



# OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

## PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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Under the chairmanship of secretary CPV & OIA Shri. Muktesh K Pardeshi a holistic review of entire gamut of PGE Div involving 15 POEs was held in NewDelhi on July 25. A number of proposals were discussed to enhance the productivity of the divisions.

# Kerala: thriving tourists' paradise

**K**erala is a melting pot of cultural, religious and geographical characteristics. The practices and traditions handed down

southern coast of Malabar particularly at Muzuris (the ancient port city of Cheras) and Kozhikode (the commercial hub) to buy spices. Arabs regu-

and diverse wildlife sanctuaries.

### Growth of tourism

Tourism is today recognised as a social phenomenon which brings

strong demand for the prevention of pollution to save the state's beautiful backwaters — a key attraction for tourists.

### Kerala marks 20pc

of previous year, clocking a robust 20pc increase.

The trend firmly established that the state's tourism made a massive surge even compared to



from generation to generation, alongside some of the natural wonders that the state is blessed with and its spices have attracted ancient travelers. Kerala has historical trade and cultural ties with the Arab world. The connection between Kerala and the Arabian Peninsula dates back to the ancient times. Arab traders from the Gulf came to the

larly purchased wooden dhows (boats) made in the Malabar region. Others who came to Kerala are Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, the French and the British, who ruled India. From the ancient healthcare system of Ayurveda to the most modern medical facilities are available in Kerala. The state is dotted with picturesque hill stations

mankind closer to different social values, cultural heritage and customs. Successful tourism development imbibes the values of recognising the sustainability of natural resources and the socio-cultural ethos of the land.

The importance of responsible tourism based on conservation and preservation of environment are the key points to Kerala's tourism policies. Still, pollution and mismanagement of waste materials are causing damages to the natural beauty of this tiny state. The government and local bodies should wake up to this concern. Already, there are

### rise in tourists

Setting a new record in domestic tourist footfall, Kerala attracted 1,06,83,643 visitors from within the country in the first six months of the last calendar year compared with 88,95,593 in the corresponding period

the pre-pandemic period that clocked the highest figures till then. The state also registered a surge in the number of domestic tourist arrivals compared with the pre-Covid period. The statistics revealed a significant increase of

(Cont. on page-2)



# Entire Kerala should be a tourism destination, says Minister PA Mohammed Riyas

**K**erala Tourism Minister PA Mohammed Riyas recently spoke about the future of tourism in God's own country. Addressing a conclave, Riyas talked about how Kerala rebounded after the pandemic. He said Kerala could recover extremely well from the losses it suffered by the end of 2022. "Our state has been featured in the list of 52 countries by The New York Times. In



**PA Mohammed Riyas** addition, Kerala has been declared the best wedding destination by the maga-

zine Travel + Leisure." Travel awakens words, pictures and energy hidden inside us, said Tourism Minister Mohamed Riyas in his message on National Tourism Day. Traveling beyond our boundaries helps meet new people, see unfamiliar places, taste new food and know little-known lives. Because of this realisation, humans went in search of new pastures, the minister said.

"Today, travel is much

more than just seeing a new place. It is about knowing the history, cultural and culinary diversity of the places we are visiting, whether it is in our country or elsewhere," Riyas said at the National Tourism Day function.

To extend new experiences along with memorable hospitality to foreign and domestic tourists is the priority of the government. The growth of tourism should benefit society

and people, directly or indirectly. The government gives paramount importance to this, he said. Caravan Tourism, Biodiversity circuit, Malabar Literary Circuit, Agri tourism network and "in-car dining" are some of the innovative projects of Kerala Tourism. The minister said the aim is develop the entire state as a tourism destination and get its presence noted in the world tourism map.

## Kerala: thriving tourists'.....

(Cont. from page-1)

17.87 lakh domestic tourists in the first half of 2023 compared to the previous year.

