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PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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Thailand extends visa-free travel for Indians indefinitely

BANGKOK : Thailand has announced that Indians now have visa-free entry in the country, indefinitely extending its visa policy for Indian nationals, which was set to end on Nov 11, 2024.

According to the new policy, Indian visitors are now allowed to stay in Thailand without a visa for up to 60 days. This visit can be extended by 30 days through a local immigration office.

Through the extension of visa-free tourism for Indians, tourists will now enjoy ease of trav-

el in Thailand, which is a very popular vacation destination due to its pristine beaches and massages.

Earlier, the process of getting a Thai visa involved fees and documentation and in some cases, a waiting period. However, the elimination of documentation increased the number of Indian tourists to around 16.17 million between Jan and mid-Oct of 2024. The visa-free travel has also led to impromptu weekend bookings.

AMERICA FIRST POLICY CAN AFFECT INDIA Trump may tighten H-1B visas, but can turn harsh on China

NEW DELHI: Trump's stance on immigration, particularly the H-1B visa programme, may become a sticking point between India and the US since it is likely to affect Indian professionals. Over 80pc of India's IT export earnings come from the US, making it vulnerable to changes in visa policies. The US is India's largest trading partner, accounting for over \$190 billion

of annual trade. Nevertheless, observers feel the excellent personal relations between Modi and Trump can help India to a large extent.

However, Trump's hawkish approach to-

wards China may benefit India in the rapidly changing global order in the wake of the ongoing conflicts in West Asia and Europe.

Trump's "America First" agenda may lead to higher tariffs on Indian auto, textiles, pharma etc. Indian exporters may face high customs duties for goods like automobiles, textiles and pharmaceuticals if the new US administration decides to pursue such a policy. (Cont. on page-2)



Nasser's Gold Rolex to be auctioned

NEW YORK: A unique piece of Egyptian history is going for auction -- a 1963 Rolex Day-Date watch that belonged to former Egyptian presi-



dent Gamal Abdel Nasser. On the market for the first time, the watch will be sold at the Sotheby's Important Watches auction in New York on Dec 6.

An Egyptian army officer who led the military coup to depose King

Farouk in 1952, Nasser was named Egyptian prime minister in 1954. In 1956, he was elected president, a position he held until his death in 1970.

The watch was one of his few prized possessions. Nasser was famously uninterested in material possessions, he refused to even own a house, yet the watch held a different meaning for the president. A gift from his friend, Anwar Sadat, the third president of Egypt, Nasser wore the watch often, including during prolonged talks to establish a united Arab congress.

Singapore Airlines unveils first class seats on ultra-long flights

SINGAPORE: Singapore Airlines is introducing first class on its ultra-long haul flights for the first time as part of a sweeping S\$1 billion (\$835 million) upgrade to its cabin products.

Singapore's flag carrier, already routinely ranked as the world's No. 1 airline with its generous pouring of champagne and ability to book the cook and order Lobster Thermidor, unveiled its fresh and completely redesigned first and business class seats -- with all-new privacy doors.

To start, Singapore Air's

seven Airbus SE A350 jets that fly the 18- or 15-hour



crossings between Singapore and New York or Los Angeles will get four first class seats installed.

The move comes as rival Qantas Airways prepares to launch non-stop flights between Sydney and London and New York as part of Project Sunrise.

Air Canada's new flight from Toronto to Mumbai from Dec 6

MONTREAL: Canadian flag carrier Air Canada (AC) is planning to launch new flights between Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (BOM), Mumbai via Frankfurt Airport (FRA), Germany from Dec 6 to Feb 1, 2025. However, the return flight from Mumbai to Toronto from Dec 6 to Feb 1 will be non-stop.

However, from Feb 2, 2025, both flights will be direct---- Toronto to



Mumbai and Mumbai to Toronto, with no fueling stop at Frankfurt. They will be operated by Boeing 777-200LR.

According to details shared by the Indian Aviation Guy on X, Air Canada will operate a direct flight from Toronto

to Frankfurt and it will be a fuel stop. The flight will be operated by Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. The plane will remain on the ground in Frankfurt for one hour and 15 minutes and after that, it will depart for Mumbai.

Overall, the connect-

ing flight will take around 17 hours to cover the distance of 12,480 km (7,755 miles).

With these flights, Air Canada is set to operate 25 weekly flights to and from India this Winter. The Canadian airline will operate 11 weekly flights from Toronto to Delhi (DEL) and Mumbai, daily flights from Montreal (YUL) to Delhi, and daily flights to Delhi from Western Canada, Calgary (YYC) via London Heathrow (LHR).



