



OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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Lulu to invest Rs 5,000cr in Kerala, to create 15,000 jobs

KOCHI: Lulu Group International (LGI) will invest Rs 5,000 crore over the next four to five years in various projects in Kerala which are expected to generate nearly 15,000 job opportunities.



“The investment will mainly be in food processing, the Global City project and IT parks. The exact breakup is being worked out,” MA Ashraf Ali, executive director of LGI, announced on the sidelines of the Invest Kerala Global Summit (IKGS) here.

Discussions in this regard have been held with the group will invest in IT and fintech infrastructure in the Global City project, proposed by the state government in Kochi. “The food-processing zone will have extensive cold-storage facilities. Vegetables and fruits will be collected from across the state and even parts of Tamil Nadu and moved to Kochi airport. Value-added products will also be part of the project with 100pc export

Industries Minister P Rajeeve. While the proposed food-processing zone will come up on 20 acres in Kalamassery, orientation,” he said. The group’s twin IT towers at Kochi’s Infopark will employ around 25,000 profes-

sionals and will be commissioned within three months. In the retail sector, the company is

(Cont. on page-2)

Air Arabia’s early bird offer till March 2

MUMBAI: Air Arabia, the leading low-cost carrier in the Middle East and North Africa, unveiled an extraordinary early bird promotion called “super seat sale” with discounted offers on five lakh seats across the company’s entire network.



The promotion includes non-stop flights from India to three air-

ports across the United Arab Emirates (Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, and

Ras Al Khaimah) and beyond to other onward destinations like Milan, Vienna, Cairo, Krakow, Athens, Moscow, Baku, Tbilisi, Nairobi and many more with fares staring from Rs 5,914 one way.



This early bird offer

(Cont. on page-2)

CRUCIAL ROLE OF MEA-OE APPROVED RECRUITMENT AGENCIES IN STRENGTHENING INDIA’S ECONOMY

MUMBAI: India has long been a major contributor to the Global workforce. With millions of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled professionals employed across worldwide the penetration of Indian Human Resources into the International job market, facilitated by the Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, MEA -OE Division, Protector General of Emigrants and their respective POE Offices through their approved Recruitment Agencies, plays a vital role in strengthening the nation’s economy and social frame work. However, despite their significant contributions, these recruitment Agencies often remain under appreciated, says Shri V.S. Abdulkareem, President, IPEPCIL.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF OVERSEAS EMPLOY-

MENT: Foreign Exchange inflow and economic stability: One of the most direct benefits of overseas employment is the substantial remittance inflows into the country. The expatriate workforce sends billions of dollars annually, contributing significantly to India’s foreign exchange reserves. These remittances help to maintain to favourable balance of payments and reduce the trade deficit, ensuring economic stability. Supporting livelihoods and reducing un-employment, each employed emigrant support on average of six dependents in India. The financial assistance provided by these overseas employed workers helps improve living standards, fund education and support healthcare for their families. Additionally, overseas employment opportunities help to reduce

domestic unemployment pressures, particularly for semi-skilled and unskilled workers who may struggle to find suitable jobs in India.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND SKILL ADVANCEMENTS: Returning emigrants bring valuable technical knowledge and experience gained from working with advanced machinery and industry-best practices abroad. This knowledge transfer plays a crucial role in infrastructure development, manufacturing advancements, skill upgrades in various industries across India.

ROLE OF MEA-OE APPROVED RECRUITMENT AGENCIES: Ensuring legal, safe and ethical Overseas Employment. MEA-OE approved recruitment Agencies play a crucial role in ensuring that Indian work-

(Cont. on page-7)

MESSAGE

National Day/Liberation Day greetings to leadership and people of Kuwait

On the joyous occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day of the State of Kuwait, I extend my warm wishes to the leadership, the Government and the people of the friendly State of Kuwait.

I express my gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for their patronage towards building a strong India-Kuwait partnership and ensuring the well-being of the large and vibrant Indian community in Kuwait.

India and Kuwait share centuries old historical, trade and people-to-people linkages that has been further upgraded to a Strategic Partnership during the recent visit of Prime Minister of India to Kuwait. The conferment of the highest national award of Kuwait “The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer” on Prime Minister of India HE Shri Narendra Modi is symbolic of the importance attached by the leadership of Kuwait to its relations with India. India remains fully committed to working closely with Kuwait in making our bilateral relations truly multi-faceted for the mutual benefit of our people.