### Tourism revenue

The number of foreign tourists in the first half of 2023 was pegged at 2,87,730 as compared with 1,05,960 during the corresponding period a year earlier — an increase of 1,81,770 and a healthy 171.55 per cent growth. There had also been a steady increase in revenue generated by the state's tourism sector from 2020 to 2022. The tourism sector netted a revenue of Rs 35,168.42 crore in 2022 against Rs12,285.91 crore in 2021 and Rs 11,335.96 crore in 2020. The surge in domestic tourist footfalls is a clear indication that 2024 will definitely be a record-breaking year for Kerala Tourism. The steady uptrend in tourist arrivals also vouched the increased acceptance



that's known for its literacy rate, picturesque beauty, and delectable cuisine, is undergoing some of the most notable developments in different departments. From the transportation and commute sector to the seaports and metro projects, a lot is happening.

Both the state and the central governments are working collaboratively to execute all the proposed projects to pave the way for the optimal development of the state.

### Kerala Coastal Highway

The first on the list is the Kerala Coastal Highway, which is a 625 km

Kunjathur in Kasaragod district.

According to the official reports, the total estimated budget of construction is Rs. 6,000 crore and the entirety of the project is being paid by the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB). What's unique about this highway is that it will have a dedicated lane for cycles. The estimated deadline is 2026.

### Mumbai-Kanyakumari Economic Corridor

Different economic corridors in India are being constructed simultaneously and the Mumbai Kanyakumari Economic Corridor deserves a special mention. It is a 1,760 km long economic corridor being developed by the Union as part of the Bharatmala Pariyojana.

The corridor runs along the western coast connecting the major cities of Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Mangalore, Kochi, and Thiruvananthapuram. The main purpose behind the construction of this corridor is economic boost. The project is estimated to be around Rs. 50,000 crore. However, the reports suggest that the operation of this corridor will gen-

erate revenue of Rs. 25 lakh crore by the next 25 years. This will be a most beneficial Kerala Megaprojects among the projects.

### GIFT City, Kochi

The GIFT City, Kochi, is a proposed global financial and trade hub under development on 220 hectares of land at Ayyampuzha near Aluva in Ernakulam district, Kerala, India. It is an early-bird project under the Kochi-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (KBIC). The project is being done under the collaboration of

was approved at the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The government has decided to increase the bar licence fee from Rs 30 lakh to Rs 35 lakh. Besides, the licence fee for clubs serving liquor for marine officers will be increased from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh.

The policy aims to increase the production of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) in the state. Bevco is currently the only state-owned agency that procures and distributes IMFL. Manufacturing of neutral alcohol, which

**The Kerala Tourism Authority and Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) Society has to have a broader Vision to promote Kerala as per its Aims & Objectives, so the shortfall in the existing Tour Operator Accreditation policy also to be reviewed and broadened for the potential Tour Operators to get accredited with a more flexible criteria review for the best interest of Kerala Tourism promotion.**

the state and the central government of India and reports suggest that the completion of this project will generate 50,000+ job opportunities. The land acquisition process is underway.

### Tourism & liquor policy

The Kerala government last year approved the new liquor policy for 2023-24 which aims to promote toddy, the traditional alcoholic beverage of the state, under rebranding. Under the new policy, the bar licence fee was hiked and the rules for restaurants within tourism zones were liberalised.

The new liquor policy

is the main component in IMFL, will be promoted in the state. The policy will also allow the brewing of low-intensity liquor and wine made from fruits.

The government proposes allowing bars in designated areas of IT Parks in the state and the amendments to this effect are in progress. The new policy also proposes to strengthen the government's campaign against the use of liquor and narcotic substances especially among teenagers under the 'Vimukthi' initiative. Meanwhile, 'Vimukthi Clubs' have already been set up in different schools.



of new products and initiatives that the state had launched to woo visitors. **Kerala mega projects 2024**

Kerala, which is a state

(388 mi) long planned coastal highway running parallel to the Arabian Sea . . It begins at Pozhiyoor in Thiruvananthapuram district and ends at

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## Electrical Engineers

Salary Range SAR 4000/- to SAR 6000/-

B E / B Tech in Electrical Engineering with 1 to 3 years' of experience in Design electrical systems and components based on project requirements and coordinate with project teams to ensure timely completion of tasks. Proficiency in electrical design software and AutoCAD. Preferable Age: 21 to 28 years