Success of GST

Driven by festive sales coupled with general surge in business sentiment, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) recorded the second-highest collection at Rs 1.87-lakh-crore in October. The highest-ever gross GST collection was in April 2024 at Rs 2.10 – lakh-crore.

The pickup in gross GST collections happened after the pace of growth had dropped to over a three-year low level in Sept and despite a high rate of 42.8pc for domestic refunds. While the gross GST collections' growth rate picked up pace, it still continues to be less than the double-digit growth seen during the previous two financial years. Gross domestic revenue of GST increased by 10.6pc in Oct as against 5.9pc in Sept, while gross imports GST revenue rose by 3.9pc in Oct, slower than eight per cent in Sept.



No doubt, festivals such as Durga Puja and Diwali contributed largely to this handsome gain in GST collection. Many state governments as well as private companies have paid higher annual bonus to their employees which enhanced their purchasing power. Data released by the electronics industry and automobile sector as well as sales of flats in large cities such as Mumbai and Delhi prove this point. The improvement in the year-on-year (YoY) growth in gross GST collections to 8.9pc in Oct 2024 from the multi-year low of 6.5pc in the previous month is certainly encouraging. Nevertheless, the YoY growth was compressed on account of the low rise in collections on imports in the month. Additionally, the growth in compensation cess collections was marginal in Oct 2024, at just 0.8pc, which reflects the weakness in the purchases of the items on which this is levied.

In absolute terms, Maharashtra was at the top with collection of Rs 31,030 crore (14pc growth) followed by Karnataka with collection of Rs 13,081 crore (nine per cent growth) and Gujarat with collection of Rs 11,407 crore (17pc growth).

The split-up shows that the Central GST (CGST) — the tax levied on intra-state supplies of goods and services by the Centre — collections stood at Rs 33,821 crore, State GST (SGST) — the tax levied on intra-state supplies of goods and services by the states — collections were Rs 41,864 crore while Integrated GST (IGST) — the tax levied on all inter-state supplies of goods and services — collections stood at Rs 99,111 crore and cess at Rs 12,550 crore during the month.

The then President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the GST in the midnight of June 30-July 1, 2017 at the Central Hall of Parliament. The motto was to have a single tax instead of multiple and repetitive taxes. The GST is collected at source, like the TDS, which makes the collection process easy. Key advantages of GST are prevention of tax evasion, elimination of cascading effect of tax, higher registration threshold, Composition Scheme Under GST for small businesses, simplified online process, less number of compliances, defined treatment for e-commerce operators and improved efficiency of logistics.

Of course, there are disadvantages in the GST system too. These are GST does not cover all goods, tax rates are higher, burden on micro-small industries, blockage of working capital in the middle of the financial year etc. The govt should address these issues seriously.

LIPSYNCH

“Either you are the first or you are nowhere else”
– Ratan Tata on doing business

South leads in white-collar hiring

BENGALURU: When it comes to white-collar hiring, Southern states saw significant growth with strong year-on-year gains. With a 24pc YoY growth, Tamil Nadu emerged as the top performer, followed by Telangana at 16pc, Karnataka at 12pc, Andhra Pradesh at nine per cent and Kerala at seven per cent, according to the Naukri JobSpeak Index for October..

Hyderabad and Chennai were among the top cities that led hiring for the research & analytics industry, showing growth of 51pc and 50pc, respectively. Kochi led the chart for the BFSI industry, registering a 40pc YoY growth.

With 10pc growth in Oct, hiring activity has sustained momentum

and oil & gas (18pc), pharma/biotech (12pc), FMCG (eight per cent) and IT (six per cent) emerged as primary drivers of this positive trend, the report said. Artificial intelligence/machine learning roles showed growth at 39pc YoY and two per cent month-on-month. Interestingly, hiring in the IT sector showed positive growth in four out of the seven months this fiscal. Pawan Goyal, chief business officer at Naukri, said: “We are now experiencing sustained YoY growth, with Jobspeak revealing consistently positive trends over the past few months. We are particularly thrilled to see synchronised expansion across IT and non-IT sectors. The accelerating pace of fresher hiring

is a strong indicator of business confidence and presents exciting opportunities for upcoming graduates.”

Hiring for freshers showed encouraging signs with a six per cent YoY growth in Oct. Architecture/interior designing (57pc), KPO/research/analytics (39pc) and agriculture/dairy (36pc) are key growth drivers. Tier two cities led this growth, with Coimbatore (31pc) and Jaipur (15pc) showing maximum increases in fresher hiring. Senior roles and strategic hires continue to drive job market growth as 16+ years experience band registered a significant 23pc YoY growth. With a 28pc increase in white-collar hiring, IT unicorns showed strong performance.