I am confident that under the visionary leadership of Kuwait, the people of Kuwait will see greater progress and prosperity in times to come. I also take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt greetings to all on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan.



सत्यमेव जयते
Government Of India



Dr. Adarsh Swaika
Ambassador of India to Kuwait

Tourism Malaysia completes largest sales mission to India

CHENNAI: Tourism Malaysia completed its largest-ever Sales Mission to India, taking place from Feb 3 to 7, 2025.

region.

In 2024, Malaysia had welcomed a record one million tourists from India, with Southern India

it easier for travellers from Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Kochi to explore Malaysia's diverse offerings.

D a t u k M a n o h a r a n Periasamy, Director General of Tourism Malaysia, who led the Sales Mission, commented: "India has been a key market for Malaysia for over 20 years and with the

upcoming Visit Malaysia Year 2026 (VMY2026), we are targeting 1.6 million Indian travellers. Southern India, with its robust flight connections, is crucial to our growth strategy. The 151 weekly flights and 26,686 seats per week reflect the high demand for travel between Malaysia and the Southern cities of India. This mission provides a valuable opportunity to highlight Malaysia's appeal as a top destination for

MICE, wedding tourism, and leisure travel, offering world-class infrastructure and beautiful destinations for all types of travellers."

Malaysia's MICE tourism offering includes state-of-the-art convention centres, luxury hotels, and professional services for hosting international conferences and business events. With its modern facilities and efficient connectivity, Malaysia is quickly becoming a leading choice for corporate incentives, meetings, and exhibitions.

Wedding tourism is also a rapidly growing sector, with Malaysia being increasingly chosen by Indian couples for their dream weddings. From beachside ceremonies to luxurious hotel receptions in stunning destinations, Malaysia offers a wide range of unforgettable wedding venues and world-class services to ensure a seamless and memorable celebration.

Air Arabia's early bird...

(Cont. from page-1)

is available for booking till March 2, 2025, with travel dates spanning from Sept 1 to March 28, 2026.

The Rs 5,914 ticket sale extends to non-stop flights originating from Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Nagpur, Goa, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Coimbatore, and Kozhikode into Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE and beyond.

Operating over 200 routes from its five strategic hubs located in the UAE, Morocco, and Egypt, Air Arabia continues to solidify its position as a leading player in the aviation industry.

Committed to providing passengers with comfort, reliability and unbeatable value, Air Arabia is an award-winning airline dedicated to delivering exceptional travel experiences.



The mission visited key cities Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Kochi, featuring a delegation of 62 sellers from Malaysia. This mission aimed to emphasise growing opportunities in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector, as well as wedding tourism, alongside traditional leisure travel, with a special focus on India's Southern

contributing more than 50pc of Indian visitors. The strong connectivity between Southern India and Malaysia is underscored by 151 weekly flights and a total seat capacity of 26,686 seats per week. The recent introduction of new flights by Indigo Airlines to Penang and Langkawi from Chennai and Bangalore further enhances travel options, making

IT sector may witness cautious salary hikes

MUMBAI: Industry experts predict an average wage increase of 4-8.5pc, a notable step down from previous years, signalling a shift towards more pragmatic compensation strategies.

The Distribution Of Salary Hikes Is Expected To Vary Significantly Across Different Employee Levels. Salary increments in India's US\$ 250 billion IT services sector are projected to be moderate in fiscal year 2025, as companies navigate a complex landscape of global economic uncertainties, evolving skill demands, and the increasing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), according to experts.

Industry experts predict an average wage increase of 4-8.5pc, a notable step down from previous years, signalling a shift towards more pragmatic compensation strategies.

"The outlook for salary hikes this year is quite

cautious," noted Krishna Vij, VP, TeamLease Digital. "Industry players are looking at increments in the four per cent to 8.5pc range, which is lower than what we've seen in previous years. This slowdown is largely due to global economic challenges, reduced discretionary spending, and shifting business priorities."

Companies are being more conservative with their salary budgets and many have even pushed their appraisal cycles beyond the usual April-June period, she said, which has made salary revisions less predictable in the current scenario.