## Project Coordinators

Salary Range SAR 3000/- to SAR 4000/-

B E / B Tech in Electrical Engineering or a related field with 1 to 2 years' of experience in Collaborate with project managers to support project execution, Project budgets, Project schedules, Scope statements, and Project plans. The applicants should have excellent computer in Excel, Word, Visio, Typing Skills, Preferable Age: 21 to 28 years

## Electrical Fitters

Salary Range SAR 1800/- to SAR 2200/-

Diploma / ITI in Electrical Engineering with with 1 to 3 years' experience in Read and interpret electrical blueprints, diagrams, and specifications to determine the layout of systems and components, Assemble, install, and align electrical parts and equipment according to specifications and should be Familiar with electrical tools and safety standards. Preferable Age: 21 to 28 years

## Electrical Helpers

Salary Range SAR 1200/- to SAR 1600/-

Diploma / ITI in Electrical Engineering with with 1 to 3 years' experience in Assist in carrying and positioning electrical equipment and components, Clean up work areas and dispose of waste materials and Prepare work areas and materials for electricians. The applicants should have excellent Skills, Basic Understanding of Electrical Concepts. Preferable Age: 21 to 28 years

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**POE warning on job offers from Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia**  
MUMBAI: Protector of Emigrants (POE), Mumbai, has issued an advisory for all prospective emigrants looking for jobs to be beware of fake job offers in Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia. Aspirants can go through government registered recruiting agents for jobs.

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### FOREX RATES

As on 29th July, 2024 (In rupees)

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	84.57	83.53
Euro	91.85	90.74
Australian Dollar	55.76	54.67
Japanese Yen	0.60	0.54
Canadian Dollar	61.48	60.38
Singapore Dollar	63.29	62.20
Swedish krona	8.74	6.95
UAE Dirham	23.35	22.65
Swiss Franc (CHF)	95.89	94.09
British Pound	108.68	107.60
New Zealand Dollar	50.20	48.81
Thai Baht	2.45	2.24
Hong Kong Dollar	11.68	10.37
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.03	22.08
Bahraini Dinar	229.34	215.34
Chinese Yuan	12.44	10.64
Danish Krone	12.69	11.69
Kuwaiti Dinar	280.11	264.11
Malaysian Ringgit	19.32	17.72
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Qatari Riyal	23.75	21.50
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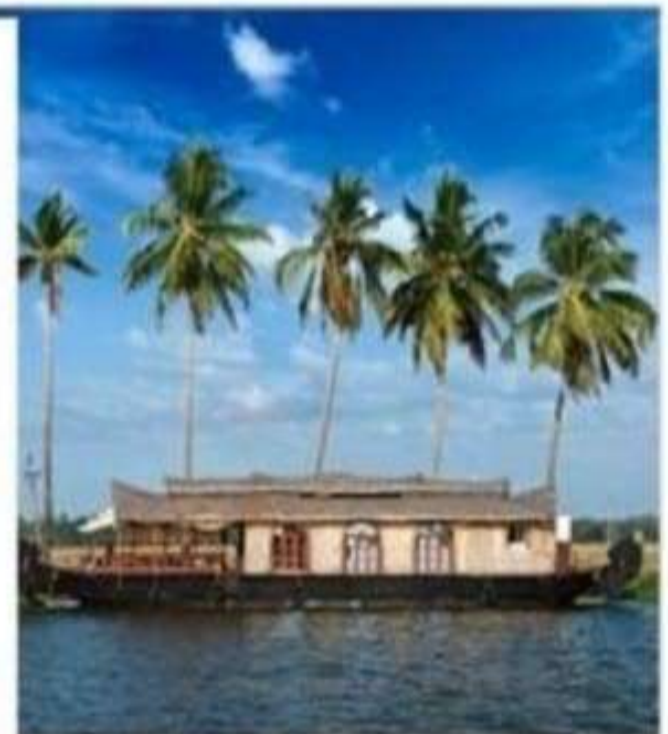
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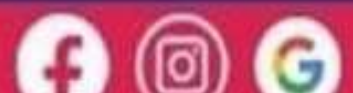