Jeddah to host IPL auction on Nov 24, 25

JEDDAH: After a last-minute venue change, the Saudi Ara-

bia held on Nov 24 and 25. The auction will coincide with the first Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy



JEDDAH TO HOST THE IPL 2025 MEGA AUCTION ON 24 & 25 NOVEMBER.

bian port city of Jeddah has been chosen to host the Indian Premier League 2025 mega auction. The much-anticipated auction will be

“The venue for the auction will be Abady Al Johar Arena (also known as Benchmark Arena) and the accommodation will be at the Hotel Shangri-la

which is at a distance of 10 minutes from the auction venue. Our operations team will be in touch for the visa and logistics requirements,”

organisers said.

The BCCI confirmed Jeddah as the venue. It also announced that 1574 players, including 320 capped players, 1224 uncapped players and 30 players from Associate Nations, registered for the mega auction.

The BCCI also explored other international locations like Dubai, Singapore and even Vienna, but Saudi Arabia has won the race to host one of the most-watched sporting events on TV. BCCI delegations visited potential venues in Saudi Arabia last month to assess logistics and lodging arrangements.

Trump may tighten H-1B visas...

(Cont. from page-1)

sue the “America First” agenda, opined trade experts.

India and the US have been collaborating intensively to counter China’s influence in the Indo-Pacific region, enabling New Delhi to play its expected role in the Quad alliance with the US, Japan and Australia. New Delhi is confident that ties between India and the US will grow from strength to

strength under Trump’s presidency. Sources in the government pointed out that the multifaceted relationship between the two countries has reached a level of stability, supported by bipartisan consensus on both sides.

Trump has already made public commitments to strengthen ties with India. He has also spoken on record on a few occasions during his election campaign about his

friendship with PM Modi.

Between FY-2020 and FY-2024, India’s merchandise exports to America rose by 46pc from \$53.1 billion to \$77.5 billion. Imports from the US also grew to \$42.2 billion last fiscal from \$35.8 billion in 2019-20. On the other hand, trade in services between the two nations expanded from \$54.1 billion in 2018 to an estimated \$70.5 billion in 2024, a 30.3pc rise.

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Lulu IPO oversubscribed 25 times

ABU DHABI: Lulu Retail Holdings, the largest and fastest-growing pan-GCC retailer, has successfully completed its initial public offering (IPO) on the Abu Dhabi Securities Ex-

change (ADX), raising Dh6.32billion (about \$1.72b). The offering, which launched earlier this week, has become the largest IPO in the UAE in 2024 to date.

The IPO was oversubscribed by more than 25 times, with investor demand surpassing Dh135bn (approximately \$37bn) across all tranches, excluding cornerstone investors. This marks the highest level of demand for a non-government UAE IPO in the past decade.

The company confirmed that the final offer price has been set at ADh2.04 per share, placing the offering at the top of the previously indicated range. Based on this price, Lulu's market capitalisation at listing will be Dh21.07bn (around \$5.74bn).

(Cont. on page-7)

FOREX RATES
As on 7th November, 2024 (In rupees)

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	84.79	83.89
Euro	92.70	91.75
Australian Dollar	57.47	56.37
Japanese Yen	0.58	0.56
Canadian Dollar	61.92	60.97
Singapore Dollar	65.16	64.11
Swedish krona	9.07	7.28
UAE Dirham	23.32	22.72
Swiss Franc (CHF)	98.98	97.58
British Pound	110.44	109.39
New Zealand Dollar	52.11	51.01
Thai Baht	2.62	2.49
Hong Kong Dollar	11.77	10.46
Saudi Arabian Riyal	22.89	22.14
Bahraini Dinar	230.12	215.12
Chinese Yuan	12.78	10.38
Danish Krone	12.81	11.81
Kuwaiti Dinar	280.03	265.03
Malaysian Ringgit	20.20	19.40
Omani Rial	224.33	212.33
Qatari Riyal	23.82	22.07
South African Rand	5.24	4.30

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- 1) Verify credentials of the recruitment agency / persons. Ensure that, the recruitment agency / persons are licensed by the Ministry of External Affairs, OE, PROTECTOR GENERAL OF EMI-GRANTS, Government of India.
- 2) Avoid any upfront payment in case asked for.
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- 5) Do not deal with the unscrupulous agencies who are inconsistent or give evasive answers to your questions.
- 6) Reporting Fraud:
If you suspect that an agent / person is doing fraudulent activities related to overseas recruitment / employment, report it to the nearest POE Office, police station etc. etc; your report can help to prevent others from falling victims to scams.
Your safety and well-being are paramount, by staying vigilant and informed, you can avoid falling prey to unscrupulous agents and ensure a secure legitimate path towards overseas employment. – VS Abdulkareem (President, Indian Personnel Export Promotion Council – IPEPCIL).