"Organisations are shifting to skills-based pay, leveraging Tier II hiring for cost efficiency. Instead of salary hikes, retention bonuses, ESOPs, and project-based incentives are being implemented as compensation strategies," Vij said.

Lulu to invest Rs 5,000cr...

(Cont. from page-1)

setting up mini-shopping malls at Perinthalmanna, Tirur, Kannur, Kasaragod and Thrissur.

Dubai-based Sharaf



Group has also announced an investment of Rs 5,000 crore, mostly in the state's logistics sector, over the next five years. Group vice-chairman Sharafuddin Sharaf said the conglomerate, which has been operating in India for the past 28 years with a presence in more than seven cities, chose Kerala for the

investment due to the state government's initiatives to simplify ease of doing business.

"We'll invest in two dry ports. The location

will be finalised after discussions with the state government," he said, citing advantages like the large pool of highly educated and capable human resource available in the state and ease of doing business.

In a major boost to its economic climate, Kerala received expressions

of interest (EoIs) for investments worth Rs 1.53-lakh-crore at the summit. Industries Minister P Rajeeve hailed it as the "new beginning of a united Kerala," emphasising the state's commitment to fostering a favourable investment climate.

"As many as 374 companies have evinced interest in establishing, expanding, diversification and reinvesting and submitted EoIs that will bring about a consolidated investment of Rs 1,52,905.67 crores. Besides, a total of 24 IT companies expressed interest in expanding operations in the state, bringing an additional investment of nearly Rs 8,500 crore and generating 60,000 more job opportunities," Rajeeve said at the valedictory ceremony.

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FOREX RATES
As on 24th February, 2025 (In rupees)

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	87.02	86.16
British Pound	110.47	109.25
Euro	91.98	90.32
Japanese Yen	0.58	0.57
Swiss Franc (CHF)	97.57	95.75
Canadian Dollar	61.64	60.45
Australian Dollar	55.85	54.80
Norwegian Krone	7.88	7.73
Swedish Krona	8.25	8.09
New Zealand Dollar	50.34	49.48
Hong Kong Dollar	11.25	11.04
Kuwaiti Dinar	283.88	275.73
Singapore Dollar	65.66	64.39
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.32	22.88
United Arab Emirates	23.80	23.34

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ENGINEERS (PI/ME/IN/EL/TELE) (5 Yrs Exp)	CSWIP 3.4U INSP CONTROLLER (5 Yrs Exp)
CALIBRATION ENGINEER (5 Yrs Exp)	PCC ELECTRICAL ENGINEER (7 Yrs Exp)
ROV SUPERINTENDENT (10 Yrs Exp)	PCC INSTRUMENT ENGINEER (7 Yrs Exp)
ROV SUPERVISOR (8 Yrs Exp)	PCC MECHANICAL ENGINEER (7 Yrs Exp)
ROV PILOT (5 Yrs Exp)	PCC PROCESS ENGINEER (7 Yrs Exp)
POSITIONING OPERATOR (3 Yrs Exp)	PCC TELECOM ENGINEER (7 Yrs Exp)
THIRD ENGINEER (3/E) (5 Yrs Exp)	PCC TELECOM ENGINEER (7 Yrs Exp)
CHIEFMATE/SENIOR DYNAMIC (3 Yrs Exp)	PCC ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN (7 Yrs Exp)
ELECTRICIAN FOREMAN (7 Yrs Exp)	PCC INSTRUMENT TECHNICIAN (7 Yrs Exp)
ELECTRO TECHNICAL OFFICER (8 Yrs Exp)	PCC MECHANICAL TECHNICIAN (7 Yrs Exp)
RADIO OPERATOR (8 Yrs Exp)	PCC PROCESS TECHNICIAN (7 Yrs Exp)
RIGGER FOREMAN (7 Yrs Exp)	PCC TELECOM TECHNICIAN (7 Yrs Exp)
RIVETER FOREMAN (7 Yrs Exp)	PIPE FITTER FOREMAN (7 Yrs Exp)

Interested candidates must submit the updated CVs, Copies of Education and Experience Certificates, Passport and photograph at the earliest on