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# DESTINATION WEDDING CATCHES UP IN KERALA

Destination wedding is the in-thing now. It will be your dream wedding! Kerala is the perfect location for a destination wedding thanks to its serene beaches, pristine waters and stunning hill stations. With delicious seafood, exciting activities and a leisure complex, your guests will have a memorable time here. It holds the poise to host any type of wedding with style and class, be it a wedding of the western culture or the traditionally rich one, or even the best place for eco-friendly weddings. It is astounding that Kerala can host grand weddings in posh and luxurious hotels. You can also go to English or Indian-style

weddings. Imagine palm groves, beaches, and endless breathtaking landscapes. tie the knot in a traditional Kerala style with the groom arriving on an ele-



This isn't a dream but can be a reality in Kerala.

Beaches at Kovalam, Alleppey, Varkala and Shanthumukham are ideal wedding venues in Kerala for a beach wedding. You can

phant, and the bride draped in a saree, with food being served on banana leaves. We at Blissful Plans are luxury wedding planners in Kerala.

Kerala has pleasant

weather all year round, so can be visited anytime during the summer or monsoon. However, the best time to have a destination wedding in Kerala is between October and March, since the weather is pleasant and apt to organise outdoor day or evening ceremonies.

The cost of a destination wedding in Kerala depends on several factors such as the number of guests, the type of venue, catering services, decorations, and other services. It can range from a few lakhs to crores depending on these factors.

Planning a destination wedding requires co-ordination with many moving parts. There are legal

requirements to navigate, budgets to balance, and cultural considerations to keep in mind. With the experience of wedding planners, in organising weddings in Kerala, they can guide you through the process and avoid potential pitfalls. Keep the planning process fun and meaningful while reducing your stress.

The culinary fare in Kerala is another highlight. Guests get to relish delectable Sadhya meals, seafood delicacies and tropical fruits. And what's a celebration without music and dance? Kerala's very own classical dance forms like Mohiniyattam or folk dances like Theyyam are sure to dazzle your guests.

## All set for Kerala Travel Mart 2024



**K Biju (IAS)**  
Tourism Secretary  
Govt of Kerala

As many as 592 foreign buyers from 71 countries have registered so far, notably buyers from 27 countries, including China, Japan and Saudi Arabia, will attend for the first time.

KTM is the only Travel Mart that concentrates on a single state, making it a unique brand. Since then, KTM has been the spokesman for tourism industry in Kerala. The

service providers in Kerala to connect. This not just led to promotion of tourism, but also gave rise to a professional approach to tourism activities in Kerala.

Right from hotels to service providers, the KTM Society has been incorporating the best in all tourism sectors and showcases them to the world. Its sole objective being promotion and

progress of Kerala Tourism has been the leading force for the success of Kerala Travel Mart. The Society plays a vital role in filtering the best product service providers which enables customers to choose better.



The inaugural ceremony of the flagship event Kerala Travel Mart of Kerala Travel Mart Society will be followed by three-day sessions at the Sagara and Samudrika convention centres on Willingdon Island (Kochi) on Sept 27, 28 and 29, 2024.

From pre-mart tours to intense networking sessions, the lineup of activities at KTM 2024 will give the delegates an immersive experience of God's Own Country even as opportunities for business open up.

With the event fast approaching, KTM has entered into a partnership with IndiGo, offering exclusive discounts for KTM attendees flying to Kozhikode, Kannur, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram. Participants can book their tickets and finalise travel plans right now.



## TSMIT ALSO JACKED UP Australia hikes student visa fees

**CANBERRA:** International students will face new challenges when choosing Australia as a study abroad destination. Two major developments by the Australian government are likely to affect international students. First, the student visa fee has increased, and second, the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) has been raised.

International students looking to study in Australian universities will have to shell out a higher amount of fee for foreign student visas. Since July 1, 2024, the fee for international student visas has been increased from \$710 to \$1,600, a 125pc hike. This means students will need to pay an additional \$890 to cover the \$1600 visa fee.

Dr John Lodewijks, Vice President, Academic & Professor of Economics at SP Jain School of Global Management, says: "While the significant rise in cost may deter some budget-conscious prospective students, this policy change may also prompt students to explore diverse funding options and seek scholarships more proactively, fostering financial resourcefulness.