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GULF FAQs

Can landlord increase rent in one go to match current market rate?

I own a villa in Dubai that I've rented out. However, compared with other villas in the area, I'm getting about Dh20,000 less. Can I raise the rent all at once to match the current market rate?

In Dubai, rent increases for properties are regulated based on specific guidelines, particularly during lease renewals. Under Article-1 of Decree No 43 of 2013 Determining Rent Increase for Real Property, the percentage increase may depend on average rent increases of the rented properties in the particular designated area.

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

- * No rent increase if the rental of the property unit is up to 10pc below the average rental val-

ue for similar properties.

- * Five per cent if the rental of the real property unit is 11pc to 20pc below the average for similar unit.
- * 10pc if the rental of the unit is 21pc to 30pc less than the average rental value of similar properties.
- * 15pc if the rental of the property is 31pc to 40pc below the average rental value for similar units.
- * 20pc if the rental of the unit is more than 40pc below the average rental value of similar properties.

The average rental value refers to the average rent for similar properties in Dubai. These averages are established by Dubai's official Rent Index managed by the Real Estate Regulatory Agency (Rera). This is outlined in 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." It is important to know that the rent increase and decrease related to 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."

When it's time to renew a rental agreement, landlords and tenants can negotiate new terms, including any rent increase, before the lease expires. If an agreement cannot be

reached, the rental tribunal may determine a fair rent based on specific criteria.

Additionally, if either party wants to change the rent terms, they must notify the other party at least 90 days before the rent ends, unless they have agreed otherwise. This is under 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 Dubai.

Article-13 states: "To renew 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 account the criteria stipulated in Article (9) of this Law."

Article-14 says: "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."

Based on the above-mentioned regulations, as the landlord, you are allowed to increase the rent by giving the tenant at least 90 days' written notice before the renewal date, as long as the Rera index supports the increase. If you and your tenant cannot agree on the new rent, you may need to bring the matter to the Rental Dispute Centre, which will decide on the increase based on fair market criteria.

Royal Brunei Airlines launches three weekly direct flights to Chennai

CHENNAI: Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) has launched its new direct flights between Bandar Seri Begawan and Chennai, India.

RB's Airbus A320neo landed at Chennai Inter-

national Airport on Nov 05 at about 22:50 and was greeted by a water cannon salute. This new connection signifies a significant expansion in RB's global network. The airline celebrated

the launch in Chennai through a series of events in collaboration with the Brunei High Commission in India, the Brunei Economic and Development Board (BEDB) and Brunei Tourism (BT)

In collaboration with BEDB, an investment seminar was organised for Indian business leaders. BEDB representatives presented Brunei's attractive investment landscape, which includes

a stable political environment, modern infrastructure and strategic access to the ASEAN market. This session fostered connections between Indian businesses and Bruneian

representatives, promoting partnerships in crucial trade, technology, and tourism sectors.

The Chennai route is a promising step toward stronger regional ties and underscores

RB's commitment to expanding its presence in the Indian market. RB's Airbus A320neo aircraft will serve the route and ensure passengers enjoy the lat-

est comfort, technology, and efficiency with RB's world-renowned cabin crew offering the signature Bruneian hospitality that RB is known for globally.



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at the ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, aimed at strengthening partnerships, promoting Brunei as a unique destination, and showcasing investment opportunities for Indian businesses.

Govt tightens GST rules on airlines

NEW DELHI: In a move to curb GST revenue leakages from airlines, the government has enforced stricter data-sharing protocols effective immediately.

Airlines must now share comprehensive passenger and booking data daily with tax authorities, according to revised regulations by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). This directive is aimed at reconciling passenger records with GST payments and ensuring

full compliance on tickets, including those for no-shows and last-minute cancellations.

Previously, airlines had flexibility in reporting passenger data at their discretion within 24 hours of departure or at the actual take-off time. The amended rules, however, require operators to submit passenger data 24 hours before departure and update it again at wheels-off time, standardising the process to tighten GST audits and verification.

GLOSSARIES-HR HIRING /TRAVEL&TOURISM

FAQs regarding the New Passport Rules-2024

The following are some questions that might come up regarding the new passport rules.

Will my passport have my parents' names printed on it?

No, your parent's names will not appear on the passport as per the new passport rules.

What color is my passport going to be?