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FABRICATION ENGINEERS (5 Yrs Exp)	SCAFFOLDER FOREMAN (5 Yrs Exp)
PTW COORDINATORS (5 Yrs Exp)	SCAFFOLDER INSPECTOR (5 Yrs Exp)
LIFTING COORDINATORS (5 Yrs Exp)	RIGGER SUPERVISORS (5 Yrs Exp)
PROJECT COORDINATORS (5 Yrs Exp)	PAINTING FOREMEN (5 Yrs Exp)
QC PIPING (3 Yrs Exp)	BASE OPERATIVE LABORS (3 Yrs Exp)
QC ELETRICAL (3 Yrs Exp)	APPROVED RIGGERS (3 Yrs Exp)
QC STRUCTURE (3 Yrs Exp)	INSTRUMENT TECHNICIANS (3 Yrs Exp)
QC PIPELINE (3 Yrs Exp)	GENERATOR OPERATORS (3 Yrs Exp)
QC COATING (3 Yrs Exp)	COMPRESSOR OPERATORS (3 Yrs Exp)
PIPING SUPERVISORS (5 Yrs Exp)	6G WELDERS 6GR+6G+ARGON (5 Yrs Exp)
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COATING SUPERVISORS (5 Yrs Exp)	COATING BLASTERS (3 Yrs Exp)
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WELDING SUPERVISORS (5 Yrs Exp)	SCAFFOLDERS (3 Yrs Exp)

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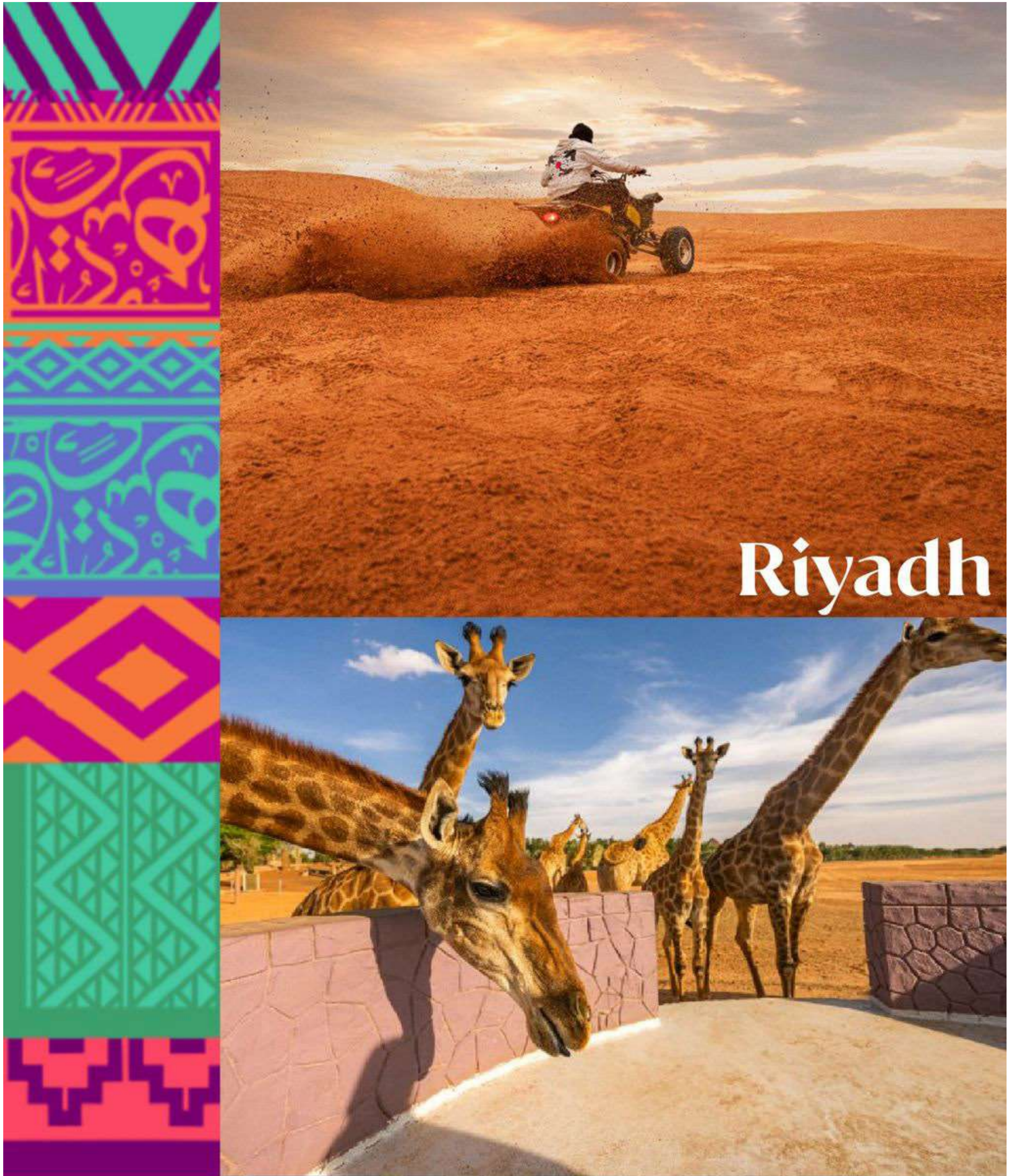