For students who may be reconsidering Australia, destinations like London, Dubai, and Singapore are becoming attractive due to streamlined visa processes,

increased accessibility to information, and making global education more feasible for students."

TSMIT also hiked. Additionally, the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold (TSMIT) has been increased from \$70,000 to \$73,150. This limit applies to nomination applications lodged between July 1 and June 30, 2025. Further, new rules are in place shortening the duration of Temporary Graduate Visas, and reducing the age eligibility, among others.

Mayank Maheshwari, Co-founder & COO, University Living says, "Recent adjustments in Australian student visa fees and migration policies indicate a strategic approach to managing immigration while prioritising educational quality. Australia's Group of Eight universities remain the prestigious choice for international students seeking top-tier education.

While we understand that the visa fee hike will impact the financial situation of students, these changes aim to attract only the cream-of-the-crop students who are committed to their academic pursuits, ultimately enriching Australia's academic landscape with their diverse contributions. Additionally, these measures are expected to help reduce fraud."

# GULF FAQs

## Don't invite digital libel in UAE

**Please explain about UAE's rule on social media criticism, reviews or complaints or defamation?**

Imagine waking up to a legal notice or a call from the local police station for leaving a Google

In the age of social media, feedback has a much broader reach than traditional word of mouth, presenting new challenges, as reviews are no longer private and the risk of reputational damage by dissat-



review on a business page. When you've had a bad experience with a service or product, you might want to share your dissatisfaction through a review, which seems harmless enough — until it isn't.

In the UAE, there are some cases in which you might find yourself in a legal battle and facing hefty fines if you are overtly critical or give a vilifying review, as businesses are becoming increasingly vigilant about safeguarding their reputations.

Last year, for instance, a woman in Dubai was found guilty of defamation for an Instagram post that "damaged a hospital's reputation" after she posted a video clip, calling it the "worst hospital" and that doctors did not know their job. A case was filed under the cybercrime law, and she was fined and asked to delete the video.

Similarly, in May the Public Prosecution convicted a woman for defamatory remarks posted about a medical centre on Google and Instagram. In her review, she criticised the centre for providing "the worst service you can imagine" and alleged that positive reviews on its social media platforms were fake.

The court fined her Dh5,000, confiscated her phone, and closed all her social media accounts. On appeal, the court upheld the charge, deeming the phrases used in the incident a crime of defamation.

isfied customers is higher. Digital libel is considered more harmful due to its enduring nature as it can be archived, made more interesting through real-time interactions like live streams, podcasts, video recordings, shared to a global audience, made viral, posted anonymously and accessed indefinitely.

A company can file both criminal and civil cases to demand the restoration of reputation and compensation. Under Federal Law No 34 of 2021, defamatory statements made online can lead to criminal charges. Civil lawsuits for damages can also be pursued simultaneously.

Constructive criticism or opinions based on genuine experiences generally do not constitute defamation as long as they are not insulting or made with malicious intent. However, even factual statements that lead to reputational damage can be considered defamatory.

There is a difference between a negative review and a defamatory one. A negative review is a critique that expresses dissatisfaction with a product, service, or business based on the reviewer's honest and factual experience. These reviews, while critical, aim to provide constructive feedback without making false statements.

In contrast, a defamatory review contains false statements. Such reviews go beyond mere opinion or criticism, which can lead to legal consequences.

## How to get a car loan in Dubai?

While Dubai's public transport system serves residents quiet efficiently, a car is unmatched when it comes to travelling around the city with ease and speed. Especially during the

summer months when soaring temperatures can get bothersome.

For those who may be unable to afford a car in one payment, taking out a loan is always a good option. Banks in the UAE provide

auto or car loans to customers. Different financial institutions offer various kinds of loans, ranging from "green" auto loans to fixed deposit and fixed rate loans.

From eligibility to the documents required, here is a guide to taking out auto loans in the UAE.

While the eligibility criteria may vary from bank to bank, some basic requirements remain the same.