Your passport will be blue if you are in an ECR status. If not, it will be issued in the color that corresponds to your category.

Do I have to include my parents' names on the application?

No, giving the names of both parents at the time of application is no longer required.

Can a minor get a passport if their parents have a criminal background?

Yes, however, the application must be submitted through the Tatkal scheme, and the passport will not be issued until it has been approved by the appropriate authority.

What color changes have been made to the passport?

Passports are made available in dark blue, maroon, white, and orange colors to distinguish between ordinary citizens, diplomats, government officials, and others.

How to get a passport for a mentally retarded person without address proof traveling abroad for treatment?

The applicant must submit a passport application, along with proof of birth and the address of their parents. A specific competent authority's approval is required before a passport can be issued.

ECR & non-ECR (ECNR) Passports

ECR passport: An Indian passport bearing the Emigration Check Required (ECR) stamp is

SKILLS GURU

By Sajan MS

The reasons for traveling are numerous. While some individuals travel for work, others do so for leisure. Some travel to study further, while others travel to take a break from life. Similarly, others have business reasons to travel. Travel is a wonderful way to learn a lot of things in life, be it for job search, employment, entertainment or knowledge. Whatever the reason, travel opens a huge door for us to explore the world beyond our imagination and immerse ourselves in many things.

The fields of Overseas Manpower Recruitment and Travel and Tourism are full of jargon and acronyms. In order to make the ensuing journeys entertaining, educational, and potentially life-saving, SKILLSGURU presents a few glossaries explaining the domains of overseas manpower recruitment and travel and tourism. Skills Guru hopes that people who are unfamiliar with it will find this glossary helpful. Let us continue with Passport that ranks first in these fields even though it is not regarded as a glossary.

an ECR passport, and it signifies that the holder may need to secure emigration clearance prior to working in 18 specified countries as per the Emigration Act-1983. (The Emigration Act governs the emigration

ther/Legal Guardian column on the last page of the booklet.

Non-ECR (previously ECNR) passport:

A passport that permits travel to other nations without requiring emigration clearance

in occupations that have been notified by POE, like nursing, which necessitates emigration clearance regardless of educational background. In addition, individuals who have worked overseas for more than three



of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled laborers as well as specific professionals, like "Nurses," who are periodically notified to work abroad in 18 designated countries, including Saudi Arabia.). Individuals who plan to work abroad in these 18 countries and whose passports bear the "Emigration Clearance Required" (ECR) stamp must get emigration clearance from the Protector of Emigrants (POE). Workers who have not received clearance from POE risk being stopped at immigration. The 'Emigration Check Required' is printed just above the Name of Fa-

is known as a non-ECR passport or Emigration Check Not Required passport. Anybody with a matriculation (Class 10) or higher degree is typically eligible for a non-ECR passport, with the exception of those

years in one stretch or split stretches, minor children under the age of eighteen, those over fifty, income tax payers with a steady income from a regular job or business, etc., are also eligible for a non-ECR

passport. If there is no stamping or printing of ECR status on the passport booklet, then the passport is a non-ECR passport (previously ECNR).

Is it true that ECR passport holders are being stopped at Indian airports?

The Emigration Act -1983 prohibits the travel of those holding ECR passports—including skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled laborers as well as specific professionals like "Nurses," who are periodically notified. As per the Act, they must obtain emigration clearance from the Protector of Emigrants to work abroad in 18 designated countries for employment purposes. Those ECR passport holders without emigration clearance granted from the POEs may be stopped at the Bureau of Immigration checkpoints located at Indian airports.

If an ECR passport holder is visiting or vacationing in India without a copy (and translation) of their residence permit and exit-reentry visa, they are subject to the aforementioned rules.

If you meet any of the requirements for a non-ECR passport, you can convert your ECR passport to a non-ECR (formerly ECNR) passport. In such cases, a new passport will be issued as per the new rules; other endorsements are not allowed. (To Be Continued)

Lulu IPO oversubscribed 25 times

(Cont. from page-1)

Retail investor interest was particularly strong, with more than 82,000 individuals participating in the offering, setting a new record for a UAE IPO in the last ten years. The shares are expected to begin trading on Nov 14, 2024, with Lulu Retail's listing marking

the 100th listing on the ADX.

Founded in 1974, Lulu Retail is the region's largest full-line retailer by sales, store numbers and retail space. The company operates over 240 hypermarkets, express outlets, and mini-markets across six GCC countries. It also

has a growing e-commerce presence through its mobile app, online store and partner channels. Lulu sources products from 85 countries and serves over six lakh shoppers daily, representing 130 nationalities, with an on-the-ground presence in 19 countries.