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GULF FAQs

Unfair rent hike, will Smart Rental Index help?

I am a Dubai-based tenant who has just been given a rent hike notice, and I think it is unfair. Dubai recently launched a Smart Rental Index. How do I use this to negotiate a better rate?

In Dubai, the percentage increase in rent may depend on the average rent increase of rented properties in the designated area. This is under the Article 1 of Decree No. (43) of 2013 Determining Rent Increase for Real Property in the Emirate of Dubai, which states,

“When renewing real property rent contracts, the maximum percentage of rent increase for real property in the emirate of Dubai shall be as follows:

a) No rent increase, where the rent of the real property unit is up to 10pc less than the average rental value of similar units;

b) Five per cent of the rent of the real property unit, where the rent is 11pc to 20pc less than the average rental value of similar units;

c) Ten per cent of the rent of the real property unit, where the rent is 21pc to 30pc less than the average rental value of similar units;

d) Fifteen per cent of the rent of the real property unit, where the rent is 31pc to 40pc less than the average rental value of similar units;

e) Twenty per cent of the rent of the real property unit, where the rent is more than 40pc less than the average rental value of the similar unit.”

The average rental value refers to the average rent for similar properties in Dubai. The average is determined in accordance with, the “Rent Index of the Emirate of Dubai”, which is approved by the Real Estate Regulatory

Agency (RERA). This is under the Article 3 of the Dubai Rent Increase Law. “For the purposes of application of Article (1) of this Decree, the average rental value of similar units shall be determined in accordance with the Rent Index of the Emirate of Dubai approved by the Real Estate Regulatory Agency.”

Furthermore, the rent increase and decrease of residential properties in Dubai is decided by the RERA. Article 10 of the Law No. 26 of 2007 Regulating the Relationship between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai states that, “RERA shall have the authority to establish criteria relating to the percentage of rent increase in the emirate in line with the requirements of the prevailing economic situation in the emirate.” At the time of renewing a rent contract, both the landlord and tenant may discuss and amend the terms, including the rent. If they can’t agree, the tribunal may decide what the fair rent should be, based on specific criteria.

Additionally, if either party wants to make changes to the rent terms, they are required to notify the other party at least 90 days before the rent contract ends, unless they have agreed otherwise. This is in accordance with Articles 13 and 14 of the Law No. 33 of 2008 Amending Law No. 26 of 2007 Regulating the Relationship between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai.

For the purposes of renewing a rent contract, the landlord and tenant may, prior to the expiry of the rent contract, amend any of its terms or reconsider increasing or reducing the rent. If the landlord and tenant fail to reach an agreement in this regard, the tribunal may determine the fair rent, taking into

UAE imposes new laws for people’s welfare

What are the new laws imposed by the UAE from New Year?

The UAE has put its new year’s resolutions in place, with landmark legislation being introduced for the start of 2025 to improve access to health care, safeguard the environment and bolster the economy.



As well as new flagship policies, the UAE will continue its commitment to growing the local workforce as private sector companies set their sights on Emiratization targets in the months ahead.

The financial landscape will come into sharp focus as new taxation rules for big business are brought into

account the criteria stipulated in Article (9) of this Law.”