Applicants are required to be of 21 years of age to apply for an auto loan. Most banks also require a minimum salary of Dh5,000.

Residents are required to show a proof of salary to confirm this. This amount may vary from bank to bank.

**DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:** Along with documents to show proof of owning a car, the individual's personal documents are needed to apply.

The duration for loan repayment differs from institutions. Some may offer periods of up to five years, while others may offer up to a few months. This also depends on the age of the vehicle.

## Is alteration of building allowed?

I recently moved into a villa of my friend in Dubai. My landlord wanted to add a room to the villa by partitioning the living room. This would involve some construction work. Would we need regulator approvals for this?

The Building and Government Housing Department of the Dubai Municipality is the "Competent Department" which issues approvals for constructions and repair works of a building. This is in accordance with "Definitions" mentioned in Article 3 of the Local Order No. 3 of 1999 Regulating Construction Work in the Emirate of Dubai.

No individual may carry out permanent or temporary works on a building or property without a permit issued by the Competent Department of Dubai Municipality. This is under Article 4 of the Dubai Local Order No. 3 of 1999, which states, "No natural person or public or private legal person may implement any construction works that involve permanently or temporarily changing, whether in whole or in part, the features of any land or real property, without first obtaining the relevant permit from the competent department."

An individual or his or her representative (engineers or contractors) should file an application with the Department related to construction works to be undertaken in a building. This is in accordance with Article 5 of the Dubai Local Order No. 3 of 1999, which states, "A permit application signed by the Applicant will be submitted to the Competent Department on the form prescribed for this purpose, together with the relevant required documents. The implementing bylaw of this order will determine the documents required in this respect."

Furthermore, any construction works including temporary constructions may be implemented as per approved plans and drawings

and technical requirements as approved by the Competent Department of Dubai Municipality. This is under Article 14 of the Dubai Local Order No. 3 of 1999, which states, "Construction works must be implemented as per the approved plans and drawings, the conditions based on which the permit is issued, and the technical engineering standards adopted in this respect. No changes or amendments to these documents may be made without the relevant approval of the Competent Department."

Moreover, Article 19 to Article 26 of the Dubai Local Order No. 3 of 1999 mentions the obligations of the relevant parties who undertake construction works such as contractors and engineers. The said clauses also mention the safety conditions which need to be undertaken while conducting construction works on a building or a property.

Additionally, Schedule No. 1 of the Local Order No. 3 of 1999 mentions the applications fees of Dubai Municipality for engineering audit of plans and Schedule No. 6 of the said order mentions the fees of Dubai Municipality for modifications and additions to the approved plans.

Based on the aforementioned provisions of the local order of Dubai, you may appoint a licensed contractor or engineer who may assist you in obtaining various permissions from Dubai Municipality to undertake renovation work in your villa. You may be required to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the master developer or the community management in order to ensure that the modifications or alteration comply with the guidelines set by master developer or community management, Dubai Municipality, Dubai Development Authority (DDA) and any other relevant authority as applicable.

# INMECC can play key role in enhancing India-GCC trade ties: Premachandran (MP)

**MUMBAI:** The Indo Gulf & Middle East Chamber of Commerce and Industries (INMECC) hosted its chapter meeting in Maharashtra on Sunday bringing together professionals and business leaders from India and Middle East countries.

The event featured a keynote address by the chief guest –veteran parliamentarian-- NK Premachandran, who highlighted the pivotal role INMECC can play in enhancing trade activities between India and the Middle East.

Premachandran emphasised the unique position of INMECC in connecting business leaders across India and the Middle East. INMECC is a platform dedicated to promoting economic, industrial, commercial, and cultural activities in the region, the MP said. In just two years of operation, INMECC has made significant progress and has the potential to achieve wonders by covering five countries out of the 17 countries in the Middle East.

