the Authority, the company shall compensate the beneficiary of the coverage stated in the insurance policy for any costs suffered by them as a result of deprivation from the damaged motor vehicle.

3) Pay compensation for the value of the motor vehicle according to the agreement between the company and the insured in the insurance policy against loss and damage.

4) Compensation will be made on the basis of calculation of the market value of the motor vehicle for the damage covered by the motor vehicle insurance policy against third party liability, by an expert or by setting the average value of three proposals from licensed motor vehicle showrooms in the state."

Based on the relevant provisions of law, an in-

surance company must settle compensation for a total loss within 15 days of receiving all required claim documents. However, since your compensation payment has been delayed for more than two months without a reasonable explanation, you may be entitled to additional compensation for any costs incurred due to this delay. To address this issue, you can begin by contacting your insurance company to request an explanation for the delay.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may approach the Insurance Authority of the UAE to seek an amicable resolution. However, if there is no amicable settlement, you have the option to take legal action by filing a case through the relevant court in the UAE that has jurisdiction to resolve the matter responsible for covering the cost in accordance with the policy. If emergency care is denied in such circumstances, you have the right to report the incident to the Dubai Health Authority.

We need five more large airlines, says Minister Naidu

NEW DELHI: Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Monday said the ministry had continuously been working to encourage competition in the sector and encouraged more airlines to come to the industry with the government's help.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Naidu said: "We have envisioned the demand to be growing at such a rate that we want to have more airlines in the picture... The demand that India is creating today, we need to have five big airlines, and that has been the effort from the ministry to encourage more airlines to join the industry."

Highlighting that the ministry has continuously been working to encourage competition, Naidu



said:

"There are the smaller airlines also, which we have encouraged in the last five, six years. We want more players to be in this industry. This is the time to start an airline in India."

Naidu's remark comes amid the ongoing crisis in domestic-carrier IndiGo, which is facing flight disruptions due to a variety of reasons. The minister said the disruptions happened a

month after the Flight Duty Time limitations (FDTL) rules came into effect.

"The airline was responsible for handling crew and rostering. Our role is to check whether FDTL rules are being followed, and there has been no compromise on that front. For an entire month, we closely monitored this. On Dec 1, we even held a meeting with IndiGo on FDTL, clarified their doubts, and they

did not raise any such concerns. Everything seemed normal until suddenly, on the third this situation emerged," Naidu said.

IndiGo issue serious

He said the ministry is not taking this incident lightly, and an inquiry is underway. "There was a lot of difficulty that was faced by the passengers, and we are not taking this situation lightly. Any mis compliance or non-adherence by any airline, operator, or individual in civil aviation will face very strong action," he said.

The operations at IndiGo, India's largest airline, have been disrupted for the last few days, with the airline cancelling over 500 flights on Dec 5. The DGCA

has asked the airline to respond to its show cause notice by 6 pm today and added that no more extensions will be provided.

The disruptions came as the FDTL rules expanded rest hours, limited night duties, and mandated 48 hours of weekly rest. However, amid growing issues, DGCA allowed relaxations to the airlines on Friday.

Noting that safety has been the Centre's topmost priority, Naidu said: "We care for the crew, we care for the pilots, and we care for the safety of the entire system. We care for the passengers. So from the ministry, we have made it very, very clear to all the airlines that they have to follow the rules."

Entrepreneur says 'No' to German passport

BERLIN: An entrepreneur and researcher has explained why he refuses to give up his Indian passport despite not having stayed in the country for the last nine years.

Mayukh Panja has spent nearly a decade in Germany – first as a doctoral researcher, then as an employee and now as the founder of AI firm Populations.

An Indian who has spent a decade in Germany opens up about not wanting German citizenship.

In a post shared on the social media platform X, Panja revealed that he is eligible to apply for a German passport. However, he prefers to hang on to his Indian citizenship. "I don't feel German", Panja's reasons for refusing to give up his Indian passport are multi-fold. At its core, however, it boils down to the fact that he does not feel German.

"I have been here nine + years and I became eligible for the German passport a year back. I could have applied for citizenship

a year ago, but I did not," Panja said. "I have thought about this a lot and I am increasingly coming to the conclusion that I can't do this. Because I don't feel German."

Eight-fold increase in electronics exports

(Cont. from page - 2) scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing in 2020, mobile phone output has increased from Rs 2.2- lakh-crore to Rs 5.5-lakh-crore.

Mobile phone exports saw a meteoric rise from Rs 22,000 crore to over Rs 2.2-lakh-crore in the same period. The electronics sector now employs nearly 25 lakh people, according to industry estimates. Under the Semicon India Programme, launched in 2022, 10 semiconductor units have already been approved with cumulative investments to-

talling Rs 1.6-lakh-crore. The scheme alone has attracted investments worth Rs 14,065 crore. A parallel PLI scheme for IT hardware has drawn Rs 846 crore so far. complementing these initiatives, reforms in taxation, customs duties and FDI policies have aimed to further streamline and incentivise domestic manufacturing. Today, nearly all major global semiconductor design companies operate design centres in India, with cutting-edge chips, including advanced two billion designs, created by Indian engineers.

Indian student in US dies in fire

NEW YORK: A 24-year-old Indian student and cyber security professional from Telangana, Sahaja Reddy Udumala, has died in the US after suffering severe burn injuries in a house fire in Albany, New York. Her passing has prompted grief from Indian authorities, family members, and the Telugu

community in the US, who are now working to repatriate her remains.

According to the Indian Consulate in New York, Udumala was pursuing a Master's degree in Albany. In a post on X on Friday (local time), the mission said it is "deeply saddened by the untimely demise" of Udumala, who lost her life in the fire accident. "Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences to her family during this difficult time," the Consulate added, noting that it is in touch with the family and providing all possible assistance.

The Albany Police Department said in a statement that emergency personnel responded to the house fire on the morning of Dec 4. When they arrived, the residence was "fully engulfed in flames" and several individuals were still inside. Officers and firefighters rescued four adult victims who were transported to a hospital with serious injuries, and two were later moved to a burn centre.

Govt asks IndiGo to submit staggered...

(Cont. from page - 2) and provide all support to stranded passengers. Besides, Minister Naidu directed DGCA to closely monitor the airfares during the flight cancellations. The development came amid significant operational disruptions at IndiGo, which has cancelled several hun-

dred flights over the past few days. Industry insiders cited a combination of factors behind the disruptions, with FDTL-led rostering constraints among the primary issues. In technical parlance which define prescribed duty hours, rest periods and flight-time restrictions for cockpit crew.