Unless otherwise agreed by the parties to a rent contract, where either party wishes to amend any of its terms pursuant to Article (13) of this law, that party must notify the other party of this intent no less than 90 days before the date on which the rent contract expires.” In cases where the landlord provided the required 90-day notice and the previous index supported the increase, but the new index does not, the renewal date will determine which index ap-

force, while there will also be extra charges for consumers to be aware of.

Here, we examine the updated laws of the land that will help to shape the national agenda in 2025.

NATIONWIDE HEALTH INSURANCE: FROM JAN 1:

Basic health insurance for all private sector and domestic workers who do not already have coverage will be mandated as of Jan 1.

The major reform will extend health insurance provision – already in place in Abu Dhabi and Dubai – to employees in Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah.

The previous index will be applied if the contract was renewed before 2025. The new index will apply if the contract is renewed during 2025. Based on the above, your landlord may only increase the rent of the rented property if the RERA index permits an increment of rent. In addition, your landlord may only increase the rent by giving written notice to you at least 90 days prior to the renewal of the rental period. In the event of a dispute with the landlord, you may approach the Rental Dispute Centre to decide on the dispute.

Employers are required to buy the new health insurance as a condition of issuing or renewing residency permits. However, the mandate does not apply to employees with work permits issued before Jan 1, 2024 that remain valid, and will only become mandatory when their residency permits are due for renewal.

THE INSURANCE POLICY: Covering people up to the age of 64 – will be valid for two years. The second-year premium can be refunded if the visa is cancelled. The basic insurance package costs Dh320 (\$87) a year, with no waiting period for workers suffering from chronic illnesses.

“This pricing makes it highly accessible, ensuring a larger portion of the population can secure essential health coverage for their dependents,” said Neeraj Gupta, CEO of Policybazaar.ae.

DUBAI EXTENDS PLASTIC BAN: From Jan 1 Dubai has banned styrofoam products such as disposable cups as part of a wider national push to reduce plastic waste.

The emirate has banned single-use bags, made of any material and will step up its eco-friendly strategy over the next two years. The new ban will include styrofoam containers and cups, as well as plastic stirrers, straws, table covers and cotton buds with plastic stems. In Jan 2026, the final phase of the scheme will see single-use plastic cups prohibited, along with plastic lids, cutlery, food containers and plates.

CRUCIAL ROLE OF MEA-OE APPROVED RECRUITMENT AGENCIES...

(Cont. from page-1)

ers find overseas jobs through legal and secure channels. These Agencies strictly adhere to Government Regulations, ensuring fair trade practices and protecting jobs seekers from fraudulent recruitments.

PROTECTION OF WORKER'S RIGHTS:

Workers recruited through approved agencies have a safety net of legal protection, ensuring that their contracts, wages and working conditions meet International Standards. This prevents exploitation and Human trafficking which is a common concern in unregistered overseas employment. Maintaining authentic data for policy making the MEA-OE Department maintains a robust database of Overseas Employment trends which helps the government in policy formations. This data driven approach allows for better workforce planning, diplomatic negotiations and strategic decision-making regarding international labour agreements.

LACK OF RECOGNITION AND THE NEED

FOR POLICY SUPPORT:

Despite these significant contributions, MEA-OE approved recruitment agencies do not receive the recognition and respect they deserve. Their role in nation-building is often overlooked, even though they serve as the backbone of India's global workforce migration movements.

NEED FOR FAIR AND TRANSPARENT COMPLAINT RESOLUTION AGAINST MEA-OE APPROVED RECRUITMENT AGENCIES:

While addressing grievances related to Overseas Employment is essential, it is equally important that MEA-OE approved Recruitment Agencies are treated fairly during the complaint resolution process. Regulatory bodies should ensure that, the complaints are genuine and thoroughly examined for authenticity and legitimacy before raising any show-cause notices and related action, that may adversely impact on agencies operations and reputation. Frivolous or baseless complaints should be dismissed after due notification if the complainant

fails to respond or participate in hearings. Keeping unresolved or unverified complaints indefinitely in online records can unfairly hinder an Agency's Registration Certificate renewal and access to other regulatory services. A balanced approach that protects both migrants and ethical recruitment agencies is crucial to maintaining a fair and transparent overseas employment ecosystem.

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SUPPORT

NEEDED: Awareness and acknowledgement, the government should recognise and promote the contributions of approved recruitment agencies through policy acknowledgements and public campaigns. Incentives for ethical recruitment practices; incentives or certifications can be provided to agencies maintaining the highest standards of legal and ethical recruitment.