Premachandran reiterated the importance of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between India and the UAE in 2022, noting the impressive trade volume of US\$ 84.5 billion achieved in 2023. He also mentioned India's ongoing efforts to sign a similar agreement with Oman. "India is the fastest-growing major economy in the



**At the INMECC meeting along with Premachandran (MP) are Dr PJ Aprain, President of the Maharashtra Chapter, Dr Sureshkumar Madhusudhanan, Secretary General of INMECC, Rajesh Swamy, Deputy General Manager, VS Abdulkarim, Vice President of the Maharashtra Chapter, AN Shaji, Secretary of the Maharashtra Chapter, HE Chris Hong, Consul General of South Africa and HE Jesus Campos, Consul-General of the Republic of Panama.**

world, currently ranked fifth and expected to become the third largest economy within the next eight to 10 years, he stated. "Maharashtra, as the economic powerhouse of India, plays a crucial role in this growth. Maharashtra's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) was approximately US\$ 435 billion in the fiscal year 2022-23, making it the largest economy among Indian states. He also highlighted the state's strategic connectivity, with three international airports, an extensive road and railway network and a significant coastline facilitating substantial cargo transport. Premachandran also emphasised the state's dynamic economic landscape, with a blend of knowledge-based and

manufacturing sectors, a high number of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and a vibrant workforce. Premachandran noted the deepening rela-



**INDO-GULF AND MIDDLE EAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

tionship between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), driven by historical connections, increasing trade and investment and the presence of around nine million Indi-

ans in the region. He highlighted India's trade with the Arab world, which has surged to an unprecedented \$240 billion annually.

INMECC has developed several projects aimed at the progress of the country and the advancement of individuals. One notable initiative is "The RISE – Sick Unit Revival," which seeks to revive industrial units in India marked as sick. Premachandran explained that the project involves identifying such industries, conducting expert studies, assessing their potential for revival, and preparing Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to attract investment from NRI investors.

He welcomed the recent budget allocation for skill development and aspects of the internship pro-

gramme. The programme aims to provide year-long paid internships to 10 million youth in India's top 500 companies, offering exposure to real-life business environments and employment opportunities. The veteran MP concluded his address by acknowledging the challenges ahead and expressing confidence in INMECC's ability to drive positive change. "Taking up the project "The Rise Sick Unit Revival" is a herculean task, but INMECC is well-equipped to meet this challenge.

The meeting was presided over by Dr PJ Aprain, President of the Maharashtra Chapter. Dr. Sureshkumar Madhusudhanan, Secretary General of INMECC, delivered a speech showcasing the future programmes of INMECC. Rajesh Swamy, Deputy General Manager, gave a presentation on the sick unit revival project. VS Abdulkarim, Vice President of the Maharashtra Chapter, addressed the issues facing the tourism, overseas recruitment, and fisheries sectors and requested Premachandran to kindly involve himself in resolving these industry challenges. AN Shaji, Secretary of the Maharashtra Chapter, proposed a vote of thanks. The meeting was honored by the presence of H.E. Chris Hong, Consul General of South Africa, and H.E. Jesus Campos, Consul General of the Republic of Panama.

## India's rating to be upgraded, says UBS

**GENEVA:** UBS expects a ratings upgrade for India on the basis of lower fiscal deficit target and potential implications of higher revenue target.

(UBS Group AG is a multinational investment bank and financial services company founded and based in Switzerland).

The first budget by the Modi 3.0 Cabinet is done

and dusted. You may deliberate on whether it is a hit or a miss but according to UBS, the biggest plus is that a sovereign ratings upgrade is in the offing for India. Given that India's economy is in a sweet spot, UBS says the lower deficit number surely enhances the elbow room for improving India's scope for sustained medium-term growth.

In fact one of the most striking aspects of the budget was the fiscal deficit number. While the Interim Budget had made a projection of the deficit being at 5.1pc the full Budget for FY25 announced a significantly lower deficit target of 4.9pc for the same period.

Well, this is where the whopping Rs 2 trillion plus RBI dividend trans-

fer and lower subsidy bill comes to play. The finance minister, in her budget speech, reiterated that the government would continue to take the fiscal deficit to below 4.5pc of GDP by FY26. Additionally there was also mention that FY27 onwards, they will shift to a new medium-term fiscal consolidation path linked to reduction in central government debt

(as percentage of GDP). "We think this will give them greater flexibility to decide on an appropriate fiscal trajectory. We expect a sovereign rating upgrade for India (currently rated at the lowest investment grade) by at least one of the three rating agencies over the next 18-24 months," says Tanvee Gupta Jain, UBS India Economist.



# Vizhinjam puts India on global shipping map

**KOCHI:** India's first deepwater container transshipment port is set to have a transformative impact on the country's blue economy. Capable of accommodating the world's largest container ships, Vizhinjam Port will handle high-speed cargo and bulk carriers. It is also close to major international sea routes and the domestic transport network. This along with tech-



nological and infra-structural advantages will make Vizhinjam a

global maritime trading hub in the near future.

**Explore a sea of opportunities**  
With lower logistics cost

and improved trade efficiency, Vizhinjam will propel India into a new era of growth. Additionally, it will also contribute to the development of a thriving business environment concentrated in and around the port. From warehousing to banking, hotels to housing schemes, there are several opportunities for investors who are looking to become a part of this exciting development journey.

# Flying abroad: do you need tax clearance certificate? New simplified tax law coming

**NEW DELHI:** Amid reports that a mandatory tax clearance certificate

required to be issued by the income-tax authority stating that such person

has no liabilities to obtain the tax clearance certificate.

Hence, the proposed amendment does not require all the residents to obtain the tax clearance certificate, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in its clarification. Only in the case of certain persons, in respect of whom circumstances exist which make it necessary to obtain a

**NEW DELHI:** The government is working towards a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act, and the first draft which will be prepared by an internal committee of the tax department will be put out for stakeholder consultation within the next six months, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra said.

Addressing FICCI's interactive session on Union budget 2024-25, he said: "We will have a consultation process on the first draft and how it will happen, that we will decide. We would like to have a collaborative approach for implementation." The Revenue Secretary further stated that the efforts of the government will continue to provide a hassle-free, simple, and collaborative approach towards the implementation of taxes.

"Our approach towards taxation has always been and will continue to be in the mode of collaboration and not confrontation. The purpose of our proposals, both on the policy side as well as on the implementation side, is to collect taxes from wherever they are due but do it in a manner that gives respect, and trust to the taxpayers and collect them in a smooth and hassle-free manner," he added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in her Budget speech that a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act, 1961 will be completed in six months. "The purpose is to make the Act concise, lucid, easy to read and understand. This will reduce disputes and litigation, thereby providing tax certainty to the taxpayers," she had said.



is required for individuals before flying abroad, the Union government clarified that every person is not required to obtain the certificate under section 230 of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

In Union budget 2024, it has been proposed to include the reference to the Black Money Act, 2015 to obtain a tax clearance certificate. Such a certificate is re-

quired to be issued by the income-tax authority stating that such person has no liabilities under the Income-tax Act, or the Wealth-tax Act, 1957, or the Gift-tax Act, 1958, or the Expenditure-tax Act, 1987.

Since, the Black Money Act, 2015 is also administered by CBDT, it has been proposed in the budget to add the reference of the Black Money Act, 2015 to the list of Acts under which any person should clear his

tax clearance certificate will be required to obtain such certificate. Such a clearance certificate is necessary where an individual is involved in serious financial irregularities and his presence is necessary in the investigation of cases under the Income-tax Act or the Wealth-tax Act and it is likely that a tax demand will be raised against him.

# Vistara to offer free Wi-Fi to passengers on select flights

**NEW DELHI:** Vistara will offer 20 minutes of complimentary Wi-Fi to all passengers on select international flights joining other global airlines providing free service to attract passengers.

The airline began offering complimentary Wi-Fi service to its loyalty programme

members last Nov and now the offer has been extended to all the passengers. The service is available on flights operated with Airbus A321 and Boeing 787 aircraft.

Vistara is the first Indian

airline to offer complimentary Wi-Fi onboard



international flights. Customers can avail up to 20 minutes of free connectivity and can extend the service or buy additional plans using an Indian credit or debit card. Business class passengers will continue to enjoy 50MB data free as an

added benefit while all loyalty card members get free chat service.

"At Vistara, we are committed to constantly enhancing the experience of our customers. We are confident that customers will appreciate this value addition," the airline's CEO Deepak Rajawat said in a statement.