STRICT ACTION AGAINST UNREGISTERED RECRUITERS:

To ensure the safety of Indian jobseekers, stringent measures must be enforced against unau-

thorised recruiters who exploit workers and tarnish the image of MEA-OE approved agencies and India's reputation abroad.

The role of MEA-OE approved recruitment agencies in India's economic growth, employment generation and skill developments are undeniable. Their efforts not only help individuals secure better livelihoods but also contribute immensely to national progress. Recognising and supporting

this sector through better policies, incentives, certifications and public acknowledgement will ensure a more structured and ethical overseas employment framework, benefitting both the workers and the nation as a whole. It's time for the government and the public to give these agencies the respect and recognition they rightfully deserve, emphasised **Shri VS Abdulkareem, President, IPEPCIL.**

L&T bags \$1.5b contract from Saudi Aramco

MUMBAI: Saudi Aramco has awarded the main EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contract for the first phase of its ambitious Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS) hub to Larsen & Toubro's Energy Hydrocarbon (LTEH) division. The contract, valued at about \$1.5 billion, is part of Aramco's Accelerated Carbon Capture & Sequestration (ACCS) initiative aimed at reducing carbon emissions and enhancing the company's CCS capacity.

Phase 1 of the project is pivotal in advancing Saudi Aramco's broader environmental objectives, as the company pushes to mitigate its carbon footprint and strengthen its position in the global energy transition. The company has yet to comment on the award.

L&T's recent performance reflects a robust order book, which stood at Rs5.46-lakh-crore as of Q3FY25, marking 20pc year-on-year (YoY) growth. Despite this, the company has seen a slight decline in expected order prospects for the upcoming Q4 FY25, with projected orders amounting to Rs5.51-lakh-crore, compared with Rs6.72-lakh-crore in Q4 FY24—a 12pc year-on-year dip.

Fake hotel booking: kingpin held NRI medical quota racket, ED raids in Siliguri

PANJIM: The Cyber Crime Police have arrested a suspect and exposed a pan-India fake hotel website/booking racket that defrauded customers under the guise of well-known hotels in Goa, Puri (Odisha), Shillong, and Meghalaya.

The investigation commenced after the Cyber Crime Police Station registered a case based on a complaint from the General Manager of a beach resort in Salcete. Upon tracing the fraudulent websites, police identified the suspect as Lalit Khare (25), a resident of Morena, MP. Investigations revealed that Khare had not only created the fake website but had also made

payments to the hosting service for its establishment.

A Crime Branch team apprehended the suspect from MP. During interrogation, police uncovered seven additional fraudulent hotel websites created by him—four targeting hotels in Goa, two in Odisha and one in Meghalaya.

Further inquiries led the police to Firoz Ahmad from Guna, who was found to be connected to the accused, having made payments for the creation of fake hotel websites. Ahmad was served a notice under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and his interrogation directed

the investigation towards Mewat, Rajasthan.

Police have seized a laptop and a mobile phone from the accused. According to officials, these fake websites were designed using real hotel names and images, and were linked to Google listings.

When potential customers searched online for these hotels, they were redirected to fraudulent websites. A WhatsApp contact number was provided on these fake sites, where the scammer impersonated hotel staff and tricked victims into transferring money into designated bank accounts, thereby committing fraud under the pretext of hotel bookings.

NRI medical quota racket, ED raids in Siliguri

SILIGURI: A four-member team from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided the residence of a medicine trader in Hakimpara, Siliguri. The operation began early in the morning when a contingent of paramilitary forces cordoned off the area and secured the premises. ED officials entered the building to interrogate individuals suspected of involvement in a scam related to medical college admissions.

According to sources, the raid is linked to a racket allegedly producing fake NRI certificates to secure admissions in private medical colleges

and hospitals for MBBS degrees. The ED team reportedly questioned the suspects for over six hours, scrutinising documents related to fraudulent practices in student admissions.

This investigation highlights growing concerns over corruption in the NRI quota system, which has been exploited by unscrupulous actors to bypass legitimate admission processes. The ED's actions underscore the government's efforts to crack down on such malpractices in the education sector. Further details are awaited as the investigation progresses.